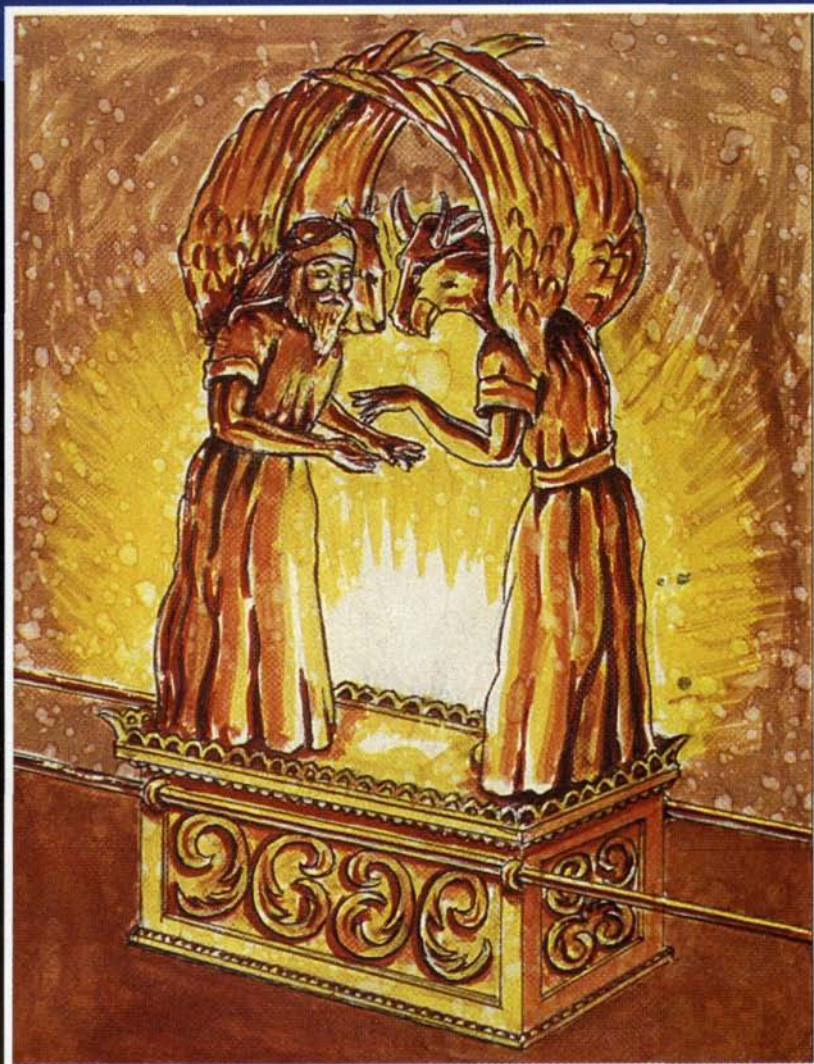


The Cherubim

Divine Majesty in Motion







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Preface

THE curious appearance of *Cherubim* throughout the Scriptures has held many Biblical expositors entranced. Yet the symbolism and work of the Cherubim cannot be explained, nor properly understood, without an appreciation of the Hope of Israel, and the fundamental principles of the Truth. The Cherubim illustrate the divine manifestation of sacrifice, of purpose and of ultimate glory, in activity. It teaches the importance of being diligent in the Master's service, of being properly directed in the activities of the Truth, and of being aware of the need to develop the divine likeness in the individual character.

A series of articles appeared in *Logos* magazine over many years, as a number of writers outlined various features of this intriguing subject. These include articles from Brethren J. Thomas, W. McKelvie, H. P. Mansfield, W. G. Holton and K. Cook. Together they provide a helpful commentary upon the subject of the Cherubim, with some exhortatory thoughts for personal development. Illustrations have been kindly supplied by Brethren Neal Whitehurst, Dave Phillips and Stan Isbell, as well as some selected from other *Logos* publications.

The formation of the spiritual cherubim is nearly completed. Fashioned after the example of the perfect Cherub, the Lord Jesus Christ, each member of the multitudinous figure — from the days of Abel until the return of our Master — will complement the glory and dramatic activity of the Immortal Cherubim. Finally, the glory of Yahweh resident in the Cherubim will move from the way of the east (Rev. 16:12) into the Temple of the Millennium, there to be displayed to all the world as the example of faithful perseverance and spiritual direction, perfected in immortality.

If we would understand the divine purpose in flesh, we can set upon no better, more exciting, pathway than to discover the beauty

and perfection of the figure of the Cherubim. It will take us from the days of Eden, where the important principles of sacrifice and offering were provided through means of the appointed Elohistich cherubim; through the channel of Tabernacle and Temple, in which the divine principles were enlarged in types and furniture; and into the revelations given through Ezekiel and John, when great visions and prophecies were received in times of exile and dispersion.

If the vision of the Cherubim is kept foremost in our hearts and minds, we will not drift into the complacency and indifference of those who have “lost their first love”, so characteristic of these last days (Lk. 18:8). It will remind us that the great purpose of the divine Spirit is the manifestation of Himself in those of His choosing — those in whom He is pleased to “ride”, for the Cherubim represent the activity of the Spirit. The subject demands of us not only an understanding of the divine principles, but the expression of those important qualities in an active and virile spiritual development. By that means we become performers of Yahweh’s will, and the manifestation of His wisdom.

Very soon the Cherubim will again be seen in the earth — not merely in figure, in parable, nor in prophetic vision merely, but in reality as Christ and his Beloved move together in unity to bring the Father’s glory to its final resting place. Then, a joyous voice will emanate from the throne: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev. 21:3). It is for the development of such a community of faithful chariots of the Spirit-Word, that this book is provided.

— G. E. Mansfield,
Logos Publications,
May 1992.

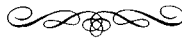
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A Brief Introduction

The Cherubim figured largely in the worship of the God of Israel; they overshadowed the Mercy Seat, and were represented on the veil that divided the Holy Place. In addition to these inanimate symbols, there were living Cherubim, as we find from such references as Psalm 18:10 and Genesis 3:24, and the question arises, What did the Cherubim represent? The wonder of their work is perceived as we trace the cherubim and the flaming sword through the Scripture.



CHERUBIM were placed at the east of the garden in Eden with a flaming sword which “turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.” Some suggest that this means that these guardians were designed to close off the path to the tree of life so as to prevent a way back to God. Rather were they intended to demonstrate God’s method of redemption, for the word “keep” also means “to preserve, to maintain”. Placed at the east in Eden the cherubim were doubtless a meeting place for Adam and his descendants. There they could present their offerings before Yahweh, and commune with Him regarding His purpose (Gen. 3:15).

Here was a manifestation of divine mercy and a declaration of God’s purpose to redeem.

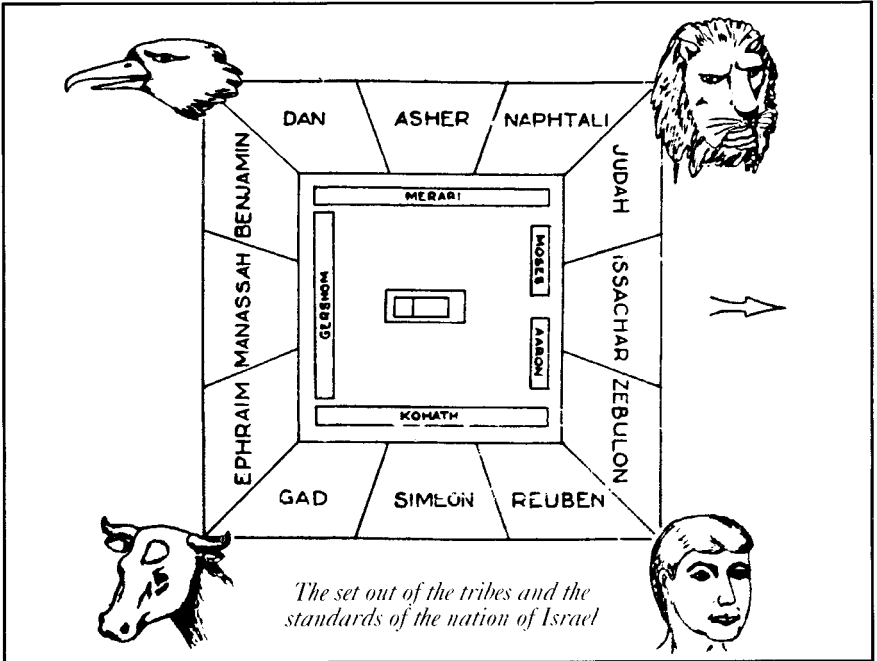
The flaming sword represented the presence of the spirit of Yahweh.

In Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12 Paul likens the Word of God to a “two-edged sword,” and in Psalm 104:4 the Psalmist declares that God “maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire.” These symbols are identified with the Lord Jesus in Revelation 1:16, and it is through him that the faithful can become constituents of the antitypical cherubim that will be formed of immortal saints at the day of glory.

The cherubim is next found in the tabernacle worship. Moses was instructed to make the Mercy Seat of pure gold, and overshadow it with two cherubim to be formed out of the same piece of gold. This was the most sacred spot in Israel. God declared: “There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel” (Exod. 25:22).

The cherubim in Solomon's Temple were made of olive wood overlaid with gold. Why olive wood? An answer is suggested in Zechariah 4. There is the symbol of two Olive trees which, through two branches, empty their oil into the golden lampstand. In the appended explanation, we are told that these represent "the two anointed ones," or, according to the margin, "the sons of oil" — children of light. The cherubim were coated with gold because this is symbolic of a tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7; Rom. 11:17; Heb. 9:5).

In beginning of his prophecies, Ezekiel describes the cherubim at length. He likens them to four living creatures, with the general appearance of a man, but having four faces; those of an ox, eagle, lion and man. In this, the cherubim followed the pattern of the camp of Israel, for Israel was divided into four main groups under four standards. These groups are described in Numbers 2. But notice that while Reuben is the firstborn of Jacob's sons, he is not given the first place. This is given to Judah, and Judah was stationed on the east side, towards the rising of the sun. Under Judah's standard are found also the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun. On the south side was placed the standard of Reuben, and with this tribe were also those of Simeon and Gad. On the west side was Ephraim with Manasseh and Benjamin. On the north side, was the standard of Dan with Asher and Naphtali. In the very centre was placed the Tabernacle. The four standards



The set out of the tribes and the standards of the nation of Israel

of Israel answer to the faces of the cherubim: Judah the Lion, Reuben the Man, Ephraim the Ox, and Dan the Eagle.

The cherubim had also four wings joined one to the other showing that they were all one camp. They were energised by the spirit of God, and were "full of eyes" (Ezek. 10). As the eye is the symbol of intelligence, it presented the idea of a multitude of intelligent beings, all manifesting the glory of God.

In Ezekiel 10 the same symbolism is used, and the prophet declares the vision was seen at the east side of the Lord's house. In his 43rd chapter he describes how the glory of God will return to the Temple when it is erected in the future. Then it will enter "by way of the east" in the personage of Christ and his multitudinous Bride.

The Apocalypse chapters 4 and 5 also introduce us to the cherubim. In the symbolism of chapter 4, the earth is represented as calm and peaceful, declaring glory and honour to him who sits upon the throne. In chapter 5 the One sitting on the throne is portrayed with a scroll containing seven seals, the complete revelation of God's purpose. But it is also completely sealed, so that only one can open it — the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, "who hath prevailed."

In the midst of this throne are seen four living creatures (the cherubim) ascribing glory in such terms as to identify them with the saints. Their praise is directed to a Lamb "as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God." Here is the Redeemer surrounded by a multitude which no man can number, out of "all nations, peoples and tongues." All the saints are here from Abel to the very last one. What a vast and grand assembly this will be! All shall have the seal of the living God; all will express glory with one voice, all will sing the song of the Redeemed: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and honour, and glory." He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

This final picture takes us back to Genesis and to the east of the Garden, where were established the cherubim with the flaming sword; a manifestation of the goodness, mercy and love of God, with power to act as intercessors.

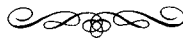
Thus in this wonderful book we call the Bible, Genesis takes us forward to Revelation and Revelation takes us back to Genesis — for they are parts of one whole that cannot be separated and which reveal for us the grand and lofty purpose of God.

"Blessed are they who do His commandments that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter through the gates into the city of the living God".

— W.McK.

The Federal Symbol of Israel

The following comments were written by Brother John Thomas to explain the symbolism of the cherubim as illustrative of the purpose and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ and the saints. It represented the fullness of the divine figures of tabernacle and temple, realised in the composite Body of Christ.



BUT little is said about the *cherubim* in the Mosaic narrative. The word is a plural noun, and represents therefore more objects than one. But, in what did this plurality consist? I should say, judging from Gen. 4:14, that it had especial regard to a plurality of *faces*; for when the Lord God sentenced Cain to a fugitive and vagabond life, the fratricide answered, “behold, then, from **THY FACES** (*plural in the Hebrew*) shall I be hid.” That is, “I shall no more be permitted to come before the Cherubic faces, which thou hast placed at the east of the garden, to present an offering for my sin.” As he truly observed, “Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven.” He was exiled from the Faces of God still further to the east, as a murderer doomed to eternal death (1 John 3:15) as the end of his career.

That the faces were connected with the cherubim seems unquestionable from other passages of scripture where cherubim are described. The Lord spoke of them to Moses in the mount. Having commanded him to make an ark, or open chest, overlaid with gold, with a crown along its upper margin, he said, “Thou shalt make a *mercy seat* of pure gold. And thou shalt make *two cherubim* of beaten gold in the two ends of the mercy seat.” In another place, it is explained that “Out of the mercy seat made he the cherubim on the two ends thereof.” Then it is continued, “And the cherubim shall stretch forth *wings* on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their *faces* one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat *above upon* the ark, and in *the ark thou shalt put the testimony* that I shall give thee” (Exod. 25:10-21).

It is probable, that the reason why Moses gave no description of them in Genesis was, because he intended to speak more particularly when he came to record their introduction into the most holy place of the tabernacle. In the text above recited, they are described as having wings and faces; and, being made out of the same piece of gold as the mercy seat, upon which they looked down,

beholding, as it were, the blood sprinkled upon it; it is evident, they were symbols connected with the institution of atonement for sin through the shedding of blood. But they were still more significative. They were God's throne in Israel. Hence, the psalmist saith, "The Lord reigneth; he *sitteth* between the cherubim." This throne was erected upon mercy; and for this reason it was, that the covering of the ark containing the testimony, the manna (Exod. 16:33; John 6:33), and the resurrected rod (Numb. 17:8; Isa. 11:1), was styled the mercy seat, or throne, where the Lord covered the sins of the people. It was also the Oracle, or place from which God communed with Israel through Moses. "There," said the Lord, "will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the Ark of Testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."

But, though Moses informs us of two cherubim with a plurality of faces and wings each, he does not tell us what kind of faces, or how many wings they had. This deficiency, however, seems to be supplied by Ezekiel. Those he saw had each of them *four faces* and *four wings*; a human body with feet like a calf's, and the hands of a man under their wings. Of their faces, one was like a man's; a second, like a lion's; a third, like that of an ox; and a fourth, like an eagle's. The things of his first chapter taken collectively, evidently represent *the Messiah upon his throne, surrounded by his saints, and all energized and made glorious by the Spirit of God*. The rings of Ezekiel's wheels were full of eyes; but in the cherubim which John saw, the wheels were not introduced, but two more wings were added, and the eyes were transferred to the six wings (Rev. 4:8). In this place, the cherubim are styled "beasts," and more properly, *living creatures* (Heb. *ra*); and are associated with "twenty-four elders."

Now, by attending to what is affirmed of them in another place, we shall see who are represented by the four cherubim of Ezekiel with four faces each, and their wheels; and the four of John with one different face each, and twenty-four typical elders. It is written, that "they fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are (or represent) the prayers of the saints. And *they* sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed *us* to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made *us* unto our God kings and priests; and *WE shall reign on the earth*" (Rev. 5:8-10). From this it is evident that the cherubim, etc., represent *the aggregate of those redeemed from the nations, in their resurrection state*. The Lamb, the four cherubs, and the twenty-four elders, are a symbolical representation of what is expressed by the phrase, "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *saints*;" that is, those who have been constituted the righteousness of God in Christ in a *glorified state*.

The cherubim are the *federal* symbol; and the *eyes*, representative of the

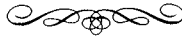
individuals constituted in *him* who is signified by the cherubim. The Lamb is introduced to represent the relationship between the holy eyes, or saints, and the Cherubic Faces; that is, between them and the Lord Jesus; while "*the twenty-four elders*" are indicative of their constitution as "the Israel of God." There are *twenty-four*, because the kingdom of God, being an Israelitish Commonwealth, is arranged with the *twelve sons of Jacob* as its gates (Rev. 21:12); and with the *twelve apostles of the Lamb* as its foundations (Rev. 21:14; Eph. 2:20); the former being the entrance into present life of the *fleshly* tribes, or *subjects*; and the latter, the foundations of the *adopted* tribes, or HEIRS of the kingdom; so that twenty-four is the representative constitutional number of the spiritual Israel of God; for without the natural the spiritual could not be.

But, the Mosaic Cherubim were deficient of several of the characteristics which distinguish those of Ezekiel and John. They had simply the wings and the faces. His cherubim were not only of beaten gold continuous with the substance of the mercy seat; but they were embroidered into the Veil, made of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, which divided the holy and the holiest place of the tabernacle. Now, when "Jesus cried with a loud voice, he expired; and *the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain from top to bottom*" (Mark 15:37-38). Thus, we see the breaking of the body of Jesus identified with the rending of the Cherubic Veil; thereby indicating that the latter was representative of the Lord.

— J.T.

The Principle of Representation

The drama of the Edenic representation of the cherubim and the flaming sword, was repeated with varying features in the four faces of the cherubic vision of Ezekiel. In this chapter Brother Thomas shows that the cherubim of Ezekiel's vision were enveloped in brilliant fire, representing the powerful spirit of God which illuminated and motivated the spiritual Cherubim of glory.



THE Mosaic Cherubim were symbolical of “*God manifest in the flesh.*” But upon what principles was his incarnate manifestation represented by the cherubim? First, in the solution of this interesting problem, I remark, that the scriptures speak of God after the following manner. “God is *light*, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5); again, “God is a *Spirit*; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24); and thirdly, “Yahweh thy God is... a consuming *fire*” (Deut. 4:24). In these three texts, which are only a sample of many others, we perceive that God is represented by *light*, *spirit*, and *fire*; when, therefore, He is symbolized as manifest in *flesh*, it becomes necessary to select certain *signs* representative of light, spirit, and fire, derived from the *animal* kingdom. Now, the ancients selected the *lion*, the *ox*, and the *eagle*, for this purpose, probably from tradition of the signification of these animals, or the faces of them, in the original cherubim. They are called God’s Faces because His omniscience, purity, and jealousy, are expressed in them. But the omniscient, jealous, and incorruptible God, was to be manifested in a particular kind of flesh. Hence, it was necessary to add a *fourth face* to show in what *nature* He would show himself. For this reason, the *human* face was associated with the lion, the ox, and the eagle.

These four faces united in one human shape, formed out of beaten gold; and two such, not separate and distinct symbols, but standing one on each end of the mercy-seat, and the same in continuity and substance with it; — taken as a whole, represented Jesus, the true blood-sprinkled mercy seat, or propitiatory, “in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Rom. 3:25; Col. 2:3,9). All four faces were to look upon the mercy seat, so as to behold the sprinkled

blood of the sacrifice. To accomplish this, two cherubs were necessary; so that the lion, and the ox, faces of the one; and the man, and the eagle, faces of the other, should all be “mercy-seat-ward.” It will be seen from this view of things, how important a place the cherubim occupied in the worship of God connected with “*the representation of the truth*”. They were not objects of adoration; but symbols representing to the mind of an intelligent believer, the Seed of the Woman as God manifested in the likeness of sinful flesh. This I take it was the significance of the cherubim which the Lord God placed at the east of the garden; and which became the germ, as it were, of the shadowy observances of the patriarchal and Mosaic institutions; whose substance was of Christ.

In Eden the things represented by the lion, ox, and eagle faces, were visibly manifested in the sword of flame. This was light, spirit, and fire, flaming around the cherubim as the glory of God. It turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. This is all Moses says about it; and were it not for other testimonies, we should be at a loss to understand its allegorical signification. The cherubim set up in the tabernacle and first temple, were enveloped in a cloud of thick darkness. At night, the cloud which was visible without the former, appeared like a blaze of fire (Exod. 40:35-38), but in the day, it towered aloft as a pillar of cloud. Darkness and fire were frequent accompaniments of the divine presence; indeed, always so upon great occasions. The presence of the Lord upon Mount Sinai was a magnificent and terrible example; and when Jesus expired in blood, Judaea was veiled in darkness, and God looked upon it.

With the exception of the thunder, the earthquake, the tempest, and the flashing lightning, God’s communing with Moses, and after him with the High Priests, were conducted from between the cherubim, as upon Sinai — “the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace; and God answered him by a voice” (Exod. 19:18); so that the thick darkness became luminous and indicated His presence. The illumination of the darkness without the voice would be sufficient to give assurance of acceptance. The Priest having witnessed this on the great day of atonement, when he came out to the people, looking for him with anxiety to know the result, would be enabled to report to them that the Lord had shined forth. This was the sign to them of a typical salvation. Hence, Asaph prays, “give ear, O Shepherd of Israel; thou that dwellest between the cherubim *shine forth* — stir up thy strength, and come and save us. Turn us again, O God, *cause thy face to shine*; and we shall be saved” (Psa. 80:1-3).

But the flaming sword in Eden is more strikingly illustrated as to its probable appearance by Ezekiel’s description of the cherubic glory. He says, he beheld “a great cloud, and a *fire infolding itself*, and a brightness was about it, and out of the brightness thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire; whence issued forth the likeness of four living creatures,” or cherubim. “Their

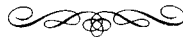
appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps; it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of *the fire went forth lightning*. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a *flash of lightning*.”

It was customary with the Lord to answer men by fire when any great principle, or new institution, was to be established. Thus, the covenant with Abraham was confirmed by fire (Gen. 15:17); there also came out a fire from before the Lord, and consumed the offering on Aaron’s induction as high priest (Lev. 9:24); when the plague was stayed at the intercession of David, the Lord answered him by fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering, and thus indicated the place He had chosen to place His name there (1 Chron. 21:16, 18, 26; 22:1); and also at the dedication of the temple fire consumed the sacrifices in the same way (2 Chron. 7:1). From these examples, I think it is a fair inference, that the flaming sword in Eden was applied to a similar purpose, namely, to flash forth its fire for the consumption of the sacrifices offered by the family of Adam before the Lord.

— J.T.

The Cherubim and the Glory of Messiah

The figure of the cherubim was expressive of the greatness of Yahweh's majesty. It depicted Yahweh's purpose to manifest Himself in power, through the flesh. Thus the cherubim were the throne of Yahweh, wherefrom He declared His purpose, and revealed His wisdom. It foreshadows the wonderful day when the law of Yahweh of Hosts will be disseminated from Zion, and when the Divine Majesty will be respected throughout the entire earth.



THE fire described by Ezekiel represented the spirit of God in its cherubic relations; for as the fire flashed its lightning so they moved to and fro. It also represented the glory, or brightness, of the Messiah as he will appear upon his throne. "I saw," saith he, "as the appearance of a man above upon the throne: as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from thence downward, as it were, the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of *the likeness of the glory of the Lord*" (Ezek. 1:4, 13, 14, 26, 28). The apocalyptic representation of the Lord's glory when seated on the throne of David, is a repetition of Ezekiel's, though under some modification, so as to adapt it to circumstances which had arisen out of the things concerning Jesus. "I beheld," says John, "a throne was set in the heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings, and voices; and there were *seven lamps of fire* burning before the throne, which are the *seven spirits of God*" (Rev. 4:3-5).

From these passages, it is evident, that *fire* which is also *light*, is in symbolic representation significative of the *spirit* of God. If more proof were necessary, the outpouring of the spirit on Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius, would be sufficient to settle the matter (Acts 2:2, 4; 11:15). Now, when this appearance envelopes men and things, it is called *glory*, or *majesty*. Hence, referring to the

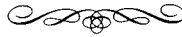
transfiguration of Jesus on the Mount, the apostle says, "we were eyewitnesses of his *majesty*: for he received from God the Father *honour and glory*" (2 Pet. 1:16). Such glory, or brightness, so beautifully represented by Ezekiel and John, will clothe the saints, as well as the Lord Jesus, when they shall appear in the kingdom of God; as it is written, "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). The apostle also speaks of the brightness of the sun, moon, and stars, as an illustration of the glory of the risen saints (1 Cor. 15:41-42); and what is symbolically represented in Ezekiel and John of the glory of the Lord, is plainly affirmed by the prophet in these words: "the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients *gloriously*" (Isa. 24:23).

From the whole, then, I conclude, that the cherubim and flaming sword at the east of Eden's garden were representative, *first*, of God manifest in the woman's nature as "the word made flesh;" and, by being bruised in the heel, set forth as the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, or propitiation for sin; and *secondly*, of God manifested in the spiritual nature, clothed with dazzling brightness, surpassing the sun and moon in splendour. The cherubim were the throne of the Lord in relation to the antediluvian world. There he communed with men. His presence was there, and the altar he had set up. When men went to sacrifice before him, there they presented their offerings. If these were according to his appointment, he accepted the worshipper: and, probably, answered him by fire flashing forth from the cherubic glory, and consuming the sacrifice upon the altar. If the worshipper were faithless and disobedient, *the faces were hid* by thick darkness, and the offering remained unconsumed. This was the case with Cain. His countenance fell, and he expressed himself with anger. Then the Lord God "answered him with a voice," and the conversation ensued which is recorded in the Mosaic narrative.

— J.T.

The Mystery of the Cherubim

Throughout the Bible reference is made to the Cherubim. They were present in Eden, they were wrought in gold over the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy, they are referred to in the book of Revelation. And yet, though thus frequently mentioned, the references to them are so allegorical, as to cause earnest students of the Word to ponder the meaning of the details presented. Of course, Yahweh required that Paul was not permitted to “speak particularly” concerning the cherubim (Heb. 9:5). The significance is there for us to unlock, and there is great pleasure in store for those who seek to do so. In this chapter we consider some clues that will help us solve some of the problems.



WHAT is the signification of those strangely constituted creatures called cherubim appearing in several of the prophetic visions, pictured upon the veil of the Temple, and in effigy overshadowing the mercy seat of the Mosaic Tabernacle?

The question is suggested, and the answer supplied, by a consideration of those portions of Scripture by which are to be explained the symbolisation in the Apocalypse of the company of the redeemed as four living creatures in the midst of, and round about, the glorious throne which John saw “set in heaven” (Rev. 4). The first like a lion, the second like a calf, the third had the face as a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. That they are symbols of the redeemed saints in their glory is shown by the song which they sing unto the Lamb, in which occur the words, “Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation: and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.” The symbols of the Apocalypse are for the most part based on the Law and the Prophets. Consequently, before we can grasp their import, their use in the former writings must be understood.

The Edenic Cherubim In Genesis

When the Lord God drove out the man from the Garden of Eden, He placed

at the east of the garden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. Later, after God had separated the nation of Israel for Himself, He manifested His glory to the people at the door of the tabernacle, and accordingly, we presume that it was at the east of the Garden (Gen. 3:24) where Cain and Abel brought their offerings to the Lord.

A flaming sword is indicative of judgment. Therefore judgment against sin needs to be acknowledged by any desiring to approach before the Lord; and must be manifested in His presence in a representative manner by sacrifice.

Although Adam was driven out of the Garden lest he should put forth his hand and eat and live for ever, there must have been provided for him a moral and intellectual eating that might lead to ultimate immortality, and to this end the cherubim were appointed to keep the way to the tree of life. The word “keep” in Genesis 3:24 signifies “to preserve” as well as “to guard”. It seems as if those cherubim were a figure of the purpose that God has, of manifesting His power and glory through those whom He takes out of the human race, and sets apart in Christ. They shall be the future instructors of the inhabitants of the earth in the new order of things, as it appears the cherubim at the east of the Garden must have been to Adam and his descendants, when they came up to worship the Lord, coming by, or through the execution of judgment, as represented in the sacrifice they offered.

The Mosaic Cherubim — Exod. 25:18-22; 26:1

When Moses received instructions to construct a tabernacle, where Yahweh should place His name, he was told to make a mercy seat, a place where God’s mercy should rest. Upon this, at either end, were to be formed two cherubim made of the same gold as the mercy seat, one on each end, with their wings stretched forth on high, covering the mercy seat, and their faces looking towards it and each other. The mercy seat was to be placed on the ark, and in the ark, the testimony. Yahweh said, “There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim” (Exod. 25:22).

In order to obtain this communion, the high priest, on the great day of covering for sin (which occurred towards, or, in, the end of the cycle of the season — Lev. 23:27 — a type of him who appeared at the end of the age, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself — Heb. 9:26), passed through the veil, but as he was only a figure of the Christ who should pass through, in all its dread reality, the high priest passed through by other blood than his own. In his entering, the high priest took a censer full of burning coals from off the altar (Lev. 16:12), by this causing a cloud of incense to cover the mercy seat, which was upon the testimony “that he died not”; he also sprinkled of the blood upon the mercy seat eastward and before the mercy seat *seven times* (v. 14). Seven signifies completeness. In this there was a figure of the completeness of the true sacrifice by which

the antitypical mercy seat was sprinkled, a sprinkling of blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Heb. 12:24). The cloud of incense represented prayer, and formed a covering between the high priest and the cherubim, "that he die not."

All this clearly teaches that however necessary the blood of the sacrifice is, it will not save of itself; it is of God's mercy, and therefore the cloud of incense, or prayer, seeking for mercy at the mercy seat, was the necessary accompaniment to the sacrifice. It was in this that God was well pleased.

In all those things we see the Christ. He was the victim on the altar, himself the altar, the blood his own, his state of prayer the cloud of incense; the seven times sprinkling, the pouring out of his soul unto death. And in this manner he became the mercy seat for our sins. As the incense arose to heaven so the Lord has been exalted to the Father's right hand, and is now in the cherubic state.

The veil that divided between the Holy and the Most Holy had also cherubim wrought into it. Paul states that it represented the flesh of Christ (Heb. 10:20). While the Lord Jesus is the Christ pre-eminently, all in him are of the one body, termed by Paul — Christ (1 Cor. 10:16; 12:12). Jesus their head has passed through the veil into the Most Holy; yet while they are in the Holy, the veil of the flesh stands between them and the Most Holy. They are partakers of the veil, and of the cherubim inwrought in it. Those cherubim in the veil of the tabernacle must have represented something inwrought in the Christ in the days of his flesh. Zechariah declares: "Behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch; for behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes; behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith Yahweh of hosts" (Zech. 3:8-10). Those who have passed into the Most Holy are seen by John in vision; they have the Father's name written in their foreheads (Rev. 14:1). Of such material were the cherubim which were inwrought in the flesh of Christ, so that he was the Word made flesh. The Lord Jesus is the first, the seed in which is the nucleus of the whole tree; and so in him, by the spirit of the Father, was dwelling the fulness of divinity. In the days of his flesh, he was the antitype of the cherubim *wrought in* the veil, but now he is the antitype of the cherubim *above* the mercy seat; and this is to be yet further enlarged in him and his brethren when they also shall have all passed through the veil. Just now he is the place where Yahweh meets with His holy ones to commune with them.

Do we estimate this high privilege aright, and come to commune with the Father in spirit, and in truth?

In considering the cherubim, we must bear in mind that they spring from, or grow out of, the mercy seat and also that they are based upon it. It is from its gold that they are formed. In speaking of Christ, Paul says that God hath set him forth to be a mercy seat (rendered "propitiation": Rom. 3:25). John also states that He is the propitiation (that is, mercy seat: 1 Jhn. 2:2; 4:10) for our sins. The

anointed Jesus is, without doubt the true mercy seat, prefigured by the one which the Lord commanded Moses to make, which covered the ark, and upon which stood the cherubim. Such being the case, the ark containing the testimony must represent that community covered by Christ, and in whom the truth or testimony is laid up as a witness. In the divine parable the figure of the tabernacle cherubim portrays the divine manifestation with His protecting wings spread over us, and the faces of His mercy shining upon us.

