

The Apocalypse Epitomised

**THE
CHRISTADELPHIAN
EXPOSITOR**



**A VERSE-BY-VERSE EXPOSITION
OF THE SCRIPTURES**

by
H. P. Mansfield

Printed by
EUREKA QUALITY PRINTERS
for
LOGOS PUBLICATIONS
Box 220, FINDON, SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5023

Christadelphian Expositor



THE BOOK OF REVELATION

THE APOCALYPSE EPITOMISED

Contents



Introduction 7

Why the Apocalypse Should Be Studied 10

Analysis 15

Section One: "The Things Thou Hast Seen"... 23

Section Two: "The Things Which Art" 37

Section Three: "The Things Which Shall Be" .. 65

THE APOCALYPSE EPITOMISED

Introduction



Over a decade ago, we published a book under the same title as this one, that aimed to provide a verse by verse exposition of the **Apocalypse** based upon **Eureka**. For some time that work has been out of print, and continual requests have been received to re-issue it.

We could do this in its original form, or give it a thorough revision. As our understanding of this remarkable book has increased with further study and thought, we decided on a revision and re-writing of the material.

The volume now in the hands of the reader comprises the results of this labour. We hope and pray that it may assist in the better understanding of this important section of Revelation.

The *Apocalypse* comprises the final message of the Lord Jesus Christ to "his servants," that they might understand certain matters relating to the purpose of Yahweh that were previously hidden from them; particularly in relation to events that were to come to pass (Rev. 1:1,19; 4:1; 22:6). The message is not limited to prophecy, but also contains exhortation, warning and encouragement. However, its main purpose is to reveal the significance of the "times and seasons" which as "children of light" it is expected that we should comprehend (1 Thess. 5:1-5).

In *Eureka*, Brother Thomas has written:

"The *Apocalypse* was given to the end that the servants of the Deity who are keeping their garments might be able to discern the signs of the times preceding the apocalypse of Christ; and the real nature of things extant in their several generations. No believer, understanding this prophecy, could be seduced into fellowship with the clerical institutions of the world; because he would see them in all their native deformity and sin."

*We are greatly indebted to **Eureka** for our understanding of the **Apocalypse**. Indeed, we hope that the present volume may be the means of interesting the reader in Brother Thomas' monumental work, serving to epitomise the thought-provoking exposition he has provided therein. We have found that **Eureka** is best appreciated when the reader has a basic comprehension of what the *Book of Revelation* is about. **Apocalypse Epitomised** is designed to provide that basic knowledge. It is not exhaustive. The reader would miss much if he limited his study to what we have set down, and therefore is urged to read and re-read **Eureka**.*

*Concerning **Eureka**, Brother Roberts wrote:*

"I, for one, am indebted for my understanding of this most difficult part of the testimony of God. Before reading that exposition, I understood only snatches of it. Now I am thankful to be able to follow it in its entirety. Do not be tempted to think that we lean upon a man's judgment in the matter. Dr. Thomas not only gives you his conclusions, but the reasons which led him to those conclusions. We are able to make his conclusions our own by a process which makes us independent of all men as to the ground on which we hold them. The best proof of the soundness of the views advanced by Dr. Thomas lies in this, that once a reader is directed by him to the Bible, and becomes a Bible student, he can dispense with Dr. Thomas' book altogether so far as steadfastness of conviction is concerned. The Bible nourishes that conviction from day to day."

We thoroughly endorse these words of Brother Roberts.

*The **Apocalypse Epitomised** is designed as a basis for home or group study, and Bible marking.*

In that regard, we offer the following suggestions:

- (1)—Never open your Bible without a silent prayer that Yahweh may bless the reading of His Word (James 1:5-6).
- (2)—Never write a note of explanation in your Bible unless you have thought out its significance, understand it thoroughly, and fully agree with it.
- (3)—Mark up your Bible sufficiently comprehensively so that the comment will be as meaningful to you in ten years time as it is when you are studying the Book. Whilst the mind is concentrating upon a theme it is possible to make notes, the significance of which, later is not clear. Aim to be explicit.

- (4)—If you have a wide margin Bible, use only good quality waterproof or Indian ink.
- (5)—Use colours so as to quickly pick out references from comments. Here is a suggestion that has proved to be good. Underline in green the word or text of scripture you wish to comment upon, and place a number alongside it in the same colour. Then place a corresponding number in green, in the margin. Print any comments in black; write all references in red. Each will then be easily distinguishable from the other. Commence your numbering at the beginning of each chapter. Print headings in the margin. For example:

CHAPTER 1

The General Scheme Of The Revelation

Introduction — Vv. 1-8

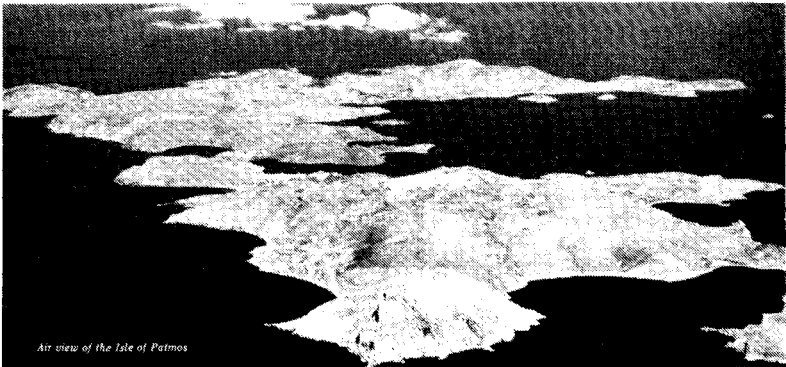
The Title — Vv. 1-3

(Comments on words or phrases then continue, being numbered 1,2,3 etc. according to your underlining and numbering of Scripture).

- (6)—Be sparing in your comments. Make them brief but comprehensive. It is best to write them first in a notebook, and afterwards in your Bible. By this means you will establish them in your mind before transferring them to your Bible.

*The system suggested above has been adopted by many students of the Scriptures to great profit. Our hope is that the owner of this volume may likewise find pleasure and profit from his study of the **Apocalypse**, and so learn to epitomise its message.*

— H. P. Mansfield.



Air view of the Isle of Patmos

Why the Apocalypse Should be Studied



Paul wrote that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

All sections of the Word, therefore, should engage our attention; all of it is designed to equip the student for a wonderful and exciting destiny: life eternal in the Kingdom of God.

The *Book of Revelation* should not be neglected. But, unfortunately, it is neglected by many who believe that it is beyond their comprehension to grasp. Admittedly, it is a book that is hard to understand; but so is Scripture generally, for it sets forth divine wisdom, which is far above human thought (Isa. 55:8-11).

The Blessings of the Book

However, more than any other book of the Bible, divine blessings are pronounced upon those who study the Apocalypse with understanding. Daniel was told that "the wise shall understand" the prophecies delivered unto him (Dan. 12:10), John in Patmos was told that the wise who come to understand the things revealed unto him will be "blessed."

In fact, this "blessing" is pronounced seven times throughout the book. And that is quite significant, for *The Apocalypse*, is a book of "sevens": seven messages to the Ecclesias; a seven-sealed book; seven trumpeters; seven vials, and so forth. Seven is the number of completion, the number of an oath which seals a matter. The proclamation of seven blessings throughout the book emphasises the importance of its study.

Here are the seven blessings:

- (1)—A Blessing pronounced upon the accurate study of its message:

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein" (Rev. 1:3).

- (2)—A Blessing pronounced upon those who will be resurrected to help fulfil it:
“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13).
- (3)—A Blessing upon those who watch and walk in the light of its teaching:
“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments” (Rev. 16:15).
- (4)—A Blessing upon those who partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb:
“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9).
- (5)—A Blessing upon those who attain unto life eternal:
“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power” (Rev. 20:6).
- (6)—A Blessing upon those who keep the sayings of the book:
“Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (Rev. 22:7).
- (7)—A Blessing upon those who keep the Lord’s Commandments:
“Blessed are they that do his commandments” (Rev. 22:14).

The word *blessed* is from the Greek *makarios* and signifies to pronounce *happy*. A cognate word is found in James 5:11: “We count them happy which endure.” The word is used in relation to the beatitudes (Matt. 5), and there denotes the nature of the blessing. The “poor in spirit,” the “mourners,” the “meek,” the “hungry and thirsty,” the “persecuted” are pronounced “blessed” or “happy,” because they are enabled to look beyond their present sufferings, to the glory of the Kingdom of God.

The *Apocalypse* sets forth that hope as a reality. It makes clearer and more substantial the joyous anticipations of the present. More than any other book of the Bible, it enables one to look beyond the present to the joy of the future. It enables one to appreciate better the words of Paul:

“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:15-18).

A Message For Every Age

Throughout the Revelation, Christ has injected personal messages to his brethren of every age. For example, his messages

to the seven Ecclesias related primarily to the brethren of the first century; his encouraging comment recorded in Revelation 13:9-10 particularly concerned the faithful of the Middle Ages who had to endure the bitter persecution levelled against them by the Papacy during the time of its ascendancy; the proclamation of Revelation 16:15 is directed to those living at the epoch of his return.

So the book has encouragement for believers of every age, and words of warning, exhortation and advice for every situation. Above all else, it directs attention to the time when "God shall wipe away all tears from eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

The Book, therefore, comprises Christ's personal message to "his servants" whom he treats as "his friends" (John 15:15). As his friends, let us heed the words he has directed for our learning and admonition, and particularly the powerful exhortation that is inserted in the prophecy of Chapter 16 for the benefit of believers of this Age.

A Blessing Or A Curse?

The Apocalypse pronounces a blessing upon those who come to understand its message accurately.

There are three main schools of interpretation of this book. They are: the *Immediate*, the *Futurist*, and the *Historist*.

The *Immediate* sees it all fulfilled prior to the destruction of the Jewish State by the Romans in A.D. 70. According to this interpretation, the seven kings of Revelation 17:10, are the seven emperors: Augustus, Tiberias, Gaius, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho. The number of the beast — 666 — is the total numerical value of Nero Caesar spelled in Hebrew letters, and so on.

The *Futurist* understand the major part of the book as referring to what is still future, that is, to the end-epoch of the present age, and onwards. The theory introduces a confused jumble of events unlike anything else in Scripture; so that Christ is pictured as returning to the earth to wage war, and then ascending to heaven again, to finally return to complete his labours. The saints go forth to fight, only to be slain, and their bodies to remain for three days in the street of the great city (Rev. 11), to be resurrected, and "ascend into heaven."

The *Historist*, taking Rev. 1:3, 19 as a guide, see the book as a prophetic programme covering the whole of history from apostolic days to the end of time. The Book thus becomes divinely pre-depicted history, from about A.D. 96 when John was persecuted in Patmos (Rev. 1:9) to the present time and beyond, depicting political and ecclesiastical events in cipher, figure or code. In this view, the book is unfolding itself throughout history, even

through the present age.

That is the interpretation set forth by Brother Thomas in *Eureka*, and the view upon which the present book is based. We fail to see how any other view can be acceptable in view of the statement of the Revelator!

Consider the statements of the book itself. John was told: "The time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3); "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (Rev. 1:19).

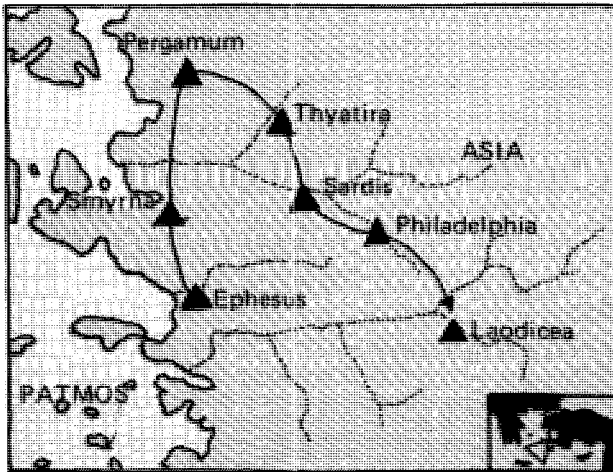
These statements surely indicate that the *Apocalypse* relates to things that then shortly would begin to come to pass, and would continue on until the Kingdom is established. How can the *Immediate* theory be sustained in view of such requirements as "God shall wipe away all tears, and there shall be no more death" (Rev. 21:4)? How can the *Futurist* view be sustained in view of the Revelator's explicit claim that the prophecies set down "must shortly come to pass?" We have read the theories advanced in support of this *Futurist* view, have given them consideration, but have been compelled to set them aside, not merely because we consider them an incorrect interpretation, but because that very form of interpretation would undermine basic doctrines of the Truth when taken to their logical conclusion. For example, a theory that demands that Christ returns twice; that the saints suddenly become belligerent and fight against the powers that be in a losing battle, to die, be raised and ascend to heaven, conflicts with basic teaching of the Gospel, and must be set aside.

We do not believe, therefore, that we can "agree to differ" regarding the interpretation of the *Apocalypse*. Whilst we can sympathise with brethren who may be hazy about its meaning, and therefore in need of instruction which they are prepared to receive, we believe that those who set out to destroy the line of interpretation set down in *Eureka* do a veritable disservice to the Truth; even though they do not intend this.

The matter is quite important. If a blessing is attached to those who "know accurately" the significance of the message; what are we to say of those who would set forth an interpretation that would distort its meaning? Obviously their theory conveys a curse; and as such should be opposed even though they might be quite sincere in their propagation of it. Certainly, we cannot remain indifferent to such expositions. When the basic doctrines of the Truth are challenged we are expected to defend them, and show the fallacy of the error advanced in their stead. In similar manner we should defend the truth concerning the interpretation of this book, particularly when the Lord Jesus himself has proclaimed a special blessing upon those who attain unto its true understanding.

THE APOCALYPSE EPITOMISED

With many Christadelphians, we believe that though *Eureka* is not inspired as the Scriptures are inspired, its author was divinely guided in the interpretation set forth. That does not mean that we necessarily endorse every detail of it; but it does mean that by and large, we accept it as the true meaning of the Revelation. Because of that *The Apocalypse Epitomised* is based upon its teaching. We are convinced that an unbiased examination of the evidence will demonstrate the soundness of what is therein set forth.



A messenger from John in exile in Patmos would have crossed to Ephesus and then taken a circular route. The seven ecclesias are listed in the order he would have visited them.

Analysis



It is valuable to study the books of the Bible by both telescopic and microscopic methods. The former considers the overall teaching of a book; the latter, its more minute exposition. The former provides an analysis and outline; the latter, the deeper meaning of words and phrases. We attempt here the first; whilst our verse by verse comments provide the second.

In the *Revelation* we have a series of sevens. There are seven messages to seven Ecclesias, seven seals that open the book, seven trumpets that sound, seven vials that are poured out.

But, in addition, there are sections that are unmarked in that fashion, such as chapters 10,11; and chapters 12,13,14. Visions depicting the Kingdom are interspersed in the most unexpected places. For example, why break the continuity of chapter 9:21 with chapter 11:15 by the vision of the Rainbowd Angel of chapter 10, and the Resurrected Witnesses of chapter 11? Are chapters 12,13,14, which stand on their own, susceptible to a sevenfold division?

These are problems that have faced all who have attempted a simple outline, or analysis of *Revelation*. For example, an outline of *The Construction of the Apocalypse* that I have before me as I write, sets the book out in seven divisions, but in order to do so, takes the chapters out of the sequence in which they are placed in Scripture. **Such a division is unsatisfactory.**

The *Apocalypse* does lend itself to a simple and significant analysis. First of all, it proclaims that the things to be uncovered, or revealed, comprise prophecy which, at the time spoken, would "shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1). In other words, it purports to set forth a revelation of prophecy from John's time to the end of time. Secondly, it conveniently divides itself into three sections (Ch. 1:19) thus:

"The things which thou hast seen;"
"The things which are;"
"The things which shall be hereafter."

The first relates to the initial vision seen by John in Patmos; the second, to the messages dictated to the existing Ecclesias of Asia; the third, to the prophetic visions which commence with chapter 4. Hence in its first introductory verse, John is told that he will be shown "things which must be hereafter."

In view of this, we set out now, a straightforward outline of the whole book divided into these three main headings.

THE APOCALYPSE EPITOMISED

or

THE UNVEILING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

KEY PASSAGE: Rev. 1:1

Scope & Plan of the Prophecy: Rev. 1:19

Era of Commencement: Rev. 1:3

(1)—JESUS CHRIST AND THE REDEEMED (As The Alpha and Omega)

"The things which thou hast seen" (Ch. 1)

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Prologue | 1-3 |
| 2. Salutation | 4-8 |
| 3. Introduction | 9 |
| 4. The Initial Vision: The Multitudinous Christ | 10-20 |

(2)—JESUS CHRIST AND THE ECCLESIA (As Head of the Body)

"The things which are" (Chps. 2,3)

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. <i>Ephesus</i> : The Hard Ecclesia | 2: 1-7 |
| 2. <i>Smyrna</i> : The Persecuted Ecclesia | 8-11 |
| 3. <i>Pergamos</i> : The Embattled Ecclesia | 12-17 |
| 4. <i>Thyatira</i> : The Compromising Ecclesia | 18-29 |
| 5. <i>Sardis</i> : The Dead Ecclesia | 3: 1-6 |
| 6. <i>Philadelphia</i> : The Beloved Ecclesia | 7-13 |
| 7. <i>Laodicea</i> : The Complacent Ecclesia | 14-22 |

(3)—JESUS CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM (As The Triumphant One)

"The things which shall be hereafter" (chps. 4-22)

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Introduction (Chapters 4, 5). | |
| (a) The Throne in heaven | Ch. 4 |
| (b) The Sealed Scroll & Prevailing Lamb | Ch. 5 |
| 2. The Seven Seals (Chapters 6, 7). | |
| (a) First Seal: A white horse | 6: 1-2 |
| (b) Second Seal: A red horse | 3-4 |
| (c) Third Seal: A black horse | 5-6 |
| (d) Fourth Seal: A pale horse | 7-8 |
| (e) Fifth Seal: Souls under altar | 9-11 |
| (f) Sixth Seal: Great Earthquake | 12-17 |
| (g) Sealing the Servants of God | 7: 1-8 |
| (h) The Rejoicing Redeemed | 9-17 |
| 3. The Seven Angelic Trumpeters (Chapters 8-11). | |
| (a) Seventh Seal: Angels Prepare to Sound | 8: 1-6 |
| (b) First Angel: Fiery Storm on Earth | 7 |
| (c) Second Angel: Burning Mountain in Sea | 8-9 |
| (d) Third Angel: Burning Star on Rivers etc. | 10-11 |
| (e) Fourth Angel: Heavenly Bodies Smitten | 12-13 |
| (f) Fifth Angel: Locusts Out of Bottomless Pit | 9: 1-12 |
| (g) Sixth Angel: Loosing angels of the Euphrates | 13-21 |
| (h) The Seven Sealed Thuncers of Rainbow Angel | 10: 1-11 |
| (i) Death and Resurrection of the Witnesses | 11: 1-13 |
| (j) Seventh Angel: Kingdom Ceded to Christ | 14-19 |
| 4. The Development And Destruction Of The Beast, His Image And Organisation (Chapters 12-14). | |
| (a) Birth of the Man-child | 12: 1-6 |
| (b) War in Heaven | 7-12 |
| (c) Persecution of the Woman and Her Seed | 13-17 |
| (d) Development of the Beast of the Sea | 13: 1-10 |

(e)	Development of the Beast of the Earth & Image ..	11-18
(f)	The Lamb on Mount Zion	14: 1-5
(g)	Mid-heaven Angelic Proclamation	6-12
(h)	Reaping the Harvest and Vintage	13-20
5.	The Seven Vials of Divine Wrath (Chapters 15-16).	
(a)	The Rejoicing Redeemed	15: 1-4
(b)	The Temple Opened in Heaven	5-8
(c)	First Vial - Upon the Earth	16: 1-2
(d)	Second Vial - Upon the Sea	3
(e)	Third Vial - Upon Rivers, etc.	4-7
(f)	Fourth Vial - Upon the Sun	8-9
(g)	Fifth Vial - Upon the Throne of the Beast	10-11
(h)	Sixth Vial - Upon the Euphrates	12-16
(i)	Seventh Vial - Armageddon etc.	17-21
6.	The Judgment Of The Great Whore And Triumph Of The Lamb (Chapters 17-20).	
(a)	Babylon the Great Destroyed:	
	The System Described	17: 1-18
	The System Destroyed	18: 1-24
(b)	The Marriage of the Lamb:	
	The Marriage Come	19: 1-8
	The Marriage Celebrated	9-10
(c)	Final Conquests Of The Lamb:	
	The Beast Conquered	19:11-21
	Satan Bound	20: 1-6
	Satan Destroyed	7-15
7.	The New Heavens And New Earth (Chapters 21-22).	
(a)	The Character & Constitution of the New Jerusalem.	21: 1-8
(b)	The Relationship of Jerusalem to the Lamb	9-11
(c)	Its Wall	12-18
(d)	Its Foundations	19-20
(e)	Its Gates	21
(f)	Its Glory	22-27
(g)	Its River of Life	22: 1-6
(h)	Epilogue:	
	Final Admonition and Appeal	7-21

The above Analysis divides the book into three main sections. In turn, the third section, or that recording "the things which shall be hereafter," is divided into seven divisions appropriate to its internal construction.

What The Apocalypse Is All About

Accepting the basic interpretation of the *Apocalypse* as expounded in *Eureka*, the *Book of Revelation*, is divisible into ten sections, so designed as to suggest a parallelism of ideas similar to that found in introverted Hebrew poetry. Hebrew poetry represents a parallelism of ideas rather than of rhyme or rhythm. One idea builds upon another until the completed thought, or picture, is revealed. In introverted Hebrew poetry, which is frequently found in Scripture, the first line is answered by the last, the next by the second to last, and so on. An example, set out in the following form is found in Psalm 135:15-18:

*The idols of the heathen are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.
They have mouths but they speak not;
They have eyes but they see not;
They have ears but they hear not;
neither is there any breath in their mouths;
They who make them are like unto them;
So are all they who put their trust in them.*

Couple the first and the last lines together, and the thought of the former is found completed in the latter:

*The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, (inanimate),
So are all they who have put their trust in them.*

The general structure of the *Apocalypse* as a whole, seems to be in the form of a long, dramatic, introverted Hebrew poem, presenting a parallelism of development, in which the first harmonises with the last, and so on. Accepting the interpretation of *Eureka*, the whole message can be set out in the following form:

- (1) – Introduction: Warning and Appeal (Ch. 1:1-8).
- (2) – The Multitudinous Son of Man (Ch. 1:9-20).
- (3) – The messages to the Ecclesias (Chs. 2, 3).
- (4) – The heavenly worship & sealed book (Chs. 4, 5).
- (5) – The “Christianising” of Rome (Seals—Chs. 6, 7).
- (6) – The overthrow of the Roman Empire (Chs. 8, 9).
- (7) – The development of latter-day Communism (Ch. 10, 11).
- (7) – The development of the Holy Roman Empire (beasts etc. Chs. 12, 13).
- (6) – The destruction of Babylon the Great (Ch. 14)
- (5) – Divine judgment on the Holy Roman Empire (Vials—Chs. 15, 16).
- (4) – The overthrow of false worship (Babylon etc.—Chs. 17, 18, 19).
- (3) – The conquest of sin and death (Ch. 20).
- (2) – The Bride as the New Jerusalem (Chs. 21, 22:6).
- (1) – Epilogue: Warning and Appeal (Ch. 22:7-21).

In this introverted breakdown of the *Apocalypse*, the message is set forth symmetrically, the first line matching the last; and second to first matching the second to last, and so on.

Thus the vision of the multitudinous Son of man (2), is matched with the Bride as the New Jerusalem (2); the section recording the messages to the Ecclesias (3), is linked with the conquest of sin and death (3). Each are closely related, as a little thought will reveal, the latter sections complementing and completing the former sections.

It will be seen, also, that the *Apocalypse* presents an orderly progression of one thought to the next, and not a haphazard and

unsystemised throwing of visions together, as might be imagined. This can be summarised thus:

Section 1 – Chapters 1–5

- a. Christ in the midst of the Ecclesias (Ch. 1).
- b. Christ's messages to the Ecclesias (Chs. 2,3).
- c. Christ's purpose with the Ecclesias (Chs. 4,5).

Section 2 – Chapters 6–11

1. The "Christianising" of the Roman Empire (Chs 6,7).
2. The break-up of the Roman Empire (Chs 8,9).
3. The protest against tyranny leading to the development of Communism (Ch. 11).

This section, which brings us to half of the Apocalypse, depicts events that took place in the Roman Empire, providing a basis for further developments leading to the end. The Empire was first "Christianised," then broken up into independent nations answering to the toes of the Image of Daniel 2, but held together by the Holy Roman Empire which replaced Pagan Rome. Co-etaneous with that system, there were manifested protesting communities, both religious and political (the two witnesses of Revelation 11), the political section of which rose to power in the French Revolution, and developed modern Communism. Today, the influence of such is manifested in every form of government upon earth, and is playing an important part in the development of the crisis of the last days. It has "ascended into heaven" (political authority – Rev. 11:13), and the "remnant are affrighted."

Section 3 – Chapters 12–19

- a. The development and destruction of the Holy Roman Empire (Chs 12, 13, 14).
- b. The Divine judgment on the latter day political system (Chs 15, 16).
- c. Divine judgment on the latter day religious system (Chs 17, 18, 19).

Section 4 – Chapters 20–22

- a. Conquest of sin and death (Ch. 20).
- b. The Manifestation of the Bride (Ch. 21).
- c. The final appeal of Christ to the Ecclesias (Ch. 22).

The second half of the Apocalypse follows the first half in orderly fashion. The Holy Roman Empire replaced the former Empire, and will be destroyed. The "two witnesses" developed into political power (Ch. 16), and though used to punish "the beast," likewise will be destroyed. The final chapters also follow in proper sequence.

An Extension Of Daniel's Visions

It is clearly obvious, that if the interpretation of *Eureka* is accepted, the *Book of Revelation* is an amplification of that section of Daniel's prophecy which the prophet failed to comprehend.

When he was given the vision of the four beasts (Dan. 7),

with its emphasis upon the fourth beast, Daniel confessed himself as being confused: "As for me, Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me; but I kept the matter in my heart" (Dan. 7:28).

Again, in chapter 8, in a prophecy relating to the "little horn of the east," or Rome's conquest of the holy land and people, and its subsequent destruction at the hand of "the Prince of princes" (vv. 11,25), Daniel stated that "none understood" the vision. Again, in chapter 12, he declared: "I heard, but I understood not" (v. 8).

He was not given an interpretation of these visions, but told that the words "were sealed until the end."

The *Book of Revelation* was given at "the time of the end" (Heb. 1:1; 9:26), and comprises the additional matter there promised. The key to *Revelation*, therefore, must be sought in the prophecy of Daniel. The outline suggested above, shows that the entire *Apocalypse* is an amplification of the fourth beast and the multitudinous man (Daniel chapters 7-12); or the development and decline of Rome both politically and ecclesiastically, and of the work of the saints in relation thereto.

All of which helps to give added point to the system of interpretation set forth in *Eureka* as being the true one, showing that the promised blessing (Rev. 1:3) is bound up in such a comprehension of the book.

Division Into Sevens

The poetical symmetry of *The Apocalypse* will be appreciated even more clearly if careful heed is taken to the general divisions of the book, and particularly its use of seven.

Chapters 1-11 comprise roughly the first half of the book. However, it seems, at first, as though John has abandoned the use of seven, for the section from chapter 12-14 is not so numbered, though the seven-fold division appears again in chapters 15,16 with the vials.

But, in fact, there is a seven-fold division clearly set forth in chapters 12-14, prefaced by the words *there appeared* or *I saw*. Thus:

- (1)—"There appeared a great sign in heaven: a woman . . ." (Rev. 12:1-2).
- (2)—"There appeared another sign in heaven: a red dragon . . ." (Rev. 12:3).
- (3)—"I saw a beast rise up out of the sea" (Rev. 13:1).
- (4)—"I saw another beast coming up out of the earth" (Rev. 13:11).
- (5)—"I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on mount Sion" (Rev. 14:1).
- (6)—"I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven" (Rev. 14:6).
- (7)—"I looked, and behold a white cloud, and on the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man" (Rev. 14:14).

It will be seen that each of these beginnings, prefaced by the words above, has an appropriate conclusion that rounds off that particular portion of the vision. See Rev. 12:2; 12:17; 13:9-10; 13:18; 14:4-5; 14:12-13; 14:20.

Now observe the symmetry of the whole book:

THE APOCALYPSE

Introduction:

Chapter 1:1-9: Foreword.

Chapter 1:10-20: The Multitudinous Son Of Man Amid The Lampstands.

Chapters 2,3: The Letters To The Seven Ecclesias.

Chapters 4,5: The Throne Set In Heaven And Its Worship.

First Half

Chapters 6-11

Chps 6-8:1-The Seven Seals

Including:

- (1)-Israel remnant sealed
- (2)-The rejoicing redeemed (ch.7).

Chps 8-9-The Seven Trumpets

- (1)-On the earth
- (2)-On the sea.
- (3)-On the rivers.
- (4)-Sun etc.
- (5)-Darkness, scourge.
- (6)-Euphrates: army.

Parenthetical (Chapters 10-11)

- Rainbowed angel proclamation;
- Death & resurrection of Witnesses
- (7)-Christ takes kingdoms

Second Half

Chapters 12-19

Chps 12-14-The Seven-fold Vision

Including:

- (1)-Israel sealed in forehead
- (2)-Blessedness of saints (Ch. 14).

Chps 15,16-The Seven Vials

- (1)-On the earth.
- (2)-On the sea.
- (3)-On the rivers.
- (4)-Sun
- (5)-Darkness, scourge.
- (6)-Euphrates: kings.

Parenthetical:

- Frog-like spirits stir to war;
- Christ's proclamation.
- (7)-Armageddon & its aftermath.

Completion:

Chapters 17-19:10: Judgment On The Whore.

Chapters 19:11 - 21:1: Conquest Of Sin And Death.

Chapters 21:2 - 22:6: The Lamb's Bride As The New Jerusalem.

Epilogue: Final Warning And Appeal

Notice how these last sections are appropriately rounded off: "These are the true sayings of God" (Ch. 19:9); "the former heaven and earth were passed away" (Ch. 21:1); "These sayings are faithful and true" (Ch. 22:6).

The Plan Of The Apocalypse

In addition to the divisions suggested above, the book of *Revelation* can also be divided into seven portions, comprising the following general matters:

- (1)- The Introduction (Ch. 1).
- (2)-Messages to the Ecclesias (Chps 2, 3).
- (3)-Preparatory vision: the Lamb's power and authority (Chps 4, 5).
- (4)-The relation of the Ecclesia to the external world, embracing the political and secular aspects of things as bearing on the Ecclesia (Chps 6-11).
- (5)-The relation of the Ecclesia to the external world, embracing the rise

and destiny of the Catholic Antichrist; its overthrow and the ultimate triumphant establishment of the Kingdom of Christ in glory (Chps. 12–20).

- (6)–The final condition of the righteous in their state of triumph and glory, as the New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb (Chos 21–22:5).
(7)–The Epilogue (Ch. 22:6–21).

When Was It Written?

As to when the *Apocalypse* was written would be of relative unimportance, apart from the claim of some that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70, and that its visions and prophecies were fulfilled in that event.

The early Christian “fathers” are almost unanimous that the Apocalypse was written in the closing years of John, and towards the end of the reign of Domitian; that is, about A.D. 95 or 96.

The principal testimony to this fact is that of Irenaeus. He was a disciple of Polycarp, overseer of Smyrna, who was himself the disciple of the apostle John. He had, therefore, every opportunity of obtaining correct information, and doubtless expresses the common sentiment of his age on the subject. His testimony is plain and positive that the book was written near the close of the reign of Domitian, and the testimony should be regarded as decisive unless it can be set aside. He wrote: “The Apocalypse was seen not long ago, but almost in our generation, near the end of Domitian’s reign.”

This evidence is accepted by Brother Thomas who writes in *Eureka* vol. 1:

“Irenaeus, who flourished ecclesiastically A.D. 169, i.e. about 70 years after the death of the Apostle John, is said to have introduced an opinion that the Apocalypse was written in the reign of the Emperor Domitian, brother to Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem, and who occupied the throne of the Caesars from A.D. 80–96, when he was assassinated.”

The internal evidence shows that it was written from Patmos during a period of persecution (Rev. 1:9). It is known that there was a persecution of the Christians in the time of Domitian. Concerning Domitian, Mosheim writes:

“He was an emperor little inferior to Nero in baseness of character and conduct. His persecution undoubtedly was severe; but it was of short duration, as the emperor was soon murdered.”

It commenced about A.D. 93 or 94, and continued until the death of the Emperor. Sometime during those years, the *Apocalypse* was written.

SECTION ONE

“The Things Thou Hast Seen”

Comprising

JESUS CHRIST & THE REDEEMED

As the Alpha and Omega

Chapter 1



The Apocalypse is divided into three main sections recording things that John was instructed to write. He was told to record (1) "the things which thou hast seen," (2) "the things which are," and (3) "the things which shall be hereafter" (Rev. 1:19).

The first section comprises the initial vision recorded in the first chapter. It includes the vision of the Son of Man in the midst of the Lampstands, and therefore displays the Lord Jesus Christ as the Alpha and Omega of the multitudinous body of the redeemed.

In this section, John supplies the title of the book, presents salutations from heaven and from himself, gives an introduction to the writing of the book in which he describes his state as banished to Patmos because of his testimony to the truth, and concludes with an account of the initial vision.

The vision concerns one like unto the Son of Man, displayed as a man of many parts. It obviously symbolises the multitudinous Christ, of whom the Lord himself is the Alpha and Omega. There is a clear link with a similar vision seen by Daniel, the significance of which he claims to have understood (Dan. 10:1). Thus the Revelation commences with a theme which would have directed John's attention to the prophecies of Daniel, some of which had been sealed up awaiting a promised revelation.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MULTITUDINOUS MAN AMID THE LAMPSTANDS

This chapter gives the title of the book, an announcement of the purpose of the Revelation, a salutation to the seven Ecclesias, and, finally, a description of the initial vision.

1. Prologue – Vv. 1-3

The prologue sets forth the title of the book, describes how its contents were revealed unto John, and provides a general scope of its message.

VERSE 1

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ” – This is the true title; that which stands at the head of the book in the Authorised Version is a spurious one. The Apostles never used the titles *saint* and *divine* to discriminate one from another. These are mere appellations introduced by the Apostasy, and should not be used as a title for an individual. The term *saint* is only used collectively in Scripture. All are “saints” who have made a covenant with God (cf. Psalm 50:5; Heb. 10:22; 1 Cor. 1:2; Col. 1:2). Their “sainthood” consists of their call to separateness through an understanding and acceptance of the Truth (Ps. 50:16; Dan. 12:10; Rom. 6:17-18). The word “saints” signifies *separated ones*, and denotes those who are separated from their contemporaries for divine use. It does not denote the moral condition of the ones so described, but merely the special relationship in which they stand as being separated for the purpose of God. The term is not used exclusively for those who have the Truth. The Medes who overthrew Babylon are styled Yahweh’s “sanctified ones” (i.e. saints) because He had separated them for that use (Isa. 13:3). In the N.T., the appellation is applied to brethren generally, not individually. Peter did not write of “St. Paul” but of “our beloved brother Paul” (2 Pet. 3:15). It is never used to single out individuals above their fellows, as is the custom of Rome.

“The Divine” – This title at the head of the book is incorrectly applied to John as though he had graduated in a theologi-

cal college. The Apostle would have repudiated such a title (cp. Matt. 23: 8-11). All true saints are “in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2), and, therefore, are in expectation of “divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4), when the Divine Name will be named upon them (Rev. 3:12). All who attain unto that glorious state will bear the title of *Divine* – but not in the sense that the world uses it today, or as the A.V. title of The Revelation applies it to John.

“The Revelation” – This word is derived from the Greek *Apokalupsis*, meaning to *uncover, unveil, to bring to light that which was hidden*. Thus *The Apocalypse* (as *The Book of Revelation*) is often called, though there is no definite article in the Greek) is a “disclosure” of things previously hidden. Many call it *The Apocalypse* to distinguish it from other parts of the Revelation of Yahweh. Brother Roberts wrote: “To speak of it as ‘Revelation’ is to clash with the fact that there is much other revelation besides, and that *The Apocalypse* is only a part of Revelation. To speak of it as *Apocalypse* is to identify a particular part of revelation” (*Thirteen Lectures On The Apocalypse*). The word is rendered to *lighten* in Luke 2:32, where it expresses the unveiling of something hidden, which gives light and knowledge to those who behold it. Elsewhere, it is rendered *revelation* (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:3; Gal. 1:12; 2:2). The word is used particularly in relation to a special epoch: the manifestation of glory at the coming of the Lord (See Rom. 2:5; 8:19; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:7,13; 1 Cor. 1:7).

“Of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him” – This teaches that Christ was dependent upon God for the knowledge that he passed on to “his servants,” and proves conclusively that he is not co-equal with the Father. Previously

certain knowledge was hidden from the Lord (see Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7), but having "prevailed," and having been raised from the dead to life eternal, and elevated to the right hand of God, the full revelation of the Father's purpose was given unto him (see Rev. 5:5). In turn, he passed this knowledge on to his servants over whom he has the pre-eminence (Col. 1:18).

"To show unto his servants" — These "servants" are the "saints," the "wise who understand" (Ps. 50:5; Dan. 12:10). They are those who reveal a keen interest in the things of God, so that they are found lamenting a lack of knowledge (Rev. 5:4). The constant prayer of such is for a greater understanding of the Divine purpose (Rev. 6:9-10). To such *The Apocalypse* is given. Therefore, a basic understanding of the true Gospel is essential to the comprehension of it. It is not designed for general study, so that unless a person understands the truth concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, he will fail to grasp the significance and teaching of the Apocalypse. That accounts for the general ignorance of its teaching, and the failure of many to unlock its mysteries. They do not possess the "key" to its understanding, and so the door of knowledge remains closed to them.

The word "servants" is *doulos*, or bond-servants, in Greek. The word signifies *one who submerges his will in that of another*. A "servant of Jesus Christ" is one who gives himself to doing the will of his master. Paul was one such. Though he was a freeborn Roman citizen, he gloried rather in his servitude to Christ (Rom. 1:1). He taught that normal slaves become "free men" in Christ, whereas free men submit to servitude in him (1 Cor. 7:21-23).

It was not the custom of masters to reveal their intentions to their bond-servants or slaves, for they considered themselves to be above such. But Christ acts differently. He elevates his bond-servants to the status of friends by revealing unto them his future purposes (See John 15:15). If we would enjoy the privilege of his friendship, we should seek to study and understand his revelation.

"Things which must shortly come to pass" — This is an important statement, clearly revealing the scope of the book,

and providing a key to its interpretation. It shows that the correct interpretation is the *Historic* one which treats the *Apocalypse* as a prophetic plan of unfolding history, the fulfilment of which was about to commence, to come to pass, shortly after it was given to the Apostle John. The visions and revelations thus cover history from the day of the Apostle to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"He sent and signified it" — Brother Thomas translates: "He indicated them by sign." Brother R. Roberts writes:

"It was not sent in plain form, but in an enigmatical or sign form. To 'signify' is to represent by sign or symbol. That this is what is meant by the use of the verb 'signify' in this case is shown conclusively by what John saw and heard. He saw certain things which he describes, and concerning these he is repeatedly informed that the mystery or meaning of what he saw was this and that" *Thirteen Lectures*.

The same method of imparting knowledge was delivered to the prophets — Hos. 12:10.

"By his angel" — Christ exercises authority over the angels of heaven to effect the purpose of God on earth (1 Pet. 3:22). Though several angels are used to reveal the revelation unto John, it is evident that one, specific messenger acted as presiding angel throughout (cp. Rev. 19:9-10). Compare the mediating angel in the visions of Daniel and Zechariah (Dan. 8:15-16; 9:21; 10:10; Zech. 1:9).

"Unto his servant John" — A "servant" designates the prophetic office (cp. Isa. 49:5; Amos 3:7; Rev. 19:10; 22:9). As the Lord implied that he would (John 21:22-23), John outlived the other Apostles to witness the "coming" of the Lord in judgment upon guilty Judea in A.D.70 (James 5:7-11), and, also, to receive *The Apocalypse* which outlines developments subsequent to that time, that would concern the Ecclesias, and express the divine purpose leading to the consummation. The Apocalypse is concerned particularly with the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24; Rom. 11:25).

VERSE 2

"The word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ" — "Word" relates to the express declaration or teaching of Yah-

weh, "testimony" (*marturion* in Greek), signifies "witness," and relates to personal witnessing. The word of God is shown to be true by the personal witness of the Lord Jesus. Having risen from the dead, he is the guarantee, witness or testimony of the truth of all things proclaimed in his name (Rom. 1:4).

"And of all things that he saw" — John "heard" the "word of God," and was caused to "see" certain visions which he reported for the benefit of his readers.

VERSE 3

"Blessed is he that readeth"

Here is a grand incentive to study. The book closes with a similar benediction (Rev. 22:7). So anxious was John to experience this blessing, that he wept when he found that the Apocalypse was a sealed book (Rev. 5:4), but he was caused to rejoice at the opening of the seals and the resultant revelation. A similar desire to learn the wisdom of Yahweh should characterise all the saints of God. An increasing knowledge of the Truth is a constant need (cp. Col. 1:10; Acts 20:32) because it is the means designated of God for the sanctification of His saints (John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13). God has promised to help us grow in knowledge if we ask Him aright (see James 1:5; Psalm 25:9).

Dr. Thomas writes: "The word *anaginosko* does not merely mean 'to read' but signifies one who gathers exact knowledge of a matter, hence, in my translation I have rendered it 'he that knows accurately.'"

"They that hear" — In *Eureka*, Bro. Thomas states that the word in the Greek implies not merely hearing, but giving heed to what is heard. Mere "reading" is not sufficient for the blessing; it requires a gathering of exact knowledge. We must exercise the greatest care to ascertain the true meaning of this wonderful book—then the blessing will be ours. To do this takes time and effort, but a blessing awaits those who thus labour in faith.

The use of pronouns both singular and plural in this place is significant. "He that readeth" is contrasted with "they that hear." The former, who come to understand thoroughly, is obligated to expound it to those who will hearken to his interpretation. This implies a heavy responsibility upon those who would be teachers, that they comprehend

the message aright (cp. James 3:1). They will receive no blessing, nor will they confer a blessing, who misinterpret this important message.

"And keep" — First, read; then study; finally, keep! This should be the object of Bible study. Note the example of Ezra (Ezra 7:10). The study of the Apocalypse will enable us to view life from the standpoint of God. It will reveal to us the true nature of the political and religious environment, and the significance of the times in which we live. Thus, it will underline for us the importance of both studying the things of God, and giving practical application to them by keeping His commandments.

Dr. Thomas renders: "to observe narrowly the things written."

"The time is at hand" — The time was at hand, in the days of John, when the beginning of the prophecies contained in this book were to commence their fulfilment.

2. The Salutation — Vv. 4-8

The Apocalypse is sent specifically to the seven ecclesias of Asia through John the amanuensis of the Father and the Son, whose relationship to the saints, and future purpose therewith, are expressed.

VERSE 4

"John" — His name signifies *Yahweh is Gracious*, and this fact is clearly shown in the *Apocalypse* so graciously revealed for the benefit of the servants of God.

"Seven" — The number of completeness. God finished the work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh — thus the idea of completion. The complete, or entire, Ecclesia is here referred to in seven states of its existence throughout the ages. In Hebrew, the word *sheba* signifies both "seven" or "oath." An "oath" completes a contract, thus the spiritual significance of the number seven.

"Churches" — The word church is a corruption of the Greek *Kuriake* — *pertaining to a lord*. From this word is derived the Scottish word *kirke*. The modern usage of church makes it quite unfit for its presence in this verse. The Greek word *ekklesias* never signifies the *place* where Christians meet, or a building

consecrated to the worship of God." (see *Eureka*). The writer suggests that the Anglicised form of the original Greek: *Ecclesia*, is far to be preferred to the word "church." It is compounded of two Greek words: *ek* meaning *out of*, and *klesis* signifying *a call or invitation*. Thus an *Ecclesia* is an assembly of people who have obeyed the "invitation" or call, to "come out" from among the Gentiles (see 1 Thess. 2:12; Acts 15:14; Gal. 3:26-29; Acts 20:28). The *servants* of Rev. 1:1 constitute the *ecclesia* of v. 4. Thus the Revelation was not written for "the churches" as commonly understood, but for those *called out* of such. The first portion of the word "ecclesia" (i.e., *ek - out of*) - is found in such passages as Rev. 5:9-10; Acts 15:14; 2 Cor. 6:17; translated *out of*. *Klesis* is found in Rom. 11:29; 1 Cor. 1:26; Eph. 4:1; Eph. 1:18, etc., and is rendered *calling*, etc. As an adjective *kletos* is found in Matt. 20:16; 22:14; Rom. 1:1,6,7. 1 Co.: 1:2. Invariably the idea of a call or invitation is associated with this word. One Greek scholar has defined the word "ecclesia" as "An assembly called forth by the herald." Wherever the word "church" appears in the Authorised Version (with the exception of Acts 19:37 - where the word signifies "temples" in the Greek), the word in the original is *ecclesia*.

"Grace be unto you" - Grace is divine favour. The word *charis* signifies *that which occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favourable regard*. The word calls to mind the great favours that Yahweh has made available to His servants, and of which Christ is the vehicle (John 1:14,16,17). He, himself, experienced the grace of God (Luke 2:52), and it now defines the sphere in which God's servants stand (Rom. 5:2), and the place from whence they can fall (Gal. 5:4). Grace has many facets. It can be seen in the virility of an *Ecclesia* (Acts 11:23; 13:43); in divine help to bring a mission to a successful completion (Acts 15:40); in divine strength to overcome the weakness of the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7-10); in divine forgiveness of shortcomings (Rom. 3:24; Tit. 3:7). Grace is set in contrast to debt (Rom. 4:4,16), justification by works (Rom. 11:6), or the exactions of law (John 1:17). As Yahweh's servants cannot fulfil the requirements of the Law, they can be justified only through grace, or Divine favour in overlooking their

shortcomings. Therefore, as grace is something not fully merited, they should exercise graciousness towards each other (Gal. 6:1-4; Eph. 4:31-32), manifesting grace, or kindly favour towards others. We live in a dispensation of grace (Eph. 1:2; 3:7-8) which reveals the rich privileges God has opened up to us (Eph. 1:7), and which lead on to glory (Eph. 1:6; 2:7). God's servants can "grow in grace" or Divine favour, by rendering back to Him that which He desires of them. Paul makes the point that to each one there is given "a measure of grace" (Eph. 4:7). This means, that each one has been granted sufficient favour of God to reveal the qualities that He desires to see in each, but, at the same time, some have a greater measure of it than others.

"Peace" - This interesting word is found in every book of the N.T. except 1 John. The Greek word is *eirene*, and it is from a root signifying *to be at one*. Thus it does not express merely the cessation of war or antagonism, but the unity or binding together of two or more parties as one. In this, it is similar to the Hebrew *shalom*, which likewise basically signifies oneness or wholeness. This peace of true fellowship was promised the apostles by the Lord (John 14:27; 16:33), and is available to us (Eph. 2:14-17; Col. 1:20; 3:15). The Gospel is defined as "preaching peace" (Acts 10:36; Rom. 10:15), as "the way of peace" (Rom. 5:1) through Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:14-17).

Peace, therefore, comes through seeking the grace or favour of God. One of the Divine titles of the N.T. is *the God of peace* (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20; 1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Cor. 13:11). It reveals that He will give peace by forgiving sins, strengthening His servants to overcome, and uniting them with Him in "fellowship." In the verse before us, the privileges of grace and peace are said to flow from Yahweh through the channel of His Son.

"Him which is, and which was, and which is to come" - The reference is to Yahweh in manifestation. He is manifested now in the Lord Jesus; He was proclaimed to Moses at the bush (Exod. 3:14); and He is *to come* in that His glory will be revealed in the multitudinous company of the redeemed (2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 3:12; Rom. 5:2). In the Revelation, Yahweh is set before His servants in the several phases of manifestation in which He has and will reveal Himself: firstly,

in the Word; secondly, in the Lord; thirdly, in the Redeemed. Through Isaiah, He declared: "I am the first and with the last" (Isa. 41:4). In this statement, *first* is in the singular number, and *last* is in the plural. "The first one" relates to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the manifestation of the Father; the "last ones" relate to the brethren of Christ in whom he will be glorified (2 Thess. 1:10). The name, Yahweh, signifies *He Who will be*, and proclaims the intention of God to reveal Himself in a family of His choice. The Ecclesia, therefore, comprises a company of people who have been "taken out of the Gentiles" for "His name" (Acts 15:14).

"From the seven spirits" – There is but one spirit (Eph. 4:4), but it is manifested in various ways, and, in the days of the Apostles, through many individuals (1 Cor. 12:8). Thus, to express the principle of "one spirit" in multitudinous manifestation, the term *seven spirits* is used, because the number *seven* in symbolism represents completeness, or unity in diversity. The term, therefore, defines the "one spirit" in its complete, multitudinous manifestation. Yahweh has revealed Himself to man through His spirit, for His spirit is His power by which He does all things. Thus "grace and peace" from Yahweh can only be received through His spirit, for it is the channel of all that He does. But what constitutes His spirit today? The answer of Scripture is, the Truth (see John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1 John 5:6). It is the channel of sanctification (John 17:17), and the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). A person's character is purified by "obeying the truth" (1 Pet. 1:22) or the spirit-word (John 6:63; Gal. 5:16-17), which is likened to incorruptible seed leading to eternal life (1 Pet. 1:23).

In the verse before us, however, the "seven spirits" are represented as servants waiting "before the throne" of Yahweh, to perform His bidding. He uses His spirit, in all its multitudinous manifestation, as we do electricity. It becomes our servant enabling us to speak to others in distant parts, or to perform work by remote control. Yahweh does likewise through His spirit. It was through the spirit that the Apocalypse was given to John in Patmos (cp. Rev. 2:7 etc). Significantly, seven angels were repeatedly used for that purpose, and Hebrews 1:7 describes the angels as "spirits". The

seven angel-spirits of the Apocalypse were representative of the whole united host of heaven.

"Which are before His throne" – In the Greek, the verb is in the singular, though the noun is in the plural, which is contrary to the normal rules of grammar. This is a Hebraism which is sometimes used in the Old Testament, when one motivating power energises a community. Thus the plural noun *Elohim* is often used with a verb in the singular, teaching that though a multitude of angels might be at work, the one unifying power that operated through them was that of Yahweh. A similar principle seems to be expressed here. Brother Thomas comments: "*Seven* is the symbol of unity and perfection. Hence, being representative of the one spirit, the substantive verb is expressed in the third person *singular*, and not in the plural, as the grammar of the sentence requires. 'The Seven spirits *which is*' not '*which are* before the throne'. There is but one spirit there, and this one is the nominative to the verb '*is*.' "

VERSE 5

"And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness" – The name of the Lord signifies that salvation has come through the anointing (see Psalm 80:17). He is the "faithful witness," for all that men need to know of the Father is revealed in the Son (John 14:9). His resurrection is the guarantee that Yahweh will fulfil His purpose (Acts 17:31), demonstrating that we can place complete trust in the promises of the Word (2 Cor. 1:19-20).

"The first begotten of the dead" – He is the firstborn from the dead, though not the first to be raised therefrom (cp. 1 Cor. 15:23). Unlike other resurrections, his witnessed to the fact that he is, in truth, the Son of God (Rom. 1:4).

"The prince of the kings of the earth" – This proclaims his status as King of kings and Lord of lords to be manifested on earth at his coming (Rev. 17:14). He will then reign in company with the glorified elect (Rev. 5:9-10; 20:4). The drama of the Divine purpose is that the one crucified as a criminal will become chief of the glorified rulers of the age to come. To the amazement of flesh, the prince that it put to death 1900 years ago (Dan. 8:11), will be manifested in power as the Prince of princes, to discipline and subdue it (Dan. 8:25). In the light of that

drama, notice the development in Christ expressed in this verse: from witness, to resurrection, to exaltation to power.

“That loved us” – The Greek is in the continuous tense: “who loves us” (Diaglott). Christ not only died for us, but continues to act as our representative before the throne of grace (1 John 2:1-2), that he might “prepare a place” for us (John 14:1-2). Both Father and Son are deeply interested in our eternal salvation, and will do their part to secure it (Rom. 8:34-39). The question remains: will we do our part?

“Washed us from our sins in his own blood” – Cp. Rev. 7:14; Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:22; See 1 John 1:7.

VERSE 6

“And hath made us kings and priests:” – The phrase can be rendered (see *Diaglott*) “a kingdom of priests.” This is a citation from Exodus 19:6, and comprised the promise made unto Israel. The Ecclesia is elevated to the position once occupied by Israel in the wilderness, and is described as “the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:11-14). The promise made to Israel in the wilderness is now made to saints in the Gentile wilderness of life (1 Pet. 2:5-10).

“To him be glory and dominion” – This is a prayer for the coming of the Kingdom. See Phil. 2:9-11; Psalm 2:7-12.

“For ever and ever” – This is literally “for the ages of the ages,” and as such does not define eternity, but the millennial age of one thousand years that is made up of shorter epochs of time. Christ’s dominion over flesh will last one thousand years (Rev. 20:6), after which he will deliver a perfected Kingdom up to the Father that He might be all and in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28). At that time, sin and death will have been completely eliminated from the earth, and Yahweh’s purpose to fill it with His glory will have been brought to consummation (Num. 14:21).

It is significant that the phrase occurs fourteen times (twice seven) in the Apocalypse, rendered *for ever and ever* with the exception of Rev. 1:18 where the phrase is rendered *evermore*. In spiritual numerics, fourteen, being a multiple of seven, partakes of its significance; and being double that number, implies a double measure of spiritual perfection, such as will be manifested in the Kingdom.

“Amen” – This is John’s endorsement of the proposition expressed in the phrase *So be it!*

VERSE 7

“Behold” – This exclamation is designed to alert the reader to something eye-catching and arresting.

“He cometh with clouds” – In Malachi 4:1, Christ is likened to the Sun; here, his immortalised brethren are compared to “clouds” (see also Heb. 12:1). The symbolism is drawn from the phenomenon of nature. The influence of the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:1) upon the waters (peoples) of the earth (Rev. 17:15; Isa. 57:20; 26:19), has the effect of separating a few from the bulk, and, in due time, drawing such into the political heavens (Rev. 4:1), there to be formed into clouds, to ultimately empty their contents upon the earth (Deut. 32:1-8; Ps. 72:6). In this verse “cometh” is *erchomai* in Greek, as in Matt. 24:30; 26:64, and signifies the act of coming or going, and not mere arrival. The “coming” in question, therefore, is the moving from one point to another, and here signifies the movement of Christ and the saints from Sinai to Jerusalem. The “clouds” thus comprise the saints in glory who will be with the Lord in his day of triumph.

“Every eye shall see him” – Every eye will not see the Lord as he descends to the earth, but his movement from the Judgment Seat of the household (Sinai) to the Judgment Seat of the nations (Jerusalem) will be open to all to see. Those who do not witness it personally will learn of it by report.

“They also which pierced him” – The Jewish people. See Zech. 13:6; 12:10. In addition, some who were personally responsible for his crucifixion will be raised to judgment in that day, to witness his triumph – Matt. 26:64; Luke 13:28.

“All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him” – They shall be caused to wail because of the terrible judgments in the earth (Dan. 12:1-2; Jer. 25:33) Zech. 12:2-3), and which they will then realise have been experienced because of their own blindness in refusing to accept him.

“Even so, Amen” – Amen is an acknowledgement of the righteousness of

all that has been stated, and John's personal endorsement of it. It is a Hebrew word transliterated into Greek and English. It is rendered "faithful" in the O.T. (Deut. 7:9; Isa. 49:7); and is used as a title of God (Isa. 65:16). In Rev. 3:14 it is used as a title of Christ, because through him all the promises of God are established beyond any doubt (2 Cor. 1:20).

As *Amen* is a Hebrew word, *Kai* rendered "even so," is the Greek form. The same exclamation is here repeated, combining in one, the two great races of mankind: Jew and Gentile, and referring to those taken out of both.

VERSE 8

"I am Alpha and Omega" — Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. There are twenty-four letters in the Greek alphabet, answering to the twenty-four elders of Rev. 4:4; representative of the multitudinous Christ. It is appropriate that the Lord, who is described as "the word made flesh" should be so represented. He is the "author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2), and to him we should look. In this verse, however, he speaks as the manifestation of Yahweh, the Almighty. Though Yahweh has no beginning nor ending, His manifestation in man has. He "is" manifested in the Lord Jesus, and He "will be" manifested in sons of Adam over whom Christ is the Alpha and Omega. See 1 John 3:1; Rom. 8:19; and compare Isa. 44:6 with Isa. 41:4. In the former, the word "last" is in the singular — referring to the Lord Jesus personally; in the latter, it is in the plural — referring to him in a multitudinous sense. In this context, therefore, *Alpha and Omega* comprises the title of Yahweh as manifested in the multitudinous Christ, over whom the Lord Jesus is head.

"The beginning and the ending" — In the best texts these words are omitted in this place.

"Saith the Lord" — The RV and *Diaglott* render this as *Lord God*; in the Hebrew *Yahweh Elohim*, Deity manifested in a multitude.

"Which is and which was and which is to come" — See note v. 4.

"The Almighty" — In the Greek this is *Pantokrator*, a name compounded from

pas, all, and *krateo*, to hold or have strength. This title is found in the N.T. only in 2 Cor. 6:18 (and is there used as an equivalent for *Yahweh Sabaoth* of the Old Testament), and in Rev. 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:15; 21:22; and once rendered *omnipotent*, Rev. 19:6. The R.V. renders the verse before us as *The Lord our God, the Almighty*. The title *Pantokrator* is used in the Septuagint as equivalent to *Sabaoth*, "hosts," or "armies," in names of Deity such as "Lord (or God) of hosts." In Jer. 5:14; Amos 4:13, the Greek *Kurios Pantokrator* is used for "Lord (or God) of hosts." *Yahweh Sabaoth* is the militant name of Deity, expressive of His ability to perform His purpose in spite of all the opposition that flesh may present. The use of an equivalent title in the Apocalypse is significant, for it is expressive of His ability to perform all that is therein set down.

The term *Almighty* as used in the O.T. is from the Hebrew *Shaddai*, a plural noun expressive of Yahweh's power manifested through the angels. The word is derived by some from *shad* signifying "breast," and by others from *shadaa* signifying "to destroy." Perhaps both are right, and the word had the dual significance of Nourisher and Destroyer. Yahweh is a Nourisher of those who embrace and honour the truth; but a Destroyer of those who oppose it. He destroyed the Sodomites; but nourished Abraham and Lot. According as we react to His word, He will be for us either a Nourisher or a Destroyer. See Psalm 18:25-26.

3. Introduction — V. 9

John introduces himself, describes his status, and sets forth his circumstances.

VERSE 9

"I John, your brother, and companion in tribulation" — John describes himself as a brother and a companion. As such, he was a sharer in the tribulation that is the lot of all those who seek the Kingdom (see Acts 14:22). The word "tribulation" is *thlipsis* and signifies — *pressure*. We shall have more to say of this word in subsequent comments. Meanwhile we note that tradition represents John as being brutally persecuted during the reign of Domitian, and in

A.D.95, being banished to the rocky, lonely isle of Patmos.

“In the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” — Though John was subjected to persecution and banishment, his spiritual vision was centred upon the Kingdom. For saints, tribulation is part of their apprenticeship for the Kingdom. They recognise that the cross must come before the crown, even as the Lord taught and demonstrated (see Matt. 16: 24-28; 2 Tim. 2:12). Brother Thomas renders the latter part of the phrase as waiting for Jesus Christ. The *Diaglott* renders *patient waiting for Jesus Christ*. The word *hupomone* signifies *an abiding under*, and thus a patient submission to circumstances, awaiting the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This patience is tested and developed by trial (James 1:3). Such trials are sometimes from Yahweh (Heb. 12:7); sometimes the undeserved affliction from the world without (1 Pet. 2:20); sometimes the result of our own folly. Whatever the cause, let us face the circumstances in faith, manifesting endurance under trial, and this will produce fruit to the glory of God (Rom. 2:7; cp. Luke 8:15; Heb. 12:1).

“Was in the isle that is called Patmos” — Patmos is one of the Sporades Islands about twenty-eight miles southwest of the island of Samos, and about the same distance from the coast of Asia Minor. Its length is about eight miles its greatest width six miles, and it covers an area of approximately twenty-two square miles. The island has been described as a horse’s head and neck with the nose pointing eastward, or as similar to a crescent with the horns facing eastward. On account of its rocky, barren, and desolate nature the Roman government used the island as a place of banishment for criminals. The prisoners were compelled to work in the mines of the island.

“For the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” — The preposition *for* is *dia* with the accusative case, and so signifies *on account of*. He was banished to Patmos on account of his bold witness to the Truth. See comments v. 2.

2. The Initial Vision — The Multitudinous Christ — Vv. 10-20.

A trumpet sound causes John to

look behind him, where he observes “one like unto” the Son of Man. The vision is similar to that seen by Daniel as recorded in his tenth chapter, the significance of which vision the prophet understood (Dan. 10:1), as, evidently, does the apostle also (cf. Rev. 5:4). The vision is so striking that it over-awes John, causing him to fall down in a faint. He is restored by the voice of the one like the Son of Man, and in being raised upon his feet, he figuratively enacts his own death and resurrection. The vision, therefore, symbolises the future glory of the elect, raised from the dead, and made one with Christ.

VERSE 10

“I was in the Spirit” — There is no definite article in the Greek. He was in spirit at the day of the Lord. His meditations had been upon the theme of Christ’s coming, and mentally he was present at that very day. From this we realise that though John had been banished to isolation, and experienced bitter tribulation, he kept his spiritual vision on the glory set before him. The significance of the phrase before us is illustrated unmistakably a little further on. At the close of the first series of things shown to him, John heard a voice addressing him thus: “Come up hither and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter” (Ch. 4:1). “And,” says he, “immediately I was in the spirit, and behold, a throne,” etc. What this means exactly is shown in the case of another prophet, Ezekiel, who, being addressed on the occasion of being about to receive visions, says (Ezek. 2:2). “And the spirit entered into me when he spake to me,” and again, “So the spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me” (3:14). To be “in spirit,” is to be seized, covered, or held by the spirit of God for the particular purpose in hand, generally a purpose of vision and revelation. The spirit was John’s constant companion, as Jesus had promised (John 14:26; 16:13). It was a Comforter, an Instructor, a Revealer of things to come.

“On the Lord’s day” — This is not Sunday, but “the day of the Lord.” That is a day when the Lord will be manifested in power, and is referred to in Malachi 4:1-2; Isa. 2:12; Acts 17:31;

1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Sam. 23:4. To that day true Israelites were always taught to look. The Tabernacle and Altar always faced east – towards the rising sun; the Passover was celebrated at night, anticipating the deliverance of the coming day (Deut. 16:1-4). Though John was bodily in Patmos, he was mentally in the “day of the Lord,” beyond the time of the resurrection of the dead, which will introduce the great and terrible day of Yahweh. John was thus present in spirit, at the day of the Lord.

“**Heard behind me**” – The voice caused him to turn and look back, and what he saw when he did so had relation to the resurrection and glorification of the one Body of Christ.

“**Voice as a Trumpet**” – The Trumpet was used to gather the people together (Num. 10:3). It here speaks of the gathering of the people together for judgment prior to the manifestation of the great day of the Lord when all nations will be brought into subjection to the Son of God (cp. 1 Thess. 4:16).

VERSE 11

“**I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and**” – In the best texts these words are omitted at this place, though they occur in Vv. 8,17. They do not appear in the Diaglott or the R.V. See notes on v. 8.

“**What thou seest, write in a book**” – From these words we can conclude that the initial vision, recorded in Vv. 13-18 comprise “the things which thou hast seen” of v. 19.

“**Send it unto the seven ecclesias which are in Asia**” – They were selected as representative ecclesias; actually the messages are for the benefit of all in every age. See Rev. 2:7 etc.

“**Unto Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea**” – These Ecclesias comprised a circle of Ecclesias of easy distance one to another. From Ephesus, through the ministrations of Paul, the Truth went forth through all Asia Minor. Therefore, appropriately, this Ecclesia is mentioned first.

VERSE 12

“**Being turned, I saw seven golden**

candlesticks” – The word should be rendered *Lampstands*. The Lampstand in the Tabernacle was fed with special oil supplied by Israelites (Exod. 27:20-21). It represents the truth, whilst gold symbolises a tried faith (Lam. 4:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:7; Rev. 3:18). The seven golden lampstands represent the Ecclesias of God (v. 20) manifesting faith and light (cp. Matt. 5:15-16). It is the duty of every individual member to play his or her part in providing the gold and the oil, so that an ecclesia may thus be manifested.

VERSE 13

“**In the midst of the seven candlesticks**” – The very heart and purpose of the formation of Ecclesias is to develop the multitudinous Christ, a “people for the name” of Yahweh (Acts 15:14).

“**One like unto the Son of man**” – The vision was not of Christ himself, although Christ was part of it, but one “like unto” him. Daniel, likewise, saw “one like the similitude of the sons of men” (Dan. 10:16) after he had been raised from his figurative death. What the prophet and the apostle saw was symbolic representations of the multitudinous Christ, of whom the Lord Jesus is the head (Eph. 4:13). Each member of that glorious, multitudinous Body will be “like him” (1 John 3:2). The title *Son of Man* is very significant. It not only denotes origin, in that every member will be a descendant of Adam, but is also the title of the Lord as judge (John 5:27), and the vision reveals the multitudinous Christ in the work of judgment. The prophecy of the Son of Man recorded in Daniel 7 (cp. v. 13) is one of judgment. As we have indicated in our Introduction, the *Apocalypse* is an amplification of this section of Daniel’s prophecy.

“**Clothed with a garment down to the foot**” – Nakedness is symbolic of a state of sin (Rev. 16:15). This was impressed upon Adam and Eve, when God stripped them of their fig-leaf device, and covered them with the skin of a slain lamb (Gen. 3:21). This pointed forward to the offering of Christ (Gal. 3:26-28; Rev. 13:8). It teaches that we must be figuratively covered with the “garment of salvation” (Isa 61:10), which we “put on” in baptism (Gal. 3:27). Israel was taught the need of a covering by the institution of the Day of Atonement.

ment (*kapharim* or coverings—Lev. 23:27) when sin was covered over, or hidden from view, by being forgiven. Our covering by which our sins are hidden or forgiven is found in Christ. We must keep the Christ-robe unspotted (Rev. 3:4; Jude 23), if we desire to wear it eternally in the Age to come. Then it will be for us the robe of righteousness (Rev. 19:8), and of immortality (2 Cor. 5:3). The garment is the symbol of character (holy), condition (immortality) and office (priestly). Special garments were prepared for the firstborn (Gen. 37:3), and priests (Exod. 28:2), as the insignia of their office (cp. Isa. 22:21 and ct. Luke 20:46). In the verse before us the phrase “a garment down to the foot” is from the Greek *ponderes* which is compounded of *pous*, “foot,” and *aro*, “to fasten.” It therefore describes a garment that entirely covers the body. The word is used in the Septuagint to define the long robe worn by the high priest (Exod. 28:4), the “linen” of the angelic judge of Ezek. 9:2, and the “change of raiment” given to Joshua in his typical representation of the Lord (Zech. 3:4), and, therefore, is indicative of the priestly and authoritative status of the one wearing it. In Zechariah 3:4, instead of a *change of raiment* the Septuagint has *ponderes* rendered, a long robe. Christ already wears this “garment,” and the multitudinous Christ will do so in the Age to come. The flesh will be covered entirely, with the glorious garment of immortality and divine status.

“**Girt about the paps with a golden girdle**” — Gold is the symbol of a tried faith (Lam. 4:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:7), without which “no man can please God” (Heb. 11:6). Faith binds and completes the robe of righteousness. In the resurrection, any not suitably clothed will be rejected. The R.V. renders: *girt about at the breasts*. This is significant. Josephus (*Ant.* 3:7:2) states that the Levitical priests were girded about the breast, though not of gold. The object of the girdle in the symbol before us (and probably the lesson of the girdle worn by the priests as described by Josephus) seems not to have been to strengthen him who wore it for the priestly service of judgment and ministration merely, but to bind the garment of righteousness firmly around his heart, so that in the midst of searching words of reproof and warning, there may also be found mercy

poured forth from the breasts of consolations (cp. Isa. 60:16). In that regard, it is a counter-balance to the “eyes as a flame of fire,” and the feet “burning in a furnace!” The girdle on this multitudinous Christ is a symbol of power, righteousness, truth and mercy (cp. Isa. 22:21; Job 12:18; Isa. 11:5).

VERSE 14

“**His head and his hairs were white like wool**” — Christ is the head of the multitudinous body (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23), every member of which should be motivated by His thinking (Phil. 2:5). “White as wool” represents his righteousness (Isa. 1:18). Ultimately every member of the Body must appear as he is, and be united as one to the head (John 17:21). Unfortunately, the Ecclesia at Colosse was spiritually spastic, for it was found “not holding the head” (Col. 2:19); in other words, walking in a disjointed manner, not governed by the head.

“**As white as snow**” — The high priest had a white mitre of linen (Exod. 28:39) pointing forward to the perfection of Christ’s mentality. The reference to snow is significant. It is used to describe the refreshing effect of Yahweh’s word (Isa. 55:10), purity (Ps. 51:7; Lam. 4:7), divine glory (Dan. 7:9; Matt. 28:3). Snow protects the crops from the rigours of winter; melting snow fructifies the earth and feeds the growing crops; snow is the source of the purest water. It is also a means of discipline (Job. 38:22; Ps. 147:16; 148:8). Every snow-drop is a six-pointed crystal, no two being the same in design. Thus snow represents flesh purified, emphasising the diversity of characters who shall be found clothed upon with glory in the age to come.

“**His eyes were as a flame of fire**” — The eye is the symbol of intelligence and investigation. In the past, the angels have acted as the eyes of Yahweh, supervising the development and destiny of men and nations for the ultimate benefit of the elect (see Gen. 11:5; 18:21; 2 Chron. 16:9; Dan. 4:17). In the future age, the saints will occupy that position (Zech. 4:10; Heb. 2:5). The symbol before us, represents the eyes of the multitudinous Christ as flashing with anger. The stubborn wickedness of the world will induce this reaction, so that the “people of the name” (Acts 15:14),

are represented as going forth in anger to discipline it (Isa. 30:27). The saints will "execute the judgments written"

VERSE 15

"His feet" — The "feet" are those of the multitudinous Christ, or the saints in glory, marching forth to execute the judgments written. Various duties will be allocated to the elect in that day. Some will act as the "eyes of Yahweh" investigating conditions; others as "feet" marching forth to discipline the rebellious; some as "hands" ruling the nations, shaping their development. The "feet" of Zechariah 14:4, are the "feet" of those bearing the Name of Yahweh (Isa. 30:27), and not merely those of the individual Christ (cp. Zech. 14:3).

"Like unto fine brass" — Brass is the symbol of flesh purified by fire. All metal that remained after going through the fire was accounted as cleansed (Num. 31:22-23). Therefore, when the fire of Yahweh flashed forth against the Levites who rebelled against the authority of Moses and Aaron, it consumed them so that only the brass of their censers was left, and this was incorporated in the brazen altar as a symbol of flesh purified by fire (Num. 16:35-38). In the vision of John, this brass is shown on the feet of the multitudinous Christ, equipping it to tread down the wicked. Animals were shod with plates of metal for the purpose of treading out the corn, and this is used as an illustration of the future conquests of the saints (Micah 4:11-13; Malachi 4:1-3). Thus the symbol before us represents flesh purified by fire, and then going forth to discipline the nations, bringing them into subjection to Christ.

"Burned in a furnace" — A burning furnace describes the condition into which the world will be brought through the outpouring of divine judgment. See Isa. 60:12; Jer. 25:33.

"His voice as the sound of many waters" — This describes the sound of a multitude (cp. Rev. 17:15). After the outpouring of fiery judgment upon the rebellious nations, the offer of peace on the basis of truth, will be made to them (Rev. 14:6; Isa. 14:32; Ps. 2:10-12). Through this medium, a knowledge of the Truth will spread throughout the world (Hab. 2:14; Isa. 2:2-4).

VERSE 16

"In his right hand seven stars" — cp. v. 20.

"Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword" — The power and teaching of the Spirit (Heb. 4:12). By its means, the glorified saints will be able to read the hearts, and discern the motives, of all before them (cp. Isa. 30:20-21), and so restrain sin. By this means, satan (sin in the flesh individually or politically) will be bound (Rev. 19:15; Isa. 11:4). The use of the Spirit in disciplinary judgment was illustrated in the drastic punishment administered to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:3-7).

"His countenance" — The word *opsis* is derived from *ops*, the eye; and *horao*, to see, indicating that which is seen by the eye. In John 7:24 the word is rendered *appearance*. Brother Thomas renders, *aspect*. The whole appearance of the multitudinous Christ is referred to, and not merely the face. The vision glowed with light, as did the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration when the divine glory was manifested through him.

"As the sun shineth in his strength" — The Sun is a symbol of Yahweh (Ps. 84:11), Christ (Mal. 4:2; 2 Sam. 23:4), and of the saints in glory (Matt. 13:43). As radiations of light from Christ the Sun of righteousness, they will destroy the forces of darkness.

VERSE 17

"When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead" — John goes through the same processes as did Daniel when he saw a similar vision (see Dan. 10:9-19). In doing so, both prophet and apostle, enacted their own destinies. They were taught how they would attain unto places in the multitudinous Body of the redeemed. They dramatised their own death and resurrection.

"And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not" — Daniel was given the same reassuring message under similar conditions (Dan. 10:19). Figuratively they were taken to the Judgment Seat to hear the divine approval on their conduct.

"I am the first and the last" — This epithet is three times ascribed to Yahweh in Isaiah (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12), and three times ascribed to Christ personally

or mystically in Revelation (Ch. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13 — it should not appear in v. 11). In Isaiah, the word *last* in Ch. 44:6 is in the singular number: the *last one*; but in Ch. 41:4, it is in the plural: *the last ones*. This variation predicts the development of God manifestation: firstly in the Lord Jesus, the *last one*; and ultimately in the multitudinous Christ, the *last ones*. See note v. 4. Christ is the Author and Finisher of the faith of the elect (Heb. 12:2). Through him alone will such gain the victory.

VERSE 18

“I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive” — See note v. 8. This expression, used in the context of v. 17, reveals that Yahweh was manifested in a “body of humiliation” (Phil. 3:21).

“For evermore” — Lit. *for the ages of the ages*. See note v. 6.

“Amen” — The Hebrew word signifies *faithfulness*. The resurrection and glorification of the Lord is the guarantee of Yahweh that He will fulfil His promise (see Acts 17:31).

“I have the keys of hell and of death” — The power to unlock both the grave and the bonds of mortality. An understanding of the gospel comprises the key to that end (cp. Matt. 16:19; 1 Cor. 15:54-55).

VERSE 19

“Write the things which thou hast seen” — The first section of *The Apocalypse*, the initial vision recorded in this first chapter.

“And the things which are” — The second section of *The Apocalypse* comprising the messages to the seven ecclesias (cp. Ch. 2:1).

“And the things which shall be hereafter” — The third section of *The Apocalypse* comprising the panorama of history (cp. Ch. 4:1).

VERSE 20

“The mystery” — The *musterion*, that which is known to the *mustes*, or the *initiated*. Therefore, the secret. In *The Apocalypse*, Christ whispers a secret to his friends (v. 1), of which the world is in ignorance.

“The seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand” — Such “stars” are teachers (Dan. 12:3). These stars are represented as being in “the right hand” of the Spirit for that is the position of privilege and power. They were men controlled by the Spirit, thus Spirit-endowed elders (Acts 14:23; 16:4).

“The angels of the seven ecclesias” — The term is used in Scripture for both divine and human beings: the latter being men appointed to positions of status and authority. These “angels” were in the right hand of the Spirit, and as such were unique to the Apostolic age when the Spirit was openly manifested among the Ecclesias. They comprised the Spirit-appointed elders of the various Ecclesias, whose divine appointment Paul refers to in Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 12:28-29. There are no such elders in the Ecclesias today. Arranging brethren are appointed by vote as were the deacons of Acts 7; not by the Spirit, as were the elders of that time.

“The seven candlesticks are the seven ecclesias” — Those ecclesias were representative of all ecclesias in every age. The word “candlesticks” should be *lamps-stands* (cp. v. 13), for there were no candles used in the Temple or Tabernacle.

SECTION TWO

“The Things which art”

Comprising

CHRIST'S MESSAGES TO THE ECCLESIAS

As the Head of the Body

Chapters 2 & 3



CHAPTERS TWO & THREE

“THE THINGS WHICH ARE”

In this section of the Apocalypse, seven representative Ecclesias, contemporary with the time of John, are addressed. The messages could summarise them thus:

EPHESUS: *The “hard” Ecclesia – lacking love.*

SMYRNA: *The persecuted Ecclesia – poor but rich.*

PERGAMOS: *The fighting Ecclesia – Antipas fighting errorists.*

THYATIRA: *The endangered Ecclesia – Jezebel gaining the ascendance.*

SARDIS: *The “dead” Ecclesia – large in number and repute, but works not complete.*

PHILADELPHIA: *The beloved Ecclesia – Small in numbers, but vigorous in activity.*

LAODICEA: *The lukewarm Ecclesia – Self-righteous, know-nothing.*

The counsel of Christ to each reminds those who have ears to hear that they do not have to succumb to their Ecclesial environment (cp. Ch. 2:24-25), nor does an Ecclesia have to remain in the state it is found. The symbol of the Ecclesia is the waning, waxing moon, receding or increasing in spiritual virility.

Christ’s messages to the seven Ecclesias can be sectionised into four parts: (1)–Commendation; (2)–Condemnation; (3)–Counsel; (4)–Challenge, thus:

The Seven Messages Dissected

	Commendation	Condemnation	Counsel	Challenge
Ephesus	2:2-3	v. 4	v. 5	v. 7
Smyrna	v. 9	nil	v. 10	v. 11
Pergamos	v. 13	vv. 14-15	v. 16	v. 17
Thyatira	v. 19	v. 20	v. 25	vv. 26-27
Sardis	3:2,4	3:1,2	3:2-3	3:5
Philadelphia	v. 8,10	nil	v. 11	v. 12
Laodicea	nil	vv. 15-17	v. 18-20	v. 21

Three significant features emerge:

- (1) No rebuke is offered to Smyrna or Philadelphia;
- (2) No commendation is given to Laodicea;
- (3) The two Ecclesias particularly condemned (Sardis and Laodicea) were apparently doctrinally sound (no accusation of false doctrine is made against them) but were self-righteous and self-complacent.

This suggests that the Lord considers apathy and indifference to be more deadly sins than even doctrinal error.

In addition to the personal messages, the seven Ecclesias seem to represent seven epochs of Ecclesial activity. In "Eureka," Brother Thomas suggests that the messages not only describe the Ecclesias as they existed in the days of the Apostle, but that they also can be aligned with seven epochs of time, leading to the full development of Apostasy in the days of Constantine, when the Church co-operated with the State, and the Laodicean period commenced, continuing to the present. He joined them with the epochs outlined by the seven seals.

But in addition to that division, there seems to be a long range prophecy as well, illustrating the condition of Ecclesias to the Truth reaching to the epoch of the second coming. Thus:

EPHESIAN EPOCH — when the first love was lost: at the close of the Apostolic era, from A.D.96 to about A.D.110.

SMYRNAN EPOCH — noted for persecution and the manifestation of the synagogue of satan. From A.D.110 to 312 when growing antagonism between the liberals and the conservatives among believers led to division.

PERGAMON EPOCH — when Antipas was slain and Balaamites and Nicolaitanes flourished: the development of the Papacy. From A.D.312 to 606.

THYATIRAN EPOCH — Jezebel in the ascendance: the full manifestation of the Papal system in power.

THE APOCALYPSE EPITOMISED

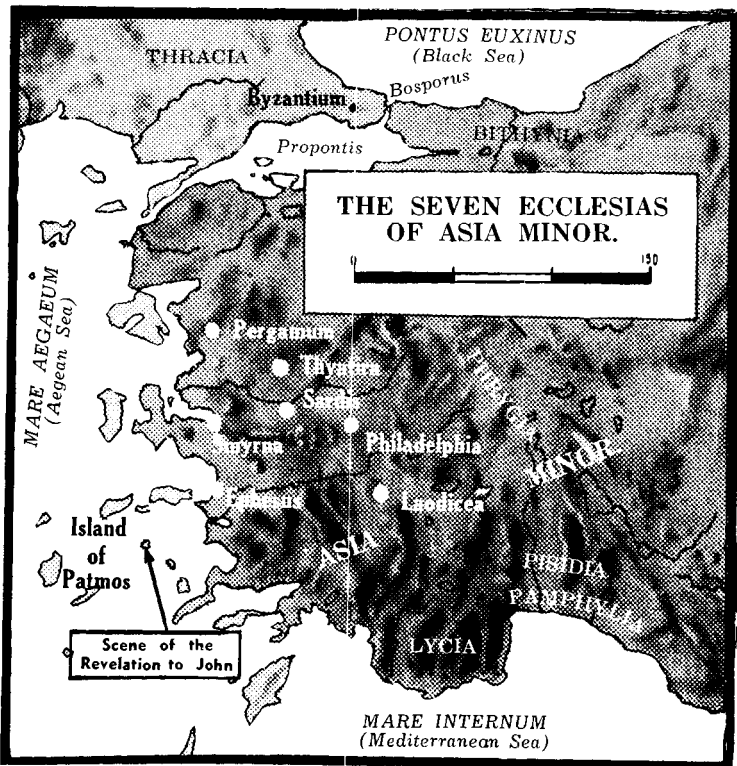
From A.D.606 to 1572 when true witnessing came to an end (see Rev. 11:7).

SARDIAN EPOCH – A name of repute, but spiritually dead: the period of Protestant reformation. From 1572 to about 1847.

PHILADELPHIAN EPOCH – the period of “a little strength,” and “an open door”; the revival of the truth in its purity. From 1847 to about 1947.

LAODICEAN EPOCH – The “hour of temptation” or the perilous present (2 Tim. 3:1).

The Spirit's words of exhortation, warning and counsel set forth vital messages of personal and Ecclesial importance for every age until the Lord returns.



CHAPTER TWO

WARNING MESSAGES TO THE ECCLESIAS:
EXHORTATIONS FROM HEAVEN

This chapter addresses words of warning, exhortation and counsel to the Ecclesias in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos and Thyatira.

EPHESUS: THE HARD ECCLESIA

(vv. 1-7)

Ephesus was the metropolis of the Lydian Asia, and was considered one of the best and most glorious cities of those times. It was the greatest emporium of Asia proper, and was styled one of the eyes of Asia, Smyrna being the other. Today it is noted for its ruins of palaces, temples and amphitheatre. It is called by the Turks Ajasaluk, or the Temple of the Moon, from the magnificent structure formerly dedicated to Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians.

Paul introduced the Truth to Ephesus (Acts 18:19). After he left, Apollos visited the city, proclaiming the doctrine of John the Baptist (v. 24). But Paul's friends, Aquila and Priscilla, hearing him in the synagogue, formed an acquaintance with him, and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (v. 26). Having been thus set right by them, he went to work in the right direction, and mightily convinced the Jews in public, showing them by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Paul later visited the city again (Acts 19), and remaining there for some three years, made it the headquarters of

his Gospel proclamation efforts throughout Asia Minor. He was assisted in this by Timothy, who was left in charge of the Ecclesia during the absence of Paul (1 Tim. 1:3), with instructions to restrain certain brethren who were causing trouble, and to put other matters in order until the Apostle's return. On his last journey, Paul called for the elders of the Ecclesia to meet him at Mileus, that he might give them final words of exhortation (Acts 20:17-32). These references to Ephesus, show how the Truth had flourished in that city, and imply the standing that the Ephesian Ecclesia must have had in the eyes of its sister Ecclesias.

The message is divided into:

Commendation - Vv. 2-3,6

Condemnation - V. 4.

Counsel - V. 5.

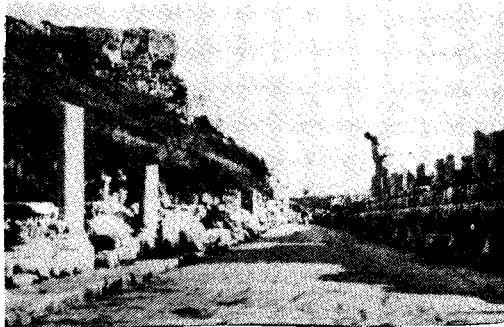
Challenge - V. 7.

VERSE 1

"Unto the angel" - The spirit-appointed eldership of the Ecclesia (cp. Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).

"The ecclesia of Ephesus" - This should be rendered "the ecclesia in Ephesus." The Ecclesia was not identified with the city; there is nothing analogous to the "Church of England" in the terms used by the Spirit in relation to the saints. The name Ephesus is given by some as signifying *Desired One*; but that "desired one" had left its first love!

"He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand" - This describes "the one like unto the Son of man," and particularly the status and function of the Lord. The verb "holdeth" is *krateo*, and signifies "to hold firmly." This suggests the power that Christ exercised in the Ecclesias (cp. Matt. 28:18). Their future was in his keeping; their continued existence did not depend upon their



Remains of the great marble street of the Arkadiane at Ephesus, which ran from the theatre to the harbor.

personal activity, but upon the blessing of the Lord. That blessing was promised if those addressed took heed to the warning, and followed the counsel he offered them.

"Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" — The verb *walketh* suggests activity. Christ was active through the Spirit in the Ecclesias.

VERSE 2

"I know thy works" — Christ is interested in the development of Ecclesias, and takes heed to all activity in his name. His summary of the Ecclesia in Ephesus revealed that it was:

- A working Ecclesia — v. 2;
- A separated Ecclesia — "canst not bear;"
- A pure Ecclesia — "tried them;"
- An enduring Ecclesia — v. 3;
- A fighting Ecclesia — v. 6;
- A faulty Ecclesia — v. 4.

"Thy labour" — The word *kopos* "labour," primarily denotes a *striking*, a beating, and thus suffering, or tiring, laborious toil, that is wearing and exhaustive in its effect. The brethren in Ephesus were noted for this, but, nevertheless, their hard, unceasing labour lacked a love that Christ desired above all else (v. 4).

"Thy patience" — Patience is *hupomone*, "an abiding under." The brethren in Ephesus maintained their exhausting labour in spite of the opposition they experienced from the world; they endured this patiently, and did not permit it to deflect them from their activity in the things of God. In doing so, they followed Apostolic example. See note Rev. 1:9.

"Canst not bear them which are evil" — They are commended for this attitude of hostility to their evil contemporaries. It followed the example of the Lord (cp. v. 6).

"And hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" — Paul had alerted the elders of the Ecclesia as to what they might expect (Acts 20:28-30), and had instructed Timothy how to act in the face of such (1 Tim. 1:3, 6-8, 19-20). Christ's commendation shows that the elders had faithfully observed the warning of the

apostle, and had tried and rejected the teaching of those who claimed to be "apostles, and were not." An "apostle" is *one sent* with a commission, one possessing authority. There were apostles chosen by God and Christ, such as Paul, and there were apostles selected by men (e.g. 2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25, where the word "messenger" is the same as "apostle" in the Greek). In addition to genuine apostles there were "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13). The Ephesian brethren were not deluded by such, but having tested their credentials had discovered that they were liars, and had rejected them.

VERSE 3

"And hast borne, and hast patience" — The words of commendation continue. The R.V. renders: "Thou hast patience and didst bear for my name's sake." In other words, they did not lose sight of Christ in their patient endurance; they continually had him in view.

"For my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted" — The Greek word translated "fainted," *kamno*, primarily signifies to work; then, "as the effect of continued labour, to be wearied" (Vine). It is only used three times in the N.T. Here, in Heb. 12:3 where concentration upon the example of Christ will aid in overcoming weariness; and in James 5:15 where it is stated the prayer of faith will assist in warding it off.

VERSE 4

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee" — These ominous words introduce the condemnation which is intermixed with this message.

"Because thou hast left thy first love" — Christ desired not merely their labour, but their love. Notice that the brethren in Ephesus had not left or forsaken the object of that love, for what they did was for "his name's sake," but the original fervent degree of love was now missing. They had lost the original enthusiasm, the spontaneous sparkle of keen endeavour in the work of the Truth. Their wearisome labour was performed as an end in itself, and not as a pleasure-

able love-gift to Christ. Israel had manifested similar loss of original love. See Jer. 2:2-3.

VERSE 5

“Remember therefore, from whence thou art fallen” — It is good to look back at the past and compare it with the present. See Paul’s exhortation in Eph. 2:11; and Moses’ constant command to Israel to do likewise (Deut. 5:15; 7:18; 8:2; 9:7; 15:15; 16:12,24; 18:22; 24:9; 25:17; 32:7). Indeed, to remember and apply the lessons of the past, is one of the great themes of Deuteronomy, worthy of careful note.

“And repent” — The word *metanoëo* signifies to change one’s mind and purpose. It implies that one turn around, and commence a new course of action.

“Do the first works” — That is, rediscover your first love. Love, not works in the absence of it, is the bond of perfectness (Col. 3:14).

“Or else I will come unto thee quickly” — According to the best texts, the word *quickly* should not appear at this place.

“And will remove thy candlestick out of his place except thou repent” — Christ’s warning should remind believers in every age that it is possible to engage in exhausting toil for Christ’s sake without being motivated by that love for him which he desires above all else. Work can be done “for his sake,” or in order to advance his cause even after the “first love” has been lost. Indeed, such a loveless attitude of works without faith was manifested by the Pharisees towards Yahweh. The message to the Ecclesia in Ephesus warns that it is possible to display a commendable zeal for purity of doctrine, or in proclamation of the Gospel, without being truly motivated by love of Christ: a warm-hearted emotion towards him. The Pharisees were noted for their proselytising ardour, and their self-righteous zeal; and yet were unaware of the root cause of their failure.

VERSE 6

“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes which I also hate” — The Ephesians had this

redeeming feature that they “hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes,” hated also by Christ. He commends them because “they could not bear them which are evil” (v. 2). These expressions remind us that both love and hate have their place in the Divine economy. We are commanded to “hate every evil way” among which is classed false doctrine. What is the use of loving good, if it does not induce in us a hatred of evil? Commendation was extended to the Ephesians for their righteous hatred, whilst, at the same time, they were exhorted to develop a true love.

The word “Nicolaitanes” is formed by the conjunction of two words: *nicos*—victory, and *laitos*—the people. The word therefore signifies *vanquishers of the people*. Brother Thomas identifies the Nicolaitanes as errorists who introduced Gentile philosophy within the Ecclesia (cp. 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16). Their “science,” “gnosis,” or knowledge was derived from Plato, and incorporated a belief in the immortality of the soul. The doctrine of the resurrection is an embarrassment to the teaching of an immortal soul, but these errorists got around this by teaching that the resurrection was already past (cp. 1 Cor. 15:12; 2 Tim. 2:18). The clear teaching of Truth by Paul and Timothy in Ephesus, developed a hatred of the Nicolaitanes with their false doctrine on the part of the brethren — an attitude of mind endorsed and encouraged by the Lord himself, who also looked with anger upon the hypocrites of his day (Mark 3:5. See also Ps. 97:10; 119:104; 139:22).

VERSE 7

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias” — “These words seven times repeated, give us to understand that what is said in each particular letter is not confined to the particular ecclesia addressed, but to all the ecclesias whose spiritual condition at a certain stage of apostasy was represented by that particular one. The promises made in all of them are promises to all true believers of all ages and generations The words are not ‘let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Star-Angel of the Ephesian ecclesia.’ One might hear this and feel no personal interest in the matter. He might say

that the promises beginning 'to him that overcomes' related only 'to him of the particular ecclesia addressed that overcomes, I will give;' but this restriction is excluded by the phrase, 'what the spirit saith to the ecclesia,' showing that it is spoken to the saints in general" (*Eureka* vol. 1).

"To him that overcometh" — The Greek word *nikao* signifies to conquer, and is closely related to *nikos*, from whence is developed the title Nicolaitanes, *Conquerors of the people*. To conquer in the terms of the phrase before us, is to gain the victory over the forces of darkness that can destroy the spiritual man. It is an exhortation to triumph over personal besetting sins; over the world and its temptations; over prevailing error; over the ills and trials of life which can crush one. The life in Christ is a constant warfare (cp. Acts 14:22), in which faith is needed for the victory (1 John 5:4). There was a lack of "first love" in the Ecclesia in Ephesus, and despite its insistence for doctrinal purity, and its increasing, exhausting labour, victory would be to those only who re-discovered their first love for Christ, and manifested it in action.

"Will I give to eat of the tree of life"— To eat of the tree of life is to be granted life eternal (Gen. 3:22). This was denied Adam and his posterity, but will be permitted the "seed" of the second Adam (cp. Isa. 53:10; 1 Cor. 15:45). Thus the first and the last books of the Bible are joined as a bridge: the former showing how things began, the latter showing how they will end. Eden will be restored; the second Adam will be joined in marriage to the second Eve (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7) and will be united "as one" in the paradise of Deity (Gen. 2:23; John 17:21). "To eat of the Tree of Life is to be an unfading leaf, an immortal possessor of the glory, honour and incorruptibility of the Kingdom which the God of heaven will set up in the Age to come" (*Eureka*). The saints are likened to trees in Paradise—cp. Ps. 1; Rev. 22:2.

The word of God is likened to a tree of life because of its effect upon those who partake thereof (see Prov. 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4).

"Which is in the midst of the paradise of God"— The words: *the midst of*, are omitted by the best Greek texts. "Para-

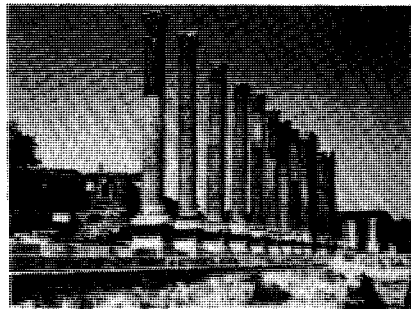
dise" is a Persian word for a *garden*. In the Septuagint translation of the O.T., the word occurs in Gen. 2:8; Neh. 2:8; Jer. 29:5; Ecc. 2:5; Song. 4:13. Isaiah declares that the Land of Promise will be as "the garden of Yahweh" (Isa. 51:1-3). It will form the nucleus of the Kingdom of God, in which will be found that which will provide the eaters thereof with eternal life.

SMYRNA: THE PERSECUTED ECCLESIA

(Vv. 8-11)

Forty-five miles north of Ephesus Smyrna was an influential city of Ionia, and is still a place of some importance. It is situated on the Archipelago in Asia Minor, and has a very fine harbour.

There is no special notice of Smyrna in the New Testament apart from the reference in the Apocalypse. The Gospel was probably introduced to the city by Paul during his three years' residence in Ephesus. The ecclesia must have been a healthy community spiritually, for Christ speaks of it in terms of commendation and encouragement. The celebrated Polycarp (martyred approx. A.D. 167) was associated with the Smyrnan Ecclesia, and he welcomed Ignatius to it in the year 107, when the latter was on his way to Rome, whither he was sent by order of Trajan, "to be thrown to the wild beasts for the entertainment of the people." While at Smyrna, Ignatius wrote a letter of advice to the Ecclesia at Ephesus.



The standing pillars of the ancient Forum of Smyrna

Time made inroads into the Ecclesia in Smyrna, and gradually apostasy asserted itself, until the Truth faded from view. But that unhappy condition was not the state of the Ecclesia when Christ directed this message.

The message to this Ecclesia is divided into:

*Commendation – V. 9
Condemnation – nil
Counsel – V.10
Challenge – V.11*

VERSE 8

“Unto the angel of the ecclesia in Smyrna” – The record shows this Ecclesia to have been:

An active Ecclesia – V. 9;
A poor Ecclesia rich in faith – V. 9;
A maligned Ecclesia – V. 9;
A persecuted Ecclesia – V. 10.

The word Smyrna is derived from Myrrh, signifying *bitter*. The Ecclesia in that city knew the bitterness of active persecution.

“These things saith the first and the last” – See note Ch. 1:17. This is a divine title used by the Spirit in relation to Christ, because He is the channel through whom Yahweh is manifested in believers. He is the author and finisher of their faith (Heb. 12:2). He begets faith in those who embrace his principles, and completes its work.

“Which was dead and is alive” – Christ’s titles are appropriate to his messages. He was equipped to encourage the persecuted Ecclesia in Smyrna, because he had endured similar trials as they were called upon to suffer, and yet had won through to victory (Heb. 4:15). He suffered tribulation, poverty, blasphemy; he was taken into custody; he was faithful unto death. But today he is alive, and occupies a position of glory and honour, clothed upon with eternal life. The fact that he experienced a martyr’s death, but now lives for evermore, strengthens the exhortation of v. 11.

VERSE 9

“I know thy works” – The reference to works is not found in the best texts. There was no resting on works in Smyrna as there had been in Ephesus.

“And tribulation” – The brethren

of Smyrna suffered tribulation, as will all who attain the Kingdom of God (see Acts 14:22). The word signifies *pressure*, and the pressures of life are frequently designed of God to mould believers into shape. See note Ch. 1:9.

“And poverty, (but thou art rich)” – The Ecclesia in Smyrna was rich in spite of its material poverty. See James 2:5; Luke 12:21; 2 Cor. 6:10; and contrast with Rev. 3:17-18.

“I know the blasphemy” – In this context, the term *blasphemy* is used to describe those who claimed to be what they were not, and here bears no relationship to speaking derogatively of God. Those so-called “Jews” may have been sincere and reverent in their approach to God, but they were blasphemers none the less, because they claimed to have the truth whereas they did not. Their presence in Smyrna was an embarrassment to the Ecclesia. Their inconsistent attitude, possibly provided the civil authorities occasion to move against Christianity as a whole.

“Of them which say they are Jews, and are not” – There are “spiritual” Jews as well as natural Jews. Those who embrace the Truth embrace a Jewish hope (Acts 28:20), and are counted as spiritual Israelites (cp. Rom. 2:28; 9:7-8; Eph. 2:11-14). There were some in Smyrna who were laying false claims to being spiritual Jews, but who were, in fact, members of Satan’s synagogue.

“But are of the synagogue of Satan” – The word synagogue signifies a *collecting*, a *gathering*, hence a *congregation*, and sometimes the building where the congregation meets. The blasphemers in Smyrna, who said they were apocalyptic Jews, or, by interpretation, Christians, but lied, are not styled ‘the Ecclesia of the Satan’ because that would imply that they were called out by special invitation to something” (*Eureka*). These pseudo-spiritual-Jews “went out” of the Ecclesia of their own accord (cp. 1 John 2:19), accusing their brethren falsely of being in the wrong. Having separated themselves, they became a congregation of the satan, the adversary. They were opposed to those who kept the Truth, though claiming some sort of identity with them. But their claim was blasphemy.

“If the gospel of the Kingdom be stated and proved, to a man, or a com-

pany of men and women, and they oppose it as contrary to their views and feelings, by so doing they evince that they savour not of the things of God, and are therefore satans. On this principle, those who emigrated from the fellowship of the apostles, and made a new settlement upon the Nicolaitan basis, for themselves, seeing that their teaching was opposed to and subversive of the 'truth as it is in Jesus,' became Satan. This was the case with the faction in Smyrna. They pretended to be Christians, but were opposed to the true doctrine of Christ, and opposed those who were faithful to it, thereby constituting themselves 'the Satan in Smyrna'" (*Eureka*).

VERSE 10

"**Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer**" — The word *melleis* translated *shalt* signifies *about to be or do*, and is used of purpose, certainty, compulsion or necessity (*Vine*). The phrase, therefore, should be rendered, "fear none of those things which thou art about to suffer." The things Christ warned about, happened shortly afterwards.

