



THIS PROPHECY

AN EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

CHARLES H. WELCH

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being
an exposition of the book of

THE REVELATION

By

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Dispensational Truth
The Form of Sound Words
Just and the Justifier
In Heavenly Places
The Testimony of the Lord's Prisoner
Perfection or Perdition
and other works



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NOTE:

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The Chart illustrating the Image of Daniel 2 on page 176 has been kindly given as an act of fellowship by Mr. W.G. Whitaker.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

It has been truly said of the God-breathed Scriptures they "are an intrinsic necessity". Certainly the wonderful book with which the sacred Canon closes carries a message of vital importance to every reader of the Bible.

This exposition of the book of Revelation has been made in belief and with observance of the facts that "The Lord hath spoken" and "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God"; and with a desire to obey the command in 2 Timothy 2:15 — "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth".

It is a matter for thanksgiving to God, that the work received His blessing when it was first published as a series of articles in *The Berean Expositor* (a journal edited by the author) during the war period of 1914-18. That a reprint in book form, with practically no alteration of the entire content of the studies, should be made twenty-five years later when war clouds have burst anew, is also a matter for thanksgiving to God, and one which should commend the worth of Mr. Welch's expository work to all discerning students of the Bible.

The book carries little that will appeal to casual readers of religious literature, but for those who "can hear" His word and "endure sound doctrine" there is much that will strengthen and stimulate faith in God, and provoke unto every good work.

Such has been proved by readers of the articles in old volumes of *The Berean Expositor* and it is entirely due to one such reader calling the attention of a friend to the need of the studies for "such a time as this" that the present volume has been produced.

May God's blessing rest upon every reader of its pages.

The quotation with which this short preface closes is from Chapter 14.

"Dark as the outlook may be now, and thicker
the darkness yet to come, faith pierces the gloom
and sees ahead the judgment of all that

oppresses and enslaves, and the blessing and peace that must surely come when the Lord takes to Himself His great power and reigns. We echo the seer's closing prayer, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus'".

"A BEREAN BY THE GRACE OF GOD".

1939.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

My first acquaintance with the book of the Revelation was when it was recommended to me at the age of fifteen as an antidote to the sinful course then manifest. A few years later the riches of God's grace were appreciated, and after another ten years a series of lectures prompted the desire to personally study the book.

The difficulty being realised, advice was sought for a book that would help. The advice was "Don't think of reading the book of the Revelation until you are thirty". Despondent at this, the request was made to another, and the advice was "Go home and read the Revelation now, it is the only book in the Bible that begins with a benediction on the reader — 'Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy' ". This advice was taken, but I have had to wait nearly forty years for a book to help me as this one has. I am grateful to be writing the Preface to the second edition.

Knowing well the spoken and written ministry of the author I have no hesitation in saying that the watermark throughout is

"Don't take it from me
But search and see,"

which, together with the recognition of the fact that "This Prophecy" has its roots deeply grounded in the Old Testament, can only inspire confidence.

What follows then is for Bereans who will search the Scriptures to see whether the things stated are so.

That the reader will be richly blessed in this, is the earnest wish of

Yours by grace,
J.G.T.C.

1950.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

We are glad to be able to issue a third edition of this valuable exposition of the book of Revelation. Although this is a New Testament book, its thought and symbolism is that of the Old Testament prophets such as Daniel, Zechariah etc. There are some 280 references to the Old Testament in the Revelation. This is therefore the divine commentary on the last book of the New Testament.

Regarding its interpretation, Mr Welch writes:

“For some years past we have been forced to the belief that the Bible explains itself, and that all the necessary information is found *within its pages*. If the child of God must possess a knowledge of the acts of the Goths and Vandals, and of the tortuous intricacies of European and Roman history before he can understand this book, then but a very few can possibly hope to acquire sufficient data even to commence the study”.

This is not an easy book to read and study, nor is the Revelation an easy book to understand. The reader should proceed slowly and reflect carefully on the author's exposition, verifying the Scriptural references.

It will be noted that he translates the Greek *aion* and *aionias* as “age,” “ages” and transliterates the adjective as “aionian”. These words are generally rendered “ever” and “eternal” in the Authorized Version and Revised Version. There is no absolute agreement among scholars as to the exact meaning of these words, so the student need not take exception to this translation.

If diligently used, this exposition is indeed a valuable one, for it rests its case on the authority of holy Scripture and not upon the opinions of historians and any one Prophetic School. At the same time, no commentary on the book of Revelation is likely to command agreement on every point.

STUART ALLEN 1984

CHAPTER I

The Relation of the Book to the rest of the Bible and as a whole

Much of the failure to understand the Scriptures arises from the fact that we approach its pages thinking that *we* have to explain the Bible, instead of realising that the Bible has been written to explain things to *us*. Further, we approach the various books of the Bible as though *they* had no connection with the rest of Scripture, and thereby fail to perceive the beautiful design running through the entire Word. In approaching the book of the Revelation it is of the utmost importance to notice its place in the canon of Scripture, and the relation which it holds to the remainder of the inspired Word. The simplest and at the same time the most obvious relation is the connection of this *last* book with the *first*, that is, Genesis.

Genesis tells us of the creation, the Serpent's deception, the loss of Paradise, the forfeiture of the right to the tree of life, the entrance of sin, death, and the curse. *Revelation* tells us of the new creation, the end of the Serpent's deception, the restoration of Paradise, the right to the tree of life, and the blessed fact that there shall be "no more death," and "no more curse". The third chapter of Genesis contains in a brief statement the great prophecy concerning the Seed of the woman, and the seed of the Serpent. Revelation shows us in fuller detail the final and complete fulfilment of this basic prophecy.

Coming to the New Testament we find in the opening book, the Gospel of Matthew, a striking and obvious connection between this gospel of the kingdom, and the Revelation. Matthew presents us with the coming of the "Son of man" in lowliness, finally showing us His rejection by Israel as their King, His head crowned with thorns, and the Gentile successor of Nebuchadnezzar's dominion preferred to the King of God's appointment.

The Revelation has an answer to this, just as it had an answer to all that was said in Genesis. In the Revelation the

Lord is seen coming again, still as the Son of man, this time in great glory, this time crowned with many crowns, this time to enter into His place as heaven's appointed King to rule with a rod of iron, to overthrow the final blasphemous development of Gentile dominion, and to usher in that perfect kingdom concerning which all the prophets had spoken.

In studying the teaching of the New Testament books, a great deal can be gathered from the way in which they use the Old Testament Scriptures. When we find that Matthew refers to the Old Testament Scriptures about ninety-two times, and that the epistle to the Hebrews contains in its short compass 102 Old Testament references, we are at once impressed with the fact that these books contain some line of teaching which has a real connection with the purpose and people of Old Testament times. When we consider the Prison Epistles, and note how very few references they contain to the Old Testament, we are at once in possession of that which helps us to see that these epistles are not the continuation of the teaching of the Old Testament, but they are a revelation of something new, even as they themselves claim (see Eph. 3).

What shall we say then when we find no less than 285 references to the Old Testament in the book of the Revelation, or more than the references of Matthew and Hebrews put together? Surely this is a witness which must not be overlooked. Further, the visions, the symbols, the general character of the language of the Revelation are similar to those of Daniel, Zechariah, Joel, and the Old Testament prophets generally. If we approach the Revelation with a mind stored with the teaching of the prophets of old, we shall not need explanations of much that otherwise would mystify us, and shall be spared the utterly vain attempt to find an explanation by ransacking the history of Europe to get something approaching to an interpretation.

For some years past we have been forced to the belief that the Bible explains itself, and that all necessary information is found *within its pages*. If the child of God must possess a knowledge of the acts of Goths and Vandals, and of the tortuous intricacies of European and Roman history before he can understand this book, then

but a very few can possibly hope to acquire sufficient data even to commence the study. This shuts us up to the few whose opportunities for research have been more advantageous than the majority, and finally calls us to rest upon the conflicting findings of these frail and erring teachers, fallible as ourselves. No, this is not the case at all. The simplest believer who may never have heard of Caligula, nor of Alaric, to whom such phrases as "political heavens" and "ecclesiastical suns" may be utterly unintelligible, may nevertheless understand all the mind of God as revealed in this book without one single additional outside or historic allusion. Revelation studied in the light of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Zechariah and Malachi is luminous, and in turn reflects light on some otherwise difficult passages in those prophecies.

As we read the Old Testament prophecies written before the captivity, and those written during and after the captivity, we shall find a marked change. Ezekiel's prophecy is full of symbols, so also is Daniel's; Zechariah devotes six chapters to symbols. This change, this important place given to symbols, is worthy of notice. During the time of Israel's decline and failure symbolic prophecy is in the ascendant. When we come to the Revelation we find these symbols referred to as "mysteries," e.g., "the mystery of the seven stars" (Rev. 1:20). Mystery first appears on the page of Scripture in Matthew 13, when Christ, as Israel's King, had been rejected by the nation (see Matt. 12). It was because of this that He spoke in parables, and it is because Revelation deals with this same people, their final trouble and restoration, that we have so many signs or symbols in it. It is not until the seventh angel sounds his trumpet that:

"the mystery of God shall be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets... And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign unto the ages of the ages" (Rev. 10:7 and 11:15).

Many opponents of the inspiration of the book of the Revelation have brought forward, among other arguments, the style and language of the book. One need not have a learned acquaintance with classical Greek to be able to

point out many departures from recognised rules of syntax which are to be found in the Revelation. What is important to observe is that these departures from pure Greek are not "barbarisms," as Dionysius Alexandrinus called them, but are to be traced to the strong Hebrew current of theme and style running through this prophecy. The imagery of the book is peculiarly Jewish throughout; temple, tabernacle, ark, manna, covenant, altar, incense, priesthood, the rod of iron, the holy city new Jerusalem, Jezebel, Balaam, Sodom, Egypt, the plagues so closely parallel to those of Exodus, all these figure largely in the Revelation. The vision of the four horses of Revelation 6, and the two witnesses of Revelation 11, are direct references and continuations of the same visions and prophecies of Zechariah. The angel of Revelation 10:5,6 is a direct reference to Daniel 12:7, while the opening vision of the Son of man in the first chapter is parallel to that of Daniel 10. Surely none have any hesitation in believing that Daniel and Zechariah prophesied concerning the future of Israel and Jerusalem?

It has been pointed out already by others that the titles of Christ used in this book link the Lord to the earthly kingdom purpose, and not to the church of the mystery revealed in Ephesians 3. The student is recommended to make a list of these titles. He is called, The Son of man; The Almighty; The Lord God; The First and Last; The Prince of the kings of the earth; The One Who is to come; The One Who liveth; The Lamb; The Lion of the tribe of Judah; The Morning Star; The Root and Offspring of David; He Who has the Key of David.

Let us now look at the book as a whole in order to gain a large and comprehensive understanding of its purport. This will not only teach us what the book is about, but will act as a corrective when looking at details and smaller passages. Let it be remembered that no one verse or passage must be so interpreted that it goes beyond the scope of the book as a whole, oversteps its place in relation to the rest of Scripture, or isolates it from the divine plan observable throughout the inspired record.

To illustrate our meaning. A verse taken by itself *may* refer to the Reformation, to Constantine, to the early Church, or to Rome, etc., but its context may demand that

it refers to Antichrist, Israel, Babylon, Jerusalem, etc., and however much the isolated passage may *seem* to fit the historical reference, that will be only a superficial agreement, and must be rejected if it runs counter to the unity of purpose exhibited in the book as a whole. Therefore, before we venture a consideration of the first chapter, or a theory as to the "seven churches," or "the woman clothed with the sun," etc., we will look at the book as a whole.

Different arrangements of the book have been given by various writers, but none seem to commend themselves to us so much as that of the late Dr. E.W. Bullinger, where the structural indications in *the book itself* have been diligently followed and tabulated, thereby *discovering* the Spirit's own arrangement, rather than *inventing* one of man's own. This being the case, we have no hesitation in presenting it before the reader, feeling that although Dr. Bullinger is the honoured instrument, the structure itself is that of the Lord, the Inspirer of the Apocalypse. It will be found that while retaining the divisions as given by the Doctor, we have departed at times from his words of explanation.

This survey presents to the eye the whole book, and demonstrates at a glance the fact that the central member, C, is indeed not only central in position, but is the pivot or platform of the whole. The seven-fold division of visions is of great importance, the whole series being found in pairs, that which takes place upon the earth being the result of that which has taken place in heaven. It will be observed that the seven assemblies are brought into direct line with the new heavens and earth, and the new Jerusalem, and that one theme runs throughout the entire book.

The Revelation as a whole

- A 1. Introduction. The angel testifying. Behold He Cometh.
The Son of man. John falls at the feet of Christ.
Seven stars
- B 2, 3. The Remnant on the earth. Time of tribulation.
Exhortations to overcome. Suffering in view of
the new heaven and earth, paradise and the new
Jerusalem
- C (a) 4,5. *In heaven.* — The throne, the book, the
Lamb, living ones, all creation
1 (b) 6:1-7:8. *On earth.* — The six seals. The
144,000 of the children of Israel
2 (a) 7:9-8:6. *In heaven.* — The great multitude
and the seventh seal
(b) 8:7-11:14. *On earth.* — The sounding of
the six trumpets
3 (a) 11:15-19-. *In heaven.* — The sounding of the
seventh trumpet. The king-
dom
(b) 11:19. *On earth.* — The earthquake, etc.
4 (a) 12:1-12. *In heaven.* — The woman, man-child,
dragon
(b) 12:13-13:18. *On earth.* — The dragon, the
beast, and the false
prophet
5 (a) 14:1-5. *In heaven.* — The Lamb and 144,000
(b) 14:6-20. *On earth.* — The six angels
6 (a) 15:1-8. *In heaven.* — The seven angels with vials
(b) 16:1-18:24. *On earth.* — The seven vials
7 (a) 19:1-16. *In heaven.* — The marriage of the Lamb
(b) 19:17-20:15. *On earth.* — The final judgment
and millennial reign
- B 21:1-22:5. The new heavens and earth. The new
Jerusalem. No more sorrow nor
death. The tree of life. The over-
comers inheriting these things
- A 22:6-21. Conclusion. John falls at angel's feet. The
bright and morning star. Angel
testifying. Surely I come quickly.
-

CHAPTER 2

The Introduction

Revelation 1:1-4

The introduction to the Apocalypse occupies not the first *chapter*, as some have been led to think, but the first three *verses* and part of the fourth of the first chapter. These verses contain much that is of service to us in the understanding of the rest of the book, inasmuch as they give such important items as the theme, agents, means, recipients, and time during and by which the things herein revealed shall come to pass.

The theme of the book is introduced into the first sentence. It is *The revelation of Jesus Christ*. The word translated "revelation" is *apokalupsis*, and means "an unveiling". The usage of this word in other Scriptures lends great weight to the teaching that we have in this title, which is pre-eminently the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in Person.

"The *manifestation* of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19).

"Waiting for the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:7).

"When the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed* from heaven" (2 Thess. 1:7).

"Might be found unto praise and honour and glory at (the) *appearing* of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

"At the *revelation* of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13).

"When His glory shall be *revealed*" (1 Peter 4:13).

These passages are sufficient to show that Scripture has already fixed the meaning of the word *apocalypse* as having direct reference to the visible appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that this constituted the hope of God's believing people during the time covered by the Acts, and even afterward, as expressed by Peter's epistle. As we proceed we shall find that all which is written prior to Revelation 19:11 is introductory to the great theme of the book. There in chapter nineteen is at length described THE *apocalypse*, in view of which all the rest of the book is

written. In the book of the Revelation, however, that which is yet future history is brought before the Apostle in vision, consequently the next clause tells us how this revelation was shown to John before its actual fulfilment in fact. "God gave it unto Him to show unto His servants". The word "show" is of importance. It is often used in connection with showing by means of signs. Its first occurrence in the New Testament is not only indicative of this meaning, but opens up to the mind many lines of thought in relation to the special aspect of Matthew and the Revelation considered together:

"Again the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and *showeth* Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" (Matt 4:8).

That which the Lord Jesus refused to take at the hand of the prince of this world, He will receive in the appointed time from the hand of the Father, for a day is coming when the words shall echo through the spaces of heaven and earth:

"The kingdoms of this world (same as Matt 4:8) are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ" (Rev. 11:15).

The use of the word "show" in the Revelation itself will give us its meaning more clearly than any other explanation.

Show (*deiknuo*)

- A 1:1. The revelation shown by the angel. In promise
- B 4:1. Things hereafter. The throne and worshippers
- C 17:1. The whore (Note seven vials, and "he carried me away in the spirit")
- D 21:9. The bride (Note seven vials, and "he carried me away in the spirit")
- C 21:10. The city descending out of heaven from God
- D 22:1. The river proceeding out of the throne of God
- A 22:6. Things shown by the angel
- B 22:8. The angel who showed the things refusing worship.

The things shown to us by John in this book are further said to be "things which must come to pass with speed".

The words are a direct reference to Daniel 2:29, and we would here emphasise with all the power we may possess the utter impossibility of understanding or appreciating either the message, or the means used to convey that message in this book, without a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the Old Testament prophecies. Not only Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but Daniel and the so-called Minor Prophets need careful study. How many there are who fail to understand the book of the Revelation, who never blame themselves for ignoring the first commentaries ever written, namely, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zechariah, Haggai, Zephaniah and Malachi! The statement as to the speedy fulfilment of these things shown is again emphasised in verse three, "for the time is near". No amount of reasoning can make this speedy fulfilment the well-nigh two thousand years which have intervened between the uttering of these words and their then distant accomplishment.

The words "with speed" and "is near" were not written from the standpoint of A.D. 96, but from the standpoint from which the visions were seen, that is, *The Day of the Lord*. Time will then be shortened for the elect's sake, the final seven years of Daniel 9 will quickly run their course, and the Lord will rend the heavens and come down. The reference to such passages as 2 Peter 3:8 is a gloss invented to explain away the apparent difficulty, a difficulty which vanishes by adjusting the view-point to the time when the visions were seen and the words heard. This urgent note is repeated in the messages to the seven assemblies, "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly" (2:16), "Behold, I come quickly" (3:11). The same meaning must be given here as to the words in Revelation 11:14. The book closes with repeated emphasis upon the nearness of the Lord's coming (Rev. 22:7,12,20) and helps us to see that the whole book is written from the future standpoint of the Day of the Lord, and has no historic or prophetic reference to the course of events which have transpired during the interval filled by the dispensation of the Mystery, or of the church in its wider aspect.

The word "signified" in the first verse, as the English word suggests, is derived from the word "sign," or "symbol," and indicates that in the book of the Revelation

we are to have described and explained a prophecy which was made known to John by an angel through the medium of a series of signs or symbols. The word *semaino*, "to signify" (from *semeion*, "a sign"), occurs only six times in the New Testament. John 12:33, 18:32, and 21:19 have reference to symbolic words. In Acts 11:28 Agabus signified by the Spirit that there should be a dearth. How he did it we are not told, but the manner in which he prophesied the bondage of Paul in Acts 21:11 by a sign may suggest his method in Acts eleven. The only other reference is Acts 25:27.

The introduction of the angel in the opening verse is important. This angel does not leave the Apostle until the last chapter is reached. The first six chapters of Zechariah afford a striking parallel. Angels figure largely in Israel's history. They are found with Abraham (Heb. 13:2), they were connected with the giving of the law (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19). They are prominent in the Gospels and the Acts. They figure prominently in the Second Coming of the Lord (Matt. 16:27; 24:31; 1 Thess 4:16, and 2 Thess. 1:7), and the Epistle to the Hebrews contains twelve references to them. The Revelation contains more than seventy references to angels, linking the book with Israel and the earthly kingdom, and severing it from the church which is the Body by the fact that in the Prison Epistles angels are only mentioned once, and that by way of contrast (Col. 2:18). Let the reader open any concordance and observe the continuous angelic ministry of the Revelation. There is the angel sent to John, there are angels who have control of the vials, the seals, the plagues, the trumpets, the woes, the waters, the winds, *and the seven assemblies*. We emphasise the last clause because of the unwarranted license taken with Scripture, which makes these seven angels (so prominent elsewhere in the Revelation as real angels in the true sense) into bishops, deacons, synagogue overseers, and the like. The archangel Michael is the prince that standeth for Israel (Dan. 10:21; 12:1), and it would seem that he delegates these seven angels to watch over the people of the Lord during their time of fierce trial.

Of those who deny or ridicule the idea of angelic ministry we would say that they only need their eyes opened (see 2 Kings 6:16 and 17). Hebrews 1:14 declares that they are

ministering spirits, and such they appear throughout the Revelation.

The description of the message as testified by John is of importance. It is threefold, (1) The Word of God, (2) The testimony of Jesus, and (3) All things that he saw; but these three are not divided, they are one. What John *saw* in the vision *was* the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. What is this testimony? How shall we decide its meaning? The usage of these words in the book itself will help us. There are seven references to the testimony of Jesus, four of them being linked to the other description, "the Word of God".

- A 1:2. John testifies. The angel his instructor
- B 1:9. John in Patmos for the testimony
- C 6:9. "Souls". Martyrs promised judgment and told to wait
- D 12:17. The remnant who keep this testimony
- A 19:10. The angel linked with John
- B 19:10. The prophecy (*cf.* verse 11 "and I saw heaven opened")
- C 20:4. "Souls". Martyrs and their judgment awarded.

Whatever our conception of this testimony may be, one thing is clear; it is that to which the faithful remnant cling, it is the "word of My patience" spoken of by the Lord to the overcomer, and it is the theme and essence of the spirit of prophecy which fills the book. This consideration leads us to one of the most important points in the interpretation of the book of the Revelation. It is *not* addressed to the world at large, but it is addressed principally to those who are exhorted to "overcome". For their encouragement the seven letters to the assemblies are addressed, for their strength the whole course of events is foreshadowed. Against them the whole force of the dragon, the false christ, and the false prophet is directed. They are the ones who are called and kept. They are the ones who seal their testimony with their blood, they are the ones who have their blessed part in the first resurrection, they are the ones who have found access to the new Jerusalem. These are therefore addressed in the last verse of the introduction (1:3). The blessing promised is echoed in

chapter twenty-two. There in verses eighteen and nineteen threatening takes the place of blessing, which includes the adding of the plagues written in the book, and the taking away of their part out of the tree of life, the holy city, and the things written in the book, followed by the words, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly," just as verse three of chapter one ends with the words, "for the time is at hand".

The rationalistic professor who adds or takes away from the words of this prophecy, though he will be dealt with in the judgment unless forgiven here, is not visited by the plagues which are described in this book. Once again the passage becomes luminous in the light of the fact that it is addressed to a yet future remnant exhorted to overcome in the yet future Day of the Lord. To such primarily the blessing is addressed in chapter 1:3. To such the promises and threatenings to the seven churches are addressed. We append the structural outline of this introduction in order that these studies may be as helpful as possible.

The Introduction (Rev. 1:1-4)

- A1 (a) The revelation of Jesus Christ } Twofold definition
- (b) Which God gave to Him }
- B1 (c) The "things" shown
- (d) Which shortly come to pass (*en tachei*)
- C1 (e) Signified by the angel
- (f) Testified by John
- A2 (a) The Word of God (*logos*) } Twofold definition
- (b) The testimony of Jesus }
- B2 (c) The "things" seen
- C2 (e) The reader (like the angel)
- (f) The hearers (like John)
- A3 (a) The words (*logos*) } Twofold definition
- (b) The prophecy }
- B3 (c) The "things" kept
- (d) The time at hand (*engus*)
- C3 (e) John (like the reader and the angel)
- (f) The seven churches (like the hearers and John).

Passing from the deeply interesting introduction of verses 1-4, we commence the book proper in the fourth verse.

We find no warrant for making the prophetic section of the book commence at chapter four. One would imagine

that the words of verse two of chapter four, "I was in spirit," occur here for the first time by the way this passage is treated by many commentators. These words "in spirit" occur for the first time in the Revelation in chapter 1:10, "I was in the spirit in the Lord's day". Let us first of all, however, consider the scope of the chapter before us. It is evident that chapter two commences a new section, so that the chapter division here is a true one. We do not feel satisfied with any structure of this opening chapter that we have yet seen, and although realising the imperfection of the following suggestion, we think that by adhering to the terms of the Scriptures themselves, rather than by inventing headings, we approach nearer to the true arrangement.

Revelation 1:4-20

- A 4. The seven assemblies and seven spirits
- B (a) 5—. Christ the first begotten from the dead
- (b) — 5, 6. Result of that death. Redemption
- C (c) 7. His coming. Effect on tribes when they see Him
- (d) 8. Title. Alpha and Omega. I AM
- D 9, 10. John in Lord's day for testimony
- E 11. Seven assemblies particularised
- D 12-17—. Son of man in glory testifying
- C (c) —17 —. His glory. Effect upon John when he saw Him
- (d) —17. Title. First and Last. I AM
- B (a) 18—. Christ. I am He that liveth and was dead
- (b) —18. Result of that death. Power
- A 20. The seven assemblies and seven angels.

It will be observed that a fair balance of thought is indicated by the above arrangement, and one or two important aids to interpretation are educed. Let us consider verse four.

John to the seven assemblies which are in Asia. — First we must spare a moment to look at the word "assembly," translated "church" in the Authorized Version. We have no objection to the word church; it is only because so many have limited the meaning of it that we prefer the wider and more open word "assembly". The word *ekklesia* is composed of two words, *ek*, meaning "out of," and *kalein*, "to call, or summon". The Septuagint uses the word *ekklesia* to translate the Hebrew word *qahal*, "to call

together, or assemble," seventy times. *Qahal* is variously rendered "congregation," "assembly," "company," and "multitude". The first occurrence of *qahal* is important. Genesis 28:3,4 records the ratification of the Abrahamic covenant with Jacob. Let us observe its setting:

- (1) "EL SHADDAI bless thee (cf. Gen 17:1), and
- (2) "Make thee fruitful, and
- (3) "Multiply thee,
- (4) "That thou mayest be a multitude (margin, assembly) of people, and
- (5) "Give the blessing of Abraham to thee, and
- (6) "To thy seed with thee,
- (7) "That thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave to Abraham."

Here it will be noticed that the "assembly," or "church," is the central member of this sevenfold promise. It will be further seen that the Abrahamic covenant is *the* only covenant in view; Jacob's seed are the heirs together with Jacob and his forefathers, and the inheritance of the *land of Israel* is the final clause of this wonderful promise. It will be remembered that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob NEVER INHERITED THE LAND, although God had made the promise unconditionally. Scripture is not silent upon this fact. It calls attention rather to this evident truth. Stephen says concerning Abraham, "He removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell, and He gave him NONE inheritance in it, NO, NOT SO MUCH as to set his foot on". Hebrews 11:13 says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off". One word, and one word only, will constitute an answer that shall meet all requirements, and that word is *resurrection*. Apart from resurrection, practically no promise of Scripture can be fulfilled.

This is emphasised by the context of the first New Testament occurrence of the word *ekklesia*, Matthew 16:18, "On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it". This "church" is not to be confounded with the teaching revealed later through the Apostle Paul. This church has direct connection with the kingdom of the heavens, and with Peter's ministry. Peter's ministry in the Acts, particularly as laid down in the second and third chapters of Acts, and its references to the

Day of the Lord, is linked to the book of the Revelation. The Lord Who spoke of building His church in Matthew 16 is seen in Revelation 1 with the evidences of His power. He told Peter that the *gates* of hades should not prevail against it. Here in Revelation 1 we see Him victor over death, and possessing the *keys* of death and hades.

There is no warrant for the idea that the church as indicated in the Prison Epistles, or the church in its wider aspect known as Christendom, is in view here. The seven assemblies are constituted of believers who shall be found on the earth in the last days, to whom this book of the Revelation is particularly addressed. The days will be dark; persecution, temptation, and spiritual wickedness will be rife, and the words of exhortation to overcome, and the promises and warnings of the seven letters to the churches, will be needed as never before.

These seven assemblies are in Asia. Asia in Scripture does not refer to the vast continent known by that name to-day, but to a portion of that part spoken of as Asia Minor. Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and the rest have been spiritualised into many mystic meanings, but we do not remember reading the mystic symbolism of *Asia*, nor yet of *Patmos*. When Peter addressed his epistle to the sojourners of the dispersion, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, he meant those actual districts to be understood, and not some mythical or fanciful meaning that might be extorted from them. It will be seen from this reference that Asia is only a small place. Ephesus was its principal city, and consequently to Ephesus the first epistle is addressed. The order in which the assemblies are named is the order in which a messenger would visit them. A glance at the map will show that from Ephesus the road runs north to Smyrna, the second assembly mentioned, then on still further north to the third church Pergamos, then it turns south-east to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. The order is as fixed as though they were stations on a railway. The developments which are being made in Mesopotamia will cause the province of Asia to become of great importance, for it is on the line of development, and just a little north of Pergamos in Bithynia that the railroad which joins the East with the West commences.

The prophecies of the Revelation, and indeed of the Old Testament prophets, cluster around Jerusalem and Babylon, and in the closing days immediately preceding the revelation of the Lord the region round about these cities will be the arena of the most awful activities. Indications are not wanting at this moment that this region will be the scene of international contention. The Lord knows that in those days there will be little gatherings of faithful ones under sore pressure who will need the words of this book. To these, primarily, the book of Revelation is addressed. The overcomers are before the mind from first to last. The various subjects revealed in the book are all concerning them. Every epistle in chapters two and three is urgent in its word, "to him that overcometh" (*ho nikon*). Chapters four and five bring before us THE true overcomer (*nikao* 5:5). Chapter 6:1,2 introduces a view of the false christ, "conquering and to conquer" (*nikon kai hina nikesei*), and so on through the book. The overcomers are seen arrayed in white robes; they overcome because of the blood of the Lamb, and finally we see them, according to the promise to the church of Laodicea, sitting upon the throne (20:4), inheriting the all things of (21:7), and having a right to the tree of life (22:14). Just as the nations and their doings are recorded in the Old Testament, according as they figure in Israel's history, so the beast, the false prophet, the plagues, the persecutions, the conflicts in heaven and earth, are all described and explained in their relation to the remnant of faithful ones, and written for their encouragement and guidance.

Of course, we too can learn much for our blessing. Others also beside these seven churches will receive the blessing and need the exhortation of these epistles, and these seven churches, literal and actual as they are, in their turn do become in this symbolical book *representations of the people of God on the earth at the time*. This is quite in harmony with the trend of the book, and is not to be confused with the other idea of making the seven churches typify seven phases of Christendom.

Asia is mentioned some fifteen times in the Acts, and was the scene of much spiritual activity. Peter, as we have seen, addressed the dispersion in Asia, and to two cities, Ephesus and Colosse, the Apostle Paul addressed epistles

from his prison at Rome. It is no wonder then that seven churches in Asia should be addressed as representative assemblies during the period immediately before the Day of the Lord. Events in the near East may demonstrate still more clearly how prominent this corner of the earth is yet to be. When we reach verses ten and eleven, we shall find that these seven churches are in evidence in the future scene of the prophecy, and that the *primary* interpretation must have these future assemblies in mind.

We will not occupy time with the discussion regarding the historic fact that no church was known at Thyatira during the first few centuries, nor enter into the many conflicting interpretations which have spiritualised these churches away into the history of Christendom.

The Book of the Revelation, addressed to the seven churches in Asia (and through them to all who are in a similar position), affords many points of contrast with the message addressed to the seven churches by Paul. One such contrast is immediately before us. To the seven assemblies John sends salutation and wishes of grace and peace, as do Peter and Paul to the churches addressed by them, but the titles given to the Lord in connection with the greetings are of a different character, and should be noted. Paul's invariable salutation in his epistles to the churches was, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ", see Romans to 2 Thessalonians. The salutation before us is:

"Grace to you and peace, from the One who is, and who was, and the coming One and from the seven Spirits which are before the throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth".

Before proceeding with the examination of the titles included in this salutation, let us observe the general arrangement of the passage:

Revelation 1:4-6

A (a) Grace } To you
 (b) Peace }

B1 "From"	(c) One who is
	(d) Was
	(e) Coming
B2 "From"	(f) Seven Spirits
	(g) Before the throne
B3 "From"	(h) Jesus Christ
	(i) Faithful Witness (ref. to death)
	(j) Firstborn from the dead (ref. to resurrection)
	(h) Who loveth us
	(i) And loosed us from our sins by His own blood (ref. to death)
	(j) And made us a kingdom of priests (in resurrection)

A (a) Glory } To Him.
 (b) Might }

One of the most striking and deeply suggestive differences observable in the titles of the epistles of Paul, and in these epistles to the seven churches in Asia, is the use of that of *Father*. With Paul it is often "Our Father"; with John in the Apocalypse it is NEVER "Our Father".

The references to the Father in the Revelation are as follows:

- "Made us a kingdom of priests unto God and HIS Father" (1:6).
- "Even as I received of MY Father" (2:27).
- "I will confess his name before MY Father" (3:5).
- "Even as I also ... am set down with MY Farher" (3:21).
- "Having His name and the name of HIS Father" (14:1).

These occurrences, taken together, not only emphasise the different relationships maintained in the Revelation from that of the Church Epistles, but contain a complete line of truth which, while we cannot digress so far as to pursue it for the moment, yet anticipates our future findings by indicating the trend of the teaching as follows:

The teaching linked with the "Father" in Revelation

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| A 1:6. A kingdom of priests unro God | "His" |
| B 2:27. Rule. "Even as I" | "My" |
| C 3:5. Confession | "My" |
| B 3:21. Throne. "Even as I" | "My" |
| A 14:1. "Firstfruits unto God". | "His" |

It will be seen how prominent the throne and the earthly kingdom are in these passages.

Ho on kai ho en kai ho erchomenos.—At first sight there appears to be something wrong with the grammar of this passage. The preposition *apo* (“from Him which is” etc.) governs what is called the genitive case, which is something like our possessive. This rule is observed in the clause, “from the seven spirits” and “from Jesus Christ”. In the passage before us, however, the title is in the nominative case. Some manuscripts had inserted the genitive *tou* after *apo* (“from”), which makes it read, “From Him, the One who is,” etc. While there does not seem sufficient authority for this insertion, that evidently is the meaning.

Possibly the reason why no attempt is made to ease over the departure from ordinary grammatical rules is because the Holy Spirit would have us see in this title the Old Testament name *Jehovah*, which in the Hebrew remains unchanged by any grammatical necessities. The Hebrew name *Jehovah* is the title of God as viewed in covenant with His people, and from the call of Abraham, His people Israel. Two passages in the Old Testament will help us to see the difference between God as such, and God in the relationship of *Jehovah*. First in the case of Noah and the animals:

“And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God (Elohim) had commanded him: and the LORD (*Jehovah*) shut him in” (Gen. 7:16).

Secondly, in the case of Jehoshaphat and the Syrians:

“Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD (*Jehovah*) helped him; and God (Elohim) moved them to depart from him” (2 Chron. 18:31).

In Genesis 21:33 Abraham “called upon the name of *Jehovah*, the everlasting God,” or the God of the age. If the reader will turn up the occurrences of *olam* (translated “for ever” and “everlasting” in Genesis) he will see that the conception of eternity is beside the mark (Gen. 9:16; 13:15; 17:8, 13, 19; 21:33; 48:4 and 49:26). The first reference is to the covenant made between God and every living creature on the earth. The last has reference to the superior blessing given by Jacob to Joseph. The others refer to the covenant

made by God relative to the land of Canaan, and the covenant of circumcision. Every reference is limited to the earth, and to purposes and promises pertaining to the earth. Jehovah is the title of God in covenant, the *God of the age*, against whom Satan as the *god of this age* is in direct opposition.

The name Jehovah is used in combination with ten other words, forming titles which are expressive primarily of his peculiar relationship with Israel:

JEHOVAH-JIREH = The Lord will provide (Gen. 22:14). The provision of redemption.

JEHOVAH-ROPHKA = The Lord that healeth thee (Exod. 15:26). The application of redemption.

JEHOVAH-NISSI = The Lord my banner (Exod. 17:15). Warfare.

JEHOVAH-MEKADDISHKEM = The Lord that doth sanctify you (Exod. 31:13). Worship.

JEHOVAH-SHALOM = The Lord (send) peace (Judges 6:24). Overthrow of Baal.

JEHOVAH-ZEBAOTH = The Lord of Hosts (1 Sam. 1:3). Continually used by Prophets of restoration, e.g., Zechariah.

JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU = The Lord our righteousness (Jer. 23:6; 33:16). Under the new covenant.

JEHOVAH-ELYON = The Lord most High (Psa. 7:17; 47:2; 97:9). Above mere nations and gods.

JEHOVAH-ROHI = The Lord my Shepherd (Psa. 23:1). Israel are the sheep of His pasture.

JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH = The Lord is there (Ezek. 48:35). The ultimate blessing of Jerusalem.

All the promises and purposes covered by these many variations or appendages to the name of the covenant-keeping God of the age find their complete fulfilment in the Revelation. The title "Who is, was, and is coming" may be looked upon as the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew Jehovah. The Targum of Jonathan, on Deuteronomy 32:39, reads, "*Ego ille qui est et qui fuit et qui erit... Et ipse fuit, et ipse est, et ipse erit*". This title, in varied order of its parts, occurs four times in the Revelation.

In 1:4,8, "Who is, and was, and is coming". The hope of His people.

In 4:8, "Was, and is, and is coming". The hope of creation.

In 11:17, "Who art, and wast". The kingdom on earth set up.

The words "is to come" are omitted from the third reference by the Revised Version and all critical editions. The promise of the coming is fulfilled in Revelation 11, by the taking of the great power and reigning of the Lord. There is more than a superficial reference back to Exodus 3:14,15:

"And God said,... I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you... Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My Name unto the age, and this is My memorial unto all generations".

This title, which resembles one part of the full title Jehovah, is revealed at the commencement of the deliverance from Egypt. This was the first covenant. Here was redemption by blood, and the overthrow of Pharaoh accompanied by many awful plagues and miraculous preservation. Antichrist and the False Prophet take the place of Pharaoh and his magicians, the two witnesses fill the office of Moses and Aaron, the blood of Christ our Passover is the blood of the New Covenant, which New Covenant both Jeremiah 31:31-40 and Matthew 26:28 link with the Passover. What the deliverance of Israel from Egypt was in type, the deliverance under the New Covenant in the Revelation will be in actuality. The fearful judgments of Exodus foreshadowed the great and dreadful Day of the Lord (*cf.* Rev. 1:10 and exposition page 48), which day is linked with the purpose and view-point of the whole of this prophecy.

Sufficient we feel has been said to show how very different is the relationship indicated by the titles of the passage under notice to those which describe the relationship of the Lord with the Body of Christ.

Passing from the "seven churches" we pause to consider the "seven spirits". Much has been written on the meaning of these seven spirits. Some believe that they represent God Himself, Who is perfect Spirit; some believe that they represent the Holy Spirit, and at first sight the position which they occupy certainly justifies a careful consideration of the Word before we place created beings in the sphere of the divine benediction. The sevenfold spiritual endowment of Isaiah 11:2 has been brought

forward to show that the Holy Spirit is intended. It is worthy of remark that in all the salutations and benedictions written by the Apostle Paul, the Holy Spirit is only included once (2 Cor.13:14). If we will turn to the structure, page 13, we shall be struck with the way in which the first and last members help one another in the matter of interpretation. We put them together:

A 1:4 The seven assemblies and seven *spirits*

A 1:20 The seven assemblies and seven *angels*.

This is at least a suggestive variation, and puts forward the present interpretation, that these seven spirits are the seven angels. First notice *where* they are. "The seven spirits which are *before* His throne". These are mentioned again in Revelation 4:5, "There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God". In Revelation 8:2 we read, "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God". The use of the article, "THE SEVEN angels," implies that they are either well known or have been mentioned before.

Hebrews 1:14 is a clear indication that angels are called "spirits," and the "seven lamps" of Revelation 4:5 seem to have some connection with the description given of the living creatures of Ezekiel 1:13, "their appearance was like the appearance of lamps". In Revelation 1 the structure brings together the seven spirits, the seven stars, and the seven angels. In the first verse of chapter three spirits and stars are brought together:

"These things saith He that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars".

Further, in Revelation 5:6 we read:

"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth".

The reader will remember that we urged a careful reading of the Minor Prophets as a preparation for the imagery of the Revelation. This verse is a case in point. To those who have a good knowledge of the prophecy of Zechariah this passage will speak very plainly:

“For behold the stone which I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone (that is; fixed upon, see Deut. 11:12, ‘the land,’ 1 Kings 9:3, ‘the House’) shall be seven eyes” (Zech. 3:9).

In Zechariah 4:2 we read of “the seven lamps,” and in 4:10:

“They shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, these seven (lamps which thou sawest, 4:2), these are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth”.

While the seven eyes which are the seven spirits of the Lord run to and fro in the earth, other messengers which figure in the Revelation occur in Zechariah, and are said to “walk to and fro in the earth”. There are the chariots and horsemen of 1:8-11 and 6:1-7. These charioteers are said to be “the four spirits of the heavens”. Thus we have seven spirits and four spirits. In Revelation 6 we read of these chariots, and in 7:1 we read of the four angels standing on the four corners of the earth. The seven are said to *run*, and the four are said to *walk* to and fro in the earth. The first chapter of Ezekiel describes the wonderful living creatures which he saw, afterwards defined as the cherubim, which chapter should be read by the student. Angelic ministry is very prominent in the record of God’s dealings with Israel:

“The angel which redeemed me from all evil bless the lads” (Gen.48:16).

“Behold, I send an angel before thee” (Exod. 23:20, also 32:34 and 33:2).

“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him” (Dan. 3:28).

“My God hath sent His angel and hath shut the lions’ mouths” (Dan. 6:22).

“The angel of His presence saved them” (Isa. 63:9).

“The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors” (Acts 5:19).

“There stood by me this night the angel of God” (Acts 27:23).

Scripture testifies to the great number of angels that there are waiting to do the Lord’s bidding:

“The chariots of the Lord are twice ten thousand thousand, even thousands upon thousands” (Psa. 68:17).

“The heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels” (Heb. 12:22).

“Behold the Lord came with His holy ones” (Jude 14 R.V.).

"I heard the voice of many angels ... the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Rev. 5:11).

"Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him" (Dan 7:10).

At the giving of the law angels had an active part:

"The word spoken by angels" (Heb. 2:2).

"Who hath received the law by the disposition of angels" (Acts 7:53).

"The law ... was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19).

Angels are prominent in the second coming of Christ (see Matt. 24:30,31; 13:39-41; 1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:7). That angels are connected with the nations seems to be made known to us in the book of Daniel. In Daniel 10:5-13,20,21, under the title of princes, we have, if we are not mistaken, angelic beings over the affairs of the nations. The princes of Persia and of Greece are unnamed, but by with-standing Michael seem to imply that they are the angels of Satan, who, watching over his interests in the development of the Gentile power under the successive monarchies of Babylon, Persia and Greece, finally assumes the kingdoms and the glory of this world as shown in Luke 4. Daniel 12:1 speaks of Michael as "the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people".

The four winds (Rev. 7:1,2), fire (14:10), waters (16:5), and the sun (19:17) are at different times under their power. An angel is used to reveal the word of the Lord to Zechariah (chaps. 1-6) in much the same manner that the angel "signifies" to John the Apocalypse. The word "angel" occurs in the *Revelation* over 70 times, in *Hebrews* 13 times, and in the four *Gospels* and the *Acts* over 70 times, in *Peter's Epistles* 4 times, in *Paul's Epistles*, apart from *Hebrews*, 14 times, of which number one occurrence only is found in the *Prison Epistles*, and that one a negative statement (Col. 2:18). These facts alone will help us to see the close connection which the *Revelation* and its angelic ministry has with God's earthly kingdom purposes.

In 1 Timothy 5:21 Paul says, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels". This is closely parallel with Revelation 1:4,5. While we would not say that the seven spirits are the angels of the seven

churches, Revelation 1:20 and 3:1 help us to see some connection between them. The teaching of Scripture as to the ministry of angels will prevent us from taking the seven references to the angels of the churches to mean some office in the church or synagogue. Angel means angel in its ordinary sense throughout this book. Angelic ministry follows Israel from the nation's beginning up to the nation's end (for a time) at the close of the Acts. Angelic ministry, like supernatural gifts, ceases with the national existence of Israel, but revives when the time for Israel's national restoration approaches. Our limited knowledge prevents us from saying that the seven spirits before the throne, the seven angels of the churches, of the trumpets, of the vials, and the elect angels are all the same, but the contemplation of the picture of the mighty spiritual myriads, ever doing the Lord's service, as revealed in the Scriptures, should cause us to glorify Him Who is raised far above all principality and power, angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto Him.

In our next chapter we shall endeavour to draw the reader's attention to some of the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the verses following.

CHAPTER 3

The Glory and Dominion

Revelation 1:5,6

We pass from the seven spirits which are before the throne to the contemplation of the person and titles of the Lord Jesus Christ. The best manuscripts omit the title *Christ* in several of the passages where the Authorized Version reads *Jesus Christ*, and the evidence seems sufficient to prove that in verse five of the first chapter we meet with the title for the last time, unless we include the last verse of chapter 22. Omitting this last verse, for it does not really come under this heading, the title *Jesus Christ* occurs but thrice, that is, Chapter 1:1,2 and 5. The exclusively Pauline title *Christ Jesus* never occurs in the Revelation (Revised Text).

The first title that follows is, "The faithful witness". The order of the words in the original gives the emphasis to the word faithful, "The witness, *the faithful one*". In Revelation 2:13 the Authorized Version translates the same words, "My faithful martyr". This is corrected in the Revised Version, but it is well to remember that true witnessing carries with it incipient martyrdom. Every witness may not necessarily die a martyr's death, but if faithful to his trust he will be willing thus to die rather than surrender truth. Such a witness was the Lord Jesus Christ while on earth. Such was He when from heaven He spoke to John. The faithfulness of this testimony is emphasised in the Revelation. In 3:14 the Lord is spoken of as "The faithful and true witness". In 19:11 He is called "Faithful and True," while in 21:5 and 22:6, faithfulness and truth are predicted of the words and sayings of this book. When the Lord stood before Pilate, He linked His kingship with His testimony to truth:

"Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37).

The next title, "The first begotten of the dead," calls our

praiseful attention to another of His glories. The word translated *first begotten* occurs nine times in the New Testament. One reference (Heb. 11:28) speaks of the Egyptians, leaving eight, the number of resurrection, for those that speak of Christ and His people. The word is used of Christ in connection with three different periods:

With reference to CREATION (Col. 1:15).

With reference to HIS BIRTH at Bethlehem (Matt. 1:25; Luke 2:7).

With reference to HIS RESURRECTION (Col. 1:18; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 1:5).

It is also used in Romans 8:29, where His pre-eminence is the thought more than birth or resurrection. A reference to Colossians 1:15-18 will show that this title carries with it power and authority. Hebrews 1:6 shows that authority to be divine, "When He again bringeth in the first-begotten into the world He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him". We often overlook the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself could not finally become king to Israel apart from resurrection. Psalm 2, and its New Testament quotations, apart from many other Scriptures which testify of the glories that were to follow the sufferings of the Lord, will prove this. As the risen One He claimed all power in heaven and in earth. In the Revelation we see Him putting forth that mighty power which is not retracted until the new heavens and the new earth need that rule no longer.

The next title, "The Prince of the kings of the earth," leads us to Psalm 89. There we find the three titles of Revelation 1:5 together:

"I will also make Him My FIRSTBORN, higher than the KINGS OF THE EARTH ... His throne ... shall be established ... as a FAITHFUL WITNESS in heaven" (verses 27, 36 and 37).

Psalm 89 and the book of the Revelation have truth in common. The former speaks of the covenant made with David with respect to his throne and his Seed. It is to David in the first sense that the above quotations apply. "I have found David my servant". Concerning this one we read, "Thou has profaned his crown, casting it to the ground," and again, "and cast his throne down to the ground" (verses 39 and 44). David's hopes were in his greater Son. Acts 2:25-36 declares that David understood that the promises concerning "the fruit of his loins"

necessitated resurrection, "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ". "The last words of David" (2 Sam. 23:1-7) speak of the righteous rule of his greater Son. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God". David knew that he, personally, had not fulfilled the requirements of the ideal ruler, but he knew that God's covenant made it certain that One, the Son of David, was going to fulfil them. Revelation 1:5 presents us with One who should rule and reign in righteousness. One of the prophecies He will fulfil is, "His throne shall be ... as a *faithful witness* in the heavens". Three times is David mentioned in the Revelation, each time with reference to Christ. In Revelation 3:7 Christ is seen as the true Eliakim (God shall cause him to rise), the One who bears the key of David upon His shoulder, Who shall be for a "glorious throne to his father's house" (Isa 22:15-25). In 5:5 He is seen as "the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David" prevailing to open the seven-sealed book. In 22:16 He is once again presented as the "Root and the Offspring of David". The kings of the earth over whom the Lord is Prince figure repeatedly in prophecy (*cf.* Psa. 2:2; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Rev. 6:15; 17:2,18; 18:3,9; 19:19; 21:24).

From these passages it will be seen that some of the kings of the earth are among the enemies of the Lord, while others rejoice with His people in His glory. In Revelation 1:5 the Lord is spoken of as *Prince* of the kings of the earth. In 19:16 He is seen as King of kings. Isaiah speaks of Him as the "Prince of peace". Daniel calls Him the "Prince of princes". In the Acts He is spoken of as the "Prince of life," and as "a Prince and a Saviour," which is in strong contrast to the "prince of this world". One of the reasons why this title comes in Revelation I will be found in Hosea 3:4, "The children of Israel shall abide many days *without a king and without a prince*". The days of their long rejection draw to a close, and the title given to the Lord indicates that the nation of Israel is again to come into relationship with God. The word prince (*archon*) is linked with the title, "The Beginning" (*arche*, Col. 1:18), and indicates that the Person thus titled is *First, pre-eminent*. The word is also translated *Ruler*. How grateful we should be to know that the kings of the earth are to have a Ruler. How the whole world is crying out for one. So great will be the felt need of a Ruler

that the kings of the earth will hail the advent of the Anti-Christ with approbation. These words, true in 1914, are terribly, frightfully true to-day. Dark apostasy lies between our day and the righteous reign of the Prince of peace, but we rejoice in the testimony of the Revelation that a day is coming when He shall take unto Him His great power and reign. The Lord be praised for the promise of the Day Star. May we, too, be found "looking for a Saviour".

The threefold titles of the Lord Jesus — the Faithful Witness, the First-born of the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth — are followed by a threefold ascription. He is said to be one who *loves*, who *loosed* from sins, and who *made* them a kingdom of priests.

TO HIM THAT LOVETH US. — Of all the manifestations of the attributes of God as revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ, love is singled out for first mention. The first words recorded as coming from the heart of redeemed man in this book direct us to the fountain head. Our Authorized Version tells us He *loved*, but the Revised Version, following all the critical Greek texts, tells us He *loveth*.

The love of God in Christ lies at the foundation of His mighty purpose. How prominent is the love of God to Israel. In the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before he died we read, "Yea, He *loved* the people". In Deut. 7:7,8 we read, speaking of Israel:

"The Lord did not set His *love* upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people ... but because the Lord *loved* you".

The prophet Hosea speaks of the same period:

"When Israel was a child, then I *loved* him ... I drew them ... with bands of *love*" (Hos. 11:1-4).

In Jeremiah 31:3 we read:

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have *loved* thee with an eonian (Heb. *olam*) love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee".