In the prayer with which Aaron was commanded to bless Israel, the following words occur: "Yahweh make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee" (Num. 6:23-26). And again the words of the Spirit, as put in the mouth of Israel in Psalm 80:1,3 "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth." Also: "Turn us again, O God, and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." But when Yahweh was angry with His people, He said: "I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity" (Jer. 18:17). It follows from this, that the face of Yahweh being towards any one, was a sign of favour. Consequently, the faces of the cherubim looking to the mercy seat indicated that God's mercy was there, and only there, as in the case of Jesus, according to the word of Peter: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The cherubim were made of gold, and gold in the pattern-system of things belonged to the Holy and Most Holy. We would therefore, look upon it as representing an approved faith, and the end of such faith, which is the divine nature. We know that the Lord Jesus is now in that nature, but he has not lost his humanity. As a true high priest he has a fellow feeling with us in our infirmity. In him, the Spirit and human nature are united in immortality, and it is from between them, and from above the mercy seat, that the Father communes with His sons.

In Solomon's Temple —1 Kings 6:23-35

In the sojournings of Israel the tabernacle resembled the state of the saints in probation. In the tabernacle, the area of divine favour is limited; His faces were only shining on, and His wings covering, the mercy seat. This sign is continued when the kingdom was established, along with another aspect of the cherubim. We read that Solomon, by the priests, brought in the ark of the covenant of Yahweh unto His place, into the oracle of the house, to the Most Holy under the wings of the cherubim. Those cherubim which Solomon made filled the Most Holy, their wings meeting together in the centre, and touching the wall on each side; their faces looking out to the Holy. In this is seen an extension of the blessing and favour of God. Their faces are looking outward, and therefore eastward, to the blessing of Israel, and the nations.

The Living Creatures of Ezekiel and John — Ezek. 1, Rev. 4

To Ezekiel the heavens were opened, and he had visions of Elohim. He says, "I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the secret place, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself ... also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man and every one had four faces, and every one had four wings ... they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side, and they four had the face of an ox, on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle." From what follows, it is evident that it is a multitude, or host, which is thus symbolised. He says: "When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host." After further describing their appearance, he says, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh." The faces seen by Ezekiel are the same as those of the redeemed in the Apocalypse, but those in Ezekiel have only four wings, whilst those of the Apocalypse have six. The seraphim, or burning ones, of Isaiah 6, have also six wings. They are remarkable symbols of divine manifestation, and of a perfected relation composed of the Lord Jesus and the saints glorified together as a habitation of the Father in Spirit.

Four Wings and Six Wings

Why, then, are they seen in one instance with four wings, and in another with six? There must be a reason for the distinction, and we apprehend that it is in relation to the work before them. When the divine manifestation is limited to the nation of Israel, the wings are four, as the host consisted of four camps or armies, and it seems a clear inference that the insignia of each camp was one of those faces. It is evident the lion was that of Judah; Reuben's is of the man, Ephraim's the ox, and Dan's the eagle. Ezekiel's visions of Elohim are entirely in relation to the nation of Israel. He sees them in connection with the glory departing. He has a vision of them again when the glory returns, and the earth shines with His glory (Ezek. 11:23; 43:2), but he gives no description of them further than saying that it was according to the appearance of the vision that he saw when he came to the prophecy of the destruction of the city. The living ones in the Apocalypse have a work of judgment to perform on the nations, symbolised by: "Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices" (Rev. 4). The title Isaiah gives them (Ch. 6) — "seraphim" or "burning ones" — indicates judgment; but there he only shows the result of the judgment in the whole earth as being full of God's glory.

But, in speaking of the wings, he says: "With twain he covered his face." That would indicate Yahweh's displeasure. "With twain he covered his feet," would indicate that there was no message of peace. "With twain he did fly," would point to the destruction of the enemy, as in Psalm 18 we read, "He rode

upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings and discomfited them". The six wings then seem to indicate an extension of the field of operation. In divine manifestation, wings symbolise wide or out-spreading power. For example: "Ho, to the land shadowing with wings" (Isa. 18). The faces are only four, the same four which bore a relation to the nation of Israel, so that although there is an increase or extension of the power, as shown by the wings, the faces show the power to be that of the throne of Israel. The six wings represent the power of that throne, exercised over the Gentiles, so that "The Kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ."

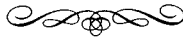
In those four living ones, or the cherubim, we have the symbol of that glorious and powerful community, styled the One New Man, which God in His love and mercy has formed for Himself, that they should be His faces, through which He may shine upon the renovated earth. The 'four beasts' of Rev. 4 represent the saints in the hour of judgment, in their political and military aspect; while the twenty-four elders represent them in a priestly aspect. Accordingly, as the four 'beasts', they are seen in the midst of the throne, and also round about the throne. The midst of throne is the origin and seat of power. So it is appropriate that the manifestation of God's power should be seen in the midst of the throne, as well as surrounding it. But as the twenty-four elders, they only appear round about the throne, for their function as priests is between the people and the throne. John sees the throne set in heaven, or the ruling of all things set in this earth; for John sees nothing that is away from the earth. All that he saw represented things to come to pass hereafter upon the earth, all bearing a relation to God's purpose of filling it with His glory. When that throne is set in the heaven, the saints of all previous ages, who have been found worthy, shall have come in fact to that to which they stood related in the past by faith.

Among the many things to which they will have come, we shall only notice that they come to "the spirits of just men, made perfect." We read of one who was styled "the Just One." Have we ever considered the greatness of that title? We have been justified in him in putting him on by faith and baptism, but we are to walk as he walked. Thus we must be just, if we are to be among the spirits of just men made perfect. How would unjust saints judge the world? The four living ones, or cherubim, will be the means of filling Zion with judgment, and righteousness, equity and truth will go along with their administration, so that they shall be an habitation of justice, a mountain of holiness, a fountain of life.

— C.S.

The Significance of the Name

“Over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat: of which we cannot now speak particularly” (Heb. 9:5).



THE words of Paul above are intriguing. They indicate that the apostle had given deep thought to the subject of the cherubim, and would have delighted to have expounded upon it at length, if the time had permitted.

What would he have written if he had done so? It would be interesting to know, but in the absence of such information, the secret remains there for us to unlock. Fortunately, further hints have been supplied, particularly in the book of Revelation, that can lead to the unravelling of the wonderful symbology, and with these and other clues, an explanation is possible, and one too, that is of the greatest significance.

What Does “Cherubim” Signify?

We come upon two words in the Bible: Cherub (Psalm 18:10), and Cherubim (Gen. 3:24). The former is in the singular number; the latter in the plural. Cherub refers to one, and Cherubim refers to many. The usage of the term throughout the Bible shows that it is not necessarily limited to symbolic images as in the Tabernacle and Temple, but can also relate to living personalities. The King of Tyre is described as “the anointed cherub that covereth” (Ezek. 28:14), whilst, in Eden, the angelic guardians of the tree of life are said to be cherubim.

What is the meaning of the term? In *Phanerosis*, Bro. Thomas suggests the following:

“We believe that the word is derived from the root *rachav*, ‘to ride’ whether on an animal or in a vehicle. By transposing the first two letters and haematively inserting *wav* before the last, we have ‘cherub’ or that which is ridden — in the plural, ‘cherubim.’ This convertibility of the verb *rachav* into the noun ‘cherub’ is illustrated in Psalm 18:10.”

This suggestion has considerable merit, and has been endorsed by other Hebraists. It seems appropriate to the usage of cherubim throughout the Scriptures, for they are often identified with a vehicle. For example, 1 Chronicles 28:18 speaks of “the chariot of the cherubim.” Here the cherubim are identified

with “that which is ridden.” Consider also the language of Psalm 18:6-10 —

*“In my distress I called upon Yahweh,
And cried unto my God;
He heard my voice out of His temple,
And my cry came before Him, even into His ears,
Then the earth shook and trembled;
The foundations also of the hills moved
And were shaken, because He was wroth.
There went up a smoke out of His nostrils,
And fire out of His mouth devoured;
Coals were kindled by it.
He bowed the heavens also, and came down;
And darkness was under His feet.
And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly;
Yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind.”*

In the picture presented above, all the forces of nature are represented as obeying Yahweh. His servant appealed to Him in distress (v. 6), and He hastened to his help. The manifestation of power resulted in tremendous upheavals of nature which were directed particularly against the enemy. A tremendous storm broke forth in all its shattering power; the hurricane roared; the sea was lashed into a fury by the violence of the wind; an earthquake rent the habitations of man; fear and terror swept throughout the land. But Yahweh’s servant was delivered, for there, in the very heart of the storm, was the angelic cherub directing the issues for his benefit. This Cherub was a “ministering spirit, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). He was an angel, “mighty in strength, a doer of God’s commandments, a reckoner to the voice of His word” (Psa. 103:20). He obeyed the directions of Yahweh as do the horses of the one who rides in the chariot.

Yahweh’s Cherubic-Chariot

Yahweh is represented in Psalm 99:1 as inhabiting His Cherubic-chariot —

*“Yahweh reigneth;
Let the people tremble:
He sitteth between the cherubim;
Let the earth be moved.”*

Expressions such as these, support the suggestion that the word cherub implies something “that is ridden.”

As the cherubim relate to the saints, many places in the Scriptures speak of the glorified saints as chariots in whom Yahweh will ride to victory. These references are often accompanied by expressions that are very similar to those found in Psalm 18. Thus Isaiah 66:15 declares: “For, behold, Yahweh will come with

fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire.”

Yahweh will be manifested in His glorified saints, who will execute the judgments written (Psa. 149), and will destroy the forces of darkness and of evil. They are described by Habakkuk as His “horses and chariots of salvation” (Hab. 3:8). Zechariah saw them as four chariots that proceeded forth from between two mountains of brass, to conquer mankind and quieten God’s spirit in the earth. He was told (Zech. 6:5) that they represented “the four spirits of the (political) heavens, which go forth from standing before the Ruler of all the earth.” The two mountains of brass represent the two great blocks of nations in the kingdom of men at the time of the end. They are “brass”, for brass in the image of Daniel 2, represented the power of Grecia; whilst in Daniel 11:40-45 the “time of the end” manifestation of the kingdom of men, sets them forth under two divisions of what was once the universal power of Greece: the Kings of the North and of the South (cp. Dan. 11:2-3). In the vision of Zechariah, the four



The angelic guidance of the ministering power of Yahweh is depicted as the thundering chariot across the heavens — the cherubim rider of the divine vehicle.

chariots bring all mankind into compliance with the divine will, thus quietening God's spirit, and bringing peace on earth.

Psalm 68, which is both Messianic and Millennial in character, also speaks of the future chariots of Yahweh. Verse 17 declares (using the *Companion Bible* rendition): "The chariots of Elohim are twenty thousand, thousands of angels. Yahweh among them, hath come from Sinai into His Sanctuary." Here the saints are described as chariots in which Yahweh rides; and they are seen emerging from the site of the Judgment Seat (Sinai), and proceeding north in victory and power, to finally enter the Sanctuary in glory.

Yahweh will not only be the invisible Rider of these chariots in the future, but He has already been so in the past. The saints must be vehicles of the divine will now, if they hope to be so in the future. The principle is revealed in the language of the Old Testament in relation to certain remarkable incidents. When Elijah was separated from Elisha, he was taken away by "a chariot of fire and horses of fire." This was an Apocalypse of angelic glory, and Elisha identified Elijah with it. He cried: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" (2 Kings 2:12). Elijah was the typical chariot and Yahweh T'zvaoth comprised the horsemen. The prophet had been guided and driven by Yahweh, and thus had comprised His cherubic-chariot in the midst of Israel.

A similar theophany was later revealed to the servant of Elisha. Both he and the prophet were in the city of Dothan, when the king of Syria despatched an army to take them. The presence of the large force of hostile soldiers disturbed the servant. He cried to Elisha: "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Elisha's answer was illuminating. "Fear not," he replied. "for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." This answer must have been incomprehensible to the servant until God opened his eyes, and then he saw that the mountain "was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." They were the angels of Yahweh, encamping around those who fear Him (Psalm 34:7). Their appearance as chariots and horses of fire was merely to illustrate the belligerent and powerful nature of their mission. Yahweh would ride those chariots to victory against the enemies of Elisha.

And for this same reason, Elisha, in type, enacted "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof" (2 Kings 13:14). He was guided and directed by Yahweh through His spirit, and his very presence in Israel was a defence of the nation, as Joash acknowledged.

We Need To Become Vehicles Of The Divine Will

Chariots and horses are completely subject to the will of the driver. They are guided according to the way he desires to go. We, likewise, must become pliable to the divine will. A person becomes spirit-guided when the Word takes possession of his heart, and is reflected in his way of life. He is then "led of the Spirit"

Word (Gal. 5:18; John 6:63), as the horse is turned by the bit and bridle. God is revealed in him, as He takes possession of his thoughts, actions, character, life. The divine characteristics that are so beautifully revealed in the Son of God become built into the lives of such as allow God to rule them. Thus a person shows by word and action that he has "been with Jesus and has learned of him."

Such a person becomes changed and directed by the influence of God on his life.

That change is as clearly discernable as the watchman was able to look down from his tower, and tell by the manner of approach of the chariot that he saw coming in the distance, that Jehu was driving. His style was unmistakable (2 Kings 9:20). The world looks upon the change that takes place in a person's life when the Word takes possession of him, and unconsciously recognises that he is being driven by the Spirit-Word.

The Spirit-Word demands the manifestation of qualities that are not natural to us. It requires in young people a maturity that is quite unlike the irresponsibility and stupidity of youth that is characteristic of today; and it requires in elders an understanding of their responsibilities, and of the Word, that will fit them to act as capable shepherds of the flock.

Such must be "broken in" to the Word, as a horse needs to be "broken in" to the requirements of its driver.

Another Definition Of Cherub

Another definition of the word cherub represents it to mean: "Resembling the Majesty." This definition takes the word as it stands, and divides it into its two stems: *kay* and *rab*. *Kay* signifies "resemblance" and *Rab* means "majesty."

Thus Cherub is said to mean: "Resembling the Majesty."

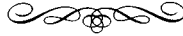
Upon reflection, it will be seen to that this is similar to Brother Thomas's definition. We can only resemble the Majesty of the divine character if we allow Him to guide our lives through His word. This definition thus describes God's purpose in the cherubim; that of Dr. Thomas, how it will be brought about. So Paul wrote: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, but we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (1 Cor. 4:6-7).

When God is truly manifested in these "earthen vessels," they become moulded to His shape and reflect to His honour. They become as His chariots in whom He rides, of His people who reveal His majesty. That is the status to which we are called, and as such we typically become cherubim destined unto glory.

— H.P.M.

Immortal Priests In Eden

“He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Gen. 3:24).



THE cherubim are first introduced to our notice in Genesis after sin had been revealed, and death had been pronounced upon the Adamic race. They appear as shadowy, mysterious, figures, and their identity and function have been the subject of much conjecture.

They find their place in a chapter of Scripture that at first sight seems most unsatisfactory. The sequence of Genesis 3 seems completely disjointed. It records in order the punishment of death placed on Adam (v. 19), the naming of Eve (v. 20), the divine clothing of the human pair (v. 21), their ejection from the garden (v. 23), and finally the setting up of the cherubim.

This sequence seems so unnatural (why should Adam interrupt the divine statement to name Eve immediately following the momentous pronouncement of death on him?) that higher critics have suggested that the text is faulty. Moffat, in his translation, suggests that some verses indicate editorial additions to the text. Driver, in the *Critical Commentary* states: “The naming of the woman can hardly have come in between the sentence and its execution.” And even we, who accept the Bible as inspired and infallible, may well wonder at the remarkable sequence. Is there any connection between these incidents, or are they just thrown together haphazardly to show what happened?

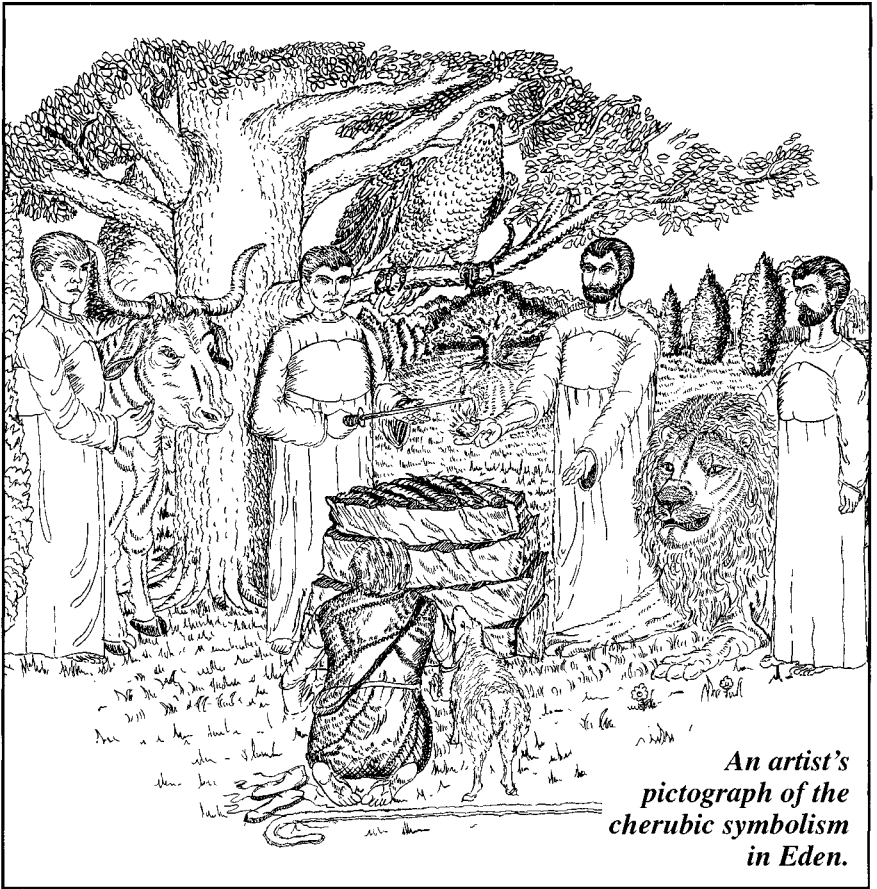
A little research will reveal a wonderful link between the verses, and a natural sequence. It will show that in these incidents there is not only an account of what literally happened, but some wonderful prophetic types of what is yet to occur.

And the whole is welded into a fitting background upon which to introduce the cherubim.

Adam Showed Faith In The Promise

Take, for example, the naming of Eve, and the divine clothing subsequently provided. This reveals Adam’s faith in the promise of God, and the means whereby it will be attained.

God had pronounced sentence on Adam: “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” It proclaimed the inevitability of death, the hopelessness of man because of sin. It is followed by the statement that Adam “called his wife’s



“And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim”. This illustration is an artist’s pictograph, portraying the elements of the cherubim on the background of the Edenic circumstances. Four angels are pictured to represent the four-fold aspect of the cherubim — each one features the cherubic principles. On the left is an ox, featuring the laboring work of the cherubim; above the second figure is the eagle, representing the Spirit; the third is the man; whilst the fourth figure is associated with the lion. Again, the eagle above illustrates the overriding element of Spirit-Word; the ox to the left indicates the West, whilst the lion to the right illustrates the East, with the man in the centre. The two cherubim in the centre are holding a sword and coal, to illustrate the “flaming sword” — a combination of sword and fire. Behind the figures in the centre is the Tree of Life at the end of the path. The altar in front represents the principle of Deity in sacrificial manifestation. Abel is clothed in the animal skin of divine appointments, with the lamb alongside as the atoning factor in redemption. Thus each figure in this pictograph has been included to emphasise the important work of the Cherubim, in the salvation of mankind.

name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.” The word *Eve* is a translation of the Hebrew *chava* (Greek *zoe*), and signifies life, and the life of this verse is in direct contrast to the death of the previous verse.

Thus after receiving a sentence that showed the inevitability of death, Adam looked to his wife and saw the hope of life. How was this?

Because of the promise: “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head” (Gen. 3:15). Adam understood that promise. He saw in it the hope of a Redeemer who would lead mankind out of death. He put his confidence in this, and the naming of his wife was an expression of his faith.

Divine Clothing Provided

But what is the way of life? This was revealed to Adam in the natural sequence of the narrative. The angel saw the nakedness of Adam and Eve and slew a lamb in order that they might be clothed with the coats of skin it was able to provide. This taught the principle of sacrifice. It revealed that the way of life is through death — the death of flesh, for “without the shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). The covering provided is a contrast to Genesis 3:7, which records how the naked-conscious couple endeavoured to provide coverings for themselves by sewing fig leaves together. This man-made device for sin was a hiding of iniquity (see Job 31:33), instead of a confessing of it to God that He might in mercy cover it. On the other hand, the divine slaying of the lamb was a typical foreshadowing of the “lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

It taught Adam and Eve, and it teaches all who read the record with understanding, that they must seek a divine covering, and that it is the prerogative of God alone to forgive sins. That is stressed time and again in Scripture. It was dramatically set forth on the day of Atonement (of Coverings, as *atonement* means). It was shown in the blood shed in sacrifice, for God declared: “The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement (Heb. *kaphar* — covering) for your souls; it is the blood that maketh an atonement (covering) for the soul” (Lev. 17:11).

It was in recognition of this, that Isaiah could joyfully sing:

“I will greatly rejoice in Yahweh, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness” (Isa. 61:10).

In the drama of Eden, Adam and Eve learned the same lesson that was impressed upon David in regard to his sin involving Bathsheba; namely, that sins must be opened up and acknowledged in order that they might be covered. Adam tried to hide his sin by the fig-leaf device he invented; David tried to hide his by murder, deception and lies. Both learned that there must be a ruthless confession of sin, a genuine manifestation of humility, a tearful request for forgiveness, before Yahweh would cover them from sight. And He alone is capable of providing a satisfactory covering.

But with confession and forgiveness, David experienced a joy that contrasted

with his previous misery when he tried to deceive himself and others regarding his iniquity. Paul wrote: "David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Rom. 4:6,7).

The true covering, of course, is Christ (Gal. 3:27). He warned those in Sardis who had not defiled their garments to be sure and keep them clean, in order that they might walk with him in white (Rev. 3:4). He warns those who would be living at the time of the end: "Behold, I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15). Such warnings reveal that to become covered by Christ is a process which commences at baptism but is not completed until spirit-nature is bestowed at his coming. "They shall be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:8).

Access To The Tree Of Life Closed

Having demonstrated to Adam the divine provision for the covering of sins, it was next revealed that apart from this there was no hope of redemption. There, in Eden, in the sight of Adam and Eve stood the Tree of Life. The partaking of that tree would confer immortality, and thus defeat the sentence of death that had been imposed upon Adam. Adam and Eve were therefore expelled from the Garden, and cherubim were stationed at its entrance to "keep the way of the Tree of Life."

Some suggest that a continuous eating of the fruit was required to gain immortality. However the angel claimed that only one eating was required: "Lest he put forth his hand, and eat..." One eating alone was all that was necessary, and as it was not good for man to be granted immortality in view of his unatoned-for sinful state, so Adam was driven from the Garden.

He was driven therefrom that he might till the ground for the rest of his days. The fruit of the soil would provide him with the means of temporary life. As a tiller of the soil, he would be utterly dependent upon the mercy and goodness of God. Thus he was sent forth to perform work that required faith — faith in the goodness of God to provide the means of life.

There is, therefore, a beautiful and significant harmony in the verses of Genesis 3. They reveal in sequence: (1) The sentence of death (v. 19); (2) Adam's faith in the promise of life (v. 20); (3) The means whereby this might be attained (v. 21); (4) The need of faith in the affairs of life (vv. 22-23).

And now, at the entrance of the Garden, there stood the cherubim to keep guard over the way of the Tree of Life.

The Duties Of The Cherubim

These cherubim were angelic beings. Brother Thomas renders the phrase: "cherubim, and a flaming sword," and directs attention to Psalm 104:4, "Who maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire."

The flaming sword was wielded to "keep" the way of the Tree of Life. The

word can signify both to guard and to preserve. The cherubim “guarded” it because so long as they remained in the way, Adam and Eve could not touch it. But they also “kept” or “preserved” it, inasmuch as they functioned as priests receiving the sacrifices of the worshippers. Therefore their presence was a pictorial presentation of the only means of access to life — and that was by means of sacrifice. The flaming sword was for that purpose: the sword to slay and the flame to consume the offerings brought to that place.*

This was probably the reason why Cain realised that his offering had been rejected. The flaming sword was extended to Abel’s offering, but not to Cain’s firstfruits of the ground. And because he refused to humble himself before God, and avail himself of the sin offering that crouched at the door (Gen. 4:7), he was excommunicated, banished to the “land of Nod”, the land of *exile*. He recognised the significance of this, for he declared: “From Thy face (Heb. “faces” — the faces of the cherubim) shall I be hid...” (Gen. 4:14).

The faces of the cherubim at the east of the Garden reflected the glory of the Father, as ultimately will also the faces of the multitudinous Christ: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

The cherubim in Eden, as God’s Faces, thus spake of the divine presence in the earth. As He later dwelt between the cherubim in the Tabernacle (Psa. 80:1), so He did in the cherubim in Eden.

Genesis states that the cherubim were “placed” at the east of the Garden. The word in Hebrew is *shakan* and signifies to dwell. The oft-used phrase, *shekinah* glory is derived from this word, and signifies to “have habitation,” to “reside permanently,” and thus implies a dwelling place. The statement in Genesis has been rendered: “...at the east of the Garden of Eden, He caused to dwell in a tabernacle the cherubim...”

The Cherubim Foreshadowed The Future

Thus tabernacle, cherubim, altar, and organised worship were set up in Eden. The cherubim comprised immortal priests to whom were brought the offerings of the people. This foreshadowed that which is to come. In vision John saw a new race of cherubim, described also as the New Jerusalem, the Lamb’s wife, and declared concerning this divine polity in the earth: “I saw no temple (Most Holy) therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple (Most Holy) of it” (Rev. 21:22).

The title, *Lord God Almighty*, speaks of Deity manifested in a multitude, of Yahweh dwelling in His saints. In Revelation 5 they are identified with the cherubim, as we shall see. And, as the Lamb comprises the antitypical mercy seat, here, in the New Jerusalem, are cherubim, mercy seat, and indwelling divine glory.

* The sword in Eden represents the spirit in belligerent manifestation against sin. The cherubim was the medium by which Yahweh might be approached by those seeking for His favor.

This new race of cherubim will act as immortal priests (Rev. 5:9-10), so that to it will be brought the glory and honour of the nations (Rev. 21:26), and from it shall be excluded all things that defile.

In his great Temple prophecy, Ezekiel makes reference to immortal priests who shall accept and supervise the offerings of the people. They comprise the cherubim of the Age to come. They will dwell in the Tabernacle that God will set up there, to receive the offerings of mortals, who will be privileged to witness the Kingdom.

Thus there will be a re-enactment of Genesis 3:24 but with Christ and the immortal saints handling the offerings.

The cherubim in Eden were stationed east, towards the sun's rising. This was figurative of the purpose of God. The dawn is emblematic of the coming day of Yahweh, when His rule will replace that of the flesh. The Tabernacle and Temple also faced east, so that, throughout the ages, God has caused men, in their religious devotions, to mentally visualise the coming "morning without clouds" (2 Sam. 23:4), when the "Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in his beams" (Mal. 4:2). Today we still look figuratively "towards the sun's rising" to the east, where, in the return of the Jews and other significant events in Abraham's land (cp. Rev. 16:12), we witness signs of the dawning of Yahweh's day when His name will at last be honoured by flesh.

The cherubim in Eden, standing east of the garden, and presiding over the way to the Tree of Life, exhibited the mercy and redemption of God. As Abel offered "the firstling of his flock" in sacrifice, and offered it through these immortal priests, he would see the way leading to the Tree of Life. The principles of SACRIFICE, GOD MANIFESTATION, ETERNAL LIFE were thus revealed, and each one as the corollary of the other. By sacrifice of the flesh, God can be manifest in our lives, and when that has been adequately accomplished to meet Christ's approval, we shall be ultimately granted the right to eat of the Tree of Life.

"To him that overcometh," declared Christ, "will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

The Way To The Tree

"The way to the tree of life" is a phrase used in a most significant manner throughout Scripture. Frequently the Truth is described in the Bible by the two meaningful words: "the way." Consider the following:

"All flesh had corrupted HIS WAY upon the earth" (Gen. 6:12). "Shew me now THY WAY, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight" (Exod. 33:13). "Thou wilt shew me the PATH OF LIFE" (Psa. 16:11). "Her (wisdom's) ways are WAYS OF PLEASANTNESS, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her" (Prov. 3:13-18).

The reference from Genesis 6 above, declares that the way to the Tree of Life was corrupted by flesh; it was restored in all its beauty by Christ. The prophet foresaw this in a vision: "He shall cry, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare

THE WAY, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of My people" (Isa. 57:14). "Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps, set thine heart toward the high-way, EVEN THE WAY WHICH THOU WENTEST: turn again, O virgin of Israel" (Jer. 31:21).

And Christ declared: "I am THE WAY, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

The Apostles spoke of the Truth as "the way": "Saul desired letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any OF THE WAY (mg.), he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:2). "They spake evil of THAT WAY before the multitude" (ch. 19:9). "There arose no small stir about THAT WAY" (v. 23). "I persecuted THIS WAY unto the death" (ch. 22:4). "Felix had more perfect knowledge of THAT WAY" (ch. 24:22).

This seems to be the point of Christ's well-known words: "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is *the way* that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow *the way*, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Isaiah, in his prophetic vision, heard a voice saying: "This is THE WAY, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:21).

This way is severally described as "the way of life," the "way of truth," the "way of righteousness," the "way of God," the "way of faith," and so on. The use of this expression shows that the Truth is a way of life, and not merely a set of doctrines to be accepted in a detached manner with no impact on our manner of living.

This way is preserved, or kept open, by sacrifice, as the incidents in Eden demonstrated. Apart from sacrifice, the way is barred, as Cain discovered to his loss. It is a way that will lead to the glories of the Most Holy. Thus the Apostle wrote:

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a NEW AND LIVING WAY, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh..." (Heb. 10:19-20).

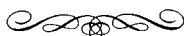
Christ has opened the way leading unto the Tree of Life. As the cherubim overshadowed the way in the Garden, so Christ overshadows our way now. We are walking that way; a way that is narrow and in which we must take care. The tendency of the flesh, down through the centuries, has been to corrupt that way, for it is continually opposed to the principles of "the way" of life. The Truth, as the "way to the Tree of Life" presents in sequence the principles of sacrifice, God manifestation and eternal life.

Let us walk along that narrow way that leads to life, in confident assurance that the cherubim still overshadow it (Heb. 1:14), as ministering spirits sent to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation. If our walk ends in victory over the flesh we shall be ultimately granted to eat of the Tree of Life and live for ever (Rev. 2:7).

— H.P.M.

Symbols In The Tabernacle

“Let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8).



TWO words — *God manifestation* — completely summarise the whole purpose of Yahweh, and the significance of the cherubim. All the acts of creation, both physical and spiritual, were designed to that end. Israel arrived at nationhood specifically to demonstrate that principle. Yahweh told Moses: “They shall know that I am Yahweh their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them” (Exod. 29:46).

Why God Redeemed Israel

The purpose of His call was that He might dwell in their midst. He commanded them to make Him a Sanctuary for that very reason, and the Tabernacle in the midst of Israel was a parable of what God expected of the people. He sought to “dwell in their hearts”, as the Tabernacle was placed in their midst. It was a constant enunciation of the divine purpose with them.