"**The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried**" — The word *diabolos* signifies *false accuser*. In this context, the term is used of the civil authorities of Smyrna. The Spirit warned that they would shortly engage upon a program of persecution of the local Ecclesia, falsely accusing members of crimes they did not commit, and imprisoning them. In Eph. 6:11, Paul makes reference to the civil authorities as the *diabolos*. In 1 Peter 5:8, there is reference to "your adversary the devil" (*diabolos*). Here the word adversary is *antidikos*, and signifies an *opponent at law*. Such opponents did not hesitate to falsely accuse the brethren, thus earning the title of *diabolos*. In the verse before us, they so succeeded in their legal charges against the brethren, as to secure their imprisonment.

"**Ye shall have tribulation ten days**" — A period of intense persecution broke out against the Christians during the years 110-120 AD. under the direction of the Emperor Trajan. He tried to stamp out the growing Christian communities, and ordered his officers to repress them with every severity. The celebrated letter of Pliny, in which he records the hopelessness

of diverting Christians from their beliefs no matter how severe he persecuted them, was written at this time.

"**Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life**" — Christ, himself, was the guarantee of such a reward, for he, too, had been put to death, but had obtained the crown of life. The word for "crown" is *stephanos* and signifies the reward of victory. It is a term, drawn from the custom of the times to bestow a coronal wreath upon the heads of victors in the Grecian games, and is frequently used in Scripture as a symbol of victory in the fight or race of life. To obtain that crown requires personal discipline (1 Cor. 9:25), and respect for laws set down (2 Tim. 2:5). The crown promised is fadeless (1 Pet. 5:4), and relates to the future award (2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12), but it can be stolen (Rev. 3:11).

VERSE 11

"**He that hath an ear,**" etc. — See note v. 7.

"**He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death**" — The second death is the death of the rejected at the Judgment Seat of Christ. See Rev. 20:6.

PERGAMOS: THE FIGHTING ECCLESIA

(Vv. 12-17)

Pergamos was the name of a kingdom as well as of a city. The kingdom was one of the four that developed out of Alexander's Empire referred to in Dan. 8:8,22. We read that "out of one of them came forth a little horn" (v. 9), which the angel's subsequent explanation identifies with the Roman power. Pergamum was the one through which Rome came to power in the east.

Attalus III, king of Pergamos, died B.C. 136, and was succeeded by his nephew Philometer, who governed the kingdom in a most pernicious and extravagant manner. He was scarcely seated upon the throne before he stained it with the blood of his nearest relations, and the best friends of his family. Throughout his reign he vented his ferocity and barbarity in all directions.

Previous to his death (133 B.C.), he made a will, by which he appointed the

Roman people his heirs. The principal article was expressed in these terms, "Let the Roman people inherit all my effects." They were not slow to take possession, and by the sword compelled the people to submit, reducing the one-time kingdom of Attalus into a province of Rome called Asia, in which were found the seven ecclesias. Pergamos was the former capital of the kingdom, and played an important part in the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy, Ch. 8.

Little is known of the Ecclesia apart from what we read here, but it was apparently the headquarters of a developing apostasy.

The message is divided into:

- Commendation – V. 13;
- Condemnation – Vv. 14-15;
- Counsel – V. 16;
- Challenge – V. 17.

VERSE 12

"And to the angel of the ecclesia in Pergamos, write" – The name Pergamum has been perpetuated in the word *parchment* (Latin *pergamena*, Greek *pergamene*) since the city developed the use of this writing material, and excelled in its manufacture, when Egypt cut off the supply of papyrus.

Pergamos signifies *Citadel, Fortress*. It is an appropriate name for an ecclesia so beset by enemies as was this one. The message reveals it to have been

- (a) a determined Ecclesia—v. 13;
- (b) an embattled Ecclesia—v. 13;
- (c) an endangered Ecclesia—vv. 14-15.

"These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges" – See note Ch. 1:16. The description seems to be drawn from the reference to Christ in

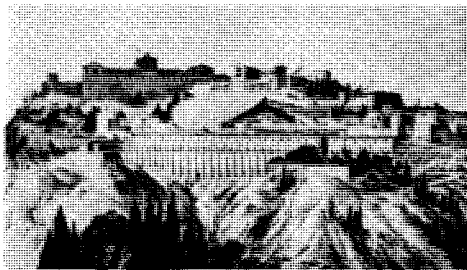
Isa. 49:2. The "sharp sword" comprises the Spirit-word. See Heb. 4:12. The title is appropriate to the message delivered by the Spirit to this Ecclesia. Compare with v. 16.

VERSE 13

"I know thy works" – The reference to "works" is missing in the best texts.

"Where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is" – The reference to "Satan's seat" can have various applications. First, the word "seat" is the same as that translated "throne" elsewhere; hence it relates to the authority, or status, of the one so described. As we have noted in the introduction to this letter above, the Kingdom of Pergamum was bequeathed to Rome, and subsequently became the headquarters of Roman authority and power in Asia Minor. Politically, therefore, the place could be described as "Satan's throne." As the centre of Roman power in Asia, its citizens were required to acknowledge the divinity of Caesar as a token of their loyalty to the State. The refusal of the brethren to comply, may well have been the cause of the martyrdom of Antipas. On the other hand, it may have contributed to the uprising of the "Balaamites" in the Ecclesia, for they comprised a group that were prepared to compromise with the powers that be, proclaiming a doctrine of expediency. Perhaps they reasoned, that it did not much matter if Caesar was acknowledged as divine as a matter of words, and so proclaimed their doctrine of expediency, to become the headquarters of the opposition (satan) to the strict requirements of the Truth found in other Ecclesias as well, thus deserving the title of Satan's throne, or seat of power.

Splendid temples were built also to Dionysus, Athena, and Asklepios. The healing god Asklepios was extremely popular, and so prominent and dominant was this god as far as Pergamos was concerned, that it was sometimes described as "the Pergamene god." The temple, hospital, and gymnasium connected with the worship of Asklepios was celebrated throughout the world, and rivalled that of Epidaurus, from whence the god originated. The term *satan's seat*, therefore, could apply to the city when considered either from its political, pagan, or heretical environment. How-



An artist's reconstruction of the Acropolis at Pergamos, a cultural centre of ancient Asia Minor.

ever, the subsequent terms of Christ's message suggest that ecclesial heresy had so gained ground in the Ecclesia, as to constitute it the "throne" of the adversary.

"And thou holdest fast my name" – The name of Jesus, or Yahshua as the Hebrew has it, is a combination of *Yah* signifying *He will be* and *Shua* meaning *salvation*. Yahshua, or Jesus, therefore, signifies *Yah's Salvation* or *He will be for salvation*. Yahweh is the self-imposed name of God, first proclaimed at the bush, for a memorial unto all true Israelites (Exod. 3:14). The name has been incorrectly translated "Jehovah," "Lord" and "God," and should be rendered Yahweh. It proclaimed God's intention to draw out of Egypt a people who would constitute His family, and in whom would be manifested His characteristics. It is the family name of God, and the truth is a call to separate from the world as a people "for the name" (Acts 15:14). As there exists complete unity between Yahweh and the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:21), the name of the former is superimposed upon the latter (see Zech. 14:9), even as a father's name is attached to those of his children. In holding fast to the name of the Lord, therefore, the brethren in Pergamos held fast to the name into which they had been inducted at baptism (Acts 15:14). And as a person's name, in Scripture, is often used to define character and destiny (cp. Ps. 8:1), so the brethren in Pergamos, in holding "fast to the name" clung tenaciously to the truth, revealing in their lives the characteristics that it demands of believers.

"And hast not denied my faith" – Faith "cometh by hearing the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). This creates a conviction, without which "it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). A man of faith is one who is convinced that "God is and that He becomes a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Heb. 11:6), and allows that conviction to guide his actions in spite of opposition.

"Even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr" – This refers to a time of intense persecution, during which Antipas remained constant to the Truth. The word "martyr" is from *martus*, elsewhere rendered *witness*. It indicates one who bears witness by his death. Antipas is styled "my faithful

witness," and is so identified with him, or them, who held fast the name and denied not the faith of Christ in the face of persecution, whether in Pergamos or elsewhere. *Eureka* comments: "The name is typical of a class at that time, and signifies against all Nicolaitanes, Balaamites, children of Jezebel, false apostles, and spurious Jews, who, as Justin says, "are called Christians, but are atheists and impious heretics, because that in all things they teach what is blasphemous, ungodly and unsound."

"Who was slain among you" – The term signifies *at their side, in their presence*. The martyrdom of such as Antipas is a public witness of a faithful adherence to Truth. Unfortunately one does not have to be subjected to a physical death in order to become a martyr (see 1 John 3:15). Antipas was against all who opposed the truth – whether in the Ecclesia or outside of it.

"Where Satan dwelleth" – This would identify the "satan" of this message with the heretics of the Ecclesia: the Balaamites and Nicolaitanes.

VERSE 14

"I have a few things against thee" – Now follows the condemnation.

"Because thou hast there them" – There were heretics in the Ecclesia at Pergamos whose presence should not have been tolerated (see 1 Tim. 1:20; 1 Cor. 5:5-7; Rom. 16:17; Tit. 3:10). So long as they were permitted to remain, the Ecclesia would not experience peace, and unless they were dealt with Scripturally, there was grave danger that the light of truth would be completely extinguished. That was the basis of Christ's warning to the elders in Pergamos.

"The doctrine of Balaam" – His name signifies *Waster of the People*. He allowed the prospects of riches and honour to blind him to his responsibilities to Yahweh. He compromised the Truth for the sake of wealth (Num. 22:16-17, 37). When he repeatedly sought permission to go to Balak, God agreed that "if the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them" (v. 20). But Balaam did not heed that condition. Instead, he rose up and went, incurring the anger of Yahweh by so doing. Thus he bent the word of Yahweh to his own use, and persisted in his course, though opposed by the angel, and rebuked by the ass!

The doctrine of Balaam, therefore, is teaching that is prepared to bend Scripture to personal advantage.

“Who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel” – Balaam found it impossible to defeat the counsel of God in relation to Israel, but devised a means to bring the divine curse upon the people. He taught Balak (whose name means *Waster*) to lure the Israelites from their separateness, by the seductive appeal of Moabitish women (see Num. 31:16; 25:1). The temptation was camouflaged under the guise of religion: “they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods” (Num. 25:2), and so incurred the anger of Yahweh. The antitype of this is the teaching that the end justifies the means; and that it is legitimate to remove barriers of separateness from the world to win adherents to the truth. Thus the influence of Balaam was both lasting and disastrous. In the Book of Numbers (see Ch. 22:5) he enters the narrative of Scripture as suddenly as does Elijah (in Kings) but once there he never really leaves it. As the verse before us shows, he is found in the Revelation; and he is actually responsible for the revolt at the end of the thousand years (Rev. 20:7-9). He speaks well: “Let me die the death of the righteous” (Num. 23:10); “God is not man that He should lie” (Num. 23:19); “He hath blessed and I cannot reverse it” (Num. 23:20). But always there was present the desire to defeat the counsel and teaching of Yahweh, so that his influence was disastrous to the children of God. In Pergamos, there were those who spake equally well of the revelation of God, but whose influence was equally pernicious in developing a state of worldliness in the Ecclesia.

“To eat things sacrificed unto idols” – Idolatry is just as rife today as it was in the days of Balaam. A believer “sacrifices to idols” when he permits anything to stand between him and Christ. Paul defines “covetousness” as “idolatry” (Col. 3:4), for covetousness is the worship of self, and it is rife in this age of materialism. Yahweh requires of believers that they give Him the best of their endeavours (Mal. 1:6-8); anything less than that is a form of idolatry.

“And to commit fornication” – The “fornication” in question was cloaked in religion (see Num. 25:1-2, 11-18), for prostitution formed a part of Canaanitish

worship. There also is such a thing as spiritual “fornication,” and this is often indulged in by those who would view sexual infidelity with the greatest abhorrence. James addressed those to whom he wrote as “adulteresses” because of their friendship of the world (James 4:4). They committed fornication without being aware of it, by so freely mixing with the world. The Ecclesia is called to complete separateness. It is described as “a chaste virgin unto Christ,” (2 Cor. 11:2), and for it to compromise the truth by mixing with the world is to descend to spiritual “fornication.” That was the attitude of some in Pergamos, and the Lord warned of the consequences of such infidelity. “The manifestation of these false teachers contemporary with the apostles,” writes Brother Thomas in *Eureka*, “created a crisis in the history of the faith. It had come to this; either they must be put down, or the doctrine of Christ would be suppressed. This alternative would certainly have resulted, if God had not reserved to Himself a remnant who refused to bow the knee to Baal. This remnant was Antipas, and therefore *against all* the Nicolaitanes, Balaams, and Jezebels, false teachers who had crept in unawares, corrupting and handling the Word of God deceitfully, that they might make it less offensive to the Jews, and idolaters, and so make the profession of Christianity more popular, and consequently less dangerous to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in the world.”

VERSE 15

“So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes – See comments on v. 6. The Ecclesia in Pergamos had failed to act as had that in Ephesus, and tolerated the Nicolaitanes whom it should have expelled. This created antagonism and a state of internecine fighting that threatened the future prospects of the Ecclesia.

“Which thing I hate” – These words are not found in the texts at this place; though they occur in v. 6.

VERSE 16

“Repent” – See note v. 5.

“Or else I will come unto thee quickly” – The Greek *tachu* signifies *swiftly, unexpectedly, or quickly*. It occurs seven times in Revelation: Ch. 2:5, 16; 3:11;

11:14, 22:7, 12, 20. Some texts do not have it at Ch. 2:5; 11:14 which would then make five occurrences of the word. Seven is the number of completeness; five is the number of grace. Either number is appropriate for the warning issued. The speaker is the Son of Man, a title used of Christ as Judge (John 5:27).

"Will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" – This statement warned the Ecclesia of the sharp, penetrating power of the one dictating the message. See the significant and ominous descriptive words of this symbol as expressed in Heb. 4:12-13.

VERSE 17

"He that hath an ear etc." – See note v. 7.

"Will I give to eat of the hidden manna" – The manna supplied to the Israelites in the wilderness was hidden under a covering of dew, and only when this had evaporated through the influence of the early morning sun, was it revealed (Exod. 16:13). In the light of the verse before us, this teaches that the manna which "those who overcome" will be given to eat, will be revealed when the Sun of righteousness" appears with healing in his beams (Mal. 4). On the first occasion when the miracle occurred in the wilderness, the people asked of each other, *Mahn hu?*, "What is it?" for they knew not what it was. The Jews of Christ's day asked the same question of the Lord Jesus, who described himself as being the "true bread" from heaven (John 6:48-53). They enquired *"Who art thou?"* (John 8:25). In describing himself as the true bread from heaven, the Lord taught that true Israelites should eat of that Manna: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." True Israelites eat thus when they absorb the Word, for the Lord was the Word made flesh (John 1:14). In the wilderness, the manna could not be stored up, but had to be collected fresh each morning; for that which remained after eating corrupted and had to be destroyed. True Israelites likewise, should gather their "manna" day by day; their eating should be continual and consistent.

On the sixth day, however, there was a difference. On that day, Israelites were commanded to gather twice as much in order that they might rest on the Sabbath

day. Miraculously, the manna gathered on that day, kept fresh for two days. How significant is the symbol. There is a need to gather manna daily for six days, but on the seventh, those who have gathered sufficient previously, will be sustained; speaking of life eternal (see 1 Pet. 1:22-23).

In addition to the manna gathered from day to day, Aaron was commanded to lay up an omer of it in a pot, and to conceal it from view in the Ark of the Testimony (Exod. 16:32-33). There it remained for centuries, miraculously preserved, speaking of incorruptibility. In fulfilment of the type, there is concealed in the Lord Jesus, the antitypical Ark, a golden pot containing a full measure of manna (incorruptibility and life) which will be given to those "who overcome." The eating of that manna, at the Lord's return, will confer immortality on the eater. See *The Hidden Manna in Eureka Vol. 1.*

"And will give him a white stone" – It was the custom, in the days of the Apostles, to vote in judicial trials with either a white or black pebble; the former for acquittal and the latter for condemnation. From this ancient custom there has arisen the saying that one has been "black-balled." Paul in Acts 26:10 makes reference to this custom, saying according to the Greek text, "When they were put to death, I paid my pebble against them." A white stone was also the symbol of victory in the Grecian games. Thus, in the Apocalypse the white stone represents victory and acquittal at the Judgment Seat.

"And in the stone a new name written" – The call of the Gospel is designed to separate a people "for the name" of Yahweh (Acts 15:14). At baptism, a person is inducted into that name (Matt. 28:19), and proceeds to walk "in it" (1 Thess. 1:1). But whether he successfully manifests that name will be revealed at the Judgment Seat if he is given the "white stone" of acquittal and victory. He will then be granted the "glory of God" (Rom. 5:2), even "divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4), being inscribed with the Name of Yahweh (Rev. 3:12). Therefore, this "name" is said to be inscribed in the "stone" of acquittal and victory.

"Which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" – The name is said to

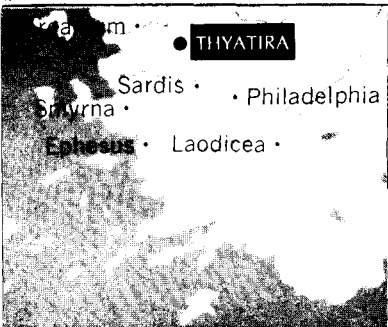
be “new.” The Greek word *kainos* means new in significance and understanding, not “new” in point of time which would be *neos*. The further statement that “no man knoweth” it saving “he that receiveth it” must likewise be understood in the sense of the word “knoweth.” Here it is the Greek word *oida*, to see or perceive fully. Its use is indicated in John 8:55 “Ye have not known Him” (*ginosko*), begun to know experimentally, “but I know Him” (*oida*) i.e. “know Him perfectly.” We know the divine name academically, and perhaps in measure experimentally, now; but the full revelation of it remains for the future, when those who gain the victory over trial and tribulation, will be granted divine nature.

THYATIRA: THE ENDANGERED ECCLESIA

(Vv. 18-29)

The dramatic circumstances which led to the formation of the Ecclesia in Thyatira are revealed in Acts 16. Paul, at Philippi, met Lydia, who was from Thyatira, and perceiving that she was a devout woman, engaged her in conversation upon the Truth. Shortly afterwards, she was baptised. Lydia doubtless took the gospel back to Thyatira, and “with her household,” formed the nucleus of the Ecclesia that was established in that city.

Further impetus was given to the work of the Truth in this place when Paul visited Ephesus, for he continued disputing in the school of one Tyrannus for some two years, so that “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:8-10). Among these must have been many from Thyatira, a town lying between Pergamos and Sardis.



Unfortunately, “the ecclesia among the Thyatirans became an arena upon which two classes of leaders displayed themselves. The one class was characterised by a more abundant love, service, faith, and endurance in the days of John, than in the days when they were originally constituted the Star in Thyatira; while the other class was characterised by the idolatrous, showy, and murderous wife of Ahab, “the woman Jezebel,” who slew the prophets of Yahweh. The former were the Antipas in Thyatira whose devotedness sustained the truth against the machinations of all its enemies, heretical or pagan. Their “love” was not like that of the opposition – a love of “divine things” as far as agreeable to their animal instincts, and compatible with their worldly prosperity and peace. The love of the Antipas was the fulfilling of the law; the doing whatsoever Jesus had commanded, by which they evinced that they were his real friends” (Eureka).

Ancient Thyatira stood some forty-eight miles east of Pergamos. Today it is known as Akhisar, or “white castle” because of the ruins of an ancient castle in its vicinity. Apart from this, there is little of antiquity in the modern city. The ancient city was noted for its trade guilds, one such being the Guild of the Dyers for which Thyatira was famous (cp. Acts 16:14). Pagan religions flourished in the ancient city, and their days of celebration were quite famous. The excavations of archaeologists suggest that every skilled worker was a member of a union, and as such, was expected to support his association. The tendency, therefore, would be to compromise religion to that end, and it is this spirit of compromise that Christ condemns in his letter to the Ecclesia. The conditions that he warns against might well have been induced through these trade requirements.

The message can be divided into:
 Commendation – V. 19;
 Condemnation – V. 20;
 Counsel – V. 25;
 Challenge – Vv. 26-27.

VERSE 18

“And unto the angel of the Ecclesia in Thyatira write” – It is suggested that Thyatira signifies *Continual Sacrifice*, a Judaistic concept of worship, comprising the “depths of satan” (v. 24).

"These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass" — See note Ch. 1:14,15. Eyes in this state suggest anger; anger induced by what the Spirit saw in the Ecclesia in Thyatira. Feet like brass, are feet ready to tread down in judgment. The introduction, therefore, is ominous, but appropriate to the message delivered. See Vv. 20-23, and verse 27.

VERSE 19

"I know thy works" — As in Ephesus (cp. note on v. 2), there seems to have been a resting upon "works" in the Ecclesia in Thyatira, as though that justified it condoning the Jezebel class (v. 20).

"Charity, service, faith and thy patience" — The Lord knew the extent of all of these virtues, and commended the Ecclesia for them. "Service" is *diakonian*, the service of an attendant or deacon, and suggests the readiness of the Ecclesia to act in that capacity. "Patience" is *hupomone* and signifies an abiding under, and is sometimes rendered *endurance*. In spite of controversy within, the Ecclesia faithfully gave itself to the tasks before it.

"And thy works; and the last to be more than the first" — The R.V. renders: *and that thy last works are more than the first*. There was no slackening off in work, but rather an increase and development in it. All that was very good, and the Ecclesia is commended for it, but, unfortunately, it justified itself by works rather than applying itself to other matters of greater importance, resulting in the conditions such as are listed in the subsequent verses. They speak of a growing evil among this otherwise virile Ecclesia.

VERSE 20

"Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee" — The Greek omits a few things. The failings urged against Thyatira were not trivial.

"Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel" — Symbolically, a woman represents a religious community (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 17:5). The indictment levelled against the eldership in Thyatira was that it tolerated in fellowship a group

described as "that woman Jezebel." Doubtless, the elders thought that they could "contain" the influence of this group in the midst of the Ecclesia, but as the Apocalypse reveals, from small beginnings "Jezebel" developed into that system known as "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots." Jezebel, or *Isabel* (to give its modern form), is a conjunction of two particles which signify *she dwells not*, and from this derivation, her name is said to signify *chaste, free from carnal connection*.

But, in fact, the Jezebel of the O.T. was a most licentious woman, with all the tawdry arts of wantonness. She was the daughter of a king, and therefore of a high social standing; she possessed tremendous ability, outstanding intellect, and indomitable willpower; she was an ardent idolater, a dominating wife, and, as was shown in the drama of Naboth, a treacherous schemer. Moreover, she had the courage to stand up to Elijah. The record shows that she was as incapable of remorse as of fear. She was proud, and loved personal adornment. In spite of the death of her husband, she refused to acknowledge her widowhood (cp. Rev. 18:7), and to the last defied Yahweh, and Jehu who was appointed to administer the divine sentence upon her (2 Kings 9:31). But she suffered a terrible fate, and died a frightful death: she was flung from the window by some of her previous admirers, to be speared by the soldiers of Jehu, trodden under foot by his horses, and consumed by hungry dogs that were waiting for her flesh.

Those who made up the eldership of Thyatira should have known all this, but *they did not fulfil the will of Yahweh as completely as did Jehu*, even though the record reveals that the latter also experienced judgment because he failed to heed the law of Yahweh "with all his heart" (2 Kings 10:31). Yahweh began to "cut Israel short" (v. 32), and the implications of this message to the Ecclesia at Thyatira was that it likewise would be cut short if it failed to amend its ways.

"Which called herself a prophetess" — Jezebel was introduced into the midst of Israel by Ahab, who set up for her a centre of worship in Samaria (1 Kings 16:32-33). She supervised the numerous false prophets that were dedicated to the worship of Baal (1 Kings 18:19), and

therefore assumed the position of "prophetess," or teacher. The community within the Ecclesia in Thyatira did likewise. It was active in setting forth its false doctrine, and so undermining the truth.

"To teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" — See notes v. 14. "Fornication" suggests unfaithfulness; "to eat things sacrificed unto idols" is to defy Apostolic teaching (Acts 15:29). The record makes reference to "the whoredoms of Jezebel" (2 Kings 9:22), by which is meant the false religion she introduced into the nation.

VERSE 21

"I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not" — The Jezebel of the O.T. had ample opportunity to change her ways. She knew of the miracle of the Mount Carmel sacrifice, and had witnessed the power of Yahweh as manifested through Elijah; but this only made her more determined to follow her course of action. So, also with the heretics in Thyatira. Probably the eldership had remonstrated with the leaders of the Jezebel class, and had endeavoured by argument and action to restrain its activities. But if so, it was in vain. There was no evidence of change of heart, "the Son of God, with eyes like unto a flame of fire," would move against the group.

VERSE 22

"Behold, I will cast her into a bed" — This describes a bed of anguish or tribulation. In other words, the scene of the sin will become the scene of the punishment.

"And them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation" — Both the leaders of the sect, and their followers would be put under extreme pressure.

"Except they repent of their deeds" — See note Ch. 2:5. The heretics of Thyatira were consistent in that their deeds reflected the influence of their doctrines.

VERSE 23

"And I will kill her children with death" — Judgment was not only administered upon Jezebel personally, but

upon her offspring as well (2 Kings 10:1-7). The circumstances should have constituted a warning to the eldership on Thyatira. Jehoshaphat joined affinity with the house of Ahab (2 Chron. 18:1), by marrying his son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel (2 Chron. 21:4-6). The union was disastrous for Judah, for it saw the introduction of false worship, so causing "the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto" (2 Chron. 21:11). Divine judgment, therefore, reached forth to bring death to the grandchildren of Jezebel (2 Chron. 22:7-10; 23:13-14). The warning of the Spirit to the elders in Thyatira was that similar judgment would reach forth to all the adherents of the Jezebel class, as well as those who joined affinity with it.

"All the ecclesias shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts" — The judgment that would come upon the Jezebel class would demonstrate to all that the penetrating eyes of the Son of God sees beyond the facade of hypocrisy to motives within (v.18). He is able to search that which is hidden from normal sight: the reins and hearts. The *reins* are the kidneys, which normally separate and expell the poisons from the body. They are considered as the seat of longing and desire, of emotion and affection. They were always offered in sacrifice (Lev. 3:4), because the longings, desires, emotions and affections should always be towards Yahweh and His truth. The reference before us seems to be a citation of Psalm 7:9, and this verse should be compared with Heb. 4:12-13 which speaks of the penetrating vision of he who is described as "The Word of God." The *heart* was considered as the seat of intellect and reason. Christ searches both feelings and intellect with penetrating vision that sees beyond all shams and disguises.

"I will give unto every one of you according to your works" — There is no injustice with God or with Christ. A careful discrimination would be made of those in Thyatira, and judgment would be administered according as each deserves. See Rev. 20:12-13; 22:12. Though we cannot obtain justification by works, or buy our way into the Kingdom through such means, we must build into our lives the characteristics of the Lord if we desire to find approval. See note — Rev. 19:8.

VERSE 24

"But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira" — The eldership, and many of the members of the Ecclesia in Thyatira, had not succumbed to the seductions of Jezebel.

"As many as have not this doctrine"— The teaching of Jezebel, described in v. 20.

"And which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak" — The supposedly deep things taught by the adversary, which were subversive of the Truth. These "depths of Satan" comprise the "science falsely so-called" of 1 Tim. 6:20.

"I will put upon you none other burden" — The Lord would put upon them no other burden than that which he had already stressed: the ejection of those errorists whom they had tolerated until that point of time.

VERSE 25

"But that which ye have already hold fast" — Whilst the elders were called upon to eject the heretics, they were to carefully nurture those who held the Truth in righteousness (v. 19).

"Till I come" — The phrase in the Greek is *an heko*. *An* is a conditional particle denoting supposition, wish, uncertainty, possibility. It marks the time of coming as uncertain. Hence it is rendered by the Diaglott: *till I may have come*. The Ecclesia was exhorted to labour on with the prospect of the Lord's coming always in view.

VERSE 26

"He that overcometh" — The Ecclesia was under challenge from the increasing belligerency of the Jezebel class, so that there was a need of this challenge.

"And keepeth my works" — The word "keepeth" is *tereo* and signifies *to guard from loss or injury*. The "works" that the Lord describes as his own, are those that he commands and requires, and for which he himself is noted. There are certain works which he will repudiate at his return (cp. Matt. 7:21-27).

"Unto the end" — See Heb. 3:6. This is not the end of life, but the accom-

plishment of the objective set before one. The word is *telous* and is from *tello* which signifies *to set out for a definite point or goal*. The objective set before believers, is the manifestation of God in their characters. This can only be accomplished in Christ (cp. Heb. 7:11; 3:14; 6:8,11).

"Will I give power over the nations" — Cp. Rev. 5:9-10; 20:6; Dan. 7:27.

VERSE 27

"He shall rule them with a rod of iron" — To rule¹ is *poimaino*, *to tend as a shepherd*. The phrase is identical with that of Psalm 2:9 as expressed in the Septuagint. Rulership in the Age to come will involve educating and guiding people that they might worship Yahweh acceptably. The experiences of life today help equip believers for that purpose (cp. Heb. 5:2-3). The shepherds (cp. Jer. 3:15 where the word *shepherd* occurs according to the Hebrew) will use a "rod of iron," for they will be inflexible in their discipline.

"As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers" — Brother Thomas places these words in parenthesis, and renders them in the present tense thus (*as the potter's clay vessel it is breaking to pieces*). He identifies the "it" as the Image of Daniel 2, and interprets the verse as teaching that whilst the Image seen by the king is breaking to pieces under the impact of the "stone" power, the nations will be "fed," "tended," or "ruled" with a rod of iron.

"Even as I received of my Father" — The Lord received power from the Father to exercise this purpose. See Matt. 28:18; Psalm 110.

VERSE 28

"And I will give him the morning star" — The "morning star" is a symbol of the Lord Jesus (Rev. 22:16). It appears to be a reference to Venus which at some seasons of the year shines forth beautifully just before morning, as the harbinger of the day. The appearance of the Lord Jesus in the political heavens, as the "morning star" of Rev. 22:16, will herald the dawn of a new era (Mal. 4:2). The saints will be made equal

unto the angels (Luke 20:36), who, at the dawn of creation, were described as "morning stars" (Job 38:7). Those who overcome, will be "given the morning star," in that they will be made one with him (John 17:21) in the Age to come, and will shine forth from the political heavens of the future as stars of

glory (Dan. 12:3; 1 Cor. 15:41). Their appearance there will herald a new "day" and order for the nations (2 Sam. 23:4).

VERSE 29

"He that hath an ear" — etc. See note verse 7.

CHAPTER THREE

MESSAGES TO SARDIS, PHILADELPHIA AND LAODICEA

Of the three Ecclesias mentioned in this chapter; one was dead (Sardis), one was alive (Philadelphia), and one was ignorant (Laodicea). Advice is given to each as to what should be done in their individual circumstances.

SARDIS: THE DEAD ECCLESIA

(Vv. 1-6)

Sardis was once a great and splendid city, the renowned capital of Croesus and the rich kings of Lydia. It was about thirty-three miles to the south of Thyatira. Once the wealthiest city in the world, it is today in ruins, though they testify to its ancient reputation and influence. The acropolis was built on a steep spur of Mt. Tmolus about 800 feet above the plain where the city proper was built. Much of its wealth was derived from the gold found in the sand of the Pactolus river which traversed the ancient city, and Sardis is famous for issuing the first gold and silver coins struck in antiquity. A famous temple of Cybele, similar to Diana, was situated there. In A.D.17, during the reign of Tiberius, the city was destroyed by earthquake. The emperor remitted the city's taxes and rebuilt it, but it never recovered its former glory. It had a name to live, but its previous splendour was no more, so that the Lord's message was appropriate to the history of the city as well as that of the Ecclesia. Modern Sart (as the Turks call Sardis) which is a little distant from the site of the ancient city, is but a village.

The message to Sardis can be divided into:

- Commendation — Vv. 2,4;
- Condemnation — Vv. 1,2;
- Counsel — Vv. 2-3;
- Challenge — V. 5.

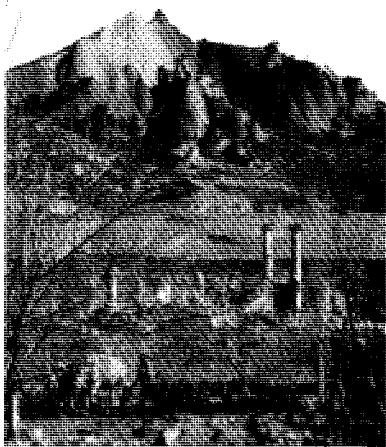
VERSE 1

"And unto the angel of the Ecclesia in Sardis write" — It is said that Sardis signifies *Escaping ones*. As an Ecclesia, the Lord's message reveals it to have been:

In high repute — but in actuality, dead (v. 1).

One that promised much; but performed little (v. 2).

One that had no error, but also no warmth (v. 3).



"These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars" — See notes Ch. 1:4,20. The "dead" Ecclesia in Sardis needed the invigoration of the spirit, so that the introduction was appropriate to the message.

"I know thy works" — The scope of the works is expressed in the words that follow.

"That thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" — In this statement, "and" should be rendered as *but*. Moffatt translates: *You have the name of being alive, but you are dead*. The Ecclesia was high in reputation before men, but not in the sight of God. It is significant, that in this message, the Lord does not specify any prevailing form of error or false doctrine, and it is probable that the Ecclesia was too apathetic to care. The Ecclesia seemed large and lively to others, yet that was but a facade that hid a corpse. It was dead spiritually.

VERSE 2

"Be watchful" — This is rendered by Bro. Thomas as *"become watchful."* The word "watchful" is *gregoreo*, to keep awake. This suggests a spiritual alertness, the very reverse of that spiritual sleepiness against which the Apostle warns (1 Thess. 5:6-7). It is interesting to trace the use of this word throughout Scripture. Believers are exhorted to be watchful:

(1)—Because they know not the time of the Lord's coming (Matt. 24:41; 25:13; Mark 13:35,37).

(2)—In order to guard against temptation (Matt. 26:41; Mark 14:38).

(3)—So as to recognise error (Acts 20:31).

(4)—In prayer (Col. 4:2).

(5)—In view of prophetic signs (1 Thess. 5:6).

(6)—To obtain a blessing (Rev. 16:15).

(7)—To receive the reward (Luke 12:37-38).

"And strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die" — The little life that remained in the Ecclesia would expire if the eldership did not wake up.

"For I have not found thy works perfect before God" — The Greek is better rendered as the R.V.: *no works of thine*, thus giving a more definite emphasis. "Perfect," according to the best texts, is

pepleromena, and signifies fulfilled. This suggests that certain vows had been made by the eldership which had not been carried out (see Ecc. 5:4). Though active in so many avenues of labour, though possessing a name praised by so many, the Ecclesia had not performed that which God required. "God" in the text is *mou Theos* or *my God* (see R.V.), as though as to contrast the indifference of the believers in Sardis with the manner in which the Lord fulfilled his vows before Yahweh.

"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard" — In this phrase *has received* is in the perfect tense; *heard* is in the aorist tense. The meaning then is, You have received the truth as a permanent deposit; it remains with you whether you regard it or not. The Ecclesia in Sardis was called upon to recall the sacrifice and labour by which the Truth was originally presented to its members, and, therefore, the great responsibility resting upon them to maintain its principles. To remember the lessons of the past, is always important. See note Ch. 2:5.

"And hold fast and repent" — There was a need for the Ecclesia to hold fast to that which it had, and to "repent." This word, *metanoco* signifies to *change one's mind and purpose*. It urges a different outlook and walk. God requires more than sorrow; He desires action.

"If therefore thou shalt not watch" — If you ignore this warning and remain asleep to your responsibilities.

"I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" — There is a warning threat in these words. They imply that the Ecclesia would be visited with divine judgment in consequence of its spiritual apathy. Evidently this took place, for there is no Ecclesia in Sardis today. How the warning was fulfilled is not revealed; but in some way, Christ influenced the course of Sardian history, and this Ecclesia of repute became defunct. Sardis itself, once the wealthiest city of the world, is today but an ignoble village.

VERSE 4

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis" — The Greek omits *even* but includes *but* before the statement: *But thou hast a few names in Sardis* (R.V.).

This was the redeeming feature in this otherwise dead Ecclesia. Notwithstanding the general laxity of the Ecclesia, there was a little strength, and Yahweh was not unmindful of it. See 2 Tim. 2:17-19.

“Which have not defiled their garments” — From this statement, it is obvious that baptised believers are accounted as already clothed in some way. Why is it then, that elsewhere they are described as being given clothing in the future (Ch. 7:11; 19:8)? The word here is *himatia*, the plural of *himation* from *heima* signifying *to put on*. The plural form of the word seems to refer to the full range of clothing that is put on, whilst the singular form relates to the outer cloke or mantle. The analogy is taken from the investiture of the priests (see Lev. 8:6-9). They were first washed with water, and then clothed with each garment, first the coat, then the girdle, until, finally, the linen mitre was placed upon the head as a crown of glory. The investiture, therefore, was gradual, and took time. So it is also in the antitype. Baptism is a preparation for clothing, and whilst the garments of salvation are put on one by one, the complete clothing, with its crown of glory, awaits the approval of the candidate at the Judgment Seat (see notes Ch. 1:13). The brethren in Sardis had been partly clothed when they put on Christ at baptism; but most of them had permitted their garments to become soiled, and as such, they would not be permitted to walk with Christ completely clothed in white. This seems to underline the reason why different forms of clothing are referred to in the Apocalypse. The first reference is to the “garment” of Rev. 1:13. This is the *poderes* from *pous*, *foot*, and *aro*, *to fasten*, and describes a garment that reaches from neck to foot, entirely covering the body. The phrase *a garment down to the foot* is a translation of the one Greek word *poderes*. The word is used in the Septuagint (the Greek O.T.) for the *chetoneth* or robe of the High Priest (Exod. 28:4), the “linen” of the angelic judge of Ezek. 9:2, and the “change of raiment” of Joshua (Zech. 3:4). In this latter place, instead of *a change of raiment*, the Greek Old Testament has *a long robe*. This long robe, reaching to the feet is designed to cover flesh entirely, and is a garment of status. It indicates that the wearer of Rev. 1:13

has been subjected to a change of nature (Zech. 3:4), and stands as judge (Ezek. 9:2), and high priest (Exod. 28:4). The second word, *himation*, is a diminutive of *heima*, and is used expressly of an outer cloke or mantle, though the plural *himatia* seems to be used for clothing in general. The investiture of these garments commences at baptism (see the use of the plural word in Rev. 3:4-5, 18; Rev. 16:15), but is completed at the Judgment Seat (Rev. 4:4). The singular form of the word, rendered *vesture* in Rev. 19:13, 16 relates to the outer mantle, or final article of dress, the *himation* proper. The third word used in *The Apocalypse* is translated “white robes.” The word is *stole* and relates to a stately robe, a long garment over the top of the other clothing, which completes the dress. The *stole* is the uniform of office; it indicates the high status of the one wearing it. It described the robe in which the angels at the tomb of the Lord were clad (Mark 16:5). Reference to the *stole* is found in Rev. 6:11; 7:9, 13, 14, and obviously relates to the status of the approved in the Age to come. Thus these robes are said to be “washed and whitened in the blood of the Lamb.” They doubtless can be identified with the white linen gowns of Rev. 19:8, 14; 15:6.

The verse before us, therefore, describes the garments put upon believers at their baptism, awaiting the final investiture at the Judgment Seat.

“They shall walk with me in white” — The emphasis in this statement is in walking with Christ, not walking in white. It speaks of unity with him. True saints are already clothed (Isa. 61:10); their garments being pure and unstained, must be kept in that state, then, in due time, their nature will correspond (2 Cor. 5:2-3). They will then be found walking in white with Christ.

“For they are worthy” — They will be acknowledged as such at the Judgment Seat.

VERSE 5

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment” — The best texts (see Diaglott, R.V.) read “He that overcometh shall *thus* be arrayed in white garments,” drawing attention to the promise of walking in company with Christ. The clothing commenced at bap-

tism will be completed at the Judgement Seat, and the clothed will be associated with the Lord.

"I will not blot out his name of the book of life" — To have one's name inscribed in this most important book (see references to it—Phil. 4:3; Exod. 32:32; Mal. 3:16) is necessary to salvation; but once there, we must guard against it being excised therefrom. The use of this symbol is doubtless based upon the custom of ancient times in which notable deeds were recorded in a book of remembrance for kings to consult when necessary (cp. Esther 6:1-3). The Scriptures speak of *books* and of *a book* (cp. Dan. 12:1; Rev. 20:12). The former is related to what might be called a "day book," in which the actions of saints from day to day are recorded; the latter might be described as the ledger, in which is found the final summing up. There are no such literal books, of course. The Spirit is the Remembrancer (John 14:26), and records all things in relation to the purpose of God. When God says, He will remember sins no more, it is equivalent to saying that they will be blotted out from the day book of records, leaving the account to our credit in the final ledger (cp. Isa. 43:25).

"But I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels" — To "confess his name" in this context, is to publicly proclaim that such a one is accepted. This will be done publicly before the Father Who will be in heaven, and the angels who will be on earth, and will be associated with Christ in the judgment (see Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8-9). The name to be confessed is the "new name" that will be bestowed upon the approved, as promised in Rev. 2:17. The Father's family name will be inscribed in the foreheads of all who are truly His (Rev. 14:1).

VERSE 6

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Ecclesias" — See previous notes, and ponder the importance of the messages so delivered.

PHILADELPHIA: THE BELOVED ECCLESIA (vv. 7-13)

Commendation unmingled with censure is extended to this Ecclesia. Philadelphia stands on the plain of Hermus, about

twenty-seven miles south-east of Sardis. In A.D. 17 it was destroyed by earthquake, but was soon rebuilt, and flourishes today. Little of antiquity is found in the city today. The area is volcanic in character, and so most ancient buildings have been destroyed. In contrast to the susceptibility of earthquake and destruction, the conquerors in Philadelphia were promised an abiding place in the Temple of God that will never be destroyed. The city was originally founded by Attalus II, who was given the name of Philadelphia, because of his loyalty to his elder brother, Eumenes II, king of Lydia. How significant! It teaches that believers should manifest loving loyalty to their "elder brother." Today Philadelphia is called Alashehir, or Alah-Shehir, the "City of God."

The message can be divided up into:

Commendation — vv. 8-10;

Condemnation — nil;

Counsel — vv. 11;

Challenge — vv. 12.

VERSE 7

"And to the angel of the Ecclesia in Philadelphia write" — Philadelphia signifies Brotherly love. The message reveals it to have been (1)—a comparatively small Ecclesia, but strong and vigorous in its approach to the Truth (v. 8); (2)—a fighting Ecclesia opposed to the "synagogue of Satan" (v. 9); (3)—an enduring Ecclesia, manifesting faith in the face of tribulation (v. 10).



A pillar of the "Church of St. John" rises above a modern roof in Philadelphia.

"These things saith he that is holy" — The *Diaglott* has the *holy one*, and thus bestows a title of Yahweh upon the Son (Isa. 43:3; 1:4; 10:17; Hos. 11:9; Hab. 1:12). In the Hebrew, the word comes from a root signifying *to be clean*, emphasising the moral excellence of Yahweh: a moral perfection revealed in the Son.

"He that is true" — The Greek *ho alethinos* signifies *the true one*, or the real, ideal and genuine, in contrast to the mere shadowy or typical. Christ is the real and ideal manifestation of all that was typified under the old dispensation. He is the *true* light foreshadowed by the typical light that shone from the beginning (John 1:9); the *true* bread typified by the manna (John 6:32), the *true* vine anticipated in the Old Testament (John 15:1). There are *true* worshippers in contrast to false (John 4:23); and the *true* God who demands our living loyalty and worship (1 John 5:20).

"He that hath the key of David" — To possess the key of a building is to have the right to it, and to possess the ability to open it to others. In Zechariah 12:8, the polity of the elect is styled *the house of David*, entrance to which is governed by the Lord. The *Key of David*, therefore, denotes authority in regard to the Kingdom of David which was, and will be, the Kingdom of God (cp. Isa. 22:22; 1 Chron. 29:11, 23; Luke 1:32-33; Acts 15:14-16). As David was a type of Christ (Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23; 37:24), the house of David is the typical designation of the aristocracy of the Kingdom (2 Sam. 7:11, 16; Ps. 122:5; Isa. 55:3).

"He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" — The Lord's authority in the use of the Key is absolute. See Christ's own comment: Matt. 16:19. This introduction is appropriate to the message that follows. See v. 8.

VERSE 8

"I know thy works" — The Spirit has nothing but commendation for the brethren in Philadelphia.

"Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" — In the R. V. these words are placed in parenthesis. For the use of the term, see 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3; Acts 14:27. There is nothing to be feared

from an earnest contention for the faith, if confidence is placed in Christ. He possesses "all authority" in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18; 1 Pet. 3:22), and can open a door of utterance for the preaching of the Word, in the most difficult of circumstances. Flesh (man) will not prevail against the power of the Spirit-word.

"For thou hast a little strength" — As noted above, the R. V. places the previous words in parenthesis, and so aligns *strength* with *works*. Some (such as Alford, Trench, etc.) omit the indefinite article, and render *thou hast little strength*, as signifying *you are few in number*. In contrast to the Ecclesia in Sardis, the Ecclesia in Philadelphia was small in numerical strength, but active and vigorous in the attitude of each member.

"And hast kept my word" — From the lips of the Lord, this is commendation indeed. See Christ's use of the same phrase in relation to the Apostles, in his prayer to the Father (John 17:6, 8).

"And hast not denied my name" — The Ecclesia had maintained the principles incorporated in the divine Name.

VERSE 9

"Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan" — The Greek *didomi*, here rendered *will make* signifies *give up* (see *Diaglott*). The R. V. has *I give of the synagogue of Satan*. Christ has the power to cause opponents of the Ecclesia to acknowledge the power of Truth. Here they are described as *the synagogue of Satan* as they are also in Ch. 2:9, indicating that division had occurred in Philadelphia resulting in two opposing communities, which the Spirit describes as the Ecclesia and the Synagogue. It is highly significant that the two Ecclesias of which no condemnation is recorded (Smyrna and Philadelphia), are also noted for their refusal to fellowship those described as the *Meeting* or *Synagogue Of The Adversary*. This is in contrast to the Ecclesias in Pergamos and Thyatira which are condemned for retaining in fellowship those who opposed the truth (cp. Ch. 2:14, 20).

"Which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie" — See note Ch. 2:9.

"I will make them to come and worship before thy feet" — The verb *will make* occurs twice in this verse in the

A.V., but in the Greek two entirely different Greek words are used. The former is *didomi* and means *give up*; here the word is *potero*, and signifies *to cause to do, to produce*, and therefore correctly rendered in the A. V. The Spirit had *given up* those of the synagogue of Satan, had abandoned them to their own delusions, as predicted in 2 Thess. 2:10: "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. . . . God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Today, the synagogue of Satan is found in orthodox Christianity, and the purpose of the Spirit ultimately, is to bring it into subjection to the Ecclesia, here described as "worshipping before thy feet." To *worship* in this context is to pay respects as to a superior, and to acknowledge the authority of such. See 1 Chron. 29:20. The time will come when an apostate Christianity will be compelled to submit to the Ecclesia in power with Christ (Rev. 14:6-7).

"And to know that I have loved thee" — What a wonderful testimony for an Ecclesia to receive. Philadelphia, the Ecclesia of Brotherly love, was beloved of the elder brother; and this the world will one day be compelled to acknowledge. See Isa. 60:14; 49:23. The attitude of the Ecclesia reflected the history of the city as indicated in its name (see *Introduction* above).

VERSE 10

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience" — The Greek *hupomone*, here rendered *patience*, signifies *an abiding under, endurance in the face of difficulty*. It is a word that occurs seven times in the Apocalypse: Rev. 1:9; 2:2; 3, 19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12, and, as we have seen in previous comments upon it, it is an attitude commended by the Spirit-word. The brethren in Philadelphia had manifested the endurance that the word of Christ advocated, and so were due for the reward of faith.

"I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" — In *Eureka* vol. 1, p. 380, Brother Thomas identifies this as a period of intense trial which broke out under Decius in A.D. 248, during which Christ-

ians were harshly persecuted. The term *earth* is used throughout the Apocalypse for the Roman empire (cp. Rev. 16:14).

"Keep" is *tereo* and signifies *to watch over, or preserve*, whilst "from" is *ek, out of*. This suggests not a removal of trial from them, but a deliverance out of the trial that would come upon them. They would be preserved in spite of the trials, for the Lord would watch over them.

VERSE 11

"Behold I come quickly" — The word *tachu* signifies *swiftly, unexpectedly, quickly*, and not necessarily immediately.

"Hold that fast which thou hast" — Surely this was the love of Christ. Cp. v.9; Col. 2:19.

"That no man take thy crown" — This word of warning reminded the brethren in Philadelphia that the possibility always exists of having the crown of victory figuratively snatched from them if they elected to follow man rather than the Word. "Crown" is *stephanos*, a coronal wreath, the crown of victory given to the successful contestants in the Grecian games. This "crown," however, is one that will not fade away (1 Pet. 5:4). See note on Ch. 2:10.

VERSE 12

"Him that overcometh" — Though the Ecclesia was commended as a whole, salvation is a personal issue, dependent upon the attitude of each individual.

"Will I make a pillar in the temple of my God" — The Temple was the abiding place of Yahweh in Israel, for in it was found His glory (1 Kings 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:19-20). Its entrance was guarded by two pillars called Yachin, *He shall establish* and Boaz, *Strength*; thus *He shall establish it in strength*. The two pillars represent the royal priesthood of Israel. They were of brass (flesh purified), ornamented at the top with "nets of checker-work, wreaths or *stephans*, of chain-work, pomegranates, and lily work, all of which were representative of things pertaining to the pillars" (*Eureka* vol. 1, p. 392). The wreaths suggest the coronal crown of victory; the pomegranates, fruitfulness through blood-shedding (the packed white seeds, and red juice of the fruit),

and the lily, purity and beauty. To be built into pillars expressive of such principles is to manifest them before God and man. Jachin speaks of priesthood, for by priestly mediatorship, mankind is established in unity with Yahweh; Boaz speaks of kingship, for wise rulership establishes a nation in strength. Both offices are combined in Christ (Zech. 6:13). Boaz was the ancestor of David (Ruth 4), and the Redeemer of Ruth and Naomi, so that the strength which the pillar commemorated is manifested in redemption. According to *Unger's Bible Dictionary*: "It has been convincingly shown that the names of these two columns stood for the initial words of dynastic oracles which were inscribed upon them . . . The Jachin formula may have been, 'Yahweh will establish (*yakin*) thy throne forever,' or something similar, and the 'Boaz' oracle may have run, 'In Yahweh is the king's strength,' or something of that sort."

"He shall go no more out" — cp. Rev. 21:27.

"I will write upon him the name of my God" — The Gospel is an invitation to individuals to separate from Gentilism and become "a people for the name" (Acts 15:14). To have the divine name of Yahweh inscribed upon one, is to constitute him a member of the family of God in glory (see John 17:21; Rev. 14:1; 2 Thess. 1:10; Rom. 5:2; 2 Pet. 1:4). Name confers authority, and the saints will exercise such in the age to come, as did the angel upon whom the name of Yahweh was conferred in the time of Moses (Exod. 23:21).

"The name of the city of my God" — This will constitute him a member of the body politic of the New Jerusalem, the Lamb's bride (see Rev. 21:9-11). See the significant names given to the literal city of the Age to come (Jer. 33:16; Jer. 3:17; Isa. 60:14; Zech. 8:3; Jer. 31:23 etc.).

"Which is new Jerusalem" — See note Rev. 21:2.

"Which cometh down out of heaven from my God" — True saints must be born from above. See John 3:3 (mg); James 1:17; 2 Cor. 5:2-4; Gal. 4:6: In that sense, they come down "out of heaven." See notes Rev. 21.

"And I will write upon him my new name" — In the Age to come, the Lord's

name will have new meaning for all who hear it, for they shall see him clothed with authority, and "name" is indicative of authority (Phil. 2:9; Eph. 1:21). In the millenium, divine authority will be conferred upon the conquerors of this age. See note on *new* — Rev. 2:17.

VERSE 13

"He that had an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Ecclesias" — Once again the message of Christ reverberates down the corridor of time.

LAODICEA: THE COMPLACENT ECCLESIA (Vv. 14-20)

Laodicea, the city of the seventh ecclesia addressed by the Spirit, lay to the south of Philadelphia. in the way of return to Ephesus. It will be found, therefore, upon an inspection of the map of Asia Minor, that the seven ecclesias lay in a kind of circular form, so that the natural progress was from one to another.

The ruins of Laodicea shew it to have been very large, situated in a volcanic region upon seven hills, and encompassing a large space of ground. Some notion may be formed of its former greatness and glory from three theatres and a circus, the ruins of which remain, and one of which is very fine, as it was capable of containing above 30,000 men. In its apostasy, the ecclesia in this city became the metropolitan, or Mother Church, of sixteen bishopricks, yet it is now desolate. Thus we have in the ecclesia of the Laodiceans, in the fullness of its apostasy, a Mother of



Laodicea today—Only ruins!

Harlots sitting upon seven hills; and because of its spiritual misery; poverty, blindness, and nakedness, reduced, with the city of its habitation, to utter desolation and irrecoverable ruin.

Laodicea was often damaged by earthquakes, and restored by its own opulence, or the munificence of the Roman emperors. These resources finally failed, however, and the city became a scene of ruin.

Laodicea was so named in honour of Laodice, the wife of Antiochus II (B.C. 261-246) who rebuilt the city. In Roman times it was known as a banking city, and was famous for its money transactions. It was also noted for the beautiful soft wool, black in colour, that was grown by the sheep of the district; and also for its pagan worship, including a great medical school associated therewith, which specialised in an eye-and-ear ointment known as Phrygian powder that was compounded locally. Thus the message of the Lord took into consideration the local background of the Ecclesia.

The message can be divided into:

Commendation: nil

Condemnation: vv. 15-17;

Counsel: vv. 18-20;

Challenge: v. 21.

VERSE 14

“Unto the angel of the Ecclesia of the Laodiceans write” — Notice the margin “in Laodicea.” The name Laodicea has been given as signifying *Justice of the people*.

“These things saith the Amen” — The *God of Amen*, or faithfulness, is a title of Yahweh (Isa. 65:16), for whatever He saith shall be. It shall be established in Christ, for “all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Cor. 1:20). The living Christ is the guarantee that all that Yahweh has promised will be fulfilled (Acts 17:31).

“The beginning of the creation of God” — The creation of God comprises the Elohim of the Age to come (Luke 20:36), of whom Christ is the beginning. See Col. 1:15-19.

“The faithful and true witness” — See note on verse 7.

VERSE 15

“I know thy works” — The Spirit could properly assess the works of this Ecclesia; its members could not (v. 17).

“That thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot” — Both cold and hot drinks are refreshing; but lukewarm ones are nauseating. Compare Prov. 25:13 with Ps. 39:3. The Laodicean brethren were lukewarm, and such an attitude is an insult to the Lord (cp. Mal. 1:6-10): an affront to the “faithful and true witness” who had died on their behalf.

VERSE 16

“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot” — Their attitude was insipid and sickening.

“I will spue thee out of my mouth” — “Will” is *mello* in Greek, and is not a declaration of immediate, inexorable doom, but can imply a stay of proceedings on certain conditions. It is better rendered: *I am about to spue thee out*, i.e., if there be no change.

VERSE 17

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” — Laodicea was a very affluent, wealthy city, and evidently the members of the Ecclesia were also. Instead of using this wealth to serve God better (cp. 1 Tim. 6:17 ct. 1 Tim. 6:9-11), they used it to indulge themselves. From this they came to lay undue emphasis upon material possessions to the exclusion of spiritual virtues. Ecclesias, today, exist in a similar environment. Significantly, the Ecclesia in Laodicea in its attitude and boast repeated the sin of Israel (see Hos. 12:8).

“And knowest not” — This was the real ground of Christ’s rebuke. The ecclesia was blind to its true state. It saw in material possessions a measuring stick of value, forgetting that these things mean nothing in the sight of Him with whom we have to do. The spiritual blindness of brethren was their real sin. With all their fine possessions they did not comprehend how wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked they were in the eyes of Christ. What a contrast to Rev. 2:9. Smyrna was an Ecclesia in tribulation and poverty, but is described as

"rich." The true criterion of real wealth will be made evident at Christ's return.

"That thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" — It is significant that a similar term is linked with Christ's message to the Ecclesias existing at his return (Rev. 16:15), implying that they will answer to a Laodicean state.

VERSE 18

"I counsel thee to buy of me" — Christ does not need our money, nor does he offer to sell on that basis. Nevertheless we must "buy" the things that he offers (see also Isa. 55:1). We do that by giving our time, thought and energy to the Lord in whatever way is open for us so to do. Those in Laodicea who imagined that they were rich are described as beggars by the Lord.

"Gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich" — This represents a tried faith, not merely faith in the abstract (1 Pet. 1:7). The Spirit thus suggests that the members of Laodicea should go out of their way, to purchase, a tried faith. They could only do that by daring something for the Truth.

"White raiment, that thou mayest be clothed" — See notes on v. 4. Laodicea was famous for a black woollen cloth (like that of the clergy today! — see note Zeph. 1:4); in contrast, the brethren of the Ecclesia were urged to sacrifice in order to be clothed with righteousness (Rev. 19:8).

"That the shame of thy nakedness do not appear" — See Rev. 16:15.

"And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" — Laodicea was noted for a medicant that acted as an eye-ointment. However, the spirit-word was the ointment they needed to "purchase" (cp. Matt. 13:44; 1 John 2:20, 27).

VERSE 19

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" — Cf. with the exhortation of Heb. 12:5-12. Yahweh treats members of Ecclesias as wise parents will their sons. As they will rebuke and chasten their children when it is needful, so also does God. But with Him it is done not only "in love" but in wisdom, and to the ultimate benefit of His chastened children. Let not such look upon the incidence of trouble as evidence that

Yahweh has abandoned them, but, rather, as evidence that He is interested in their wellbeing. Let them accept in faith that He knows what is best for their spiritual development at present, and respond accordingly.

"Be zealous therefore, and repent" — The verb, *zeleuo*, *be zealous* (found in the best texts) is akin to *zestos* rendered *hot* in v. 16. The Spirit urged the Laodiceans to heat up their ardour for the things of the truth, and to *repent*, or change their thinking and attitude.

VERSE 20

"Behold I stand at the door and knock" — "Knock is *kuruo*. It signifies much more than a tentative tap; it implies urgent rapping, so as to arouse those within. See Song. 5:2. The Spirit endeavoured to arouse the brethren of Laodicea by knocking at the door of their hearts, in order to awaken them to a full sense of responsibility towards Christ. In these last, Laodicean times, the Lord likewise urgently knocks, to awaken his brethren to the times in which they live (see Rev. 16:15, where *watheth* signifies *to be awake*).

"If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me" — To sup with one suggests communion (see Matt. 18:20; John 14:23; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; 11:20, 23-24), and honour (Luke 12:36). Christ, as the "bread of life" invites whosoever will, to partake of true communion with him now, in anticipation of feasting with him in the great celebrations of the future (Matt. 8:11; 22:1-13; Luke 13:28; Isa. 25:6-9).

VERSE 21

"To him that overcometh" — The appeal was to the hidden minority in Laodicea.

"Will I grant to sit with me in my throne" — These words are preliminary to the vision that follows in the next chapter. See also the promise of Rev. 2:26; 20:4; 22:5; Matt. 19:28; 2 Tim. 2:12.

"Even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" — These words are preliminary to the vision of the next chapter, in which John saw a "throne in heaven" (Rev. 4:2). This throne, though occupied by Christ, constitutes the "throne of Yahweh" (cp. Jer. 3:17).

VERSE 22

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Ecclesias”—This

repeated admonition, shows that what is said to each is applicable to all who study this Apocalypse.

FINAL NOTE

The messages to the Ecclesias, together with the Lord's oft-repeated appeal: “He that hath an ear, let him hearken . . .” emphasises two important principles: that the status of Ecclesias is not static; and that individuals do not have to succumb to their personal environment. The status of Ecclesias can vary according to circumstances. The ecclesia in Ephesus could recover its “first love” if it applied the exhortation of the Lord; whereas, it is obvious, that the love of Philadelphia must have waned, for there is no Ecclesia there today. Let Ecclesias take the warning to heart today, at a time when Christ is at the door.

The messages of the Lord also reveal that individuals do not have to succumb to their individual environment. The faithful minority is urged to “strengthen the things that remain,” to become a witnessing group in the particular ecclesia where they may be found, and to so testify to the teaching and practise of the Truth as to provide an example to others to act similarly.

It is significant that the messages close with the appeal: “Behold I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

The verse makes reference to (1)—the waiting Christ; (2)—the closed door; (3)—the opened door; (4)—the entrance and the feast.

It is significant that the appeal is to the individual: to “any man.” Christ knocks at the door of the hearts of individuals. He desires entrance thereto, and supplements his knocking with his voice of appeal. It is heard in the words of Scripture we have been studying. He calls that he might feast with “his friends.” To feast together is to share a common fellowship. Only those who heed the appeal of Christ, and open the door of their hearts to him, will find participation in that feast. To open the door of our hearts to Christ requires some exercise of effort on our behalf. We might understand all the symbolism of Revelation, and rejoice in the beauty of its message, but still keep the door closed. Conscious effort is required to open our hearts to Christ, to develop that “first love” which was lacking in the first ecclesia whom the Lord addressed.

Today, Christ knocks in a very audible manner. We hear the sound in the signs of the times. It is obvious that he is at the door, and he warns that he will only sup in the future age with those who he finds have opened the door of their hearts to his words, during his absence.

The message to Laodicea, can be linked with Christ's appeal to believers of today, recorded in Revelation 16:15. Both make reference to his coming as a thief, both reveal the possibility of spiritual nakedness on the part of those who have failed to hearken to his appeal. Both messages echo the exhortation of the Lord to the Apostles: “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.”

SECTION THREE

“The Things which shall be”

Comprising
**THE APOCALYPTIC OUTLINE OF HISTORY
CULMINATING
IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

Jesus Christ as the Triumphant One

Chapters 4 to 22



Chapters four and five provide an introduction to this section of The Apocalypse which covers the rest of the chapters. Our attention is first directed to a symbolic description of the Kingdom in its glory, and this is followed by the visions of the seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials and so forth, that depict events leading to this consummation. It may appear strange that the final picture should be given first, but it is the Spirit's method, not only in the book before us, but throughout the prophetic Scriptures.

This method of providing the ultimate picture first, indicates the emphasis that the Spirit places upon the final glory. It is as though it would exhort readers never to allow their spiritual vision of the final "joy set before them" to be deflected or dimmed by the difficult days that will precede its manifestation.

The section depicts the Lord Jesus Christ in relation to the Kingdom, and reveals him as the Triumphant One, victorious over his enemies. It is divided into seven sections, as set forth in the Analysis; with each section building on its predecessor, until the final consummation is reached in the establishment of the "new heavens and the new earth," with the manifestation on earth of the "new Jerusalem."

(1) INTRODUCTION

Chapters four and five comprise an introduction to the third section of the Apocalypse, which treats with "the things which shall be hereafter" (Rev. 1:19; 4:1). John is shown an open door leading into heaven, and is invited to ascend therein. In doing so, his attention is drawn to one enthroned in glory, to whom ascriptions of praise are directed by the resurrected and glorified redeemed (Rev. 5:9-10), and by the world at large (vv. 13-14). This obviously points to the consummation of the divine purpose, when God's throne and heavenly constitution, will be set up on earth, to the glory of His holy name and the wellbeing of humanity.

In this section of The Apocalypse, therefore, the final consummation of the divine purpose is first revealed, whilst, afterwards follows the revelation of events that lead to it. This is normal with the scheme of things presented in Bible prophecy. For example, Isaiah first draws a picture of Jerusalem in its glory (Isa. 2:2-4), and then proceeds to describe conditions and events that will precede that state. Again, Revelation 11:15 proclaims the reign of Christ on earth, whilst v. 18 describes how it will be established therein.

Why is this system used in prophecy? We suggest that it is in order to emphasise the importance of the final vision, and so aid to the development of a true faith (Heb. 11:1). If the ultimate purpose of Yahweh is kept always in mind, the incentive to attain unto it will be sustained, and the darkness of the way will not obscure the final vision of glory. Then the "sure word of prophecy" will become as described by Peter: "a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn" (2 Pet. 1:19).

Into what "heaven" was John taken (Rev. 4:1-2)? Certainly not into the atmospheric heavens above, to the dwelling place of God, where flesh does not enter (John 3:13), but into the symbolic and political heavens of the future, frequently referred to in The Apocalypse. The Scriptures refer to two

kinds of political "heavens"—the Israelitish and the Gentile. Both are related to the earth. The former, at present, are styled "the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph. 1:3; 2:6); the latter are styled "heavenlies" in which dwells "wickedness" (Eph. 6:12). At present the former wages a war of doctrine and principles against the latter (Eph. 3:10; 6: 12-13), in anticipation of the time when they shall eject them from their seats of power and "ascend up thither" to assume power over the nations as king-priests with Christ (Revelation 5:9-10).

In relation to Israel, Scripture refers to "three heavens," symbolising three developments of the divine purpose. The "first" are the Mosaic heavens, referred to in such passages as Deut. 32:1; Isaiah 1:2, 10; 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:7. These "heavens" were brought to an end in the destruction of the Jewish State in A.D. 70. The "second" are those yet to be established in the earth. They are referred to in Isaiah 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13, and are described as "new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The "third" comprise the new order of things on earth at "the end" of Christ's thousand years' reign, when the perfected Kingdom will be delivered up to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24).

Reference to this "third heaven" is found in Rev. 21:1 where "first" is better rendered "former," and there refers to the "second" heavens and earth. In the "third heavens," death itself will be abolished (v. 4), and a perfected kingdom will be given unto God that He might be "all and in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). Visions of that time were seen by Paul, according to his statement of 2 Cor. 12:2, in which he claims to have seen revealed things not permitted then for him to pass on to others.

The "heaven" of the two chapters now before us relates to the political order to be established on earth at the coming of the Lord. The call of the Gospel is to identify oneself with those "heavens" now, in anticipation of the time when they will be fully manifested in the earth at Christ's return.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE THRONE IN HEAVEN

The concluding promise of Chapter Three suitably introduces this vision (cp. the reference to the Father's throne in vv. 20-22 with the throne described in this vision). John is now shown a door that opens to heaven, and is invited to ascend therein. He sees a throne upon which one sits who is attended by four and twenty elders, and four living creatures. Encircling the throne is a rainbow, whilst before it are seven lamps of fire, and a sea of glass. In all, the chapter reveals seven distinct characteristics of the throne which it introduces. The vision, in its completeness, symbolises the political order of the future Kingdom of God on earth. It is not a vision of heaven as it exists now, or did exist in the days of John, but part of the section of the Apocalypse designed to show "things which must come to pass" (Ch. 4:1).

VERSE 1

"After this"—This statement commences a new vision. It also is an indication of the time-fulfilment of it. The prophetic aspect of the Laodecian epoch (the last-mentioned Ecclesia of the previous chapter) extends to Christ's second coming (cp. Rev. 3:18 with 16:15), "after which" the throne of God will be set up on earth.

"I looked, and, behold, a door was opened"—The expressions used denote wonderment, indicating something unexpected and startling in its appearance. In this case, it was an open door leading into heaven. A door is an entrance. The one John saw provided entrance into the political heavens. At present, this is closed to believers, for they are a separated community, taken "out of the Gentiles" (Acts 15:14; John 17:16), and existing as "strangers and pilgrims" in the world (1 Pet. 2:11). Indeed, their relationship to God is dependent upon this separateness (see 2 Cor. 6:17-18). However, Christ's promise to those who overcome, is that they will be elevated to positions of "power over the nations" at his return (Rev. 2:26). To that end, a door, or entrance, to the political heavens will be opened, and the approved will be invited to occupy positions of authority over the nations (Rev. 5:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:12). The crisis of Armageddon will result in the door to the political heavens being opened to the saints (Zech. 14:1-5).

"In heaven"—The Greek text has the definite article: *the* heaven. The heaven

referred to is that described in Isa. 65:17-18: the new world order to be set up at Christ's return. "Heaven" is referred to over fifty times in *The Apocalypse*, but in the majority of cases, the term is applied symbolically to the political heavens. Thus the "heavens depart" (Rev. 6:14); a woman gives birth to a son in heaven (Rev. 12:1); war flares out between Michael and the dragon in heaven (Rev. 12:7); a temple is seen in heaven (Rev. 14:17, ct. Acts 17:24); armies march to war in heaven (Rev. 19:11, 14); the heavens flee away (Rev. 20:11); and so on. The call of the Gospel is to ascend into "the heavens in Christ" now (Eph. 1:3; 2:6), in anticipation of doing so politically at Christ's return (Rev. 2:26).

"And the first voice which I heard"—This is the voice described in Rev. 1:10: the voice of the perfected, multitudinous Christ. The vision of the chapter before us, therefore, will be fulfilled after the resurrection and glorification of saints (Rev. 5:9-10).

"As it were of a trumpet talking with me"—The trumpet was sounded to call the people together for judgment or war see note—Rev. 1:10. The opening of the door for the redeemed to ascend into the political heavens requires the ejection of the present powers that be, and therefore "It shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship Yahweh in the holy mount

at Jerusalem" (Isa. 27:13).

"Which said, Come up hither"—The same expression is used in Rev. 11:12 for the elevation of the "two witnesses" to political power, indicating that the invitation of this chapter also is to political ascendancy. The "great earthquake" that took place then (Rev. 11:13), foreshadows the greater earthquake to take place at Christ's return (Rev. 16:18). John, as representative of the redeemed as a whole, accepts the invitation of the Spirit.

"I will show thee things which must be hereafter"—This is the key verse of this third section of *The Apocalypse*. It repeats what John was told in Rev. 1:1, 19. The things revealed to John in Patmos partly fulfilled the promise of John 16:13.

VERSE 2

"And immediately I was in the spirit"—There is no definite article in the Greek, therefore read: "I was in spirit." See notes Rev. 1:10. See also Rev. 17:3; 21:10.

"Behold, a throne"—The exclamation indicates that John's attention was first held by the appearance of the throne. The throne is the restored throne of David (Luke 1:32), called the "throne of Yahweh" (Jer. 3:17), and, in *The Apocalypse*, "the throne of God" (Rev. 7:10,15; 19:4; 22:1,3), for He, in the Son, will dwell among men on earth (Rev. 7:15; 21:3). In the past, the throne of David was "cast down" (Ps. 89:44), but it is to be "raised up" again (Acts 15:16).

"Was set in heaven"—The things here recorded are among those matters which John was told would be fulfilled "hereafter" (Rev. 1:1; 4:1). Hence "the heaven" of this chapter cannot relate to the atmospheric heaven above, for Yahweh's throne has been established in those heavens from time immemorial. The symbology suggests a scene of national judgment in the political heaven such as is described in the similar language of Daniel 7:9-14. The A.V. reads: "the thrones were cast down," but this is better rendered "the thrones were placed, set, or fixed." The R.V. renders, "the thrones were placed." The metaphor of placing thrones is borrowed from the custom of earthly judicatories, and particularly that of the Great

Sanhedrin, where the father of the consistory sat with his assessors seated on either side of him, in the form of a semi-circle, with the people standing before him (cp. Ps. 9:7; 122:5). That is the picture presented in the chapter before us. The redeemed already are in glory (vv. 8-11; Rev. 5:9-10); the Lamb has "prevailed" in judging the nations (Rev. 5:5); and the vision closes with praise being ascribed to the one upon the throne on the part of all upon the earth (Rev. 5:13-14). The description of the one upon the throne (a combination of jasper and sardine stones) suggests Divine judgment through the glorified Son of man (cp. John 5:19-27).

"One sat on the throne"—The picture presented is drawn from the vision seen by Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:26-28). He declares that he saw an occupied rainbowed-encircled throne, supported by the Cherubim, with the nations under them. A similar vision is now described by John. The statement, *One sat on the throne* is used throughout *The Apocalypse* as a title of Yahweh in manifestation as King (see Rev. 4:2,3,9,10; 5:1,7,13; 6:16; 7:10,15; 19:4; 20:11; 21:5). The One upon the throne is Yahweh manifested through the Son (Phil. 2:9-11; Zech. 14:9). In Psalm 2:4, Yahweh is given the title of *Yoshebh Bashshamayim*, literally *The Sitter in the Heavens* (cp. Ps. 93; 113:4-6; Isa. 40:22; 66:1-2), a title to be assumed by the Lord Jesus Christ when he returns to set up his Father's reign on earth.

The throne is described as "the throne of God" (Rev. 7:10,15; 19:4; 22:1,3) which is the title given to the "throne of David" (see 1 Chron. 28:5; Luke 1:32-33; Jer. 3:17), for manifested in His son, Yahweh will dwell among men on earth (Rev. 7:15) though corporeally. He will not leave His place in the heavens. In heaven, the Lord already sits upon the throne of his Father (Rev. 3:21), and, therefore, already can claim the title *Him that sits upon the throne*. The same throne is to be manifested on earth (Jer. 3:17), and the One seated thereon will be *God manifest in flesh*, in consequence of which it is declared that Yahweh shall be King over all the earth (Zech. 14:9). The "one upon the throne" is seen in conjunction with the Lamb (Rev. 5:6) because Yahweh is *only completely manifested in flesh crucified and glorified*. The Lamb, therefore, is the

active doer of all that is required, and as Son of Man Christ will make manifest the judgments written (see John 5:26-27).

VERSE 3

"And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone"—This depicts Christ as "God manifest in flesh." He is described as "the stone of Israel" (Gen. 49:24; Isa. 8:14; 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:4-9). His dual origin as both Son of God and Son of Man is symbolised in the stones here referred to. Jasper symbolises the Spirit. "A beautiful cerulean gem, clear as crystal, is the symbol of the Deity's spirit condensed into substance" (*Eureka*). The light and glory of the heavenly Jerusalem is represented by a Jasper stone (Rev. 21:11), the light of which is identified with the Lord Jesus (Rev. 21:23). The Sardine stone is "a carnelian, and so called from its colour, having a resemblance to that of flesh" (*Eureka*). It symbolises the fleshly descent of the Lord through his mother. This is shown by the name used to describe the gem. In Hebrew, the words *sardine* and *Adam* have the same consonants; and as, originally, Hebrew was written without vowel points, they then would have had identical appearance. "A Jasper and a Sardine Stone," therefore, symbolises the divine and human aspects of the Lord Jesus.

Both stones were found in the breastplate of the highpriest, and both are found in the jewels of the Apocalyptic Jerusalem. The Sardius was the first, and the Jasper the last, of the stones in Aaron's breastplate (Exod. 28:17,20), teaching that we begin with flesh, but can attain unto spirit. In that light, the application of these stones to the One upon the throne is most appropriate, because he is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last (Rev. 1:8; 2:8). In Hebrew, "Sardius" is *odem* signifying *redness*; "Jasper" is *Yashpeheth* signifying *Yah polishes*. Gesenius derives it from a root denoting *smoothness*. According to authorities, the Jasper can be of various colours including a "rich sky-blue" but the best gems are strictly opaque (Unger). Blue is the colour of heaven, and was used to teach the children of Israel the principles of God manifestation (Num. 15:38; Deut. 22:12).

Under the Law, the Jasper represented Naphthali (the last tribe in the order of march) whose name signifies

wrestling and prevailing (Gen. 30:8; 32:25,28). In *The Apocalypse*, however, the Jasper is the first stone (Rev. 21:19), and so identified with Judah (Rev. 7:5), whose name signifies *praise*. The combination suggests the thought that from *wrestling* and *prevailing* the redeemed will give themselves to *praise* (cp. Rev. 5:5).

Under the Law, the Sardius represented Judah, whereas in the New Jerusalem, it is the sixth stone, and represents the sixth tribe in the enumeration of Revelation 7, that is Manasseh (v. 6). Thus *praising* will lead to *forgetting* (the meaning of Manasseh—see Rev. 21:4).

All is fulfilled in Christ Jesus upon the basis of God manifestation.

"And there was a rainbow round about the throne"—The rainbow was given as the token of Yahweh's covenant with flesh (Gen. 9:11-16). It is seen refracted in falling rain as the sun breaks through stormclouds. The raindrops act as a prism, which separates the pure, white light of the sun into its seven basic colours. Here it is used as a symbol of Yahweh's purpose to establish peace on earth, with His glory overshadowing it, after the storm of Armageddon has expended itself.

Every detail of this symbol is significant. Seven is the covenant number, the number of completeness. The different colours suggest different manifestations of the complete glory seen in the sun. The sun is a symbol of Christ as the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2). The clouds represent the redeemed (Rev. 1:7; Heb. 12:1). The falling rain, the outpouring of Spirit, in teaching and power (Joel 2:23; Acts 2:15-21; Deut. 32:2; Ps. 72:6). In all, the rainbow is a complete symbol of the time when there will be manifested "glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and goodwill towards men." The rainbow was given to Noah as a symbol of God's covenant "for perpetual generations," or "generations of *olam*,"—the hidden period, or millenium (Gen. 9:12).

The A.V. declares that the rainbow was "round about" the throne. The expression denotes that it completely encircled it. This is in accordance with nature. Rainbows are completely circular; it is only our position on earth that seems to cut them in half so that only the upper arch is seen. If we were

elevated above the earth, the complete circle would be brought into view. Thus John's description is in accordance with nature, for he is describing the rainbow as seen from his elevated position in "the heaven." As a complete circle, the rainbow suggests eternal (never-ending) life, which is the physical aspect of God manifestation (2 Pet. 1:4). At present, the full glory and desirability of eternal life is partly hidden (1 Cor. 13:12), and we can join with the Queen of Sheba, in saying that "the half" has not been revealed to us (1 Kings 10:7). The future will reveal it in all its glory.

"In sight like unto an emerald"—In the breastplate of the highpriest, the emerald represented Reuben (Exod. 28:18). Reuben signifies *See a son!* (See Gen. 29:32). In the heavenly Jerusalem, however, the emerald represented Asher whose name signifies *Blessed* (Rev. 21:19). Combine the two thoughts, and the invitation suggested by the rainbow-encircled throne is to *see the son* as the channel of true *blessing*. A rainbow is made up of seven colours, but evidently, in this one, the green predominated proclaiming the message suggested above.

The bright green of the emerald is suggestive of the reviving effects of Christ's reign. The law and teaching of Christ going forth to mankind (Isa. 2:2-4) after the judgments of Armageddon, are represented as "rain upon mown grass" (Ps. 72:6). The effect of this "rain" will cause mankind (represented as "grass"—Isa. 40:6), to spring forth with renewed, healthy growth.

VERSE 4

"And round about the throne"—As in verse 3, the expression signifies to encircle.

"Four and twenty seats"—The Greek is *thronous*, the plural form of the word rendered *throne* in verse 2. As such, it indicates the delegated authority as well as the status of those seated thereon. They comprise the royal priesthood of the Age to come (Rev. 5:9-10). Their "thrones" will comprise the "thrones of judgment" to be "set" or established in the future age (Ps. 122:6).

"Upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting"—It is the intention of Yahweh to "restore the tabernacle of David as it was in the days of old" (Amos 9:11). The political order of the days of

David and Solomon, therefore, provide a pattern for the future. David divided the priests and levites into a series of twenty-four orders (1 Chron. 24:4; 25:1,31). Their duties were to minister to the people in all forms of religious service including teaching (2 Chron. 15:3), musical arrangements (1 Chron. 25:1,31), and so forth. The twenty-four elders, therefore, represent the royal priesthood of the Kingdom (Rev. 5:9-10; 14:3), as based upon the pattern of the Davidic arrangements.

"Clothed in white raiment"—The raiment represents the office, character and nature of the ones wearing it. It denotes a priestly community, righteous in character, and immortal in nature. The putting on of the raiment is a process that commences with a change of relationship at baptism (Gal. 3:24-28) and is completed with a change of nature at Christ's return (cp. Rev. 3:18; 16:15). The need for such a "covering" was dramatised and taught from the beginning when sin first made its appearance and mortality followed (Gen. 3:21; Lev. 23:28—"atonement" is literally *coverings* Isa. 61:11; Gal. 3:24-28; Rev. 3:4-8; Rev. 19:8). In Christ, a provisional "change of raiment" is received now; a permanent garment at His return (2 Cor. 5:2-4). See further notes at Rev. 7:14.

"And they had on their heads crowns of gold"—The word "crowns" is from the Greek *stephanos*, and signifies coronal wreaths such as were given as the symbol of victory in the Grecian games. The Grecian wreaths, however, were made of leaves which soon faded, like the glory they commemorated (cp. 1 Pet. 5:4). The ones referred to in the verse before us are made of gold, which speaks of the lasting nature of the victory. Gold is the symbol of a tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7), through which true and lasting victory can be obtained (1 John 5:4).

VERSE 5

"And out of the throne proceed lightnings, and thunderings and voices"—Lightnings and thunderings are the symbols of the Spirit's wrath and war (2 Sam. 22:14-15; Ps. 144:6; Zech. 9:13-14). As these are represented as proceeding from out of the throne, they, obviously, are directed by the one sitting thereupon. They symbolise the ultimatums, decrees, and declarations of war that shall issue forth from Christ against a disobedient

world (Rev. 10:3; 17:14; 19:11-14; Ps. 149:5-9; Mic. 4:3). "Lightnings, thunders and voices" were the means used by Yahweh to manifest Himself in awe-inspiring divine majesty at Sinai (Exod. 19:16). Israel submitted and promised obedience, and so entered into covenant relationship with Deity. Some nations will do so at Christ's return when they see the manifestation of His power at Armageddon (Isa. 60:9). The rest will be compelled to do so by war and conquest (Isa. 60:12). "Lightnings and thunders," therefore, represent the unleashing of divine power by which the nations will be overthrown (Zech. 4:6; 14:12). The *voices* issuing from the throne, can be identified with the decree of the multitudinous Christ instructing and commanding humanity (Ezek. 43:2). From Jerusalem shall go forth the word of Yahweh to all the world (Isa. 2:2-4).

"And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God"—The "seven spirits" represent the complete manifestation of the "one Spirit" through the Redeemed (see note—Rev. 1:4). The saints will be made "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36) who are described as "ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14). The "seven spirits," therefore, represent the complete, though diversified, manifestation of the "one spirit" (see note—Rev. 1:4), as revealed through the united "ministering spirits" of the Age to come (Heb. 2:5). They are shown in conjunction with the throne because it will be through the means of the Spirit that the nations will be brought into subjection to its rule (Zech. 4:6). The word "lamps" is from the Greek *lampades*, and signifies torches such as are fed by oil. Saints today, should be "as lights shining" being fed by the oil of the Word, in preparation of the time when they shall openly manifest the Spirit in the Age to come (Phil. 2:15-16).

David had an inner council of seven (1 Chron. 27:32-34) which assisted him in the governing of the nation by advising him in regard to matters of state, in recording events, in guiding the king's sons, supervising the army and priesthood, and so forth. This council of seven typed "the seven spirits" before the throne of Christ. The guidance and power of the spirit will ensure that all that is done by the Redeemed will be in accordance with Yahweh's will and

purpose.

VERSE 6

"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal"—The "seven spirits" act as intermediaries between the throne and the sea of glass, described as being "like unto crystal." The nations in their present state are represented as "a troubled sea, casting up mire and dirt" (Isa. 57:20). They are to be subdued unto Christ, and made subject to his law. Peace and righteousness will then replace the turmoil and trouble of today, so that "righteousness and praise shall spring forth before all the nations" (Isa. 61:11). The use of Scripture to represent nations as waters or seas (cp. Rev. 17:15) reveals a progression from one state to another. From the "troubled" conditions represented in such passages as Isa. 17:13; 57:20; Ezek. 26:3; Dan. 7:2-3, the nations will be subjected to the discipline of Christ so that their raging (Psa. 2) shall cease, and they will appear as "a sea of glass mingled with fire" (Rev. 15:2). The law of Yahweh from Zion (Isa. 2:2-4) shall then cleanse them of impurity, making them as "a sea of glass like unto crystal." Though united under one universal government during the Millennium, the nations will retain their independent identities (Dan. 7:12). However, at the end of Christ's thousand years' reign, when sin and death are finally eradicated, independent nationalities also will cease, for all people will be incorporated in the perfected Israel whose kingdom lasts for ever (Luke 1:32-33). Therefore, at that epoch, the symbolic sea will cease: there will be "no more sea" (Rev. 21:1).

"And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts"—These "four beasts" are described as being "in the midst of the throne," and "round about" or circling the throne. They did not occupy the throne, but were closely associated with it as to be identified with it. They were "in the midst" of it in the sense that they were beneath the centre of it, and they encircled it in the sense that one of the four faces was seen in each direction facing outwards. They therefore occupy the same position in relation to the throne of the vision, as did the Cherubim seen by Ezekiel in his vision. He saw a throne with the "appearance of a man above upon it," that is above the

Cherubim (see Ezek. 1:25-27). This symbolised that the Cherubim were subject to the One upon the throne raised above them whose rule, they supported. The word *beasts* of Revelation 4 is an unfortunate translation. The A.V. describes the Cherubim seen by Ezekiel as *living creatures*. The word is *chaiyoth* in Hebrew, and is derived from a root signifying *life*, thus *creatures of life*. In the verse before us, "beasts" is given as a translation of *zoon* which is derived from *zoe* or *life*. The words *living beings* would better convey the idea than any other which could be employed. They are beings of *life* having attained unto eternal life. They are not to be confused with "the beast" of Rev. 13:1-2 where an entirely different word is used. There the word is *therion*, and signifies *wild beast*. In the Septuagint, *therion*, which stresses the bestial qualities of the animal, is never used for sacrificial animals. The "four beasts" or "creatures of life," like the twenty-four "elders," represent the saints in glory (Rev. 4:8-11; 5:9-10). However, whereas the elders are representative of the saints in the peaceful exercise of their sacerdotal functions, educating the mortals and ministering to them in their worship, "the four living ones represent the saints in co-operation with the Spirit carrying on the war to its victorious consummation" (*Eureka*, vol. 2, p.37). Afterwards, they will be active in governing the nations. Combined, the living beings and elders represent the kings and priests of the Age to come (Rev. 5:10).

But why should "four living creatures" be used to represent the saints in their military and civil administration? Because "four" is the number of perfect administration as exhibited in Israel. The twelve tribes marched out from Sinai organised in four divisions (Num. 2), and when they encamped, they did so in the same order, with the Tabernacle, and throne of Yahweh in Israel, in their very centre. This order foreshadowed the "foursquare" shape of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21:16) which is emblematic of the saints in glory (Rev. 21:9-10). At the head of the four divisions of Israel's tribes flew the standards of the principal tribes: Judah (a lion), Reuben (a man), Ephraim (a bullock) and Dan (an eagle) (Num. 2:3,10,18,25) Those four marching columns became the *four living creatures* of the desert, moving steadily forward in the name of Yahweh to conquer the Promised Land.

"Full of eyes before and behind"

—This denotes omniscience, and identifies the vision with the Cherubim seen by Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:4; 10:12). In the past, the angels acted as the "eyes of Yahweh" supervising conditions on earth (Gen. 11:5; 18:21; 2 Chron. 16:9; Dan. 4:17); in the future this work will be performed by the "glorified Redeemed, the "seven eyes" in conjunction with the Stone of Israel (Zech. 3:9) which constitute "the eyes of Yahweh, which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. 4:10). The eyes are represented as being "before and behind," that is, on all parts of the bodies of the four living creatures. In other words, there will be universal vigilance in the Kingdom of God. All things will come under the supervision of the throne, reported thereto by the "eyes" that will take in all things from every direction. This universal vigilance will lend itself to perfect government. "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more. . . and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isa. 30:20-21). Complete supervision will result in complete control.

VERSE 7

"And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle"—Collectively, the saints are represented in *The Apocalypse* as an encampment (Rev. 20:9). The four faces described by John, are identical to those described by Ezekiel as worn by the Cherubim (Ezek. 1). They represented the four standards of Israel. The standard of Judah was the Lion, that of Reuben was the Man, that of Ephraim was the Bullock, that of Dan was the Eagle. God is light (John 1:5), spirit (John 4:24), fire (Deut. 4:24). The ancients selected the lion, eagle, and bullock to represent those manifestations of Deity. The shining eyes, tawny gold-like colour, flowing mane, and resistless strength of the lion is descriptive of the velocity and irresistibility of light; the curved horns, the curling locks on the forehead of the bull or ox, and his relentless fury, is descriptive of the appearance and dreadful effects of fire; the lofty skimming of the eagle, suggestive of air in motion, is a fit representation of the Spirit. The face of a man is added because man is the medium through which Yahweh has chosen to represent Himself. Moreover, the Lion is represent-

ative of royalty, kingship; the calf or ox is the servant sacrificing himself for others; the man speaks of humanity; whilst the eagle draws attention to heaven. The four major prophecies, and the four Gospel records, portray Christ in these four particulars: as King (Isaiah and Matthew) as suffering Servant (Jeremiah and Mark); as the human Son of Man (Ezekiel and Luke); and as Divine (Daniel and John). In order, these faces present the thought: If you would rule (lion), you must serve (calf), and as you are flesh (man), you can only do so by God manifestation (eagle). Thus the faces emphasise the principle of God manifestation. See Ezekiel I for further details.

VERSE 8

"And the four beasts had each of them six wings about"—This identifies the beasts of Revelation with the seraphim of Isaiah 6:2-3, as well as with the cherubim of Ezekiel 1. "Seraphim" is derived from a verb meaning *to burn or consume*. When applied to the Redeemed, it reveals that their mission is to burn and consume all that is evil in the Kingdom of God (cp. 2 Thess. 1:8; Dan. 7:9,26). Why "six" wings? In spiritual numerics, six is the number of man (Rev. 13:18), for Adam was created on the sixth day. It is appropriate that the number of man should be associated with the symbol before us, because the four beasts have to do with man. They represent Deity manifested in flesh, and they will extend their power belligerently to conquer mankind in the Kingdom. Six wings each make twenty-four in all, and this identifies the beasts, or living creatures, with the elders. The military aspect of the saints (represented by the four beasts) will be joined with priestly functions, indicated by the number twenty-four. Part of the priestly functions will be that of judging mortals (Ps. 122:5). It is appropriate that six (the number of flesh) should multiply to twenty-four (the number of priestly judging), for in the mercy of Yahweh, the work of judgment will be delivered into the hands of those whose experience of humanity qualifies them for the work (see John 5:27; Heb. 5:1-2).

The wings completely cover the four beasts, and at the same time provide them with mobility. The Redeemed will be "covered" with spirit-nature in the Age to come (2 Cor. 5:2-3), and through

the spirit will have speedy mobility to wherever they may wish to proceed (Ezek. 1:12).

"They rest not day and night"—They are immortal, and as such are not in need of rest. Their priestly ministrations to humanity are constant, never ending, providing the antitype for the priests in Solomon's Temple. Under the Mosaic order, contingents of priests were on duty day and night (Psa. 134:1), so that no matter at what time an Israelite looked towards the Temple, he knew that there were ministering priests in attendance, and that there was life and activity there. A similar continuous service will be a feature of the Age to come; for the Temple on earth will provide a type of Yahweh in heaven.

"Saying, Holy, holy, holy"—That is, "most holy." The "Most Holy" typified the immortal state which Christ put on at his resurrection (Heb. 10:19-20). He is typically represented as having "passed through (Gr. *dia*) the heavens" (Heb. 4:14), that is, through the three stages of holiness represented by the Tabernacle and Temple. These were (1) the court; (2) the holy place; (3) the most holy. In constantly "saying, Holy, holy, holy," the glorified redeemed will manifest the "most holy" state to the world. These words are cited from Isaiah 6:1-3, which vision relates to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Redeemed in glory as testified by John. For in citing this chapter, he adds: "These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory and spake of him" (John 12:41).

"Lord God Almighty"—In Hebrew: *Yahweh Elohim of Armies*. The title signifies *He who shall be mighty ones of armies*. It is the belligerent name of Deity, used when His power is manifest in subduing flesh. The words are taken from Isa. 6:3 which vision speaks of the glory of Christ (John 12:41). In Isaiah 6, the Septuagint has *Sabaoth* instead of *Pantokrator* as in Revelation; though, in other places, it has rendered the former by the latter. See note Ch. 1:8.

VERSE 9

"And when those beasts give glory and honour to him that sat on the throne"—The expression "when" does not signify sporadic praise but rather continuous praise in which the elders participate. The Greek term is *hotan*, and according to Vincent "implies with the future tense, the eternal repetition of the

act of praise." The term has been rendered *whenever* by the RSV, that is, *at all times*. The twenty-four elders thus act in unison with the four beasts.

"Who liveth for ever and ever"—This phrase, as descriptive of the Christ, appears as a title continuously throughout *The Apocalypse*. The one so described is identified as "he who once was dead but now lives" (Rev. 1:18), "the one on the throne" (Rev. 4:10), "the creator of heaven and earth" (Rev. 10:6), "God" (Rev. 15:7), and thus, in this relationship, represents God manifest in flesh. Commenting upon Rev. 1:18, Bro. Thomas remarks: "But the Spirit never died; therefore, here it must be understood of the Logos speaking from a body, personal and corporate, with whom he has united in a resurrection thereof from the dead" (*Eureka* vol. 1 p. 188). The phrase represents Christ as the manifestation of the Ancient of Days (cp. Dan. 7:9,13,22).

VERSE 10

"The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever"—They worship the Father manifested in the Son (John 5:23). They acknowledge that all that the Son is stems from the Father (John 14:28).

"And cast their crowns before the throne"—This is both an act of submission and of homage, in which the four and twenty elders acknowledge that their victory stems from Christ, as his did from the Father. In Rev. 3:21, Christ promises the faithful of Philadelphia that their adversaries will be compelled to "worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." In doing so, they will acknowledge that the Redeemed are the manifestation of Christ, as Christ is the manifestation of the Father (1 Cor. 11:3). See also Rev. 3:21.

VERSE 11

"Saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power"—The Greek, in the best text, has: "*O Lord even our God.*" (See *Diaglott* R.V. etc). The enlightened statement of Thomas when he saw the

resurrected and glorified Lord, will be echoed by all the redeemed in the age to come (John 20:28). They will see in the Lord of Glory, not merely "the man Christ Jesus," but the manifestation of his Father, mentally, morally and physically. But then, they, too, will partake of that glory (Rom. 5:2), for they then will be clothed upon with divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), and will have the name of Yahweh named on them (Rev. 3:12). Thus the perfected "house of David" will "be as God" (Zech. 12:8), and the world at large will be compelled to bow before those glorified "sons of God" (Isa. 45:11), and exclaim: "Surely God is in thee" (v. 4). As "joint-heirs with Christ" of the glory of God, they shall be "glorified together" with him (Rom. 8:17). There is nothing analogous to the doctrine of the Trinity in these Apocalyptic expressions; God in multiplicity, not God in Trinity, is expressive of Bible truth. In the Greek, glory, honour and power have the definite article connected to each: *the* glory, *the* honour, *the* power. The supreme glory, honour and power is invested in the Son, though it is also shared by the Redeemed. Glory relates to dignity; honour to position; power to ability to perform.

"For thou hast created all things"—This echoes the words of Paul to the Colossians: "For in (not by) him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth" (Col. 1:16). What "heavens" and "earth" were brought into being "*in* Christ"? The answer is, those of the future age in which will "dwell righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13). They are "the heavens in Christ" to which believers are called even now (Eph. 1:3), and when they are elevated to authoritative positions in the new constitution of things to be established on earth, the resultant glory will cause this acclamation of praise to ascend to the honour of the one who is directly responsible for the creation of such "heavens."

"And for thy pleasure they are and were created"—This is true of all forms of creation; for everything so formed is designed for the pleasure of their Creator: whether Yahweh or His son.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SEVEN-SEALED SCROLL

John observes in the right hand of the One seated on the throne a scroll, so completely sealed, as to be beyond the ability of any to unroll and read. This causes him great distress, until it is announced that the Lion of Judah has prevailed, and is able to open the scroll. Then follows a scene of great glory. Expecting to see a Lion, he beholds a Lamb to whom is given the scroll. As the Lamb receives it, onlookers break out into songs of adoration and praise. John hears first the song of the redeemed, then the praise of angels, finally that of the whole world.

The Prevailing Lamb

John is told that the Lion of Judah has prevailed to unloose the seals of the book, but describes the Lion as a Lamb. The "Lamb" is the hero of the Apocalypse.

VERSE 1

"I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne"—The right hand is the hand of privilege and strength. The One on the throne (see note Rev. 4:2) is God manifest in the flesh, or the Lord Jesus Christ. The book is said to be in his right hand, because he it is who directs the course of the events predicted therein (1 Pet. 3:22). The use of this phraseology links this chapter with that which precedes it, where the same wording is used.

"A book written within and on the backside"—The word *biblion* is a diminutive of *biblios*, bible, and denotes a scroll or a small book: In Luke 4:17,20 it is used of the scroll of Isaiah; in John 20:30 of the Gospel of John; but in Gal. 3:10 and Heb. 10:7 of the Old Testament as a whole. Here it relates to a section of *The Apocalypse*. It was written "within and on the outside" (see *Eureka*), which is similar to the expression used to describe the "little book" handed to Ezekiel (Ch. 2:10), and which also, like the one in the hands of the "one on the throne," pronounced "lamentations, mournings and woe" upon both Judah and the Gentiles: those in the covenant and those outside of it. The writing on the scroll before us, concerns events relating to the Ecclesias as well as the world generally, and therefore those both "within and without" the covenant (cp. 2 Cor. 7:5).

"Sealed with seven seals"—Seven is the number of completeness. The scroll is completely sealed from human knowledge (see Isa. 29:11; Dan. 12:4).

VERSE 2

"I saw a strong angel"—All angels of heaven are strong, so that the adjective serves to show that in spite of the strength of such they were not able to accomplish that which the Father did in collaboration with the Son in spite of the weakness of human nature (Heb. 2:14; Rom. 8:3). This angel, therefore, was unable to loose the seals and read the book. See 1 Pet. 1:12.

"Proclaiming with a loud voice"—So as to summon all who may desire to hear.

"Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof"—Daniel had been told that the book was sealed until the end (Dan. 12:4-8); now, at the end of Jewish times (Heb. 1:2; 9:26), it was about to be opened and read. At the end of Gentile times (Luke 21:24; Rom. 11:25), the things predicted therein will be fulfilled (Dan. 12:3).

VERSE 3

"No man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon"—No one living, dead nor angelic, could unloose the seals. The unfolding of the divine purpose, and its glorious consummation, required the sacrifice, and resurrection to glory, of one coming in sinful flesh and yet rendering perfect obedience in order to accomplish this. The future was all dependent upon the victory of Calvary.

VERSE 4

"I wept much because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon"—This illustrates John's keen anxiety to understand the Divine will and purpose. He lived for the future, not the present, and desired such a spiritual vision as could transport him mentally into the time when the glory is to be revealed. This anxious desire for a full understanding of the Divine purpose characterised the faithful of past ages (Heb. 11:1), as it does also those who "hunger and thirst" for knowledge today (see Hab. 1:2; Dan. 12:10; 1 Pet. 1:10; Rev. 6:10). A blessing is pronounced upon those who search for it (Matt. 7:7; James 1:5; Rev. 1:3).

VERSE 5

"And one of the elders saith unto me. Weep not"—Words of comfort are addressed to John by one of the elders. The elders represent the redeemed saints (vv. 9-10). On what basis are they included in a vision which illustrates the opening of historic seals, seeing that they will not be manifested as such until the events predicted therein are fulfilled? On the basis that "all things are for their sakes" (2 Cor. 4:15), and God represents "things that be not as though they are" (Rom. 4:17). Thus Abraham was told that he had been made a father, before his son was born; and Isaiah "saw" the glory of the risen Christ (Isa. 6:1; Joh. 12:41). It is appropriate that one of the "elders" should be represented in the vision of this chapter, for their future glory and position is dependent upon the "prevailing" of the Lamb. As John was an elder then (2 John 1), and will be incorporated into the "eldership" of the future this verse depicts him speaking with the symbol of his own glorified state, even as Christ, as the Lamb, is depicted as taking the book from Christ, the manifestation of Yahweh.