The words "of old" (*me-rachog*) have reference rather to distance than time, and might be rendered "from afar" (see *Revised Version margin*). To Jeremiah the Lord appeared "from afar". To the prophet's eyes appeared the long looked-for day when "He that scattered Israel, will gather

him,” when the Lord makes a new covenant with the house of Israel (*see the whole chapter*). Jeremiah looked down the ages, and his eye prophetically looked upon Revelation 1:5, and read the words, “Him Who LOVETH us”. This age-enduring love remains true and unshaken, even though it is sadly true that Israel has forgotten “the love of her espousals” (Jer. 2:2), and “the time of love” (Ezek. 16:8). The recognition of this point shows the tender grief which is behind the first charge of Revelation 2, “Thou hast left thy first love”.

The love of God is pre-eminently linked with redemption. We often use the love of God when we speak of His watchful care, His faithfulness, His guiding hand, His providence, but we speak not fully in harmony with the Word of truth — love is peculiarly sacred to redemption.

“God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16).

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

“The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

These and similar passages will immediately come to mind. So in Revelation 1, “He loveth” is followed by “and loosed us from our sins by His blood”. The Authorized Version reads “washed” (*lousanti*), but the Revised Greek texts read “loosed” (*lusanti*), which reading is supported by the test of numerics. Adding this occurrence, the word “to loose” occurs seven times in the Revelation. Once used of sins, twice of seals (5:2,5), twice of angels (9:14,15), and twice of Satan (20:3,7).

To realise the meaning of this term we might look at one or two references outside the book of Revelation, that is:

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might *destroy* the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

“The elements shall *melt* ... all these things shall be *dissolved* ... the heavens being on fire shall be *dissolved*” (2 Peter 3:10-12).

“Having *broken down* the middle wall” (Eph. 2:14).

We must be ready to find the word used in its secondary

as well as its primary meaning, and not imagine that it is necessarily a truth that we must always translate one Greek word by one English word. John 1:27 and 2:19 show how one writer uses the word, first in its primary meaning "loose," secondly in its more figurative meaning "destroy," and a rigid concordant or etymological system would be insufficient. To loose, to melt, to dissolve, to destroy, these are the words that are used to convey something of its meaning. What fulness there is in those triumphant words of praise, "Unto Him Who loveth us and LOOSED us from our sins". Vitally linked with this expression is the word translated *ransom*, "to give His soul a ransom (*lutron*, the loosing price) for many" (Matt. 20:28), or *redemption* in Hebrews 9:12. What a prospect is in store for the redeemed! Sin's claims dissolved, melted, gone.

"Dead to sin" is a somewhat similar though fuller expression. We say fuller for two reasons. "Dead to" involves something more than "loosed out of," and "sin" is deeper than sins. The word *hamartia* ("sin") as used by Matthew (the gospel of the kingdom) always has the plural, or the present manifestation in view, never SIN as it is dealt with in Romans 5. Sins are forgiven, but SIN is reckoned with in other ways. Here in Revelation 1, the redeemed give thanks for being loosed from sins, and that "by His blood". From the first recorded offering in Genesis to the last mention of redemption in Revelation, throughout all dispensations (Patriarchal, Mosaic, Mystery), the blood of Christ is prominently placed with respect to forgiveness and redemption. When theology and creed have said their all, a mystery profound is still unfathomed with respect to the necessity for the shedding of blood. It is for us to accept the truth and ever to set it forth.

The word *blood* occurs nineteen times in the Revelation, but of these only four passages have reference to redemption (1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11). These references are divided into two by the lines of truth they contain. Chapter 1:5, "loosed from sins"; 5:9, "Made a redemption"; 7:14, "they made them white"; 12:11, "they overcame". These two aspects of the efficacy of the blood of Christ are important guides to the special aspect of the book of the Revelation. First it is deliverance from sins, and a redeemed people. Then it is the overcomer in the power

of that redemption, and, as we have before hinted, the overcomer is *the* character of the Book.

The reference to the blood here in Revelation 1:5 takes us back to Matthew 26:28, where the Lord, as Passover, referred to His blood as the blood of the New Covenant shed for many for the remission of sins. Revelation, as we have seen, completes and corresponds with Genesis. It also has many parallels with Exodus. A greater than Pharaoh oppresses Israel here; an overthrow greater than that of the Red Sea is here; mightier magicians than those who withstood Moses work their black arts; greater plagues fall than those of the first Exodus. Again the people are sustained in the wilderness and miraculously fed. The Passover Lamb is no longer offered — the true Passover, the blood of the New Covenant, has been shed (*see* Jer. 31:31,32 for connection between New Covenant and deliverance from Egypt). The first exodus ended in failure; two only, Caleb and Joshua, overcame. The second exodus will be a glorious success. As always, that which is first is not spiritual, but natural. Israel shall yet possess the inheritance given by the covenant to Abraham. This may be the reason that the word “loosed” is used in this verse. The cleansing from sins is a part of redemption, but so also is deliverance. The exodus from Egypt was pre-eminently a deliverance, and not so much a cleansing. After the Red Sea was passed the cleansing aspect came into prominence. The Tabernacle, the Offerings, the divers Washings, the Priests, these all came afterwards. So in Revelation 1:5, the loosing from sins is followed by the making of verse six.

The reader who realises the special interpretation of Revelation need not forget that many precious lessons may be learned by application and analogy. Let us serve, walk, witness and live in the power of the words, “Unto Him that LOVETH us, and LOOSED us from our sins”. “Sin shall not have DOMINION over you”.

Some are redeemed that they may walk the streets of the new Jerusalem, some to people a renewed earth, some to constitute the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. In Revelation 1:5,6 redemption has in view the forming of a kingdom.

“And He made us a kingdom, priests to God and His Father”.

The Authorized Version reads "kings and priests," but the critical Greek Editions read "kingdom, priests". The word "priests" must not be understood as something separate, but as filling out the word kingdom. It is not an ordinary kingdom that is in view; it is a priestly kingdom, or as Peter puts it, "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9). This is the Septuagint rendering of Exodus 19:6, "a kingdom of priests".

In Revelation 5:9,10 we have another ascription of praise which is in many ways parallel:

"Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: because Thou wast slain, and didst make a purchase to God with Thy blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they shall reign upon the earth".

The fulfilment of this is found in Revelation 20:6:

"Blessed and holy who hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no authority; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years".

As we view these three passages of Scripture together, it seems that the priestly kingdom is the millennial kingdom, and that only those who have overcome, and who have had their part in the first resurrection constitute its members. We cannot help but feel that Old Testament prophecies concerning future blessings have been too hastily generalised as millennial. We believe investigation will prove that much that has been considered millennial does not take place till the thousand years are finished, and that a place in the millennial kingdom is largely a matter of being "accounted worthy". This will be considered in its place. If it is established, it will be nothing short of revolutionary in its effect upon the teaching of Scripture relative to the ages to come. To one people only has the promise or the possibility been given of becoming a kingdom and priests, and that is Israel. The various companies of believers that are called churches at different times have their place in the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of the heavens, but that is not being constituted a kingdom as the passage before us states.

It will be well if we turn back to the passage in Exodus 19 which speaks of this royal priesthood, and note the

context. In the third month from the exodus from Egypt the Lord gives a message to Israel:

“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people, though all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation ... And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do”. (Exod. 19:4-6,8).

Here we have a reference to the coming out of Egypt, of a covenant, of a promise and of an undertaking by Israel. Jeremiah 31:31,32 supplies us with the result of this compact. It takes us back to the coming out of Egypt, and shows us that the covenant entered into by Israel was broken by them. By the Old Covenant and creature effort, Israel could not become a kingdom of priests. Only under the New Covenant could this be possible.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, and I rejected them,* saith the Lord”.

The gracious words continue, dealing with their sins and ensuring the permanence of Israel as a nation (verse 36). Though rejected in the past, they shall be “cast off” no more (verse 37). It will be noticed, however, that the highest blessing (“a kingdom of priests”) is not repeated. That which was placed before all Israel under the Old Covenant, is reserved for an elect company under the new. Isaiah 61:6 gives further statements concerning the priestly functions of Israel:

“But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God”.

These words are addressed to “those that mourn” (verses 2 and 3), who “shall be comforted” (Matt. 5:4).

“The nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish” (Isa. 60:12), saith the Lord of Israel in that

* A.V. — “Although I was an husband unto them”. The Hebrew word *ba'al* has two meanings, (1) Lord, (2) To reject. Hebrews 8:9, “And I regarded them not,” settles the matter.

day; "the Redeemer shall come to Sion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob" (Isa. 59:20). This is quoted in Romans 11:26 to prove that "all Israel shall be saved". All Israel are an elect nation (Rom. 11:28), yet within that elect nation there was an election unto higher glory (Rom. 11:7). The rest who were "blinded," mentioned in verse seven, are again mentioned in verse twenty-five. The national position of Israel has no reference to their individual obedience. Their sins shall be taken away (Rom. 11:27), they, though enemies, are beloved for the fathers' sakes, and the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. But though all Israel shall enter into their blessed portion by the mercy of God, an election from the elect nation already anticipate fuller blessings. Israel is now blind and dead in sin. This election have had their eyes opened, have believed, have suffered, have endured, and they will constitute the kingdom of priests, the royal priesthood, the ones who have their part in the first resurrection, who, as priests, reign as kings during the thousand years.

Peter addresses his epistles not to the whole nation, but to this elect company among them.

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:1,2).

Such have been begotten unto a living hope, they have an incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance reserved *in heaven*. Israel, *as a nation*, had no such hope. They shall inherit the earth. This elect company pass through fiery trial which shall issue in honour and glory at the "REVELATION of Jesus Christ ... hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to you at the REVELATION of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:3-13). The hopes of this company centre in the Revelation, the *apocalypse* of Jesus Christ, and take us to chapter one. Of them it is written:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ... which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter 2:9,10).

They thus anticipate Israel's restoration (see Hos. 1:9,10; 2:23, etc.). They, like Abraham and all overcomers, are "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter 2:11; Heb. 11:13). They are exhorted as follows:

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, in order that in the *revelation* of His glory, ye may rejoice exultingly" (1 Peter 4:12,13).

Once again fiery trial, followed by glory at the *revelation*, is the theme. Yet further:

"The God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His *aionian* glory by Christ Jesus, *after that ye have suffered awhile*, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Peter 5:10).

The second epistle continues in the same strain. Chapter 1:11 speaks of an abundant entrance into the *aionian* kingdom. Chapter two vividly depicts the times of the book of the Revelation, and its testing of the elect remnant. Noah, Sodom, fallen angels, and Balaam figure in the story. Chapter three deals with the long deferred coming, and the introduction of the new heavens and new earth. It is of further interest to note that the Apostle addresses believers in Asia Minor — he also addresses them from Babylon, which plays so prominent a part in the Revelation.

To understand the special teaching of the Revelation, we must keep prominently before us that the millennial kingdom is largely one of reward, it is the *aionian* glory and kingdom, entrance into which is by suffering. It particularly deals with an elect company who are consistently spoken of throughout as "the overcomers". Failure to perceive this exclusive character has made the millennial kingdom a kind of dumping ground for all unfulfilled prophecy, leaving the "ages of ages" which follow it a blank prophetically, and has also introduced into the book those who have no part nor lot there at all. Neither Christendom nor the Church are in view. Israel, and particularly the faithful remnant of overcomers, are the chief human interest. Read 1 and 2 Peter again and again — they give clear light on the teaching of *The Apocalypse*.

With the ascription of "glory and dominion" (Rev. 1:6) we reach the first of a series of eight Amens which run through this book.

The glory of redemption is His; He is the "stronger than the strong man armed"; He it is that has the keys of *hades* and of death. The glory also of the kingdom is His.

The first time we read of glory in the New Testament is in Matthew 4:8, where the tempter showed the Saviour the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. We know how futile the temptation was, and here in the first chapter of Revelation we rejoice to see Him acknowledged as the One rightly to receive the glory as a sequel to His redeeming love.

The word translated "dominion" is *kratos*, and means "strength," chapter 5:13 renders it "power," and these are the only occurrences in the Revelation. The word is used in Ephesians 1:19:

"And what the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe, according to the inworking of the *strength* of His might, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him out from dead ones".

Peter links glory and strength together in 1 Peter 4:11, "To Whom be praise and dominion" (glory and strength), and chapter 5:11 also. Colossians 1:11 links glory and strength for our practical walk now in the phrase, "according to His glorious power," literally "the strength of the glory". One thing at least is clear, we have here no empty glory, but a glory resting upon a solid foundation. He who had the strength of death has been vanquished, the glory long usurped is to be his no longer. It will be remembered that in Psalm 8:2 we read, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength". The Septuagint and Matthew 21:16 give "perfected praise". This shows that the word "strength" must be the Figure of Metonymy, where the ascription of praise is called forth by the great strength of the overcomer.

Many of our readers will know that the title, "To the chief musician upon Muth-labben," which stands over Psalm 9 is really the conclusion of Psalm 8. This expression is taken to mean "the death of the champion," indicating in the first place the destruction of Goliath, and

prophetically the overthrow of Antichrist and Satan, “the enemy and the avenger”. A further and fuller light shines on Psalm 8 when we realise that “through death” Christ destroyed him who has the strength of death, and it is quite possible that the “champion” may refer more to Christ Himself than to the antitype, Goliath. This is strengthened by the quotation of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2:9, where it continues “but we see Jesus ... for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour”.

The dual description of “glory and strength” is found in Psalm 29:1, and verse two continues, “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name”. Verse three says, “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth,” and verse 11 concludes with the comforting assurance that He to Whom glory and strength is ascribed “will give strength unto His people”. As we read Psalm 29 and then read in Revelation 1 of the voice that is like the sound of many waters (verse 15) and see the strengthening power of His right hand (verse 17), we realise that the King of Psalm 29 is before us.

Psalm 96 introduces “a new song,” and in verse seven the “kindreds of the people” are called upon to ascribe to the Lord “glory and strength,” and to “say among the heathen nations the Lord reigneth” (verse 10), “for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth” (verse 13). We cannot help thinking of Revelation 1:7, “Behold He cometh with clouds”.

The more we search and examine the Old Testament prophecies, the more we realise the culminating fulness of the words of Revelation 1:6. The glory and strength thus ascribed is His “unto the ages of the ages”.

There are three variations of this usage of “age”. We have in Hebrews 1:8, “Thy throne, O God, is unto the age of the age,” in Ephesians 3:21, “the age of the ages,” and in Revelation 1:6, “the ages of ages”. Just as we have the expression, “King of kings,” “Holy of holies,” “Servant of servants,” “Hebrew of Hebrews,” “Pharisee of Pharisees,” so we have “ages of ages,” not merely an indication of *length* of time, but of superlative excellence. During the ages that are to ensue, commencing as far as we can perceive with the millennial reign, the glory and strength of them will be ascribed unto the Lord. Here we see Him crowned

with glory and honour, highly exalted, and given the Name that is above every name. This enables us to look beyond the conflict of earth to the peace that shall come, with confident expectancy. To this glorious ascription of praise heaven adds its first apocalyptic Amen. The use of this word "Amen" in Revelation is suggestive. We find it used in three connections. It follows:

The ascription of praise to the Lord.
The statement of and prayer for His coming, and
It is the title of the Lord Himself.

Amen

- A 1:6. Glory to Him, etc.
- B 1:7. He cometh. Yea, Amen
- C 3:14. The Amen, the faithful and true Witness
- A (a) 5:14. Four living ones, and twenty-four elders
 - (b) 7:11,12. Angels
 - (a) 19:4. Four living ones and twenty-four elders.
- B 22:20. I come. Yea, Amen.

It will be seen that 5:14; 7:12, and 19:4 suggest an expansion of the first passage (1:6), and a careful study of these verses will throw further light upon the One who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, the throne upon which He sits, and the circumstances under which He reigns.

We with the inspired book add our hearty Amen. To His glory we, too, say, Amen, to His coming again, Amen, and looking to the wonderful and manifold promises of God we say with the Apostle, "In Him is the Yea and in Him the Amen, unto the glory of God" (2 Cor. 1:20).

CHAPTER 4

“The Cloud Comer”

We have reached the first *Amen* of this book, and find that the section bounded by the word deals with the revelation of the Lord Jesus and the manner of its delivery to John (by an angel), the ones to whom John is to send the written record of the visions, and the great theme, the fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham and David in the future regeneration and blessing of Israel as a kingdom of priests. Verse 7, which follows, is in turn bounded by another *Amen*. This is the briefest section of the book, yet how important it is may be gathered not only from its contents, but by its unique position. The words of verse 7 are introduced by “Behold,” a word that occurs some 30 times through the book. “Behold, He cometh with the clouds”. The last occurrence (22:12) deals with the same great topic — the Coming of the Lord.

So often are clouds spoken of in connection with the Coming of the Lord that we can readily believe that when the Apostle says, “Behold, look, He cometh with THE clouds,” he would have us understand that he means that here is the fulfilment of the many passages which declare them to be the accompaniment of the returning Lord. The great passage referred to here is Daniel 7:13,14. It occurs after the “little horn” had spoken “great things,” and the body of the beast was “given to the burning flame” (*cf.* Dan. 7:8-11, 21-25, with Rev. chapters 13 and 19).

“I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven ... His (dominion) shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13,14).

The parallel between this chapter and the book of Revelation is very marked and must be kept much in mind. Matthew 24:30 speaks of the clouds in the same connection, “and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory”. Matthew 26:64 deals with the same theme. “Hereafter shall

ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven". This thought is evidently of great importance, for it finds a place also in Mark and Luke. Acts 1:9 speaks of the ascension of the Lord from the mount of Olives, "and a cloud received Him out of their sight". Verse eleven declares, "He shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen Him go into heaven". 1 Thess. 4:17 tells us that the hope of those who are dispensationally described as the Church at Thessalonica is to be "caught up together in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air". A comparison of the teaching of 1 and 2 Thessalonians with Revelation will show that they refer to the same period. The word cloud (*nephele*) is one of the words that occur seven times in the Apocalypse, and is associated with the Lord's coming, the time of reaping the harvest of the earth, the finishing of the mystery (secret) of God, and the triumph of those who loved not their lives unto the death. (It is interesting to know that among the Jews of early times the Messiah was called "Cloud Comer" and "Son of a cloud"). "And every eye shall see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of Him" (Rev. 1:7).

The statement "every eye" seems to be qualified in this sentence by the words that follow. Matthew 24:30 undoubtedly refers to the same event, and says, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man ... coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory". The "tribes of the land," and the mourning of those who pierced Him, take us back to Zechariah 12:9-14:

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son".

This passage contributes particulars that are essential to the true interpretation of Revelation 1:7.

- (1) The occasion and time of its fulfilment is after the nations have come against Jerusalem. This event is spoken of again in Zechariah 14:12-16. The fearful judgment that falls upon those who have fought against Jerusalem is echoed in Revelation 19:18.

- (2) Those who “look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn,” are the “house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,” more fully particularised into houses and families, “Nathan, Levi, Shimei, etc”. By no legitimate interpretation can these definite particulars be made to mean the church of the New Testament.
- (3) This “look” and this “mourning” result from the “spirit of grace and supplication”. Repentance at last will be given and the Lord “shall send Jesus Christ ... whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since an age” (Acts 3:19-21).

Together with Zechariah 12:9-14 see 13:1, “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness”. Revelation 1:5,6 has already referred to this. Further, Zechariah 14:2-4 must be read:

“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle ... then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations ... and His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem”.

This reference links the passages up still more. The reader is prevented from spiritualising “the mount of Olives” by the topographical statement, “which is before Jerusalem”. This and much more in Zechariah (as indeed in all the so-called minor prophets) throws light upon the time and locality of Revelation 1:7.

Referring again to Matthew 24:29,30, we learn one more item:

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven,” etc.

Revelation 1:7 then takes place not only in direct connection with Jerusalem, but “immediately after the tribulation”. Now there is no possibility of doubt as to when this tribulation takes place. Matthew 24:15-21 says:

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place ... then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since (the) beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be”.

There can be only one such tribulation in history, and therefore to this Revelation 7:14 refers:

“These are they which came out of the tribulation, the great one”.

Revelation 1:7 must therefore take place after Revelation 7:14. Further, this tribulation is directly the result of the setting up of the “abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet”. This is set out in detail in Revelation 13 and the tribulation is connected with refusing to receive the mark of the beast. The unparalleled tribulation of Matthew 24, which is immediately followed by the coming of the Son of man as in Revelation 1:7, is referred to in Daniel 12:1-3:

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, these to eonian life, and those to shame and eonian contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars unto the age and beyond”.

This passage emphasises the “overcomer” as plainly as does the book of the Revelation. The reference to Michael takes the reader on to Revelation 12:7-10:

“And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ... Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ”.

The whole teaching of the Prophets and the Gospels bears one united witness to the fact that Revelation 1:7 is the hope of *Israel*, is to be literally connected with the *Mount of Olives* (as Acts 1:11,12), and *Jerusalem*, that it will immediately follow *the great tribulation*, which takes place when Michael drives Satan to earth and the Antichrist arises in blasphemy. To be a kingdom of priests is *Israel's* destiny. To none other is such a promise made. To fulfil that promise the Lord Jesus as the King Priest returns, and Revelation 1:7 records that coming.

Revelation 1 is as much future as Revelation 19. The traditional interpretation that makes the first three chapters past and present, and the future section to start from chapter four is wrong.

The Apostle concludes this solemn verse with a double confirmation, "Yea, Amen". He uses the same expressions in 22:20:

"Yea, I am coming speedily. Amen! Come Thou, O Lord Jesus".

This is the revelation of the Lord Jesus. Till this takes place earth will be a wilderness to faith, and a fruitful soil for sin. Till this takes place the god of this age will rule as the prince of the authority of the air. While the hope of the One Body is not expressed in any of the passages referred to, yet they, in sympathy with a groaning creation, a down-trodden and blinded Israel, and a doomed Gentile world, also add heartily and prayerfully, "Yea, Amen. Even so, Come, Lord Jesus".

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, Who is, and Who was, and Who is coming, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8 R.V.).

If the reader will refer to the structure given on page 13, he will see that the title *Alpha and Omega* is balanced by the title taken by Christ, "I am the first and the last". Further, the words, "Who is, and Who was, and Who is coming" are echoed in the title "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore". The title, "the Almighty" finds its answer in the claim, "I have the keys of *hades* and of death". This perfect unity and reflection of purpose and attribute has already been before us in verses four and five.

The title *Alpha and Omega* in Revelation 1:8 is not specifically given to Christ, although the fact that it immediately follows verse seven would lead one to think it refers to Him as the coming One. Revelation 22:12-16, however, leaves us in no doubt, and as this chapter structurally corresponds with chapter one, it would seem to settle the matter for us.

"And behold, I come quickly ... I am Alpha and Omega ... I Jesus have sent Mine angel".

The expression *Alpha and Omega* is explained by the words, "beginning and ending, first and last," and we shall

have opportunity of considering this title when we come to verse 17. The title that is new to us is the last one, "The Almighty". The title occurs ten times in the New Testament, nine of the occurrences being in the Revelation. It is a title therefore that has some peculiar connection with the subject of the book. The passages are as follows: Revelation 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7,14; 19:6,15; 21:22, and they deal with the reign and rule of the coming King, judgment, wrath, and blessing as pertain to the purpose of God in Israel and the nations. The one reference outside the book of Revelation is 2 Corinthians 6:18, where the insistent note is separation from uncleanness, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God". The first passage where the Septuagint uses the title is 2 Samuel 5:10, where it is rendered in the Authorized Version by "The Lord God of hosts". The other occurrences in 2 Samuel are 7:8,26,27. Each reference has relation to David, the greatness of his kingdom and the future of his house. This title which occupies so great a place in the Prophets, "The Lord God of hosts" and "the Lord of hosts," seems to be used most in those Prophets that approximate most to the theme of the Revelation. The title comes before us again in James 5:4, "The Lord of Sabaoth," the context urging patience unto the coming of the Lord. John, in Revelation 1 continues in much the same strain:

"I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus, came to be in the island which is called Patmos, because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 1:9).

John calls himself a "brother and a partaker". The use of the word "brother" in the Revelation is by no means indiscriminate, in fact it appears to be confined to one distinct class, namely, those who are the overcomers by faith, and who spoke forth the Word of God. Revelation 1:9 is the only occurrence of the word in the singular, the remaining four occurrences being in the plural. These four references should be noted here, in order that their light may be used in learning the true significance of John's title.

Martyrdom attaches to the first reference, overcoming to the second, the possession of the testimony to the third, and keeping the sayings of the book to the fourth.

- A 6:11. Fellowservants and brethren killed — for the Word of God and the testimony (verse 9)
- B 12:10. Accuser of brethren cast down. Overcome by the word of their testimony (verse 11)
- A 19:10. Fellowservant and brethren that have the testimony of Jesus ... the spirit of prophecy
- B 22:9. Fellowservant and brethren which keep the sayings of this book.

No one reading these passages can doubt but that they are closely connected. What is the common theme? The testimony of Jesus — the spirit of prophecy; in other words, “the sayings of this book” of the Revelation.

Our study of the Scriptures can never be too careful. Nothing is written therein without due regard to all truth. The indiscriminate use of the title “brethren” is a case in point. The fact that the title is used in a restricted sense in Revelation is manifest. It also agrees with one or two other prominent passages. For example, when we read in Matthew 25 concerning the nations and the treatment of the “least of these My brethren” (verse 40), we must not think that the whole of the nation of Israel is necessarily intended. Rather is it to be interpreted, in the light of the Revelation, to refer to that faithful company, who for the “testimony of Jesus” will know what it is to be hungry, and naked, and in prison, and also to “be killed”. These, and not the nation of Israel as a whole, are the “brethren” intended. John also calls himself a “partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and patience”. The Greek of this passage, as indeed the English, presents a little difficulty unless we recognise a figure of speech named Hendiatris, “one by means of three”. Such a figure occurs in Hebrews 10:20, “A new and living way”; similarly, “I am the way, the truth and the life” can read, “I am the true and living way”. The words in Revelation 1:9 mean not three things, but one, and that one defined by two other terms. The one thing is “tribulation,” and it is peculiarly that tribulation which is related to the *earthly kingdom*, and which necessitates much *patience*. “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” was Paul’s testimony as recorded in Acts 14:22. (The sudden departure from narrative to quotation here, for Paul’s own words are quoted, only emphasises the more to us the stress which the Apostle evidently gave to this utterance).

Patience is referred to seven times in the Revelation, and its “perfecting work” is seen as the story of the book unfolds. Two passages call attention to the “patience” of the saints during the tribulation which comes at the time of the *Beast*.

“If any one is for captivity unto captivity he goeth: if any one is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he is killed. *Here is the patience and faith of the saints*” (13:10).

Here (in connection with the mark of the beast, 9-11) *is the patience of the saints* who keep the commandment of God, and the faith of Jesus ... blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth” (14:12,13).

John with all true brethren were sharers in this kingdom tribulation and its “patience”. His next remark links the tribulation with its cause. It is the particular application of the universal truth, “I have given them Thy Word, *and the world hath hated them*” (John 17:14).

John tells us that he “became,” or “found himself” as we should say perhaps, “in the island called Patmos,” a small island half-way between Rome and Jerusalem, situated in the sea of prophecy, “the great sea”. Tradition tells us that John was “banished” to the Isle of Patmos. John tells us in the second verse of the first chapter that he “bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw,” while verse nine tells us that he received this word and testimony, and saw the things written in this book “in the isle called Patmos”. Revelation 20:4 includes “the word of God” among the causes of martyrdom of those who have their part in the first resurrection. Not only so, but “the witness (or testimony, same word) of Jesus” also. This double expression balances the passage in the ninth verse of chapter one, these being the first and last occurrences. In chapter 12:17 the dragon makes war with those who “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus”. Chapter 19:10 has already shown it to be both the mark of the brethren, and the spirit of prophecy. These five passages should be well considered, especially 1:9 with 20:4. As members of the One Body, and those who have believed the truth as given through the ministry of the prisoner of the Lord, we have a tribulation connected therewith, not a tribulation connected with the earthly kingdom, but nevertheless a

real one. We too need much patience, we too may overcome, we too must hold fast the faithful Word. Though our destinies may be different from those who will reign in the millennial kingdom, there are many close parallels so far as our conduct and experiences are concerned. May we be encouraged to overcome, remembering for our encouragement how verse nine reads on from verse eight, where we see the "Almighty" ready to help in time of need.

"The Day of the Lord" (Rev. 1:10); the prophetic period of the Book

"I came to be in spirit in the Day of the Lord, and I heard behind me a loud voice as of a trumpet".

Verse nine tells us that John *came to be* in Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus; verse ten tells us that he *came to be* in spirit in the Day of the Lord, and verse eleven completes the parallel by saying, "What thou seest write in a book". The word and testimony were received by signs ("He sent and signified," verses 1 and 2) in the isle called Patmos, and are vitally connected with the statement "in spirit in the Day of the Lord".

There are four occasions where John tells us that he was "in spirit": namely, Revelation 1:10, he became in spirit in the Day of the Lord; 4:2, he became in spirit, and saw the throne in heaven; 17:3, he is carried away into a desert in spirit to see the woman sitting on the scarlet beast; 21:10, he is carried away in spirit to see the holy city. When John is to be taken to a desert or a mountain he is "carried away in spirit," and when he is transported into time, "the Day of the Lord," or to the future heavenly sphere, he writes, "I became in spirit".

The four references made by John find an echo and an explanation in the statements to a like effect by Ezekiel:

"The spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the Lord's house" (11:1).

"And afterwards the spirit took me up and brought me *in a vision* by the spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the Captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me" (11:24).

"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones" (37:1).

In Ezekiel 40:2 we have a close parallel to Revelation 21:10:

“In the visions of God brought He me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, upon which was as the frame of a city on the south”.

The man with the measuring reed (verse 3), and the command to declare what he saw (verse 4), also find their parallels in the Revelation. This and the seven succeeding chapters are punctuated by the words, “then, and, or afterwards, he brought me”. Ezekiel 43:5 records similar words. Ezekiel was not merely taken in vision from one locality to another, but was taken into the yet future even as was John.

In Ezekiel 8:1-3 the parallel with the first chapter of Revelation is most pronounced.

“And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me. Then I beheld, and lo, a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber. And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem”.

The description of the wondrous being who appeared to Ezekiel is very similar to the description of the Lord Who appeared to John. The vision is a prelude to a revelation of dark apostasy and the retiring glory of God. It is so also in the book of the Revelation.

There is no mystery about the meaning of John when he tells us that he “came to be in the Day of the Lord in spirit”. It cannot possibly mean that he felt in a specially spiritual frame of mind on a Sunday — such a suggestion is too trivial to require refuting. We should, moreover, be thankful that the expression “I became” has been used in verse nine in a sense that is literal. John *became* in Patmos literally and really. He *became* in the Day of the Lord in spirit, and not literally and really. There are a great number of believers who, if they were asked for their Scriptural warrant for calling the first day of the week “the Lord’s day,” would immediately point to Revelation 1:10 as

their authority. Further, many of those who use this title of the Lord's day abstain from using the word *Sun-day* because of its pagan connection (though to be consistent they should follow the Society of Friends and omit the names of days altogether, for Moon-day or Thors-day are equally as bad). It would doubtless come as a shock to such that their term "Lord's day" is equally pagan! The title for the Sun is "Lord". In Hebrew it is Baal. The Syrians call it *Adonis*, from *adonai*, Lord. Pagan Rome called the first day of the week *Dies Dominica*, omitting the word "Sol" because the Sun was pre-eminent. Other days had the planets mentioned by name. There is nothing to choose therefore between *Sun-day* and *Lord's-day* as applied to the first day of the week — both alike are pagan — one masking the paganism by a traditional sanctity.

The book of the Revelation is taken up with something infinitely more vast than days of the *week*. It is solely concerned with the Day of the LORD. To read that John became in spirit *on* the Lord's day (meaning Sunday), tells us practically nothing. To read in the solemn introduction that John became in spirit *in* the Day of the Lord, that day of prophetic import, is to tell us practically everything. Traditional bias is seen even in the rendering of *en* by "on" instead of "in". The Hebrew language does not allow such a construction as "The Lord's Day," it can only be expressed by "The Day of the Lord". The Greek language, however, like the English, permits of both modes of expression, and the one used here is "The Lord's Day," making the word Lord's an adjective. There can be no difference between the thing signified, whichever mode of expression be chosen, it is the same *day*, the difference is one of emphasis. Revelation 1:10 means "the Lord's DAY"; had it been set out as in the Hebrew it would have meant "the LORD'S day," but no other day than this could be meant by either expression.

A parallel expression is found in 1 Corinthians 4:3, where the Authorized Version translates, "man's judgment"; it should read, "man's *day*," the construction being the same as Revelation 1:10. Man's *day* manifestly means man's day of judging, as evidenced by the context. Revelation 1:10 takes us to a future day, when the Lord and not the man shall be the judge. "The Day of the Lord"

in the Old Testament is either *Yom Jehovah*, or *Yom l'Jehovah*, "a day for the Lord". Isaiah 13:6 gives some idea of the Day of the Lord.

"Howl ye (referring to Babylon), for the Day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty".

Verses 9-13 go further and closer to the imagery of the Revelation:

"Behold the Day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger ... for the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine ... in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger".

The prophecy of Joel is entirely taken up with that day. "Alas for the day, for the Day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come" (1:15). Chapters 2:1,2, and 11 show how terrible will be that day; 3:14 links that day with the harvest, and the judgment of the nations. Obadiah 15, 16 speaks of it as a day of retribution for the nations in words that are very similar to Revelation 18:6-8. Zechariah 14:1-11 tells us that in the Day of the Lord the nations will be gathered against Jerusalem, that He will go forth and His feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives, that He shall be King over all the earth, and Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

We have endeavoured to bring to the reader's attention in these pages the great importance of studying the Prophets (all of them, including the "Minor Prophets"). If this is not done, the Revelation must remain a book of unexplained imagery and intention, but to a mind already charged with the purpose, language, and symbols of the Prophets who spoke so much and so often of the Day of the Lord, the Revelation will be the great gathering up of all their threads, the capstone of their united building.

If in Revelation 1 John is taken, in spirit, to the future Day of the Lord to see the visions and to write them in a book, ALL the book that he writes, including chapters 1, 2 and 3, must be future in its final interpretation. There is no part of the prophecy or vision that is not "in the Day of the Lord". That day is the point of time from which all time must be measured. When John says of anything "it is present," or "it shall arise," *he speaks from the standpoint of*

his vision — the Day of the Lord, and not A.D. 96. No vision has been given to John as far as we have gone in our study. All is preparatory and introductory. Immediately, however, the prophetic point of time is settled, the visions begin, for as soon as he “became in spirit in the Day of the Lord” he “heard a great voice, as of a trumpet”. This is a reference to Zephaniah 1:14-16 where “the *voice* of the Day of the Lord” is linked to “a day of the trumpet”. The voice said to John:

“What thou art seeing write in a book, and send it to the seven churches, unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea” (Rev. 1:10).

These places are all found in that part of the earth adjoining the land of Canaan called by us Asia Minor. The reason why this spot of earth and not another is chosen is the simple yet awful fact that it is directly connected with the place of Satan’s throne, for that will be at Pergamos, as Revelation 2:13 shows. The development of things in the Near East (originally written in 1916), and more so to-day, makes this spot of earth to be increasingly important, and here the scene of the Revelation is laid; round about this part much will happen, and members of the assemblies in these places will come prominently into view during the time of tribulation and persecution.

We have found that the Apostle John was taken “in spirit” to the Day of the Lord, a period concerning which Old Testament prophecy is specially clear. From that standpoint the Apostle sees the visions of the Apocalypse, and is here instructed to write them in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia. We can well believe that as Paul was commissioned to write to seven churches, which should be representative of the Gentile section of believers particularly, so these seven churches in Asia may have been selected in order to show the character of the church in the last days.

The trumpet voice that John heard when translated to the Day of the Lord caused him to turn to see the One Who thus spoke. The vision of the Son of man in the midst of the seven golden lampstands is presented to him. This is the opening vision of the book. To miss its character is to be turned into by-paths of error.

The structure of the passage shows how the mind is concentrated upon the person and dignity of the Son of man.

Revelation 1:12-17
The Opening Vision

A 12. John. "I saw"

B 13-16. The Son of man. His person and glory

A 17. John. "I saw".

The member B 13-16, being the most important, demands expansion, thus:

The Son of Man (13-16)

B (a) In the midst of the seven golden lampstands

(b) Clothed to the foot

(c) Girt with girdle

C (d) Head and hair like snow

(e) Eyes as a flame of fire

(e) Feet like brass in a furnace

(d) Voice like sound of many waters

B (a) In right hand seven stars

(b) Out of His mouth a sword

(c) Countenance as sun.

The Son of man is seen standing in the midst of the seven lampstands and holding in His right hand the seven stars. Revelation itself tells us what these represent.

"The mystery (secret) of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which thou sawest are the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20).

We cannot help feeling that any attempt to "explain" this inspired explanation is apt to mislead. If the angels are not angels as the rest of the angels in this book, then the explanation given to John needs an inspired solution.

Two passages of Scripture seem to be referred to under the symbol of the seven golden lampstands. Exodus 25:31-40, which speaks of the six-branched lampstand in the tabernacle, and Zechariah 4:2. We ought to note, in passing, that Solomon, who like Moses received a pattern to work by, has ten golden lamps instead of seven (1 Kings 7:49).

The seven lamps link the vision of Revelation 1 to wilderness times rather than the kingdom of peace. Zechariah 4 refers to the lampstand of gold, with its seven lamps, as bearing a light in a day of small things.

Connected with these seven lamps, and supplying them with oil, are two olive branches. Revelation 11:4 uses the symbol as of the two witnesses. From this we gather that the seven assemblies constitute the Lord's witnesses in a corrupt day. In their midst stands the Son of man, and watching over them are angels, who are held responsible for their charges.

The description given of the Son of man is parallel with the description given in Daniel 10, so that if the Apostle had wanted to make us connect the subject-matter of Revelation 1 with things distinctly to do with Israel, he could not have done it better. In order that the parallel may be clearly seen, we put the two descriptions together:

Daniel 10:5,6,8-14

Behold, one — a man.
Clothed in linen.

Loins girded with fine gold of Uphaz.

His body was like the beryl.

His face as the appearance of lightning.

His eyes as lamps of fire.

His feet like polished brass.

His voice like voice of a multitude.

There remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption ... then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face touched the ground.

And behold a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and the palms of my hands.

Fear not, Daniel.

I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days.

Shut up the words and seal the book to the time of the end (12:4).

Revelation 1:13-17,19,20

A Son of man.

Clothed with a garment to the foot.

Girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

His head and hair like wool and snow.

His eyes as a flame of fire.

His feet like fine brass.

His voice as the sound of many waters.

And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as one dead.

He laid His right hand upon me.

Fear not.

Write the things which thou hast seen ... the seven stars are ...

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear ... and keep those things that are written, for the time is at hand (1:3).

The close parallel that is evident here leads to one conclusion. The time, place and people of the two books are the same. "Thy people," is Israel, "the latter days" bring us to the period of the Revelation, "the Day of the Lord". The difference between the two accounts is that Daniel was told to shut up the words and seal the book to *the time of the end*, whereas John is told, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein, *for the time is at hand*".

Having such a definite connection with Israel and the time of the end impressed upon the opening vision of the Revelation, we wonder how it is that so many see the "church" in this passage. However, it is not for us to question the views of others, but rather to get to know more and more of the truth of God for ourselves. Turning to the vision that John beheld, we find that in the midst of the seven golden lampstands was the Son of man.

THE SON OF MAN. — Titles, when used of Deity, are dispensational. God is spirit. The invisible God has made Himself known under a variety of titles. In the Incarnate Word He is revealed as the Saviour, the Shepherd, the Head, the Son of God, and many other titles. Each has its distinctive connection. The Son of man is related to the earth; not the earth in a wrong or unspiritual sense, but to God's purposes of blessing in the earth. The first occurrence in Scripture is found in Psalm 8, where He has "dominion over the works of Thy (God's) hands". The title occurs eighty-four times in the New Testament, and is never used by Paul in his Church Epistles. The one other reference in Revelation is 14:14, where, crowned with a golden crown, He comes to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

The seven references in Matthew 24 and 25 to the Son of man link the title closely with the *parousia*, the great tribulation, the days of Noah, the throne of glory, and judgment of the nations. Something of the glory of this Son of man is gathered from John's description. The garment which reached to the foot was the robe worn by both Kings and Priests. When Isaiah "saw His glory," he tells us, "His train (or the hem of His garment) filled the temple". The golden girdle is met with again in Revelation 15:6, as worn by the seven angels who came out of the

Temple of God. When Daniel saw the Ancient of days (7:9), he says, "the hair of His head was like pure wool," which John says of the Son of man. "White" is mentioned more times in the Revelation than in the rest of the New Testament. To the overcomer it is given to walk with the Lord in white, to receive a white stone, to be clothed in white raiment. The Son of man sits upon a white cloud, rides a white horse, and finally occupies a great white throne. Righteousness at length shall be brought in, even as Daniel 9 declares it shall be. The all-searching eyes of the Son of man are seen in the "flame of fire". Those eyes saw the evil in the church of Thyatira (Rev. 2:18), and when He at length rides upon the white horse to rule the nations, still it is written, "His eyes were as a flame of fire" (19:12). "His feet were like unto shining copper, as if they burned in a furnace" (1:15). When Ezekiel saw the Cherubim, he tells us that their feet sparkled like the colour of burnished copper (1:7). When we wish to indicate the failing and earthly character of even the best, we use a figure and say, "After all, they have feet of clay". Nebuchadnezzar's image that he saw in vision, while having a golden head, had feet of clay. The heavenly Cherubim, and the Son of man, have feet that shine like purified burnished copper. John says that His voice sounded like many waters. Ezekiel tells us that when he saw the returning glory of the God of Israel:

"His voice was like the noise of many waters, and the earth shined with His glory ... and He said ... the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet ... shall the house of Israel no more defile" (Ezek. 43:2-7).

The first chapter of the Revelation is preparatory to this returning glory. John saw that the Son of man had control of the seven angels, for "He had in His right hand seven stars". This clause is repeated in 2:1 and 3:1. He also had proceeding out of His mouth a sharp two-edged sword. This is referred to in 2:12 and 16. This sword is to be used in the smiting of the nations (19:15-21). If it should seem strange to speak of a sword proceeding from the mouth of the Son of man, Hebrews 4:12 will show the appropriateness of the figure. The word translated "sword"

in Revelation 1 occurs six times in the book, and only once elsewhere, namely, Luke 2:35.

The final description given by John is that His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. John had once before seen this glory foreshadowed, when the Lord was transfigured, for we read that "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light". Upon this mount, Peter tells us, the Lord Jesus received "honour and glory". The only occurrence of "Son of man" in Paul's writings is in Hebrews 2:6, and connects the "honour and glory" with the dominion of Psalm 8 and is given as a pledge of the kingdom over which as Son of man He will reign (Heb 2:5-9). Here in Revelation 1 John beholds the glorified Son of man, the King Priest after the Order of Melchisedec. The result of this glorious vision upon John was that he fell at His feet as one dead.

Let us rejoice as we think of the high glory that awaits the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and let us not hesitate to render to Him His due.

It may be of service to repeat a portion of the structure of this chapter, which is given in full on page 13. The portion we give shows the parallel of verses 17, 18 and 5, 6.

- B (a) 5 —. Christ the first begotten from the dead
- (b) — 5,6. Result of that death. Redemption
- C (c) 7. His coming. Effect upon the tribes when they see Him
- (d) 8. Title. Alpha and Omega. I AM
- C (c) — 17. His glory. Effect upon John when he saw Him
- (d) — 17. Title. First and Last. I AM
- B (a) 18 —. Christ. I am He that liveth and was dead
- (b) — 18. Result of that death. Power.

It will be recognised that throughout this chapter the glory and the power that pertain to the Son of man is in virtue of His resurrection. He is the first begotten from the dead — behold, He is alive unto the ages of the ages. He it is Who looses from sins. He also it is that has *the keys* of hades and of death.

The effect upon the tribes of the land when they see Him whom they pierced is mourning; the effect upon John, who is called the disciple whom Jesus loved, the disciple who seemed to have the closest intimacy with his Lord in the

days of His humiliation, the effect upon him is even greater, he fell at His feet as dead.

When Job, who had heard of the Lord by the hearing of the ear, saw Him, he said, "I am vile," and abhorred himself. When Isaiah could say, "mine eyes have seen the King," he was forced to say, "I am a man of unclean lips". Daniel, as we have seen, tells us that his comeliness turned into corruption and he retained no strength; and John, who had leaned on his Master's bosom, who had taken the Saviour's mother under his protection, he fell at His feet as dead.

All the loud boastings of the men of this world, all the creature-glorifying that constitutes so great a bulk in the travesties of truth that are spreading over the earth, all these pretensions vanish as a summer cloud when the creature stands before the risen glory of Him Who was, and is, and is to come. Though we see Him not with our eyes, this is His high position *now*. To us He is not *only* "Jesus"; He is our Lord.

The right hand which held the seven stars was laid upon John, and the first words of the Son of man are heard saying, "Fear not; I am the first and the last". The first time that the Lord said the words, "Fear not," is in Luke 8:50. The messenger from the house of Jairus came and said, "Thy daughter is dead, trouble not the Master". But He Who, though found in fashion as a man, was to overcome death itself said, "Fear not," and taking the girl by the hand said, "Maid arise". While we do not wish to imply any connection between this first and last utterance of the words, "Fear not" with the glorious title that immediately follows, it is significant that in both cases we find the Lord exercising His authority over death. The connection between the title, "The first and the last" and resurrection is noticeable in 2:8. "These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive". The original of Revelation 1:17 is more emphatic than in the Authorized Version. The risen Lord does not merely say, "I am the first and the last," but, **I** (emphatic) am the first and the last. Isaiah 41:4 uses this title in connection with God's purpose in Israel, saying, "Calling the generations from the beginning, **I** the Lord, the first, and with the last". He who called the generations from the beginning, the generations

before the call of Abraham, as well as the special generation of the line of the promise through Abraham, He will be also "with the last" when He gathers Israel and blesses the Gentiles. Notice in the context a reference to the making of idols. In 44:6 we find the title again, "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and His redeemer the Lord of hosts, I am the first, and I am the last, and beside Me there is no God". Note again how verse nine renews the reference to the making of idols. We meet the title once more in Isaiah 48:11,12, "I will not give my glory unto another. Hearken unto Me O Jacob and Israel, My called; I am He, I am the first, I also am the last". Again we see in verse five a reference to an idol, graven image, and molten image. These are the three Old Testament references to the title. The title occurs in Revelation also three times. Revelation 1:17; 2:8, and 22:13. There is no doubt when we read Isaiah that this title is claimed exclusively by God. He will not give His glory to another. In the Revelation it is just as exclusively used by Christ as the risen One. We have no argument to set forth. We accept this series of facts as a revelation to our faith and recognise in the Son of *man* One Who is also the Most High God. Not only does the Lord take to Himself these high glories, but He unfolds the fuller reasons for our confidence in Him, "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive unto the ages of the ages, Amen; and have the keys of death and hades". Romans 14:9 says, "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and lived again, *that He might be the Lord both of the dead and living*". Romans 6:9 says, "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; *death hath no more lordship over Him*". He Who died, lives, and more than that, He has dominion. He has the keys of death and hades. Keys denote authority. The resurrection of Christ has taken the victory away from death and hades.

The fact that in this opening vision of the Revelation this authority over death and hades is emphasised, links the first chapter with the twentieth, which ushers in the new heavens and new earth.

"He will swallow up in this mountain the face of the covering covered over all people, and the veil that is spread over the nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces" (Isa. 25:7,8).

Hosea 13:14 says in a context which speaks of Israel's restoration, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave (*sheol*, equivalent to *hades*); I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave I will be thy destruction". He who had the power of death has been vanquished. A stronger than he has overcome him. This world, still lying in the wicked one, still ruled by the prince of this world and the god of this age, is to give place to the rule of righteousness of heaven's deathless King. Fear not, he says to John. You are about to see evil at the worst development. Satan and Antichrist and demons will conspire together, with death and hades (Rev. 6:8) as confederates, to fix the curse of sin upon this earth. Fear not John, I live, I control, and finally thou shalt see death and hades, together with Satan and his accomplices, cast into destruction. With this encouragement, John is told to write that which he sees.

Verse nineteen has been used as the basis for division of the Revelation in such a way that it has held in its grasp the minds of thousands. This verse is supposed to teach the threefold division of the book.

The things which thou hast seen.
The things which are.
And the things which shall be hereafter.

According to this system of interpretation the messages to the seven churches are the things which are, and consequently the seven churches are taken as the history of the professing church down the age, generally indicating the church of Philadelphia as having special reference to the particular persuasion of the writer for the time being.

The future prophetic part of the book, according to this system, commences at chapter four, where John is told that he will be shown things which must be hereafter. There is another rendering that adheres closely to the literal wording of the passage and also to the sense of the context, which runs as follows:

"Write therefore what things thou sawest, and what they are, even what things are about to happen hereafter".

Alford, Rotherham, Moses Stuart and Dr. Bullinger, among others, have given this as the meaning. That the

expression, "and what they are," is a good rendering, meaning "what they represent or signify," may be seen in the very next verse. The seven stars ARE the angels, and the seven lampstands signify the seven churches. Verse nineteen, therefore, instead of indicating a threefold division of the Revelation, testifies to its unity. John is told to write the things which he sees, say what they signify, and to know that these visions which he interprets are the things that are to take place hereafter. Verse twenty immediately begins to do this for us.

- (1) John had seen the seven stars and the seven lampstands.
- (2) He is told what they signify, that is, angels and churches.
- (3) And he knew that they were to be hereafter.

Instead, therefore, of ransacking the history of Christendom to find something that accords with the statement made in the addresses to the seven churches, we see that the Lord has shown us the things that shall be hereafter. On the earth, in this fast-approaching Day of the Lord, will be a believing and tried people (they will not constitute the church of the one Body), and for the encouragement and warning of these churches who are the "overcomers" of the rest of the book, this prophecy is written.

The following chapter shows the close connection of these seven churches with the rest of the book.

We accept the interpretation of the seven stars as all-sufficient. They are seven angels. To re-interpret this as meaning a bishop or a synagogue overseer is nothing but presumption. Angels figure enough in this book to fix the meaning beyond controversy. It is no new thing for Israel to be placed under the care of angels; Michael the Archangel is their prince, and throughout their history (see Heb. 1; 2; Gal. 3:19; Acts 5:19; Dan. 3:28; 6:22), angelic ministry was the rule, not the exception. It is perfectly normal therefore to find, in a book which draws aside the veil and shows us some of the heavenly activity, that the little companies of believers in their day of trial are given into the care of angelic custodians.

CHAPTER 5

The Epistles to the Churches

Revelation 2 and 3

(A demonstration of the essential unity of the Book)

In our last chapter we drew attention to the marked connection that is made with the book of Daniel, thereby establishing more clearly than ever the truth that the book of the Revelation has special relation to the people of Israel. We further drew attention to what we consider to be the true interpretation of Revelation 1:19, which disposes of the idea that the seven churches must refer to the history of professing Christendom. We saw that the passage taught that what John saw, and what the visions meant, were *the things that should be hereafter*. If this be so, chapters 2 and 3 contain an unfolding of the mystery of the seven stars and the seven golden lampstands, and relate to *the future*.