But at the end of the nation’s sad history, and in the shadow of impending captivity, God identified the reason for Israel’s failure: “I have caused to cleave unto Me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith Yahweh; that they might be unto Me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory; but they would not hear” (Jer. 13:11).

“They would not hear!” That was the divine lament. It was the root cause of Israel’s failure, and the reason why the nation was rejected (Hos. 4:6). Like the sons of Eli, Israel “knew not Yahweh” (1 Sam. 2:12), and were driven from the divine presence. Christ emphasised the importance of this knowledge when he declared in his prayer: “This is (the) life eternal that they might KNOW Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

What It Means To “Know” God

What sort of “knowledge” is this which grants eternal life? Obviously it is saving truth, but certainly it is more than mere academic knowledge. The sons of Eli, as priests, knew all about God and His law in an academic sense, and yet they “knew not Yahweh.” They knew that God existed, that He has a purpose



*Three stages in the development of divine manifestation in worship.
The figures of the cherubim are featured throughout..*

with Israel, that the law is divine, and certain sacrifices had to be offered for specific reasons.

Yet they “knew not Yahweh.”

What did they lack?

For all their knowledge, these priests lacked a living, active belief or faith in the things relating to Yahweh working in them to reproduce the divine characteristics. And in the absence of this, mere academic knowledge is worse than useless, for it only brings one under responsibility to the just judgment of God.

It is of the greatest significance, that the same word as is used for a knowledge that will bring eternal life is also used in the Bible for conception of seed. We read: “Adam *knew* Eve his wife; and she conceived” (Gen. 4:1). “This is life eternal to *know* Thee...” (John 17:3). In both cases the word “knew” signifies a union between two persons that bears fruit in a new life. The knowledge to which Christ made reference is the living, active seed of God in one that will bring forth fruit to His glory.

That was the point of the Lord’s comment to Nicodemus: “Unless a man be born from above, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:3 mg.). Peter adds: “Being begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23).

From this we learn that truth is valueless unless it is transmitted into action; unless it constitutes a living seed manifesting growth in a new life, revealing a family likeness to Yahweh.

God dwelling in us by His Word to that end, is the principle set forth in the theme of the cherubim.

The Three Stages Towards God Manifestation

As there were three steps in man’s decline when sin first made its appearance, so there are three stages towards the complete manifestation of God in our lives. They are mental, moral and physical stages. Eve first hearkened to the voice of the serpent and became mentally defiled; she put into practice what she had heard and became morally defiled; the sentence of death was imposed upon the human race in consequence, and brought about physical defilement.

It is all reversed in Christ. He told his disciples: “Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3). That word creates a conscience in those who hear it. They are enabled to determine right from wrong as set forth by God, and are mentally cleansed. When they put into practice, the things they have learned, they have drawn a stage nearer final glorification, and are morally cleansed. The final stage in the process is the physical cleansing at Christ’s return, when “this mortal shall put on immortality.” Saints will then stand forth as sons of God in very fact, being mentally, morally and physically regenerated.

Three stages are also found in the familiar reference of Acts 15:14, “God is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name!”

The first is the call of Truth: “God is inviting.”

The second is the demand of the call — separation: “out of the nations.”

The third is the purpose of the call: “a people for His name.”

Thus a CALL, a SEPARATION, a DEDICATION.

The purpose for this three-stage process is in the glorification of Yahweh in the midst of darkness: “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:15,16). “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar (or purchased) people; that ye should shew forth the praises (or virtues; mg) of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

Revealing Light In Darkness

How is practical expression given to this? Again Peter replies: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever” (1 Pet. 4:11).

Here is light shining in a dark place; here are saints glorifying God in word and deed; here is Yahweh manifested through His sons. And the medium of manifestation is the Word, which constitutes His seed in those who comprise the Bride (John 17:17; Col. 3:9-10).

All this is relevant to the theme of the cherubim, which word, we have seen, is susceptible of two definitions: (1) That which is ridden; and (2) That which resembles the majesty.

By His Word Yahweh rides and drives those amenable thereto, as a charioteer does his vehicle; through His Word we are led to build into our lives those divine characteristics revealed in the Son, and thus come to “resemble the majesty.” For Christ was and is a cherub. He was dominated and guided by his Father, and resembles the divine majesty. Paul wrote: “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). And Christ’s true followers are cherubim, for of them we read: “God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this secret among the Gentiles; which is Christ IN you, the hope of glory.”

As Christ manifested the glory of the Father, so are we called upon (in lesser measure) to reveal the glory of Christ. He was able to say: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” Are we able to say, “In us you see Christ revealed”?

Divine Glory in the Most Holy

The symbology of the Tabernacle set forth the lesson of God manifestation. In three main stages this was revealed until, in the Most Holy, the shekinah glory of Yahweh shone forth in all its beauty (Psa. 80:1). These stages comprise Preparation (the outer court), Application (the holy place) and Glorification (the Most Holy). This constituted an exhortation in symbol reminding Israel of what they had been called, and to what they could attain.

The details of the furniture of the Most Holy are recorded in Exodus 25:10-22. First there was the Ark, a box some 3 ft. 9 in. long (1.15m), 2 ft. 3 in. deep (1m), and 2 ft. 3 in. wide (1m). It contained the two stone slabs with the ten commandments inscribed thereon. Thus it was called the Ark of the Covenant, for the ten commandments formed the basis of the Mosaic covenant.

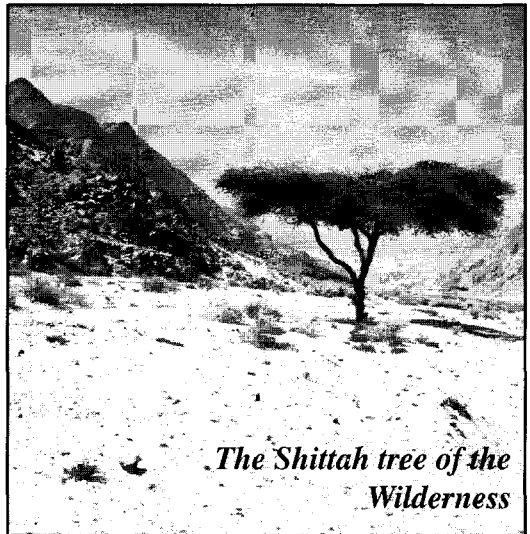
It was made of shittim wood, or acacia. This is a desert plant of rather unattractive and spindly appearance, and the Hebrew word has been identified with a root signifying “that which is despised.” This immediately directs attention to Isaiah 53: “He shall grow up before Him... as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men.”

But this wood of the Ark — figurative of human nature — was hidden from sight by a covering of gold. This precious metal, like God’s precious Son, had been taken “out of Egypt”, and now graced the most holy piece of furniture in the Tabernacle. Gold is the symbol of a *tried* faith, and not faith in the abstract (1 Pet. 1:7. Rev. 3:18). Gold was purified by being subjected to intense heat, in what is styled a “furnace of earth” (Psa. 12:6). It is said that during this process, the metal appears in a state of extreme agitation, but once all impurities have been withdrawn, this activity ceases.

What an appropriate symbol for the trial of faith! Whilst the “heat” and pressure of the difficult circumstances of life continue, we are found in a state of agitation, but when the process is completed in the development of a tried faith, the agitation will cease, and we shall shine forth as pure gold. So the Ark of shittim wood was covered with gold: that which is despised was hidden by the glory of a tried and perfected faith.

Staves were made for the Ark to convey it from place to place. They were never taken out, to impress the lesson that there was no permanent resting place for the Ark at that time, no temple in which it might remain forever. It was as “a stranger and a pilgrim in the earth.” So Moses was instructed: “The staves shall be in the rings of the Ark; they shall not be taken from it” (Exod. 25:15).

How like the Lord, who had nowhere to lay his head; how like the Truth that has been found first in one place and then in another; how like ourselves who have no per-



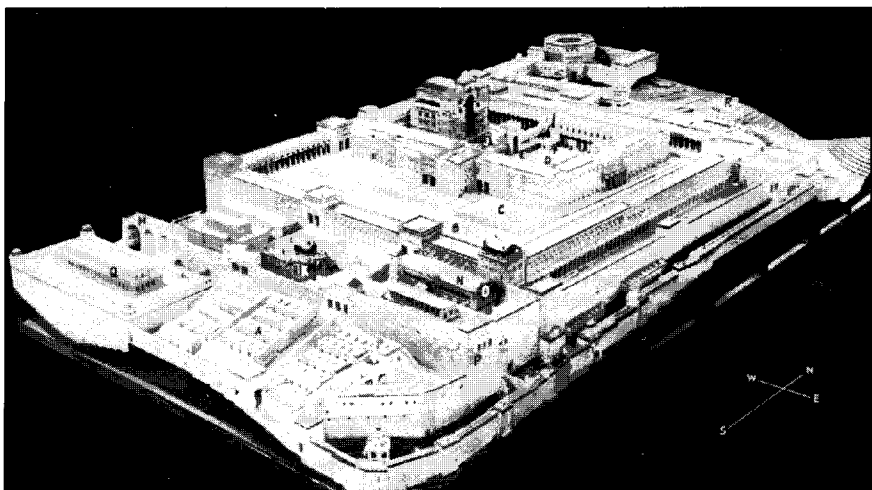
*The Shittah tree of the
Wilderness*

manent abiding place at the moment but seek one to come. It is a reminder to us that we are “strangers and pilgrims in the earth.” And though we might build ecclesial halls, and set up ecclesial systems with all the semblance of permanency, we need to bear in mind the lesson of the Ark with its staves resting in its sides, ready to be taken away from one place to another.

There was a crown of gold around the Ark (v. 11), the symbol of victory and of glory. And in it were placed the golden pot of manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.

In the *Law of Moses*, Bro. Roberts has beautifully shown the significance of these symbols. The golden pot of manna speaks of eternal life through faith. Christ declared that he would give those who overcome, the privilege to eat of the “hidden manna” (Rev. 2:17). Manna was gathered every day to sustain Israel in the wilderness. It had to be eaten the same day that it was gathered, for otherwise it corrupted and was spoiled. But nobody was allowed to eat the “hidden manna”. It was stored in the golden pot, placed in the Ark, and was miraculously preserved, thus speaking of eternal life. This will be given to those who overcome through faith, being found hidden in the Ark of Christ, being able to figuratively eat of the manna (John 6:35) and attain unto life eternal.

Aaron’s rod that budded speaks of the principle of divine selection and of its proof in resurrection. After the rebellion of Korah (Num. 16), Yahweh instructed that each tribe was to be represented by a rod, and that these twelve rods were to be laid up before the Ark in the Tabernacle of Witness. He would then reveal the man and the tribe divinely selected to minister before Him. Next morning it was



Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem. From a photograph of the model made by the late Sir Conrad Schick, a good idea can be gained of the Temple and its surroundings standing in the time of Solomon, until the fall of Jerusalem, 586 B.C. Approximately 36 acres of land is represented.

found that Aaron's rod had "budded, blossomed, and yielded almonds" (Num. 17:8). Aaron's rod, dead the night before, had sprung into life. It thus spake, not only of the principle of divine selection, but of resurrection. The almonds testified of this, for the almond tree is called by the Hebrews, the Awakening Tree, it being the first tree to awaken in spring. Aaron's rod, bringing forth fruit, symbolised not merely coming to life again, but the process by which a change of nature will be bestowed. It illustrated the principle set forth by Paul in 1 Cor. 15. Resurrection (a raising again), reasons Paul, is not completed until the full process has ended. A stalk might appear above the ground, but full resurrection demands the corn in the ear, without which the appearance of the stalk is merely abortive. Aaron's rod produced almonds, clearly demonstrating that he was appointed of God to come before Him. Our resurrection to eternal life will provide proof positive of our divine selection. We might claim the latter now on the basis of Acts 15:14, but we cannot demonstrate its proof by concrete evidence. We might point to the fruit of the Spirit-Word manifested in a change of outlook and manner of life. But this is not recognised by the world about us any more than the world recognised the true status of the Lord in the days of his earthly ministry. But when we have been clothed upon with immortality, who will be able to dispute that we have been divinely selected? That was the case with Christ. All disputation was set aside when he rose from the dead. Paul wrote: "He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power... by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:3-4). In Christ's case, the almond tree budded, blossomed and brought forth fruit. There was no disputing that he is the Son of God.

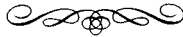
Finally the tables of the covenant were placed in the Ark. There were two of these, and five commandments were inscribed on each. On the first were all the commandments relating to God; on the second those relating to man. Among the first group was found the fifth commandment speaking of a person's attitude towards father and mother. This appropriately found its place on the first stone, because father stood in relation to the earthly family where God stands in relation to the divine family; and mother stood in relation to the family where the Covenant stands in relation to God's children.

Thus Christ divided the law into two commands: the first relating to God, the second to one's neighbour (Mark 12:29-31). These two commands answer to the two stones in the Ark of the covenant. Christ could thus say that the Law was summed up in the two principles (enunciated on the two stones): Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul and strength — and thy neighbour as thyself. These two principles must be in the heart of all covenant-members, as the two slabs of stone were in the Ark itself. Without these two principles our service to Yahweh is meaningless.

Thus, in order, the golden pot of manna spoke of the need for knowledge and faith; the rod that budded spoke of divine selection and of resurrection; the tables of the covenant spoke of the law of God as the rule of life. All were found in the Ark which was covered by the Mercy Seat and Cherubim, for they are the very principles by which these latter have been developed. — H.P.M.

As Symbols in the Temple

“And within the oracle he made two Cherubim of olive tree, each ten cubits high” (1 Kings 6:23).



THE Temple differed from the Tabernacle in several important aspects. In the former the Holy Place and the Most Holy were twice as large as those of the latter. And then, as completely distinct from the Tabernacle, there were constructed in the Most Holy of the Temple two large cherubim, some 15 feet (4.6m) high, with wings outstretched, under which was placed the Ark of the Covenant with its cherubim of gold (1 Kings 6:23-28).

Contrasts Between Tabernacle and Temple

The Bible narrative sets forth, in addition, the following contrasts:

* The large cherubim in the Temple were of olive trees (Trees of Oil) covered with gold; those over the Ark were all of gold fashioned as one with the Mercy Seat.

* The wings of the Temple cherubim were outstretched, and of such a size as to extend to the full length of the Most Holy; those over the Ark were enfolded.

* The staves of the Ark in the Temple were drawn out in such a way as to be seen in the Holy Place by the ministering priests (1 Kings 8:8); in the Tabernacle they were retained in the sides of the Ark.

* The golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded were missing from the Ark when it was placed in the Temple. It was found to contain only the "two tables of stone" (1 Kings 8:9); in the Tabernacle all three symbols were present.

These additions and omissions between the Tabernacle and the Temple were appropriate to the circumstances. The Tabernacle in the wilderness, travelling from place to place, represented the multitudinous Christ as strangers and pilgrims in the earth; the Temple in Jerusalem, with the reigning monarch sitting upon the throne of Yahweh (1 Chron. 29:23) foreshadowed the Kingdom in its glory. David had extended the Kingdom into an Empire. Solomon had added to its glory by building the Temple. The power, wisdom and wealth of Israel was proverbial throughout the world (2 Chron. 1:15). The golden age of Israel's history had dawned, and even Gentiles were drawn to Jerusalem to hear the wis-

dom of its king, to observe the justness of its administration, and to witness the glory of its worship. If only the people had hearkened to Yahweh, it could have been the commencement of a Millennium of glory, extending to the manifestation of Messiah himself, for God had declared: "This is the place of My rest for ever, where I desire to dwell in the midst of Israel" (Psalm 132:14).

But because of the folly of flesh this was not to be.

Nevertheless, Israel, in the days of David and Solomon, was typical of the Kingdom of the future, for it will be but an extension of what then existed. The conditions that appertained in those times provided the foundation for the prophetic pictures of future glory when Yahweh shall restore the Kingdom "as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11) which abound throughout the Scriptures. This is shown by the following comparison:

The Kingdom of God	Past	Future
Jerusalem: The Throne of Yahweh	1 Chr. 29:23	Jer. 3:17
Israel: a powerful kingdom	1 Kings 4:21	Mic. 4:7
Israel: chief among nations	1 Kings 4:21	Mic. 4:8
Israel: united under one king.....	1 Kings 4:20	Ezek. 37:22
Israel's king: noted for wisdom	2 Chr. 9:23	Isa. 11:2
The king: noted for unerring judgment.....	1 Kings 4:29	Isa. 32:4
The king: noted as Prince of Peace	1 Kings 5:12	Isa. 9:6
The king: supervises the building of the Temple	1 Kings 6	Zech. 6:13
The Temple: built according to divine plans	1 Chr. 28:11-19	Ezek. 40-48
The Temple: built with assistance of Gentile labor.....	2 Chr. 2	Isa. 60:10
Jerusalem: enjoying peace after an epoch of war.....	1 Kings 4:24	Isa. 9:6-7
Jerusalem: the repository of the world's wealth.....	1 Kings 4:21	Isa. 60:11
Jerusalem: universally honoured.....	1 Kings 4:21	Isa. 60:12
Jerusalem: object of worldwide pilgrimage	1 Kings 4:34	Zech. 14:16
Jerusalem: noted for fabulous wealth.....	2 Chr. 1:15	Isa. 60:17
Jerusalem: the mart of all nations	2 Chr. 1:17	Isa. 23:18
Priests serve day and night (fig. immortal).....	Psa. 134	Rev. 5:9-10
Zadok is high priest (cp. Melchi-Zadok)	1 Kings 2:35	Heb. 7:11-12
Israel is third with Egypt and Assyria.....	2 Chr. 9:26	Isa. 19:25
Satan is bound	1 Kings 5:4	Rev. 20:2

Other comparisons will suggest themselves to readers who study this vitally important period of Israel's history, and align it with the prophetic Scriptures.

These will show that the Kingdom of the future was dramatically foreshadowed in the past.

Why The Temple Cherubim Were Made Of Wood

If the symbolism of the Temple takes us into the Kingdom of the future, why were the cherubim made of olive wood coated with gold, instead of being made completely of gold as on the Ark of the Covenant?

Because it was not ordinary wood of which these two figures were made. The cherubim were not constructed of the desert acacia as were the walls of the Tabernacle, but of olive trees; the Hebrew word signifying "Trees of Oil" (1 Kings 6:23, mg.). Oil is the symbol of Spirit. This "wood of oil," therefore, coated with the gold of a tried faith, points forward to those "born of the spirit" in the age to come, those who had been changed from flesh and blood creatures to spirit beings (1 Cor. 15:44).

Why were the wings of these two massive cherubim outstretched, instead of being enfolded as over the Ark? Because the symbol points to the time when the influence of the cherubim will extend throughout the earth, bringing the grace of God to all mankind. Each wing was of five cubits, and according to Biblical numerics, five speaks of grace. The height of the cherubim was ten cubits, and this number has a spiritual value, representing the principle of completeness.

The cherubim over the Ark, with wings enfolded, and faces turned towards the blood-spattered Mercy Seat, speak of the Multitudinous Christ at one with him; but those standing upright, with wings outstretched, and faces turned to each point of the compass, speak of the cherubim wielding authority throughout the earth, and presenting the grace of God to all mankind.

Why The Staves Were Drawn Out

When the Ark was placed in the newly erected Most Holy of the Temple under the shadow of the large cherubim, "they drew out the staves," and so placed them, that the ends were seen in the Holy Place.* This taught two principles:

1.—The time of the pilgrimage was at an end.

2.—There was no other place for Israel to go to worship.

The withdrawn staves were thus symbols of comfort and of warning.

They offered comfort because, being thus drawn out of their sockets, they pointed the lesson that Israel had come to the place of rest, and the epoch of wanderings from place to place was over. Israel was no longer as a stranger and a pilgrim in the land; but had come into its inheritance (Exod. 15:17).

The staves had been retained in the side of the Ark prior to this, as a

* The Revised Version seems to destroy the principle set forth here. It renders the verse: "And the staves were so long that the ends of the staves were seen from the Holy Place before the oracle. But the A.V. is correct in its rendering. If the staves were retained in the side of the Ark, they would certainly not stretch out from the Most Holy into the Holy Place of the Temple, for this was twice as large as it had been in the Tabernacle. A footnote to the R.V. supports the A.V.: "They drew out the staves..." This is supported by Rotherham and others, and is to be preferred.

reminder that the settled place of Yahweh's rest had not been revealed (it had been in the hands of the Jebusites), and until He had a settled abode in the earth, the faithful were as "strangers and pilgrims" in the land.

But with a permanent Temple erected in Jerusalem in contrast to the Tent of the Tabernacle taken from place to place, the time of wandering was definitely at an end; and the Kingdom was established in all its glory. There was now nowhere else to go. During the wilderness wanderings, when Israel had been opposed in one place, they could travel to another, guided by the Glory. But now that Glory had its place of rest, and could draw them nowhere but to the Temple at Zion.

The withdrawn staves were also a symbol of warning to Israel. The heads of the staves were seen in the Holy Place by the ministering priests, and were reported to the people to remind them that no longer could the Ark be transferred from place to place. Here it must remain; there was to be no more wandering; there was no place to worship but the Temple. What if they failed to heed the lesson? Yahweh, who had caused the glorious Temple to be erected, would have no compunction about destroying it if the people proved disobedient. And if He did that, there would be nowhere else for them to go; it would be a time of Ichabod — the Glory would depart from Israel (1 Sam. 4:21).

The ends of the withdrawn staves peeping out into the Holy Place were a constant exhortation to that end.

Why The Manna And Rod Were Missing

It is reported that "there was nothing in the Ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb" (1 Kings 8:9).

Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden pot of manna, were thus missing. The former spake of divine selection and resurrection; the latter of eternal life through faith.

These were missing, for now the Kingdom was set up in its glory, and the rod and manna were not appropriate to the type. When the Kingdom is again restored under Messiah, its rulers will have been raised to life eternal, and will, in themselves present the lesson of the rod that budded, and the pot of manna. The fact that they shall have been raised to life eternal will illustrate the principle of Divine Selection as set forth in the rod that budded; and their immortality will demonstrate that they have eaten of the "hidden manna" (Rev. 2:17).

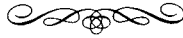
But the two tables of stone remained in the Ark. They will still be in evidence in the Age to come when the Kingdom is established, for the saints (the cherubim of the future) will administer the Law that shall go forth from Zion (Isa. 2:2-4). Divine Law will provide the foundation of acceptable approach unto Christ then as now.

The Shekinah glory was also in the Most Holy of the Temple, destroying the darkness, illuminating the cherubim, the Ark, the Most Holy. It remained there until Ezekiel was given a new revelation concerning the cherubim, and saw in vision the glory withdrawn. The visions he witnessed at that time are some of the most remarkable in Scripture.

— H.P.M.

Ezekiel: Man of Sign

Although references to the cherubim are found throughout Scripture, it was to Ezekiel, the prophet in exile, that the greatest vision of the cherubim was revealed. This dramatic experience occurred at a significant time in Ezekiel's life and in the unfolding of divine history.



EZEKIEL was contemporary with Jeremiah and Daniel, and lived at a most tragic epoch of Israel's history. Divine judgment was about to fall with a shattering force on Jerusalem and its guilty people; the city was to be completely overthrown, the beautiful Temple of Solomon to become a smoking ruin, and the proud nation to be brought to an end by the wholesale deportation of its people into Babylonia.

At the time when Ezekiel's ministry commenced, preliminary judgments had already been felt. Three times Nebuchadnezzar had invaded the land, and taken captive many of its prominent citizens. On the first occasion, Daniel had been among those involved, and the king had also taken some of the sacred vessels of the Temple to grace his pagan shrines (Daniel 1:1-2). On the third occasion, Ezekiel was among the hostages taken by the Babylonians.

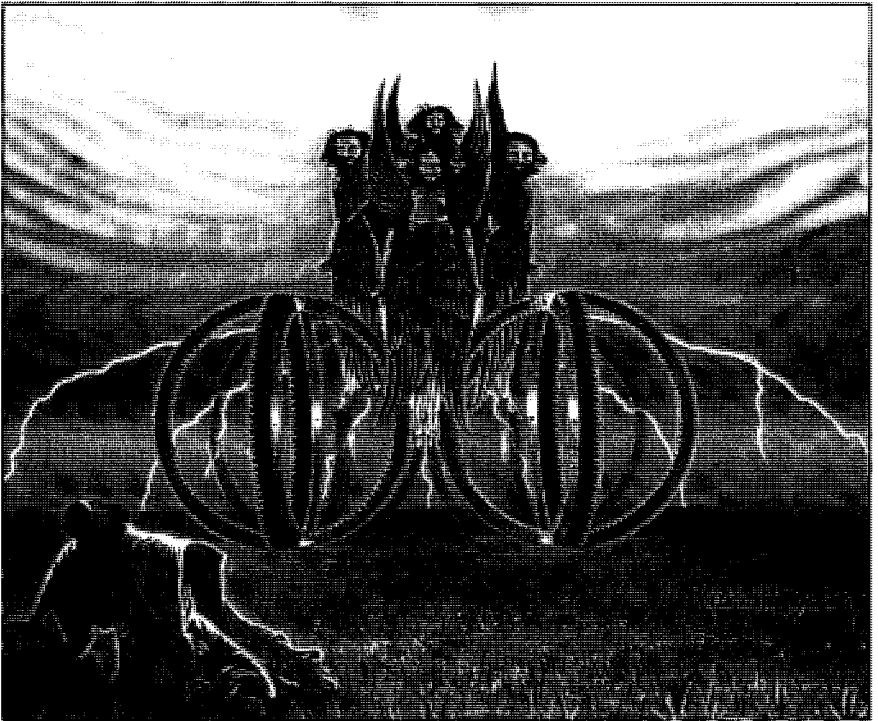
Distressing as this may have been to those affected, it was in reality an act of divine mercy; for as Jeremiah declared, those taken out of the city were removed "for their good" (Jer. 24:5). As to the rest, Yahweh was soon to abandon those who persisted in spurning His goodness, and leave them to the savagery of their enemies. The exiles were thus removed from the wrath to come.

In Babylonia, the captives were distributed into different settlements divided one from the other. They formed small communities, developing their own organisation, with freedom to worship as they desired.

One such colony was at Tel-abib on the River Chebar (Ezek. 1:1; 3:15), and it was to that place that Ezekiel was deported, to become a dominant figure among the little group. His companions ultimately recognised that they had a prophet in their midst. They sought his instruction and advice, came to him to hear the word of Yahweh expounded, and listened to the exhortations he delivered them. But they did not always act upon that which he proclaimed to them.

As he, himself, recorded: "With their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Ezek. 33:30-33).

Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, the spiritual condition of the people continued to decline, despite the tears and pleading of Jeremiah. The deadly poison of false teaching that gratified flesh, dulled the sensibilities of the people to the danger confronting them. They wanted to hear smooth things, and became impatient of the strictures imposed upon them by the mourning prophet. The false prophets had spread the idea that those who remained in the city were Heaven's favourites, blessed above those who had been taken into captivity. They claimed that the city and Temple were inviolate, and therefore so long as they remained therein no harm would come to them. Thus they engendered a spirit of complacency refusing to heed the warnings of Jeremiah. He raised his voice vigorously against this fatal teaching, warning the people that it was those who had been forcibly removed from the city, who had experienced the mercy of Yahweh, for it was destined to be ringed with fire and destruction (Jer. 25). He pleaded with them to change their ways whilst there was hope.



The dramatic scene before Ezekiel as he saw the approaching cherubic vision, enclosed in cloud and enlivened by flashing lightning.

But the people refused to heed. There was little sympathy in Jerusalem for those who had been taken into exile, only a general rejoicing that they had been preserved from such a fate. Their callousness towards those who suffered is expressed in the words they used as reported by Ezekiel: "Get you far from Yahweh: unto us is this land given in possession" (Ezek. 11:15; 33:24).

Even among the exiles, infatuated Jews were held in the grip of the delusive teaching of false prophets, and believed that their captivity would soon end. These false prophets claimed to see "visions of peace for Jerusalem," when, in fact, there was to be no peace (Ezek. 13:16). Boldly they predicted that Babylon would soon be overthrown, and the exiles would be free to return to their homeland.

Chief among the false prophets was Hananiah of Jerusalem. Presumptuously he predicted that the captivity would end within two years, and that the vessels of the Temple which Nebuchadnezzar had confiscated would be restored at that time (Jer. 28). He was vigorously opposed by Jeremiah. Publicly he challenged the prophet, openly denouncing Hananiah before the people for speaking lies in the name of Yahweh. He gave them a warning sign which would authenticate his own teaching: he declared that Hananiah would die before the two years of his false prophecy were ended.

Jeremiah then despatched a letter to the exiles, advising them to take no heed of the false prophets, because the captivity would last for 70 years (Jer. 29). He exhorted them to make the best of their lot, to establish themselves in their exile, and to seek the peace of the cities in which they would find themselves.

His letter brought dismay to those who were hoping for a speedy end to the captivity. It aroused the wrath of one of the false prophets, Shemaiah by name, who wrote a reply to Zephaniah the priest in Jerusalem, declaring that Jeremiah should be imprisoned as a madman for teaching such things (Jer. 29:24-28).

But the hopes of the false prophets were dashed by a series of events that followed one another in rapid succession. Hananiah died as predicted by Jeremiah; the voice of Ezekiel was heard in confirmation of disasters to befall Jerusalem; further deportations of the people took place (six in all before the city was finally destroyed); Babylon continued to grow in power and glory. It was obvious to all who had eyes to see that a speedy return of the people was impossible.

It was in this tense atmosphere of contention, with many voices raised in repudiation of the warnings and prophecies of Jeremiah, that the younger priest, Ezekiel, likewise raised his voice in warning, rebuke and prophecy.

Who Was Ezekiel?

Ezekiel introduces himself as a priest, the son of Buzi, a captive in the land of the Chaldeans. Apparently he was thirty years of age when he was taken into captivity and commenced his ministry (Ezek. 1:1). He had thus witnessed the

tragedy of Judah's rapid decline since the days of good king Josiah, when the nation had been called together to renew its covenant with Yahweh.

He commenced his ministry at the age when the Levites began their service (Num. 4:47), at the age when the Lord entered upon his public ministry. And, like Jeremiah, Ezekiel typed the Lord Jesus Christ.

He was a man of determination, not easily deflected from his duty, performing it in spite of the most virile opposition. His face was set "strong against their faces, and his forehead strong against their foreheads, as an adamant, harder than flint" (Ezek. 3:8,9).

His duty was to proclaim the word of Yahweh without fear or favor, irrespective as to results (Ezek. 2:5-7). But though set to the work of preaching and proclaiming the will of Yahweh, words apparently did not come easily from him, though when they did, they were weighty and impressive (Ezek. 3:26). He differed greatly from the emotional Jeremiah whose feelings were deeply affected by all that he saw and said. In contrast, Ezekiel appears rather austere, standing aloof from those about him, condemning the widespread wickedness both by word, and by dramatic and symbolic action.

Later, after the fall of Jerusalem, when his prophecies had been vindicated (Ezek. 33:21), he found himself speaking much more easily and fluently (v. 22). His reputation was then high among the Jews of the dispersion. To him they reported the disaster that had befallen the city; to him they turned for further instruction (Ezek. 33:31); and though they may have hated the reproofs that he uttered, they did not dare to openly rebuke him as they had other prophets (v. 30). Thus he enjoyed a position of some authority among the exiles.

His name signifies: "God (*El*) will strengthen." To it should be joined the title that he ascribes to himself over 100 times in his prophecy, and which was likewise appropriated by the Lord Jesus, namely: "The Son of Man." There then stands forth the declaration: "God (*El*) will strengthen the Son of Man." This is a title suggestive of the proclaiming of the divine purpose, for the Lord Jesus is the branch whom Yahweh "made strong for himself" (Psalm 80). Or, as Paul declared: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19).

Ezekiel's name and title were appropriate to his mission, for not only did Yahweh strengthen him for his task, but he is set forth as a "man of sign", typifying the Lord Jesus Christ (Ezek. 24:24). Thus in such prophecies as Ezekiel 38, where it reads: "Son of Man, set thy face against Gog..." he typifies the Lord who will literally set his face against the northern invader, and bring the power of Gentilism crashing to the ground.