"The Lion of the tribe of Judah"—The "root" of David is Yahweh, for all his promised greatness stems from God. How can Christ be identified with Yahweh? In the sense of manifestation. Thus Christ is represented as both "root and offspring of David" (Rev. 22:16). As "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16), he is the Root of David; and as the son of Mary, he is his offspring (Luke 1:32-33; Rom. 1:3). He is the Root of

David, because all that David was promised and anticipated, and which became the motivation of his life (2 Sam. 23:5), was only made possible through the victory of the Son (Acts 2:29-31).

"Hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof"—Christ's victory over the flesh opened a new phase in the Divine purpose (Matt. 28:18; 1 Pet. 3:22). He prevailed personally, and that became the guarantee that he will do so nationally and universally. His victory 1900 years ago, made it possible for him to open the seals and reveal the contents of the book; and made certain that he will ultimately prevail over the fourth beast of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 7). Therefore, the statement of the clause before us, does not merely relate to the victory on Calvary's Hill but to the ultimate bruising of the serpent's head. Accordingly, the vision appropriately concludes with all creation ascribing glory to the victorious Lamb (vv. 8-14), for it will be at that time, that "all things" will be brought into subjection to himself (Heb. 2:8).

VERSE 6

"And I beheld, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders"—The Lamb is said to occupy the throne (cp. Rev. 22:1,3), for the Lamb is the very centre and foundation of Yahweh's purpose in the earth (Heb. 2:14).

"Stood a Lamb as it had been slain"—Therefore, a resurrected Lamb! This is one of the most dramatic pictures presented in *The Apocalypse*. Imagine John's amazement, when having been told that the *lion* of Judah, the *root* of David has prevailed, he looks — and sees a Lamb! A slain but resurrected Lamb represents the conquest of flesh. The symbol teaches that if we would rule, we must serve; and to serve effectively, we must rise above the flesh. Moreover, the drama is heightened by the word used. In Greek it is *arnion* and signifies *Lambkin*, a diminutive of *amnos* or "Lamb" as found in John 1:29,36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:19; though Vine declares that the diminutive force of the word is not to be pressed. The term, however, does stress the sinless submissiveness of the Lord to the will of the Father as expressed in Phil. 2:5-11. And it is significant, that in *The Apocalypse* the term is used no less than twenty-eight times in relation to the Lord

Jesus. This teaches that the basis of his future victory over the world is his past victory over self, as exhibited in his death and resurrection. Throughout *The Apocalypse*, the Lamb is shown to be:

- The centre of divine rule on earth, the object of the adoration and veneration of all created beings (Rev. 5:6,8,12,13).
- The one who unlooses the seals, and thus guides the destiny of the nations (Rev. 6:1,16).
- The acknowledged channel of divine love and salvation (Rev. 7:9,10,14).
- The shepherd shepherding the flock (Rev. 7:17).
- The inspirer of victory on the part of others (Rev. 12:11).
- The recorder of the book of life (Rev. 13:8, 21:27).
- The leader and shepherd of the redeemed (Rev. 14:1,4).
- The conqueror of the beast (Rev. 14:10).
- The choir-leader of the victorious saints (Rev. 15:3).
- The captain of the victorious warriors who conquer the Catholic confederacy (Rev. 17:14).
- The bridegroom of saints (Rev. 19:7,9; 21:9).
- The foundation stone and light of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14,22,23).
- The ruler of the age to come (Rev. 22:1,3).

Let us follow the Lambkin in his meek but powerful submission to the will of Yahweh, and our victory will be assured. If we put to death the flesh, as did the Lamb slain, we will rise to future greatness as did he. The slain and resurrected Lamb is represented in the *Apocalypse* as the centre and foundation of all Yahweh's purpose.

VERSE 7

"He came and took the book"—The Lamb is represented as taking the scroll from the "one upon the throne," and yet both Lamb and King represent the Lord in two relationships. The Lamb represents Christ as having triumphed over the flesh ("a Lamb as it had been slain"); the King represents Christ as exhibiting the means of such victory — God manifest in the flesh (see Rom. 8:3). Elsewhere, the Lord is given the name of Immanuel, or *God with us* (Matt. 1:21); his successful offering is described as

being the result of "God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19), and he, himself, is said to be "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). As God manifest in the flesh, Christ is represented as having the appearance of "a jasper and a sardine stone," and as being seated on the throne. As having triumphed over the flesh, he is represented as a Lamb that had been slain. The latter, having "prevailed" is appropriately described as receiving the scroll from the former; for it is only as God manifest in the flesh that he gained the victory.

"The right hand"—The hand of privilege and power (Psa. 80:17; 110:1; 1 Pet. 3:22).

"Of him that sat upon the throne"—The symbolism thus depicts Christ in two relationships: as Deity in manifestation; and as the slain and resurrected Lamb. Having triumphed over the flesh (the *Lamb as it had been slain*'), the Lord was granted a revelation of future events that had previously been withheld from him (cp. Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7; Rev. 1:1). As the resurrected Lamb, he attained unto Kingly glory; so that Yahweh and Lamb were united as one. Thus the "one upon the throne" reveals Christ in Kingly glory; the Lamb slain and resurrected reveals the manner in which he attained that position. The principle of God manifestation is expressed in the statement of John 17:21: "Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee." Or in the remarkable symbolism of Daniel 7. In the visions of the prophet, Yahweh is represented as "the Ancient of Days," and the Lord is described as "one like unto the Son of man" (vv. 9,13). The Ancient of Days is represented as giving unto the "one like unto the Son of man," "dominion, glory, a kingdom" etc, so that he returns to the earth as *the Ancient of Days* (cp. v. 22). How can that be? Because all the glory and power he receives comes from the Father, and in that way he becomes *both* Son of Man and Ancient of Days. As Son of Man he is as "the Lamb that had been slain," as Ancient of Days, he is as "him that sat upon the throne." This duality is expressed in the symbolism before us. Another example of it is displayed in Isaiah 6. Isaiah, in vision, saw Yahweh seated upon a throne, surrounded by the Seraphim who proclaimed the words reproduced in Rev. 4:8. The prophet was

then sent with a warning message unto the people (Isa. 6:8). John declares that what Isaiah saw and said was prophetic of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 12:38-41). He thus represents Christ as being both "Yahweh on his throne surrounded by the Seraphim," and the "prophet proclaiming his message of warning." This duality is similar to the symbolism before us in this chapter. See also note Rev. 4:7.

VERSE 8

"And when he had taken the book"—

The taking of the book, or scroll, symbolises the actual performance of those things written therein, in the sense of Romans 4:17.

"The four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb"—They paid their homage to the Lamb because his ability in being able to open the book and reveal its contents comprise the assurance of their own ultimate salvation.

"Every one of them having harps"—The harp is a symbol of gladness and rejoicing. The priests in the temple, "prophesied with harps" (1 Chron. 25:1). The use of the symbol both here, and in Rev. 14:2, identifies the "four living ones" and the "twenty-four elders" with the 144,000 rejoicing saints in glory.

"Golden vials full of odours"—The margin gives the word "odours" as incense, the compounding of which is described in Exodus 30:7-8. Incense was symbolic of the prayers of saints (Psa. 141:2); and when the priests burned the incense every morning, true Israelites gave themselves unto prayer (Luke 1:9-10), recognising the significance of the ascending odour. The "golden vials" suggest "the prayers of faith" (James 5:15).

"Which are the prayers of saints"—This explanatory note, together with similar description of the elders and four living ones with that of the 144,000 of Rev. 14:2, identifies them as the Redeemed. This interpretation is disputed by some who prefer to abandon the explanation of *The Apocalypse* as set forth by Bro. Thomas in *Eureka*. They claim that the "four beasts" and "twenty-four elders" cannot be identified with the Redeemed, and that the vision relates to the atmospheric heavens above. But the description of the beasts and elders is similar to that of the 144,000

(Rev. 14:2) — both pay their homage to the lamb, both are shown with harps, both sing "a new song before the throne." Finally, the fact that each of the beasts and elders possesses a vial that identifies their worship with the "prayers of saints," endorses the explanation of Brother Thomas that they represent the political and ecclesiastical administration of the kingdom by the saints in the age to come. Saints pray for the time when the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh, saying: "Thy kingdom come that Thy will may be done in earth as in heaven," and therefore rejoice in the knowledge of the contents of the seven-sealed book.

VERSE 9

"They sung a new song"—The Greek *kainos* denotes new as to form or quality, as to significance and understanding, rather than new in point of time, as signifying something previously entirely unknown. For something that is new in that way, the Greek word *neos* would be used. We know the words of the song, for they are given in this verse. Therefore when they are sung in the age to come, they will not be "new" as being previously unknown, but they will be "new" in the sense that their real, complete meaning and significance will then be fully appreciated. The term a *new song* occurs several times in the Psalms, expressing prophetic words the true significance of which will not be fully appreciated until they are fulfilled. Thus Psalm 33:3,5 reads: "Sing unto Him a new song. . . for the word of Yahweh is right. . . the earth is full of the goodness of Yahweh." This purpose of God is recognised theoretically at present but not until it is literally manifested will its full significance be appreciated. Then the song will be sung with new meaning and feeling, and therefore will constitute a "new song," even though its words are recorded in the Psalm. The term is used in relation to a Song of Deliverance (Psa. 40:3 — Foreshadowing the resurrection of Christ); the establishment of the Ark in Zion (typical of the future — Psa. 96:1); the conquest of the nations (Psa. 98:1-2 — the song of the Redeemed is almost an echo of the words of this Psalm); the joy of the millenium (Psa. 149:1). Isaiah likewise uses the term in relation to the future work of Yahweh in the earth (Isa. 42:10).

"Saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof"—The Greek is in the present tense implying the continuous singing of the song. It acknowledges that the triumph of the Lamb over self has given him power to open the book, or to cause the things recorded therein to be fulfilled. Whilst the Redeemed may doctrinally ascribe to the worthiness of the Lamb at present, the future alone will reveal the fullness of his triumph.

"For thou wast slain"—Implying the sacrificial offering of the Lamb which is the basis of his power and greatness.

"And hast redeemed us to God"—The Revised Version renders this: "Thou didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men* of every tribe. . . . Accepting that reading, some have concluded that the singers are not the Redeemed, and therefore have disputed the exposition of *Eureka*. But it should be noted that the R.V. renders "*men*" in italics showing that the text is in dispute. However, even though the reading of the R.V. is accepted the singers are still to be identified as the Redeemed by their use of harps (cp. Rev. 14:2; 15:2), the statement that only the Redeemed are able to sing the "new song" that is sung before the throne (Rev. 14:3; 15:3), but most conclusively, because they are shown bearing bowls full of incense described as "the prayers of saints." If the third person pronoun *men* is correct, as used by the R.V., it indicates that the Redeemed sing this song from the vantage point of their new status and nature as the Elohim of the Age to come.

"By thy blood"—Cp. Acts 20:28.

"Out of"—Greek *ek*, the first part of the word *Ekklesia*. See Acts 15:14.

"Every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"—This all-embracing expression comprises family, language, districts and nations. See the use of the phrase throughout *The Apocalypse*: Rev. 1:7; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15, and notice that those taken *out* of such, are later sent back to convert those from whom they had previously been separated (Rev. 10:11).

VERSE 10

"And hast made us unto our God"—The R.V. renders us *as them* for which change see note above.

"Kings and priests"—This is better rendered *A kingdom of priests*, and

therefore identifies the song with the promise of Exodus 19:6. That which was set before Israel as being possible of attainment, will be obtained by the Redeemed. See 1 Pet. 2:9.

"We shall reign on the earth"—The Greek is in the present tense: "They reign." The four living ones and the elders sing their song at the time when Christ will "prevail" over his enemies, and the world will acknowledge his power (cp. v. 13). The book will then be completely open, in that it will be fulfilled. From that point of time, they look back over the unfolded record of history and acknowledge that the triumph of the Millenium stems from the triumph of Calvary, through the resurrection of the Lord. For the earthly rule of the Redeemed, see Rev. 20:4-6.

VERSE 11

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels"—There will be heaven's representatives at the epoch of Christ's triumph, who will raise angelic voices in his honour (cp. Luke 12:9; Heb. 1:6 — this latter reference should read as the margin: "When He bringeth again the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, Let all the angels of God worship him." The reference, therefore, is to the second coming of the Lord). The angels of heaven will be supplemented by the Redeemed then made "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36).

"Round about the throne and the beasts and the elders" — And so identified with them.

"And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands"—This strange enumeration seems to divide the "angels" into two groups: (1) — ten thousand times ten thousand and (2) — thousands of thousands. The expression is drawn from Dan. 7:10: "thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." The term "ten thousand" is used in relation to the Redeemed, and is a figure used in Scripture to indicate a large, undefined number, for "ten" has that spiritual significance (see Deut. 33:2; Psa. 68:17; and for the figurative use of ten as signifying a large number, see Psa. 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:15; 14:19, etc.). "Ten thousand times ten thousand," therefore suggests the totality of the Redeemed then made "equal unto the angels,"

whilst "thousand thousands" suggests the angels of heaven who will co-operate with the saints in the national judgments to be poured out. The larger number given to the saints, does not imply that they are more numerous than the heavenly angels, but merely that "all the saints" will be identified in executing "the judgments written" (Psa. 149:9), whilst only a token number of the angels of heaven will be with them in this work.

VERSE 12

"Saying with a loud voice"—A voice that all the earth will hear in the day it is proclaimed.

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing"—All these things will be laid at the feet of the Lamb. In Rev. 4:11 a similar hymn is directed to the "one upon the throne," indicating that the Ruler and the Lamb are one. The word "receive" is *lambano* and denotes *to take as one's right*. It will not rest with flesh as to whether all power, riches, wisdom, strength and honour is to be directed towards him; he will take it as his right, and flesh will be compelled to submit. What form of blessing will be directed towards the Lord? The word is *eulogian*, and its use in this context signifies the right of the Lamb to receive the eulogy of others (see 1 Pet. 1:3). We can eulogise Christ for what he has accomplished, but we cannot render him a blessing in the sense of a material benefit, for all things are his already.

VERSE 13

"And every creature"—All creation, angelic, immortal and mortal, both Jew and Gentile, will raise their voices in praise to the Lamb. First the Redeemed (vv. 9-10), then the angelic host (v. 11), finally all creation (v. 13).

"Which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them"—These terms are symbolic, not literal. "Heaven" represents the ruling places, the government; "earth" denotes the "first dominion" which will be then held by Israel (Mic. 4:8); "under the earth," represents "the bottomless pit of nations" denoting specifically the Roman Empire (Rev. 11:7); whilst "the sea" relates to the rest of the Gentiles (Rev. 13:1; 17:15). Thus all creation finally ascribes glory to the one whom mankind has ignored for so long. And this wonderful consummation is brought about by the "prevailing" of the Son of God in the outpouring of judgments upon mankind (Isa. 26:9).

"Heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb"—Blessing is *eulogia* with the definite article. All the aspects of praise have the definite article in this statement: "The blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the power be unto him." For the rest of the statement, see note on Ch. 4:2.

"For ever and ever"—See note Ch. 1:6.

VERSE 14

"And the four beasts said, Amen"—Christ is the *Amen* of the Divine purpose, for he is the guarantee of its accomplishment (Acts 17:31). See 1 Cor. 14:16; 2 Cor. 1:20, and note on Rev. 3:14. The "four living ones" identify themselves completely with that purpose.

"And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped"—In so doing they endorsed the words of the "four living ones."

"Him that liveth for ever and ever"—These words are missing from the best text of the Greek, and are supplied from Rev. 4:9 (see note at that place).

(2) THE SEVEN SEALS Chapters 6,7

The Sealed Scroll and Prevailing Lamb having been introduced, the Revelator now describes the first act in the unfolding drama. Under the symbol of four horsemen, the judgements to be poured out upon pagan Rome are hierglyphically portrayed. Then follows the prayers of saints seeking some alleviation of persecution which they suffered during the period of the previous seals. These appropriately introduce the events of the sixth seal, in which a great political earthquake overthrows the existing pagan order, to replace it with a pseudo-Christian system under Constantine. A pause of silence follows, to allow a description to be given of the number and tribal association of saints to be sealed in their foreheads, and of their future destiny. Seeing that such "sealing in the forehead" has been in process since the beginning of the Christian era, and continues today, why should this break in the continuity of history, occur at this point? And why should the total number of the redeemed be stated then, seeing that the "sealing" continues on to the present day? Because of a very important reason. At the point in history at which Constantine came to power, the great division between Church and Ecclesia took place, so that the term "Christian" was adopted by Catholics and Protestants as well as by the potential Redeemed. To many, the difference between pseudo-Christians and true believers, was not clearly discernable, and it became necessary to stress, that though that might be the case among men, it was not so with Yahweh. He "knows them that are His" (2 Tim. 2:19), and though it may be invisible to mortal eyes, true believers are effectively sealed in the forehead, and discernable as such, by Him. Despite the opposition of the Church, the destiny of such is beyond doubt. Though experiencing tribulation from fellow pseudo-Christians, the time will come when he will "wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:17).

CHAPTER SIX

THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

On being opened, the seven-sealed scroll reveals the course of future events in relation to the pagan Roman empire, in accordance with the purpose of Yahweh. In succession, four horsemen ride forth, bringing with them a series of judgments upon an Empire that dared lay its hands on Yahweh's people. Nevertheless, Christians are subjected to intense persecution, and as it increases in intensity, their prayers ascend to heaven, appealing for relief. A measure of this is provided with the opening of the sixth seal, for it pictures a great earthquake that overturns the prevailing order, symbolising the demise of paganism, and the establishment of a pseudo-christianity as a State religion in the time of Constantine.

1st SEAL: PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY: THE EMPIRE AT PEACE A.D. 96-183 (vv. 1-2)

This seal depicts a time of peace for the Roman Empire during the reigns of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, the two Antonines, and the first three years of Commodus. During this period, Christianity made great progress in the number of its adherents throughout the Empire.

VERSE 1

"And I saw"—This is the true spirit of prophecy, and is in line with expressions such as are used by the Old Testament prophets. Consider the statement of Isaiah: "The vision of Isaiah. . . which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:1). The prophets lived in advance of their times, and acted as reporters of the things they were caused to see. Originally they were called "seers" (1 Sam. 9:9). Mentally they lived in the future (see notes on Rev. 1:10).

"When the Lamb opened one of the seals"—Previously the knowledge contained in this seven sealed scroll was closed to human understanding (Rev. 5:4), but Christ had prevailed to open the book, and to him the understanding of future events was given that he might pass it on to his servants (Rev. 1:1). Thus the first seal was opened.

"And I heard as it were the noise of thunder"—Thunder implies storm, and storm symbolises political trouble (cp. 1 Sam. 2:10; Zech. 9:13-14). In the year A.D. 96, Domitian, the great persecutor of the Ecclesia, by whose order John was

banished to Patmos where he received the revelation (Rev. 1:9), was assassinated. The thunder of revolt that culminated in this event, cleared the way for a change in human affairs.

"One of the four beasts"—John heard one of the four living creatures speaking ominously, as with a voice of thunder. These "four living creatures" represent the Redeemed (Rev. 5:9-10), whose prayers ascended to heaven at this time seeking relief from the persecution of Domitian.

"Come and see"—They were eager watchers of the "signs of the times," thus the invitation to John. The events in the political heavens were guided for their benefit (2 Cor. 4:15; Jer. 27:5; Rom. 8:28).

VERSE 2

"And I saw, and behold, a white horse"—White symbolises righteousness and peace. The horse was a common symbol for Rome being dedicated to Mars. The symbol thus represents a period of peace for the Roman Empire (contrast v. 4)

“And he that sat on him”—The rider does not refer to any personal individual, but to a series of agents who controlled the Roman horse, or Empire, so as to enact the events symbolised by the seals. The term *riders on horses* is used prophetically for the rulers of nations (Zech. 10:5), and here denotes those who guided the destiny of Rome. During the period of this seal, Christianity constantly grew in numerical strength, with large numbers of people being influenced by its teaching. For the Empire itself, it was an epoch of great peace.

“Had a bow”—In Zech. 9:13-14, “bow” symbolises a multitude. In Psalm 64:3, it is used to represent “speech,” or “the word.” Thus the bow can represent a multitude imbued with the Word. This bow was an arrowless bow, indicating that the weapon was not used for the purpose of carnal war. The arrowless bowman symbolised the influence of Christianity conquering by the power of the Word.

“And a crown was given unto him”—The Greek word is *stephanos* representing the crown of victory, not of government. It denoted the coronal wreath, which was the symbol of victory in the Greek games. It is here used to indicate that Christianity would gain the victory over paganism, by its use of the arrowless bow — its doctrines. The *stephanos* “was a circlet of evergreen offered as a prize of honour and glory to the victor in the public games celebrated in the service of the gods. Before the combatant could receive the *stephan*, he had to go on conquering according to the rules of the contest, then at the end of the conflict, he was adorned with the emblem of victory” (*Eureka*).

The period of this seal was one of peace for Rome, but not for Christianity. The Christians suffered persecution, especially under the reign of the pagan philosopher, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. The following extract from a letter by Tiberianus of Syria to the Emperor

Trajan indicates something of the struggle of Christianity for the victory:

“... I am wearied,” he wrote, “with punishing and destroying the Galileans, or those of the sect called Christians, according to your (the Emperor Trajan’s) orders. Yet they never cease to profess voluntarily what they are, and to offer themselves to death. Wherefore I have laboured, by exhortation and threatening to discourage them from daring to confess to me that they are of that sect. Yet, in defiance, of all persecution, they still continue to do it... Be pleased, therefore, to inform me what your highness thinks proper to be done with them.”

Pliny, in a letter to Trajan towards the end of the 1st Century, reports on the vast growth of Christianity: “The number of culprits (i.e. Christians) is so great as to call for serious consultation. The contagion of the superstition hath spread not only through cities but even villages and the country.”

“And he went forth conquering and to conquer”—This denotes rapid growth of Christianity, as indicated by Pliny’s letter to the Emperor Trajan, quoted above. The period of the First Seal was one of peace and prosperity for the Roman Empire, during when Christianity made much progress though it suffered persecution. The five emperors named in the introduction above promoted the internal peace of the Empire though they persecuted the Christians. Gibbon in *The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire* claims that the period represents “the most happy and prosperous time of the human race.” He writes: “The armies were restrained, and the Emperors delighted in the image of peace, and considered themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws.”

This condition was entirely changed a few years later, when the events of the Second Seal began to unfold.

2nd SEAL: THE ROMAN HORSE RED WITH CIVIL BLOOD A.D. 183-211 (vv. 3-4)

Comprising the period of Commodus (180-193) — who was strangled to death; Pertina (193) — who was assassinated; Didius Julianus (193) — who gained the Empire by paying £200 to each of the

Praetorian Guards, but who only reigned for sixty-three days, when he was beheaded by the same guards; Septimus Severus (193-211) — whose firm rule brought a measure of relief to the Empire.

VERSE 3

“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see”—The last two words are omitted from the best texts.

VERSE 4

“And there went out another horse that was red”—Red signifies sin and bloodshed (Isa. 1:18). During the period of this Seal, the previous peace was withdrawn from the earth.

“And power was given to him that sat thereon” — In *Eureka*, Brother Thomas comments: “This equestrian is a symbolical personage, not representative of an individual man, but of a class of agents blindly executing retribution upon those obnoxious to the Lamb’s displeasure. He represents a class of agents endued with the power of the sword, ready and able to wield it in the cause of peace or war.” The period was dominated by the Praetorian Guard: the soldiers into whose care the city of Rome and the person of the Emperor were particularly placed. Their power increased to the point that they began to tyrannise both city and ruler, as well as the people.

“To take peace from the earth”—The tyranny of the Praetorian Guard exercised brought the peaceful conditions of the first seal to an end.

“And that they should kill one another”—Interneine antagonism and bloodshed became common.

“And there was given unto him a great sword”—The word *machaira* denotes a short sword or dagger, and metaphorically and by metonymy, violence or dissension that destroys peace (Matt. 10:34). The *Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon* defines it as “a large knife or dirk; a short sword or dagger; but still rather an assassin than a soldier’s weapon.” The assassin’s sword or dagger typified the times, which comprised a period of bloodshedding, civil war, assassination and murder. The *machaira* was specifically worn by the Praetorian Guard into whose care reposed the regal dignity of the Empire. The Praetorian Guard had been stationed near the Capital by order of Tiberius, but

soon abused the privileges that had been granted them, and made use of this assassin’s weapon to gain their own way. Rome became dominated by the Guard, during the period.

History Of The Period

Aurelius Commodus, one of the most profligate and cruel of the Roman emperors, was the reputed son of Marcus Aurelius, one of the firmest and wisest of its rulers. He was born A.D. 161, and the greatest care was bestowed upon his education. No expense was spared in providing for him the most eminent teachers that could be obtained. In 180, on the death of his father, he ascended the throne as Emperor. His reign commenced under the most favourable auspices, but the discovering of a plot organised against him by his sister, Lucilla, A.D. 183, roused the dormant ferocity of his nature, and he plunged into excesses of cruelty and bloodshed without parallel in the history even of the most wicked of his predecessors. His licentiousness was equal to his ferocity. He was both a glutton and a drunkard. He commanded that he should be worshipped under the name of Hercules, on the ground that his victories over the ferocious animals in the circus gave him a strong resemblance to that hero.

His crimes caused the “white Roman horse” to become sullied by excess, and reddened by bloodshed. Of his reign, Gibbon records: “Distinction of every kind soon became criminal. Virtue implied a dangerous superiority of merit; the friendship of the father ensured the aversion of the son. The execution of a considerable senator was attended with the death of all whom it might lament or revenge his fate; and when Commodus had once tasted human blood he became incapable of pity or remorse.”

In 193 he was strangled to death, and was succeeded by the virtuous Pertinax, of whom Gibbon records: “He found a way of condemning his predecessor’s memory, by the contrast of his own virtues with the vices of Commodus.” He endeavoured to repair the damage caused by his predecessor, and to restore the

peace of the First Seal. In this work he was prevented by the Praetorian Guard, who fearing the suppression of their privileges, power, and vices, assassinated the worthy prince. The Guard was the disturbing element of the Empire. Gibbon declares: "Their licentious fury was the first symptom and cause of the decline of the Roman Empire. . . . Elated by success, enervated by luxury, raised above the level of the subjects, they soon became oppressive to the country, and impatient of just subordination." Again, "The Praetorian Guard had violated the sanctity of the throne by the atrocious murder of Pertinax; they dishonoured the majesty of it by their subsequent conduct." They put the Empire up for auction, knocking it down to the highest bidder, one Didius Julianus, a vain old senator, who gained it by paying £200 to each of the Guards.

Thus, not only was "peace taken from the earth," but they began to kill one another (Rev. 6:4). The Guard had insulted the Empire by daring to offer it up for auction, and this aroused the anger of three Generals commanding various divisions of the Roman Legions; Clodius Albinus, Pescennius Niger, and Septimus Severus. Each marched on Rome to defend its honour. The first to reach the capital was Severus, and with legions trained in war, he prepared to attack the Praetorian Guard. The latter were soldiers in name only, and were not prepared to contest the issue, nor defend the person of Julianus in the face of the

well trained, war hardened and determined legions of Severus. They attempted to appease the latter by beheading Julianus, and pronouncing Severus Emperor. Severus subsequently disbanded the Guard, and replaced it with his own legions.

Meanwhile, the two other generals were converging on Rome from different directions. Each, in turn, opposed Severus in battle, but he obtained the victory against both. Whilst he was a ruthless and inveterate enemy to his foes, he was a just and firm ruler to the nation at large, and the last eight years of his reign brought greater stability and peace to the Empire.

The sufferings of the empire comprised Divine retribution for the severe persecution suffered by Christians during the period of the First Seal. None can harm the people of God, or oppose His truth with impunity, for "precious in the eyes of Yahweh is the death of His saints" (Ps. 116:15). The distress that Rome experienced during the period of this Seal, matched the distress that Rome had brought upon Christians during the period of the First Seal. Meanwhile, Christianity continued to make progress, though the teaching of heresy was on the increase.

The distress of the times during this seal when "peace was taken from the earth," was such that, for a time, no less than 2000 people died daily through civil dissension, murder, famine and pestilence, induced by incompetent rule.

3rd SEAL: FAMINE AND DISTRESS A.D. 212-235 (vv. 5-6)

Comprising the period of Geta (211-212) — murdered by his brother Caracalla; Caracalla (212-217) — assassinated; Macrinus (217) — murdered; Egalabalus (217-222) — assassinated; Alexander Severus (222-235) — murdered.

VERSE 5

"And when he had open the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come"— Again, the words *and see* are omitted from the best texts.

"And I beheld, and lo a black horse"— The colour changes, so also does the condition of the Empire. Black speaks of distress, intense depression of mind (cp.

Job 30:25-31), mourning (Lam. 4:8).

"And he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand"—Roman coins extant display a pair of balances engraven thereon symbolising the Emperor, as the Administrator of Law and Justice. "In this seal, it is the symbol of agents, whose office it was to execute the laws — the imperial functionaries of the empire;

both the emperors and their subordinates" (*Eureka*). They were a class of agents who, in relation to the Roman peoples, held the balance as their badge of office; the duties of which they performed oppressively.

VERSE 6

"And I heard a voice"—This is suggestive of a decree of authority (Deu. 4:30; Ezra 1:1 — mg). The "voice" John heard comprised the edicts issued from the Government, which were executed by the officials of the Empire.

"In the midst of the four beasts"—The voice is heard from the midst of the four living creatures, for, by this time, Christianity had spread throughout the Empire.

"Saying, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny"—Literally, the voice said: "A choenix of wheat a denarius; and three choenixes of barley a denarius." This suggests bread eaten by weight, and is indicative of famine. The excesses of the Emperors, and bad government caused excessive taxation and universal distress. Farming became profitless through heavy taxation, so that whole districts became deserted, causing widespread famine. Herodotus, referring to the provisions for Xerxes' army assigns a choenix of corn for a man's daily supply, evidently meaning a minimum allowance (*Herod* 7,189). There were three choenixes (or measures) in use in Rome; the most common being the *attic*, a dry measure of rather less than a quart, about "as much as would support a person of moderate appetite for a day" (Vine). The denarius was a silver coin "worth about 15 cents" according to *Eureka* (vol. 2, p. 172), but worth much more in these days of heavy inflation. In Matt. 20:2, the work of a labourer for a day is rated at a denarius, so that for a day's work, he would receive as much wheat as he would require if he were of moderate appetite! It left nothing for luxurious eating, or for family! In that case, he had to revert to barley. Usually "eight choenixes could be brought for a denarius" (Vine), so that this passage predicts circumstances of extreme difficulty. However, Brother Thomas suggests that "a choenix of wheat a denarius" was a governmental decree proclaiming the extent of taxation that was placed on the grain, thus making the cost prohibitive. Barley, being the

poor-man's grain was more lightly taxed than wheat. The exactions of Caracalla, Geta and Elagabalus reduced the Empire to great distress. Verres in Sicily exacted more than double the price of the wheat from the growers. Barley went up to over seven times the price at which it stood in Athens in the days of Socrates (Young). The Roman State tax was heavy in the first place. Then there were employed tax-gatherers who put their charges upon the original tax, and this sometimes amounted to four times the rate originally assessed by the State. Farming became unprofitable, and famine widespread (Ezek. 4:16; Lev. 26:26).

"And see thou hurt not the oil and the wine"—Towards the end of the period of this seal, the sufferings of the people were alleviated a little through the wise reforms of Alexander Severus. Among other things, he reduced the taxes to *one-thirtieth part* of what they had previously been. However, he was murdered in A. D. 235.

History of the Period

Whereas the violence and bloodshed of the second seal had been mainly limited to the rulers and nobility of Rome, the distress and misery of this seal were felt by commoners, and extended into the provinces as well.

Caracalla and Geta, as joint rulers, succeeded their father Severus in the year A.D. 211. Caracalla was a vile man of uncontrollable and unnatural passions. Several times, during his father's last illness, he tried to poison him, and he once unsuccessfully tried to raise a mutiny among the troops against him.

On the death of Severus, rancour and discord soon divided the two brothers. It was evident that they could not reign jointly, and a plan to divide the Empire between them failed. Their mother, Ulia, tried to effect a reconciliation but, during the course of the negotiations, some centurians, in the pay of Caracalla, burst into the conference room and assassinated Geta.

Caracalla, now astride the Roman "horse," proceeded to "blacken" it by a reign that became noted for distress, mourning and woe. He first made his own position sure, by winning over to his cause the most powerful element of his kingdom: the army. He increased the pay of the soldiers, impoverishing the State

finances by his reckless gifts to them. The Provinces were increasingly taxed to cope with his wild spending. Soon farming became uneconomical. It was more profitable not to sow grain than to have rapacious tax-gatherers seize that which had cost some labour and money to produce! As indicated, the cost of foodstuffs became prohibitive, and the distress of the people became aggravated by famine, caused not by failure of crops, or lack of rain, but by exorbitant taxation (Rev. 6:6).

Meanwhile, the assassination of Geta which had been brought about through the instrumentality of Caracalla, preyed upon his mind. He tried to rid himself of all remembrance of it by destroying all who had known, or who even referred to his late brother. Even his mother narrowly escaped death from the hands of her son for this reason. Gibbon records that "under the vague appellation of the friends of Geta, above 20,000 persons of both sexes suffered death." "If a senator was accused of being a secret enemy of the Government, the emperor was satisfied with the general proof that he was a man of property and virtue. From this well-grounded principle he frequently drew the most bloodthirsty inferences." "Delighting in the title of the *Savage Beast of Ausonia*, Caracalla became the common enemy of mankind. Wealthy families were ruined by partial fines and confiscations, and the great body of his subjects oppressed by ingenious and aggravated taxes. At Alexandria, he directed a general slaughter of the citizens without distinguishing either the number, or the crime, of the sufferers. The Roman Empire groined under a tyrant who made the period black with distress and mourning.

In the year 217, Caracalla was assassinated at the instigation of Macrinus, his civil officer, who had reason to fear that the death sentence would soon be passed on him, if he did not act immediately. No one lamented the death of Caracalla except the Army who had benefited from the lavish pay of their master, the tyrant of the Empire. Owing to their influence, he was proclaimed a god after his death!

Fate had placed Macrinus in a lofty position of eminence, but he was too weak to effectively use or retain it. He was unpopular both with the people and with the army. Realising the necessity of

reform, he tried to introduce it into the army, only to find himself faced with mutiny. One of the legions, named Bassianus (who assumed the name of Antoninus, and later Elagabalus) led the army against Macrinus. Macrinus also recruited forces but lacked the ability and courage to wage war. At the moment of crisis, he lost his nerve and fled from the field of battle, to experience the fate of all such cowards by being put to death.

Though Bassianus (who now assumed the name of Elagabalus) now occupied the throne, he did nothing to relieve the Empire of its distress. His lavish expenditure of the public finances continued to drain the resources of the Empire, causing widespread and heavy distress. His reign became noted for the suppression of all that is good, noble and right, whilst lust and licentiousness were indulged in with complete abandonment. He practised, openly and unashamed, the most vicious perversions and sensual delights, to the disgust of his subjects. Gibbon records that "the inflammatory powers of art were summoned to his aid. The confused multitude of women, of wine, and of dishes, and the studied variety of attitudes and sauces served to revive his languid appetites. New terms and new inventions in these sciences, the only ones cultivated and patronised by this monster in crime signalised his reign, and transmitted his infamy to succeeding time." "The invention of a new sauce was liberally rewarded, but if it was not relished, the inventor was confined to eat of nothing else till he had discovered another more agreeable to the imperial palate." He subverted every law of nature and decency, and asserted without control his sovereign privileges of lust and luxury.

Our hymn declares: *The wicked are exalted when vile men are high in place.* Under Elagabalus, vice and perversion were set forth as virtues, whilst oppressive taxation and famine continued to accentuate the miseries of the people. Finally, even the soldiers, well paid by Elagabalus to secure their support, turned in disgust from the effeminate and dissolute emperor. They began to compare his excesses with the virtues of his cousin Alexander, whom Elagabalus had made Caesar as a favour to his mother.

Sensing this growing support for Alexander, Elagabalus demoted his

cousin from the position of Caesar. But Alexander had ingratiated himself with the legions, and they received the news with fury, swearing to protect Alexander. A rumour of his death inflamed their anger, and they were only appeased by the presence and authority of the youth himself. The jealous Emperor, endeavouring to discipline some of the leaders of the army, only succeeded in provoking the Praetorian Guard still further. On 10th March, 222, he was massacred by the soldiers, his mutilated corpse was publicly dragged through the streets of Rome, and ignominiously flung into the river Tiber.

The death of this tyrant relieved the distresses of this seal. Alexander's reign of 13 years was peaceful. Though he was only 17 years of age when he ascended

the throne he allowed the wisdom of his mother to guide him. "The provinces were relieved from taxes, and the price of provisions ('hurt not the oil and wine' etc) and the interest of money was reduced." "In the civil administration of Alexander Severus, wisdom was enforced by power, and the people, sensible of the public felicity, repaid their benefactor with love and gratitude" Nevertheless, Alexander came to a violent end. He tried to reform the Army, the cost of maintaining which was an oppressive financial burden on the State. The Army resisted the reform, and inflamed by the enemies of the youthful prince, arranged for his assassination Severus was murdered, and the period of the seal was brought to an end.

4th SEAL: WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE AND DEATH A.D. 235-303 (vv. 7-8)

It was a hideous period of widespread violence and murder, stretching from the time of Maximin (A.D. 235) to the 18th year of Diocletian (A.D. 303). During fifty years, there were thirty-nine persons, claiming to be emperors, all of whom died by violence! Among them were the following: Maximin (238) — murdered; Gordianus and his son (238) — killed in battle; Maximus and Balbinus (238) — assassinated, Gordian (244) — murdered; Philip (249) — killed; Decius (251) — killed; Gallus and Hostilianus (253) — murdered; Aemilianus (253) — murdered; Valerian (268) — died in captivity; Gallienus (268) — murdered; Claudius (270) — died; Aurelian (275) — assassinated; Tacitus (276) — died; Probus (281) — murdered; Carus (284) — killed by lightning; Numerian and Carinus (285) — murdered; to 18th year of Diocletian.

VERSE 7

"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see"—Omit *and see*.

VERSE 8

"And I looked and behold a pale horse"—The word "pale" is *chlorus* signifying a pale green: the colour skin turns on the approach of death. Thus the colour of death.

"And his name that sat on him was Death"—Death ruled the Roman horse, during this period. During the first fifty years of the period, thirty-nine men claiming to be Emperors died violent deaths.

"And hell followed with him"—The word "hell" is from the Greek word *hades*. Hell is the grave. "The Saxon word *hell*, in its original significance, answers exactly to the Greek word *hades*, and denotes a concealed or unseen place, and this sense of the word is still retained in eastern, and especially, in the western counties of England. To *hele* over a thing is to cover it"—*Eureka*. Death rode the Roman horse, and the grave followed constantly upon it during the period of this seal.

"And power was given unto them"—The word signifies *authority*, as rendered in *Eureka*.

"Over the fourth part of the earth"—In *The Apocalypse*, the Roman Empire

is designated as *the earth*, and as such is shown in contrast to the rest of the world. See Rev. 16:14. As to the "fourth part of the earth," the "whole empire was one Roman Sovereignty or Majesty, but, at a certain epoch of its history, for convenience of administration, there was a practical distribution of the imperial territory into *Four Praefectures*. Gibbon says: 'According to the plan of government instituted by Diocletian (A.D. 292), the four princes had each their praetorian praefect; and after the monarchy was once more united in the person of Constantine, he still continued to create the same number of *four praefects*, and trusted to their care the same provinces which they already administered' " — *Eureka*.

"The prophecy of the fourth seal does not import that the devastations of Death and Hades were to be confined or restricted to the fourth of the earth; on the contrary, as the history shows, they would be coexistent with the earth. What then the speciality in the premises? Why this; that, whereas in the second and third seals, the judgments peculiar to them did not notably affect 'the fourth of the earth,' or praefecture of Italy, as defined by our quotation from Gibbon; inasmuch as, that the riders on the red and black horses, had not received authority specially to distress that region; but that, in this fourth seal, the time had come in the wise providence of the Deity, to bring judgment home to the very heart and soul of the Italian body politic" — *Eureka* vol. 2, p. 193-194. Thus, whereas the distress of the first three seals had more particularly affected the three outlying divisions of the Empire, those of this period weighed more heavily upon the Italian division.

"**To kill with the sword**"—The word for sword in this place is *rhomphaia*, and denotes a longer sword than that referred to in v. 4, such as was used by Thracians. It is significant that following the murder of Alexander Severus, Maximin, the Thracian, ascended the throne. The haughty nobles of Rome viewed the rough soldier with contempt which he repaid with bloodshed. His violence commenced a period of such throughout the Empire and particularly in Italy. It was followed by civil war and domestic upheavals.

"**With hunger**"—The period was noted for widespread famine.

"**And with death**"—Pestilence raged from A.D. 250-265 of such a deadly nature, that, at one time, five thousand

deaths a day were reported. It is alleged that half the human race perished as a result of it. The Hebrew *deber*, "pestilence," which occurs some fifty times in the O.T. is referred to as *thanatos*, "death," over thirty times in the New. It probably signifies *pestilence* in this place.

"**And with the beasts of the earth**"—The Barbarian nations are figuratively described as "evil beasts" (Tit. 1:12). These now begin to press heavily upon the borders of the Roman Empire, adding to the problems of the times.

History of the Period

The epoch was a frightening period of increasing violence and bloodshed, that brought the Empire almost to the point of dissolution. Among the agents by which this condition was attained, was that of the "sword" (v. 8). As the Greek word indicates, this was not the short Praetorian dagger of v. 4, but the long Thracian sword. In keeping with the symbol, and in consequence of the murder of Alexander Severus (238), there ascended to the throne an obscure Thracian by name of Maximin. The haughty nobles of Rome viewed with aversion the elevation to supreme power of one who they had previously denied entrance to their homes. On the other hand, their contempt of his obscure birth produced in Maximin the most violent and ferocious reaction. He gave vent to his inferiority complex, by ordering the execution of those whom he suspected of recalling his obscurity. "Confiscation, exile or simple death were esteemed uncommon instances of his leniency. Some of his unfortunate victims he ordered to be sewn up in the hides of slaughtered animals, others to be exposed to wild beasts, others again to be beaten to death with clubs." Gibbon records: "Without a witness, without a trial, and without opportunity of defence, Magnus (a Roman Senator supposed to have plotted against the Emperor's life), with four thousand of his supposed accomplices, were put to death."

He confiscated the independent revenue of the towns; stripped the temples of their most valuable offerings, and melted down the statues of gods, heroes, and emperors, to be coined into money. These acts aroused the temper of the multitude: riots, tumults, and massacres followed in sequence, and "death and the grave" waited upon the populations of the Roman Empire.

Goaded to desperation, the people at

last rose against the tyrant, and whilst he was busily engaged in a frontier war, with "the beasts of the earth," they proclaimed Gordianus and his son, emperors. The whole Empire, with the exception of a province in Africa gave its support to the Gordians, but in waging warfare against this province, the new Emperors lost their lives.

If they had been successful, they may have halted the distresses of this time.

Maximin heard of the rebellion. Enraged, he marched on Rome to expend his wrath against the senate. The senate became paralysed with fear. A descendant of Trajan aroused them from their fatal lethargy, and they appointed two successors to the Gordians: Maximus and Balbinus. The former was appointed to conduct the war against Maximin; the latter to superintend the government of Rome.

Maximus opposed Maximin at Aquileia, but in Rome itself, civil war broke out between the people and the Praetorian Guard who were allies of Maximin. Italy flowed with blood, and life was accounted of no value at all. In the midst of all this violence and confusion, Maximin was assassinated by his soldiers.

"Death and the grave" continued to follow the fortunes of the Roman Empire. Maximus and Balbinus failed to co-operate. Jealous and distrustful of each other, they excited the contempt of the people. In the same year (238) a troop of desperate assassins invaded the palace, and stripping them of their royal robes, dragged them publicly through the streets of the city, finally leaving their bodies mangled with a thousand wounds, exposed to the insults or the pity of the mob.

Thus, in the space of a few months, six emperors had suffered violent deaths. A third Gordian, who had been made Caesar, remained. He was proclaimed Emperor at the age of 19, but whilst engaged in war with the Persians, his Praetorian Praefect, Philip, an Arab by birth, and a robber by profession was appointed Emperor by the soldiers, and the unfortunate youth was dispatched into 'hades' by the hand of a murderer.

Gibbon declares of this terrible period, that the "animating health and vigour of the Empire were fled." To use the term of Revelation the Roman "horse" became *clorur* in colour — the colour of death.

But now, in accordance with the prophecy the Roman Empire was attacked from without. Gibbon records:

"The industry of the people was discouraged and exhausted by a long series of oppressions. The discipline of the legions was corrupted by the ambition of the Emperors; the strength of the frontiers was insensibly undermined; and the fairest provinces were left exposed to the rapaciousness or ambition of the barbarians."

Emperor Philip (244-249), after a reign of five years, was deposed by a successful revolution headed by Decius, a senator. About this time, from A.D. 248-268, the Gothic barbarians (figuratively, the "wild beasts" of the prophecy) began to invade the northern border for the first time. In the sack of one city, the blood of 100,000 persons was shed, and the Roman legions suffered their first defeat at their hands. Decius was slain in the conflict, and was succeeded by Gallus and Hostilianus (251) who, by an ignominious treaty in which Rome promised to pay ransom to the Goths, obtained peace for one year.

The success of the Goths caused other tribes to invade the borders of the Empire. Swarms of these "wild beasts" spread war and desolation throughout its territory, advancing almost within sight of Rome itself. Aemilianus, governor of Pannonia, succeeded in defeating them in war. Gallus and his son were assassinated, and he was proclaimed Emperor. He reigned for four months, when "death and the grave" claimed him. He was murdered, after being defeated in battle by Valerian who, with the legions of Gaul and Germany, had resolved to avenge the murder of Gallus.

Valerian and his son Gallienus now assumed the purple. It was a time of confusion, calamity, and bloodshed. Along the border the barbarians pressed heavily upon the Empire; the Franks attacked Spain in the West; the Allemanni attacked the northern provinces; the Goths ravaged the coasts of Asia Minor; and the Persians threatened the east. Valerian marched to defend the east against the Persians, but was defeated and himself captured. His worthless son allowed him to remain a prisoner of war until his death.

Gallienus reigned eight years, during which "death and hades" continued to devastate the Empire. During that time, nineteen pretenders to the throne arose none of whom died a natural death. In a message to one of his ministers, the Emperor wrote: "It is not enough that you exterminate such as have appeared in arms; the chance of battle might have served me as effectually. The male sex of

every age must be extirpated; provided that, in the execution of the children and old men, you can contrive means to save our reputation. Let everyone die who has dropped an expression, who has entertained a thought against me, the son of Valerian, the father and brother of so many princes. Remember that Ingenuus was made Emperor (this person was one of the nineteen who had aspired to rule, but had been suppressed by the minister concerned); tear, kill, hew in pieces. I write to you with my own hand, and would inspire you with my own feelings."

The prophecy required that the Empire should also feel the pangs of hunger. During a period of such maladministration famine was inevitable. But pestilence also threatened the people. A plague raged furiously between the years 250-265 in every province and city, affecting almost every family of the Roman Empire. At one time, the deaths of 5,000 people daily were recorded in the city of Rome; many towns were

entirely depopulated. Gibbon calculates that civil and national wars, the tyrannical conduct of Emperors, together with pestilence and famine accounted for the death, in a few years, of no less than half of the human race.

Finally, Gallienus was assassinated and the following reigns brought a measure of relief to the Empire. The army was restrained, taxation was relieved. Even so, troubles continued. The barbarians continued to threaten the Empire; pretenders to the throne rose up one after another, and in defending both the throne and the borders, death continued widespread and common.

Although "death and the grave" continued to rule the Roman "horse," conditions gradually improved. Indeed, if some measure of relief had not come, the deadly colour of the "horse" would have been followed by its demise and the Empire, itself, would have descended into hades; the place that had claimed so many of its rulers and citizens during this terrible period of 68 years.

5th SEAL: ECCLESIAL TRIBULATION A.D. 303-311 (vv. 9-11)

Comprising the ten years of tribulation caused by the anti-Christian persecution of Diocletian (cp. Rev. 2:10).

VERSE 9

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw"—It is to be noticed that the opening of this seal is not accompanied by a voice of one of the four living creatures inviting John to come and view the results of so doing. The symbol of the "four living creatures" represents the united camp of the faithful. During the periods of the first, second, third, and the beginning of the fourth seal, Christianity presented a united front to the world, but by the time the period represented by the "pallid horse" had closed, this unity had been sorely disturbed. The Ecclesia was no longer united; and heresy was rife. Thus the "fifth seal" is not introduced by one of the "four living creatures," for the divisions within what Christ would have as a united "one body," and the general laxity of a community claiming the name of Christ, made it unfit for such a title. There had commenced a general drift from the principles and practises of the Truth.

"Under the altar the souls of them that were slain"—The law of the altar is given in Exod. 20:24-25; Deut. 27:5. It could be made of earth or stone, but must not be shaped by human device. Earth and stone speaks of human nature, but "unhewn stone" relates to human nature shaped by the Divine hand. Christ was the latter. He was of our nature, but manifested Divine characteristics. As the altar, he was Deity in sacrificial manifestation (see Heb. 13:10). The altar was first cleansed, and then it made holy those who touched it (Exod. 29:37). We touch the Christ altar when we are "brought nigh" by baptism. We are then "in Christ" or the Altar. Those who die "in Christ" are "under the altar," "sleeping in Jesus," dwelling in the dust.

John said that he "saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain" What he saw in vision was blood poured-out in sacrifice, and splashed upon the Christ altar. The word *soul* is used synonymously for life in many places. Leviticus 17:11 states: "For the life (Heb. *nephesh*) of the

flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls (*nephesh*); for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (*nephesh*)." In this place, "life" and "soul" are both given as translations for *nephesh*, and the statement is made that blood represents life or soul. John, therefore, saw the blood of the slain which was representative of their lives, or souls, poured out on the Christ-altar. The figure is obviously drawn from Leviticus 17.

"For the word of God"—See Rev. 1:9.

"And for the testimony which they held"—This was the cause of their martyrdom. They had proclaimed the Truth in the face of an opposition supported by the sword of the government.

VERSE 10

"And they cried with a loud voice"—

There was an urgency in their appeal because of the extremity of the persecution, hence the cry was loud. But how can it be claimed that "blood" cried out, if by souls is meant blood? In the same way that Abel's blood cried out for vengeance (Gen. 4:10). In that way, dead men talk!

"Saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood"—Their prayer was a plea for relief from the persecution they suffered. The answer (v. 11) revealed that relief was near at hand. Only a short time was to elapse before judicial vengeance would be manifested against the persecuting power of pagan Rome. The time had almost come when that which hindered the full manifestation of a "Christian" apostasy (i.e. pagan political power) was to be "taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2:7-8). Meanwhile, believers of every age have echoed the appeal "How long?" as they have awaited the consummation of the Divine purpose at the coming of the Lord. See note: Hab. 1:2. It is to be noted, that though those so crying are represented as suffering the rigours of persecution, there is no voice of complaint directed against Yahweh; He is the Lord *holy and true* and they are prepared to submit to His decree. The title *Lord* is *Despotes* in Greek. The believers were resisting the pagan Despot on earth, seated on the throne in Rome, and significantly appealed to one exercising greater power in heaven. The title

Despotes signifies *Owner, Ruler, Master, Lord or King*. It denotes one possessing absolute power over His subjects, and therefore able to grant the petitions made to Him. It is a title used for God (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; Rev. 6:10); for Christ (2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4); for masters (1 Tim. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:21; Tit. 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:18). The use of it in this prayer is significant. It testifies that Yahweh is in absolute control, and that all are subject to Him. Those appealing to the *Despotes* in heaven, recognised His absolute supremacy over the affairs of man. In view of that they enquired, *How long?*

The verb *judge* denotes to *separate*; thence the idea of selection: to pick out, and so to discriminate or judge. For "avenge" see Luke 18:3; Rom. 12:19.

"On them that dwell on the earth"—In *The Apocalypse*, "earth" generally denotes the Roman Empire.

VERSE 11

"And white robes were given unto every one of them"—See notes at Rev. 1:18; 3:5, 18; 7:14. As believers, are already represented as clothed with Christ (Rev. 3:5), what are these "white robes" which are now given them? The Greek word *stole* denotes a mantle — the final article of dress in the investiture which commences with baptism. It thus relates to the ultimate reward of the redeemed (Rev. 19:8), which is here given to the martyrs of the Lord in prospect (cp. 1 John 2:25).

"And it was said unto them that they should rest"—Both verses seem an echo of Psalm 94. The same question is asked (vv. 1-4), and the same answer is given (v. 13): "That Thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, *until the pit be digged for the wicked.*"

"For a little season"—The time was drawing close for a change in the political constitution of the Empire, which would result in a measure of relief for Christians.

"Until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled"—The expression *fellow-servants and brethren* in this context, suggest two classes of believers: the "fellow-servants" being nominal "Christians," and the "brethren" being genuine followers of the Lord. Though a similar expression occurs in *The Apocalypse* on two other occasions

(Rev. 19:10; 22:9), and there, in a manner to suggest that both expressions relate to the redeemed, there is a subtle difference in the verse before us, where the Greek, by supplying *kai* twice in the statement, strongly implies that here two classes are referred to. The *Diaglott* reads: "till both their fellow-servants and their brethren. . . ." There was division in the ranks of believers at the time. The Novatians and puritans of the times (among whom were to be found "the brethren") opposed the growing laxity of the Catholics (the fellow-servants), though both opposed Paganism, and were opposed in turn by it. The description given by John, suggests a state of declension within and persecution from without. A comment in the R. V. margin relating to the clause *should be fulfilled* reads: "Some ancient authorities read: 'have fulfilled their course.'" An answer to this prayer is given in Rev. 10:6.

History Of The Period

During the early years of his reign, the Emperor Diocletian ruled with firmness and tolerance. Persecution of Christians was minimal, and Christianity increased numerically. But these conditions of tolerance were also noted for a sad Ecclesial declension in moral and doctrinal standards. Men began to philosophise upon basic principles, and to challenge their literal meaning, so that error increased. Loose practises became common, as followers of the Lord became "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Mutual antagonism grew, as conflicting theories caused endless quarrels between contending parties. Personal ambition and covetousness blinded many to the requirements of the Christ-life.

Milner, in his *History Of The Christian Church* claims: "The era of its actual declension must be dated in the pacific part of Diocletian's reign."

Nevertheless some strove to halt the decline. Among them was Novatius. In A.D. 151, he was elected Bishop of Rome in opposition to one, Cornelius. Later, an Ecclesial crisis was precipitated when, the latter fellowshipped those who under pressure, had renounced Christ and had sacrificed to idols (cp. Heb. 6:4-8; 10:26; Matt. 10:33). Novatius vigorously opposed Cornelius. The contention resulted in division. The minority, termed by the Revelator brethren,

followed Novatius; whilst the majority, or *fellow-servants*, followed Cornelius. One evil led to another. Cornelius began issuing indulgences to delinquents after baptism, and in other evil practises, hastened the decline of the Ecclesia.

Meanwhile, Rome was undergoing a political change. Diocletian elevated Maximian as joint-ruler over the Empire. They both assumed the title of *Augustus*, and appointed two others, as lesser joint-rulers, giving them the title of *Caesar*: Constantius in the west, and Galerius in the east. The former tolerated the Christians; the latter opposed them. Galerius determined to stamp out Christianity, and prevailed upon Diocletian to issue a general edict of persecution. This was done on 24th February 303, and the famous, or infamous, Diocletian persecution commenced.

Whereas Constantius generally ignored the edict, Galerius prosecuted it with vigour and violence. He proclaimed death as the punishment of those who attempted to hold secret meetings. Churches were destroyed, books and Bibles burned. Christians "of liberal birth were declared incapable of holding any honours or employment; slaves were forever deprived of the hope of freedom, and the whole body of the people were put out of the protection of the law" (*Eureka*). Nevertheless, the edict was vigorously opposed by the growing body of Christians. "The edict was scarcely exhibited to public view in the most conspicuous place of Nicomedia, before it was torn down by a 'fellow-servant,' who expressed, at the same time, by the bitterest invectives, his contempt as well as abhorrence of such impious and tyrannical despots. His offence amounted to treason, and was punishable with death. He was roasted over a slow fire, and every refinement of cruelty was exhausted, but without effect, to subdue his patience, or to alter the steady and insulting smile, which in his dying agonies, he still preserved on his countenance" (*Eureka*). The admiration of his fellows at his fortitude only incited the hatred of Diocletian. The Christians were blamed for fires that twice, within fifteen days, broke out in his palace, and the Emperor dedicated himself to extirpating the Christian religion.

He erected pillars commemorating his efforts to destroy Christianity, bearing

the following caption: *Diocletian Jovian, Maximian Herculaeus, Caesares Augusti, for having extended the Roman Empire in the East and West, and for having extinguished the name of Christians who brought the Republic to ruin. Again: Diocletian, etc., for having adopted Galerius in the east, for having everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ, for having extended the worship of the gods."*

On 1st May, 305, Diocletian abdicated, and shortly afterwards, Maximian did likewise. Constantius and Galerius now became the Augusti, and two lesser rulers, Maximin and Lucinius, were appointed as Caesars. Later, Maximian came out of retirement, and again assumed the purple, also elevating his son, Maxentius to power. Thus, at this time, the Empire was administered by six emperors (the number of flesh!). Constantius and Galerius enjoyed the higher rank; and under them were Maximian and Maxentius in the West, and Licinius and Maximin in the East. Constantius, whose headquarters were in York, Britain, had married Helena, a British princess, who claimed to be a Christian, and from whom, Constantine, her son, learned much about the Christian religion. Therefore, Constantius was tolerant towards Christianity, whereas Galerius continued to oppose it. Galerius had hoped to replace Constantius, and assume the highest rank, but to his disappointment, the latter died suddenly, and the legions of Britain proclaimed his son Constantine as his successor. Through his influence, a joint edict of toleration was proclaimed by the three rulers: Constantine, Galerius, and Licinius. In 311, however, Galerius and Maximian died. The territory of the former was

added to that of Maximin, a worthless, cruel, ferocious despot, without virtue or merit, who then commenced the most violent persecution of all. Even pagans, who witnessed the sufferings of Christians, became disgusted with the profusion of cruelty and bloodshed to which he resorted. The executioners themselves became weary of slaying, and resorted to other punishments: the mutilation of limbs, the plucking out of eyes, the employment of eminent Christians in degrading occupations, the consignment of large numbers of all classes and both sexes to labour in unwholesome mines, and so forth.

Finally, this terrible record of cruelty began to prey on the mind of Maximin himself. He suffered the most terrible delusions, and saw in his torments the vengeance of God. Frantic in his agony, he could cry out: "It is not I but others who did it." At length, by the increasing force of torment, he owned to his guilt, and implored Christ to compassionate his misery. He confessed himself vanquished, and died in agony of mind, in the year 313 after the opening of the sixth seal. So ended the most violent enemy of Christianity, during whose reign, Christians suffered more terribly than at any other time.

It was during this period of awful persecution, that the prayers of believers ascended to heaven enquiring, *How Long?* The answer, as given in *The Apocalypse* was that temporary relief was at hand. The demise of Maximin and of Galerius brought a measure of relief to those who suffered, even though paganism was still in power. The epoch was approaching, however, when "he that hindereth" (i.e. paganism — 2 Thess. 2:6-8) would be taken out of the way.

6th SEAL: NATIONAL UPHEAVAL A.D. 312-324 (vv. 12-17)

The epoch of Constantine's triumph, during when the control of the Empire was brought under his sole rule, and Christianity received national approval. "The remarkable symbolism of this seal represents a universe convulsed by earthquake, blood-shedding, and tempest, indicative of the wrath of the Deity in a day of wrath, upon the panic-stricken enemies of the Lamb. It does not represent the Universe, because symbols do not represent themselves. On the supposition that they do, we should be making them both sign and the thing signified, which would be absurd. . . . The nature of symbolic writing requires that

the signs and the things signified be analogous, but different. We must not look to the natural, but to the political universe for the interpretation of its 'signs' " ("Eureka").

VERSE 12

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal"—During the period of this sixth seal, the control of the empire was reduced from six rulers to one.

"And, lo, there was a great earthquake"—The exclamation *lo* suggests the element of surprise. Apocalyptic earthquakes represent political, not natural phenomena. Bible symbology often represents people as "the earth" (Gen. 6:11; Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:2; Isa. 65: 17-18), so that it is appropriate that revolutions should be represented as earthquakes. Four such earthquakes are mentioned in *The Apocalypse*: (1) — In the verse before us, representing the overthrow of paganism (A.D. 312-324); (2) — In Rev. 8:5, symbolising the attempt of Julian to overthrow Christianity, and to render untrue Christ's Olivet prophecy by attempting to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem (A.D. 360); (3) — In Rev. 11:13, illustrating the effect of the French Revolution of 1789-95; (4) — In Rev. 16:18, describing the vast changes to be inaugurated in the earth by the overthrow of Babylon the Great. The first "earthquake" thus described overthrew paganism and established a pseudo-Christianity in power; the last one, yet to be manifested, will result in the true Ecclesia assuming power in the establishing of the Kingdom of God on earth.

"And the sun became black"—The sun the natural ruler of the heavens. As a symbol it represents the ruling power over the people. Under this seal, the prevailing pagan sun was subjected to an eclipse, and ceased to shine.

"As sackcloth of hair"—The symbol of mourning. The eclipse of the political sun and moon of the old regime was mourned by the adherents of paganism throughout the Empire.

"And the moon became as blood"—In natural phenomena, the moon reflects the light of the sun. In symbology it represents state religion which derives its power to shine from the government. When that form of government ceases to shine, the moon does likewise. At the time this seal was opened, Paganism was in power; by the time it closed, it had

been ejected from authority. "Moon as blood" indicates the sanguinary overthrow of paganism: it was brought about by war and bloodshed.

VERSE 13

"And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth"—In symbology, "stars" represent prominent statesmen (cp. Dan. 12:3). The overthrow of paganism would result in pagan statesmen being ejected from their positions of authority and eminence.

"Even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs"—The margin renders *untimely* as *green* figs. The word denotes winter-figs, or such as grow under the leaves, and do not ripen at the proper season, but hang upon the trees during the winter. Such fruit easily falls off in the spring of the year, when all nature changes its appearance. This seal introduces a vast change in the political constitution of the Roman Empire, comparable to the change between winter and spring in nature.

"When she is shaken of a mighty wind"—The movements of armies is symbolically likened to the blowing of a stormy wind (see Jer. 4:11-13; Dan. 7:2). The successful wars of Constantine effected vast changes in the Empire at the time.

VERSE 14

"And the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together"—The expression is drawn from Isa. 34:4, relating to the overthrow of ancient Edom, as typical of the political power of the flesh, and has nothing to do with the literal heavens above. Symbolically it reveals that the previous form of government would be overthrown: the entire pagan political system — involving emperors, princes, rulers, and priests would be removed from their positions of authority.

"And every mountain and island were moved out of their places"—"Mountain" and "islands" symbolise sections of the Roman Empire that might be considered immune from normal disturbances because of their prominence or insularity. There was to be no immunity from this

earthquake, however; it would be felt in every part of the Empire, and by all sections of it. For example of the use of the symbolism, see Jer. 51:24-26. Prior to the political changes effected by Constantine, the Roman Empire was divided into various sections, ruled over by Constantine's contemporaries. The symbolism shows that this would be no longer the case, but that all would be levelled under the power of a sole monarch. The political earthquake effected by Constantine overthrew all former systems of rule.

VERSE 15

"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 every free man"—All were involved in the mighty upheaval that took place.

"Hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains"—These words, drawn from Isaiah 2:10, and therefore foreshadowing an even greater upheaval to come, describe the general fear of all existing classes of pagan society at the changes brought when Christianity, so-called, was elevated to power.

VERSE 16

"And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne"—This describes the attitude of pagans previously in power, as they witnessed the elevation of Constantine, the so-called "first Christian Emperor."

"And from the wrath of the Lamb"—As pagans saw so-called Christians now in power, they assumed that they were the true representatives of Christ, and that, therefore, the successes attached to the conquests of Constantine were manifestations of the Lamb's power. It is significant, in passing, to note that it is not incongruous to the character of Christ to represent this spirited Lamb as being capable of manifesting wrath (cp. Mark 3:5; Rev. 2:6).

VERSE 17

"For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"—This was the belief of both pagans and apostate Christians. The former saw in the triumph of Constantine the success of Christianity as a triumph for its founder; the latter taught that the Church

comprised the Kingdom of God on earth, and saw in its elevation to power, the establishment of Christ's reign on earth. In a *History Of The Church* issued by Catholicism for use in its schools, the conquest of Constantine is described as follows: "In the year 313, he issued from Milan a decree giving toleration to Christianity, and shortly afterwards he declared himself a Christian. Thus after two and a half centuries of bitter persecution, the Church had triumphed, and the cross replaced the eagle on the standards of Rome."

History Of The Period

The Sixth Seal was opened A.D. 311-312, and closed A.D. 324, a period of twelve years. It began with the Roman empire subject to four emperors, Licinius, Maximin, Maxentius, and Constantine, and with paganism as the religion of the State; it closed with the battle of Chrysopolis, or Scutari, as it is sometimes called, the result of which was the establishment of the empire under Constantine as the sole emperor, and with the Catholic Apostasy as the Lunar Bride of the Roman Sun. In the defeat of Hadrianople, which preceded that of Scutari, the historian says, that "the greater part of the fugitives retired to the mountains." This they did, of course, for the purpose of concealment from the conqueror who had won the wreath, as predicted in the seal. Though the mountains did not fall on them, they hid themselves until their panic having subsided, they surrendered themselves to the discretion of the victor" (see *Eureka*).

However, as the events of this seal are outlined in greater detail in Revelation 12, we will reserve a fuller consideration of the history of the period until then.

It witnessed an epoch of political triumph for pseudo-Christianity, but of spiritual declension for the Truth as a whole. In an endeavour to make Christianity attractive to pagans, errors which challenged the fundamental teaching of the Apostles were superimposed upon the Truth, whilst practises unseemly to saints were freely indulged in. The previous separation of Christians from any form of political involvement was abandoned by many, who saw no reason why they should not enroll in the legions commanded by Constantine, and so march to war behind the standard of the cross. This attitude and action caused

widespread division among followers of Christ. The majority gave their adherence to the errorists, laying the foundation for Catholicism, and exercising a powerful political influence over the Empire.

The death of Constantius in the West was followed by the elevation of his son, Constantine. Constantine followed the policy of his father in granting religious toleration throughout the western portion of the Empire. An ambitious man, he aspired to sole rule of the whole Empire, and to that end, he proclaimed a policy of complete liberty and protection for Christians. This attracted to his cause the large and growing body of Christian opinion. Many, led astray by the theory that the Church constitutes the Kingdom, saw no reason to stand aside from politics, and even from war, in support of such a "Christian" Emperor. Many worldly-minded adherents of the faith waived their previous principles of separation, and joined the army of Constantine, to march under his standard against Maxentius who ruled in Rome. Constantine engaged in a bitter struggle for power, until in 312 he eliminated Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian Bridge, gained Rome, and became sole master of the West. There still remained the emperor in the East, Licinius, but when Constantine had defeated him at Adrianople in 324, he became sole ruler of the Empire. Attributing his victory at the Milvian Bridge to a vision of the cross seen before the battle, he adopted this as his standard, and so claimed to march under the authority of the Lord, giving point to the expressed fear of pagans as recorded in v. 16 above. In the Catholic view of history, Constantine is given the title of *The First Christian Emperor*; and it is claimed that with his victory Christ's rule on earth was established. Since then, Catholics and Protestants have alike maintained that the Church constitutes the Kingdom of God on earth.

Hendrik Van Loon, in summarising the life of Constantine wrote:

"This wild Serbian who had wielded a spear on every battlefield of Europe, from York in England to Byzantium on the shores of the Bosphorus, was among other things the murderer of his wife, the murderer of his brother-in-law, the murderer of his nephew (a boy of seven), and the executioner of several other relatives of minor degree and import-

ance. Nevertheless and notwithstanding, because in a moment of panic just before he marched against his most dangerous rival, Maxentius, he had made a bold bid for Christian support, he gained great fame as the 'second Moses,' and was ultimately elevated to sainthood both by the Armenian and by the Russian Churches. That he lived and died a barbarian who had outwardly accepted Christianity, yet until the end of his days tried to read the riddle of the future from the steaming entrails of sacrificial sheep, was most considerably overlooked in view of the famous Edict of Toleration by which the Emperor guaranteed unto his beloved Christian subjects the right to 'freely profess their private opinions and to assemble in their meeting-place without fear of molestation.' For the leaders of the Church in the first half of the fourth century were practical politicians, and when they had finally forced the Emperor to sign this ever-memorable decree, they elevated Christianity from the rank of a minor sect to the dignity of the official Church of the State. But they knew how and in what manner this had been accomplished and the successors of Constantine knew it, and although they tried to cover it up by a display of oratorical fireworks the arrangement never quite lost its original character. . . . There have been other bargains during the history of the last twenty centuries; but few have been so brazen as the compromise by which Christianity came to power" (from *The Liberation Of Mankind*, p. 80).

The elevation of Constantine as sole ruler of the Empire brought about a major revolution, a political "earthquake." Paganism was dethroned as the Church of the State, and was replaced by a form of Christianity that had abandoned many of the principles of Christ. The old priesthood languished, and of those who previously had been foremost in advocating the worship of the gods, few were now to be found. As cited from *Eureka* above, "the greater part of the fugitives retired to the mountains," and, in general, in accordance with the terms of the Seal, symbolically the pagan political heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together. In their place was established a pseudo-Christianity which had "a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof."

This fulfilled portion of Paul's prophecy recorded in 2 Thessalonians 2. He

had predicted the removing of that power (paganism) which hindered the full manifestation of the "wicked one" (the Papacy) who would "oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, so that he, as God, would sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4-8). Constantine removed that which hindered the manifestation of the Papal system, and "the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:8), the papacy which replaced it.

However, many pseudo-Christians, and pagans also, saw in the success of Constantine, and the elevation of a form of Christianity, the manifestation of the wrath of the Lamb upon the pagan world of that time, and so embraced the new religion. As Brother Thomas shows in *Eureka*, the success of Constantine and of the Church is typical of the greater "earthquake" yet to be manifested in the coming triumph of the Lord Jesus and the elevation of the true Ecclesia in the earth (Rev. 16:18).

CHAPTER SEVEN

SEALING THE SERVANTS OF GOD

Though a form of Christianity was established as a State religion by the successes of Constantine, and though its adherents were widespread throughout the Roman Empire, true followers of the Lord were comparatively scarce. They constituted men and women sealed in the forehead, whose separation now was not merely from the politics of the world as previously, but also from the pseudo-Christianity that had assumed positions of political power. So two entirely different communities arose, both claiming the caption of "Christian." There is a foreshadowing of this in the words of Paul, when in warning against certain errorists, he concludes: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19). It is appropriate that the revelation of the sealing of the 144,000 should follow chapter 6 in view of the so-called Christianising of the Roman Empire. It was important to show that the Christianity in power was not the true faith. The Chapter, therefore, reveals the continued influence of the Word, and its ultimate result of Christ's return, by the sealing of the symbolic 144,000, in contrast to the politically ambitious Roman Catholic Church that claimed to be custodian of the Truth. John observes an angel having ascended from the rising sun, with the seal of the living God with which he seals 144,000 of the tribes of Israel. Afterwards he sees a great multitude of the Redeemed celebrating the Apocalyptic Feast of Tabernacles. It is significant to draw the comparison between the angel of this chapter, and the one observed in chapter 10:

Ch. 7

I saw an angel having ascended from the rising sun

having the seal of the Living God

Ch. 10

I saw another strong angel descending from heaven. . . .his face like the sun

having in his hand an open scroll. . . .

and he cried with a great voice. . . . Hurt not the earth, sea or rivers until we have sealed the servants of our God

and he cried with a loud voice. . . . standing upon the sea and upon the earth. . . . and swore by Him that liveth for ever. . . . that there should be time no longer. . . .

One angel ascends, the other descends, one does so from the rising of the sun, the other manifests himself as the sun among clouds. One carries the seal of the Living God, the supreme authentication; the other proclaims his work in the name of the Living God. Both cry aloud, the first to interpose delay before judgment; the second to proclaim that there shall be no further delay; the former to seal the Redeemed in the forehead; the second to send them forth in judgment upon the world.

SEALING THE SERVANTS OF GOD A.D. 324 onwards (vv. 1-8)

John views the peace after the earthquake and storm of Constantine's accession to power, and observes that the work of sealing the true servants of God in the forehead must continue in spite of the claim that Christ's Kingdom has been established in the elevation of the Church to political power.

VERSE 1

"After these things"—The best text have *touto* in the singular: "After this." The reference is to the events of the sixth seal: the triumph of Constantine in 324 A.D., and the elevation of the Church to political power.

"I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth"—John does not describe the form of these angels, but merely mentions their agency. This is, of course, a symbolical representation. Four is the number of *organisation*, and the angels generally are "ministering spirits" to whom the world has temporarily been placed into subjection (Heb. 1:14; 2:5). They overshadow the affairs of man, and therefore are displayed at the "four corners of the earth," for that is a representation of the entire habitable.

"Holding the four winds of the earth"—In fact, the winds blow from every quarter, but it is convenient to speak of them as coming from the four principal points of the compass, and the method is adopted, probably in every language. Among the Greeks and Latins, the winds were arranged under four classes: Zephyrus, Boreas, Notus, and Eurus, and they were considered as being under the control of a king, Aeolus. Symbolically, "winds" represent armies (Jer. 4:11-12; Isa. 17:13-14; Dan. 7:2).

The picture, therefore, denotes a period during which all armies were held in restraint, and a state of peaceful calm pervaded the Empire. Such a peace followed the triumph of Constantine, and permitted the further growth of Christianity.

"That the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree"—These are symbols of frequent occurrence. In *The Apocalypse*, "earth" generally represents the Roman Empire (Rev. 16:14); "sea" denotes nations (Isa. 57:20), whilst "trees" stand for people (cp. Isa. 40:6-8). The symbol, therefore, represents the people and nations of the empire untroubled by any major war. The reign of Constantine was noted for a period of peace extending to A.D. 396.

VERSE 2

"And I saw another angel"—This angel (or messenger, as the word signifies) is the fifth, and five is the number of grace. The angel represents a multitude as is shown by the use of the plural pronouns *we* and *our* in v. 3. This multitudinous angel is sent forth to "seal" the servants of God in the forehead, and is represented as praying for peace in order to accomplish this. As such, the angel represents the Ecclesia going forth to proclaim the Gospel, and seeking the peace of God to perform the work (Matt. 10:13; 1 Tim. 2:1-2).

"Ascending from the east"—This is rendered in *Eureka* (vol. 2, p. 282) in the past tense: *having ascended*. "The word *anabania*, rendered in the English Version *ascending*, as if it were the present participle, is really the second aorist participle; and signifies a past action, the *effect* of which, may or may not be in operation. *Having once*

ascended is the force of the tense or time of *anabanta*." John saw the angel in that state, and not commencing to ascend. The spread of Christianity commenced long before the elevation of Constantine. The term "the east" is *anatole helios*: in the Greek, and signifies *the sun's rising*. This suggests the rising of the Lord Jesus Christ from out of the grave, which gave true Christianity its real power and force (Rom. 4:25). As John observed the sun having risen, his back would be towards the east, and his face in the direction of the west. That is the very direction in which the Truth progressed. It originated in the east, and slowly spread westward (Acts 10:37).

"Having the seal of the living God"—The Truth is the seal of God (Job 33:16; 2 Cor. 1:21-22). As the image on a seal is impressed upon soft wax, so the Truth of God makes its impressions on the heart, which is seen by the manifestation of a changed life (Eph. 2:10; Col. 3:10; 2 Cor. 4:6-7). Christ was thus sealed by the Father (John 6:27). People perceived in his words, his works, his character, a manifestation of Yahweh. His teaching, therefore, had the stamp of Divine authority. As a person in authority who wished to communicate his mind, or purpose, to someone at a distance authenticated the written message with his seal, so the Father did in communicating to men through the Son (Heb. 1:1). The saints are referred to as a sealed community (Song 4:12; 8:6), being mentally sealed with divine teaching (Rev. 14:1; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13), manifested in action (Rom. 4:11; 10:17; Eph. 2:10; Col. 3:10). As the sealed of God, they are known of Him, though they may be unknown to others as such (see 2 Tim. 2:19). The seal of the living God, therefore, describes the Truth in action.

"And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea"—The "loud" voice suggests the urgency of the request.

VERSE 3

"Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees"—The angel is represented as praying for peace in order that the preaching of the Gospel might be advanced. This is the attitude of the Ecclesia in the midst of the world (Matt. 10:13; 1 Tim. 2:1-2).

"Till we have sealed the servants of our

God in their foreheads"—The expression is derived from Ezek. 9:4. The priests of Israel were "sealed" in their foreheads with a gold band bearing an inscription ascribing *Holiness to Yahweh* (Exod 28:36-39). Those sealed in the forehead, are mentally impressed with the things of God; and this characteristic is required of all those who will be saved (Rev. 14:1). *The Apocalypse* was specifically given for the illumination of the "servants of God" (Rev. 1:1; 22:6). The prayer requests a delay in judgment whilst a certain work is accomplished. It therefore appealed to the "longsuffering of God" which in previous ages "had waited" for a similar purpose (2 Pet. 3:15; 1 Pet. 3:20). Christ will not return until this work of sealing is completed.

VERSE 4

"And I heard the number of them which were sealed"—John does not say that the full number of "servants of God" was sealed within the time suggested above — A.D. 396, but rather gives the total number of the redeemed, of which only portion was sealed at that particular epoch. As we have indicated above, it was necessary, at that particular stage in the history of the Truth, to re-emphasise that not all who "named the name of Christ," were accepted of him. Pseudo-Christians were in the vast majority at the time, but "nevertheless the foundation of God was sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19).

"And there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand"—As Brother Thomas observes: "The 144,000 represent the whole number of the, redeemed. This appears from ch. 14:3, where they are styled 'the redeemed' (or those acquired by the Lamb by the ransom, or price paid, even his blood) 'from the earth.' The real, or exact, number of the 'redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot' (1 Pet. 1:18,19), we are told in Apoc. 7:9, is 'a great multitude which no man could number.'" (*Eureka* vol. 2, p. 311). Numbers have a symbolic significance in Scriptures (e.g. Rev. 13:18). It is obvious from the succeeding verses of this chapter, that this number is not to be taken literally, for it is made up of an equal number from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The total, 144,000, is

derived from the square of twelve, denoting perfect government. It is the symbolic number of fixedness and full completion (12×12), relating specifically to Israel, and therefore representing the Israelitish nature of the hope. The priestly and martial aspects of Israel were already symbolised in the twenty-four elders and four living ones of Rev. 4; and now the general organisation of Israel is brought into focus. Whereas twelve is representative of the *tribes* of Israel, its square, or one hundred and forty four, denote the *families* of Israel (cp. Zech. 12:12-14). "The solitary" shall be set in "families" declares the Messianic Psalm (Psa. 68:6). Those "families" shall be based upon Israel, politically organised in the age to come. The Israelitish *family* aspect of the 144 is suggested by the addition of *thousands*, for this is a term frequently used in the Old Testament in the sense of *families* or of *clans* (See Josh. 22:14; 1 Sam. 10:19; Micah 5:2). It is significant, that the Hebrew word *aleph* does duty numerically for both *one* and a *thousand* (by the addition of vowel points), and in so doing denotes both the *chief* (the meaning of the word), and the *family* derived therefrom. The use of the symbolic number of 144,000 in the context of this chapter, suggests not merely the multiplicity of the redeemed, but also the fact that whereas they represent "a great multitude which no man can number" (v.9), Yahweh does know the number, and His "longsuffering waiteth" until the full completion is brought in (2 Pet. 3:15; 1 Pet. 3:20).

By establishing that *thousands* relate to *families* or *clans*, the measure is reduced to each tribe producing twelve such clans, providing the square (12×12) of 144. Where is the evidence? The term *thousands* is used in that way in such places as Num. 1:16, 10:4, 36; 31:5 and elsewhere. The term "heads of the thousands of Israel" (Numb. 1:16) denotes *families* of Israel. Thus, when Gibeon said: "My family is poor in Manasseh" (Jud. 6:15), the word he used was *aleph* which elsewhere is rendered *thousand*; and so the margin renders it: "my *thousand* is the meanest. . . ." The word is derived from a root signifying to *associate together*. Applying the term in that way, Revelation defines the redeemed as constituting one hundred and forty four *related groups* or *families* without revealing the total number of

such (see v.9). This leaves us with the number 144, which, of course, as noted above, is the square of 12: the number of Israel. But why should this be squared as 12×12 ? To reveal a further aspect of the redeemed. Already they have been shown to comprise a priestly organisation of twenty-four courses (elders), and a military organisation of four divisions (living creatures), answering to the political arrangements of the Kingdom of God in the past. In addition, the Kingdom of God in the past, in its civil administration, was divided into twelve divisions, over which were appointed twelve princes, and twelve stewards (1 Chron. 27:16,25). The civil organisation of Israel, therefore suggests a square of twelve, creating a foundation of 144. This is the foundation pattern measurement of the New Jerusalem given in Revelation 21. If we accept *families* as an alternative to *thousands* in the verse before us, a square of the number of families, or clans, into which the civil organisation of the Kingdom of the future, may well be divided. Certainly, it seems to be the pattern of the measurements of the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21. It is described as having a wall which is made up of twelve gems (vv. 19-20), divided by twelve openings, or gates. The foundations of this city are given the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (v. 14), who elsewhere are told that they shall constitute the twelve princes of the Age to come (Matt. 19:28), identifying their future office with that possessed by the twelve princes in the Davidic kingdom. At the gates are angels (v. 12) which identifies their office with the twelve stewards of the Davidic age. Therefore, the number 144, seems to be the number of civil administration of the Kingdom age. The symbolic number of the redeemed therefore, represents the full completion of the household of God, as the basis of the perfect Israelitish Government of the millennial age.

"Of all the tribes of the children of Israel"—The redeemed are made up of Jew and Gentile incorporated into the one Israelitish hope (Acts 28:20; Eph. 2:10-13). As such, they constitute the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16; Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6-7; Phil. 3:3). The description of the 144,000 of Revelation 14:4 is that of all true saints. In Rev. 22:4, all redeemed are similarly marked in their foreheads; in Rev. 21:12, all the glorified

saints are described alike as being of the "twelve tribes of Israel."

The names of the tribes (vv. 5-8) form a sentence as follows: Judah — *Praise*; Reuben — *See a son*; Gad — *Company*; Asher — *Blessed*; Naphthali — *Wrestling*; Manasseh — *Forgetting*; Simeon — *Hearing*; Levi — *Joining*; Issachar — *Reward*; Zebulun — *Dwelling*; Joseph — *Adding*; Benjamin — *Son of the right hand*. The suggested paraphrase of the sentence thus formed is: *Praise Yah! For see a son! with a company of the blessed, who after wrestling, and forgetting the past, having heard and joined, have received the reward of dwelling with and adding to the son of His right hand.*

There are unique features in the enumeration. Judah is placed first, suggesting, the Lion of Judah (Rev. 5:5) assumes his right as firstborn. Joseph replaces Ephraim, suggesting that it is the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), and not natural Israel, to which reference is made. Levi is listed as possessing a tribal inheritance whereas under the Law he had none, suggesting that the Melchizedek priesthood has replaced the Levitical (Ezek. 44:15; Rev. 5:9-10). Dan and Ephraim are missing, suggesting that as Dan signifies *judgment*, the omission of his name implies that the symbol takes us beyond the time of judgment to the perfected community of the future. Ephraim, whose name signifies *double fruit*, is replaced with Joseph, whose name signifies *Increase*. The *double fruit* will already have been gathered in when the Redeemed shall be manifested, and all will be accounted as Israel, whereas there will be continued increase during the Millennium from among the mortal populations of the earth. It is significant, that in the Temple, the faces of the eagle and ox (Dan and Ephraim) are missing from the Cherubim (Ezek. 41:19), providing a link between the two prophecies.

The Rejoicing Redeemed — vv. 9-17

John's attention is now drawn to a great unnumbered company of the Redeemed, who are shown paying their respects to the Lamb, because of the victory they have obtained. They are represented as celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, and as praising the Lamb for the salvation they have received. In answer to a question put by John, their character and nature are described.

VERSE 9

"**After this**"—After the sealing is completed, and at the return of Christ.

"**A great company which no man could number**"—This is a further identification with Israel, for, as Abraham was promised (Gen. 13:16; 15:5), Israel is numberless as the stars of the sky, and the sand on the seashore. In an evil hour, David began to count the people, but he did not finish, for Yahweh had said that Israel should be numberless, and so they remained.

"**Of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues**"—The preposition *ek* here rendered *of* signifies *out of*, and indicates a selection drawn out of such environment to comprise the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:11-13). See additional note — Rev. 5:9.

"**Stood before the throne and before the Lamb**"—See notes Rev. 5:6.

"**Clothed with white robes**"—The investiture of priests under the Law (Exod. 28) took some time, as each garment was separately put on. So it is in Christ. Believers commence to put on the Christ-garments at baptism (Gal. 3: 26-29), but the final robes will be clothed upon the approved at the Judgment Seat (Rev. 19:8). There are various garments referred to symbolically in *The Apocalypse*, each of which will be put on in its proper order. In Rev. 1:13, the multitudinous Son of man is said to be clothed with a garment down to the foot. The word is *poderes* from *pous* "foot" and *aro*, "to fasten." The reference, therefore, is to a garment that entirely covers the body, hiding the flesh. The word is used in the *Septuagint Old Testament* to define the long robe worn by the High Priest (Exod. 28:4), the "linen" of the angelic judge of Ezekiel 9:2, and the "change of raiment" placed upon the typical Joshua of Zechariah 3:4, where it is rendered "a long robe." This long robe, therefore, denotes status, so that the multitudinous Son of man of Rev. 1:13 relates to a *priestly community whose flesh is hidden by the bestowal of immortality*. Another Greek word, *himation* (a diminutive of *heima*, "to put on") is used expressly of an outer cloke or mantle, though the plural *himatia* seems to be used for clothes generally. The plural form of the word is found in Rev. 3:4-5, 18; Rev. 16:15; Rev. 4:4. Believers commence to put on the

garments there referred to at baptism (Rev. 3:4-5, 18; 16:15), but *complete* the process at the Judgment Seat (Rev. 4:4). The singular form of the word is rendered "vesture" in Rev. 19:13, 16, and relates to the outer mantle, or final article of dress, the *himation* proper. This, perhaps, is to be identified with the "white robes" or *white stole* of Rev. 6:11; 7:9, 13, 14. The word denotes a stately robe, a long garment reaching to the feet, which completes the "dress" of the Redeemed. The angels were clothed in this form of garment (Mark 16:5). The R.V. renders Rev. 6:11 in the singular number: "There was given to each one a white robe." Collectively, these "robes," representative of the final character and status of the Redeemed (Rev. 7:9, 13, 14), are said to have been "washed and whitenéd" (*Diaglott*) "in the blood of the Lamb." Therefore they are to be identified with the white linen gowns of Rev. 19:8, 14; Rev. 15:6. In the beginning, Adam and Eve were taught the need of special clothing (Gen. 3:21), and this need was impressed upon Israel in the yearly *Day of Atonement* (or *Coverings*). Isaiah made reference to the "garments of valiance" (Isa. 61:11), and *The Apocalypse* completes the picture by symbolising the various stages from the putting on of Christ in baptism (Gal. 3:26), to the being clothed upon from the "house from heaven," (2 Cor. 5:1-3), even eternal life.

"And palms in their hands"—This identifies the rejoicing multitude with the antitypical feast of tabernacles (Lev 23:36-44), which Zechariah identifies with the Kingdom (Zech. 14:16). The original feast celebrated the ingathering of the fruit of Israel's land; and pointed forward to the great ingathering of the Redeemed as the "firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (Rev. 14:4). The Feast of Tabernacles was preceded by the Day of Atonement, when flesh was humbled before Yahweh. It was celebrated for seven days, at the conclusion of which, the next day, the eighth, was constituted a sabbath (Lev. 23:36-44). "This great national celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles argues the previous cessation of judgment, and consequently the resting of the saints from their labours in the execution of it" (*Eureka*). How great will be the rejoicing when the great antitypical Feast of Tabernacles is celebrated in the earth: when Christ reigns, and the world is brought in

righteousness and peace before Yahweh.

But why does *The Apocalypse* limit the rejoicing multitude to the holding of "palms in their hands?" Why not mention the other branches referred to in Leviticus 23? Doubtless to draw attention to the significance of the Palm. The Hebrew word *tamar* signifies *to be erect*, and the Redeemed will have been caused to stand erect through a resurrection from the dead. The Psalmist declares that "the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree" and shall be "planted in the house of Yahweh" (Ps. 92:12-13. See also Ezek. 40:16; 41:18 etc.). The palm grows in the desert around an oasis, producing fruit for the strength of man. It is straight and upright, useful and ornamental, and is used as a token of deliverance and peace (John 12:13-15).

In *Eureka*, Brother Thomas observes that before the saints will be able to rejoice, symbolically holding the palm branches, they must identify themselves also with the willow branches, likewise used in the feast of Tabernacles. The willow with its drooping branches is suggestive of weeping. Israel in Babylon grieved hanging their "harps upon the willows" (Ps. 137:2). Speaking of Christ before his exaltation, the Psalmist declared "he drank of the brook by the way, therefore he shall exalt his head" (Psa. 110:7). "He was obedient unto death, therefore he was crowned with glory and honor." The absence of the willows in the hands of those seen by John in the vision, suggests that they represent a rejoicing community that has passed through its time of suffering, to one of rejoicing.

VERSE 10

"And cried with a loud voice"—So that all humanity might hear, learn and apply.

"Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne"—The *Diaglott* supplies the ellipsis: "Salvation *ascribed* to our God." See similar construction (Ps. 3:8; Jer. 3:23). The reference to "God seated on the throne," when actually the one seated there is Christ demonstrates the doctrine of God manifestation. See note Rev. 4:2.

"And unto the Lamb"—The one seated upon the throne is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is "God manifest in the flesh," and became such through crucifixion of the flesh. His position on the

throne reveals his status, and his appearance as a Lamb reveals the means by which he attained it. In the Lord there is seen both God and Lamb in manifestation.

VERSE 11

"And all the angels stood round about the throne"—The R.V. provides the present tense: *were standing*. The scene described suggests a great day of celebration: the public coronation of the Lord Jesus, when having "prevailed" over his enemies, he will be presented as King to all mankind for their adulation (Rev. 5:5). The representatives of heaven's angelic host will be present on such an occasion (Heb. 1:6). See also Ps. 2:6; Ps. 45; Luke 12:8; Matt. 23:39 etc.

"About the elders and the four beasts"—The Redeemed also share the victory and glory of the Lamb.

"And fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God"—Peter declared that the angels are intensely interested in the divine purpose relating to the suffering of Christ and the glory that shall follow, "which things they desire to look into" (1 Pet. 1:11-12). In the scene depicted in the chapter before us they rejoice and worship God because of the consummation of this drama in the glory of the Son. They form an outer circle around the elders, the four living ones, and the throne, indicating their protective care and complete sympathy with the Ecclesia redeemed and triumphant, as they did with it in its conflicts and trials (Heb. 1:14). Now they unite with the Ecclesia in adoring and praising God for all that He has done.

VERSE 12

"Saying, Amen"—Signifying *so be it!*—thus the endorsement of the triumph of the Son.

"Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen"—See note Ch. 5:12. The definite article is supplied in the Greek. "Blessing" is *hay eulogia*, "the eulogy," i.e. the greatest eulogy is reserved for God. Creation cannot "bless" God, but it can eulogise Him.

VERSE 13

"And one of the elders answered"—He answered the enquiry of John's

thoughts as the Apostle meditated upon the vision before him. He did so by expressing the question uppermost in the mind of John.

"Saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?"—The R.V. expresses the question as it is given in the Greek: *These which are arrayed in white robes, who are they? and whence came they?*

VERSE 14

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest"—The R.V. has, *My lord (kurios), thou knowest*. This was a note of respect from a mortal to one who has attained unto immortality. The rest of the answer is from the Greek *oida* in the perfect tense, literally, "Thou has known" (*Eureka* vol. 2, p. 341). The term *oida* signifies to have fulness of knowledge, to comprehend absolutely and therefore to know experimentally. John's answer does not imply that he did not know, but, rather, that the question was redundant. The elder knew, because he had experienced what those dressed in white had been through.

"And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation"—The Greek has the definite article: *the tribulation, the great*. What tribulation is that? If we limit it to some future special tribulation, we limit the rejoicing "great multitude" to those who will successfully come through such a time. However, as those described as wearing "white robes" represent the Redeemed in their totality, obviously the tribulation is such as is incidental to saints of every age. The word is *thlipsis*, and signifies *a pressing, or pressure* as derived from the verb *thlibo*, "to suffer affliction due to the pressure of circumstances or the opposition of individuals." It does not necessarily signify physical persecution, but denotes the pressures of life that are incidental to saints in every age, and through which "all must pass" in order to reach the Kingdom (Acts 14:22). See the use of the verb *thlibo* in 1 Thess. 3:4; 2 Thess. 1:6-7; Matt. 7:14 ("narrow") Mark 3:9 ("throng" or press); 2 Cor. 1:6; 7:5; 1 Tim. 5:10; Heb. 11:37 ("afflicted"); 2 Cor. 4:8 ("pressed" RV). *Thlipsis* is endured by all. The Apostles (Matt. 24:9), and believers generally (Mark 4:17). But Paul in "much affliction" (2 Cor. 2:4), viewed it as "light" in comparison with the future glory (2 Cor.

4:17). Both John in Patmos (Rev. 1:9), and those to whom he wrote (Rev. 2:9) suffered it. In Rev. 2:22, divine judgment on the Jezebel class is described as a "great *thlipsis*." In Rom. 2:9, Paul reveals that the final *thlipsis* (the Great Tribulation) will be experienced at the Judgment Seat of Christ. All will experience this before receiving acquittal or condemnation, with the rejected giving way to "anguish of soul," and the accepted entering into the great joy of millennial bliss (Rev. 7:4). "Thlipsis" is rendered *anguish, burdened, distress, persecution, tribulation, trouble*. The statement of the Elder in Rev. 7, would teach us to view such experiences as moulding influences on our characters by which they will be shaped for divine use in the Age to come. In that regard, one of the names of Deity is *Yahweh Yatsar* which signifies *He Who will Mould or Shape*. The word is rendered *Maker* in Isa. 45:9-13, and elsewhere *Potter*. It signifies to squeeze into shape. It is rendered "formed" in Isaiah 43:1: "Thus saith Yahweh that created thee, O Jacob, and He that *formed* thee, O Israel." Yahweh *created* Jacob, but through adversity and *thlipsis*, moulded him into shape, and renamed him Israel. As there is a need for each one to be moulded into shape, so it is necessary for each one to go "through tribulation to enter the kingdom of God." The characters of such will then be moulded by the hands of the Divine Potter, so as to become "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

"**And have washed their robes**"—See note v.9.

"**And made them white in the blood of the Lamb**"—The "whiteness" of their robes is conditional upon the forgiveness of their sins (See note Rev. 1:5; Isa. 1:16-18).

VERSE 15

"**Therefore are they before the throne of God**"—They are brought into close proximity to the centre of government as joint rulers with the Lord.

"**And serve him day and night in his temple**"—See note Ch. 4:8. Their priestly functions never cease. The expression is gathered from Ps. 134:1. There were priests day and night in the

Temple in Jerusalem, so that any Israelite in need, at any hour, could look towards it knowing that Yahweh "neither slumbered nor slept." It was a symbol of immortality, and pointed forward in type to the Redeemed who will be immortal king-priests in the age to come (Rev. 5:9-10). See note on Rev. 3:12. The term "Temple" is *naos* in Greek, and signifies the Sanctuary proper, in contrast to the *hieron*, or Sanctuary, comprising the courts and outer buildings as well. Into the Temple, the *naos*, only priests could lawfully enter. Both the individual believer (1 Cor. 6:19), as well as the Ecclesia (Eph. 2:21; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16) are treated as the Temple, or *naos*.

"**And he that sitteth on the throne**"—See note Ch. 4:2.

"**Shall dwell among them**"—The R.V., as the Greek, renders: *shall spread His tabernacle (tent) over them*. The reference is to the Shekinah glory that overshadowed the Mercy Seat. Yahweh shall dwell among men, not personally, nor corporeally, but through manifestation. The word "dwell" is from *skenoo*, "to pitch a tent." The same expression is used in John 1:14. Yahweh dwelt among men in the past in manifesting His glory in the midst of Israel. (See Exod. 25:8; Lev. 26:11); and He has promised to do so in the future (see Ezek. 43:7; Ps. 68:18).

VERSE 16

"**They shall hunger no more**"—These words are cited from Isa. 49:10. They who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" today, shall then be filled (Matt. 5:6).

"**Neither thirst any more**"—They will be led by the Lamb-Shepherd to fountains of living, satisfying water (v.17).

"**Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat**"—They shall no longer suffer persecution, or distress, from hostile governments or individuals (See Ps. 121:5-7).

VERSE 17

"**For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne**"—The very centre, and foundation, of the Kingdom of the future will be established upon the sacrifice of flesh, typified by the Lamb.

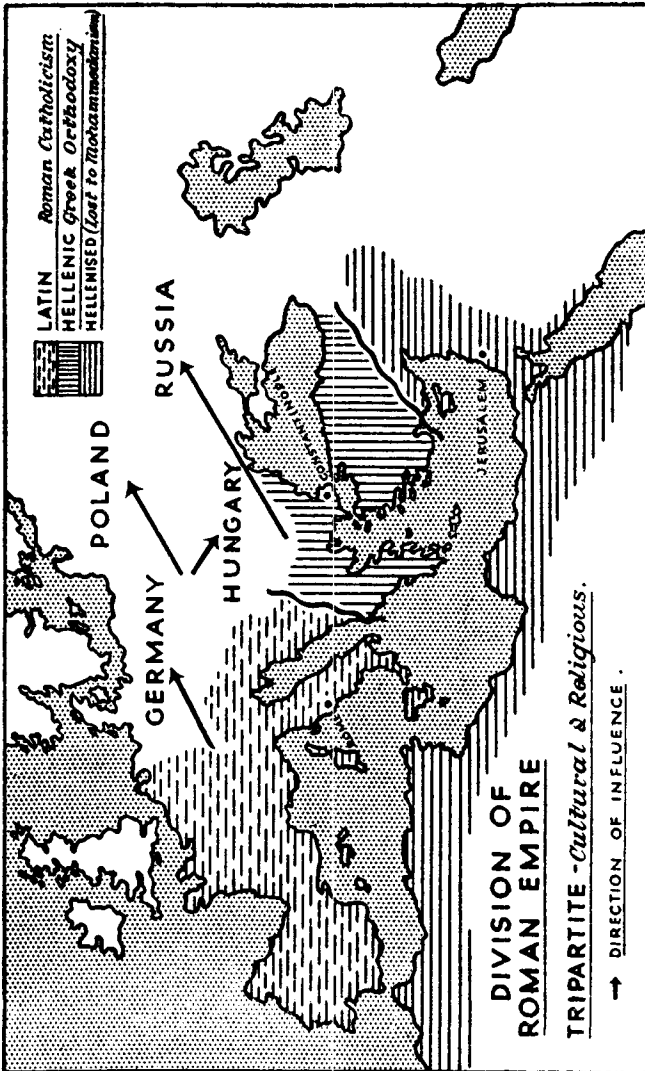
"**Shall feed them**"—Literally, "shall

shepherd them (See Heb. 13:20; John 10:11; Ezek. 34:23; Ps. 23 — for Christ as the chief shepherd of the flock). As Shepherd, the Lamb will lead his flock through the valley of the shadow of death, onwards to glory and immortality. See Rev. 14:4.