Before we consider the epistles to these churches in detail, we would draw attention to the way in which they fit into the remaining part of the book. Some will be more obviously connected than others, but we believe we shall be able to indicate sufficient points of contact to establish the important fact that the period to which these seven epistles refer is identical with the period covered by the remainder of the Revelation. In other words, the seven epistles throw light upon the spiritual history of the churches from *WITHIN*, while the remaining visions throw light upon the spiritual history of the same period from *WITHOUT*. Now although it is not a necessity that the inner history of any particular period should *always* at all points reflect the outer history, yet we should expect, at places, to find some reflection, and it is to that reflection we now call attention.

On page 6 the reader will find the structure of the book as a whole. The central member covers chapters 4 to 20, and exhibits a sevenfold division of the visions. In order to show the connection between this sevenfold series of

visions and the seven churches, we will call the first section of this sevenfold division Ephesus, the last Laodicea, and the intervening members according to the order of the seven churches. We can then note anything that seems to connect the attitude of the church with the period indicated by its name.

The Ephesus Church (2:1-7).	In the midst seven stars in right hand. Threat to remove lampstand out of its place.
The Ephesus Period (4:1-7:3).	In the midst seven-sealed book in right hand. Seven lamps, eyes, spirits. Mountains and islands "moved" (same word as above) out of their places.
The Smyrna Church (2:8-11).	Tribulation; faithful unto death; second death; hurt.
The Smyrna Period (7:9-11:14).	The great tribulation; two witnesses slain; death; slay; hurt.
The Pergamos Church (2:12-17).	Hold fast My name; Satan's throne; the hidden manna; the doctrine of Balaam.
The Pergamos Period (11:15-19).	Fear Thy name; the kingdoms of this world become Christ's.
The Thyatira Church (2:18-29).	The woman Jezebel; the morning star; the rod of iron; depths of Satan; keep works; faith and patience; false prophetess; her children killed.
The Thyatira Period (12 and 13).	Woman clothed with sun; the twelve stars; the rod of iron; Satan; keep commandment; patience and faith; false prophet; God's children killed.
The Sardis Church (3:1-6).	A few with undefiled garments; they shall walk with Me in white; name confessed before the Father.
The Sardis Period (14).	144,000 not defiled; they follow the Lamb; without fault before the throne of God.
The Philadelphia Church (3:7-13).	Worship before thee; a pillar in the temple; the name of the City of God — new Jerusalem; the trying of them that dwell on the earth; the hour; I will keep thee out of the hour.
The Philadelphia Period (15-18).	Worship before Thee; the temple; the great city Babylon; they that dwell on the earth; one hour; come out My people.

The Laodicea Church (3:14-22).	White raiment; supper; faithful and true; Amen; spue out of mouth; sit in My throne; stand at door.
The Laodicea Period (19 and 20).	Fine linen; marriage supper; faithful and true; the Word of God; out of His mouth a sword; set on throne; the Judge.

Such is the summary of the points of resemblance. Let us consider their bearing upon the prophetic unity of the book.

The first church that is addressed is the Church at Ephesus. The Lord speaks of Himself as the One Who holds the seven stars in His right hand, and Who walks in the midst of the seven gold lampstands. The tree of life is spoken of as being "in the midst" of the paradise of God. In the vision which covers the "Ephesus" period, John sees the Lord as a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. He alone was found worthy to take the seven-sealed book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. There is a threat made to the church at Ephesus of the removal of their lampstand out of its place. If this threat is taken in conjunction with the actual effect produced by the opening of the sixth seal, when "every mountain and island were moved out of their places," its force will be the more felt. In chapter seven we read of devastation which is about to fall upon the earth, the sea, and the trees, and this makes the promise to the overcomer of being granted to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God of greater moment.

Turning to the Church at Smyrna we enter into an atmosphere of tribulation; this is the note that is struck in the opening of the Smyrna section. There we find those who came out of great tribulation arrayed in white robes. Death is on every hand; the sea becomes blood, and a third part of its creatures die; many men die of the waters also, that were turned to wormwood. Not only death, but strange beings who have power to "hurt" (chap. 9) are spoken of. A limitation is set to their power to hurt, namely, "only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads". This lends emphasis and point to the

promise to the overcomer at Smyrna — he shall not be “hurt” of the second death. Men may “kill the body,” even as they do the faithful believers of chapter 11, hence the exhortation and example, “Be thou faithful unto death” like those two faithful witnesses.

The Church at Pergamos is said to hold fast the Saviour’s name, and in the Pergamos section rewards are spoken of for those that “fear Thy name”. Satan’s throne is at Pergamos, but the church there must remember that soon the true King will reign, according as we read in the corresponding section that the seventh angel sounds, announcing the advent of heaven’s King. The promise of the hidden manna takes the mind back to the pot of manna that was laid up in the holiest of all in the Tabernacle. It is appropriate therefore to read in chapter 11 of the temple being opened and the ark seen; the reference to the doctrine of Balaam is parallel to the reference to those who destroy (or corrupt, *see margin*) the earth.

The Thyatira Church emphasises the corrupt state introduced by “that woman Jezebel,” and the promise is made to those who have not known the depths of Satan. Those “depths” are seen in the Thyatira section, when the dragon stands upon the sand of the sea, and calls up the beast and the false prophet. “The woman clothed with the sun” is in strong contrast with “that woman Jezebel”. Jezebel was a false prophetess, reflecting *in the church* the presence of the false prophet outside. There is the parallel between those who “keep the works,” and those who “keep the commandments”. Among other qualities that are commended by the Lord are “faith and patience,” and in the corresponding section of the book the patience and faith of the saints is a subject to which the reader’s attention is particularly drawn. Here again a close parallel is observed between the promise made to the overcomer, and the man child in chapter 12. Both are to “rule the nations with a rod of iron,” and so to the end of the series. The diligent student will compare the passages, and see how perfectly the whole fits together.

In the Sardis Church and section the great parallel is that between those who have not defiled their garments, and the 144,000 undefiled ones of chapter 14.

Philadelphia has many parallels which are obvious in the

list already given; the reference to worshipping before them and before the Lord, the two contrasted cities, and the emphasis in both sections on "the hour" are important.

Laodicea is the only Church that speaks of "supping," and its corresponding section is the one that contains all the other references to "supper" in the Revelation (chap. 19). The counsel to buy "white raiment" is evidently in view of the "fine linen" wherewith the bride is clothed. He Who speaks to the church is called the *faithful and true* witness; He Who rides out of heaven in the corresponding section is the same — "faithful and true". The promise to the overcomer, that of sitting with the Lord in His throne, is realised in chapter 20:4, where those who live and reign, and sit upon thrones are those who have proved themselves faithful witnesses during the time of antichristian oppression. The reference in Revelation 3:20, "I stand at the door," is linked with the "Judge" by James 5:9, and so with Revelation 20:11-15.

This close comparison seems to establish beyond dispute the interrelation of the seven churches with the rest of the prophecy. Here is a field of search open to the humblest possessor of a Bible. The interpretation that necessitates an intimate knowledge of the history of Christendom for the past nineteen centuries is by force of circumstances limited to the very few. The interpretation we have been led to adopt is absolutely independent of any source of information outside the covers of the inspired Word.

When the Apostle Paul was inspired to write his epistles to the churches, we find that he wrote to seven. When the Spirit of God would give us a picture of the spiritual state of the Day of the Lord, He causes John to write to seven churches in Asia.

It is not our intention to take each epistle in detail; we shall content ourselves with drawing attention to one item before passing to the great central prophecy of the Revelation in chapter four.

THE NICOLAITANES. — The church at Ephesus is commended for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. The church at Pergamos is said to have those who hold the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. The church of Smyrna is not associated with the Nicolaitanes by name, but it has to suffer at the hands of

those who are called by the Lord, "the synagogue of Satan," just as to the church of Thyatira it is said to as many as have not "this doctrine," and have not known the "depths of Satan". The church at Sardis has some "defiling" tendencies at work within it, and the synagogue of Satan figures again in the church of Philadelphia.

The way in which the doctrine of Balaam is linked with the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes suggests a connection between them. We know from Old Testament history, as well as the details given in Revelation 2:14, what the "doctrine of Balaam" was. When we realise that *Bal-aam* means "lord of the people," and *Nikos-laos* means "conqueror of the people," we shall possibly perceive that the doctrine of Balaam is the type of the future apostasy of which the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes is the fulfilment or antitype. At the time of the end we see indicated by these epistles a movement set on foot to promote the making of the covenant between Israel and the false christ; to accomplish this end the wicked one introduces his "tares," and among the true worshippers at Ephesus are those who practise the abominable deeds of the Nicolaitanes. It would also appear that an attempt had been made to impose upon them an order of false apostles; these had been tried and found to be liars. The deeds of the Nicolaitanes had been also treated with commendable hatred. It would seem from the words of the Lord to the church in Smyrna, that Satan, defeated in his first attempt, resorts to more violent methods. Those who said they were apostles, and were not, are replaced by those who say that they are Jews, and are not; this seems to indicate an attempt to swamp the faithful by numbers of false professors. There is also evidence that persecution is to be stirred up against these faithful ones; the devil is to cast some into prison, and a ten days' tribulation, culminating apparently in the martyrdom of many, will prevail.

At Pergamos we have Satan's throne; there he will dwell. The "deeds" of the Nicolaitanes have now become the "doctrine" of Balaam or of the Nicolaitanes. It appears that prison and persecution having failed to promote the design of the false christ, persuasion is next attempted. Balaam, who failed to curse Israel from the top of the mountain, taught Balak a most effective way to ensnare that separate

people. The church at Pergamos is to be enticed through the medium of the flesh; they will be enticed first of all to eat things sacrificed to idols, and then to the most abominable excesses that have ever been cloaked under the title of religion. By the time we reach the central church, we reach the period when the dread covenant with hell and death will be made, and the covenant with Israel broken. The harlot nation is exalted by the beast and is fitly typified by the false prophetess, "that woman Jezebel". Verse twenty compared with verse fourteen shows the plague spreading: here we reach the "depths of Satan".

Death and defilement are visible in the church at this time, a name to live, and ready to die, are the words of the Lord. A few had not defiled their garments, but it seems that many had fallen into the snare. The church in Philadelphia and the church in Laodicea seem set in contrast as indicating the end, the one faithful and overcoming is kept out of the hour of temptation, the other is about to be spued out of the Lord's mouth. No greater picture of their moral rottenness could be presented than is done by this reference to the nausea caused by the condition of the church.

Both Peter and Jude refer to the "error of Balaam" as prophetic of the end, and while there are many things dealt with in these epistles, the gradual leavening of the churches by the evil doctrine and deeds of the "conquerors of the people" seems to underly most of the failure and the opposition.

A comparison between the story of these churches with the history of Israel in the past is very helpful, and readers will find much profit in studying the work of the late Dr. Bullinger, "The Apocalypse, or the Day of the Lord," on this subject. The progress also of the promises, starting with the tree of life in the paradise of God, including the wilderness by the references to the manna, and Balaam, and ending with the kingdom, throne, city, and temple, is also helpfully treated in the same work.

In the midst of the trials and temptations by which the church will be surrounded in the Day of the Lord, the faithful are warned and encouraged by having their remembrances of the Lord's dealings with their fathers brought vividly before them, and of the prophecies that

point on to the “rest that remaineth” for those who “endure to the end”.

In conclusion, may we point out that the overcomer is the one to whom the final words are addressed, whatever state the church may be in as a whole, whether commended or spoken of as being dead, whether faithful or being merely luke-warm. To the individual among them the Lord addresses words of encouragement and cheer. The varying experiences of these overcomers are traced through the remaining chapters of the Revelation; they continually appear either as a persecuted and suffering people, or as raised and crowned and victorious.

While we do not believe that the seven churches or the Revelation as a whole speak *of* the Church of the Mystery, they speak *to* it. There are lessons of parallel failings, and parallel triumphs, which it is wise for us all to receive with meekness.

CHAPTER 6

The Throne Set in Heaven

Revelation 4

In turning to the teaching of the fourth chapter, we commence the study of the great sevenfold centre of the book. On page 6 will be found the structure of the Revelation as a whole, and the central number, occupying chapters 4 to 20 is made up of a series of seven pairs of visions, the first in each pair being something seen or heard "in heaven," the second being the result or effect "on earth".

The opening heavenly vision occupies chapters 4 and 5. The main features are connected with the throne, the book, the Lamb, and the living ones.

The structure is simple, and emphasises the twofold theme of the section, together with the contrast intended to be observed between the elders and the living ones, and the Lamb.

The first vision in heaven (4 and 5)

- A 4:1-8—. The throne. Elders and living ones
- B -8-11. The saying of the living ones and elders—
Creation
- A 5:1-7. The throne, book, Lion, Lamb
- B 8-14. The song of the living ones and elders. The saying of angels.—Redemption.

From chapter 1:10 to the end of chapter 3 the Apostle had been "in the spirit". As the second verse of chapter 4 tells us that he was again "in spirit," we have sufficient indication that we are dealing with a new vision. The words, "after this," do not necessarily mean that chapter 4 succeeds chapter 3 in order of fulfilment. John hears through the open door of heaven the former voice which he had heard sounding like a trumpet (1:10) speaking with him, and saying, "Come up hither, and I will show thee what things must come to pass hereafter". "Immediately I came to be in spirit," continues the writer, "and, behold a throne was set in heaven". Let it be duly pondered, that at

the forefront of this central section we have brought into prominence a THRONE SET IN HEAVEN. *It is the Day of the Lord*, a day of justice, of vengeance, of reward. The Revelation is the book of the throne. *Thronos* occurs 61 times in the New Testament, 15 of these occurrences are apportioned between the books of Matthew to Jude, the remaining 46 occurrences being found in the Revelation, or more than three times as many as the rest of the New Testament. *It is not the standing or atmosphere of the church.* The throne set in heaven is the central, governing fact of the Revelation. We dare not hurry over our exposition, every item in this opening vision being pregnant with meaning, and containing illumination for the remainder of the visions.

The opening vision of chapter 1, which spoke of Him Who ruled among the churches, showed us the vision of One Who was heaven's Priest. The vision that now opens shows us the throne of heaven's Judge and King. It is suggestive of the change of subject to note the difference carefully.

Chapter 1

The voice as a trumpet.

I saw seven golden lampstands. In the midst One like the Son of man clothed with garment to the foot, girded with golden girdle, hair like wool and snow, eyes like flame of fire, feet like burnished copper, voice like many waters.

Chapter 4

The voice as a trumpet.

Behold, a throne was set in heaven. One sat thereon. He was like a jasper and a sardine stone: there was a rainbow round the throne like an emerald; lightnings, thunderings and voices.

In chapter 1 John sees no other beside the Son of man, but in chapter 4 there are many accompaniments of kingly state. To realise the prophetic import of the words, "a throne set up in heaven," we must turn a while to the Old Testament scriptures. Psalm 103:19-22 is parallel; we not only have the throne set, but the call to the heavenly powers to bless the Lord, as they do in Revelation 4, "The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all".

Proud Nebuchadnezzar had to learn that "the Most High ruleth among the kingdoms of men," and John, who was to behold in vision the awful days of tribulation, apostasy, and blasphemy, is shown first of all the throne, that he

may know, and that we may know, that all is still within the hollow of His hand, and that "that day" shall vindicate the wisdom, the righteousness and the holiness of Him Who sitteth upon the throne. This is brought out very fully in Psalm 11. There the psalmist says that in the Lord he had put his trust, and the wicked are about him ready to shoot privily at the righteous. "If," says he, "the foundations be destroyed" (as they must be when the righteous are persecuted and the wicked triumph) "what can the righteous do?" For answer he continues, "the Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven"; he also summarises in verse six the plagues of the Revelation, "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup".

The cluster of Psalms 93-99 are worthy of close study in relation to our subject; we can give only one or two notes as specimens.

"The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty" (93).

"O Lord to Whom vengeance belongeth ... shew Thyself" (94).

"O sing unto the Lord a new song ... for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth" (96).

"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice. Righteousness and judgment, are the habitation of His throne" (97).

"The Lord reigneth,
Let the people tremble.
He sitteth between the cherubim,
Ler the earth be moved" (99).

The balance of thought between the "reigning" and the "sitting between the cherubim" is suggestive, especially in the light of Revelation 4.

Daniel 7:9-14 seems to speak of this throne.

"I beheld till thrones were set, and the Ancient of days did sit, Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire ... *the judgment was set, and the books were opened*

... I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him, and there was given to Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him".

The importance of the vision of the throne "set" will be appreciated in proportion as we realise the awful character of the time of the end. To us, believers of an entirely different dispensation, the passage is not wanting in its lesson, surrounded as we may be by wickedness and strife. It is our peace to know that, unseen and unknown, the Lord is at the right hand of the majesty on high. To us, as to all of every time, the words come, "Be still, and know that I AM GOD," not merely, I am a Deliverer, or a Provider, or a King, or a Consoler, but I AM GOD—to know this, is to reach the goal of our being, and to have learned the lesson of the ages.

The eyes of John were first of all directed to see "a throne," but a throne, to indicate authority and power, must be occupied, consequently the writer adds, "and One sat on the throne". The appearance of this One is described, and the special accompaniment of the rainbow is given. Then John saw not only one throne, but surrounding that throne twenty-four thrones; he notes their occupants and accompaniments, this time thunder and lightning instead of a rainbow. Again he returns to the throne, and in the midst and round about he sees four living ones. This threefold description is clearly seen in the structure given, that is, 4:2-8, the throne, elders, and living ones:

- A₁ 2. On the throne. One sitting
- B₁ 3. Appearance. Like jasper and sardine stone
- C₁ 3,4. Accompaniment. Rainbow and twenty-four thrones
- A₂ 4. On the thrones. Twenty-four elders sitting
- B₂ 4. Appearance. Clothed in white, with gold crowns
- C₂ 5,6. Accompaniments. Lightnings, thunderings, voices, seven lamps, sea of glass
- A₃ 6. In midst of throne. Four living ones
- B₃ 7. Appearance. Like lion, calf, man, and flying eagle
- C₃ 8. Accompaniments. Threefold ascription of holiness.

The words, "He that sat upon the throne," must not be passed over without consideration. So often do they occur, and in such a manner, that the words indicate a definite title, and give a special character to the Revelation. The solemnity of the words and acts recorded in this book, and

their judicial character, are emphasised by the continual reference to Him that sat upon the throne. In strong contrast will be seen the one who “sits upon many waters,” “upon a scarlet coloured beast,” “upon seven mountains,” and who said “I sit a queen” (17:1,3,9,15; 18:7).

The first reference to sitting on a throne is in chapter 3:21, where the Lord speaks of His sitting with His Father in His throne. The reader should carefully note the following passages, observing the various things that are related to the One Who occupies this glorious throne (5:1,7,13; 6:16; 7:10, 15; 19:4, and 20:11). It will be specially profitable to compare and ponder the opening reference (4:2 but see also 5:1-2), with the closing reference (20:11,12); with both there is importance attached to *books* being opened.

The appearance of the One that sat upon the throne is said to have been like “a jasper and a sardine stone”. Jasper is the first foundation stone of the new Jerusalem, and the sardius the sixth; jasper was the last stone in the High Priest’s breastplate. Exodus 24:10 says:

“And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness”.

Ezekiel 1:22 seems to refer to this (see verse 26), and speaks of it as “*the terrible crystal*”. Ezekiel 28:13, describing the “anointed cherub,” speaks of his covering being composed of nine precious stones together with gold. The reference to precious stones, and the statement that the One Who sat upon the throne was like them, indicates that like all else in this creation they have their place as types of unseen spiritual realities.

Encircling the throne, and possibly partially veiling the glory of the One that sat upon it, was a rainbow, “in sight like unto an emerald”. The green of the rainbow may well stand for mercy. This throne of righteousness, from which will go forth the commands of judgment, has also a sign of mercy; it is the fulfilment of Habakkuk’s plea, “in wrath remember mercy”. For the encouragement of the faithful few, the rainbow encircles the throne. The days foreshadowed by the days of Noah are imminent, a deluge

of wrath is about to fall, but the Lord remembers His covenant, and the rainbow is seen. The day of grace has come to its end when this throne is seen, the Day of the Lord with its judgments and its terrors is about to begin; yet it is well to remember that all the judgments and plagues proceed from the throne, all is ordered by heaven's Ruler, nothing is by chance or hap. It is certainly a fact for rejoicing in such an hour to know that when the Apocalypse with its most awful scenes becomes history, there, in unsullied light and unruffled calm reigns the One "Who sitteth on the throne".

Having considered something of the majesty of Him who sat upon the throne, we now observe that around the throne are ranged 24 other thrones. The 12 apostles will sit upon 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28). Thrones are a part of creation, both those in heaven, and those on the earth (Col. 1:16). Satan has a throne (Rev. 2:13; 13:2), so also has the Beast (16:10), although the Authorised Version renders the word "seat". The thrones that are spoken of as those of the 12 apostles have direct reference to "judging" the 12 tribes; "judging" of course does not necessarily mean "condemning" for a judge acquits as well as pronounces sentence. The 24 thrones therefore seem to have some such purpose. This is further suggested by noticing who they are that sit upon the thrones, "I saw four and twenty elders". The word translated "elder" is *presbuteros*, and both among Gentiles and Jews the word conveys the idea of dignity, rule and wisdom. It will be remembered that Moses chose 70 men who bore "with him the burden of the people". There were elders in the early church, and these held positions of responsibility (Titus 1:5). The number 24 takes us back to the days of David and the temple. I Chronicles 24:3-18 gives the 24 courses of the priests; there were also the same number of prophets appointed (25:1-31); there were also 24 porters appointed from the Levites (I Chron. 26:17-19). Twenty-four, therefore, seems to be closely associated with the administration of the temple in the days of the kingdom. As Moses made the tabernacle after the heavenly pattern shown to him, so David also was divinely instructed regarding the details of the temple and its appointments. "All this (including the courses of the priests

1 Chron. 28:13), said David, the Lord made me to understand in writing by His hand upon me" (1 Chron. 28:19). David addressing Solomon said, "Behold, the courses of the priests and the Levites, even they shall be with thee for all the service of the house of God" (verse 21).

In Revelation 1 we have seen the risen Lord in His High-priestly robes; here, in chapter 4, we see the heavenly elders who take part in the administration of heavenly worship. These heavenly elders are seen clothed in white raiment, which raiment indicates righteousness. There are considerably more references to "white" in the Revelation than in the rest of the New Testament; the white robes, the white throne speak of a day of righteousness. The elders moreover are crowned with crowns of gold; this indicates that they not merely sit upon thrones, but are recognised rulers having dominion. To add to the majesty and solemnity of the scene, and also to indicate that here is not a throne of *grace*, the Apostle says, "And out of the throne proceed lightnings and thunderings and voices"; the throne is set in the accompaniment of judgment and *wrath*, it recalls Mount Sinai at the giving of the Law.

"And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled" (Exod. 19:16).

In the Revelation itself the mention of thunder, lightning and voice is associated with judgment (8:5; 11:19; 16:18). Before the throne seven lamps were seen burning, which are the seven spirits of God (Rev. 4:5). These seven spirits have already been mentioned before in the Revelation; they are seen in the hand of Christ (3:1) and are associated with the seven stars, and seven angels in 1:16,20, and chapters 2 and 3. The seven spirits before the throne are linked with God and the Lord Jesus Christ in 1:4,5. Hebrews 1:7 says, "He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire". In Revelation 5:6 the seven spirits are sent forth into all the earth, and are there likened to "seven eyes". Here then is the throne set for judgment, with all in perfect readiness. One other item is mentioned, "and before the throne, as a glassy sea, like crystal"; this is

very similar to the description given by Ezekiel in 1:22, "And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature, was as the colour of the terrible crystal"; or in Exodus 24:10, "And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness".

There is something encouraging to us in this description; in spite of all the turmoil, blasphemy, plagues and sin, an unruffled sea like crystal stretches out before the throne, all is calm *THERE*. If this can be so in the day of judgment, much more so may it be in this day of grace. May we ever remember that our peace and safety are to be found there at the right hand of God, not here, where sin and death still carry on their dreadful rule.

In the structure of this first vision (see page 70) the Throne alternates with the saying or the song of those around and before it. Verses 8-11 of chapter 4 record first the "saying" of the living ones, and the response of the four and twenty elders.

Let us approach this subject with some degree at least of appreciation that we stand upon holy ground. "The four living ones had each of them six wings about him". In no description of the cherubim in the Old Testament do we find any reference to their having six wings, neither do they speak, as do the living ones in this chapter. In Isaiah 6 we read of the seraphim; these are connected with the throne.

"Each one had six wings, with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly; and one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isa. 6:2,3).

The seraphim are associated with mercy:

"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isa. 6:6,7).

In contrast with this we read in Ezekiel 10 of the cherubim being associated with the scattering of coals of fire in judgment. The departing and returning glory in

Ezekiel, together with the placing of the cherubim at the garden of Eden, link them with righteousness as well as mercy. It has been suggested that the apparent merging of the characteristics of both cherubim and seraphim in the Revelation, is an indication that "righteousness and peace have kissed each other". These living ones we read, in Revelation 4:8, "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and Who is, and Who is coming". This is the first of a series of utterances that punctuate the book, and therefore it is of importance to notice what the theme of this first utterance is. It is an ascription of holiness to the Lord. Foremost of all the attributes of Him who occupies that awful throne in the Day of the Lord is holiness. Holiness is akin to righteousness, but whereas righteousness may seem cold, holiness burns with white heat. The self-righteous man may be found who will speak of his own uprightness and integrity, his honesty and his truthfulness, but few will be found to speak of their own holiness. This is the sacred and peculiar attribute of God, and of this the living ones unceasingly tell.

In verse nine we read, "and when these living ones give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne". How are we to understand this? Verse eight has already told us that they "rest not day and night, saying Holy, holy, holy". It would therefore seem to imply that this threefold ascription of holiness was also the threefold glory, honour and thanks which they give to Him. To speak unceasingly of the holiness of Him who sits on that throne is to "give glory". To tell of His holiness is to honour Him, and to ascribe holiness to Him is to offer thanksgiving. Nothing can be to His glory that forgets or omits the recognition of His holiness. We cannot honour Him if we do not with reverence and regard remember that we stand on holy ground.

The effect of these words of the living ones upon the four and twenty elders is to cause them to fall down and worship, casting their crowns before the throne, saying:

"Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created" (Rev. 4:11, R.V.).

Creation and its purpose form the basis of the elders' utterance. The living ones spoke of what the Lord is — *holy*, the elders of what He has done — *creation*.

We have elsewhere called attention to the logical connection established in the book of Job between God's creative *power* and *righteousness*. Here, the living ones and elders link *holiness*, *glory*, *honour* and *power* with creation. Creation *as it is*, as well as what it will be; creation that groans and that has been subjected to vanity; creation in its present bondage as well as its future liberty is a manifestation of His holiness, and is *for* His will. Puny man, with defective logic and a specious humanitarianism, would draw conclusions from his conception of the love of God that would not allow the Scriptural logic of Job or Revelation a place. "The things that are made" are divinely intended to teach "that which may be known of God, *even His eternal power and Deity*" (Rom. 1:19,20). "The heavens declare *the glory* of God," and we are not allowed by the Scriptures to brush aside the many strange and apparently opposite elements in creation to conjure up some Utopia of our own, whose God would have to repudiate the works of His hands, or change the meaning of His attributes. The present creation is the work of a holy and a righteous God; it is a necessary link in the chain of His purpose, and supplements and illustrates the teaching of the Word. The Authorized Version reads, "for Thy pleasure they are and were created". The word rendered "pleasure" is almost always rendered "will". This is a striking introduction. Creation will seem to have become in the Day of the Lord almost universally given over to evil. The words before the throne give us the aspect of those who see that which at present only eyes of faith can discern. They see creation still beneath His control. Creation was for His will; it shall accomplish His will, His holy will, in spite of all appearances and opposition. As to how it will do so may await further light and higher knowledge, but that it will do so is comfort to our hearts in days of stress and evil.

Let us test every theory regarding creation and its purpose by the utterances of those nearest the Throne. First, ever remember that He who created all things, all, whatever their kind or function, is essentially holy, and secondly, let us remember that all was created "for His

will". Creation is a part of the great purpose of the Lord God Almighty, and must be so viewed.

With this preparation we are introduced to a scene that takes us one step nearer to the great theme of the Revelation. "Thou art worthy" (cried the elders in reference to creation), "to receive glory and honour and power". We shall hear that cry again when in chapter 5 the theme shall change from creation to redemption. Such an ascription we render unto Him now, during the time of His rejection.

CHAPTER 7

The Sealed Book

Revelation 5

Having described the throne, the living ones, and the elders, and having recorded the utterances of these heavenly beings, the Apostle recalls our attention to the throne, and what is taking place there.

The right hand of the glorious occupant of the throne held a scroll that had been written inside, and on the back, and which had been sealed with seven seals. What is the meaning of this sealed book? The answer is found by observing what happens when the seals are broken and the scroll unrolled. Chapter six describes the opening of six of the seals, and it will be seen that the sixth seal takes us to the day of judgment (6:12-17), "the great day of His wrath is come".

The opening of the seventh seal introduces the seven trumpets, and at the beginning of the seventh trumpet "the mystery of God shall be finished" (10:7). When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, the following words are heard, "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign unto the ages of the ages" (11:15). This is linked with the theme of the seventh seal by the words of verse 18, "Thy wrath is come". It is also the time for the judgment of the dead, the apportioning of rewards, and the destruction of those who destroy the earth. This is none other than "the REVELATION of Jesus Christ," for the wrath is the wrath of *the Lamb*, the King who reigns is *Christ*, and all judgment is committed into the hands of *the Son*.

Let us turn to the book of Daniel. We have already referred to Daniel 10 when comparing the vision and its effects on Daniel as recorded in that chapter with the description of the Lord and the effects upon John in Revelation 1.

"In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a thing was revealed unto Daniel whose name was Belteshazzar: and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long, and he understood the thing and had understanding of the vision" (10:1).

Then follow three weeks' mourning and fasting. Evidently "the thing" and "the vision" were something to cause sadness. The vision of a man clothed in linen next appeared to Daniel, and after reviving the trembling saint he tells him that he has come "to make him understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days". The whole of chapter eleven, therefore, must refer primarily to the "latter days," and must be concerning a period that was "many days" from the days of Daniel.

To us, this settles the vexed question as to where in chapter eleven the yet *future* begins and past history ceases. Chapter twelve tells us that:

"At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, these to *aionian* life, and those to shame and *aionian* contempt" (Dan. 12:1,2).

The note of time places the fulfilment of this prophecy in the yet future, and links it with Revelation 12 (Michael), 7 (the great tribulation), 13 (the book and deliverance), and 20 (the resurrection). Daniel is then told "to shut up the words, and seal the book unto the time of the end"; so also in verse nine. We are definitely told that the "thing," which together with the "vision" occupies chapter eleven, was *revealed* to Daniel, and that he *understood* both the thing and the vision. Moreover, we read that to make Daniel *understand* was the object of the words of the man clothed in linen: this being so, we have no choice but to believe that Daniel *did* understand. The shutting up of the "words" and the sealing of the "book" therefore can have no reference to the question of his understanding.

Daniel has been spoken of as the book sealed, and the Revelation as the book opened. This, while being true, is misleading when used to teach that what is baffling, mysterious, and difficult in Daniel is clear and plain in the Revelation. The Apocalypse is not generally reckoned to be so clear and plain, and those who have studied both

books would be the ones to confess that the Revelation is the more difficult to understand of the two. The sealing is "to the time of the end". This "time of the end" did present a problem to Daniel, a problem that was not solved, and for which the Revelation does supply the solution.

When we consider Revelation 5 and note the call for one who should be worthy enough to open the seven seals, we shall there find that the idea of interpreting Daniel's prophecies, as put forward by some, can hardly fit the occasion. Angels were worthy enough to give the prophecies and to interpret them before; something more than interpretation is involved in the scene before us.

Let us get one more preparation before we consider Revelation 5 in detail. This time we turn to Luke 4. The Lord had been tempted, among other things, with the immediate possession of "the kingdoms of the habitable world," but had refused the offer. Then we read that:

"Coming to Nazareth ... He entered the Synagogue ... and stood up for to read, and there was given to Him the book of the Prophet Isaiah, and when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written,

'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord'.

AND HE CLOSED THE BOOK ... and He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:16-21).

What is there remarkable here? If we turn to the prophecy in Isaiah 61:1-3, we shall find that the Lord "closed the book" before He had finished the passage; Isaiah's words are:

"the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness".

In Nazareth, the place that symbolised His utter rejection, He closed the book without speaking of the day of vengeance. The day of vengeance is not for the lowly man of sorrows; that is reserved for the Lion of the tribe of

Judah. When the prophet sees that day, the imagery is of greatness and power:

“Glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength ... mighty to save ... the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed is come” (Isa. 63:1-4).

Both chapters 61 and 63 link the day of vengeance with the blessing of Israel. The Lord is here set before us as the *goel*, the kinsman-redeemer, and the revenger of blood. It is important to remember that the word *goel* is not only translated redeemer, but also avenger (see Num. 35:19). We may read in the book of Ruth concerning the kinsman-redeemer, and the custom and law relating to the *goel* should be studied carefully in order fully to appreciate the fulfilment in Christ.

The opening of the seals does not interpret any veiled statements of Daniel 11 and 12 so much as to put into operation the awful judgments that fall (Rev. 6) before the Lord takes the kingdom and delivers His people. No one but Christ Himself in heaven or earth or under the earth could assume such an awful responsibility as the letting loose upon this earth the long pent up wrath of God. John wept much when no one was found worthy, not that he was disappointed that the judgments would not fall, but because he knew that these days of vengeance meant redemption for his people.

This twofold theme is developed throughout the remainder of the book, and the *right division* of the word of Truth, as indicated by the Lord in the synagogue of Nazareth, tells us that when the Revelation is in process of fulfilment, the “acceptable year” will have passed and the “day of vengeance” will have come. The *Church* occupies a day of grace, and to bring the Church into this setting of judgment is to confuse things that differ.

Three times in the Revelation we read of a “strong angel”. In 10:1, “another angel, a strong one” is seen coming down from heaven; he had in his hand a little scroll opened and swore that “time” should be no longer. Then follows immediately the reference to the seventh angel and the finishing of the mystery of God. In verse twenty-one of chapter eighteen, “a strong angel” takes up a great millstone, and casts it into the sea, symbolising

thereby the sudden destruction of Babylon. In Revelation 5, the chapter before us, "a strong angel" proclaims with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?" No one was found in the whole universe "in heaven, in earth, or under the earth" who was worthy. The Apostle must have realised the great importance of the scroll which was held in the hand of Him who sat on the throne, for one of the elders said to him, "Weep not! Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, prevailed to open the book, and shall loose the seven seals of it" (verse 5). When John looked to the throne once again, in order to see the prevailing Lion, he beheld, "and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living ones, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain". The elder says the LION, but John sees a LAMB.

When Jacob gathered his sons together to tell them what should befall them in the last days, those sons concerning whom most is said, and who include in their forecast references to either Christ or Antichrist, are Judah, Dan and Joseph; this will be most readily seen if we just present the outline of Jacob's prophecy as follows:

Genesis 49:3-27

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| A ₁ | (a) Reuben. Water |
| 3-7 | (b) Simeon. Scattered |
| | (c) Levi. Divided |
| B ₁ | (d) Judah. The LION |
| 8-12 | (e) THE SCEPTRE. SHILOH |
| A ₂ | (a) Zebulon. Ships |
| 13-15 | (b) Issachar. Rest |
| B ₂ | (d) Dan. The Serpent and Adder |
| 16-18 | (e) SALVATION |
| A ₃ | (a) Gad. Troop |
| 19-21 | (b) Asher. Bread |
| | (c) Napthali. Hind |
| B ₃ | (d) Joseph. Fruitful bough |
| 22-26 | (e) THE SHEPHERD. THE STONE |
| A ₄ | Benjamin. Wolf. |
| 27 | |

Judah is the tribe whose latter day prophecy links it with the prevailing Lion, and with the sceptre, lawgiver and Shiloh. The One who had prevailed to open the scroll was moreover, "The Root of David". This title, taken together

with that of Revelation 22:16, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David," is often explained by saying that Christ was not only the son of David (the offspring), but also as the root whence David sprang. We rejoice to know that He who was David's son was also David's Lord, but in what special way David sprang from Christ we fail to see in Scripture; neither is there any need for such an idea. The "root" of David seems to be an allusion, if not a direct reference back, to Isaiah 11:1, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots"; the stem really means the stump of a tree after it has been cut down, and the figure exactly fits the apparent destruction of the royal line of David in our Lord's day. Christ is the branch that grows out of his roots, for, in verse 10, the prophet continues, "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse ... to it shall the Gentiles seek". If the title, "the Root of David," denotes the source from whence David sprang, and not the same as the offspring of David, then "the Root of Jesse" indicates the same. All are agreed, however, that "the Root of Jesse" is but another way of speaking of Him who should "grow out of his roots". Malachi 4:1 shows that "root" as well as "branch" is used to indicate posterity. The prophecy of the Apocalypse is far more concerned to show the fulfilment of the promise concerning the Seed of David, than it is to prove the deity of Christ.

The Lord is seen as the great King, prevailing as the Lion of Judah, concerning whom alone a sceptre is mentioned, and as the Root of David who, being raised from the dead, sits on David's throne.

One further and all-important truth is revealed in the vision concerning this kingly overcomer. The Lion of Judah and the Root of David, is the Lamb of God. When He first came amongst men as the sent One of God, He came not as a Lion, but was pointed out as the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world". When John beholds Him in His risen glory, he still sees Him not as a Lion, but as the Lamb; when the day of His wrath comes, and strikes terror in the breast of all, we read of the wrath of the Lamb, not the Lion; when the marriage of heaven's King is announced, it is the marriage of the Lamb, not the Lion. More pointedly, perhaps, is the first verse of chapter

six, where it is the Lamb who opens the seals, although the elder said it was the Lion. We are not to understand that He who once was the Lamb has now become the Lion. No, the Lamb it is that is seen right through the prophecy, the Lion never. Christ as the Lamb fulfils all the prophecies that speak of Him as Lion and King. The Lamb bears the marks of sacrifice, "standing as having been slain". Without the redemption concerning which the slain Lamb speaks, the throne of David would remain vacant, and the Lion of Judah would never be known. Heaven is about to burst forth in a new song, and it is to the Lamb they sing, and of His redemption, not to the Lion and of his strength.

Throughout the Scriptures there runs the teaching that is summed up in this vision of the enthroned Lamb. Man by nature would give the battle to the strong. God has throughout glorified humility and meekness, everything in fact that goes with a lamb-like character. Those who suffer, overcome, while those who appear before their fellows as the greatest conquerors have suffered the greatest of defeats.

"Through weakness and defeat,
He won the meed and crown,
Trode all His foes beneath His feet
By being trodden down".

The Lamb, however, is living when John looks toward the throne. Blessed be God, He was dead, but behold He is alive for evermore. Without the resurrection the Lamb had died in vain. Resurrection is as vital to the fulfilment of the promises made to David concerning his earthly throne and city as it is to the Church of the One Body. Peter, in Acts 2, speaking of David, says:

"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him ... that He would raise up Christ to SIT ON HIS THRONE; he seeing this before spake of the RESURRECTION of Christ" (2:30,31. See also 13:34).

Christ as the Lamb in resurrection is seen possessed of "all power in heaven and earth," for John saw the Lamb "having seven horns and seven eyes". Omnipotence and omniscience are here symbolised, and a reference back to Zechariah 3:9 and 4:10 will show that Israel's restoration and forgiveness is near. The seven eyes are further described as the seven spirits of God, and these have

already been spoken of in Revelation 1:4 and 4:5, and linked (see 3:1) with the seven angels of the seven churches. John saw this One take the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sitteth on the throne. This One, alone in all the wide universe, was worthy to do so.

A close parallel in many ways is found in Daniel 7:9-14. There is seen the throne, and the glory of Him who sat thereon. There books were opened, and

“One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given to Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him”.

At this stage it is necessary to give a rendering that shall contain the essential and important alterations to the Authorized Version in accordance with the readings of the critical Greek Texts.

“And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, because Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God, by Thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation and didst make them to our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign over the earth” (Rev. 5:9,10).

A *new song!* What song is it that Scripture calls new? Psalm 96 commences with the words, “O sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord all the earth,” and concludes with, “for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth”. The next Psalm opens with the words, “The Lord reigneth,” while Psalm 98 commences with the words, “O sing unto the Lord a new song,” and concludes with, “for He cometh to judge the earth”. The next Psalm also commences with “The Lord reigneth”.

The Companion Bible places these four Psalms together, making Psalms 97 and 99 the new song, which the preceding Psalms had summoned the people to sing. We give it for the benefit of those who do not possess a copy.

F 96. A summons to sing the “new song”. “For He cometh” (*Judgment*)

G 97. The new song. “Jehovah reigneth”

F 98. A summons to sing the “new song”. “For He cometh” (*Judgment*)

G 99. The new song. “Jehovah reigneth”.

A new song is called for in the fourth Hallelujah Psalm

(149); this speaks of “the King” (verse 2), and also speaks of Israel, and His saints who have the honour to execute “the judgment written,” thereby linking the redeemed nation with the Lord who cometh to judge the earth. In Isaiah 42:10 we again meet with a new song, this time closely connected with the “new things” predicted in verse nine. These “new things” begin to be unfolded in the next chapter; in 43:19 the Lord says, “Behold, I will do a new thing,” and the rest of the chapter, together with that following, emphasises the future deliverance of Israel:

“Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel” (44:23).

We read later of “a new name” (62:2), and “a new heavens and a new earth” (65:17). The new songs of Psalms and Isaiah are prophetic, they have never yet been sung. The new song of Revelation 5 seems to link all these prophetic songs together. The fact that the Lamb had prevailed and was worthy to open the seals was a proof that the long promised kingdom was about to be set up; this necessarily included the redemption of Israel, and the rule of the saints over the earth according to the promise given in Revelation 2:26,27, and leads on to the new Jerusalem, the new heaven and the new earth.

“*They sing a new Song*”. This is the first song recorded in the New Testament! Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 being exhortations, not records. This new song opens with the words, “Thou art worthy”. It seems as though song had ceased on earth and in heaven whilst the Lord of glory stooped to die, and not until the moment comes for the rejected One to take unto Himself His great power, does the songless silence break, and heaven once more ring with harmony. Seven times does this word worthy (*axios*) occur in the Revelation, and in the following order:

- A 3:4. They shall walk in white, for they are *worthy*
- B 4:11. Thou art *worthy* to receive glory
- C 5:2. Who is *worthy* to open the book?
- D 5:4. No man was found *worthy*
- C 5:9. Thou art *worthy* to take the book
- B 5:12. *Worthy* is the Lamb to receive power
- A 16:6. Given them blood to drink, for they are *worthy*.

The worthiness of the Lamb is ascribed in verse nine, to His work of redemption, "Because Thou wast slain and didst purchase for God, by Thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation". The Authorized Version reads, "and hast redeemed us," but the word "us" must be omitted. In verse ten the Authorized Version reads, "and hast made us" and "we shall reign"; the critical Greek text and the Revised Version read "them" and "they" for "us" and "we". The redemption spoken of, therefore, is not the redemption of the singers; they sing of the redemption of others. Who are the others that are redeemed? Are they the saved ones of all nations of the earth? No, this cannot be, for these redeemed ones are made "a kingdom and priests," a destiny reserved for one nation only, namely, Israel. If this be so, the redemption spoken of is that of the dispersed Israel scattered *among the nations*.

The first Lamb slain for Israel redeemed them from the power of one nation and the oppressor — Pharaoh; this redemption was accompanied by miracles and wonders, many of them taking the form of plagues. The title, "the Root of David," is suggestive of Isaiah 11:10, "the Root of Jesse," which is closely connected with Israel's second redemption, and here we find close parallel with "every tribe and tongue, and people and nation," for —

"It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the SECOND TIME to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left ... from Cush and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea; and He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (11:11,12).

This second redemption is going to have much that will echo the first redemption from Egypt (Isa 11:16). The song of Moses followed the first, the new song celebrates the second.

In Exodus 34:10 we have a covenant given by the Lord, that before all the people of Israel He would do marvels, and marvels of such a character that it could be said they were such as had not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. The word translated "marvels" is used by the Lord with reference to the plagues wherewith He smote Egypt, "I

will ... smite Egypt with all my *wonders*," and also with the plagues threatened to Israel, "the Lord will make thy plagues *wonderful*" (Deut. 28:59). The covenant of marvels finds its fulfilment in the Apocalypse; there Pharaoh finds his antitype in the Beast, and Egypt in the wide world; the first covenant written upon tables of stone finds its echo in the New Covenant written upon the fleshy tables of the heart, and the passover lamb finds its very image in the Lamb as it had been slain. The result of the purchase price paid by the Lamb is given in the new song, "and didst make them to our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign over the earth" (Rev. 5:10).

The subject of the "kingdom of priests" was dealt with in Chapter 3 under Revelation 1:6. There we saw that this priestly kingdom looked forward to the Millennium (Rev. 20:6, Isa. 61:6), and backward to the Exodus (Exod. 19:4-6). The scattered of Israel were addressed by Peter (1 Peter 1:1,2), and to them at the REVELATION (1 Peter 1:3-13) the "royal priesthood" is promised. These priestly kings "reign over the earth". The glorious privilege of reigning with Christ, whether over the earth, or in the super-heavenlies far above all principalities and powers, is for the overcomers, but sufficient has already been said upon this in "The Prize of the High Calling".* Such are promised that they shall sit with the Lord in His throne, they are to rule the nations with a rod of iron, and share the thousand years reign (see Rev. 2:26,27; 3:21; 20:4,6).

The earth, subjected to vanity since the days of Adam, and given over to Satan since the days of Nebuchadnezzar, is to be ruled in righteousness and finally delivered from the bondage of corruption; the initial act in this grand deliverance is the opening of the sealed book; this therefore calls forth the new song, and well may we hear its echo even now, realising now "the future on the instant".

When the four living ones and the four and twenty elders had sung their new song, representing the innermost circle around the throne of heaven, its theme is taken up by the next order of created beings, the angels; here the number is so vast as to pass beyond definite enumeration, "their number was ten thousands of ten thousands, and

* By the same Author and Publisher.

thousands of thousands". These "holy myriads" seem to be referred to in Jude 14, and Matthew 26:53. Daniel 7:10, to which we have referred before, speaks of those who surrounded the heavenly throne in similar language. "Thousand thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him". These angels are spoken of as being ministering spirits, and in connection with Israel they had many opportunities of realising the problem of redemption. From the tremendous host of angels sound forth the words, "Worthy is the lamb that was slain, to receive

Power, and
Riches, and
Wisdom, and
Strength, and

Honour, and
Glory, and
Blessing".

Here is a sevenfold ascription, detailing in heavenly joy the perfections of the Lamb that was slain.

POWER. — He is worthy to receive power. The question is raised, Does this mean that He is worthy of having all these virtues and gifts bestowed upon Him? or is it that He is worthy of being praised as possessing them? That the Lord did possess power before His birth in Bethlehem we know, for Hebrews 1:3 speaks of Him as "upholding all things by the word of His power". The Lord Himself, when He died on Calvary's cross, "was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God" (2 Cor. 13:4). That risen life marked Him off as "the Son of God with power" (Rom 1:4), and His resurrection was the source from which His believing children draw their power (Phil. 3:10).

In the three Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, the words of the Lord are recorded concerning His coming in the clouds with power and great glory. His High Priesthood is in the power of an endless life (Heb. 7:16). The host of heaven say that the Lamb is worthy to receive power. We take this here in a literal sense. The Lord had been exalted to the highest place of glory, graced with the name that is above every name, that at that name every knee should bow; here in Revelation 5 the myriads of adoring ministering spirits acclaim His worthiness to receive this sevenfold blessing. Power had been given to others, but how unworthy had they proved themselves to be of the

trust. We read of the powers of the heavens which are to be shaken, the power of the enemy which was used for the hurt of human kind. There shall yet be manifested "power and signs and lying wonders" in the earth, when the dragon gives to the beast "his power, and his throne, and his great authority" (2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:2). This last reference supplies the parallel with our subject; just as God will give to the Lamb "power," and He is acclaimed as worthy to receive it, so the dragon at the last feels that in the beast he has one who is worthy to receive his power, and his throne; and just as the Lamb Who receives this power is "as it had been slain," so of the beast it is written in Revelation 13:3,4:

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded (same word 'slain') unto death, and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast, and they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"

The parallel between these two passages is very marked and needs no further comment. The power given to the Lamb has special reference to His kingdom, and in chapter 11:17 we catch an echo of the new song, when the Lord God Almighty takes to Himself His great power and reigns.

The same age-time lesson is here which we learnt from seeing a Lamb, as it had been slain, in the place where we might have expected a Lion. In all heaven and earth none is so worthy to receive *power* as the Lamb, and that Lamb the One who was dumb before His accusers and was crucified through weakness.

RICHES. — What we have said of power may also be said of riches; the Lord was rich, yet for our sakes became poor; He is worthy therefore to receive riches. When we try to think of the "riches in glory," or "the unsearchable riches of Christ," we cannot find words to express even our puny conceptions, but we glory in the fact that He Who sits upon heaven's throne and rules this poor cursed earth in righteousness and peace, is worthy to receive the coveted power and riches which no one yet has possessed without failing somewhere in his stewardship. The gold that the Lord counselled Laodicea to buy, was "gold tried in the

fire, that thou mayest be rich"; such is the character of all the riches that He will receive.

So we may consider all the rest. The *wisdom* that is first pure, then peaceable, is His; the *strength* that is His will never be used but in the cause of righteousness. *Honour* and *glory* constituted His crown "for the suffering of death" (Heb 2:9), and His priesthood's consecration on the mount of transfiguration (2 Peter 1:17). Glory and honour also pertained to Him as the Son of man beneath Whose feet shall be subjected all things. Finally comes:

BLESSING. — As we listen to this acclamation, our minds are impelled backward into the history of the past. We think of those who have received from God glory and honour, riches and wisdom, power and blessing. Among those that stand out in this connection are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar — yet, wide as the difference between these individuals may be, and worthy as some are of our imitation, all were creatures, and all were fallen, none were "*worthy to receive*" the blessings that had been bestowed. How different it is with the Lamb of God! God blessed Adam, but how soon Adam involved himself and his seed in the curse! He was not worthy. God blessed Noah and his sons, but how soon the father's curse falls! God gave wisdom to Solomon, yet consider his end! All, all are unworthy, heaven's song is true, "Worthy is the Lamb".

This song, begun in heaven, is taken up by all creation. From the heavenly side, power comes first, leading on to blessing; from the standpoint of universal creation, blessing comes first and might last. This fourfold ascription taken up by the wider circle of all created things in the four divisions of the universe (heaven, earth, under the earth, and sea), is addressed to "Him that sitteth upon the throne," as well as "unto the Lamb".

The universal praise that ascends to the throne, commencing with the four living ones, and the twenty-four elders, extending to the myriads of heaven's angels, then taken up in turn by every creature in every sphere of creation, is gathered up again from whence it came by the solemn *Amen* of the four living ones, and the worship of the four and twenty elders.

All is now ready, the Lamb has been acclaimed, He alone

was worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals, the solemn hour has struck, and with the noise of thunder the Lamb opened one of the seals, and the “day of vengeance” began.

Before passing on to the scenes of judgment, let us pause awhile to catch the joy and delight that seem to echo through the words of praise, “for He is worthy, Amen and Amen”.