Personal details of the prophet are revealed in the book he wrote. He was married (Ezek. 24:16-17), and lived in his own house at Tel-Abib (Ezek. 3:24; 8:1). Tragedy struck at him at the same time as it did Jerusalem, for his dearly-beloved wife suddenly died. But Ezekiel was commanded that he was not to

make any public mourning on this account, for trying as the circumstances were, they were overshadowed by a greater tragedy (Ezek. 24). In Jerusalem, another wife was dead, even Yahweh's wife (Isa. 54:1-2): the city and Temple were destroyed, and the remnant of the people either slain with the sword, or taken into captivity.

Ezekiel prophesied for about 22 years. His death is not recorded in Scripture, but according to Jewish tradition, he was murdered by a fellow-exile whom he had rebuked. Together with Jeremiah and Daniel, he accomplished a wonderful service for the exiles. They went into captivity as hopeless addicts of idolatry; they returned, 70 years later, a fiercely monotheistic people, wedded to the Law and the service of their God for a limited period. That was the greatest accomplishment of the 70 years' captivity, and an eloquent testimony to the outstanding services performed by the prophets of the dispersion.

Theme of His Prophecy

Between them, the prophecies of those who were contemporary — Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel — comprise the Apocalypse of the Old Testament. In subject and expression they are closely related to the Book of Revelation. Jeremiah's prophecy of the Fall of Babylon (Jer. 50, 51) forms the basis of the judgment on "Babylon the Great" found in Revelation chapters 17, 18. Daniel's images of the beasts find their counterpart in the visions revealed to John on Patmos. And Ezekiel's prophecy, also, is closely linked with the same book.

Ezekiel's visions commenced with those of the cherubim, and concluded with the description of the Temple of the Age to come. The Book of Revelation does likewise, for in the fourth chapter reference is made to the cherubim as four "living ones," and in the final chapters there is given the picture of the New Jerusalem, the spiritual temple of the future, which is based upon the description of the literal Temple described to Ezekiel. Ezekiel ate the little scroll given him (Ezek. 3), as did John also (Rev. 10), and with similar effect (Ezek. 3:4,14; Rev. 10:9). He recorded prophecies concerning Gog and Magog, of Babylon, of judgments poured out upon the nations, as does also the Book of Revelation, so that the one supplements the other. The more this is studied, the more obvious it is that the visions of the Apocalypse are based upon the prophecies of the Old Testament. In fact, the Revelation is the grand unveiling of the divine purpose; it gathers into one all the prophecies of God's Word, and in thrilling, dramatic pictures, shows that every promise, every prediction will be fulfilled.

Thus the visions of Ezekiel, the exile in Babylonia, are closely linked with those of John, the exile in Patmos (Rev. 1:9).

Ezekiel's theme is expressed in the oft-repeated statement: "They shall know that I am Yahweh". This declaration occurs about 70 times in his book. It is expressed in connection with the predicted punishment on Jerusalem some 29

times; it is stated in describing the effect of the judgment to fall upon the Gentile nations some 24 times; it is declared in relation to the restoration of the people, and final blessing on the nation of Israel some 17 times.

“They shall know that I am Yahweh,” is a significant statement. For Yahweh is the covenant Name of Deity, proclaimed when He was about to move for the deliverance and redemption of His people (Exod. 3:14). It enunciates His purpose with His people, and shows that all His dealings with men and nations are bound up with the covenants of promise made to the fathers of the Israelitish nation. Because of that, He punished Israel but will restore it; because of that, He punishes nations that have raised themselves against His people. They are the holy nation, Yahweh’s inheritance, and none can touch His possessions with impunity.

Israel and the nations, shall yet “know Yahweh” for what He is (Jer. 16:21).

Christ used this expression in his prayer to the Father when he declared: “This is life eternal to *know Thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3). To “know” in this sense means much more than mere recognition that God exists; it signifies to “know Him” as far as His purpose and character are concerned, in such a way as to form a “seed of truth” within a person that will be manifested in a changed way of life. To “know” God in that sense, is to be drawn into such close and intimate relationship with Him as to be united with Him in His purpose and outlook. When Ezekiel ate the little scroll (Ezek. 3:1-3), he assimilated it into his very being. It became part of himself, and he identified himself with all that it declared, both in judgment and in promise.

Ezekiel thus “knew” Yahweh in the true sense, and became one with Him in that knowledge.

The judgments he predicted are designed to do that for men. This was the case with those that fell on his own city and people in his day. The destruction that came upon Jerusalem in fulfilment of his prophecies had a profound effect upon the people. It demonstrated to his fellow-exiles that Yahweh’s word was with him, and that what Yahweh declared was true. They began to “know” Him as they had never known Him before, and this helped to effect the change that was manifest in them when the 70 years’ captivity had come to its end.

The judgments yet to fall upon the Gentile nations as predicted by Ezekiel will have a similar effect. They will cause men to recognise truths that they have denied for 6,000 years. Thus Ezekiel described the effect of the overthrow of Gog at Armageddon as, “they shall know that I am Yahweh” (Ezek. 38:23). The outpouring of divine judgment upon the Gentiles will have just as profound an effect as the outpouring of judgment on Jerusalem had upon the Jews. It will humble them before His power, make them submissive to His will, and reveal a new way of life throughout the earth.

And equally profound will be the influence that the restoration and final blessing of Israel will have upon the world. Men will be drawn to see the God of Israel in His true light, and will become united with Him in a covenant of peace (Zech. 8:22). The glorious House of Prayer for all nations will draw all diverse peoples into one glorious unity based upon a mutual acceptance of divine truth, and will create true peace. All mankind will embrace one common ideal, one common religion, one universal government.

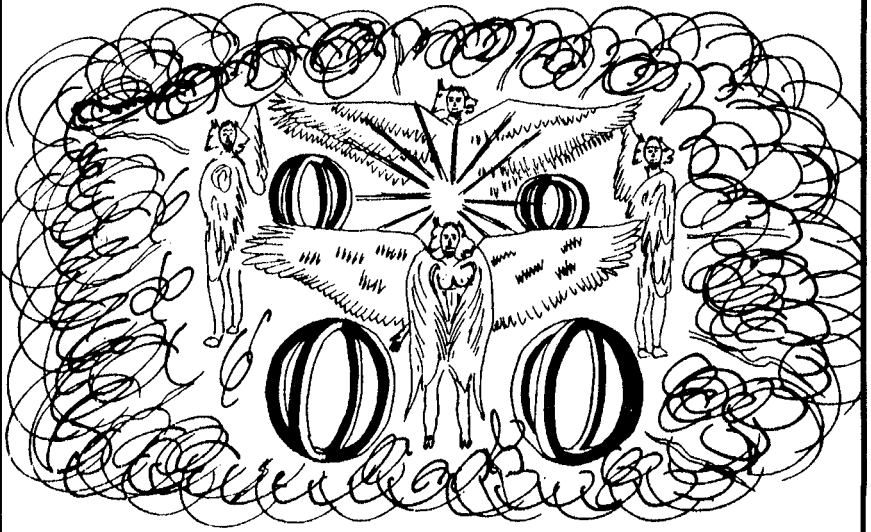
Ezekiel's prophecies concluded with this vision, and with the statement that in that day it shall be said that "Yahweh is there" (Ezek. 48:35). Men will "know" Yahweh in truth.

The prophecy of Ezekiel can be divided into four broad sections: (1) His Commission (Chapters 1-3); (2) Judgment on Jerusalem (Chapters 4-24); (3) Judgment on the nations (Chapters 25-39); (4) Future glory (Chapters 40-48).

Perhaps the most remarkable visions that he saw are those relating to the cherubim. At a time when many in Jerusalem were predicting the early collapse of Babylon and the impending restoration of Judah, and many in exile were pinning their faith on such false hopes, Ezekiel proclaimed his vision of the cherubim. He saw them as living creatures moving swiftly to judgment against the guilty city of Jerusalem and the nations; he saw the glory of Yahweh which was previously manifested between the cherubim in the Most Holy, depart from the Temple and the City to leave them both defenceless against the converging Babylonians. But he also saw the glory return, though in a different form (Ezek. 43:1-2). When the time had come for Yahweh to desert His temple, His people and His city, Ezekiel again witnessed the vision of the cherubim and the wheels. The glory departed, to return not again until manifested in the immortalised multitudinous Christ-Body, the Elohim of the Kingdom Age.

— H.P.M.

The Vision of



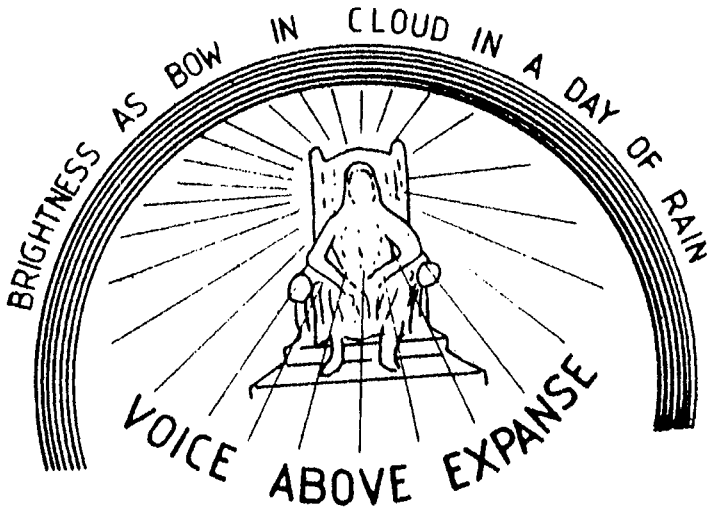
The Terrible Expanse Ezek. 1:22-25

WINGS STRAIGHT ONE TOWARDS ANOTHER

COVERING THEIR BODIES

STOOD AND LET DOWN WINGS

The Cherubim



Likeness of the Glory of Yahweh Ezek. 1:25-28

LIKENESS AS APPEARANCE OF A MAN

BURNISHED COPPER FROM LOINS UPWARDS

AS FIRE FROM LOINS DOWNWARDS

LIKENESS OF A THRONE —
AS SAPPHIRE STONE

An Infolding Fire and Eye of Amber

“Behold... a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber out of the midst of the fire” (Ezek. 1:4).



THE cloud that Ezekiel saw rapidly approaching from the north (Ezek. 1) was extremely luminous. He reported that “a brightness was about it.” He saw, as it were, tongues of fire leaping out from it, which seemed to catch hold of themselves (see mg.), and so encircle it in a wall of flame.

The prophet was witnessing a symbolic representation of Yahweh in beligerent manifestation.

God Manifestation in Fire

A similar revelation had been made at Sinai. Moses recorded:

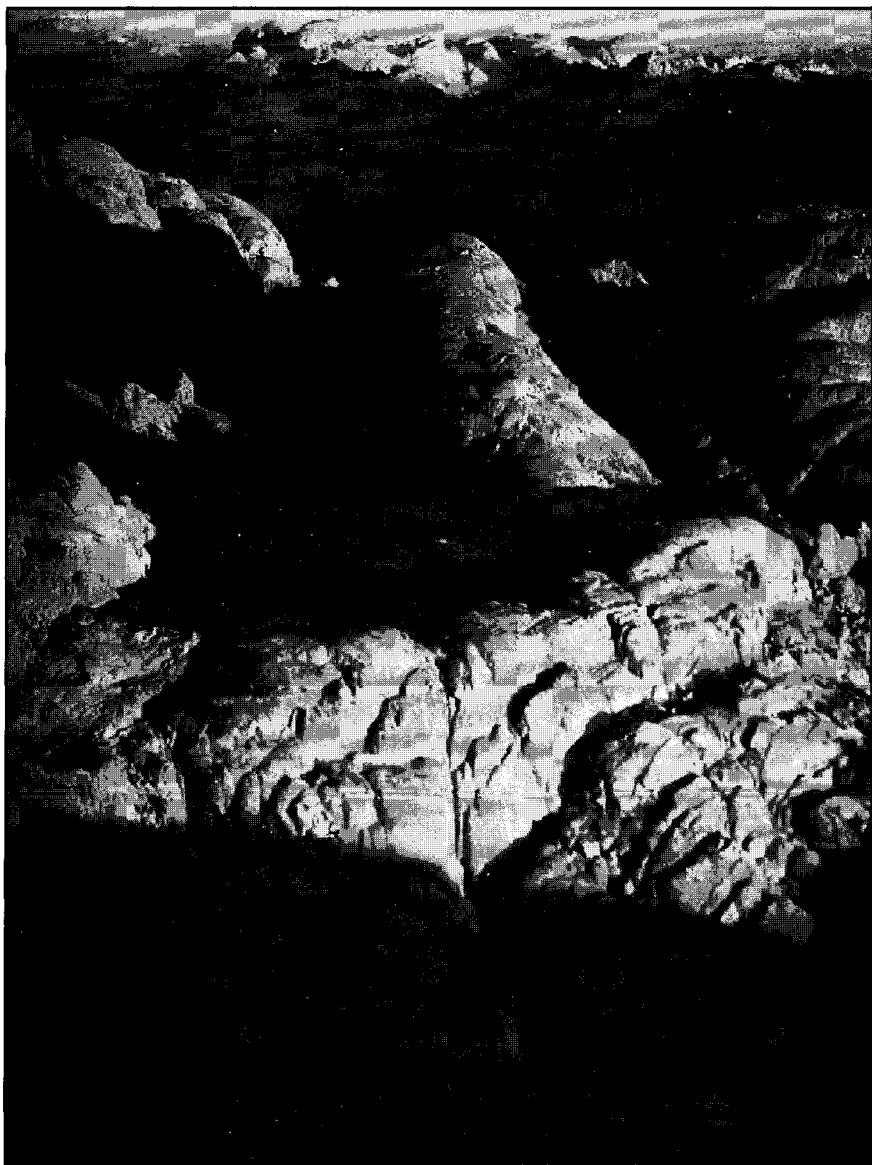
“The sight of the glory of Yahweh was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel” (Exod. 24:17).

Such a sight was calculated to remind them that Yahweh was not to be trifled with; that the purging, consuming fire of His wrath could destroy them if they were disobedient, as it could their enemies if they opposed the divine will.

Again, a similar theophany was exhibited at the resurrection of Christ. The angel descended in power to roll away the sealed stone that blocked the entrance to the rock-hewn sepulchre in which lay the body of the Lord. The startled Roman soldiers saw that the countenance of this angel gleamed forth as lightning (Matt. 28:4). So disturbing was the sight, that the normally courageous soldiers shook with fear and fell down upon their faces in terror. Certainly they were powerless to prevent the stone being rolled away!

The manifestation in the age to come, of the Cherubim in power, will have a similar impact upon the militant powers that be. It will bring all Gentile authority to the dust, reducing its pomp and power to impotence, purging the world of evil, so that what remains might reflect to Yahweh’s glory.

At Sinai, Moses encouraged Israel with the knowledge that Yahweh, as a devouring fire, would destroy the strength of the Canaanites, consuming them as the flame does chaff. He declared: “Understand therefore this day, that Yahweh thy God is He which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire He shall



Mount Sinai — the venue for the tremendous manifestation of glory witnessed by Moses at the giving of the Law and the formation of Israel as the Kingdom of God. Israel was to be a national cherubim, designed to bear the Divine Name before all peoples. It is in this area that the judgment seat of Christ will be conducted, in which the activities of the faithful will be examined, as the foundation for the ultimate bestowal of Divine Majesty in the earth.

destroy them, and He shall bring them down before thy face; so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as Yahweh hath said unto thee” (Deut. 9:3).

It was comforting to know that such Power was available for their benefit; but they also had to learn that the same flame of divine wrath could be kindled against themselves if they forgot their privileged position and the responsibility of undivided loyalty in obedient service that it demanded. Moses warned: “Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of Yahweh your God... for Yahweh thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous* God” (Deut. 4:24).

This was no idle threat. Israel had seen an example of the dreadful fire of divine anger in the sudden destruction of two of their number who had dared to defy God. When Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, presumed to offer strange fire before Yahweh in defiance of His express command, “there went out fire from Yahweh, and devoured them, and they died before Yahweh” (Lev. 10:2). And the warning comes down to spiritual Israel, today: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28-29).

He is a consuming fire. Fire can be used to purify or destroy. In the case of metal it will purify by driving out the dross; in the case of wood, or hay, it will consume. So Israel was commanded that the spoil of war should be thus tested and purified and offered unto Yahweh, from Whom had come victory. This thought is presented in the command of Eleazar unto the men of war: “This is the ordinance of the law which Yahweh commanded Moses; only the gold, silver, brass, iron, tin and lead, everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean” (Num. 31:21-23).

In the same manner, Israel was tested by fire to determine the quality of their “metal”, to see whether some gold or silver might not be manifested fit for Yahweh’s use. But in their case the fire revealed the nation to be but dross; it showed that as a nation it was completely lacking in the principles of faith and redemption, symbolised by gold and silver (Isa. 1:25; Ezek. 22:19,21). “Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem... and blow upon you in the fire of My wrath.”

Thus the nation was overthrown, driven from the land; the fire revealed that it was unfit for Yahweh’s use, and consumed it as dross.

Building to Abide the Fire

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, individuals will be similarly tested. Even their labor for the Truth will be carefully scrutinised to see whether what is produced is worthy of divine use. “Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (1 Cor. 3:13).

The apostle explained the need of building upon the foundation of Christ that

* The Hebrew word comes from a root signifying to be hot, to flush up red as in the heat of anger.

which will abide the fire: gold, silver, precious stones. We do that when our preaching, teaching and ecclesial activities strictly conform to the pattern revealed in the Word. But when it is otherwise, then all our labors for the Truth will be revealed as “wood, hay, stubble” when tested by the divine flame. They will be destroyed, shown up as useless, manifested only as fuel upon which the divine wrath can feed. Paul thus showed that we will be held accountable for what we do with the Truth in educating others, and that though we may personally gain a place in the Kingdom, “yet so as by fire,” we will “suffer loss” if our labors are not endorsed by Christ (v. 15).

All this gives point to the words of James: “There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy” (Ch. 4:12). The fire that purifies can also destroy!

And that fire is to be manifest in the Age to come through the medium of the cherubim. Paul declared that the Lord Jesus will be revealed “in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:8). Daniel spoke of certain nations being destroyed by the “burning flame,” and the “fiery flame” that shall figuratively flare out before the multitudinous Christ (Dan. 7:11). Isaiah proclaimed that “the Name of Yahweh” (the glorified saints — see Acts 15:14) shall be seen “burning in anger”, and his tongue as “a devouring fire” shall kindle the conflagration in Tophet designed for Gogue (Isa. 30:27-33).

This is symbolic language. It shows that the fiery appearance of the cherubim seen by Ezekiel, betokened divine wrath and judgment. In its complete fulfilment (for there was a partial fulfilment of this in the judgments that fell upon Jerusalem in the days of Ezekiel) it points to the time when Christ and the saints will reveal themselves before the world to “execute the judgments written” (Psa. 149:9). The nations must first be cleansed of evil (as the spoil of spiritual Israel), purified in the fire of divine judgment, and then led into fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, for he is *first* king of righteousness and *afterwards* king of peace (Heb. 7:2).

As Ezekiel saw the fiery Cherubic cloud swiftly moving from the north to bring judgment upon guilty Jerusalem, so the nations will see the multitudinous Christ, the Cherubim of the future age, as a fiery cloud of witnesses, burning with the anger of divine wrath, against a rebellious and evil world that has rejected the divine mercy.

The Powerful Eyes of the Cherubim

The symbol of fire, as both a cleansing and destroying agent, illustrates the dual character of Yahweh, His mercy and justness, His goodness and severity (Rom. 11:22). This was revealed to Moses when the character of the Creator was solemnly affirmed in his presence.

This dual characteristic of the great Increate is also suggested by the next symbol in the cherubim that is presented to our view. For Ezekiel recorded: “And out of the midst thereof, as the colour of amber.”

In the Hebrew, however, the word “color” is the word for “eye”. The prophet saw an eye that gleamed forth with a piercing color of amber.

From Ezekiel 10:12, we learn that the cherubim were “full of eyes.” As the prophet viewed the rapidly approaching cherubim from afar, this multiplicity of eyes merged into one, until it seemed to be one great eye.

The eye is a significant symbol in Scripture. The same Hebrew word not only does duty for color and eye, but also for “fountain.” It is rendered “eye” 497 times; “sight” 217; “colour” 11; “fountain” 11 times. A little thought will reveal why this should be so, and is indicative too, of the use of Hebrew which is a very vivid language. The eye is not only the most colorful part of the body, but it also acts as a fountain; for under stress of emotion, tears will well up from the body through the eyes. The eye can flash out fire when angry, or pour out tears when filled with sympathy. Christ is both the eye of fire and the fountain of tears, the well from whence comes the water of life (John 4:14).

The eye is a very expressive organ. It can indicate concern, pleasure, emotion, intelligence, fear, anger, love. It can shoot forth fiery glances, it can gleam as lightning, it can look hard and piercing, it can soften in love. It is the symbol of intelligence, for as Christ commented, it is the “light of the body” (Matt. 6:22-23). He spoke of a healthy eye and a distorted eye. His words reveal that it is not sufficient to have light, we must also have an organ adapted to receiving light. Moreover, that organ must be correctly focussed on an object, otherwise it would appear to be distorted. When that is the case spiritually, we fail to clearly see the true aim of life (Heb. 12:1-2). But as the natural eye, when healthy, brings all things into correct perspective, and regulates the motions of the body accordingly, so does the mental eye to direct the spiritual vision. Thus Christ called for a single-eyed service to God (Matt. 6:23. See also Acts 11:23; Phil. 3:13; Deut. 32:46-47).

The Scriptures speak of the “eyes of Yahweh” (Zech. 4:10), as they do also of His feet, arms, body, and so on. These terms relate to His manifestation in the angels or the saints in glory, in the past and in the future. For example, Zechariah 14:4 speaks of the “feet of Yahweh” standing upon the Mount of Olives in the future. These “feet” refer to Yahweh manifested in the multitudinous body of the saints who shall have Christ as their head.

This is also representative of the “eyes of Yahweh.” There have been “eyes of Yahweh” in the past, and there are destined to be “eyes of Yahweh” in the future. At Babel, the angels acted as His eyes, “to see” the conditions of things on earth (Gen. 11:5). Yahweh is represented as saying, “Let *us* confound their speech,” because His eyes (the angels who were given this mission) acted on His authority. Similar “eyes” were sent to Sodom, and blazed in anger at the wickedness of that city. The people of Israel were constantly reminded that the “eyes of Yahweh” were ever present to behold their ways. Hanani the prophet, indicated the folly of Asa in resting upon the heathen instead of putting his confidence in Yahweh. In effect, Hanani told the king that he was blind. He declared: “For the

eyes of Yahweh run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. 16:9).

These "eyes" are the angels. Daniel described them as Yahweh's "watchers" (Dan. 4:17). Paul said that they are "ministering spirits, ministering for those who are the heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). The angelic eyes of Yahweh are ever present, so that Christ could say that not even a sparrow falls to the ground but that God is cognisant of it. He knows all things, for His agents are everywhere. He is omniscient as well as omnipotent because of His spirit, whether universally diffused, or corporeally manifested in the angels (Psa. 34:7).

In its carnal way, the Papacy tries to imitate this omniscience. It claims to be the Holy See. It has its agents everywhere who report back to headquarters. It seeks omnipotence through its omniscience as far as the nations are concerned. But the blazing "eyes of Yahweh" will ultimately stare out of existence the eyes of the Papacy, when the present-day work of the angels will be superseded by the Cherubic "eyes" of the glorified saints (Heb. 2:5). They will then be sent into all parts of the earth to watch the interests of the King who shall be centred in Jerusalem. Those "eyes" will gleam forth as lightning, shine with pleasure, or smile with kindness and tenderness, according to what they see. In the past, the "eyes of Yahweh" were tenderly solicitous of Abraham, but highly indignant against Sodom, so that they blazed forth in anger against that wicked city, bringing about its downfall.

The saints will see the world in like fashion, and bring upon it a similar fate.

The Awful Eye of Amber

Ezekiel described the eyes of the cherubim as being amber in color. Why amber?

The Hebrew word *chashmal* is rendered "glowing metal" by the *American Revised Version*, but in the *Septuagint*, it is rendered "electron". Bochart says that an electron was compounded of gold and silver, two significant metals in Bible symbology. Gold is the symbol of faith (1 Peter 1:7); silver is the metal of redemption, for every Israelite had to pay a half shekel of silver for the redemption of his soul (see instructions, Exod. 30:13). Thus gold and silver speak of faith and redemption in Christ. Peter makes that point, declaring: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ" 1 Peter 1:18-19.

In the sacrifice of flesh, and the dedication of a life unto God (indicated in the term "the precious blood of Christ") there are seen the principles of faith and redemption. And the amber color of the eyes of the cherubim suggest the same principles. When the saints are manifested in glory, as the cherubim of the Age to come, they will look out upon the world of the ungodly with pure eyes, seeing life through the revelation of Yahweh. To the ungodly, and the rebellious who are determined to go their own way, the gleaming forth of eyes of such color in

majesty and sternness will strike terror into the hearts of those who reject the principles of faith and redemption.

Those awful eyes of amber, capable of reading the hearts of men, are like the Urim in the breastplate of the High Priest, lighting up with the manifestation of Yahweh. The Urim (comprising the multitudinous lights of Yahweh) shone forth through the twelve gems on the breastplate of Judgment worn by the High Priest that typified the Thummim or *fulness* of Israel (Exod. 28:30). And here, in this “eye of amber,” there is seen the light of divine revelation shining forth from the four living creatures that comprised the cherubim seen by Ezekiel, the counterpart of which are those twelve gems, set foursquare in the breastplate.

In the cherubim, therefore, the prophet saw the antitype of the Light and Fulness of the Urim and Thummim, the perfect Israel, borne upon the breastplate of the High Priest as part of his glorious robes designed for beauty and glory.

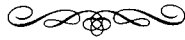
— H.P.M.



A stylised illustration by an artist showing the Spirit of God moving throughout the earth, featured in the vision of the living eyes in moving “wheels within wheels”. The vigor and strength of the cherubic figures are thus represented.

The Exhortation of the Four Faces

“As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle” (Ezek. 1:10).



TWO factors constantly obtrude in Ezekiel’s description of the cherubim: the diversity of the vision, and yet its essential unity. He refers to four living creatures that are yet one: to four distinct wings that are also joined together; to four wheels that work “wheel within a wheel.”

He also describes four faces to each of the four living creatures, but declares that each set of four faces were joined to one head of each cherub. This is expressed in Ezekiel 10:11 — “They turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it...”

Here is diversity and yet unity. It points to the ecclesia, or multitudinous Christ as composed of many members, but having only “one head.” So Paul exhorted, that “speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:15).

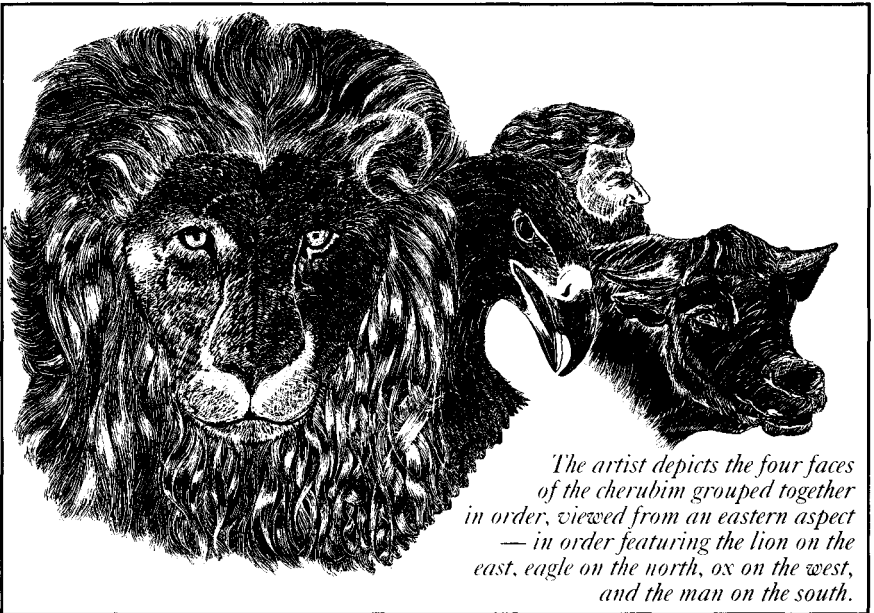
Four Faces To One Head

The four faces of the cherubim each manifested Yahweh in a different way; but they were attached to one head which did the thinking for the whole four: “whither the head looked they followed it.” That must be the case even now of those who wish to form part of the Cherubic glory of the future: they must try to let Christ do their thinking for them, striving to bring “every thought into captivity to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” Paul exhorted the Philippian brethren (Ch. 2:5). In another place, he showed that whilst the ecclesia is made up of “many members,” each of which can serve the Truth according to their different characteristics and attributes, the one mind, the mind of the spirit (Rom. 8:6), should govern and direct them all.

Such a mind is brought into being by the Spirit-words of the Lord (John 6:63; Col. 3:9-10). The Truth is designed to that end, but if it fails to create such a mind, it is because its real power is not felt, its true significance is not understood. Christ told his disciples that they were “clean through the word he had spoken unto them” (John 15:3), for that word had awakened their consciences to

the difference between truth and error, good and evil. Through its means they could learn to “love righteousness and hate iniquity” even as had their Lord (Heb. 1:9).

The conversion of Paul and the great change in his life from persecutor to persecuted, demonstrate the transforming impact of knowledge when a realisation of its significance is perceived. Paul became dead to the old way of life, and alive to the new (Gal. 2:20), and so great and drastic was the change that many in his day doubted whether it was genuine.



The Truth is thus a way of life, and not a mere theory. It is designed, not merely to provide information, but to change us for the Kingdom. It can create in us a new mode of thinking and a new code of morals, that will find their outworking in a new way of life. All this is done through the Christ-word dwelling in us, as the one head of the cherub controlled the four faces. That is why the Lord prayed the Father that He might “sanctify the disciples through the truth” (John 17:17); and that is why the Proverbs declare that it is “the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings is to search out a matter” (Prov. 25:2). God has deliberately clothed His revelation in language hard to be understood in order that those who love His Word may be caused to “think upon these things” (Phil. 4:8-9. See 1 Cor. 2:12-15). Such mental activity will result in the mind concentrating upon the things of God to the exclusion of the things of the flesh.

Take the theme of the cherubim as an example. God could have expressed in simple, straightforward language all that He has concealed in the remarkable

symbols presented, but to do so would have robbed the subject of the thrill and pleasure of discovery that is found in unravelling the vision. As we ponder the things presented therein, the mind learns to concentrate upon Godly themes, with the result that, as the Proverbs declare: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

If the "one head" dominates the diverse elements of an ecclesia, all members will be found co-operating together, and moving steadily forward in the direction to which the head looks. They will work as a team at the bidding of the Word.

This co-operation will be seen in the perfection of the glorified Cherubim of the Age to come.

Why Four Faces?

The four faces of the cherubim symbolise the true Israel of God. This is established firstly, because the faces are the same as the standards under which Israel marched in the wilderness; and secondly, because they are reproduced in Revelation 4:7, and later interpreted as being the multitudinous Body of the Redeemed (Rev. 5:8-10).