“And lead them unto living fountains of waters”—Symbolic of eternal life

(John 4:14). The words literally rendered are: *Fountains of water of life*. See Ps. 23:2; Isa. 12:3. Yahweh is such a Fountain (Jer. 17:13).

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes”—See Rev. 21:4; Matt. 5:4. The reference is derived from Isa. 25:8.



The Roman Empire—tripartite cultural and religious divisions.

(3) THE SEVEN ANGELIC TRUMPETERS **Chapters 8-11**

The opening of the seventh seal introduces seven angelic trumpeters. This significant symbol is derived from the Old Testament use of the trumpet, to call the people together. Consequently, the sounding of these Apocalyptic Trumpeters, summon the enemies of the Roman Empire together for the purpose of judgment upon it. The first two chapters in this sub-section: chapters 8,9, introduce six of the trumpeters, and as in chapter six of the Apocalypse, these are divided into four and two. The first four introduce events that affect the Western Section of the Roman Empire; the last two summon forces that afflict the eastern section of it. As we have shown in our introduction (see p. 21), these seven trumpeters, are symmetrical in their effect with the outpouring of the judgment vials of Chapter 16. Chapters 10,11 form a parenthesis that is matched also by one in the 16th chapter (see p. 21), culminating in Christ taking the kingdom of men.

The completion of this sub-section at the conclusion of Revelation 11, brings The Apocalypse to a climactic point, with the kingdom of man ceded to Christ. This represents half the Apocalypse, and the next chapter recapitulates the ground covered, with a new set of visions that go back in point of time. It will be seen that Chapter 10 is not disjointed, but rather wellplaced; and that the conclusion reached in Revelation 11 is a foreshortened and premature conclusion, necessary to the general plan as shown in our introduction, p. 19.

CHAPTER EIGHT

OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL

The seventh seal is opened, to reveal seven angels, each with a trumpet in his hand. For a moment there is silence, during which the smoke of incense is seen arising from the golden altar, and the prayers of saints are heard petitioning for relief from their sufferings. Then, in order, the first four angels sound their trumpets, and the enemies of Rome in the west are summoned to execute vengeance upon the Empire because of its persecution of the servants of God. The symbolism of the judgments of the angelic Trumpeters matches that of the first four vials (see p. 19). At the conclusion of the sounding of the fourth trumpeter, another angel proclaims three final woes upon an unrepentant world. Does history record events that follow the triumph of Constantine and that answer to the requirements of this chapter? It does. History reveals four events of sufficient significance as to constitute clearly defined steps, or developments, in the destruction of the Roman Empire. Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, composed with no reference to *The Apocalypse*, records four such events, extending from the first invasion of the Goths and Vandals at the beginning of the fifth century, to the fall of the Western Empire in AD 476. The first was the invasion of Alaric, king of the Goths, AD 410; the second was the invasion of Attila, king of the Huns, the "scourge of God," 447; the third was the sack of Rome by Genseric, king of the Vandals, 455; the fourth, resulting in the final conquest of Rome, was that of Odoacer, king of the Heruli, who assumed the title of king of Italy in 476. His assumption of power in Italy brought the Empire in the West to an end. The Eastern Empire still remained, to be destroyed as the result of the final "woe-trumpets." It is significant that Gibbon states regarding the four events enumerated above that each one directly contributed to the downfall of the Empire in the West.

The events of the first trumpet were projected on the Empire by the folly of the eleven years' old Honorius, who assumed power in the West on the death of his father, Theodosius. By direction of Theodosius, the Empire was divided into two parts, and distributed to his two sons, on his death, and was never again re-united. Gibbon claims (Ch. 29): "The genius of Rome expired with Theodosius, the last of the successors of Augustus and Constantine who appeared in the field at the head of their armies, and whose authority was universally acknowledged throughout the whole extent of the empire." The elevation of his two sons in the West and East constituted a "final and permanent division of the Roman empire."

The sounding of the Trumpets, therefore, preceded by the division of the Empire into its "two legs of iron," announced events that brought the divided empire to its end. Thus *The Apocalypse*, in its prophetic presentation of coming events, faithfully anticipated the course that things would take in the history of the world.

(a) — Seventh Seal: Angels Prepare To Sound — vv. 1-6

The opening of the seventh seal reveals seven angel trumpeters. Attention is then drawn to the smoke of incense arising with the prayers of saints. Meanwhile the trumpeters prepare to sound.

VERSE 1

“And when he had opened the seventh seal”—The time period of the seventh seal extends from the overthrow of paganism by Constantine at the battle of Chrysopolis (AD 324) to the return of Christ. It includes the seven trumpets, seven vials, etc.

“There was silence in heaven”—Following the success of Constantine outlined in the concluding verses of Chapter 6, there was peace in the political heavens of the Roman Empire.

“About the space of half an hour”—The Jews divided the day into twelve hours, and the night into twelve hours. Brother Thomas suggests that a month (a lunar month of thirty days) comprises the hour of the year. On that basis, “half an hour” would represent 15 days, but on the principle of a day for a year (Ezek. 4:6), this would represent fifteen years. The text signifies *about* half an hour. Actually, the period of peace extended for about fourteen years: from 324 until a few months after the death of Constantine in 337. During that time, the Empire was united under one powerful ruler, and the government was stabilised. In accordance with the request of the “sealing” angel, the winds of war were restrained from sweeping across the empire (cp. Rev. 7:1-3).

VERSE 2

“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God”—The angels of heaven are “ministering spirits” who minister on behalf of the saints (Heb. 1:14). They are here depicted about to act in that capacity; they do so under the authority and direction of Christ (1 Pet. 3:22).

“And to them were given seven trumpets”—Though handed the trumpets, the angels, for a moment, remain inactive. This was in answer to their request of Rev. 7:3. The delay provided opportunity for the servants of God who were sealed in the forehead, to withdraw from the pseudo-Christian Church (Cath-

olicism), and to establish themselves as a separate community, the Ecclesia, based upon the symbolic number of 144,000. Meanwhile, the prayers of saints continued to ascend to heaven seeking relief from their sufferings, for now the so-called “Christian” Church, established as the State religion of the Empire, commenced to persecute the Ecclesia. So the trumpeters made preparation to sound. Trumpets were used to call people together (Num. 10:3; Lev. 23:24). The effect of the sounding trumpets was to summons the enemies of Rome to gather together against it.

VERSE 3

“And another angel came” — This angel is shown attending to the two altars: the brazen altar of sacrifice, and the golden altar of incense. He therefore represents the saints earnestly engaged in prayer in the “heavenlies in Christ” (Eph. 2:6; Heb. 9:23). The context of this verse shows that the prayers were offered by saints who suffered persecution from the State Church during the thirty minutes silence.

“And stood at the altar”—The altar referred to is obviously the altar of sacrifice, for at it incense was given to the angel to offer on the golden altar. The symbolism is based upon the requirements of the Law, for its provisions necessitated that incense offered upon the golden altar in the Holy Place, be ignited from coals taken from off the altar of burnt offering in the court (Lev. 16:12-13). The two altars of the Temple are thus referred to in this verse. The first represented the principle of sacrifice which was appropriate to the circumstances; for the Ecclesia at the time experienced bitter persecution, and so “fellowshipped the sufferings of Christ.” The second represented prayer, through which a believer can figuratively ascend into heaven itself (Col. 3:1; Heb. 10:19-20). Seeing that these two altars are brought into conjunction with each other in this verse, it is helpful to consider the relationship of one with the other. The brazen altar was outside; the golden altar inside. The former was made of wood overlaid with brass; the latter was made of wood overlaid with gold. Brass, in such a connection, speaks of flesh purified; gold speaks of faith. One develops from the other. The first altar had no crown; the second had a crown, representing the

victory of faith (1 John 5:4). The first represented Christ in the days of his flesh; the second represented him in glory and power at the right hand of the Father. The brazen altar, as the place of suffering, typified him as Saviour; the golden altar, as the place of glory, typified him as Mediator. Sinners came to the first to be made saints, and there entered "into Christ;" saints made their way to the second to acceptably worship Yahweh (Heb. 10:19-20), and to seek for life eternal. The blood of the first made the second efficacious. Both were ignited by divine fire: a symbol of the Word of Yahweh. Effective prayer must be combined with sacrifice, as it was in this instance; for the two altars were brought into conjunction with each other, as the suffering of saints caused them to more fervently turn to God in prayer.

"Having a golden censer"—Thus prayer is associated with faith.

"And there was given unto him much incense"—Suggesting effusive prayer. See Luke 18:1.

"That he should offer it with the prayers of all saints"—The margin renders: "He should add it to the prayers of saints." The component parts of incense symbolise the various aspects of prayer. See this discussed in *Making Prayer Powerful*, published by *Logos Publications*. Prayer should be balanced, blending praise with petition, and respect with request. It should comprise a sacrifice of the lips, and the expression of emotion governed by reason. As such, it ascends as a sweet savour unto Yahweh (cp. Eph. 5:2). In the verse before us, the prayers comprise those of the persecuted Ecclesia, then oppressed by the State Church which claimed to be "Christian." As at an earlier period, believers again turn to God for help (See Rev. 6:9-11; Luke 18:7), beseeching His aid by fervent prayer (James 5:16).

"Upon the golden altar"—This relates to the altar of incense. It was made of gold, and finished off with a crown at the top — the crown of faith. See notes above.

"Which was before the throne"—The throne of Yahweh in the Tabernacle or Temple comprised the Most Holy with the Ark of Mercy. It was there that Yahweh held court with His people (see Exod. 25:22). The antitypical Most Holy, at present, is in "heaven itself," where is

Christ who appears "in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). The angels act as "ministering spirits" on the behalf of worshippers, linking them with the court of heaven above.

VERSE 4

"And the smoke of the incense"—See Ps. 141:2.

"Which came"—Omit, as it is lacking from the Greek.

"With the prayers of the saints"—The incense gave savour to the prayers, and revealed that they were acceptably received.

"Ascended up before God out of the angel's hand"—See Heb. 1:14; Matt. 18:10.

VERSE 5

"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar"—The word "with" is *ek*, signifying *out of*. The altar fire which ignited the sacrifices of old was divine fire (see Lev. 9:24), and therefore is suggestive of the consuming power of God's spirit word (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1 John 5:6). Paul taught that "through him (Christ) we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit (the Truth) unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). Prayer must be ignited by the spirit-word to be really effective. The divine fire of the altar, symbolic of the Spirit, was used in the outpouring of judgment as in Ezekiel 10:2.

"Cast it into the earth"—The Roman "earth" or empire. This was the answer of heaven to the prayers of saints. See Ps. 65:5; Luke 12:49.

"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake"—These expressions are figurative of war and revolt, and historically were fulfilled following the death of Constantine. To clear the way for Constantine's sons — Constantine II, Constantius and Constans — and eliminate possible rivals, soldiers murdered the rest of the imperial family except for two young nephews of the dead emperor, Gallus and Julian, who were made virtual prisoners. As senior of the three Augusti, the eldest brother ruled the west as Constantine II. In AD 340 he set off to eliminate his younger brother, Constans, who was ruling Italy and Illyricum. But he lost his life on the way, and Constans took over his heritage. Hard pressed to hold back the

Franks who were pouring into Gaul, as well as the Picts and Scots, who were invading Britain, he was assassinated. Thus the Empire again became united under Constantius. He was forced to rely upon his young cousins, Gallus and Julian, as subordinates and possible successors.

Gallus proved a failure, so Constantius had him executed in AD 354. However, his studious half-brother, Julian, who was sent to Gaul, showed remarkable ability as a commander and administrator. He repelled the invasion of Franks and Germans, and carrying the offensive into Germany secured the submission of some tribes. By AD 359 he controlled the whole of the Rhine. As ruler of Gaul, he sought to reduce the crushing weight of taxation. In AD 361 he renounced Christianity and declared war on his cousin Constantius. Constantius was not a popular ruler. He had proved to be both cruel and ruthless. Civil war was averted only by his sudden death in 361, which left the succession to Julian.

These "voices, thunderings, and lightnings" were followed by an "earthquake." Julian attempted to re-establish paganism as the state religion. He speedily set about restoring pagan rites and ceremonies, re-opening and re-dedicating pagan temples, and reducing the privileges previously enjoyed by the church. He was tolerant of all religions, so that under his rule, the Donatists were protected (an answer to the prayers of v.4, for the general term *Donatists* included the Ecclesia), so alleviating the bitter persecution experienced by believers previously. The political and religious "earthquake" attempted by Julian, however, did not produce any lasting change. On 26th June 363, he died of wounds received in battle against the Persians, and his death terminated paganism's last hope. He was succeeded by Jovian, an ardent Catholic, who, in a few months, abolished Julian's edicts, and restored the privileges of the Apostasy, re-establishing it as the legal religion of the State. He died suddenly the following year, and was succeeded by Valentinian I in the west (364-375) and his brother Valens in the east (364-378).

VERSE 6

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets"—The seven angels had the trumpets in their hands ready to

sound, suggesting the imminence of impending trouble. See Jer. 4:5.

"Prepared themselves to sound"—The sounding of the trumpets would summons the enemies of Rome to move against the empire. The preparations for sounding brought the barbarians converging upon the borders of the empire. This occupied a period of some 32 years, during the reign of Jovian, Valentinian and Valens, Gatian, and Theodosius, lasting until AD 395.

History Of The Period

It was a period of increasing trouble for the Roman Empire. Along its borders its enemies massed, awaiting opportunity to invade. Within its borders, the apostasy flourished, growing in tyranny and blasphemy, whilst the state was afflicted with civil disorders and antagonism. Gibbon in *The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire* wrote: "The fall of the Roman Empire can be justly dated from the reign of Valens." Brother Thomas states in *Eureka*: "The happiness and security of each individual were personally attacked, and the arts and labours of ages were rudely defaced by the barbarians of Scythia and Germany." These "barbarians" in the north, pressed heavily against the borders of the Empire attacking its citizens, pillaging its cities, and constantly threatening to invade in force.

At last, in 366 the threatened invasion commenced. The Goths crossed the Danube, and under Hermani, King of the Ostrogoths, extended their power from the Danube to the Baltic. Further west, the Alemanni and Ostrogoths crossed the Rhine, and the Saxons ravaged the borders of Gaul. The Empire became so weakened by pressure and attack, that ultimately Rome had to enter into a treaty with the barbarians. Under the terms of this agreement, these northern tribes were permitted to settle in Thrace, Phrygia, and Illyricum. Though they openly proclaimed themselves as allies of the Empire, secretly they remained its enemies, awaiting the first opportunity to rise against the weakened, incompetent government of Rome.

(b) — First Angel: Fiery Storm on Earth — vv. 7-8

The first angel sounds, and hail and fire mingled with blood sweeps the earth,

burning up a third part of trees and foliage. This symbolised the invasion of Alaric and the Goths — AD 395-410.

VERSE 7

“The first angel sounded”—The sounding of this first trumpet summoned Alaric and his Goths against the Empire.

“And there followed hail and fire mingled with blood”—This suggests a mighty and ruthless destroyer as in Isa. 28:2. The word “with” is *en* in Greek, and signifies *in*, thus “hail and fire mingled in blood.” The hailstones and fireballs fell in a shower of blood. Similar words are used to describe the seventh plague of hail (Exod. 9:22). The Septuagint renders the description of the plague as: “And there was hail and the fire flaming in the hail.” The devastating effect of the plague on Egypt was felt by Rome, when Alaric and his Goths invaded the Empire.

“Were cast upon the earth”—The “earth” in question related to the Roman “earth,” or empire. The best texts add: *And the third part of the earth was burnt up and the third part of the trees, etc.* At the death of Constantine the Empire was divided into three parts. The Italian third was the portion affected by the invasion of Alaric.

“And a third part of trees was burnt up, and all the green grass was burnt up”—The effect of the seventh plague on Egypt is similar (Exod. 9:22-26). As a symbol, *trees* represent leaders; and *grass* the people (cp. Jud. 9:8; Isa. 40:6). Both leaders and people would suffer from the attack of Alaric. The word “green” is *clorus*, the colour of the pale horse of Rev. 6:8. *Clorus* is the colour of young, undeveloped grass — a pale grass, suggesting the weakened condition of the Empire generally.

History Of The Period

The sounding of the first trumpet summoned Alaric, as a mighty destroyer, to punish the Italian third of the Roman Empire. Alaric was a Goth, a tribe which, as fugitives and suppliants from the Huns, had humbly sought permission to settle within the borders of the Empire, in the waste lands lying to the south of the Danube. Alaric became an officer in the Roman army under Theodosius. On the death of Theodosius, in 393, the Empire devolved on his two

sons, Arcadius and Honorius, both youths of feeble minds. The former reigned in Rome, the latter in Constantinople. One of the first acts of Arcadius was to drive Alaric from his service and to rouse him to revenge, by an insulting refusal of all promotion. The fiery Goth returned to his own countrymen, who received him with enthusiasm, and proclaimed him king.

Alaric first marched against Constantinople; but finding the city too strongly defended, he turned towards the west, and commenced to ravage Greece. The effect was a trail of devastation. He laid waste both towns and rural centres. Pleasant scenes of peace and prosperity were changed into ruins as the “hail and fire” of his widespread destruction were mingled with the blood of his many victims. He was defeated and forced to retreat by Stilicho, a famous Roman general. In the year 402, he crossed the Alps into Italy, and advanced on Milan, where Honorius then resided. Again he was defeated by Stilicho. Meanwhile, Rhadagaisus, at the head of a large army of Germans, also invaded Italy. The cowardly Honorius, Emperor of the West, together with the trembling Senate, lacked the courage to defend the country, and fled before the invaders. It was again left to Stilicho to save the Empire. The German hordes were defeated and dispersed, though they were not expelled from the borders.

Two years later, Stilicho himself, having become an object of envy, jealousy, and hatred to the feeble-minded Honorius and his courtiers, was beheaded at Ravenna, by order of the emperor on 23rd Aug. 408. By this act of insane cruelty, of incredible ingratitude and stupidity, Italy was deprived of its last defender. In October of that year, Alaric again crossed the Alps, and advanced to Ravenna, and on to Rome, without any resistance. Some 618 years had elapsed since that city had been violated by the presence of a foreign enemy outside her walls. Now, however, it was blockaded by the King of the Goths, and subjected to a siege that caused great suffering and death to its inhabitants. Enraged by hunger, the desperate inmates devoured the bodies of victims, whilst even mothers tasted the flesh of their slaughtered infants. The dead lay in thousands in the streets and houses, until the stench that arose

became unbearable. At last Alaric accepted an enormous ransom to retire. However, negotiations for peace fell through, and Rome again was besieged in 409, and again in 410. Finally, the Goths obtained admission to the city, and with ungovernable fury swept it with death and destruction. After six days, they evacuated it, only to turn their fury on the southern provinces of Italy, mingling the blood of the inhabitants with the hail and fire of destruction. In 410, however, death claimed Alaric; his forces disintegrated and dispersed, bringing some alleviation of the miseries experienced by the Italian third of the Empire.

(c) — Second Angel: Burning Mountain in the Sea — vv. 8-9

The second angel sounds, and a great mountain burning with fire is flung sizzling into the sea, bringing death to a third of the creatures inhabiting it, as well as to the ships that sail on its surface. The symbolism pointed forward to the depredations of Genseric and the Vandals (429-477).

VERSE 8

“The second angel sounded”—The sounding of this trumpet summoned Genseric and the Vandals against the Empire.

“As it were a great mountain burning with fire”—A “great mountain” is symbolic of a destroying kingdom (Jer. 51:25; Dan. 2:35).

“Cast into the sea”—This naturally would cause us to look at some area adjacent to the Mediterranean for the fulfilment of the vision. Genseric’s activities were mainly maritime.

“And the third part of the sea became blood”—As with the epoch of the first trumpet this description speaks of the serious nature of the affliction, and to its concentration on one of the tripartite divisions of the Roman Empire. It also can be related to the first plague on Egypt (Exod. 7:17).

VERSE 9

“And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died”—Again implying the maritime nature of the calamity.

“And the third part of the ships were destroyed”—The commerce of the Empire would be drastically curtailed.

History Of The Period

This relates to Genseric and the Vandals. The symbol of a blazing or burning mountain, torn from its foundations, and precipitated into the ocean, well represents the requirements of Genseric’s invasion. Genseric and the Vandals were uprooted from their ancient seat, and projected towards the maritime parts of the Empire.

Genseric, the king of the Vandals in Spain, was born at Seville in the year 406. When he came to the throne, the Vandals had just received an invitation from Boniface, governor of Africa, to come over and aid him in his revolt from Rome. Crossing the Straits of Gibraltar, Genseric entered North Africa, and was joined by the Donatists who were suffering severe persecution by the Catholics. Others joined him, until his forces were of such power as to cause Boniface dismay. He now recognised his mistake, in inviting Genseric to assist him and attempted to restrain him. But Genseric was beyond all restraint. He became the scourge of North Africa, destroying and pillaging the country, and ultimately establishing himself as master of Hippo and Carthage. However, once established in power, he showed that he was capable of wisely ruling, and commenced to exercise firm control over the possessions he had won. From the ports of Hippo and Carthage, he organised piratical excursions against the Romans ravaging the coasts of the Mediterranean, and boldly attacking the Empire’s Navy. He won outstanding victories by the use of fire ships, and though new ships were built to oppose him, he continued to win victories on the sea. All maritime trade ceased, and the sea “became as blood.” In 455 he set sail for Rome itself, transporting a large army across the ocean. Maximus was emperor of Rome at the time, but lacked the determination or ability to resist the attack of Genseric. Disembarking at Ostia, the Vandals marched on Rome, the city was taken, and for fourteen days it again suffered indignities from the hands of its enemies, so that much of its wealth and possessions were carted off to Cathage by its conqueror. After the death of Maximus, two further attempts were made to overthrow Genseric, both of which were unsuccessful. In 457, the Emperor Majorcan assembled a large fleet at Carthage, for the purpose of

invading Africa; but he was surprised by night, and most of his ships burnt. In 468 another expedition was fitted out by Leo, emperor of the East. Genseric expressed great alarm, and a desire to treat with his enemy. A fatal truce of five days was granted, during which the Vandals fell upon the fleet in the night, and almost entirely destroyed it. In 477, Genseric died. His successes demonstrated that the Empire was vulnerable to attack, and his occupation of Rome revealed the weakness of the defences of that city. But even more significant to the brief occupation of Rome, was the severance of Africa from the Empire. Gibbon summarises the attack of Genseric by the statement: "The loss or desolation of the provinces from the Ocean to the Alps impaired the glory and greatness of Rome; the internal prosperity was irretrievably destroyed by the separation of Africa." Genseric died in 477.

(d) — Third Angel: Burning Star on Rivers etc. — vv. 10-11

The third angel sounds, and, a great star, burning as a lamp, is seen to fall upon the rivers and fountains of waters. The name of the star is "wormwood," for it has the effect of making bitter the waters of the area. The prophecy was fulfilled by the frightful ravages of Attila and the Huns (433-453).

VERSE 10

"And the third angel sounded"—The sounding summoned Attila and the Huns who ravaged southern Europe whilst Genseric was busy in North Africa.

"And there fell a great star from heaven"—A star is the natural emblem of a prince or ruler. See Num. 24:17; Isa. 14:12; Dan. 12:3. A star falling from heaven would be a natural symbol of one whose character and course would be like a meteor shooting through the sky.

"Burning as it were a lamp"—The language describes a meteor blazing through the air, an emblem of fiery energy, of rapidity of movement.

"And it fell upon the third part"—See note v. 7.

"Of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters"—A reference to the area of the Rhine, Danube and Alpine districts. They were the regions that suffered most from the devastations of Attila. "The power of Attila extended from the

swampy wilds of Scythia to the banks of the Rhine, and from the forests of Scandinavia and the shores of the Baltic, to the head of the Adriatic, and the desert valley of the Danube."

VERSE 11

"And the name of the star is called Wormwood"—The Greek word is *apsinthos*, which is also the name of the river Illyricum, the district from whence Attila came. "Wormwood" signifies *bitterness*, and the shocking atrocities committed by Attila and the Huns as they went on their rampage of destruction, violence and bloodshed, brought bitterness to the people of the districts he invaded.

"And a third part of the waters became wormwood"—"Waters" is a symbol of peoples (see Rev. 17:15).

"And many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter"—Though Attila invaded and desolated "the whole breadth of Europe," his principal operations were in the regions of the Alps and the portions of the empire where the rivers flow down into Italy. He did attempt to invade Gaul, and if he had succeeded, the whole of Europe would have fallen under his control. But he was defeated, and this caused him to turn towards the Alps and Italy. Gibbon states: "Attila spread his ravages over the rich plains of modern Lombardy, which are divided by the Po, and bounded by the Alps and the Appennines." He brought devastation and ruin wherever he went, and rejoiced in what he did. It is claimed that the ferocious Hun declared that "the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod."

In the regions defined by Gibbon as being those most particularly affected by the concluding depredations of Attila, the great rivers that water Europe have their origin, and are swelled by numerous streams that flow down from the Alps.

History Of The Period

Tough fighters though they were, the Ostrogoths (East Goths), Visigoths (West Goths) and Vandals proved themselves to be no match for the Huns. Noted for their ruthless, barbarous ferocity, the Huns spread devastation and bloodshed wherever they went.

They originated from Scythia, in Central Asia. Attila was the son of Mandzach, a chief of the most warlike section of the race. He first menaced Constantinople, and was granted a treaty by Theodosius

the younger, the emperor of the eastern Empire, which acknowledged him as lord of the lower Danube. But this acknowledgment did not bring peace to the area. Though Attila first attacked the Persians, when defeated by them he turned and ravaged the eastern section of the Empire, causing destruction of cities, and great loss of life, throughout Illyria and Greece. The eastern Empire was powerless to restrain him, and it was a relief to Constantinople, when Attila turned towards the west, and devastated Europe. He made preparations to invade Gaul, but again suffered defeat, and this caused him to turn his attention towards the Alpine districts of Italy. He burst into Italy at the head of an enormous army, demanding from the Emperor Valentinian III, the hand of his sister Honoria, and the surrender of nearly half the provinces of the empire. These terms being refused, he laid siege to the great and flourishing city of Arqueleia, at the head of the Adriatic, which he took and levelled with the ground. He afterwards destroyed the cities of Padua, Vicenza, Verona, and Bergamo, and laid waste the plains of Lombardy. After devastating the fairest provinces of Italy, he was induced by a display of force, and the appeal of Pope Leo I, to retire beyond the Alps to his encampment on the plains of Hungary. The very name of Attila caused terror throughout the Empire, and this was heightened by the ferocious and wild appearance of the Huns. Scenes of peace and prosperity were turned into smoking ruins and deserts by the ruthless and senseless destruction of his hordes. He died at the height of an orgy in the year 453. Gibbon in *The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire*, records the actions of Attila at length, describing him as "that formidable barbarian, who alternately insulted and invaded the East and the West and uged the rapid downfall of the Roman Empire" (Ch. 34). That being his character, it is appropriate that the results of his ravages should be selected by the Spirit for special reference in *The Apocalypse*.

(e) — Fourth Angel: Heavenly Bodies Smitten — vv. 12-13

The sounding of the fourth angel, sees the sun, moon and stars subjected to a partial eclipse, so that a third of these heavenly bodies cease to shine. This is followed by a mid-heaven angelic proc-

lamation of woe to the inhabitants of the earth because of the remaining trumpeters who are yet to sound. The symbolism points to the complete overthrow of the Government in Italy, brought about by the conquest of Odoacer, and the final eclipse of the Roman Empire in the West, in AD 476.

VERSE 12

"And the fourth angel sounded"—The sounding of this trumpet summoned the Goths under Odoacer. His triumph brought the Roman Empire in the west to an end. It occurred at such a time, that anyone has only to open *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* to see that this is the next event that *should* be symbolised if the design were to represent the progression of history leading to the downfall of the empire.

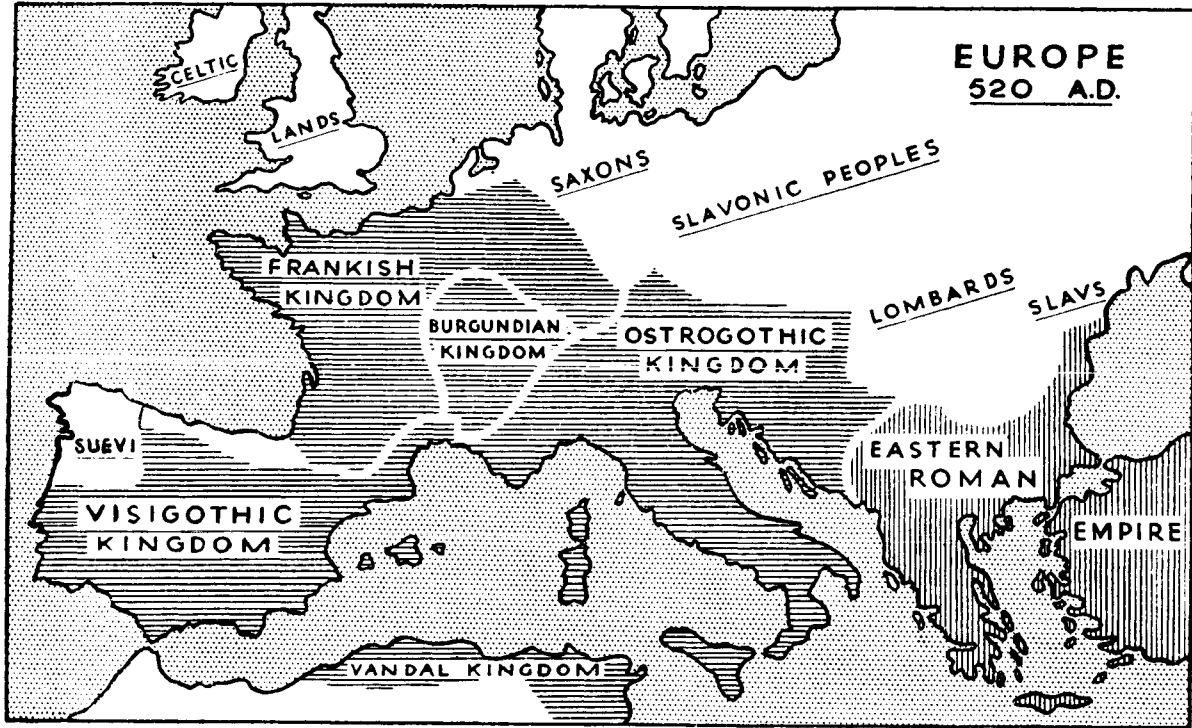
"And the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars"—Previously it had been the earth, trees, water, etc., that had been smitten. Now it is the ruling powers in the political heavens. The heavenly bodies are commonly used as denoting governments and leaders (see Ezek. 32:6-8; Isa. 1:1,10; Luke 21:25, etc.).

"So as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise"—In the terms of the symbolism, this implies an eclipse of the government in the Italian third of the Empire, from whence the Western division was ruled. In recording the disasters by which the Western Empire came to an end, Gibbon states: "The splendid days of Augustus and Trajan were eclipsed by a cloud of ignorance."

History Of The Period

The name of the first recorded Emperor of Rome was Romulus Augustus, and it is a coincidence of history, that the last ruler of the Roman Empire had the same name: Romulus Augustus. He was placed on the throne by Orestes, Secretary of State to Attila. He was succeeded by Odoacer, King of the Heruli, who took Rome in 476, deposed Romulus and became King of Italy, thus bringing the Western Empire to an end. He was subsequently deposed by Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths (eastern Goths), and later assassinated (AD 493).

The Four Trumpets of Revelation 8



The historian Gibbon lists four events as decisive in the decline and fall of the Western Empire. They are the attack of Alaric and the Goths (1st trumpet), Genseric and the Vandals

(2nd Trumpet), Attila and the Huns (3rd Trumpet), and the fall of the Empire at the hands of Odoacer in AD 476. Thus history endorses the outline of *The Apocalypse*.

Gothic kings continued to reign in Rome for about 60 years.

The depredations of the Goths, Vandals and Huns, had irreparably weakened the empire, and brought about a rapid decline in its influence and power. Odoacer completed the decline. When he took over the rulership of Rome from Romulus Augustus, "the sun, moon and stars of the western third of Rome ceased to shine" — the constitution was eclipsed. As a sign of this eclipse, the diadem of the West was handed over to Zena, the Emperor of the east, in Constantinople.

Odoacer was the son of Edecon who had served under Attila. He assumed the title of king over his followers, and eventually occupied Rome. Gibbon records: "Odoacer was the first barbarian who reigned in Italy, over a people who had once asserted their superiority above the rest of mankind." The Empire, as it previously existed, came to an end with this event. Instead of one united rule it was divided into a number of independent nations. Recording the elevation of Odoacer, Gibbon writes: "I have now accomplished the laborious narrative of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, from the fortunate age of Trajan and the Antonines to the latest extinction in the West, about five centuries after the Christian era.....All the subjects of the empire, who by the use of the Latin language, more particularly deserved the name and privileges of Romans, were oppressed by the disgrace and calamities of foreign conquest; and the victorious nations of Germany established a new system of manners and government in the western countries of Europe."

In accordance with the requirements of prophecy (see Daniel 2), the united Empire had first been divided into two, answering to the legs of the image, and now into ten, answering to its toes.

Yet the light was not wholly extinct. It was "a third part" of it which was put out; and it was still true that some of the forms of the ancient constitution were observed — that the light still lingered before it wholly passed away. The authority of the Roman name had not yet entirely ceased. The senate of Rome continued to assemble as usual. The consuls were appointed yearly, one by the Eastern emperor, one by Italy and Rome. Odoacer himself governed Italy under a title — that of *Patrician* — conferred on him by the Eastern emperor.

In commenting upon this, *The Apocalypse And History* (p. 56) makes this point: "An eclipse is only a passing phenomenon. When it is over the sun or the moon, as the case may be, shines once again in the heavens. So in the political heavens of Rome the eclipse passed, and the luminaries again shone when Theodoric became 'King of the Goths and Romans.' Although Theodoric was a Goth, and therefore might be considered a barbarian, his government was essentially Roman, and hence the Gothic is reckoned as one of the 'heads' of the seven-headed beast of the Apocalypse, of whom we read 'five are fallen, and one is, and the other is yet to come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space' (Rev. 17:10). The Roman character of the rule of Theodoric (who followed Odoacer) cannot be questioned. It was fully recognised in his own times, and by the rival empire of eastern Rome, or Constantinople. Not only is there the fact that the Imperial regalia was returned to him, but..... Theodoric publicly undertook to keep inviolate all that the Roman princes in the past had ordained for their people, and whilst introducing Gothic officers into the state, he kept up the old Roman establishment with titles that had obtained under the Empire. These facts show the remarkable dovetailing of Apocalyptic predictions with history."

VERSE 13

"And I beheld"—John's attention was suddenly attracted by an interruption in the action of the angelic trumpeters. Why should the trumpeters be interrupted at this point? It indicates a change of direction as to where the prophecies would be fulfilled. Previously the visions concerned the Western Empire, now we must turn to the Eastern Empire; previously they related to Rome, now they concern Constantinople.

"And heard an angel"—The Greek word is *aetos*, "eagle." One of the four faces of the living creatures, representative of the saints in their military order, was that of a "flying eagle" (Rev. 4:8). It here represents a class of agents who warn of coming trouble. The woes that were proclaimed were for the benefit of believers, who in turn, drew attention to them in their proclamation of the signs of the times.

"Flying through the midst of heaven"

—In this position, the eagle is separated from both heaven and earth. Its appearance there is suggestive of impending judgment (cp. 1 Chron. 21:16). Its warning gives opportunity for the right-minded to make their peace with God, and avoid the threatened judgments. Its flight suggests a change of venue, from Rome in the West to Constantinople in the East.

“Saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth”—The repetition of the word is intensive, and the idea is, that the sounding of the

three remaining trumpets would announce great and fearful calamities to the inhabitants of what remained of the Roman “earth,” the Byzantine Empire.

“By reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound”—The fourth trumpet brought the Western Empire to an end; the next two trumpets brought the Eastern Empire to an end; and the final trumpet brought trouble on East and West, and will terminate in Christ taking over the Kingdoms of the world (Rev. 9:12; 11:14).

CHAPTER NINE

THE SOUNDING OF THE FIRST TWO WOE TRUMPETS

The trumpet sounding of the fifth angel is followed by a star falling from heaven unto the earth with a key to open the bottomless pit. On the opening of the pit, the sun and air is darkened by the ascending smoke, out of which pour a cloud of locusts. They are commanded to avoid any green foliage, and attack only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. This they do for some months, moving as cavalry under the direction of a king. The sounding of the sixth angel is followed by the releasing of four angels bound in the great river Euphrates. They lead a vast horde of cavalymen to battle, as a result of which, the third of men are killed. The Eastern Empire is thus brought to an end, but even this tragedy does not cause the rest of mankind to cease from their sin and blasphemy against Almighty God.

(f) — Fifth Angel: Locusts Out Of A Bottomless Pit — vv. 1-12

The falling star, the bottomless pit, the smoking furnace, the army of locusts, and the king who leads them to battle, symbolise the uprising of Mahomet and the Sacacens in 622, and their attacks against the eastern Roman, or Byzantine Empire.

VERSE 1

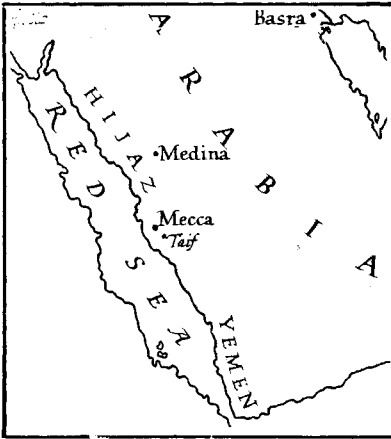
“And the fifth angel sounded”—Seeing that the fourth trumpet heralded the collapse of the Western Empire, it is appropriate that the next vision should consider the fate of the Eastern Empire, with its capital at Constantinople.

“And I saw a star fall from heaven”—The Greek is in the past tense: *A star from heaven fallen.* John saw the star already fallen. A star denotes a leader, a

prince, or a warrior (see note Ch. 8:10). In the fulfilment of this, we look for the appearance of some mighty prince and warrior, to complete the demise of the one-time Roman Empire. As the Empire of the West had been brought to an end with the sounding of the fourth trumpet, we naturally look to the Eastern, or Byzantine Empire, with its headquarters at Constantinople for the next event to be symbolised. This still remained intact, but was soon brought under pressure by the conquests of Mahomet and the Saracens. The circumstances answer to the requirements of the prophecy. The very nature of it, with its reference to locusts, would cause us to look to the East for a fulfilment.

At the beginning of his career Mahomet enjoyed the protection of the Prince of Mecca. On the death of the

Prince, Mahomet (as the star falling from heaven) was forced to flee from Mecca to



the city of Medina. This was in the year 622, and the *Hegira*, or flight, marks the beginning of the Mohammedan era. The Moslem calendar was dated from this time, and as it computed time according to lunar years, the year 1917, was the year 1335 according to the Moslem calendar, at which time it was abandoned, and the Moslems reverted to the Western calendar (see Dan. 12:12). Jerusalem was freed from Turkish control in 1917, and the Balfour Declaration invited Jews to return to the land!

"Unto the earth"—Having been ejected from his previous position of eminence, Mahomet turned to the people for support.

"And to him"—The use of the personal pronoun indicates that the "star" must be interpreted as a prince.

"Was given a key"—A key is emblematic of power (Isa. 22:22; Rev. 1:18). A key was also an armorial bearing of the Mohammedans. Mahomet ultimately gained power over the Arabs.

"Of the bottomless pit"—The RV renders this as the *pit of the abyss*. The Greek is *phrear abussos*. Elsewhere *phrear* is rendered "pit" (Luke 14:5), and "well" (John 4:11-12), and obviously relates to the *shaft leading to the "abussos" or water below*. The Greek *abussos* from a intensive, and *bussos*, "depth" (Eng. *bath* is derived from this word) is used in Rom. 10:7, Luke 8:31, and frequently in the Septuagint for the

sea. Altogether *abyss* is referred to seven times in *The Apocalypse* (Rev. 9:1,2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3), and in those places, reference to the *shaft* or *pit* of the abyss is found only in Rev. 9:1-2. This is vitally important. It signifies that the effect of the sounding of the fifth trumpet was to open the *shaft* or *pit* that leads to the abyss, and not the abyss itself. The abyss is the deep (Rom. 10:7; Luke 8:31), or the "peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues" which the Roman whore dominates (See Rev. 17:15). The "pit" or "shaft" of the abyss was the way to power over the Roman system both political and religious. Mahomet sought to overthrow the Eastern Roman Empire, and its capital Constantinople. But first he had to gain control of the East. In gaining control of Arabia, Palestine and Syria, he opened the *pit of the abyss*, or the way to the domination of Europe.

VERSE 2

"And he opened the bottomless pit"—

We have noted above that the term *phrear abussos* or *pit of the abyss* occurs only in Rev. 9:1-2. Elsewhere, only the *abussos* or abyss is referred to. Thus, in v. 11, the Greek text has only *abussos*, even though, in the AV, the word is rendered exactly the same as in the verse before us: *the bottomless pit*. This fact is important, for it provides the key to the interpretation of the passages. It is clear that the term abyss relates to the sea of nations of the Greek and Roman Catholic countries of Europe, the "waters" where the whore is represented as sitting (Rev. 17:15). Therefore "the beast" is said to ascend "out of the bottomless pit" (Rev. 17:8). On the other hand, the "shaft of the abyss," referred to in the verses before us, denotes the entrance to the abyss, and in the terms of the prophecy, "the way" into Europe. This prophecy, therefore, faithfully indicates, that whereas the "star" of this fifth trumpet would gain control over the shaft leading to the abyss, he would lack control over the abyss itself, he would not be successful in gaining control over the eastern Empire.

The "star" was Mahomet. It is appropriate to the symbol, that Arabia, the region from whence Mahomet originated, is noted for the remarkable depression of the Arabah, the Jordan Valley and the area around the Dead Sea. This is the lowest point of the earth's surface which is above water, so that the



term "abyss" is appropriate to it.

Mahomet was born about the year 570, and belonged to the Koreish clan, whose special privilege and duty it was to guard the sacred Black Stone at Mecca. Mahomet was still a young man when he commenced his "great imposture," declaring that he was a "prophet" in communion with God, and had been appointed to set before the people the true religion. The people of Mecca, who made no small gain out of the Black Stone, drove Mahomet from the city, and he fled to Medina. Mahomet wrote the Koran, and proclaimed the tenets of Mahommedanism. Gradually the number of his converts increased. Proclaiming his belief in one God, he declared open war upon the Trinitarians of the Greek and Roman Catholics. As his power grew, he sent ambassadors to the court of Constantinople, and when they were contemptuously rejected by the authorities of the eastern Roman Empire, he decided to overthrow it by force. The way, or shaft to the abyss was domination of the Middle East. Accordingly he laid claim to Arabia, and then made preparations for an attack on the bastion of the eastern Empire. He died in 632 before he could accomplish this, and was succeeded by Abubeker, the first Caliph.

"And there arose a smoke"—Fire and smoke are symbolic of wrath and war (Deut. 29:20; Ps. 74:1; Isa. 31:9). The conquest of Arabia caused the smoke of war to arise in the sight of the Eastern Roman Empire, warning its rulers of the proximity of "fire." Under Abubeker, the Saracens advanced against the Eastern Empire.

"Out of the pit"—The Greek word is *phrear* and not *abussos*, and therefore denotes the shaft, or entrance to the abyss (or nations of Europe). As explained above, the Middle East comprised the key or way into Europe, and was the centre from whence the smoke of war ascended.

"As the smoke of a great furnace"—This is the description given of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:28), and indicates the ominous nature of the threat to Europe which was arising in Arabia.

"The sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit"—In the Middle East, throughout Arabia, Palestine and Syria, Byzantine authority (i.e.

the authority of the Eastern Roman Empire) was darkened by the smoke of war. Damascus was taken in the year 634, and Jerusalem in 637.

VERSE 3

"And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth"—The Hebrew word for locust, *arbeh*, sounds similar to that for Arab, though they are spelt differently. As a symbol, locusts represent an all-devouring army, and because they appear chiefly in the East, the mention of them naturally turns the attention to that portion of the earth for the fulfilment of the prophecy. Locusts are remarkable for their numbers, which sometimes are so great as to darken the sky. See Jer. 6:23; Nahum 2:15; 3:17; Jud. 6:3-6; Joel 1 etc. Locusts are an emblem of desolation and destruction. They seem to devour not merely from a ravenous appetite as from a rage for destroying. They will eat anything: vegetable matter, linen, silk, leather, even the very varnish of furniture. The "locusts" of this chapter relate to the Arabs or Saracens.

"And unto them was given power"—The word *power* is *exousia* and signifies *ability, strength, delegated authority*. This was a faculty *imparted* to them beyond their ordinary nature. Through the inspiration of Mahomet, the Arabs became united and developed into a great power. This was unique to their history, for Arabs have ever been noted for disunity (Gen. 16:12).

"As the scorpions of the earth have power"—The sting of the scorpion is painful but not fatal (see vv. 5,6). The scorpion is an animal with eight feet, eight eyes, and a long jointed tail, ending in a pointed weapon or sting. It is the largest and most malignant of all the insect tribes. It is more hideous in appearance, more formidable in attack, and more irascible in disposition than most animals. Under certain conditions scorpions will even attack and consume each other. They are a natural symbol for Arabs, for they are indigenous to the same area. The effect of the sting induces extreme inflammation, severe pain, and a raging temperature. Politically, this also was the effect of the Saracen attack on the eastern Roman Empire.

VERSE 4

"And it was commanded them that

they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree—This is opposed to the normal habit of locusts, even as Mahomet's uniting of the Arabs into a well disciplined organisation presenting opposition to their enemies, is contrary to their nature. It was effectively accomplished by Mahomet and the caliphs that succeeded him, with the result that the Arab empire ultimately comprised all the Middle East, north Africa, and even Spain. "Grass" and "green foliage" are used symbolically in the Bible for people (Isa. 40:6-8), implying that the Saracens would devote themselves to the overthrow of systems and of nations, rather than of people. Abubeker's instructions to his troops well illustrate the significance of this verse. He commanded them: "Remember you are always in the presence of God, on the verge of death, in the assurance of judgment and the hope of Paradise. Avoid injustice and oppression. Let not your victory be stained with the blood of women and children. Destroy no palm trees nor burn any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you need to eat. You will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of satan who have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they either turn Mahomedans or pay tribute."

Within one hundred years, all Palestine, Syria, Egypt, North Africa and much of Spain were under Moslem rule.

"But only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads"—Cp. Rev. 7:2, and see Abubeker's instructions above.

VERSE 5

"And to them it was given that they should not kill them"—The Saracens were not granted permission to politically destroy the Eastern Roman Empire; this was reserved for the Turks who fulfilled the requirements of the 6th Trumpet. Constantinople, its capital, was twice besieged by Saracens (668-675 and 715-718) but was not taken. For a time the political life of the Eastern Empire continued; and it was left to the Ottomans to bring about its demise (cp. v.18).

"But that they should be tormented five months"—See notes on v.10.

"And their torment was as the torment

of a scorpion when he striketh a man"—As noted in the comment above, the effect of the scorpion sting, is to incapacitate a man, inducing extreme inflammation, pain and fear, but not so as to prove fatal. The attacks of the Saracens brought pain to the Eastern Empire, and induced a "fever" of fright on the part of its rulers, but did not result in political death.

VERSE 6

"And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it"—The rulers of Constantinople went through the same pain and anguish as did those of Judah in the days of Jeremiah (Jer. 8:3). They sought peace at any price, but they could not obtain it without turning Mahomedans, and this they would not do.

"And shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them"—This is the feeling and effect of a severe scorpion bite.

VERSE 7

"And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle"—See Joel 2:4. The head of the locust is so much like the appearance of a horse, that Italians call them *cavaletta* or *little horse*. The outstanding victories of the Arabs came mainly as a result of their skilful horsemanship, their splendid cavalry, and their horse-drawn artillery.

"And on their heads were as it were crowns of gold"—John is describing the Arab cavalry as he saw it in vision, the crowns of gold being the yellow turbans worn by the Saracens. Note that he is careful to state that what he saw was not real crowns nor real gold, but "*as it were*" crowns of gold.

"And their faces were as the faces of men"—The bearded Arabs were a contrast to the shaven Romans.

VERSE 8

"And they had hair as the hair of women"—The flowing tresses as worn by the Saracens in those days. Pliny, who was contemporary with John, describes the Arabs as having long, uncut hair (*Nat. His.* vol. 6, p. 28), and other writers up to Jerome in the 5th Century do likewise (see Newton *On The Prophecies*).

"And their teeth were as the teeth of lions"—See Joel 1:6. The teeth of lions speak of strength and ferocity.

VERSE 9

"And they had breastplates, as it were breastsplates of iron"—The locust has a firm and hard cuticle on the forepart of the breast, which serves as a shield or defence permitting it to freely move in thorny and furzy vegetation. Here it is used as a symbol of the breastplates of iron worn by ancient warriors: their polished steel cuirasses.

"And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle"—See a similar expression in Joel 2:5. The term *many horses* is suggestive of the innumerable Arabian cavalry.

VERSE 10

"And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails"—The Arabs dragged their artillery into battle, and swung their horses around to face the cannon to the enemy. To John, who saw the action of the Arab cavalry in vision, this suggested the scorpion, whose sting is in its tail. The Arabs were the first to introduce Saracen fire (the precursor of artillery) into warfare.

"And their power was to hurt men five months"—Five months is the normal period of locust activity — from May to September in Arabia. In accordance with the requirements of the symbol, two periods of five months are introduced into the prophecy (cp. v. 5), instead of ten months — which would not conform to normal locust activity.

Ten lunar months of 30 days each is a period of 300 prophetic days or years. Hence, the locusts were to torment and hurt the men of the apostasy for a period of 300 years. This period seems to have commenced about the year 632 when the power of the Arabs was first felt by the Byzantine Empire, until 932, when Arab power declined, and the secular authority was taken from the Caliph of Baghdad. The expression "*hurt men*" is different to the word *torment* in v. 5. The Greek word *adikeo* as used here, signifies *to be unjust, to injure, to act wrong*, morally, socially,

or physically. Joined with the expression of v. 5, the two statements imply that men shall be tormented by unjust, injurious, and wrong demands imposed upon them by their Arab conquerors. The Arabs proved to be quite ruthless in their requirements of those of the apostasy whom they subjugated. They de-

manded that they accept either the Koran or the sword.

VERSE 11

"And they had a king over them"—The RV render this: "They have over them a king." It is not according to nature for locusts to have a king (Prov. 30:27), demonstrating that these were not real locusts. Nor is it in the nature of Arabs to submit to a single authority, but this they did under Mahommedism. The king is the Caliph, a descendant of Mahomet, elevated to the highest office, both secular and religious.

"Which is the angel of the bottomless pit"—The word angel signifies *one sent, a messenger*. The Caliph acted in that capacity to the abyss, or the Roman world, in that he demanded that the Roman world submit to his authority. Unlike the expression *bottomless pit* in vv. 1,2 the sole word used here is *abyss*, and as such related to Europe proper.

"Whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon"—The name signifies *Destroyer*, and this the Saracens proved to be to those whom they attacked. The name is first given in Hebrew, because the might of Arab arms was first felt in the Holy Land.

"But in the Greek tongue hath his name Appollyon"—This name signifies the same: *Destroyer*. It is given in Greek because after dominating the Middle East, the Saracens attacked the Greek Catholic countries, aiming to overthrow the power of the Byzantine Empire, and Constantinople, the headquarters of the Greek Catholic Church.

VERSE 12

"One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter"—The first of these woes followed immediately after the completion of the fifth sounding, though the sounding of the final woe was delayed for some time.

History Of The Period

The first attacks of the Saracens were directed against the towns on the trade route from Damascus to Petra. They then attacked Jerusalem which fell to them in 637. From Syria they spread northwards to Asia Minor and Persia, and southwards to Egypt and North Africa. Within fifty years of Mahomet's death the Moslems had advanced to the two great

citadels of Europe: Constantinople and Gibraltar, annexing the countries they conquered. Passing over the Straits of Gibraltar they entered Spain conquered much of the territory, and threatened to engulf Europe. They were opposed by the chief adviser and administrator of the Merovingian king of the Franks: a man by the name of Charles, who organised an army of Franks and allies, and opposed the Arabs at Poitiers (732). The Saracens were defeated, Europe was saved, and Charles earned the title of *the Hammer*. Meanwhile, Constantinople stood firm against Saracenic pressure, and despite two sieges, remained as a bastion of eastern Europe. Thus the Eastern Empire, though greatly reduced in size, and tormented by constant pressure, still retained political life — in accordance with the requirements of the prophecy. Wherever the Saracens went, they carried their learning with them, and Europe was enriched in the arts and sciences such as the Arabs were able to supply. In that regard, they were far superior to the Turks who followed them.

(g) — Loosing The Angels Of The Euphrates — vv. 13-21

The sixth angel sounds, and John hears a voice from the horns of the altar of incense commanding the four angels bound in the river Euphrates, and which had been prepared for their labours for a period of time, to be loosed. At the head of an innumerable army of horsemen supplemented by weapons of fire, they attack the third part of men, and kill them. Despite this judgment, however, the rest of men repent not of their idolatry, blasphemy, or evil deeds. This section of The Apocalypse foreshadows the rise of the Turkish power which accomplished that which the Saracens failed to do: namely, bring the Byzantine Empire, centred in Constantinople, to an end. This occurred in 1453 when the Ottoman Turks took Constantinople, and terminated the influence of the Greek Catholic Church in that city. When that occurred the headquarters of the Greek Catholic Church was transferred to Moscow which was given the title of "the third Rome."

VERSE 13

"And the sixth angel sounded"—It is appropriate that the uprise of the Turkish Empire is connected with the sounding of the sixth angel, for the drying up of the

same power forms part of the outpouring of the sixth vial of Revelation 16:12.

"And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God"—See Note Rev. 8:3. This statement implies that the events symbolised in the rest of this chapter came in answer to the prayers of saints offered upon the Christ-altar. Suffering persecution, their prayers ascended to heaven, and were answered in the unloosing of the Euphratean angels against their persecutors: the Byzantine authority in Constantinople. The Turks considered Catholics as their particular enemies, and by attacking them, avenged the persecution suffered by believers at the hands of the church. The golden altar relates to the altar of incense, and incense symbolises prayer (see Note Rev. 5:8).

VERSE 14

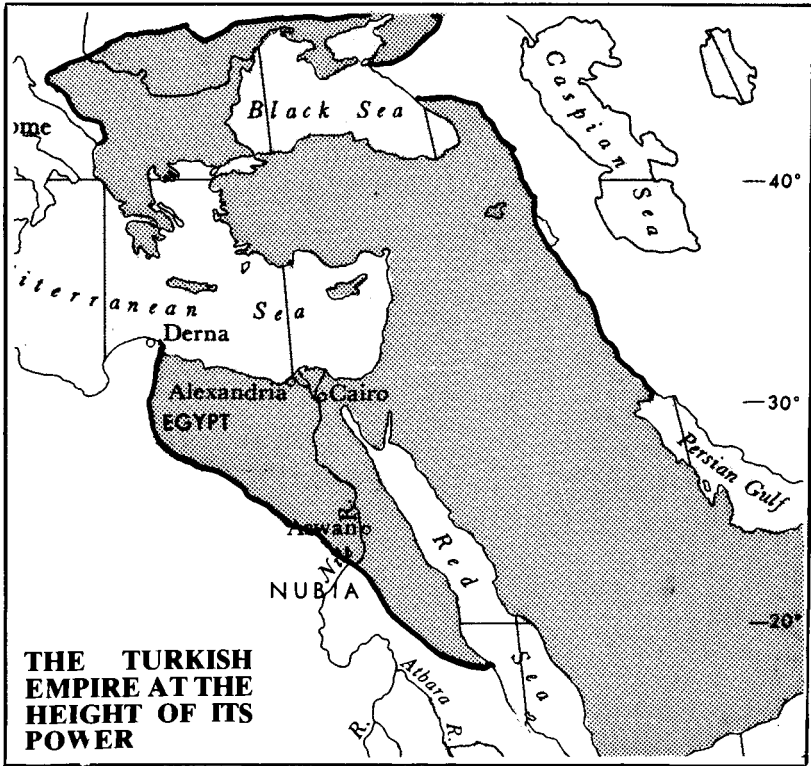
"Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet"—This command shows that the angels act upon the instruction of Christ (1 Pet. 3:22), as "ministering spirits" on behalf of the "heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14).

"Loose the four angels"—There were four Turkish divisions: Seljukians, Moguls, Tartars, and Ottomans. History in turn reveals four waves of attack by marauding Turks. The title *angels* suggests that they are to be regarded as *messengers* of Yahweh, sent forth to execute judgment in response to the prayers of saints.

"Which are bound in the great river Euphrates"—The preposition *in* is *epi* in Greek, and is rendered *at* by the RV, and *by* by the *Diaglott*. The four angels were not bound "in" the river, but *at* or *by* it. The river itself provides a geographical indication of the power referred to. The Euphrates became the main river of Turkey, and the spot from whence the Turks attacked the east. They migrated to the area, and were "bound" by it for some time before being unloosed upon the Roman world.

VERSE 15

"And the four angels were loosed which were prepared"—Brother Thomas translates: "And the four angels having been prepared were loosed. . . ." The Turks, under such leaders as Alp Arslan, Tamerlane, etc. attacked the Byzantine, or Eastern Roman Empire, in successive waves.



"For an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year"—Computed on the lunar year of 360 days, this is a period of 391 days 1 hour. On the day for a year principle (Ezek. 4:6), this represents 391 years, one month. On 27th April, 1062, the powerful Turkish leader, Togrul Beg, established himself in Islamic authority by marrying the Caliph's daughter. He waged war on the eastern Roman Empire, initiating a series of determined assaults against Constantinople. But the city did not fall until 28th May, 1453, when it did so to the attack of Mahomet 11. This is exactly 391 years one months from the time that Togrul Beg in 29th April 1062 assumed full Moslem authority. With the fall of Constantinople, the eastern Empire came to an end; Greek Catholicism was ejected from the city, and it became Moslem in religion. However, John does not speak of a "time" (360 days), but "a year." The Greek word *eniantos* means that which

goes or returns upon itself. Taking it as a solar year, we arrive, on a day for a year principle, at a total period of 396 years, 121 days. Calculating back from 29 May 1453, this would date from January 1057, the month in which Togrul Beg left Baghdad to commence his career of conquest, to the fall of Constantinople.

"For to slay the third part of men"—Europe was divided into three parts: the Holy Roman Empire in the West; the papacy or Image of the beast (Rev. 13:11,14); and the "dragon" power of Constantinople (Rev. 13:4). The occupation of Constantinople by the Turks, brought the "dragon" power, as it was then constituted, to an end.

VERSE 16

"And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand"—The number here referred to would be two hundred million! Obviously this is not to be taken literally, any more

than the 144,000 of Chapter 7 is the literal number of the redeemed. The Greek is *two myriads of myriads*. The myriad was ten thousand, and ten thousand is used in Scripture symbolically for a large, but undefined, number (see Deut. 33:2; 1 Sam. 29:5; Ps. 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:15). The expression *two myriads of myriads* suggests the superabundance of horsemen, and is an indication of the innumerable cavalry used by the Turks during the period of their dominance. In Scripture, the horse is used as a symbol of war (Job 39:18-25; Zech. 10:3), for the horse was mainly reserved for war in ancient times.

It is significant that the Turks counted their horses by *myriads*. Gibbon writes of the Turkish cavalry as "being, both men and horses computed by *myriads*." He also writes on his own account: "The *myriads* of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles." Thus the language of Scripture is appropriate to the circumstances.

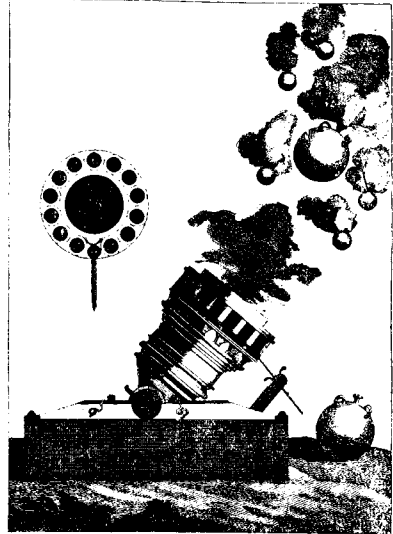
"And I heard the number of them"—Such a phrase seems to imply that the number is to be considered figuratively and not literally. See similar use in Rev. 7:4; 13:18.

VERSE 17

"And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them"—John's attention was attracted to the horses and their riders, and to their unusual appearance. The latter included the new weapon, the cannon that the Turks introduced into the science of warfare, and by which they gained their great victories and established their widespread conquests.

"Having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and of brimstone"—This commences a descriptive account of the new method of warfare which the Turks were among the first to exploit. It is similar to the earlier description, relating to the Saracens (vv. 8-10), but whereas the Arabs used Saracen fire, the Turks perfected the use of gunpowder in their wars, and particularly in their attacks on Constantinople. The "breastplates as of fire" (RV) suggest the breastworks upon which were mounted the "head" or cannon of the horse artillery, from which belched forth fire. "Jacinth" or *hyacinthine* is a colour of deep purple or reddish blue, and suggests the bluish smoke that arises from the use of gunpowder.

"Brimstone" is sulphur, which is related to gunpowder, and gives forth a bluish smoke.



A Turkish Mortar, 15th Century.

"And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions"—The roar of the cannon, used by the Turks (gunpowder was new to the art of war), suggesting the roar of the lion. The name Alp Arslan, the successor of Togrul Beg signifies *the valiant lion*, so that, again, the language of *The Apocalypse* is appropriate to the circumstances. Gibbon writes: "The successor of Togrul displayed the fierceness and generosity of the royal animal."

"And out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone"—The practise of the cavalry in regard to the horsedrawn artillery, was to drag the cannon into battle, and then swing around, so that its mouth faced the enemy. To John, the barrel from whence issued the "fire, smoke and brimstone," thus became the "head" of the horse-drawn cannon.

VERSE 18

"By these three was the third part of men killed"—Europe was then divided into three parts: in the west, the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy, and in the east, the remnant of the dragon power with its headquarters in Constantinople. In 1453 Constantinople fell to the

Turks, and this third section of Europe was politically killed. The prophecy required that this should be as the result of the fire, smoke and brimstone.

“By the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths”—The fire, smoke and sulphurous smell of such a discharge corresponds exactly to the use of gunpowder and artillery. It is significant that Constantinople fell by such means. In describing the overthrow of this city, Gibbon, in *The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire* writes: “Among the implements of destruction, he (the Turkish sultan) studied with peculiar care the recent and tremendous discovery of the Latins; and his artillery surpassed whatever had yet appeared in the world. A founder of cannon, a Dane or Hungarian, who had almost starved in the Greek service, deserted to the Moslems, and was liberally entertained by the Turkish sultan. Mahomet was satisfied with the answer to his first question, which he eagerly pressed on the artist: ‘Am I able to cast a cannon capable of throwing a ball or stone of sufficient size to batter the walls of Constantinople....?’ On this assurance a foundry was established at Adrianople; the metal was prepared; and at the end of three months Urban produced a piece of brass ordnance of stupendous and almost incredible magnitude.....the stone bullet weighed above six hundred pounds....the explosion was felt or heard in a circuit of a hundred furlongs; the ball, by force of gunpowder, was driven about a mile; and on the spot where it fell, it buried itself a fathom deep in the ground.” The experiment proving satisfactory, the cannon was used successfully against Constantinople, and so played a most important part in overthrowing this remnant of the Byzantine Empire. In speaking of the defence of the city, Gibbon writes: “The incessant volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound, and the fire of their musketry and cannon.” The words of this agnostic historian answer extremely well to the description of John.

VERSE 19

“For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails”—The cannon were drawn into battle at the tail of the horse. To fire, they were swung around to the fore. Thus it appeared to John in the vision as

though the power was in the mouth and the tail, for the barrel of the gun at the tail, became the mouth when the horse swung it around.

“For their tails were like unto serpents”—A serpent is able to strike by coiling its tail. The Apocalypse description fits the breech-loaded cannon. The ball was pushed into its “tail” in order to get its spring.

“And had heads, and with them they do hurt”—The muzzle of the cannon became the “head” when the battle was joined.

VERSE 20

“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues”—With the fall of Constantinople, the Eastern third was politically killed (v. 18). This left Western Empire and the Papacy intact as political and religious entities. These surviving Catholic institutions still maintained their independence.

“Yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils”—The word is *demons*. The Greeks gave the title to an inferior race of divine beings, that they considered ministered between the chief gods and their worshippers. For example, Socrates called his “spirit” a *demon*. The Catholics worship “saints” and departed “spirits,” as Paul predicted they would (1 Tim. 4:1). This constitutes demon-worship. It is described as the “works of their hands” to illustrate the fleshly nature of the worship which relies largely upon the human manufacture of idols.

“And idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood”—Suggestive of the idol worship of Roman Catholics.

“Which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk”—Cited from Ps. 115:4-7.

VERSE 21

“Neither repented they”—For the significance of *repent*, see note Ch. 2:5. Despite the divine judgment poured upon the Eastern Empire, the Roman Catholics did not change their attitude, or their blasphemous practises. The vision of Chapter 10 revealed that Yahweh is not prepared to permit such practises to continue indefinitely. The opportunity to repent is limited by time (see Ch. 10:6; 11:1,3,14).

“Of their murders”—Hatred without

ust cause is murder (1 John 3:15; Rev. 7:6).

“**Nor of their sorceries**”—The word is from the Greek *Pharmakia* (from which is derived the word *pharmacy*). It denotes drug-taking, which was then generally accompanied by incantations and appeals to occult powers. It is translated *witchcraft* in Gal. 5:20. See also Rev. 18:23. The doctrine of Rome is a drug leadening the conscience to the realities of life, as well as to the Truth and its requirements.

“**Nor of their fornication**”—Spiritual fornication denotes unfaithfulness to the requirements of Christ. See James 4:4.

“**Nor of their thefts**”—This is defined as withholding what is due to Yahweh (cp. Mal. 3:8-10). Roman Catholicism is guilty of all these sins.

History Of The Period

The period of the sixth trumpet witnessed the triumph of the Turks, the final overthrow of Constantinople, and the demise of the Eastern Roman Empire. The Turks, or Tartars, originated in the far East, and migrated to the Middle East. They adopted the religion of Islam from the Saracens, but none of their civilising influence. “Horde after horde swept across the boundary of the Euphratean lands. These invasions may be grouped broadly into *four*. During the 11th century, the Seljuk Turks established their supremacy over the grass lands stretching from China to the Bosphorus. In 1058, Togrul Beg, grandson of Seljuk, from whom the tribe was named, besieged and captured Baghdad, compelling the Caliph to renounce his temporal authority and to remain merely the spiritual head of the Mahomedans. Togrul took the title *Vicar of the Faithful*, and as such advanced towards Palestine, capturing Jerusalem and the holy places. Hitherto pilgrims from Europe had been permitted to visit places associated with the life of Christ. Now the Turks plundered and taxed them to such an extent that militant Christianity of Europe was called to wage the first of the Crusades against the infidel. The success of the Crusades and the establishment of a Latin kingdom of Jerusalem led to the downfall of the Seljukian empire (*The Apocalypse And History*, p. 61).

The doctrine of the Trinity was particularly obnoxious to the Turks who

fanatically believed in the unity of God.

The second invasion occurred towards the end of the twelfth century. Genghis Khan (his name means *Universal Sovereign*) extended his conquests from Central Asia, eastwards to North China, westwards to South Russia, south-eastwards to India and south-westwards to Mesopotamia. All, irrespective as to race or creed, whether Christian or Mohammedan, fell victims to his attack. Cities disappeared as he advanced. Rich plains were transformed into deserts. He has been described as “the most terrible scourge that ever afflicted the human race.” The Seljukians were overthrown, and Moguls and Tartars took their place of dominance. Octui, one of the sons of Genghis Khan, with 1,500,000 Moguls, extended his conquests into the very heart of Eastern Europe. He celebrated the battle of Lignitz by filling nine sacks with the right ears of his enemies. He dictated a warning to the Pope claiming that he was invested with divine power to subdue and extirpate all nations.

The third and fourth invasions happened simultaneously in the 14th Century. Timour, or Tamerlane, a descendant of Genghis Khan, established a Mogul empire in India, with its capital at Delhi. He died in 1405 whilst moving against China. Meanwhile, the Ottomans, had advanced to Asia Minor and south-east Europe. They were an offshoot of the Seljuks, and took their name from Othman, who, towards the close of the 13th century, united the various Turkish tribes which the Mogul conquests had driven westward into Asia Minor. From that vantage point they extended their influence throughout the Middle East, and then into south-east Europe. This brought them against the remnant of the Eastern Roman Empire, and Constantinople in particular, which had remained as a citadel of power against such attacks for so long. The city was besieged by Mahomet II in April 1453. Special cannon, of a size hitherto unknown, were used in the siege, and it was chiefly through use of these that the city was taken on 29th May, 1453. Catholicism in the east suffered a severe blow with the Ottoman success. The beautiful churches of Constantinople erected to the demons, or departed spirits of saints, were converted into Mosques by the victorious Turks. The Patriarch of the Greek Catholic Church, originally stationed in Constantinople,

fled to Moscow where he set up his power. Moscow became known as the Third Rome; the two previous ones being Rome itself, and Constantinople.

Each of the three cultural divisions of the imperial Roman Empire was now destroyed as the result of the forces called forth by the sound of the trumpets, thus:

1. A third — the Latin west by trumpets one to four.
2. A third — The Hellenised east by

trumpet five (Saracenic).

3. A third — The Hellenic east by trumpet six (Turkish).

When the seventh trumpet call is sounded, it will draw forth the forces which will destroy for ever the systems based upon, or influenced by Rome, and "the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" (see *The Apocalypse And History*).

CHAPTER TEN

THE CONQUESTS OF THE RAINBOWED ANGEL

A new vision unfolds before John. He sees a mighty angel holding a little book, bestriding earth and sea as a conqueror. He hears the roar of the lion, and the thunder of heaven's artillery. He listens to the Divine oath that there shall be "time no longer," but that the grand secret of the Divine purpose will be made manifest in the earth. He is invited to "eat the book," or to participate in the events it records. Finally, he is given the exciting news that those who have been "taken out of every people and tongue and nation" (Rev. 5:9-10) shall be sent back to the lands of their probation bearing with them the teaching of Christ, which men shall then be compelled to accept. This chapter completes the revelaton given in answer to the prayers of saints (Ch. 6:10) asking, How Long? It announces that time is limited (v. 6), and though men might blasphemously ignore God (see Ch. 9:20-21), the sounding of the seventh angel will bring all such licence to an end (cp. v. 7).

(h) — The Seven-Sealed Thunders Of The Rainbowed Angel — vv. 1-11

John observes a rainbowed angel with an open book in his hand, his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the land. In response to the angel's cry, seven thunders utter their voices, but John is not permitted to record the things he hears. However, he is told that the purpose of God will come to fruition at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and he receives an invitation to eat the book presented to him. He does so, describing the effect of the eating, and then receives the assurance that he will yet preach the Gospel to the peoples of the world.

VERSE 1

"And I saw another mighty angel"— This "angel" is distinct from the seven who are described as trumpeters. The

description identifies him with the "one like unto the Son of man" of Ch. 1. He thus represents the multitudinous Christ (Eph. 4:13-14), engaged in the conquest of the nations. His appearance in vision at this time, reminds John that the overthrow of the Roman Empire was not to establish Ottoman power permanently, nor would the blasphemies perpetuated by Catholicism be permitted to continue indefinitely, but that ultimately all would be swallowed up by the conquests of the "rainbowed" angel.

"Come down from heaven"—If the angel represents the multitudinous Christ, how can it be said that he "came down from heaven"? There are heavens political and spiritual as well as heavens atmospheric. Saints are already in "the heavens" in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3) even though they have not left the earth! They

will be more completely so when the Lord returns, for they will be associated with him in the "new heavens" or form of Government he will establish on earth (Isa. 65:17-18). From that elevated position they will "descend to earth" in order to subdue nations, and organise the governance of the world. It also is true, that those who will constitute the multitudinous Christ in the age to come are those who are spiritually "begotten from above" (John 3:3 — mg). The seed of such a begetting is the "incorruptible seed of the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23). The development of this seed in a believer's life will culminate in the bestowal of "divine nature" from heaven at Christ's return (2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Cor. 5:2-4). Such will then be "born of the spirit," and, metaphorically, will have "come down from heaven" (cp. James 1:17).

"Clothed with a cloud"—The white cloud suggests righteousness (Rev. 19:8), as well as a multitude (Heb. 12:1). See notes Rev. 1:7.

"And a rainbow was upon his head"—For the symbol of the rainbow as the token of the covenant of peace, see notes on Rev. 4:3.

"And his face was as it were the sun"—The multitudinous Christ will manifest the Divine glory (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43); the members thereof will be like Christ (1 John 3:2), the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2), reflecting his glory (2 Thess. 1:10). As the redeemed, equal unto the angels (Luke 20:36) they also shall be capable of literally shining forth in glory, as did the Elohim (Matt. 28:3).

"And his feet as pillars of fire"—See note on Rev. 1:15. The description of this angel answers to the "one like unto the Son of man" of Revelation 1, indicating that he represents the multitudinous Christ. The feet of such shall convey the influence of this body to the ends of the earth in a work of conquest.

VERSE 2

"And he had in his hand a little book open"—Reference to this "little book" is found in vv. 2, 8, 9, 10. The Greek word is *Biblaridion*, with the exception of v. 8 where the word is *Biblion* — though in some texts *Biblaridion* is retained. There are three words used in Scripture: *Biblos*, Bible; *Biblion* (Ch. 5:1), a diminutive of

Biblos; *Biblaridion*, a diminutive of *Biblion*, and so rendered *little book*. The first is used of books of the Bible as in Luke 3:4; the second of the seven-sealed scroll; and the third of the book in the hand of the angel. The "little book" is small in comparison with the seven-sealed scroll, because its contents cover but a short period of time. The experience of John in receiving such a book was similar to that of Ezekiel who likewise was handed such a book (see Ezek. 2:9-10). Therefore, as in the case of the book given Ezekiel, we may well expect the contents of this "little book" to proclaim the purpose of God to establish His glory in the earth at the return of the Lord, and to record "the lamentation, mourning and woe" that will fall upon those who refuse His mercy (Ezek. 2:10). In setting forth his message, Ezekiel found that the people refused to accept Yahweh's mercy (Ezek. 3:4-11) which caused him distress, bitterness and heat (Ezek. 3:14). John's reaction was similar.

"And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth"—The angelic colossus bestriding sea and land suggests universal dominion. Revelation 13 refers to a "beast of the sea" (v. 1) and a "beast of the earth" (v. 11), over which the multitudinous Christ ultimately will gain the victory. Rome and Constantinople are the two main centres suggested.

VERSE 3

"And he cried with a loud voice"—So that all the earth might hear.

"As a lion roareth"—A reference to the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5. See also Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2).

"And when he had cried seven thunders uttered their voices"—"The Jews were accustomed to speak of thunder as *the seven voices*" (Vincent). The expression is drawn from Psalm 29, where "the voice of Yahweh" is aligned with thunder (v. 3), and is repeated seven times (vv. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9). The Psalm commences by calling upon men to give unto Yahweh glory and strength in worship (see the ultimatum of Rev. 14:6), and it concludes with peace (v. 11). The Psalm, therefore, proclaims *glory to God in the highest, on earth, peace and goodwill towards men* (Psa. 29:1,11). In between, seven thunders utter their voices.

Thunder is heaven's artillery, and symbolises judgment and war. The seven thunders of this verse speak of the complete subjugation of mankind by divine national judgment after Armageddon. This suggests seven specific campaigns on the part of Christ and the saints by which the world will be brought into subjection to him (cp. Ps. 149:7-9; Zech. 9:13-15; Rev. 17:14). Christ will then fulfil the type set by David who, in seven distinct campaigns, changed the Kingdom into an Empire (see 2 Sam. chapters 8, 10). David first cleared Zion of the enemy — as will Christ also. He then brought the Ark to the city — as will Christ also (for Christ and the redeemed, as the antitypical Ark will enter the city). David finally extended the Kingdom into an Empire by seven separate campaigns — as will Christ also. The seven thunders of the verse before us are suggestive of this.

VERSE 4

“And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write”—From John's action in commencing to write it is obvious that he heard more than the noise of thunder; and that the utterance had a distinct and meaningful enunciation.

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered”—The matters relating to the conquest of nations after Armageddon are temporarily hidden from view. They are revealed elsewhere in outline, but not in detail.

“And write them not”—To record the things revealed at this time for general information would have defeated the purpose of *The Apocalypse*, which is devoted to outlining the progress of events leading to the end. John's experience at this time evidently was similar to that of Paul's, who received revelations, but was not permitted to pass them on to others (2 Cor. 12:4).

VERSE 5

“And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven”—The Greek expresses it as his *right hand*, the hand of strength and direction. It was the normal action taken to emphasise that that which is proclaimed would be irrevocably fulfilled (cp. Gen. 14:22; Dan. 12:7).

VERSE 6

“And sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever”—See note Ch. 4:9.

“Who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things which are therein”—See Notes Ch. 4:11.

“That there should be time no longer”—This announces that the time periods outlined by the angel to Daniel are about to find their completion (Dan. 12:7). The statement of the angel is in answer to the prayers of saints recorded in Rev. 6:10. The effect of those prayers was: *firstly*: the overthrow of paganism (Rev. 6:12-17); *secondly*: the continued sealing of the 144,000 (Rev. 7); *thirdly*: the disintegration of the Western Empire (Rev. 8); *fourthly*: the overthrow of the Eastern Empire (Rev. 9 — the last woe); *fifthly*: a preliminary judgment on Roman Catholicism (Rev. 11:1-13 — 2nd woe); *sixthly*: the final overthrow of fleshly politics and religion (Rev. 11:15-19 — 3rd woe). This completes the first half of *The Apocalypse*. The assurance of John was that there would be no further delay in executing the final vengeance once the seventh angel sounded. This provides vindication of the angelic oath of Daniel 12:7.

VERSE 7

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel”—John is advised that the consummation would not be brought about during the epoch of the sixth trumpet, but that there would be need to await the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

“When he shall begin to sound”—The Greek *mello* denotes, “When he is about to sound” as the RV. Nevertheless, the statement “in the days of the voice” is from the Greek *en*, and signifies *within* the days. There were traditionally three blasts with the shofar trumpet, and these answer to “the days.” The final judgments, and the fulfilment of the time periods of Daniel, will occur during the period of the seventh trumpet sounding, but not necessarily at its beginning. The voice of the seventh angel commenced with the ending of the second woe (the end of the French Revolution in 1793), and it has been sounding ever since. It will continue to do so until the divine purpose is fulfilled.

“The mystery of God should be

finished—The word “mystery” should be rendered *secret*. There is nothing mysterious about the purpose of God, though only the initiated understand His revelation. God has whispered the secret of His will to His servants, though it is unknown to the world (see Rev. 1:1; Eph. 3:3; Rom. 16:25-26).

“As He hath declared to His servants the prophets”—Brother Thomas renders this: “Announced its glad tidings.” The Greek word *euaggeliso* is the expression used elsewhere proclaiming the good news of salvation (Rom. 16:25-26). The consummation of the prophetic vision of *The Apocalypse* will see the manifestation of the Gospel in the earth (Gal. 3:8).

VERSE 8

“And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth”—There is a strong resemblance between this command, and that given Ezekiel as recorded in Ezek. 2:9-10; 3:1-3.

VERSE 9

“And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up”—John is commanded to absorb the message of the book; to make it part of himself. (See Jer. 15:16). Ezekiel, also, was invited to eat the book handed to him, and had a similar reaction to that of John. It was sweet to the taste (Ezek. 3:3), but on assimilation it brought him bitterness (Ezek. 3:14). As the prophet absorbed the book, it became part of himself, and caused him to share, on a human basis, Yahweh's attitude towards His sinful people. John also ate the book, making it part of himself. It first produced sweetness, but as it enabled him to view life from the standpoint of Yahweh, it also induced bitterness because of the prevalence of evil (see Jer. 6:11).

“And it shall make thy belly bitter”—Bitterness implies fierce anger, judgment and destruction (Ezek. 3:14). The book proclaimed such against an unrepentant world, and in eating it, John endorsed its decrees.

“But it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey”—Honey is both soothing and strengthening, and therefore is an apt illustration of the power and influence of the Truth (Ps. 19:10-11; Prov. 24:13-14).

VERSE 10

“And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey”—The prophet found the book to be soothing and strengthening. That is the effect of the Truth upon all who properly absorb it.

“And as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter”—The knowledge of the book filled the prophet with indignation against a godless world, so that he endorsed the judgments to be poured out upon it.

VERSE 11

“And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again”—To prophesy is to teach to edification, to proclaim the will and purpose of Yahweh (1 Cor. 14:3). After the judgment of Armageddon, the Redeemed will be sent into all the world to proclaim the divine will and purpose to the peoples of the earth (Rev. 14:6-7). The cloud (v. 1) will pour forth rain (Ps. 72:6) in refreshing showers of divine truth (Deut. 32:2). Mankind will be educated in God's ways, so that “the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh will cover the earth” (Hab. 2:14). “Teaching priests” will be found throughout the world (Mal. 1:11), educating mankind in the ways of God (Isa. 2:2-4).

“Before many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings”—In Rev. 5:9-10, the Redeemed are described as having been “taken out” of such. Now, through the commandment issued to John, they are represented as being sent back to the very same places, with a message of millennial salvation. Evidently the Redeemed will return to the countries of their probation, in order to educate the people in divine truth. They will “receive praise and fame where previously they were put to shame” (Zeph. 3:19). This is the great drama of the Gospel in relation to the coming age. A people humble and meek, who have been despised, ridiculed, and sometimes persecuted by the world about them, will be made great in the earth, so that even “kings shall bow before them.” Even so come, Lord Jesus!

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE WARFARE, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES

This chapter comprises three parts: the measuring of the Temple; the warfare, death and resurrection of the Witnesses; and the sounding of the seventh trumpet at which the nations pass from under the control of flesh to that of the Lord Jesus Christ. It completes the first half of the Apocalypse.

(i) — The Death and Resurrection of the Witnesses — vv. 1-13

A measuring reed is given to John, and he is directed to measure the temple, but is instructed to leave out the court without. He describes the warfare of two witnesses, which results in their death and resurrection. These two witnesses dramatise the long struggle against political and religious tyranny that has gone on throughout the ages, and particularly during the epochs of time occupied by the sounding of the first six trumpets. Hence the placing of the prophecy at this point in the Apocalypse.

VERSE 1

“And there was given me a reed”—The symbol of measurement (Ezek. 40:3; Rev. 21:15-16).

“Like unto a rod”—A rod is used for correction (1 Cor. 4:21). Hence the symbol indicates a measured period of chastisement (Lam. 2:8).

“And the angel said”—The texts omit these words. Supply the ellipsis: *and one said*.

“Rise”—The Greek *ageiro* expresses the idea of collecting one’s faculties in order to concentrate upon the matter in hand.

“And measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein”—True followers of Jesus Christ constitute the figurative “Temple of God” (2 Cor. 6:16); they are partakers of the Christ-Altar (Heb. 13:10; 1 Cor. 9:13); they are true Israelites, or “them that worship therein” (Eph. 2:14-15). And now they are measured off for tribulation, inasmuch as they are “par-

takers of Christ’s sufferings” (1 Pet. 4:13; Heb. 12:6).

VERSE 2

“But the court which is without the temple”—This describes the court of the Gentiles, so that the symbol relates to the alien (Eph. 4:17-18), but a special type of alien. To an uninitiated observer, the Court of the Gentiles would appear to be part of the Temple, and those assembled there would have the appearance of being true worshippers, or at least, genuine sympathisers. Therefore, whereas true saints constitute a separated priestly community (1 Pet. 2:9); the court of the Gentiles denotes those who claim to be “Christian” but who oppose the real teaching and practise of the Truth.

“Leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles”—The instruction *leave out* is from Greek *ekbale*, “cast out,” with the suggestion of using force. Hence *to excommunicate, to have no fellowship with*. This instruction shows that there should be no true identification with those communities that appear to be part of the symbolic Temple, but which, in fact, deny some of the important principles of basic truth. A community might claim to be “Christian” and yet be numbered in the court of the Gentiles. The instruction of the Spirit in relation to such is to deny them fellowship.

“And the holy city”—Spiritual Jerusalem, the Ecclesia (Gal. 4:26), described in *The Apocalypse* as the Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9-10).

“Shall they tread under foot forty and two months”—For this length of time, Gentiles who claim to be part of the Temple, shall tread underfoot those who

adhere to the Truth. Computed according to lunar months (30 days), as is normal in Scripture, this represents a period of 1260 days, the period of Christ's ministry. It is the same length of time as is given in different words in v.3. Why the two methods of describing time periods? Because they are to be computed from different commencing dates. This same distinction is preserved throughout *The Apocalypse* (cp. Rev. 11:2; 13:5 with 11:3; 12:6). There is a third method of describing 1260 days, for it is also given as "time, times and a half" (Rev. 12:14). In this case, it links the period with Dan. 7:25; 12:7. Each method of describing the 1260 days, links the period to a specific commencing date that is to be observed wherever that particular form of words is used. The verse before us speaks of an epoch when the "holy city" (the Ecclesia) is trodden underfoot by those in "the court of the Gentiles," or those organised as a "Christian" community but with whom the "holy city" will have no fellowship. The symbol points to Roman Catholicism, which claims to be "Christian" but is not. Roman Catholicism, was granted power by the decrees of Justinian (533) and Phocas (606-610), two emperors of Constantinople. The development and decline of the Papacy, bridged by the epoch of 1260 years, reveals some amazing parallels showing that "the ages are thoroughly adjusted to God's command" (Heb. 11:3 — *Diaglott*). The following dates are significant:

- 533. Justinian proclaims the pope as Universal Bishop — 1793, the French Revolution greatly weakens papal power.
- 539. Ravenna (ancient seat of papal power) re-conquered by Justinian; papal power increases — 1799, the Napoleonic wars are directed against papal influence.
- 549-554. Justinian's *Pragmatic Sanction* grants to the pope control of Municipal and Provincial Governments. Papal power increases — 1809, Napoleon annexes the Papal States.
- 590. Gregory 1 appoints himself as pope, and introduces a new era of influence for the papacy — 1850, Pope Pius IX driven into exile.
- 600. Gregory's popedom at its zenith — 1860, two-thirds of the Papal States annexed by Italy.
- 608-610. Phocas confirms Justinian's decree — 1868-1870, temporal power withdrawn from the papacy. The pope becomes a "prisoner of the Vatican," and Rome is appointed capital of Italy.

These, and other similar dates, show that an arch of 1260 years bridged the period of the development and decline of the papacy as a politico-religious organisation. During that long epoch of time, the Ecclesia was opposed, oppressed and persecuted by the Papacy.

VERSE 3

"And I will give power"—The word *power* should be omitted, as it is in the margin. Real power was not in the hands of the "two witnesses" but in the control of those found in the "court of the Gentiles" who claimed to be "Christian" but trod underfoot the Holy City. Having been shown the opposition the "holy city" would receive at the hand of these Gentiles, John is now shown how those comprising it will receive a measure of protection, and thus escape complete destruction, such as would otherwise be its fate. Christ reveals that he would provide this by supplying "two witnesses" who would oppose the political and religious tyranny manifested by the pseudo-Christians found in the court of the Gentiles.

"Unto my two witnesses"—The two witnesses are identified as those who "stand before" or oppose "the God of the earth" or the pope. Why "my" witnesses, and why two? They are described as Christ's witnesses, even though they do not embrace the Truth in its purity (they manifest no scruples in taking up the sword in defence of their position, though that is denied true saints), because they demonstrate the principle that "all power" is in the hands of the Lord (Matt. 28:18; 1 Pet. 2:22); and that he will provide protection to his true followers, if they proclaim the truth in its purity. He has assured them that he will "never leave them nor forsake them" (Heb. 13:5-8), and the manifestation of these two forms of protection witness to that truth. The two witnesses have stood for political and religious freedom, and the very vigor of their protest against tyranny has permitted the Truth to sound forth even though "the holy city" has been trodden underfoot of pseudo-Christian Gentiles. There are *two* witnesses, because religious and political tyranny has been matched by two forms of opposition which likewise has been religious and political. Elsewhere, *The Apocalypse* divides the protesting class into two main groups, symbolised as the

"earth" (political opposition), and the "woman" (religious opposition). In Rev. 12:15-16, the "earth" and the "woman" are shown as opposed by, and opposing, the Dragon. Symbolically, "earth" relates to the masses as politically organised, whilst it is obvious that the "woman" denotes religious organisation, for she is shown in conjunction with "the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17). In *Elpis Israel*, Brother Thomas writes: "The prophecy of the two witnesses is concerning two great parties in the ten-horned beast's dominion, which antagonise it in its civil and ecclesiastical policy. One party is purely secular, and styled 'the earth,' or democracy; the other party is 'religious,' and termed 'the woman.' The mission of these is to make war upon tyranny.... They have co-operated since the reign of Constantine more or less intimately until the present time; their co-operation consisting in a determined hostility to State-Churchism, and to its monarchical allies. They are both more or less Republican in their principles. 'The earth' especially is animated by a hatred of oppressors. Its spirit in all ages has shown itself in a terrible form. It is ferocious as the tiger, but it is a ferocity which is required by the nature of the work assigned it. The civil and ecclesiastical tyranny it has to combat which is itself horribly terrific and blasphemous against God and His truth, must be encountered by a spirit as fierce. In history, we see it exhibited in the Circumcellions of the first century of its operations, in the men of Munster of the sixteenth, the Camisards of the seventeenth, the Terrorists of the eighteenth, and the Red Republicans, Socialists, etc., of the nineteenth." (p. 341).

On p. 342, he writes: "But there is a *third party* which although it has the deep-rooted enmity of truth against every form of Satanism in Church and State, Papal and Protestant; and wishes success to the Two Witnesses in their war with civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, yet it is distinct from them both. It is that party described by the apostle in the passage above quoted. It is composed of the saints of God in the highest sense of the word. It is the One Body of Christ, having the one faith, the one hope, one Lord, one spirit, one baptism, and one God and Father. It is styled 'the holy city' in the Apocalypse; and is trodden

under foot of the Gentiles for forty-two months of years, till the Ancient of Days appears. It is by this class that 'the faith once for all delivered to the saints' is preserved from being entirely lost. In the twelfth of Revelation they are termed 'the remnant of the Woman's seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.' They are a people who believe the gospel of the kingdom of God and the things of Christ's name as set forth in 'the law and the testimony;' for 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' They are also an immersed people; for they keep the commandments of God as well as believe His word. It is their mission to 'contend earnestly for the faith'. Hence they come into collision with all parties; being antagonistic to 'every high thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,' whether entertained by the enemy or by witnesses, who torment him with their insurrections, or with prophesyings in behalf of civil and religious liberty."

The "earth" and the "woman" comprise the "two witnesses" of Revelation 11, whilst the "remnant of her seed" constitute the "temple of God, the altar, and them that worship therein" referred to above.

"**And they shall prophesy**"—To "prophesy" in the N.T. meaning of the term is to preach or teach (1 Cor. 14:3-4).

"**A thousand two hundred and three-score days**"—This is the same length of time as is denoted in the 42 months of v. 2, but is described differently, because belonging to a different epoch. The 42 months represent a period of time during which organised persecution on the part of a properly constituted "court of the Gentiles" would be manifested towards the "Temple" or the Ecclesia. In the verse before us, the epoch represents a period of warfare on the part of two parties, in which both resort to violence, and from which the Ecclesia invariably stands aside. Whereas the witnesses are "killed" for a short time, the symbolic "holy city" is not. The period of time extends to when "they shall have finished their testimony" (v. 7), and terminates, in the triumph of the persecuting power, and the silencing of the witnesses. It must commence, therefore, when the voice of opposition was raised against the religious and political tyranny of a pseudo-Christian community.

Accordingly, the warfare suggested in this prophecy commenced on the establishment of Christianity as the State Church in the year 312. This was the epoch of the Great Division in the church, when the Donatists refused to conform to decrees that issued forth from the State Church backed by the authority of Constantine's government. It commenced a period of religious controversy which continued for 1260 years to 1572 and the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. In that year, Rome made determined efforts to still the voice of religious opposition. This succeeded in France, at least, where a terrible massacre of those opposed to Rome took place. This terminated the effective testimony of the witnesses, which then "finished" (v. 7), and they were given over to political death. The *coupe de grace* came in 1685 when, after a century of terrible persecution, the *Edict of Nantes* that had granted some relief to the persecuted was revoked, and effective witnessing ceased for a time.

"Clothed in sackcloth"—Sackcloth is the garb of mourning and woe, and displays the witnesses as being in affliction.

VERSE 4

"These are the two olive trees"—The reference is to Zech. 4:3. Both Jews and Gentiles are symbolised as "olive trees" (Rom. 11:17). It is from mankind generally, and not from Jews alone, that the two witnesses are drawn. In Zechariah 4:11, the two "olive trees" are shown as standing in juxtaposition with a lampstand; and the oil of the former is shown as passing into the latter through two notable branches of the trees (Zech. 4:12). These two branches represent those separated from the Jewish and Gentile olive trees, to supply oil for the lampstand, and therefore signify the Ecclesia as distinct from the trees, or humanity generally. The symbolism of Rev. 11:4, provides for the three classes referred to in our note upon v. 3 (1) — political opposition to tyranny; (2) — religious opposition; (3) — the "remnant" who though protesting vocally do not do so militarily.

"And the two candlesticks"—The reference is to lampstands, and not to candlesticks. In his vision, Zechariah saw only one lampstand connected to the trees with two notable branches. These signified those separated from the rest of

the stems on the Jewish and Gentile trees, and therefore denoted the Ecclesia. The "two notable branches" are lacking from the symbolism of *The Apocalypse*. Thus, whilst there are resemblances between the two visions, there also are distinct differences. The two lampstands of Revelation, imply two independent forms of witness, such as are provided for in Brother Thomas' interpretation of the symbol as representing political and religious opposition to tyranny.

"Standing before the God of the earth"—The Greek has "*the Lord of the earth*" instead of the "God of the earth." "Before" is *enopion* from *en*, "in," and *ops*, "the eye," and signifies "in view of" the Lord of the earth. This Lord is shown in contrast to the "God of heaven" of v. 13, and has application to the papal constitution, where the pope, seated in the supposed temple of God, declares himself to be a God (2 Thess. 2:4). Thus pope Gregory the Second, writing to the Emperor in Constantinople in the eighth century, said: "All the lands of the west have their eyes directed towards our humility; by them we are considered as a God upon earth." A reference to this oppressing "Lord of the earth" is found in Ps. 10:18.

VERSE 5

"And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies"—Fire is a symbol of war. The witnesses had no compunction in taking up the sword against their persecutors. The "earth," or those manifesting political opposition to tyranny, came to the aid of those who testified by word of mouth against the papal god, and stood ready with the sword to defend them (both Protestants and Ecclesia) against aggression. History provides numerous examples of groups who though they did not agree with the teaching of the "woman" or the "remnant of her seed," yet were ready and eager to defend their right to teach it.

"And if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed"—He "must" be killed in this manner because it is the means of defence thus provided.

VERSE 6

"These have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their

prophecy" — Cp. James 5:17. Showers from heaven are indicative of Divine blessing and peace (Ps. 72:6). The withdrawal of such implies that peace is taken from the earth. Drought is related to Divine wrath (Deut. 11:17; Zech. 14:17).

"And have power over waters to turn them to blood"—"Waters turned to blood" are symbolic of peoples and nations (Rev. 17:15) suffering the effects of war.

"And to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will"—The verse refers to the antagonism, violence, and war that erupted as the witnesses resisted the political and religious tyranny to which they were subjected. During the period of 1260 years, many groups strove with the sword to secure and maintain political and religious freedom of conscience, belief and expression. Their resistance to the tyranny of Rome and its associate rulers permitted the voice of truth to be maintained by the Ecclesia, even though it refused to take up the sword in its own defence.

VERSE 7

"And when they shall have finished their testimony"—The "two witnesses" are known to history by several names: Donatists, Waldenses, Novatians, Huguenots etc. All in their turn witnessed against the autocratic ecclesiastical power of Rome, and so maintained a continuous record of opposition to its political and religious tyranny. During that time, Christendom so-called was ruled by the Church supported with the power of the sword, and the symbolic "holy city" (the Ecclesia) would have been completely overwhelmed but for the protest and resistance of the "two witnesses." Their opposition by voice and sword gave protection to the Ecclesia in its faithful preaching of the Truth to the World. No matter how bitterly believers were opposed by the Church, there was always some party prepared to stand for its defence if need be, and so obtain for it a certain immunity from trouble. In *The Apocalypse And History* occurs this summary of the warfare of the witnesses:

"It has been pointed out that neither the rule of Caesar nor the rule of Christ (as interpreted by the church) could receive the unquestioned obedience of all members of society. There were those who opposed the political organisation

and those who repudiated the dogmas and claims of the church. Frequently the two forces of opposition — religious and political — combined to accomplish their several objects. Thus in England, John of Gaunt, who opposed the church on political grounds, joined with Wycliff, who protested on religious matters. In Bohemia the protestant principles of Huss had a political effect, and later led to one of the most terrible religious-political wars that ever ravaged Europe (the Thirty Year' War, 1618-1648). One can well imagine that under the shadow of these greater forces of opposition there would also be that passive resistance exercised by the true believers in Christ. They would benefit by the successes of the Wycliffites, Hussites, etc.; they would suffer with them when the tide turned. Their teaching would be misunderstood and misrepresented. To the church they would be heretics of the heretics; by the state they would be regarded as secret plotters against the government. . . ."

However, as the 1260 year period neared its end in 1572, the hitherto forthright witnessing of true believers lessened, and the separateness which the Truth requires was not maintained. In consequence, the Divine protection likewise lessened, and the Papacy began to gain the ascendancy. The period terminated in a determined attempt by the church to destroy, once and for all, the opposition it had previously experienced. This culminated in an epoch of frightful persecution initiated by the so-called *Massacre of St. Bartholomew*, in France, on 24th August, 1572, when a determined effort was made by papal interests to crush all political and religious opposition to its power. This initiated a war to the death. It was particularly directed against the Huguenots in the south of France, who, in a special way, exemplified this opposition to church and state. To them may be traced the great political, social and economical upheavals of the eighteenth century which also enter into the scope of this prophecy.

The growing political influence of the Huguenots made their suppression appear as a necessity to the Catholics.

The increasing tension, erupted in a massacre of a number of them assembled together for worship at Vassy in 1562. This resulted in a number of civil wars that disturbed the nation in 1562, 1567

and 1568. The Huguenots were generally successful in these struggles, and gained many privileges. Then followed the crowning act of ecclesiastical and political treachery. The king was persuaded by the Catholic party that his life was in danger, and that it was essential to give his sanction to the arrest and execution of leading Huguenots. The king yielded and at a given signal Paris became a veritable shambles. So well had the plot been laid that few Huguenots escaped the horrors of the day of St. Bartholomew, 24th August, 1572. From Paris massacre spread to the provinces, and once again France was plunged into civil war. From 1572 to 1593 civil war followed civil war, until in that year circumstances called Henry of Navarre, a leader of the Huguenots, to the throne. Anxious to conciliate the Catholics, he became converted to Romanism. Nevertheless, at the same time, he endeavoured to relieve the sufferings of his old associates, and in 1598 religious feuds were temporarily settled by the Edict of Nantes, which granted many privileges to Huguenots, including the right to retain their strongholds and freedom to exercise their religion.