CHAPTER 8

The Beginning of Sorrows

Revelation 6

The Lamb has taken the seven-sealed book from the hand of Him who sits upon the throne, ten thousand times ten thousand have acclaimed His worthiness and ascribed to Him power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. The Apostle now watches the opening of the seals, and describes what he sees as a result. It will be seen that the first six seals are opened consecutively and without pause, but a whole chapter intervenes between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals; we shall therefore give our attention to the six seals as contained in chapter 6.

It is at once evident upon reading this chapter through, that these six seals are divided between (1) judgments and (2) martyrdom:

A 6:1-8. The four horses. — Judgments under false Christ

B 9-11. Martyrs. — Cry for vengeance

A 12-17. Signs in heaven. — Wrath of the Lamb.

What are we to understand by these symbols? What volumes have been written in the attempt to interpret them! We do not intend wasting our limited space in refuting the interpretations of the "historic school" (the various writers do that so completely themselves), but we would most humbly and sincerely seek to follow the inspired rule, and "explain spiritual things by spiritual words," keeping within the covers of the book for all the material necessary for the interpretation. What help can we get regarding these four horses? Every one acquainted with the *Minor Prophets* (and such only can hope to begin to understand the imagery of the *Apocalypse*) will immediately turn to the prophecy of Zechariah. In chapter one of his prophecy, Zechariah says:

“I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white. Then said I, O my lord, what are these? ... These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth, and they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest” (verses 8-11).

Before reading on further, we will turn to the corresponding vision described in chapter 6:

“And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass. In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses; then I answered and said unto the angel that talked to me, What are these, my Lord? And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth” (verses 1-5).

Coming back to chapter one we find that the narrative continues with a prayer for mercy upon Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah upon which the Lord had indignation for threescore and ten years; the Lord answered, using good and comfortable words. God reveals His jealousy for Zion, and His sore displeasure with the nations who had gone beyond the little displeasure of the Lord, and had “helped forward the affliction”; the vision finishes with the promise that the Lord shall yet comfort Zion and shall yet choose Jerusalem. The vision of chapter 6 is preceded by the prophecy concerning the building of a house for the ephah in the land of Shinar (Babylon), and is followed by the prophecy concerning Christ who shall build the temple of the Lord.

We can now return to Revelation 6 and understand that the four horses and their riders are also “the four spirits of the heavens”. By comparing chapters 6 and 7 and onwards we find the following structure emerges, from which it appears that the judgments represented by the four horsemen will really be the ministry of angels, and that the fellow-servants of the martyrs are the 144,000 sealed ones and the great multitude.

- A 6:1-8. Four horses; commissioned to let loose God's four sore judgments on the earth
- B 6:9-11. The martyrs; the cry for vengeance; their fellow-servants to be killed; white robes to be given them
- C 6:12-17. Signs in heaven; the great day of wrath
- A 7:1-3. Four angels; commissioned to hurt the earth, the sea, and the trees
- B 7:4-17. The 144,000 sealed; the great multitude out of the great tribulation; white robes
- C 8:19. The seven trumpets and vials; the wrath of Almighty God.

The wrath of the Lamb, the great day of wrath, the wonderful signs in the heavens, and the effect upon the kings, captains, and mighty men, epitomised under the sixth seal, are given at greater length and fuller detail in the chapters that follow, concluding with the personal coming of Christ, the wrath of Almighty God, and the kings, captains, and mighty men who suffer under this judgment, as shown in chapter 19.

We will now once more leave the book of the Revelation to obtain further light from the prophecy of Christ himself recorded in Matthew 24. There is an indirect link with Zechariah's prophecy in the prophecy of Olivet, by the reference to the *house* being left desolate, and its stones being overthrown. The disciples asked the Lord, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming (*parousia*) and of the end (*sunteleia*) of the age?" This threefold question receives a threefold answer, but the answers do not follow the order of the questions, but the reverse; the first answer deals with the end (*sunteleia*) of the age (verses 4-22); the second answer deals with the sign of the coming (*parousia*) (verses 23-31); the third answer is the parable of the Fig Tree, which, by saying, "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors," answers the first question, "When shall these things be?" (verses 32,33).

Let us now take note of the Lord's answers in fuller detail. There shall be false Christs (verse 5). Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars ... the end (*telos*) not yet (verse 6). Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places (verse 7). All these are the beginning of sorrows (verse 8).

The disciples had asked, "What shall be the sign ... of the end of the world?" The word "end" here is the Greek *sunteleia*, a word in common use, occurring in the Septuagint at Exodus 23:16 and there translated "The feast of the ingathering". The disciples evidently knew that harvest set forth in type the end of the age.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (Matt. 24:29,30).

We turned, it will be remembered, to this prophecy for further light upon Revelation 6. By placing the records in parallel columns we shall easily see that Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 cover the same ground:

Matthew 24	Prophecies and Seals.	Revelation 6
Verses 4,5.	False Christs.	Verses 1,2.
6,7.	Wars.	3,4.
7.	Famines.	5,6.
7.	Pestilences.	7,8.
"All these are	the beginning of sorrows".	
9-28.	Martyrs.	9-11.
29,30.	Signs in heaven.	12-17.
	The Lord's coming.	

We have now cleared the way for investigating the meaning of these signs; we have both the testimony of Matthew 24 and of Zechariah to prevent us from giving a second thought to the multitude of "fulfilments" that have been culled from the history of Rome onwards, and find in the reference to Daniel 9 in Matthew 24 a point of time around which these events are grouped.

As members of the One Body we have a hope entirely unconnected with "signs," yet the argument is irresistible, that if the signs of the consummation of the age are appearing upon the horizon (be they as yet no larger than a man's hand), then our hope is so much nearer its realisation. May we all live ... looking for that blessed hope.

Following the latest Greek texts, the first verse reads:

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living ones saying, as with a voice of thunder, Go!" (Rev 6:1).

The words “and see” are omitted and the verb *erchomai* being translated by either “come” or “go” the context alone can decide. If the living ones said “Come,” the response would be, “he came forth”; as it is, the wording is, “he went forth,” showing that the verb in this case is the command “Go!”

We have considered the teaching of the Old Testament prophecies, particularly Zechariah, in connection with these horsemen; we will now deal with the actual visions themselves.

In Matthew 24 we read not of one false christ, but many, not one war or one famine or one pestilence, but many. We shall, therefore, have to be careful when viewing these seals that we do not read anything of our own into them. There will be one false christ, and one false prophet when the end is in sight, but the “beginning” of sorrows is ushered in by the many false christs — which are here symbolised under the figure of the white horse.

“A *White Horse*”. — Here is the parody of Revelation 19:11-16. There we read:

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse: and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war ... and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (Rev. 19:11-14).

The rider in Revelation 6 has a bow, and is thereby linked with another vision of the revelation of Christ, that is, Psalm 45:4,5. “In Thy majesty ride prosperously ... Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the King’s enemies”. While the bow is of frequent mention in the Old Testament, it is mentioned only once in the New Testament. A passage from Hosea seems to point the meaning of the symbol:

“I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen” (1:7).

This statement rules out the four horsemen of Revelation 6. These are not the divine instruments of Israel’s restoration. What was true of the first inheritance will be true of the last.

“They got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them ... I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me” (Psa. 44:3-6).

The false messiahs will be no saviours, they will go forth conquering in order that they might conquer. The object is here stated, “in order that” (*hina*) he might conquer. Like the beast of Revelation 13 and like all his pre-shadowings down the age, these grasp at world dominion and seek it by right of conquest. The crown that is given to the rider is a triumphal crown (*stephanos*), indicating victory or conquest.

The next horseman that rides forth is seated upon a *red* horse. The horse symbolises war. To the rider are given two things, the one a symbol of the other. It was given to him to take peace from the earth in order that they should kill each other; and there was given to him a great sword. The sword is the first of God’s great sore judgments.

“The sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast” (Ezek. 14:21).

When the true Christ was born, the angels said, “on earth peace” (Luke 2:14), but the world despised Him, hated Him and crucified Him. The false christ ushers in war, and takes peace away from the earth. No war ever fought will “end war”; that is one of the awful mockeries of the times we live in. Nothing but the coming of the Prince of Peace will be sufficient guarantee that the nations shall “learn war” no more. The peace is taken from the earth with a purpose, “in order that they should kill each other”. Nation rises against nation, kingdom against kingdom, and wear themselves down in their blind hatred and impotence. All these things, as current events demonstrate, make the universal kingdom of the Beast a necessity, and a welcome proposition to the war-worn nations. One of the features connected with the great Dictator at the time of the end, will be a false peace. They shall say “peace and safety” while catastrophe is imminent (1 Thess. 5:3). This threat is associated with the possession of some paralysing power, for the universal admission will be, “Who is able to

make war with him?" (Rev. 13:4). This power could well be some secret development of atomic weapons as the signs of the times indicate.

Following in natural sequence we have the *black* horse. Desire for conquest, then war, then famine; how true this order has always been. The rider of this horse holds neither a bow nor a great sword, he holds a balance in his hand. Black denotes famine in Scripture symbolism.

"Their visage is blacker than coal ... they that be slain by the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger; for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field".

"We gat our bread with the peril of our lives, because of the sword of the wilderness. Our skins were black like an oven because of the terrible famine" (Lam. 4:8,9; 5:9,10).

The balance indicates the need of scrupulous care because of famine. When Ezekiel foreshadowed the siege of Jerusalem he had to eat his meat by "weight," and his water he had to drink "by measure" (Ezek. 4:9-11; *see also* verse 16 and 12:16-19). This is an expression in direct contrast with "eat and be full" of Deuteronomy 6:11, etc.. The extent and nature of the famine is indicated by the words, "one choenix of wheat for a denarius, and three choenixes of barley for a denarius". A denarius was a day's wage (Matt. 20:2,9), and a choenix was nearly a quart. Numerous citations from Greek writers show that this measure was the daily ration of a slave. An attic medimnus of grain cost five or six denarii. A choenix was the forty-eighth part of a medimnus and cost one-eighth of a denarius. Here therefore is a statement of famine prices. The cost of daily food advanced to 800 per cent. The command also to injure not the oil and the wine indicates that extreme care must be taken with these by reason of the great shortage of the staff of life.

The fourth horse is described as *pale*. The word *chloros* means a colour like that of a young shoot of vegetation, i.e., a palish green; evidently a hue inclining to the *cadaverous* is here meant (Moses Stuart, *in loco.*). The name of the rider is given, *ho thanatos*, "death," and in immediate association comes *hades*. Christ, by virtue of His redemption, claims the keys of death and hades. When the

dead are raised to stand before the great white throne, we read, "death and hades gave up the dead which were in them," and finally, "death and hades were cast into the lake of fire" (20:13,14). Both death and hades are spoken of as having a dominion. These forces and authorities of darkness are given a dreadful liberty of action in the closing days of the age.

"And there was given to him authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth" (Rev. 6:8).

To kill by "death" is a figure, a figure indicating pestilence and plague, death in its most awful form. The Septuagint renders the Hebrew word for pestilence by *thanatos* ("death") more than thirty times, and so enables us to see the meaning of the word here.

We have in these four horsemen and their followers a series of symbols setting forth the sign of the *sunteleia* of the age and the "beginning of sorrows". War, famine, pestilence, wild beasts, with death and hades exercising their dread authority. What a blessing to know Him Who has the keys of death and hades, and to look across this darkening nightfall of a ruined world to the day when death and hades shall be cast into the great destructor together with all things that offend. These are the beginning of sorrows, but they do not last for ever. Greater judgments have yet to follow them, nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The first four seals are connected together by the reference to the four living creatures. The fifth seal is not connected with them, and must be considered as a separate subject. While viewing this seal as something separate, we must remember that the words of verse nine link this with the awful times of the first four seals.

"And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the Word of God, and because of the testimony which they held" (Rev. 6:9).

An altar is literally "a place of sacrifice". It occurs in 8:3 and 5; 9:13; 11:1; 14:18 and 16:7. The first and last

occurrences have much in common. We read that the third angel poured out his vial, and the angel of the waters said:

“Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments” (Rev. 16:5-7).

While this last reference is parallel with the first, the idea of judgment is connected with several of the remaining passages. The dispensation of grace, with its spirit of longsuffering and meekness, has led the enemies of truth to a fatal misunderstanding. The God who said, “Avenge not yourselves,” said also, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay”. To the wicked God said, “These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself ... now consider ... lest I tear you in pieces” (Psa. 50:21,22). The long deferred “day of vengeance” (see Luke 4:19,20) is linked with the comforting of Zion (Isa. 61:2,3). So also in Isaiah 63:4, “For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed is come”. “The day of the Lord’s vengeance” is linked with “the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion” (Isa. 34:8). The Kinsman-Redeemer is also the Avenger of blood, both in type and anti-type.

The opening of the fifth seal is marked with a cry for vengeance. The Apostle says that he saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain. It surely indicates poverty of argument when such a passage is used to support the traditional teaching concerning the soul, and we do not remember ever reading that anyone who has used this passage to support the teaching of the soul’s conscious existence after death has ever brought together the seven occurrences of the word “soul” in the Revelation. We do not believe that in such a book as the Revelation we shall find teaching concerning the nature of the soul, and as Moses Stuart remarks, “It would be as apposite to undertake a demonstration that the trees and brambles can talk, from the fable of Jotham, as it would to undertake the proof of the material nature of the soul from the representation before us”. The seven occurrences of *psuche* are:

“The *souls* of those who had been slain” (6:9).
“The creatures, which were in the sea, and had *life* died” (8:9).
“And they loved not their *lives* unto the death” (12:11).
“And every living *soul* died in the sea” (16:3).
“And bodies and *souls* of men” (18:13).
“The fruits that thy *soul* lusted after” (18:14).
“The *souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus” (20:4).

The way in which the word is brought in in 6:9 and 20:4, together with 12:11, should cause us to hesitate to generalise the passages, and in effect to render the word unnecessary. We believe a richer lesson lies awaiting us than can be discovered by considering this word merely as a figure of speech. There is a most definite doctrine of Scripture concerning the *soul* that has not received sufficient notice. We do not refer to the teaching of the Word as to the nature of the soul, but the teaching concerning the losing and saving of the soul:

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For, whosoever shall save his *soul* shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his *soul* for My sake shall find it” (Matt. 16:24-26).

In Hebrews 10:39 we read, “But we are not of those shrinking back unto destruction; but of faith unto obtaining (as of a purchased possession, Eph. 1:14) of soul”. This is directly connected with, “taking joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance,” and is illustrated by the examples of Hebrews 11 (see verses 8, 9, 10, 24-26), and in Hebrews 12:2, by the greatest example of all. The giving up in this life is rewarded by joy in the next life. The losing of the soul here ensures the finding of it there. 1 Peter 1:9 links the salvation of the soul with the theme of suffering followed by glory, “of which salvation,” “the sufferings for Christ and the glories that should follow,” and “the grace that is to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ” are wondrously related.

It is because John had to teach this truth, that he tells us that he saw not the dead bodies, but the souls of the martyrs under the altar. Here, these suffering saints “lost their souls” for Christ’s sake. In chapter 20:4 John again

saw “the souls” of these martyrs glorified — they had “found them,” as the Lord had promised. This is a lesson worth the learning, and lies very near the heart of the *Apocalypse*, tracing as the book does the “overcomer” through suffering to glory. These martyrs were slain on account of the Word of God, and on account of the testimony which they held. Four times do we find the “testimony” and the “Word” together in the Revelation, namely:

John’s testimony to the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ (1:2).

John in tribulation and patience for the kingdom of Jesus, in the isle of Patmos for the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus (1:9).

John sees under the altar the souls of those slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held (6:9).

John sees on thrones those who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the Word of God (20:4).

It will be seen that to hold this testimony in the days of the Revelation will mean suffering and death. This is further emphasised in the seventeenth verse of chapter twelve, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus,” and here the dragon himself is seen to be the great persecutor. God views the death of these witnesses as sacrifices — their souls are seen under the altar, they have “loved not their lives unto the death”. Their cry ascends to God, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and take vengeance for our blood from them that dwell upon the earth”. The church of God cannot cry to God for vengeance, such is not in harmony with its calling. When the day of grace closes, and the day of vengeance sets in, then the cry will be right and proper, and the “Imprecatory Psalms” and the many prophecies of vengeance will be fulfilled. Those upon whom vengeance is called are “them that dwell on the earth”. Reference is made to these earth dwellers in very awful and solemn settings. We give the passages in order that this special title may receive the attention that seems its due.

The earth dwellers

- 3:10. Speaks of the hour of temptation about to come on such.
- 6:10. Vengeance for blood shed is called down on them.
- 8:13. An angel flies in mid-heaven saying, Woe, woe, woe to them.
- 11:10. They rejoice over the death of the two witnesses.
- 11:10. Who had tormented them.
- 13:8. They shall worship the beast. Their names not written in the Lamb's book of life.
- 13:12. They are made to worship the beast by the false prophet.
- 13:14. They are deceived by his numerous signs.
- 13:14. They are told to make an image to the beast.
- 14:6. An angel flies in mid-heaven with the *aionian* gospel to them.
- 17:2. They were made drunk with the woman's wine, which is likened to the blood of the martyrs (verse 6).
- 17:8. They shall wonder at the beast. Their names not written in the book of life.

The only gleam in the gloomy list is 14:6, and then we have no warrant for believing that the "earth dwellers" obey this primeval gospel, although we believe many of those who are differentiated from them (*see* 14:6, "and unto every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people") will fear God in the hour of His judgment.

In answer to the cry of the martyred witnesses we read:

"And there was given to each one a white robe, and it was said to them, that they should rest yet for a time until both their fellow-servants and their brethren that were about to be killed as they also had been, fill up *the appointed number*" (Rev. 6:11).

The following passages will make clear the reason why these martyred saints were given white robes:

"Nevertheless, thou hast a few names in Sardis which defiled not their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. *He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments*" (3:4,5).

"A great multitude ... arrayed with white robes, and palm branches in their hand" (7:9).

"These are they who come out of the Great Tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white through the blood of the Lamb" (7:14).

To each of the unavenged martyrs is given a symbol of the overcomer. "They are worthy," "They overcame because of the blood of the Lamb" (12:11). They are bidden

to rest yet for a time. Their fellow-sufferers who were to be killed as they had been were also said to "rest from their labours, for their works follow with them" (14:13). God, Who allows His witnesses to be put to death for their testimony, knows them each one. Knows the number that must suffer, looks upon their faithfulness as an acceptable sacrifice with reward in view. The guilty world little dreams that the blood they shed cries for vengeance. It does, and when iniquity reaches its height again in a rebuilt Babylon, judgment falls. Blessed are they who in that day hold the testimony of the Lord, blessed are they who are kept out of that hour, blessed are they whose hope shall anticipate the fall of vengeance, blessed are they who in every dispensation "hold fast the faithful word".

"And I saw when He opened the sixth seal, and there was a great shaking, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, as the fig tree casteth her untimely figs when shaken by a mighty wind, and the heaven was separated (from its place) as a scroll rolling itself up; and every island and mountain 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 free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the mountains. And they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Because the great day of His wrath is come, and who is able to stand" (6:12-17).

THE GREAT SHAKING. — Although the word *seismos* may be rendered "earthquake" with truth in many passages, the primitive idea ("a shaking") will fit the context better in this case. Seven times do we find the earthquake or *seismos* mentioned in the Revelation itself, and as we desire to provide every facility for arriving at a true conclusion, we will set them out first.

The "shaking" upon the opening of the sixth seal (6:12).

The result of the angel's scattering of fire on the earth, before the seven trumpets were sounded (8:5).

The reviving of the two witnesses is followed by an earthquake, when the tenth of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain 7,000 men (11:13).

The result of the temple being opened in heaven (11:19).

The result of the pouring out of the seventh bowl. This earthquake is the greatest ever known (16:18).

It will be seen that this “shaking” is connected with the presence of the Lord either on the throne, in the temple, or manifesting Himself in the raising up of the two witnesses, and in every case judgment is imminent. There is evident allusion in Revelation 6:12,13 to the times spoken of by Joel 2:10,11:

“The earth shall quake before them, the heavens shall tremble: the sun and moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining ... for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it?”

A further reference to similar phenomena is found in Joel 2:30,31, which Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost, and declared that the outpouring of the spirit which had then taken place was the fulfilling of Joel 2:28,29. The complete prophecy of Joel has not yet been fulfilled, but a sevenfold beginning was made, leaving the wonders in heaven and earth to take place in the Day of the Lord.

It will be remembered that the mighty earthquake that ushers in great Babylon’s judgment in Revelation 16 is preceded by the gathering of the whole world to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. The armies are gathered into the place called *Har-mageddon*. In Joel 3:9-16 there is a proclamation of “Holy War” (see margin verse 9), and the Gentiles are gathered for judgment. There again we read:

“The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake”.

In the thirteenth chapter of Isaiah we have *The burden of Babylon*. The reader should read from the commencement of the chapter, noting parallels with Joel 3. In verses 9-11 and 19, we read:

“Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger ... for the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil ... therefore will I shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger ... and Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah”.

When considering the cry for vengeance under the fifth seal, we quoted Isaiah 34:8, which links the day of the Lord's vengeance with the year of the recompense for the controversy of Zion. The same chapter is an Old Testament prophecy of the effect of the opening of the sixth seal.

"The indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies ... all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree ... for it is the day of the Lord's vengeance ... Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you" (Isa. 34:1-8; 35:4).

A terrible shaking awaits the nations of the earth. Even in the present day, as we see thrones and crowns on the brink of collapse, what word so expresses the state of the nations and kingdoms as the words of Haggai, "I will shake all nations"?

"For thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Yet first, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Hag. 2:6,7).

Here is the blessing of Israel. The closely-related "vengeance" on the nations is found in Haggai 2:21,22, "I will shake the heavens and the earth: And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations". In the epistle to the Hebrews we see that the shaking of the earth looks back to Sinai, while the shaking of the heavens "once for all" looks forward to a far more violent and far-reaching visitation, the inspired comment being, "*Yet once for all* denotes the removal of the things that may be shaken, as of things that have been made, so that the things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Heb. 12:25-29).

Coming now, with all these prophecies, to Matthew 24, the key prophecy, we shall be able to locate the sixth seal in the Divine plan.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven” (verses 29,30).

No mention is made in this passage of the shaking of the nations, but this is supplied by Luke:

“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh ... for these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled ... until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken; and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory” (21:20-27).

It will be observed that in Matthew 24:29 we have a distinct point of time indicated. The tribulation is immediately followed by the shaking and the signs in heaven. Therefore we can with certainty say that the great tribulation takes place either at the breaking of the fifth seal, or before the opening of the sixth. If this be so, then, still following the order of Matthew 24:15, the *Abomination of desolation* must find its place somewhere between the fourth and sixth seals, and consequently Revelation 13 must be assigned a place here. It appears, therefore, that although there are seven seals upon the scroll, six of them exhaust the period of its prophecy. The sixth seal takes us to a period of time, when kings, great men, and bond and free shall flee to hide from the wrath of the Lamb. The period which is reached by the sixth seal is called, “The great day of His wrath”. We are led on by a different series of events to the same end when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, for again the period is given, “Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged” (11:18).

The record of the seven angels who have the seven vials gives us fuller details of this period of “wrath” (6:17, 11:18), for they have the seven golden vials full of the wrath of God. At the opening of the seventh seal, upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and upon the pouring out of the seventh vial, we have voices, thunderings,

lightnings, and an earthquake or shaking (8:5; 11:19; 16:18). These three series of seals, trumpets and vials are each connected with the temple (8:3-5; 11:19; 16:1,17).

We have devoted time to this particular section because of the need there is to seek an answer to the question, "Do the seven trumpets, and the remaining prophecies of the Revelation, take place after the sixth seal *in order of time*, or do they go back and give fuller details of the period covered by the six seals?" The fact that the abomination of desolation and the great tribulation come before the opening of the sixth seal, necessarily brings some of the later chapters into the period covered by chapter 6, and considering also the manner in which each series of seals, trumpets, and vials ends, we cannot help but feel that the teaching is the true one which sees in the six seals the large outline of events, and in the subsequent trumpets and vials the fuller details of the same period.

In the rendering of Revelation 6:12-17, which appears on page 108, it will be observed that there comes the expression, "the *whole* moon became as blood". If we consider this as meaning what is known as the full moon, we shall miss the important connexion with the events of the fourth trumpet. When the fourth angel sounded, the *third* part of the sun was smitten and the *third* part of the moon. Just as God in His dealings with Pharaoh held back the threatened judgment upon the firstborn until the very last, so here we can see that the sounding of the fourth trumpet, though mentioned after the opening of the sixth seal, is really before it in point of time.

Again, at the conclusion of this fourth trumpet an eagle flies through mid heaven with cries of *Woe*. Under the fourth seal men repent not, neither give God glory. This seems connected with the record of chapter 14:6, which speaks of an angel flying through mid heaven with the *aionian* gospel, calling upon the earth dwellers to give glory to God.

May the revelation of these realities stir us up to diligent prayerful service, and steadfast faith during the days in which we are called upon to witness.

The minds of men are beginning to visualise what is likely to be coming on the earth, and however fantastic the following advertisement may appear to us to-day, there is

nevertheless an anticipation of what will happen at the breaking of the sixth seal, when men will hide themselves "in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains" (Rev. 6:15), when the great day of wrath shall have come.

Atomic haven

THIS ADVERTISEMENT appeared in a Washington newspaper: "Mountain safety. Are you seeking haven for atomic crisis? Colonies now forming in Ozark Mountain area; ideal refuges; accessible caves".

CHAPTER 9

The Sealing of the 144,000

Revelation 7:1-8

Before the inspired record deals with the opening of the seventh seal, two episodes are introduced; one, the sealing of the 144,000; the other, the great multitude before the throne.

There is nothing in the wording of the passage to tell us definitely just where to place these visions in relation to the seals. The words with which chapter 7 commences are (according to the best texts and the Revised Version) *after this*, and not "after these things"; there is therefore no necessity to take the sealing as occurring after the sixth seal in point of time. In verses 1 and 2 reference is made to four angels who had received commandment to injure the earth, the sea, and the trees by the instrumentality of the four winds of the earth:

"And I saw another angel ascending from the sun-rising, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea: saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads".

We do not read anything that exactly answers to this hurting of the earth, sea and trees in any of the happenings following upon the opening of the six seals. In the sixth seal there is a most awful convulsion or shaking, but this seems to be the result of something other than the wind. In chapter 9 the fifth angel sounds and locusts come out upon the earth:

"And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (9:4).

Here, by implication, we see the 144,000, for they are contrasted with the unsealed ones.

Let us now turn to the prophet Ezekiel to see whether we

can obtain any light from his prophecy. The first twelve chapters of Ezekiel are taken up with the desolateness of Jerusalem and Israel, even as the concluding thirteen are taken up with the restoration. Chapter one is full of teaching concerning *four living creatures* (the very same name as the four *beasts*, or living ones, of Revelation). Ezekiel receives his commission to go to the rebellious house of Israel, and in chapter 4 he prophesies, by means of a symbol, the siege of Jerusalem; there we find a parallel with the third seal:

“I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight and with care, and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment” (4:16).

In chapter 5 Ezekiel is bidden to take a sharp sword, “as a barber’s razor shalt thou take it,” and with it used in this fashion he is told to cut off some of his hair and beard. The hair was divided into three parts, one-third to be burned in the city, one-third to be smitten with the sword, and the remaining third scattered to the wind, and the Lord said, “I will draw out a sword after them”. A few in number were to be taken and bound in the prophet’s skirts. These signs are interpreted in verse 12:

“A third part of thee shall die with pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee (*see the first four seals of Rev. 6*), and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them” (this emphasis upon the *third part* is also found in Rev. 8).

No mention is made in this passage of those typified by the small portion of hair bound in the prophet’s skirt; in chapters 6 and 7, however, a hint is given by the reference to a “remnant” that “escape” (6:8; 7:16). Chapters 8-11 are taken up with the sins of Israel with reference to the temple, and a series of “abominations” are shown to the prophet. In chapter 9:4-6 the Lord commanded:

“Go through the midst of Jerusalem, and *set a mark upon the foreheads* of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof, and to the others He said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women; *but come not near any man upon whom is the mark*: and begin at My Sanctuary”.

Without pursuing this section further, it will be seen that we have a close parallel to the sealing of the 144,000 in the book of Revelation. We cannot but feel that they, too, will be marked off as ones that sigh and that cry because of THE abomination that maketh desolate. The sealing of these saints of God is in direct contrast with the branding of the beast (Rev. 13:16-18; 14:9-11; 16:2; 19:20). God's own are "sealed," the devil's own are "marked" or "branded". John tells us that he "heard the number of the sealed," and the 144,000 (12,000 for each tribe) must be taken literally. Again in 9:16, a far more "figurative" sounding number is given, that is, "two hundred thousand thousand!" yet the Apostle solemnly declares, "I heard the number of them". When the number is beyond computation he has said so, e.g., "whose number is AS the sand of the sea" (20:8), or even more to the point, in the very next vision to the 144,000 he sees a multitude "that no man could number". Moses Stuart says, "That the number in this case is *symbolical*, and not to be literally taken, seems scarcely necessary to remark"; the same writer, however, when speaking of the order of the names of the twelve tribes, makes the observation, "There are no two cases in the whole Bible where the *order* and *number* are the same". The following table may be useful as a guide to the underlying reasons for this variation of what at first would seem to be a fixed subject (*see next page*).

We have not attempted to set out all the lists that occur in the Scriptures as the foregoing will be sufficient for our purpose. The first, the order of birth, needs no comment. Where the order differs from this one, however, an explanation seems necessary. The omission of Levi from four of the lists (Nos. 4-7) is explained in Joshua 18:7, "The Levites have no part among you, for the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance". These four lists deal with the earthly inheritance. Levi finds a place in No. 8 which deals with the heavenly inheritance. Ephraim is omitted in No. 8, but Joseph is named, while in Nos. 4-7 Joseph is omitted. Numbers 13:11 explains the omission of Joseph's name, "Of the tribe of Joseph, namely of the tribe of Manasseh". This also would stand good in an opposite sense in No. 8, and Joseph would there stand for Ephraim, Manasseh being mentioned by name. The omission of Simeon from

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Birth. (Gen. 29; 30; 35)	Jacob's Blessing. (Gen. 49)	Moses' Blessing. (Deut. 33)	The Numbering. (Num. 1)	The Spies. (Num. 13)	Division of Canaan. (Joshua 13-19)	The Inheritance. (Ezek. 48)	144,000 Sealed. (Rev. 7)
Reuben Simeon Levi Judah Dan Naphtali Gad Asher Issachar Zebulon Joseph Benjamin	Reuben Simeon Levi Judah Zebulon Issachar Dan Gad Asher Naphtali Joseph Benjamin	Reuben Judah Levi Benjamin Joseph Zebulon Issachar Gad Dan Naphtali Asher (Simeon omitted)	Reuben Simeon Judah Issachar Zebulon Ephraim Manasseh Benjamin Dan Asher Gad Naphtali (Levi and Joseph omitted)	Reuben Simeon Judah Issachar Ephraim Benjamin Zebulon Manasseh Dan Asher Naphtali Gad (Levi and Joseph omitted)	Reuben Gad Manasseh Judah Ephraim Benjamin Simeon Zebulon Issachar Asher Naphtali Dan (Levi and Joseph omitted)	Dan Asher Naphtali Manasseh Ephraim Reuben Judah Benjamin Simeon Issachar Zebulon Gad (Levi and Joseph omitted)	Judah Reuben Gad Asher Naphtali Manasseh Simeon Levi Issachar Zebulon Joseph Benjamin (Dan and Ephraim omitted)

the blessing of Moses is explained by *The Companion Bible*, in a note on Deuteronomy 33:7, saying, "Judah includes Simeon by Figure of *Synecdoche*; for their inheritance and blessing were one".

Why is Dan omitted from No. 8? The sealing was that of *all* the tribes of the children of Israel (Rev. 7:4). Dan is by no means excluded from blessing, as may be seen in No. 7, for the very first to be assigned its position is this tribe. Dan was the first tribe to set up idolatry after the entry into the land, but it must not be forgotten that before Dan's image was made, Aaron and all the tribes had been involved in the matter of the golden calf. Again, while Dan may have been the first to lapse into idolatry, what tribe is there that is clear from that sin?

The promises of the Revelation are addressed to persons, and are related to personal actions; they take no account of either the good or the bad record of the person's ancestry. It is essentially "to HIM that overcometh". It may seem strange that not one individual of the tribe of Dan should have been found worthy to receive the seal of the living God, but it is possible that in the light of the fulfilment of this passage abundant reason will be found. If, as some believe, Antichrist is to be of the tribe of Dan, that would possibly have some influence on the tribe as a whole, but this has to be proved, and we prefer to wait. We do not expect to see the fulfilment of this passage, believing that the blessed hope of the calling wherewith we have been called will have been realised before the Day of the Lord sets in; the church of the one Body has no promise that any of its members will be sealed in their foreheads, but the same principle obtains in this dispensation as in that of the Revelation, as the teaching of Philippians 3 bears witness.

There are some commentators of standing and repute who have, notwithstanding the definite statement of the early part of Revelation 7, interpreted the 144,000 of the tribes of the children of Israel as of the church.

It will be remembered that we considered this passage and gave evidence that the statements of the chapter were to be taken literally. We now approach the second part of the chapter, and the questions arise, "Is the great multitude the church? Are they Gentiles?" By far the great majority of writers take it for granted that this company is composed

of saved Gentiles. This we question, and ask the reader to reserve his judgment until we have examined the Scriptures together. It is no argument to produce Scripture to show that the Gentiles will be blessed through Israel — that is a blessed fact, but it does not prove anything here. The words of verse nine are taken to indicate the Gentile character of the great multitude.

“After this, I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues”.

The reader will doubtless be aware that the passage should be rendered, “out of all nations”. We have met with a similar expression in chapter 5:9,10:

“Thou didst purchase for God, by Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and didst make them to our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign over the earth”.

In Chapter 3 we considered the passage, and concluded that this was a redemption of scattered Israel, not out of one nation, nor as at the first from Egypt, but from many nations (Isa. 11:11,12); the fact that those redeemed were to be a kingdom and priests, pointed to Israel also. The great multitude likewise are Israelites gathered *out of every nation*, they too are invested with priestly dignity, “they serve Him day and night IN HIS TEMPLE”. The great multitude were “clothed with white robes”. There is an evident intention in the choice of the word “robes”. Elsewhere in the Revelation we read of “white raiment” (3:4,5,18; 4:4) and “white linen” (15:6; 19:8,14) which have their own significance, but “robes” appear to be associated with martyrdom and its award. The only other mention of robes outside this chapter is in chapter 6:11. Under the fifth seal we heard the cry of the martyrs, to whom was given a white robe, with the injunction to await the vengeance for their blood until their brethren and fellow-servants who should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. When we see the great white-robed multitude, we see the fulfilment of the promise of the fifth seal. The white-robed throng bear palm branches.

Dr. Bullinger in his *Apocalypse* refers back to Leviticus 23:39-43. In that chapter we have the whole of Israel’s history epitomised in the feasts. Commencing with the

birth of the nation at the Passover we follow its course through Pentecost, Harvest, Trumpets, Atonement, and lastly the feast of the Tabernacles. This is also connected with the in-gathering of the fruit, and it is at this point that the palm branches are mentioned. Israel were to dwell in booths or tabernacles for the seven days of the feast. When the true feast of Tabernacles is celebrated it is written, "and He that sitteth on the throne shall TABERNACLE among them" (Rev. 7:15). The reason for the feast of Tabernacles is given in Leviticus 23:43:

"That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT".

The feast of Tabernacles is connected with the "year of release" (Deut. 15:1; 31:10). By comparing Revelation 7,14, and Leviticus 23 together, we arrive at the following. The 144,000 sealed ones are the "FIRST FRUITS UNTO GOD". The great multitude constitute the HARVEST that follows. When we come to study chapter fourteen, we shall have further details given us as to the character of the 144,000, and why some tribes are omitted from the number. The church in Philadelphia had the promise, "Because thou didst keep the word of My patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of temptation". The promise says nothing about keeping out of the "great tribulation" — it speaks of an hour of *temptation*, and a temptation which comes upon all the world to try those that dwell on the earth. This will include the worship of the image, the reception of his name or number, and will involve these earth-dwellers in unclean ceremonies. From all this the overcomers will be kept, and so we read of their undefiled character (Rev. 14:4).

The first-fruit is followed by a glorious harvest. If the 144,000 are sustained during the temptation, the great multitude are enabled to endure the great tribulation. The great multitude come out of "the tribulation, the great one". This we learn from the question that is put by one of the elders, the answer being, "these are they which came out of great tribulation". This great tribulation is the subject of more than one prophecy. Matthew 24:15-22 links it with Daniel's *abomination of desolation* which is distinctly connected with a fearful outbreak against Israel. Daniel 12:1 says:

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a *time of trouble*, such as never was since there was a nation even unto that same time: and at that time *thy people shall be delivered*, every one that shall be found *written in the book*”.

It will be remembered that only those whose names were “written in the book” withstood the pressure which was brought to bear upon them to make them worship the beast, and receive his mark. Jeremiah 30:7 says:

“Alas! for the day is great, so that none is like it, it is even *the time of Jacob’s trouble*, but he shall be saved out of it”.

The white-robed multitude who stand before the throne have come out of the great tribulation, “such as never was,” “so that none is like it,” they come out of that tribulation which oppressed Daniel’s “people” — Israel, which was called “Jacob’s trouble”.

Let us now seek to understand the meaning of the words, “they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”. It is a misconception to speak of this passage as a “standing of works,” in contrast with the “standing in grace” of the present dispensation. The dispensation is certainly different from the present one, but there is no question of a standing in *works* here. These are “overcomers,” whose salvation has been settled for good by the once offered sacrifice of Christ. The epistle to the Hebrews makes this clear, and we cannot find any Scriptural warrant to convince us that any one will be saved, under whatever dispensation he may come, by a mingling of works and faith — the blood of Christ is spoken of four times in the Revelation:

“Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by *His Own blood*, and made us a kingdom and priests to His God and Father” (1:5,6).

“Thou wast slain, and didst redeem back to God, by *Thy blood*, out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation, and Thou didst make them to our God a kingdom and priests, and they shall reign on the earth” (5:9,10).

“They washed their robes and made them white by the *blood of the Lamb*, because of this are they before the throne of God” (7:14,15).

“And they overcame him because of the *blood of the Lamb*, and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death” (12:11).

Let us notice the facts here recorded, and the order of their development. First is the redemption of the priestly nation, stated without any details except the fact of the redemption and the goal towards which that redemption was directed:

From sins ... by His blood ... a kingdom and priests.

Secondly, the added item is now given that this redemption was not only from sins, but from exile and banishment, "out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation"; further, the sphere of their priestly kingdom is indicated, "they shall reign on, or over, the earth". So far nothing has been said concerning the personal faithfulness of those redeemed, these two passages speak of *all Israel*. The book of the Revelation, however, from first to last is chiefly concerned with "him that overcometh":

Out of all nations ... by His blood ... a kingdom and priests on earth.

The two remaining references do not speak of "all Israel," but of a faithful number of witnessing Israelites who *overcome*. In the third reference therefore the question of redemption from sin is not in view, it is now, "the things that accompany salvation" (Hebrews), or the "working out their own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians) that is intended:

They washed their robes ... by the blood ... they are before the throne.

The fourth reference makes the positive statement:

They overcame the devil ... because of the blood.

Again redemption from sin is not in question. Now "the washing of the robes," a symbolical statement, is parallel with "overcoming," a literal statement. Daniel refers to the effect of this trying time in chapters 11 and 12, "and some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end" (11:35), "many shall be purified, and made white, and tried" (12:10). Zechariah is more specific. "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is

refined, and will try them as gold is tried" (13:9). Malachi also refers to a similar effect of "that day," "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (3:3). Coming to the book of Revelation itself:

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me IN WHITE, for they are WORTHY; he that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in WHITE RAIMENT" (3:4,5).

The great multitude therefore are "overcomers":

"I saw the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God ... and WHITE ROBES were given unto every one of them (6:9-11).

"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready, and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteousness (award) of saints" (19:7,8).

Here are some who are pronounced "worthy," some who "make themselves ready". There is no mingling of grace and works, for it is purely a question of overcoming, not of salvation, that is in view all the time. Those who overcame, the preserved of the great tribulation, are said, in a figure, to have "washed their robes by the blood of the Lamb". It was because of His blood they overcame, and to them is given the victor's reward. God deals with the redeemed nation in companies. The great bulk are destined to rule on the earth, some by reason of faithfulness will be rewarded with a heavenly ministry, some will be numbered among a company called the Bride, which is chiefly connected with the new Jerusalem. What those had endured who had come out of the great tribulation is indicated in verses 16 and 17, hunger and thirst (for the beast will control the supply of food); great heat through exposure and lack of home and covering; tears, for their sorrows were indeed great.

With these closing verses we break through the thick darkness of that day, and see the peace and rest of that which lies beyond for scattered Israel, and for blinded Gentiles; and nothing short of this can satisfy. Praise God! darkness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

The Seven Trumpets. Temple Judgments (Rev. 8)

The sixth seal leads on to the day of the wrath of the Lamb, when the heavens shall depart as a scroll. This one statement is sufficient to prove that the sealing of the 144,000 does not follow the sixth seal in time. We are evidently taken back in the history covered by the six seals. The breaking of the seventh seal is therefore very markedly severed off from the breaking of the sixth. The seventh seal is the beginning of another series. A sevenfold judgment is revealed which culminates in the accession of Christ to the throne of universal dominion under the seventh trumpet.

The opening of the seventh seal is followed by silence, silence for about half an hour. While we can easily find "great voices" and "thunders" on other similar occasions which mark a contrast, the silence of this verse seems to indicate something deeper. Dr. Bullinger's, *The Apocalypse* (pp. 294, 295) has brought together the following passages which we here quote:

"On earth, the cry of the saints has been incessant. They 'cry day and night'. In heaven the cry is now about to be answered, and there is a solemn pause — the silence of expectation.

"The Hebrew *dumeyyah* (silence) (fem. adj.) which occurs four times exactly expresses the position:

"(1) 'O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not; And in the night season there is no *silence* to me' (Psa. 22:2).

"(2) 'I was dumb with *silence*' (Psa. 39:2).

"(3) 'Truly my soul is *silence* toward God: From Him cometh my salvation' (Psa. 62:1).

"(4) 'There shall be *silence* before Thee, And praise, O God, in Zion, ... O Thou that hearest prayer, Unto Thee shall all flesh come' (Psa. 65:1,2 R.V. marg.)

"In all these four passages the word denotes a period of waiting between the offering of the prayer, and the giving of the answer which shall call forth praise. The adverb in Lamentations 3:26 exactly expresses it. 'It is good when one doth wait even *in silence* for the salvation of Jehovah'".

The words of Habakkuk 2:20 seem applicable to this scene, "The Lord is in His holy temple, be silent all the earth before Him". So also Zechariah 2:13, "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for He is raised up out of His holy

habitation". Some action of intense moment seems imminent. All heaven awaits the moment when God shall speak.

The first movement that follows the silence is the giving of seven trumpets to the seven angels which stood before God.

The seven angels (*Tous hepta angelous*). Before the throne, we read in chapter 4:5, were *the* seven spirits. According to chapter 5:6 the seven spirits of God were sent forth into all the earth. Seven angels preside over the seven churches of Asia. The Apostle Paul when writing to Timothy said, "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels". This is comparable with Revelation 1:4,5, "Grace be unto you and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come, *and from the seven spirits* which are before the throne, and from Jesus Christ". Here is heaven's supreme court. "The judgment shall sit," and it is because of the solemnity of that long-deferred judgment that heaven ceases as it were to breathe in dreadful sympathy and anticipation.

Before the seven angels sound their trumpets, another angel steps forward and by his action indicates the character of the impending judgments. They are TEMPLE judgments.

The sixth seal left us certainly at the *throne*, and the close of chapter 7 speaks of the throne, but that is not the case in chapter 8. Even the formula is altered. The seven angels are not said to stand before *the throne*, but simply before God. Further, it is not true exposition to draw a severe line between "throne" and "temple," for Revelation 16:17 reads, "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the *temple*, from the *throne*". The *Vatican Manuscript*, *LT.* and *Tr.* all agree to this reading, "out of the temple from the throne," which unites throne and temple together. The very passage before us does the same thing:

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the *golden altar* which was before the throne" (Rev. 8:3).

The throne is in the temple, and cannot be severed from it. Unlike all other kings the Lord unites priesthood and

kingship together. The testimony of Zechariah 6:13 is fatal to the conception of a clear-cut distinction between throne and temple in the Revelation:

“He shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a *priest* upon His *throne*”.

Isaiah’s vision, as recorded in chapter 6:1-6, links the throne with the temple:

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple ... mine eyes have seen the King ... a live coal from off the altar”.

Here again the intentional linking of throne and temple, king and priest, will be recognised, especially when we remember Uzziah’s act. He attempted to unite in himself kingship and priesthood, and for his temerity he was smitten with leprosy. In the year that that king died, Isaiah had a vision of the true and only Priest-King.

As the Priest-King, the Lord Jesus appeared before us in the opening vision of the Revelation, and as the Priest-King He will rule and reign. When we read of one who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, we see a priest. When we read of his golden girdle, and his clothing, we read of the symbolic robes of a priest.

What is true of the opening of this seventh seal is also true of the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Revelation 11:15-19 records the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and when that trumpet sounds:

“The TEMPLE of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His covenant: and there were ... thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail”.

This temple scene is closely connected with the proclamation, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ — and He shall reign for the ages of the ages”.

We will now consider a little more closely the record of chapter 8. The prayers that ascend, with the incense offered by the angel, are answered by a symbolic action of judgment:

“And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were cries, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake” (verse 5).

This answer to the prayers which is here given, covers the period of the seven trumpets. The prayers of those under the altar who cry for vengeance are at last to be heard. The "little season" (Rev. 6:11) has passed, the seventh of these angels shall introduce the time when the dead should be judged, and rewards given to the Lord's servants and saints. The judgments do not fall in one stroke. Each trumpet sound introduces an added plague. This *sevenfold* judgment seems to be a fulfilment of Psalm 79:12, "And render unto our neighbours *sevenfold* into their bosom". The whole psalm is prophetic of the period. The heathen have come into the Lord's inheritance. The holy temple is defiled, Jerusalem is in heaps. The dead bodies of servants and saints are devoured by the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the earth. Their blood has been shed round about Jerusalem like water. The heathen have taunted Israel with the silence of God. They pray:

"Let Him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of Thy servants which is shed" (verse 10).

This prayer ascends unto the Lord. It is answered with fire from the altar. *Then these judgments are temple judgments.* Let us look at the *fire from the altar* as it falls upon the earth at the sounding of these trumpets.

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and a third part of the earth was burned up, and the third of the trees was burned up, and all green grass was burned up" (Rev: 8:7).

Here is the effect of the fire from the altar. All human life is dependent upon the vegetable kingdom. It is not possible for man to assimilate for himself the elements which form his food. The lower orders of creation must lay hold of these for him. With an atmosphere around him four-fifths of which is nitrogen, he would die of starvation. So with all the other necessary elements. What a stroke then it will be when a third part of the earth which stores the food, and the trees and grass which render that food available, are burned with fire.

Under the third seal famine is seen, and here is a parallel affliction. The affliction of a *third part* is a feature of these early trumpet judgments. Let us, to save space, tabulate the references:

1st trumpet. Fire.	Third part of the earth and the trees.
2nd trumpet. Fire.	{ Third part of the sea. Third part of the creatures in the sea. Third part of the ships destroyed.
3rd trumpet. Burning Lamp.	{ Third part of rivers and fountains of waters. Third part of waters become worm-wood.
4th trumpet.	{ Third part of sun, moon and stars darkened. Third part of the day and night affected.

There is mercy in this judgment, and it is more clearly seen when we turn to the seven vials. There mercy is withdrawn. The sea, not a third part, becomes as blood, and *every* living soul dies in the sea. The rivers and fountains of waters become blood, not a third part. The close parallel between the trumpets and vials we shall see later.

Before proceeding we would draw attention to the equally close parallel between these judgments and the plagues sent through Moses upon Egypt.

The first plague in Egypt turned the river into blood and the fish died.

The second filled the land with frogs.

The third afflicted man with lice.

The fourth corrupted the land with swarms of flies.

The fifth afflicted the cattle with a grievous murrain.

The sixth afflicted the Egyptians with boils.

The seventh killed the cattle with hail.

The eighth, by means of locusts, devoured every herb and fruit.

The ninth plunged Egypt into awful darkness.

The tenth smote every firstborn.

The trumpet and vial judgments of the Revelation are repetitions or parallels upon a vaster and grander scale, but they are as literal. We wish to hurt no one's feelings when

we speak of the interpretation of these judgments set forth by such men as Elliott, Wordsworth, and others of the same school, but with Exodus before us we refuse to believe that the first trumpet means the wars of the Goths and the Vandals, or that "trees" mean princes, and "grass" their power and glory. God Himself has said that in the Day of the Lord He will show wonders in the heavens, and signs on the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood. The literal plagues of Egypt prepare us for the literal judgments of the Revelation. We do not rest however upon analogy, we have definite Scripture for our belief. Israel's future is connected by a parallel with Exodus.

"According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things" (Micah 7:15; see also Isa. 11:15,16).

The redemption of Israel from Egypt will be repeated on a grand scale (Jer. 23:7,8). Indeed God makes a covenant that He will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation (Exod. 34:10). As every prophecy that has been fulfilled has been fulfilled literally, we prefer to take our stand with those who believe that the sea, the trees, the rivers, and the ships of these trumpet judgments are to be understood literally. We have only to call to mind the menace to national existence that the submarine campaign instituted, to appreciate, somewhat, the dreadful calamity it will be when a third part of the shipping is destroyed.

Our desire is single — we wish to believe God, and to help His people to be free to do the same, and any allusions to the teachings of other servants of God are not made in a carping spirit, but in an earnest desire for truth free of tradition.

The First and Second Woes (Rev. 9:1-21)

To set out in diagram form that the seventh seal subdivides into seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet again subdivides into seven vials, is attractive, and we have made several attempts to improve upon the efforts of those who had previously dealt with it. Being desirous of making our

lay-out as Scriptural as possible, we made careful examination of the Scriptures to obtain data upon which to work. The result is that no diagram has been prepared, for we have been obliged to confess that our notion on the subject was not supported sufficiently by the Scriptures.

We have seen that the six seals are complete in themselves. No event except solemn silence is chronicled upon the opening of the seventh seal. Instead of the seventh seal expanding to cover the events of the seven trumpets and seven vials, a new set of prophetic visions, ranging over parts of history already covered by the six seals, is introduced by the seven trumpet judgments. Just as the sixth seal completes the series, leaving the seventh detached and isolated, so the sixth trumpet appears to complete the series.