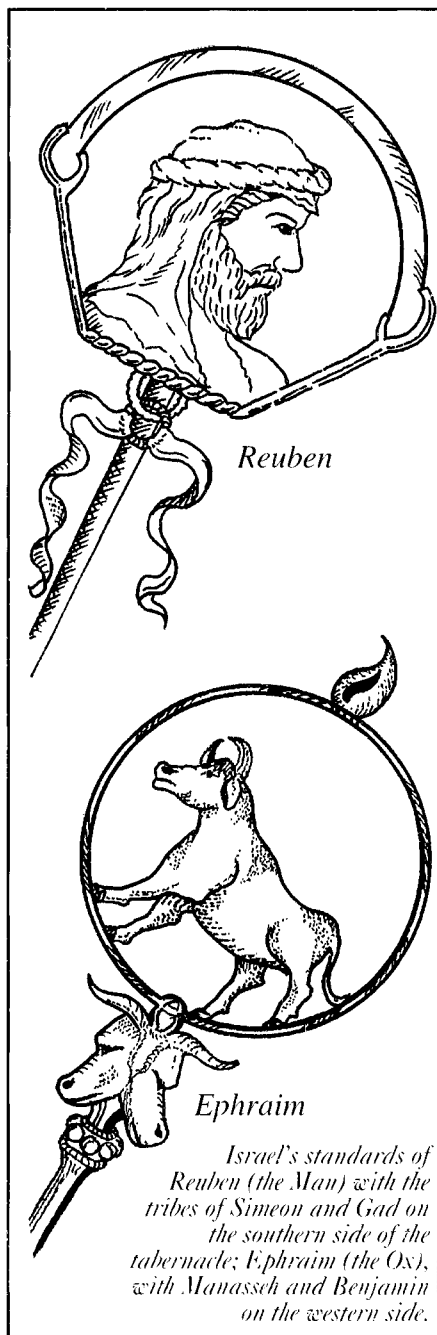
Israel marched towards the Promised Land in four groups of three tribes each, with the standards of the leading tribes (Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan — Num. 10:14, 18, 22, 25) at the head of each of the groups. When the tribes encamped, they did so in four sections (Num. 2), so that the encampment of Israel as a whole was foursquare like that of the New Jerusalem of Rev. 21:16.

According to Jewish tradition, the standards of the four leading tribes were identical with the four faces of the cherubim. This has the support of Scripture. Judah is identified with the lion (Gen. 49:9), Reuben with the man (Gen. 49:3; 30:14, 15), Ephraim with the ox (Deut. 33:17; Jer. 31:18), and Dan with the eagle — this tribe covered the reaward (or rearguard) of all the camp, protecting it, hovering over it, as an eagle might that of its young (Num. 2:25).

As the symbols of the cherubim are the standards of Israel, so the antitypical Cherubim (the saints in glory), though drawn out of all nations (Rev. 5:9), are Israelitish in character. That is a feature of our calling that we must never overlook nor forget.

As Israel was exhorted to constantly "remember" that they had been slaves in Egypt, and that Yahweh had brought them out in order that He might "bring them in" (Deut. 5:15; 6:23), so Gentile believers are called upon to constantly "remember" that they are Israelites. Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (ch. 2:11-13).

These one-time Gentiles had been inducted into the Commonwealth of Israel. They were now "Israelites indeed," "Jews inwardly" (Rom. 2:29), "children of the promise" (Rom. 9:8). In Revelation 7 they are aligned with the



twelve tribes of Israel, forming part of the symbolic 144,000 sealed in the forehead (Rev. 7:4; 14:1). As members of the true Commonwealth of Israel, their symbol is the four faces of Ezekiel 1.

There is a need to give concrete expression to this fact, because the ties of flesh are strong. Some might easily experience feelings of fleshly patriotism, identifying them with a national or parochial viewpoint (as the case may be) to the exclusion of that "universal ecclesial" outlook that the Truth demands. We need always to "remember" that, whether Australian, British, American or German, we have been taken out of the Gentile "fold," and made "one flock" in Christ (John 10:16). Barriers of race, country, state or city should no longer divide members of ecclesias, for they have been taken "out" of such and dedicated as a "people for God's name" (Acts 15:14). There should be no glorying in the flesh, which, the Lord declared, "profits nothing," for we have changed our patriotism, and our citizenship is now in heaven awaiting its manifestation in the earth (Phil 3:20 — "conversation" should be rendered "citizenship").

For that reason we do not vote in society's affairs, take part in politics, join the armed services of the state, nor be involved in judicial action. But our separateness should go even further. We should try and crush mere fleshly partisanship in all its manifestations, and see service to Christ our king, and undivided loyalty to the Israelitish hope to which we have been called, as the main objectives of life.

That is not always easy to do.

because the flesh blinds us to facts. It is so easy to be moved by propaganda, to be swept along by the mass hysteria which is the stock-in-trade of national leaders. The influence of the Press is great and widespread, and the men who control it are expert in whipping up public opinion in such a way as to sweep readers off their feet. Facts are distorted to do service to the nation, the country, or the cause to which the paper is devoted. How easy it is for fleshly feelings to be aroused when the emotions are skillfully played upon. This is found even in the realm of sport, and unless the saints of God are careful, they too can be carried along by the fervor of finding pride of identification in some national hero who had demonstrated that he can use his muscles (but not necessarily his brains) better than others.

The theme of the cherubim, rightly applied, should lead us to resist such trends, and recognise that we have been called out of that state of things.

The way of life which is so familiar to us today, in its political, social and religious manifestations, is destined to be destroyed at Christ's coming. How then can we be found identified with that which we hope to help Christ destroy?

The Four Faces Exhorted Israel

Apart from identifying the saints with the true Israel of God, what else did the faces teach?

There are various answers to this question. Take the names of the tribes whose standards are brought into view. Judah signifies "Praise;" Reuben: "See a son;" Ephraim: "Double Fruit;" Dan: "Judgment." A paraphrase of these meanings provides the following state-

Judah



Dan

Israel's standards of Judah (the Lion), including the tribes Issachar and Zebulun on the eastern side of the tabernacle; Dan (the Eagle) with the tribes of Asher and Naphtali on the northern side.

ment: "PRAISE the SON whom you BEHOLD, for he will reveal DOUBLE FRUIT at the JUDGMENT."

Thus the marching tribes of Israel followed standards that proclaimed the divine purpose in the nation.

In addition, the four faces set forth the principle of God manifest in the flesh. In *Elpis Israel*, Brother Thomas comments upon the four faces of the cherubim in the following terms:

"We have arrived then at this, that the Mosaic Cherubim were symbolical of 'God manifest in the flesh.' We wish now to ascertain upon what principles His incarnate manifestation was represented by the cherubim? First then, in the solution of this interesting problem, I remark, that the scriptures speak of God after the following manner. 'God is LIGHT, and in Him is no darkness at all' (1John 1:5), again, 'God is a SPIRIT; and they that worship him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth' (John 4:24); and thirdly, 'Yahweh thy God is a consuming FIRE' (Deut. 4:24). In these three texts, which are only a sample of many others, we perceive that God is represented by LIGHT, SPIRIT, and FIRE; when, therefore, He is symbolised as manifest in FLESH, it becomes necessary to select certain SIGNS representative of light, spirit, and fire, derived from the animal kingdom. Now the ancients selected the LION, the OX, and the EAGLE for this purpose, probably from tradition of the signification of these animals, or the faces of them in the original cherubim. They are called God's Faces because His omniscience, purity, and jealousy are expressed in them. But the omniscient, jealous, and incorruptible God was to be manifested in a particular kind of flesh. Hence, it was necessary to add a FOURTH FACE to show in what NATURE He would show Himself. For this reason, the HUMAN was associated with the lion, the ox, and the eagle" (p. 151).

The lion, with its shining eyes, its tawny gold-like color, its flowing mane, its irresistible strength suggests the velocity and superiority of light over darkness. The ox or bull with its horns, its curling locks on its forehead, its relentless fury when aroused is descriptive of the appearance and terrible effect of fire. The eagle, with its silent movements, loftily soaring high into the heavens, is suggestive of the spirit in motion.

But it required a creature through whom these divine attributes could be intellectually revealed, and so the face of a man was added to the lion, ox and eagle.

The manifestation of divine knowledge (light), zeal (fire), and power (spirit — eagle) will be revealed in judgment upon the world of the ungodly in the Age to come, by the Cherubim of glory, and to that end God will be revealed in flesh (John 5:27). If we are to form a part of that glorious company then, we must, in measure, reveal those characteristics now.

The Lord Jesus, as the nucleus of the cherubim, manifested all four faces. He was the perfect manifestation of God's character in flesh, so that he could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He was, and is, completely "one with Him."

For that reason, his life is recorded in four gospels, each of which sets forth

one of the four faces. These gospels are not mere repetition, but reveal the different facets of the ministry and words of Christ as the Lion, the Ox, the Man, and the Eagle. He is the Lion in Matthew, for Matthew dwells on his royal majesty; he is the Ox in Mark, for Mark reveals him as a servant devoted to the needs of the people he desired to help; he is the Man in Luke, for Luke traces his genealogy back to Adam (Luke 3) and wrote for Gentiles; he is the Eagle in John, for John reveals him as the Word from the beginning then made flesh, and shows the influence of his divine begetting more than any of the other writers.

So in these four gospels, we have in order: Rulership, Service, Humanity, Divinity. We learn that Christ is fit to *rule* because he learned to *serve*; and though he came in *flesh*, he triumphed through the *spirit*.

That also is the exhortation of the faces. As we see them set forth in the order of the Gospels, we learn the message of their appearance: If we would *rule*, then we must *serve*; and though burdened with *humanity*, we must seek the strength that comes from the *Spirit-Word*.

In Rev. 5:9-10, the four beasts (identical with the four faces — see Rev. 4:7) are represented as singing: “Thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth.”

Here is a community, created out of flesh, elevated by the Spirit-Word, and destined to rule because it first learned to serve. Christ sets the example. Paul exhorts: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:5-11).

Carefully analysed, those verses reveal the four faces of the cherubim. There is the eagle, the spirit — the “form of God”; there is the ox — the “form of a servant”; there is the man — “made in the likeness of man”; there is the lion — the royal majesty that is his, and which will ultimately cause every knee to bow before him.

The faces of the cherubim, the standards of Israel’s tribes, are thus revealed in the King, the ideal Israelite, and through the four Gospel records each of these faces flash one by one into view to provide a composite picture of the Lord.

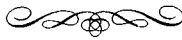
“Let this mind be in you,” wrote Paul. As the four faces of the cherubim were attached to one head, and as the body went in the direction dictated by the head, so the mind of Christ must motivate us now, if we would share the glory of the future.

Thus, the exhortation of the faces is this: If we would *reign* (lion), we must *serve* (ox), and will only serve acceptably in *flesh* (man) by the influence of God’s *Word* dwelling in us (eagle).

— H.P.M.

The Four Faces Identical with Israel's Standards

The order of the camp of Israel in the wilderness was symbolically represented in the faces of the cherubic visions of Ezekiel. It demonstrated the divine progress by which the nation of Israel was directed through the desert, and the way by which the Cherubim of Faith would manifest the divine glory. The dramatic picture is also featured in Ezekiel's vision.



A careful consideration of Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10, clearly shows the direction in which each of the four faces looked, and makes more complete their identification with the four main standards of the tribes of Israel.

We have seen that Israel encamped in four great divisions (Num. 2). It did so in such a way that Judah, at the head of Issachar and Zebulun, faced the east (Num. 2:3); Reuben, at the head of Simeon and Gad, faced the south (Num. 2:10); Ephraim, at the head of Benjamin and Manasseh, faced the west (Num. 2:18); and Dan, at the head of Asher and Naphtali, faced the north (Num. 2:25).

Each point of the compass, therefore, had a group of three tribes facing it, and at their head waved one of the four main standards of Israel.

They Looked in the Same Direction

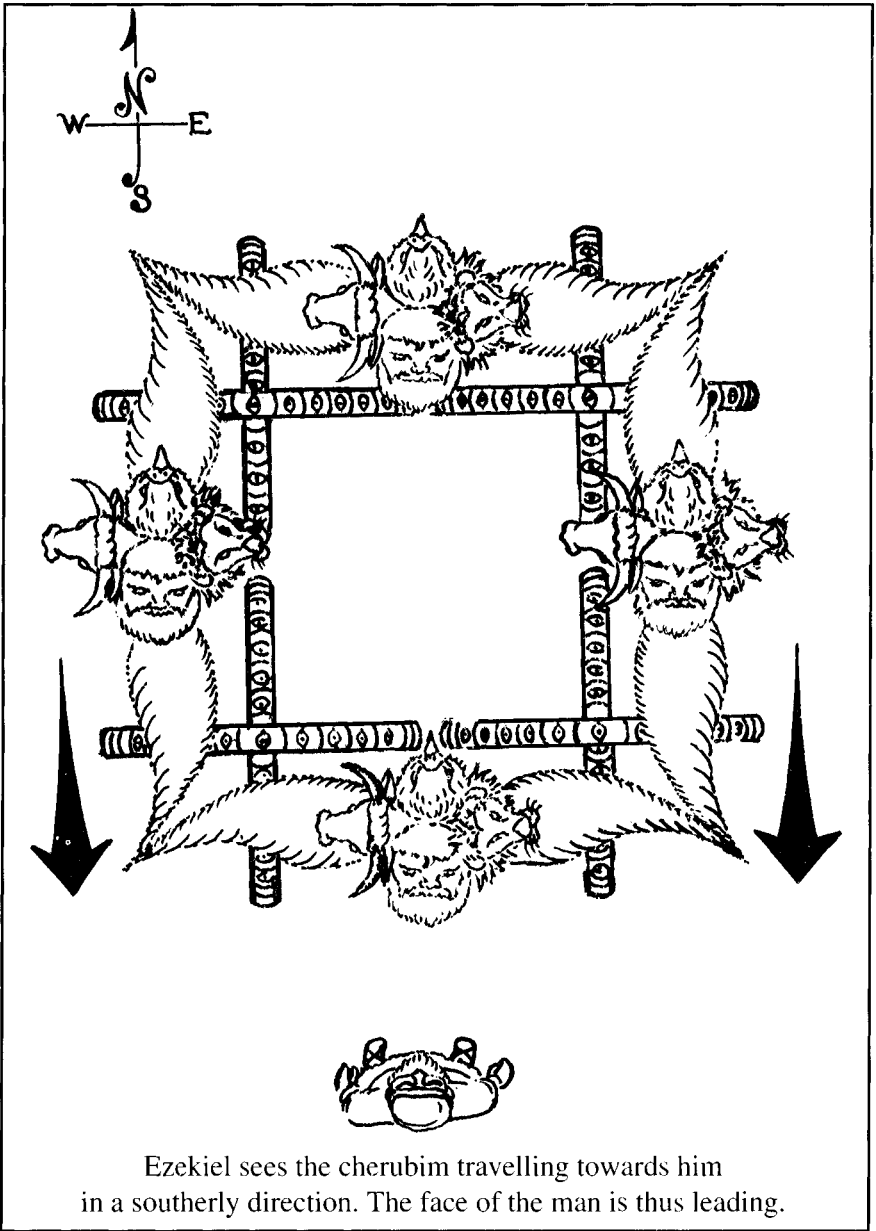
We identify the standards of these principal tribes as: the Lion for Judah, the Man for Reuben, the Ox for Ephraim, and the Eagle for Dan. The Lion faced the east, the Man faced south, the Ox faced west, and the Eagle faced north.

These were the same directions in which the four faces of Ezekiel's cherubim also looked.

When the cherubim travelled eastwards, the Lion was the face first encountered; when it travelled southwards, the Man was the face first encountered.

This is revealed by an interesting fact that emerges when the description of the cherubim contained in Ezekiel Chapter 1 is compared with that found in Chapter 10.

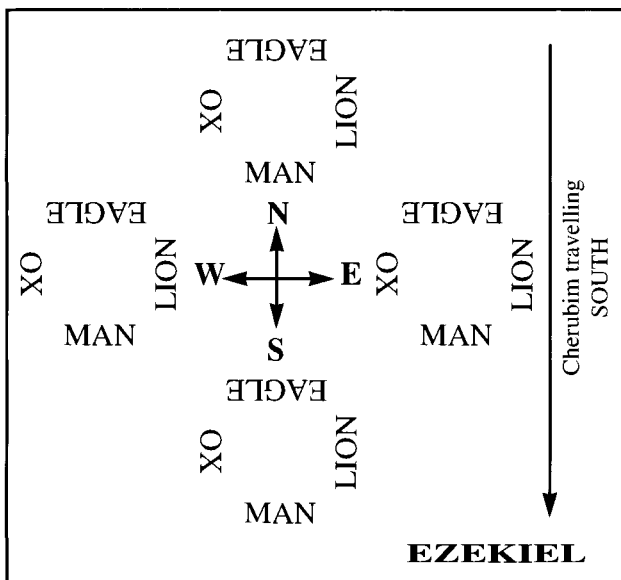
In Ezekiel 1:10, the prophet recorded: "As for the likeness of their faces,



Plan of the four-square encampment of the cherubim. Ezekiel sees the figure approaching him in a southerly direction, with the face of the man on each of the four cherubic figures leading.

they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.”

He first saw the man-face travelling towards him, with the lion-face on the



right, the ox-face on the left, and the eagle-face at the back. He saw them thus, because he was south of the vision, and saw it sweeping towards him from the north (v. 4). He saw the four living creatures, each with its man-face looking towards him, as indicated by the diagram on the left.

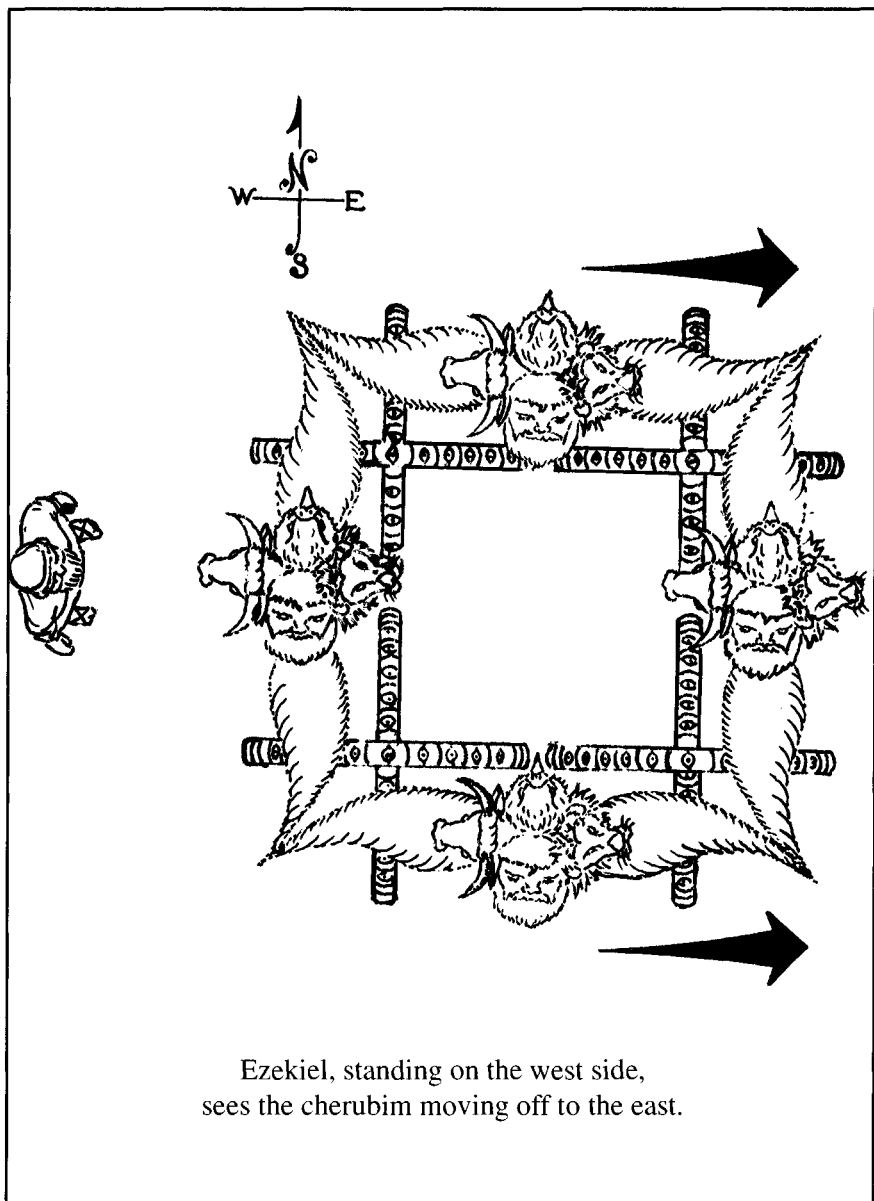
In the tenth chapter of his prophecy, however, Ezekiel describes the Cherubic vision again, but with a significant difference: “And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.”

In Chapter 1, the man-face is first described, but here the cherub-face. Why? Because Ezekiel had changed his position. In Chapter 1, he was by the River Chebar, and, looking north saw the vision approach from that direction. His description, therefore, took in first the southern aspect of the living creatures.

In Chapter 10, however, his description is taken from a different position. He had been taken “in spirit” (i.e., in vision, not in fact) to Jerusalem (Ezek. 8:3), and from a position close to the door of the Temple (v. 16), he saw the cherubim and glory depart by way of the east (Chapter 10:19). He is careful to explain that it was the same vision he had seen by the River Chebar (vv. 20-22), but viewed from a new position. He now saw it from the west.

As the cherubim were moving due east, the lion-face would lead the way, and the ox-face would bring up the rear. To Ezekiel, looking at the departing vision from the west, this ox-face would be the first or nearest one to him. And so he declared: “The first face was the face of a cherub” (or ox).

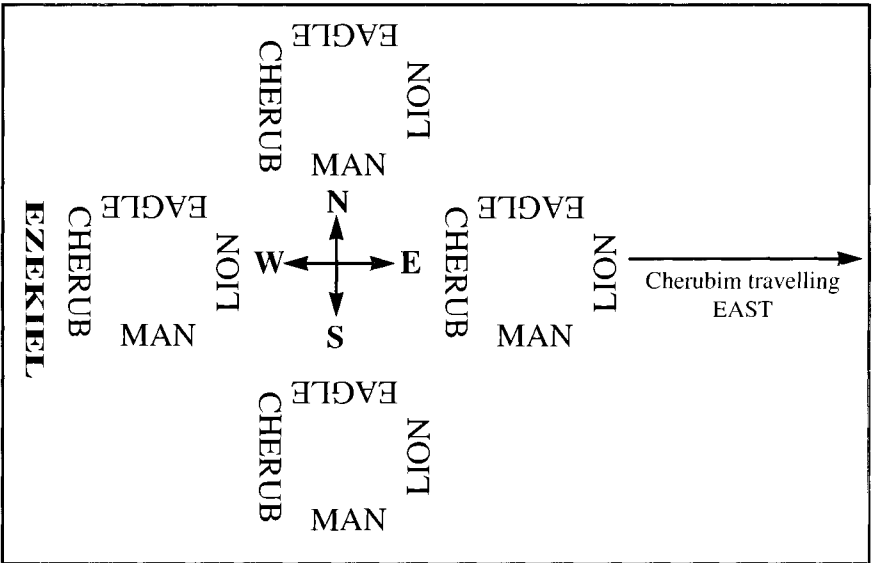
In this description of the cherubim, it is obvious that the four faces on each



Plan of the four-square encampment of the cherubim. Here Ezekiel is on the western side, and sees the cherubim moving away to the east. Thus he has the faces of the oxen towards him.

of the four heads all looked in the same direction identical with the standards of Israel. Thus all the man-faces looked south, even as Reuben with the standard of the Man pitched on the south in the encampment of Israel; all the lion-faces looked east, even as Judah with the standard of the Lion pitched on the east; all the ox-faces looked west, even as Ephraim with the standard of an ox pitched on the west; all the eagle-faces looked north, even as Dan with the standard of the Eagle pitched on the north.

As there were four living creatures at each of the four points of the compass, so the whole vision would have the Lion on the east, the Man on the south, the Ox on the west, and the Eagle on the north, as follows:



In the encampment of Israel, there was but one lion standard, one eagle standard, one ox standard, and one man standard, but in the cherubim, there were four of each such faces. This seems to indicate that the glorified Israel of the future (the saints) will comprise a much larger host than that of the past. John describes the number as a “great number, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” (Rev. 7:9). In the earlier verses, he reveals that they are identified as the true Israel of God “sealed in their foreheads.”

Why the Cherub Instead of the Ox?

In his description recorded in Ezekiel 10, the prophet describes the western face of the cherubim as that of a “cherub” instead of that of the “ox” mentioned in Chapter 1. Why this change?

Probably to indicate the work or status of the cherubim as a whole. The ox is the symbol of the laborer or servant (1 Cor. 9:9-10). In ancient times oxen provided great help to man, working in the fields for his benefit and profit. The design, or purpose, of the husbandman is seen in the work of the ox, which therefore stands representatively for the servant-community, which, indeed, the saints comprise.

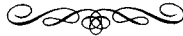
The term "cherub" is used in a similar way. David declared of the divine intervention he experienced: "He (Yahweh) rode upon a cherub and did fly" (Psalm 18:10). Ezekiel described the prince of Tyre (whom Yahweh used as His servant), "the anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezek. 28:14). The whole vision of four living creatures is described as "the cherub" (Ezek. 9:3) as well as the cherubim (Ezek. 10:20), it being the chariot or vehicle of divine manifestation, the medium by which Yahweh will work His will in the earth.

The replacement of the ox-face with the cherub-face in Ezekiel 10, thus seems to have been made in order to point to the fact that the cherubim are the medium of divine labor, the glorified servant community, that will accomplish the purpose and work of Yahweh in all the earth.

— H.P.M.

The Wings

“Every one had four wings” — Ezek. 1:6. The power and diversity of the Cherubim were demonstrated in the wings which provided them with their means of mobility.



THE four wings of the cherubim, like the four faces and the four living creatures, again identify the vision seen by the prophet with the foursquare encampment of the true Israel of God (Rev. 21:16).

All different sets of four, however, suggest different divine attributes. The four faces, looking in each direction of the compass, indicate omniscience; the four living creatures, suggesting the political order and unity of the government of the Kingdom of God, point to omnipotence; the four wings, giving swift mobility to the cherubim in whatever direction the multitudinous Body might desire to move, imply omnipresence.

Omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence are characteristics of Yahweh, and will be revealed by the cherubim (the saints in glory) in the Age to come, because they constitute His family, and, as such, will manifest Him in all His attributes.

Unity in Diversity

The wings, though four in number, acted in unison for, as Ezekiel observed, they were “joined one to another” (Ezek. 1:9). Therefore, as in other features of the vision, the principle of unity in diversity is again stressed, for it is an important element of the corporate Body of Christ whether in its imperfect formative state, or in its perfected, glorious manifestation in the coming age.

Ezekiel observed that the wings “were joined one to another” (Ezek. 1:9). What is meant by this is further explained in vv. 11, 24, where it is revealed that two wings were always down, though when the living creatures moved, two were extended upwards in such a way that their tips touched, and were in that sense “joined.” The marginal rendering of v. 11 states that their wings “were divided above,” and this is incorporated into the text of the Revised Version, which reads, “their wings were separate above.” In the action of flight, the two wings were stretched upward, touching the neighbouring wings at the tip, and so “joined,” while the other two covered the bodies.

The Noise of An Army

Ezekiel saw the living creatures both in motion and stationary. When moving, two of their wings were stretched above to give them mobility, but when they were stationary “they let down their wings” (v. 24).

The cherubim in motion suggest judgment. The multitudinous Body of Christ will “rebuke strong nations afar off” (Mic. 4:3), moving swiftly through the earth to accomplish this purpose. Isaiah saw them as “the name of Yahweh burning with His anger,” with “lips full of indignation, and tongue as a devouring flame” (Isa. 30:27), consuming all that is evil so that all things may reveal the glory of Yahweh. John in Patmos saw them as the armies of the heavens, following their Commander in chief, who “in righteousness doth judge and make war” (Rev. 19:11-14).



The four-headed cherubim with two wings extended and figured as in flight. Other two wings cover the body. Behind the figure is a clenched fist, to illustrate the hand of judgment.

Ezekiel not only observed the cherubim in motion, but took careful heed of the noise made by their upstretched wings. It was, he declared, “like the noise of great waters, as the noise of the Almighty, the noise of tumult (RV), as the noise of an host (army)” (Ezek. 1:24).

“Great waters” speak of a vast multitude “which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” (Rev. 7:9). John described the voice of the multitudinous Christ in such terms, declaring: “I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the noise of many waters” (Rev. 1:15; 19:6).

Flesh will not be able to successfully challenge the irresistible impact of such a flood. Its power will be swept aside together with all its institutions and ways, to be replaced with a divine system on earth.

The Voice of The Shaddai

The noise of the wings, however, was not merely like the noise of many waters, or the tumult of an army on the march, but also “as the noise of the Almighty.”

In short, the judgment is divine judgment, for the cherubim manifest the strength of Yahweh.

In Hebrew, the word *Almighty* is represented by the word *Shaddai*, which, according to Brother Thomas in *Phanerosis*, is a plural noun. It is derived from a Hebrew root signifying “destroyers” or “nourishers.” The verb *shadad* signifies to “destroy;” but the Hebrew word *shad* is translated in the A.V. by three words: “breast”, “pap” and “teat”, and signifies the source of nourishment to a child. The Shaddai, therefore, are either destroyers or nourishers.

Brother Thomas makes the beautiful point in *Phanerosis* that Abraham worshipped God by the title of El Shaddai (Exod. 6:3), which he translates as “The Strength of the Powerful Ones.” He shows that Yahweh revealed Himself to Abraham through His angels who were the “powerful ones” performing the will of Deity, and that Abraham worshipped not the angels, but the El (or Strength) who was manifested through them.

Abraham saw these “powerful ones” in a dual capacity: as Nourishers and Destroyers. They were Nourishers to Abraham, caring for him in all his wanderings, protecting him from the enemy that surrounded him on all sides. But they were Destroyers to such as the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, punishing them for their wickedness, overthrowing their cities in a terrible judgment of fire and brimstone.

Abraham, who knew Yahweh by the title of God Almighty (*El Shaddai* — the Strength of the Powerful Ones — Exod. 6:3) saw their destructive power manifested in the terrible overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah.

But Abraham’s experience of the *Shaddai* was not limited to such manifestations of destructive power. In Gen. 17:1-2, God spake to the patriarch kindly, in

the following terms: "I am Almighty God (El Shaddai); walk before Me, and be thou perfect, and I will establish My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly."

There is no threat of destructive judgment in this statement, but the very reverse. It expresses a promise of help and grace. It therefore seems as though *Shaddai*, like some other Hebrew words, is susceptible of two widely differing meanings, indicating that those represented by the word are manifested as either Yahweh's *Destroyers* or *Nourishers*. What particular meaning is given in any particular place, must be governed by the context. Abraham saw them as *Destroyers* when they plunged Sodom and Gomorrah into the abyss, but he also experienced them as *Nourishers* when they so carefully protected him, guarding him from evil in the places where he wandered as a pilgrim, caring for him as a parent would for its child. In this sense, the title is expressive of the fulness and riches of God's grace, of Yahweh as the Giver of "every good and perfect gift." At its mother's breast, the need of a child is met. It finds warmth, security, sustenance and comfort. And the *Shaddai* provided all this for Abraham as he wandered in a land filled with enemies.

The Shaddai, therefore, manifested the twofold character of Yahweh: the "goodness and severity" which His dealings with Israel reveal (Rom. 11:22). As the Shaddai of the future age (Luke 20:36), the Cherubim, when sweeping forth for judgment, will reveal the same dual characteristics: those of mercy and of judgment. Their voice will be heard throughout the world (Psa. 19), "as the voice of Shaddai" — offering mercy to those who are prepared to submit (Psa. 2:10-12), but destroying, in an outpouring of fiery judgment, those who persist in resisting the will of God (2 Thess. 1:8).

It is well to bear in mind, that these dual attributes of mercy and judgment, have always been characteristics of Yahweh. He is, as He has revealed in the Psalms, both a "Sun and a Shield." He is a Sun of judgment to those who resist Him, destroying them by the heat of His righteous anger, but He is a Shield of mercy to those who trust in Him, protecting them as they shelter under the cover of His wings. Thus flesh can so act, as to cause God to respond accordingly. The Psalmist expressed that thought in Psalm 18:23-27: "I was also upright before Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore hath Yahweh recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyesight. With the merciful Thou wilt shew Thyself merciful; with an upright man Thou wilt shew Thyself upright; with the pure Thou wilt shew Thyself pure; and with the froward Thou wilt shew Thyself froward. For Thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks."