The seventeenth century, however, saw many of these privileges taken from them. Louis XIII forbade them holding political meetings, though they still retained religious freedom. Cardinal Richelieu determined on their complete suppression as a political party, if not as a religious community. His work, like that of his successor Mazarin, paved the way for Louis XIV, who in 1685 felt himself strong enough to revoke the Edict of Nantes.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was epoch-making. Free and liberal institutions were crushed in France, and the power of the king made absolute. From 1685 to 1789, to all outward appearances, the real France was dead. Huguenots who could have made France the first commercial and industrial nation of Europe, fled elsewhere, taking their arts and crafts with them. Many migrated to England; others crossed the ocean to America and South Africa, taking thither their industrial acumen and their sense of freedom. Their influence helped to stimulate the spirit of revolt against tyranny in America, with the result that in 1776 the American colony revolted against Britain, and gaining independence, laid the foundation for the USA.

From there the seeds of revolt were later transported back to France, to contribute in developing the French Revolution of 1790-1793.

Meanwhile the revocation of the Edict of Nantes brought political death to "the witnesses" in France. The war cry was "*Die or be Catholics*". Persecution, torture and death became the weapons by which Rome sought to force its will on the Protestants of Europe. Amid a thousand hideous lamentations and horrid blasphemies, men and women were subjected to unspeakable indignities to force them to revoke their religion, and sign that they were Catholics. The Inquisition did its foul work with frightful efficiency, and the Dark Ages, a period of ignorance, spiritual decline, and blind superstition unilluminated by any light of truth was ushered in upon Europe.

"**The beast**"—The *Diaglott* renders this: "That wild beast." The reference is to the Papacy. See note Rev. 13:1-2.

"**That ascendeth out of the bottomless pit**"—Lit. *out of the abyss*, elsewhere rendered as *deep*, and not out of the *shaft of the abyss* as in Rev. 9:1-2. As noted there, the shaft of the abyss, constituted the entrance into the abyss, provided by the conquest of the Middle East; whereas the *abyss* itself denotes the teeming masses of Europe. From these, the beast arose. In the Septuagint, the term *abyss* is rendered *deep* in Job 38:30; Isa. 63:13 etc., and there identified with the ocean. Symbolically the *abyss* represents the sea of humanity (Rev. 17:15). According to Jewish tradition, the *Abyss* was a place under the earth, thought to be a great receptacle of waters, which, as a reservoir, furnished all springs and waters. This opinion was held also by the Egyptians, by Homer and by Plato. Therefore, as a symbol, the *abyss* represents a hidden multitude of confused people, and it was from out of such that Roman Catholicism arose.

"**Shall make war against them**"—The war commenced in its most bitter form with the Massacre of 1572, 1260 years after the establishment of Christianity as the State religion in the reign of Constantine (A.D. 312).

"**And shall overcome them**"—The full weight of Catholic power was directed to stamping out Protestantism: and because the testimony of the two witnesses was at an end, and their confidence was placed in the arm of flesh rather than in that of

God, the opposition was successful in its attacks.

“And shall kill them”—France became the main battleground of the war thus initiated. The Huguenots were found there in strength, and against them Catholicism directed its attack, supplemented by the support of the State. As a result, over the years, some 800,000 fled France, to take their Protestant principles, together with their hatred of religious and political tyranny elsewhere. Many went to England, others fled to America where their revolutionary principles found fruitful soil, and blossomed into the American Revolution of 1776. In France, the “war” was conducted with varying fortunes. As noted above, in 1597, the Huguenots were granted religious freedom to worship as dictated by their conscience. This was through the Edict of Nantes extorted from Henry IV. But in 1685, this was revoked, and what remained of the witnessing party in France was subjected to the most extreme persecution to force it to capitulate. As a result, opposition to political and religious tyranny in France was put to death politically. The Huguenot organisation, as an effective political entity in France competent to resist, was brought to an end.

VERSE 8

“And their dead bodies shall lie”—This verse represents the political “bodies” of the two witnesses as lying dead and unburied for all to see. Symbolically it indicates that the triumph of Catholicism over its enemies would be kept publicly in view, and would not be allowed to be forgotten, or “buried” out of sight. This was done by a yearly celebration of the triumph of Catholicism over the Huguenots. The Papacy was so proud of the murders it committed during the massacre of 1572, that medals were struck commemorating the event.

“In the street of the great city”—The city referred to is Babylon the Great (Rev. 16:19), whose headquarters is in Rome (Rev. 17:18). The “street” or main division of this city is France, sometimes called the eldest son of the Church. It was in France that the full weight of the Papal war of extermination against the witnesses was directed.

“Which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt”—Sodom for pride and abomination; Egypt for darkness and bondage.

“Where also our Lord was crucified”—By the decree of Caracalla, Rome was made co-extensive with its dominions. Christ was crucified by order of Rome’s representative.

VERSE 9

“And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations”—See notes Rev. 5:9-10; 7:9. In this statement, “of” is *ek*, “out of,” and therefore defines a certain class separated from those referred to. Catholic action against the Huguenots of France caused a wave of abhorrence to sweep Protestant countries. The eighteenth century witnessed the uprise of the great Protestant power of Britain whilst in other places, and particularly in France, discontent and the spirit of revolt seethed under the surface, awaiting opportunity to manifest itself. By such agitation, as well as by the celebrations of Catholics and the protests of Protestant countries, the dead bodies of the two witnesses (political and religious opposition to tyranny) was not permitted to be forgotten.

“Shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their bodies to be put in graves”—The violent opposition of Catholicism, towards the Huguenots and others, was not permitted to be hidden away, or put out of sight, for a period of three and a half days. Actually, a period of 105 years elapsed between the political death of the witnesses in 1685, and their political resurrection in the French Revolution of 1790, but in conformity with the aptness of the symbol, this is described as three and a half days. It would not be appropriate for a dead body to lie in an open street for longer than such a time because decomposition would take place. As it is, a corpse lying in an open street for three and half days, would cause a most disagreeable odour and appearance to those in its vicinity. This, too, is appropriate to the symbolism and circumstances, for the suppression by the Catholic authorities of those under their control had its reaction, for it ultimately erupted in the French Revolution: a political upheaval that changed the constitution of Europe, and laid the foundation of modern political society. Brother Thomas, therefore, suggests that 3½ lunar days are referred to, as agreeable to the symbol. A lunar day (the phases of the moon) is equal to thirty

normal days, so that the period referred to represents 105 prophetic days or years. Dating this from 1685, the political "death" state of the "witnesses" extended to 1790 and the outbreak of the French Revolution. During that period, the tragedy of the suppressed opponents of Catholicism was brought continually before the notice of the world. Protestants would not suffer the dead bodies of the two witnesses to be buried away, but constantly agitated against Catholicism.

VERSE 10

"And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry"—The reference is to the Roman earth, or area of the Roman Empire. In contrast to those taken out of the nations (v. 9), the Catholic populations of Europe rejoiced in the triumph of political and religious tyranny.

"And shall send gifts one to another"—The Massacre of 1572 was commemorated by Catholics. Pope Gregory XIII struck a medal celebrating the day.

"Because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth"—The opposition experienced from the two witnesses was mainly directed against the Roman "earth," where Catholicism was entrenched.

VERSE 11

"And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them"—This speaks of a revival of political and religious witnessing. The former was manifested in the revolutionary agitation of the masses; the latter in the revival of the Protestant Movement. This resulted in greater liberty of thought and expression, including the revival of the Truth. It was the era of national Bible Societies, Publishing Houses, the emergence of non-conformist religions, the stirring of political opposition to tyranny that finally erupted in the French Revolution of 1790 onwards. The Witnesses were resurrected politically, to threaten their one-time oppressors. When the Huguenots earlier had fled France, many migrated to England and America where they continued to agitate against tyranny. In the latter country, the seeds of revolution produced fruit. It climaxed in the American revolution of 1776 by which the USA came into existence. Having tasted freedom, some of its leaders returned

to France to sow the seeds of revolt there as well.

"And they stood upon their feet"—The witnesses, having been put to political death in France, their resurrection must occur in the same place. Belloc in *The French Revolution* states: "The Huguenots, though no longer permitted to exist as a state within a state, remained for the hundred years between the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the outbreak of the French Revolution a powerful and ever-watchful body." No longer "alive" as a political force, they remained organised, and did not deteriorate into a mere decomposed mass. They were ready, when the time came, to co-operate with the democratic political element which carried the spirit of revolution from America to France.

In the years preceding 1790, discontent in France grew more acute. Influences were at work which stimulated the spirit of liberty. At last the representatives of the people arose and proclaimed themselves a National Assembly. Thus democracy forced itself upon the tyrannical government of Louis XVI, and made demands against both the religious and political constitution of the nation. So "the witnesses" "stood upon their feet."

"And great fear fell upon them which saw them"—The display of political power by the democratic forces of France made a great impression upon the nation as a whole. Filled with fear, the king invited commoners to send representatives to Parliament, and through this action, the States-general was convoked by Louis XVI in 1788.

VERSE 12

"And I heard a great voice from heaven"—This suggests the invitation made by the French Government to the representatives of the people to air their grievances.

"Saying unto them, Come up hither"—The representatives of the common people, including the oppressed classes, were invited to participate in Parliament to assist in governing the State. Thus was convened the States-General which paved the way for the French Revolution; for having once tasted of power, the revolutionaries were not satisfied until they had completely overthrown the existing form of rule. The States-general, as it is called, comprised a representative

body of all classes. It was convened at the request of the aristocracy of France, who aimed to limit the absolutism of the crown. In this, the requirements of *The Apocalypse* were fulfilled to the letter, for the deputies were invited to ascend to ruling positions in the State. In doing so, the aristocratic party opened the way to revolution. As the French writer, Francois de Chateaubriand, later wrote: "The patricians began the Revolution, and the plebeians completed it."

"And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud"—Deputies representing all classes in France, accepted the invitation to form the States-general. Some 610 Deputies were elected by the people, and ascended into the political heavens in a cloud.

"And their enemies beheld them"—The States-General assembled in May 1789, hopeful that it would be permitted to institute the reforms the nation needed. The Deputies met with resistance, but refused to be intimidated thereby. As a consequence, they were invited to merge with the National Assembly, which granted them real power to implement policy. "Henceforth there were no representatives of the Estates of France, only representatives of the French nation." Louis, alarmed at the growth of unrest in Paris, yielded. Authorities in Church and State viewed the growing power of the Deputies with concern, and urged the king to use force to restrict them and so save the nation.

VERSE 13

"And the same hour"—Brother Thomas computes this as the hour of the year or, in Bible chronology, a month of thirty days (see Note Ch. 8:1). The French Revolution, and the wars of Napoleon that followed, occupied thirty years from 1789 to 1819.

"There was a great earthquake"—The reference is to a political earthquake, such as occurred as a result of the French Revolution. Generally, earthquakes are heralded by preliminary shocks. These are followed by a series of shocks, during which the magnitude on the largest scale may increase, and the whole appearance of the neighbourhood be altered. In the case of the French Revolution, the first mutterings were first underground rumblings, and then pent up tensions ready to erupt in destructive

violence. "From the taking of the Bastille by the mob of Paris to the execution of the king and queen the revolutionary forces went from one extreme to another, till the whole political constitution of France was levelled to the dust as by an earthquake" (*The Apocalypse and History*). There are four earthquakes referred to in *The Apocalypse*, three of them described as "great," the final of which exceeds the others (Rev. 6:12; 8:5; 11:13; 16:18). The first established the church as the official religion of Rome; the second, under Julian, witnessed the beginning of attacks by other nations (barbarians) upon the Empire which finally brought its dissolution; the third related to the French Revolution; and the fourth will bring about the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Each of the "earthquakes" of the past has played a powerful part in determining the course of history. The second earthquake was brought about by the death of Julian who was killed in a disastrous expedition against Persia, which resulted in Rome ceding the eastern half of Roman Mesopotamia to Persia. This encouraged the "explosive" movements among barbarians beyond the borders of the Empire (See *The Penguin Atlas of Medieval History*, p. 16), that led to them invading it.

"And the tenth part of the city fell"—The division of Babylon the Great into ten parts, is in accordance with the ten toes of the Image. The statement shows that the revolution was to mainly effect only one such portion: France.

"And in the earthquake was slain of men seven thousand"—In the Greek, "of men" is *onomata anthropon*, and signifies "names of men" (see mg.). Seven is the number of completion. The statement suggests the complete abolishing of the multiplicity of clerical and civil titles that had been a feature of France. This was done during the French Revolution. The aristocracy was completely overthrown. Hereditary nobility and titles were abolished: all men became levelled as citizens of the State, so that the common greeting became *Citizen*.

"And the remnant were affrighted"—The Revolution inaugurated a reign of terror which destroyed the previous ruling class. This commenced on September 1793, and within a few months some 40,000 had been executed, and many more imprisoned.

The guillotine could not work fast enough, so that the revolutionaries had recourse to mass killings. The official governmental policy decreed that terror was to be the order of the day. The revolutionaries exacted terrible retribution upon their previous enemies, causing fear throughout the nation. The revolution attacked religion as much as it did the aristocrats. In Paris, promoted by Herbet and the Commune, it spread into attacks on the clergy, compelling them to resign. Churches were plundered, ceremonies prohibited, and statues destroyed. Mock processions aped those of the despised religion. The Commune closed down the churches or used them for secular celebrations, with busts of Voltaire and Rousseau replacing the statues of the saints." The very ferocity of this reign of terror caused "the remnant to be affrighted." Hamlyn's, *Age of Revolution* states: "The government feared this 'religious terror' would only upset much of their support and give counter-revolutionaries further arguments for discarding the revolution."

"And gave glory to the God of heaven"—The Revolution had overthrown Catholicism as a State sponsored religion, and introduced atheism. On 10th November, 1791, the worship of the God of the earth (Catholicism) was abolished, and the Goddess of Reason was substituted. In November 1793 the *Feast of Reason* was celebrated in Notre Dame with Reason represented by a woman of the streets, wearing a cap of liberty. Robespierre, however, disliked it since he believed in God, and insisted that there was an important place in the revolution for religion. He declared that "Atheism is aristocratic," and devised the cult of the Supreme Being. In May, 1894, he presided at a festival at which the God of heaven was officially honoured.

(j) — Seventh Angel Sounds: Kingdom Ceded to Christ — vv. 14-19

The Apocalypse moves on to present the consummation of the Divine purpose at Christ's coming. This chapter completes the first half of the book. Already it has shown how that the Roman Empire was first "Christianised," then broken up into independent nations answering to the toes of the Image of Daniel 2, though held together by the Holy Roman Empire which replaced pagan Rome. In the chapter before us, the condition of the

witnessing parties during this long period of history has been explained, leading to Christ's return. Now the great "revolution" at his coming is outlined.

VERSE 14

"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly"—The third woe trumpet sounded by the seventh angel introduced events that came quickly after the French Revolution. As is frequently the case in Scripture, the final picture is given first, and then the events leading up to it are related. These are briefly hinted at in this section of *The Apocalypse*, but are more completely dealt with as described by the outpouring of the vials Chapters 15, 16.

VERSE 15

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven"—The heaven in question is the seat of government of the Age to come. The proclamation is the declaration inaugurating the Millennial reign of Christ.

"The Kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ"—In the Greek, *kingdom* is in the singular number; hence the RV renders: The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord. . . ." The various nations are but divisions in satan's kingdom (Matt. 12:26). It is to be noted that Daniel treats of "the kingdom of men" (Dan. 4:17; Dan. 2:41,42,44), bringing all ten toes under one heading. Man's rule will be transferred to Christ, (Isa. 61:11; Zech. 14:9; Ps. 2:8).

"He shall reign for ever and ever"—Literally this is *the ages of ages*, for the Millennium is divided into shorter ages. At the conclusion of the thousand years' reign of Christ, a perfected Kingdom will be given over to God (1 Cor. 15:24). In these verses the consummation is presented first, and afterwards the events leading up to it (cp. vv. 18-19). See Note Rev. 1:6.

VERSE 16

"And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God"—See notes Rev. 4:4, 10-11.

VERSE 17

"Saying, we give Thee thanks Lord God Almighty"—The name as given in

Hebrew is Yahweh Elohim Sabaoth: *He who shall be mighty ones of armies* — the belligerent title of Deity. It will be through armies manifesting Yahweh's power and glory (Rev. 19:14) that the nations will be subjected to Christ. See note Rev. 1:8.

"Which art, and wast, and art to come"—The last section of this title is missing in the Greek. At the time referred to, Yahweh will again be manifested in the earth. See note Rev. 1:4.

"Because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned"—The setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth will provide tangible evidence of Yahweh's hidden power.

VERSE 18

"And the nations were angry"—They will be made so by the disturbing influence of the "frogs" (Rev. 16:13-14) generating that attitude described in Ps. 2:1-3.

"And thy wrath is come"—Christ will first rule in the midst of his enemies (Psa. 110:2), pouring out upon them his judgments (Ps. 149; Isa. 30:30-33; 60:12).

"And the time of the dead that they should be judged"—See 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rom. 2:5, 16.

"And that Thou shouldest give reward"—See Luke 14:14.

"Unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name small and great"—This suggests a gradation of service. First we must submit as bondservants; then proclaim the Word as prophets (1 Cor. 14:3); manifesting the separateness of saints to the world about; whilst reverencing the name of Yahweh.

"And shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth"—The word is *diaphtheiro*, from *dia* "through" intensive, and *phtheiro*, "to destroy by corrupting." It (*phtheiro*) is used of the corrupting influence of evil company (1 Cor. 15:33); the effect of dishonorable dealing by bringing people to want (2 Cor. 7:2); mental corruption (2 Cor. 11:3); the outworking of human nature (Eph. 4:22); the corrupting effect of false doctrine (Rev. 19:2). It is rendered *defile* (1 Cor. 3:17), and *destroy* (1 Cor. 3:17). The noun *phthora* is rendered *corruption* (relating to physical dissolution — Rom. 8:21; 1 Cor. 15:42,50; Gal. 6:8), *perish* (i.e. corrupt — Col. 2:22; 2 Pet. 1:4)

destroyed and corruption (2 Peter 2:12, 19). The word before us, *diaphtheiro* is an intensive form of the verb, and signifies *utter corruption*. It is used to describe the utter corruption of perverse disputing (1 Tim. 6:5); the destructive work of the moth in reducing everything to corruption (Luke 12:33), and is rendered *is decaying* (2 Cor. 4:16), *destroyed* (Rev. 8:9). The noun, *diaphthora*, "utter or complete corruption" is used negatively of the body of the Lord (Acts 2:27, 31; 13:34,35,37), and once, affirmatively of David (Acts 13:36).

The word, therefore, suggests a degree of corruption or pollution such as could be fatal to civilisation. It is actually a citation of Genesis 6:12, and implies that at the epoch of the return, the world will drift into a state comparable with that of Noah's age, manifesting such a degree of pollution, or corruption, as to jeopardise its future. Present conditions answer to the prophecy. Mankind has so polluted the earth as to make the prospect of life thereon doubtful; he has become so morally corrupted as to justify the harshest judgments; he has stockpiled such weapons of war as to destroy life on earth if they were used. Who can redeem him from such a state? Christ, alone, has the wisdom and power to do so. Meanwhile, it is indicative of the truth of Bible prophecy, and of *The Apocalypse*, that it should anticipate a condition on earth, such as we see developing today.

VERSE 19

"And the temple of God"—The reference is to the *nave* or Most Holy. This was Yahweh's throne in Israel (Exod. 25:22). In it was found the Ark of Covenant overshadowed by the Cherubim, symbolic of Christ and the saints (Rom. 3:25). When Christ returns and the saints are united to him, the antitypical Cherubim and Mercy Seat will form a unit (Zech. 14:9). The multitudinous Body of Christ will thus constitute the Temple (2 Cor. 6:16), or Most Holy. Moreover, the Most Holy speaks of Divine nature (Heb. 10:20) which will then be granted the Redeemed (2 Pet. 1:4). As decrees for peace or war issued forth from Yahweh through the Most Holy in ancient Israel, so they will again when Christ and the Redeemed are apocalypted as the antitypical Most Holy in the age to come.

“In heaven”—Lit. “the heaven,” the place of authority, the government of the coming age (Rev. 4:1).

“And there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament”—The word “testament” should be rendered *covenant*. The ark comprised the Mercy Seat and Cherubim, and above the first and between the second, the glory of Yahweh was seen. Christ is the Mercy Seat or propitiation (Rom. 3:25), and the Redeemed comprise the Cherubim (Rev. 4:7). In the coming age, the glory of Yahweh will be revealed in the Christ community (Acts 15:14; Rev. 3:12), so

exhibiting the fulfilment of the covenant, whilst, at the same time, offering mercy to humanity through the offering of Christ.

“And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail”—A tremendous storm and earthquake will overthrow all existing constitutions of the flesh, and replace them with a new divine order on earth. The French Revolution was a tremendous political earthquake, but it will be exceeded by that which will take place at Christ’s return. For details and explanations see notes on Rev. 16:18.



The capture of the Bastille

from Les Révolutions de Paris, engraved by Dupin

**The Fall of the Bastille (Paris fortress prison) on July 14th 1789
officially launched the French Revolution.**

(4) THE DEVELOPMENT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE BEAST, HIS IMAGE, AND ORGANISATION — Chapters 12-14

The conclusion of Chapter Eleven brings us to the end of the first half of *The Apocalypse*. Now, with the commencement of the second half, it retraces its steps and again reviews history from the epoch of Constantine onwards.

Why the repetition? Is it not confusing?

No, a little thought will reveal that *The Apocalypse* proceeds on a systematic plan of historical development. The previous chapters predicted the following events of a political character:

1. The "Christianising" of pagan Rome (Chs. 6, 7).
2. The break-up of "Christianised" Rome (Chs. 8,9).
3. The warfare of the witnesses and the triumph of the truth (Chs. 10,11).

In thus concentrating upon political developments, religious developments have been largely ignored. Now, in orderly fashion, "*The Apocalypse*" re-traces its steps to take up that theme. Hence we have:

1. The development and destruction of the Holy Roman Empire (Chs. 12,13,14).
2. The Divine judgment on the latter day political system (Chs. 15,16).
3. Divine judgment on the latter day religious system (Chs. 17,18,19).

The second half of "*The Apocalypse*" follows the first half in orderly fashion. The Holy Roman Empire replaces the Roman Empire, and its destruction is described. The "two witnesses," after resurrection, develop in political influence (Ch. 16), and though they are used to punish "the beast," they likewise are destroyed, so finally Christ's Kingdom succeeds over all. Hence there is a proper progression of history.

CHAPTER TWELVE

WAR IN HEAVEN

Perhaps no chapter of "The Apocalypse" has been the subject of more controversy than this one. It has been used frequently to support the theory of the devil as a fallen angel. It is claimed that "the man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron" is Christ, that the "war in heaven" is literally fulfilled in the heavenly realm of God's abode, and that the "casting of the dragon into the earth," represents the literal ejection of the devil as a fallen angel from heaven, to roam the earth in search of victims.

Such a theory takes hold of the Apocalyptic statement that there will be "war in heaven," and interprets it literally. But if the term "heaven" is to be applied literally in v. 7, it must be similarly applied in v. 1, which states that the woman gives birth to her son "in heaven." Obviously this cannot relate to the atmospheric heavens above (see notes Ch. 4), and must apply to the political "heaven" on earth.

Moreover, any exposition of "The Apocalypse" to be sound, must conform to the basic principle that it was given to reveal "things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1). Applying this as a rule of interpretation, we must seek for the fulfilment of the birth of the man-child, the war in heaven, and so forth, at some time after A.D. 96, when the revelation was given to John. Furthermore, as it is specifically stated that "he (Christ) sent and signified it (the revelation) by his angel unto his servant John," we must recognise the "sign" language as such where appropriate. That is surely the case in this chapter, which describes a dragon whose tail drags the third part of the stars of heaven and flings them to the earth — a physical impossibility.

The chapter should be linked with two other sections of "The Apocalypse." Firstly, with the message to the eldership in Thyatira, in which a warning note was sounded against the influence of "that woman Jezebel" then found in the midst of the Ecclesia. Secondly, with the great earthquake of Chapter 6:12 which resulted in the overthrow of the pagan system of government, and its replacement by one claiming to be "Christian."

The "woman Jezebel" symbolised a class of heretics tolerated in the Thyatiran Ecclesia, which developed into the great harlot system described in Revelation 17:4-5. The "woman" of the chapter before us (Ch. 12) symbolises this same system (Roman Catholicism) in its early political development.

Revelation 6 describes the effect of a great political earthquake (vv. 12-17). This overthrew political paganism, and replaced it with a pseudo-Christian system. In the chapter before us greater details are provided of this important development of history.

(a) — Birth Of The Man-child — vv. 1-6

John sees a woman "in heaven" about to give birth to a child, whilst a dragon stands waiting, ready to consume it as soon as it is born.

VERSE 1

"And there appeared a great wonder"

—The Greek word denotes *sign* as in the margin. The fact that the "woman" is described as a "sign," shows that the verses should be interpreted symbolically.

"In heaven"—It is quite obvious that the "heaven" relates to the political and not to the atmospheric heaven, for the "sign" that takes place therein is that of a woman giving birth to a child. The growing political influence of the Church was a great "sign" at the beginning of the Fourth Century — from 300 A.D. onwards — for it heralded great changes in the political constitution of the times.

"A woman"—The Ecclesia is likened to a "chaste virgin" (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23). But as sections of the Ecclesia had been guilty of unfaithfulness (see Rev. 2:20-23), the one time "chaste virgin" is now represented as being with child (cp. James 4:4 mg).

"Clothed with the sun"—The sun is the symbol of government, so that the woman is represented as being invested with imperial authority. At the beginning of the 4th Century, Christianity began to enjoy the support and protection of the Roman authorities. Particularly was this the case with Constantine, whose influence was extending in the West. He took the rapidly increasing Christian community under his protection, and, at the height of his reign, invested it with great political authority. Constantine, however, was a pagan, and particularly revered Apollo the sun god, so that the imagery of this verse is appropriate to the circumstances.

"And the moon under her feet"—The moon derives its light, or influence, from the sun, so that the symbol is appropriate to illustrate a state ecclesiasticism which derives its authority from the Government. Here it is seen "under the feet" of the woman, or in subjection to her. The triumph of Constantine was followed by the subjugation of paganism to that of pseudo-Christianity, and, ultimately, to the overthrow of paganism as the state religion.

"And upon her head a crown"—The word for "crown" is *stephan*, or wreath, the symbol of victory. The *stephan* was the reward given to the victor in the Grecian games (cp. Ch. 6:2). A *stephan* on the head of the woman, together with the moon shown as under her feet, suggests that she (pseudo-Christianity) had gained the victory over the "moon," or pagan state religion.

"Of twelve stars"—As the sun represents governmental authority, and the moon represents state religion, so the stars represent the princes of the realm (cp. Dan. 12:3). At the time of the vision, twelve principal rulers had governed Rome since the establishment of the Imperial system by Augustus. They were the Emperors: Augustus (died A.D. 18), Tiberias (37), Caligula (41), Claudius (55), Nero (68), Galba (68), Otho (68), Vitellius (69), Vespasian (79), Titus (81), Domitian (96), Nerva (98). These twelve princes, or stars, represented the supreme authority of Rome up until the time that *The Apocalypse* was given. Now John sees them as stars on the *stephan* upon the head of the woman, indicating that she had attracted to herself the authority of the State.

VERSE 2

"And she being with child"—In 2 Cor. 11:2, the Ecclesia is described as a "chaste virgin." Early in her life, however this virgin became pregnant with the seeds of error (Acts 15). They included the doctrine that Christ was not sufficient for justification, and that believers need to seek for it in the Law of Moses. This Judaising heresy was vigorously opposed by Paul, but never entirely eradicated. Other errors were superimposed upon the Truth, that in time produced the most terrible fruit. The result was that, by the age of Constantine, many "Christians" had so departed from the faith, that they were prepared to assist him to power by co-operating with him in his wars of conquest. The period of time suggested by the symbolism of the birth of the woman's son is in accordance with the requirements of history. From conception to birth is a period of 280 days. On the prophetic basis of a day for a year, this represents 280 years. The prophecy dates from about A.D. 33, when the Ecclesia was established through the preaching of Peter on the Day of

Pentecost until 280 years later, in the year 313, when the wars of Constantine, with the assistance of pseudo-Christians, brought him to the zenith of his power. In gratitude he adopted the Church (but not the Ecclesia) as State-sponsored, and in turn, it helped him to power. Thus the man-child was brought to political birth, through the help of the Apostasy.

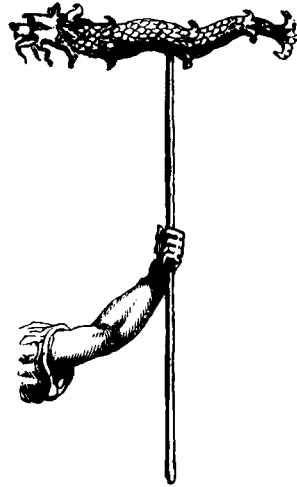
“Cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered”—The pangs of parturition in pregnant women commence about ten days before the birth of a child, and the fulfilment of the prophecy answers remarkably to the requirements of the symbolism. In the year 303, ten years before Constantine was elevated to supreme authority, brutal persecution against Christians was initiated by the Emperor Diocletian. He posed as the champion of Paganism, whilst Constantine supported the Christians. The persecution of Diocletian brought pain to the woman (or Christian community), and was an element in Constantine’s rise to power. Many so-called Christians saw in him their only hope of deliverance.

VERSE 3

“And their appeared another wonder in heaven”—Another sign in the political heavens was the appearance of the “dragon” in belligerent opposition to the rising power of Constantine.

“Behold a great red dragon”—The term *dragon* is used to describe the crocodile, the symbol of Egypt (Ezek. 28:3). Egypt stands in Scripture as the sin power in political manifestation. At the beginning, it was the great opponent of God’s people of Israel, but with the political decline of Egypt, the role was assumed by Rome which is likened to Egypt (Rev. 11:8). The word “dragon” is from the Greek *drakon*. It is derived from *derk*, “to see,” and is so called because of its keen power of sight. It is described as being red in colour, which is both the colour of sin (Isa. 1:18), and of warlike belligerency (Rev. 6:4). The word can be rendered *fiery*, and is appropriate to the symbol, for it is said that the Generals of pagan Rome often had fire carried before them; as an offering to the gods, as they marched to battle. Here, its obvious purpose, is to indicate the wrathful and hostile attitude of the Dragon, the military power of Rome, towards Christianity.

At one time the *dragon* was used as a standard for Rome. Barnes quotes Amminianus Marcellinus (16.10) as describing it thus: “The dragon was covered with purple cloth, and fastened by the end of a pike, gilt and adorned with precious stones. It opened its wide throat, and the wind blew through it; and it hissed as if in a rage, with its tail floating in several folds through the air.”



He further describes it as being *purpur-cus* or purple-red. The dragon was first used as an ensign near the close of the second century, though it was not until the third century that its use had become common. It is most appropriate, therefore, that *The Apocalypse* should introduce it at this particular point of the prophecy.

“Having seven heads”—For an explanation of the seven heads see Rev. 17:10. They provide both topographical and political indications of the power referred to. They represent firstly, the seven mountains upon which Rome is built, and secondly, the seven “kings,” or forms of administration, by which the city was ruled. In Greek, the word *king* does duty for both the person and the government. The seven systems of government by which Rome was ruled were: Regal, Consular, Dictatorial, Decemviral, Tribunial with consular authority, Imperial and Gothic.

“And ten horns”—The horns answer to the ten toes on the feet of the Image of

Daniel 2, and relate to the ten-fold division of the Roman Empire which subsequently took place, providing the basis of modern divided Europe. The numeral "ten" is frequently used to denote an unspecified number of completeness (1 Sam. 29:15; Ps. 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:15; 14:19), rather than the literal number.

"And seven crowns upon his heads"—

The word "crowns" is *diademata* and in contrast to *stephan*, denotes the symbol of authority. The fact that the crowns are displayed on the heads and not on the horns of the dragon (as they are in Ch. 13:1), is an important indication of when the prophecy was to be fulfilled. It was to be before the breakup of the Roman Empire into its several divisions.

VERSE 4

"And his tail"—The tail of a beast in motion is indicative of its fear and wrath. The symbol is applicable to the circumstances of the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century. It so happens that at a time when the "dragon" had become a common standard in the Roman armies, and had, in some measure, superseded the eagle, that there also existed a tripartite division of the Empire. About A.D. 300, it was divided into three sections all of which would unite against a common enemy.

"Drew the third part of the stars of heaven"—In a very remarkable manner, the terms of this prophecy were fulfilled in amazingly exact detail. In the year 284, Diocletian assumed the purple. Two years later he admitted Maximian to share control as Augustus; and in 292 Galerius and Constantius were associated in the government, with the inferior title of Caesars. Subsequently, Diocletian removed his court from Rome to Nicomedia, on the Asiatic shore of the Propontis. In the partition of the empire, Diocletian reserved for himself Thrace, the Asiatic provinces, and Egypt; Maximian, whose residence was at Milan, received Italy and Africa; Galerius had Illyria and the countries on the Danube; while Gaul, Spain and Britain were assigned to Constantius, the father of Constantine.

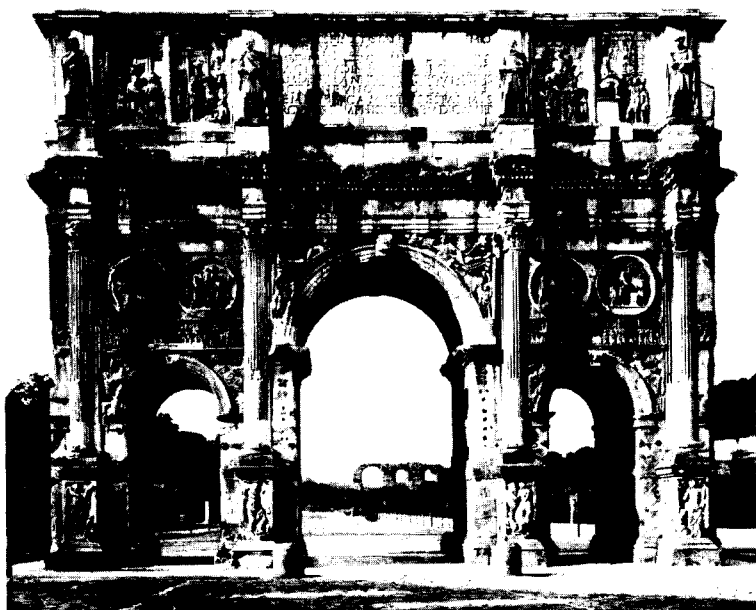
The priests and others who were interested in the maintenance of the pagan system became apprehensive that they might lose their hold on the empire. Diocletian was indifferent as to religion,

while Constantius openly favoured the Christians; and Maximian and Galerius were hostile to Christianity. Diocletian was won over to the cause of paganism at the instigation of Galerius, and commenced a bitter persecution of the church. On the 1st May 305, however, he abdicated the empire, and Maximian, in reluctant submission, did likewise. Constantius and Galerius now succeeded to the highest dignity, and two new Caesars, Maximian and Severus, were associated with them. For some years the imperial power was the subject of contentions, changes, and partitions: at one time there were no fewer than six emperors—in the east, Galerius, Maximian, and Licinius; in the west, Maximian, who had resumed his power, his son Maxentius, and his son-in-law Constantine, the son and successor of Constantius. Meanwhile the condition of the Christians throughout the empire varied according to the character of its several rulers.

Licinius, who ultimately alone remained to resist the growing power of Constantine, was elevated to the rank of Augustus by Galerius in 307. In 313 he improved his position by marrying the sister of Maxentius, and in that year he succeeded Maximian as emperor of the Eastern provinces. In that area, and particularly in the dominions of Syria and Egypt under Maximian, the persecution of Christians was ferocious. J. Robertson in his *History Of The Christian Church* writes: "Maximin boasted of the blessings which had followed in his measures for the revival of paganism. . . . The persecution (both in the east and west) altogether lasted ten years, although after the first two it was but little felt in the west."

Constantine succeeded his father Constantius as ruler in the far West. Constantius had favored the Christians, and his son followed the same policy. He was appointed to the control of the West by the army, and in defiance of the wishes of Galerius. Indeed, Galerius looked upon the elevation of Constantine in the West with suspicion, and though for purposes of policy, he accepted and endorsed the nomination, he refused to acknowledge him as an equal, and delegated him to the fourth rank among the Roman rulers. He made ready to invade the West, in order to force the capitulation of Constantine. Thus, in the terms of the prophecy, the pagan *dragon*

The arch of Constantine seems to symbolize his desire to restore the empire, for it contains fragments of monuments of many great Romans.



stood before the woman (church) to devour her child (Constantine) as soon as it was born. History reveals that Constantine owed his strength and position to the support of the church.

The death of Galerius saved Constantine from the impending attack, but it did not save Rome. Publicly proclaiming a policy of religious tolerance that favoured Christians, and so gaining the support of the rapidly increasing Church, Constantine made ready to attack Rome. Many so-called Christians, rejecting the teaching of the Master, identified themselves with the cause of Constantine, and justified the taking up of arms in his support. They claimed that the Church comprised the Kingdom of God, and as it had been politically accepted, it was legitimate for Christians to fight on its behalf. Accordingly pseudo-Christians of the West joined the army of Constantine, whilst those of the East formed a fifth column in the heart of enemy territory. Maxentius supported paganism and prepared to resist Constantine, but he

was defeated. In a series of remarkable victories against great odds (proclaimed by the clergy as miracles), Constantine moved steadily and triumphantly towards Rome. He was opposed in person by Maxentius at the battle of Milvian Bridge, one of history's decisive battles. Victory again attended the arms of Constantine, and Maxentius was drowned trying to escape. Constantine then entered Rome in triumph. It was in connection with this battle that he was reported to have received a vision of the cross which appeared in the sky with the words *In hoc vinces* — "In this conquer." He thereupon adopted this sign as his standard. It was not the "sign of the cross" as it is usually represented, but a monogram consisting of the first two letters of the word Christ (in Greek XP) superimposed one upon the other. Meanwhile, the Catholics hailed Constantine as their patron and supporter, whilst his victory at Milvian Bridge resulted in the Empire being reduced to three divisions as required by the

prophecy before us. Constantine ruled in Rome over the West, Licinius ruled in Illyricum, and Maximin ruled the East, including Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt.

Constantine and Licinius acting in concert as allies were favourable to the Christian cause. In 313 they issued a decree of toleration known as the Edict of Milan. But Maximin remained an intolerant pagan, and a cruel persecutor of the Christians. He fiercely refused to conform to the policy of the West, and demanded that his subjects submit to the practices of paganism. He decreed by law that all were to partake of food sacrificed to idols: goods offered for sale in the market were to be sprinkled with pagan lustral water; no one was to visit the public baths without throwing incense to the gods whose altars were placed there.

“And did cast them to the earth”—

Thus the most easterly provinces of Rome, the “tail of the dragon,” waved about in anger. In the face of the decree of toleration issued by Constantine and Licinius, Maximin proclaimed his intention of destroying Christianity, and initiated a holy war to that end by attacking Licinius. However, his death intervened, and Licinius annexed his territory. The policy of Maximin, therefore, had the effect of “drawing the third part of the stars of heaven” (the princes of his realm), and of casting them to the earth, or rejecting them from their positions and influence of power.

The defeat and death of Maximin reduced the number of Emperors to two, Constantine now took for himself the whole of the West and the Illyrian provinces, whilst Licinius was given Thrace and Asia, as well as Syria and Egypt, the previous “pagan” third of the Empire.

At this juncture Licinius repudiated his toleration of the Christians, and identified himself with paganism. Once again, now under his influence, the “tail” of the great red dragon began to move in anger. This departure from his previous policy effectively divided the Empire, and inevitably led to hostilities between him and Constantine. Licinius bound himself with an oath that if he were victorious he would extirpate the Christian religion root and branch. This attracted the support of pagan rulers, so that once again, the “third part of the stars” were drawn by the “tail” of the dragon.

“And the dragon stood before the

woman which was ready to be delivered”

—The final contest between Christianity and Paganism was about to be fought. The declared policy of Licinius to utterly destroy Christianity illustrates the section of the prophecy before us. First Galerius, then Maximin, finally Licinius had defied destiny in their bitter and unreasonable support of Paganism against Christianity.

“For to devour her child as soon as it was born”—

Constantine had come to power through the help and influence of the Church. The apostate branch of Christianity had supported him through all the pangs of political birth. But so long as Licinius remained, and Paganism retained power in the east, the fulness of Constantine’s political birth was not in evidence. It, together with the full emancipation of the Church, was in process of fulfilment. In the East, paganism made ready to destroy both Christianity and Constantine. Licinius prepared to stake his future on the outcome of the impending struggle. Meanwhile, the persecuted Christians of his realm waited expectantly.

VERSE 5

“And she brought forth a man child”—

This prophecy does not relate to Christ, as is sometimes thought, for it is specifically declared that *The Apocalypse* was designed to outline “things which must come to pass” (Rev. 1:1; 4:1); but it concerns the political birth of a system which the flesh has confused with Christ. Nevertheless, the triumph of Constantine, and the elevation of the Church to the status of a State-sponsored religion, was interpreted by pseudo-Christians as the establishment of Christ’s reign on earth. The political birth of this “man child” was the beginning of the fulfilment of Paul’s prophecy of the manifestation of the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2:3). This refers to an order of men (the Popes) and not to a single individual. Constantine’s triumph laid the foundation for the development of such, Gibbon records that “the first of the Christian Emperors was unworthy of that name till the moment of his death.” Constantine submitted to immersion only three days before his death in 337, in order that he could be sure that all his sins would be washed away. Though unbaptised, and clinging to the rites of paganism, he still presumed to act as president at ecclesiastical councils, inter-

rupting the discussions, and adjudicating on matters of doctrine and practise relating to the church.

Christianity (so called) brought Constantine to political birth, for it was the support of nominal believers that ensured the success of his arms. Rejecting the teaching of Christ, they flocked to the war-banner of Constantine, and agreed to wield the sword on his behalf.

“Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron”—Destiny decreed that Constantine should unite all the nations of the Roman Empire under one iron rule. This he did. Gibbon records of him that “the last fifteen years of Constantine’s reign revealed him as a cruel and dissolute monarch,” ruling with a rod of iron.

“And her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne”—It is written of the Man of Sin, prophetically referred to by Paul, that he would “oppose and exalt 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” (2 Thess. 2:4). In succeeding ages, the prelates of Rome claimed to represent God on earth, and to be enthroned as such in what they claimed to be His temple, the church. Constantine laid the foundation for such a development. Ignoring the pagan “gods of his fathers” he “magnified himself above all” and claimed the divine right to rule (see Dan. 11:37), in the course of which he honored “a god whom his (pagan) fathers knew not.” In his rise to power, and in his presumption in deciding matters of doctrine and church practise, Constantine ascended into the political and ecclesiastical heavens. His influence and authority paved the way for the emergence of the god of the earth (Rev. 11:4), to whose throne (the Church) he aspired. Figuratively, he was “caught up to God, and to His throne.”

VERSE 6

“And the woman fled into the wilderness”—Having given birth to her son, the woman (the church) found that she had spawned a tyrant, and was forced to flee from his power. For Constantine, having ascended to supreme authority, was prepared to destroy his “mother” to retain it. The “woman” represents the Christian Church that Constantine had used as a stepping-stone to power, though not the Catholic section of it that had directly aided him to that end. In

concert with Licinius, he had issued *The Edict of Milan*, which granted religious freedom to all “Christian” parties (Catholic or otherwise), for, at that time, as Brother Thomas observes, “the son was too young to know its true mother.” Shortly after this, however, what is known as *The African Controversy* broke out, and Constantine was forced to take sides. The church was divided by contention between Caecilian and Donatus, bishops of Carthage. Each claimed that the other had apostatised during the period of Diocletian’s persecution of Christians to the extent of delivering up the Scriptures to be destroyed. Constantine adjudicated in the argument, and declared himself in favour of Caecilian. But his decision only aggravated the matter. The Donatists separated from the main body of the church (for to the title *ecclesia* it could no longer lay claim), and became anti-Catholic in their attitude.

“What has the Emperor to do with the church, what have Christians to do with kings, what have bishops to do at court?” became their battle cry. They refused to have any part or lot with the apostasy that had developed in the main body of the church. The Catholics, on the other hand, excommunicated the Donatists. Having the ear of Constantine, they induced him to legislate against their adversaries, thus bringing him into conflict with the section of the Movement that he had used to gain power. The Donatists were denied political recognition, and were excluded from the civil and religious communion of the State-church (Gibbon). Ecclesiastical history does not provide reliable information of the doctrinal stand adopted by the Donatists. In recording the division that took place, the authors of such histories (themselves Catholics), not only colour their writings with their prejudices against the schismatics (as they are called), but include all sections of opposition received by the official church under the general heading of *Donatists*. They do acknowledge that among the chief characteristics of such was an intense zeal for purity of living, and separation from worldly affiliations, though, at the same time, they decry them as being hypocritical and inconsistent. The Donatists as a group were astray from the Truth doctrinally, but the general term, as used by historians, undoubtedly includes those who adhered

to it in its purity, and who kept apart from all parties. They are Apocalyptically defined as "the remnant. . . which kept the commandments of God and had the testimony of Jesus Christ" (v. 17). "The woman," as symbolising a separated religious community, now relates to that section of the church that repudiated affiliations with Rome either politically or ecclesiastically.

"Where she had a place prepared of God"—The place prepared of God was found "in the wilderness." That suggests an area remote from the general habitation of man. Donatists dominated throughout North Africa, whereas the Catholics were entrenched in Europe. In North Africa the former found that they were largely immune from the persecution initiated by Constantine at the instigation of the official church.

"That they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days"—This implies that there would exist a religious group protesting against the iniquities of the main church, for a period of 1260 years. Dating this period from 312, when the separation between Donatists and Catholics took place, brings the witnessing period to 1572, for which dates see notes Rev. 11: 3.

(b) — War in Heaven — vv. 7-12

War in heaven ensues between Michael and the dragon, in consequence of which the dragon is ejected from heaven, to the rejoicing of heaven's inhabitants, but to the consternation of those on the earth.

VERSE 7

"And there was war in heaven"—This warfare took place in the same "heaven" as where the woman gave birth to her son (v. 1), and where the "great red dragon" was found (v. 3). By no stretch of imagination can this relate to the astronomical heavens above. Not only would it be inconceivable that a woman should give birth to a son there, but in addition, Scripture teaches that "God cannot look upon sin" (Hab. 1), and Christ taught his disciples to pray for the time when the will of the Father will be done "in earth as it is in heaven." If heaven above is the realm of antagonism, disorder and war, there is no point in Christ's request! The "heaven," there-

fore, relates to the political heaven in the days of Constantine.

"Michael and his angels"—Michael is a title of Christ (Dan. 12:1). In this verse, however, it relates not to Christ, but to those in the political heavens who identified themselves with him. Constantine and his followers, claimed to have fought in the name of Christ. But why does *The Apocalypse* use a title of Christ in relation to such a man? Because in his support of the church, and defeat of paganism, in the sweeping changes that he introduced consequent upon his victories, Constantine typed the future work of Christ who will overthrow the Dragon of Rev. 20:2-3. It is said that he had a picture elevated over his palace gate depicting him with a cross over his head, whilst under his feet, and the feet of his children, were depicted his enemies represented by a dragon cast into the abyss, the very symbol by which he is represented in *The Apocalypse*.

"Fought against the dragon"—The *dragon* is the symbol of the pagan military power of Rome. Against this, a pseudo-Christianity led by Constantine, and growing in political influence, matched its strength.

"And the dragon fought and his angels"—At the time, the Empire was divided between two conflicting ways of thought: paganism and pseudo-Christianity. The "dragon and his angels" relates to the military power of pagan Rome and its officials.

VERSE 9

"And the great dragon was cast out"—The *dragon* is identified with pagan Rome (cp. v.3 with Rev. 17:9, 18) before it became "Christianised." Paganism was overthrown politically by Constantine, and was ejected from the political heavens, or places of authority.

"The old serpent"—The serpent in the beginning gave expression to the mind of the flesh, and the *dragon* was the political manifestation of the same principle. As noted above (v. 3), the word *dragon* is derived from a root signifying *to see*, and thus identifying it with the lust of the eyes. It is now aligned with the serpent, who, in the beginning reasoned on the basis of fleshly observation, and so led Eve astray. Political expediency has ever been the motivating power of the dragon. In the Septuagint, the serpent

into which Moses' rod was changed is called a dragon (Exod. 7:9). The word is also rendered *leviathan* (Isa. 27:1; Ezek. 29:3; Jer. 51:34; Job 41:1), and is used as representing the flesh in political manifestation.

"Called the devil"—Literally, *sur-named* the devil. The word signifies *false accuser, calumniator*. In 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 2:10 the term is directly related to pagan Rome. Rome, both pagan and papal, has been a *diabolos*, distorting the word of God, and falsely accusing His servants of crimes they have never committed.

"Which deceiveth the whole world"—In the Greek, "world" is *oikoumene* and signifies "habitable." In Luke 2:1 it is used to define the Roman Empire. The *dragon* pagan power deceived the whole Roman Empire at that time.

"He was cast out in the earth"—The wars of Constantine in support of a pseudo-Christianity, resulted in paganism being ejected from positions of authority in the Empire. Constantine posed as the champion of Christianity, and when Licinius in the east repudiated his toleration of the Christians, and identified himself with the cause of paganism, war was declared between the two. The prize for which they mutually strove was sole control of the Roman Empire, the "ruling of all nations." The conflict was desperate, but decisive. The "dragon fought and prevailed not." Constantine, as the typical Michael (Dan. 12:1), secured a complete victory over the forces of paganism at the battle of Adrianople at Chrysopolis, and in A.D. 324 reigned over a united Empire. Paganism no longer held sway in the political heavens. Its influence was limited to the "earth" or the people.

J. C. Robertson in *History Of The Christian Church* describes the final defeat of Licinius in terms that remarkably illustrate the references in the chapter before us. He records:

"The joint triumph of Constantine and Licinius over Maxentius and Maximin (these representing the three divisions of the Empire at the time — HPM) was soon followed by differences of the Empire which were decided by the defeat of Licinius in the battles of Cibalis and Mardia. By a new partition of the empire all Europe, except Thrace, was assigned to Constantinople; but a revival of jealousies produced another war, which

ended in the ruin of Licinius. This prince, oppressed his Christian subjects, perhaps regarding their religion as a token of inclination to his rival's interest. He demolished churches, put some bishops to death, and it is said that he was on the point of giving orders for a general persecution when he was diverted by the progress of Constantine. *The emperors mustered their hosts under the standards of Christ and of heathenism respectively; each party relied on presages and visions which were supposed to come from heaven; and the triumph of Constantine was especially ascribed to the God of Christians.* From that time pagan emblems disappear from his coins, and he declares himself in his edicts to be an instrument of God for spreading the true faith."

"And his angels with him"—The support paganism once enjoyed from those in authority was lost by the defeat of Licinius at the Battle of Chrysopolis, and pagans were ejected from their positions of authority.

"Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ"—This was how Catholics viewed the success of Constantine and the church at the time. Eusebius, who was contemporary with Constantine, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (book 10 ch. 4 headed, *Panegyric On the Splendour Of Our Affairs*) describes the triumph of Constantine's rule in almost identical terms. He uses such expressions as the "celestial powers of sun, moon and stars" to describe the glory of the Emperor's administration, and represents the armies of Constantine as those of Jesus Christ triumphing over paganism throughout the earth. He writes:

"Wherefore, also, Constantine the protector of the good, combining his hatred of wickedness with the love of goodness, went forth with his son Crispus, the most benevolent Caesar, to extend a *saving arm to all those that were perishing*. Both, therefore, the father and son (Constantine and his son), having as it were God the universal King, and His Son our Saviour, as their leader and aid, drawing up the army on all sides against the enemies of God, bore away an easy victory; all things being prospered to them by God in the conflict according to their wishes."

He writes of Licinius being "justly hurled down the same precipice" with the

remnants of paganism, and of the restoration of "the Roman empire to its ancient state of one united body; extending their peaceful sway around the world, from the rising sun, to the opposite regions, to the north and the south, even to the last borders of the declining day. All fear, therefore, of those who had previously afflicted them, was now wholly removed. They celebrated splendid and festive days with joy and hilarity. All things were filled with light, and all who before were sunk in sorrow, beheld each other with smiling and cheerful faces. With choirs and hymns, in the cities and villages, at the same time they celebrated the praises of the *pious* emperor, and with him all his *divinely favoured* children. There was a perfect oblivion of past evils, and past wickedness was buried in forgetfulness. There was nothing but enjoyment of the present blessings, and expectation of those yet to come. Edicts were published and issued by the victorious emperor, full of clemency, and laws were enacted indicative of munificence and genuine religion."

With such terms Eusebius, Bishop of Ephesus at the time of Constantine, expressed himself on the changes wrought on the success of Constantine. They are illustrative of the very expressions used in *The Apocalypse*. He saw the triumph of the church as the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Indeed, Catholicism still claims that it comprises the Kingdom of God. In the days of Constantine, the church was elevated to high dignity; and, in fact, the Emperor's triumph foreshadowed that of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will finally destroy the "dragon" (modern paganism) and establish the Kingdom in truth.

"For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night"—The reference is to paganism (see I Pet. 5:8), which as the political "devil" or false accuser, had cast many Christians "into prison" (Rev. 2:10). This had been done "in the sight of God" (as the words should be rendered), but partial relief was received with the elevation of Constantine.

VERSE 11

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death"—It was the belief of

Catholics that Constantine, with his pseudo-Christian supporters, triumphed through the aid of Christ. Indeed, in the extract from Eusebius quoted above, a direct statement is made to that effect. There is also an element of truth in it, for apart from the endurance of faithful Christians in resisting the persecution of paganism, Christianity whether true or false, would have died out. Indirectly, therefore, the triumph of Constantine, can partly be attributed to the help received from those who had faithfully maintained their testimony for the Truth in a time of persecution. It was in answer to the prayer of such that some measure of relief was granted (Rev. 6:9). Their proclamation of the Truth had enlightened society to the point were it would no longer tolerate the old superstitions, even though subsequently the truth in its purity was not always maintained.

VERSE 12

"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them"—Those "dwelling" in the political heavens at the time were Catholic rulers newly appointed to power. They now had cause to rejoice at their political elevation.

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea"—"Earth" and "sea" are used symbolically of people, in contrast to the "heavens" which relate to rulers. Paganism was retained by many of the former, though it was officially repudiated as the State religion by the government. In some outlying parts of the empire, paganism still resisted the change taking place elsewhere, and persecution of Christians still persisted.

"The devil is come down unto you having great wrath"—Until the final and complete defeat of paganism in every part of the empire, it bitterly resisted the encroachments of Catholicism, and with the anger of despair persecuted those Christians where it had the power to do so. The sufferings this caused, however, were but the birth pangs of the impending Catholic system.

"Because he knoweth that he hath but a short time"—The rapid growth of Christianity, and the skill and vigour by which Constantine furthered his plans of conquest, made it apparent to any discriminating mind that paganism was a doomed cause, and it was but a matter of time before a pseudo-Christianity would

triumph. The success of Constantine against Maxentius in 312 made this obvious; and it was only twelve years later when the first (so-called) Christian Emperor was acknowledged as sole monarch of the Roman Empire, and paganism had received its final defeat within its borders.

(c) — Persecution Of The Woman And Her Seed — vv. 13-17

Cast out of heaven into the "earth," the dragon persecutes the woman and other of her children (apart from the man-child) to whom she had given birth. It seeks to drown both woman and children in a flood of water. But the "earth" opens its mouth and absorbs the water of the flood so rescuing those who otherwise would have been overcome by it. This section of the prophecy symbolises the persecution of Protestants and the Ecclesia by both pagans and pseudo-christians.

VERSE 13

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child"—Once Constantine came to power, or, in the symbology of this chapter, was elevated into the political "heavens," he set his face against all but the official "Catholic" church. The protesting section of the church found it necessary to "flee into the wilderness" (v. 6), or to seek refuge in the extremities of the Empire. There she was persecuted by "the dragon," the symbol of the civil or military power of Rome. At first this was pagan in character, but as the influence of Constantine spread, it became "christian." Whether pagan or pseudo-Christian, it was noted for its opposition to, and persecution of, the "woman" (Protestantism) and her "children" that keep the commandments of Christ" (the Ecclesia).

VERSE 14

"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle"—The eagle was the symbol of the Roman Empire (Deut. 28:49), and the wings represent the extremities of its power. To those parts fled "the woman." As noted above, in the symbolism of this chapter, she represents that section of the Christian community which refused to conform to the general attitude of the Catholic

church in supporting Constantine. Instead, it opposed the official "Christian" policy and teaching. Among the remnant of her seed were those who maintained the truth in its purity (v. 17). They obtained no relief from persecution through the elevation of Constantine, but, instead, were bitterly opposed by the State-supported church. Pressure was brought upon both the "woman" and the "remnant of her seed" by pagans and papists alike. The "wilderness" wanderings of the woman (or Protestantism) are illustrated by the experiences of the Donatists, Novatians, Paulicians, Waldenses, Albigenses and others, who, throughout the ages, refused to conform to the demands of pagans or Catholics alike. In the era of Constantine, they were found mainly in the outlying districts of the Empire, and particularly throughout the province of North Africa.

"That she might fly into the wilderness, into her place"—Cp. v. 6. The Protestants escaped into "the wilderness" or remote sections of the Empire, seeking immunity from persecution. The "wilderness" is to be treated symbolically (cp. Rev. 17:3). The Christian minority which opposed the state church was not only excommunicated by it, but also denied recognition of any kind. Ecclesiastically and politically, the Protestants were "in the wilderness," a place assigned them of God.

"Where she is nourished for a time, and times, and a half a time"—A "time" is a Jewish year of 360 days, so that three and a half times represents 1260 days or years. Dated from A.D. 312 when Constantine came to power in Rome and the persecution of Protestants commenced, it continued until 1572, as does the period mentioned in Rev. 11:3. At that time, the comparative immunity of the "woman" and her "children" from persecution, as required by this verse, came to an end, and was followed by a period of extreme opposition and violent persecution which terminated in her "death" as one of the two witnesses.

"From the face of the serpent"—This implies a significant change in the attitude of the dragon-serpent power. In v. 12, it is said to know that "its time is short," and yet, in the verse before us, it is represented as persecuting the woman for a considerable period of time. Both statements are true. The "dragon" or serpent represents the civil, or military,

power of the Roman Empire. Originally this was pagan in character. The sweeping victories of Constantine, and the growing influence of so-called Christianity, however, made it obvious that its pagan phase had but a short time to continue. Many of the institutions, festivals and doctrines of paganism were superimposed upon the so-called Christian church in order to attract to its communion those who had previously opposed it. The church became a state-sponsored, paganised form of Christianity, bitterly opposing those who refused to conform to its apostasy, and who openly proclaimed its errors. Thus the character of the Empire underwent a change. A paganised Christianity had supplanted the original paganism, so that now the symbols of "serpent" and "dragon" relate to the so-called "Christianised" Empire. Finally, when Constantine transferred his civil and military headquarters from Rome to Constantinople (previously the very centre of pagan resistance), the "dragon" became identified with the civil and military power of a so-called Christianised Empire. It was from the face of this pseudo-Christian serpent-dragon that the "woman" (the original Protestants) fled. Religious tyranny had commenced its war to the death with those who opposed it (Rev. 11:4-6).

VERSE 15

"And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman"—The serpent tried to drown the woman. "Water as a flood" is used of an invading army (Isa. 8:7; Jer. 46:7-8). The serpent, being the calumniator (devil), and adversary (satan) of the Truth was now manifested as the paganised-Christian state church. It used its growing influence with Constantine to move him against "the woman," or those whom it decried as heretical, and whom it aimed to destroy by force. Thus a so-called "Christian" church used the power of the State to crush those, whose only crime was their desire to follow Christ according to their conscience.

"That he might cause her to be carried away of the flood"—The purpose of the persecution was to destroy all opposition to its power.

VERSE 16

"And the earth helped the woman"—

In Bible symbology, "earth" represents the political organisation of the people, whilst "heaven" relates to the ruling powers. Within the democratic strata of society there have always been found those who are prepared to fight for liberty of speech and belief even though they may not personally subscribe to the doctrines proclaimed by those whom they defend. This was so when "the woman," or persecuted minority found herself opposed by the forces of a so-called Christian state. The Circumcellions of North Africa, a movement from the lower strata of society, rose up in defence of the right of such as the Donatists to worship according to their conscience.

"And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth"—The Circumcellions took up the sword in defence of political and religious liberty, and so effectively opposed the armies of Rome, as to cause their withdrawal. As "the earth" they are represented as absorbing the flood of water, and so protecting the woman. The "earth" and "the woman," therefore, represent "the two witnesses" of Revelation 11.

VERSE 17

"And the dragon was wrath with the woman"—The dragon is the symbol of the civil or military power of the Roman Empire. Before Constantine came to power, the "dragon" was pagan in character; but afterwards it was changed to a pseudo-Christian or Catholic power. Though Constantine fought for personal power and prestige, he camouflaged his ambitions by claiming that he strove for religious liberty. Nevertheless at the instigation of the official church, he vigorously opposed those who were decried as "heretics," some of whom held the Truth. Whether the "dragon" was pagan or papal in concept it is Apocalyptically characterised as showing unremitting hostility to "the woman" and her seed; those who opposed Catholicism whether in error or in truth. The chapter, therefore, depicts "the dragon" in two aspects: as pagan and as pseudo-Christian. The woman, likewise, is shown both in power (v. 1), and in persecution (v. 15). It was when she was in power that she brought forth the man-child who ruled all nations. That caused "division" in the church, and resulted in "the woman" becoming the persecuted party.

The final stand of paganism against a state-sponsored Christianity, was in the Middle East. This demonstrated to Constantine the strategic value of this area as a centre for world government. Therefore, having established his authority in Rome, with the whole Empire united under his control, he sought for a better strategically situated centre for the civil and military administration of the Empire, and found it on the Bosphorus. Here he built a new capital which he called Constantinople. This became the military headquarters of the Empire, whilst Rome remained the centre of religious influence. Constantinople thus became the site of "the mouth of the dragon" (Rev. 16:13), or military headquarters of the Empire. Meanwhile, a Christianised "dragon" continued to persecute "the woman," or that section of the church that refuse to conform.

"And went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the

commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ"—The "remnant of the woman's seed" obviously relates to those who held the Truth in its purity. The prophecy required what history provides: an apostate church supported by the Christianised military power of the Empire (the dragon), opposing the "woman" (or religious opposition to tyranny) and her seed (those who hold the Truth in its purity), who, in turn, were helped by the "earth" (or political opposition to tyranny). A war to the death ensued, in which a temporary triumph was won by the Apostasy (Rev. 11:7), although final victory will be with the Remnant. Brother Thomas renders *remnant* in the plural, as *remnants*, expressing the many different communities down the ages which have stood for the Truth until overwhelmed by opposition or apostasy. Today "the remnant" comprises the Christadelphians.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

UPRISE OF THE BEASTS OF THE SEA AND OF THE LAND

In this chapter, John reports on the uprising of two beasts. The first he sees arises from out of the sea; the second arises from out of the earth. The first is likened to various beasts and has seven heads and ten horns; the second has two horns, and whilst having the appearance of a lamb, it speaks and acts like a dragon. The first beast suffers a serious wound, but recovers therefrom to manifest great power with the help of the dragon; the second beast has dominion co-etaneous with that of the first, and by its influence induces the world to do homage to the first beast. The first beast continues for forty and two months exercising great power and blaspheming God and His people; the second beast erects an image to the first beast, and compels all to give homage to it on threat of death. As a whole the vision symbolises the power and influence enjoyed by Roman Catholicism in its political manifestations, and depicts the brutal persecution by which it endeavoured to bend the minds of men to its doctrines and practises.

(d) — Development of the Beast of the Sea — vv. 1-10

This vision is closely connected with

that of Ch. 12, which is introductory to what is now revealed. John, standing upon the sand of the sea, observes a beast

arise therefrom, in appearance like the four beasts seen by Daniel in similar circumstances (Dan. 7:1-3). This beast has seven heads and ten horns, one of which receives a deadly wound, though, after a time, the deadly wound is healed. It then increases in power and blasphemy and becomes notorious for the persecution of saints. But in spite of its widespread influence and power, a message is received from the Lord proclaiming that it is destined for capture and destruction.

VERSE 1

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea”—Sea is symbolic of nations (Isa. 57:20). John’s experience was similar to that of Daniel, who likewise saw four beasts arise out of the same sea that were symbolic of the nations (Dan. 7:1-3). John, as representative of the saints watching the signs of the times, looked out upon the restless Mediterranean, doubtless whipped into a storm by tempest-winds that had previously been restrained (Rev. 7:1). The sounding of the trumpets (Rev. 8), had summoned

the barbarian nations to invade the Empire. Establishing themselves therein as separate nationalities, they laid the foundation of divided Europe.

“And saw a beast rise up out of the sea”—This was the third of the seven developments that John saw (see Introduction p. 20). A “beast” is symbolic of a power. See Prov. 28:15; Dan. 7:17. The word here used is *therion* and signifies *wild beast* in contrast to *zoon*, “living creature,” translated “beast” in Rev. 4:7. *Therion* stresses the bestial qualities of the animal; *zoon*, the life principle. *Therion* is never used in the LXX for sacrificial animals. John saw a wild beast arise out of the sea, which is emblematic of the nations (Isa. 57:20; Rev. 17:15).

“Having seven heads”—Representing forms of government. See note Rev. 12:13; 17:9-10.

“And ten horns”—These ten horns answer to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image (Dan. 2), or the ten horns of the wild beast seen by Daniel (Dan. 7:7), and represent individual nations



Barbarian tribes invade the Empire. See Notes Rev. 8:7-12.

(see Rev. 17:12; Jer. 48:25; Dan. 7:24). The once united Roman Empire became divided into ten parts by the barbarians who penetrated its borders and settled within its dominions. Brother Thomas lists the ten as follows: the Huns, Vandals, Visigoths, Burgundians, Gepidae, Lombards, Franks, Suevi, Alans, Babarians. However, in Bible numerics, ten symbolises completeness, and in that sense here represents the complete division of the Roman Empire.

“And upon his horns ten crowns”—The word *diademata* signifies diadems, the crowns of authority and self-government, implying independent authority. In Rev. 12:3, the crowns are placed on the heads of the Dragon, indicating that the prophecy was fulfilled before the nationalities represented by the horns obtained individual independence. Crowns on the horns instead of the heads indicate that at the time of the prophecy, the Empire had been divided into ten independent nations.

“And upon his heads the name of blasphemy”—The “heads” of the wild beast relate to the central government established in Rome. At this stage, it is important to note the difference between the “beast” of this chapter, and the “dragon” of chapter 12. Both are described as having “seven heads and ten horns,” but though reference continues to be made to the “dragon,” it is no longer described in that way. The reason for this is that historically, the “dragon” was shorn of the power represented by these symbols, whilst another beast in the West arose to manifest it. When Constantine established Constantinople as his capital, the headquarters, or “mouth of the dragon” (Rev. 16:13), was set up there. However, though he ruled as sole Emperor over a united Empire, subsequently it became divided into two, with its military headquarters in Constantinople, and its religious centre in Rome. As the barbarians established their individual nationalities within the borders of the Empire, the military power of Constantinople waned: the “dragon” lost its power over the “horns,” with the result that another, papal “wild beast,” began to rise in the West. Upon that beast was found “names of blasphemy.” The Greek term (*onomata*) is in the plural, and is without any definite article. “Names of blasphemy” relate to the various doctrines, practises and titles of

Rome. As a contrast, the Redeemed have “the Father’s name” inscribed in their forehead (Rev. 14:1). Notice how the beast bearing the “names of blasphemy” blaspheme the name of Yahweh (vv. 6, 14). Blasphemy is claiming to be what one is not (Rev. 2:9): this the Pope does (2 Thess. 2:4).

VERSE 2

“And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion”—Daniel also saw a leopard, bear, and lion which contributed to the development of the “fourth beast” which he left unnamed (Dan. 7:4-7). He described how that each beast in turn ate up the one before it, so that the fourth beast comprised a combination of all the previous beasts. The unnamed beast of *The Apocalypse* is similar. Its fulfilment is seen in the papacy. Rome combined the rapacity and ferocity of all nations that were before it. The leopard is noted for speed in hunting the prey, and blood-thirstiness and cruelty in killing it; the bear is known for its strength particularly its strong feet and claws; the mouth of the lion speaks of ferocity and power, for with it the beast not only roars its defiance and threats, but also seizes and holds its prey. The “names of blasphemy” upon the heads reveals that it is religious in character. Though Rome had lost its military power, it dominated the West through its religion. The individual nationalities that arose within the borders of the Empire were all converted to “Christianity,” and gave support to the bishop of Rome, who assumed the status of pope. Thus the one time united Empire became divided into a military and a religious power: the former with headquarters in Constantinople, and the latter with headquarters in Rome.

“And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and his great authority”—The development of the religious “Empire” of the papacy received full support of the dragon with its headquarters in Constantinople. The armies of the Empire established there were used to enforce the influence and status of the form of government still retained in Rome which was rapidly becoming more papal in character. “Power” is *dunamin* and signifies the ability to perform things, as distinct from the authority to do so (see vv. 4,5,7,12,14,15). “Seat” is *throne*,

and symbolises government or rule. Both the Emperor and the church of Rome received support from the Emperor in Constantinople. "Authority" is *exousia* and signifies "permission," "authority," or status. This word is rendered "power" in vv. 4.5.7.12. In vv. 14.15. "power" is *didomi*, "to give," so that the RV renders: *it was given (him)*.

As the Emperor in Rome declined in military power, he received support from his counterpart in Constantinople, so as to maintain his "power, seat and authority," as well as that of the church.

VERSE 3

"**And I saw one of his heads**"—This is not a new vision, and therefore, the Greek text excludes *I saw*. (See introduction p. 20). There were seven heads, and they represented the different forms of government under which Rome had been ruled (Rev. 17:10). The Roman historians Livy and Tacitus enumerated five different systems of government from the building of the city as follows: Regal, Consular, Dictatorial, Decemviral and Tributinal. Since that time, there was set up in B.C. 31 the Imperial system of rule, and from 476 when the Goths invaded Italy, there was established the Gothic form of government.

"**As it were**"—John saw that one of the heads had the *appearance* of being mortally wounded, whereas actually it recovered.

"**Wounded to death**"—The head was the Imperial sixth head of the beast. It was "wounded to death" by the Goths who conquered Italy, and superimposed their form of Government in Rome. Their success seemed to bring to an end the previous form of government, but, in fact, after about sixty years of rule, the Goths were subdued, and the sixth head was revived in a new form.

At this time, the Empire was divided into two parts, with emperors reigning in Constantinople and Rome. After the time of Theodosius the Great of Constantinople (346-395), Ravenna, and not Rome, was made the capital of the West. This gave opportunity to the Bishop of Rome to exercise certain secular powers which developed into the ecclesiasticism of later times. The empire of the West, as it previously existed, was brought to an end in 476 by the triumph of Odoacer, king of the Heruli. He had demanded land within the empire where

his Heruli soldiers might settle. On being refused he proceeded to take it by force. He defeated and deposed the emperor Romulus Augustulus, and the Imperial regalia was sent to the emperor at Constantinople, who had no alternative but to instal Odoacer as governor of Italy. It is a curious coincidence of history that the last emperor of the west, should bear the name of Rome's founder: Romulus.

Thus the sixth head was "wounded unto death." Odoacer enjoyed his power in Rome for only fourteen years, at the end of which time, in 493, he was overthrown by Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths (East Goths). Gothic rule was established in Italy, forming the seventh head of the beast, and continued for about sixty years. Thus the sixth head *appeared* to have received a mortal wound, and to have been replaced permanently by the seventh head, or Gothic rule.

The Gothic success was endorsed by the Emperor in Constantinople, who returned to him the regalia which Odoacer had sent to the capital. Theodoric, therefore, had all the external forms of a Roman emperor. Moreover, when installed as ruler of Italy he retained the Roman laws and administration, and by diplomacy brought the Franks, Burgundians, and Visigoths (west Goths) under his influence. Thus Gothic rule can well be described as a "head of the beast" or Roman Empire. Fletcher in *The Making of Western Europe* claims: "In his later years the Ostrogothic king appears almost as an Emperor of the West."

The authors of *The Apocalypse and History* comment upon the continuation of the Roman character of rule under Theodoric and the Goths in the following terms:

"These facts show the remarkable dovetailing of Apocalyptic predictions with history. The fourth trumpet blast required that the Imperial line in Italy should be removed from the scene, because the sun was to be obscured in that section of the Empire. Yet the interpretation of the horned beast symbol necessitated that the sixth head, the Imperial, should be followed for a short space by a seventh. Both these requirements are met in the events we have reviewed in the establishment of a kingly government, Gothic by race but Roman in spirit and profession."

"And his deadly wound was healed"—The RV renders this *death stroke*. "Wound" is from *plege*, "stroke," whereas "deadly" is from *sphazo*, "slain." The Greek is in the past tense, *esphagmenen*, "having been slain" i.e. by a stroke. Milligan, in *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* states that the statement is the counterpart of Rev. 5:6 related to the Lamb. In both cases there had been actual death, and in both cases revival: one the mocking counterpart of the one (cp. Rev. 13:8).

Though the Goths were "Christian" by profession, they were opposed to the Catholics on doctrinal grounds. They embraced the teaching of Arius who rejected the doctrine of the Trinity without endorsing the true principles of God Manifestation as it is revealed in the Lord. Therefore, their domination of Italy and Rome was disastrous to the official church.

The opposition of the Goths to the Church, however, proved to be their undoing. Stifled by Gothic rule, the bishop of Rome appealed to the military authority of Constantinople for assistance, and under Justinian, and through the military skill of his general Belisarius, the Goths were overthrown, and the sixth (Imperial) head was revived in a new form, religious in character. This revived sixth head, became the eighth head of the beast (Rev. 17:11), or the "beast of the earth" of this chapter (vv. 11-12).

This was brought about mainly through the instrumentality of Justinian, Emperor of Constantinople. The chronology of the period is as follows:

A.D. 526: Theodoric died, and Athalaric, his grandson, a boy of ten years, succeeded him with the support of his mother, Amalasantha.

A.D. 534: Athalaric died. A joint rule established between Amalasantha and Theodatus, her cousin. The following year Amalasantha was strangled by order of Theodatus. Theodatus was assassinated by Vitiges, who assumes the position of Emperor.

A.D. 535: Italy invaded by Belisarius, military leader of Justinian, Emperor of Constantinople, in an attempt on the part of the Eastern Empire, to reassert control over Rome and Italy.

A.D. 546: Insufficient support of Belisarius by Justinian permitted the Gothic leader Totila to successfully attack Rome, for the church was hostile to the Goths, and intrigued with Justinian

against them. The walls were broken down, and citizens fled, and for forty days Rome was like a dead city.

A.D. 552: Narses, sent from Constantinople to lead the army, defeated Totila who was killed in battle. Teias succeeded Totila: but at the battle of Draco, the following year, Teias was slain.

A.D. 544: The rule of Constantinople now established in Italy. By decree of Justinian, Rome was ruled by the Emperor's lieutenant, who was resident in Ravenna. Rome was degraded to a city of the second rank. This relieved the Papal throne from the blighting effect of being subject to sovereign temporal power. The intervention of Constantinople destroyed the Gothic head and helped to restore the sixth Imperial head in a new religious form, so that "its deadly wound was healed."

"All the world wondered after the beast"—The RV renders "world" as *the earth*, i.e. the Roman earth, or empire. "Wondered" is from *thaumazo*, "to wonder with admiration," and being joined with "after," denotes to admire and follow after. The revived sixth head is the papal Imperial head, the development and success of which drew to her millions of admirers.

VERSE 4

"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast"—The correct reading is the Greek *hoti*, "because he gave." "Power is *exousian*, "freedom of action, right to act." The dragon delegated such authority to the beast. The rise of the papacy in the West, is directly traceable to the assistance rendered by the Emperors of Constantinople. This was particularly the case with Justinian who supported Catholic pretensions, and issued a decree proclaiming the Bishop of Rome to be "universal bishop" of the church. Papal prestige rose as men witnessed its growing influence and strength, and saw it surviving the troubles of the times.

"And they worshipped the beast"—The "beast" denotes the Roman Empire, but as that had come to an end in 476 when the Goths seized power in Italy, what form did it now take? A new power arose known to history as the "Holy" (or Papal) Roman Empire. By religious influence, it sought to unite nations in a common worship. This ultimately brought Christendom into existence.

"Saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"—This is a parody on similar ascriptions of praise to God suggesting that divine honours were paid to the beast. See Ps. 113:5; Jer. 49:19; Isa. 40:18,25; Mic. 7:18, and compare with Rev. 18:18. The Pope claimed to be God's representative on earth. Cp. 2 Thess. 2:4.

VERSE 5

"And there was given unto him a mouth"—Rome became "the mouth of the beast" (Rev. 16:13) from whence emanated papal decrees supported by the military power of Constantinople.

"Speaking great things and blasphemies"—The expressions of this verse are derived from Daniel's prophecy of the papacy (Dan. 7:20, 25).

"And power was given unto him"—The Greek word *exousia* denotes "delegated authority." Brother Thomas renders it as *licence to practise*.

"To continue"—The margin renders this as *to make war*. The war was religious in character, and sought the submission of the "two witnesses," religious and political opposition to tyranny. The warfare is symbolised in Rev. 11:4-6, and is predicted in Dan. 10:1; for where we read: "the time appointed was long," the Hebrew can also signify *the warfare was long* (see margin).

"Forty and two months"—This period of 1260 is thus dated from the time that Justinian of Constantinople officially decreed in support of the Papacy. That was in the years 529-533, so that the period terminates in 1789-1793 with the French Revolution. This event, which changed the face of Europe, and established the foundations of modern Europe greatly reduced Papal power, and brought political communism into force (see Rev. 11:12-13). Other dates that are significantly bridged by the same epoch of time are as follows.

In 539 Ravenna, the seat of Government in Italy at the time, was reconquered by Justinian's forces, and 1260 years later, in 1799, Napoleon commenced his wars of conquest particularly against the Papal powers of Europe.

In 549-554 Justinian issued his *Pragmatic Sanction* giving the Pope control of Municipal and Provincial Governments, and adding greatly to Papal power and prestige. In 1809, Napoleon annexed the Papal States, and the Holy Roman

Empire was terminated.

In 590 Gregory I was appointed Pope, and instituted a new era of Papal power and glory; but in 1850 Pope Pius IX was driven into exile.

In 600 Gregory's Popedom was at its zenith; but in 1860, two-thirds of the Papal States were lost to Italy.

In 608-610 Emperor Phocas of Constantinople confirmed the decree of Justinian by proclaiming that the "Pope was head of all churches," but in 1868-70, the temporal power of the Papacy was brought to an end, and Rome became the capital of Italy.

VERSE 6

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God"—Rome has been noted for its blasphemy, particularly in its claims and pretensions. Here are a couple of examples: The Roman Council of 877 declared that "Christ himself willed that the Pope be the head of us all in his stead upon earth." The *Canon Law* of the 17th century stated: "It is certain that the supreme Pontiff was called God by the pious prince Constantine. It is manifest that Deity cannot be judged by men."

"To blaspheme His Name"—The Roman Catholic Church is founded upon the doctrine of the Trinity, which is blasphemy. Yahweh is pleased to be surnamed the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Heb. 11:16), the one God of the Hebrews. The great church controversy of the fifth century was Trinitarianism versus Arianism — a teaching that denied the doctrine of a triune God, but also, unfortunately, that of God manifestation. With the military support of Constantinople, the controversy was resolved in favour of Trinitarianism.

"And His tabernacle"—Yahweh's dwelling place: the true followers of the Lord (2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:20-22).

"And them that dwell in heaven"—There are "heavenlies in Christ" (Eph. 1:3; 2:6; Col. 3:1) which are opposed to the heavenlies of this age (Eph. 3:10; 6:12 mg.). These "heavenlies," it should be noted, are located on earth!

VERSE 7

"And it was given unto him"—The power he received from "the dragon" granted this ability (cp. v.4). Even before the days of Justinian, when the arms of Constantinople were extended to give

power to the papacy, it received support to accomplish what this verse predicts. In 445, Valentinian 111 and Theodosius 11 unitedly issued an edict making the bishop of Rome "director of Universal Christendom." It referred to the "presumptuousness of resisting the Holy See." In 450, the Council of Chalcedon referred to "The most blessed Pope of Rome who is head of all churches." According to Gibbon, Justinian (527-565) "labored to establish with fire and sword the unity of the Catholic faith." In March 533, he issued his edict recognising the Pope as supreme in the churches, adding: "We hasten to increase the honour and authority of your throne." In 606, the edict of Phocas proclaimed that the Pope was head of all churches.

"To make war with the saints"—The papacy was given power to persecute those who held to the truth, or who opposed its pretensions. See Dan. 7:21; 10:1 (mg), Rev. 11:7, and the slaying of the Two Witnesses.

"And to overcome them"—The word is *nilao*, to "vanquish, prevail." *The Apocalypse* repeats the prophecy of Dan. 7:25. Temporary victory was with the Papacy.

"And power was given unto him"—The word is *exousia*, "delegated authority."

"Over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations"—This is a phrase that occurs seven times in *The Apocalypse*, and which is drawn from Daniel's prophecy (cp. Dan. 4:1; 6:25). It is equivalent to the nations of the habitable. In the days of the Lord that was limited to the Roman Empire (Luke 2:1); later it became more extensive as the borders of civilisation were pushed further back. In Rev. 5:9-10, the Redeemed are described as being "out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation." In Rev. 11:9, the "two witnesses" are said to be *viewed* by every kindred and tongue etc. In the verse before us, the Papacy exercises power over such. In Rev. 17:15 they will oppose Christ's rule. In Rev. 1:7 they will be caused to mourn at his coming. In Rev. 14:6 they will be issued an ultimatum. In Rev. 10:11, they ultimately will be educated and ruled by the saints. Gather together the seven times the reference is used, and there is presented an outline of the various attitudes adopted by the masses of humanity throughout the ages. In the verse before

us, the RV has: "Authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation," implying the various divisions of humanity. See note Rev. 5:9.

VERSE 8

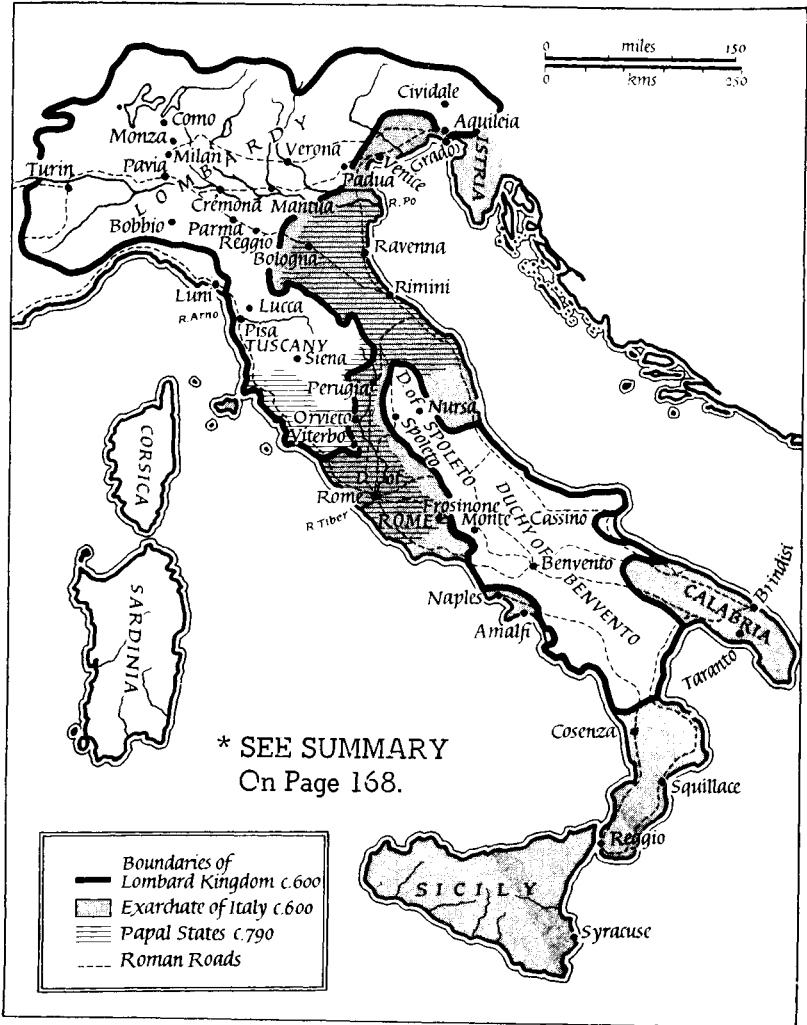
"And all them that dwell on the earth shall worship him"—Cp. v. 3.

"Whose names are not written in the book of life"—There was no toleration of the Papacy by Christ and his true followers. Those deluded by the pretensions of Rome are described simply as those not found "written in the book of life." See note Rev. 3:5; 20:12.

"Of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world"—The Greek construction of the phrase agrees with the way in which it has been rendered in the AV and RV which has: "The lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world." The book of life has been in existence since the beginning of creation. See Exod. 32:32; Dan. 12:1-2; Matt. 25:34; Rev. 17:8. The Lamb, also, was typically slain at the foundation of the world when coats of skins were provided Adam and Eve to hide their nakedness. This was the "foundation of the world," or the altered system of things that came into existence following transgression. The noun is *kataboles*, and signifies that which is "cast down." The verb is compounded of *kata* "down," and *ballo* "to hurl or cast." It occurs in 2 Cor. 4:9, Rev. 12:10. The divine order was established in the beginning when man walked in fellowship with God. Sin brought disharmony in Eden and disrupted the prevailing order or *kosmos*. This required a new foundation upon which to build based upon sacrifice, of which the typical lamb in Eden was an important element. In the verse before us *kataboles* is preceded by *apo*, "from," denoting that which develops out of that with which it is associated. The phrase thus teaches, that the lamb slain developed out of the throwing down of the foundation referred to. The use of *katabole* should be compared with the use of *themelios*, also rendered "foundation," but which denotes "belonging to a foundation." Its use is found in Luke 6:48-49; 14:29 etc.

VERSE 9

"If any man have an ear, let him hear"—By hearkening to the voice of the spirit in the preceding verses, one would be induced to act by standing aside from



Rome and its harlot-daughters. This is an appeal to members of Ecclesias to maintain their separateness from the religious systems surrounding them. See Rev. 3:22.

“He that leadeth into captivity”—The dragon and the beast.

“Shall go into captivity”—At the hands of Christ (Rev. 20:2).

“He that killeth with the sword”—As the Papacy has done (v. 7).

“Shall be killed with the sword”—At the hands of the Lord (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:20-21).

“Here is the patience and faith of the saints”—The exhortation combines two important virtues. Patience is the enduring of trial without failing under the test. This requires faith; for a “confident anticipation of things hoped for” (Heb. 11:1), will provide the incentive to victory over the world (1 John 5:4). See notes on

Rev. 1:9. The word signifies *an abiding under*. It occurs seven times in *The Apocalypse*: Rev. 1:9; 2:2,3,19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12.

Summary

The great political theme of *The Apocalypse* is that of Rome versus Zion. Rome is revealed politically (the Empire), ecclesiastically (the Papacy), and combined (the Holy Roman Empire). *The Apocalypse* predicted the decline of the Empire and the uprise of the Papacy. The latter is symbolised as the *Beast of the Sea*. After many vicissitudes, Rome was reduced, politically, to a second-rate city in the empire. But this enhanced the position of its bishop or pope. Freed of political encumbrances, he extended his ecclesiastical authority throughout Italy and the West. The decree of Justinian, after he had overthrown the Gothic monarchy, gave further power and legal status to the papacy.

The "beast of the sea" is represented as gaining power through the help of the "dragon." History fulfils the prophecy inasmuch as the Papacy gained its prestige and power through the help of the Emperors of Constantinople. At that time, Rome and Constantinople represented the religious and military headquarters of the Roman Empire. The armed might of Constantinople was constantly extended in support of the Bishop of Rome. Even when the anti-papal Goths took control for approximately sixty years, and for a time the Imperial head of the beast received a deadly wound, it was Justinian of Constantinople that came to the aid of the church, and restored its power.

However, the military power of Constantinople gradually declined, as the Empire in the east came under pressure from the Saracens and then the Ottomans, and the Pope had to look elsewhere for support. In addition, the church had become hopelessly divided, and Rome, as the headquarters of Roman Catholicism, was at variance with Constantinople as the headquarters of Greek Catholicism. But where could the Pope look for help? The Empire in the West was at an end, and a new power was arising: that of the Franks under Pepin followed by his son Charlemagne. Meanwhile, in A.D. 752, the Lombards, hostile to the Pope, had occupied much of Italy. On the other hand, Pepin and

Charlemagne supported the Papacy. The Pope turned to the developing Empire of the Franks for assistance, and obtained every encouragement and help. The arms of Charlemagne were used successfully against the Lombards, and in the year 799 an alliance was completed between the Pope and the Emperor of the Franks. This laid the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire, the two-horned *Beast Of The Earth* of the chapter before us. The alliance granted temporal power to the Papacy, in that certain "states of the church," were ceded to the Pope. He was elevated into a pontifical potentate exercising civil jurisdiction. Rome itself was raised from her previous humiliation to a city of imperial sovereignty. Gibbon testifies that it was "revered by the Latins as the Metropolis of the world, and the throne of the Pope and Emperor who from the Eternal City derived their title, their honours, and the right or exercise of temporal dominion."

Charlemagne and his successors provided the military power to sustain the authority of the Papacy. In doing so they took the place of the Emperor of Constantinople, who no longer exercised sufficient military power to do so. This new European Empire, known as the Holy Roman Empire, comprised the two-horned Beast of the Earth, in that it was a dual power representing military and religious influence. The Empire of the Franks developed into the Germanic Federation of Nations which, for centuries, provided the military power necessary, whilst the Pope represented ecclesiastical authority. The Holy Roman Empire lasted a Millenium, from the year 800 until it was overthrown by Napoleon in 1806. It thus provides a contrast to the "thousand year reign" of Christ predicted in Rev. 20.

(e) — The Development of the Beast of the Earth and its Image — vv. 11-18.

John observes another beast arise out of the earth having two horns like a lamb, but which speaks as a dragon. It performs great wonders, causing fire to come down from heaven upon the earth, and deceiving men by the power it manifests. It makes an Image of the Beast of the Sea and causes it to live. Moreover, through its military power it compels men to hearken to the voice of the Image, and to submit to the mark he orders them to place on their right hands or in their foreheads. In

addition to the military and ecclesiastical powers thus manifested, it exercises considerable economic restrictions, limiting buying and selling to those who have the mark, or name of the beast, or the number of his name given as Six hundred threescore and six. In many regards, this Beast of the Earth resembles the Beast of the Sea.

VERSE 11

"I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth"—This new power developed into the Holy Roman Empire. It was not limited to territory around the Mediterranean as was the Beast of the Sea (v. 1), but included Central Europe. It was brought into being by the Pope having to seek new allies. A division had occurred in the so-called Christian church, and east and west were divided into Greek and Roman Catholic religions, with headquarters respectively in Constantinople and Rome. In consequence, the Pope could no longer rely upon the military support of the Emperor of the east, and Italy itself lacked adequate defence. The Lombards took advantage of this and laid claim to the Roman dukedom and to Rome itself. "The papacy was now in danger of subjection to the Lombard kingdom and when a Lombard army besieged Rome. Pope Stephen 11, after turning in vain to the Byzantine emperor for help crossed the Alps to seek Pepin's assistance." (*The Hamlyn History Of The World*). On the death of Pepin, the Lombards again invaded Italy and threatened Rome. Deserted of its "dragon" ally in the east (v. 4), the Pope (Pope Hadrian — in 773) appealed to Charlemagne, son of Pepin, who again attacked and defeated the Lombards (774). In 787, Rome formally turned from Constantinople, and became allied to the growing power of Charlemagne. "Charlemagne fought a long series of wars during his reign and made many conquests. He was prompted by both political considerations and personal ambition, but his wars had also a religious character. He sincerely wished to protect and extend Christendom" (*Hamlyn History Of The World*). The Pope suitably responded to this ideal. On Christmas Day, 799, Pope Leo 111 crowned Charlemagne as Augustus and Emperor, and with the union now established between the Pope and Emperor, the Holy Roman Empire had

come into existence. "The pope rewarded him by placing a golden crown on his head and saluting him as 'Carolus Augustus, Emperor of the Romans.' The crowd shouted, 'God bless and save Carolus Augustus, crowned of God, the great and peace-bringing Emperor of the Romans'." (*Hamlyn History*). This revived "Holy" Roman Empire is represented in *The Apocalypse* as arising "out of the earth" because Charlemagne extended his conquests to include the Germanic nations of Central and Northern Europe.

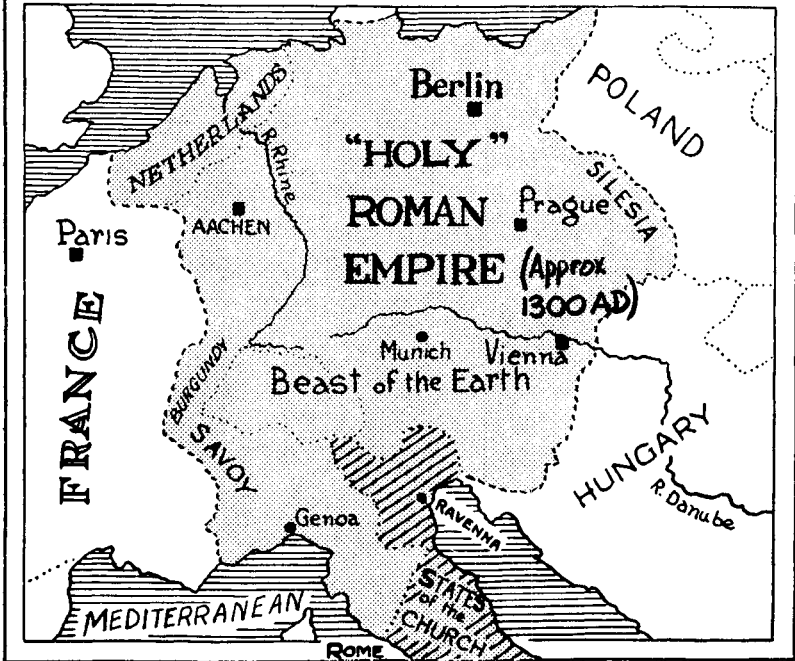
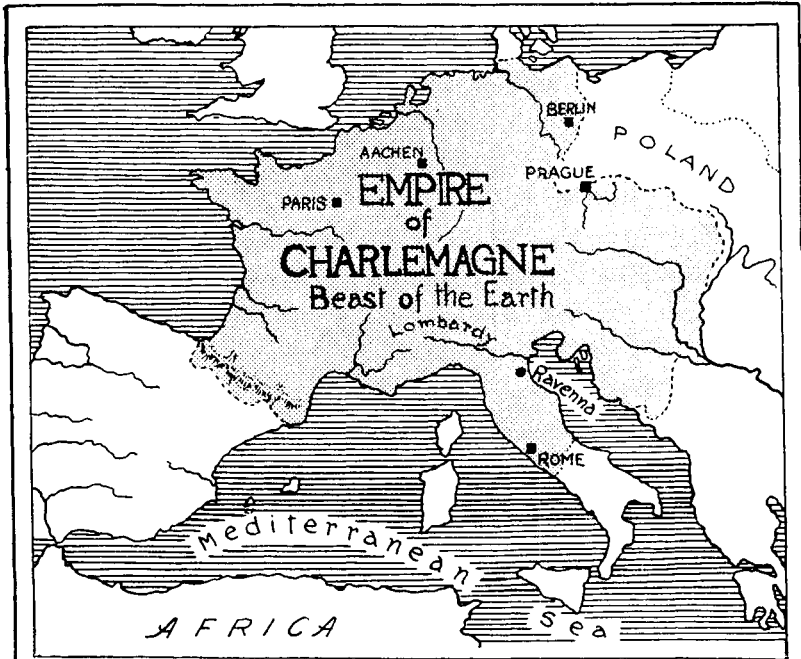
"And he had two horns like a lamb"—

Two horns represent two aspects of power: one religious (the Pope); the other military (the Emperor). The organisation they jointly established looked "like a lamb" because it claimed to be Christian in character: it was known as the *Holy Roman Empire*.

"And he spake as a dragon"—This revealed the true character of this beast. The "dragon" is the symbol of paganised military Imperialism. The so-called Holy Roman Empire was founded on the Imperialistic ambitions of Charlemagne which were similar to the military ambitions of the Emperor of Constantinople. Charlemagne's ambition led him to invade, annex and unite all Germany under his Frankish rule. "By the end of the eighth century Charlemagne had a vast region stretching from Elbe to beyond the Pyrenees and from the North Sea to central Italy. Once again most of western Europe was united under a single empire ruled by a Christian sovereign who had enlarged the bounds of the Church by his conquests. The popes were well aware of the value of strengthening their links with the Carolingian dynasty and endowing it with the prestige of past tradition." This quotation from the *Hamlyn History of the World* illustrates how completely history conforms to the prophecies of *The Apocalypse*.

VERSE 12

"And he exercised all the power of the first beast before him"—The latter part of this statement is rendered by Brother Thomas as *in his presence* (see also *Diaglott*). The first beast was not destroyed. The "two-horned beast" was established in the presence of the ten horns which remained of the first beast (v. 1), and which had embraced so-called Christianity.



"And causeth the earth and them which dwell therein"—See note at v. 6. Those "in the heavenlies" comprise the true followers of Christ; those "in the earth." are those who remain. Over them Roman Catholicism exercised great power.

"To worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed"—The "first beast" comprised the Papal organisation. The "beast of the earth" exercised the functions of the "dragon" (v. 4), and called upon mankind to give their allegiance to the Pope. "The sword of Charlemagne was extended not merely to increase his empire, but to extend Christianity. The Germans became Christians and subjects of the Frankish empire at the same time. When Charlemagne seized the duchy of Bavaria in 788, the duke was compelled to become a monk, and his two sons and two daughters had also to abandon their luxurious palace for Frankish abbeys" (*Hamlyn History Of The World*).

VERSE 13

"And he doeth great wonders"—The word *semeia* denotes "signs." The victories of Pepin and Charlemagne constituted "signs of the times," as well as demonstrating to the Pope their ability to help him in his extremity.

"So that he maketh fire come down from heaven"—The preposition "so" is *hina*, and signifies "in order that." The early conquests of Pepin revealed that he was an ally worth cultivating, and so he was invited to help the Pope in his resistance to the anti-papal Lombards. "Fire on earth" suggests anger, war, destruction, persecution (Isa. 42:25; 66:15; Ezek. 22:20-22; Zech. 13:9; 1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12). All this was manifested by Pepin and Charlemagne against the opponents of Rome.

"In the sight of men"—The "fire" was both secular and ecclesiastical. The former was administered by the armies of the Empire; the latter by the thunder of papal interdicts and excommunications.

VERSE 14

"And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth"—Gibbon supplies several examples of the manner in which the Papacy deceived its dupes. Writing of the pontificate of Gregory the Great, he states: "The credulity or the prudence of Gregory, was always disposed to confirm

the truths of religion by the evidence of ghosts, miracles, and resurrections" (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*).