The narrative proceeds unbroken till the sixth trumpet is sounded (Rev. 9:13-21). Chapter ten does not immediately follow with the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Another mighty angel comes down from heaven, holding in his hand a little book. Seven thunders utter their voices and their utterances are sealed. The mighty angel refers to the days of the sounding of the seventh trumpet as a period when the mystery of God shall be finished. John, however, is told that he must prophesy again before many peoples and nations and tongues and kings. The temple of God is measured, and the two witnesses prophesy for 1,260 days. There is therefore a considerable interval indicated. These trumpets are, however, connected by the fact that they are called the three woes (8:13; 9:12; 11:14). Chapter 12 must go back again in history, for the seventh trumpet proclaims Christ as heaven's King, while in chapter 12 Satan is active and the Lord's people are persecuted. Chapter 13 tells of the rise of the beast and the false prophet, and chapter 14 speaks of the 144,000 on mount Zion, and of the fall of Babylon. Then after this long interval the Apostle speaks of the seven vials as the seven last plagues. It will be seen, however, that under the seventh vial great Babylon comes into remembrance (16:19), whose judgment is given in detail in chapters 17 and 18. This shows that once again, under the vials, history is retraversed. Then follows the great Hallelujah of 19, the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the riding forth of Christ as King of kings.

It will be seen that a great interval separates the trumpets from the vials, and there is no possibility, so it appears to us, that the seventh trumpet which proclaims that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, can *develop* into the seven vials which culminate in the judgment of Babylon. The order of these seals and trumpets may be perceived more clearly if set out thus:

- A The Six Seals. A series of judgments ending in wrath of the Lamb. Heaven departs as a scroll
- B Episode separating the seventh seal from the rest. The 144,000 and the great multitude
- C The Seventh Seal. Silence in heaven
- A The Six Trumpets. A series of judgments characterised by the affliction of "a third part".
- B Episodes separating the seventh trumpet from the rest. The little book. The two witnesses
- C The Seventh Trumpet. Christ proclaimed King.

So far there is a sequence of events which corresponds, but with chapter 12 we commence something quite different. There is, however, a very marked connection between the seven trumpets and the seven vials, which we must notice before we attempt to go further.

Trumpets	Vials
<i>(Partial, not complete, mercy still holding back).</i>	<i>(The last plagues. In these the fury of God completed).</i>
FIRST.	FIRST.
On the earth fire and blood. Third part trees and all grass burnt up.	On the earth grievous sore on worshippers of the beast.
SECOND.	SECOND.
On the sea. Third part became blood. Third part creatures died. Third part ships destroyed.	On the sea. It (the sea) became as blood of a dead man. Every living creature died.
THIRD.	THIRD.
On the rivers and fountains. Third part smitten. Third part wormwood.	On rivers and fountains. All smitten. They become blood.

FOURTH.	FOURTH.
On sun, moon and stars. Third part smitten. Third part of day and night.	On the sun. Men scorched.
FIFTH.	FIFTH.
The Abyss opened. Darkness. Men tormented 5 months. King Apollyon.	The throne of the beast. Darkness. Men gnawed their tongues for pain.
SIXTH.	SIXTH.
The river Euphrates. The four angels loosed. Horsemen. Third part of men killed.	The river Euphrates dried up. Way for kings of East prepared. Three spirits like frogs. Armageddon.
SEVENTH.	SEVENTH.
Voices saying. Kingship of Christ.	Into the air. Voice says, "It is done".

By comparing the foregoing columns the reader will see that God in His longsuffering reserved the full outpouring of wrath till the end. A third part is smitten under the trumpets, yet men repented not, so the long-deferred stroke at last must fall. By reason of the terrible results that follow the sounding of the last three trumpets, they are called "three woes".

"And I beheld and I heard one eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to those that dwell upon the earth by reason of the sounding of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound" (8:13).

The reading "eagle" (*aetos*) is supported by the best texts (*see Revised Version*). Eagles are often used in Scripture in association with judgment, and this may be the reason for its use here. Our interest is therefore focused upon these three trumpets, and we shall observe that they are described at greater length than the first four.

The first four trumpets are somewhat preparatory, warnings as it were to men concerning the nature of their guilt and the judgment impending. Up till this point the seals and the trumpets have shown wonders in earth, sea, air, heaven, and the greater and lesser luminaries.

The first woe opens the Abyss. What this fact means the mind cannot conceive. The Revelation contains several such crises. The casting of Satan out of heaven to the earth is another such close contact with hell. So also when the beast arises out of the Abyss. What an awful place the world will then become. The nature of the judgment is suggested by the likeness used — locusts. The host of destroyers is headed by Apollyon, *the destroyer*.

It would appear also from a close following of the original, that a fallen star, not one of the angels of God, is commissioned to let loose this scourge upon the earth. "And I saw a star, out of heaven having fallen". The idea is not so much that John saw the star *fall*, but that he saw a *fallen star*. To this fallen star is given the key of the pit of the abyss. The Septuagint uses this word *abussos* ("the deep") in Genesis 1:2. The waters which at that time covered the earth were pushed back at the emerging of the earth, again to break their bounds at the flood, when "the fountains of the great deep were broken up" (Gen. 7:11).

The loosing of these locusts is a forerunner of a greater scourge, for out of the Abyss arises the beast (Rev. 11:7, 17:8). It will be the prison of Satan during the thousand years. It is not to be confused with gehenna or the lake of fire, and it is differentiated in 17:8 from perdition. Satan likewise emerges from the Abyss after the thousand years and is cast into the lake of fire. The Abyss, being so closely connected with the supernatural evils of the closing days of Gentile dominion, will not, we might well expect, liberate blessing to the earth, when the pit is opened by the fallen star. Smoke and intense darkness prepare the way for the scourge now let loose, which is described as that of locusts.

When the prophet Joel would speak of the terrors of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord, he uses the figure of the locust. It is probable that Joel 1:4 refers to the locust under four stages of its development. The children's children were to tell the children of another generation of this destructive scourge. "Alas," says the prophet, "for the day! for the Day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come" (Joel 1:15). The second chapter under the blowing of a trumpet speaks of this terrible visitation in language that applies to man. "A great people and a strong". Yet they are not ordinary

men for, "there hath not been ever the like, neither shall there be any more after it, even to the years of many generations" (Joel 2:2).

The Assyrian invasions were foreshadowings of the Day of the Lord. That is why Isaiah, in the midst of his prophecy concerning the future, breaks off to tell of Sennacherib and his overthrow. In Proverbs 30:27 we are told that "the locusts have no king". As the locusts of Revelation 9 have a king, it follows that these are a different kind from the natural order.

The description of these strange beings is fairly full, if at the same time strange:

- (1) They are like horses prepared unto battle.
- (2) They wore as it were golden crowns.
- (3) Their faces were like the faces of men.
- (4) They had hair as the hair of women.
- (5) Their teeth were like the teeth of a lion.
- (6) They had breastplates of iron.
- (7) They made a sound like many chariots.
- (8) They had tails like scorpions.
- (9) And they had a king named Apollyon.

There is a resemblance between the natural and the supernatural order of locusts in that five months is the space over which their ravages extend. The natural order appear usually in May and cease in September. Ordinary locusts destroy vegetation. These locusts are forbidden to hurt the grass, green herb or tree, but only the men who have not the seal of God upon their foreheads. When the trees are smitten, or the waters become blood, the innocent suffer together with the guilty. This first woe discriminates, and does not punish man by destroying his food, but signally attacks those only who are devoted to the beast. The power of death was not given to them, but the power to torment men for five months. The limitation imposed upon Satan in connection with Job will come into mind. The torment is indeed terrible, for men will seek death and not find it. The reference to the hair on the locust, together with the general setting of the vision, makes one think of Jeremiah 51:27:

"Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her: cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars" (or locust bristling with hair).

In Revelation 9:3 we read of the locusts that “authority was given to them as the scorpions of the earth have authority”. There is nothing strange in reading that these locusts from the Abyss have an authority given them to hurt, and it might have been written that their hurt was like that of a scorpion. It does say this, but it says more. It reveals the fact that the scorpion of the earth can actually hurt a man now only because authority is given it. The permission to hurt and destroy is not limited to scorpions, but over the face of the whole nation creatures seem authorised to spoil, destroy, infect and corrupt the fair things of earth. All this is because of sin and the lost dominion of man. It is but intensified in the case before us, and will only cease when the dominion is again vested in the Son of man when it shall at last be true that

“the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ... the weaned child shall put his hand in the adder’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain” (Isa. 11:6-9).

Both the names of the king of these locusts of the Abyss mean destroyer, and Joel, who uses the locust to describe the terrible Day of the Lord, speaks of it as, “a destruction from the Almighty”. A day comes, however, when God will “destroy them that destroy the earth,” when the last enemy shall be destroyed, when that abused term “reconstruction” shall be gloriously realised, because it is based upon the “reconciliation” accomplished by the Son of God.

We now give consideration to the second of these woes.

“One woe is past; behold, there are coming yet two woes after these things” (Rev. 9:12).

In the first woe we see the Abyss opened and its immediate consequences. In this there is revealed the yet further relation between rivers and deeps with spirit powers. But first let us notice who it is that speaks and from whence the message comes:

“And the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God” (verse 13).

The golden altar stood, whether in tabernacle or temple, immediately before the veil. The command proceeds from

the temple, and the judgment cannot therefore be called "political" in a sense which would sever it from connection with the temple. The command is a singular one: "Loose the four angels which are bound at the river Euphrates".

The river Euphrates meets us in Genesis 2 in association with the creation of man. It formed the eastern boundary of the promised land (Deut. 11:24). Babylon's doom was typified by the casting of a book bound to a stone into this river (Jer. 51:63). It is specially marked out for judgment under the sixth vial (Rev. 16:12). Babel and Babylon are linked with this river, and there at this eastern boundary of the land of promise four angels are bound:

"And the four angels were loosed, even those having been made ready for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men" (verse 15).

What stress this passage lays on the exact moment! In our puny computations of prophetic times we are full of suppositions. A published list of the dates and times suggested when certain prophecies are supposed to have been, or will be, fulfilled, would be its own confutation. There are no round figures with God. To us, as to Habakkuk, He speaks:

"The vision is yet for the appointed time, and panteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come, it will not delay" (Hab. 2:3).

Not only the year, but the month of that year is fore-ordained. Not only the month, but the day, yea, the very hour of that day is a matter of Divine provision. And what is all this careful provision for? — the killing of the third part of mankind! Upon the release of these four angels, there appears an army whose immense numbers, and whose monstrous character, while admittedly beyond our present comprehension, is not beyond our simple faith. The number is "two myriads of myriads," or 200,000,000, and such an army passes beyond human understanding. Yet the number must not be explained away, for John adds, "I heard the number".

The description of these horses is unlike that of any creature known to man. Fire, smoke and brimstone come out of the horses' mouths and kill the third part of men.

The tails also of these horses have heads like serpents. Like the locusts of the preceding trumpet they belong not to our creation — they are from beneath. The description of these creatures is indeed strange, yet we are not therefore to conclude that the passage is figurative. The Apostle has described these beings in full detail because they are so strange. God had said:

“I will do marvels (*pala*, miracles, wondrous works, used of the plagues of Egypt, Psa. 106:22) which have not been done in all the earth nor in any nation” (Exod. 34:10).

What seems a greater marvel is revealed in the concluding verses of Revelation 9:

“And the rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts”.

To think that this great woe should visit mankind, leaving behind one-third of the race dead, and not bring about repentance, seems almost impossible. “The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, *who can know it?*”

Some commentators find a difficulty in interpreting these words literally, believing it to be impossible that the enlightened world should ever fall into idolatry of such gross a type. If the reader will reflect, he will soon discover incipient idolatry with actual, literal idols of gold, silver, brass, wood and stone about him. How many have their “mascots” in one form or another? From time to time grotesque figures are put on the market in the form of desk companions, motor-car mascots, watch chain ornaments, etc., which are “lucky,” or preserve from accident, or some other good that should be sought from the Lord only.

Then the passage specifies the worship of demons. As we write these words (July, 1920) two papers have come into the market. One is called PAN after the Greek god of that name. The other is called EVE which among other advertised attractions will be *Pagan!* One of these publications is for “Saints and Cynics”! Spiritism is demonism. The Apostle Paul writing to Timothy says:

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1).

Witchcraft, necromancy, clairvoyance are all leading on to the same dreadful goal — a state of hardened unrepentance, deceiving and being deceived. Of those who are spoken of in Revelation 9, 2 Thessalonians 2 seems to speak:

“Then shall that wicked one be revealed ... whose coming is after the working of Satan ... with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion (a working of error, R.V.), that they should believe THE LIE” (verses 8-11).

Men will actually worship the dragon, the beast and his image (see Rev. 13:4,15). Men will be saved in that depraved hour who simply worship Him as the Creator that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (14:7). Idolatry originated in the heart of man:

“When they knew God they glorified Him not as God ... they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man ... they changed the truth of God into a LIE, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed forever” (Rom. 1:21-25).

Immorality is always the handmaid of idolatry. The spirits that prey upon mankind are often “unclean spirits”. If mankind sank so low when God “gave them up,” to what depth will they descend when God sends them the strong delusion? These sins are essentially “religious”. This unprecedented judgment falls upon false worshippers. It is impossible to differentiate between the political and the religious, the throne judgment and the temple judgment, for the references to the temple and worship are not confined to any section. Social sins are spoken of as secondary in this awful list; and even of the four sins mentioned, sorcery and fornication have much to do with “religion” (2:20). The ready acceptance of the teaching of demons and the miracles that accompany their teaching are indicated in chapter 16:13,14.

The awful condition indicated in Revelation 9:20,21 is traceable to Babylon, and we need not go outside the

Revelation to find that this is so. Babylon makes the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication. Babylon is depicted as drunk with the blood of saints. Babylon deceived all the nations by her sorceries. Babylon becomes the habitation of demons. Since the days of Nimrod Babylon has been Anti-Christ. Modernism, the super-man, civilisation, are all so many phases of Babylonianism, and we do well to remember the horrible thing that surrounds us and entangles us, lest we forget our separate calling and bring Christ's holy name into disrepute.

We shall miss the most powerful exposition of all if we do not realise that in Revelation 9:20 we have a quotation from the Book of Daniel. It is common knowledge that Daniel's prophetic visions are preparatory to the vision of the Revelation, yet the quotation here is not from one of the visions of Daniel's book. It is taken from Daniel's solemn warning to Belshazzar, in the night in which he was slain.

“And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, *though thou knewest all this*; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concuhines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in Whose hand thy breath is, and Whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: Then was the part of the hand sent from Him; and this writing was written ... God hath numbered thy Kingdom and finished it ... Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting” (Dan. 5:22-27).

Belshazzar lifted himself up against the Lord of heaven in spite of the example of Nebuchadnezzar. He did not receive the love of the truth that he might be saved. So likewise, in spite of the most unprecedented judgment that had fallen upon mankind, it is written, *the rest of the men ... repented not*.

If Belshazzar sets forth the character and doom of the last phase of Babylonianism, Daniel and his companions set forth the faithful remnant, who pass through fire and who are cast to the lions, rather than bow down to the idol of the state. We may have sung with little thought, as children, “Dare to be a Daniel”. May we pray with a deeper

realisation that both we and our dear ones may stand as steadfast as did that man of God.

So ends this phase of the sixth trumpet judgment, with a world mad upon its idols, and given up to evil. As it was with Belshazzar, so must it be again; the next act in this mighty drama will be the "taking of the Kingdom," not indeed by Darius the Mede (who will follow the folly of Belshazzar), but by Christ the Lord, the Prince of the kings of the earth.

CHAPTER 10

The Mystery of God Finished

Revelation 10

The result of the sounding of the sixth trumpet revealed mankind with a heart like that of Belshazzar. The quotation from Daniel 5 makes one feel that judgment severe and without remedy is imminent. The kingdoms of this world are about to pass under the blessed sway of Christ the Lord. Before the seventh angel sounds and the proclamation of heaven's King is made, two most solemn episodes intervene. The first is recorded in chapter 10.

A mighty angel with insignia of covenant-keeping power descends from heaven. In chapter 4 a rainbow encircled the throne. Here the rainbow is seen on the head of the mighty angel. His face also was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. There is a close parallel here with the description of the Lord as the King-Priest in Revelation 1. This mighty angel comes, clothed with the authority of heaven, and comes to announce with mighty voice that the Lord at length will take unto Himself His great power and reign. "The nations tumultuously assemble, and the peoples imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth set themselves, the rulers take counsel together (a league evidently in operation) against the Lord and against His Anointed". These words of Psalm 2 seem prophetic of this period. "Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure". These words speak of the judgment of the Revelation. "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion". This is the substance of the result of sounding the seventh trumpet. In spite of all, in spite of Satan, the beast, and all the infernal hosts, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth".

The power indicated in Psalm 2 — "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" — is referred to in the Revelation more than once. The decree announced in this Psalm has

reference to the Son as the King. In Psalm 110 we find the words, "The Lord said unto My Lord, 'Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool' ". This is what has been happening under the seals and the trumpets. At the sixth trumpet the enemies of the Lord are seen as His footstool. "The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies". This is not the reign of peace, it is the rule of the greater David, before the Solomonic reign can begin.

Instead of the decree we have here an oath, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec' ". Heaven's King is also Priest. Throne and Temple are united in Him. His nearest subjects are a kingdom of priests, and these two functions cannot be divided in the Revelation.

"The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through Kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations. He shall fill the places with dead bodies. He shall strike through the heads over a great land" (Psa. 110:5,6).

These words vividly anticipate the remaining chapters of the Revelation.

The mighty angel who descends from heaven in Revelation 10 holds in His hand "A little scroll open". There are three contrasts here with the scene of chapter 5. There, it is a scroll; here it is a little scroll. There none but the Lamb of God could be found worthy enough to take the scroll; here a mighty angel has it. There it was sealed with seven seals; here it is open. It seems evident that this mighty angel comes with full authority and with all the evidences to make formal claim for his Lord. When Christ, as the Son of man, was about to come in lowliness to Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Calvary, a man of the wilderness in camel's hair was His forerunner. Now that the same Son of man is about to take the kingdom and reign in glory, His forerunner is a mighty angel. John the Baptist cried "Repent," but the sixth trumpet reveals the utter impenitence of man. The mighty angel makes no call to repentance.

Majesty accompanies this great forerunner's every act. "He set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth". This first act symbolises possession. At His first

coming though "the world was made by Him, the world knew Him not". He was pointed out by His forerunner as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. At His Second Coming the world made by Him will be claimed by Him. Creation will not be alienated for ever. His forerunner this time enters into possession. The inheritance is secured:

"Ask of Me, and I will give thee the heathen, thine inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth, thy possession" (Psa. 2:8).

No longer as the Lamb of God to die for sin, but as the Lion of the tribe of Judah He is coming in power and great glory. The cry of this mighty angel was as the roar of a lion, and seven thunders utter their voices at his cry, "the seven thunders" to be exact. We have the seven angels, the seven stars, the seven spirits, and here the seven thunders. What were these echoes awakened by the angel's voice? Were they the distant sound of the seven vials? We do not know. For some wise purpose the Apostle was commanded, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not". Whatever they said, it was sealed. We believe that they are unsealed in the pouring out of the seven last plagues. The angel now:

"lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which therein are, that there should be time no longer" (Rev. 10:5,6).

Before saying anything about this, we shall be wise to notice a parallel passage in Daniel 12. The prominent figure is Michael, the great prince which standeth for Israel. The setting is the time of great tribulation and resurrection. Daniel is instructed to shut up the words, and to seal the book, even to the time of the end. Then comes the parallel with Revelation 10:

"And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left unto heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half: and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished" (verse 7).

In both cases, it will be observed, time is the subject. The term "time, times and a half", is one way of referring to that period which figures so largely in Revelation, and is spoken of sometimes as 1,260 days, sometimes as forty-two months, being three years and a half. This we will consider in its proper place. In Revelation 10, instead of saying that a certain amount of time shall run its course, the angel says, "time shall be no longer".

The word "time" here is *chronos*. This word is used four times in the Revelation, and its meaning will be ascertained by considering the four passages together:

Chronos

- A 2:21. "Space to repent". — See sins detailed in verses 20 and 21, and the threat in 22 and 23
- B 6:11. "A little season". — Souls slain for Word of God and testimony; told to wait
- A 10:6. "No longer rime". — See statement concerning non-repentance at the end of chapter 9, and the judgment that follows
- B 20:3. "A little season". — Souls of beheaded for testimony and Word; now reign.

It will be seen that the passage in 10:6 corresponds with 2:21, and leads us to see that the angel declares that "space for repentance shall be no longer". Awful announcement! Yet who can say the Lord has not been longsuffering! The very complicated series of slowly increasing judgments are evidences that judgment is His strange act. Now however the wrath is come to the uppermost, and will be poured out without admixture. Coupled with this, we must read 6:11. There delay is indicated until the martyr host is complete; here the delay is finished, heaven's King is at hand, and the martyred souls are soon to be liberated to share the reign of the thousand years. A sharp contrast therefore is made in the messages of the two forerunners.

We said above that the mighty angel makes no call to repentance; we can now see that he indicates that the time for repentance is over. This is indeed a "Woe". The angel's statement however has not been completely given yet. After this declaration that there should be time no longer he continues:

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished also, as He hath announced the glad tidings to His servants the prophets” (verse 7).

The mystery of God announced as a gospel (*evangelizo*) to His servants the prophets must not be confused with the Mystery revealed only to the Apostle Paul. It is the conclusion of the gospel of the kingdom, deferred owing to Israel’s unrepentance, and here strangely enough ushered in upon the impenitence of the Gentiles. There may be a connection however here of these two hitherto separate lines of truth. The hope of the church of the Mystery is given in Colossians 3:4:

“When Christ who is our life shall be made manifest, then shall ye also be made manifest with Him *in glory*”.

Before the Lord takes to Himself His great power to reign He will be “made manifest” in glory. The church of the One Body will then be “made manifest” with Him. The time when this takes place we are not told. Here, as we see in chapter 10, the mystery of God is brought to a conclusion in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound. All the mysteries of the Word seem to focus here. What are the mysteries referred to in Matthew 13? Most interpreters of the parables would have us believe that the Christendom of the past 1,900 years is the fulfilment of those parables. We believe they point to the closing Day of the Lord.

The mystery of Christ’s rejection is solved at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The mystery of Israel’s blindness shall be finished when the trumpet sounds, for when “He shall send back Jesus,” the times of restoration shall begin, and all Israel shall be saved. Israel’s feast of trumpets in the seventh month, the trumpet of the jubilee with its liberty and re-entry into the forfeited inheritance, is consummated in the sounding of this seventh trumpet. The mystery of the sudden change from mortality to immortality without the necessity of death and resurrection will be solved when this trumpet sounds. This, together with the resurrection, takes place at the last trump. When this is brought to pass the prophecy of Isaiah 25:8 is fulfilled, which in its turn will take place when the

veil that is spread over all nations shall be taken away, the rebuke of God's people be taken away from off all the earth, and the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously (Isa. 25:6-8; 24:23).

The proclamation of Christ as King is the solution of the mystery of God, its delay the reason for the chequered history of the world, its attainment one great step toward the goal of the purpose of the ages.

John is commanded to take the little scroll and eat it. The effect of doing so was that while it was to his mouth as sweet as honey, yet to his belly it was bitter. Ezekiel 2:9-3:3 is parallel. "How sweet are thy words to my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth," said the psalmist, and this is echoed by the Apostle. Yet the awful character of the judgments therein revealed could not be contemplated without emotion.

After having taken the little scroll and eaten it John is told, "Thou must prophesy again concerning (or against, but not 'before,' *epi* with dative) many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings". The simplest interpretation seems to be that the remaining chapters of the Revelation, "the words of this prophecy," are here intended. Some who think that a future ministry is here indicated have wondered whether John was to be one of the two witnesses of chapter 11, but this we do not believe is at all likely.

There is a sweetness and a bitterness at the consummation of God's mystery. It is the year of God's redeemed, but it is also the day of vengeance. This we shall see more fully when we read the actual passage in chapter 11, which chronicles the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The book of the Revelation is essentially, "The revelation of Jesus Christ". The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. "Lo, I come," and "Lo, He comes" fill the volume of the book and bring the mystery of God to an end.

The second woe finishes with the testimony of the two witnesses, who are introduced by the measuring of the temple, the altar and the worshippers. This section, therefore, like that of the opening one of the second woe, has to do with worship, and is a temple section.

“And there was given to me a reed, like a rod, and he said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and *take account of* those who worship therein. But the court that is without the temple cast without, and measure it not: because it is given up to the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months” (Rev. 11:1,2).

We are inclined to translate “a reed, like a sceptre”. Moses Stuart and Dr. Bullinger show that the Hebrew equivalent is used for a measuring rod (Psa. 74:2; Jer. 10:16; 51:19). These references, however, are not very convincing. The word *rhabdos* is used in the New Testament with the meaning of:

An ordinary staff (Matt. 10:10).
A rod for correction (1 Cor. 4:21).
A sceptre as of a King (Heb. 1:8).
A rod as of the High Priest (Heb. 9:4).
The shepherd’s club (Rev. 2:27, *rule* — “to shepherd”. The word occurs four times in the Revelation, 2:27; 11:1; 12:5; 19:15).

It will be seen therefore that three references speak of shepherding the nations, and one is connected with measuring the temple.

Two passages of the Old Testament may throw a light on the meaning intended here.

“And concerning the tithes of the herd, or of the flock, even whatsoever *passeth under the rod*, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord” (Lev. 27:32).

“I will cause you to *pass under the rod*, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant” (Ezek. 20:37).

In these passages the Lord is either claiming a portion as His special tithes, or referring to the gathering again of Israel. In both cases there is an emphasis upon peculiar possession, protection and reservation.

It will be remembered that before the seventh seal was opened 144,000 of the tribes of Israel were sealed. Here, before the seventh trumpet sounds, the temple and its worshippers are measured. Taking the suggestion of peculiar ownership from Leviticus 27 and Ezekiel 20, and that of sealing and preservation from Revelation 7, it appears that such is the meaning of the measuring of the temple. Another parallel is found in Zechariah 2.

“I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof and what is the length thereof ... Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein. For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her” (Zech. 2:1-5).

What is intended of the city here seems to be intended of the temple in Revelation 11. The passage in Revelation is concerned only with preserving the innermost part of the temple, the court is cast out and the city is trodden under foot. This emphasises the fact that the temple and its worship is to be specially remembered in this section.

There are several passages of Old Testament Scripture which refer to the time of trouble that will overtake the Lord's people, and indicate their place of refuge. Take for example the following:

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (Psa. 91:1).

“... to enquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock” (Psa. 27:4,5).

“Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues” (Psa. 31:20).

This secret place, the secret of His tabernacle and presence, seems intended in Revelation 11. The pride of man reaches its height in the blasphemy of the beast. This period is given as 42 months in 13:5, which is exactly the same period given for the treading down of the city in Revelation 11:2. All except the inner shrine of the temple (*naos*) is given over to the Gentiles. But God has reserved His portion. There is a secret place. The sealed 144,000 will find a secure haven from the pride of men and the strife of tongues. The Lord (in Luke 21:24) says:

“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”.

We will not go into the question as to when these times commenced; it will be sufficient for us here to state broadly that they commenced with Nebuchadnezzar as the king of

Babylon. Revelation 11 does not speak of the whole Gentile times, but only of the final period of forty-two months when blasphemy will reach its height. During this period two specially equipped witnesses will prophesy:

“And I will endow My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth” (verse 3).

This period, given in days, is the same as the forty-two months already mentioned. While the final treading down of the city takes place, the two witnesses prophesy. As a result of Elijah’s prayer the heaven was shut for the same period, three and a half years, so that there was no rain (Luke 4:25; James 5:17). The history of that event and the character of the King should be remembered as a type of the end. Many expositors believe that Elijah will be one of the two witnesses, and those who argue that as he did not die he must come back to do so usually take Enoch to be the other witness. Others, by reason of the transfiguration, prefer Moses and Elijah. The better plan is to abide by the statement of Scripture. “These are the two olive trees, and the two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth”.

The title “Lord of the earth” is in line with the angel’s claim in chapter 10 over the sea and the earth, upon which he placed his feet. The alternative to worshipping the beast is that of worshipping the Creator (14:7) for the condition of things has become so bad that this most elementary feature constitutes the whole of the gospel then proclaimed. The Gentile times revert back to the character given in Romans 1:18-32. The two witnesses are spoken of as the two olive trees and the two lampstands. This is a reference back to Zechariah 4. When the angel asked Zechariah whether he knew the meaning of the two olive trees which emptied their oil into the lampstand, he replied, “No, my Lord”. Then he answered Zechariah, saying:

“This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, bur by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel rhou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, saying, Grace, grace unto it” (verses 6, 7).

The olive branches are differentiated from the lampstand, and are “the anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth” (verse 14). In the Revelation the witnesses are called the two olive trees and the two lampstands. However, much is parallel. In both cases there is a return from captivity in progress. Great opposition is rising against the people, the city and the temple. Nevertheless, the seventh angel shall sound and the headstone shall be brought forth with acclamation. The great mountain foreshadows Babylon, and when Babylon falls, heaven rings with Hallelujahs and the Lord rides forth on the white horse as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The secret of power for the two witnesses is, “by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts”. These witnesses have the power of devouring their enemies with fire and of shutting up the rain of heaven. They can turn water into blood, and smite the earth with every plague as often as they will. The plagues brought upon Pharaoh by Moses and the judgments brought about by Elijah were literal; so will these be, no power, not even that of Satan himself, can cut short a testimony given and sustained by God. For three years and a half Satan, the beast, and the false prophet with their host of followers, both demon and human, try in vain to stop this testimony. All the while that men are enrolling themselves on the side of the beast, God sustains a powerful miraculous testimony to Himself and His truth. The whole world have this testimony and become thereby involved in responsibility and guilt.

It is important to observe the order of the words in Revelation 19:20, “with which he deceived those that *had received* the mark of the beast”. The *receiving* came before the *deceiving*. They are without excuse. Heaven’s witnesses have given unceasing warning, and at last repentance becomes impossible.

“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast, which cometh up out of the abyss, shall make war upon them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie on the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord also was crucified” (Rev. 11:7,8).

The two witnesses die at Jerusalem. Its character at the time is vividly presented under the two similes Sodom and

Egypt, and by the connection of the martyrdom of the two witnesses with the crucifixion of their Lord. So far as God's purpose is concerned Jerusalem is "the holy city," but viewed in its apostasy it is not even named, being described instead by a threefold description which reveals its complicity with the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

By reading chapter 13 it will be seen that while these two witnesses are working their miracles, the false prophet is working his. It is a repetition of the days of Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh. A short-lived rejoicing is followed by a great fear, for these servants of the Lord are raised from the dead and a loud voice from heaven says:

"Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in the cloud and their enemies beheld them. At that same hour there was a great earthquake. and a tenth part of the city fell, and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand names of men" (verses 12, 13).

The result of this judgment causes great fear to fall upon men, and they give glory to the God of heaven. No evidence is given that these men experience any change of nature, and the giving of the glory may be a passing admission that "this is the finger of God". On the other hand we do not limit God. The *aionian* gospel distinctly says, "Fear God and give glory to Him, because the hour of His judgment is come" (14:7), and therefore we leave it without expressing an opinion. With this incident the second woe passes, and the third woe is spoken of as coming quickly.

God has never left Himself without witness. In the utter corruption and apostasy of the final three and a half years of this world's Christless history two miraculously endowed, and miraculously sustained, witnesses bear their testimony. The longsuffering exhibited toward Pharaoh is repeated toward his antitype, and the miraculous ministry of Moses and Aaron is repeated in that of the two witnesses. But, alas, as it was with Pharaoh, so will it be again: the waters will cover the oppressor, and all his pomp will descend to perdition.

The next sound to break forth is that of the seventh trumpet. Surely in those days the urgent prayer will be, *Even so, Come, Lord Jesus.*

The first *woe* was occasioned by the opening of the abyss (9:1-11), the second by the loosing of the four angels bound at the river Euphrates (9:12-21).

The first *woe* synchronises with the fifth trumpet (9:1), the second with the sixth trumpet (9:13). We now approach the third *woe* and the seventh trumpet.

“The second *Woe* is past; and behold, the *third Woe* cometh quickly, and the *seventh* angel sounded” (verses 14, 15).

So far the parallelism is preserved, but when we read on we become conscious of a change in the order of narration. Instead of some more dreadful judgments falling, heaven rings with the joyful news that at long last:

“the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for the ages of the ages” (verse 15).

Such blessed news cannot constitute the third *woe*; we must search for further information. It may be remembered that when we reached the sixth seal “the heavens departed as a scroll ... the great day of His wrath is come ...” The opening of the seventh seal did not lead further into the future that lies beyond the day of wrath. After the solemn silence in heaven for about half an hour, the seven trumpet angels come forward, and again we follow the narrative step by step until the sixth trumpet and its second *woe* is past, and then again at the seventh the sequence is broken with the same purpose — the supplying of fuller detail concerning the end. Readers familiar with Daniel’s visions will remember the same phenomenon there. The seventh trumpet is evidently pregnant with meaning, for in 10:7 we are told:

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery (secret) of God shall be consummated”.

We observe here “in the days,” not merely the day, as though this seventh trumpet is protracted: and “when he shall begin, or be about to sound,” again indicating a period of time covered by the sounding of the trumpet. The question arises, if this sounding of the seventh trumpet brings the mystery of God to a conclusion, and places Christ upon the throne of the world, what place in the

Divine programme do chapters 12-20 occupy? The answer is supplied from several considerations:

- (1) We must find a place in this seventh trumpet for unprecedented judgment, for with it is associated the third woe; this would therefore reach forward and include the seven vials of wrath of chapter 15:7.
- (2) Verse 18 of chapter 11 gives a summary (see below) of the events that fill out the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which upon examination will be found to be chapters 12-20 in brief.
 - (a) "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come.
 - (b) The time of the dead, that they should be judged.
 - (c) And the rewarding of God's servants the prophets.
 - (d) And the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great.
 - (e) And the destruction of those which destroy the earth".

This summary is followed by the statement "that the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His covenant". Then follow lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, earthquake, and great hail.

It will be evident that the time for judging the dead and giving rewards must reach over to chapter 20. The anger of the nations and the falling wrath, together with the destruction of those who destroy the earth, are also found in the chapters that follow. Some look upon chapter 15:5 as the resumption of the subject, and place chapters 12-14 as episodes, not strictly in chronological order, which lead up to the same point by other ways. We feel that this is unnecessary.

Upon the proclamation of heaven's King war would be made by Michael upon the Dragon. That this is no fancy is seen by reading chapter 12:9-12:

"And the great dragon ... was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him, and I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, *and the Kingdom of our Lord, and the power of His Christ*: FOR the accuser of our brethren is cast down ... Woe to the earth ... for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath".

Our search has not been fruitless: here we discover *the third woe*. The third woe, the proclamation of heaven's

King, and the casting out of Satan therefore synchronise. This settles the position of chapter 12. We must not look upon it as a parenthesis — it is an integral part of the subject. We are also able to say, with tolerable certainty, when the seventh angel sounds, and what time the “days” will cover. Upon the casting down of Satan the woman flees into the wilderness for the space of three years and a half. For exactly the same period the outcast Satan gives his authority and throne to the beast from the abyss (13:5). The *aionian* gospel will be published at this time also, for one of its statements is “for the hour of His judgment is COME”. Again, the fall of Babylon, which occupies chapter 17 and 18 leads right on to the Hallelujahs of chapter 19, is linked with these chapters, for another angel follows the herald of the *aionian* gospel announcing that *Babylon is fallen*.

Chapter fifteen introduces the seven angels having the seven last plagues, and these are not poured out until after the beast has arisen (chap. 13), for those who had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name (all found in 13) stood upon the sea of glass having the harps of God. Immediately before chapter 12 we read, “and the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen the ark of *His covenant*”. In chapter 15, the wording is a little different, “the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened”. Under the “opening” of chapter 11, where the emphasis is upon the *covenant*, the Lord is seen succouring His own during the time of trouble through which they pass; under the “opening” of chapter 15, where the emphasis is upon the *testimony*, the Lord is seen visiting with unmitigated judgment the Beast and his followers.

Returning to chapter eleven, we would draw attention to the Revised Version, which follows the best texts in verse 17, “We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast”. The Authorized Version wrongly adds “and art to come”. The Lord *had come* (see R.V.), and that portion of the ineffable name is fulfilled at the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

The several statements, “the Lord, and His Christ,” “the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come,” refer back to the prophecy of Psalm 2:

“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed”.

“Then shall He speak to them in His wrath”.

“Yet have I anointed my King upon My holy hill of Zion”
(verses 2, 5, 6).

The words of Daniel 7:21, 22, and 26, 27, seem very fitting here:

“And I beheld, and the same horn made war against the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom ... but the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end, and the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an *aionian* kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him”.

The following simple set-out may help the reader to realise the chronology of the seventh trumpet:

The Time of the Seventh Trumpet, 3½ years

The woman fed for 1,260 days (12:6).

A time, times and a half a time (12:14).

The Beast has power 42 months (13:5).

The Seven Vials (15,16).

Babylon falls (14:8).

The final 3½ years of Daniel's 70 weeks (Dan. 9:27).

If the above suggestion is true, then it would appear that the breaking of the covenant in the midst of the week (Dan. 9) is answered by the opening of the temple containing God's covenant. The giving over of the throne and great authority of Satan to the Beast is answered by the proclamation of Heaven's King (11:15). It is the date also of the catching up of the man child to God and His throne (12:5). The Lord too may descend from heaven to the air immediately after the pouring out of the seventh vial — “and the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air” — and the hope of 1 Thessalonians 4 will be realised.

When Satan loses his authority of the air (Eph 2:2), the church of the Acts dispensation will occupy that region.

When Satan is taken and cast into the abyss, the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to Israel.

Thus each section attains its hope upon the ejection of Satan from its destined sphere of glory.

The Mystery of God finishes with the seventh trumpet. That mystery may have several phases and different planes, but all focus in the exalted pre-eminence of Christ.

A great sign in heaven appears in chapter 12. This is the first time the word "sign" (*semeion*) occurs in the Apocalypse. The sign is that of a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. A contrast is evidently intended with the woman of chapter 17:

"And the woman was clothed (same word as in 12:1) with purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls ... the woman whom thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the Kings of the earth" (verses 4, 18).

This city's name is Babylon, and in it is brought to its head the mystery of iniquity (17:5). Chapter twelve also has the sign of a woman, which also represents a city (and the system for which the city stands). The one is the false, the other the true; the one is supported by the beast, the other is attacked by the dragon. In Genesis 37:9 the sun, moon and eleven stars represent Jacob, his wife, and his eleven sons. The woman is Jerusalem, the city of David and of Israel. She is represented as being on the eve of giving birth to a child.

Another sign is seen in heaven: a great fiery red dragon, having the insignia of the final phase of Gentile dominion, stood before the woman, ready to devour her child as soon as it should be born. The sun, moon and stars, the woman's emblems, seem to indicate a power from heaven. This is in direct contrast with the seven heads and ten horns and the seven diadems, which plainly indicate the powers of the beast that support the woman of Revelation 17 (see verse 3).

The dragon in the sign is said to draw the third part of the stars from heaven and cast them to the earth. This is taken by some to refer to the fall of Satan away back in the beginning, but we cannot see how this fact can come into the story here. There is no necessity to leave the period under review, for the reference to the stars is interpreted in verse nine, "and his angels were cast out with him," that is, at the moment of the defeat by Michael. The chief interest of the passage however is the man-child that is born:

“And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and His throne” (12:5).

To whom does this refer? Undoubtedly the words in the first instance are prophetic of Christ Himself, as we find them in Psalm 2. In Revelation 2:26,27 these words are quoted of the overcomer:

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father”.

In Chapter 5 we pointed out the way in which the seven churches of chapters 2 and 3 were related to the rest of the book. The reader is referred to that chapter for the complete statement, argument, and illustration. We now merely extract the portion which bears upon our present study:

THE THYATIRA CHURCH (2:18-29). — The woman Jezebel; the morning star; the rod of iron; the depths of Satan; keep works; faith and patience; false prophetess; her children killed.

THE THYATIRA PERIOD (12 and 13). — The woman clothed with the sun; the twelve stars; the rod of iron; Satan; keep commandments; patience and faith; false prophet; God's children killed.

The close parallel between the “church” and the “period” in each case provides a valuable key to interpretation. There in the future day to which Revelation refers this man-child is born. This cannot refer to Christ personally, but it can indicate that company of faithful overcomers who share the millennial reign of Christ. The catching up of this man-child to God and His throne precedes the tribulation, it is a complete escape from that day of trouble. In Matthew 24:4-8 we have the beginning of the birth-pains, which are the false Christs, wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes. These have already been indicated in the opening of the seals. They lead the way for the tribulation under the beast and false prophet, and when they reach their meridian, the man-child is born.

After the man-child is caught up the woman flees into the wilderness. So in Matthew 24, after the period spoken of as the beginning of birth-pains, which synchronises with

Revelation 12:2, we hear of affliction and hatred, of offence and betrayal, of false prophets who deceive. At the same time a gospel activity is indicated witnessing to all nations before the end comes.

About this same time the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet will be set up in the holy place. This evidently refers to the image of the beast. Daniel's prophecy indicates that the setting up of this abomination occurs in the midst of the final seven years there referred to. This would leave three and a half years for the tribulation to run until "the end". So, in perfect harmony, we read that the woman is fed 1,260 days (12:6), or (as in 12:14), "a time, times and a half," in line with Daniel's cryptic utterance. Three years and a half therefore before the end, and before the revelation of the Lord, the man-child is caught up. This is the rapture of the overcomers. Some will be "accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass" (Luke 21:36). The man-child caught up and escaping the tribulation, the woman who flees into the wilderness, and the remnants of her seed which are attacked by the dragon, cannot possibly represent the same company of people. There are the overcomers who are destined to rule; there is the woman, shielded, fed and protected in the wilderness; there are the seed that are left, who are persecuted. It is evident that some believers are left to endure the fierce wrath of the last days. Our attention however must be kept for the present upon the man-child. Verse eleven adds a detail as to the character of these overcomers:

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death".

The *sign* is a child born under the menace of Satanic destruction; the *reality* is the faithful testimony of those who loved not their lives unto the death. The dragon waiting to devour is interpreted in verse ten as "accusing the brethren before God day and night". The moment of the rapture of these overcomers is at the sounding of the seventh trumpet:

"Now is come salvation and strength, and the KINGDOM of our God, and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down" (12:10).

The words "our brethren" attract attention. Who is it that says these words? The speaker ("I heard a loud voice saying in heaven") is unnamed, but it is clear, from all other similar references, that it *cannot be a man*. In Revelation 22:9 an ANGEL says to John:

"I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy *brethren*, the prophets, and with them that keep the sayings of this book".

We adopt the translation given in the Diaglott. It means that the angel and John and the brethren are all upon one common level in this aspect. An ANGEL, therefore, appears to be the one who calls the overcomers "brethren". These overcomers are to be identified with the Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven (Heb. 12:22,23). These have come to Mount Zion (so had the 144,000, Rev. 14:1); and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. This is also said of the overcomers (Rev. 3:12). These had also come unto an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly.

The casting out of the great dragon to the earth ushers in the third and last woe:

"Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and the sea! for the Devil is come down, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time" (12:12).

The woman is carried away to a place prepared for her, and nourished in the wilderness for the rest of the period until the kingdom is set up on earth. To this period applies the LORD'S PRAYER. "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven". These words will be the heartfelt utterance of this persecuted company, and while experiencing again the manna in the wilderness, they will pray with real understanding, and not with vain repetition, "Give us this day *the bread that cometh down upon us*". The word rendered "daily" in the prayer occurs nowhere else in Scripture, nor, as far as we know, in any writing in the Greek language. It is a word which can only be fulfilled by the repetition of the miracle of the manna, and this is what does take place.

The Scriptures speak of several companies of believers, some ready, some unready, some watchful, some asleep, some like wise virgins, some like unwise, one taken, the

other left, one child of the woman caught up to God and His throne, other of her seed suffering the wrath of the dragon, some sheltered in heaven and the secret of His presence, others sheltered in the wilderness. The Church of the One Body, while not connected with these phases of the great plan, should give heed to these differences and seek to profit thereby.

CHAPTER 11

The Two Beasts

Revelation 13

"The Devil is come down having great wrath," and the most appalling programme of evil immediately ensues. The Revised Version places the opening of chapter 13 at the close of chapter 12, and follows the critical Greek texts by reading "and he stood upon the sand of the sea," instead of the Authorized Version reading "I stood". Before attempting to analyse the intricate details of this chapter it will be necessary to look at it as a whole. It is divided into two parts closely related:

1-10 *speak of the beast that arises from the sea.*

11-18 *speak of the beast that arises from the earth.*

These two parts run parallel to one another in detail:

A 1—. And I saw

B —1. A beast rise up out of the sea

C —1-2—. Like unto a leopard, etc.

D —2. His authority. Satanic

E 3. The deadly wound healed

F 7. War with the saints

G 9,10. *a* "Let him hear"

b "Here is patience".

A 11—. And I saw

B —11—. Another beast arise up out of the earth

C —11. Like a lamb

D 12—. His authority. The first beast

E —12-15—. The deadly wound healed; the image worshipped

F —15-17. Death for those who worship not

G 18. *b* "Here is wisdom"

a "Let him count".

Those who have read Dr. Bullinger's *Apocalypse* will have no difficulty in tracing the origin of this structure. We have altered it in a few minor details only. It will help us to observe these several features more closely. The first beast rises out of the sea called up by the devil who stood upon the sand of the sea. The sea out of which the beast ascends

is evidently the same as seen by Daniel in the vision recorded in chapter 7 of his book:

“I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds strove upon the great sea; and four beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from the other” (verses 2,3).

In Revelation 13 one beast arises out from the sea. When the interpretation of this vision is given to Daniel we read:

“These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the EARTH” (verse 17).

The “great sea” of the vision can be interpreted of the “earth”. This is strange if the literal Mediterranean is intended, but if peoples and nations are symbolised here as in other places, the difficulty vanishes. Daniel next describes these beasts: the first was like a lion and had eagle’s wings; the second was like a bear; the third was like unto a leopard with four wings and four heads; the fourth was indescribable, it was dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, it devoured and broke in pieces the other three beasts, it was diverse from the others and it had ten horns. John in Revelation 13 sees only one beast, but immediately we begin to read its description we realise that he saw *the nondescript beast* which is the object of Daniel’s inquiry in Daniel 7:19-22, and is here found with all their characteristics merged into one huge combination of Satanic power:

“And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard (third beast) and his feet were as the feet of a bear (second beast) and his mouth as the mouth of a lion (first beast)” (Rev. 13:2).

Both are said to have ten horns. Attention is drawn to the leopard having four heads, while the nondescript beast of Revelation 13 has seven. This difference is accounted for simply by seeing that the other two are added to his own and the leopard’s four. These earlier beasts are *kings*, each having some special feature represented by the lion, bear, or leopard. The beast of Revelation 13 will be a combination of all these and more.

There is to be observed here a similarity to the final phase of the same Gentile dominion as represented by the great image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. While *successive* monarchies are positively intended by the various metals

(for Daniel thus interprets the parts), nevertheless, when the stone which is Christ's kingdom strikes the feet of the image, the whole image (gold, silver, brass, iron and clay) is smashed *at the same time*, indicating that at the time of the end Gentile misrule will be concentrated in one awful monster energised by the devil, and Babylon will be its seat of government. As at the beginning, the power, the throne and the great authority of the beast will be those received from Satan. These are given to the beast in exchange for the greatest thing that Satan covets — WORLD WORSHIP. Think of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Satan there shows Christ all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and says, "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me". What a tragedy! How art thou fallen, Lucifer, son of the morning!

One of the heads of the beast was wounded, or "slain to death," and the deadly wound was healed. This travesty of the resurrection of Christ causes all the world to wonder after the beast, and to worship the dragon. The inner thought of the people is expressed by the words, "Who is like unto the beast, who is able to make war with him?" We do not wish to be fanciful, yet we are confident that Scripture fully anticipates the end. Military experts, as well as the man in the street, know that the next war is to be a war in the air.* Britain's boasted isolation and ocean bulwark have been breached, the invasion of these islands had been considered well-nigh impossible; now we know that the introduction of aerial warfare has broken down all such frontiers. That nation, large or small, which has dominion of the air, will conquer the world. Satan is called "the Prince of the authority of the air" (Eph. 2:2). Satan gives his great authority to the beast, the result being that all the world at once recognises his position; "Who is able to make war with him?"

There are indications that the beast will be small and obscure in its origin, but this will matter nothing then. Daniel sees among the ten horns another little horn, which emulates the beast that carries it by plucking up three of the horns by the roots, as the beast had devoured the three beasts before it:

* Written in 1921. Reprinted in 1951, since the advent of atomic warfare the language is still more pregnant.

“The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth ... and the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise, and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings, and he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” (Dan. 7:23-25).

The parallel in Revelation 13 is remarkable:

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies, and power was given unto him forty and two months ... to make war with the saints, and to overcome them” (verses 5-7).

In the light of Daniel 7 we realise that the interest passes from the beast as a whole to “the horn that shall arise”. This is more fully dealt with in chapter 17, the main outline being sufficient here. The second beast, who is called the false prophet (19:20), leads the world to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. This beast has power to perform miracles, he makes fire come down from heaven, and deceives them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast. An image to the beast is made, and life is given to it so that the image speaks, all who refuse to worship the beast are ordered to be killed. Who that reads these words does not think of the image in the plain of Dura, the dulcimers and the sackbut and all kinds of music, the command, “whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace”. We remember the noble answer of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego:

“O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king: *BUT IF NOT* (what a marvellous lack of worldly wisdom! What a ruthless lack of compromise! *but if not*), be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image thou hast set up” (Dan. 3:16-18).

The glorious testimony of these three, together with the equally glorious witness presently of Daniel himself under a similar trial (6:1-28) while being historic fact concerned personally with the four men named, is placed in the

prophecy, illustrating for us more plainly than any vision could portray the days of the beast and the false prophet, and the sterling testimony of those who:

“overcame because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death”.

As Nebuchadnezzar testified that one like unto a son of God walked with the faithful three in the furnace, so angelic fellowship will be granted to those who are faithful even unto death.

The epistles of Paul speak of the end of this age in terms of apostasy and darkness. Let us not be merely moved as we read the splendid courage and faithful witness of these men of old, let us also in our day and generation hold fast the faithful word, even to the extent of saying the “But if not” of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

We have observed that the personal incidents interwoven in Daniel’s prophecy were in themselves prophetic. This is true of chapter 4 as well as of chapter 3. Nebuchadnezzar himself is smitten by the watchers, and during a period of seven times becomes to all intents and purposes a beast of the field. Had the event no prophetic meaning, the cryptic words “seven times” would not have been written; we should have read “seven years,” or “seven weeks” or whatever period is intended.

In the lycanthropy of the head of gold may be seen the nature of Gentile dominion in the sight of God. It is that of a beast, and as a monster it emerges at the close, including in its composite character all the cruelty, oppression, and power of the kingdoms that had passed away. We will not attempt a consideration of details in Revelation 13 until we have seen one further connection, this time with 2 Thessalonians 2.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

- A 1-3. The Day of the Lord, not yet
- B 3. The apostasy
 - C 3. The revelation of the man of sin
 - D 4. Showing himself that he is God (see Rev. 13:6-8).
- A 5, 6. He holdeth fast, his own season
- B 7. The mystery of iniquity
 - C 8. The revelation of the wicked one
 - D 9. With all power, and signs, and lying wonders.

We have seen that the whole chapter (Rev. 13) is devoted to the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth.

Again we acknowledge the help received from Dr. Bullinger's *Apocalypse* in making this comparison. Here we have one called "the man of sin, the son of perdition," and his recorded act is that he

"opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (verse 4).