The Psalmist saw Yahweh as both Nourisher and Destroyer.

The Wings That Hang Down

We have shown, that whilst two wings are upstretched to give mobility to the

cherubim, two always hang down as a cover to the body. The upstretched wings speak of the outpouring of judgment, for the wings give mobility to the cherubim for that purpose, and on that basis, those that remain down as a cover, speak of defence.

In short, whether judgment is being poured out or not, there is always opportunity of a cover — the principle of atonement offered in the symbol of the cherubim.

The use of wings to that end, is suggested by the words of the Lord, as well as by the constant repetition of the Psalmist. As he lamented over Jerusalem, Christ declared: “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chicken under her wings, and ye would not; Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:37,38).

Boaz commended Ruth in these terms: “Yahweh recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of Yahweh God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust” (Ruth 2:12).

The Psalmist besought Yahweh: “Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings, from the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about” (Psa. 17:8,9). “In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast” (Psa. 57:1).

And in regard to the Messiah, it was predicted: “He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler” (Psa. 91:4).

As figurative of the ever-ready defence of Yahweh, the cover that is always available to those who put their trust in Him, it is appropriate that two wings are always shown stretched down to hide, as well as two wings stretched up to fly.

Once the work of judgment is completed, however, the cherubim will let down their wings (v. 24). Once the nations are subdued, there will be no need for the saints, as belligerently manifested, to move swiftly to and fro through the earth for judgment. The wings will be let down, and all mankind will find refuge thereunder. The tumult of the army, the noise of the saints as a mighty river in flood, will give place to the peace, quietness and order of the millennium.

Saints will be established in all parts of the world as the representatives of the government centred in Jerusalem. In other words, the cherubim will “let down their wings.”

Why Not Six Wings?

In Revelation 4:7-9, the cherubim are represented as having six wings each, making twenty-four in all. There are, therefore, four living creatures and twenty-four wings, like the twenty-four elders around the throne.

Why should the cherubim of Revelation have six wings, and yet those of Ezekiel’s vision have only four?

The obvious intention seems to be to identify the king priests of Rev. 5:9-10

with both the cherubim of Ezekiel 1, and the seraphim of Isaiah 6. These king-priests are both the cherubim (“that which resembles the majesty”) and the seraphim (“that which burns”, or consumes).

As the cherubim they manifest the attributes of Yahweh unto the world; as the seraphim they consume in fiery judgments all the polluting influences of flesh.

The four wings identify them with Israel; the six wings identify them with flesh (for six is the number of flesh — Rev. 13:18). Thus the six wings speak of God manifest in flesh, and the four wings reveal the national channel of such manifestation: Israel.

It is significant that the cherubim of Revelation 4 are identified with the seraphim not only through the wings, but also through a song (v. 8), a song that proclaims them to be the manifestation of the Most Holy in the earth.

The Hidden Hand of Judgment

The upstretched wings apparently enabled Ezekiel to see “the hands of a man (Adam) under their wings” (Ezek. 1:8). This word should be rendered in the singular number: “hand” and not “hands” as in the A.V. The “hand of man” indicates the work of judgment. Of Christ it is said: “The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man” (John 5:27).

The stretching upwards of the wings that the cherubim might move forward to judgment, reveals the “hand of a man” about to be outstretched for that purpose.

Ezekiel saw the cherubim sweeping down against Jerusalem, and as he considered their fearsome aspect in judgment, it must have emphasised to him that there was nothing worth preserving in a people and system that gave only lip-service to Yahweh, but refused to reveal any practical manifestation of what is justly due to Him. A powerful exhortation is thus presented to the prophet, for he would realise that he must work for the attainment of the future glory, and not for the preservation of things then existing, but destined to pass away.

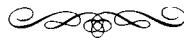
That is the exhortation to us also.

Shortly, the Cherubim of glory will be revealed in the mighty army of Shaddai which will overthrow the existing order of things on earth, to replace it with the divine system. Let us labor to that end, and not for the preservation of a state of things doomed to destruction at the coming of the Lord Jesus, whether it be found ecclesially or otherwise.

— H.P.M.

The Heart of the Cherubim

“As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps; it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning” (Ezek. 1:13).



WHEN Ezekiel’s attention was first drawn to the cherubim, whilst they were still afar off, he saw them as a moving mass of light, with long tongues of flame encircling them in a band of fire.

As they travelled steadily forward he saw four distinct figures emerge therefrom, and was able to describe their shape, their faces, their wings, and other parts of the symbolic representation.

Still closer they came, enabling him to describe further details as they were revealed. He saw burning coals of fire, the appearance of lamps, the shooting forth of lightning, and according to the A.V., he declared this was the “likeness of the living creatures” (Ezek. 1:13).

Burning Coals of Fire

But the *Septuagint* renders verse 13 differently, and though the Hebrew is in accordance with the A.V., Ginsburg, the celebrated Hebraist, believes that the context demands that the *Septuagint* be here followed. Certainly it is much more intelligible: “And in the midst of the living creatures there was an appearance as of burning coals of fire, as an appearance of lamps turning among the living creatures; and the brightness of fire, and out of the fire came forth lightning.”

This reading is supported by Ezekiel 10:6-7: “Take fire from between the cherubim... and the cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubim, and took thereof...”

Burning coals of fire, turning lamps, and shooting lightning all speak of different manifestations of the Spirit.

The burning coals of fire suggest the coals of fire upon the altar of sacrifice, some of which were used to burn the incense offered upon the golden altar of the tabernacle which connected the Holy Place with the Most Holy. Aaron, for example, was instructed to take “a censer full of burning coals of fire from off

the altar before Yahweh” (Lev. 16:12).

From whence came those coals of fire? It was no ordinary fire supplied by man. It was divine fire from heaven. When the altar was first set up, and sacrifices were heaped upon it, divine fire miraculously ignited the wood of the altar, to consume the offerings. Lev. 9:24 declares: “There came a fire out from before Yahweh, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat...” That fire was carefully preserved; it was never allowed to go out. Aaron was instructed: “The fire upon the altar shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning... the fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out” (Lev. 6:12-13).

That fire represented the consuming spirit of Yahweh. The burnt offering was only acceptable when consumed by that fire. Symbolically it showed the offerer what he had to do to offer acceptably to Yahweh. As the several parts of the animal, representing mind, strength and being, were slowly consumed by the fire, so he learned that he must allow the Spirit-Word to so consume him that in mind, strength and body he served God in complete dedication. He then became a “living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” which he recognised as the “service of reason” (Rom. 12:1). When the Spirit-Word dominates us, it will consume the mind, the strength and the body causing the resultant service in action to ascend as an acceptable savour unto Yahweh. So Paul exhorted the Thessalonian brethren that they should “quench not the spirit” (1 Thess. 5:19), thus likening the Word to the flame that consumed the sacrifice.

But these burning coals of fire could be used to consume the guilty as well. Nadab and Abihu found that out to their cost, when in defiance of the implicit instructions of Yahweh, they went to “offer strange fire before Yahweh.” The record states: “And there went out fire from Yahweh, and devoured them, and they died before Yahweh” (Lev. 10:2).

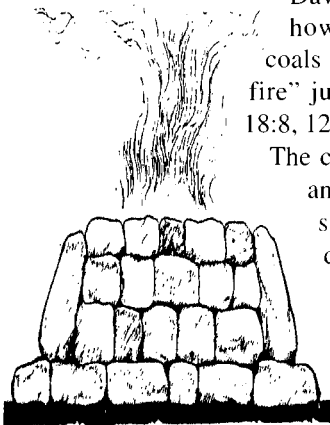
On this occasion, the fire from the coals consumed in judgment.

David speaks of a similar theophany. He describes how that “fire out of Yahweh’s mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it,” and that through “coals of fire” judgment was executed upon the wicked (Psalm 18:8, 12, 13).

The coals of fire, therefore, could be used to consume an acceptable offering to Yahweh, turning it into a savour of a sweet smell unto Him, or it could devour and destroy the wicked.

That power will be in the hands of the saints in the Age to come.

They will be Yahweh’s representatives on earth, to receive the offerings of the people, or to consume in righteous indignation those who



reject the divine mercy.

In the centre, the very heart of the four living creatures, these burning coals of fire were seen by Ezekiel, a symbol of hope to the godly, but of grim warning to the rebellious.

The burning coals, therefore, are a symbol of the Spirit of Yahweh which can heal or destroy.

The Turning Lamp

Ezekiel also saw “the appearance of lamps,” and the *Septuagint* adds that they were “turning lamps.” Here, again, is a further symbol of the spirit, but now used in the sense of illumination. John in Patmos, describes the cherubim as having “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God” (Rev. 4:5).

Actually, there is but one Spirit (Eph. 4:4), but when that spirit is multitudinously diffused (as it will be in the millennium through the saints), it is described as “seven spirits,” for seven is the number of completeness.

As far as the cherubim of Ezekiel Ch. 1 are concerned, if we accept the wording of the *Septuagint*, the lamps were turning in each direction, and in that sense they correspond with the faces. This could well be the case. It speaks of the illumination that, stemming from the Spirit which shall then fill the saints, will destroy the darkness of Gentilism, and irradiate divine truth on every side.

So first there is set forth the suggestion of sacrifice in the burning coals of fire, and then the suggestion of the manifestation of truth in the shining lamps in the midst of the cherubim.

And after that? Judgment. Ezekiel saw lightning flashes forking out from the midst of the cherubim. This speaks of divine judgment.

The Lightning Flashes

Lightning is used in Scripture as the symbol of Yahweh’s spirit in belligerent and angry manifestation. The Psalmist uses it as a symbol of divine judgment. Psalm 144:6 declares: “Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.”

Lightning implies the open manifestation of the Spirit against the enemies of Yahweh. Zechariah speaks of how natural Israel will be organised into an army to invade those Gentile territories that will resist the appeal of the Son to submit themselves to him (Psalm 2). The prophet declares: “And Yahweh shall be seen over them, and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning; and the Lord Yahweh shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with the whirlwinds of the south” (Zech. 9:14). Officered by the saints (the “whirlwinds of the south”), and assisted by the Spirit, this Israelitish army will subdue the world.

This will be a period of political storm, figuratively a time of “dark clouds, of thunder, and of lightning.” In *Eureka* vol. 3, p. 200, Brother Thomas shows how the Lord shall enthrone himself in Jerusalem, shall issue a proclamation

unto the nations calling upon them to submit to him, and shall first await the result of such an appeal before sending forth his armies against a disobedient world. He writes: "Enthroned in Jerusalem, his dwelling-place, he is fearless of attack. 'I will be still,' says the Spirit: 'yet in my dwelling-place I will be without fear — as dry heat impending lightning, as a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest' (Isa. 18:4). Such will be the condition of the political aerial, styled in Apoc. 16:17, 'the air,' at the crisis when 'the lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail' (Rev. 11:19; 4:5) shall be about to rend the heavens, shake the earth, and beat down the corrupters of the world. During this ominous sultriness, or portentous calm, the strong lion of Judah 'sends of those who have escaped... to the nations... and they shall declare the glory' of which he is the king (Isa. 66:19)... With a loud voice throughout the aerial, styled 'mid-heaven,' (they) will invite mankind to 'fear the Deity, and give glory to Him, because the hour of His judgment, which is to destroy the catholic and protestant constitution of things, 'is come' (Rev. 14:6,7)."

They will be destroyed by the "forked lightning" that shall strike against them through the medium of the cherubim controlling the armies of Israel. This will be the open manifestation of spirit power, that shall gleam through the darkness of the Gentile political heavens (Isa. 60:1), to show forth the power of Yahweh in angry, belligerent manifestation.

The Living Creatures as Lightning

According to the A.V., Ezekiel declared that "the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning" (Ezek. 1:14). In the Hebrew, however, the word for "lightning" in this verse, is different from that in the verse preceding it. In the previous verse, the word signifies to gleam, such as lightning does in the darkness of a stormy sky; but in this verse, it signifies speed.

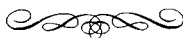
Ezekiel saw the living creatures running and returning with superhuman speed, in a flash. They ran to execute the judgments written, and returned to report. They are thus like the angels of heaven who "excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word" (Psa. 103:20). The cherubim will be united as one; they will be the manifestation of Yahweh in the earth, and will perform that which their "head" requires.

In this tremendous vision of flashing fire, and swift movement, Ezekiel saw the work of the saints in the Age to come, as the cherubim of glory, accepting the offerings of the nations, illuminating the darkness of the Gentiles, and subduing in divine judgment those who dare resist God's will. Swift and certain in execution, there will be no resisting the tremendous judgments that will be aimed against the world of the ungodly when Yahweh's spirit is unleashed through His elect, then united in the one Body of the Cherubim, through which shall be seen once again, the shining forth of glory in the earth.

— H.P.M.

The Awe-Inspiring Wheels

“The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl... and as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel” (Ezek. 1:16).



PERHAPS the most curious feature of the cherubim were the wheels which the prophet described in detail. He refers to the number of them, their colour, their curious construction, their purpose, size and position, their appearance, the unity of their operation, the command issued to them, and the noise they made when in motion.

The Number of Wheels

There were four wheels (Ezek. 10:9), as there were also four living creatures, four faces, and four wings; and what applies to the number four in relation to these other features, applies also to the wheels. They represent the true Israel of God as a mobile force conveying the divine judgments wherever they are needed.

Each of the four wheels was placed by one of the four living creatures (Ezek. 1:15), so that combined they formed the “chariot of the cherubim” (1 Chron. 28:18), swiftly bearing the living creatures to the point of the compass where their presence was required.

Their Color

Their “appearance” and their “work,” declared Ezekiel “was like unto the color of a beryl” (Ezek. 1:16). This is a most significant gem, and helps to identify the cherubim with the “certain man” seen by Daniel, whose body “was like the beryl” (Dan. 10:6). This man of many parts, represents the multitudinous Christ of Ephesians 4:15, 16, so that the beryl has a very important meaning for those who hope to form part thereof.

The Hebrew name for beryl is *tarsheesh*, which signifies “to break or subdue.” A gem having this meaning is appropriate to describe the work of the cherubim or saints, for they are to break in pieces (Rev. 2:26,27), and subdue the nations, bringing them into obedient subjection to Christ.

The beryl found its place in the fourth row of gems that made up the Urim and Thummim in the breastplate of the high priest (Exod. 28:20), and as such,

answered to Dan which tribe took up the first position in the fourth group of three tribes set out in Numbers 2 (see v. 25). The tribes of Israel encamped around the Tabernacle in a vast square, each group of three facing one of the four points of the compass, and with the standards of the principal tribes taking the prominent position. Dan was chief of those stationed on the north of the Tabernacle, the direction from whence Ezekiel saw the cherubim swiftly advancing, and Dan's gem in the breastplate of the high priest was the beryl. Dan signifies *Judgment*, and indicates rulership, for through Christ, Yahweh will "judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31).

The beryl, therefore, stood for that which is "to break or subdue," and it was associated with a tribe whose name means judgment. In this there is quite a significant association of ideas. It is not without point that the prophet Daniel (*The Judgment of El*) was chosen to interpret the dream of the king which revealed the purpose of Yahweh to "break and subdue" the nations by the crushing blow of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands (Daniel 2).

Notice, also, the significant play on the meaning of the word Dan in Jacob's prophecy of the last days: "Dan (judgment) shall JUDGE his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O Yahweh" (Gen. 49:16-18).

This section of the prophecy shows the Judge, ruling his people, subduing the enemies of Israel, revealing the salvation of Yahweh. It is the work of Christ as Dan the judge and ruler, revealing the character of the beryl stone, the stone of Dan the tribe.

Christ will not perform this work on his own, however, but in conjunction with his brethren. Thus the Psalmist declared: "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the nations, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgments written: this honor have all his saints. Praise ye Yahweh." (Psa. 149:5-9).

As this is the future work of the multitudinous Christ, no wonder Daniel saw his body "as the beryl," — as that which breaks and subdues.

This, too, explains why the "work of the wheels" is described "as the color of the beryl." Ezekiel saw them inexorably rolling on to judgment, to "break and subdue" the guilty city of Jerusalem; and the outpouring of similar judgment upon the Gentiles will constitute part of the work of the true cherubim, when they are manifested in the Age to come.

But though the beryl is identified with Dan in the Old Testament, in the New Testament it represents the tribe of Levi. This is revealed by a careful consideration of the gems associated with the New Jerusalem, together with the symbolic

tribes of Israel that form its members. The foundations of this symbolic city, the Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9), are twelve gems on which are inscribed the names of the twelve apostles (v. 14). These twelve gems are identifiable with the twelve tribes of Israel, and the names of the Apostles are therein inscribed, because they are destined to be the Judges of the twelve tribes in the day that Christ rules from Jerusalem (Matthew 19:28). This fact demonstrates that the Hope of Israel is the foundation of this spiritual city, the Bride of Christ.

Now the eighth stone is a beryl (Rev. 21:20), and answers to the eighth tribe enumerated in Revelation 7, where the tribes that form the New Jerusalem of Chapter 21 are set out in order. This eighth tribe is not Dan (which tribe is not mentioned), but Levi (Rev. 7:7). Thus under the Law, the beryl relates to Dan the Judge, whereas in the Apocalypse, it relates to Levi the Priest. The beryl, therefore, unites the two functions of Judge and Priest, symbolising the royal priesthood which the cherubim shall constitute as described in Revelation 5:9-10, or as they are called by Peter: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood..." (1 Pet. 2:9).

Dan and Levi thus make an interesting combination, setting forth what the saints will effect in the Age to come as a community of king priests. First they shall judge (Dan), bringing the Law of Yahweh before the notice of the nations, then they shall join (Levi means *to join*), by incorporating them in the kingdom to be set up, and ministering to them as priests. The pouring out of divine judgments will humble the nations, after which the saints will join them to Yahweh by a covenant of peace.

That is the drama of the future, beautifully displayed in the visions of the prophets. A typical example is found in Zechariah 14. The very nations that will come up against Jerusalem to war, will be so broken and subdued by the crushing judgments poured out by the saints, that these will ultimately clearly recognise the divine omnipotence manifested therein. They will then seek the peace of the One they have rejected for so long, and will return to Jerusalem for worship. First they will converge on the city for war (v. 2), and then for worship (v. 16), and in this remarkable transformation there is revealed the drama of the divine purpose.

Their Curious Construction

Ezekiel declared that there was "as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel" (Ezek. 1:16). What did he mean? Some have thought that his words describe a wheel working within a wheel as though joined together by cogs, and so see in the vision a symbol expressive of complete harmony and co-operation. But a careful consideration of this description indicates that each of the four wheels was interlocked with a wheel fitted into it at right angles. Each wheel, therefore, had four sides to it, and could roll in any direction without turning. "When they

went, they went upon their four sides, and they turned not when they went” (Ezek. 1:17).

Some object to this, on the grounds that it is an impossibility, for it does not provide for a normal axle. But the cherubim do not relate to normal things; it is a divine vision comparable to nothing on earth. It is not normal for wheels to be living things full of eyes, as are these (v. 18); it is not normal for wheels to be on earth, and at the same time, apparently in heaven; but these are so described (vv. 15, 18).

It is not necessary, therefore, to match these wheels with the conventional wheels of today, but rather to accept what is revealed, and try to understand the meaning of the vision.

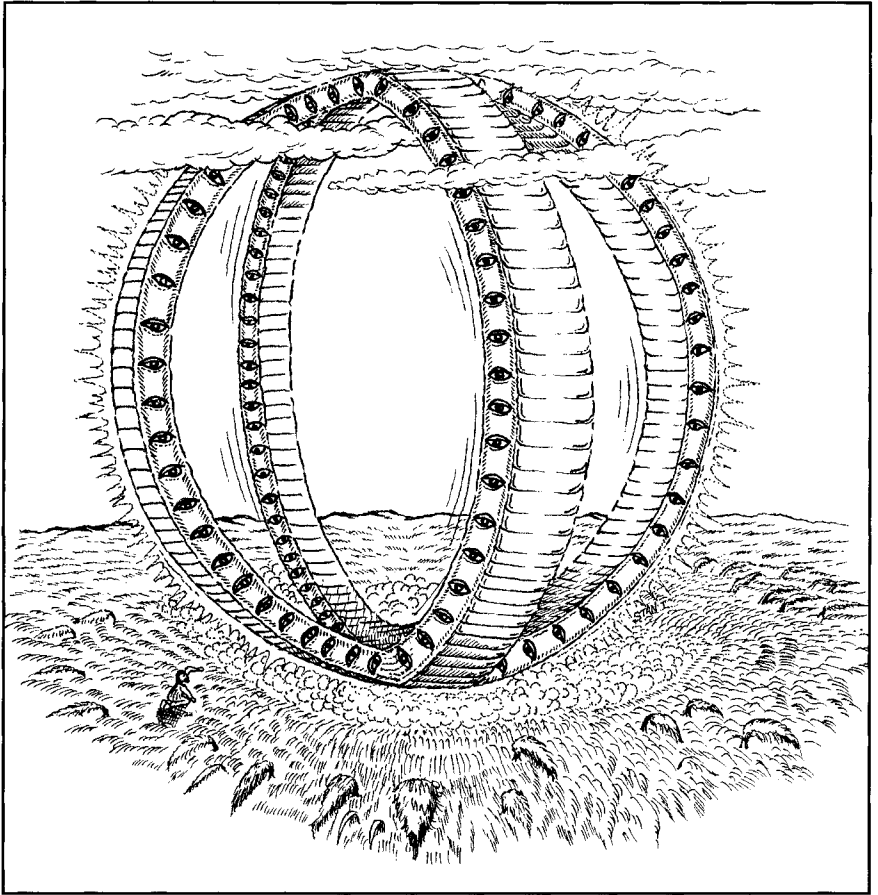
A wheel, being circular, and therefore having no end, suggests the symbol of eternity, so that the divine principle of immortality is first stressed. The interlocking wheel, however, divides the wheel into four sections, so that here, once more, is the symbol of Israel, teaching the lesson that the hope of eternity can only be obtained through the promises made to Israel.

Though divided into four sections, however, there is complete unity of operation, for all the wheels follow the head (Ezek. 10:11). The brain (the Lord Jesus) is there directing the movements of the cherubim, so that they proceed according to his will, and the wheels turn in the direction in which the head looks. Ezekiel declared that “the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels” (Ezek. 1:20), showing that they were living entities of the whole, and that they, like the rest of the vision, were governed by the one motivating spirit (Eph. 4:4).

The interlocking wheels permitted the cherubim to move straight forward to any point of the compass without turning, and in this action they were driven by the Spirit (Ezek. 1:12). With the minimum of trouble, they went directly to the place required, there to pour out the judgments of Yahweh, and to bring into subjection those who would resist His will.

They were awe-inspiring wheels, with rims so high, declared Ezekiel, that “they were dreadful” (v. 18). We glimpse in this description, a picture of the prophet crouching in fear before the terrible vision as it swept close to him. He sees the lofty wheels full of eyes speedily rolling along before him; he observes the faces looking intently at the point where judgment is to be poured out; he hears the noise of the wings, like an army on the march, bearing the creatures onwards; he considers the terrible eyes of which the vision was full, piercing in their discernment; he feels the heat of the fierce, purging flames, capable of consuming all that offends the majesty of Yahweh. And now, as the vision is right before him, speeding south to Jerusalem, he is over-awed by the lofty rims which tower so high above him as to unite both earth and heaven, and to fill him with fear.

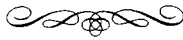
— H.P.M.



Ezekiel sees the lofty rims of the wheels-within-wheels extend from the earth to the firmament above. They are filled with eyes, and represented in this illustration as being active with movement. Ezekiel is portrayed crouching at the bottom left of the vision in an endeavor to indicate proportion to the majestic vision before him. On the foreground all around, trees and shrubs are bent over from the movement of the wind, the "spirit of the living creatures", which is "in the wheels".

The Lofty, Formidable Rims

“As for their rings (lit. rims), they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about” — Ezekiel 1:18.



AS Ezekiel considered the wheels of the Cherubic-chariot, his attention was particularly drawn to four remarkable features relating to the rims.

(1) They were high, or lofty, so that they towered above him, instilling in him a sense of inferiority and humility.

(2) They were dreadful (from the Hebrew *yihrah* — to fear or reverence), or of such a nature as to excite in him a feeling of awe and reverence.

(3) They were living, and not inanimate; for they were “full of eyes round about.”

(4) They formed a link between heaven and earth, for they were the one part of the vision that touched the earth (v. 15), and yet were elevated high above it unto heaven (v. 18).

Four Impressive Features

These features of the rims symbolise attributes that will be displayed by the cherubim of glory (the saints), in the Age to come. Their elevated position in that day, will inspire in mere mortals a sense of inferiority as to induce humility, as well as causing them to prostrate themselves in awe and reverence. They will acknowledge the saints as victors over the flesh, as members of the divine family of God, the aristocracy of the Kingdom of God. Men will pay obeisance unto them as unto superiors — for they will be the visible manifestations of Yahweh. Those who at one time were adherents of the Apostasy will recognise their error, and acknowledge that these are the beloved of Yahweh, the spiritual royal house of David. In Revelation 3:9, Christ promised the faithful: “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.”

The rims comprised circles of eyes, for they were “full of eyes round about.” The expression shows that the wheels were living things, “executing the judgments written,” whilst the circle implies their immortality. Zechariah saw the saints as “the eyes of Yahweh, which run to and fro through the whole earth” (Zech. 4:10); a similar idea to that expressed by the vision of Ezekiel.

From Ezekiel 10:12, however, we learn that the whole vision was “full of eyes,” and not merely the wheels (Ezek. 1:18). The whole vision was a revelation of the saints in glory, but the different parts of it (faces, wheels, wings, rims, etc.), like the different members of the multitudinous Christ, will have varying and differing duties to perform. Some will go forth as warriors with Christ, some will be sent out as teachers, others will be administrators in his realm; all will find congenial work to do in that day, according to their ability and the need. Not all will be warriors, not all will be administrators, not all will exercise the same authority. There will be various offices, and gradations of rank, although one mind shall direct them all.

The immortalised saints will also form a link between earth and heaven, and this is implied in the description of the wheels, for Ezekiel declared that they both touched the earth, and yet were lifted high above it. This link between earth and heaven will be established by the glorified saints for, though once flesh and blood, they will then bear “the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2); though once “earthly,” they will then have been made like unto the “heavenly.” In them will be brought to fulfilment the saying of Paul: “As we have borne the image of the earthly, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:48-49). And as bearers of the heavenly image they will also take over those duties once administered by the angels (cp. Heb. 1:14 with 2:5).

The glorified saints will provide a further link between earth and heaven, inasmuch as they will act as an object lesson to the mortal population during the Millennium, for it will be recognised that what they then will be (clothed upon with divine nature), any mortal can attain unto at the end of that period, by overcoming the flesh.

The True Unity of the Body

Ezekiel witnessed beautiful unity of movement and position between all the various parts of the Cherubic vision, including the wheels. He declared: “And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels” (Ezek. 1:19-21).

Here is expressed a glorious unity, suggesting that, notwithstanding the individual duties of saints, they will all be motivated by one spirit, the spirit of Yahweh. It matters not, therefore, whether they act in the capacity of wheels, rims, wings, eyes, faces, or body, there will be complete identification with the cherubim as a whole. Each will have a work and status such as he or she will be best qualified to perform.

Yet absolute unity will prevail, for one spirit will move them all.

That is the foundation of true unity whether now or then. Unless the spirit of Truth moves each member of an ecclesia today, there cannot exist true unity. Paul made that point when he exhorted the brethren of Ephesus, that they should “endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). It was the “unity of the spirit” (i.e., the teaching of the Word — see John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1 John 5:6) that he exhorted them to keep, and not the unity of the ecclesia in its absence. He knew that the latter was assured if the former was maintained, but that where there is not a mutual appreciation of truth, there does not exist the basis for full ecclesial unity. He therefore exhorted elsewhere that



errorists should be excluded from the company of saints. That, also, is the theme of Christ's warning messages to the seven ecclesias in Asia, recorded in Revelation 2 and 3. He told the elders of those ecclesias, that unless they took heed, and dealt with those errorists found in their midst, he would remove their light-stand. Unfortunately, the elders failed to heed the warning, and the ecclesias in their care reaped the consequences of their folly. For if truth is capitulated for the sake of peace, both will be lost ultimately. Divine wisdom is "first pure, then peaceable" (James 3:17), even as Christ the Prince of Peace, is "*first* King of righteousness, and *after that* also King of peace" (Heb. 7:2). It is fatal, in our ignorance or apathy, to try and reverse that process.

Unfortunately, that is a principle largely lost sight of today. There is much talk of ecclesial unity and of peace, but it is talk of such a nature as to destroy the point and power of doctrine. It is being urged that we should not oppose error too vigorously lest such agitation erupt into division; but to bow to such a philosophy is to betray the Truth, for such an attitude can only strengthen error. True fellowship means much more than enjoying the company of brethren, or of endorsing a mutual agreement to avoid controversial subjects; it requires that we share the feelings and ideals of those with whom we are linked in the bonds of the Gospel, and that we meet them in open discussion on the Word without fear of being challenged on some fundamental principle.

True unity is not limited to pleasant social gatherings, or enjoyable fraternals, but is manifested where a community is welded together by the unifying spirit of Truth enthusiastically accepted and acted upon. Where that is in evidence, there will be found true unity, for each member will be motivated by the driving force of the Spirit-Word, and will gravitate naturally to those of like mind. Though, perhaps, differing from one another in race, temperament, appearance and age, there will be found a common family likeness, for each one will be "sealed with the Name of God in the forehead" (Rev. 14:1). The "spirit of life" will motivate the whole Body, producing that result described in Revelation 7:9, "Behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the lamb..."

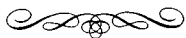
So the wheels and the rims appeared to Ezekiel as both lofty (high) and awe-inspiring (terrible), and manifesting a unity with the rest of the vision, for the spirit of life was in the wheels as elsewhere.

These references to the cherubim completed his initial description of them.

— H.P.M.

The Terrible Firmament

“And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above”— Ezekiel 1:22.



THE closing verses of Ezekiel 1 provide a sequential outline of the establishment of Christ's reign on earth in the Age to come. The vision took in the environment and dramatic movement of the cherubim. The prophet saw and heard:

- (1) That the cherubim supported a firmament that was stretched forth over their heads — v. 22.
- (2) That before stability was brought to this, they made a noise like that of an army on the march — v. 24.
- (3) That when they let down their wings (after the outpouring of judgment was completed), quietness prevailed and a single voice was heard — v. 25.
- (4) That a throne, with a man sitting thereon, was then seen upon the firmament above — vv. 26-27.
- (5) That a rainbow was round about the throne — v. 28.

Ezekiel Sees The Establishment of the Kingdom

These five points describe the order in which the Kingdom of God will be established upon the earth, and answer to the following developments:

- (1) The firmament relates to the “new heavens” of the coming age (Isaiah 65:17). This is supported by the cherubim, for it is essentially Israelitish in character. When the cherubim are manifested in the earth, the Israelitish nature of that which they will ultimately establish therein, will be abundantly evident.
- (2) It will be by war, and the outpouring of judgments upon the Gentiles, that this will be achieved.
- (3) When the work of judgment is brought to a successful completion, and quietness prevails throughout the earth (Zech. 1:11), the decrees of the King will be heard from Zion, sending forth his instructions throughout all the world (Isa. 2:2-3).
- (4) The full glory of the Lord's throne will then be manifested for all to see.

- (5) Thus will the covenant of Yahweh (of which the rainbow is the token: Gen. 9:13-15) be consummated.

The Firmament

Among other references, this word occurs in two significant passages of Scripture, both of which point to the future.

Psalm 19:1 declares: "The heavens declare the glory of God (El), and the firmament showeth His handiwork".