"By means of these miracles"—The word denotes "wonders" or "signs," and relates to the theological deceptions of Rome (2 Thess. 2:9) in addition to the military successes of the Empire which brought the western world to the feet of the Papacy.

"Which he had power to do"—See note v. 2.

"In the sight of the beast"—The Holy Roman Empire was established in the sight of the other horns, or powers found on the beast of the sea (v. 1). It arose from within their midst (see Dan. 7:8).

"Saying to them that dwell on the earth"—An authoritative mandate directed to all apart from those in "the heavenlies" in Christ.

"That they should make an image to the beast"—The word "image" is *eikon*, and combines the ideas of representation and manifestation. Thus man is said to be "the image of God" (1 Cor. 11:7), and believers are called upon to manifest the "image" of Christ (Col. 3:10). The reference in the verse before us is to the Papacy. It was not merely the representation and manifestation of the beast, but the "image" which men worshipped. It is rather significant that the great controversy between the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic churches was due in large measure to image-worship in the former!

"Which had the wound by a sword, and did live"—In the Papacy supported by the Empire there was seen a resurrection of the previous beast. Note how this verse aligns the "head" with "the beast."

VERSE 15

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast"—The word is *dunami*, or dynamics; the ability to perform things. The Holy Roman Empire gave political and ecclesiastical life to the beast by compelling men to worship Catholicism by the power of the sword.

"That the image of the beast should speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed"—To "speak" in this context is to issue decrees. This the Papacy did upon the authority of the Empire which supported them with the sword. Men were compelled to worship the Papacy — to give it unquestioning endorsement. Its

authority was supported by the sword. by the temporal power which this enabled the Pope to wield (Dan. 7:20).

VERSE 16

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark”—The word here rendered *mark* occurs in the Bible only in *The Apocalypse*, except for Acts 17:29, where it is rendered *graven*. In all other places where it is found (Rev. 13:16, 17:14:9; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4), it is rendered *mark*, and is applied to the same thing — the mark of the beast. It was the custom of slave-owners to brand their slaves with a sign on the forehead or hand to indicate ownership and servitude. It is significant that Catholics cross themselves as indicative of devotion. Those having the sign of the Papacy are its slaves, worshipping its head. The sign of the cross, which is made on the hands of priests at their ordination, and which worshippers make on their foreheads and bodies, and which is used to advertise churches is really the badge of cursing (Gal. 3:13).

“In their right hand, or in their foreheads”—This dedicated them to work and think only for Rome. Contrast Ch. 14:1.

VERSE 17

“And that no man might buy or sell”—Trade with heretics was discouraged. However, the “buying and selling” also had relation to practising religion (cp. Rev. 18:12). Rome recognises only its priests as being authorised to do this.

“Save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name”—The “mark” identified the one bearing it with the name of the beast, which was indicated by the number of his name.

VERSE 18

“Here is wisdom”—Wisdom is found in properly identifying the “beast,” and maintaining a strict separateness from it. It is significant that this phrase again occurs in Rev. 17:9 where the beast is more clearly identified.

“Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast”—This statement indicates that care should be exercised in the interpretation of this

verse, whilst it also implies that the correct meaning can be ascertained. However, it will only be ascertained by “counting” the numbers of the letters that make up the total here given. This is important to the correct interpretation of the verse.

“For it is the number of a man”—It is the number of flesh. It is also significant that the authority and power of the Papacy is vested in a man, the Pope!

“And his number is six hundred three score and six”—There are many interpretations given to this number, but we see no reason to differ from the interpretation of *Eureka*, where it is given as *Lateinos*. It was the custom among pagan countries to designate some of the gods by the total number of the numerical value of the letters that made up its name, for both Hebrew and Greek consonants have numerical values as well as denoting letters. Ireneas, who discoursed with Polycarp the disciple of John, declared the name signified *Lateinos*. The numerical value of the letters in Greek that make up that name total that amount, thus: L (30), A (1), T (300), E (5), I (10), N (50), O (70), S (200). *Lateinos* signifies *The Latin Kingdom*. It is alleged that it was in the year 666, that Pope Vilation decreed that Latin be the religious tongue of the Papacy. The title, *The Latin Kingdom*, also has a numerical value of 666: H (8), L (30), A (1), T (300), I (10), N (50), E (8), B (2), A (1), S (200), I (10), L (30), E (5), I (10) A (1).

In Greek, 666, is represented by (Χ—600, Ξ—60, Ϛ—6), the first and last letters are frequently used as an abbreviation for Christ, and the middle letter is said to be the sign of the serpent. Hence the mystical number is said to represent *The Messiah of Satan*, and upon these grounds some reason that the prophecy will be fulfilled by antichrist, who will set up his power in Jerusalem (it being identified with the city of Rev. 17:9), will proclaim himself to be the Jewish Messiah, will reign as king, and proceed to build a temple at Jerusalem (See *There's A New World Coming* by Hal Lindsey, or *Armageddon* by J. Walvoord). This theory is actively promulgated by Catholic and Protestant interests today (see *The Jerusalem Bible*), and may well be a reason why, when Messiah returns, both Catholics and Protestants (Rev. 17:5) will oppose his rule (Rev. 17:13-14). There is great need

for soundness in exposition of Bible prophecy, for many false theories are circulated throughout the world. Six is the number of flesh, of mortality, and therefore of man.

Further Comment

There appears to be a latter-day application of the wounding and healing of the sixth head of the beast. The initial fulfilment came to pass in A. D. 476 when the Roman Empire of the West was brought to an end by the Gothic domination of Italy. This was "the deadly wound" administered to the sixth head. The wound was healed when the Goths were overthrown by Justinian, and power was restored to the Papacy in 536, some sixty years later. It is significant that there has been a repetition of this in modern times. In 1870, the temporal power of the papacy was withdrawn when Italy was united under Garibaldi and obtained its independence. The Pope then became "a prisoner in the Vatican." But in 1930, by a concordat issued by Mussolini, the temporal power was restored, and the Papacy set up its foreign ministry once again. Since "the deadly wound was healed" in modern times, the Papacy has grown in power and arrogance, and has actively intervened in world politics. Moreover, since 1957 when the Treaty of Rome was signed that laid the foundation of the Common Market, a modern form of the beast has arisen in Europe, as the prophecy of Rev. 17 requires. Once again, Europe is divided, and the feet are forming in preparation for the time of the End. We are living in significant times.

Historical Outline

THE TWO-HORNED BEAST AND ITS IMAGE

The "two-horned beast" represents the dual authority of the Emperor and the Pope as revealed in the Holy Roman Empire, whilst its "Image" relates to the Papacy itself which the Empire called upon men to worship. We will now outline the historical events which brought the first into existence, and gave power to the second.

Charlemagne's Frankish Empire which embraced Central Europe including Germany, and incorporated territory similar in extent to that of modern Europe west of the Iron Curtain today, did not last. Charlemagne was succeeded by his son, Louis the Pious (814-40), who

divided the Empire among his sons. On his death, however, the Empire was thrown into disorder, out of which emerged three modern nations: France, Germany and Italy.

Germany comprised a federation of smaller powers which gave their allegiance to a common head, who was crowned three times: as king of his particular kingdom, as head of the German Federation, and as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The headquarters of the latter power were firstly at Aachen, but, subsequently were centred in Vienna in Austria. With the uprising of Prussia and modern Germany, however, Berlin became the centre of Government.

The Holy Roman Empire, as such, lasted one thousand years, and was terminated by the conquests of Napoleon in 1809 (see Rev. 16:10) when the kingdom "became full of darkness." In 1933 onwards, Hitler tried to revive it. His Third Reich, as his ill-fated Empire was called, derived its name from the First Reich (the Holy Roman Empire) and the Second Reich (the German Federation of 1870).

The German realm was the first country to recover from the dissolution of Charlemagne's Frankish Empire. The revival of the German monarchy began with the election in 919 of Henry, Duke of Saxony. He was succeeded in 936 by his son, Otto the Great, who wished to follow in the footsteps of Charlemagne by having himself crowned as emperor and securing a special position as protector of the Papacy. In 951, he invaded Italy, and defeating his rivals in battle, became King of Italy.

Though the Pope, at the time, refused the request of Otto that he be crowned in Rome, the latter's opportunity came later. In 959 John XII, who had become pope, appealed to Otto for help against the rulers of northern Italy. Otto came, defeated the pope's enemies and in 967 arrived in Rome where he was crowned emperor. At the same time, the emperor also assured the pope of his protection, though he insisted that the election of succeeding popes be confirmed by the 'clergy and people of Rome.' When Otto left Rome John XII sought to regain his independence, but Otto returned and appointed a layman, Leo VIII, as pope. When, in 964, the Romans elected an-

other pope. Benedict V. Otto returned, starved the city into surrender and reinstated Leo. The emperor's triumph was complete.

The Empire reached the height of its strength and prosperity during the reign of Henry III (1039-56). Imperial power revived, and he extended his influence until all of Charlemagne's dominions except France was brought under his control. As a result of rivalry among the Roman nobility, there were by 1045 three rival popes, each claiming to be the rightful holder of the post. Henry III, who became known as the "maker of popes," deposed all three and secured the election of a succession of German popes. This, however, did not last, though it contributed to the "giving of life to the image of the beast."

The influence of Otto and Henry meant that though the pope was elected by the College of Cardinals, and ratified by the people of Rome, he was not legally consecrated until the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire had signified his approval and approbation.

Gibbon declares: "The Roman Pontiffs of the ninth and tenth centuries were insulted, imprisoned and murdered by their tyrants; and such was their indigence after the loss and usurpation of the ecclesiastical patrimonies, that they could neither support the state of a prince nor exercise the charity of a priest."

Meanwhile, the excesses and vices of certain Popes demanded that some reform be instituted. Whilst affecting this, the papacy sought to increase its power.

Giving Life To The Image Of The Beast

In 1059, Pope Nicholas II, published a decree restoring to the Cardinals of Rome the right of nomination and election, and leaving the confirmation to the Emperor, but excluding the ratification by the people of Rome. This was done at the instigation of Hildebrand, a Cardinal, who was the real power behind the Pope.

Hildebrand ascended the Papal throne assuming the title of Pope Gregory VII. He immediately set about gaining further power. He published a new decree against lay investitures, claiming that they reduced the dignity and purity of the Roman Hierarchy.

He sought an occasion against Henry of Navarre who stood in the way of Papal

power. Charges being laid against Henry IV by his subjects, he was summoned to Rome to explain his case. Instead of doing so, Henry assembled a gathering of bishops and vassals of Worms, and procured a sentence that Gregory should no longer be obeyed as lawful Pope. Henry was thereupon excommunicated by Gregory.

Gregory supported his case by letters which contained the statement: "Bishops are superior to kings and made to judge them." He aimed to establish at Rome an annual assembly of bishops to decide contests between nations. A sort of United Nations Organisation presided over by the Papacy!

Many bishops and nobles of Germany supported Gregory, and ignominiously Henry was compelled to submit. He humbly presented himself before the Pope at Canossa to receive absolution for his sins.

But Gregory incited the Lombards, and they rose against him. Henry rushed to their support. Gregory, on the other hand, supported the claims of Rodolph to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire, in opposition to Henry. However, Rodolph was no match for Henry's military skill. He was decisively defeated and his fall considerably reduced the influence of Gregory.

Final Result of Conflict between Emperor and Pope

Disputes between the Emperor and the Pope (secular and ecclesiastical horns of the beast) continued until 1122 when a Concordat or Treaty of Agreement was arranged, by which the Emperor resigned for ever the investiture of bishops, whilst the Pope agreed to receive his temporalities from the Emperor.

By a Papal constitution, no bishop was permitted to exercise his functions until he had received the confirmation of the Roman See.

No Pontiff now thought of awaiting confirmation of the Emperor before he was installed in "the throne of St. Peter."

Gregory's ambitions for absolute power was attained by Innocent III (1198-1216) who stated that it was the Pope's authority to accept or reject the Emperor elect. Thus the position between Pope and Emperor was entirely reversed. The "image" of the beast had been given vigorous "life," and all were called upon to worship it.

By the thirteenth century the Papacy Europe — greater even than the Emperor. was recognised as the supreme power in

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE OUTPOURING OF THE VIALS OF WRATH THE TRIUMPH OF THE REDEEMED

Having outlined the development of the seven-headed beast that has inscribed upon its head the names of blasphemy (Ch. 13:1), John is now shown the destiny of those who have been mentally sealed with the name of Deity (Rev. 14:1), against whom the many-headed beast has waged war. They are shown in triumph on Mount Zion, surrounding the Lamb; their faith and patience are now rewarded in the glory that is bestowed upon them. From the millennial throne of Christ a proclamation goes forth commanding the nations to submit; and when this is rejected, it is followed by the outpouring of divine judgment that destroys forever the influence of Babylon the Great. Thus the final issue of the war initiated by the beast (Ch. 13:6) is that of victory and triumph on the part of the redeemed.

(f) — The Lamb On Mount Zion — vv. 1-4

John is given a vision of the Lamb on mount Zion surrounded by the rejoicing redeemed. The character of the latter are described to him.

VERSE 1

“**And I looked, and, lo, a lamb**”—The Greek has the definite article: *the* Lamb. It is the Lamb described in Ch. 5:6 (see notes) — Christ in glory. Thus the Lamb, usually so helpless and inoffensive, triumphs over the beast that combines the strength and fierceness of the lion, leopard, bear and dragon (Rev. 13:1-2). The Lamb represents the principle of self-sacrifice which finally will triumph over self-power; for self is sacrificed that Yahweh might triumph.

“**Upon Mount Zion**”—As a symbol, Mt. Zion represents the Abrahamic Covenant in contrast to Mt. Sinai which represents the Mosaic covenant (Gal. 4:24; Heb. 12:22). Zion was the place where Yahweh elected He shall dwell among His people (Deut. 12:11; Ps. 132:14), and therefore symbolises the Ecclesia (2 Cor. 6:16). It is presented in *The Apocalypse* in contrast to the seven-hilled city of Rome, which represents the Apostasy. Zion is a symbol

of permanency (Ps. 125:1). The name signifies *conspicuousness*, such as a guiding pillar (Strong). A true saint is a citizen of Zion (Ps. 87:1-5), and with the Lamb will find his true joy in the theocracy to be set up in literal Zion (Jerusalem) after the destruction of Gog (see Jer. 3:17). The overthrow of Gog will precede the conquest of Catholic Europe, as this chapter reveals.

“**And with him an hundred and forty and four thousand**”—This is the symbolic number of the redeemed (Rev. 7:4), here placed in contrast to the number 666 of the previous chapter. One hundred and forty four is the square of twelve, the number of Israel. The redeemed constitute the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:11-12). Thousands are added to the square of twelve to indicate the multiplicity of the redeemed. In the O.T., *thousand* is sometimes give as a synonym for *family*, and could well do so here, indicating the unnumbered multitude of the family of God (Rev. 7:9).

“**Having his Father's Name**”—The RV following the Greek, has *his name and the name of his Father* (See comments on the text in *Eureka* vol. 3, p. 376). However, the Greek *kai*, “and,” is the conjunction of annexation, “uniting things that are strictly co-ordinate” (Bullinger), and

therefore can be rendered as *and, also* or *even*. The latter should be used here, thus: *his name even the name of his Father*, for their names are one (Matt. 28:19). The AV, therefore, is basically correct, for Christ is the means of access to the Father (John 5:23; 8:54). A name, as used in scripture, is indicative of character and purpose. Thus Abraham's name was changed to indicate the divine purpose with him; Jacob's name was changed to reveal his changed relationship with God. Christ "manifested" the Father's name unto the disciples by the character he revealed unto them; he "declared" the Father's name unto them when he revealed His purpose to them (John 17:6, 26). Saints, today, comprise those "taken out of the Gentiles for the Name" (Acts 15:14). That Name is Yahweh. It is derived from the root signifying *I will be*. In superimposing that Name upon Himself, the Father proclaimed His intention to manifest Himself in a family of glorified ones, of whom the Lord Jesus is chief. That family Name, therefore will be named upon all those who overcome the flesh (Rev. 3:12). In addition to becoming name-bearers of God, they also will share His glory (Rom. 5:1-2), and nature (2 Pet. 1:4), and therefore will comprise the divine family of immortals of the future age.

"Written in their foreheads"—Brother Thomas translates this in the past tense, *having been written*. The "writing" or "sealing" (Rev. 7:3) is first done doctrinally in this age (Matt. 28:19; John 17:11; Isa. 43:7), for a person must be mentally moved by the things of God if he is to share His glory in the future. The truth is designed of God as the means by which that is done (John 17:17). By it a person learns to think as God would have him think, which is to be symbolically "written in the forehead" with the Father's name. This is the antitype of the band of gold with the inscription *Holiness to Yahweh* that was worn by the Aaronic high priests (Exod. 28:36). That band of gold symbolised a mind of faith which set Yahweh above all other considerations. Others besides priests manifested such a mind. In the day of judgment that came upon Jerusalem, Ezekiel was shown the angel of Yahweh figuratively putting a mark upon the foreheads of those who thought of God, and they were spared in the time of trouble (Ezek. 9:4). Such an attitude of mind will be found of greatest

value in the day of judgment (see Rev. 7:3; 22:4 and contrast with Rev. 9:4; 13:16; 20:4). Contrast "the Father's name written in the foreheads" of the redeemed with the terrible name written upon the drunken whore of Rev. 17:5.

VERSE 2

"And I heard a voice from heaven"—The voice was heard from the symbolic heaven, or ruling place of authority in the age to come. This will be found on earth where the redeemed will reign with Christ (Rev. 5:9-10; 20:4).

"As the voice of many waters"—Representative of a great multitude (Rev. 19:6). The same symbology is used of those who manifest the glory of the Elohim of Israel, and enter the precincts of the Temple of the age to come in company with the Prince, the Lord Jesus Christ (Ezek. 43:2).

"And as the voice of great thunder"—At the same time as the Redeemed will manifest the Father's Name physically by a change of nature, the political heavens will thunder forth their judgments (Isa. 29:6-7). Not only will the Russian confederacy be overthrown by divine intervention, but Christ will issue an ultimatum to the nations calling upon them to submit to him; and warning them of the consequence of them failing to do so.

"And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps"—This should be rendered: *And the voice which I heard (was) as (the voice) of harpers*. This suggests the rejoicing priests of the future age (Ps. 87:7). (See 1 Chron. 25:1, and note that the priests of the past "prophesied" by their musical exercises).

VERSE 3

"And they sung"—The time of rejoicing and of singing for the Redeemed is yet to come (Ps. 98:1; 100:2; Song 2:12; 2 Tim. 2:11-12). Notice how the sighing of Habakkuk was turned into singing as he lifted his eyes from the troubles of his day to the glory that shall yet flood the earth (Hab. 1:2; 3:18). As the "sighing" of Israel in Egypt was turned into "singing" on the day of deliverance (Exod. 2:23-24; 15:1), so it will be with the redeemed in the future age.

"As it were a new song"—See the same expression used in Psa. 33:1-5; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9-10; 149:1. It relates to

songs of deliverance to be sung in the future age. The adjective signifies a song that is sung with new *meaning*, rather than a song of new *words*. We know the words of the songs to be sung, but we do not yet appreciate the fullness of their significance. That only will be apparent when we personally experience the reality of the things promised. Thus the word expresses the enthusiastic shout of joy and relief that will ascend to heaven because of the great deliverance effected. The words of the songs, already revealed in Scripture, will be sung with true understanding and force when the truths they proclaim are visibly manifested in the earth.

"Before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders"—These symbols denote the various and differing offices of the Redeemed, and show that they will not all be engaged in the same duties. The throne, of course, will be the central pivot of authority. The "four beasts" relate to the political order of the Kingdom: the twenty-four elders to its sacerdotal ministration and the one hundred and forty-four thousand to its Israelitish constitution of the Kingdom.

"And no man could learn that song"—None can sing the song with true meaning unless he experimentally comprehend its significance. A person might know the meaning of the words, but unless he has experienced the change of nature that will be bestowed upon the Redeemed, he will not be able to sing it with full understanding.

"But the hundred and forty and four thousand"—As noted above, there are various "new songs" referred to in the Psalms, but the particular song attributed to the hundred and forty-four thousand seems to be that recorded in Psalm 98. It is sung with harps (v. 5) as is the song before us; and it has relation to the manifestation of mercy and truth towards the "house of Israel" (v. 3), which has particular application to the significance of the hundred and forty-four thousand as a symbol.

"Which were redeemed from the earth"—These are redeemed, or purchased (see Acts 20:28) from the earth (ct. with Rev. 13:3 where the same word is rendered *world*).

VERSE 4

"These are they which were not defiled with women"—They were not guilty of

spiritual adultery with the false women of the Apostasy (see James 4:4; Rev. 2:20; 17:5).

"For they are virgins"—They are faithful to Christ. See 2 Cor. 11:2.

"These are they which follow the Lamb"—Christ as the Lamb offered in complete dedication to God, is their example, inspiration and shepherd. They see him as the Lamb: quiet, submissive, offering himself in sacrifice to God; but also powerful to conquer the world. Cp. 1 Pet. 2:21-25.

"Withersoever he goeth"—Even unto the crucifixion of self. See Gal. 5:24.

"These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb"—See James 1:18. The privileges of the firstborn become theirs — a double portion of inheritance, the priesthood, and authority. These are obtained in Christ. "Firstfruits" imply a further harvest, for which see Rev. 20:16, 12-15.

VERSE 5

"And in their mouth was found no guile"—They follow the example set them. See 1 Pet. 2:21-25.

"For they are without fault before the throne of God"—The latter phrase, *before the throne of God* is not contained in the Greek text. The RV renders "fault" as *blemish*, and the statement shows that they will be found like the Lamb whom they follow (1 Pet. 1:19). That same Lamb is able to present saints as "faultless" before the throne of grace through forgiveness of their sins (Jude 24). Thus they are utterly dependent upon the sacrifice of the Lamb in order to attain unto that state (see Eph. 1:4; Rom. 4:6-8).

(g) — The Midheaven Angelic Proclamation — vv. 6-12

John's attention is drawn to an angel in the midst of heaven who proclaims the everlasting gospel to all nations, warning them to fear God and give glory to Him for His judgments are about to come. This is followed by another angel proclaiming that Babylon is fallen; and by a third, warning the nations against worshipping the beast and his image, or against identifying themselves with such in any way. Those who fail to heed the warning are destroyed. The symbolism reveals that after Christ has consolidated his power in

Zion, he will issue an ultimatum to the nations, calling upon them to submit to his rule.

VERSE 6

“And I saw another angel”—This expression seems to identify this angel with the one described in Rev. 10:1, and therefore relates him to the multitudinous Christ. The word “angel” signifies a bearer of tidings, a messenger.

“Fly in the midst of heaven”—As a political symbol the angel represents one bearing tidings from the “heavens” or Government to the “earth.” His appearance in mid-heaven also suggests the threat of impending judgment. See 1 Chron. 21:16.

“Having the everlasting gospel to preach”—This is more correctly rendered (see RV) as “an everlasting gospel,” for the definite article is lacking in the Greek text. “Everlasting” is *aionion*, and denotes “pertaining to the age.” It relates to a proclamation that will be adapted to the needs of the coming age. Brother Thomas refers to it as “millennial good news.” The word “gospel” is *euangelion*—“good news,” and the word “preach” is *euangelisai*, and denotes the proclamation of the good tidings. The RV renders it as *proclaim* which is more appropriate than *preach* in this context.

“Unto them that dwell on the earth”—The expression is used politically for those who previously followed after the beast (Rev. 13:3).

“And to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people”—These are those who previously were under the domination of the beast (Rev. 13:7), from out of which the Redeemed are drawn (Rev. 5:9-10), and unto whom they now return with the millennial good news to proclaim unto them (Rev. 10:11). Christ’s ultimatum will not only be directed to governments as in Psalm 2, but also to the common people themselves, as in the verse before us.

VERSE 7

“Saying with a loud voice”—So that all may hear and heed it.

“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”—After the destruction of Gog at Armageddon, this ultimatum will be

issued to all nations to submit to the King ruling in Zion (Ps. 110:1-2). It will announce that the “hour of judgment” has come (see Isa. 61:2; Acts 17:31), in which nations must “learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:9), or suffer the consequence (see Isa. 60:12).

VERSE 8

“And there followed another angel”—The word “another” is *deuteros*, “a second angel.”

“Saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen”—“Babylon” to the Gentiles signifies *Gate of God* but in Hebrew it denotes *Confusion* (see note: Gen. 11:9). As a symbol it indicates the confusion of error of which Rome and her daughters are guilty. Hislop in *The Two Babylons* reveals how closely the teaching and institutions of Rome are to the system of worship found in ancient, historical Babylon. The proclamation of this second angel shows that the fate of Gog is not heeded by Rome and Christendom as a warning to submit to Christ. As a matter of fact, Rome teaches that Antichrist must arise claiming that he is a king and will set up his power in Jerusalem. The teaching of Rome at present, therefore, is preparing for the resistance that will be shown then.

“That great city”—See Rev. 16:19; 17:5, 18. Catholicism is founded on the city of Rome. In *The Apocalypse* the destinies of two cities are contrasted: Babylon and the New Jerusalem. The former represents the polity of the Apostasy; the latter that of the Ecclesia. From Rev. 18:21 it would appear that the city of Rome will be destroyed by earthquake, but evidently the system of Rome survives the destruction of the city. See Rev. 14:9.

“Because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication”—The idea is that she has made all nations drink of the wine of her fornication which will bring on the wrath of God. The “wine of her fornication” relates to the heady, intoxicating doctrine of Rome which turns people from the Truth. See Rev. 18:3.

VERSE 9

“And the third angel followed them”—The Roman system survives, though Rome is swallowed up in the abyss like Sodom. With the overthrow of the city, a

further appeal is made to Catholics to submit.

"Saying with a loud voice"—Because of the urgency of the message, and its importance to all who might hear.

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand"—From this it would appear that the papal system which survives the destruction of the city will rally its forces to resist Christ (see Rev. 17:14). The people are warned against giving their allegiance to the system.

VERSE 10

"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God"—This is contrasted with Rome's "wine of fornication" referred to in v. 8. Wine, in the present context, is a symbol for bloodshed and judgment (see Isa. 51:17-23; 63:1-3; Jer. 25:17).

"Which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation"—Contrast this statement with that of Ps. 75:8. "Mixed wine," is wine fortified by drugs designed to dull pain. Such wine was given to criminals before execution to save them pain. However, there will be no dulling of pain for those who persist in supporting guilty Rome after these persistent appeals. See Rev. 18:6,24. The literal Greek has: *Having been mixed undiluted in the cup.* "Indignation" is *orge*. "wrath" — see Rom. 2:8.

"And he shall be tormented"—The word is *basinizo* and signifies "to rub on the touchstone, to put to the test, to examine by torture." The same word is rendered "toiling" in Mark 6:48. The opportunity will be given people to submit to Christ peaceably or by force. If they resist the first, the strength of their resistance will be put to the test by the painful means of force.

"With fire and brimstone"—Fire and brimstone suggest judgment and war. Sodom was overthrown by "fire and brimstone," and to the extent that Catholic Europe partakes of her sins, it will experience her judgment. It is significant that Rome is likened to Sodom in Rev. 11:8. The fate of Sodom is set forth as an example of the judgment to come (Jude 7).

"In the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb"—The "holy angels" comprise the Elohim of the

age to come: the glorified Redeemed. The title is sometimes given the followers of Christ, as in Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 1 Tim. 3:16. The Greek *angelos* (angels) is rendered "messengers" in Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24; 9:52. The Redeemed will be made "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36), and will be sent forth as Christ's messengers to the world at large. They will supervise judgments as well as issue proclamations. See 1 Cor. 6:3.

VERSE 11

"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up"—Babylon the Great suffers the fate of Sodom. As the smoke of Sodom "went up" in the sight of Abraham (Gen. 19:28), so that of Babylon is said to do so in the sight of his glorified seed.

"For ever and ever"—The expression denotes that it shall burn until completely destroyed. The fate that Jerusalem once suffered (Isa. 34:10), now falls upon Babylon to its destruction. Jude sets forth the fate of Sodom as "an example" of a city suffering "eternal fire;" that is fire that shall consume until nothing remains.

"And they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name"—The war to be initiated will continue without respite until Rome and its influence are completely destroyed.

VERSE 12

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus"—The revenge promised in Rev. 13:10 will be fulfilled, and the triumph of the Name of Yahweh over the names of blasphemy will be complete. The Redeemed have anticipated the crisis that will culminate in the end of the Catholic system: and when during the dark ages, they have suffered persecution at the hands of it, they have patiently awaited the judgment that they knew would fall upon it.

(h) — Reaping the Harvest and Vintage — vv. 13-20

John is given a message of encouragement from heaven. Having written it, his attention is drawn to an angel on a cloud, like unto the Son of man, wearing a golden crown and with a sharp sickle in his hand. The angel is invited by another

angel to reap the harvest of the earth: and accordingly the earth is reaped. Another angel is seen emerging from the temple, also with a sharp sickle. He is invited to reap the vintage of the earth. He does so, and the grapes are trodden without the city causing a flood of blood unto the bridles of horses in height and for sixteen hundred furlongs in extent. Though given after the vision narrated at the beginning of the chapter, that which is now revealed, is actually introductory to it, and shows how the Redeemed will be established on Mount Zion. This is in accordance with other visions in the Revelation, wherein the ultimate picture is stated first, and the details leading to it are revealed afterwards (cp. Rev. 11:15,18).

VERSE 13

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying”—This is introductory to the vision about to be revealed.

“Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord”—The blessing is to those who are faithful unto death (Rev. 2:26), and they are blessed at the “time of the dead” (Rev. 11:18)

“From henceforth”—This addition shows that the blessing is not in death but from “henceforth,” or in the kingdom (Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12; Luke 14:14). Notice the marginal reading: “From henceforth saith the Spirit. Yea, that they may. . .” etc. It is said by grammarians, that the construction of the Greek favours joining “henceforth” with “die” as in the A.V. and not as the margin. This would suggest that in view of the persecution and frustrations to which believers would be subjected (cp. Rev. 13:10), to “die in the Lord” would be of greater benefit than to live in persecution and tribulation (cp. Isa. 57:1). However, the true measure of that blessedness will not be received until *henceforth*: until the events of this chapter are revealed in the earth.

“Yea, saith the Spirit that they may rest from their labours”—The future age will reveal the true sabbatical rest (Heb. 4:9); but it will not be the rest of idleness, but of joyous co-operation with the Lord, as is suggested by the word used in Matt. 11:29.

“And their works do follow them”—Brother Thomas renders: “Yea, saith the Spirit, in order that they may rest from their labours, and their works he goeth in aid of with them.” This literal rendition

of the Greek may appear clumsy, but it does represent the original. It suggests that during the period of “rest” the spirit aids the saints by manifestation of power in work. The “rest” is the sabbatical rest from the works of the flesh. It is not the rest of idleness, but of joyous co-operation with Yahweh. The Spirit will be poured out upon the Redeemed and will assist in establishing Christ’s reign on earth. Thus the phrase: “and their works (the labour they perform in the coming age) he (the Spirit) goeth in aid of (or assist) with them.” What the Redeemed perform in the age when they shall be at rest from the distractions of the flesh, or from the tribulations experienced in previous times, will be done through the Spirit which they will then possess in its fulness. See Zech. 4:6; Ezek. 1:12,20.

VERSE 14

“And I looked and behold”—Connecting this vision with that of v. 1.

“A white cloud”—A righteous cloud of witnesses. See note on Rev. 1:7. Cp. Heb. 12:1; Matt. 24:30.

“And upon the cloud one like unto the Son of man”—The title *Son of Man* is the title of Christ as judge (see John 5:27). The angel John saw is identified with the multitudinous Son of Man of Rev. 1.

“Having on his head a golden crown”—The word for crown is *stephanos* not *diadem*. It implies the personal victory of faith, and not the granting of authority. The verse suggests that at this stage, Christ, although *Generalissimo* of the white-cloud army, is not in possession yet of David’s diadem: he has not yet conquered Jerusalem. The vision, therefore, presents the multitudinous Christ at the outset of his military campaign, before Armageddon, competing for prizes later described as “many diadems” (Rev. 19:12), or the conquest of the nations.

“A sharp sickle”—See note on *Armageddon* (Rev. 16:16). See also Mic. 4:12; Joel 3:14. This angel “like the Son of Man,” stands in threatening pose before the world of darkness; ready to harvest it at the appointed time when whatever “grain” is found therein is ripened.

VERSE 15

“And another angel came out of the temple”—The Temple is symbolic of the saints (2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 3:12; 11:1). The

angel that emerges therefrom, who urges the one "like the son of man" to reap the harvest of the earth, is representative of the Redeemed praying for the consummation of the age. Later (v. 17), the Temple is shown "in heaven" or the place of authority, but in the verse before us it has not reached that stage. The "harvest" of the earth represents Armageddon, and the Redeemed will not ascend into the political heavens of the future until Gog is overthrown (see note Rev. 4:1).

"Crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap"—There is a set time for the consummation of the Divine purpose: nothing will be done haphazardly or by chance (see Ps. 75:2 — mg. or RSV).

"For the harvest of the earth is ripe"—The Greek *xeraino* signifies "to dry up, wither" (see mg), and is rendered by the RV as *over-ripe* suggesting "the long-suffering of God" (1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:15). The judgments of God, to which the earth will be subjected, shall be conducted with perfect justness, designed to reclaim and not merely to destroy. Though Babylon the Great will be completely overthrown (Dan. 7:11), other nations will remain (Dan. 7:12). The same principle observed towards Israel, will be manifested towards the Gentile nations: grain that can produce growth to the glory of God will be gathered in to form the mortal subjects of the Kingdom (cp. Amos 9:9; Zech. 13:8-9).

VERSE 16

"And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped"—"Harvest" suggests grain in comparison with the vintage of v. 18. As grain ripens before the grapes (v. 19), so Armageddon will precede the invasion of Europe by Christ's forces in order to overthrow Babylon the Great (Rev. 17:14).

VERSE 17

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle"—In this verse, the Temple is represented as being in heaven, suggesting that the Temple of living stones, the glorified Redeemed are now in power, established as the government of Jerusalem. The emergence of this angel is equivalent to the

proclamation of the warning of vv. 6-7.

VERSE 18

"And another angel came out from the altar"—These various angels are all symbolic of the saints in different aspects either predicting, warning, or executing judgments. Christ is the altar (Heb. 13:10), and the angel is represented as emerging therefrom in answer to the prayers of Rev. 6:9 though uttered so long ago.

"Which had power over fire"—The altar fire is divine fire (Lev. 9:24) capable of consuming the wicked (see Lev. 10:2).

"And cried with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth"—The word "gather" is *trugao* from *truge*, to gather ripe fruit in Autumn, and denotes the gathering in of the ripened harvest, vintage or ripe fruits.

"For her grapes are fully ripe"—Here the word is *akmazo*, at the full point of ripeness. From this Greek word is derived the English word *acme*. Whereas the harvesting of grain (v. 15) represents the judgment of Armageddon, the gathering in of the vintage symbolises the conquest of Europe and the world which follows upon the destruction of Gog.

VERSE 19

"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth"—There are both Jewish and Gentile vines. The reference here is to the latter: to Gentile nations (see Isa. 63:3; Rev. 19:11-16).

"And cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God"—The adjective is in the masculine gender, the noun in the feminine (Vincent). There will be a joint labour by the bridegroom and the bride (cp. Isa. 63:1-3).

VERSE 20

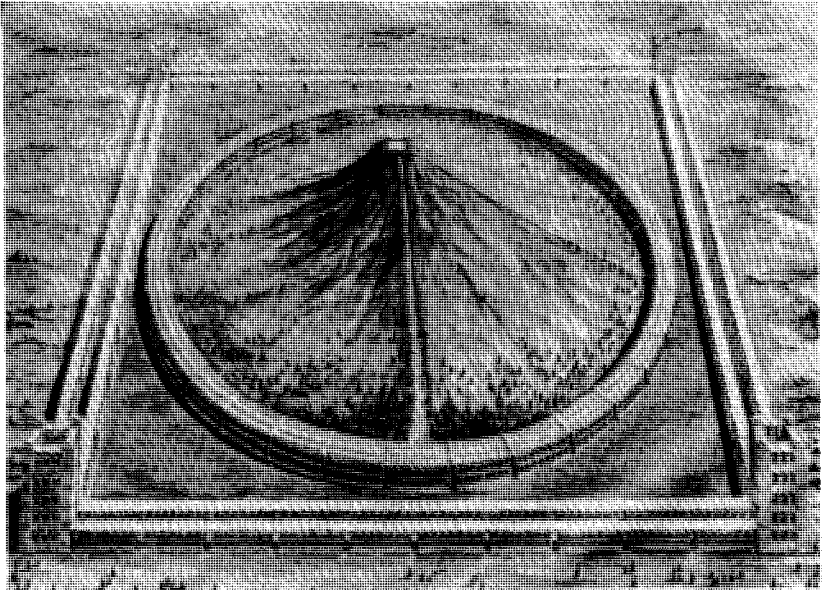
"And the winepress was trodden without the city"—Compare with v. 8. The judgment will extend to nations outside the Apocalyptic limits of Babylon the Great.

"And blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles"—The judgment will reach unto the ones guiding the horse: to the rulers of the nations. See notes on Rev. 6 where Rome is likened to a horse, and the riders

thereon to those who guided its destiny. The horse, in Bible symbology, represents the nations in warlike aspect. See Zech. 10:5; Rev. 19:18; Hag. 2:22.

“By the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs”—This number is the square of forty, for $40 \times 40 = 1600$. The square suggests Israel which encamped in a square (cp. Rev. 21:16). Forty is the number of probation (Deut. 25:3). In the Bible it is frequently associated with humiliation, affliction and punishment. Moses twice humbled himself forty days in prayer and fasting (Deut. 9:9, 18); Elijah (1 Kings 19:8) and Christ (Matt. 4:2) were both forty days fasting. Israel

was afflicted for forty years (Num. 14:33-34); the Canaanites had forty years to repent after the spies had searched the land for forty days (Num. 14:33). Christ taught the disciples for forty days after his resurrection (Acts 1:3); and after forty years of preaching the Gospel, the Jewish State was destroyed in A.D. 70. There will be forty years of judgment on the nations prior to the establishment of the Kingdom of God (Mic. 7:16; Ezek. 20:34; Isa. 11:11-16;) and the symbol before us seems representative of the period of probation by which the nations will be humbled in preparation for Christ's universal rule.



JERUSALEM OF THE FUTURE — Centre of administration for the 144,000 in the Age to Come. Ezekiel was given a vision of the multitudinous Christ entering the literal Temple in Jerusalem as the Cherubim of glory (Ezekiel 43:1-3), and heard the voice of Yahweh proclaiming: "Son of man, the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever."

(5) THE SEVEN VIALS OF THE WRATH OF GOD

Chapters 15, 16

The visions of these two chapters bring us to the culmination of the Divine purpose. John first describes a scene of triumph, with the Redeemed singing a song of victory upon a sea of glass because the judgments of God are made manifest. Afterwards, he observes seven angels bearing seven golden vials from out of the Temple. The vials contain the wrath of God, and the angels are instructed to pour them out in order upon the earth. One by one this is done, bringing distress upon those not exercised thereby. The outpouring of the seventh vial climaxes in Armageddon and the dividing of Babylon the Great into three parts. Even so, men continue to blaspheme (v. 21), necessitating further judgment. In this section of the The Apocalypse, as in others, (cp. Rev. 11:15, 18), the final scene is presented first, and afterwards the steps that lead to it are revealed. These two chapters, therefore, become introductory to the chapters that follow which describe the judgment of the great whore and the triumph of the Lamb (Chps. 17-20).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE REDEEMED ON THE SEA OF GLASS

Chapter fifteen is the shortest chapter in *The Apocalypse*, but it is one of the most important. It is linked with the "great sign" of chapter twelve (cp. Rev. 12:1; 15:1) which represents in symbol the apostate Church system assuming political eminence, for it shows that the antithesis will be the redeemed in glory. It reveals the culmination of the divine purpose, presenting first the ultimate vision of glory, so enabling, the Redeemed to see through present troubles to the triumph of the future. In spite of the pressures of the times, faith enables believers to ever keep before them the joy that such a vision as now opens to John permits them to anticipate.

(a) — The Rejoicing Redeemed — vv. 1-4

John is shown the sign of seven angels having seven last plagues by which the wrath of God will be brought to an end. He sees the Redeemed standing upon a sea of glass, and hears them sing their song of triumph: the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.

VERSE 1

"I saw another sign in heaven"—This links the sign now about to be described, with that given in Rev. 12:1.3. The former "sign" heralded the elevation of an apostate system to a position of authority which resulted in some claiming that the kingdom of God had come in the triumph of Constantine and the church; this one describes the elevation of the Ecclesia into ruling places with Christ. The word "sign" is *semeion*, and denotes a sign, mark, indication or token. It is translated *wonder* in Rev. 12:1. Paul used the word for his signature that authenticated his epistles (2 Thess. 3:17). It is also used of a sign heralding an event: "the sign of Jonah" (Matt. 16:4; John 2:11 — "the beginning of signs"), or of one that authenticates something (1 Cor. 1:22). The word occurs seven times in *The Apocalypse* (Rev. 12:1, 3; 13:13, 14; 15:1, 16:14; 19:20).

"Great and marvellous"—The sign is a mark of triumph, and is described as "great and marvellous," because it will terminate in the consummation of the divine purpose, and the triumph of the Redeemed. They are represented as

using these adjectives in the song they sing (v. 3).

"Seven angels having the seven last plagues"—A "plague" is not necessarily an epidemic, but a stroke, a smiting. In the Greek it is the word *plegas* from *pleso* signifying a "flattening out by pounding or by smiting." Thus it describes a stripe or wound caused by a stripe. It is rendered *stripes* in Luke 12:48; Acts 16:23,33; 2 Cor. 6:5; 11:23, and thus describes punishment designed to correct. Here it describes the seven last strokes, or smittings, of God designed to discipline the nations and change their ways. The term *wound* is used 14 times in *The Apocalypse*, rendered "wound" (Rev. 13:3,12,14) and "plagues" (Rev. 9:20; 11:6; 15:1,6,8;16:9,21; 18:4,8; 21:9; 22:18 — notice the recurring use of the number *seven* in *The Apocalypse*). In the chapter before us, the word is given the definite article: *the* plagues, because they bring to consummation the divine purpose, terminating the present order, and establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

"In them is filled up the wrath of God"—Or, more correct (see RV), "in them the wrath of God is finished." "Filled up" is from the Greek *teleo*, "to finish, complete." The contents of the seven bowls are not the sum total of Divine judgments; they comprise the final outpourings of judgment that will bring God's wrath to an end. There is tremendous encouragement in the statement that they bring the judgments of God to a completion, for we have

reached the epoch of the sixth vial: and are thus in "the time of the end."

VERSE 2

"And I saw"—As in Rev. 11:15, 18, John's eye is captured by the final picture which he first describes, after which he details the events leading to it.

"A sea of glass"—Brother Thomas renders this a *glassy sea*: a sea that is crystal calm. The symbol describes the nations at rest in contrast to Isa. 57:20-21. See note on Rev. 4:6.

"Mingled with fire"—Brother Thomas renders: *Which had been mingled with fire*. Fire is a symbol of war, and though the nations will have been involved in war, it will have been brought to a completion at the time of the fulfilment of this prophecy.

"And them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name"—This repetition of points of identification is not without significance. It represents the various forms of separation of the Redeemed from the Roman Catholic system including its politics (beast), its religion (image), its commercial activities (mark — cp. Rev. 13:17), its morals (number of his name).

"Stand on the sea of glass"—They are elevated to positions of authority over the nations at peace (cp. Rev. 4:6).

"Having the harps of God"—Indicating a state of rejoicing. See note Rev. 14:2.

VERSE 3

"And they sing the song of Moses"—This refers back to the song of deliverance sung when Israel was saved from Pharaoh and his host (Exod. 15). The Israelites rejoiced, and were led in song and dances by Moses (v. 1) and Miriam (v. 21). The sea was calm before them after the storm of the previous night, whilst evidence of the great victory was found on the shore (Exod. 14:31), answering to the "sea of glass which had been mingled with fire." The *Song of Moses* is not only commemorative of what was then done on behalf of Israel, but also is prophetic of a greater deliverance in the age to come. In fact, those who were then brought out of Egypt were not "brought in and planted in the mountain of Yahweh's inheritance" (Exod. 15:17) as the song

declares, but the Redeemed and the Israel of the future will be. The complete fulfilment of Moses' Psalm of Deliverance is yet to be fulfilled, and as such, formed the basis of many prophetic songs of Scripture such as Psalm 68 (cp. vv. 17-18). Moses' Song speaks of the Redeemed "dwelling in the Sanctuary" which Yahweh's hands have established: to which Paul surely alludes when he wrote of "the sanctuary, the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man" (Heb. 8:2). The visible token of this will be the House of prayer for all nations, to be established at Christ's return (Isa. 56:4-7).

"The servant of God"—The relative positions of Moses and Christ as servant and son are emphasised by Paul in Heb. 3:5-6. As servant and son, Moses and Christ bridge the divine purpose. The former was the mediator of the first covenant which revealed sin for what it is, demonstrating the need of a Redeemer (Gal. 3:19-24); the latter is the mediator of the new covenant that bears it away.

"And the song of the Lamb"—Moses' song of triumph is matched by that of the Lamb.

"Saying, Great and marvellous are thy works"—This song links Christ's "works" with the "sign" with which the chapter opens, for the same adjectives are used in both verses (cp. v. 1). The outpouring of the vials will bring to consummation the divine purpose. For some of these works, see Psalm 68:9-17.

"Lord God Almighty"—See note on Rev. 4:8. The Hebrew form of this title is *Yahweh Elohim Sabaoth*, "He Who will be Mighty Ones of Armies." The title signifies Yahweh as manifested in a multitude of mighty ones organised into an Army. The multitude referred to are those "sealed in the forehead with the Father's name" (Rev. 14:1), answering to those "taken out of the nations, a people for the Name" (Acts 15:14). At his first advent, the Lord was put to death, a lonely sacrifice on Calvary's Hill; in the near future the world will see him at the head of a "great multitude" of glorified ones (Rev. 7:9). This remarkable drama of the Divine purpose will reveal that Yahweh's "little one" has become "a thousand" (a word that is also rendered *family*), and His small one "a strong nation" (Isa. 60:22). The drama is graphically described by Daniel. In Daniel 8:11, he is referred to as "the

prince" put to death by Rome, but in v. 25 of the same chapter, he is given the title of *Prince of princes* — the one put to death has developed into a multitude. In the divine name before us those "mighty ones" are described as being organised into *the army* (the Greek has the definite article) of the Lord. See Rev. 19:14.

"Just and true are thy ways"—The doctrine of the Atonement reveals Yahweh manifested in His Son as both "just and the Justifier of those who believe" (Rom. 3:25). In the coming age, this will be appreciated more than it ever is now. Though Yahweh is merciful, He is also just. He demands the recognition of sin for what it is. It is only upon the basis of this that He accepts individuals now; and it will be only upon the acceptance of the same principles that nations will be incorporated into His Kingdom then (Isa. 60:12). His ways are also according to truth. The word *alethinous* signifies that which is real, genuine and tangible, in contrast to that which is typical, shadowy and intangible. There will be nothing vague or shadowy about the Kingdom He will establish, for it will be set up in all its tangible reality. It is not always viewed like that at the present. Saints must exercise faith and patience under pressure and trial in order to comprehend the reality of the things to which they are called (Rev. 13:10), but when Christ is in the earth, all the shadows will disappear in the glorious shining forth of that antitypical Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2). Isaiah declares: "The parched ground shall become a pool" (Isa. 35:7). The RV mg renders this: "The *mirage* shall become a pool." That which men have rejected as being a mere mirage, will be revealed in all its refreshing reality: the vision will become a tangible fact in the earth; and the Redeemed will be able to sing that His ways are according to truth.

The word "ways" is from the Greek *hodoi*, "paths," and hence the means to an end. Figuratively, it defines a course of conduct leading to a desired objective. The Gospel is described as "that way" (Acts 9:2; 16:17; 18:25), the "way of truth" (2 Pet. 2:2), the "way of right" (2 Pet. 2:15), the "way of love" (1 Cor. 12:31), the "narrow way" (Matt. 7:13-14). It is the "way to the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24), which men corrupted at the time of the Flood (Gen. 6:12), but which Christ manifested in all its reality. It is a

way that imposes sacrifices, and demands such dedication, as to cause some to doubt its value; but the benefits of walking that "way" will be appreciated in the day of triumph yet to dawn upon the earth. In that day this song will be sung by the glorified Redeemed.

"Thou king of saints"—This is better rendered as in the margin, *King of nations*. The Greek is *ethnon*, "nations." In Rev. 19:12, Christ is represented as wearing many crowns, thus as conqueror and king of nations. See also Ps. 22:28; 47:78; 96:10. In Jer. 10:7, the title is applied to Yahweh, as being supreme in power, and the great Disposer of the destiny of nations (Dan. 4:17). As such, He referred to the great Nebuchadnezzar as "My servant" (Jer. 27:6), for the Babylonish king unconsciously performed the bidding of Yahweh. The Lord Jesus Christ will manifest the fulness of this title of his Father, as he will all the others.

"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?"—The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7), whereas divine "love" is the bond of its completeness (Col. 3:14; 1 John 4:18). Isaiah declares that when Yahweh's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants will learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9). They will do so through the reverential fear that shall be induced by such judgments. They shall then "glorify His name." "Glorify" denotes the expression of an opinion, and thus signifies the honour that results from the good opinion openly proclaimed by others. See Rom. 15:6,9; 1 Pet. 2:12.

"For Thou only art holy"—All true holiness stems from Yahweh and His son who manifests Him through the channel of the Word (John 17:17); and "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). The foundation of both covenants (that of Moses and that of Christ), is the declaration of Yahweh: "By ye holy for I am holy." Holiness, therefore, is a family characteristic in the household of God. See 1 Pet. 1:15-16.

"For all nations shall come and worship before Thee"—Before Thee" means *in Thy presence*. Yahweh's presence in the earth will be manifested through the Lord Jesus Christ. The remnant of the nations, after the holocaust of Armageddon, will ascend to Jerusalem to "worship Yahweh" (Zech.

14:9, 16; Ps. 86:9), and shall there see "the king in his beauty" (Isa. 33:17).

"For Thy judgments are made manifest"—The judgments of God may be terrible in their manifestation, but they will be curative in their effect. They alone will compel men to worship in truth (Isa. 26:9-10). They shall do so at the House of prayer, designed for that purpose. See Ps. 68:29-33; Isa. 56:7; 60:7; 66:20.

(b) — The Temple Opened in Heaven — vv. 6-8

John sees the Most Holy opened in heaven, and describes how that seven angels emerged therefrom to pour out the vials of Divine wrath upon the earth. Until that was completed, there was no way of entrance into the Temple. Therefore, the previous vision which describes the nations as coming and worshipping before God (v. 4), must await its fulfilment until after the seven vials have been poured out.

VERSE 5

"And after that I looked, and behold"—John's attention is drawn from the rejoicing redeemed, in order to concentrate upon the "judgments to be made manifest" (v. 4).

"The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony"—The word rendered "Temple" is *Nave*, and it denotes the "Most Holy" of the Tabernacle. This was the dwelling place of Yahweh. His throne in Israel, and in the parable of the Tabernacle typed the multitudinous body of Christ in glory. Therefore, to refer to the *Nave* as being "opened," or fully manifested, in the political heavens, is to symbolise the glorified Redeemed in power, after those "who walk after the flesh" have been purged out. Christ, the forerunner, has already entered into this glorious state (Heb. 4:14; 10:19-20).

"The word "testimony" is from the Greek *maturion* translated "witness" in Acts 4:33 and elsewhere. The word suggests not merely the proclamation of Truth, but a demonstration of its power (cp. 2 Thess. 1:10). Thus, the testimony, or witness, of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10) because it is a demonstration of its power. The Redeemed in glory will testify to the truth and power of Yahweh's Word."

The term *Tabernacle of Witness* is used

in Num. 17:7. The Hebrew word for "witness" is *edoth* which is the feminine form of *ed*, witness. This is significant, for it will be the manifestation of the Lamb's bride in glory that will witness to the power of the truth. The Tabernacle in the wilderness was given this title because it set forth the tokens of Yahweh's requirements in the covenant He had made with the people. The Ark in the Most Holy contained the tables of the law (called "the testimony" or "witness" and representing the Word — cp. Num. 17:7 with Exod. 25:21), Aaron's almond rod that blossomed (divine selection and resurrection), the pot of manna (eternal life). It was overshadowed by the mercy seat (Christ), and the Cherubim (the Redeemed in glory). The antitype of all this will be seen in Christ and the saints in glory in the age to come.

"Opened in heaven"—The Redeemed are elevated into the political heavens, constituting the Government of the age to come (cp. Rev. 2:26; 4:1; 20:4). As is normal in *The Apocalypse* the final consummation is presented at the beginning. The antitypical Most Holy is revealed *first* in heaven, whilst *afterwards* (in Rev. 16), the means whereby it will attain to that position are set forth.

VERSE 6

"And the seven angels"—These angels represent those who minister on behalf of the saints. They bring about the desirable result described in the previous verses. See Heb. 1:14.

"Came out of the temple"—They are represented as coming out of the Temple because they minister on behalf of the saints, being directed in their duties by Christ (1 Pet. 3:22). They are represented as doing this, even though, when they commence their outpouring of the vials, the Temple is not established in heaven, on the basis of Romans 4:17: "God speaketh of those things which be not as though they are." What God determines shall be done, shall be accomplished without doubt. On that basis, and in that view of the future resurrection, Abraham already lives unto Him (Luke 20:37-38).

"Having the seven plagues"—See note v. 1.

"Clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles"—See note Rev. 1:13. Their clothing emphasises the principles of

priestly ministration in judgment and mercy.

VERSE 7

“One of the four beasts”—This symbol relates to the Redeemed (see note Rev. 4:6). It was last referred to in Rev. 6, where each of the four beasts opens one of the seals of the closed book. Now, after a lapse, it appears again. Brother Thomas suggests that the symbol is withdrawn after the epoch referred to in Rev. 6:7 because at that time the Ecclesia succumbed to increasing apostasy. It is now re-introduced because the judgments about to be poured out upon the nations will complete the epoch of divine wrath (v. 1), and will culminate in the manifestation of the perfected and glorified Ecclesia (whose military emblem comprises the four beasts) in the earth.

“Gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, Who liveth for ever and ever”—The Greek *phials* denotes “bowls.” They are golden bowls because the outpouring of them is connected with faith (Rev. 13:10). The “pouring out” of God’s wrath suggests the rapidity of these final judgments.

VERSE 8

“And the temple was filled with smoke”—The effect of the smoke was to hide the divine glory that would otherwise be revealed. Thus the mani-

festation of glory is temporarily hidden. There were occasions in the past, when a similar happening occurred in relation to the literal Tabernacle and Temple. On the days of dedication, a cloud filled the Tabernacle and Temple so that the priests could not minister on behalf of the people (Exod. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10; Isa. 6:4). The symbol before us, therefore, suggests that there will be no priestly intercession for the nations, no hope for the world, until the divine judgments are completed. There is hope only for individuals who elect to “come out” of it. At the conclusion of the outpouring of the vials, however, the nations will be incorporated into the Kingdom, and will have national access to the Most Holy (Zech. 14:16; Ps. 68:29-32).

“From the glory of God and from His power”—The Divine glory will be hidden, as also will be its power (see Hab. 3:4), which, however, will later be revealed (Isa. 30:27; 33:14).

“And no man was able to enter into the temple”—See the type: Exod. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10. There will be no priestly intercession for the world on a national basis until the judgments are completed. At the conclusion of that time, however, the nations that remain will be invited to worship before the King in Jerusalem, and will find access to the antitypical Most Holy: the Lord Jesus Christ and the Redeemed (Zech. 14:16).

“Till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled”—Until after Armageddon.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE OUTPOURING OF THE VIALS OF WRATH

This important chapter provides details lacking in Revelation 11:13-15 where the “time of the end” is summarised. It outlines by symbol the significance of the international events that followed the French Revolution, and which have played such a compelling part in the development of current events that are leading to Armageddon and the revelation of Christ and the Redeemed in power. Perhaps no other chapter of the Bible is more important than this one in revealing the significance of current events. The first five vials treat with judgments on Europe, by which the Holy Roman Empire was brought to an end. Then attention is diverted to the Middle East, and the part that it is

playing and will continue to do so in developing the time of the end is outlined. Finally, West and East are brought together at the judgment of Armageddon which precedes the final outpouring of judgment on Babylon the Great.

(c) — First Vial — Upon the Earth — vv. 1-2

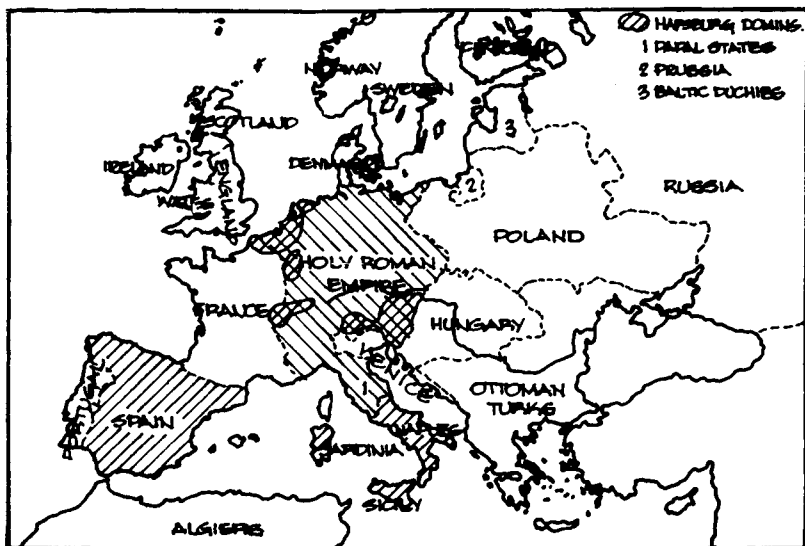
A great voice from the temple commands the seven angels to commence their work of judgment. The first pours out his vial upon those identified with the beast, and they suffer from great ulcers that appear on them.

VERSE 1

“And I heard a great voice out the temple”—The voice, heard from the Temple, is a Divine voice, and its instructions to the seven angels are for the ultimate benefit of the saints, the Temple of God on earth (2 Cor. 6:16). Paul declares that “all things” are for the sake of the elect (2 Cor. 4:15). The great international events that take place are for the benefit of believers, inasmuch as they are steps leading to the final consummation. Accordingly, Christ calls upon his followers to “lift up their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh” when they observe the latter-day fulfilment of prophecy (Luke 21:28). This “great voice” is analogous to the demands of the revolutionaries that resulted in the

French Revolution. It was followed by “a great voice” which issued jointly from nations that confederated against revolutionary France in 1790, and protested against the treatment that had been meted out to Louis XVI and the French nobility. Foreign armies were massed on the borders of France, forcing the revolutionaries to take up the sword against their enemies. The war forced upon France brought to the fore Napoleon, the most successful French general. Despite revolution within and attacks without, his military genius resulted in outstanding victories throughout Europe, and brought for him elevation to the highest position in France. The events of this chapter, therefore, follow on from Rev. 11:13 where the French Revolution is described as “a great earthquake.” It provides details of the “third woe” briefly referred to in Rev. 11:15, 18.

“Saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth”—*The Apocalypse* reveals that the decisive events of history



EUROPE AT THE TIME OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

are under the supervision and guidance of angelic ministration, and are not a matter of chance or caprice. See Dan. 4:17

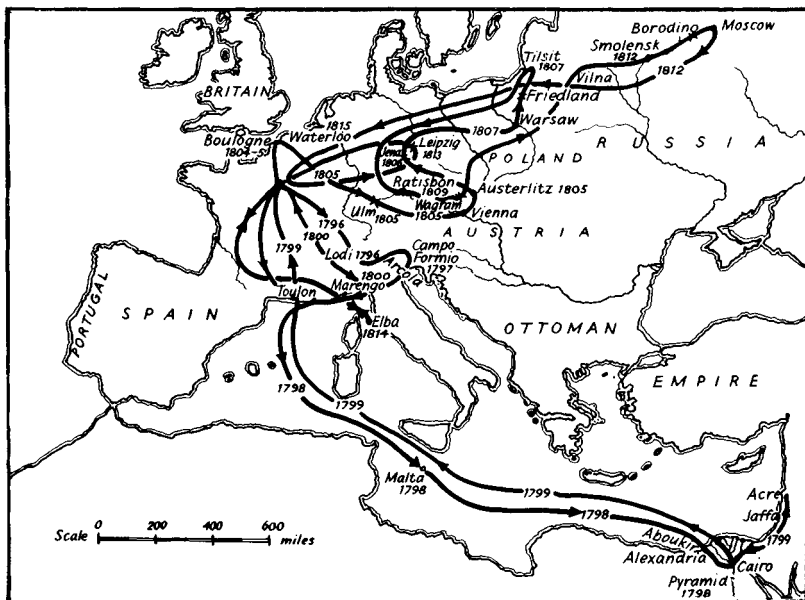
VERSE 2

“And the first went and poured out his vial upon the earth”—The reference is to the Roman “earth” or territory of the Empire (see note Rev. 8:7). The fulfilment of this vial, therefore, was limited to the borders of Europe. Napoleon’s divine commission (of which, of course, he was ignorant) was against Roman Catholic countries.

“And there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men”—“There fell” is literally *there came to pass, or there broke out*. “Noisome” is *kakos* and signifies “evil.” The phrase can be rendered, *an evil, malignant ulcer*. An ulcer is an open running sore resulting from a local inflammation or constitutional irritation which affects the whole body. The “local inflammation” in question was the French Revolution. It basically was a matter of local concern, limited to France, but from there it affected the body-politic of all Europe, and continues to be felt to the present day. The present “distress of nations,” due to industrial disputes and unrest, is directly traceable

to the French Revolution. Its immediate effect, accomplished in the first five vials, was to bring to an end the Holy Roman Empire, after a millenium of rule. It is significant, that Charlemagne’s Frankish Empire established the Holy Roman Empire, and yet afterwards France separated therefrom; and was used by Yahweh to bring to an end the very empire brought into existence by it.

“Which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image”—The “beast” was the Holy Roman Empire, and its “image” was the Papacy. The divine commission which Napoleon unconsciously fulfilled was to so trouble the former as to bring it to an end. He was “a man of destiny,” specifically directed against Roman Catholicism. It is remarkably significant, that whereas he enjoyed outstanding victories so long as he limited his attacks against Roman Catholic countries, he experienced dismal and decisive defeats when he moved beyond the area of such. His Palestinian and Russian campaigns were disastrous, and his quarrel with Protestant England finally encompassed his fall. Meanwhile, the effect of the “malignant ulcer” was felt by all Roman Catholic countries of Europe, as Napoleon marched against



Map showing the chief places of importance in Napoleon's life and the routes he followed in the course of his campaigns.

them, and the continent was engulfed in war.

However, Napoleon was not at first entrusted with control of the armies of Revolutionary France. The enemy at the border had been repulsed by Lafayette and others, who controlled the military forces at the time. The enemies of France found that the spirit of revolution was arising within their own borders; the "malignant ulcer" was spreading throughout Catholic Europe, and their military action against France was weakened by sympathisers with the revolutionaries within. Napoleon was appointed to the command of the armed forces in October 1795, two years after the French Revolution was complete. Counter-revolutionary forces were rising within Paris, and Napoleon was appointed to restrain them. He did so by secretly positioning a cannon on a large square not far from the military barracks, and when a huge armed crowd of 25,000 converged thereon to wrest control from his force of 5,000 men, attacking it by firing the cannon directly into the crowd, by allowing them to taste "a whiff of grapeshot," as he later explained it. Later he was appointed commander of the French army stationed on the Italian border. Austria, the dominant power in Europe at the time, was anxious to crush the new regime. Napoleon was ordered to attack and to destroy this threat. With incredible energy, and outstanding skill, he re-organised the army under him, and invading Italy, won decisive victories against the Austrians who opposed him. As a result, the Austrian domination of Italy was shattered, most of its northern sectors was incorporated into the French Republic, whilst southern Italy came under French influence. Napoleon was honored by France, and supreme control of the army was given into his hands.

(d) — Second Vial — Upon the Sea (v. 3)

The outpouring of this vial brings stagnation to the sea, so that its water becomes as blood, and all life therein dies. It symbolised Napoleon's Middle East campaign, which was defeated by a British blockade of the sea.

VERSE 3

"And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea"—As the conquests of Napoleon and of France extended throughout Europe. Great Britain took

up the challenge. The French proved no match for the British on the seas, and French-dominated Europe was blockaded by the Fleet. The victories of Hood, Howe, Bridport and Nelson from 1793 onwards, established the supremacy of the British navy, and Napoleon found himself isolated in Europe.

The British Navy contributed largely to the defeat of Napoleon in the Middle East. In July 1798, he landed with his army in Egypt and captured Alexandria. He claimed to have come to liberate the Egyptians from the rule of Turkey and the Mamelukes, but strategically, he believed that occupation of the Middle East was necessary to the conquest of the world. By occupying Palestine, he believed that he could move north against Russia, and by a pincer movement from east and west, draw all Europe and Asia into his control. He succeeded on land but was defeated from the sea. His army landed at Alexandria, but his navy was destroyed by Nelson. As Napoleon marched north to Joppa and Acre, he was shadowed by the British navy which harried him off the coast of Palestine. He failed to take Acre and had to retreat towards Egypt. He there determined to abandon the army and return to France to consolidate his position in that nation. Fortunately for him, Turkey sent an army against him in Egypt, which he soundly defeated, so that he returned as a hero.

Napoleon's invasion of the Middle East and his defeat emphasised two principles: (1) The importance of the Middle East in world strategy; (2) The divine decree regarding Napoleon limiting his successes to attacks against "worshippers of the image of the beast" (v. 2), or Roman Catholic countries. Whenever Napoleon exceeded that commission he faced failure. He did so in the Middle East; he did so against Russia; he did so when he took issue with Protestant England.

"It became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea"—The circulation of sea-traffic stagnated as the British navy blockaded Napoleon-dominated Europe.

(e) — Third Vial — Upon the Rivers etc. (vv. 3-7)

This vial is poured out upon the rivers and fountains of waters which become as blood. It symbolised Napoleon's victories

against the Alpine districts and the north of Italy from 1796 onwards.

VERSE 4

“And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters and they became blood”—There is a parallel between the events of the seven trumpets and the seven vials (see p. 21). The same area of Europe as was affected by Napoleon was the scene of the operation of Attila under the third trumpet. The description points to the area north of Italy: to Switzerland and its adjoining highlands. Here the great rivers of western Europe and their tributaries rise. There, and in northern Italy, rivers and lakes abound, so that the description of the “rivers and fountains of waters” point to that area. It was those districts that felt the weight of Napoleon’s attacks.

At that time the map of Europe looked very different from what it does today. The territory which we know as Germany was then made up of numerous states, each with its own ruler and laws. The Italian peninsula was also divided into separate duchies, kingdoms and states. Most of these were under the political domination of Austria.

The spirit of liberty which motivated the French Revolution had crossed the boundaries of France and spread into the surrounding countries. It was opposed by the rulers of those lands who were eager also to destroy the new regime in France. When they aided the Royalists and threatened to invade France, the French retaliated by annexing Belgium and all the German states along the Rhine. Holland became a sister Republic, and Spain, although she remained an independent state, became closely allied to France.

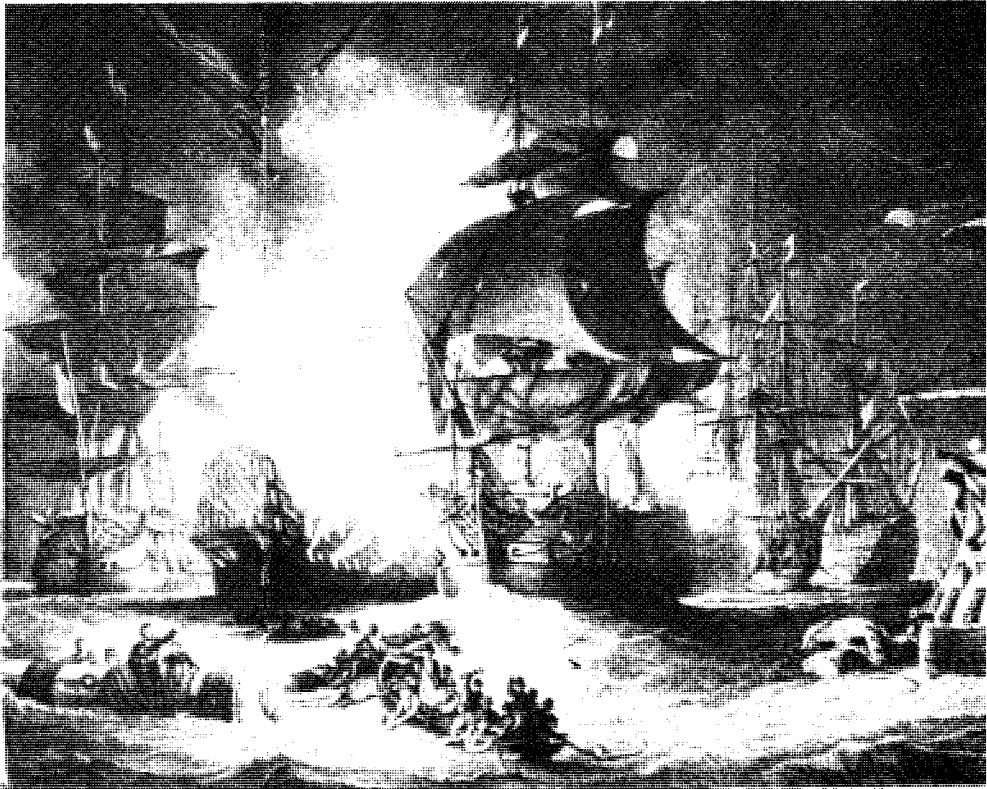
Such was the map of Europe when Napoleon was given command of the Southern Army on the Italian border. Control of the Alpine districts of southern Europe, and domination of Italy, constituted the key to European power. In 1796 Napoleon invaded Italy, and though opposed by an Austrian army (for Austria then was the dominant nation of Central Europe, and its Emperor was also Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire) he decisively defeated it, and invaded the peninsula. His objective was to open an highway from France to Italy via Sardinia. The Papal States trembled before his power, and sued for

peace. It was granted on ignominious terms. Austria resisted. She drew Russia into an alliance to defeat Napoleon, but instead their combined army was soundly beaten.

Between 1796 and 1797, Napoleon won twenty-six battles. His successes made him the hero of the Revolution. He dominated northern Italy as far as Rimini, occupied Florence and Leghorn, compelled the British to evacuate Corsica and merged Milan, Modena and Bologna into the Cisalpine Republic.

Then followed the disastrous Egyptian campaign referred to above, in which Napoleon was defeated by the strength of Britain on the sea. He returned to France to be elevated from General to Ruler, and given the title of First Consul. France was under considerable pressure. Armies were required to guard its borders on all sides. The French army in Italy was in a deplorable condition. It was under attack by the Austrians and was unable to hold the lands which Napoleon had conquered a few years before. The French fourth army in Italy had already suffered several defeats, and the wonderful spirit that Napoleon previously had instilled in the men was now broken. The soldiers were in desperate need of supplies; their leadership had failed, and the coast of Italy was blockaded by the English fleet. Many soldiers left the ranks and wandered off on their own. Whole battalions deserted. The near collapse of the French army in northern Italy opened a direct route into France for the Austrian enemy.

Once again the military genius of Napoleon came to the aid of revolutionary France, and again “the rivers and fountains of waters” ran with blood. On becoming First Consul, Napoleon offered terms of peace to Britain and to Austria, the surviving members of the Second Coalition, only to have them spurned, for the Austrians had regained North Italy except for Genoa, which they were then besieging. Napoleon attacked with speed and skill and at the Battle of Marengo (June 1800) won back North Italy in a single day. Further victories followed, and though the French continued to be beaten by the British on the sea, Napoleon was dominant in Europe. The defeats suffered by the emperor of Austria, who also had the title of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, virtually brought the Empire to an end.



Sea becomes as blood. At the "Battle of the Nile" Nelson defeated the French fleet and Napoleon's army was isolated in Egypt. A nineteenth century engraving showing the French flagship exploding.

VERSE 5

"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shall be"—The Greek text has *ho hosios* "Thou holy one," instead of the last clause. It is an acknowledgement that whatever was done was according to that which is right.

"Because thou hast judged thus"—Despite the agony of the judgment it was right, for only by the outpouring of such will flesh learn to amend its ways (Isa. 26:9-10). As noted above, the wars of Napoleon at this point were extremely important to the development of the divine purpose, for they had weakened the power of the so-called Holy Roman Empire to the point that it was on the verge of collapse.

VERSE 6

"For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy"—Napoleon's commission, as far as God was concerned, was against the papacy, and constituted judgment upon the system because of the manner it had persecuted the saints in the past (Dan. 7:25). The weakening of papal power enabled the non-conformist sects to develop, and ultimately for the Truth to be proclaimed through the labours of Brother Thomas, as a latter-day witness. The outpouring of divine judgment through Napoleon anticipated the final judgment, and complete destruction, of the system by Christ and the saints (Rev. 18.19).

VERSE 7

“And I heard another out of the altar say”—This statement takes us back to the prayer of Rev. 6:9, which is most significant. Those prayers ascended to the Father hundreds of years before Napoleon went forth to devastate Catholic Europe, and so answer them. They continue to be effective in modern times, thus illustrating the power of prayer. The Greek omits the words *another out of* and ascribes the statement to “the altar” alone. The altar is personified as representing Christ and the saints.

“Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments”—See note Rev. 4:8.

(f) — Fourth Vial — Upon the Sun (vv. 8-9).

The vial, poured out upon the sun, symbolised the wars of Napoleon against Austria and the so-called Holy Roman Empire.

VERSE 8

“And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun”—As we learned from our study of the sixth vial (ch. 6:12), the sun is a very appropriate symbol of the supreme or sovereign power of a political universe. In this case, the leading light of the “Holy Roman Empire,” which title and position was held by the Emperor of Austria.

“And power was given unto him”—The word “power” is not in the Greek text, and instead the RV has “it.” There was little of real power manifested by the Emperor of Austria at the time, for he had suffered defeat after defeat at the hands of Napoleon. To retain any power whatever, it was necessary that he resist the French, and the preparations for war that he now entered into caused the “sun” to increase its heat.

“To scorch men with fire”—The Greek is *en fire, within*. He drew men into the fire which scorched them. In Isaiah 42:24-25, “fire” is used as a symbol for war.

VERSE 9

“And men were scorched with great heat”—The margin has *burned* with great heat. War engulfed Europe. On 18th May, 1804, Napoleon was proclaimed Emperor of France. The following year,

Austria, Russia and England declared war on the French. Taking the initiative, Napoleon marched against Austria, and on 2nd Dec. 1805 won a resounding victory at Austerlitz over the combined forces of Austria and Russia. Napoleon was now undisputed ruler of Europe. In 1806, the Holy Roman Empire (over which the Emperor of Austria exercised political authority) was dissolved, and replaced by the German Federation comprising the powers of Central Europe. Prussia entered the lists against Napoleon and was defeated at Jena in October 1806. Russia, honouring its obligations, also marched against Napoleon, but was also defeated and turned back. Everywhere the French were victorious, as men were scorched by the great heat that the war then generated.

“And blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues”—As with the plagues in Egypt, the people failed to recognise in these judgments the punishment of God on the iniquitous papal system, and hardened their hearts by extending to it their sympathy, adoration and help. Even protestant countries like Great Britain, extended the hand of help to the papacy in distress.

“And they repented not to give Him glory”—God’s object in judgment is to mercifully assist those who glorify Him by their repentance; but this the people failed to do.

(f) — Fifth Vial — Upon The Throne Of The Beast — vv. 10-11

The beast referred to here is the papal-dominated “Beast of the earth” with its “two horns like a lamb” but speech “as a dragon” (Ch. 13:11). This is known to history as the Holy Roman Empire. With the defeat of its Austrian Emperor during the fourth-vial period, and the humiliation of the Pope representing its ecclesiastical head, during this vial, the Holy Roman Empire was dissolved after a millenium of blasphemy and violence — and Napoleon’s commission (cp. v. 2) was completed.

VERSE 10

“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast”—The word “seat” is better rendered “throne” as in the R.V. The “beast” referred to is the papal-dominated “beast of the earth” with “two horns like a lamb” though he “spake as a dragon” (Rev. 13:11). This organisation is known to history as the

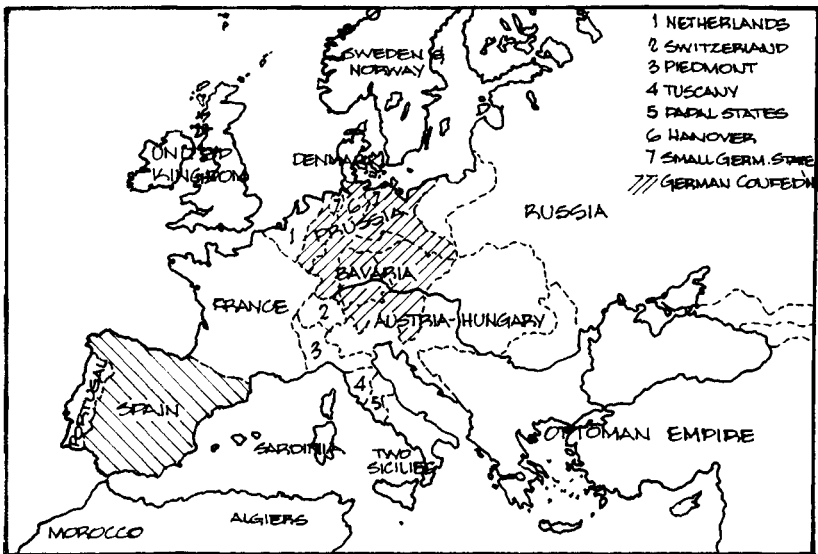
Holy Roman Empire. The civil and religious authority of the beast was vested in the Emperor of Austria and the Pope of Rome respectively. The French Revolution had greatly weakened the power of the Empire and that of the church. Its territorial possessions and monasteries in France were confiscated, and its sacerdotal vestments were publicly burnt. Catholic worship was forbidden. Napoleon's activities in Italy thus aroused the hostility of the Papacy which supported England in its struggle against France, and now issued an edict of excommunication against the French. In retaliation, Napoleon invaded Italy, and in 1798 after a resounding victory demanded of the pope the renunciation of his temporal authority. Upon his refusing to do so, he was taken prisoner by Napoleon and died in exile.

Pope Pius VII was elevated to the papal throne in 1800. Negotiations were opened between Napoleon and Pius, and in 1801 a Concordat was signed. Churches were re-opened, bishops appointed to the vacant sees, and arrangements made for the support of the clergy. In 1805, Napoleon became Emperor, and Pope Pius was summonsed to Paris to

crown him. A few months later Napoleon travelled to Milan and was crowned with the iron crown of the king of the Lombards. He was again opposed by the British, Russians and Austrians, but at the battle of Austerlitz gained an outstanding and decisive victory. It was the year 1806, and it brought to an end the Holy Roman Empire. A few years later, he invaded the Papal States of Italy, and annexed them to the French Empire. He was opposed by the Pope who excommunicated him, but Napoleon took him captive and exiled him first to Savona (in 1809), and later to Fontainebleau. Thus the vial was poured out upon the "seat (throne) of the beast;" for both "horns," the civil and the religious were removed from power.

"And his kingdom was full of darkness"—With Austria overthrown, the Holy Roman Empire brought to an end, and the Pope a prisoner at Fontainebleau where he remained for five years until the defeat of Napoleon, the throne of the beast was plunged into political darkness.

"And they gnawed their tongues for pain"—The opposition of Napoleon to



Europe after the wars of Napoleon – Note that the Holy Roman Empire has entirely disappeared.

the pretensions of the Papacy brought pain and humiliation to the Papacy. The Pope, now a prisoner, was made to pay the expenses of the war; the papal kingdom was extinguished; the Holy Roman Empire was terminated; the two-horned beast was destroyed. Rome, itself was degraded to the status of a second class city in the French Empire.

VERSE 11

“And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores”—The crowning act of blasphemy was the restoration of the Pope in Rome by Protestant Powers including England after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815. They delivered the Pope from captivity; and restored him to the pontifical throne and kingdom, which had cost so much blood and misery to darken. Upon his re-enthronement, the Pope re-iterated such blasphemies as to decree the worship of the virgin Mary, and of the saints of the Romish calendar. Bible societies became special objects of papal wrath. They were declared to be tares in the midst of wheat, and wolves in the guise of lambs. The circulation of the Scriptures unaccompanied by Romish interpretations was denounced by Leo XII in 1824 as poisonous pastures.

Meanwhile, the darkening of the Papal throne, and the demise of the Holy Roman Empire completed the work of Napoleon as far as *The Apocalypse* is concerned. Shortly afterwards, he exceeded the commission Apocalyptically set him (see v. 2) by moving out of the area of Papal influence, and invading Russia. His disastrous defeat laid the foundation for his final overthrow which followed shortly afterwards. His work brought the purpose of God a step forward in that his conquests brought to an end the Holy Roman Empire which had continued for a millenium: a thousand years of blasphemy and violence against those who sought to worship Yahweh according to their conscience.

“And repented not of their deeds”—The purpose of divine judgment is to cause a person to change his ways, but this did not follow on this occasion: there was no real change in attitude on the part of mankind towards God.

(h) — The Sixth Vial: Upon The Euphrates — vv. 12-16

The sixth trumpet saw the inundation of the Euphratean flood over the Middle East (Rev. 9: 13-14); the sixth vial witnesses its complete evaporation. The symbolism of this vial is drawn from the historical account of the taking of Babylon by Cyrus who is set forth as a type of Christ (see Isa. 45:1-5). He diverted the course of the River Euphrates, and entered the city along the dried up river-bed to take Babylon.

VERSE 12

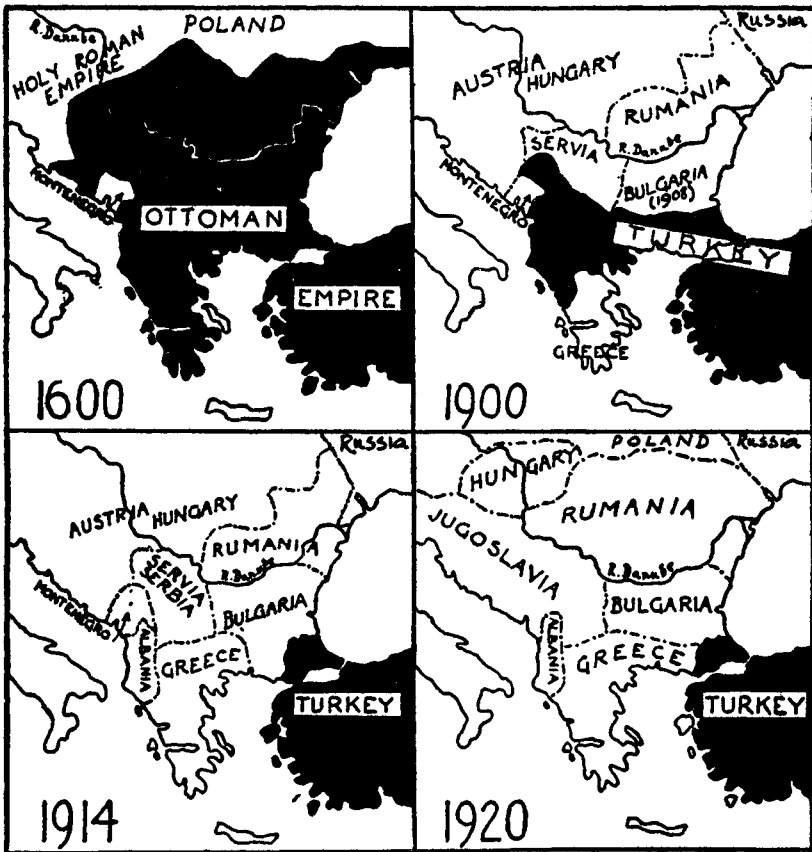
“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates”—The reference is to the Turkish Empire (see notes Rev. 9:13-14). The Euphrates was the principal river of Turkey, as the Nile is that of Egypt, or the Thames that of England.

“And the water thereof was dried up”—The overflowing of a river represents the extension of the power identified with it (see Isa. 8:7-8). On the other hand “drying up” implies a slow, gradual, evaporation of its power and resources. The fulfilment is largely a matter of history. At the height of its power, the Turkish Empire extended deep into Europe, occupied part of southern Russia, dominated the whole of the Middle East, ruled over Egypt and Arabia, and extended throughout North Africa. But gradually the Empire “dried up.” Nation after nation revolted against Turkish rule and obtained their independence. In 1820, Greece rebelled against its Turkish overlord, and in 1827, through the intervention of England, France and Russia, gained its independence. In 1828, war with Russia was followed by the granting of autonomy to Moldavia, Wallachia and Serbia. In 1829 France occupied Algiers in North Africa, until then under Turkish power. In 1832 Egypt revolted and would have obtained its independence but for the intervention of Britain, Russia, Austria and Prussia. In 1842 Algiers was annexed by France. In 1853 the Crimean war between Turkey and Russia seriously weakened the Empire further. A peace was patched up, but war between these two powers broke out again in 1871. In 1881 France annexed Tunis. In 1882 Britain occupied Egypt. In 1897 the Empire was embarrassed by the Graeco-Turkish war. In 1908 Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria claimed

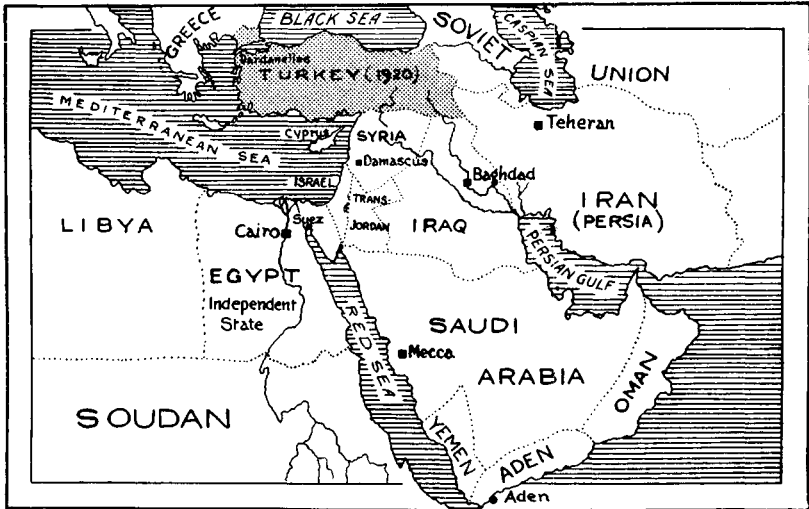
her independence. In 1911 Italy occupied Tripoli. In 1912-13 the Balkan war commenced which reduced Turkey in Europe to a limited zone around Constantinople and Adrianople. In 1914-18 the Great War was fought in which Turkey unexpectedly turned her back upon her traditional allies and fought with the Central Powers. In consequence of this she lost Arabia, Palestine, Syria etc., and had her European territory further reduced to Constantinople. At the same time, the proclamation of the Balfour Declaration opened the doors of Palestine to Jewish exiles. Immediately after World War I, the Turkish Empire became so reduced in power and

influence, that the Empire was terminated, and a Republic. This, too, will be annexed by Russia completing the drying up.

“That the way of the kings of the east might be prepared”—In taking historic Babylon, Cyrus diverted the waters of the river Euphrates so that his soldiers might attack the city along the dried-up bed of the river that ran through it, as predicted by Isaiah (Isa. 44:27). In his prophecy, Isaiah described Cyrus as a “king of the east” (Isa. 41:2), and presented him as a type of the Messiah (Isa. 45:1-4). This forms the



The Decline of Turkey in Europe



The amazing decline of Turkey from 1820 - 1920

basis of the "drying Euphrates" of the chapter before us. The political "river Euphrates" has been partially dried up that the antitypical Cyrus might attack Babylon the Great. The "way" or route is the Middle East, and the Promised Land in particular. Christ will first reveal his power in Jerusalem, and from that centre will move out against "great Babylon" (Rev. 16:19). The political "river Euphrates," the Turkish Empire, was "dried up" from the Land of Promise, the "way" of the verse before us, in 1917 when the British under General Allenby drove the Turks from the land. Since then, with the return of the Jewish exiles, and the revival of Israel, that "way" is in course of preparation.

The term "kings of the east" is from the Greek *anatole helios*, "kings who are out of a sun's risings." Two political "suns" are referred to in this chapter. In v. 8 reference is made to the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire as "the sun," and now the symbol of "the Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2) is applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. The sun is the great illuminator of the earth, and is therefore an apt symbol for the Lord who will enlighten mankind with his glory (see Isa. 60:1; 2 Sam. 23:14; Luke 1:78-79; John 1:9; 9:5; Rev. 10:1). The warmth of the sun after winter causes growth to spring forth from the earth, a symbol of

the resurrection. But as springtime causes both flowers and weeds to appear, so also will the resurrection. The judgment will discriminate between such (see Heb. 6:7-8; 2 Sam. 23:6); the former to reveal their full glory, and the latter to be destroyed.

The "Kings who are out of a sun's rising," therefore, will be those who will be granted immortality at the resurrection, and will live and reign with Christ a thousand years (Rev. 20:4). Christ and the Redeemed will comprise the antitype of Cyrus and his associates who marched to the destruction of Babylon in the days of Belshazzar (Dan. 5; Isa. 45). The way to the world dominion they will exercise is today being "prepared" in the modern developments of Israel.

VERSE 13

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs"—In *Eureka* vol. 3 Bro. Thomas shows that three frogs constituted the heraldic symbol of the French people, in contrast to the three lilies which was the heraldic symbol of the Bourbon rulers of France. Pharamond, who reigned in Treves in 420 adopted the symbol of three frogs on his shield; Childeric, king of the Franks, who reigned in 456, struck a medal displaying the frog as his symbol; the Banner of Clovis (son of Childeric, and first "Christian" king of France —

466-511) displayed the symbol of three frogs as representing the army of France (Tapestry in the Cathedral of Rheims). As the Franks originated from the marshy lands of Westphalia, the symbol of "frogs" is appropriate to the origin of the people. It is used as a common term to identify the French even in modern times. The "frogs" therefore represent the people of France in contrast to its one-time rulers. Their voices were heard for the first time in the noisy agitation of Revolutionary principles with their demands for *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*.

However, John did not see three frogs, but "spirits like frogs." The term "spirit" is used for teaching or doctrine (1 John 4:1-3). The French Revolution developed a doctrine, or teaching, peculiar to it in the Communistic principles that swept Europe as a result. In 1848 these were consolidated by Karl Marx in his *Manifesto Of The Communist Party* which has since so drastically changed the pattern of world politics.

The frog is noted for its rough, harsh, coarse voice; for its habitat in mud; for its endurance of all the vagaries of weather — cold and heat, rain and frost; for its ability to swell its size and distend its cheeks as if in pride; and because its harsh croaking is an harbinger of spring. In the symbol before us, all this has application. The rough, harsh, coarse voice of loquacious agitators, filling the air with their croaking; their delight in mud-raking; their persistence; their false pride and self-importance; whilst, as harbinger of spring, the very agitation that is evidence throughout the earth disturbing, deluding, and seducing the minds of men, the trouble that Communism is inciting among the nations (predicted by the Lord — Luke 21:26) is for those watching the signs of the times, an harbinger of the imminence of Christ's return, and the resurrection: the spring-time of human affairs.

"The history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has shown France to be a storm centre, the direct or indirect cause of most of the wars and revolutions which have happened since the closing years of the eighteenth century. The revolutions of 1789, 1830, and 1848; the wars of Napoleon 1; the intrigues and diplomatic wars of Napoleon 111; and later colonial enterprises and their resultant 'crises'; are the result of the influences of the 'frog-like spirits'."

(*Apocalypse and History*). The instability of the French Government, together with its diplomatic intrigues during the twentieth century has contributed largely to the two world wars that have taken place, as well as to the international dissension that has plagued Europe since.

"Come out of the mouth of the dragon"—A "mouth" is apocalyptically a symbol of government, through which the executive, gives expression to its policy. The "dragon" is the symbol of the military or eastern Roman Empire with its headquarters at Constantinople (Rev. 13:4). In 1453, this city fell to the Ottomans, since when it has formed an important section of the Turkish Empire. For the past 120 years, Russia has shown a keen interest in the destiny of Constantinople, for it is so strategically placed, as to hold the key to the Bosphorus and entrance into the Mediterranean. Bible prophecy not only shows that the Euphratean power is to be dried up, but also that Russia will occupy Constantinople (Dan. 8:23-25; 11:40), at which time the Communistic spirit will emanate as never before, to play a part in agitating the nations, and drawing them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

"Out of the mouth of the beast"—There are two "beasts" referred to in *The Apocalypse*: the beast of the sea, and the beast of the earth (Rev. 13:1,11). The latter beast is referred to in this chapter (v. 10), relating it to the Holy Roman Empire and the Germanic Federation. The headquarters of this was located in Vienna, but with the fall of the Empire, the centre of Germanic influence shifted to Berlin. In any case, the symbol points to Central Europe, which is today dominated by Soviet Russia and its Communistic principles. We can expect the "frog-like spirit" of Communism to emerge from this centre even more virulently in the future to agitate the minds of men and nations as indicated in the prophecy.

"And out of the mouth of the false prophet"—A prophet is one who speaks to edification, exhortation and comfort, and not merely one who predicts events ahead (1 Cor. 14:3). Therefore, a "false prophet" is one who proclaims error (2 Pet. 2:1). The false prophet of the verse before us is the Pope, with his headquarters at Rome. It is significant

that the Communist party in Italy can boast of more members than that of any other country outside of Russia. The unclean spirit of the frogs is frequently heard "croaking" from that centre, playing its part in agitating the nations. It will be the policy of Gog to cause "craft (priestcraft) to prosper" (Dan. 8:25), so that some alliance between Catholicism and Communism can be expected. Such a union will probably be hailed as an evidence of "peace and security," but it will be followed by "sudden destruction" (1 Thess. 5:3). Thus through "peace he shall destroy many" (Dan. 8:25). The recent Russian policy of *detente* illustrates what this statement predicts.

VERSE 14

"For they are the spirits of devils"—The word is *daemons*. In N.T. times, insanity was attributed to one being possessed of a devil (*daemon* — John 7:20). The verse, therefore, signifies that a spirit of madness will take possession of the nations leading to war. This will be stimulated by the three-pronged doctrine of Communism: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, which is really a threefold appeal to the flesh. Jeremiah refers to the insanity of the nations at the time of the end (Jer. 25:16; 51:7), and evidence of it is seen today. At his first advent, the Lord demonstrated his power to "cast out *daemons*," by curing those said to be possessed of such; and he alone has the power to destroy the unclean spirit of insanity stemming from Communism that is affecting nations today.

"Working miracles"—The Greek word *semeion* signifies signs, marks, or tokens. The RV renders this as "working signs," the signs being the signs of the times. Among the "signs" is the unification of Europe into two sections: the Common Market in the West, and the Communist bloc in the East. By this means the feet of the image are forming in preparation for it to stand up.

"Which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world"—The word "world" is *okoumenee*. Concerning this word, *The Dictionary of New Testament Theology* states: "This word was used in the Roman period for the *Imperium Romanum*, the lands under Roman rule. In other words, what had originally been a geographical and cultural concept had become a political concept in the Roman period. The

Emperor Nero was entitled *soter* (saviour) and *euergetes* (benefactor) of the *okoumenee*."

The Greek text reads: "Kings of the habitable whole." The latter word is from *holos* signifying "completely, altogether, and by analogy, everywhere." The statement therefore, implies that the doctrines of the frogs (the principles of Communism), go forth first to influence the area of Europe, the Roman Habitable, and from thence to the entire world.

"To gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty"—The word "battle" (*polemos*) is better translated "war" and is so rendered by the RV. The conquest of the nations by Christ will be a protracted war, and will not be resolved by one conflict. The destruction of Gog's forces will clear the Promised Land of the enemy, but it will still be necessary to overthrow opposition to the Lord elsewhere (see Rev. 17:14). There are three main stages in this war. First, the conquest of the south (Egypt, Arabia etc.), then the overthrow of Gog, finally the subjugation of Catholic Europe. The destruction of the Image seen by Nebuchadnezzar is shown in three stages: broken by the stone; ground to powder by the mountain; swept away by the wind.

The war is called that of "the great day of God Almighty," for it will witness the vindication of His promises throughout the earth. The prophets speak extensively of this coming Day of Yahweh. See Isaiah 2:12; Mal. 4:1; Zech. 14:1. References to the Day of Yahweh are found frequently throughout the closing chapters of Zechariah's prophecy: Zech. 12:3,4,6,8,9,11; 13:1,2,4; 14:1,4,6,8,9,13,20,21. Isaiah declares that Yahweh "waits" for that day (Isa. 30:8); for it is the "day" when He will judge the world in righteousness through Christ (Acts 17:31). In the three closing chapters of Zechariah where reference to "the Day of Yahweh" is so frequent, the nations are mentioned 13 times, Jerusalem 22 times, and Yahweh 30 times. It will be His day, in which Jerusalem will be elevated, and the nations humiliated.

VERSE 15

"Behold I come as a thief"—The Lord will return secretly, unheralded, at a time when the nations are manifesting a warlike belligerent attitude such as they are today. See Christ's exhortation: Matt.

24:43; Luke 21:34-36. See also 1 Thess. 5:2; 1 Pet. 3:10.

"Blessed is he that watcheth"—The word "blessed" signifies "happy." True happiness is found only in the things of God. They provide substantial and joyous benefits now (Heb. 11:1; Phil. 4:4-7), whilst promising outstanding blessings for the future (Heb. 11:39-40).

The word "watcheth" is from the Greek *gregoreo* and signifies "to keep awake." See Christ's exhortation—Luke 21:36, and the notes on this word at Rev. 3:3.

"And keepeth his garments"—The word *tereo* signifies "to watch over, preserve guard." This is a personal responsibility. See Jude 23. For "garments" see note at Rev. 3:4. Contrast Gen. 3:10-11 with Lev. 23:27 (where "atonement" signifies "coverings"); Isa. 61:10; Matt. 22:11; Gal. 3:26-28.

The reference to "keeping garments" may be derived from the custom relating to the Temple guard. According to Edersheim, "During the night, the captain of the Temple made his rounds. On his approach the guards had to arise and salute him in a particular manner. Any guard found asleep when on duty was beaten, or his garments were set on fire. The confession of one of the Rabbins is on record that, on a certain occasion, his own maternal uncle had actually undergone the punishment of having his clothes set on fire by the captains of the guard."

"Lest he walk naked, and they see his shame"—To walk naked is to be rejected at the Judgment Seat, and so denied the clothing of immortality (see 2 Cor. 5:3). It is of significance that the word "naked" links the warning of this verse with the warning given to the Laodiceans (Rev. 3:17). This implies the great possibility of the community of believers living at the time of Christ's coming, being found in a Laodicean state. To walk naked is a disgrace. See the note from Edersheim above.