We believe this to be one individual, and not the whole beast of Revelation 13.* This surely is the abomination of desolation in the holy place, and is the signal for the believer to flee from Judaea to the mountains. This is but the plain way of speaking about the woman carried on eagle wings and nourished in the wilderness.

The Thessalonians were informed that the Day of the Lord could not have set in because several events had not taken place. The day could not come until the apostasy had set in. While "he holdeth fast" the final wickedness cannot be manifested, but as soon as Satan is cast out of heaven, he comes down to the earth in great wrath and stands upon the sand of the sea, then is the moment for the final throw. God himself is challenged and the world worships the dragon; truly a burning fiery furnace for the faithful few in those days. No wonder each of the seven Churches have special promises given to the overcomer. In Revelation 19:20 we read:

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast".

Note this order, "he deceived them that HAD RECEIVED," they *received* first, they were not deceived first. Now note 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12:

"Whose presence (*parousia*) is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: BECAUSE THEY RECEIVED NOT the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness".

* See note on Antichrist on page 175.

Here the same order is followed, they are deceived, because they would not receive, they will not believe the truth, they do believe *the lie*; not merely a lie, but *the lie*. John 8:44, speaking of the Devil, says, "he is a liar, and the father of π ". Christ is the truth, the old man is the lie (Eph. 4:21-25, "wherefore putting away *the lie*"). All Satan's works are "the lie". With a lie he deceived our first parents, saying, "ye shall not surely die"; with some similar lie he sets God aside in favour of himself and his false Messiah at the end. If all this iniquity finds its home in Babylon, it has but returned to its original home. Speaking of the Babylonian apostasy, Romans 1:18-32 uses terms similar to 2 Thessalonians 2.

"They changed the truth of God into *the lie*, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator".

"They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an IMAGE made like to corruptible man".

The words of 2 Thessalonians 2 are further echoed in Romans 1:32, where it speaks of those who "have pleasure in them that do them". The miracles wrought by the energy of Satan are called "powers and signs and wonders of falsehood". These three words are used in Hebrews 2:4 without the words "of falsehood" to describe the miracles of the Acts of the Apostles. This fact should be enough to teach us that the miracles performed by the false prophet will be real enough even as Jannes and Jambres were able in many instances to work miracles in opposition to the miracles of Moses. The peril with which many so-called *Pentecostal* movements are fraught becomes clear in the light of this fact. The work of Satan will be such a counterfeit of truth as to deceive if it were possible the very elect. "Here is the patience and faith of the saints". In the somewhat confused state of the Greek text of Revelation 13:10, the safe course to follow is to turn to the Hebrew original to which this passage alludes:

"And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death; and such as for captivity to captivity; and such as are for the sword to the sword" (Jer. 43:11).

Revelation 13:10 therefore should be rendered:

“If any one is for captivity into captivity he goeth; if any one is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he is killed; here is the patience and faith of the saints” (see also 14:12,13 for similar thought).

For forty-two months it will be given to the beast to make war with the saints and to OVERCOME them. Many will have the patience and faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego and say, “but if not ... we will not serve thy gods”. To this period belong such Psalms as 10:

“Why standest Thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest Thou Thyself in a time of trouble? *The wicked* in his pride doth persecute the poor ... *the wicked* boasteth of his heart’s desire ... *the wicked* through pride of his countenance, will not seek after God” (verses 1-4).

The Psalm closes with the coming of the Lord:

“To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that THE MAN OF THE EARTH may no more oppress”.

Again, Psalm 11:3 says:

“If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?”

The answer is supplied in the next verse:

“The Lord is in His Holy temple, the Lord’s throne is in heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men, the Lord TRIETH the righteous”.

“Here is the patience and faith of the saints”.

“Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup” (verse 6).

Here we have in one verse the awful outpouring of wrath detailed in the Revelation. Psalm 12 again deals with the same period of trial:

“Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men ... *the wicked* walk on every side, when the vilest of the sons of men are exalted”.

Psalm 14:1 sums up the great man of Satan’s right hand.

“The FOOL hath said in his heart, let God not be”.

Doubtless in that day of darkness the "fools" will be those who trust in a god who saves them not, who cry to a god who is afar off. "Here is the patience and faith of the saints," "the just shall live by his faith," "yet a little while and He shall come, and will not tarry". Do we wonder that, patient as they were, John, who was their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, records the cry:

"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).

John expresses the one great cry that will go up to the throne on high from that awful arena, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus".

"Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down" (Isa. 66:1).

The mark of the beast, what visions this calls up! *The number of his name*, on this theme what volumes have been written! Yet must we add our effort in the endeavour to understand what God has written for our learning.

Those who will not worship the beast will be put to death; the refusal of the mark, the name, or the number will be punished by hunger and ostracism, a living death. We must first bring together in some sort of order the references to this name, mark and number, and observe anything that will lead us on in the understanding of the problem.

Mark

"And he causeth all, even the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, to receive a *mark* on their right hands, or upon their foreheads, that no man should be able to buy or to sell except he who had the mark" (13:16,17).

"If any one worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth *his mark* on his forehead, or on his hand, even he shall drink of the wine of God's fury" (14:9,10).

"And there broke out a noisome and grievous sore upon the men who had the *mark of the beast*" (16:2).

"The miracles ... with which he had deceived them that had received the *mark of the beast*" (19:20).

"And whosoever did not worship the beast ... and did not receive the *mark* on their foreheads and on their hands, both lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (20:4).

NOTE.—The words "and over his mark," in 15:2, are omitted by G.L.T.Tr. A., W.H. and R.V. This gives six occurrences of the word.

The Mark of his Name

"They have no rest day and night ... whosoever receiveth the *mark of his name*" (14:11).

The Name

"That no one should be able to buy or sell except he who has the mark, or the *name of the beast*" (13:17).

The Number of his Name

"That no one should be able to buy or sell except he who has ... the *number of his name*" (13:17).

"Those who had gotten the victory ... from the *number of his name*" (15:2).

It will be seen that while the mark and the name are spoken of separately, both the expression "the mark of his name" and "the number of his name" point to the fact that in both cases it is the NAME that is significant. Before going further into "the number of his name" we shall learn a little by contrast from the emphasis laid in this book upon the name of the Lord and the application of that name to the believers of the period:

The Name (the Lord Himself)

"Hast not denied My name" (3:8).

"He had a name written that no man knew" (19:12).

"His name is called the Word of God" (19:13).

"On His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16).

The second reference demands a moment's consideration before proceeding. The Vatican MS. reads in 19:12, "many diadems having names written, and a name written, which no one knows except Himself". This gives us our first contrast:

The Beast	Christ
"Upon his horns ten diadems and upon his head names of blasphemy" (13:1).	"Upon His head many diadems, having names written" (19:12).

Surely it is patent to all that the name written on the many diadems of Christ will be the exact contrast to those blasphemous names written on the heads of the beast. If "blasphemy" sums up the seven names of the beast, the words "holiness to the Lord" will sum up the names on the diadems of the King-Priest of God. Another name, written

on the thigh of the coming Christ, is “King of kings, and Lord of lords”. This name is in direct contrast to Gentile domination. Daniel uses the words in his interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar of the head of gold, “Thou, O king, art a KING OF KINGS ... ruler over all” (Dan. 2:37,38), and we meet it again in Revelation 17:18, “and the woman (supported by the beast) ... is that great city, which reigneth over the KINGS of the earth”.

The Name (the believers)

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, ... and I will write on him THE NAME of My God ... and My new name” (3:12).

“An 144,000, having His name, and the name of His Father on their foreheads” (14:1).

“And they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads” (22:4).

Here is a most evident contrast with the devotees of the beast. The world at that time will be divided into two classes, the huge majority, those that receive the mark of the beast; the persecuted minority, those that deny not the name of the Lord, and who receive the name of the Lamb on their foreheads. Here we must examine a second contrast which is instructive.

The Beast	Christ
The name of the BEAST upon the foreheads of those that dwell on the earth.	The names of the LAMB upon the foreheads of the 144,000.

Christ in His twofold character in this book is Lamb and Lion. The beast in his composite character is a combination of Leopard, Bear, and Lion. The Lion in both represents kingship, and this is common to both (*see* quotation from Daniel 2 above). The Lamb is the *Redeemer*, the Leopard and the Bear the *Destroyer*. Some are marked with the name of the Redeemer, others are numbered among those that destroy the earth; the former in harmony with that name are “redeemed” from among men (14:4), the latter in harmony with their mark are “destroyed” (11:18).

We now look at the “number of his name”. As we have received help by placing Christ in contrast with the Beast, we will continue to do so as we examine this number. The

reader is probably aware that both the Hebrew and the Greek alphabets serve for both letters and numbers. The name "Jesus" in Greek characters is written ΙΕΣΟΥΣ. The numerical value of each letter in order is 10, 8, 200, 70, 400, 200, which added together give the great contrast to the number of the beast, 888. In the same way Lord (*Kurios*)=800. We have already had occasion to refer to the typical character of Daniel and his three friends. It is highly significant that their Hebrew names give the very same number as the name Jesus!

DANIEL	95	
HANANIAH	120	
MISHAEL	381	
AZARIAH	292	Total 888.

Without pursuing this feature further we feel that in this recognition of the lordship of "Jesus," and the absolute refusal to bow down and worship the image of the beast, the contrast with the number and the name of the beast is manifested, and by the contrast the character of the beast is brought to light.

Before proceeding further we pause to observe that Irenaeus tells us that some ancient copies of the Apocalypse in his day read 616 instead of 666. While there is no doubt that 666 is the true reading, the fact that such a number as 616 found advocates suggests that there was a reason for the alteration, and that it must not be attributed to carelessness on the part of the scribe. It will be remembered that when the Apostle wrote to the Thessalonians concerning the advent of the beast in 2 Thessalonians 2 he uses rather cryptic language, referring to something he had told them which he would not commit to writing. Again, when Jeremiah wished to refer to the King of Babylon he refers to him as *Sheshach* (Jer. 25:26). The *Massorah* explains that this word stands for Babel. The system upon which this is worked is the reversal of the Alphabet; thus, since "b" is the second letter of the Hebrew Alphabet, and "sh," the *second from the end*, "sh" stands for "b"; so with the place of "l" and "ch," respectively. Jeremiah, Paul, and John use these cryptic methods when speaking of the beast.

The suggestion that John in the Apocalypse refers to the Hebrew is not to be despised. In the Talmud and other

Rabbinical writings the words *Neron Kesar* (the Caesar Nero) often occur. The gematria of the Hebrew words is 666. If, however, this name be written in the Latin way, *Nero Caesar*, it amounts to 616, the alternative reading of Irenaeus' reference. Now, if Nero was intended by John and by Paul, we can understand how convenient at the time the method of Jeremiah 25:26 would be. Moreover, if some wrote the name after the Latin fashion they would be tempted to substitute 616 for 666.

The reader by this time may be asking, Does the writer believe that Rome is the Beast of Revelation 13? We will answer that question by asking another. Was John the Baptist Elijah? John the Baptist when asked the question said *he was not* (see John 1); Christ when asked the question said *he was*:

“I say unto you that Elias is come already ... then the disciples understood that He spake of John the Baptist” (Matt. 17:12,13).

“For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John, AND IF YE WILL RECEIVE IT, this is Elias, which was for to come” (Matt 11:13,14).

“He shall go before Him in the *spirit and power* of Elias” (Luke 1:17).

John was Elias, IF...! Rome would have been the Beast of Revelation 13, IF...! the “if” here was the repentance of Israel. Israel however did not repent, and the nation was set aside, and Rome was not the beast. When the Lord Jesus commenced His ministry He could say “THE TIME is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Had Israel repented (we speak after the manner of men) there must have been at hand all material ready for the final sphere of Gentile dominion. Surely the times that could produce a Herod (Acts 12 note carefully) could produce the Antichrist! surely the age that could see the rise of such as Nero could produce the beast!

One of the objections to Rome is that it never really held possession of Babylon. This is not by any means a difficulty, neither is it a valid objection. Jerusalem, not Babylon, is the key. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, each in turn held JERUSALEM, and that fact constituted it the successor in Gentile dominion. Rome it was that compelled the mother of Christ to travel to Bethlehem. Rome's penny it was that was shown to the Lord, Rome it was that

crucified Christ, Rome's soldiers that guarded His tomb, Rome itself was the final place of appeal of the Apostle Paul. Upon the failure of Israel the prophetic Image of Daniel enters into mystery. The first three dynasties are named, Babylon, Persia, Greece, the rest remained unnamed. Rome succeeded to the domination of Jerusalem, and after Rome came the Turk. This lasted until the taking of Jerusalem by General Allenby.

The decision of UNO in 1949 to place Jerusalem under international control was a continuance of this essential feature and links the present grouping of the nations of the world with the subdivision of the Image into two feet and the ten toes at the time of the end. This attempt to dominate Jerusalem will, as Zechariah 12:2,3 indicates, precipitate the great conflict at the end.

Jerusalem, not Palestine, is the index, and whatever Gentile power rules Jerusalem, that places that power in the Image of Daniel 2 (Luke 21:24).

The diagram on page 176 is an attempt to illustrate the essential features of this great prophetic Image but our knowledge is too limited for us to make anything more than a suggestion regarding the shape of things to come.

Apart from the computation of the number of the name we can learn something more concerning the character of this final phase by the occurrences of the number elsewhere and its significance. Take for example the revenue of Solomon in one year (1 Kings 10:14), that is, 666 talents of gold. Surely we can see something more than a hint in this that one of the gods of Gentile dominion will be Mammon:

"The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet and all thyine wood, etc." (Rev. 18:12,13).

From the battle of Actium (31 B.C.) to the Saracen conquest (A.D. 636) the period of Rome's *domination of Jerusalem* is 666 years. Again, we still speak of 360 degrees of the circle, 60 minutes, 60 seconds. This is a survival of the Assyrian system of reckoning, which has six as its main factor. Strangely enough Rome's numerals, which we still use on our clock dials, inscriptions etc., are six in number, i. v. x. l. C.D.* and their numerical value is 666. Six is the

* The M for thousand was originally two letters, D placed thus: CD.

number of man. Man was created on the sixth day; for six years Athaliah usurped the throne of David (2 Kings 11; 2 Chron. 23), six words are used for man in the Bible. Goliath, one of the many foreshadowings of the beast, was 6 cubits high, had 6 pieces of armour, and his spear's head weighed 600 shekels. Nebuchadnezzar's image which he set up was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits broad, introduced by 6 instruments of music. Dr. Bullinger tells us that the Gematria of the Hebrew words of Daniel 3:1, which describe the setting up of the image, is 4,662, the factors of which are 7×666 .

Further, we do not use the word *Antichrist* when speaking of the beast of Revelation 13. The word does not occur in the Revelation. The Antichrist is spoken of by John in his first epistle. The beast will be the great world power at the end, the Antichrist will be the great apostate false Messiah. The beast of Revelation 13 is not a false Messiah, it is a political power, Nero well foreshadows the beast, Herod the Antichrist. *The Antichrist* will sell the people of Israel and help on the time of trouble, he will be a renegade Jew; Judas the betrayer was called "the son of perdition". By confusing these two titles (Antichrist and Beast) we are apt to mystify ourselves and misunderstand the Scriptures. The number of man, the number of the name of the beast, apart from the cryptic reference to the individual himself, tell us that he will be the climax MAN, deified, worshipped — and destroyed with the brightness of the appearing of the Son of God. The League of Nations* is preparatory to the development of the ten Kings, the ten toes of the image.

In immediate succession, and as we have seen in designed contrast, to the reference to the enforcing under penalty of death of the mark of the beast, comes the vision of the 144,000, having the name of the Lamb and of His Father in their foreheads. In chapter 7 we have the sealing of the 144,000, followed by a great multitude whom no man could number; in chapter 14 the relation between the two companies is shown. The 144,000 are "firstfruits unto God

* At the time of printing the Second Edition, eighteen years after, the next development urged by many is "A Federation of Nations," which may forge another link in the chain. This has now developed in 1949 into UNO.

and to the Lamb"; the great multitude is the harvest that follows.

The elect company are seen standing upon mount Zion. Zion, or Sion, means a stronghold; upon Zion God will yet set His King (Psa. 2); "out of Zion" shall come the Salvation of Israel (Psa. 14:7), strengthening (20:2), the shining of God (50:2), the rod of Messiah's strength (110:2), blessing to, and from, the Lord (128:5; 135:21), and the law (Isa. 2:3). It is evidently central, a place of administration and of strength.

The epistle to the Hebrews in chapter 12 speaks of two companies which bear a relation to each other very parallel with that of the firstfruits and harvest here. The first part of Hebrews 12 speaks of sons, the second of the *first-born*, introduced by the reference to Esau and his birthright. One of the statements made concerning their position is that they had "come unto mount Sion". In both places mount Sion is connected with the overcomers, and their victory is the theme of the new song (which none could learn by rote, but only through experience) before the throne.

Singing is with understanding, and the nature of their victory is explained in Revelation 14:4,5, "they are virgins". In our English language a virgin usually means a female, but in the Greek it is not necessarily so. Here in Revelation 14:4 it cannot be so, for the passage reads, "these are they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins". We do not wish to enlarge upon this, but feel we must warn our readers against spiritualising the passage away. Romans 1:18-32, the history of Israel from Balaam's stumbling-block to Solomon's shame, the prophetic utterances of Paul, Peter, and Jude concerning the character of the end, and the testimony of the Revelation itself, all go to show that moral uncleanness, Satanic religion, doctrines of demons, and idolatry go hand in hand.

The transition from the truth to the lie is strongly marked in Romans 1:18-32, "the lie" being the one great covering title of the whole Satanic programme, which includes uncleanness and a reprobate mind. One need have but the slightest acquaintance with the undercurrent of life in great cities, to know that should immorality ever

receive the sanction of religion, devotees would flock in their millions to its shrine.

These 144,000 sealed ones have been preserved from the doctrines of Balaam or Jezebel; "they are virgins"; "in their mouth was not found (the) LIE, for they are blameless". All the best texts read *lie* instead of "guile," they are blameless with regard to the LIE. The lie is believed as a result of not receiving the love of the truth (2 Thess. 2). The overcomers who repudiate the lie stand on mount Zion; those who cannot enter into the city, the holy Jerusalem, include everything common or that maketh an abomination and a LIE. Those written in the Lamb's book of life alone have access. Only those thus written are able to refuse the mark of the beast:

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, each one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb slain" (Rev. 13:8).*

While truth wears different aspects and presents itself under different forms according to the dispensation under which it appears, it is nevertheless one; the same is true of *error*. The truth has ever been the mark of God's children, and the *lie* the mark of the devil's; "the devil ... is a LIAR, and the father of π " (John 8:44); God is "a God of *truth*, and without iniquity" (Deut. 32:4); He is a God that cannot lie (Titus 1:2). The apostasy of the Revelation is spoken of in Isaiah 28:15 as a covenant with death and an agreement with hell and a refuge of *lies*. The poor and needy of that day, the Lord's own flock, they find in the Lord "a refuge from the storm" (Isa. 25:4). "His truth shall be their shield and buckler" (Psa. 91:4). The doctrine of the Antichrist is summed up by John in his first epistle as a lie, and those who teach it as liars:

"I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that NO LIE is of the truth: who is THE LIAR, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is THE ANTICHRIST, that denieth the Father and the Son" (2:21,22).

If we turn to the epistles of the Mystery the same teaching is present:

*See also page 254 for note concerning this rendering.

“But you have not thus learned Christ, if indeed you heard Him, and were taught by Him, as the TRUTH is in Jesus (namely) to have put away from you the former manner of life, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and to have put on the new man which according to God has been created in holiness and righteousness of TRUTH; wherefore, having put off THE LIE, speak every man TRUTH with his neighbour” (Eph. 4:21-25).

Here the lie is the old man and his deeds. This is fundamental. The blasphemy of the beast, the denial of the Antichrist, the well-nigh universal apostasy of the end, are all so many manifestations of MAN as he is. The regeneration of Israel, the overcomers who enter the city, the membership of the One Body, these are various manifestations of the *new man*, the new creation. Revelation 14, therefore, while speaking primarily of that future day of trial, speaks to us now. All that goes to make up the lie we must repudiate, all the truth we must embrace. Our armour will be useless if our loins are not first girded with truth, our gospel will be powerless if it is not “the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation”. Righteousness and holiness will be fictitious if they be not of the truth. The worldliness of modern Christendom is the lie, and those who are of the truth have no place other than OUTSIDE. We are not to assume to ourselves the blessings and privileges of the 144,000, but we have our own victory and its blessed results in view. Where we are at one with all people of God through all dispensations is in our attitude towards the truth, the lie and the overcoming.

“And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, having the *aionian* gospel to preach unto those sitting upon the earth, and upon every nation, and tribe, and language and people, saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God, and give glory to Him, because the hour of His judgment is come, and worship Him that made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the fountain of waters!’” (Rev. 14:6,7).

Before considering the “everlasting gospel” we ask the reader’s attention to the people to whom that gospel is preached. “Them that dwell on the earth” appear to be one section, and “every nation, and tribe, and language and people,” appear to be the other. It will be noticed, however, in our rendering above, that we have the words, “those sitting upon the earth”. Our endeavour must always be

first to realise what God says, and then to seek to understand the meaning of His words.

The expression, "them that dwell upon the earth," is frequent in the Revelation, and the ordinary reader would most probably take it for granted that 14:6 was but another occurrence of the familiar phrase. This is not so however. The usual expression is found in 13:8, *hoi katoikountes epi tes ges*. *Katoikeo* means "to dwell," and is a cognate of *oikos*, "a house". The best texts do not read this word in 14:6 but *kathemai*. This word is of frequent occurrence in the Apocalypse, and in many cases it has a special connection with the idea of authority.

In Revelation 4:2,3,4,9; 5:13; 7:10,15; 11:16; 19:4; 20:11; 21:5, the references are to "sitting upon a throne". In Revelation 6:2,4,5,8; 9:17; 19:11,18,19,21, the references are to "sitting upon a horse". Revelation 14:14,15,16, refers to "one sitting upon a cloud". None of these passages convey the idea of merely resting, but of sitting in authority, as king, as elder, as soldier. There are but five more occurrences of the word in Revelation, and they will identify the people to whom the *aionian* gospel is preached, and illuminate the true meaning of the clause that follows their mention:

"The great whore that SITTETH upon many waters" (17:1).

"A woman SITTING upon a scarlet coloured beast" (17:3).

"The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman SITTETH, and they are seven kings" (17:9).

"The waters ... where the whore SITTETH, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (17:15).

"I SIT a queen" (18:7).

There is no passage in the Revelation where the verb "to sit" is used in any other way. Every occurrence has to do with rule. The one that "sitteth" on the many waters, and upon the beast, is Babylon. We can now view chapter 14:6 in clearer light. "They that SIT upon the earth" are the leaders of the great Babylonian Apostasy.

The next consideration must be the relation which this great system has to those who are spoken of as "every nation," etc. As the A.V. stands, the gospel is addressed

- (1) To them that dwell upon the earth.
- (2) To every nation, etc.

But the word *epi* which occurs in the phrase “*upon* the earth” is repeated in the next sentence, “and *upon* every nation”. With 17:15 as our authority we can positively say that the meaning is that those same ones who are said to *SIT* upon the earth, are also said to *SIT* upon every nation, etc., for the very enumeration comes in 17:15. The beast of 13:7 received authority over (*epi*) every tribe, and people, and language and nation. This was the extent of Nebuchadnezzar’s dominion. His herald addressed the King’s command to “people, nations, and languages” (Dan. 3:4,7). The very strangeness of the expression, namely that of “languages” being “commanded” to fall down and worship Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image, is a connecting link with Revelation 14.

Babylon and all that it means will *SIT* upon the very earth and its peoples. The scene on the plains of Dura will be re-enacted. The image of the beast takes the place of the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar, and death is the penalty, as before, for disobedience. The very throne of God is usurped. The Creator Himself is denied. That throne is described in chapter 4, where we found our first occurrence of the word “sit”. There, too, heaven’s worship goes up to God as “Creator” (4:11). Soon evolution and kindred theories will have done their work. The whole of Science and Philosophy will have become enslaved by their teaching, and God Himself will be scientifically reduced to a cipher. Then the Man of Sin will mount the throne. Then the false prophet will demand universal worship of the beast and his image, and then will go forth the “everlasting gospel”.

We trust the reader is sufficiently acquainted with the meaning and usage of *aion* and *aionios* to obviate the necessity of enlarging upon them here. The words mean, “an age, that which has to do with an age,” and this gospel announced from heaven by an angel is peculiarly fitted for the awful time of Babylon’s last grasp for godless power. Unlike the gospel of the Kingdom, or the gospel of Grace, it does not call for repentance or for faith, but simply to “fear God”. Do any of the oppressed nations, tribes, languages and peoples, hearken to this elemental message? Turn to chapter 15. There a company are seen who have

overcome the beast, his image and his mark, and sing unto the Lord as to the *King of the Ages**, saying:

“Who shall NOT FEAR Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? for Thou only art holy: for *all nations* shall come and worship before Thee, for THY JUDGMENTS are made manifest” (verse 4).

This is an echo of the evangel that saved them:

“Fear God, and give glory to Him, FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME, and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (14:7).

We are too prone to take our own times as a standard for judging other periods. We have no authority to preach as a gospel the fear and the worship of the Creator, but this will be the “good news” for the time of Babylonian supremacy. Further light upon this necessity will be found in Romans 1:18-32. There it will be seen that the apostasy of the Gentile world in its beginnings foreshadows its final phase (Rev. 13; 14; 17; 18). The nations knew God, they were taught His relationship to creation, but they “glorified” Him not as God; they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an *image* made like to corruptible man, birds, beasts, and reptiles. They changed the truth of God into THE LIE (see pages 177-179 for the close connection that this establishes between the 144,000 and this *aionian* gospel) and “worshipped” and served the creature more than the CREATOR. Babel, at the beginning (Gen. 11), in the middle (Dan. 3), and at the end (Rev. 13) remains the same. Deliverance, however, comes to the oppressed peoples, when the image is broken, and the Son of man comes. Then will be given to Him “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him”.

Turning back once more to Revelation 14, let us note what immediately follows the announcing of this gospel, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen,” showing by its sequence the true nature of “those that sit upon the earth”.

The first angelic message in the days of the beast and the false prophet will be that of the *aionian* gospel. The second which immediately follows will herald the fall of Babylon. As this is dealt with in detail in chapters 17 and 18, we pass on to note the message of the third angel:

* See also pages 191-193 concerning the rendering of Rev. 15:3.

"And another, a third angel, followed them, saying with a loud voice, If anyone worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth his mark on his forehead or on his hand, even he shall drink of the wine of God's fury, which is prepared undiluted in the cup of His wrath; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth for the ages of the ages, and they have no respite day or night who are worshipping the beast and his image, and if anyone receiveth the mark of his name" (14:9-11).

Here is the solemn, the awful witness of the third angel. In Psalm 75:8 we read:

"For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and He poureth out the same; but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink thereof".

There is in many prophecies of this period an indication that the punishments Israel are made to suffer under the permission of God will be ultimately turned upon the great oppressor. For instance, in Psalm 73:10 it is "His people" to whom "the waters of a full cup are wrung out". So in Isaiah 51:17:

"Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which has drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out".

Look at verses 9-16. There is the wounding of the dragon, the fear of a man that shall die and the fury of the oppressor. Here, too, is an allusion to the terms of the *aionian* gospel:

"And forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth" (Isa. 51:13).

Then in Isaiah 51:22,23 comes the great transfer:

"Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink of it again: but I will put it into the hands of them that afflict thee: which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over".

Again in Jeremiah 51:7 we read:

"Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand; that made all the earth drunken. The nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad".

Then comes the parallel with Revelation 14:8:

“Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed ... it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of His temple” (Jer. 51:8-11).

The language of Revelation 14:10,11, is based upon a passage in Isaiah 34. The whole chapter should be read, and its bearing upon the Revelation noted. We draw attention to one verse in particular. The land of Idumea is to become:

“burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day: the smoke thereof shall go up for ever, from generation to generation it shall lie waste, none shall pass through it for ever and ever” (verse 10).

We would not seek to diminish the awfulness of the punishment which falls upon those who worship the beast, but we do ask that this terrible penalty shall not be unscripturally applied to unsaved sinners of all times and places. It is the peculiar punishment of a special class. “Day and night” apply to time, not to eternity. A strict adherence to the tense of the verb makes us translate in Revelation 14:11:

“They have no rest day or night *who are worshipping* the beast,” as though their torment is already in operation while they live upon the earth. Further, chapters 17 and 18 expand and expound these verses. There we read:

“How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her” (18:7).

“She shall be utterly burned with fire ... the kings of the earth shall bewail her when they see the smoke of her burning” (18:8,9).

“With violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all ... and again they said, Hallelujah, and her smoke rose up for ever and ever” (18:21-19:3).

During the millennial kingdom Babylon will remain a burnt mountain, a monument of wrath to all the nations of the earth. During the same period the smoke of the torment of those who received the mark of the beast and who worshipped his image will be an awful object lesson to those in the heavens. Both symbols will pass away with the “former things” when the ages of the ages finish their course, and when He that sits upon the throne shall say, “Behold, all things are new” (21:5).

There is another portion of the angel's message which must receive attention, namely, the words of 14:12,13:

“Here is the patience of the saints — those who keep the commandment of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, for their works follow with them”.

In Revelation 13:10 we have an explanation of what constitutes “The patience and the faith of the saints” — captivity and sword under the cruel oppression of the beast. This is expanded in 14:12, which, coming in immediate sequence to the reference to those who worship the image of the beast, suggests the character of their trial. A voice speaks from heaven, saying, “Write”. On four different occasions the Apostle is commanded in the Apocalypse to write.

A 1:11,19; 2:3. Write to the seven churches

B 14:13. Write, Blessed are the dead

B 19:9. Write, Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb

A 21:5. Write, Behold, I make all things new.

There is a real connection between 14:13 and 19:9 “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord *from henceforth*”. The death here spoken of is evidently martyrdom. Under the fierce persecution of the beast the believer is called upon to think of death as “blessed” rather than by yielding to pressure to purchase an extension of life by worshipping the image. Such overcomers are specially mentioned in Revelation 15:1-4 and 20:4, and are clearly referred to in 14:1 (cf. 13:16). See also second half of Hebrews 11:35. These enter into “rest” and their works following them bear testimony to their victory over the beast and the false prophet.

The same word is used of both classes. The one have “no rest day and night,” the other “rest from their troubles”. The martyrs under the fifth seal likewise are told to “rest” a little season until their fellow servants should also be killed (6:11). There is an evident reference here to chapter 14:13.

The passage which we have here before us brings very vividly to light the two classes into which the actors in the Revelation are to be divided. It is not so much saved and unsaved, but

The worship of the Beast	or	the worship of God.
The receiving of his mark	or	the mark of the Father.
The earth dwellers	or	the pilgrims.
Those who bow to the Beast	or	the overcomers.
Those who save their lives by idolatry	or	those who love not their lives unto the death.

The one class constitute the great supper of God (19:17), and the other is called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:9). The one class are devoted to a special and signal punishment, the other to a special and signal reward. The one class are ranged under the dragon and the other under the Lamb.

The exhortation to patience will be needed in those days of trial and fierce temptation. John could write sympathetically of this, for he describes himself as "Your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus" (1:9). The churches of Ephesus and Thyatira are commended for their patience, and the church of Philadelphia will receive a wonderful deliverance because it keeps the Word of the Lord's patience.

The only other references to patience are those of Revelation 13:10 and 14:12, "Here is patience," both of which refer directly and exclusively to the period of the beast and the false prophet. The references in other Scriptures, particularly those in the epistle of James, are also very applicable to this period of tested faith.

Our lot is cast in a different day. Our trials may be of a different character, but to us as to all saints at all times the Word is true, "Ye have need of patience" (Heb. 10:36). "Let patience have her perfect work" (James 1:4).

Immediately following the cry of the third angel and the indication that wickedness had reached its height comes the twofold scene of judgment, represented under the figures of the harvest and the vintage.

It will enable us to see more clearly the bearing of these visions upon the theme of the book and their place in its outworking if we take a wider view than the limits of chapter 14.

On page 6, the structure of the Revelation as a whole is given. The central member is composed of a series of seven pairs of visions. It will be seen that 14:6-20, "The six angels" is echoed in the structure by 16:1-18:24, "The seven

vials". This helps us to place the Harvest and the Vintage, and to see that both will be fulfilled in the doom of Babylon and the Beast.

It is pardonable to hesitate in accepting the statement that the harvest here refers to judgment, seeing that in many passages the reaping of the harvest includes the righteous. One prophecy seems to speak directly of this same period. We refer to Joel 3:12-14:

"Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. PUT YE IN THE SICKLE, FOR THE HARVEST IS RIFE; come, get you down; for the PRESS is full, the FATS overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of threshing; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of threshing".

The Authorized Version reads "The valley of decision" here, but the Hebrew word *charuts* is translated "threshing instrument" in Isaiah 28:27, 41:15, and Amos 1:3. Here without doubt is a scene of judgment, and here the figures both of harvest and vintage are used. Further, there is a verbal connection which should be remembered. In Revelation 14:15 the word "thrust" is the Greek word *pempo*=to send. In Joel 3:13 the Septuagint has *exapostello*, which likewise means "send" (see Joel 2:25). The sickle is sent, just as the other agencies of judgment and mercy, and just what will answer to the symbol we may not at present know. Another passage bearing upon the subject is Jeremiah 51:33:

"The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor, it is time to thresh her; yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come".

While judgment is manifestly the setting of these visions, the harvest at the end of the age is a reaping of both wheat and darnel. In this case the "tares" or darnel, the "children of the wicked one," are the worshippers of the image. These are bound in bundles to be burned. The "wheat" are the children of the Kingdom, the blessed dead who die in the Lord at that time. With regard to the vintage the language is plain. It represents unmitigated wrath. The clusters of the vine of the earth are cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God. This is but an echo of the figure of verse 10, "the wine of the wrath of God". Isaiah 63:1-6 speaks of this terrible vintage:

“Who is This That cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, Mighty to save ... I have trodden the winepress alone ... I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come”.

When we were dealing with the earlier portion of Revelation 14 we found Isaiah 34 applicable. That chapter contains much that fits in with the vintage of Revelation 14. There we read of a “sacrifice in Bozrah” (verse 6). The same awful emphasis upon “blood”. “The land shall be soaked (drunken) with blood”. And the same period is indicated as that of Isaiah 63:

“For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion” (Isa. 34:8).

Israel is represented as a vine. Sometimes they become worse than the “vine of Sodom” (Deut. 32:32), or “the degenerate plant of a strange vine” (Jer. 2:21), yet in the day of their restoration they shall “grow as the vine” (Hos. 14:7), and the vine that the Lord brought out of Egypt shall once again blossom and bud, and fill the earth with fruit (Psa. 80:8-19). The vine of Sodom, the degenerate plant of a strange vine, to which Israel approximated in the apostasy, was the vine of the earth. Sodom and Babylon are included under this figure. The vine of the earth becomes ripe, iniquity reaches its height. The Man of Sin ascends the throne of Deity, and the sharp sickle is thrust in and the vintage gathered. This vine has not yielded that wine which rejoices the heart of God and man, but the intoxicating wine of Babylon that has sent the nations “mad drunk” (Jer. 51:7). Now the clusters are cast into the winepress of the wrath of God, and the awful result is expressed in the words:

“And blood came forth out of the winepress even to the bridles of the horses, a thousand six hundred furlongs” (Rev. 14:20).

The sixth vial leads to Armageddon (16:12-16). The actual treading of the winepress takes place at the riding forth from heaven of Christ as the Word of God, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. As a result of the battle which then ensues, the birds that fly in mid-heaven are

called to partake of the great supper of God, when they shall eat the flesh of kings, officers and mighty men, horse and rider (19:11-21).

The distance, 1,600 furlongs, cannot be spiritualised; it stands as an actual measurement and indicates some feature of importance. The furlong is the Roman stadium, which is about 202 English yards; 1,600 stadia, therefore, represent about 183 English miles. What tract of land can this point to? The southern extremity of Palestine was Kadesh-barnea (Num. 34), the northern boundary, Mount Hermon (*see note in The Companion Bible to Num. 34:7*). Kitto's Cyclopaedia reads as follows:

"The length, from Mount Hermon in the north, to which the territory of Manasseh beyond Jordan extended (Josh. 13:11), to Kadesh-barnea in the south, to which the territory of Judah reached was 180 miles".

The 1,600 furlongs give, practically, the extreme measurement north to south of the land of Israel. The whole of the land will be drenched with blood. Just how all will take place we do not know, and we are thankful that such details do not belong to our sphere. The cry goes up from beneath the altar:

"How long dost Thou not avenge our blood?" (6:10).

When the day of vengeance sets in, the second vial of wrath turns the sea into blood (16:3), the third vial turns the rivers and fountains into the same. The cry goes up at this:

"They have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy" (Rev 16:6).

The woman, Babylon, is discovered "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (17:6), and in Babylon was found "the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (18:24).

The nations by their policy, their social developments, their science and their religions, are heading straight for this awful end. The wrath of God is terrible beyond words. Blessed are they who have been redeemed from wrath and for whom there can be no condemnation.

CHAPTER 12

The Song of Moses, and the Seven Vials

Revelation 15;16

Chapter fourteen is occupied with a brief foreshadowing of the seven vials of wrath and the condition of the Lord's people during that dread period. It indicates that the climax sin is reached under the commands of the false prophet, and that the fall of Babylon is closely connected with the blasphemy associated with the beast. The torment of fire and brimstone and the smoke of that torment which ascends for the ages of the ages reveals the intensity of these seven last plagues, while the blessedness of the dead "from henceforth" shows the frequency of martyrdom during this time. The whole is summarised under the figures of the harvest and the vintage.

Before this series is given we are permitted a glimpse of the FIRST FRUITS (14:1-5), and these sing a NEW SONG. In chapter 15, before the seven vials are poured out, we see the overcomers of the beast, who also are a kind of FIRST FRUITS from the harvest of the earth. These, instead of singing a new song, sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. The key to the understanding of the seven vials of wrath is found in "the song of Moses".

There is a division of opinion as to what is intended by the title, "The Song of Moses". Some contend with a fair show of reason that the triumph over the host of Pharaoh in the Red Sea is echoed by the greater triumph over the beast and his image. This looks to Exodus 15 as the song of Moses. *The Companion Bible* and others, however, see a reference to Deuteronomy 32, which is distinctly and repeatedly called the "song" of Moses, and which rehearses the ways of God with His people, vindicating the justice of His judgments, and revealing the inner causes both of Israel's defection and the nation's apostasy.

In Deuteronomy 31:19 we read, "That this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel". In verse 21 we find, "this song shall testify against them as a witness,"

and in verse 22 that "Moses wrote this song the same day". The burden of the song is given in verse 29, the evil which will befall them in the *latter days*. The song itself occupies the whole of Deuteronomy 32. It traverses the dealings of God with His people right to the end: the idolatry of Israel, the worshipping of strange gods, the forgetting of God, their resemblance to the vine of Sodom. The song concludes with a call to the nations to rejoice with His people, the threat of vengeance for the blood of His servants, and the promise of mercy to His land and people.

In Exodus 34:10, the Lord makes a covenant that before all the people He would do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. This is primarily a covenant with reference to Israel as a stiff-necked people, but seems to cover the judgments of the Apocalypse. It is noticeable how closely the miraculous judgments of the Revelation resemble the plagues sent by God upon Pharaoh and Egypt. These we shall have an opportunity of observing later.

In Revelation 15:3 we read, "And they sing the song of Moses ... and the song of the Lamb, saying ..." This indicates that the overcomers do not repeat Deuteronomy 32, but give a summary of its principles in the words that follow. In their summary they emphasise at the commencement the greatness and the marvellous character of the works of God, and that His ways are just and true. Then they ask the question, "Who should not fear, and glorify Thy name, O Lord?" and give a threefold reason.

Because of the Lord's holiness.

Because all nations shall come and worship.

Because of the manifestation of His righteous judgments.

In verse 3 the Authorized Version reads, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints," and gives in the margin "Or *nations*, or *ages*". The R.V., G., L., Tr., A. and W.H. read "nations". The Numeric New Testament reads, "King of the ages". This Numeric New Testament used the Greek text of Westcott and Hort, but has found it necessary to differ from them here. The two titles, "King of nations" and "King of the ages," occur together in a most significant passage in Jeremiah. In the tenth chapter of

Jeremiah the prophet warns Israel against idolatry. After proving the utter futility of idolatry, the prophet says in verses 6 and 7:

“Forasmuch as there is none like unto Thee, O Lord; Thou art great, and Thy name is great in might. WHO WOULD NOT FEAR THEE, O KING OF NATIONS?”

Again the prophet interjects a word on the worthlessness of idolatry, and then in verse 10 says:

“But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and KING OF THE AGES. At His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation”.

Then follows a verse which is written in Chaldee, the language of Babylon:

“The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish ... and from under these heavens”.

Surely here is a reference to the state of things that necessitated the *aionian* gospel of Revelation 14.

The words, “Who would not fear Thee, O King of nations?” are echoed in Revelation 15:3,4. The portion of Jeremiah addressed to Israel contains the title “King of nations”. The title that immediately precedes the Chaldee verse is “King of the ages”. Whichever reading we accept in Revelation 15, it appears from Jeremiah 10 that both titles are related, both speak of the Lord’s purpose through the ages with regard to Israel and the nations and there, for the time being, our limited knowledge stays.

“O Lord ... Thou only art holy”. The word rendered “holy” in Revelation 15:4 is not the usual word so translated. It is *hosios*. Cremer, linking it with the Hebrew *chesed*, speaks of it as denoting God’s holy love toward His people Israel. *Hosios* denotes a holiness established by right or custom, but *chesed* “must not be taken as implying any praiseworthy virtue or merit, but simply an hereditary advantage” (Hupfeld). In Acts 13:34 the word occurs in the sentence “I will give you the sure mercies of David,” and the Authorized Version margin calls attention to the use of *ta osia*, holy, or, just things, which the Septuagint frequently uses for the Hebrew *mercies*.

The occurrence of this word in Revelation 15:4 and 16:5 is closely associated with the fulfilment of the sure mercies

of David and the restoration of Israel. The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb bring before us the truth, the righteousness, the mercy of Him Who is both King of nations and King of ages, Who in the midst of wrath remembers mercy, and, while judging the nations for their idolatry, yet speaks of the day when all the nations shall worship before Him.

We now approach the great crisis of the book. Chapters 16, 17 and 18 are taken up with the seven last plagues. These seven vials of wrath are, in the language of Jeremiah 51:11, "The vengeance of His temple".

This expression is found in the same context as the words, "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken". Because these seven vials are peculiarly the "vengeance of His temple," we find in Revelation 15:5 and 16:1, that the seven angels who are commissioned to pour them out are connected with the very innermost shrine of the tabernacle. "The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony" is the basis of these judgments. They have to do with idolatry, with the usurpation of the place of God, with the blood of the saints.

The order of the seven vials is very similar to that observed of the seven seals and the seven trumpets. It will be remembered that the sixth seal takes us right on to the day of the wrath of the Lamb, and that the seventh seal is divided off from the rest by the half-hour's silence in heaven, and that the seventh seal covers the whole period of the seven trumpets. So here: the first six vials run in sequence. The seventh is detached and is largely taken up with the judgment of Babylon. The order of the vials is as follows:

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|------------|
| 1st. | On the Earth. | } | Blood. |
| 2nd. | On the Sea | | |
| 3rd. | On the Rivers | | |
| <i>I heard. The Angel of the Waters. "Thou art just".</i> | | | |
| <i>One from the Altar. "They are worthy".</i> | | | |
| 4th. | On the Sun | } | Blasphemy. |
| 5th. | On the Throne | | |
| 6th. | On the Great River Euphrates. | | |

“Righteous art Thou, Who art, and Who wast, The Holy and Merciful One (*ho hosios*), because Thou didst judge these things; because they shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; worthy are they” (16:5,6).

After this John heard “the altar” saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments”. We are not told whether the angel of the altar, or the souls that waited beneath the altar, is intended in this intensely figurative expression. Most probably it indicates the concurrence of the martyrs, which is repeated in 19:1,2.

Many translators render the words *axioi eisi* “they deserve it,” and while this is certainly the meaning, yet we feel that the contrast with the words *axios ei* of Revelation 5:9, “Thou art worthy,” is important. Further, *axios* is derived from a word meaning “the beam of a balance,” and amplifies the thought in the words that precede the exclamation, namely, “Because they shed the blood of saints and prophets, Thou hast given them blood to drink” — the judgment corresponds with the crime; eye for eye, tooth for tooth, the beam of the balance indicating the equivalent judgment.

THE 4TH VIAL. — The effect of this vial is the intensification of the heat of the sun:

“And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God, Who hath authority over these plagues; and they repented not to give Him glory” (16:9).

It is evident by the preceding words that these final judgments are so arranged (humanly speaking) to give the last opportunities to the worshippers of the beast to repent. Instead of repenting they blaspheme, both here, under the fifth, and under the seventh vial.

THE 5TH VIAL. — A direct attack is made upon the throne of the beast. The throne of Satan will be at Pergamos (2:13), and Satan will give the beast his throne and great authority. Whether the seat of government will continue at Pergamos we cannot say. Revelation 2:13 seems to indicate that at least during one part of the time it will be there. Zechariah 5:11 suggests a return to Babylon.

The Day of the Lord is connected with “darkness and gloominess, clouds, and thick darkness” (Joel 2). The sun will turn to darkness before the Day of the Lord (Mark 13:24,25). It is the beginning of the end.

THE 6TH VIAL. — The Euphrates is dried up with a purpose — “that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared”. In Isaiah 11:15,16, we read that “the river” is to be smitten in the seven streams, so that men may go over dry shod:

“And there shall be an highway for the remnant of His People which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt”.

The passage through the Red Sea was real and the account of it literal, so will be the drying up of the river Euphrates. Both the remnant of Israel from Assyria, and the kings of the east will pass over in this way. Zechariah 10:10,11, has words much to the same effect as Isaiah 11:15,16. The kings of the east evidently lead their armies across the Euphrates, and the verses following show that their objective is Armageddon.

Three unclean spirits, demon spirits working miracles, proceed from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, with the express object of gathering the kings of the habitable world to the battle of that great day of God, the Almighty. East and West (for the *oikoumene* signifies the “habitable” or “civilised” world) meet together in joint opposition to the Lamb. At this critical period the Lord speaks to His own enjoining watchfulness. The “blessedness” of watchfulness here is to be compared and contrasted with the “blessedness” of a martyr’s death “from henceforth” in chapter 14.

Armageddon, or more correctly, Har-mageddon, means “The mount of Megiddo”. This is a literal geographical place, situated in the plain of Esdraelon, and destined to be the greatest battlefield of all time. Judges 5:19, 2 Kings 23:29, 2 Chronicles 35:22-25, Zechariah 12:11, and Septuagint version of Isaiah 10:28, give a foreshadowing of the Har-mageddon of the Apocalypse.

The seventh angel will pour his vial on the air. Why the air? We are not told that men were suffocated as a result — indeed, no result is actually mentioned. Yet the outpouring of this vial, reserved to the end, must be the climax. The fifth vial will be poured out upon the throne of the beast, the seventh will be directed against Satan himself. Unless we mistake the reference, Ephesians 2 speaks of Satan as

“The prince of the authority of the air”. The casting out of the dragon, called the Devil and Satan, from the heavens to the earth is followed by the words:

“Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Anointed” (Rev. 12:10).

The casting down of the Devil speaks woe to the inhabitants of the earth:

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Rev. 12:12).

When therefore the seventh vial falls upon the air, a great voice is heard out of the temple from the throne saying “ACCOMPLISHED” (Rev. 16:17). The word here ranks in sacred importance with the word “FINISHED” of John 19:30. The state of the text renders Revelation 21:6 (“It is done”) a little uncertain, but many feel that the Authorized Version should be retained. If so, this is a blessed counterpart to Revelation 16:17. One of the features that follows this vial is an unprecedented earthquake:

“Such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty and so great” (Rev. 16:18).

Seeing that this earthquake must be akin to the mighty geological upheavals that have left their mark upon the crust of the earth, when mountains were formed and islands rose or disappeared, the words of verse 20 need not be figuratively understood at all; “Every island fled away, and (certain) mountains disappeared”. The shock divided Babylon into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed.

The mighty army that comes up against Israel, which Ezekiel addresses as Gog (38:14-23), is met by a terrible earthquake:

“So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at My presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground ... I will plead with him with pestilence and with blood ... great hailstones, fire, and brimstone” (Ezek. 38:20-22).

The passage seems to refer to the seventh vial. In Isaiah 2:19,21 in connection with the Day of the Lord, we read of the time "when He shall shake terribly the earth". Haggai 2:6,7,21 and 22 says:

"Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come".

"I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and the riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother".

This again speaks plainly of Har-mageddon. The first earthquake in the experience of man is described as a "creation," being something new. It was occasioned by the presumption of Korah, and Moses said:

"If the Lord make a new thing (margin, create a creature), and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up ... then shall ye understand that these men have provoked the Lord" (Num. 16:30).

The earthquake is associated with the judgment of God upon those who sinned in connection with holy things. Deuteronomy 32:21,22, declares that the idolatry of Israel kindled a fire which shall consume the earth and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. Thus the volcano and the earthquake are both associated with "the vengeance of His Temple". The earthquake that Zechariah tells us shall split the mount of Olives in the midst is likened to the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, the king, who followed Korah's sinful example, and was smitten (like the men under the first vial) with leprosy. Not only is the earth convulsed, but there fall from heaven hailstones of almost incredible weight. The Jewish talent has been computed as equal to 114 lb. troy (Moses Stuart), avoirdupois (*The Companion Bible*), the Attic talent 57 lb. troy. Whichever we take the talent to mean, the judgment is beyond thought. The construction of the sentence and the words used in verse 21 justify some such rendering as "terrific!"

Some readers have passed through the mental and physical agonies of the bombardment of modern war in the trenches, or the terrors of an air raid at home. What

therefore must this unparalleled earthquake be, followed by a storm of hail, each stone weighing at least about a half hundredweight, falling from heaven! By far the most important feature of this section is that of verse 19, "And great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath". This feature occupies chapters 17 and 18, and to this we must address ourselves in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 13

Babylon the Great

Revelation 17:18

On two occasions during the outpouring of woe and judgment Babylon has come into notice. First after the announcement of the *aionian* gospel by an angel, "There followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city," and the reason of Babylon's fall follows: "Because she made all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication". At the close of the seventh vial there comes another reference to Babylon. "And great Babylon came into remembrance before God". This time instead of speaking of the wine which Babylon made the nations to drink, a parallel judgment is indicated, "To give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath".

So important a place does the fall of Babylon occupy in the Revelation that chapters 17 and 18 are devoted to it, and the opening verses of 19 contain Hallelujahs over the destruction of the city. The overthrow of Babylon is introduced by a vision of a woman. Then follows the explanation of the symbol. These two phases occupy chapter 17. One of the seven angels that had the seven vials addressed John, saying:

"Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (17:1,2).

The Apostle was thereupon carried away "in the spirit into the wilderness," an expression very similar to that of 1:10, "I was in spirit in the Day of the Lord". The vision that he saw is next described:

"I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns" (17:3).

There are further descriptions of the beast. The description of the woman follows:

“And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication” (17:4).