The Psalm is a parable of the Kingdom. In Romans 10:18, Paul quotes v. 4, and applies it to the preaching of the Apostles, but its complete fulfilment will be seen at Christ's return. In that regard, "the heavens" that will "declare the glory of El," and "the firmament" that will display "His handiwork," relate to the new political order then to be set up. In its midst, and encircled by the "planets" there will be established the "sun of righteousness," the Lord Jesus Christ (Mal. 4:1-2). The Psalm describes him as both a "bridegroom" and a "warrior" (v. 5); and such, indeed, the Lord will be, for after uniting himself with his Bride, he shall go forth as a man of war to destroy the powers of darkness (Isaiah 60:1).

In describing the glory of the saints in the future, Daniel likewise made reference to the firmament, declaring: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the *firmament* (the "glory of the Father"; see Matt. 13:43), and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

Here again, the term is used to describe the exalted positions of eminence which the glorified saints shall occupy when they are given "power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26). Paul likens it to being "ever with the Lord" in "the air" (1 Thess. 4:17). John, in Patmos, saw a door opened in heaven, and he heard a voice inviting him, as representative of the saved, to "come up hither" (Rev. 4:1). Such an invitation to political exaltation, will be issued to the saints after the Judgment Seat of Christ has discriminated between the worthy and unworthy. Meanwhile, as Brother Thomas comments in *Eureka* vol. 2 pp. 20-21:

"To the saints this aerial expanse is closed. At present they do not shine there as the sun, moon, constellations, and stars of the firmament. The luminaries of the heaven are the dignities, or glories, incarnated in the officials who figure as the civil and spiritual rulers of 'the earth and habitable.' Although the saints are promised 'power over the nations to rule them' (Rev. 2:26-27), 'the heaven,' in which national government is located, is shut and fast closed against them. Their principles incapacitate them for sharing power with the world-rulers in Church and State. A saint, who is one in deed as well as name, cannot condescend to subject himself to the conditions necessary to obtain the favor of the political mob, whether that mob be a mob of aristocrats, or a mob of what these call 'the swinish multitude;' he cannot, I say, condescend, as a son of the Deity, a brother of Jesus Christ, and a king and priest elect for God, to seek the favor of 'the dead in trespasses and sins,' whose votes and patronage are indispensable to his exaltation to the heaven; in which he may figure by the eloquence of his speech,

or the gaudy decorations of a court, as a star of the first or an inferior magnitude. No saint could by any other possibility than that based upon apostasy, consent to occupy the Papal Chair, or to fill an archiepiscopal, or other ecclesiastical or secular throne. The heaven, in which these seats of glory, honor, wealth, and power exist, is infected with such malarious and poisonous exhalations of sin's flesh, that he could not breathe them, and live and move, and have continued healthful spiritual existence in the Deity. Fortunately for the saints this heaven is shut against them, and its door bolted, locked and barred to keep out all who will not fall down and worship the Satan, who is prince of the Aerial, and bestows its glories upon whomsoever he approves.

“But this heaven is not always to be shut up and barred against the saints — against the Lord Jesus and his Brethren. The Satan that now fills it, and monopolises its heavenly things, is to be hurled from it with a mighty overthrow. This Satan, which is Sin in official manifestation, holds the power and glory of the world's dominions... But the Satan in the heavenlies is doomed; for Jesus in vision of the future said: ‘I beheld the Satan as it were lightning fall out of the heaven’ (Luke 10:18). He falls thence by virtue of a stronger than the Satan breaking into the heaven and casting him out... The oracle before us (Rev. 4:1) proclaims ‘a door opened in the heaven,’ which is equivalent to saying, that a power had been apocalypsed on earth, stronger than the Satan; that this power had made a breach in the enemy's works; and that this breach had become practicable, so that the breaching power could march through it as through a door and take possession of the heaven, or ‘kingdom under the whole heaven’ (Dan. 7:27).”

Ezekiel declared that the firmament was supported by the cherubim, and as they represent the true Israel of God, the vision he saw, demonstrated that the firmament, or heavenlies of the future, will be Israelitish in character. The Gentiles will be forced to submit to Israel's king, and accept the constitution he shall provide for the peace of the world. Thus they will be drawn to the brightness of Zion's light (Isa. 60).

Its colour was that of “terrible crystal.” The word “terrible” is from the Hebrew *yarey*, a word that means *to fear, be in awe of, to reverence*. The firmament thus appears as a beautiful, pure, transparent rock crystal, shining in such brilliance as to induce awe and reverence in all who behold it. Let a summer sun shine forth powerfully out of a clear sky, and the firmament will appear as a rock-like crystal reflecting the strength, heat and brilliance of the shining orb.

Such a firmament becomes the figure for the political atmosphere, or aerial, when the sun of righteousness shall shine forth in full complete glory, “seven-fold as the light of seven days, in the day that Yahweh bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound” (Isa. 30:26). The figure speaks of the glory, purity and peace of the Kingdom of God.

The nations likewise will reflect the blessings of the Government in that day. The vision of the cherubim in Revelation 4 is associated with a “sea of glass like

unto crystal" (v. 6). In his exposition in *Eureka*, Brother Thomas shows that this is an apt symbol for the purified nations at peace with the Government of Christ. At present, they are like "a troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isa. 57:20), but when they are purged of evil, and made subject to the law that shall proceed from Zion, "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and goodwill towards men" will result. The troubled "seas" will be calmed by the one who showed his ability to do this in the midst of the storm on Galilee's waters, and becoming as crystal, will reflect the attributes of those who shall reign over them.

The cherubim will bring such a "firmament" to the present stormy political heavens, and such a calm to the troubled sea of nations. Prior to the full establishment of this, however, mankind will witness a day of judgment such as is described in the sombre words of Zephaniah 1:15 — "A day of wrath, of trouble, and distress; a day of wasteness and desolation; a day of darkness and gloominess; a day of clouds and thick darkness."

In contrast, Ezekiel's firmament is clear and bright, and shines forth with radiant glory.

A World in Subjection

Before the clear, awe-inspiring firmament can be established over mankind, the world must be brought into subjection to the King. The cherubim will accomplish this by the outpouring of their judgments. They will go forth as an army to that end. So the prophet heard them first as "the noise of great waters, the voice of the Almighty (the *Shaddai*), the voice of speech, as the noise of an army" (v. 24).

A "noise of great waters," speaks of a tremendous multitude such as "no man can number out of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues" (Rev. 7:9). A "voice of speech" indicates the demands that shall be made upon the nations to submit to the authority of the Son of God. A "noise of an army" implies war, and such a war as will devastate those who resist his will. The "voice of the *Shaddai*" (Almighty) reveals the alternative to be set before men: salvation or destruction. (See comments on the word *Shaddai* in Chapter 11).

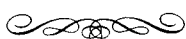
In using the "voice of the *Shaddai*" the glorified saints will display the dual aspects of Destroyers and Nourishers to the world about them. Upon those who continue to flout the divine mercy, they will pour out judgments like those experienced by Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. 60:12), but those who are prepared to submit will be invited to shelter under their care.

This revelation of judgment and mercy will ultimately bring all mankind into subjection to the Government of the Lord Jesus, to that authority symbolised by the pure, shining, awe-inspiring, terrible firmament that Ezekiel saw stretched above the heads of the cherubim as they went forth as an army on the march.

— H.P.M.

The Man Upon the Throne

“Above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it” (Ezek. 1:26).



EZEKIEL first saw the Cherubim (the Saints) in glory subduing the nations by the outpouring of the judgments of war. He heard the noise of their wings, “as the noise of many waters, as the voice of the Almighty, as the voice of speech, as the noise of an host (army)” (v. 24).

But then he added: “When they stood, they let down their wings.” The standing implies the end of judgment, the letting down of their wings suggests the ceasing of the tumult, so that quietness prevails.

Thus there was symbolised, first national judgment and then peace. This is a familiar sequence of prophecy. The multitudinous Christ will first “rebuke strong nations afar off” (Mic. 4:3), in consequence of which worldwide peace will ensue: “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall no longer lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Isaiah declares: “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:9).

The Voice From The Throne

This quietness will be broken by a voice. Ezekiel declared: “And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings” (Ezek. 1:25).

It will be the voice of Christ proclaiming that the initial stage of the divine purpose is completed (Rev. 16:17), and announcing the terms of peace. Isaiah predicts: “Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3). His voice, proclaiming the law and testimony of Yahweh, will be carried to the ends of the earth by the ruling aristocracy of the future age (the saints), whose “line will go out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world” (Psa. 19:4. See Paul’s application of this to the preaching of the Apostles, Rom. 10:18).

In that day, Jerusalem, as the Metropolis of a divine theocracy on earth, will provide the Foundation of Peace (the meaning of *Jerusalem*), and will revert to its original title of *Salem* (Gen. 14:18; Psalm 76:2). Thus Jerusalem will end as it began. When first introduced into the Bible narrative, it was ruled by a king-priest whose name was Melchizedek (Gen. 14), and in its future development it will be ruled by a king-priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110). Jerusalem then will have attained unto its divine destiny.

From that centre, and from the restored throne of David, the voice of Christ will sound throughout the earth, as a voice of authority, setting before men divine decrees for their guidance and observance. This voice will be heard and heeded by all, as the millennium, the thousand years' reign of peace, commences.

The Sapphire Throne

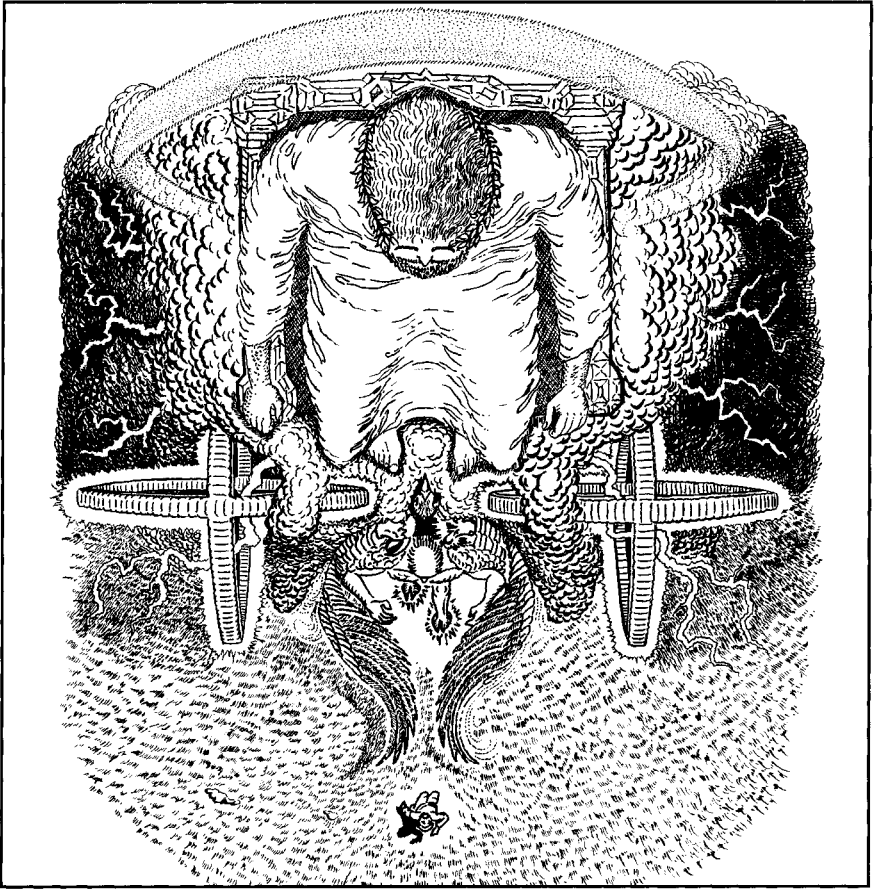
His attention drawn to the voice, Ezekiel next observed "the likeness of a throne" over the heads of the cherubim. The throne is David's throne, promised to the Lord Jesus at his birth (Luke 1:32), and destined to be set up when he returns to "build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down" (Acts 15:16), and to restore it "as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11).

Ezekiel describes the throne as having "the appearance of a sapphire stone" (Ezek. 1:26). This gem is particularly significant in view of its colour — a beautiful blue — as well as its use in Scripture.

Blue was an important colour in Israelitish ritual. Numbers 15:38 records the instruction of Moses that the children of Israel should complete their garments by putting upon the "fringe of the borders a ribband of blue." "And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of Yahweh, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring. That ye may remember, and do all My commandments, and be holy unto your God" (vv. 39-40). The fringe of blue thus reminded the children of Israel of their heavenly origin, and the divine commandments that they should observe to do.

How significant that the throne should be thus described! It will be a divine throne, setting forth to mankind divine laws and principles. When people look towards that throne they will be reminded of the very things that the children of Israel were reminded when they looked upon the fringe of blue on their garments.

Blue is again referred to in a significant manner in Proverbs 30:20 which states that "the blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil." In the Hebrew, however, the word is a different word from that rendered "blue" in Numbers, and relates to the dark blue stripes that form over a wound as it is healing. The statement is nevertheless appropriate to the healing work of Christ, a healing that will



This illustration is designed to portray the three stages of divine development, paralleling those of the tabernacle. From a view above, the artist depicts the scene of glory developing upon earth. In the foreground (the lower section of the illustration) is depicted the man Ezekiel gazing at the wonderment before him. As the "son of man", he represents the first level of divine manifestation on the earth: the nation of Israel arraigned before the saints in the millennium. The next level is the Saints, here seen in cherubic form immediately to the front of Ezekiel. First appears the Cherub's face of the man, with the ox to the left side, the lion to the right, and the eagle behind. It is the glorified Body of those drawn from humanity, and comprise the Ecclesial "sons of man". They are associated with the wheels, the fire and the glory of immortality. Finally, the third level — the figure on the throne — depicts Christ as the fulness of the divine substance, manifested in rulership and sovereignty. He is on the throne, in "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh". He is encased in fire, with curling tongues of flame surrounding him on all sides; whilst about him is the aurora of light, brightness and glory. Those three stages of Mankind illustrate the three stages of future glory: Christ, the Saints and Israel — all of whom depict the divine character in varying degrees: the Prince, the immortal Community, the People of the Holy Land.

only come to suffering humanity through the administration of a wound of chastisement.

The Hebrew word for Sapphire is *sappeer*, and signifies "to scratch," hence to write, to inscribe; and in the breastplate of the high priest, the sapphire was used to represent Simeon (Exod. 28:18-21). Simeon means *hearing*, and it is by hearing the Word that a person's heart is inscribed (or scratched) with the teaching of Yahweh. In the book of Revelation, however, the Sapphire is identified with Reuben (Rev. 21:19; 7:5), and Reuben means *See a son*. Here is a remarkable change in the symbolism of the sapphire, the significance of which has been changed from hearing to seeing. That change will be revealed in the Age to come, when those who today *hear* the Word, will *see* the Son!

This sapphire rule of the Son of God will heal the nations just as he was able to heal the woman troubled with "an issue of blood" during his former ministry on earth. She approached him that she might touch "the hem of his garment" (Matt. 9:20); referring to the blue fringe, to which she attributed some divine quality. Her selection of that part of the Lord's garment was doubtless dictated by the ordinance of the Law in relation to the fringe of blue on the skirt of a Jew. Heaven's blessing of healing was present when the divine origin of the Lord was acknowledged by the woman, and will again be, in the future age, when it is acknowledged by the world.

Because of that, Zechariah declares that representatives of the nations "shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23). Again, the blue fringe seems to be the item of attraction, causing the Gentiles to acknowledge the divine purpose in the nation of Israel.

When the sapphire quality of the throne of the Lord is acknowledged in the coming age, men will recognise that its principles are divine, and humanity's ills will be healed when the nations heed the commandments that shall issue forth therefrom for their guidance and salvation.

The Ruler On The Throne

Upon the throne was one that had "the appearance of a man." The word, in Hebrew, is *Adam* (the last Adam — 1 Cor. 15:45), and yet Ezekiel is careful to explain that the vision is "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh" (v. 28). The one upon the throne, therefore, is of human origin, but of divine nature and glory. He is, of course, the Lord in glory: son of David and Son of God. But even when he shall sit triumphantly upon his throne in Jerusalem, surrounded by all the manifestations of his glory and divinity, his original humanity will be recognised.

In a later prophecy, Ezekiel describes him as the Prince of the future age, and refers to him as offering sacrifice in the Temple on his own behalf (Ezek.

45:22). What a powerful exhortation will then be enacted! The Lord of glory will be exhibited before mankind as having been at one time clothed with human nature, and will again testify by his action in so sacrificing, that his elevation to such a lofty status as he will then manifest, is due to the life of sacrifice he offered his Father during his previous ministry on earth, when clothed with humanity.

By this means, the fact will be brought vividly home to the people, as it is to us today, that what Christ is, we and they can become. The Lord — offering sacrifice on his own behalf, showing himself to have been a descendant of the first Adam though now clothed with divine nature — will be a symbol of hope to all people, spurring them on to render a like obedience to the will of the Father, setting before them the possibility that they, too, may become partakers of divine nature at the end of the thousand years reign of peace.

The king is shown encased in fire. From the loins upwards, and from the loins downwards (the standard of Truth — Eph. 6:14), purging tongues of flame curl either upwards or downwards. His is the altar (Heb. 13:10), and through him must be offered the sacrifices of mankind; through him the incense of prayer must be offered if it is to be acceptable to Yahweh.

Earlier that Spirit-fire (see 1 Thess. 5:19) had consumed the evil out of his kingdom, destroying those who obstinately refused to heed the divine message, blotting out of existence the fourth beast with its religio-political influence (Dan. 7:19; 2 Thess. 1:8). But the same fire that destroyed can be used to heal; the same open manifestation of spirit that reduced the armies of the nations to impotence, will be available to guide, direct, and illuminate mankind and receive their burnt offerings (symbols of themselves) as did the cherubim in the Garden of Eden.

Here, then, is the counterpart of the flaming sword that turned every way to keep (or guard) the way to the Tree of Life.

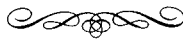
This fire, records Ezekiel, gave an aura of light, brightness and divine majesty to the man-ruler. This fulness of glory (such as the angels manifested at the sepulchre of the Lord before whose glory the soldiers fell down in a dead faint) shall be revealed by the glorious King whose beauty of character and of majesty will be recognised by all (Isa. 33:17).

Even Ezekiel felt the impact of such a shining forth of glory, it affected him so profoundly that he fell upon his face as one dead. But before doing so, his attention was drawn to one last aspect of the vision: a strange rainbow that arched over the throne.

— H.P.M.

The Rainbow About the Throne

“As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh” (Ezekiel 1:28).



THE rainbow is first referred to, both literally and symbolically, in Genesis 9:12-13: “And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations; I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth.”

This statement has its background in an earlier declaration of God, thus: “Neither will I again smite any more every thing living as I have done” (Gen. 8:21); and now the rainbow is appointed as a token of that unconditional promise.

The Rainbow as a Symbol

It is sometimes thought, on the basis of Genesis 9:13, that this was the first time the rainbow ever appeared in the sky, but that is not necessarily so. The word “set” is translated from the Hebrew *nathan* and signifies “give,” “appoint,” “assign.” Thus the rainbow was *appointed* as a sign and a token at this time, though there is no reason to believe that it would not have been seen on previous occasions when falling rain and a shining sun occurred in conjunction.

From now on, however, the rainbow would be viewed with particular interest, and seen as a symbol of the time when Yahweh’s glory shall cover the earth. God declared: “And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth” (v. 16).

The word “everlasting” is the Hebrew *olam*, a word signifying “the hidden period,” and relating to the millennial reign of Christ. The covenant, therefore, refers specifically to that period yet in the future.

What Noah Was Taught

In presenting this covenant and its token to Noah, God beautifully expressed in symbol His purpose in relation to the future.

He declared: "I shall bring a cloud over the earth." Clouds are frequently used to symbolise the saints. They are referred to as a "cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1), the "clouds" that shall appear with Christ in his glory (Rev. 1:7), the "clouds of heaven" who will associate with him in his throne of glory (Matt. 24:30), the "swift cloud" upon which he shall ride to pour out judgments upon the world of the ungodly (Isa. 19:1). The glorified saints will comprise the symbolic cloud that Yahweh will "bring over the earth."

A cloud is formed by the action of the sun separating a minute portion of the waters of the earth, cleansing it from all impurity, and ultimately vaporising it into the heavens.

The figure requires sun, heavens, waters and cloud, all of which are frequently used as symbols in Scripture. Thus Christ is described as the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4); the heavens are referred to as positions of political authority (Isa. 65:17-18); waters are figurative of nations and peoples (Rev. 17:15); clouds relate to the saints in the heavenlies (Heb. 12:1; Eph. 2:6; Rev. 4:1).

Here are all the elements necessary to form the symbolic picture presented to Noah. Moreover, Yahweh declared that it is a work He will personally accomplish, for He declared, "I will bring a cloud over the earth." It is He Who is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14), or, in the terms of the symbol given Noah, Who is separating the minute drops of water from the bulk of the earth's seas, rivers and lakes through the action of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. That same influence will ultimately cause these drops of "water" to be cleansed of all impurities, and to be vaporised into the heavens (or elevated to political eminence) where, united together, they will form a "cloud over the earth."

A Day of Rain

But something more than cloud is necessary to form a rainbow. Not only must the sun be shining, as it will be when the Sun of Righteousness appears with healing in his beams (Mal. 4:2), but rain must also be falling. And this requires the action of lightning, or the manifestation of the Spirit.

Consider the beauty of the following expression from Psalm 135:6-7 in the light of what we have expressed above: "Whatsoever Yahweh pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings for the rain; He bringeth the wind out of His treasures."

"He maketh lightnings for the rain" (see also Jer. 10:13, mg.). The saints, elevated into the political heavens, and being now "born of the spirit" (lightnings), shall return the blessings of Yahweh back to the earth in the form of rain:

the Spirit's teaching. Ezekiel declares: "I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing" (Ezek. 34:26). Joel likewise predicts this time. He speaks of the "former rain" coming down "moderately," and the "latter rain" showering down abundantly. The application of Joel's prophecy by Peter on the Day of Pentecost, shows that this "former rain" related to the first century revelation that came through Christ and the Apostles, so that the "latter rain" that shall shower down abundantly, symbolises the widespread teaching of divine principles that shall follow the manifestation of Christ in the earth once again. David, in his prayer, declared: "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth."

The expression, in the Hebrew, suggests a field that has been harvested, or pasture land that has been eaten out by cattle, and implies judgments that shall be poured out upon flesh (cf. Isa. 40:6). Rain on such land revives and fructifies the soil, and this will be the effect of the spirit's teaching through the saints upon a world harvested by divine judgments. It is interesting, in passing, to note that the word for "mown" in Hebrew, is rendered elsewhere as "fleece," and one is reminded of the fleece full of dew found by Gideon.

David's words in this final prayer, recorded in Psalm 72, seem to be a reflection of a similar statement in his "last words" of 2 Samuel 23:4. Speaking of the Just One who shall rule over man, he declares: "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."

The Bow Reflects the Glory of Divine Majesty

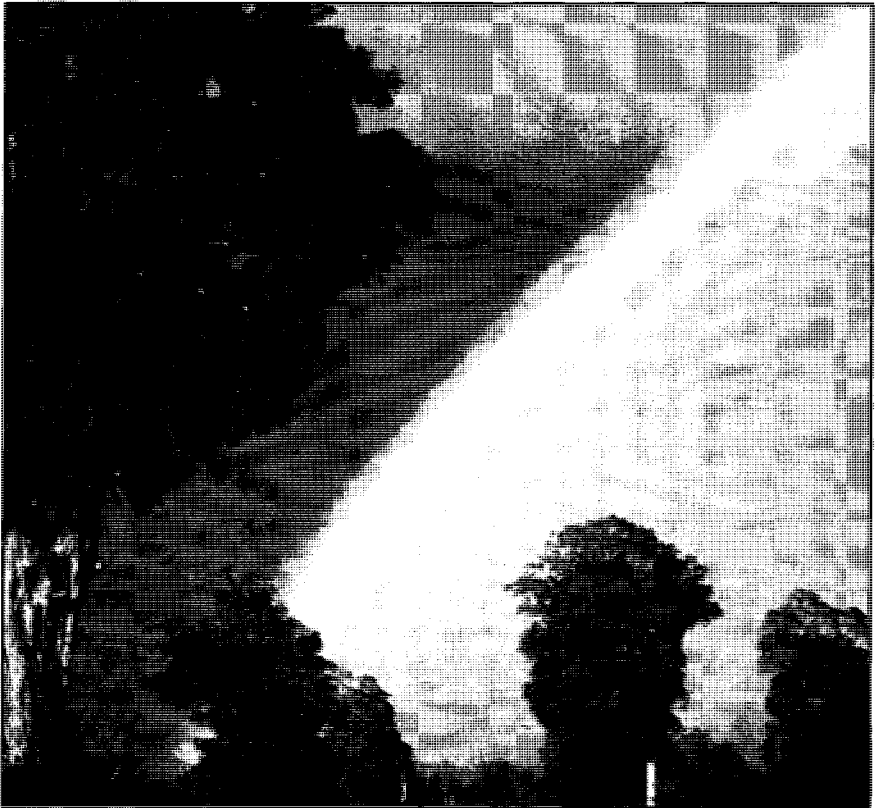
When the Sun is shining and rain is falling, a bow forms in the heavens. The rainbow reflects the seven basic colours of the pure, clear shining of the sun. Seven is the number of completeness, and when the seven basic colours of the rainbow are united, they form the one, clear, bright light of the sun.

Thus the rainbow shows forth the majestic glory of heaven's brightest star, as, in the Age to come, the saints will manifest the glory of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, as he, in turn, reveals the glory of the Father.

The seven different colours of the rainbow point to differing manifestations of the one glory. Paul wrote: "We are in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2), but though all true saints will attain unto this, it does not mean that they will each manifest the same measure of glory (see 1 Cor. 15:41). Like the rainbow, the multitudinous Christ will break up the glory of its Sun into its component parts, although when united together, they will reveal the complete glory that he manifests in his person. "The glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them," he declared in his prayer to the Father (John 17:22). It was that glory which Ezekiel saw as he described the rainbow about the throne, for he declared: "It was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh" (Ezek. 1:28).

And what is that glory? The clear, bright shining forth of radiance as from the Sun of Righteousness who, as Zion's light, shall illuminate the world of mankind and drive away the dark, gloomy shadows of night (Isa. 60:1-2). Ezekiel declared concerning the bow: "It had brightness round about, as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain..."

Look into the heavens when the storm clouds have emptied their rain, and the sun begins to shine. See the rainbow forming a glorious arch over the earth, revealing the seven basic colours of the sun's clear light. Notice how the silver lining edges the dark clouds themselves, the pledge of a final clear shining after the last of the dark thunderclouds of judgment have passed away! Such was the "brightness round about" seen by Ezekiel. It was the "glory of Yahweh" — the self-given name of Deity, given at a time when He was about to move for the redemption of His people, proclaiming His purpose to manifest Himself in a multitude of people who shall constitute, as He then declared, "a generation of the race" (Exod. 3:15, Bro. Thomas' rendering).



The name *Yahweh* is expressive of that beautiful truth. It condenses into one word, one name, the whole purpose of God; it proclaims what He desires of us — the manifestation of His glorious characteristics; it is prophetic of His ultimate purpose, revealing that “He will be” vindicated and manifested in the earth in the glorified company of the redeemed.

Saints are a people, called out of Gentile darkness “for His name.” They thus constitute members of His divine family, and must show a family likeness one to another, and with the Lord Jesus, who is the personification of that Name.

It is described as the Memorial Name, because it ever sets before those who understand it, the purpose that Yahweh has in regard to creation upon the earth, namely, to reveal His glory in those “created” by the Word to that end (Isa. 43:6). His glory related to both character and nature. Christ manifested the first when he was on earth; he rose from the grave to receive the second which he now possesses. In him will be seen the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and saints will share with him the glory, both in character and in nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

The consummation of this will be seen when the throne of David is re-established in the earth, and the aristocracy of that age (the great company of the redeemed) will be “as the appearance of the brightness round about (that throne), as the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh.”

To Whom Was the Covenant Made?

The covenant made with Noah extended beyond him to all who were in the Ark, both human beings and animals. The narrative is quite explicit in this regard. God declared: “This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and EVERY LIVING CREATURE that is with you, for perpetual generations...” (Gen. 9:12). In v. 10 this includes “fowl, cattle, and beasts of the earth,” both clean and unclean.

In what sense can the covenant involve the lower creation? Only when they are seen as types, for in the narrative concerning Noah there is a typical foreshadowing of the future.

The people, birds and animals in the Ark provided the foundation of the new world that was established under faithful Noah after the old world had been destroyed by flood. Noah, himself, whose name means “rest,” points forward to Christ, and therefore, to him, God declared: “I will establish My covenant with you” (Gen. 9:11). It was only by their association with Noah (see v. 12) that it extended to the others in the Ark whether they were his sons, or the birds and beasts that God had gathered together that they might take refuge therein. And it will be only through their acceptance of Christ that his “sons” (see Heb. 2:11-13) or the nations, will find any place in the future age.

The sons of Noah are thus typical of the family of Christ, his brethren, who are saved through water. What of the birds and beasts, clean and unclean? Fre-

quently these are used in Scripture for nations and peoples, and this seems to be the typical lesson here. The clean birds and animals under the Law were typical of Israel, and the people were taught thereby to discriminate between other nations, and imitate only the characteristics of the clean creatures to which attention was thus drawn. Clean habits, chewing the cud, sure-footedness, all find their place in the lessons thus drawn. On the other hand, Peter was taught that the unclean birds and beasts represented Gentile nations (Acts 10:11-17), and he was shown that the time had come when the gospel should be extended to also include them.

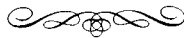
In the birds and beasts included within the Noahic covenant, there are represented the Jewish and Gentile nations that will be preserved in the kingdom, so that in the little community that stepped out from the Ark after that devastating storm, there was seen a typical foreshadowing of the future: Noah as representative of Christ; his family as representative of the family of Christ; the birds and beasts over whom Noah and his sons exercised dominion (Gen. 9:2), as representative of those nations that shall survive the aftermath of Armageddon to be incorporated in the Kingdom of God as mortal subjects.

The bow in the sky was appointed as the significant token of Yahweh's covenant for the future involving all flesh, and as it was incorporated in the vision of the cherubim seen by Ezekiel, it will be at the time when the cherubim are manifested in the earth, that the covenant will be fulfilled. The prophet looked upon the vision full of wonder, and saw a glory so transcending anything he had ever seen previously, as to cause him to fall into a deep faint. Thus, he was taught the means whereby he will personally experience the fulness of the vision he beheld: Resurrection from the dead. It needed the power of the spirit to set him on his feet again (cp. Ch. 2:1-2), as representative of all the saints.

— H.P.M.

Ezekiel's Personal Relationship to the Vision

"I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake. And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me" — Ezek. 1:28-2:2.



THE revelation of glory, seen by Ezekiel, proved too much for the mortal constitution of the prophet; he could not bear it, and he fell upon his face as one dead. Whilst he was in that recumbent position, he heard a voice speak to him, he felt the spirit enter him, and strengthened thereby, he stood upon his feet that he might better hearken to the voice that spoke.

Ezekiel Dies Figuratively

It was a figurative representation of his coming death and resurrection; an experience that he had in common with others of "his brethren the prophets." Both Daniel in captivity (Dan. 10), and John in Patmos (Rev. 1), as well as others of the prophets, had a similar experience. And, significantly, their experiences followed on a similar revelation of glory as was seen by Ezekiel. Daniel saw the multiple "certain man" of composite metals, and recognised in him the mystical "one body" of Christ in glorious multitudinous manifestation in the Age to come, after its present long warfare is over. John saw "one like unto the Son of Man," whose clothing and appearance were similar to the man of Daniel's vision, and who is revealed to be the very nucleus of the ecclesia of God.