VERSE 16

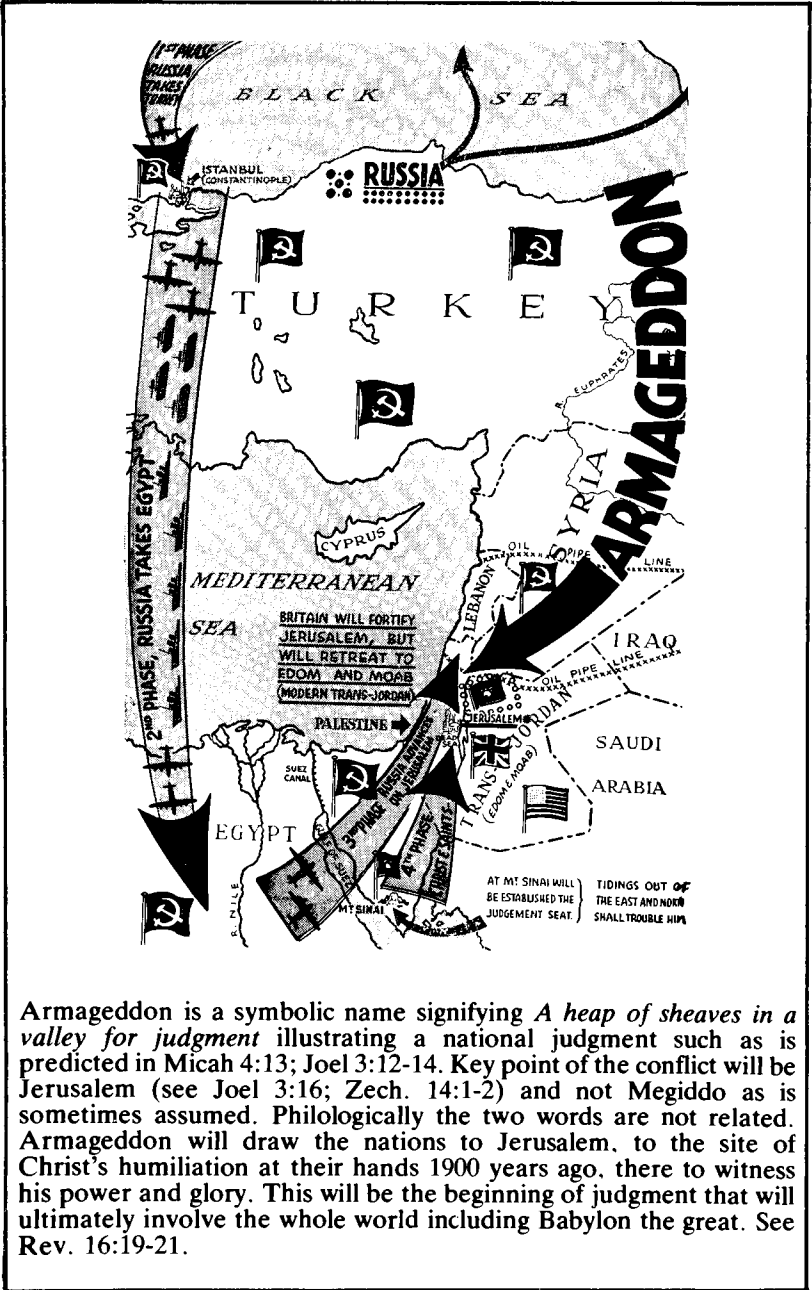
"And he gathered them together"—The "he" relates to the angel of the sixth vial, who acts under the direction of Christ (Matt. 28:18; 1 Pet. 3:22). The gathering is to Jerusalem (Isa. 66:18; Joel 3:2; Zeph. 3:8; Micah 4:11; Zech. 14:1).

"Into a place called in the Hebrew

tongue"—This statement is very important. It implies that the name *Armageddon* is to be interpreted according to the Hebrew language and not according to the Greek. This further implies the revival of the Hebrew language at the time of the end (see Zeph. 3:9), as has been the case. Finally, it indicates that the locality in question is found in the land of the Hebrews, i.e. modern Israel.

"Armageddon"—Much has been written upon this interesting word that is not in accordance with the statement before us. It has been generally identified with Megiddo, but, in fact, the word is not philologically related to that word. The Greek has *Megidon* (a single "d"), not Megiddo; and the RV has Harmagedon, which some interpret as *Mountain of Megiddo*, but there is no such place mentioned in the O.T. The Bible does mention a Valley of Megiddo (2 Chron. 35:22); and Zechariah refers to the "mourning of the valley of Megiddo" as being typical of the mourning that shall take place among the Jews when they perceive their past blindness in relation to the Messiah (Zech. 12:11). But there is no mention of a Mountain of Megidon (following the Greek), and even Megiddo is in the plain of Esdraelon. Moreover, the O.T. prophecies do not refer to a gathering of the nations to Megiddo at the time of the end, but always to Jerusalem (see references above).

In accordance with the instructions of the verse before us, we must turn to the Hebrew language for the significance of the name. Then we find that the word, like *Euphrates* is expressive, not of a literal place, but of a symbol representative of the swift and overwhelming judgment and destruction that shall overtake all those who are gathered together against God's people, as the nations will be at Jerusalem. Turning to the Hebrew, Brother Thomas suggests that the word is compounded of three Hebrew words: *Arma* from Hebrew *Arema*, signifying a heap of sheaves; *ge* from *gai* denoting a valley, and *don* for *dun* or *judgment*. The word then bears the meaning of *A heap of sheaves in a valley for judgment*. This is the very description given by the prophecies for the nations gathered together to Jerusalem at the time of the end. (Zech. 14:1). A decisive battle will take place in the valley of Jehoshaphat (or *Yahweh's*



Armageddon is a symbolic name signifying *A heap of sheaves in a valley for judgment* illustrating a national judgment such as is predicted in Micah 4:13; Joel 3:12-14. Key point of the conflict will be Jerusalem (see Joel 3:16; Zech. 14:1-2) and not Megiddo as is sometimes assumed. Philologically the two words are not related. Armageddon will draw the nations to Jerusalem, to the site of Christ's humiliation at their hands 1900 years ago, there to witness his power and glory. This will be the beginning of judgment that will ultimately involve the whole world including Babylon the great. See Rev. 16:19-21.

judgment), and there they will be threshed (Joel 3:2,12,14; Mic. 4:11-12). Immediately the statement of *The Apocalypse* ties in with those of the O.T. prophecies. The Valley of Jehoshaphat (or *Yahweh's Judgment*) is just outside of Jerusalem. In the past, it has been from the heights overlooking that very valley that Jerusalem's conquerors have established their headquarters. On Mount Scopus, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Vespasian and Titus each in turn did so in order to attack the city. And here, too, according to Daniel's prophecy (Ch. 11:45) the king of the north will do so before "coming to his end with none to help him." Armageddon, therefore, is a symbolic name indicating that the nations will be gathered together for the purpose of divine judgment. The prophecies show that the place where Christ will manifest his power against Gog will be at Jerusalem, not Megiddo.

(i) — The Seventh Vial: Conquest of the Nations — vv. 17-21

The nations are gathered to Armageddon during the period of the sixth vial, but judgment overwhelms them during the outpouring of the seventh. As the state of the nations already answers to that described by the sixth vial, how close are we to the return of the Lord! The outpouring of the seventh vial sees the world convulsed in trouble, with a political earthquake overwhelming the existing order of things. Babylon the Great is divided into three parts, and heavy judgments fall upon those supporting this system.

VERSE 17

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air"—As reference is made to symbolic "waters" in v. 12, so it is to the symbolic "air" in this statement. It, perhaps, is significant that man has penetrated the firmament, and that war in the air is a feature of modern battles, but reference is mainly to the political aerial. The judgments to be poured out at Christ's return will not be limited to one section of the globe, but will involve all, and will overthrow all fleshly governments and ruling systems. The sun of the political heavens was darkened during the outpouring of the fifth vial (v. 10), but now the very political firmament is to be overwhelmed in judgment. In Bible symbology, sun, moon and stars repre-

sent civil and ecclesiastical systems of government and their statesmen; whilst the earth refers to the governed, the ruled, or the common people. Accordingly the symbolic "air" relates to the upper stratas of society: the places where the political sun and moon and stars are found.

The significance of this symbolism is explained by Paul in his *Epistle to the Ephesians*. He describes believers as being already elevated into the "heavenlies" in Christ (Eph. 1:3; 2:6) in preparation for the time "in the ages to come" (Eph. 2:7) when the fulness of God's purpose in them will be revealed. In the meantime, they engage upon a war of words with the world, in setting forth the hope of the Gospel in opposition to the political aspirations of the "principalities and powers" established in the current "heavenlies" (see Eph. 3:10). In doing so, they wield the "sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" effectively (Eph. 6:17). At present, the "heavenlies" are occupied by the "rulers of the darkness of the world," (*Kosmos* or present order of things). However, as the events of the seventh vial reveal, they are to be ejected from their places of authority, and their positions taken over by Christ and his saints then clothed with immortality. When that happens, the Redeemed will be elevated into the political air there to be "ever with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17).

It is that aerial that will feel the effects of the outpouring of the seventh vial. Divine judgment upon the nations will completely change the order of society. The governmental functions of the flesh will be replaced by a divine system. Every form of Gentile rule will be supplanted.

"And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven"—The words of *heaven* are missing from the Greek text. The temple relates to the glorified Redeemed. See note Rev. 15:5.

"From the throne"—The Temple, or Most Holy, symbolises Christ and the saints in glory, for it was in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle and the Temple of the past, that the glory of Yahweh was manifested. The term "throne," indicates the status of the Redeemed. They shall rule as a royal priesthood on earth (Rev. 5:9; 20:4). Following the defeat of Gog, Christ's authority will be set up in Jerusalem, and the throne of David will

be restored (Luke 1:32-33; Acts 15:16; Jer. 3:17). It is from that throne that the decrees of the future age will be proclaimed (Isa. 2:2-4).

"Saying, It is done"—This proclamation is a quotation from Ezekiel 39:8. It announces the completion of the initial judgment of the great Day of Yahweh by which the Holy Land will be cleansed of Gentile influence. See Isa. 44:23.

VERSE 18

"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings"—These are symbols representing decrees or ultimatums, warfare, and the manifestation of spirit power. Such will issue forth from the throne, as directed by Christ. See the similar language of Rev. 4:5, and consider the notes at that place. Following the overthrow of Gog, an ultimatum will be issued to the nations commanding them to submit to the rule of Christ (Rev. 14:6-7). Those that accept the invitation will be incorporated as mortals in the universal empire to be established by the Lord; those that reject it will be forcibly compelled to obey or will be destroyed. (Isa. 60:12).

"And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great"—There will be both literal and political earthquakes of unprecedented extent at the apocalypse of the Lord Jesus. The literal earthquake will alter the topography of the Holy Land, elevating Mount Zion (Isa. 2:19; Ezek. 38:19; Zech. 14:4), and plunging Rome into the abyss (Rev. 18:21). The political earthquake will completely destroy the existing political, social and religious orders and replace them with a divine theocracy on earth. Israel will be completely restored (for this "earthquake" see Ezekiel 37:7); the rule of flesh will give place to the Kingdom of God (for this "earthquake" see Haggai 2:6-8); and the institutions of man will be replaced by those of Christ (for this "earthquake" see Joel 3:16). For the four symbolic "earthquakes" referred to in *The Apocalypse* see notes at Rev. 6:12; 8:5; 11:13.

VERSE 19

"And the great city"—Mystical Babylon, described in greater detail in the following chapters. See also Rev. 14:8.

"Was divided into three parts"—These three parts seem to answer to the dragon, beast, and false prophet of v. 13 (see also Rev. 19:20; 20:2), and relate to the military, economic, and religious sections of humanity at the time of the return. Russia in occupation of Constantinople will assume the status of the Dragon, and will be first overthrown. This will be followed by the destruction of Rome, the headquarters of the "false prophet," and finally by the overthrow of the Catholic powers of Europe, or the latter-day manifestation of "the beast."

"And the cities of the nations fell"—The nations will be identified by the cities (such as Constantinople and Rome) with which they will be allied. As the nations fall so also will the cities with which they will be identified.

"And great Babylon came in remembrance before God"—See Rev. 18:5,6,24

"To give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath"—See note Rev. 14:10.

VERSE 20

"And every island fled away"—All insularity will cease when Christ's universal kingdom is set up. An island is separated from the mainland by water, and in the language of symbology, represents an independent nation. All such independencies shall be brought to an end; all nations will be made subject to the control of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

"And the mountains were not found"—Mountains are symbols of Empires (Jer. 51:25) These will all be swallowed up in the great earthquake to be supplanted by the great Mountain of Christ's Kingdom (Dan. 2:35, 44-45).

VERSE 21

"And there fell upon men a great hail"—In Isa. 28:2; 30:30; Ezek. 13:11 the Redeemed in belligerent manifestation; and though there will be a literal storm at the apocalypse of Christ in power (Ezek. 38:22), in which he will use the elements to complete the destruction of Gog's forces (Ezek. 38:22), the term is obviously used symbolically in this verse.

"Out of heaven"—The political heavens where the Redeemed will then be established in power.

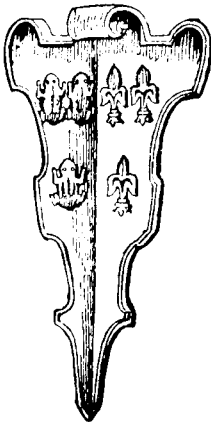
“Every stone about the weight of a talent”—The “hail” represents the army of the saints, and their qualifications are described in talents (Matt. 25:15), to indicate their ability to conquer the enemy. Their combined weight will fall upon the world of the ungodly and destroy its influence. The talent was the largest weight known to the Hebrews, and weighed about 125 lb. troy weight. It comes from the Hebrew word, *kikkar* signifying a circle, and thus is suggestive of eternal life. It is thought that the Hebrew word was used because the talent was taken as “a round number,” or sum total.

A significant reference to the talent is found in the measurements of the Tabernacle, and as the saints are related to the Most Holy in the chapter before us, it is surely appropriate to the symbolism of it. There were forty sockets of silver under twenty boards in the Tabernacle, and forty tenons fitted into the sockets. Each socket was made of a talent of silver, and represented the redemption payment of six thousand men (Exod. 38:25-27), so that each board represented twelve thousand men (cp. Rev. 21:16). The significant feature is that the word “sockets” is a plural form

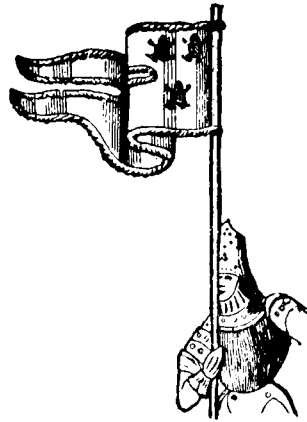
of the word *Adon*, and therefore signifies “rulers,” in the sense of strength. They governed the boards, causing them to stand upright. The word “tenons” is *yadoth*, or “hands,” so that the figure of the Tabernacle, represented hands outstretched to take hold of rulers. The reference to “talents” in the passage before us therefore is most significant. It implies that the army of immortals that will crush the sin power will be composed of rulers who will afterwards provide the foundation for the centre of worship of all mankind.

“And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail”—The men referred to denote those who continue to hold to Rome, or Babylon, in the day of national judgment. That system cannot be converted, and will be completely blotted out (Dan. 7:11; Isa. 60:12).

“For the plague thereof was exceeding great”—The calamity will be great and terrible. It will represent a “time of trouble such as never was” (Dan. 12:1-2), with a final destruction of Babylon that will be complete and awful. The conversion of the system is not possible; its annihilation is sure.



Armorial Shield of Clovis.



The Banner of Clovis.

Symbol of the French Democracy

(6) THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT WHORE AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE LAMB

Chapters 17-20

These chapters describe in greater detail the outpouring of the seventh vial of divine wrath as it effects Babylon the Great, as well as outlining the marriage of the Lamb, and Christ's final conquests.

John is conveyed into a wilderness and is shown Babylon the Great first in power and then in destruction. This is followed by a description of the Marriage of the Lamb, the conquest of the beast, and the binding and ultimate destruction of Satan. The section can be epitomised:

- (a) *Babylon the Great Destroyed*
 - The System Described.....17: 1-18*
 - The System Destroyed.....18: 1-24*
- (b) *The Marriage Of The Lamb*
 - The Marriage Come.....19: 1- 8*
 - The Marriage Celebrated.....19: 9-10*
- (c) *The Final Conquests Of The Lamb*
 - The Beast and False Prophet Destroyed.....19:11-21*
 - The Dragon (Satan) Bound.....20: 1- 6*
 - The Dragon (Satan) Destroyed.....20: 7-15*

This sixth section of the Apocalypse sees the end of the reign of flesh. As six is the number of man, it is appropriate that it should do so.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE HARLOT SYSTEM OF ROME DESCRIBED

This chapter commences a more detailed description of the formidable anti-Christ power briefly referred to in the last chapter. John is conveyed into a wilderness where he sees a profligate woman seated upon a beast, with a caption on her head identifying her with Babylon the Great. He describes her appearance as well as that of the beast upon which she rides. He then outlines the vacillating attitude of the beast towards her, and the manner in which it ultimately will attack the Lamb only to be overthrown. The awful description given of the woman of this chapter reveals the way in which Rome is viewed by the Father and the Son. Despite its glamour and the title of "Christian" with which it has labelled itself, it is revealed as nothing more than a whore, drunken by excess of pleasure and power.

(a) — The System Described — vv. 1-8

A description of Babylon the Great is given that astonishes John and reveals the full measure of its iniquity in the sight of God.

VERSE 1

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me"—This angel doubtless was the seventh because the outpouring of his vial had to deal with Babylon. As the seventh angel, he is the angel of the covenant, and because the covenant requires it, Babylon will be judged and destroyed.

"Saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee"—As in the case of Daniel (Dan. 10:12), the angel noticed the bewilderment of John and sought to give him further enlightenment.

"The judgment of the great whore"—A whore is an unfaithful woman. And as, in Bible symbology, the Ecclesia is likened to a "chaste virgin in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2), unfaithfulness towards him is likened to harlotry (James 4:4; Rev. 2:20). In Rev. 12:1-2 the Ecclesia is described as being "with child," due to her unfaithful association with the world. In the chapter before us, the full extent of her wickedness is made obvious. It is sobering to realise that Babylon the Great developed out of the Ecclesia. The apostasy commenced by an early,

relatively unimportant declension from the faith, which not being properly checked, found its final growth in the heartless, wicked system presented in this chapter as a drunken whore.

"That sitteth upon many waters"—The same description is given of historic Babylon (Jer. 51:13), for its wealth was derived by the Euphrates and its vast system of canals. In a figurative sense, the waters represented nations, and it exercised world influence. The symbology before us not only reveals that Babylon the Great is representative of an apostate religious system, but that it is international in its influence; it dominates "many waters," or nations.

VERSE 2

"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication"—Her influence is found in high political circles. The figure of a harlot committing fornication occurs frequently in the prophets, representing the defection of God's people and their attachment to other forms of worship (Cp. Isa. 1:21; Jer. 2:20; 3:1, 6, 8; Ezek. 16:15-16 etc; Hos. 2:5; 3:3; 4:14).

"And the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk"—The influence of the system has been found among the people as well as in diplomatic circles; it has involved all classes in its wickedness (see Rev. 14:8).

“With the wine of her fornication”—See Rev. 18:3. The so-called “Christian” nations have deeply drunk of the heady, stupefying, adulterated wine of Rome’s doctrine. Similar language is used of historic Babylon (Jer. 51:7). Pure wine is used in Scripture to illustrate the influence of divine truth (Isa. 55:1), but mixed, adulterated wine, “wine of fornication,” or wine used to break down moral restraint, is symbolic of false teaching.

VERSE 3

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness”—John was conveyed to “the wilderness of the people” (Ezek. 20:35). The Gentiles constitute a spiritual wilderness inhabited by wild beasts, with spiritual oases few and far between (see Amos 8:11-12). The “wilderness” to where John was conveyed was Europe, which, as far as the truth is concerned, is as a howling wilderness.

“And I saw a woman”—The figure of a woman is frequently used to symbolise an ecclesiastical system (2 Cor. 11:1-2; Eph. 5:31-32). But this woman was not a virgin.

“Sit upon a scarlet coloured beast”—She sits upon it to manage and guide it. It is scarlet in colour because of its association with sin (Isa. 1:18). As a “beast” it is identified with the “beast of the sea” of Rev. 13:1. The prophecy demands, therefore, a revival of the political organisation of the “beast” at the time of the end, as guided and managed by the woman. Current developments in Europe point to this. The E.E.C. (or Common Market) is combining the nations of Western Europe in a manner reminiscent of the Western Roman Empire, and is creating an organisation answering to the “beast” of Rev. 13. We may well expect the influence of Rome to increase as suggested by this prophecy.

“Full of the names of blasphemy”—See note Rev. 13:1. The “names of blasphemy” caption the Roman Catholic system, as the one name of Yahweh does that of the Redeemed (see Rev. 14:1).

“Having seven heads and ten horns”—See vv. 7,9.

VERSE 4

“And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour”—The woman is

identified with Rome (see v. 18), which is noted for these very colours. The outward display of splendour and luxury on the part of the Catholic system hides the real character of its wickedness. But see Rev. 18:24. The colours have a religious significance: purple represents God-manifestation; scarlet represents sacrifice (Exod. 25:4), but on the whore they only camouflage her real character.

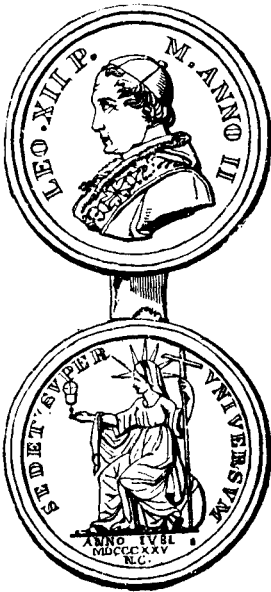
“Decked with gold and precious stones and pearls”—The margin gives the word as “gilded.” These baubles are the decorations with which her officials, styled the “princes of the church” are distinguished. The system is “gilded” with such. It is not noted for true gold, which is a symbol of faith, nor of true precious stones and pearls which likewise have spiritual significance, but for the display of pseudo-qualities which, in fact, only hides her true state.

“Having a golden cup in her hand”—This cup, with its intoxicating contents, is designed to attract her votaries. She offers it desiring them to drink of it so as to reduce their resistance to wickedness, and so commit fornication with her. See the similar description applied to historic Babylon (Jer. 51:7). Pope Leo 12 had medals struck showing the Papacy as a woman holding forth a cup.

“Full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication”—The Greek *bdelugmaton* (abominations) is used in the Septuagint for idols (2 Kings 23:13) and idolatry (Deut. 18:9). The word signifies an object of disgust (cp. Matt. 24:15). Rome is noted for her idolatry, which is disgusting to those possessing the truth. “Filthiness” denotes “uncleanness.” The image is that of papal Rome, represented as an abandoned woman in gorgeous attire, alluring by her arts the nations of the earth, and seducing them into all kinds of moral pollution.

VERSE 5

“And upon her forehead was a name written”—Contrast with the name inscribed on the gold band worn by the high priest (Exod. 28:36), as well as that with which the Redeemed are identified (Rev. 14:1). Such a name is on the “forehead” to indicate that it dominates the thinking of those associated therewith. See this demonstrated in the incident recorded in 2 Chron. 26:19. Uzziah tried to force his way into the Temple which it was not



It is a most remarkable fact that the Papacy, as if *designing* to furnish a fulfilment of this prophecy, has chosen to represent itself almost precisely in this manner — as a female extending an alluring cup to passers by — as will be seen by this engraving. Far as the design of striking this medal may have been from confirming this portion of the book of Revelation, yet no one can fail to see that if this *had* been the design, no more happy illustration could have been adopted.

THE "WOMAN" WITH THE GOLDEN CUP.
Two remarkable Medals.



*Struck by Pope Innocent XI.
in 1680*



*Struck by Pope Leo XII.
in 1825.*

lawful for him to do, and was opposed by Azariah the high priest. Yahweh intervened, and the forehead of the king was smitten with leprosy as indicative of his thinking. The king, with the mark of leprosy in his forehead, was opposed by the high priest wearing the band of gold inscribing "Holiness to Yahweh." The one acted as a contrast to the other.

"Mystery, Babylon the Great"—The woman is identified with Rome (v. 18), and therefore with Roman Catholicism. The papal system represents the perfecting of that "mystery of iniquity" that was working even in Apostolic times (2 Thess. 2:7), but whose full manifestation was hindered by paganism. The Catholic system specialises in mystery. Its

very appearance — its monasteries, convents, priests and nuns suggest “mystery.” It is claimed that the word *mystery* was once engraven on the Pope’s tiara, but was removed by Pope Julius 111 because of embarrassing Protestant comment. Gibbon in *The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire* (Ch. 51) refers to “The creed of *mystery* and superstition which in the seventh century disgraced the simplicity of the gospel. . . .” To the Hebrew the name *Babylon* signifies *confusion* as resulting from the confounding of tongues that took place there as result of apostasy (Gen. 11:9), but in the Chaldean language it signifies *The Gate Of God*. How true of the system suggested by the symbol! To its votaries, Roman Catholicism comprises the Gateway to God; but to those initiated in the Truth it denotes complete spiritual confusion.

“**The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the earth**”—Rome always claims to be the “Mother Church,” recognising as her rather disobedient daughters, the State churches of the world. The Tridentine Council described the papacy in such terms, stating: “The Roman Church is the Mother and Mistress of all churches.” Her harlot daughters have been brought to the birth by her adulterous union with the “kings of the earth.” The establishing of the Church of England is a case in point. Originally, it was Roman Catholic, but because Rome refused the request of King Henry VIII for a divorce, he set up the Church of England as distinct from that of Rome, and refused to acknowledge the authority of the Pope. All State Protestant Churches teach the basic doctrines of Rome in greater or lesser degree; whilst many of the ceremonies and beliefs of the mother church can be traced back to pagan Babylon. Gibbon (Ch. 47) observes:

“During the ten centuries of blindness and servitude, Europe received her religious opinions from the oracles of the Vatican, and the same doctrine, already tarnished with the rust of antiquity was admitted without dispute into the creed of the reformers who disclaimed the supremacy of the Roman pontiff. The synod of Chalcedon still triumphs in the Protestant churches. . . .”

VERSE 6

“**And I saw the woman drunken with**

the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus”—She is seen intoxicated with the success of her campaigns against those who opposed her teaching. The most ruthless brutality of the Inquisition, involving both torture and death, was used by Rome to enforce its will.

“**And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration**”—“Admiration” is a wrong word in such a context as this, and should be replaced by the word “astonishment,” or “wonderment.” John was astonished at an organisation claiming to be Christian being guilty of such wickedness. John did not admire what he saw.

VERSE 7

“**And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns**”—Noticing the confusion and astonishment of John, the angel proposes to give him an explanation of the vision.

VERSE 8

“**The beast which thou sawest was, and is not**”—The beast is thus identified with that which had appeared in a previous vision, namely, the “beast of the sea” of Ch. 13 with seven heads and ten horns, but with certain additional particulars. In *Eureka*, Brother Thomas comments: “The beast of the sea in Ch. 13 was the polity it represents in its origin; but the beast of the abyss of Ch. 17, is the same polity in the last thirty years or ‘one hour’ of its existence, and previous to its arrival at the ‘perdition’ into which it goes away.” In John’s day, though the beast that he saw was that which had already been shown in vision in Ch. 13, it had not then been historically manifested, though it was subsequently. As this “beast” goes into perdition, it must yet be manifested in its fulness.

“**And shall ascend out of the bottomless pit**”—This symbol describes the mass of humanity. See Notes at Rev. 9:1; 11:7.

“**And go into perdition**”—Perdition is *apoleia* in Greek, and denotes destruction. This beast is identified with the papal political system, which, according to 2 Thess. 2:38, shall be destroyed by Christ at his coming.

“**And they that dwell on earth shall**

wonder—As John was astonished at the depraved, bloodthirsty state to which Christianity was reduced according to the symbol showed him (cp. v. 6), so the world will be startled at Christ's destruction of a system claiming him as its Lord.

"Whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world"—See note Rev. 13:8. It is only those who hold the truth in its purity who are able to recognise the complete depravity of the Papal system.

"When they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is"—The *Diaglott* renders the last section of this statement as *shall be present*, that is, shall be revealed. The prophecy thus requires the re-appearance in the earth of a European system answering to the "beast of the sea" of Rev. 13. The system must have individual autonomy for the powers represented in it, answer to the ten kings (v. 12), and must yet be banded together, and guided by Papal influence. The E. E. C. or Common Market is currently developing such a system. Moreover, the Common Market was brought into existence by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. In this manner, the "beast" is gradually forming.

VERSE 9

"And here is the mind which hath wisdom"—See Rev. 13:8. Wisdom is shown in seeking out the meaning of these symbols, and observing the signs of the times in relation to them.

"The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth"—Rome was founded on seven hills, thus identifying it with the symbol before us.

VERSE 10

"And there are seven kings"—See note Rev. 12:3.

"Five are fallen"—Five forms of government by which Rome was ruled had passed away at the time the revelation was given to John.

"And one is"—In the days of John, Rome was governed by an imperial form of rule.

"And the other is not yet come"—The imperial form of government was supplanted by Gothic rule as explained elsewhere.

"And when he cometh, he must continue a short space"—The Imperial

form of government was followed by the Gothic which continued for a short period of time. See notes on Rev. 13:1-3.

VERSE 11

"And the beast that was and is not"—See v. 8.

"Even he is the eighth, and is of the seven"—The pattern is revealed in Rev. 13:1-4. The sixth head of the beast was wounded to death by the invasion of the Goths, and their assumption of power in Rome. They were Arian rulers and opposed to the Papacy. However, after about sixty years of Gothic rule, the "deadly wound of the beast was healed" by the military power of Justinian who established the Papacy firmly into place, and who demonstrated such ability as to cause his enemies to fear his power (cp. Rev. 13:4). John is now shown that the past in relation to the Papacy forms the pattern of the future, and that a revival of Papal influence linked with the military power of Constantinople, can be anticipated. This requires that Russia occupy Constantinople, so as to revive the dragon once again, and that a confederacy between Communism and Catholicism, between Rome and Constantinople must ensure as it did previously. Such a fusion of interests is anticipated by Daniel in Ch. 8:25, for writing of the "little horn of the goat" (the military power established in Constantinople) in its latter day manifestation, the prophet declares: "His policy also shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many." The word "craft" is from the Hebrew *mirmah* and signifies "deceit, fraud." It is rendered by the RV as "deceit," and it is used in Jer. 9:6 in relation to religion. The policy of this "king of fierce countenance," therefore, will be to cause priestcraft to prosper, and though many shall be destroyed in the process, he will so confederate Europe as to cause the cry of "peace and safety" to ascend (1 Thess. 5:3); but this will be followed by the "sudden destruction" of Armageddon. The traditional policy of the Roman Emperors in Constantinople was to honour the Pope (see Dan. 11:36-39), and this shall be repeated when the Euphratean power is completely dried up, and Russia occupies Constantinople. As the latter-day manifestation of the "little horn of the goat," Gog will use the

Papacy to consolidate his power in Europe before moving down into the Middle East. The "eighth head of the beast," therefore has yet to arise.

"And goeth into perdition"—This statement shows that this "eighth head of the beast" will be in evidence at Christ's return.

VERSE 12

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet"—These ten horns answer to the ten toes of Daniel's image, and denote the several divisions into which the Roman Empire was divided. See note at Rev. 13:1. They did not appear upon the scene until long after *The Apocalypse* was given, hence the latter portion of this statement.

"But receive power as kings"—The word power is *exousia* and signifies indwelling strength with freedom of action. Hence they retain their autonomy as elements of the beast. The present organisation of the Common Market illustrates the prophecy. Each nation governs its subjects in its own right, but each subscribes to the overriding organisation.

"One hour with the beast"—Brother Thomas suggests that this is a period of thirty years on the same basis of computation as that of Rev. 8:1. The suggestion is that the thirty years follows the destruction of Gog. Micah suggests that forty years will be occupied in the destruction of the nations (Mic. 7:15), and the following time sequence could well follow:

Christ's Return.....At the time appointed Resurrection and judgment of the household	10 years
Defeat of Gog and ultimatum to the nations	10 years
Destruction of the Papacy and Beast.....	30 years
Establishment of the Millenium, Temple opened for service.....	50 years (Jubilee).

The word "hour," however, is *hora* and can relate to exact time, or inexact time.

It is translated "for a season" in John 5:35, 2 Cor. 7:8. The *Companion Bible* renders the phrase "at one and the

same hour." However, Brother Thomas' explanation has much to commend it.

It should be borne in mind, that John saw the ten-horned scarlet-coloured beast at the crisis of its judgment. The overthrow of Gog (the latter-day "dragon") will bring about the fall of the East, leaving only "the beast" to resist the rising power of Jerusalem, which it will for "one hour."

Meanwhile, current European developments are most significant. In the Common Market, "the beast" is gradually forming; in the countries east of the Iron Curtain, the "dragon" is slowly taking shape, awaiting its full manifestation when Russia occupies Constantinople; in Italy the "false prophet" is gaining power and prestige (see Rev. 16:13).

The division of Europe into two separate blocs of nations: East and West, answers to the two feet of the Image of Daniel 2. Even the time period is significant. The EEC came into existence as a result of the Treaty of Rome, in 1957, which is 1335 years after the establishment of the Moslem era in 622: a most interesting epoch in view of the statement of Dan. 12:12. One British newspaper, commenting upon the occasion, observed: "Western Europe is on the brink of federation. The plain truth is that the States are to pool their armies: France, Western Germany, Italy and the Low Countries, and will by that very act decide to scrap more than a thousand years of separate history and become one state again, as they were under Charlemagne" (see *Apocalypse and the Gospels*).

The destruction of Gog's army at Jerusalem, will leave the organisation of Western Europe intact to continue the war with the Lamb, which will follow.

VERSE 13

"These have one mind"—The present Common Market Organisation is developing this oneness of mind, and it will be strengthened as Papal influence increases.

"And shall give their power"—The word is *dunamis* and signifies *inherent ability* to do things. At the crisis introduced by the appearance of the Lord in the earth, and the amazing destruction of Gog's army, there will follow a strengthening of the "beast," by the ten

horns surrendering their power to it.

“And strength unto the beast”—Here the word is *exosia* and signifies indwelling strength, or physical power. The ten horns, or nations, will deliver up their inherent ability and indwelling strength, i.e. their individual independence, to the organisation of the “beast.” Why should they be induced to do this after the amazing crisis of Armageddon? Partly because of a false Catholic theory that is sweeping Protestantism today.

There is a tradition among Papists that Antichrist is yet to come, and will set up his power in Jerusalem, and from that centre will seek to destroy the church. This theory has been embraced by many Protestant religions today. Millions of books, written by Hal Lindsey and others, such as *There's A New World Coming* have been sold, proclaiming that Antichrist will shortly appear, to set himself up as ruler in Jerusalem. They teach that he will proclaim himself King of the Jews, will abolish Judaism, build a temple, and seek to overthrow the nations by war. Therefore, when Christ, after the destruction of Gog's army, shall send forth his emissaries, the saints, demanding that the nations “fear God and give glory to him” (Rev. 14:7), the false prophet of Catholicism will make proclamation that Anti-christ has come at last, and that he is aiming to destroy the Church and propagate his influence by the sword. Christ's victories will be interpreted as a fulfilment of this doctrine of the false prophet, and the minds of men will be inflamed with a burning fanaticism to oppose and destroy the alleged “Antichrist.” Doubtless the victory of Christ over Gog, will be mis-interpreted as some new form of nuclear warfare (see Zech. 14:12), assisted by a chance earthquake (Zech. 14:5), rather than accepted as evidence of divine intervention. The Lord's opponents, therefore, will be encouraged by the belief that they can match might with might, and so destroy the new power of Zion.

VERSE 14

“And these make war with the Lamb”—This is after Armageddon. At Armageddon, the beast (western Europe), the false prophet (papacy), and the dragon (Russia in Constantinople) will comprise an Eurasian confederacy (Ezek. 38), that will invade the Middle

East, besiege and occupy Jerusalem (Dan. 11:40-45), to be destroyed by Christ (Zech. 14:4). Thus will the “dragon” (headed by Russia) be overthrown as a political force. But it will not end opposition to the reign of Christ. A European confederacy of Catholic countries (the Apocalyptic “beast”) will oppose the rising power of Israel under Christ and will “make war with the Lamb.” Christ, however, will take the initiative. He will “rebuke strong nations afar off” (Mic. 4:3). His army will move against Catholic Europe and bring it into subjection as predicted in Rev. 19:19-20.

“And the Lamb shall overcome them”—He will use an army of Israelites, officered by immortals, for that purpose (Zech. 9:13-14).

“For he is Lord of lords, and King of kings”—The “lords” and “kings” being the Redeemed then made like him, immortal and glorious (cp. Rev. 2:26).

“And they that are with him”—See Rev. 14:4.

“Are called, and chosen, and faithful”—They partake of the character of Abraham, being his true seed. He was called (Isa. 51:2; Heb. 11:8), and chosen (Neh. 9:7), and faithful (Rom. 4:13). The Redeemed are those who respond to the need of selection, separation and dedication.

VERSE 15

“And he saith unto me”—This introduces a new phase in the angel's exposition. He goes back to describe and interpret a further feature of the vision seen by John. Therefore a mistake will be made if these verses are interpreted as being fulfilled consecutively.

“The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues”—This describes the universal influence of the whore. To “sit” upon waters, is to exercise power over them. See note Ch. 13:7.

VERSE 16

“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast”—Both the *Diaglott* and *Rotherham's Emphasised Translation* translate: “and the beast,” instead of “upon the beast.” In other words, the prophecy deals with the horns and the beast as separate powers. It requires that the very powers that once supported the Papacy should manifest a revulsion

against it. This came to pass from the period of the French Revolution onwards. The resurrected witnesses of Rev. 11, representative of the revolutionary forces that erupted as a result of that Revolution, attacked the Papacy with such virulence, as to bring the Holy Roman Empire to an end. The circumstances are illustrated in the first five vials of Rev. 16. Daniel's vision saw the Papacy successfully waging war against the "saints" for a certain period of time until the termination of the temporal power of the Papacy in 1870; then he saw the "saints" consuming and destroying the territory of the Papacy "until the end." Finally, he was told that "the people of the saints" shall take the Kingdom for ever (Dan. 7:25-27). The exposition of this section of Daniel's prophecy comprises the key to the third part of *Elpis Israel*, and is vital to a proper comprehension of the signs of the times. It requires: (a) The Papacy in the ascendancy until 1870 (1260 period). (b) The consumption of Papal interests by revolutionary "saints" (the witnesses of Rev. 11). (c) The revival of Papal influence at the "time of the end." (d) The final destruction of the Papacy by Christ and the saints.

Current history provides a vindication of Daniel's prophecy.

It also testifies to the fact that we have reached the epoch of Christ's return.

"These shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh"—Earlier chapters of *The Apocalypse* have revealed that the power of the Papacy to "make war with the saints" was limited to 1260 prophetic days or years (Rev. 13:5). These can be dated from the decrees of Justinian and Phocas, both of whom legislated in support of the Papacy. The former was the period 529-533, when Justinian proclaimed the supremacy of the Pope of Rome over all other bishops. The latter was the period 606-610 when Phocas endorsed the proclamation of Justinian. 1260 years from the former period reaches to 1789-93, when the French Revolution took place, and, subsequently, Napoleon rose to power. He devastated the Catholic countries of Europe, and brought the Holy Roman Empire to an end. Subsequently, the spirit of revolution swept those nations to the detriment of Catholic interests and influence. The

ten horns manifested "hatred towards the whore." This spirit of revolution affected even Italy, and led to the withdrawal of the temporal power of the Papacy. The second period, commencing in 606-610, reached to 1866-1870 when the temporal power of the Papacy was withdrawn by the revolutionary government of Italy, and the Pope was made "a prisoner of the Vatican," having no political influence. By this means the whore was "made desolate and naked" politically. The church suffered severe reverses throughout Europe through the revolutionary and anti-papal attitude engendered among the nations by the French Revolution and the uprise of Communism (the "three frogs" of Rev. 16). Having been forcibly separated from her previous political affiliations, she was brought to a state of political "widowhood."

However, that is not the whore's condition as described by John in v. 3; nor is her attitude one of "widowhood" at the time of her destruction, for she is represented as saying "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7). Today the Papacy is rising in political influence, and will do so even further when Russia occupies Constantinople, and forges a new union with it (Dan. 8:24). There will be a resurgence of papal influence in Europe, for at the epoch of her judgment, the woman was represented to John as riding the beast in triumph. We can expect Catholic influence to increase throughout Europe.

"Shall burn her with fire"—The Greek *katakaioo* signifies to be "utterly burned" (Rev. 18:8). The work initiated by the horns shall be completed by the Redeemed (Dan. 7:25-27). The French Revolution and the wars of Napoleon commenced the process, which was further stimulated by the agitation of Karl Marx. "It was with the utmost difficulty, in 1848, that the Papal power was sustained, and this was done only by foreign swords," writes one historian. In 1870, the Temporal power of the Papacy was terminated, and the pope stripped of political power and "made desolate" as a prisoner of the Vatican. Garibaldi surrendered his authority to Victor Emmanuel, the first king of a united Italy, and the two rode side by side into the city of Naples. The establishment of a united Italy terminated the temporal power of the Papacy. In Daniel's

prophecy this initial "burning" is attributed to "the saints." the resurrected "witnesses" of Rev. 11; whilst the ultimate complete destruction of the Papal system will be accomplished by "the people of the saints" — Christ and the resurrected and glorified elect (Ps. 149:6-9).

VERSE 17

"For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will"—God does this, not by direct influence, but through the political developments of the times. The French Revolution brought about a condition of things in Europe that resulted in individual nations "hating the whore," but today events are flowing in another direction, and the Papacy is rising in influence and power. In 1930, due to a Concordat signed between the Pope and Mussolini the year before, the temporal power of the Papacy was restored, and papal temporal sovereignty was revived. Once again the papacy manifested political influence among nations as well as spiritual ascendancy in the church.

The development is summarised in the Waverley Encyclopaedia, *Book Of Knowledge*:

"From the Vatican the Popes ruled and still rule the Roman Catholic Church. Until 1870 they were also temporal rulers of the Papal States. In that year these states became part of the unified Kingdom of Italy. Papal territory was then confined to the palaces of the Vatican, and the Lateran and the Villa of Castel Gandolfo, and the temporal power of the Popes was suspended until 1929. In that year papal sovereignty was recognised by the Italian government, and the Popes, who had meanwhile been virtually prisoners in their own splendid dwellings, now sometimes leave them on special occasions."

In 1929, the Vatican was but a city; today it is a city-state; and in order to increase the political prestige and influence of the Papacy, Popes have visited other parts of the world, including Jerusalem and USA.

The "for" of the verse before us is *gar* in Greek, and signifies the reason, cause or motive of the action referred to in the previous verse. The ten horns first hate the whore, and afterwards unite with the beast *because* of God-directed circumstances. He rules in the kingdom of men (Dan. 4:17), and events take the course

they do, because His purpose requires it.

"And to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast"—This requires the unification of Western Europe, the area of the "beast of the sea," such as is taking place today through the papal inspired Common Market. The terms of the EEC are consistent with the requirements of the prophecy. In a book explaining the national political systems of the main European States that form the basis of the EEC entitled *Six European States* the following three statements are made which are illuminative of the manner in which the "horns" of "the beast" have first "hated" the whore, but now are beginning to agree to a common policy in support thereof. The comment is made under the sub-heading of "the church" in France: "We should not leave the subject of pressure groups without saying a brief word about the Church. Although 60% of the population of France are nominally Catholic, clerical influence in politics is less than in any of the other countries covered in this book. *The Church has never fully recovered from the set-back it received at the time of the great Revolution*; one of the first acts of the revolutionary leaders, in the autumn of 1789, was to confiscate its vast endowments. The privileged position the Church enjoyed prior to the Revolution was related to its association with the Monarchy, an association which goes back to the baptism of Clovis (496)."

Dealing with the withdrawal of temporal power in 1870, the writer states: "The blow to Papal prestige of the loss of its states is hard to imagine at this distance in time. Pius IX refused to recognise the change in sovereignty and he and his successors remained in self-imposed imprisonment within the Papal Palace, never venturing outside."

Dealing with the concordat with Mussolini which restored some of the lost power, the writer continues: "Pius XI accordingly decided to make an agreement with Mussolini, which resulted in the Lateran Pacts of 1929. . . . Mussolini was prepared to go much further than the government of 1871 in that he recognised the Pope as the *temporal* ruler of Vatican City which was to become an independent sovereign state. . . ."

To increase its political power, the Church needs the support of some military power. In the events symbolised in Revelation 13, this was supplied by

Justinian in Constantinople. Today, Russia is the dominant military power in Europe and Asia, and the Church is changing its policy towards Communism and the Soviet. The writer above notes: "The attitude of the whole Catholic Church to Communism has been greatly affected by the personality of individual Popes. Pius XII acquired his enmity for Communism during the Spanish Civil War when he was Secretary of State at the Vatican. In 1949 he issued a decree prescribing the penalty of excommunication for those who voluntarily adopted Communism; after the Hungarian revolt in 1956 he condemned the Russian action in three encyclicals in three days — something no other Pope had ever done. His interest in the electoral fortunes of the Christian Democratic Party and in the minutiae of policy has already been referred to; the Cold War was at its height, the issues were clear cut and by and large the policy worked. After the death of Pius in 1958, John XXIII took a radically different view both of the Church's role in Italian politics and of its attitude to Communism in the world. Great publicity surrounded his reception in audience of Krushchev's son-in-law, Alexis Adzubei, at that time editor of *Izvestia* in March 1963. This gesture was followed the next month by the famous encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, in which a more conciliatory line towards Communism was taken. When the Com-

munist made gains in the elections soon after, John had to face severe attacks from the conservative press.

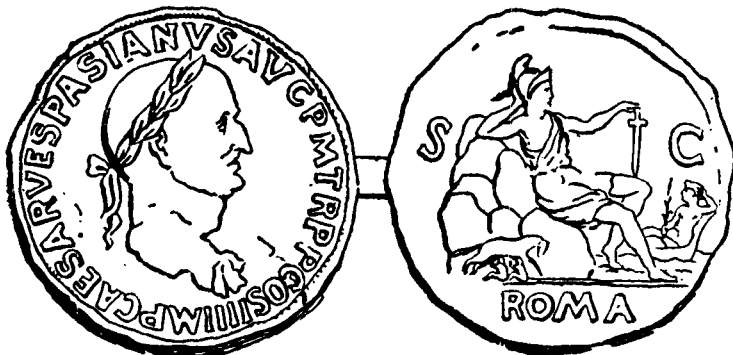
"Although Pope Paul VI will not be remembered as a radical in theological matters, he has continued John's general policy towards Communism; he received President Podgorny of the Soviet Union in audience in 1967. . . ."

Prophecy indicates, however, that it will be when Russia occupies Constantinople as required by Daniel 8:25 and elsewhere, that the latter-day "dragon" will be manifested, and the full alignment of Communism with Catholicism will take place. This will be followed by the Image of Daniel 2 standing upon its two feet, one in the west and the other in the east. At that time, the horns will surrender their autonomy to the "beast," saying (as they are already beginning to do) "who can make war with him."

"Until the words of God shall be fulfilled"—Until the divine purpose is complete in the establishment of the Millennium.

The Greek *achri* signifies "to fix the attention on the whole duration up to a certain time, but leaving the further continuance undetermined" (Bullinger). Strong defines it as "pointing to a terminus," without specifically determining when this shall take place. The prophecy requires the "horns" both to oppose and later to support the Papacy

From Roman Coin in the British Museum
Struck A.D. 69-79



ROME SEATED ON SEVEN MOUNTAINS

(Rev. 16:9-10). At the epoch of her judgment (the *until* of this verse) the whore is seated on the beast (Rev. 17:3) proclaiming that she shall "see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7) implying that she has been through such but has successfully surmounted it.

VERSE 18

"And the woman which thou sawest"

— The woman named Babylon the Great — v. 5.

"Is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth"—Rome was the

great city that reigned over the kings of the earth in the days of John. The picture drawn in his verse was a familiar symbol of Rome even in John's day. In the period of Vespasian, before *The Apocalypse* was delivered to the Apostle, Rome was represented on coins as a woman sitting on seven projectiles representing the seven hills of the city. Again, on a medal dated 1825, issued in the time of Pope Leo XII, the Roman State was represented by a woman holding a crown in her left hand, and a cup in her right, with the caption: *She sits upon the universe*.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN**BABYLON'S VIOLENT OVERTHROW**

Having described the system styled "Babylon the Great" at the epoch of its judgment, the angel of the seventh vial is succeeded by one who lightens the earth with glory. This angel proclaims the impending judgment of Babylon the Great, and the reasons for it. An appeal follows calling upon those who have ears to hear, to separate themselves from the system, on the grounds that the judgment will involve all who are identified therewith. Others are represented as mourning the passing of the great city. They are the spiritual merchants who have been made rich by her merchandise, and who regret her overthrow. This suggests that even the judgment of Rome will not cause all to seek Yahweh, necessitating the conquests of Christ described in the following chapter. But one group of people do rejoice: the company of the Redeemed, recognising the gross iniquity of the Catholic system, are glad to see it go. The violence of the overthrow is then described, and the cause of it is stated: "In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

The System Destroyed — vv. 1-24

The first three verses provide a general outline of the destruction of Babylon the Great. As in other parts of the prophetic word, (cp. Rev. 11:15,18), the final picture is first given, and then the events leading up to it are outlined. That is the case here. The chapter should be considered in conjunction with 2 Thess. 1:8-9; 2:8; Isa. 13:19-22; 26:5; 45; Jer. 51; Dan. 5 etc. The overthrow of historic Babylon provides the type for the overthrow of spiritual Babylon.

VERSE 1

"And after these things"—After the

main vision given in the previous chapter. That vision (vv. 1-7) revealed Babylon the Great in full manifestation of its power. The rest of the chapter comprises explanatory comments of the angel to John revealing the significance of aspects of the vision seen. See vv. 7,8,9,12,15,16. Therefore, the events of the chapter now before us take place after Babylon the Great is elevated to a dominant position on the revived beast.

"I saw another angel"—This is not "one of the seven angels" who supervised the outpouring of the vials (Ch. 17:1), but another "angel" or divine messenger.

who shall illuminate the earth with glory. This angel, therefore, is associated with the sun, and can be identified with the "rainbowed angel" of Rev. 10:1. In turn, the very description of that angel, takes us back to the multitudinous Son of Man of Rev. 1:13-16, for his aspect "was as the sun," and his feet "burned as a furnace." The angel in the verse before us, therefore, comprises the Redeemed in glory.

"Come down from heaven"—The reference is to the political "heaven." At the return of Christ, the immortalised redeemed will be invited to "come up hither" (Rev. 4:1), and so will ascend thereinto. From that place of eminence in Jerusalem, they will give their attention to the political "earth," in the administration of the things of the kingdom.

"Having great power"—The word signifies *authority*.

"And the earth was lightened with his glory"—At the Lord's coming, "darkness will cover the earth" (Isa. 60:2), but as the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2), he will dispel the prevailing gloom. It is declared of the righteous that "they shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of the Father" (Matt. 13:43). As the "kings who are out of a sun's rising" (Rev. 16:12), they shall illuminate the earth with the divine laws and teaching that shall emanate from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4). The night of Gentile darkness will come to an end with the rising of this Sun whose "beams of light" shall illuminate all mankind.

VERSE 2

"And he cried mightily with a strong voice"—This suggests the manifestation of great power capable of conquering all opposition.

"Saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen"—These words are cited from Isa. 21:8 showing that historic Babylon typed "Babylon the Great" of *The Apocalypse*. In this chapter of judgment, the final picture is displayed first, and the steps leading to it are then outlined. The chapter should be considered closely in conjunction with Isaiah chapters 13, 21, and Jeremiah chapters 50, 51. The words by which fallen Babylon is described present a symbolic picture of abject and total destruction (cp. Isa. 13:19-21; Jer. 50:39).

"The habitation of devils"—Deserted

of human habitation. Babylon is given over to wild beasts. Instead of "devils" read *daemons*. The proclamation is cited from Isaiah 21:9 where, instead of "devils," the account reads "the graven images of her gods He hath broken unto the ground." Thus the "demons" of this verse answer to the "fallen images" of Isa. 21:9. This is in accordance with N.T. usage of the term "demons," for it is used for idols (see 1 Cor. 10:20). In that regard, Rome has advocated the "doctrine of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1), being noted for its idolatry. The picture presented in the verse before us, therefore, is that of a desolated system, deserted of worshippers, and peopled only with its once revered, but now fallen idols.

"And the hold of every foul spirit"—The term "spirit" is sometimes used in the sense of teaching (see 1 John 4:1-2). The "foul spirits" of this verse relate to the false doctrines of Rome which will be discredited at Christ's coming.

"And a cage of every unclean and hateful bird"—The Greek word rendered "cage" is the same as that translated "hold." Babylon the Great is represented as being in ruins, deserted of all but creatures that are ripe for destruction. These "unclean birds" can well represent the priests of Rome.

VERSE 3

"For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication"—Cp. Jer. 51:7; Rev. 18:2. "Wrath" is from the Greek *thumos* denoting an agitated condition of feelings such as leads to an outburst of anger. This has been induced among the nations by the intrigues of Rome as well as by its doctrines.

"And the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her"—They have received and imbibed, the policies of Rome whether doctrinal or political, and have become completely dominated thereby.

"And the merchants of the earth"—These are defined as "great men of the earth" (v. 23). They, therefore, are not ordinary traders, but dealers in Rome's merchandise, traffickers in indulgences, preferments, ecclesiastical privileges, immunities and emoluments of all sorts; in other words, the clergy of Rome. Cp. v. 12. The word strictly means one on a journey by sea or land especially for traffic. Hence a travelling merchant as

distinguished from a mere retailer. Thus the clergy of Rome travelling from point to point to trade in their "goods."

"Are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies"—Brother Thomas renders this as "the potency of her voluptuousness." The word rendered *delicacies*, occurs nowhere else in the N.T. It properly means *rudeness, pride, insolence*; and hence *revel, riot, luxury, wantonness*. The reference is to such luxuries as are found commonly in a great, gay and splendid city. Rome's display, its highly organised religious ceremonies, its gross appeal to the flesh, has brought incalculable wealth to the church, and this forms part of the divine indictment against the system.

A Last Call To Separate From Her — vv. 4-5

The effect of the judgment on Rome having been outlined, the events leading up to it are now detailed. Before the system is completely destroyed an ultimatum will be addressed to all who have ears to hear to separate from it, and so escape the judgment that will destroy it. See Rev. 14:6-10.

VERSE 4

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying"—This represents a proclamation from the government established in Jerusalem to all those under the power of Rome and its system.

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"—A similar appeal was addressed to the people of God in historic Babylon before its destruction (Isa. 48:20; Jer. 51:6). The proclamation in the future will be addressed to Israel after the flesh through the ministrations of Elijah (Mal. 4); and to all those among the nations (mainly Catholic Europe) yet to be brought under the power of Christ (Isa. 66:19-20), who might heed the appeal. It will remind them that by remaining in Babylon they will be treated as lending their sanction to its sins by their presence, and by doing so they will receive of the punishment to be inflicted on her. The Jewish people will heed, and make their way back to the Land of Promise, whilst undoubtedly a "mixed multitude" of the nations will likewise separate themselves from Rome and give their allegiance to the new Power of Jerusalem. It is significant that

Kimchi, a Jewish Rabbi, in comment upon the prophecy of Obadiah relating to Edom, declared: "This is the hope of the nation, when Rome shall be desolated, that then shall be the redemption of Israel." Not only Israel, but many people will cleave unto Yahweh in that day (see Zech. 2:11; 8:21), whilst other nations, refusing to do so, will perish (Isa. 60:12). When this separation is made, Babylon shall be given over to final destruction.

VERSE 5

"For her sins have reached unto heaven"—Having failed to heed the warning of preceding judgments (Rev. 9:20; 16:9, 11, 21), Babylon will be given over to complete destruction (see Jer. 51:9).

"God hath remembered her iniquities"
—See v. 24.

Hostilities Commence — vv. 6-8

First Rome itself, and then the system, is destroyed. See Rev. 14:6-12.

VERSE 6

"Reward her even as she rewarded you"—This command is directed to the Redeemed who are thus called upon to administer the judgment upon Rome (Ps. 149:5-9). The decree is not unreasonable nor vindictive. It is impossible for truth and righteousness to prevail in the midst of Babylon, and whilst God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), this is conditional upon a changed attitude by the wicked. If they stubbornly refuse the way of righteousness, no alternative remains but to remove them. The command of this verse is issued by the Commander of the Faithful (Isa. 55:4) calling upon his followers to render back the just judgments decreed against the system that has consistently opposed the Truth and slaughtered its adherents (cp. Rev. 17:6).

"Double unto her double according to her works"—The Law decreed that the thief should pay double compensation (Exod. 22:4, 7, 9). Rome has thieved men of their most precious heritage, and will be judged according to the Law — as it richly deserves. Israel has been compelled to do so (cp. Jer. 16:18), so why not Rome (see Jer. 25:29)?

"In the cup which she hath filled fill to her double"—The cup of Rome has brought wrath and judgment upon the

nations (see Rev. 14:8), and now she is to experience twice the amount of wrath.

VERSE 7

“How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her”—“Deliciously” is better rendered *profligately*. Rome is a profligate extension of “that woman Jezebel.” Her wicked seductions have continued over the centuries (Rev. 2:20), and now the measure of her personal glorification and pride becomes the measure of her fall.

“For she said in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow”—Before Armageddon, Rome will receive the partial support of the Russian Dragon (Dan. 8:25), and will thus be fully recovered from the loss of her prestige following the time of Napoleon when “the ten horns hated the whore, and made her desolate and naked” (Rev. 17:16). United with Gog, the Roman harlot will imagine that her state of widowhood is over, and that the so-called Eternal City will remain for all time. As an illustration of what is meant by the boast, *Eureka* quotes an extract from *The Tablet*, a Romish newspaper. This claimed that about one month after Pope Pius IX ascended the Papal throne, the Abbess of Minsk spent the whole night in prayer for the Catholic Church, and claimed to have heard a voice saying: “Fear not, my daughter, I have not left my church a widow. I have chosen for her a pontiff after my own heart.” This blasphemous claim shall be repeated in the future. There are political moves today indicating that the leaders of Catholicism and Communism are moving more closely together, and that a Concordat between Rome and Russia is not a complete impossibility. It is significant that the largest Communist Party outside of Russia is found in Italy.

In claiming “I shall see no sorrow,” this latter-day Jezebel follows the example of her historic counterpart, for after her husband had been slain, she sought fresh paramours (2 Kings 9:30). She was ruthless in her search for power and prestige; and Rome is likewise. It will tread underfoot any who stand in its way, will view with indifference the death of any of her children, so long as she triumphs.

VERSE 8

“Therefore shall her plagues come in

one day”—Her fate will be similar to that of historic Babylon. Suddenly and without warning (Jer. 51:64), in the midst of revelry and debauchery (Dan. 5:1-5), her end will come. Described as the antitypical Sodom (Rev. 11:8), her overthrow will be as dramatic and as decisive as was that of the ancient city. The “one day” of her destruction, is the “day of judgment” to come on the whole world (see Jer. 50:31; Acts 17:31; Mal. 4:1-3; Isa. 2:12,20). That day is styled the *Day of Yahweh*, that is, the day when His authority will be vindicated, and all flesh shall be humbled (Zech. 14:1).

“Death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire”—Her destruction will be violent and complete. Concerning her fate, Brother Thomas has written: “Consternation, fear, mutual slaughter will sweep the Italian Peninsula, to be followed by a disastrous volcanic eruption that shall destroy Rome, the very heart of the system” —*Eureka*.

“For strong is the Lord God who judgeth her”—The “Lord God” of this statement is doubtless *Yahweh Elohim* of the Old Testament, the name of God which is prophetic of His purpose to manifest Himself in the multitude of the Redeemed. That multitude will “execute the judgments written,” as predicted (Zech. 14:5; Psa. 149:5-9).

Consternation Among Earth's Rulers — vv. 9-10

The “kings of the earth,” representing the ten horns of the beast (Rev. 17:12), shall lament the destruction of Rome; which will be viewed by them as a national tragedy.

VERSE 9

“And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her”—These are those referred to in Rev. 17:2,12; 18:3 — the rulers of Western Europe.

“Shall bewail her, and lament for her”—See this anticipated in the destruction of historic Babylon (Jer. 50:46).

“When they shall see the smoke of her burning”—This suggests destruction by volcanic eruption (cp. Jude 7), to which the area of Rome is susceptible. The nations will outlive the destruction of Rome (Dan. 7:12).

VERSE 10

"Standing afar off for the fear of her torment"—Her destruction will be a salutary warning to the world of the fate of those who pervert the Truth of God, and reject His mercy.

"Saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city!"—These expressions of sorrow indicate that the epoch during which these same nations hated the whore (Rev. 17:16) is prior to the epoch of her destruction. Now they lament her passing. They will combine to form the beast of western Europe (as they are today doing), and she will assume a position of power and prestige over them (Rev. 17:3). The subsequent sudden, dramatic overthrow of Rome, with which Babylon the Great is particularly identified (Rev. 17:18), will be viewed with consternation and regret by them. Despite the divine judgments in the earth, they will still "blaspheme God" (Rev. 16:21).

"For in one hour is thy judgments come"—This is indicative of the sudden and complete overthrow of Rome as well as the system it heads. It is suggested that as the Jews divided the day into twelve hours, that this "hour" can represent the hour of the year, or a month of thirty days. On the prophetic basis of a day for a year, this suggests that whereas the city of Rome may be overwhelmed in an "hour," the system it represents will be subjected to a period of thirty years of judgment. If Micah 7:15 is taken to signify that forty years will be occupied in subduing the nations, this may well be divided into a period of ten years during which Christ consolidates his power in Jerusalem, and issues his ultimatum calling upon the nations to submit to him (Rev. 14:7), followed by thirty years of active judgment during which those nations that resist his appeal will be forced to submit (Rev. 17:14).

Regret Among The Merchants — vv. 11-19

The spiritual merchants (or clergy) of Rome lament the passing of the city, and the fact that their merchandise is no longer attractive to the world.

VERSE 11

"And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her"—These are spiritual merchants who have waxed rich by trading in the "bodies and souls of

men" (cp. v. 13 — mg). They are the clergy of Rome, the antitype of the Canaanites (whose name signifies *traders*), who shall be excluded from the House of Yahweh in the future (see Zech. 14:21, and note that the RSV renders the last words as: "There shall no longer be a trader in the house of Yahweh of hosts on that day.>").

"For no man buyeth their merchandise any more"—The religion of Rome will no longer appeal.

VERSE 12

"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"—Rome is identified with many of these things. "Thyine wood" was used for incense, which Rome uses in its pagan practises.

"And all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble"—A visit to the Vatican reveals how profitable has been the trading of Rome in these particulars.

VERSE 13

"And cinnamon, and odours"—*"Odours"* is better rendered "spices."

"And ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots"—Items used for religious purposes as well as those for daily use and convenience.

"And slaves, and souls of men"—Here we have reference to the most notorious form of Romish merchandise. The word "slaves" is from *soma*, better rendered, as in the margin, *bodies*, and souls of men. Rome has gained great riches from her tithing, as well as her charges to hasten the souls of her dupes through the imaginary purgatory of her false-teaching and so forth. She has traded her religious wares for material gain. But consider the fate of these religionists in the age to come — Zech. 13:2-4; Jer. 16:19; Isa. 25:7; Jer. 3:17. In place of the false theories of an apostate Christendom, men shall rejoice in the truth (Isa. 2:2-4). Meanwhile, as Brother Thomas points out in *Exposition of Daniel*, the churches are described by the prophet as "most strong holds" (Dan. 11:39). The original is *mitzahrai mahuzzim*, and denotes *Bazaars of Guardians*. The churches are "bazaars" dedicated to

"guardian saints." and designed to bring wealth to Rome.

VERSE 14

"And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee"—The word *opora* properly denotes fully ripe, or autumn fruits. The fulness of Rome's schemes will be denied her. Prior to the unexpected judgment of Christ and the saints, it will seem as though the greatest age is about to dawn for the church. At long last it will seem as though Europe will be permanently united under her influence and that of the "beast." The cry will be of "peace and safety," when, suddenly, "sudden destruction" will overwhelm it.

"And all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all"—Instead of "goodly," the RV has *sumptuous*. All the rich rewards that once poured as a golden stream into Rome will suddenly stop.

VERSE 15

"And the merchants of these things,

which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing"—Cp. with v. 10, and ct. with v. 20.

VERSE 16

"And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls!"—In the previous description (vv. 12-13), these are mentioned as articles of trade. Here the city, under the image of a female, is represented as clothed in the richest and gayest of these articles (cp. Rev. 17:4).

VERSE 17

"For in one hour so great riches is come to nought"—cp. v. 10.

"And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors"—Rotherham renders this: "pilot and passengers," a reference to the sky-pilots of Rome (a name given to the clergy), as well as those carried along with them. Literally, the clergy and their flocks. The R.V. has "and any one that saileth any whither."

"And as many as trade by sea, stood



Dragon from the Ishtar Gate, Babylon. The religion of Roman Catholicism is directly traceable back to pagan Babylon.

afar off—The spiritual merchants of Rome who extended its “trade” by spreading its doctrines throughout the world. For explanation of the “sea” see Rev. 17:15.

VERSE 18

“And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!”—These lamentations reveal that even at the judgment of Rome, her devotees will not acknowledge her great wickedness, but will continue to blaspheme (Rev. 16:21), and resist the work of Christ (Rev. 17:14).

VERSE 19

“And they cast dust on their heads”—A sign of mourning. See Ezek. 27:30. The analogy is taken from the prophecy against Tyre, and demonstrates the spiritual commercialism of Rome. Thus the judgments that were poured out upon Sodom, Tyre, and Babylon are used to portray that yet to be felt by Rome.

“And cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate”—The spiritual merchants mourn the passing of such a luxurious city, and the lucrative trade it brought them (see Zech. 13:3-4). Reference to their merchandise is found in 2 Pet. 2:1-4.

(f) — The Rejoicing Of The Redeemed — v.20.

In contrast to the mourning merchants of spiritual Babylon, the new government of Christ and the Redeemed is called upon to rejoice.

VERSE 20

“Rejoice over her, thou heaven”—This “heaven” comprises the new form of government established by Christ and the Redeemed in Jerusalem. See notes Rev. 4:1; 16:21.

“And ye holy apostles and prophets”—This being addressed to those long dead implies that the resurrection has taken place.

“For God hath avenged you on her”—God’s action will be in answer to the prayer for relief recorded in Rev. 6:10. Even though such prayers are not immediately answered they are not wasted, but remain in the memory of Yahweh awaiting the appropriate time to be granted. Because of such prayers, He

decreed that at a certain point there will be “time no longer” (Rev. 10:6), and now, with the judgment poured out on Rome, the resurrected redeemed are invited to view how their pleas have been answered. Rome was responsible for the death of the Lord (Rev. 11:8), as well as the persecution of saints.

(g) — Rome’s Violent Overthrow — vv. 21-24

The destruction of the city is expressed in similar terms to those used to describe the overthrow of historic Babylon. See Isa. 26:5; 32:19; Jer. 51:63-64.

VERSE 21

“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone”—This angel can be identified with the “angel” of v. 1, representing the multitude of the Redeemed. A similar dramatic action symbolised the sudden, unexpected overthrow of historic Babylon (Jer. 51:63-64), but on that occasion, the stone was thrown into the Euphrates by a Jewish prince. A millstone is a very solid piece of masonry, and is referred to in connection with complete destruction (Matt. 18:6). In Dan. 2:44-45, Matt. 21:42-45, the kingdom of God is likened to a stone that destroys the image.

“And cast it into the sea”—“Sea” is symbolic of the nations (Isa. 57:20), and Babylon the Great is represented as sitting upon “many waters” (Rev. 17:15). The violent overthrow of Rome will cause waves of consternation to sweep throughout the earth, similar in effect to a large stone being flung into the depths of the ocean. Such will cause ever-widening ripples throughout the expanse of water. The destruction of the city of Rome, probably by earthquake and volcanic eruption as here implied, will have its repercussions throughout the world, violently agitating the Catholic system that remains. So stubborn is human nature, however, that man will not submit in spite of this judgment, but will continue to “blaspheme God” (see Rev. 16:19-21). Hence, after Rome is destroyed, the system remains to be overthrown, as the succeeding chapter reveals.

“Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all”—Unfortunately the nations will not be converted by preaching, but only by the exercise of

mighty power in judgment (Isa. 26:9). Rome's iniquities exceed those of historic Babylon, and therefore her punishment will be more complete. Historic Babylon was used by Yahweh to punish His guilty people; but, in turn, was itself punished because its motive in attacking Israel was not to vindicate God but for its own aggrandisement. It overthrew Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, blasphemed the name of Yahweh, and took Israel captive. Because of its blasphemy, Babylon was judged, and this is called "the vengeance of Yahweh, the vengeance of His Temple" (Jer. 51:11; cp. Dan. 5:3-4). Rome has done all this and more, for it has brutally slain the brethren of Christ (Yahweh's Temple of living stones — Rev. 11:1; 16:1), and has blasphemed the name of Yahweh (Rev. 16:25). It has added to its wickedness by doing this in the very name of Christ. Hence the vengeance of Yahweh and of His Temple (see Rev. 15:6-8) will be complete and final.

VERSE 22

"And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters,

shall be heard no more at all in thee"—The voice of harpers and so forth symbolises joy (Jer. 25:10). All joy, together with the pageantry of trumpeters shall cease.

"And no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee"—Rome has been noted for the accumulation of the products of skilled artisans: painting, sculpture, architecture; but all will be destroyed forever (cp. the "pleasant pictures" of Isa. 1:16).

"And the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee"—The humblest labour in the supply of the essentials of life will no longer be heard, for Rome is to be completely destroyed — as was Sodom before it.

VERSE 23

"And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee"—Another image of desolation, as if every light were put out, and there were total darkness. The word "candle" should be rendered as *lamp*.

"And the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in



The ruins of the historic city foreshadow the overthrow of the mystical city.

thee"—Rejoicing in the prospects of new life shall cease; all cheerfulness shall be stilled (cp. Jer. 25:10).

"For thy merchants were the great men of the earth"—This expresses the cause of the overthrow: the influence of the clergy of Rome with their "merchandise" (see 2 Pet. 2:3). This was the root cause of past national judgments (2 Pet. 2:3-7), and will be that of Rome in the future.

"For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived"—The word "sorceries" is from the Greek *pharmakeia*, and relates to drugs. The same word is used in regard to false doctrine in Gal. 5:20. The teaching of Rome has acted as a drug upon the minds of its followers, distorting the

vision, and dulling the mind to personal responsibility towards God.

VERSE 24

"And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth"—What a terrible epitaph upon the death of a city so honoured by men as has been Rome! But is it not extreme to say that it has been responsible for the blood of all the slain upon the earth? The statement should be limited to the context: all of saints who were slain. So numerous have been those slain in Rome's religious wars, so constant and bloody the persecution manifested by Catholicism towards such, that it is held responsible for all those slain in such a cause.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB AND THE CONQUEST OF THE NATIONS

The destruction of Rome is viewed with relief, so that Halleluyahs ascend to heaven in thankfulness. This chorus of joy is echoed and repeated as the smoke of her torment ascends. A decree is heard from the throne calling upon all saints to praise God, and is responded to by another mighty Halleluyah from the great company of the Redeemed. The statement is made that the marriage of the Lamb has already taken place, and now invitations are extended calling others to the supper that will shortly begin. A blessing is pronounced upon those who accept the invitation.

John is so overcome by the scene that he falls down in adoration at the feet of the presiding angel. He is warned against doing this, and exhorted to direct his worship and his thanksgiving to God.

The final conquest over the beast and false prophet then follows. John sees an army emerging from heaven identified with the Redeemed, and led by one described as "King of kings and Lord of lords." A call is made to those who are prepared to partake of the "supper of the great God" to separate themselves for that purpose. A war of conquest is commenced against those who remain, in which the beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, and the remnant of their followers are slain with the sword. This triumph over the forces of darkness comprises the cause of rejoicing at the feasting that follows.

The chapter can be divided into two parts:

The Marriage of the LambVv. 1-10
The Conquest of the NationsVv. 11-21

The former can be sectionised:

<i>The Marriage come</i>	Vv. 1- 8
<i>The Marriage celebrated</i>	Vv. 9-10

The Marriage Come — vv. 1-8

Amid the Halleluyahs that ascend consequent upon the destruction of Babylon the Great, a voice is heard calling upon all to Praise God, for that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and the marriage of the Lamb has taken place. The bride is then described as prepared and dressed appropriately for the occasion.

VERSE 1

“And after these things”—After the destruction of Rome described in the previous chapter.

“I heard a great voice of much people in heaven”—The “heaven” is the new government set up in Jerusalem. See notes Rev. 4:1; 7:9; 18:20.

“Saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and power unto the Lord our God”—The exclamation *Halleluyah*, here rendered *Alleluia*, signifies *Praise ye Yah!* It is the enthusiastic acclamation of the Redeemed in view of the judgment imposed upon the “great whore.” or Babylon the Great. It links this song of *The Apocalypse* with the *Halleluyah* songs of the Psalms. There, the word *Halleluyah* is rendered *Praise ye the Lord* (see Ps. 146:1 — mg). The last five Psalms all commence with such an exclamation, and prophetically proclaim the glory of the Kingdom, climaxing in the ascription of praise on the part of all creation in Ps. 150. There are further *Halleluyah* Psalms which are used for the celebration of the Passover (see Psa. 111 to 114), and which form part of what the Jews describe as the *Great Hallel*. These Psalms likewise are predictive of the coming triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the vindication of Yahweh’s name in the earth. The verse before us reveals that such Psalms will be sung at the epoch of Babylon’s destruction. In pronouncing “salvation unto the Lord our God,” the hymn acknowledges that the salvation thus revealed is due to His intervention in world affairs.

VERSE 2

“For true and righteous are His judgments”—This statement declares

that the judgments administered are both absolute (true) and thoroughly justified (righteous).

“For He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication”—The great whore is identified in Rev. 17.

“And hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand”—Again *The Apocalypse* reverts back to the prayer for vengeance recorded in Rev. 6:10-11. The word “at” is rendered from the Greek *ek*, signifying “out of,” thus “out of her hand.” Babylon the Great exercised power over them at one time, but now they have been snatched out of her grasp.

VERSE 3

“And again they said Alleluia”—The second *Halleluyah* is sung. To this one is appended the word *Amen!* (v.4). This suggests that there are two stages in the destruction of Rome (see notes on Rev. 14:7-11; 18:10). The city is first destroyed, and afterwards the system. The first *Halleluyah* praises Yahweh for the judgment administered upon the city of Rome; and second one praises Him for the completion of the judgments written as recorded in vv. 11-21 of this chapter. There will be great rejoicing among the Redeemed at the overthrow of the system that has so ruthlessly enslaved men’s minds, destroyed the Truth, and persecuted the saints.

“Her smoke rose up for ever and ever”—This denotes that there will be complete destruction; that there will be no quenching of the fires of judgment until Babylon and her hateful system is completely destroyed. To burn “for ever and ever,” does not necessarily signify endless burning, but complete destruction. The phrase “eternal fire” is used of the destruction of Sodom (Jude 7), and therefore denotes a fire that continues to burn until everything is consumed. Jerusalem, likewise, is described as being consumed with a fire that would never be quenched (Jer. 17:27); for the “fire” would continue to burn until the city would be completely destroyed. The word “ever” is frequently used in the

Bible to denote *an age* and not eternity.

VERSE 4

“And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne”—The symbols relate to the Redeemed in their priestly and political manifestations. See notes Rev. 4.

“Saying, Amen. Alleluia”—For the significance of *Amen* see Rev. 5:14.

VERSE 5

“And a voice came out of the throne”—The one occupying the throne, is the Lord as God manifest (Rev. 4:2-3). The throne is that of David’s, upon which Christ will reign (Luke 1:32-33); and from it will issue laws for the instruction, guidance and elevation of mankind (Isa. 2:2-4).

“Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great”—This decree is obviously issued in the authority of Christ who occupies the throne. It speaks of *“our God”* hence rejecting the concept of the trinity, and emphasising the principle of God manifestation. The decree calls upon all to submit to God in view of the judgments already poured out. The wording is similar to the instruction of Ps. 115:13 — one of the Passover Psalms.

VERSE 6

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings”—The opening words of this verse suggest that John is now going back to repeat in greater detail what he has already described in vv. 1-5. Therefore the *Hallelu Yah!* of this verse, can be identified with the *Hallelu Yah* of v. 1, and the description of things recorded in vv. 7-21 comprises a more detailed account of the background and judgment of v. 3. The expressions used are those used elsewhere for the great company of the Redeemed (see Ezek. 43:3; Rev. 1:15; 7:9), who are described as rejoicing at the righteous judgments of Yahweh. Their combined voices rising like “mighty thunderings” have an ominous note for those upon whom divine judgments are going to fall, as described in vv. 11-16.

“Saying, Alleluia”—In view of our comments above, endorsed by *Eureka*, the *Hallelu Yah* of this verse is to be identified with that of v. 1. It is mingled with thunder because of the imminence

of war; and is associated with marriage, because the marriage of the Lamb will take place in such a time of trouble (Dan. 12:1-3).

“For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth”—For the significance of the divine title used, see notes on Rev. 1:8.

VERSE 7

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him”—This expresses the great joy of the Redeemed at their salvation, all honour of which is due to Yahweh manifested in His son.

“For the marriage of the Lamb is come”—The relation of Christ to the Ecclesia is often represented in Scripture under the image of marriage (see 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:29-33). As Papal Rome has just been represented as a wanton whore, it is appropriate that the Ecclesia should appear as a pure bride, the Lamb’s wife, and the triumph of the Ecclesia, as a joyous marriage. Christ and the Ecclesia will then be united as “one” (John 17:21). The marriage of the Lamb will fulfil the type of the first marriage in Eden, when Adam was put “into a deep sleep,” that a bride might be built up for him (Gen. 2:23-24). Eve was given the title of *woman or out-man*, for “she was taken out of man.” This typed the formation of the Bride of Christ “out of” her Lord, to find its completion in the glorious unity of the marriage. As the Ecclesia should be one in Christ now, it shall be one with him then.

Brother Thomas renders the present tense *is come* of the A.V. in the past tense, *hath come*. The *Diaglott, The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* (Marshall), and other renditions do likewise. The marriage will take place before Rome is destroyed, thus the use of the past tense, in this place.

“And his wife hath made herself ready”—It is the duty of the Bride to make herself attractive to her groom. She can only do this by following the instructions he has left her (Eph. 5:25-26). The beauty of her character is symbolised in the portrayal of the “marriage” outlined in Psalm 45. She is said to be “all glorious *within*” (v. 13), so that both in heart, as well as in external deportment, she is attractive to her groom. The excellent qualities of the Bride are outlined in Proverbs 31:10-21, where she is described as the virtuous woman.

VERSE 8

“And to her was granted she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white”—Again, these words should be in the past tense. Brother Thomas renders “hath been granted,” for all this has taken place before the destruction of Babylon the Great. The clothing with which she is “arrayed” (see Isa. 61:10; Rev. 3:5,18) denotes both nature and status. As to nature, 2 Cor. 5:4 refers to eternal life as a covering of nakedness: “being clothed upon, that mortality be swallowed up of life.” As to status, “fine linen” was the material out of which was made the clothing of priests (Lev. 6:10; 16:2-4), and, therefore, is appropriate to provide garments for this company of king-priests.

The garments are both “clean” and “white.” They are “clean,” for immortality will “cleans” our death-defiling nature. They are “white,” for they are resplendent in glory. The word signifies “bright” as in the margin. The two words are *katharon* and *lampron* signifying “pure and bright.” In character and in nature they shall manifest the glory of the Father. See Matt. 13:43; 2 Thess. 1:10.

“For the fine linen is the righteousness of saints”—Brother Thomas renders this word as *right actions* (see Ps. 132:9,16; Job 29:14). The white robes of the priests were intended to indicate their righteous actions: in evidence of inner cleanliness manifested in a way of life. It will be “doers of the law” who will be justified, and not mere “hearers” (see James 1:22; Rom. 2:13).

The Marriage Celebrated — vv. 9-10

The marriage having taken place, according to the customs of the times guests are invited to celebrate it. Overcome with emotion at the glory of the occasion, John falls at the feet of the angel, and is warned against rendering worship to any but to God.

VERSE 9

“And he saith unto me”—John is interrupted in his description of the bride by the voice of the angel.

“Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb”—Marriage suppers were extended feasts that occupied many days, and took place after the actual marriage. A mistake would be made, therefore, if the marriage of the Lamb was identified with

the marriage supper of the Lamb. The marriage of the Lamb to his Bride will take place at Sinai where they will be united together. The marriage supper, to which guests are invited, will take place after this, at Zion.

The following account of a marriage supper, taken from various parts of the Word, will help in the better understanding of this important symbol of *The Apocalypse*. The bride was dressed in white, often richly decorated (Ps. 45:13-14). She wore a bridal girdle about her waist (Isa. 49:18), and was resplendent in jewels (Isa. 61:10). The bridegroom set out from his home to that of the bride, accompanied by friends and musicians to herald his approach (Matt. 25:10). Having received the bride, he conducted the whole company to his home, with singing and dancing marking the route (Psa. 45:15; Song 3:6-11). It was customary for friends to join the procession on the way to their future abode (Matt. 25:6). A feast was then provided to which additional friends were invited and came (cp. Matt. 22:1-10; 25:1-13).

When the verse before us, is viewed in its context, the following sequence is revealed. The Lamb, as bridegroom, returns in company with his angelic friends to meet the bride at Sinai (Matt. 16:27; Mark 8:38), to conduct her to her future home in Zion (Ezekiel 43:1-3), there to celebrate the marriage feast (Isa. 25:6). Those who participate therein will be those who answer the invitation of Rev. 14:6-7, and therefore will constitute Israel and those nations (see Rev. 19:17) who submit to Christ. The feast is celebrated after Armageddon, and before the final judgment upon those nations that stubbornly refuse the invitation (Isa. 60:12; Ezek. 39:17). The “fourth beast” (the latter-day manifestation of which is described in Rev. 17) will be completely destroyed (Dan. 7:11), though individual nations that go to make it up will remain to be incorporated into the Kingdom (Dan. 7:12) and ruled over by the Redeemed (Luke 19:17,19), if they submit to the decrees of Christ. The Marriage Feast is identified as “the supper of the great God” in vv. 17-21.

“And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God”—This solemn affirmation of the angel declares that the fulfilment of the prophecies of *The*

Apocalypse is beyond doubt. It therefore emphasises the importance of having the glorious consummation ever fixed in the mind, especially in the midst of trial and persecution. No matter how great the trouble, how difficult the trial, those, like John, who have been blessed with an understanding of the revelation given (Rev. 1:3), should fix their minds upon it, never doubting that God's way will finally triumph in the earth. This will sustain them in moments of deepest despondency and depression.

VERSE 10

"And I fell at his feet to worship him"—Throughout *The Apocalypse* there is found a presiding angel supervising the various visions (Rev. 1:1; 10:9; 11:1; 17:1,7; 19:9,10; 22:6,8,16). Now, overcome with the magnitude of the revelation given, John commences to pay him homage beyond that which is appropriate. The word *worship* is used in Scripture with various shades of meaning. Here it implies such worship as is fit only for Yahweh; though the word can signify *to do obeisance* as in Rev. 3:9.

"And he said unto me, See thou do it not"—See Acts 10:26; Rev. 22:9. The rebuke comprised a salutary warning to some in the Ecclesias at that time who were advocating the "worship of angels" (Col. 2:18). It is a rebuke that the

Catholic Church should heed, for it has advocated the worship of departed saints.

"I am thy fellowservant"—The angel is engaged in the same service as was John, and used this title to bring home to the Apostle the exalted status that he enjoyed in the work given him by Christ to do.

"And of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus"—See Rev. 12:17. The angel identifies himself with the Redeemed, for the vision just concluded relates to the time when they shall be made "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36).

"Worship God"—Such adoration should be directed to God alone.

"For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"—The word "for" is *gar* and expresses the reason, purpose, motive, cause etc. of what has previously been said. The angel thus identifies himself with the saints inasmuch as he, in common with them, speaks forth "the testimony of Jesus" (see Rev. 1:2). The word "testimony" is *marturia*, "witness," and the statement of the Apostle teaches that the resurrected living Lord witnesses to the truth of prophecy (cp. Acts 17:31; Rev. 12:11). As Christ lives, so all prophecy will be fulfilled. Prophecy is both the foretelling and the speaking forth of the mind and purpose of God (see Num. 11:17-29; 12:2; Amos 3:7-8; 1 Cor. 14:3).

The Final Conquests Of The Lamb — v. 11-Ch. 20:15

John is now given a vision of the final work of conquest. This will take place after the judgment of the "great whore," and prior to the "supper of the great God." He sees the militant forces of Christ emerge to do battle with the remnant of the opposition, for though Babylon the Great is destroyed, the beast and the false prophet remain to resist him. They are now overthrown, and cast forever into "the lake of fire burning with brimstone." Those nations called to "the supper of the great God" are required to endorse this work of conquest and national judgment (vv. 17-18) as a basis for their acceptance. Following the judgment of the beast and the false prophet, the "dragon" alone remains, and is now bound for one thousand years in the "bottomless pit," whilst the resurrected and glorified Redeemed reign on earth. At the end of this millenium of peace, satan, who is identified with "the dragon," is unloosed for a little season, and agitates against the rule of Christ. This introduces the final resurrection and judgment at the close of the

millenium, as a consequence of which, death and the grave are finally eradicated from the earth.

The section is divisible into three sub-sections:

- (1) The beast conquered — vv. 11-21;
- (2) Satan bound — Ch. 20:1-6;
- (3) Satan destroyed — vv. 7-15.

The Beast Conquered — vv. 11-21

Though Rome is destroyed, its influence still remains in the organisation of the beast and the presence of the false prophet. These are first conquered, and their influence destroyed, by Christ.

VERSE 11

“And I saw heaven opened”—John is taken back to the initial vision relating to “things which must be hereafter” (Rev. 4:1). He had seen “a door opened in heaven,” and had heard a voice inviting him to ascend therein. This will take place when the Redeemed, glorified with Christ, are elevated with him as the king-priests of the age to come (Rev. 5:9-10). That same “heaven” (the political heavens) is now opened that its belligerent forces might move against the principalities and powers of the darkness of human rule (Isa. 60:1).

“And behold a white horse”—At the opening of the seals there was revealed a “white horse,” indicative of the forces of Christianity then dominating the Roman Empire. The work of conquest was never properly completed, however, for the whiteness of the horse was turned to red under the next seal (Rev. 6:1-4). But now, in a vision relating to the future, the “white horse” again emerges, this time Israelitish in character (cp. Zech. 10:3), to complete the conquest of the world.

“And he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True”—It is most significant, and appropriate, that these are the titles of Christ used to introduce the message to Laodicea (Rev. 3:14). An echo of this message is heard in the declaration of Christ in Rev. 16:15, and again here. It is as though the Lord would contrast the apathy and blindness of the Laodiceans with the faithful certainty and reality of his own purpose in the earth. The Laodiceans, in their affluence imagined that they had “need of nothing,” and failed to recognise their true state. The return of the Lord will make that state truly apparent.

“In righteousness he doth judge and make war”—His belligerence and righteousness in war and judgment will elevate the principles of justice throughout the earth, establishing God’s truth in every nation. See Isa. 11:4; 26:9; Acts 17:31.

VERSE 12

“His eyes were as a flame of fire”—This serves to identify the one on the horse with the “one like unto the Son of man” of Rev. 1:14. “Eyes as a flame of fire,” express the flashing forth of divine anger against the world of the ungodly. See Isa. 30:27; 2 Thess. 1:7-8.

“And on his head were many crowns”—The word is literally *diadems*, indicating conquests already won. Christ’s national authority will be first established at Armageddon. This will result in “many nations” laying their crowns at the feet of the Lord (Psa. 72:10-11), though those powers dominated by the beast and false prophet will refuse to do so. Accordingly, Christ will take the war into enemy territory. See notes on Rev. 14:14.

“And he had a name written”—The name is given in v. 13, as *The Logos of God*. Christ is the Word made flesh, the manifestation of Yahweh among men (1 Tim. 3:16). All that that Word requires is revealed by him; all that it predicts finds its final revelation in him. He is the Alpha and Omega of the Divine purpose proclaimed in the Word (cp. Rom. 15:8). *Logos*, however, signifies more than the mere utterance of a thing; it denotes the thought, intention, purpose revealed thereby. That is why *Logos* is identified with God in John 1:1. The Word expounds Yahweh to humanity, and therefore has been elevated above all His holy name (Psa. 138:2).

“That no man knew, but he himself”—Actually the name is revealed for all to know; but the word “knew” (Gr. *oida*) signifies more than to read the name: it is to know completely, fully, and

absolutely. Christ alone fully comprehends the significance of the name he bears, though we might know it academically. The use of the Greek *oida* is illustrated in John 8:55: "Ye have not known Him (*ginosko* — begun to know), but I know Him (*oida* — know Him fully)." See notes on Rev. 2:17.

VERSE 13

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood"—Vesture is *himation* and relates to an outer garment. Brother Thomas renders the phrase: "He had been clothed with a garment that had been dipped in blood." The *Diaglott* and *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* are similar. Accordingly, Brother Thomas identifies the "garment" as "human nature," with which the Lord was once clothed, but which has been changed for divine nature. Strength is given to this explanation by use of the word *bapto* rendered "dipped." It signifies that the whole vesture had been dipped, or dyed in blood, and in the light of Brother Thomas' explanation, would imply that the Lord's sacrifice was for his own salvation, as well as that of others: that through it he obtained redemption from human nature. He did this for himself as well as for his brethren (Rev. 7:14; John 17:19). That is the teaching of Paul in Hebrews 13:20 where he declares that the Lord was brought again from the dead "through the blood of the everlasting covenant," or his own blood. The symbolism is appropriate to the circumstances of the Lord as depicted in the scene before us, for he is revealed as chief among those who are appointed to "execute the judgment written" (Psa. 149:9). Christ declared that the Father had "given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:27). Therefore, though the one leading the armies of heaven in the verse before us, is obviously divine in nature, he is also one who previously *had been clothed* with human nature, from which he has been redeemed.

That seems to be the significance of the verse before us if the A.V. reading is accepted. Therefore, the picture presented is different to that depicted in Isaiah 63:1-4 where the Victor of Edom is shown in blood-sprinkled garments as the result of many slain. However, in order to link it with this O.T. prophecy, a few manuscripts have *rhantizo*, "sprinkled," instead of *bapto*, "dipped," in Rev.

19:13. The RV follows this, and renders "sprinkled with" instead of "dipped in" blood, adding a note in the margin: "Some ancient authorities read 'dipped in'." The AV is supported by the best Greek texts, which, therefore, indicate that the scene before us is different to that depicted in Isaiah 63. This is shown by the Septuagint which has neither *bapto* nor *rhantizo* in this place but *Eruthros* signifying *red*. In Isaiah 63, the garments of the conqueror are sprinkled with the blood of slain who will never rise again (Isa. 63:3), but in the verse before us, the garments are baptised in the blood of the Redeemer, teaching that Christ benefited from his own sacrificial death.

It is appropriate that at this moment of national conquest the mighty victor should be described in terms that draw attention to his greatest victory: his personal conquest of flesh (see Prov. 16:32). It was by this that a "change of raiment" (nature) was granted him. This was typed in the "change of raiment" given Joshua the high priest as described in Zech. 3:3-5.

"And his name is called The Word of God"—The Lord was, is, and will be the complete manifestation of the Law and Prophets: they find absolute fulfilment in him. It is significant, that whereas in the Gospel the title of *The Word* or *The Logos* is absolute (John 1:1), here it is qualified, as *of God*. This is the sense in which it can be stated that "the word was God," because it was "*of God*," and not because the Lord was God in the Trinitarian concept of his status. The title is appropriate to the Lord for he "confirmed the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8).

VERSE 14

"And the armies which were in heaven"—The armies in the new political arena will comprise the glorified Redeemed, "the called, and chosen, and faithful" who will be with the Lord at that time (Rev. 17:14). The call of the Gospel is a recruiting call to join this divine army (2 Tim. 2:3-4). To be successful requires discipline and training, the dedication of mind and body necessary to good soldiering. In that army, yet to be manifested in the earth, will be found the fulfilment of the prophetic title, of Yahweh Sabaoth — *He Who will be armies*, the belligerent title of Deity. See its use in Isa. 9:7.

“Followed him upon white horses”—See note on v. 11. The horse is the symbol of war; accordingly, “white horses” symbolise the righteousness with which the Lord will make war (v. 11). In doing so he will use Israel after the flesh as well as the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). In Zech. 10:3, the “house of Judah” is described as the “flock” of Yahweh of hosts, whom He has made “as His goodly horse in the battle.” Israel after the flesh, officered by the Redeemed (see Zech. 9:13-14), shall “fight because Yahweh is with them.” Their success will be such that the Gentile “riders on horses,” or those who guide the destiny of nations, their rulers, “shall be confounded” (Zech. 10:5). The manifestation of the Lord in belligerent power will be necessary because of the refusal of Catholic countries to submit to the authority of the new Government in Jerusalem. Despite the outpouring of the seventh vial at Armageddon, men will continue to “blaspheme God” (Rev. 16:21), and will do so even after Rome is destroyed (v. 19). The invasion of the territory of those who continue to resist the Lord will be necessary if righteousness and truth are to prevail in the earth.

“Clothed in fine linen, white and clean”—Their “garments” have been washed “in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14), and show forth clean and white. Like their Commander whom they follow (Isa. 55:4), they once were clothed with human nature, but having won the victory over flesh, they are given a change of raiment. The word “white” is *leukos*, denoting “white,” and not *lampros*, “bright”, as in v.6. The clothing, like the horses, are white in colour, typifying righteousness (v. 8).

VERSE 15

“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword”—See note Rev. 1:16. The imagery is drawn from Isa. 49:2, where Christ is represented as saying: “He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.” The skill which Christ displayed in answering the religious leaders of his day illustrates the use of the symbol. He “cut” them with words. Sharpened by the Holy Spirit granted him without measure, he possessed an ability to answer his adversaries in a way that admitted of no reply. When he spake, he uttered words of power expressing wisdom, counsel and knowledge. In like manner, in the future, he

will speak with authority, compelling the obedience of men. “He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked” (Isa. 11:4).

“That with it he should smite the nations”—This “sword” comprises the Spirit (Heb. 4:12), and, saith Yahweh Sabaoth, “by My spirit” and not by the exercise of fleshly power. Gentile might shall be destroyed (see Zech. 4:6).

“And he shall rule them with a rod of iron”—See note Rev. 2:27. He will be inflexible in his demands and commands.

“He treadeth the winepress”—See notes Rev. 14:19-20.

“Of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”—The blasphemy of flesh shall be rigorously put down, for the more men resist, the worse will be the punishment. See Jer. 25:32-33. For the significance of the divine title used, see note Rev. 4:8.

VERSE 16

“He hath on his vesture and on his thigh”—His vesture is his covering indicative of his nature and status; his thigh is the place where the sword is worn, emblematic of strength and power over his enemies. See Ps. 45:3-4.

“A name written King of kings and Lord of lords”—Christ will be chief among ten thousand (Song 5:10), the other “kings” and “lords” comprising the Redeemed, the aristocracy of the future age. Christ on earth will be the manifestation of Yahweh in the heavens. Who is a “great King above the Elohim” (Ps. 95:3; 1 Tim. 6:15).

VERSE 17

“And I saw an angel”—This angel is representative of the multitudinous Christ.

“Standing in the sun”—The sun is figuratively the place of royalty and authority. In Rev. 12:1, the apostate Church is depicted in that position, for in the days of Constantine, it grasped at political power. The attempt was premature, for saints should remain separate from all forms of political involvement, until specifically bidden to “come up hither” (Rev. 4:1), at which time they will be elevated to ruling places of authority (Rev. 5:9-10). The Redeemed, as a body, will then politically find a place “in the sun,” for the Sun is the symbol of divine glory and power. “The righteous

shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," declared the Lord (Matt. 13:42).

"He cried with a loud voice"—This cry represents a proclamation that will be issued to the nations, again calling upon them to accept the authority of Christ. The ultimatum (for such it will be) will be issued after Armageddon, and before Christ launches his attack against Catholic Europe, and other nations that refuse his terms of peace (Rev. 14:6-11; Ps. 2:10-12). Peoples and nations of goodwill will be invited to submit to his rule. In the midst of this, the complete regathering of Israel, and restoration of the tribes in the order of Ezekiel 48, shall take place. To that end, and prior to Armageddon, Elijah and his associates will be sent to the Jewish people still in dispersion, to instruct them as to the real identity of the new power that shall destroy Gog, and so relieve the pressure upon Israel in the land (Mal. 4:5-6). They will be invited to accept him in faith, and to make their way back to the land. Some nations will resist the attempt of Jews to return, and in those countries, they will have to fight their way back to the Promised Land (Ezek. 20:33-38; Isa. 11:13-14; 27:12-13). A "new covenant" will be made with Israel in that day (Jer. 31:31-38; Rom. 11:23), and they will be established as twelve tribes in the Land (Ezek. 48) on a basis of faith.

Saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven"—In several parts of the Word, the nations are likened to "the fowls of the heaven." In Daniel 4:12, the Babylonian Empire is likened to a tree in whose branches "the fowls of heaven" (i.e. other nations) sheltered. In Matthew 13:32, the kingdom of God is likened to a tree "so that the birds of the air (the nations) come and lodge in the branches of it." In Jer. 12:9, Israel is likened to a "bird of prey" (see mg) which the other birds (or nations) attack. See also Isa. 46:11. In the verse before us, the "angel" directs his decree to the "fowls that fly in the midst of heaven," or to those nations with sufficient political independence to act upon his summons.

"Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God"—The imagery is taken from a scene of great slaughter, in which the bodies of the dead are left unburied to be consumed by birds of prey. In Ezek. 39:17, a similar invitation is issued to symbolic "feather-

ed fowl" to come and feast off the carcasses of the slain at the conclusion of Armageddon. In plain language, Gentile nations will be invited to endorse the action of Christ in destroying the Gogian confederacy by acknowledging that the judgment was both right and just. The opportunity will be given them to do this before launching an attack upon those who "obey not" the gospel to be then preached (2 Thess. 1:8; Rev. 14:6). Figuratively, a nation will partake of the "supper of the great God," when it will acknowledge the righteousness of Yahweh's judgments, and will submit to the reign of Christ the King (see notes Ezek. 39:21). The "marriage supper of the Lamb" is styled "the supper of the great God," because, as Christ showed in his parable of the marriage feast, it is God who has arranged for it on behalf of His son (Matt. 22:1).

VERSE 18

"That ye may eat the flesh of kings"—This implies a sacrificial feast such as was eaten on the establishment of a covenant. In such circumstances, two contracting parties were joined together as one. A special ceremony was observed, referred to in Jer. 34:18-19. The sacrificial animal was divided into two parts, and the two contracting parties, having proclaimed the terms of their agreement, "passed between the pieces thereof," and then ate the sacrificial flesh. In the verse before us, "the flesh of kings" symbolises those nations ruled by such (see v. 19), that will be overthrown by the judgments of Christ; whilst the "fowls" represent those peoples who submit to his rule. The latter are called upon to figuratively "eat the flesh of kings," in the sense of acknowledging as just the judgments that Christ will pour out upon the nations. In doing this they will vindicate his name. Acknowledging the judgments are right, and Christ's rule desirable, such peoples will be incorporated into the realm of Christ as mortal nations.

"And the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses"—These are all symbols of war, which Christ's reign will cause to "cease unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 46:9).

"And of them that sit on them"—See note Rev. 6:2. Those who figuratively "sit on horses," are those statesmen who guide the destiny of nations.

"And the flesh of all men both free and bond, both small and great"—All people.

from the highest to the lowest in the land will have to submit to the reign of Christ by acknowledging that his judgments are just.