The symbolic significance of this vision is next indicated. In the Authorized Version the whole wording is printed in capitals, as though all formed a part of the title upon the woman’s forehead. The Revised Version margin, however, gives it as though the word “mystery” is an explanation, but not a part of the title. We read the verse then as follows:

“And upon her forehead was a name written, a mystery (secret), ‘BABYLON THE GREAT,’ the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (17:5).

This passage is threefold:

- (1) There is here a “mystery” or secret.
- (2) There is the name itself, “Babylon the Great”.
- (3) There is the meaning of the secret of the name, “The mother, etc.”

In chapter 1:20 we have a guide to the interpretation of the mysteries or secrets suggested:

“The mystery of the seven stars in My right hand...
The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches”.

The name therefore “Babylon the Great” was a secret symbol of something deeper. If however we are in ignorance or confusion as to the basis of this symbol, we shall not be ready to follow the inspired interpretation, and for the sake of clearness we must set before the reader the Scriptural history and prophecy concerning Babylon before we go further into the intricate details of chapter 17.

Babylon, as the seat of government from which commenced “the times of the Gentiles,” is that great city which existed in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, but Babylon, the mother of harlots, is that city founded by Nimrod the rebel. Idolatry when traced to its source dips finally underground, and is found originating in the secret rites and teachings of ancient Babel, and idolatry with its associated obscenities is the dark and persecuting background of the whole book of the Revelation. The ancient mystery cults were all derived from Babel.

Bunsen says that the religious system of Egypt itself,

ancient as it is, was derived from Asia and “the primitive empire in Babel”. It is not our purpose to attempt to set forth the ramifications of the Babylonian system, the reader will find it most fully set forth in Hislop’s *Two Babylons*. There is practically no religious system on earth to-day that does not use the symbols, names and ritual of this leavening set of lies. What Jerusalem is yet to be in the hands of our God for blessing, Babylon has been and yet will be, in the hands of Satan, for a curse.

There are many expositors who believe and teach that the Babylon of the Revelation is the Roman Catholic Church. This we must set aside as not fulfilling the Scriptures. Isaiah wrote prophetically of Babylon. Did he speak of the Roman apostasy or of the city of Babylon? Let him speak for himself:

“And Babylon, the glory of Kingdoms, the beauty of the CHALDEES’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah” (Isa 13:19).

The whole of Isaiah 13 should be read, and its many parallels with Revelation noted. Its time period is spoken of as “the Day of the Lord” (verse 9). Its signs are the darkening of the sun, moon and stars (verse 10). Its object is the punishing of the wicked and the proud (verse 11). Its accompaniments are the shaking of the heavens and the removing of the earth (verse 13). These four points of resemblance are enough to connect the Babylon of Isaiah’s burden with that of John in the Revelation.

When we read on into Isaiah 14 and hear the proverb taken up against the “King of Babylon,” we again realise that prophecy is pointing onward to the great apostate head of World Rule who is to seek universal worship for himself, saying “I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:4-23 and Rev. 13). Jeremiah prophesies concerning Babylon, and he too is careful to locate Babylon geographically:

“The word that the Lord spake against Babylon and against the land of the CHALDEANS” (Jer. 50:1).

One incident that marks the overthrow of Babylon is the return of both Israel and Judah:

“In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together ... let us join ourselves unto the Lord in a *perpetual covenant*” (Jer. 50:4,5).

This fixes the time of fulfilment as being yet future. The nation concerning whom Jeremiah prophesies is called "the hindermost (or the last) of the nations" (Jer. 50:12), which is the position of Babylon at the time of the Lord's return. The reader is urged to read Jeremiah 50 and 51 for himself and note the many points of contact with Revelation. To stimulate the reader to make the comparison we transcribe the following list of parallels from a list in the prophetic studies of B. W. Newton:

Jer. 51:13	Rev. 17:1
" 51:7	" 17:4
" 51:7	" 17:2
Isa. 47:5,7	" 17:18 and 18:7,8
Jer. 51:25	" 18:8
" 51:6,45; 50:8	" 18:4
" 51:9	" 18:5
" 50:15; 51:24-49	" 18:6
" 50:29	" 18:6
" 51:8 (Isa. 21:9)	" 18:2
" 51:63,64	" 18:21
Isa. 13:21	" 18:2
" 24:8,10	" 18:23

When John saw the vision of the woman sitting upon the beast he said:

"And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and I wondered when I saw her with a great wonder" (Rev. 17:6).

The question that arises sooner or later in this connection is "will Babylon be rebuilt?" Zechariah, the prophet of Israel's restoration, foretells the revival of Babylon. In Zechariah 5:1-11 we have a woman, and wickedness taken back in an ephah "to build it an house in the LAND OF SHINAR". This prophecy necessitates the revival of Babylon. Babylon has never been destroyed as Scripture says it will be — "suddenly" (Jer. 51:8). When the stone cut out without hands struck the Colossus on the feet, the whole image, the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces, *together*, and the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Gentile dominion and Satanic counterfeit will both be headed up again in Babylon, and there they will be judged.

Mesopotamia cannot be kept out of the world's politics any more than Jerusalem could be kept out of the first great war or present problems. The sands of time are running out. The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh, and whether on the mount of Olives, in the air, or in glory, may we be ready to meet Him.

Upon the expression of wonder with which John greeted the vision of the woman and the scarlet coloured beast the angel said to him:

“Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns” (17:7).

This is encouraging, for the mystery or secret is great. At first sight the explanation seems more difficult to grasp than the vision itself. The order in which the interpretation is given is (1) the beast, (2) the woman. So far as the beast itself is concerned, its supernatural character is first put forward in verse 8. Then the meaning of the seven heads and the ten horns follows (verses 9-14). The waters upon which the woman sits are interpreted in verse 15, and then finally the woman is explained in verse 18. This covers all in the vision that needs explanation.

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition” (17:8).

These few words sketch the past, present and future of the beast.

(1) *He was.* — He has therefore lived in the past.

(2) *He is not.* — That is to say, when the time comes into which John had been taken by the spirit, the beast will have been slain. Revelation 13 adds information here. There the beast rises up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads. One of the beast's heads had been slain as it were to death, and yet was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast.

(3) *He shall be present.* — He is about to ascend out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. The Authorized Version reads “and yet is,” but all the best MSS. read *kai parestai* = “shall be present” for *kai per estin* = “and yet is”.

There is in this statement an indication that the beast will counterfeit the parousia of the Lord. In 2 Thessalonians 2:8,9 we read:

“Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His *parousia*, even him whose *parousia* is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders”.

One of the Divine Titles in this book is the unfolded name Jehovah — “Him which is, and which was, and which is to come”. The counterfeit of this name is seen in the description of the beast — “He was, and is not, and shall be present”. There is also a very evident imitation of the glorious words of Revelation 1:18, “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive unto the ages of the ages”.

The ascension of the beast from the abyss after it could be said of him “he is not” indicates that we are here dealing with something superhuman. In some form or other this is life from the dead. Just how far Satan has the power of giving back life we do not pretend to know, and how much is real and how much is deception we cannot say. The statements of Scripture plainly intimate the miraculous, and 2 Thessalonians 2, already quoted, uses the same words “power, signs, wonders” as are used in Hebrews 2:4, with the added qualification “lying”. In Revelation 17:8 we read:

“And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the overthrow of the world”.

In Revelation 13, after describing the superhuman phase of this beast, verse 8 says:

“And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the overthrow of the world”.

Before the angel proceeds to give further detail, he adds the words, “Here is the mind that hath wisdom” (17:9). This is a close correspondence with the closing verse of chapter 13, “Here is wisdom, let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast”. There is

evidently some close association between the number of the beast, 666, or his mark, and the threefold description "He who was, and is not, and shall be present". It seems very probable that his mark, which all his followers will have to wear, will be some device that will set forth this great Satanic counterfeit of the resurrection. Practically all of the peculiar and sacred prerogatives of the Saviour have been appropriated by false leaders and systems, but it remains for the superhuman beast at the end to travesty His Name, "the One who was, and is, and is to come," His resurrection and His parousia.

We must not omit another most important reference. In Revelation 12 we have the great sign of the woman and the birth of the man-child, and there we have a description of Satan — "a great red dragon having SEVEN HEADS and TEN HORNS". There is war in heaven and Satan is cast out into the earth. Satan DESCENDS (12:12, *katabaino*), and the beast ASCENDS (13:1, *anabaino*). Both words are used of Christ. The wild beast that ascends from the sea is described in exactly the same terms as was the great red dragon, "having TEN HORNS and SEVEN HEADS". One important difference is made, which we must remember as we proceed, and that is, the dragon has "on his heads seven crowns," whereas the beast has "on his horns ten crowns and on his heads names of blasphemy".

The prophet Daniel saw this same monster in vision, and describes it in Daniel 7. Four beasts came up from the sea, the first like a LION, the second like a BEAR, the third like a LEOPARD having four heads, and a fourth beast not likened to anything, and this beast had ten horns. Here again we have the seven heads and ten horns. The lion = one head; the bear = one head; the leopard = four heads; and the fourth beast = one head. Total, seven heads. Returning to Revelation 13:2, we find Daniel 7 is immediately before us:

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a *leopard*, and his feet were the feet of a *bear*, and his mouth as the mouth of a *lion*".

In Daniel 7:14 we see the Ancient of Days sitting and the Son of man brought near Him, and

"There was given Him dominion, and glory, and a Kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him".

In Revelation 13:2-7 we read of this beast:

“And the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority ... and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues, and nations”.

One thing seems clear amidst all the complicated imagery and wording, namely, that the last kingdom which shall be upon earth before the coming of Christ shall be “diverse from all kingdoms” (Dan. 7), for it shall be the kingdom of Satan on earth, the beast being possessed of all Satan’s authority and power, so that when men “wonder after the beast” they “worship the dragon”. Just as there is yet to be a kingdom on the earth which is also to be diverse from all kingdoms, namely, the kingdom of God, so shall there be the kingdom of the Lion-Lamb, and when the world wonders after that kingdom of blessedness and shall see Him Who really died and rose again, they shall in their turn worship Him that sitteth upon the throne and also the Lamb. The beast that supports Babylon is Satanic in its fullest degree.

To this fearful end the Gentile world is moving. To this awful blasphemy apostate Israel too will incline, and make their covenant with hell and with death. Antichrist will be *to the Jew* what the beast will be *to the Gentile*, an outward manifestation of Satan’s final usurpation of the throne of God just before the end. What a blessed thing to be saved out of all this wickedness and horror. Yet science and politics and religion will have so completely blinded the eyes of men that they will believe that the rising of the seven-headed monster from the abyss will be the millennial dawn, whereas it will be the settling down of such blackness of darkness that none but God can disperse.

A further description of the seven heads and the ten horns is given by the angel in Revelation 17 to that which is given in 12 and 13. We must remember that the explanation which starts in verse 9 reads straight on and should be translated thus:

“The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, and they are seven kings”.

We may not be quite clear why there is this double inter-

pretation here, but it is clear enough for us to understand that the seven heads represent seven kings. Possibly the introduction of the symbol of mountains is connected with the fact that the woman represents a city. The transition would be then:

<i>The Woman.</i>	<i>The Seven-headed Beast.</i>
The woman is a city.	The heads are mountains.
The city reigns.	The mountains are kings.

The seven kings are further described:

“Five are fallen” (the word indicates a violent death).
“The one is” (that is at the time of the vision).
“The other is not yet come”.

The order therefore is:

(1)	}	Kings already fallen. These are specified or symbolised in Daniel 2.
(2)		
(3)		
(4)		
(5)		
(6)		The sixth king reigning at this point of the vision.
(7)		The seventh king not yet come.

When the seventh king ascends the throne “He must continue a short space”. We are not here told how the seventh king comes to his end, but in chapter 13 we find that one of the heads of the beast was wounded to death and the deadly wound was healed.

“The beast that was and is not, even *he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition*” (17:11).

In verse 8 we read:

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and *shall ascend out of the abyss, and go into perdition*”.

The ascending out of the abyss is parallel with the statement that he is the eighth and of the seven. The eighth therefore is *the superhuman* stage after the deadly wound had been healed. This eighth king does not add another head to the beast, for “he is of the seven”. Not merely “of the seventh” although that is true, the resuscitated king is “of the seven” and contains within himself the previous

seven heads, so that this eighth king is spoken of not as a king merely, but as “the beast”. He is first mentioned in 11:7, where, speaking of the two witnesses, it says:

“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the abyss shall make war against them”.

These witnesses occupy a period of three and a half years before their death (verse 3). The holy city is trodden under foot of the Gentiles for the same period (verse 2). In chapter 13 the beast receives power to continue three and a half years. This period seems to be the extent of the reign of the beast, for the seventh angel sounds soon after the death of the two witnesses.

The satanic kingdom has *seven crowned heads* (12:3), but the final manifestation in the beast that ascends out of the abyss has *ten crowned horns* (13:1). We are not definitely told that the seven heads were not crowned, and seeing that they represented reigning kings, we must understand the ten crowns to be additional. This is in line with the angel’s explanation:

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings one hour with the beast” (17:12).

In Daniel 7:24 the description is “And the ten horns *out of this kingdom* are ten kings that shall arise”. The ten kings arise out of the fourth kingdom which was diverse from the others. They are not human, they are of Satan’s princes and are spiritual. *This observation is most important. One feels their presence even in Daniel 2.* The descriptions of the earlier kingdoms of Gentile dominion read smoothly enough, but when the *toes* of the image are described the language becomes involved:

“And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly brittle. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, *THEY shall mingle themselves with the seed of MEN; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.* And in the days of *THOSE KINGS shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom*”, etc. (Dan. 2:42-44).

Who are meant by “they”? If they are ordinary human beings, why speak of them mingling themselves with the seed of “men”? “Those kings” are evidently “they” and “they” are the toes. The toes are “ten” in number, and although this final phase of the Colossus was not a subject for Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel says enough to let us understand that Gentile dominion will finally merge itself into a confederacy of ten kings who shall be superhuman, and that although they will attempt to mingle with the seed of men they shall not do so. It was left for Daniel himself to see the vision of this monstrous kingdom and the ten kings that arose out of it. Some readers may be a little sceptical as to the possibility of these more than human kings, and therefore we might notice Daniel 10. A glorious heavenly being appears to Daniel. The description of his glory is so like that of Christ in Revelation I, that some have felt that it must be the same. The effect upon Daniel was overpowering. This mighty messenger reveals to Daniel the fact that “the Prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood him *one and twenty days*” and it necessitated the help of Michael the archangel before he could get through to Daniel! Not only is there this mighty Prince of Persia, but, says the messenger, “the Prince of Grecia shall come”. These princes cannot be merely human, for no human being could withstand for one and twenty days such a glorious person as appeared to Daniel. Ten such kings form part of the beast at the time of the end. They had no kingdom until the beast ascends out of the abyss, then they reign together with him. How closely Satan travesties truth.

When the true King reigns, there will be associated with Him those who also received a deadly wound and had been healed:

“I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus ... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4).

Of these ten kings it is written, Revelation 17:13, “These have one purpose”. *Gnome* occurs twice in verse 17:

“For God inclined their hearts to carry out His purpose, even to carry out one purpose and to give their kingdom to the beast till the words of God shall be fulfilled”.

What a comforting thought in this awful nightmare that even Satan's princes are beneath the control of God! Seeking in this final desperate throw to accomplish the purpose of their fallen master, they nevertheless can do nothing against the truth.

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (17:14).

This war is described more fully in chapter 19. Before that takes place, however, another part of the divine purpose must be fulfilled. Babylon, the great city, rules over peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues (17:15), and the kings of the earth (not the ten kings) are in league with her. When the moment arrives the ten kings and the beast throw over the attitude of support hitherto given to Babylon and make her desolate. Thus Babylon, that wicked city, with its long history of infamy, finds in the final phase of its anti-christian activity its own executioner.

The whole of the eighteenth chapter is devoted to the record of the destruction of Babylon. The fall of Babylon has been spoken of in earlier chapters, but the actual narrative is reserved until the last because it is the great tragic climax of the history of man on earth. When Babylon falls, the end has come, and the long-prayed-for kingdom of righteousness dawns.

"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev. 18:2).

There is a fulfilment here of the prophecy of Isaiah 13:21,22:

"Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces".

Jeremiah says of Babylon:

"It is a land of graven images, and they are mad upon the idols, therefore the wild beasts ... the owls shall dwell therein" (50:38,39).

"And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant" (51:37).

Isaiah and Jeremiah both speak of dragons; Revelation speaks of demons and unclean spirits. In Revelation 9:14 we learn that at the river Euphrates were bound four angels, and upon their being loosed a demon army of two hundred thousand thousand was let loose also. Babylon is to be the prison house (*phulake*) of every unclean spirit and the habitation of demons. The time for judgment does not come immediately at the destruction of Babylon, and here at this spot will be gathered and held all the unclean spirits and demons that have worked such mischief and ruin among men, while the thousand-year reign of Christ shall run its course. Behind the idols of the Gentiles were the demons, so taught the Apostle Paul:

“The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God” (1 Cor. 10:20).

The fall of Babylon and its fate just described is because of its effect upon all the nations of the earth. There appears to be need for a revision of the text of Revelation 18:3. Instead of reading as the Authorized Version, “For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,” we read “Because all nations have fallen by reason of the wine of the fury of her fornication”. Compare:

“The nations have drunken her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed” (Jer. 51:7,8).

As Babylon has caused the ruin of all the nations of the earth, so Babylon shall fall as a consequence. As Babylonianism has robbed the nations of their wits and their morals as strong wine will, so let her cup be filled double. Let her become the prison-house of these demon and unclean spirit agencies of destruction. That there is this element of retribution intended Revelation 18:6,7 will show:

“Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works. In the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself and indulged, so much torment and sorrow give her”.

A call goes forth at this point to the people of God:

“Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (verse 4).

“My people”. — When Nebuchadnezzar became the head of gold, Israel became *Lo Ammi*, “Not My people”. At the return from Babylon they came in favour again, but this position was again lost in A.D. 70 at the destruction of the temple. When that great Babylonian dominion falls, the moment will have arrived for Israel once more to become “My people”. These “people” who are called upon to “come out” are bidden in Jeremiah to “remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind” (Jer. 51:50). At the fall of Babylon Israel repent:

“In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, *going and weeping*: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward” (Jer. 50:4,5).

The fall of Babylon is to be sudden:

“Therefore shall her plagues come *in one day*” (Rev. 18:8).

“*In one hour* is thy judgment come” (Rev. 18:10).

“These two things shall come to thee *in a moment in one day* ... desolation shall come upon thee suddenly” (Isa. 47:9,11).

Babylon is to be utterly burned by fire (Rev. 18:8). Jeremiah 51:25 says that Babylon shall become “a burnt mountain”. The destruction of Babylon will cause universal woe:

“The Kings of the earth ... shall bewail her ... and the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her” (Rev. 18:9,11).

“At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations” (Jer. 50:46).

These features when taken together prove that this fall of Babylon is future, and therefore that Babylon must revive and once more take a prominent place in the earth. For the sake of clearness let us summarise these points:

- (1) The return and repentance of Israel and Judah together.
- (2) The terrific suddenness of the blow.
- (3) The destruction by fire.
- (4) The world-wide consternation at her fall.

These features have never yet been fulfilled. Babylon slowly dwindled away. Arabs do pitch their tents there. There was a church there in apostolic times (1 Peter 5:13), and before the war of 1914-18 a Turkish governor found

enough people there to pay taxes to the Sultan's government. An indication of the character of Babylon is found in the list of things which made up the merchandise whereby the merchants of the earth grew rich:

"Gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and citron wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most costly wood, and of copper, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and spice, and incense, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep, and horses, and carriages, and bodies, and souls of men" (Rev. 18:12,13).

It will be observed that while gold and silver are included, iron as a raw material is not wanted. Vessels of iron already made are included. The timber too is costly and beautiful (not the timber of commerce); spices, incense and unguents speak of luxury and ritual, and lastly the merchandise includes the "bodies and souls of men". The papyri use the word "body" as a synonym for a "slave"; here the slavery is so deep that it includes both body and soul. The traffic in these articles with Babylon was so great that the merchants of the earth grew rich in their trade — "the abundance of her luxury" (verse 3). Babylon is not a commercial city. She imports luxuries, but does not export in exchange. It will be observed that shipmasters and mariners are included. Herodotus is referred to by Rawlinson as saying that the Euphrates was navigable 500 miles from its mouth. Not only do the kings of the earth, the merchants and shipowners raise a cry at the fall of Babylon, but the call goes forth:

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets, seeing that God hath avenged you on her" (Rev. 18:20).

This rejoicing is recorded in the opening verses of chapter 19. Then comes the great symbol of utter destruction with the wonderful accompaniment of the prophetic dirge:

"A mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found NO MORE AT ALL." (Rev. 18:21).

"Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her" (Jer. 51:64).

Music and mirth, craftsmanship and domestic work, the lamp and light of hearth and home, the voice of bride and bridegroom shall be known in Babylon NO MORE AT ALL. We do not know how words could be used to express more thoroughly and irrevocably the destruction that falls upon Babylon the great. Finally:

“by her sorceries were all nations deceived, and in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all the slain upon the earth” (Rev. 18:23,24).

Such is the twofold indictment, deceiver and destroyer. With the judgment of Babylon is introduced the first of a blessed series of “no more’s,” which expand and include the sea, sorrow, sin, death, and the curse.

Before entering into the teaching of chapter 19, we give a summary of the teaching of Scripture on the question, Is the fall of Babylon future?

Is the Babylon of prophecy to be understood literally?

There are two main prophecies, Isaiah 13, 14 and Jeremiah 50, 51. Let us observe the way in which Babylon is there described. Isaiah 13:19 speaks of Babylon as “The beauty of the *Chaldees’* excellency,” and it is situated where it is a likely thing for Arabs to pitch their tents (verse 20). Jeremiah 50 opens with the words, “The word that the Lord spake against Babylon and against the land of the *Chaldeans*”. The connection between Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans is seen again in verses 8, 10, 25, 35, 45; 51:4, 24, 35, 54. Not only so, but the symbol of Babylon’s fall is connected with the river *Euphrates* (Jer. 51:63). We do not think words could be plainer.

Supposing we agree that the Babylon of Isaiah and Jeremiah is literal, how does that prove that the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 is literal too?

Let us “search and see”.

Jer. 51:13

“O thou that dwellest upon many waters ... thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness”.

Rev. 17:1

“Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters”.

Jer. 51:7

"Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken. The nations have drunken of her wine: therefore the nations are mad".

Isa. 47:5-8

"O daughter of the Chaldeans ... the lady of kingdoms".

"Thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever ... Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children; but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood".

Jer. 51:25

"I will make thee a burnt mountain".

Jer. 51:45

"My people, go ye out of the midst of her".

Jer. 50:15

"As she hath done, do unto her".

Jer. 51:63,64

"And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates; and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her".

Rev. 17:4 and 2

"Having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations".

"The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication".

Rev. 17:18; 18:7,8

"The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth".

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she hath said in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine".

Rev. 18:8

"She shall be utterly burned with fire".

Rev. 18:4

"Come out of her, My people".

Rev. 18:6

"Reward her even as she rewarded you".

Rev. 18:21

"And a mighty angel took up a stone like to a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all".

We believe the parallels are too evident to need further remark.

We will answer this question by noting

(a) *Marks of Time.*

“Then shall his yoke depart from off them” (Israel) (Isa. 14:25).

“Her time (that is Babylon’s time) is near to come ... FOR the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land ... and they shall rule over their oppressors” (Isa. 13:22; 14:1-4).

“In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go, and seek the Lord their God ... join ourselves to the Lord by a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten” (Jer. 50:4,5).

“In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none” (Jer. 50:18-20).

The fall of Babylon synchronises with the restoration of Israel and Judah. It must therefore be future. Further, the Scriptures already considered declare that this blow shall fall in the *Day of the Lord*.

“Howl ye, for the Day of the Lord is at hand: it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty ... and Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah” (Isa. 13:6-19).

(b) *Other signs.*

The fall of Babylon is placed in a setting of world-wide judgment.

“I will punish the WORLD for their evil” (Isa. 13:11).

The fall of Babylon is accompanied by signs in the heavens.

“The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth and the moon shall not cause her light to shine ... therefore will I shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger” (Isa. 13:10 and 13).

This is dated for us in Matthew 24 as being “immediately after the tribulation of those days,” and is closely connected with the Lord’s *parousia*.

The fall of Babylon is to be sudden.

“Babylon is *suddenly* fallen and destroyed: howl for her” (Jer. 51:8).

“Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come” (Rev. 18:10).

The gradual decline of Babylon in no sense corresponds with this emphasis upon its sudden end. In the days of Alexander the Great, Babylon was a city strong enough to have attempted resistance against him. It did not do so, but welcomed the conqueror, who commanded the rebuilding of its temples. Babylon therefore was not suddenly destroyed when the Medes took the kingdom. In the time of Tiberius, Strabo speaks of Babylon as being “to a great degree deserted”. Peter wrote his epistle from Babylon, where a church had been formed. In A.D. 460 a writer says that Babylon was only inhabited by some Jews, and from Babylon soon after this was produced the Babylonian Talmud. In A.D. 917 Ibn. Hankal speaks of Babylon as “a small village”. In A.D. 1100 a fortified town is mentioned named Hillah (from Arabic to rest, to take up abode). In A.D. 1811 Hillah was visited by Rich who found a population of between six and seven thousand Arabs and Jews. The land which supports even this number of people cannot be called “desolate, so that no man shall dwell therein” (Jer. 50:3). If Hillah has been built out of the stones that composed the greater buildings of Babylon, then the words of Jeremiah 51:26 have never yet been fulfilled: “They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, but thou shalt be desolate for ever”.

No useful purpose will be served by lengthening these evidences. We believe that the testimony of Scripture is clear and unambiguous: that Babylon, in the land of the Chaldeans, on the Euphrates, will be revived to accord with the description of Isaiah 13, Jeremiah 50 and 51 and Revelation 17 and 18: that in the Day of the Lord, and accompanied by signs in the heavenly bodies, Babylon will be suddenly destroyed and become like Sodom and Gomorrah. Throughout the thousand-year reign of Christ, Babylon will remain a witness to all the world, a prison-house of every unclean spirit, a place shunned and

abhorred by all men. In direct contrast with this will be the glory of restored Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

We look upon Rome and Romanism as one of *many* corrupt streams that flow from Babylon, but do not believe that this most corrupt daughter can be called the mother of all the abominations of the earth. The issues are vaster and deeper than can be contained within the history of the professing church, and we believe that the united testimony of Scripture demands a future rebuilt Babylon followed by utter destruction at the Coming of the Lord.

CHAPTER 14

The Marriage of the Lamb and the Revelation

Revelation 19

“Alas! Alas!” cried the merchants of the earth,
“Hallelujah!” cried heaven, when great Babylon fell. The
heavenly cry is made by

- A Much people in heaven
- B Four and twenty elders
- B Four living ones
- A A great multitude.

The cry of “much people in heaven” is followed by the reference to the “great whore, which did corrupt the earth”. The cry of the “great multitude” is followed by the reference to the wife of the Lamb. Babylon and Israel, the false and the true, start together in Genesis 11, 12. For a time the false is in the ascendancy, but at the end judgment is swift and without remedy and the true rises out of the dust.

The first ascription of praise in the Revelation arises from the redeemed company who have been made a kingdom of priests. We have a parallel in Isaiah. First, in Isaiah 53 they look upon Him Whom they pierced and mourn for Him, then Isaiah 54 opens with the word “Sing”. This time it is not as a kingdom of priests, but as a restored wife that the nation is addressed:

“Thou shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thy husband ... for the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God” (Isa. 54:4-6).

The day of Israel’s return to the Lord is likened to the day when they came up out of Egypt, which likeness is often referred to when speaking of the end. So Hosea 2:15-20 says:

day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me 'My husband' ... and I will betroth thee unto Me for the age, yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness".

This wife who had been repudiated (Hos. 2:2) is said to be "betrothed" upon her return, so Isaiah 62:5 uses the figure:

"As a young man marieth a virgin ... and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee".

This is followed in Isaiah 63 with the prophecy of the coming of the Lord in vengeance, "their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments," being parallel with the passage in Revelation 19, "He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood"; the "garments like him that treadeth the wine fat" being parallel with "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15).

The close association which is made by Isaiah 62 and 63 between the marriage of Israel and the treading of the winepress of the wrath of God enables us to see with the same sequence in Revelation 19 that we have there the fulfilment of these earlier prophecies of restoration. For a thousand years the marriage, here celebrated, shall last. Whether it be true to say that it is then done away, and that the Holy City which descends out of heaven called "The Bride" is something quite different, we will consider in its place. Of the Lamb's wife it is said that she had "made herself ready"; in chapter 21 the word appears again in the expression, "*prepared* as a bride adorned for her husband".

While it is correct to see a distinction here between the standing of the Church and of Israel, as the Church can by no means be said to make itself "ready," the question of grace and works has nothing to do with the passage, for the word simply refers to the adornment of the bride which was so customary in Bible lands. In the verse following, however, there is a reference to "works":

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and shining; for fine linen is the righteous award of the saints" (Rev. 19:8).

There appears to be a need for careful distinction in connection with those who make up the marriage celebration of that day. The Wife cannot be "All Israel" because Israel has also to supply "the friend of the bridegroom," "the virgins her companions," those "bidden to the marriage of the King's Son," and those set forth under the figure of "the wise and foolish virgins". This being so, it appears that a portion of Israel are chosen as the Bride. The "righteous award" seems to indicate some recognition of faithfulness, and this is quite in harmony with the whole of the book. To each of the seven churches a reward is promised to "him that overcometh". Those who come out of the great tribulation are said to have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb". Some are said to have done His commandments, or to have washed their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and to enter into the city. In this very chapter there are at least two companies, the Lamb's wife, and the guests:

"Write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (19:9).

As may be expected the word "Blessed" comes seven times in the Revelation, and the words just quoted from chapter 19 come centrally in the list.

- A 1:3. *Blessed.* — Reader, hearer and keeper of the words of
this prophecy
- B 14:13. *Blessed.* — The Dead which die in the Lord
- C 16:15. *Blessed.* — He that watcheth and keepeth his
garments
- D 19:9. *Blessed.* — They which are called to marriage
supper
- C 20:6. *Blessed.* — He that hath part in the first
resurrection
- A 22:7. *Blessed.* — He that keepeth the sayings of the
prophecy
- B 22:14. *Blessed.* — They that do His commandments. Right
to tree of life.

Apart from the passages which speak of hearing or keeping the sayings of this prophecy, the other passages under B and C speak of the overcomer. This helps us to see that those who respond to the call to the marriage supper are overcomers too. The case of the man who had not the

wedding garment will come to mind, and by reflection from chapter 19:8 we see that this also indicates the "righteous award" of the saints. In the case of the ten virgins, it was the "ready" ones that entered into the marriage.

In concluding this section the angel said, "These are the true words of God". We take it that these words cover chapters 17, 18 and 19:1-9. There follows a series of visions commencing with the formula "and I saw," which concludes in 21:5 where again we read, "These words are true and faithful". One of the seven angels again comes forward and "shows" John the bride, the Lamb's wife, and he also "showed" the river and the tree of life. Again come the words, "These sayings are faithful and true". These passages punctuate the grand conclusion of the book. Babylon judged, the marriage of the Lamb, the riding forth of the Word of God, the first resurrection, the Great White Throne, the new heavens and earth, the abolition of the curse, sorrow and death, the detailed description of the new Jerusalem, and at last, Paradise restored. What a galaxy, what a constellation, thrice confirmed to us by the words, "These are the true and faithful words of God"!

Dark as the outlook may be now, and thicker the darkness yet to come, faith pierces the gloom and sees ahead the judgment of all that oppresses and enslaves, and the blessing and peace that must surely come when the Lord takes to Himself His great power and reigns. We echo the seer's closing prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus".

What event is it that demands an opened heaven? What event is it that must come at the climax of revelation? Surely nothing less than the Coming of the Lord in great power and glory! Babylon has by this time fallen. Satan's last outpost has gone down with terrific judgments. The universal dominion of the beast gives way to the reign of the King of kings. The harlot gives place to the bride, the Lamb's wife. The wicked city passes away and the new Jerusalem is established.

Here at this moment is fulfilled the great bulk of Old Testament prophecy. Practically with one voice the prophets cried to Israel, "Behold! Thy King cometh". Psalm 72 was penned in the light of that glorious day when David's greater Son should reign in righteousness and

peace. To “see the King in His beauty” summarised the expectancy of every believing heart. At last the Seer reaches that precious, that tremendous moment, when heaven opens, and the heavenly rider comes forth. As He rides forth the seventh trumpet rings out throughout the heavens, and great voices are heard crying out the glad news:

“THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST. And He shall reign for the ages of the ages. Amen ... We give thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned” (Rev. 11:15-17).

The same voices go on further to say that this coming in glory to reign is associated with the anger of the nations, the time of the judgment of the dead, the time for the reward of the Lord’s servants, and the time for the destruction of those who destroy the earth (Rev. 11:18,19). These words are an epitome of Revelation 17-20. In Revelation 11:19 the Apostle said:

“And the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His covenant”.

This “opening” precedes the opening of heaven in chapter 19. God’s covenant is about to be fulfilled, and Christ, Who is now at the right hand of the throne of God in the heavens, is “manifested in glory”. As though to assure the fainting heart that these things are sure of fulfilment, the rider of the white horse is called *Faithful and True*, and three times does the narrative pause to declare the truthfulness of these sayings.

Revelation 17:1-19:9 — The harlot judged. The wife of the Lamb ready.

THE ANGEL’S ASSURANCE. — “*These are the true sayings of God*”.

Revelation 19:11-21:5 — “AND I SAW”:

- (1) The Apocalypse (19:11-16)
- (2) The Supper (19:17,18)
- (3) The Beast (19:19-21)
- (4) Satan bound (20:1-3)
- (5) Millennial Reign (20:4-6)
- (6) Great White Throne (20:11-15)
- (7) New heaven and earth (21:1)
- (8) Holy City (21:2-5)

THE ASSURANCE FROM THE THRONE. — “These words are true and faithful”.

Revelation 21:9-22:7 — “AND HE SHEWED ME”:

- (1) The Bride (21:9)
- (2) The Holy Jerusalem (21:10-27)
- (3) The river of water of life (22:1-5)

THE ANGEL'S ASSURANCE. — “These sayings are faithful and true”.

The first of the series of events prefaced with the words, “And I saw,” is the glorious apocalypse of Christ so long anticipated throughout this book:

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse: and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war” (Rev. 19:11).

Judgment and War. — These two themes are stated as the object of this appearance. “In righteousness doth He judge and make war”. For war the Lord mounts a white horse. For judgment a white throne. In both offices He is Faithful and True. The title, Faithful, turns the mind back to Isaiah.

“There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots ... He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes ... but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the OPPRESSOR (*ariz*, instead of *erez*, ‘the earth’) with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the LAWLESS ONE. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and *faithfulness* the girdle of His reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb ...” (Isa. 11:1-6).

Psalms 45 and 69 are also clearly indicated in Revelation 19. There in that Psalm are united together the triumphant Rider and the King's daughter. Space will not permit the citation, but the whole Psalm should be read through. The reference in Revelation 19:13 to the vesture dipped in blood shows that here in this glorious apocalypse we have the fulfilment of Isaiah 63:1-6.

“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread

them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come”.

We learned from Revelation 1:10 that the prophetic setting of the book was “The Day of the Lord”. Here the character of that day is given, that is, “the day of vengeance,” and its object and issue is “the year of my redeemed”. The word “vengeance” occurs six times in Isaiah, and this six-fold vengeance with its contexts is illuminative of Revelation 19 and 20:

“For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of the recompences for the controversy of Zion” (Isa. 34:8).

The context speaks of the Lord’s judgment upon the nations, the passing away of the heavens, the turning of the land into “confusion” and “emptiness” — the same condition (*tohu* and *bohu*) as that of Genesis 1:2. In Isaiah 35 we have the blessing that flows out to Israel when the wilderness shall “blossom as the rose,” and there we have the next reference to vengeance:

“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you” (Isa. 35:4).

This chapter concludes one great portion of Isaiah’s prophecy, and the glory and the triumphant issue of the revelation of Christ can be felt as one reads the chapter through. The next reference to vengeance has definitely to do with Babylon:

“Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans ... I will take vengeance ... thou shalt no more be called, The lady of Kingdoms” (Isa. 47:1-5).

Babylon’s fall immediately precedes the Coming of the Lord in the Revelation, and here in Isaiah it is especially prominent. Just before the glorious command sounds forth, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee” (Isa. 60:1), we find another parallel with Revelation 19:

“For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head; and He put on the garments of vengeance” (Isa. 59:17).

In Isaiah 61:2,3 we read:

“To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes”.

Then comes the last reference, that of Isaiah 63, with which we commenced. The object of the Lord’s coming is further specified in Revelation 19:15:

“And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”.

The quotation here from the second Psalm throws a vivid light upon the scene. Psalm 2:1,2 shows the condition of the world immediately before the second advent:

“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against HIS CHRIST”.

This brings down the judgment. God’s rightful King ascends the throne and to Him it is given “To rule with a rod of iron”.

“And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16).

Three names are said to belong to the Lord in this vision:

- (1) He had a name written that no man knew but He himself.
- (2) His name is called, The Word of God.
- (3) He hath a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

The first name, known only to the Lord Himself, is associated with the wearing of many crowns. In Revelation 2:17 the overcomer will receive a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. In Philippians 2:9,10 the exaltation of Christ is accompanied by the giving of the name which is above every name. It appears idle for us to pretend to a knowledge where Scripture declares that the subject is known only to the Lord. It is possible however that the meaning of the passage is not so much that no one knew in the sense of being acquainted with the fact, but that no one perceived or fathomed the meaning of the name which the Lord received. It is suggestive that in Philippians 2 and Revelation 19 the statement concerning the granting of a

name which is not made known is immediately followed by a name that is well known. In Philippians 2 it is the name "Jesus" that is associated with the Name above every name. In Revelation 19 it is the "Word of God" and "King of kings and Lord of lords" that seem to expand and explain that which otherwise could not be known.

The Word of God. — In this title is compressed the revelation of Christ's place in the purpose of the ages. Manifestation seems to have much in common with it. Speech reveals the unseen thought, and for the great purpose of the ages Christ became the IMAGE of the INVISIBLE GOD. The theme is too great for a mere note. For the present we would say that the coming together here of the two names, The Word, and King of kings is to indicate to us that the One Who came forth as the great Firstborn of all creation in order to accomplish the reconciliation, expressed in the term "Fullness," is here seen bringing to pass that phase which is summed up in the words king and kingdom. The glorious millennial kingdom, followed by the even more glorious reign of the closing age (1 Cor. 15:24,25), is one of the many factors in bringing about *the end* "that God may be all in all".

The reference to the winepress shows that Revelation 14:8-20 is another compressed anticipation of this glorious apocalypse. The King cometh. The saints shall reign. In His days there shall be an abundance of peace. He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. Surely whatever our dispensational standing, whatever the hope of our calling, we can with heart and voice take up the Advent song and say:

"Hosannah to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosannah in the highest" (Matt. 21:9).

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth" (Isa. 24:21).

For the purposes of redemption the Lord Jesus Christ became a man of "sorrows"; "He was crucified through weakness". He knew what it was to be despised, to suffer hunger, to thirst, to be the butt of His enemies, "as a lamb before his shearers is dumb". That phase, praise God, is over. The humiliation, the weakness, the cross, with their

fruits of grace and peace, are finished. He has ascended to the right hand of God, there to wait until iniquity reaches its full measure.

“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall shatter the head over a land far extended” (Psa. 110).

When the Lord comes again the second time it will be for a dual purpose. This dual purpose is expressed in Isaiah 63:4:

- (1) *The day of vengeance is in My heart.*
- (2) *The year of My redeemed is come.*

The Coming of the Lord will bring about the restoration of all things that have been spoken by the prophets, and will also bring about the destruction of every opposing force, that the purpose of the ages may be brought to a glorious conclusion. In the passage before us we have these two elements together. He comes not to redeem, but to claim the fruit of redemption and to punish the high ones that are on high. No gospel is preached to the gathered armies of the beast, the Rider on the white horse rides forth to judge and to make war. Under the sixth seal this Second Coming is spoken of as:

“The wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of His wrath is come” (Rev. 6:16,17).

Under the sixth vial this awful period is said to be:

“The battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:14).

The angel who stands in the sun calls upon the fowls of heaven to participate in:

“The great supper of God” (Rev. 19:17).

We are not told in Revelation 19 how the beast and false prophet gather this huge army together, nor where the gathering ground will be. This has been explained in earlier chapters. We learn from chapter 16:13,14 that there issues from the mouth of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet three unclean spirits of demons, who have the power to substantiate their message with “signs following,”

for they work miracles. These unclean emissaries go forth unto the kings of the whole habitable world to gather them together in a place called Armageddon. We are not told in chapter 19 how the Lord will come, and what the effect of His appearing will have upon this host. This we learn in chapter 6:12-14:

“Lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth 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”.

These are the accompaniments of the Second Coming, as the Lord said in Matthew 24:29-31; only in that prophecy the other feature, namely, “the year of the redeemed,” is uppermost. The effects of these appalling sights upon the kings of the earth and their armies are only faintly realised as we hear them, in the words of the prophecy, calling on the mountains and rocks to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. In Revelation 19:20 we read:

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him ... These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone”.

Here is fulfilled Psalm 110:6 which says, “He shall shatter the head over *a land far extended*,” for the beast exercised dominion over the kings of the whole habitable world. The summoning of the fowls of heaven to eat the flesh of kings, and captains, of mighty men, of horse and rider, of free and bond, small and great, fulfils two other statements in the same Psalm, that is:

“He shall fill the places with the dead bodies” (verse 6), and “He shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath” (verse 5).

The Scriptural descriptions of the beast show that it is the master stroke of Satan, and that it rules in Satan’s name and in Satan’s interest (*see Rev. 13*). The dragon does not figure in the record before us; it is the beast and the false prophet who are cast into the lake of fire. Immediately following the judgment of the beast we read of the binding of Satan. An angel is seen descending from the heavens having the key of the abyss and also a great chain.

“And he laid hold of the dragon, that ancient serpent, which is the Devil (Greek), and Satan (Hebrew), and bound him for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:2).

The thousand year reign of Christ will not be the final and perfect kingdom; it will be preparatory, and in some ways a period of judgment and restraint. The beast and the false prophet will never again work their deceptive ways among men. Satan will be bound for the whole period. Outside temptation will be removed, but because of the nature of the millennial kingdom Satan is not cast into the lake of fire until after this kingdom has finished, as he is to be given a little season as a final test both for himself and for the nations of the earth. Of this we shall learn more in its place.

In this chapter we have seen the short sharp work of judgment that falls before the kingdom can be set up. We are mindful that our salvation is by grace, and that vengeance belongs to the Lord. It is however a comfort to know that these awful leaders of such high handed rebellion are not to go on for ever. The Day of the Lord is said to come as a “destruction from the Almighty,” and it is said that “He shall destroy the sinners out of it”. Then the Lord shall cause to cease the arrogance of the proud and the loftiness of tyrants (Isa. 13:6-13). It is evident that all things that offend shall be gathered out before the righteous can shine in the kingdom of their Father.

CHAPTER 15

The Millennium; its Character, its Failure, its Foreshadowing

Revelation 20

The word *millennium* simply means "a thousand," and the millennial reign of Christ is that reign which lasts a thousand years. The millennial reign is bounded at its two extremes by a series of events which indicate the peculiar character of that kingdom.

At the beginning	At the close
(1) Satan bound for 1,000 years.	(1) Satan loosed when 1,000 years finish.
(2) Nations deceived no more until 1,000 years finish.	(2) Nations deceived after 1,000 years finish.
(3) Thrones and judgment given to saints.	(3) The camp of the saints encompassed.
(4) The first resurrection. Priests of God and of Christ.	(4) The resurrection of the rest of the dead.

When we read the writings of men on prophecy we are liable to be carried away by their descriptions of this kingdom, and to ascribe much of the blessedness and glory that belong to a later period to this one of the 1,000 years. Coming to the Revelation itself with all the high hopes implanted by conferences and prophetic literature, the reader is apt to feel somewhat disappointed. Here in Revelation 20 is no glowing description of that kingdom, no details of its blessedness or its beauty. Satan is bound certainly, but the very verse that tells us so goes straight on to say

"After that he must be loosed a little season" (Rev. 20:3).

The millennium ends exactly as every other dispensation had ended, that is, in failure. This one fact enables us to see that instead of understanding this kingdom to be the *beginning* of the Lord's work of power and glory, it is to be understood rather as the *last* of His dealings with men. The

millennial kingdom finds its basis in the words of Exodus 19:3-6:

“Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation”.

The special features of this basic passage are:

- (1) Israel separated from all the nations.
- (2) Israel a peculiar treasure.
- (3) Israel a “royal priesthood”.
- (4) The conditions are obedience and keeping the covenant.
- (5) The words “for all the earth is Mine” suggest that this special favour is shown to Israel with a view to the blessing of the nations.

Israel utterly failed to fulfil the conditions, and instead of being a blessing in the earth, they became a curse.

The prophet Malachi speaks of a remnant of faithful ones who feared the Lord in the days of apostasy, and of such the Lord said:

“They shall be Mine ... in that day when I make up My peculiar treasure ... then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not” (Mal. 3:17,18).

If we look back to Malachi 2 we shall find that the great controversy is concerning the failure of the priests. The Lord says that, as a result of their failure, their very blessings shall be cursed. Special emphasis is placed upon the fact that they had “corrupted the covenant” (2:8), and that they had not preserved their peculiar separateness unto the Lord (2:11,12).

The Apostle Peter forges another link between Israel and the millennium. To the dispersed of Israel that were looking for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, who had been redeemed from the vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers, the Apostle addresses the words:

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices ... Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:5,9).

The whole atmosphere of this epistle is that of suffering in view of glory. This is seen to be the same in Revelation 20. First, however, let us see Revelation 1:5,6:

“Unto Him that loved us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood, and hath made us a kingdom of priests unto God and His Father”.

Here we find that the royal priesthood is composed not of those who obeyed and kept the covenant, but of those who have been redeemed. In harmony with this is the song of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders:

“Thou wast slain, and didst purchase a people for God by Thy blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and didst make them to our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign over the earth” (Rev. 5:9,10).

Coming now to Revelation 20:4 we learn further details concerning those who constitute the first resurrection and the royal priesthood:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and the souls of them that had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus, and because of the Word of God, and whosoever had not worshipped the Beast, nor yet his image, and did not receive his mark on their foreheads and on their hands, both lived again and reigned with Christ a thousand years”.

These are essentially the overcomers of the Apocalypse. That such do not exclude others of like precious faith we may learn from Matthew 19:27,28:

“We have forsaken all, and followed Thee: what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, ‘Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel’ ”.

Or we may remember chapter 6, where we read of those who had been slain for the Word of God, to whom white robes were given, and the information that they were to rest a little season until their fellow-servants should be killed even as they had been (6:9-11). In Revelation 20 there is an evident reference to the great prophecy of Daniel 7, as we can see when we come to compare the passages together.

Daniel 7

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven" (verse 13).

"I beheld till the thrones were set ... the judgment was set" (verses 9,10).

"The books were opened" (verse 10).

"And judgment was given to the saints of the Most High" (verse 22).

"And the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (verses 22-27).

Revelation 1 and 20

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him" (1:7).

"I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it" (20:11).

"The books were opened" (20:12).

"And judgment was given unto them" (20:4).

"And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. This is the first resurrection. They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (20:4-6).

There are several other items of importance we must consider together before we can come to a true conclusion as to the character of the millennium; we have seen:

- (1) That the millennial kingdom ends in revolt and is therefore like all preceding dispensations.
- (2) It is the fulfilment of the promise originally made at Sinai unto all Israel.
- (3) It is administered by those who have "overcome".
- (4) Israel's position in this kingdom is that of a nation of priests for the nations outside.

When we think of the millennium, we usually think of that condition of peace that is intimated in the words:

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock" (Isa. 65:25).

It is a mistake however to assume that such is said to be the condition of things *all over the earth at that time*. Both Isaiah 65 and 11 add these important words:

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain".

"In all My holy mountain" is not the same in extent as all the earth, and this passage is one of many that indicate the peculiar position of Israel in the millennium, in much the same way as Babylon shall remain "a burnt mountain" as a

warning to all the earth during the same period. Another passage of similar import is Isaiah 60:1,2:

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon THEE. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the EARTH, and gross darkness the PEOPLES, but the Lord shall arise upon THEE, and His glory shall be seen upon THEE”.

There is the greatest difference indicated between the nation of Israel and the nations during this kingdom.

“The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee ... The nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish: yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted” (Isa. 60:10-12).

“Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vine dressers. But ye shall be called the PRIESTS OF THE LORD; men shall call you the MINISTERS OF OUR GOD” (Isa. 61:5,6).

Israel are here seen in their position as the royal priesthood, and the surrounding nations as their servants. It was one of the great duties of the priest to teach:

“For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge; and they should seek the law at his mouth” (Mal. 2:7; see also Lev. 10:11).

and therefore when the millennial kingdom is set up we find that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be set up as the head of the mountains, and to this centre all the nations shall “stream” and shall say:

“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. 2:3).

The Revised Version margin of Psalm 72:10 reads:

“The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall render tribute”.

Turning to Isaiah 25 we may notice some further limitations that may at first surprise us. A feast is to be made unto all peoples, but it is to be held “in this mountain” (verse 6). The veil that is cast over all the peoples and which is spread over all nations is to be done away, but once again it is “in this mountain” (verse 7). In the same context we have these two opposite thoughts:

“He will swallow up death in victory” (verse 8).

“Moab shall be trodden down, or threshed, even as straw is threshed under the wheels of the threshing cart” (verse 10).

This threshing of Moab is connected with the mountain of the Lord, for it reads:

“For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, and Moab shall be threshed,” etc.

When the desert blossoms as the rose, when the eyes of the blind see, and the ears of the deaf hear, when the ransomed of the Lord return to Zion (Isa. 35), the same chapter says:

“Behold, your God will come with vengeance” (verse 4).

We must therefore be prepared to find in the millennial kingdom the execution of judgment. Not only so, but Scripture reveals that there will be sin in that kingdom, and death as a consequence; in other words, the king who shall reign will:

“Rule them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Psa. 2:9).

That this is characteristic of millennial rule is seen by comparing Revelation 2:27, 12:5 and 19:15:

“To him that overcometh ... will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessel of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of My Father” (Rev. 2:26,27).

Psalms 110, which speaks also of that day, reveals the Lord ruling in the midst of enemies, judging among the nations, and filling the places with dead bodies! Strange symbols of peace!! The Oxford Gesenius renders verse 3:

“Thy people will be (all) voluntariness in the day of Thy host”.

In marked contrast with Israel will be the feigned and constrained obedience of the nations. The Revised Version marginal reading of Psalm 18:44 is:

“The sons of the stranger shall yield *feigned* obedience unto Me”.