All three prophets, on seeing these visions, fell down as though dead, but were set on their feet again by angelic ministration. Thus they enacted their own death and resurrection. It was as though Yahweh, having revealed His future intentions to His servants, and disclosed to them the fulness of glory (a glory that overwhelmed them as being impossible for flesh unaided to attain), then proceeded, in mercy, to comfort them by revealing the means whereby they will find a place therein, namely through a resurrection from the dead.

Ezekiel Is Figuratively Resurrected

Lying prostrate on the ground in a dead faint, Ezekiel heard a voice. It was a

voice that typified the one he is yet to hear in the future, for Paul declares: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16).

These are significant words. The word "voice" is *keleusma* in Greek, and signifies "a word of command." This is the only place it is used in the New Testament, though it is found in Proverbs 30:27 in the *Septuagint* version of the Old Testament, which reads: "The locusts have no king, and yet march orderly *at one command.*" The verse is commenting upon the remarkable co-ordination of activity that naturalists have observed in locusts; they so act in concert as though answering a specific command issued by a leader. But no one knows of that urge, that command, apart from the locusts, so that *keleusma* implies a "shout" or a "command" that is audible only for those intended to hear it. The world will not hear the command, for the Lord will not make such a shout so loud as to wake all the dead, but will call to "come forth" those who are slumbering in mother-earth, whom the Lord wishes to awaken. This will be all sufficient to cause them to come forth even as Ezekiel was caused to stand up out of his faint. Christ thus declared: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28-29). Only the responsible dead will hear that voice!

It is interesting, in passing, to notice the other allusions to resurrection made by Paul. Christ, he declared, will come with the voice of the archangel. The only archangel mentioned in Scripture is Michael (Jude 9), and he is described in Daniel 10:21 as the "prince" of Israel. The angel who met Joshua with the drawn sword is similarly described as a prince (Josh. 5:14, mg.), wielding authority over the nation. He therefore can be identified with that angel into whose care the nation had been specifically placed (Exod. 23:21), and in whom Yahweh's name had been vested. Therefore, as the "shout" speaks of power, the "voice of the archangel" is expressive of authority.

"The trump of God," is also a significant phrase to use in conjunction with resurrection, for it directs attention back to the "memorial of blowing of trumpets" that preceded the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:24; 25:9). This alerted the minds of the Israelites to the impending Day of Coverings, or Judgment, and reminded them to prepare for that solemn occasion. But no matter how solemn the Day of Atonement in the past, it will be superseded by the solemnity of that greatest of all Days of Atonement when living and dead saints shall be gathered before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

So the three expressions used by the Apostle speak of the power, the authority and the purpose of Christ in resurrecting the saints to judgment.

A Standing Again

The resurrection will be made possible through the Spirit of Yahweh which the Lord Jesus possesses without measure. Ezekiel describes how that spirit entered into him to give him renewed vigor causing him to again stand upon his feet. On a later occasion, recorded in his 37th chapter, he was permitted to witness a resurrection actually taking place. He saw graves opened and bones scattered therein upon which the flesh had corrupted away. Then, miraculously, he saw bone come to bone; sinews and flesh began to form upon the skeletons before him; and, finally, the spirit entered into the newly-formed bodies to give them life.

It was a repetition of his own experience, as in a dead faint with his face towards the ground, he felt the spirit of Yahweh energising him, permitting him to struggle to his feet, and stand upright. In this upright position, he heard the Voice of Yahweh once more appointing him work to do, sending him to the rebellious people who had rejected His message, to proclaim judgments upon them if they continued to manifest their obstinate attitude to divine requirements.

It was a picture of the future, yet to be enacted by Ezekiel and millions like him. They are to be resurrected, changed into spirit-beings (1 Cor. 15:46), sent forth into the world in a work of warning and of judgment.

Ezekiel thus enacted his own death, resurrection, glorification, and future mission unto the nations.

John in Patmos did similarly, and was told: "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings" (Rev. 10:11). It was out of these same "peoples, nations, tongues, and kings" that John and others like him were drawn (Rev. 5:9-10), and to them they are to be again sent, to proclaim the purpose of Yahweh and to save those who are prepared to submit.

A Spiritual Resurrection

But saints will not attain unto that physical resurrection unless they are first subject to a spiritual resurrection through the waters of baptism. Paul declared that we should "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4), and Jesus taught "the hour *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). He was urging the need for a spiritual resurrection by those who are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), and who can only be enlivened out of that state of living death through the quickening influence of Christ.

How is such a resurrection brought about? Only by the energising influence of the Spirit-Word. Apart from that, man is destitute of spiritual life. When that is in us, it will cause us to lift ourselves up from our natural earthy state with faces towards the ground, and enable us to stand upright and hearken to the

“voice of him that speaketh unto us” through His Word.

This was part of the parable enacted by Ezekiel as a man of sign. The spirit entered into him, caused him to stand upright and to hearken further unto God, and then sent him forth to proclaim that word unto others, that they might be similarly affected by it.

So the resurrection that Ezekiel experienced, was first a spiritual resurrection unto newness of life, and then a foreshadowing of the physical resurrection and transformation into a spirit-being that will be his lot at the return of Christ.

The Cherubic Vision Summarised

The Cherubic vision had revealed to the prophet that judgment was about to fall upon Jerusalem, but inasmuch as it was supervised by the cherubim, it revealed to him that all that was about to be done was for the benefit of the elect. As Paul later declared: “All things are for your sakes,” even judgment and death.

It was a foreshadowing of the judgments, that, commencing at Jerusalem, will sweep the whole world when the Cherubim of glory are manifest in the earth. Manifesting the glory of Yahweh physically, they will be in possession of powers that will make them:

- (1) OMNISCIENT, for Ezekiel saw them as full of eyes (Ezek. 1:18).
- (2) OMNIPRESENT, for he saw them moved by the spirit into all parts of the earth.
- (3) OMNIPOTENT, for he saw manifestations of irresistible power — burning coals, lamps of fire, forked lightning (v. 13), that consumed the adversaries.

All-knowing, All-seeing, All-powerful! These are divine attributes which guilty Judah had forgotten existed. Oh, yes, they mouthed these words, they ascribed these attributes unto Yahweh, but their actions belied their doctrine: they worshipped with lip service but not in fact, nor in heart. And they were destroyed by a crisis of their own making, out of which Yahweh would have delivered them if they had but sought Him.

What of ourselves?

We need to catch the vision of the cherubim in these modern days. Science has placed staggering new powers and weapons into the hands of man; materialism and fleshly power daily increase in scope, so that there seems no end to the power and wealth that men can accrue to themselves. Wickedness, today, finds much bigger and far more terrifying forms of expression than ever before. Things move on such a vast scale, and with such frightening speed, and at the beck of such ungodly and challenging forces, that the international situation could easily become profoundly disturbing to anyone whose faith is not anchored in the things revealed in the Word. To the merely fleshly mind, the reins of Providence whereby God guides and directs events, seem to hang loose-

ly, as though God does not have a purpose. And though we would never subscribe to that doctrine in theory, the danger is that we may temporarily blind our eyes to the fact that God rules in the affairs of man, and become caught away by the whirlpool of human affairs, and concern that can quickly sweep us into a tide of trouble so strong as to destroy us spiritually. Evil forces in large areas of the earth seem to have it pretty much their own way. It is easy for our eyes to become so drawn by the possibilities that life presents, and our minds so bewitched with the prospects of the present, that we lose our sense of reality in the absolute assurance of the establishment of the divine purpose in the earth. The vision of that glory-flashing throne high over all, the divine sovereignty revealed by the cherubim in glory, and the crushing judgments they will bring upon all human institutions opposed to the will of Yahweh, can restore in us a proper sense of proportion, and cause us to recognise the limitations of human life about us.

In chapter 8 the cherubim are again introduced, and a hidden hand takes hold of Ezekiel to convey him to Jerusalem. There he learned with growing sorrow and concern what "every man did in the chambers of his imagery" (Ezek. 8:12). He observed a people giving lip service to Yahweh, but denying Him in heart. He heard the terrible indictments proclaimed upon the leaders of the nation because of the bad example they set the people. He saw the cherubim sweep out of the city, taking with them the shekinah glory, and abandoning Jerusalem to its fate.

Ezekiel experienced the heartache of seeing God's privileged nation, the custodian of His truth, completely overwhelmed in a judgment that came upon it because the people failed to hear and heed the divine counsel. Thus darkness settled down upon the place where previously light had shone forth.

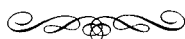
But he also predicted the dawn of a better day. In his 43rd chapter he described how the Cherubim of the Age to come, as a great company of immortals, will bring back the indwelling glory of Yahweh, and fill the millennial Temple with a glory far transcending that seen in that place previously.

In his earlier chapters he described how the cherubim left the city by way of the east (Ezek. 10:19), and in his forty-third chapter he reveals how they will return from the same direction. The time will come, when men will see the great theophany on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4), and will recognise in the glorious company assembled together the "feet of Yahweh," bringing the glory back to the city from whence it departed so long ago, never again to be removed therefrom.

— H.P.M.

Four in One and One in Four

“As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle” (Ezek. 1:10).



A glorious vision of the coming Kingdom is presented to us at the commencement and conclusion of Ezekiel’s prophecy, which can greatly stimulate our faith in these closing times of the Gentiles. As a priest (Ch. 1:3), Ezekiel’s mind would often dwell upon God’s temple and its furnishings as he longed for Israel’s restoration, and these thoughts formed the basis of the visions given unto him.

Vision Of Elohim

His first chapter records the vision of the cherubim in full development as manifested in the time of glory of Israel’s immortal king priests (Rev. 5:9-10). The golden cherubim in the Mosaic tabernacle had been made of beaten work in pure gold, typifying faith perfected through suffering; they were one with the mercy seat, towards which their faces were turned (Exod. 25:20).

This was a pictorial representation of God’s saints in every age as, in breaking bread and drinking wine, they concentrate upon the true Altar and Mercy Seat, and in their daily devotions, fix their minds upon the Ark of Testimony, the true Manna, Aaron’s Rod that budded, and God’s holy Word. All these were typical of the work accomplished by Christ Jesus, who fulfilled the Mosaic types, so that they become living realities embodied in himself and his saints.

The cherubim comprised God’s meeting place with mankind. Here it was that heaven and earth were linked together in wondrous grace and fellowship: “There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony” (Exod. 25:22). “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth” (Psa. 80:1).

The cherubim were the vehicle of divine presence upon earth, but though

they provided habitation for the Most Holy, they were but inarticulate and inanimate models. In his first view, however, Ezekiel was privileged to see them spring into life and become active personalities with four faces in each living creature, and four creatures joined to one head: "When they went upon their four sides they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked they followed it; they turned not as they went."

It is difficult to picture these living creatures in our minds, yet they can be understood quite simply if we follow the clues at the beginning of the prophecy. The name Ezekiel declares the divine purpose, for, combined with his title of Son of man, it proclaims: "El will strengthen the Son of man." To that end he reports that he saw "visions of God" (Ezek. 1:1). The word for "God" in the Hebrew is *Elohim*, signifying "mighty ones", so that the prophet was given "visions of mighty ones;" — of Christ and the saints in the coming day when the heavens will be opened, and the Son of man is manifested in glory with all who are joined to him by faith and obedience.

There is unity combined with diversity in Ezekiel's visions. Though there are four living creatures, they are yet one; though they have four wings, they are joined together to give complete unity of movement; though there are four wheels, they work "wheel within a wheel."

This appears a rather complex arrangement, but it is the honor of the king-priests of the future "to search out the matter" which the glory of God has concealed for their diligent investigation.

The constant repetition of "four" in Ezekiel's vision draws attention to the foursquare encampment of Israel as a type of the foursquare city of the Apocalypse (Rev. 21:16) which comprises the symbolic encampment of the saints (Rev. 20:9), the true, completed ecclesia under the headship of Christ.

Wheels imply locomotion upon the earth, and wings suggest movement in mid-heaven, and this, indeed, will be the function of the saints in the Kingdom: "They that wait upon Yahweh shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31). What a glorious future awaits those faithful servants who serve their Lord in these evil days:

"Bless Yahweh, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless Yahweh, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psa. 103:1-5).

Unity in Diversity

The four faces represented Yahweh in four aspects. They were attached to

one head which did the thinking for all four: "Whither the head looked they followed."

What an important lesson for ecclesias today! Brethren should not assume self-sufficiency by directing affairs in their own way, but should let Christ, our living Head, guide their actions according to the Word. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," declared Paul (Phil. 2:5).

Our heavenly Father is a lover of variety in harmony, and diversity with unity, as was shown in the earthly paradise which He created in the beginning: the tint of each flower, the diversity of color and beauty in birds, beasts and fishes are all evidences of the wondrous character of God who made all things well. Today, however, there is little harmony, for "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together" under the dominion of sin" (Rom. 8:22).

There is variety in those whom God has called out of the nations to be a people for His name, for they include impetuous Peters, deep, meditative Johns, as well as "sons of thunder." For the present, the ecclesias are a mixture of good and evil vessels, of zealous and nominal saints, all members of the One Body in its imperfect state, so that complete harmony cannot be fully attained. Meanwhile, we ourselves, "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Ezekiel's cherubim reveal the perfected one-body, glorious in unity with the Eternal Spirit: "And they went every one straight forward; whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went" (Ch. 1:12).

This is the true Israel portrayed by four faces, corresponding to the four standards under which the natural Israel had marched towards the promised land. They had moved in four groups, each with the standard of the leading tribes: Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan. Ezekiel's cherubim will pour out judgment upon the nations, as they purify Israel and purge out the rebels, during a possible period of forty years (cp. Mic. 7:15). Ezekiel reported: "The living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning" (Ch. 1:14). This implies the worldwide activity of the saints. They control every corner of the earth, and return swiftly to the base where their living Head has set up his throne. Balaam was given a vision of their foursquare encampment:

"For from the top of the rocks I see him and from the hills I behold him; lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"

Spiritual Israelites are envisaged in Revelation 21:16-17 as the New Jerusalem community: "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth; and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs; the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a

man, that is, of the angel." Here, again, is diversity in unity: a multitude attaining unto the measure of a man, even an angel-man, "one like unto the Son of man," equal unto the angels, immortal and glorious.

Thus the Truth is not a mere theory, but a way of life, designed to change us for the kingdom; and God's Word is the instrument of transformation today for the perfecting of the saints "until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The Four Standards

According to Jewish tradition, the standards of Israel's tribes were identical with the four faces of the cherubim, and in Scripture, Judah is identified with the lion (Gen. 49:9), Reuben with the man (Gen. 30:14-15; 49:3), Ephraim with the ox (Deut. 33:17; Jer. 31:18), and Dan with the eagle (which was degraded to a serpent when the tribe turned to idolatry — Gen. 49:17; Judges 18:30).

All this emphasises the Israelitish nature of the hope. The outstanding characteristic of true believers is their devotion to the hope of Israel (Acts 28:20), which marks them off from the various sects of Christendom who have little faith or belief in God's purpose with the Jews. Paul wrote: "Wherefore, remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:11-13).

Thus believers are inducted into the commonwealth of Israel, becoming "Israelites indeed," "Jews inwardly," and "children of the promise." In the Revelation, they are aligned with the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev. 7), forming part of the foursquare encampment of the twelve tribes symbolically represented as 144,000 sealed in the forehead (Rev. 7:4; 14:1). In *Elpis Israel*, Brother Thomas supplies the following meaning of the four faces of the cherubim: "We have arrived then at this, that the Mosaic Cherubim were symbolical of God manifest in the flesh. We wish now to ascertain upon what principles his incarnate manifestation was represented by the cherubim? First then, in the solution of this interesting problem, I remark, that the Scriptures speak of God after the following manner: 'God is *light* and in Him is no darkness at all'; again: 'God is a *spirit*, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth;' and thirdly: 'Our God is a consuming *fire*.' In these three texts, which are only a sample of many others, we perceive that God is represented by *light, spirit and fire*; when, therefore, He is symbolised as manifest in *flesh*, it becomes necessary to select certain *signs* representative of light, spirit and fire, derived from

the *animal* kingdom. Now the ancients selected the *lion*, the *ox*, and the *eagle* for this purpose, probably from tradition of the signification of these animals, or the faces of them, in the original cherubim. They are called God's Faces because His omniscience, purity and jealousy are expressed in them. But the omniscient, jealous and incorruptible God, was to be manifested in a particular kind of flesh. Hence, it was necessary to add a *fourth face* to show in what *nature* He would show Himself. For this reason, the *human* face was associated with the lion, the ox, and the eagle..." (p. 151).

"It will be seen from this view of things, how important a place the cherubim occupied in the worship of God connected with 'the representation of the truth.' They were not objects of adoration; but symbols representing to the mind of an intelligent believer, the Seed of the woman as God manifested in the likeness of sinful flesh. This I take it was the significance of the cherubim which the Lord God placed at the east of the Garden; and which became the germ, as it were, of the shadowy observances of the patriarchal and Mosaic institutions; whose substance was of Christ" (p. 152).

The Lion is the King of beasts; its shining eyes, gold-like color, flowing mane and tremendous strength suggest the irresistible power and velocity of light. The Ox is a ruminating animal, a servant to mankind, like the meditative saint; yet, as a bull with horns, it can be aroused to a relentless fury that is descriptive of the terrible effects of consuming fire. The eagle dwells upon the rock; it has telescopic sight, like the saints who 'endure as seeing him who is invisible,' but as it skims high above the earth and then plunges swiftly upon the prey, it is suggestive of God's spirit in motion. The face of a man was added to the lion, ox and eagle so that the divine attributes could be intellectually revealed as they are in "the man Christ Jesus." He is the complete manifestation of God, so that he could say: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

The four gospels, therefore, are not mere repetition, but reveal Christ as the Lion in Matthew, the Ox in Mark, the Man in Luke, and the Eagle in John. If we are to form part of that glorious company united to Christ, we must in measure reveal the Yahweh characteristics now. Our characters will not change at the judgment seat, so that if we are mere nominal members of Christ now, we cannot hope to change our outlook at the last moment to blend with the virile single-hearted Cherubim of the future. Jesus was highly exalted because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity (Heb. 1:9). He was no "hail-fellow-well-met" as far as the Truth was concerned, but one whose meat and drink was to do the Father's will. He was eaten up with zeal (John 2:17), and moved to anger with the hardness of Israel's hearts (Mark 3:5). The world's gospel is a gospel of love and of tolerance, but that is not the Lord's gospel. Jesus commended the Ephesians because they "hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans" (Rev. 2:6), the vanquishers of the people, as the name signifies. They tried to popularise the Truth

by making it superficial. They doubtless manifested good works, but those only of mere philanthropy and of sociability. Our "good works" are those which are outlined in the Gospels and Epistles for believers to follow, so that we are called upon to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." This is a good work when necessity demands it (Jude 3). We are required to grow in knowledge (Col. 1:10), giving all diligence to "add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love." These are the "good works" we must not neglect if we would "make our calling and election sure."

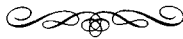
Ezekiel's cherubim had "straight feet" (Ch. 1:7), and our walk must be straight and sure, not devious and uncertain. "And they went every one straight forward, they turned not when they went" (Ezek. 1). We, too, must not deviate from our duty as the Lord's servants; we must strive (agonise) to enter in at the straight gate, "and make straight paths for the feet" (Heb. 12:13).

"Let this mind be in you," wrote the Apostle, in regard to the mind of Christ. So, as the four faces of the cherubim are united to one head, and as the body went in the direction thus indicated, so the mind of Christ revealed in his Word must motivate us now. If we would reign as kings (Lion), we must serve first, devoting our strength to the Lord's work (Ox). We can only serve acceptably in Christ (the Man), as God's Word dwells in us richly to produce enduring faith (Eagle) as "seeing Him who is invisible."

— W.G.H.

Placed In the Most Holy

“And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy place” (Exod. 26:34).



THE two figures of the cherubim were so constructed that they were one with, and developed out of, the two ends of the Mercy Seat. They were made or “beaten” out of the one piece of pure gold, with faces that looked down toward the Mercy Seat, and yet toward each other. Their wings stretched above and over the Mercy Seat.

Scant indeed are the details provided in Exodus, but the symbolism of the cherubim extends throughout Scripture, and from it can be derived their significance.

The Place of Glory

The concept of the cherubim being placed in a tabernacle is not new. In Genesis 3:24 we read that Yahweh “placed (Heb. *shakan*, meaning *to dwell, or tabernacle*) cherubim.” An alternative rendering of this verse is: “He caused to dwell in a tabernacle, the cherubim.” The verb *shakan* is the root of the expression, *Shekinah glory*, that is, “the glory that dwells inside.”

The children of Israel would be aware of the location and features of the Ark and the cherubim within the Most Holy Place. There was also a regular reminder, through their High Priest, of its functions. The thoughtful and faithful Israelite would well realise the significance of them being placed in the Most Holy. They were aware of the four wings and realised that they symbolised their own encampment surrounding the four sides of the Sanctuary. The wings were “stretched forth on high,” covering the Mercy Seat. “Stretched out” (Heb. *sakak*) means to entwine as a screen, to fence in; to cover over, to protect. Faithful Israelites would be compelled to consider the significance. They would relate this to the function of the cherubim at the entrance to Eden (Gen. 3:24) as there they guarded, or kept, the way to the Tree of Life. They would discern the symbol of their own nation in relation to that function.

The Exodus account does not give details of the faces but the deficiency seems to be supplied by Ezekiel Chapters 1, 10. The prophet describes the faces as those of a MAN, a LION, an OX, and an EAGLE. Ezekiel, furthermore, locates them

in relation to each other. From the southward position that he occupied as he relates the details of the vision, he looked northwards (cp. Ezek. 1:4,5) and saw first the face of the MAN — that is on the SOUTH side facing Ezekiel. On the right hand, or EAST side, he saw the face of the LION. On the left hand or WEST side, that of the OX, finally, the face of the EAGLE which must have been located on the NORTH side. From the position he occupied, Ezekiel could not actually see the face of the Eagle in his vision.

Symbology

We have already seen how the Spirit has used the Mercy Seat as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a figure that was extended to incorporate the two cherubim, just as the meeting place between Yahweh and His people is available to both Jew and Gentile alike. The Body of Christ includes both and, in the age to come, they will function as one with Christ.

Although Israel knew that the cherubim were in the Most Holy Place, they were hidden from their view; only their High Priest and their Leader were able to enter and see them.

The four faces of the cherubim pointed forward to four aspects of the Lord Jesus Christ, as depicted in the four Gospel records:

(1) Luke wrote of him as a MAN; the son of man. He recorded his genealogy as from ADAM.

(2) Matthew revealed him as a LION; the Lion of the tribe of Judah. His genealogy was written as from DAVID. Matthew 1:1.

(3) Mark showed him as an OX; the servant. His record commenced upon that note, and constant reference is made to his labour and ministry.

(4) John depicted him as an EAGLE; as the eye of Yahweh viewing all things and people from the heavenly viewpoint. He was “Emmanuel,” “the Word made flesh”.

These characteristics of the Lord, displayed during his life and ministry, all unite to draw attention to his function as the Mercy Seat. So much of Yahweh’s plans and designs, and His implementation of them, point towards, and lead to, the place and means whereby His creatures may be reconciled to Himself.

It was in his capacity and function as our Mercy Seat that the Lord was the bearer of the Royal Majesty of his Father. Our reconciliation with his Father has resulted in the display, through Jewish and Gentile members of the ecclesia (made *one* in Christ: Galatians 3:27-29), of the Majesty and Character of Yahweh, though subject as we are to human limitations for the present time.

The cherubim prophecy was not confined to the Lord Jesus Christ, however. Of necessity, it included all those who are, and have been, an extension of himself — those whose faith, as tried gold, has been the subject of much “beating” and affliction to ensure that they conform to the “pattern” given to Moses. Our

own development and transformation as described in Romans 12:2 involves the conflict between flesh and spirit as described in Romans 7:23.

Saints must also display in today's wilderness, the same attitude and characteristics as shown by their "Mercy Seat." They must:

- * While in the fleshMAN
- * Serve Yahweh and meditate upon His Word.OX
- * Rule themselves by the WordLION
- * Be guided by the Spirit-WordEAGLE

Thus our "faces" look toward the "Mercy Seat," the Lord Jesus Christ, and also toward each other in a sharing of these divine attributes. This should be the attitude of faithful members of the Ecclesial/Cherubic Body towards each other, being "knit together in love" (Col. 2:2) and being "labourers together" (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1). They have been called together, in Christ, for the purpose of mutual co-operation (2 Thess. 2:1; 1 Cor. 1:10, 12:24; Eph. 2:5,6).

When assembled around the Memorial Table, saints are found in this attitude, looking upon the "Mercy Seat," with its symbolic sprinkled blood. What do they see? The antitype of that which was year by year, sprinkled in sacrificial offering before the faces of the cherubim. They recall, when the attitude of the cherubim is cultivated, the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Moreover, their faces must also be towards one another. When that is the case, and conflict or division interrupts, there is distraction from true remembrance; and a turning of the eyes of faith away from the Mercy Seat.

Where "eyes" and "wings" are united in the manner depicted in the Tabernacle pattern, there will be found a true and effective keeping of the way of life. But *all* need to be fully extended in this application. The wings represented the four sides or extremities of Israel. They were the sides of the encampment, in symbol, brought into the Most Holy Place for the purpose of being used by Yahweh to keep the Way that He provided. Wings outstretched, as in Exodus 25:20, depict an inviting and protective posture towards all "sides" of the ecclesial encampment. All need to become involved in this task of "keeping" the Way.

The time will come, according to Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezek. 1:24), when the wings will be lowered from the posture of invitation. Then they will cover the body of the cherubim, signifying that it will be no longer possible to obtain an entrance into that body.

Revelation 21:1-3, 9-11, 23, refers to the future time when Christ and the saints will become the dwelling place (the Most Holy Place) of the divine presence upon earth (1 Cor. 15:28). They will constitute the glorified immortal hosts that will fill Yahweh's dwelling place — the whole earth. To that glorious future habitation all true Israelites have been called, and are being prepared.

This is the proper context of the cherubim in the Most Holy Place. It is for this reason that the details supplied by Ezekiel in his first and tenth chapters

become so important. His prophecy and visions represent those of whom they were a shadow as he portrays them in their “most holy” condition. The cherubim foreshadowed the features, qualities, characteristics, and work of those saints who will be associated together, as the One Body of the Kingdom age, in the establishment of divine rule and in the manifestation of Yahweh’s glory in all the earth.

— K.C.

The Triumphant March of The Cherubim

The order of Israel's march from Sinai, through the wilderness, to the promised inheritance, was a parabolic prophecy of the development of spiritual Israel, the true Ecclesia.



THE parable was set out first in the divine pattern by which the tribes encamped around the Tabernacle, and then in the manner in which they moved from point to point. The four-sided encampment did not lose its inter-tribal relationship as it moved; rather it appeared to “unwind” itself as it took on the formation of a nation on the march. But it did so in accordance with the divine instructions as described in Numbers 10.

The order of the march was governed by the priests sounding two trumpets made from a single piece of silver. A single trumpet note called the princes to assemble (v. 4); a double sounding called the whole nation together (vv. 2-4).

In addition, the trumpets could sound an “alarm.” When one “alarm” only was sounded, the eastern camps prepared to move (vv. 14-16), followed by the Tabernacle (the *Mishkan* — v. 17). At the sound of two “alarms,” the southern camps followed behind the sons of Gershon and Merari (vv. 18-20). Then came the Kohathites, carrying the “Sanctuary” or the Most Holy things. Afterwards, the western camps moved forward (vv. 22-24); and the northern tribes brought up the rear (vv. 25-28).

This order foreshadowed the development of the Ecclesia.

- (1) The sound of the silver trumpets suggests redemption through the atonement (see Acts 15:14). As there was one note, so there is one Gospel (Eph. 4:3-6).
- (2) The Israelitish ecclesia, under the ensign of the Lion of the tribe of Judah commenced the march to the promised inheritance; so it does under Christ.
- (3) After a pause in ecclesial development, the time came for the manifestation of the Tabernacle: Yahweh’s dwelling place in the midst of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 4:4; John 1:14).

- (4) As the princes gathered to Moses at the sound of the trumpet, so Christ gathered to himself twelve Apostles, representatives of the tribes of Israel, the future princes of the Kingdom (Matt. 19:28). Through their work the ecclesia has been established, whilst its "Ark" has gone before to seek out for it a "resting place" (Num. 10:33).
- (5) All now await the final blowing of the trumpet that shall sound throughout the whole encampment and call it together (1 Cor. 15:52; 2 Thess. 2:1; 4:16); then for the sound of the "alarm," and the march with the "Ark" in the midst to the promised inheritance (Deut. 33:2-3). The ecclesia of the future will move forward as the Cherubim of Yahweh entering into its inheritance. Then will be manifested all the antitypical vessels for the service and glory of Yahweh, in the midst of the multitudinous body of Christ (see 2 Tim. 2:21).

Brother Thomas described this period as the "epoch of the seventh trumpet." This will embrace the seven thunders, and the saints at war in establishing the Kingdom. The scene is depicted in Rev. 7 as the four-sided ecclesial encampment, comprising the symbolic 144,000 (vv. 4-8; Rev. 14:1).

Zechariah 9:14 associates the trumpet-blowing with Yahweh's manifestation in the "whirlwinds from the south," that is, from Sinai, Teman, and Paran (see also Hab. 3:3-5). Isaiah describes the act as "the Name of Yahweh coming from far, burning with His anger" (Isaiah 30:27).

So the Name, the Glory, and the Power of Yahweh, displayed in His Son and in His immortalised Ecclesia, will make its glorious entrance into the promised inheritance. The "House of Prayer for all nations," the great antitype of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, will be constructed for the millennial praise and worship of the whole world. The glorious consummation of the kingdom age, when a material sanctuary (or separate place) will no longer be necessary, is depicted in Rev. 21:1-3. The Ecclesial Kingdom (the saints of God) described symbolically in vv. 9-26 will then be the perpetual habitation of the Deity.

Preparation And Fulfilment

The Cherubim and Tabernacle of the future age are now being prepared. Its members, having been called and made subject to the influence of Yahweh's Word, are being developed through the stages of improvement illustrated by the Outer Court and the Holy Place of the Mosaic Tabernacle.

The way towards perfection and complete identification with our Mercy Seat, can be traced clearly by its symbols:

- (1) Baptism into the Lord Jesus Christ: the "Door."
- (2) Life and service subject to the cleansing effects of the "water of the Word", seen in the figure of the Laver.
- (3) Life offered as a living sacrifice revealed on the Altar of Burnt Offering.

During these stages the “brassy” fleshliness that characterises our human nature is purified, and the tried and proved gold of faith is revealed. So as we proceed into the Most Holy state:

- (4) The Light (Lampstand) of Yahweh’s Word illuminates the life.
- (5) Fellowship (Bread on the table) with Yahweh and His servants is enjoyed.
- (6) The prayer-communication (Altar of Incense) with Yahweh ascends as a sweet-smelling fragrance, as we draw closer to Him in our life of sanctified dedication in the ecclesia.
- (7) Now we stand at the veil, awaiting its removal of mortality in ourselves, so that we may enter into the “joy set before us,” in the perfection of the Kingdom age. With the removal of the veil of our flesh, we shall be manifested as the Cherubic bearers of the Glory.

Finally, the prayer and praise uttered by Moses (see Numbers 10:35,36) will reach its ultimate fulfilment: “When the ark set forward, Moses said, ‘Rise up, Yahweh, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.’ And when it rested, he said, ‘Return, O Yahweh, unto the ten thousand thousands (marg.) of Israel.’”

May the lessons and principles illustrated by the Tabernacle, be positive guides to us in our lives in the Truth, leading us unto the day of our salvation, and of Yahweh’s glory and power in all the earth.

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev. 15:3-4).

Then the glorious Cherubim, which were first seen in sin-stricken Eden, will be finally established in glory. Formed from the saints who have overcome sin, and enjoy the exhibition of Yahweh’s righteousness, they will be seen resplendent in immortality, as they occupy the throne on Mount Zion and spread their wings over the whole earth. Then the world will be “filled with the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea”. May that grand joy soon be realised!

— K.C.