VERSE 19

“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathering together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army”—The overthrow of Gog at Armageddon will destroy the power of Russia, and therefore relieve the world of the military bondage of the latter-day “dragon” power. But the Catholic influence of Rome and Europe will remain, even after the judgments of Christ have destroyed the “great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 17:18). Catholic Europe will prepare to resist the new Government set up in Jerusalem, but, as previously revealed, it will be decisively defeated, and the organisation of the beast by which the diverse nationalities will be welded together as in the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, will be destroyed.

VERSE 20

“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, and them that worshipped his image”—The pope will give his blessing to this organised resistance to Christ’s rule (see Note Rev. 17:13-14). It is significant that no mention is made of “the dragon” (see Rev. 16:13), for its influence would have suffered a severe reverse at the defeat of Gog’s forces.

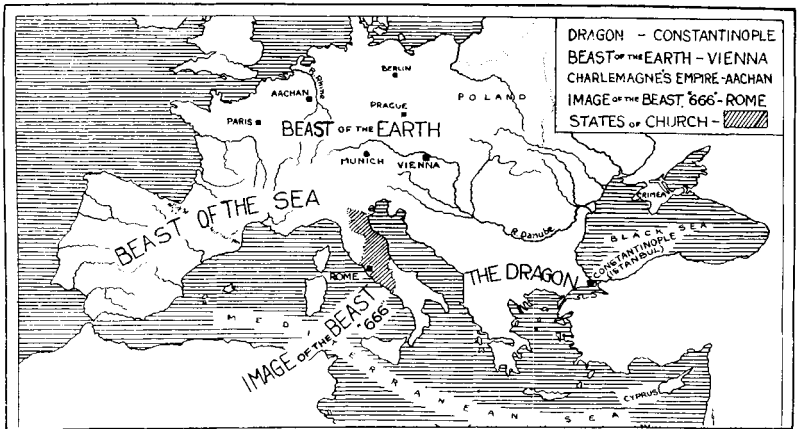
“These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone”—Europe will be turned into a lake of fire by the outpouring of Divine judgments. See Dan. 7:11; 2 Thess. 1:8; Mal. 4:1-2. Sodom was turned into a “lake of fire burning with brimstone,” and is set forth as an example of the fiery judgments to be experienced by those powers that foolishly resist the reign of Christ (Jude 7). The political organisation of Western Europe, together with every influence of Catholicism will be completely eradicated from the earth.

VERSE 21

“And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse”—Though the main forces of organised opposition will be overthrown, many pockets of resistance will remain. They will be overthrown by the campaigns of Christ, or the “seven thunders” of Rev. 10:3 (See note).

“Which sword proceeded out of his mouth”—The sword relates to the Word of God (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). The conquests of Christ will not be limited to war, but will embrace education and teaching (Isa. 2:2-4). By such means the remnant of the nations will be won over to his control.

“And all the fowls were filled with their flesh”—Those nations that have submitted to Christ will assist in extending his rule. They will thoroughly endorse his actions, particularly when they observe the benefits of so doing in the new world order to be established on the earth (see Zech. 8:20-23).



CHAPTER TWENTY

SATAN BOUND FOR 1000 YEARS

Though the "beast" and the "false prophet," have been silenced, the moral regeneration of mankind still remains to be accomplished, and with this, the complete and final conquest of sin and death. This will occupy one thousand years. Paul declares that Christ "must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:25-26). A perfect Kingdom will then be handed over to God "that He may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). The chapter before us outlines the means by which this is done. Though "the dragon," or political rebellion against the rule of God (see Rev. 2:10; 12:3-4), will be humbled at Armageddon, its influence will not be completely destroyed until the end of the reign of Christ. Meanwhile, having dealt with the "beast" and "false prophet," Christ will set about limiting the influence of the "dragon," until the very seat of its influence (the flesh) is swallowed up of life.

Satan Bound — vv. 1-6

An angel is seen descending from heaven with the key of the bottomless pit. He lays hold on the dragon identified with the serpent, and called the Devil and Satan, and imprisons him for one thousand years, after which he is loosed for a little season. Meanwhile, the Redeemed are elevated into positions of authority with Christ.

VERSE 1

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven"—An angel is a messenger of God. In Rev. 19:10, the presiding angel is identified with the Redeemed, who, in the days of their glory, will not only be "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36), but will take over the administration of affairs at present conducted by the angels of heaven under the guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:14; 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:22). After the destruction of all organised resistance to Christ's rule (Rev. 19:21), the nations will be brought under control of divine law (Isa. 2:2-4; 26:9; 42:4). To bring about this state, the Redeemed, having been elevated to the political heavens (Rev. 4:1; 5:9-10), will afterwards descend to the political earth to educate and guide the people. They shall "come down like rain upon the mown grass" (Ps. 72:6).

"Having the key of the bottomless

pit"—See note Rev. 9:1. The Greek is *abusson*, "abyss." In this place, there is no word for "bottomless" in the original. The "abyss" is the deep, or the ocean; and, therefore, in the typology of *The Apocalypse* a symbol for the nations (Rev. 17:15; Isa. 57:20). A "key" represents power (cp. Rev. 1:18; Isa. 22:22), so that the symbol indicates that this angel exercises power over the nations.

"And a great chain in his hand"—This is for the purpose of restraint, such as was used to limit the actions of the madman Legion (see Mark 5:4).

VERSE 2

"And he laid hold on the dragon"—The "dragon" is used throughout *The Apocalypse* as a symbol for sin manifested politically. See notes Rev. 12:3; 17:9-10. To "lay hold" of such implies the use of force. Vigorous methods will be used by Christ and the Redeemed to restrain all political opposition to his power during the millenium. At the conclusion of that period, however, Christ will relax his controls so as to enable men to independently demonstrate their loyalty. Some will seize the opportunity to rebel, with the result that "the dragon," or organised political opposition to Christ, will reveal itself again. A post-millennial Gog and Magog

will develop to re-enact the political folly exhibited by the pre-millennial Gog as predicted in the prophecy of Ezekiel 38.

“That old serpent”—See note Rev. 12:9. In the beginning, the serpent incited rebellion against the express commands of God, and the spirit of such has been manifested by flesh and its institutions ever since.

“Which is the Devil and Satan”—These two words signify *false accuser and adversary*. The term “devil” is frequently used for sin’s flesh (cp. Heb. 2:14); but one of its manifestations is political opposition to God’s way, the symbol of which is the Dragon. That the term *devil* is sometimes used for political opposition to the Truth is shown in such passages as Rev. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:8 (where the term “adversary” signifies an *opponent at law*); Eph. 6:11-12; 1 Tim. 3:6. “False accuser” and “adversary” are suitable descriptions of the flesh in political manifestation, for it has falsely accused and opposed the brethren of Christ.

“And bound him a thousand years”—Political opposition to Christ’s reign will be effectively restrained during the millenium. This will be brought about by such rigorous controls as are suggested in Zech. 14:17-19. In that age, the Redeemed will be able to read the very hearts of people, so as to restrain any gross opposition to authority before it is manifested (See the effect of this described in Isa. 30:21). The possession of the Holy Spirit in the past has made this possible then, how much more so in the future. Peter, by the Holy Spirit, was able to detect the motives of such as Ananias (Acts 5:4-9); and Elisha, by the same means, knew of the deception of Gehazi (2 Kings 5:25-27). With Christ’s influence so powerfully in evidence in the earth, there will follow a wholesome and widespread revulsion against error, so that it will not be tolerated (Zech. 13:3-4). By such iron controls, the Dragon (political opposition to righteousness) will be kept bound, and Christ’s rule everywhere respected. These restraints will result in the Truth permeating society, so that a pure worship centred in Jerusalem will be established (Zech. 14:16); the moral standards of humanity will be elevated (Isa. 32:1-6); whilst peace and prosperity, will be developed on the basis of true love towards God and man (Isa. 9:6-7; 2 John 6).

But though all political opposition will

be restrained, and sin will be reduced by the just administration of divine law (Isa. 65:17-20), human nature in all but the Redeemed will remain as it is today for the thousand years.

VERSE 3

“And cast him into the bottomless pit”—The “bottomless pit” symbolises humanity generally (see v. 1). The “dragon” will be “shut up” in the hearts of men, and will not be permitted open manifestation. To accomplish this it will be necessary to eject human nature (sin’s flesh, alias the devil) from all share in the government, and to thrust all its officials into privacy among the common people. Christ shall “put down the mighty from their seats” (Luke 1:52).

“And shut him up, and set a seal upon him”—To set a seal upon the “dragon,” is to officially prohibit the uprising of any political opposition. The government will be dictatorial in its character, but wise and beneficent in its operation. A system of repression and watchfulness will be set up as will leave no loophole for the manifestation of human satanism in a political form to arise from the “abyss” into which it will be placed. Christ and the Redeemed will command the forces of omnipotence, and will silence all those who would otherwise oppose their rule (see Mic. 7:16; Ezek. 39:11 — mg).

“That he should deceive the nations no more”—In past ages, nations have been deceived by political aspirations that have led them to oppose the principles of God (Micah 4:12; Ezek. 43:7-8). This will no longer be permitted. Whilst the nations retain their individual identity during Christ’s millennial reign, they will be all subjected to his authority: “their dominion will be taken away, but their lives prolonged for a season and time” (Dan. 7:12).

“Till the thousand years should be fulfilled”—A “thousand years” is a millenium, hence the general use of the term. The thousand years of peace described in this chapter, does not commence at Christ’s return, but after he has subdued the nations. Other parts of Scripture suggest that the judgment of the household, and the subduing of the nations, will occupy a jubilee of fifty years. The peace of Christ’s reign, once it is established, will not be disturbed until the millenium is completed.

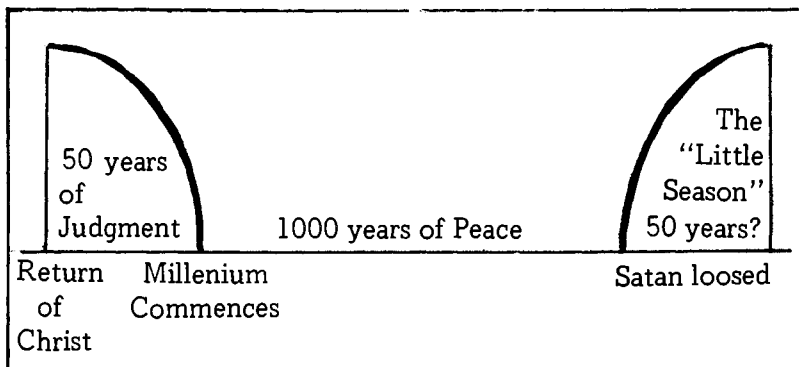
“And after that he must be loosed a

little season”—The term “must” is from the Greek *dei* signifying something necessary because it is according to God’s purpose, or because the circumstances compel it; but not because the thing described is forced to act against its will. After one thousand years of peace and righteousness, such a test is necessary to give people opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty, or otherwise, to Christ and to God. It is a test permitted at the close of an epoch of great benefit to humanity.

How long will “the little season” continue during which restraints will be relaxed? We are not told. It could be for

a jubilee, a period of fifty years, to balance up the fifty years between Christ’s return and the commencement of the millenium during which the “dragon” is restrained. This would be a fitting period for such a purpose.

In 1 Cor. 15:23-24, Paul refers to three major developments in the divine purpose: (1) Christ’s return; (2) the resurrection of the Redeemed; (3) the End (of Christ’s millennial reign). Paul revealed that at the End, even death is destroyed; and the chapter before us endorses that. It will culminate in God being “all and in all.”



VERSE 4

“And I saw thrones”—These are thrones of judgment such as are referred to in Dan. 7:9; Ps. 122:5; Rev. 4:4 (“seats” should be *thrones*).

“And they sat upon them”—The reference is to the Redeemed.

“And judgment was given unto them”—This honour is reserved for the Redeemed. See Ps. 149:9; Matt. 19:28; Rev. 2:26; 3:21.

“And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God”—These are the “souls” last seen “under the (Christ) altar” (Rev. 6:9). Then in persecution, they are now revealed in glory, resurrected and ruling on thrones provided for them. Their “souls” represent their “lives” which previously were given over to death. In Rev. 6:9-11, they are represented as pleading for vengeance. The judgment now meted out to the nations by the saints is payment in kind for that which they suffered previously. They sacrificed their lives to serve Christ.

and now those sacrificed lives are displayed before all mankind to demonstrate that the way of life is through sacrifice of self, and that, in Christ, no sacrifice is wasted. Seated upon thrones of glory, the Redeemed will demonstrate that they attained unto their positions of authority because they “loved not their lives unto death,” and that they “endured unto the end.”

“And which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands”—See note Rev. 15:2. The expressions denote complete separation politically, socially, ecclesiastically. Salvation is dependent upon such a separation (2 Cor. 6:17-18).

“And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”—This is equivalent to saying that they *lived again* (see v. 5). The Greek is “and they lived, and they reigned with the Anointed one,” thus implying a resurrection unto eternal life, followed by a reigning with Christ during the millenium (Rev. 5:9-10).

VERSE 5

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished"—This statement cannot relate to those who died before Christ's coming, for vast multitudes of those shall never rise from the grave (Ps. 49:19-20; 88:5; Isa. 26:14; Eph. 2:12), whereas the statement before us teaches that there is a certain class that will rise from the dead at the end of the thousand years' reign of Christ. The statement cannot relate to the responsible wicked, for they will rise with the righteous to be judged at Christ's coming (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 13:49-50; 26:64; Luke 12:8-9; 13:24-30; Rom. 2:6-12.16). The "dead" of this verse, therefore, can only relate to those who die after Christ's return, and during his thousand years' reign, for death will continue during the Millennium (Isa. 65:20; Ezek. 44:22). The Redeemed are described as "the firstfruits" (James 1:18), and as such comprise but a portion of the complete harvest, the balance of which will be gathered in during Christ's reign on earth. The force of the statement before us seems to be in the intimation that there will be no more admission to immortality until "the thousand years are finished." The "rest" of the dead, therefore, relate to those who die during the millennium.

"This is the first resurrection"—Resurrection is here referred to in the absolute sense: as a raising up unto eternal life, and not merely a standing again in life to die again in the grave. See the word used in the sense of a "better resurrection" (Phil. 3:11; Luke 20:36; Heb. 11:35).

VERSE 6

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection"—These constitute the "firstfruits" (James 1:18; Rev. 14:4), being given unto Yahweh in a special way (Exod. 22:29). Therefore they are both blessed, (happy), and holy (separated and consecrated). See the seven-fold blessings of *The Apocalypse* (pp. 10-11).

"On such the second death hath no power"—See Ch. 2:14; 21:8.

"But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years"—See Rev. 1:6; 3:12.

Satan Destroyed — vv. 7-15

Satan is first bound, and then destroy-

ed. This glorious culmination brings death itself to an end, so that a perfected world, peopled by those clothed upon with divine nature, is delivered unto God that He might be "all and in all."

VERSE 7

"And when the thousand years are expired"—The "thousand years" of vv. 2, 4.

"Satan shall be loosed out of his prison"—After the completion of the millenium, there will follow a period during which the restraints of that time shall be relaxed, enabling every person to manifest the hidden motives of his or her heart by continued obedience or otherwise. No longer will the Redeemed openly oppose sin; no longer will be heard the voice of instruction commanding "this is the way walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:21). Instead, each one will be permitted to exercise his own desire, and shall be self-judged by the way he reacts.

VERSE 8

"And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth"—With the relaxing of restrictions, human nature will assert itself once more. It will be found that people can please themselves without restraint, so that even "in the land of uprightness" people will begin to act unrighteously (Isa. 26:10). In their folly, leaders among mankind will imagine that they can successfully challenge the Almighty, for sin is a deceiver (Rom. 7:11). Men will begin to assert themselves, and peoples will become deluded and seduced by their pretensions, as Israel was in the days of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. The very expression of the verse before us implies some such national development in all parts of the earth. The fact that the verse specifies the "four quarters of the earth" shows that the circumstances described are not to be confused with those of Gog and Magog outlined in Ezekiel 38, for there the invasion comes from the "north" only. Moreover, Gog of Ezekiel 38, moves against self-confident Israelites who are humbled (cp. Ezek. 38:11 with Ezek. 39:26), and not against "the camp of the saints" as in *The Apocalypse*.

"Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle"—See Gen. 10:2 where Magog appears as a son of Japhet. In Ezekiel 38, Magog is a general name for the northern nations, and Gog is their prince. Here Magog comes from the four

quarters of the earth, whilst Gog is still the chief. According to *The Hebrew And English Bible Students Concordance*, Magog signifies *from the top*, whilst Gog signifies *a roof*. The terms thus denote those who assume the leadership among men. The Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38 represent political antagonism towards God, and therefore type the form of rebellion that will be manifested at the end of the thousand years' reign of Christ.

"The number of whom is as the sand of the sea"—In the Bible, this merely defines an unspecified number, and does not imply that the whole population shall rise against Christ. The same term is used in 2 Samuel 17:11 for a large army, and certainly does not denote an entire population. The teaching of the verse before us is that a large, but unspecified number, will be led in revolt against the administration of Christ, and that these come from all parts of the earth. This suggests that many will become impatient at the restrictions placed upon them, and will desire some change. Certainly the flesh is capable of such a reaction. The desire for self-government is very strong, and history records many examples of firm, wise administration: being overthrown by a people who have tired of it and desire a change of government. Human longevity will be common in those days (Isa. 65:20), so that the immortality of the rulers will appear as no reason for the flesh (itself long-living) not to take over.

VERSE 9

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth"—The description is that of an invading army moving towards a common centre. Such a movement of large bodies of people will be normal in those days when representatives of the nations go up from year to year to worship the king in Jerusalem (Zech. 14:16). But this time there will be a difference. They will not go up for worship but for war, not to pray but to protest; they will move as an army on the march with belligerent intent. Though it is declared that the nations shall "learn war no more" (Isa. 2:4), they will, without special training, move in a hostile mood towards the seat of government, determined to "demand their rights." There is no reference to armed forces as there is in Ezekiel 38. The context suggest a belligerent approach to the "beloved city" in order to

vigorously protest and make demands. And this, not by all mankind, but by those who have assembled from out of the nations for that purpose.

"And compass the camp of the saints about"—Israel in the wilderness was an encampment, lying foursquare about the Tabernacle. The political order of the saints in the Kingdom is similarly described (Rev. 21:16). The Jerusalem of the future will comprise a four-square temple as the seat of the Theocratic government that will be set up (see H. Sulley *The Temple Of Ezekiel's Prophecy*), and portion of the duties of those who minister therein (whether mortal or immortal priests — for both will be there) will be to "keep the charge of the sanctuary" (Num. 8:26). This is a military term relating to the work of a sentry on his post. It is a term used in regard to the Levites who were to "wait upon the service of the tabernacle," or, as the Hebrew has it (see mg.) *war the warfare of the tabernacle* (Num. 8:24). The Levites, in typing the saints, "encamped round about the tabernacle," and defended it from "the stranger" who may attempt to unlawfully "come nigh" it (Num. 1:50-54). A similar "charge" was delivered unto Timothy in regard to the Ecclesia, and the proclamation of the Truth (1 Tim. 1:18). And similar instructions are given in regard to the Temple of the future age (Ezek. 40:46; 44:8-16). The need for such vigilance is illustrated by the events recorded in the verses before us.

Therefore, throughout the millenium, the saints will be required to guard the Temple and its worship; acting as sentries, so as to exclude any who might not manifest the right attitude (see Ezek. 44:9). Hence, when a large community of rebels approaches Jerusalem with belligerent intent, it will find its way barred by the "camp of the saints." The word "camp" in this place is an interesting one. It is from the Greek *parembole*, and it can relate to an army as in Heb. 11:34, or the castle or barracks which forms the headquarters of an army, as in Acts 21:34,37; 22:24; 23:10,16,32. In Hebrews 13:11,13, it is used to describe the city of Jerusalem (the camp), and this is appropriate to the verse before us.

"And the beloved city"—See Ps. 78:68; 132:13. But Jerusalem also is treated symbolically in the Word, and applied to the Redeemed. See Heb.

12:22; Rev. 11:2; 21:9-10. The intention of the rebels in converging upon such will be to overthrow the government of Christ, and set up the rule of flesh. Doubtless they will consider that flesh is "clean" and "good" and well able to legislate on its own behalf. The context of the verse suggests the development of unusual circumstances that will appear opportune for revolt. For some reason, the Redeemed are all gathered in one place: the Land of Promise. Normally this will not be the case. They will exercise jurisdiction over different cities (Luke 19:16-19), so that centres of administration in the theocratic rule will spread over all the world (Malachi 1:11). But apparently, this order of things will be changed, at least temporarily, and the saints recalled to headquarters leaving mortals everywhere in charge. This will provide "satan" or the flesh, with a grand opportunity to stimulate revolt, and for it to gather momentum unchecked. Mortal leaders will arise to take control in different parts, and so lead rebels against the land of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem. It could be, that this withdrawal of the Redeemed from their places of authority, will comprise the relaxing of restraint suggested in the chapter before us.

"And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them"—The best texts omit the words *from God* (See *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*). Fire from heaven will destroy the rebels, as it did Sodom so long ago. "Heaven," denotes the government of Christ, the fire being the manifestation of the spirit wielded by the saints, so that the destruction of the rebels will be an act of judicial execution.

VERSE 10

"And the devil that deceived them"—Human nature is the devil of the Bible, and is a great deceiver (see Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8; Rom. 7:11; Mark 7:20-23). Moreover, it is manifested in many forms. It can relate to the lust of the flesh, denote a person who incites to evil, describe a government, or an organisation, opposed to the truth, and so forth. In the verse before us, however, it signifies the spirit of revolt that will dominate the rebels who will converge upon the beloved city.

"Was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are"—It will be noted that the

word *are* is in italics, indicating that there is no comparable word in the Greek. The *Diaglott*, accordingly, renders it as *were cast*. The analogy is taken from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which is set forth as "an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). The fire of God's judgment consumed those cities without remedy (Lam. 4:6), and now the devil and its apocalyptic associates will be consumed in like manner. In v. 14 the lake of fire is clearly defined as death.

"And shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever"—For the use of the word "tormented" see notes on Rev. 14:10-11. The Greek word signifies primarily to *put to the test*, and then to *examine by torture*. Paul declares, that in the day of judgment, the value or otherwise of a person's work will be determined by fire (1 Cor. 3:13-15). The "fire" is not literal fire, of course, but the fierce and purging scrutiny of divine inspection. The analogy is drawn from the Law. The ordinance delivered Moses required that all things taken by Israel in conquest had to be tested by fire: "Everything that abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean" (Num. 31:23). When put to such a test, inflammable material such as wood, hay, stubble is inevitably destroyed; whereas, by the same means, gold, silver, and the like is purified. Therefore, a person is either destroyed or purified by divine judgment.

The reference to the beast and the false prophet, at this point of the prophecy, is remarkable, seeing that they were cast into the "lake of fire" (described as the "second death") one thousand years earlier. Yet the clause before us is quite specific. It should read: "and they shall be tormented (put to the test) for ever and ever" (see *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*). It aligns the punishment now meted out to the devil with that given to the beast and false prophet previously, and therefore suggests that a link exists between the insurrection of those powers in pre-millennial times, with the revolt at the end of the thousand years' reign of Christ. The term "*for ever and ever*" does not signify eternity, but relates to the millenium (see Rev. 1:6). The overthrow of the beast and false prophet in pre-millennial times was a "putting to the test" to demonstrate the folly of revolt. As such, the lesson shall last throughout the millenium. But it will

be overlooked towards the end. With the relaxation of restraint, the devil will deceive the people with the disastrous result outlined in previous verses, though it, also, will suffer the fate of the beast and false prophet.

This will constitute an appropriate finish to the history of sin's flesh. In the post-millennial revolt it will be permitted the opportunity of coming to a great head, so to speak, in order that there might be a final crushing of it, as was foretold in Eden (Gen. 3:15). There is a dramatic and satisfactory completeness about such an arrangement, which is in harmony with the divine wisdom that is manifest in all the works of God. As we noted in commenting upon v. 8, whilst support for the rebellion will come from all parts of the world, it will not involve all mankind. There will be millions who will not identify themselves with it, and their faithfulness will be acknowledged by the granting to them of life eternal after the presumptuous rebels have been suddenly and dramatically overwhelmed.

VERSE 11

“And I saw a great white throne”—This describes the throne of judgment. It is white in colour to emphasise the principle of righteousness. The figure is drawn from the great white throne of judgment that Solomon caused to be erected, and from whence he administered justice stemming from his wisdom (see 2 Chron. 9:17-19). Christ will do likewise.

“And him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away and there was found no place for them”—The one upon the throne is described in Rev. 4:2-3, and represents Yahweh manifested in flesh (1 Tim. 6:15-16). The full glory of that manifestation will be revealed at the conclusion of the millenium, at which time the constitution of the existing political order will be changed. Paul taught that at the end, Christ will deliver up the “kingdom to God, even the Father” (1 Cor. 15:24), and will himself be subject unto Him (v. 28). A complete divine system will replace the combination of spirit and flesh that will exist during the millenium when immortals shall reign over mortals. Mortality, in all its manifestations, will be done away with, in order that God may be all and in all. The great change in the political constitution that this will require is symbolised as the “earth and heaven fleeing away.” They are replaced by “a

new heaven and a new earth” (Rev. 21:1).

VERSE 12

“And I saw the dead small and great”—Reference is made to “the rest of the dead” of v. 5; in other words, those who die during the millenium.

“Stand before God”—Actually they will stand before Christ the Judge (John 5:27). But as he is Yahweh's representative and complete manifestation, to stand before him is to stand before God. A similar usage of this phrase is found in 2 Chron. 19:8; Deut. 19:17. In those places, to stand before the priest is accounted as standing before Yahweh, for they acted as His representatives on earth at that time.

“And the books were opened”—These books are shown to be in addition to the Book of Life. They can be likened to the “day book” and “ledger” in the record of life. Thus an accountant's set of books is used to symbolise the record kept of those held responsible by God. The Bible refers to the Book of Remembrance (Mal. 3:16) in which are recorded the day to day incidents of life. The successes and failures, thus recorded, are “posted” to the “ledger,” and from there are carried forward to the Book of Life. These various “books” are referred to throughout the Bible. There is the “Book of Death” or *the book of the generations of Adam*, in which all enter by virtue of birth (Gen. 5:1). There is the Book of Condemnation, in which the rebellious are recorded (Isa. 30:8-9). There is the Book of Remembrance (Mal. 3:16), based on the custom of the times, in which kings recorded incidents of their reign in order that those who had conducted themselves meritoriously might be rewarded (Esther 6:1). At the judgment seat these various symbolic “books,” will be opened to reveal their evidence.

“And another book was opened, which is the book of life”—This is the most important book, for only those whose names are recorded therein will receive the life promised. References to this “book” are contained in Exod. 32:32; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5.

“And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works”—This second judgment at the end of the millenium, is based upon the methods

adopted at the first judgment, prior to the millenium.

VERSE 13

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it"—Throughout *The Apocalypse* "sea" is used symbolically of the nations. There is no sound reason why it should not be similarly used here. Accordingly, the statement signifies that the living mortals are judged, at the same time as the "dead" are resurrected for the same purpose.

"And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them"—A bodily resurrection will take place at the same time.

"And they were judged every man according to their works"—Their works, based upon their faith, will determine their destiny.

VERSE 14

"And death and hell were cast into the

lake of fire"—Death and the grave are personified, and represented as being destroyed in the lake of fire, because this final judgment at the end of Christ's millennial reign will bring to an end both death and the grave. The wicked will be consumed in death; and the righteous will be granted immortality. Death and the grave, therefore, will be rendered redundant. Paul taught that the last enemy Christ will destroy will be death (1 Cor. 15:26).

"This is the second death"—See Rev. 2:11. The "second death" as a term relates to a death from which there shall be no awakening. The "Lake of Fire" is likened to such an end.

VERSE 15

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"—This principle is true in regard to both the pre-millennial as well as the post-millennial judgments.

The Consummation

Such is "the end, when the Son shall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, that God may be all and in all." The separation between God and Man began with the transgression of the first Adam; it continues till the end of the 7,000 years, when sin and death are utterly eradicated, and harmony again established in this orb of His glorious universe. Earth will have been delivered from moral and physical evil by His power administered and displayed through the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though "subjected to the Father," will have the pre-eminence over all "his brethren" through the endless duration of ages. The last resurrection, which is employed in the development of "the end," will bring up from the dust the sleeping dead of the previous thousand years. Those who are accounted worthy of eternal life will receive it, and be added to the saints of the "first resurrection."

Thus a population will have been provided for the earth, which, instead of being destroyed, will be renovated, and all things belonging to it made new. The earth and its inhabitants will be incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading. God, according to His word, will have made "a full end of all nations," except that of Israel; which will be the sole occupant of the globe, and every Israelite, "an Israelite indeed," "equal to the Elohim," and crowned with glory and honour throughout all ages. During the thousand years their nation will consist of three classes, Christ and the saints, righteous Israelites in the flesh, and those who die "accursed"; but when perfection comes there will be but one class, and all will be immortal. The purpose of God, in the formation of the earth, will be accomplished; and "the headstone of the creation will be brought forth with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."

Elpis Israel p. 456

(7) THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH (Chapters 21,22)

The last two chapters introduce us to the glorious consummation. First we are given the final scene, and then shown the steps leading to it. The "beloved city," new Jerusalem is described as "the bride, the Lamb's wife," in contrast to the hated city, Babylon the Great, the abandoned whore. There are eight sub-sections to this final picture: (a) The Character and Constitution of the New Jerusalem; (b) The Relationship of Jerusalem to the Lamb; (c) Its Wall; (d) Its Foundations; (e) Its Gates; (f) Its Glory (g) Its River of Life; (h) The Epilogue: The Final Admonition and Appeal. As in other portions of The Apocalypse, the final picture is presented first.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE NEW JERUSALEM

The previous "heaven and earth" having fled away, they are replaced by a new heaven and a new earth, as the final abode of the Redeemed. Associated with this, the new Jerusalem is described as descending out of heaven, adorned as a bride for her groom. John is invited to a closer inspection of the vision, and describes the wall, foundations, gates, and glory of the holy city.

(a) — The Character And Constitution Of The New Jerusalem — vv. 1-8

John describes a new vision which he sees, and records the words of the angel who explains details in relation to it.

VERSE 1

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth"—This phrase connects this vision with that of the previous chapter. John there declared that "the earth and the heaven fled away" (v. 11) to provide for the final constitution of the things on earth. The final destruction of sin and death, will be followed by the complete manifestation of the New Jerusalem in its final glory. The "heaven and earth" referred to are political and symbolic, not literal. They relate to a new state of divine society on earth (Deut. 32:1; Isa. 65:17; Dan. 12:3), for the literal heaven and earth will remain forever (Ecc. 1:4; Ps. 125:1; 148:6; Isa. 45:18).

"For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away"—The manner of their passing is described in Rev. 20:11, which makes it clearly obvious that these are symbolic figures. If the literal "heaven and earth" are to flee away from the face of the One sitting on the throne, they should have done so from the beginning of time, for the glory of Yahweh has been always in evidence! As the new "heaven and earth" of the verse before us, replace those that "fled away" at the conclusion of the millennium, they relate to conditions after Christ's thousand years' reign. Before that period, death still exists, but with the destruction of both it and the grave, a state of deathlessness will exist on earth (v. 4). The terms "first heaven" and "first earth," therefore, are better

rendered as *former* heaven and *former* earth, as they are in the *Diaglott*. The same Greek word here translated *first* is rendered as *former* in v. 4, and there relates to millennial conditions.

This "new heaven and new earth" is the "third heaven" referred to by Paul in relation to his vision of future glory (2 Cor. 12:2). The "first heaven" was the Israelitish constitution, or Kingdom of God, as established under the Mosaic covenant (Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:2). It came to an end in the destruction of the Jewish State in A.D. 70 (2 Pet. 3:7). The second "heaven and earth" will be established at Christ's coming with the setting up of the Kingdom of God, the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6; 2 Pet. 3:13). The third "heaven and earth" will be at the close of Christ's reign on earth, when a perfected kingdom will be delivered unto the Father that He might be all and in all (1 Cor. 15:24).

"And there was no more sea"—There will be no more sin and death stricken "peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues" (Rev. 17:15), for "a full end" will be made of all nations but Israel (Jer. 30:11). In Bible symbology the sea of nations is shown in various conditions: firstly, in a troubled, stormy state, casting up mire and dirt (Isa. 57:20); secondly, at peace having been purged by the fiery judgments of Armageddon (Rev. 15:2); thirdly, calm and purified, with all dross removed, and represented as "clear as crystal" (Rev. 4:6); finally, completely removed, when independent national existence will be brought to an end, and an immortal Israel alone will remain.

"And I John saw the holy city"—The best texts omit the word *John*. In the city

he describes, the apostle saw not a material city, but one made up of inhabitants. By metonymy, the term "city" can stand for its inhabitants, as in Matt. 8:34; 12:25; 21:10; Mark 1:33; Acts 13:44. The character of the city John saw is "holy," in contrast to the unholiness of Babylon the Great.

"New Jerusalem"—The word "new" is *kainos*, which relates to newness in form or quality, and not "new" in respect of time (which would require *neos*). The Greek word thus implies some change in a city previously existing. At the epoch of the fulfilment of this vision, the Holy Jerusalem as the Lamb's bride (v. 9), will have been in the earth for over 1,000 years, for, in its first form, it will be set up as such at Christ's second coming.

Jerusalem is frequently used as a figure for the Redeemed (Psa. 87:5; Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22). The word itself signifies *Foundation or Vision of Peace*, and teaches that true peace can only be established upon the basis of the hope of Israel (Acts 28:20). Figuratively, the holy Jerusalem relates to the political organisation of the elect, to be revealed at the coming of Christ (Rev. 3:12). Its final glory, however, awaits the close of the millenium, when all the redeemed throughout the thousand years' reign of Christ will be gathered within its walls.

"Coming down from God out of heaven"—Only those "born from above" (John 3:3 — mg) will find a place in this city. Such are begotten through "the incorruptible seed, even the word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23), which, like every "good and perfect gift" has come "from above" (James 1:17; 3:15-17). The Word is designed to change the characters of believers for the kingdom (John 15:3; 17:17). When it takes possession of the minds and hearts of such, its influence is revealed in their lives, and their characters will gradually conform to that of the Lord Jesus Christ. His character is divine though his nature, whilst on earth, was human. This transformation on the part of believers will be rewarded by the clothing upon of divine nature "from above" following the judgment. Thus the "new Jerusalem," which comprises the polity of the immortalised Redeemed, is said to come "out of heaven," for every member of it must be "born from above" (see 2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 5:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:47-49; Col. 3:3; Rev. 22:12; Luke 14:14).

"Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"—This shows that the New Jerusalem is not a material city, but a symbol of the elect (cp. 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7; 21:9). The "adornment" is the perfection of character and nature that Christ desires to see in those whom he will take to himself as his own (Eph. 5:26-27; Psalm 45:13-14; Isa. 61:10; 1 Pet. 3:3-4).

VERSE 3

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven"—This "great voice" makes an official proclamation outlining the new constitution of things.

"Saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men"—The Tabernacle comprised God's dwelling place in Israel (Exod. 25:8), and was a type of the elect in whom He chooses to dwell (Heb. 9:11; 2 Cor. 6:16). With sin, death and the grave eradicated from the earth (Rev. 20:14-15), and God made "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28), it can be announced that "the tabernacle of God is with men" The Tabernacle in the wilderness was a parable of the new Jerusalem (Heb. 9:9). It was made resplendent by materials obtained from Egypt, and built according to divine plan and specifications (Exod. 12:36; 25:1-7). This foreshadowed the requirements of the new Jerusalem, or the "tabernacle not made with hands" (Heb. 9:11). It will be constructed of Yahweh's "special treasure" (Mal. 3:17) taken from "out of the Gentiles" (Acts 15:14), and divinely shaped by the influence of the Word to conform to the divine plans and specifications therein set down.

"And He will dwell with them"—Yahweh will not personally leave His throne in the heavens, to take up permanent residence on earth, but He will dwell with men in the terms of God manifestation: by revealing Himself through the Redeemed. Similar words are used to describe His dwelling in the sanctuary in the midst of Israel (Exod. 25:8; 29:45). The token of His presence was the *Shekinah* (dwelling) glory which shone above the Mercy Seat and between the Cherubim (Psa. 80:1). Yahweh dwelt more personally among men when His glory was revealed through His son (John 1:14). He is yet to dwell among men in the multitude of the redeemed each one of whom will manifest His glory (Rom. 5:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 3:12; Ezek. 43:1-3). Finally, at the last judgment, at the

conclusion of the millenium, His glory will be so manifested, as to fulfil in every particular His declaration to Moses: "All the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh" (Num. 14:21). Thus will He dwell with men.

"And they shall be His people"—The Greek is *laoi* "peoples," plural (see RV). Abraham was promised that he would become "a father of many nations" (Gen. 17:5). At the end of the millenium, all nations will be incorporated into Christ, and will become one, united in the walls of the new Jerusalem.

"And God Himself shall be with them, and be their God"—The words *and be* given in italics are inserted. The Greek is: "And God Himself will be with them — their God" (see *Diaglott*). This comprises the foundation of the new Jerusalem: God manifested in each individual, and each one recognising His status.

VERSE 4

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"—The final victory at the end of the millenium will see a repetition of those conditions which followed the initial judgment. See Isa. 25:8; 35:10.

"And there shall be no more death"—Death is the final enemy to be conquered at the conclusion of the millenium (1 Cor. 15:26). Until then, it continues, even throughout the millenium, though in a modified state (Isa. 65:20).

"Neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away"—These conditions shall continue during the millenium, though on a greatly reduced rate to that of today.

VERSE 5

"And he that sat upon the throne"—See note Rev. 4:2.

"Said, Behold, I make all things new"—A completely new order, or constitution of things, will be set up at the conclusion of the millenium. The perfected kingdom will be delivered to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24), and a new sphere of activity will open out for the Redeemed, the details of which are not revealed.

"And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful"—These adjectives are some of Christ's many titles (see Rev. 3:14). They indicate that he will accomplish the work to be

performed, and faithfully fulfil the predictions of the words uttered. It is significant, that these titles, proclaimed to the indifferent self-satisfied Laodiceans, are referred to several times at the conclusion of *The Apocalypse* — Rev. 19:11; 21:5; 22:6.

VERSE 6

"And he said unto me, It is done"—A similar statement was made at the beginning of the millenium, and is now repeated at the conclusion of this final stage of the divine purpose. The correct reading of the Greek (*Gegonan*) is, *it is all come to pass*.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end"—See note Rev. 1:8. All has been accomplished in Christ.

"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely"—The water of life is not offered indiscriminately to all, but only to those who thirst for it (Isa. 55:1). How necessary it is for us to cultivate that thirst. See John 4:13-14.

VERSE 7

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things"—Dominion over all things was promised at creation (Gen. 1:28). However, the incidence of sin revealed that it would only be obtained through war and conquest (Ps. 8:4-9). Though Christ gained the victory over death "we see not yet *all things* put under him" (Heb. 2:6-10). The future will reveal this consummation in regard to both the Lord and the Redeemed.

"And I will be his God, and he shall be My son"—The relationship of Father and Son as far as the Redeemed are concerned will then be made absolute. It was when Christ rose from the dead and was glorified that he was "declared to be Son of God with power" (Rom. 1:4). So it will be with the Redeemed. Many might claim sonship today, but the future will reveal the fact of the matter.

VERSE 8

"But the fearful"—Gr. *deilos*, "cowards." The truth demands both mental and moral courage. All cowards will be excluded from the Kingdom.

"And unbelieving"—This was the cause of many in Israel failing to enter the land of promise (Heb. 3:18). We honour Yahweh by respecting His word which He has magnified above all His name

(Psa. 138:2). The word is *apistos*, and signifies "faithless." A person can "believe" a doctrine academically and yet be faithless. That was Israel's failure. Faith comes by generating confidence in Yahweh's promises through study of the word (see Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:1.6).

"The abominable"—Gr. *bdelussomai* from *bdeo*, "to stink," to cause one to turn away in disgust. A kindred word in Luke 16:15 is used to describe that which is highly esteemed among men, but which is abhorrent in the sight of God.

"And murderers"—A murderer, in a figurative sense, is described as one who hates his brother without cause (1 John 3:15).

"And whoremongers"—The unfaithful who make friends with the world are described as adulteresses (James 4:4).

"And sorcerers"—Gr. *pharmakeus*. A related word is rendered "witchcraft" in Gal. 5:20. The root word implies the removing of an evil, or the inflicting of one, usually by use of a drug. Heretical doctrines can act as a drug, dulling the mind to the realities of life and of true religion.

"And idolators"—Idolatry is refusing to heed the Word of God (1 Sam. 15:23), or of covetously serving self to the exclusion of the Truth (Col. 3:5).

"And all liars"—An errorist is counted as a liar. See 1 John 2:4,22; 4:20; 5:10.

"Shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death"—They will share the fate of the world which they loved so much.

(b) — The Relationship of Jerusalem to the Lamb — vv. 9-11

The first eight verses of this chapter take us to beyond the millenium. From v. 9 onwards, a new vision commences. The Spirit takes John back to the commencement of Christ's earthly reign to trace the development of the new Jerusalem whose final glory he has been shown already. This is the final vision of The Apocalypse, which, in the course of its unfolding, has revealed the holy city under persecution (Rev. 11:12); at the beginning of the millenium (the vision now before us), and at the conclusion of it (Rev. 21:1-8). It is significant that the symbology of the spiritual Temple-city now described is based upon the details relating to the literal Temple of Ezekiel chaps. 40-48.

VERSE 9

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels that had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues"—The introduction of this vision by one of the angels of the vials suggests that the time period of its fulfilment is at the return of Christ (Rev. 16:15). It will be during the period of the 7th vial that the new Jerusalem will be first revealed.

"And talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife"—This explanatory statement relating to the new Jerusalem reveals that it constitutes the company of the redeemed. See Rev. 19:7.

VERSE 10

"And he carried me away in the spirit"—Ezekiel was carried in spirit from captivity in Babylonia to view the literal city of Jerusalem in its future glory (Ezek. 40:2); and John was conveyed from his place of banishment in Patmos to view the glory of the future spiritual city.

"To a great and high mountain"—Ezekiel saw the literal mountain (Ezek. 40:2) as it will be after the earthquake shall have elevated Zion (Zech. 14:4,10). John saw spiritual Zion (Heb. 12:22), after the political earthquake will elevate it (Rev. 16:18). The symbol of the Kingdom of God is a "mountain filling the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35). See also Isaiah 2:2-4.

"And shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem"—John saw a Temple-city as is suggested by the adjective *holy*. It was like its literal counterpart seen by the prophets: a city "built to Yahweh" (Jer. 31:38). The one seen by John is composed of living persons (see 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Pet. 2:4-8).

"Descending out of heaven from God"—See note v. 2. The "house from heaven" will be clothed upon the approved both at pre-millennial as at post-millennial times (2 Cor. 5:1-4), and therefore, appropriately, on both occasions the "city" is represented as "descending out of heaven."

VERSE 11

"Having the glory of God"—That Glory is promised the saints (John 17:22), and will be revealed at the coming of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:10). Paul taught that we are "in hope of the glory of God" (Rom.

5:2), and the Lord promised that he would name the name of God on those who overcome (Rev. 3:12). The glory of the spiritual Jerusalem will beautify the literal Temple, for Ezekiel saw the multitudinous Christ coming from the "way of the east" and filling it with glory (Ezek. 43:3-4).

"And her light was like unto a stone most precious"—This "most precious stone" relates to the Lord Jesus, of whose "likeness" the Bride of Christ will partake. He is the measuring rod of glory and light for all the elect, for he comes "to be glorified in his saints" (2 Thess. 1:10). The word "light" is strictly *luminary* or *light giver*. It is used figuratively of believers as shining in the spiritual darkness of the world (Phil. 2:15), but here it is used of Christ, as the light reflected in and shining through the New Jerusalem, his Bride (vv. 9, 13). These who shine forth as lights today, will do so in the future. Connect with Isa. 24:13-15, where "fires" should be *lights*.

"Even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal"—The Jasper Stone is representative of Christ (see note Rev. 4:3). It is described as "clear as crystal" indicative of the finest quality gem. The statement "clear as crystal" is one word in the Greek: *krustallizo* — to shine like crystal, to be of crystalline brightness. "The verb may, however, have a transitive force, signifying to crystallise, or cause to become like crystal. In that case, it would speak of Christ (since he is the *Lightgiver* — see the preceding part of the verse) as the one who causes the saints to shine in his own likeness" (see Vine and cp. Dan. 12:3: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament").

(c) Its Wall — vv. 12-18

The city possesses a large wall in which are let twelve gates indicative of the Israeliitish nature of the Gospel. It is based upon twelve foundations identified with the twelve apostles; the whole being set in a square and forming a huge cube.

VERSE 12

"And had a wall great and high"—This wall is the despair of expositors because they identify it with the height of the city referred to in v. 16. The true meaning, however, is revealed by the specifications concerning the Temple of Ezekiel's prophecy. This had a wall to separate the holy from the profane (Ezek. 40:5;

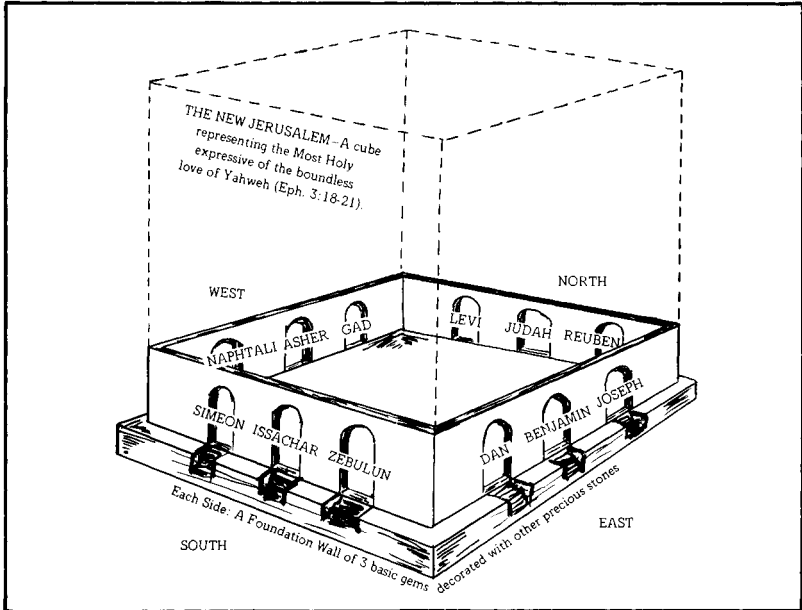
42:20). The first principle demonstrated by the symbol, therefore is that of separation; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (see Heb. 12:14; 2 Cor. 6:16-18). The word for "gates" is *pulonas* and signifies a porch or vestibule then the gateway, or gate tower, of a walled town. The figure is thus drawn from the literal gates seen by Ezekiel in his vision of a literal Temple-city (Ezek. 40:5-6).

"And had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels"—The messengers at the gates are the symbolic porters of the spiritual Temple. They grant access to the approved who then enter to enjoy divine communion (v. 24; Rev. 22:17), but they refuse entrance to the unworthy (v. 27). The angels will assist Christ at the judgment of the household (Matt. 13:49; 16:27; Mark 8:38), and, therefore, appropriately are shown at the gates of this figurative city. The literal Temple will likewise have its porters at the gates who will exclude access to the unworthy (Ezek. 44:23-24), thus following the Temple of Solomon (2 Chron. 23:19).

"And the names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel"—If we follow Ezekiel (Ezek. 48:31-34) for the placing of the gates we have the following: on the *east*, Joseph — *Adding*; Benjamin — *Son of his right hand*; Dan — *judge*. On the *north*, Reuben — *See a son*; Judah — *Praise*; Levi — *Join*. On the *south*, Simeon — *Hearing*; Issachar — *Reward*; Zebulun — *Dwelling*. On the *west*, Gad — *Company*; Asher — *Blessed*; Naphtali — *Wrestling*. The identification of these gates with the tribes of Israel is drawn from Ezekiel's description (see Ezek. 48:31). Only those having relationship with Israel will be permitted to enter thereat (Eph. 2:11-13; Gal. 6:16).

The following sentences emerge, proclaiming the purpose of Yahweh: East: *There shall be adding to the Son of His right hand after the judgment*; North: *See a Son, praise and join him*; South: *To those who hear he will reward with a dwelling*; West: *The company of the blessed have gone through wrestling*.

However, in *The Apocalypse*, Dan is replaced with Manasseh. Dan signifies *judging*, whilst Manasseh signifies *forgetting*; for after the judgment, there will be a forgetting of the past in the joy of deliverance. Adjustment accordingly can be made to the above.

**VERSE 13**

“On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates”—The new Jerusalem, being also the antitypical Cherubim, faces all directions.

VERSE 14

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations”—See Eph. 2:20.

“And in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb”—The twelve apostles are to be the twelve rulers of Israel (Matt. 19:28), and upon their authority will rest the administration of the Land in the future (cp. Acts 28:20).

VERSE 15

“And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the walls thereof”—A reed was also used to measure the Temple that Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 40:3). Here it forms the basic measure of the spiritual city, and being golden (the symbol of a tried faith — 1 Pet. 1:7; Lam. 4:1-2) reveals that faith is the measuring line of it. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), and impossible to fit into the required measurements of the new Jerusalem. The characters of

those who form part of the holy city must conform to the divine requirements. Contrast the “reed of faith” with the “reed of persecution” (Rev. 11:1).

VERSE 16

“And the city lieth foursquare”—The foursquare shape of the new Jerusalem is similar to the shape of the breastplate (Exod. 28:16), the altar, and of Israel’s encampment (Num. 2). The holy city will be as the breastplate from whence shone forth the divine glory; the altar which consumed the sacrifices; the encampment emphasising the Israelitish nature of the hope.

“And the length is as large as the breadth; and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs”—If by this is meant that each side of the city measured twelve thousand furlongs, the city would stretch for 1500 miles in each direction, or six thousand miles round. This, of course, precludes the possibility of the city being a literal city: it is a symbol for the Lamb’s wife (v. 9). Six thousand speaks of the measure of the multitudinous man, for six is the number of man. It also points to the length of time during which the materials of the new Jerusalem have been gathered from

out of the Gentiles. The size of the city, therefore, is appropriate to the symbolism that it is meant to serve. At the conclusion of the millenium, that city will cover the entire earth, and for those who are mathematically minded, the following observation from *City of Revelation* by J. Michell may be interesting:

"The macrocosmic city of 12,000 furlongs square and the microcosmic citadel wall of 144 cubits differ in scale but belong to one geometric figure. When they are brought to commensurable proportions, it is found that a square of 12 furlongs exactly contains a circle of 24,890 feet or 14,400 cubits round. The nucleus of John's New Jerusalem can thus be identified as a cube containing a sphere which is in fact a model of the earth on the scale 1 foot: 1 mile, for the diameter of the sphere is 7920 feet, and the earth's mean diameter 7920 miles."

The number twelve thousand is significant. Twelve, of course, is the number of perfect government, and we have seen its use in a figurative sense in Rev. 7. It has also a most interesting relationship to the Tabernacle. The walls of the Tabernacle were formed of boards ending in two tenons that fitted into silver sockets (Exod. 25:15-19). Each socket was made of a talent of silver, and represented the redemption money of six thousand men (Exod. 38:25-27), so that each double socket represented twelve thousand redeemed men. The talent, therefore, represented the measure of redemption as seen in a multitude (see Rev. 16:21). The sockets provided the foundation in which the tenons took hold (Exod. 25:17), and the significant fact is that the Hebrew word for sockets is *Edonim*, the plural of *Adon*, the word used for God as Ruler. "Tenons" is from *Yadoth*, the feminine gender of the Hebrew word for hands. The thought suggested by this is that the Bride (Isa. 54:4) takes hold upon the Lord to form a dwelling place for Yahweh (Exod. 25:8). The double sockets being the redemption measure of twelve thousand men, and the foundation wall of the New Jerusalem being twelve thousand furlongs in extent, the measurement of the former provides a type of those of the latter.

"The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal"—The city thus forms a cube of twelve thousand furlongs. The Most High was also cubical

in shape (1 Kings 6:20), and as such pointed to the perfect love of God, as Paul observes (Eph. 3:17-20). The ground area or surface of such a cube is divisible into 144 equal parts of one thousand furlongs each, pointing to the symbolic number of its citizens which comprise the component parts of the symbolic city (Rev. 7:4; 14:1).

VERSE 17

"And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits"—In our comment upon v. 12, we show that the wall formed a partition, or separation, dividing the city from the rest of mankind (Ch. 22:14). The Temple in Jerusalem, in the days of Christ, had a wall of separation that divided Jews from Gentiles, known as "the middle wall of partition" (Eph. 2:14). A notice on the wall warned Gentiles that if they stayed beyond that point they could blame themselves for the death that would ensue.

The measure of one hundred and forty four is made up of the square of twelve; and twelve is used figuratively for perfect government. The whole city, as well as the wall itself, is divisible into twelve, for as the multitudinous Christ, it will administer perfect government to the world.

The measure is given in "cubits." This is an interesting word. In the Greek it is *pechus* and signifies the fore-arm, hence the length of the arm between the elbow and the tip of the middle finger, approximately 18 inches, though measurements vary. But *The Apocalypse* is not interested in the cubit as a unit of measure; it is not literal cubits with which it is concerned. Why then use the term? Because it represents that part of the human body that is known for power and work: the arm and hand. These are used as divine attributes of manifestation in the active governing of the nations. Yahweh's hand can be stretched out to help (Isa. 9:12), or to rule: "Behold, the Lord Yahweh will come with *strong hand*, and His *arm* shall rule for Him" (Isa. 40:10). There is the figurative "cubit," the fore-arm of Yahweh manifested by the multitudinous Christ in the age to come.

"According to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel"—Eliminate the words in italics (which are not found in the Greek) — *according to*, and the

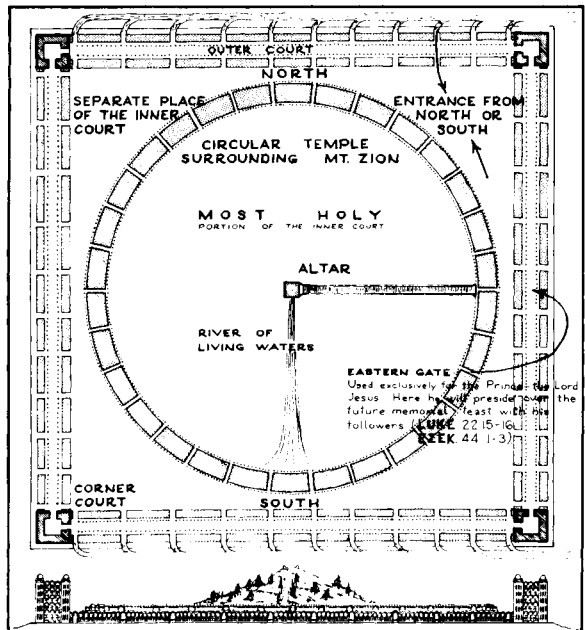
statement identifies the measure given as that of an angelic man. This angel-man is the one referred to in Rev. 1:13, as "one like unto the Son of man." The measure of this "perfect man" (Eph. 4:13), to be made "like unto the angels" (Luke 20:36) is thus one hundred and forty four cubits (for which see note above). In *The Apocalypse* he stands in contrast to the man whose number is 666 (Rev. 13:18).

VERSE 18

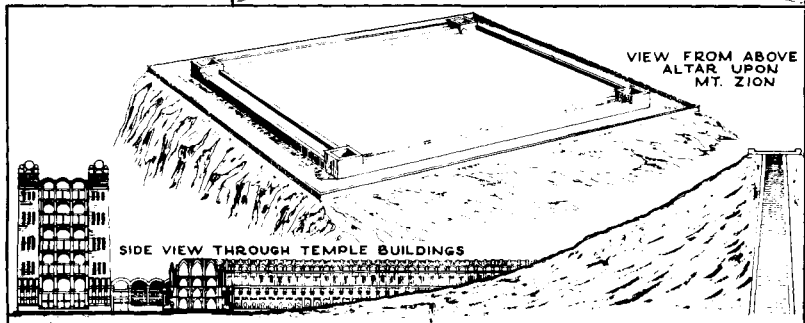
"And the building of the wall of it was of jasper"—"Building" is *endomesis* from *en*, in and *domad*, to build, thus "that which is built in," "or the material of

which the wall is constructed. In v. 11, jasper is likened to divine light, exceedingly luminous. Speaking of the literal Temple city yet to be built at Jerusalem, Yahweh, through Zechariah, declared: "I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her" (Zech. 2:5). That wall of fire will separate the holy from the profane. The jasper stone is also likened to the "glory of God" (Rev. 21:11), and this also is appropriate, for God manifestation will comprise the basic material of this spiritual city. It will be "the glory in the midst of her."

Ground plan of the literal Temple - city of the Age to come; type of the spiritual city: the New Jerusalem, symbol of the Lamb's Bride.



Note how the Temple is an extension of the foresquare Altar.



"And the city was pure gold"—Gold is the symbol of tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7), which is a basic requirement in pleasing God (Heb. 11:6).

"Like unto clear glass"—The word rendered "glass" in this place (*hualos*) occurs in the NT only here and in v. 21. It signifies anything transparent. Here the meaning is, that the golden city would be so bright and burnished that it would seem to be glass reflecting the brilliance of the sun. How appropriate to the figure of a city formed of the glorified redeemed. Matthew records the words of the Lord: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). The general picture of reflecting Divine light is conveyed by the description now before us.

(d) — The Foundations Of The Wall — vv. 19-20

Twelve precious gems, garnished with other precious stones, form the foundations of the wall of separation.

VERSE 19

"And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones"—As the foundations of the walls comprise twelve basic gems, representing the twelve Apostles, to "garnish" or decorate them with further "all manner of precious stones," is to add to those already established. This will be done in that all the Redeemed will find a place in the Lamb's bride, the New Jerusalem. They are added because they have been brought to that state through the testimony of the Apostles (see John 17:10; 1 Cor. 3:10; Eph. 2:20), or, if they lived before the witnessing of such, because they were motivated by the same faith. They all comprise Yahweh's special treasure in which He takes delight (Mal. 3:17). Accordingly Paul wrote to the Thessalonian brethren: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1 Thess. 2:19). They will be as gems in Paul's crown of rejoicing.

The twelve foundations are identified with the twelve Apostles, because the doctrines they proclaimed involving the "things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Christ Jesus" (Acts 8:12; Eph. 2:20), form the basis of the New Jerusalem. In addition, they will be the

rulers of regenerated Israel in the age to come (Matt. 19:28). The twelve tribes are named in Rev. 7, suggesting that the stones enumerated in the chapter before us can be identified with the tribes in the order of listing there. As the wall lies foresquare, and comprises twelve gems, the general shape and formation of the wall of the New Jerusalem answers to the Urim and Thummim of the High Priest's breastplate (Exod. 28:30). The Urim and Thummim represented the Lights and Fulnesses of the perfected Israel. In our opinion, the gems of the breastplate were set in order in such a way as to reproduce the encampment of Israel, leaving the square in the centre to represent the Tabernacle.

This is strongly implied in that Moses was instructed to place the gems in the breastplate "according to the twelve tribes" (Exod. 28:21). This suggests the placing of them as the tribes were encamped around the Tabernacle.

That, too, is the order of the gems surrounding the new Jerusalem, so that there is a link between the Tabernacle of the past, and the symbolic city of the future.

The gems are not only identified with the Apostles, and they with the tribes over which they will rule, but their various colours will reproduce the sevenfold colours of the rainbow, the token of the covenant (Gen. 9:15; see note Rev. 4:3). When the sevenfold colours of the rainbow are combined they produce the white light of the sun (again cp. Matt. 13:43), figurative of the light of righteousness. As the rainbow is the reflected multicoloured glory of the sun, so the gems represent various aspects of divine glory.

The gems that form the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem must be cut, polished and engraved with the teaching of the Apostles (v. 14). Concerning this, Brother Thomas writes in *Eureka*: "The principle consists in writing, stamping, impressing or engraving of the things designed upon the subject or material. The writer is the Spirit (Rev. 4:5; 5:6) who 'engraves the graving thereof' (Zech. 3:9). The precious stones that form the building come out of the earth from whence all precious stones come, but they have to be cut, polished, embroidered and adorned to bring out the beauties by which they are susceptible. The resurrected bodies are raised to

conststantiality with Deity (Rev. 3:12). Thus all the earthiness and corruptibility of their grave-bodies is 'swallowed up of life.' They lose their similitude to the nature of the 'first Adam,' and acquire 'the heavenly image' of the Lord from heaven. Cp. Ps. 101:8."

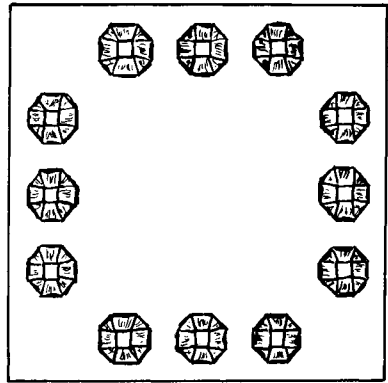
"The first foundation was jasper"—It symbolises divine light and glory (v. 11). In the breastplate it represented Naphtali (Exod. 28:20; Num. 2:29) for the placing of the gems answers to the order of the tribes (cp. Num. 2). In *The Apocalypse*, however, the gems correspond to the enumeration of the tribes given in Revelation 7. A comparison of the two chapters, therefore, will show that the Jasper in the verse before us represents Judah, though under the Law the gem represented Naphtali signifies *striving*, whereas Judah signifies *praise*. The comparison suggests that when the new Jerusalem is revealed, there will be a change from *striving to praising*.

"The second, sapphire"—The Hebrew *sappeer* signifies *to scratch, polish, write, number*. The sapphire is a deep blue in colour, suggesting the principle of God manifestation (Num. 15:38). The pavement under the feet of the Elohim as seen by Moses was of sapphire (Exod. 24:10), as was also the throne of glory associated with the Cherubim (Ezek. 1:26; 10:1). Both were visions of the glory of the coming Kingdom, the foundation and throne of which will manifest the divine glory in the earth. In the breastplate, the sapphire represented Simeon (Exod. 28:18; Num. 2:12); in Revelation it represents Reuben (cp. Rev. 7:5). Simeon signifies *hearing*, Reuben signifies *seeing*. When the new Jerusalem is manifested in the earth, there will be a change from *hearing to seeing*.

"The third a chalcedony"—This gem is found in different colourings, among which is a golden yellow variety, speaking of faith. Reference to it is found only in Revelation, where it stands for Gad (Rev. 7:5). Gad signifies *a company* i.e. of faithful ones. Through lack of faith Israel failed to obtain that which the elect has and will obtain (Rom. 11:7).

"The fourth an emerald"—For the emerald, see our notes on Rev. 4:3. The emerald is a bright green gem. In the breastplate it stood for Reuben (Exod. 28:18; Num. 2:10), but in Revelation it represents Asher. Again there is a

transition. Reuben signifies *See a son!* Asher signifies *blessed*. Blessed will he be who sees the Son.



The "city lieth foresquare," and its foundations were studded with gems like the breastplate of the High Priest. In the breastplate, the gems were set "according to the tribes of Israel," which suggests the above unconventional setting of the stones leaving the centre space to represent the Sanctuary in the Wilderness, or the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse.

VERSE 20

"The fifth, sardonyx"—According to Vincent the sardonyx is "the most beautiful and rarest variety of onyx. Pliny defines it as originally signifying a white mark in a sard (cornelian) like the human nail (onyx) placed in flesh, and both of them transparent. Onyx is so called from the resemblance of its white and yellow veins to the shades in the human finger-nail." Vine defines it as "a name which indicates the formation of the gem: a layer of sard, and a layer of onyx, marked by the red of the sard and the white of the onyx." In *The Apocalypse*, the gem is related to Naphtali signifying *to wrestle*, i.e. with the hands, the red of flesh contrasting with the white of righteousness. The Hebrew word for onyx denotes *a flashing forth of splendour*. Those who successfully wrestle with the flesh will ultimately flash forth in splendour. The gem was not used in the breastplate.

"The sixth, sardius"—In Hebrew, the word for Sardius is *odem*, similar to Adam, and therefore relating to the flesh. It is reddish in colour. In the

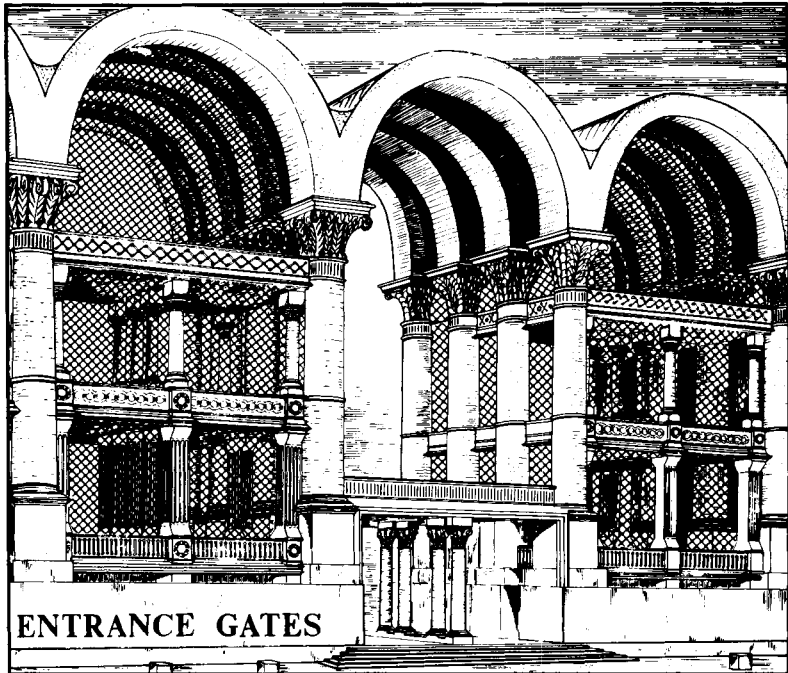
breastplate it stood for Judah (Exod. 28:17; Num. 2:3), whilst in *The Apocalypse* (Rev. 7) it represents Manasseh. Judah signifies *praise*; Manasseh signifies *forgetting*. Those who praise Christ now will be given cause to forget the flesh in the future (Rev. 21:4).

“**The seventh, chrysolite**” — The word itself means *golden stone*. It was applied to gems of a golden or yellow colour. It was not represented in the breastplate, but in *The Apocalypse* it stands for Simeon. Simeon signifies *hearing* which is appropriate to the gem, for faith (represented by gold — 1 Pet. 1:7) is developed through hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17).

“**The eighth, beryl**” — The Hebrew word for beryl is *tharshish*, and signifies *to beat, subdue*. The wheels of the

Cherubim were of beryl, mighty in subduing the nations (Ezek. 1:16; 10:9). The body of the multitudinous Christ is “like a beryl” (Dan. 10:6), for to him that overcometh, the Lord declared, “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. . .” (Rev. 2:26-27). In the breastplate, the beryl stood for Dan; in *The Apocalypse* it stands for Levi. Dan means *judge*, Levi denotes *joining*. The nations will be humbled and subdued by the judgments of Christ, and then will be joined to him in fellowship.

“**The ninth, a topaz**” — The topaz is of various colours, though mainly of a rich yellow appearance. In both the breastplate and in *The Apocalypse* it represents Issachar, whose name means *reward*.



The word for “gates” (Rev. 21:12) is “pulonias,” signifying porches, vestibules, or gateways, as in the vision of the Temple seen by Ezekiel. The above illustration of the entrance gates is taken from “*The Temple of Ezekiel’s Prophecy*” (by H. Sulley), and is suggestive of the term used in “*The Apocalypse*” (see note on page 248).

The reward that was set before Israel after the flesh will be reaped by Israel after the spirit.

“The tenth, a chrysoprasus”—The word in the Greek is a combination of two words signifying *gold* and *leek*. Hence the chrysoprasus is described as a stone of greenish golden colour, like a leek; that is, apple-greenish in colour. It thus combines the symbolism of a tried faith (gold) and the glory of everlasting life suggested by the ever-living green colour (see note Rev. 4:3). The stone stands for Zebulun whose name means *dwelling*. Saints of faith will certainly *dwell* in the new Jerusalem.

“The eleventh, a jacinth”—The jacinth is the same word as *hyacinth*, and denotes a gem of a deep purple or reddish blue. Purple, as a colour, stands for God manifest in the flesh, being a combination of blue (cp. Num. 15:38) and red the colour of flesh. In the breastplate it stood for Ephraim; in *The Apocalypse* it represents Joseph. Ephraim signifies *double fruit*, whilst Joseph signifies *increaser*. Those who develop double fruit (John 15:16) will find an abiding place in the new Jerusalem, and will bring forth increased fruit in the millenium.

“The twelfth, an amethyst”—The amethyst is violet or purple in colour, again suggesting God manifest in the flesh (cp. Num. 15:38 with Isa. 1:18), and also the colour of royalty (Jud. 8:26; John 19:1-3). The word itself comes from a root signifying *not intoxicated* because this gem was supposed to be an antidote against drunkenness. In both the breastplate and in *The Apocalypse* it represents Benjamin whose name signifies *Son of His Right Hand*. Those associated with the Son will certainly find an antidote against the intoxicating doctrines of Babylon the Great, and will be incorporated into the new Jerusalem in due time. Speaking of the new Jerusalem, Isaiah declared: “I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of Yahweh, and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established” (Isa. 54:11-14).

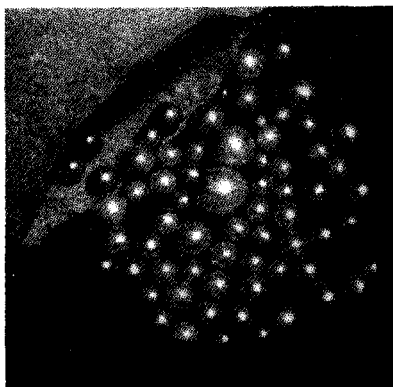
(e) — The Gates Of The New Jerusalem — v. 21.

As in the literal Temple described by

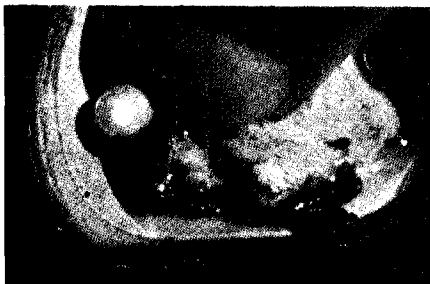
Ezekiel, the gates are let in the “wall of separation” that surrounds the city. Like the Cherubim, they face in each direction. See vv. 12-13.

VERSE 21

“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls”—The pearl is a wonderful symbol for the Redeemed. Pearls are found in the depths of the ocean, hidden away from human sight until brought into view. The Redeemed, in the days of their flesh, are also hidden away in the depths of the sea of nations (Isa. 57:20). Pearls are formed in the oyster by a grain of sand acting as an irritant, and so forming a nucleus. The oyster coats it with a nacreous substance which hardens to form the coating of the pearl. So it is “through much tribulation” that the redeemed develop characters fit for the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). But the pearl must be brought to the light before its full beauty will be revealed. Its outer coating must be peeled away, and its full lustre revealed by the light of the sun. In the antitype, the Redeemed must shed their coats of flesh, and be clothed with divine nature, thereby shining forth with the reflected light of the Sun of righteousness (2 Cor. 5:2-4; Mal. 4:2; 2 Thess. 1:10). A pearl, therefore, is developed out of trouble, through successfully coping with the irritants of life. How appropriate is the symbol to

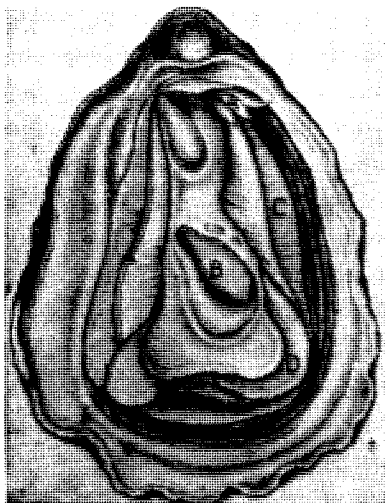


Not more than one mussel in a hundred holds a pearl. A small collection of pearls showing their various sizes and thereby values. They are uniform in their white silvery appearance: colours of righteousness and redemption.



THE PEARL AS IT IS FOUND

The precious gem within an oyster is produced as a result of local irritation caused by some minute object which intrudes between the two halves of the shell. The irritant is very minute, but the precious stone produced thereby is of great value. So it is in its spiritual application.



ANATOMY OF THE OYSTER

The mouth is flanked by feeding palps (A) The position of the stout muscle (B) is seen on an empty shell as a dark patch, showing the spot where it was attached. With this the shell is kept closed. The gills (C) project into the mantle (D), which is the body wall.

those who embrace the truth. Yet only when the Light of the world (John 8:12) is again manifested in the earth will the true beauty of these "pearls" shine forth.

The Greek word for "pearls" is *margarites*. It is said that among the motives which impelled Caesar to attempt the conquest of Britain, was the fame of its pearl-fisheries, for the pearl was held in highest rank among precious stones. In Latin they are given the name of *unio* (unity), expressing unity in diversity, for it is claimed that no two are found exactly alike. Shakespeare used the term *unio* for *pearl* in Hamlet. Act 5, Sc. 2.

"Every several gate was of one pearl"—There was a unity in the appearance of the gates. The way of entrance into the new Jerusalem is through the gospel, and the symbol of the gospel is "one pearl of great price" (Matt. 13:46). The value of that pearl must be acknowledged by all who desire to enter those gates.

"And the street of the city was pure gold"—The word "street" is better rendered *broadspace*. It does not relate to a street as we understand the term, but a large quadrangle or broad space inside the Temple walls, which, in the literal Temple, will accommodate the worshippers. This street is of gold, the symbol of a tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7), and "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). It is more precious than literal gold.

"As it were transparent glass"—See note, v. 18.

(f) — The Glory Of The New Jerusalem — vv. 22-27

The city shines with the glory of God and the light of the Lamb; its status is recognised by the kings of the earth bringing their glory and honour into it; its gates are always open so that access to it is always possible; and in it are found only those things that reflect credit to Yahweh.

VERSE 23

"And I saw no temple therein"—For "temple" render *nave* or *most holy*. The Tabernacle and Temple of the past were divided into Holy and Most Holy places, but in this new Jerusalem that distinction is not found. The reason is that the Holy Place in the Tabernacle or Temple represents the mortal state of believers, whilst the Most Holy represents the

immortal state (cp. Heb. 10:19-20). In the new Jerusalem will be found only immortals.

“For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it”—Therefore, it is entirely Most Holy. For the use of the divine title see notes on Rev. 4:8. The Most Holy represents Yahweh in multitudinous manifestation revealed in the great company of the Redeemed: God in multiplicity, manifested in a community then made “equal unto the angels.” The titles *Lord God Almighty* and *The Lamb* draw attention to three parties: Yahweh, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Redeemed. Yahweh will be glorified in His Son and Christ’s brethren, and they will form the Most Holy of the Age to come. This was foreshadowed in the inner sanctuary of the Tabernacle and the Temple, for in them were found the Mercy Seat pointing to Christ; the Cherubim foreshadowing the Saints; and the Shekinah Glory being the token of Yahweh’s indwelling presence. All this is summed up in the statement: “The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Most Holy of it.”

VERSE 23

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it”—As symbols, the sun and moon relate to political and ecclesiastical powers (cp. Rev. 16:8). There is no need for delegated political or religious power in the age to come, for Zion’s light in those particulars will shine forth with divine power (see Isa. 24:23; 30:26; 60:19-20).

“For the glory of God did lighten it”—The redeemed will manifest the glory of God in that age (John 17:22; Rom. 5:2).

“And the Lamb is the light thereof”—He will be glorified in the Redeemed (2 Thess. 1:10) whose symbol is the new Jerusalem. As the bride of Christ (v. 9), they will reflect his light (John 1:9; 8:12).

VERSE 24

“And the nations of them which are saved”—There are nations that will be incorporated into the Kingdom of God, and others that will be destroyed (Isa. 60:3,12; Dan. 7:11-12).

“Shall walk in the light of it”—The nations shall walk in the light that shall emanate from Jerusalem the Holy City; that is, in the light of the law and instruction that shall be dispensed

throughout the world by the saints (Isa. 2:2-4).

“The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it”—These “kings of the earth” are not those of Rev. 16:14 but those of Rev. 5:9-10, for the former will be replaced by the latter. The redeemed will comprise the kings of the future age (Luke 19:17-19; Rev. 20:4), and they will cause the respective communities over which they shall rule to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ (cp. Psa. 68:31). This will constitute “their glory.” In the best texts the words *and honour* are missing. Compare Isa. 60:3.

VERSE 25

“And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day”—The gates of the literal Temple at Jerusalem will provide constant access to those worshippers who desire to ascend there for worship (Isa. 60:11), and in this sense, there also will be constant access to the spiritual Jerusalem seen by John, for, at the conclusion of the millenium, those who have served God faithfully during that period, will be incorporated into the city. In Solomon’s Temple, there were priests who ministered there day and night (Psa. 134), a token to faithful Israelites that access to Yahweh is always available.

“For there shall be no night there”—Figuratively, “night” is the time when the Sun of Righteousness is withdrawn (see John 8:12; 9:4-5). The Lord Jesus Christ, as the Light of the world, will constantly shine in the Age to come (Mal. 4:1-2).

VERSE 26

“And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it”—Haggai states that “the desire of all nations shall come,” and the Temple shall be “filled with glory” (Hag. 2:7). Brother Thomas renders the phrase: “The excellency of the nations, they shall come in.” He shows that the phrase has relation to the multitudinous Christ, for the noun is in the singular number, but the verb is plural. Fuerst’s *Hebrew Lexicon* renders it as “the desirable, precious things of all nations.” The reference is to the Redeemed, for they represent the true “glory and honour of the nations,” being separated from out of all nations for that purpose (Rev. 5:9-10). They, alone, will be permitted in the New Jerusalem: that is, incorporated as elements in the multitudinous bride of the Lamb (v.9).

As Israel took of the wealth of Egypt to glorify the Tabernacle, so God is "taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name" (Acts 15:14).

VERSE 27

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth"—To defile is to render for common use that which Yahweh claims as His own. In the past, Israel failed in that regard (see Ezek. 44:7), but the future will see Yahweh's requirements respected (cp. v. 9). There will be no access to the spiritual temple, no incorporation into the multitudinous bride of Christ, for those who have wantonly defiled God's holy things (see Rev. 21:7-8).

"Neither whatsoever worketh abomination"—See note v. 8. Luke 16:15 states that that which is highly esteemed among men, is often abominable in the sight of God.

"Or maketh a lie"—False teaching is accounted as lying (cp. Ezek. 13:6,9,22). Those who have indulged in such jeopardise their future inheritance.

"But they which are written in the Lamb's book of life"—See notes Rev. 3:5; 20:12. By "continuance in well-doing" we shall find a place in the book of life, and will be incorporated into the symbolic Holy Jerusalem, forming the multitudinous "Lamb's wife."

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO**THE FINAL MESSAGE**

This last chapter completes the description of the New Jerusalem, and then concludes with a personal message from Christ, and a response from John in Patmos.

The first six verses describe the river of life which John sees proceeding out of the throne of the Holy City. This completes the last of the visions granted to him.

What follows is exhortation and warning: an exhortation to understand and apply the principles set forth in "The Apocalypse," and a stern warning against minimising the importance, the meaning, or the effect of what is contained therein.

The book concludes with a prayer and a benediction; thus fittingly bringing to an end the wonderful revelation from heaven that we call "The Holy Bible."

(g) — The River of Life — vv. 1-6

As Ezekiel saw in vision a literal river of water flowing from the Temple, through the desert to the Dead Sea, bringing healing and life wherever it went, so the new Jerusalem has its river of life that produces fruit to the glory of Yahweh.

VERSE 1

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal"—The symbolism is based upon the literal Temple prophesied by Ezekiel. He described the stream of living water which, in vision, he saw proceeding from the Altar, and flowing eastward to

fructify the desert. Its living waters caused fruit trees and foliage to spring up, and brought healing to the waters of the Dead Sea (Ezek. 47). That is the basis of the figures now before us, here applied to the symbolic New Jerusalem. Christ is the Altar (Heb. 13:10), and from him will proceed the doctrine of life, represented as a stream of living water (John 4:14; 7:37-39). This will fructify the aridness of men's minds, and will heal the "dead sea of nations" (Isa. 57:20-21). The water John saw was unpolluted and health-giving.

"Proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb"—Literally, the throne

of God will be established in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4; Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 43:7); symbolically, it will be found in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10). Meanwhile, Yahweh through the Lamb must become enthroned in our hearts now, if we would find a place in the New Jerusalem then. Our privilege then, will be to carry forth the message of salvation to all the world, that all might "drink of the water" and so live (John 4:14; 7:37-39).

VERSE 2

"In the midst of the street of it"—The Greek *plateia* signifies "broad-space," and not a street as we know it. Jerusalem, the temple city, will not be divided into streets. The term relates to the four-square area found within the walls of the city (Rev. 21:16), where, in the literal Temple, the worshippers will gather to worship. See note v. 21.

"And on either side of the river, was there the tree of life"—It would not be possible to have a single tree both inside the city, and on either side of a river that flows therefrom. The word *xulon* can relate to a wood, or a forest of trees; and that, obviously, is its meaning here. The symbol is based upon the literal forest that Ezekiel saw in vision spring up along the banks of the river of living water that flowed out from the Temple (Ezek. 47:12). Trees and leaves are sometimes used as symbols to describe the redeemed in glory (see Psa. 1:3; 92:12; Isa. 60:21; 65:22). The water emanating from the Christ-altar, will be drawn up by the roots of these symbolic trees causing growth and producing fruit. As in the natural, so in the spiritual: as natural leaves help to purify the air so these symbolic leaves "breathe" and help purify the millennial air. They represent the Redeemed who will convey the purifying teaching of Jesus Christ to the world at large (Isa. 30:20-21; Jer. 3:15; Mic. 4:1-4).

"Which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruits every month"—This, again, shows that John saw a forest of trees, and not a single tree. Some of the "fruits" to be produced through the influence of the water of life are outlined in Prov. 3:16-18; Gal. 5:22. The number twelve identifies the fruit with the hope of Israel, and suggests the monthly pilgrimages and services that will form part of the ministry of saints in the age to come (see Isa. 66:23).

"And the leaves of the trees were for

the healing of the nations"—They shall act as health-giving herbs (cp. Ezek. 47:12). Figuratively, these leaves relate to the administration of the saints in the Kingdom of the age to come. The influence of their teaching will be to heal the nations of the ills that afflict them today. In natural life mankind is utterly dependent on plants or leaves for their nourishment because even the fish and flesh eaten is from creatures that feed on plants. The green pigment chlorophyll is derived from the energy of light which through this means is made available to those who consume such growth. Moreover, leaves breathe in the poisonous carbon dioxide which man breathes out, and breathes out pure oxygen so essential to life. So leaves purify the air, as the Redeemed will purify the political, social, and moral atmosphere of the age to come. Thus, once again, Yahweh's purpose is illustrated by the facts of nature.

VERSE 3

"And there shall be no more curse"—This statement relates to those who are members of the New Jerusalem. By a change of nature they will be delivered from the curse of mortality that has afflicted humanity as the result of the first sin. Meanwhile, all out of the ground are cursed, for it is itself cursed (Gen. 3:17; Rom. 8:20-23; 1 Cor. 15:47-50).

"But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it"—This statement limits those upon whom there will be "no more curse," to members of the New Jerusalem; though, ultimately, all the earth shall be delivered from the curse.

"And his servants shall serve him"—There will be joyous activity in the age to come on the part of the Redeemed in conjunction with the Father and the Son. The word *laireuo* primarily signifies to work for hire. "It came to be used by the Jews in a very special sense to denote the service rendered to Yahweh by the Israelites as His peculiar people (see Rom. 9:4; Acts 26:7; Heb. 9:1.6)" (Vincent). The Redeemed will minister as a royal priesthood on behalf of humanity.

VERSE 4

"And they shall see his face"—They shall see the full glory of Yahweh revealed in Christ (cp. Isa. 33:17; Matt. 5:8; John 14:9; 1 Tim. 6:15). To do this they must be made consubstantial with

him (see Exod. 33:20; Psa. 17:15; 1 Jhn. 3:2).

"And his name shall be in their foreheads"—See note Rev. 14:1.

VERSE 5

"And there shall be no night there"—See note Ch. 21:25.

"And they need no candle"—The Greek word is *luchnos* (cp. John 5:35). It denotes a portable hand lamp fed by oil, burning for a time, and then going out. That has been the experience of saints during their mortal ministry, but will no longer be the case when clothed upon with immortality. The righteous shall then "shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of the Father" (Matt. 13:43). At present they are as the *luchnos*, needing to be fed with oil, and ultimately destined to go out; but then they shall be the very source of light on earth, for "the Lord God giveth them light."

"Neither light of the sun"—See Note Ch. 21:23.

EPILOGUE

CHRIST'S FINAL ADMONITION AND APPEAL vv. 7-21

With the visions now at an end, Christ, through his angel, directs words of admonition and appeal to "his servants" (Rev. 1:1). They are urged to heed the message of the book, and warned of the consequences of neglecting it. A severe rebuke is included for those who would detract from the importance of his final message delivered unto them. The exhortation from heaven is rounded off by a benediction from John.

(a) Christ's Last Message to Man — vv. 7-20

Christ stresses the principle of personal responsibility in relation to the things recorded in "The Apocalypse," and completes his message to "his servants" with a reminder of his coming to earth again.

VERSE 7

"Behold, I come quickly"—The ejaculation, *Behold!* is designed to call attention to the statement that follows. The adverb *quickly* is from the Greek *tachu* denoting "swiftly, speedily, unexpectedly." Strong defines the word to

"For the Lord God giveth them light"—The Redeemed then will have a "light within" that will be divine.

"And they shall reign for ever and ever"—See note Rev. 1:6; 20:4.

VERSE 6

"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true"—See note Rev. 19:11; 21:5.

"And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done"—cp. Rev. 1:1. The literal Greek is *the Lord the God of the spirits of the prophets* (cp. Num. 16:22; Neh. 9:20,30). The same spirit as motivated the prophets of the Old Testament inspired *The Apocalypse* (see 2 Pet. 1:19-21). Among the chief functions of prophecy was that of comforting, exhorting (Acts 15:32), and edifying believers (1 Cor. 14:3). *The Apocalypse* assists in those directions as well as foretelling the future (cp. Rev. 1:3).

signify: "Shortly, i.e. without delay, soon or (by surprise) suddenly." Obviously it is used in the final sense in *The Apocalypse* for 1900 years have passed away since this message was given. Significantly, the warning occurs seven times (Rev. 2:5,16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:7,12, 20).

"Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book"—The word "blessed" signifies *happy*. The key to true happiness is found in the Gospel (cp. Matt. 5:3-9). However, the happiness promised in *The Apocalypse* is found by "keeping" the sayings of the prophecy of the book. The word "keepeth" (Gr.

tereo) denotes to watch over, preserve, keep, to guard from loss or injury by keeping the eye upon. One who treats the "sayings of the prophecy of this book" in that way, receives them as a divine communication, and makes use of them to comfort himself in days of difficulty, persecution and depression. See notes on Rev. 1:3.

VERSE 8

"And I John saw these things, and heard them"—John authenticates the visions revealed unto him.

"And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things"—cp. Rev. 19:10.

VERSE 9

"Then said he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book"—John's feeling of awe and joy again overwhelmed him. They were in direct contrast to the misery he had previously experienced when he was unable to penetrate the mysteries of this book (Rev. 5:4). However, he was angelically restrained in his attitude. We must not worship men or angels (Col. 2:18), no matter how brilliantly they might expound the Word, or reveal the mysteries of God. The angel identified himself with the prophets, and appropriately so when the nature of *The Apocalypse* is concerned. He "kept" the sayings of the book, in that he gave them his close attention. There are some things that even angels do not know (Mark 13:32), but which they desire to know, and upon which they ponder (1 Pet. 1:12).

"Worship God"—Such adoration as John was about to display should be reserved for God alone. See Rev. 19:10.

VERSE 10

"And he said unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book"—In other words, *The Apocalypse* is given to be understood (ct. Dan. 12:4,9; Rev. 10:4).

"For the time is at hand"—See note Ch. 1:3.

VERSE 11

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still"—This statement is made on the context of v. 12: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me. . ." In that

day, the unjust will be deemed unjust; and the filthy be deemed filthy, with true discernment; and not as now, when the unjust are mistaken for the just; and the filthy for the clean. (See Isa. 32:5). He that is really righteous will be made righteous before Christ and the angels; and he that is holy will have the name of the New and Holy Jerusalem written upon him. Once Christ has left the right hand of the Father, his mediatorial work will be closed for a time, and the door of opportunity will be closed temporarily, as in the days of Noah (Gen. 7:16), and it will be too late for change. Meanwhile, let us account the "longsuffering of God as salvation" (2 Pet. 3:15; 1 Pet. 3:18-22). The unjust are those unjustified through faith manifested in baptism; they are those who refuse Christ.

"And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still"—The Greek word *rhuparos* is used of "vile clothing" in James 2:2. The term, therefore, relates to those who have embraced Christ but have failed to keep their garments clean (See Rev. 3:4). Whereas the unjust refuse Christ, the filthy disgrace him. Actually, the term used here, *rhupantheto* signifies, "let him be made filthy" (see R. V.). The filthiness of such will be made manifest at Christ's coming (cp. Rev. 16:15).

"And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still"—The righteous relate to the justified in both faith and works. Their characters will be revealed as such at Christ's return. The phrase in the Greek is: "and the righteous (one) righteousness let him do still" (see R. V.). True righteousness is a matter of action (see note Rev. 19:8), and such actions will be carried on in the Kingdom.

"And he that is holy, let him be holy still"—Separation is necessary if one would please Christ (Heb. 12:14). It will be maintained in the age to come (vv. 14-15).

VERSE 12

"And behold I come quickly"— See note v. 7.

"And my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be"—Christ comes with the reward; believers do not ascend into heaven to receive it! He rewards at the resurrection of the just (Luke 4:14), as the result of judgment (2 Cor. 5:10); and such a reward is based upon faith in action, and not a mere academic understanding of

the Truth (see Rom. 2:13; James 1:22-25). The word *misthos* is "wages." The Redeemed will receive "payment" for actions they perform, although the "wage" received will be far beyond the value of the work performed. For the use of the word see Isa. 40:10; 62:11; Matt. 5:12; 10:41-42; Mark 9:41; Luke 6:23; 1 Cor. 3:8,14; 2 Jhn 8; Rev. 11:14. Instead of "shall be," the Greek has "is."

VERSE 13

"I am Alpha and Omega"—It is appropriate that such a declaration should appear at the beginning and the completion of *The Apocalypse*. See note Rev. 1:8.

"The beginning and the end"—See note Rev. 1:8.

"The first and the last"—See Rev. 1:11.

VERSE 14

"Blessed are they that do his commandments"—The best texts read: "Who wash their robes" (see *Diaglott*); that is, those who make due preparation for Christ's coming. See note Rev. 7:14.

"That they may have right to the tree of life"—The "right" is the authority granted them. The Greek word is *exousia* and denotes both authority and privilege to act, in much the same way as is expressed in John 1:12. The preposition *epi*, rendered "to," can be used in the sense of direction *right to come* to which is the way the RV renders it. See note Rev. 2:7. That which was deprived Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:22-24) is now made available to the Elect.

"And may enter in through the gates into the city"—They will be incorporated into the New Jerusalem (see Isa. 26:2). All others are excluded (Rev. 21:7-8).

VERSE 15

"For without are dogs"—A dog is an unclean animal, and was a term of reproach by which Israelites described unjustified Gentiles (Matt. 15:26-27). Under the Law the term is used to denounce the moral perversions used in pagan worship in conjunction with male prostitutes (Deut. 23:18). Apart from that, as one writer has explained: "the word on the lips of a Jew signified chiefly *impurity*; of a Greek, *impudence*. The herds of dogs which prowl about eastern cities, without a home and without an owner, feeding on the refuse and filth of the streets, quarrelling among

themselves, and attacking the passer-by, explain both applications of the image." Paul used the term of Judaisers who acted as Gentiles (Phil. 3:2). Such "dogs" are excluded from the New Jerusalem, for within its walls are found only true Israelites (whether Jew or Gentile — Rom. 2:28; 9:8).

"And sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie"—See notes Rev. 21:8. The phrase *maketh a lie* is better rendered *doeth a lie*. It should be contrasted with the phrase *doeth the truth* (see John 3:21; 1 John 1:6).

VERSE 16

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto these things in the Ecclesias"—Here the Lord expressly appears as the speaker, to ratify and confirm all that had been communicated to John by the instrumentality of the angel. As the Lord has gone to such trouble to reveal *The Apocalypse* for the benefit of his servants (Rev. 1:1), it is honouring to him to earnestly and prayerfully study it; it is an aspect of acceptable worship so to do (cp. Psa. 138:2).

"I am the root and offspring of David"—Christ is Yahweh manifest in flesh (2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Tim. 3:16). He is the "root" of David because David's greatness stemmed from the divine purpose and promise to reveal Himself in a Redeemer (Isa. 11:1,10). He is the "offspring" of David, inasmuch as he came in the line of David (Luke 1:32-33; Rom. 1:3-4). See note Rev. 5:5.

The word "Nazarene" which was applied to the Lord (Matt. 2:23), is from the Hebrew *netzer*, denoting "sprout" or "shoot" as in Isa. 11:1. The root of the Israel-oak is of such a nature, that though cut down, it will shoot again (Job 14:7-10). In that regard, it is significant that in context with Isa. 11:1, the overthrow of the Assyrian Gog is likened to the felling of a cedar-forest (Isa. 10:33-34). Unlike the oak, the cedar throws out no fresh suckers, and once cut down it dies. Not so the oak, which Isaiah gives as a figure of Israel (Isa. 6:11), for it is a tree which after the felling a stock remains. There is a future, therefore, for Israel the oak, for the root shall continue to feed and to bear, and to produce a greater glory than it previously manifested. As David was brought by Yahweh (2 Sam. 7:8-9) from obscurity to great

honour and supreme power in Israel. so the Lord arose from great humiliation to receive greater honour yet to be manifest in the earth, in which David and all in him shall share. The glory of David, then, is found in his greater son, as he himself recognised. In commenting upon the marvellous privilege and hope granted him in the covenant made with him, he declared: "And *is* this the manner of man, O Lord Yahweh?" (2 Sam. 7:19). The word *is* which is in italics in the A. V. should be eliminated, and the question turned into a statement: "This is the manner of man!" Again the word "manner" should be rendered *oracle* as it is by Brother Thomas, whilst the word "man" is given the definite article in Hebrew *ha-Adam*: "the Adam." The statement of the king then becomes: "This is the oracle of the Adam." David recognised that the seed thus promised him was related to the Edenic covenant: the Seed of the Woman who would crush the serpent's head. He came to realise that he had been elevated by Yahweh for the express purpose of extending the covenant in Eden and to Abraham to include the royal house which, under God, he had established; and, therefore, the very root of his glory and position even then, was the seed promised, who was both son of David and Son of God (Luke 1:32-33).

"**And the bright and morning star**"—The "morning star" is rated the brightest of all stars. It is seen shining in the heavens at the dawn of a new day, and therefore heralds a new beginning. The reference is to Venus, rated the most beautiful of the heavenly bodies. At some periods in the East it shines out beautifully as the darkness of night is passing away, and the first light of dawn can be seen. Thus its light is intermingled with the light of the yet unseen sun, and it becomes the herald of the new day (see note Rev. 2:28; Num. 24:17).

VERSE 17

"**And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come**"—The Spirit-word finds expression through the Bride in proclaiming the divine invitation to those with hearing ears to "come." The Spirit is frequently used in the NT for the state of mind generated by the Word of Truth (see John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1 John 5:6; Rom. 8:6,10).

"**And let him that is athirst come**"—

See note Rev. 21:6. The invitation of the Gospel is directed only to those who thirst for truth (see Isa. 55:1); such shall find satisfaction (Matt. 5:6), for God will quench it.

"**And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely**"—See Rev. 21:6. Every one who is disposed to come, who has a desire to be saved, is assured that he may live. No matter what his state may be now, it can be changed in Christ (see 1 Cor. 6:9-11). The word "will" is *thelon*, "desireth." It implies the exercise of volition and purpose, a determination born of desire.

VERSE 18

"**For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book**"—This commences a most solemn warning against any tampering with the words of *The Apocalypse*. Those who hear it have a responsibility towards it. See note on "hear" — Rev. 1:3.

"**If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book**"—The Bible opens and closes with such a warning as this (Deut. 4:2). Both Moses and Christ, the two great leaders of Israel whose combined efforts witness to law and grace, give their testimony as one, and warn against man adding to the words of divine revelation. The Judaisers were guilty of this, for they added the tradition of their elders (Matt. 15:3), and earned the rebuke of Christ by so doing. Today the Mormons and others do similarly. Note the power of the Bible as indicated by the exhortation to Joshua (Jos. 1:7).

VERSE 19

"**And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy**"—To "take away" is not merely to reject the book altogether, but also to reduce the power of its teaching by a wrong interpretation of it, or by discouraging others from studying it. The whole book is to be received, with all its awe-inspiring truths, its fearful judgments, and its stimulating prophecies and promises as a revelation from God; and no matter however obscure some of it might seem, it should be earnestly, carefully and prayerfully studied. *The Apocalypse* is important, not merely to reveal things to come, but to show the real difference between the world without and the Truth

within. Let us beware of reducing its power in that regard.

“God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book”—There is a solemn obligation, therefore, to carefully seek to understand this book, and to exercise great care in expounding it. “Teachers” who set forth wrong ideas jeopardise their future by so doing (see James 3:1-2, where “masters” should be *teachers*). The reference to the “book of life” should be altered to the “tree of life” in accordance with the Greek (see margin). The warning suggests that some might be rejected at the Judgment Seat for perverting or destroying the teaching of *The Apocalypse*.

VERSE 20

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly”—See note v. 7. The Lord Jesus witnesses personally to the truths contained in *The Apocalypse*.

(b) John’s Response And Benediction — vv. 20-21

John responds by words which ring down the corridor of time to our day, and which we, too, can endorse.

VERSE 20

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus”—The words *even so* are omitted in the best texts and replaced by the word *Amen*, “so be it” (see note Rev. 3:14). John’s simple, direct prayer, therefore was: *Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!* All who “love the Lord’s appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8) will re-echo it.

VERSE 21

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be

with you all”—These gracious words, combined with the fervent prayer of the previous verse, close the wonderful prophecy. With a vision of splendour and glory fresh in his mind, John added this benediction to all who would study the book. He thus opened and closed *The Apocalypse* by calling for grace, divine favour, upon all who would read it (see note Rev. 1:4). This favour comes from heaven (Ps. 84:11) through the channel of the Lord (John 1:17), and is available to all who would seek Yahweh. How great is God’s grace; how glorious His favour. As we consider this, and contemplate the glory yet to be revealed in the earth with all the riches of grace, let us be moved by the revelation to build into our lives the qualities seen in the Lord Jesus Christ, that the fulness of favour might be experienced by us in the age to come.

“Amen”—This concluding comment is missing from the best texts, and placed at the beginning of John’s short prayer. Nevertheless, as we contrast the wickedness and darkness of this present age with the wonder and glory of that which is to dawn when the Lord shall reign from Jerusalem, we append our *Amen!* “so be it,” to the glorious vision that unfolds before the mind. It was appropriate to the aged John, suffering exile in a lonely island, to pray for the coming of the Lord; it is appropriate for us to do likewise, as we see the end of Gentile times approaching, and experience the growing tide of wickedness and blasphemy apparent throughout the earth. These evils are but for a moment. They are as the shadows of the night to be driven away by the bright shining of the Sun of Righteousness in the day of his glory. Therefore, *Amen. Come Lord Jesus*, thy waiting servants pray.

Come, Lord Jesus!