So again in Psalms 66:3 and 81:15. The character of this kingdom is moreover manifested by turning to the Revised Version margin of Daniel 9:24. “To restrain transgression”. This idea of restraint is seen in the fact that during this period Satan will be *bound*, but not destroyed. Psalm 21:1-13; 48:4-7; 66:7; 68:21; 72:9-14, and 97:1-7 seem to speak of that kingdom and the presence therein of evil-

doers. Psalm 101:8 reads, "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land". The word "early" is rendered by Rotherham "morning by morning" and indicates summary judgment upon offenders. Psalm 149 calls upon Israel to rejoice, and the children of Zion to be joyful in their king. The Psalm is evidently millennial:

"Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand. To execute vengeance upon the nations, and punishments upon the people. To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron. To execute upon them the judgment written, this honour have all His saints. Hallelujah" (Psa. 149:6-9).

Here once again we see the "iron rod" in action. It is evident from Zechariah 14:16-19 that throughout the millennium, and not merely at the commencement, judgment will fall upon disobedience. The last two verses of Isaiah bring before us a dual picture — "all flesh" shall come to worship before the Lord, and they shall also look upon the carcasses of transgressors (presumably in the valley called Gehenna), and they shall be an abhorring unto "all flesh". Death, if it occur, in the millennium will be the direct result of personal sin. This seems to be the meaning of Isaiah 65:20. The Authorized Version reads thus:

"There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, for the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed".

Rotherham translates the passage:

"But a youth a hundred years old may die, yea, a sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed,"

the suggestion being that for one to die in that kingdom, even at the age of a hundred years, would be to die young, and that such a death would be the direct outcome of sin.

The millennial kingdom is not the glorious reign of Christ that ushers in the consummation. The millennium is rather man's most favoured opportunity and most signal failure. The conditions are even more favourable than those of Eden in some respects. For here no outside tempter can enter, Satan being bound for the whole period, yet revolt spreads rapidly as soon as Satan is let loose.

The millennial kingdom is Israel's sphere of blessedness wherein all the promises related to them as a peculiar people to the Lord shall be fulfilled. The millennium foreshadows the perfect kingdom. What will take place over the breadth of the earth after the millennium, takes place during the thousand years in Israel's land only. One nation, Israel, shall be "born at a stroke" (Isa. 66:8). One people, Israel, "shall be all righteous" (Isa. 60:21), and the days of their mourning shall be ended. But the ends of the earth will slowly learn the lesson. A brighter and a better day succeeds the thousand-year reign of Christ and His people. The royal priesthood will have accomplished its purpose. Through this chosen "seed" shall all the families of the earth have been blessed; many will join themselves to the Lord and come under the promise:

"The sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord ... even them will I bring to My holy mountain" (Isa. 56:6,7).

for the Lord's house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. The law at Sinai and the nation of Israel afterwards were under the delegated authority of angels, but the "world to come" has not been submitted to angels, but to the saints, particularly those of "the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2), which embraces all those of like precious faith. This kingdom is the last manifestation of the failure of delegated rule.

The kingdom of the Son is marked by the subjection of *all* rule and authority. He shows Who is that blessed and *only* Potentate, and at the close of that rule and that rule alone we reach perfection and the goal of the ages. All down the age has been heard the murmuring challenge of the sovereignty vested only in Christ. Israel failed to hold that sceptre; the Gentiles failed too. Adam in Eden, and man in the millennial kingdom equally fail. Every age and dispensation converges upon one thought, every knee shall bow at last to one Lord, every tongue will confess but one Name, Revelation 5 shall be repeated upon a grander scale:

"Who is worthy? ... no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth ... was found worthy ..." (verses 2-4).

"And they sung a new song, saying, 'THOU art worthy' " (verse 9).

How are we to understand the words "the first resurrection" of Revelation 20? If it means the first of all

that shall take place, then the resurrection of the church of the One Body must take place later. The statement of verse 5 has a bearing, for there we read:

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished”.

According to the teaching of Revelation 20 the resurrection that follows the “first” is that which brings “all the rest” before the great white throne. This increases the difficulty, for not only is the hope of the One Body involved, but the resurrection of 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4 also. In Revelation 21:1 we have these words:

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away”.

Here we have the same word “first” used in chapters 20:5 and 21:1. Now we are already acquainted with the teaching of 2 Peter 3:4-13, where we find a distinct reference to a third heaven and earth:

- (1) “The world that then was”.
- (2) “The heavens and the earth which are now”.
- (3) “A new heaven and a new earth”.

It is evident therefore that the heaven and earth which passed away in Revelation 21:1 is really the second, namely, “the heavens and earth which are now,” and the word “first” is in contrast with the word “new” and should be translated “the former”. This same meaning is intended in Revelation 20:5:

“This is the former resurrection (of the two under notice)”.

These two resurrections have one thing in common, they are both connected with the second death. To the overcomer in Smyrna came the words:

“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).

This overcomer is numbered among those whose part is in the “first resurrection”; for them the second death holds no terror:

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power” (Rev. 20:6).

Looking back again to Revelation 2 we observe the title of the Lord when He speaks to the angel of the church in Smyrna:

“These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive” (Rev. 2:8).

Most, if not all, the titles of the speaker to the seven churches are found together in the description given in chapter one. This can be seen by comparing the opening words to each church in chapters 2 and 3 with the description given in chapter one. The title with which we are immediately concerned is evidently taken from Revelation 1:17,18:

“Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for the ages of the ages, and have the keys of death and hades”.

These statements throw light upon the character of the second death. According to our understanding of the first death will be our understanding of the second. The traditional view is that while the body turns to dust, the soul, or the person himself, passes on in an unclothed state, either to the immediate presence of the Lord, to Paradise, or to Purgatory. For ourselves we believe that the dead *are dead*. The body has returned to the dust as it was, the spirit has returned to God who gave it, the man has ceased to be a living soul, and knows nothing until resurrection.

If we take the view that death is not the cessation of consciousness or of mental and spiritual activity, we shall probably believe the same may be true of the second death, and invest that second death with all the traditional horrors of the orthodox “hell”; if we believe that death is the end of all conscious being, we shall believe that the second death likewise is the end of all conscious being too. It does not follow that the second death will be exactly similar to the first, but it cannot be totally dissimilar, for that would invalidate the idea contained in the word “second”. For example, the Lord Jesus Christ is called “the second Man” (1 Cor. 15:47).

In some aspects He is much unlike the first man, as the context elaborates. The one is natural; the other is spiritual. The one is earthy; the other is heavenly. The one is simply man; the other, while being the second Man, is

the Lord. There is however no violence done to the conception of a series. There is an advance from earthly to heavenly, from soul to spirit, but throughout all the change and progression the one word "man" remains constant, whether spoken of Adam or of Christ. So in Hebrews 8:7 there is the "first covenant" and the "second". They have marked differences, as far apart as law is from grace, but they remain "covenants" all the way through.

So with the "second death". However much more intense the destructive qualities of the lake of fire may be than the dissolution of body and spirit, commonly known as death, the character of death will remain constant right through. We find from I Corinthians 15:18 the character of the first death set forth by an extreme case:

"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are PERISHED".

What would make the death even of the redeemed so utter and hopeless? The denial of the resurrection. Without resurrection the death even of the saint would mean hopeless annihilation. Is there a resurrection from the second death? Not a glimmer of hope can be found at the end of Revelation 20. Nowhere throughout the pages of Scripture is such a statement to be found. Some there are who see such a hope in I Corinthians 15:26, but in this we cannot agree. Our reasons have been set forth in fair detail in our book *The Apostle of the Reconciliation* and have also been given further consideration in another series both in *The Berean Expositor* and in pamphlet form. There will be opportunity and occasion to speak more fully of the second death when we reach the closing verses of Revelation 20 in the order of exposition. We are at present more concerned with the overcomer of the second death than with those who pass into it.

We are told that the second death hath no power on those who attain to the first resurrection. The word "power" is a translation of *exousia*, and means authority. We shall find the origin of this statement in Luke 12:4,5:

"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath *authority* to cast into Gehenna; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him".

The first death “kills the body,” and its authority ceases at that point. God can go further. Matthew 10:28 records the Lord’s utterance, and uses slightly different words to do so:

“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him Who is able to *destroy both soul and body* in Gehenna”.

If the Lord spoke in Aramaic to the people, then both Luke and Matthew together provide a full translation. Luke’s words “to cast into Gehenna,” become in Matthew’s record “to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna”. Gehenna is limited in its scope, but is a foreshadowing of the lake of fire at the end.

The second death has this authority. It is so constituted by the Lord that it can destroy both soul and body. Apart from philosophy altogether, it is obvious that the destruction of soul and body is to all intents and purposes annihilation. Such will cease to be. Who they are and why they pass under this dread authority we leave until we reach the passage in Revelation 20. All those who attain the *first* resurrection are free from all fear of the second death. It is not so with those who wait until the second resurrection. Some of those do enter into the second death.

The reign of these favoured ones is the reign of priests. Both on earth and in the heavens “over the earth” (Rev. 5:10) there will be a royal priesthood. The nation of Israel on earth; the overcomers over the earth; and under their dual ministry the nations are taught the truth of God, and many will pass from darkness to light.

The Apostle Paul, in Romans 15:16, speaks of his ministry to the Gentiles as a priestly work: “that the offering up of the Gentiles might be accepted”. If Paul’s ministry among the Gentiles, as set forth in the Acts, is any foreshadowing of the priestly ministry of the royal priesthood during the thousand years, the blessedness of that millennial rule cannot be described in words. We can only look forward with high hope and anticipation. But, like as it was in the case of Paul, so it will be again. While an unnumbered host are saved, apostasy and revolt follow hard upon the close of the period. Perfection comes under the personal administration of Christ. The millennial reign

is the final preparation for the working out of the great consummation.

When the thousand years have run their course, Satan is let loose out of his prison. Revelation 20:3 has already told us that "he must be loosed a little season"; here we see the purpose. We must notice carefully what the Scriptures actually say here. We must not make a mistake and speak of the nations as a whole. The nations that yield to Satan's last deception and perish at the hand of God are specified:

"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" (Rev. 20:7,8).

During the priestly rule of Israel and the overcomers many nations shall be joined to the Lord, as prophecy testifies. The nations who are deceived by Satan at the close of the millennium are found in the four quarters (Greek *gonia*, "angles," same word translated "corner" in 7:1) of the earth, as distinct from God's holy city and centre. Their name is given as Gog and Magog. This will not be the first time that Gog and Magog have threatened the land and people of Israel.

In Ezekiel 38 and 39 we read of a gathering of nations under Gog of the land of Magog. Just who Gog and Magog may be is a very difficult problem to solve. It is usual to interpret them as general names of the northern nations of Europe and Asia. This may be true, but is not by any means all the truth *or the most important aspect of it*. We are not concerned as to whether these nations originally occupied the north, for after the millennium they will be upon the outskirts of the earth at all points of the compass. We are much more concerned with their relation to Israel and the purpose of God.

Israel's first entry into the land of promise was accompanied by conflict with the Canaanites. These nations were of such a nature that nothing less than *utter extinction* was decreed against them. In Deuteronomy 3:1-13 we read of Og, the king of Bashan. We read that only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of the giants, and his bedstead was nine cubits long and four

cubits broad. The threescore cities mentioned in verse 4 have all been seen and counted in our own time. That the rendering "giants" is the true one, any reader of Dr. Porter's *Giant Cities of Bashan* will agree. In Numbers 24:7 Balaam refers to Israel's ascendancy in the millennium:

"And his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted".

The Samaritan Text here reads "Agog" instead of Agag, and this appears to have been the word before the translators of the Septuagint, for they give "Gog". These sidelights give a somewhat different character to the nations that spring into open revolt at the end of the thousand years. Is there not sufficient history recorded in the Word to show that certain nations are to be reckoned peculiarly the Devil's own? Was Og, king of Bashan, not "of his father the Devil"? Do we credit the Lord with the responsibility of the creation of the Rephaim, the Nephilim, the giants and monsters of antiquity? Did not God give an exhibition of His utter abhorrence of the result of the marriages of sons of God with the daughters of men, by sending the Flood? Does not the order for the utter extermination of the Amorites, the Amalekites and the Canaanites generally point to the same thing? Does not Goliath of Gath typify the same awful and Satanic enemy?

When Satan goes out to the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, he goes out to *his own*. They rise as one man and compass the camp of the saints about and the beloved city. Their destruction is immediate and without remedy:

"Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them"
(Rev. 20:9).

In chapter 19 the armies led by the beast and the false prophet are slain by the Lord, and their flesh is afterwards devoured by the fowls of the heavens. Here the fire from God not only kills but devours, nothing is left for the birds of the air.

We do not believe Gog and Magog will stand before the great white throne. The fire which falls from heaven is for them the second death. Of such Psalm 1:5 speaks:

"The ungodly shall not stand (or rise) in the judgment".

When Israel's day comes, and they sing their millennial song of triumph (Isa. 26:1), they will look back upon the days when the seed of the serpent had dominion over them. Of such they say:

"They are dead, they shall not live; they are the Rephaim (giants), they shall not rise; therefore hast Thou visited and destroyed them, and made their memory to perish" (26:14).

So will it be with Gog and Magog at the end of the millennium. The conflict of the two seeds, "the seed of woman" and "the seed of the serpent," runs throughout the Scriptures and the entire course of the ages. The seed of promise triumph in Christ their great Kinsman-Redeemer. The seed of the serpent perish utterly and completely, so much so that they have no resurrection. Here in Revelation 20:9 we see another section of them "visited and destroyed". It is God's intention to gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and the new heavens and new earth can only be ushered in by the fire of 20:14,15.

Not only will Israel remember their oppressors in the day of their exaltation, they will also be very sensibly reminded of their past sins.

This may be seen by reading the closing verses of Ezekiel 16. We cannot quote at length, but give the last verse:

"That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God" (verse 63).

Another suggestive passage is Ezekiel 44:9-14, where we find certain of the Levites who went into idolatry are not permitted to exercise their office in full, but are made servants at the gate, not being permitted to come near unto the Lord. This particular honour is reserved for the sons of Zadok. These are rewarded for their fidelity, they

"kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me" (verse 15).

It is evident from this distinction that the element of reward and loss obtains in the millennial kingdom. This is further exemplified in Ezekiel 48, when compared with Revelation 7. The tribe of Dan forfeit a place among the 144,000 sealed overcomers, but they do not lose their place

in the earthly apportionment of the kingdom which is theirs by covenant, not by merit, for the tribe of Dan is mentioned in Ezekiel 48:1.

The question of reward or forfeiture in the Gospels and Epistles has much to do with position and glory in this kingdom. Those being found faithful in small things are rewarded by being made responsible for great ones. Those who hid their talent in the earth are deprived of glory in the Lord's presence.

Returning to Revelation 20 we take notice of one further item. We have seen Satan loosed, and the nations that were deceived suddenly devoured by fire. We now notice what is said of Satan himself:

"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 the ages of the ages" (verse 10).

The expression "for the ages of the ages," *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, occurs in the Book of the Revelation thirteen times, and is distributed as follows:

"For the ages of the ages"

- A 1:6 The kingdom of priests ascribe glory and dominion to Christ
- B 1:18 Christ. Living for the ages of the ages
- C Worshippers of God (fourfold).
 - a₁ 4:9 The living creatures
 - b₁ 4:10 The twenty-four elders
 - a₁ 5:13 Every creature
 - b₁ 7:12 All the angels
- A 10:6 The mighty angel. The mystery of God finished
- B₁ 11:15 He shall reign
- C Worshippers of Satan (fourfold).
 - a₂ 14:11 Smoke of torment
 - b₂ 15:7 The seven angels
 - a₂ 19:3 Smoke of torment
 - b₂ 20:10 The Devil, beast and false prophet
- B₂ 22:5 They shall reign.

The passages which are specially connected with our present subject are the two groups of four, lettered C C. In the first set we have all creation, including the four living

creatures, the twenty-four elders, and all the angels joining in praise to God and to the Lamb. It is important to notice the universality of the scope of 5:13. What words can convey to us the sense of the universal better than these?

“And every creature
which is in heaven
and on earth
and under the earth
and in the sea
and all that are in them”.

Yet the worshippers of the beast, together with Satan, the beast and the false prophet themselves must be excepted, otherwise we introduce discord into Scripture. This should be remembered when we are tempted to make universal application of the “all’s” and “every’s” of Scripture. In the case of those who worship the beast, and of Babylon itself, we read:

“The smoke of their (or her) torment ascendeth up (or rose up) for the ages of the ages”.

The ages of the ages is the great converging point of all time. There the smoke ceases to ascend, there every enemy is subjected, there the reign of the saints reaches its goal, there in fact the Son Himself shall vacate His mediatorial throne, and having accomplished the purpose of the ages, He shall:

“Deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father ... that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

In Ezekiel 28:11-19 which we understand to speak of Satan, we read that God says:

“Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee” (verse 18).

Thus ends the awful conflict of the ages. The thought of this torment and destruction is a terrible one, yet He Who measures the guilt by the gift of His Son is righteous in His vengeance, for perfect love must also know perfect hatred, otherwise it would be for ever one-sided and unreal.

At the opening of the sixth seal great convulsions took place, causing the sun to become black, the moon to be like blood, the stars to fall, the heaven to be parted asunder as a

scroll rolling itself up, and every mountain and island to be moved out of their places. Thus was ushered in the day of wrath, foretold in Isaiah 13:6-13, 34:1-5, Haggai 2:6,7,21,22, and Matthew 24:35. Now we have brought before us a more terrific movement. Not merely do the heavens part asunder and the mountains move, but John says:

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them” (Rev. 20:11).

“No place” seems to signify more than the mere idea of “room” or “position”; it seems to indicate that the heavens and the earth that Peter said “are now” have accomplished their purpose. This idea may be seen in such a passage as Hebrews 8:7:

“For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should *no place* have been sought for a second”.

Or again, Hebrews 12:17:

“For he found *no place* of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears”.

In neither of these passages does “place” bear the idea of physical or material locality, and the same applies to Revelation 20:11.

The heavens and the earth that are now will have run their appointed course by the time that the Great White Throne has been set up. They began as a result of Satan’s first rebellion, suggested though not stated in Genesis 1:2, when the first earth perished in the water. They will end when Satan’s last rebellion has come to its inglorious close, and not with a flood of water but a lake of fire:

“By the word of God ... the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are laid up in store, kept for fire for the day of judgment and destruction of impious men ... in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:5-10).

In spite, therefore, of the words of a great commentator on Revelation 20:11, “To seek a *literal* sense in such a passage would be quite a superfluous undertaking,” we

believe that we have here as literal a cosmic movement as in Genesis 1:2, the Deluge, the terrors of Sinai, or the rending rocks and opened tombs at the crucifixion of the Saviour:

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God” (Rev. 20:12).

Unless one had actually heard it denied, it would hardly seem necessary to say that “the dead” who thus stand before this throne are raised and living again.

There are two items in this very chapter that necessitate the resurrection of all those that were not raised at the commencement of the millennium.

(1) *The First Resurrection*. — We observed earlier that the word “first” means “former,” “the former of two,” and implies a second or later resurrection to follow.

(2) *The rest of the dead lived not again until ...* “Lived not again until” necessarily means that when the limit set by the word “until” has been reached, those others called “the rest” shall “live again”.

The revised text reads, “stand before the *throne*” instead of “before God” in Revelation 20:12, and this reading is followed by *J. N. D., Rotherham, The Companion Bible*, as well as the *Revised Version*. We know from other Scriptures that “He Who sits on that throne” is none other than Christ:

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (John 5:22,23).

“Because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained” (Acts 17:31).

It is important to notice the character of this judgment. The word “sin” is not mentioned. This is covered by the death of Christ. Sin entered the world by one man, Adam. It involved all in its consequence — death. But the Scriptures as emphatically affirm that there is a perfect parallel between Adam and Christ, and that:

“As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto a justification of life” (Rom. 5:18).

If any should object to our words "a perfect parallel" we will agree that the parallel is not perfect, that throughout Paul's argument in Romans 5 the grace of God in Christ is "not as it was by one that sinned," but that continually we must say when speaking of the grace of God "much more". For Christ not only died for "sin," but in the case of all those who received the abundance of grace, He shed His blood on account of their "sins" also, and consequently "no condemnation" can be theirs. This is not the case with "the rest of the dead". The "sin" that was theirs in common with "all in Adam" has been put away, and the death that ensued has been revoked. There is for them a "justification of life". These however never knew the forgiveness of "sins" (is there a passage anywhere in the New Testament that speaks of the forgiveness of "sin"?) and they are here found standing before the throne to hear the judgment of God concerning their works.

Our attention is most particularly drawn to the presence of two sets of books which are to be opened at this great judgment:

"And the BOOKS were opened: and ANOTHER BOOK was opened which is the book of LIFE: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, *according to their works*" (Rev. 20:12).

Whoever undertakes to interpret this passage ignoring this most important distinction, thereby stamps himself as an untrustworthy expositor. Judgment is out of the *books*, not out of the *book*. The judgment of the Great White Throne is a judgment upon works. Further, there is no word "wrath" in the record of this solemn judgment. The vials of wrath poured out by the seven angels completed the wrath of God. This is the testimony of Scripture, and J.N.D. thus translates Revelation 15:1, "For in them the fury of God is completed". Rotherham reads "ended," the *Revised Version* "finished". It is not for us to theorise, but it is for us to adhere faithfully to the word of truth. There are two words rendered "wrath" in Revelation, *thumos* and *orge*, and they both terminate with the conclusion of the seven vials. The last reference to *thumos* is Revelation 18:3, where Babylon is in view, and the last reference to *orge* is at Armageddon (Rev. 19:15). We do not believe a single

Israelite will stand before the Great White Throne, for Israel being an elect nation were saved by Christ, and the judgment of their works falls within the millennium. We must be guided by the Word however, and remember that "They are not all Israel that are of Israel," for even in that elect race the holy seed had become corrupted, and some in our Lord's day who were lineal descendants of Abraham were nevertheless said to be "of their father the Devil" (John 8:44). With that one reservation we can boldly say "And so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26). There will not stand before that throne one of any dispensation from Adam onwards who has walked by faith. "The rest of the dead" includes that great company of Adam's sons, who were not elected to any of the companies of faith, and who never attained either by award (Matt. 19:16), fruit (Rom. 6:22), or faith (John 3:16), to the life of the age that had then gone by, usually translated "everlasting life", and made parallel with the kingdom (Matt. 25:34 and 46).

Tyre and Sidon and Sodom (Matt. 11:21-24) shall find it "more tolerable" than some who on the surface were nothing near so vile. We have it upon no less authority than that of the living God Himself that Sodom was "more righteous" than Israel:

"As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters ... they are more righteous than thou ... thou has justified thy sisters" (Ezek. 16:48-52).

Just as the enormity of Israel's sin "justified" Sodom, so we read of Nineveh's repentance "condemns" Israel:

"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it" (Matt. 12:41).

It is not possible for any human judge to deal with a man upon the ground of what he *would* have done under altered circumstances — the whole world would cry out against such an administration. But He Who sits upon the Great White Throne is One Who "tries the reins and the heart". He knows what Sodom or Tyre *would have done* had the favours shown to Chorazin and Bethsaida been shown to them. He alone can judge the "secrets of men", and that "according to my gospel" says Paul (Rom. 2:16). Paul's gospel touches *Adam* and *sin*, no other gospel goes so far

back nor so deep. It is quite apart from all the lurid pictures of orthodoxy to think of a gospel in association with the Great White Throne, but we nevertheless believe that such is the case.

After the judgment according to works has been given we read:

“And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14).

Death and “gravedom” (*hades*), together with the present heavens and earth, have accomplished their end. Like all other things that are temporal or cause offence, they are destroyed before the kingdom of righteousness can be set up. By no conceivable interpretation can we understand that God’s intention is to *preserve* or to *change* death and the grave by casting them into the lake of fire. Death, so far as it may be spoken of as a state, has been destroyed by the resurrection of all the rest of the dead. So far as it may be spoken of as an enemy it is here seen to be destroyed in the lake of fire.

The book of life is now put into operation, and this book alone is connected with the second death. No man will ever enter the second death as a result of judgment according to his works. It would be to ascribe most unbecoming trifling to the Lord Jesus to say that it would be more tolerable for one company who are cast into the second death than for another. The word “whosoever” in Revelation 20:15 is apt to mislead the English reader. *Kai ei tis* can only be translated “and if anyone,” and the words are so rendered by the *Revised Version*. We now leave the great multitude for the individual. A mistaken zeal often prompts the evangelist to declare: “If any one stands before the Great White Throne he is necessarily doomed. Nothing but the lake of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone can be his lot. Flee from the wrath to come!”

These words contain serious mistakes. The second death is not the period spoken of in Scripture as “the wrath to come”. The day of wrath has peculiar reference to Babylonianism, Antichrist, etc. (see Rom. 1 and Revelation). “Wrath” does not occur in the inner part of Romans, that is, 5:12-8:39. It is not true to say that to stand

before the Great White Throne is just the same as being condemned to the lake of fire.

“If any one” denies that. None shall go into the lake of fire unless his name shall not be found in the book of life. This book of life was written “from the overthrow of the world”. The translation that we believe to be the true one of Revelation 13:8 is:

“And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, everyone whose name hath not been written from the overthrowing of the world in the book of the life of the slain Lamb”.

When Satan’s rebellion brought about the “overthrow” of Genesis 1:2, and the purpose of the ages was put into movement, a second heavens and earth were made (which were to pass away when their purpose was accomplished), and a people were written in the book of life. Sin entering brought the first death, and sin brought punishment, but the ultimate destiny of this people of purpose had no reference either to Adam’s one sin or their own many sins. The consequences, both of the one offence and of the many offences, were undertaken by Christ, and in accordance with the outworking of the purpose of the ages, different companies were called to a saving knowledge of the truth. At length the last company is reached. They, too, suffer for their works, or are rewarded as the case may be, and being found in the book of life, pass into the new heavens and the new earth for the final movement in the great age purpose. There are some, however, whose names, apparently, will not be found therein. Can we find anything in Scripture to help us understand this omission? Turning once more to Revelation 13:8, let us notice what it says of those whose names had not been written in the book of life:

“And all that dwell on the earth, every one whose name hath not been written in the book of life of the slain Lamb, SHALL WORSHIP HIM, i.e., the dragon and the beast”.

Terrific judgments are pronounced against such in Revelation 14:10,11. A promise is made to the overcomer in Revelation 3:5, that the Lord will in no wise (double negative) blot out his name from the book of life.

These two passages raise certain questions concerning the book of life that must be faced:

- (1) Rev. 13:8 indicates that the worshippers of the beast are those who have not their names in that book. There will be a company therefore on earth who are not reckoned in the great transaction of Adam and Christ; in other words, we perceive some of the false seed who are of "their father the Devil".
- (2) The promise not to blot out the name of the overcomer suggests that there may be some point in the life even of one of the true children of Adam where such an awful thing may take place.

We are reminded of the words of Moses in Exodus 32:32,33:

"And if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of that book which Thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book'".

We must, however, be careful to note that this does not say "the book of life", and may refer to other things. In Psalm 69:28 we read:

"Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous".

Rotherham, in a footnote, says, "Or list (or register) of the living," and it is by no means certain that the Psalmist has "the book of life of the Lamb" in mind. The expression is parallel with "the land of the living" (Psa. 52:5 and Isa. 53:8). It should be read with Psalm 37:29:

"The righteous shall inherit the earth, and they may settle down to futurity (Heb. *ad*) thereupon".

We can be certain that the names of those who worship the beast as recorded in Revelation 13:8 are not written in the Lamb's book of life. Whether anyone whose name is in that book can possibly commit such an act and so take the side of Satan, is more than we can say. Enough for our purpose to understand that the second death is the end of those whose names are not in the book of life.

We do not read "the book of *aionian* life," neither do we read of "the book of glory," or "blessing," or "peace," or "victory," or "holiness". All these other aspects of the future will have been settled. One issue, and one issue only remains. Life or death. The second death is the only alternative. It cannot mean purgatory, it cannot be a place of reformation, it is not a place of torment. Where the lake of fire is used as a place of torment it is *before* the Great

White Throne (Rev. 20:10), and the lake of fire is described as *either* a place of torment *or* the second death, never *both*.

Before the righteous can shine forth in the kingdom of the Father, the “tares,” “the children of the wicked one,” the “false seed” must be destroyed. The figure used to describe the end of the children of the wicked one is taken from agriculture. Every man who cultivates the ground knows the necessity and the purpose of the annual bonfire. The weeds are raked together into a heap, and a fire is kindled in order that he may be rid of them. If anyone should venture to suggest that he entertained a hope that by means of the fire some of the thistles would reform and become figs, the gardener would rightly put such a one down as mad. Now the figure taken from husbandry was taken by the Lord to *illustrate*, and if the gathering of the bundles of tares (the children of the Devil) to be burned is not to destroy them, then the Lord has *mised* us!:

“They shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend ... then shall the righteous shine ...” (Matt. 13:41-43).

We have no warrant for believing that either Satan, the Beast, the False Prophet, the Angels that fell with Satan, or his monstrous seed sown in the earth to corrupt the true seed of the woman, ever have had their names in the book of life. These, together with death and the grave, are consumed in the second death.

The platform has now been prepared. All is ready for the last great act which is ushered in by the coming of the new heavens and new earth. These John beholds immediately following the lake of fire. This exact sequence is preserved in 2 Peter 3 where the Day of the Lord eventuates in the burning up of the heavens and the earth, and which in turn is followed by the Day of God. This fixes for us the lake of fire. It is the great dissolving and destroying agency at the end.

CHAPTER 16

All Things New

Revelation 21 and 22

The Scriptures are divided into three great sections, that is:

- (1) The heaven and the earth which were created. "In the beginning" (Gen. 1:1).
- (2) The heavens and the earth which were created during the six days. "Which are now" (Gen. 1:3-2:3; 2 Peter 3:7).
- (3) The new heaven and new earth (2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1).

One constant factor throughout the second division is the presence of sin. During the ages which span this section the wondrous purposes of grace and redemption are worked out. The last act which pertains to this section is that of casting death and hades into the lake of fire. The millennium is in the Day of the Lord (2 Peter 3:10), and this is followed by the Day of God (verse 12). For this the believer "looks and hastens unto," "looking according to His promise, for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (verse 13). The section therefore which now claims our attention, though brief, is of stupendous significance. It is nothing less than the goal of the ages, the fruit of redemption, and the triumph of truth.

The subject "the new heaven and new earth" occupies chapter 21:1-22:5. First we have a brief statement occupying 21:1-5, then, secondly, we have an expansion of one aspect of the subject which has particular connection with the theme of the Revelation. It is important to a right understanding that we have this arrangement of the subject clearly before us.

The new creation and its heirs

A ₁ 21:1-5.	All things new
A ₂ 21:6-22:5.	These things inherited.

The first part of the subject is general — "all things". The second part of the same subject is that which is peculiar to the overcomer — "he that overcometh shall inherit these things". Five verses are sufficient to tell of the new heavens

and new earth, while twenty-seven verses are taken up with the description of the inheritance of the overcomer. Let us consider these separate groups.

“All things new” (Rev. 21:1-5)

- A (a) 1 New heaven. New earth
 - (b) 1 Former heaven and earth pass away
 - (c) 1 No more sea
- B 2 The Holy City
- B 3 The Tabernacle
- A
 - (c) 4 No more death
 - (b) 4 Former things pass away
- (a) 5 All things new.

So complete is the change that takes place that the Scripture repeats, in order to emphasise, that “the former heaven and earth” and the “former things” pass away. In Isaiah 65:17 we read:

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come upon the heart”.

Just as the passing of the old heavens and earth is vitally connected with the “former things” in Revelation 21, so in Isaiah 65:16, for we read:

“The former troubles are forgotten ... they are hid from mine eyes”.

Further, there is no more sea in that new earth, which is balanced by the statement that there shall be no more death, sorrow, crying or pain. Now why should the sea be associated with death? In exactly the same way that the “former heaven and earth” are associated with the “former troubles”. The sea here refers to “the deep” of Genesis 1:2.

Seeing that we have reached in this chapter the great cosmic change, the goal towards which creation and redemption have pressed, it is not to be wondered at if sin is viewed, not from an individual point of view, nor even from a racial and federal point of view; it is seen rather as the primal sin that caused the overthrow of the world, made the present creation necessary, and which is behind all sin in general and “Mystery Babylon” in particular.

With the repeated emphasis upon the passing away of former things, and the complete cessation of death, it is simple to believe that all who were cast into the lake of fire suffer destruction, that they become “no more” even as the

sea, death and sorrow, that they have passed away as completely as the former heaven and earth. To believe that a countless mass of unsaved humanity will still suffer torment contradicts these plain words, as does also the other teaching that the second death is in some measure a purgatory or place of temporary detention.

We look in vain in this chapter of Revelation for any further description of the new heaven, and new earth. Immediately following the briefest of introductions, John focuses upon one phase of this new world:

“And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (21:2).

Again a pause, and a further expansion:

The city is named ... New Jerusalem.
The city is located ... Coming down from heaven.
The city is likened ... Prepared as a bride.

Here the description ceases. Presently the theme is resumed with a wealth of detail, but in the brief summary which prefaces this section the above suffices. John “saw” the city. He also “heard” a great voice out of heaven saying:

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God” (21:3).

This is an evident explanation of the purpose of the new Jerusalem. It is to be in reality what the tabernacle was to Israel in type. It was further to be for “men,” whereas the tabernacle was exclusive to Israel. At the close of the description (22:1-5) we reach Eden, paradise restored. It will be seen therefore that there are to be a series of steps ever back to “as it was in the beginning”.

- (1) THE MILLENNIUM. — Jerusalem on earth, a holy city.
Special feature THE TEMPLE (Ezek. 40-47).
- (2) THE NEW HEAVEN. — Jerusalem, heavenly city.
Special feature THE TABERNACLE.
- (3) THE NEW EARTH. — Paradise. “The day of the age” (2 Peter 3:18 *lit*).
Special feature THE TREE OF LIFE.

We have already suggested that the new Jerusalem is closely associated with the "overcomer," and a glance back to some of the promises in Revelation 2 and 3 will show that some of them are not fulfilled until after the millennium.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the *paradise of God*" (2:7).

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

"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*" (3:5).

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is *new Jerusalem*, which cometh down out of heaven from My God" (3:12).

In these four passages, we have four items that are connected with our subject:

- (1) The paradise of God.
- (2) The second death.
- (3) The book of life.
- (4) The city of God.

It will be found that Nos. 2 and 3 are indicated in chapter 21:8 and 27, where the two statements "the second death" and "the book of life" are mentioned in connection with the new Jerusalem.

The very close resemblance between the tabernacle and the city becomes evident upon examination. The materials for the tabernacle are given in Exodus 25:1-7, and they are gold, silver, brass, blue, purple, scarlet, precious stones, etc. The breastplate of the high priest contained twelve precious stones. These closely resemble the twelve precious stones with which the foundations of the wall were garnished. There is also an intended contrast with Babylon. In Revelation 17 and 18 we have the mystery of iniquity and there we read of purple and scarlet, gold and precious stones and pearls in the description of the harlot, and among the merchandise of that great city we find gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple silk, scarlet. Again in the description of the king of Tyre (Ezek. 28:12-19) who sets forth in symbol Satan, we have a

description which includes "every precious stone," and nine precious stones are mentioned by name.

The great city, Babylon, falls to rise no more; the great city, new Jerusalem, manifests the triumphant conclusion of the conflict of the ages.

We may observe here that one feature of the tabernacle which is given first place in Exodus 25 is the one feature mentioned in Revelation 21.

Exodus 25:8. — "Let them make Me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell among them".

Revelation 21:3 — "The Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them". (See also Ezek. 43:7; Zech. 2:10; 8:3).

Another important item is brought to mind by these parallels. The references to Zechariah and Ezekiel are millennial and to Israel, whereas the reference in Revelation 21 is beyond the millennium and is to "men" and not to Israel alone. The new heaven and the new earth together with the heavenly Jerusalem will be anticipated in the millennium in Israel and the Jerusalem that will be built according to the prophecy of Ezekiel 40-47.

Isaiah mentions the new heavens and new earth in connection with Israel, the millennium and the Jerusalem of that day, and unless the typical and anticipatory character of Israel's history be remembered, a great difficulty will be experienced in placing these passages. They are Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22:

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come upon the heart. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy ... and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (Isa. 65:17-19).

Yet this cannot be the same as Revelation 21, for the next verse speaks of a sinner dying an hundred years old, and being accursed, whereas in the new earth of Revelation 21 there is no more death, and in Revelation 22 no more curse.

In Isaiah 66 the new heavens and earth are connected with Israel, and the carcasses of men shall be seen in Gehenna, and be an abhorring unto all flesh.

There is one more item given in Revelation 21 upon the

nature of the new creation, which though briefly stated is infinitely precious:

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death” (Rev. 21:4).

When God wipes away all tears, it indicates that death has been vanquished:

“He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces” (Isa 25:8).

There shall not enter into the new heavens or earth any who do not stand in new life in Christ.

We must now pass on to the more detailed description of the new Jerusalem, which commences at Revelation 21:9. The intervening verses (4-8) form a transition:

“And He said (the One that sitteth upon the throne), Behold, I make all things new.

“And He said, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

“And He said, It is done”.

Some authorities read “they have been accomplished,” but the sense of fulfilment remains unaltered. The word *gegone*, “it is done,” is the word that was uttered as the last vial of wrath was poured out “and great Babylon came into remembrance before God”. At this utterance “every island fled away, and (certain) mountains were not found; and there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven” (Rev. 16:17-21). Here we see the great contrast.

<i>It is done.</i> — Judgment.	<i>It is done.</i> — Blessing.
The great city, Babylon.	The great city, new Jerusalem.
Precious stones, pearls and gold.	Precious stones, pearls and gold.
No more harper, candle or rejoicing.	No more death, sorrow or curse.
The habitation of demons, foul spirits.	Nothing that defileth.
Islands flee, mountains not found.	Earth and heaven flee away.
The harlot.	The bride.
Kings of the earth corrupted.	Kings of the earth bring glory.
Nations made drunk.	Nations walk in light.

The reader may lengthen this list; we have given enough to show the evident contrast between the two cities and the two conflicting purposes that attach to them. The mystery

of iniquity ends in destruction utter and complete, the mystery of godliness ends in glory beyond description.

Who is it that sits upon this throne? Who is it that says "Behold, I make all things new"? Who is it that says "It is done"?

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 21:6).

This title has occurred in Revelation before, namely, in Revelation 1:8. There it is shown to be parallel with the great name Jehovah, and the Almighty:

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty".

It is also closely associated with death and resurrection:

"Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for the ages of the ages, Amen; and have the keys of hades and of death" (Rev. 1:17,18).

Or again:

"Thus saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14).

Both *Alpha* and *Omega* are vowels. A vowel is required to form a complete sound. Without Christ the promises of God can never be fulfilled, but with Him every jot and tittle shall be accomplished. He Who bowed His head upon the cross crying, "It is finished," shall one day sit upon the throne and say "It is done".

One blessed promise is given here:

"I will give unto him that thirsteth of the fountain of the water of life, freely" (Rev. 21:6).

At first sight this seems no more than that of:

"A pure river of water of life" (Rev. 22:1), or
"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life, freely" (Rev. 22:17).

A moment's consideration, however, will reveal a difference. First we have "the fountain". Secondly we have "the river," and thirdly we have "the water" without reference to either river or fountain.

Now in Revelation 7:17 we have a millennial anticipation by the overcomers of this same blessed promise:

“The Lamb ... shall lead them unto the fountains of the water of life (R.V.), and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes”.

We read in Jeremiah 2:13 that the Lord Himself is “the fountain of living waters,” and the promise of Revelation 21:6 takes the overcomer to the very source of that pure river which flows out from the throne to water the paradise of God. It is an “overcomer’s” portion, and not that of “whosoever will”. This promise is immediately followed by the words “He that overcometh shall inherit these things” (*tauta*, these things, instead of *panta*, all things see R.V.). There is no practical difference between “all things” and “these things” in this passage, for “these things” must refer to something stated in the context, which seems to be all things that are made new.

An inheritance, in the Scriptures, seems to have a two-fold significance. There is the inheritance that is associated with birth, and the inheritance that is associated with merit. Christ was appointed “heir of all things” (Heb. 1:2), but there seems an added feature in the statement, “He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name” (Heb. 1:4). So with Abraham: “When he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed” (Heb. 11:8). This inheritance doubtless was the land of Palestine, but it included more. Isaac and Jacob were heirs together with Abraham of the same promise, and dwelt in tents as sojourners in a strange country:

“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ... They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly ... He hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:9-16).

The inheritance spoken of therefore in Revelation 21 looks to the new Jerusalem in particular for its fulfilment and enjoyment.

In severe and awful contrast with the overcomers are placed throughout the Revelation those who receive the mark of the beast or the number of his name. Their characteristics are given in verses 8 and 27. The last word in these two lists is connected with *the lie*.

“All liars” (verse 8). “Whatsoever worketh abomination or a lie” (verse 27).

If we are to take the words “all liars” in an unrestricted sense it would include every son of Adam. There is something in this term that is specific, it is associated with making “abomination” or making “a lie”. It refers to complicity with the great Antichristian system of which Satan is “the father”:

“He is a liar, and the father of π ” (John 8:44).

This lie usurped the place of the truth of God, when the Gentile world became submerged in idolatry (Rom. 1:23-25), and will finally obsess the worshippers of the man of sin and his “lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:9-11). This basic lie is connected with specific murder (John 8:44; 1 John 3:12), and with abominations (Rom. 1:26, Rev. 2:20, etc.). With this dreadful company are joined “the fearful,” and “the unbelieving” (Rev. 21:8), which we understand also in the same restricted sense, otherwise the very apostles must come under this awful doom (see the same word used of them, Matt. 8:26).

Abraham looked for a “city which had foundations” and a “heavenly country,” and these are now to be described with a wealth of detail. One of the seven angels who had been instrumental in the destruction of Babylon comes forward and says to John:

“Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (Rev. 21:9,10).

There is an evident parallel with Revelation 17 here:

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters ... so he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman ... the woman which thou sawest is that great city ...” (Rev. 17:1-18).

Once again we shall find that the millennial city foreshadows the heavenly Jerusalem:

“In the visions of God brought He me unto the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south” (Ezek. 40:2).

The word "wife" is *gune*, a word which is translated "woman" in the Authorized Version 129 times, 17 of the occurrences being found in the Revelation. *Gune* is translated "wife" 92 times, two of these occurrences being found in the Revelation. Like the word *aner*, which means both husband and man (see "the perfect man" Eph. 4:13), so *gune* means any woman who is of marriageable age, as well as a wife.

To make a distinction between the Lamb's wife in Revelation 19 and the bride of the Lamb in 21 seems to be artificial by the very fact that the Lamb's bride must be His wife:

"I will show thee the *bride*, the *wife* of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:9).

Are we to believe that the marriage consummated in Revelation 19 is dissolved by either divorce or death at the end of the millennium? No one can believe that the Lamb of God will even in type and symbol break the law of God concerning marriage and practise polygamy. It was customary for a wedding ceremony to cover a period of seven days. "Fulfil her week" (Gen. 29:27) refers to this period. So also from Judges 14:17,18, we gather the same thing. The marriage festivities of the Lamb last for a longer period, how long we do not know, but after the end of the millennium, when the new heaven and earth appear, the holy city descends from heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, and it is then that the bride is called the Lamb's wife.

There are several references in the Old Testament to Israel as a wife, a wife divorced and taken back again, which must not be ignored if we would have the truth.

Another passage to be noted is Hosea 2:16-23, where we read "Thou shalt call Me my husband ... and I will betroth thee unto Me for ever," or yet again, Jeremiah 3:14, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you".

The simple solution seems to be to keep distinct the titles of the Lord, as (1) The God of Israel, and (2) The Lamb, God manifest in the flesh; the restoration of the nation of Israel being one thing, the inheritance of the new Jerusalem being another. "If children, then heirs, *heirs of God*," that is

one position. "Joint-heirs with Christ, if so be we suffer with Him" (Rom. 8:17), that is another, and is somewhat parallel to the case before us.

Let us now read the description of this wondrous city:

"He shewed me the holy Jerusalem ... having the glory of God" (Rev. 21:10,11).

The glory of God is a theme that requires separate treatment, and we must content ourselves here with pointing out a few outstanding features:

- (1) The glory of God is directly attacked by the Babylonian system that "flooded the earth with idolatry" (Rom. 1:23).
- (2) Sin causes all to come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23).
- (3) Only by virtue of redemption may any therefore entertain the hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:2).
- (4) Immediately following the rebellion of Babel "the God of glory" called Abram out of Chaldea (Acts 7:2).
- (5) The glory of God is vitally connected with resurrection:
 - (a) Christ was raised from the dead "by the glory of the Father" (Rom. 6:4).
 - (b) At the tomb of Lazarus, the Lord said in connection with the raising of Lazarus, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John 11:40).

We may at least see in the new Jerusalem these five elements. The Babylonian attack has perished for ever; sin has passed away with the former things; redemption is the foundation upon which this city rests, and resurrection life is its animating principle.

This glory is said to be, not "her light," but "her luminary" (*phoster*). There was no need in this city for the light of either sun or moon. The wall is "great and high," and there are twelve gates, with twelve angels, the names of the twelve tribes of Israel being inscribed on the gates. Verse twenty-one adds the information that each gate was a pearl.

The super-structure of the wall is of jasper (verse 18), but the wall rests upon twelve foundations, bearing the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. With the exception of Matthias no doubt is entertained concerning the names of the remaining eleven. We have given our reasons in *The Berean Expositor* for June 1923, for believing that Matthias

is the twelfth apostle; and in expositions upon Ephesians the peculiar position of the Apostle Paul is considered. It is our firm belief that the name of Paul will not be found upon the foundations of the new Jerusalem, also that Paul is not one of the apostles of "the Lamb".

The measurements of the city are given and must be received, and nothing we can write will be of any service beyond stating that we must accept the explanation as a matter of fact. It is possible that the shape of this city is that of a pyramid, which would be in harmony with the archaeological evidences of early Babylonian buildings. Near to the ruins of Babylon is a huge mound which is called Birs-Nimrud, or the tower of Nimrod:

"It covers a square surface of 49,000 feet, and is nearly 300 feet high ... Herodotus saw it while it still retained something of its ancient glories".

He describes it as being constructed of a series of eight towers, with a way running spirally around them. Nebuchadnezzar leaves a record to the effect that he restored this tower, using different coloured tiles for each stage of the building (see Vol. V. of *The Berean Expositor*, p. 30). This seems to be Satan's anticipation and travesty of the glorious colours of the new Jerusalem.

It is somewhat difficult to decide whether the word "building" in verse eighteen means the super-structure, as some translate it, or the buttresses, as others suggest. It is evidently something different from the foundations themselves, as one could scarcely adorn jasper with jasper. Those who have opportunity may find in the Museum at South Kensington the twelve stones mentioned in this description. We do not think any spiritual good can come by a lengthy description; most have some fair knowledge of their general appearance, and when we do see this vision of beauty we shall doubtless say, "the half was not told me".

During the millennium there will be the glorious temple described with such minuteness by Ezekiel (in chapters 40-47), but the greater glory of the new Jerusalem is *that it needs no temple*:

"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Rev. 21:22).

While temples, altars, sacrifices and priests stand, full access is denied (see Heb. 9:8,9; 10:19-22 for the principle). During the millennium:

“the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold” (Isa. 30:26).

but of the city of Jerusalem itself we read:

“The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory” (Isa. 60:19,20).

This is but another anticipation of the heavenly city:

“And the city hath no need of the sun, neither the moon, that they should shine on her; for the glory of God did lighten ir, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21:23).

Future blessedness in the minds of many is somewhat nebulous. They imagine an immaterial state, with nothing much to do except to sing. The new earth at least presents a very different aspect. There are nations there and kings, “and the nations shall walk by means of her light,” which is but following out the anticipation of the millennial city:

“Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ... and Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isa. 60:1-3).

“Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night; that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations, and that their kings may be conducted through” (Isa. 60:11).

The kings of the earth were ruined by Babylon, the nations were made drunk by the harlot, but the nations shall walk by the light of Jerusalem earthly and heavenly, and kings shall be blessed by her.

The concluding words regarding this city are those which repeat the solemn witness of verse eight:

“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27).

The city is likened to the tabernacle. The ritual of the tabernacle impresses us with the need for cleansing. The leper, being unclean, or any who had contracted defilement, was not allowed to come near until his

defilement had been removed. The provision for the removal of sin and uncleanness is found in the blood of Christ. This had been rejected by those who were cast into the second death. There remaineth no more offering for sin. Christ dieth no more.

Throughout the record of chapter 21 illumination is found in the story of Israel. This principle of interpretation which looks to the typical people of Israel to supply the correct grounds for interpreting the unfolding of the purpose of the ages we commend to our readers, who will find much more than we have brought forward here that will make the vision plain.

We now arrive at the last members of the great structure which comprises the purpose of the ages, and are brought not to Israel nor Jerusalem, but back to Eden and paradise. Revelation 2:7 gives us warrant to use the word paradise of Revelation 22:1-5. Genesis speaks of the garden planted by the Lord with its rivers and its trees of fruit and its tree of life. The picture is revived in this closing section. Ezekiel 47 provides a millennial anticipation of this river of living water. Its healing power is brought before us by a physical and geographical fact:

“These waters issue out towards the east country (used of the Jordan, Josh. 22:11), and go down into the desert (or plain), and go into the sea (that is the Dead Sea), which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed” (Ezek. 47:8).

Is not this a blessed symbol? In verse twelve we read of the fruit trees with similar characteristics and virtues as those of Revelation 22.

The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations, not for those who have the right of entry into that city. We are, however, not to suppose that sin or death is at work among the nations, for the Scripture immediately adds, “And there shall be no longer any curse,” even as there shall be no longer any night, nor death, or crying.

There in that renewed paradise shall be the throne of God and the Lamb, there His servants shall serve Him and see His face, bearing His name upon their foreheads. Basking in the light that the Lord God Himself shall give, they shall reign unto the ages of the ages. This is the farthest point to which the book takes us in the outworking of the

great purpose of God. One by one the barriers are broken down. The last to go here is the temple with its priesthood. Paul places the top stone upon the edifice by revealing that when the reign of Christ has brought everything into line and order, the goal of the ages will then be reached and God shall be all in all (1 Cor. 15:25-28).

The remaining verses of chapter 22 form the epilogue or conclusion of the book. The conclusion has much in common with the introduction, and goes back to its time setting.

We have the coming of Christ mentioned or suggested in the chapter at least four times:

“Behold I come quickly” (verse 7).

“Behold I come quickly” (verses 12,13).

“The morning star” (verse 16).

“Surely I come quickly” (verse 20).

A blessing is pronounced upon those who keep the words of the prophecy of this book (verse 7), while severe judgment is threatened to any who shall either add to or take away from these prophetic words (verses 18,19).

John sees the Lord, not only as the root and offspring of David, but as the bright and morning Star. From the dark night of sin and sorrow ascends to the Lord the bright harbinger of everlasting day, the one word COME, “He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly”.

As we review the black night of tribulation that casts its gloom over this book, as we see the persecution of the saints, the mark of the beast, the worship of the dragon, our hearts unite with that of John in response to this word of promise. AMEN. EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS:

“Oh what a bright and blessed world
This groaning earth of ours will be,
When from its throne the tempter hurled
Shall leave it all, O Lord, to Thee”.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints, Amen”.

INDEXES

As the exposition of the Apocalypse proceeds in an orderly examination of the book, no references to texts from the book itself are included in the Index. References to other Scriptures are so numerous as to make an index impossible. The table of contents and the index of subjects will be a sufficient guide to the earnest student.

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* Under the title, "The Secrets of the Son", fresh light has been thrown on this term in *The Berean Expositor* for May, 1951.

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