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Zechariah

Introduction



THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ZECHARIAH THE PROPHET

Zechariah lived at a most significant epoch of Jewish history. The seventy years captivity in Babylon, predicted by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:12. 29:10. Dan. 9:2) had come to an end; Babylon had fallen before the Medo-Persian onslaught, and after reigning jointly with Darius for two years (Dan. 5:31), Cyrus had assumed sole authority over the Empire.

He immediately introduced a policy of religious tolerance. One of his first acts was to issue a decree inviting the Jewish exiles to return to their homeland, and rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2). This fulfilled the two hundred years' old prophecy of Isaiah who had actually named Cyrus as the one who would open the way for the Jews to return (Isa. 44:28).

The greatest excitement prevailed among spiritually-minded Jews in Babylon when the decree was published (Psalm 126). Two men, Zerubbabel and Joshua, undertook to organise the return. Zerubbabel (known also as Sheshbazzar — cp. Ezra 5:16 with Zech. 4:9) was a descendant of David (1 Chron. 3:9-19), and the acknowledged leader of the people; Joshua was high priest. Together they represented the civil and religious authority of Israel.

Some 49,697 Israelites (Ezra 2:64-65) of all tribes and classes, including Haggai and Zechariah through whom Yahweh subsequently revealed His purpose as His prophets, responded to the call. They uprooted themselves from Babylon to commence the long and wearying trek back to the land of their forefathers. A difficult four month's journey lay before them (Ezra 7:9), but full of enthusiasm, they were undeterred by the prospect of it. They were moved by a religious zeal. They knew that Yahweh was with them, and they believed that they had sufficient faith to surmount any problem that might face them. Moreover, they had the full support of the powerful Persian Government. By decree of Cyrus they were not only encouraged to return, but were given the vessels of the Temple that Nebuchadnezzar had seized 70 years before, together with a large sum of money to assist them in the work they had set themselves to do (Ezra 1:7).

What more could they wish for? With the backing of the most powerful monarch of the day, with sufficient wealth to establish their project, and with the assured blessing of Heaven above, they could not fail

The only thing they lacked (but they did not then realise this) was sufficient faith to enable them to "remove mountains." They were to be faced with mountains of difficulties that would test them thoroughly, and find them wanting.

On arrival in the land they saw the full extent of the work before them: cities neglected, Jerusalem in ruins, the site of the Temple a charred mass of burnt debris. They had expected all this, however, and it did not deter them. Anxious to grapple with the work, they took up their abodes in various places, and awaited the seventh month when, appropriately, they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles that commemorated their deliverance from Egypt (Lev. 23:39-43). At this time, also, they set up the Altar, arranged for regular services of worship, and made initial preparations for the building of the Temple (Ezra 3).

All this activity was viewed with hostility by surrounding nations. And the Jews became increasingly conscious of this. Though still full of enthusiasm for the work before them, it was now intermixed with a measure of fear, as they sensed the growing antagonism manifested by their neighbours (Ezra 3:3). The Jews had many enemies who did not want to see a powerful Judah arise again on their borders.

In this atmosphere of growing hostility the work began. The Temple site was cleared of the rubble and rubbish of seventy years of desolation, and the foundations were laid. The people at last saw some tangible result of their labors, and celebrated it with manifestations of the greatest joy. A special service of thanksgiving was arranged, and the people met together to thank Yahweh for His goodness towards them.

But there were mixed feelings at that gathering. Some, who were old and had seen Solomon's Temple in its glory, wept when they saw the state of the ancient site, and the poverty of the new foundations in comparison with the previous glory seventy years before. They could not resist their tears of grief as they recalled the fallen glory of Israel. But their lamentations were drowned by the excited shouts of joy that arose from thousands of throats, as the younger members of the congregation saw the evidence of something accomplished. Their cries of exultation triumphantly echoed among the hills and valleys of Jerusalem, until the whole city seemed wrapped with the sounds of joy (Ezra 3:13).

A shortlived joy it was! When the adversaries of the Jews, and particularly the Samaritans, heard that the children of the captivity were building the Temple, they took counsel together, and laid plans to defeat the project.

They first tried subtily; they cunningly offered to assist in the building, hoping to take the Jews off guard, and sabotage the work from within. But Zerubbabel was too astute to be taken in

by these offers of friendship. "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God," was his reply (Ezra 4:13).

Nothing daunted by this opposition, the adversaries tried other means. "They weakened the hands of the people, and troubled them in building" (v.4). They corrupted the Persian officials with bribes, so that the promised help became tardy and ineffectual (Ezra 4:5, 7). They petitioned the court of Persia, making false accusations against the Jews, and calling upon the Government to stop the rebuilding of the Temple.

In the meantime, Cyrus had died, and their representations were given sympathetic consideration by his successor.

It was a troublous time for the Persian administration. The death of Cyrus was followed by the reign of his son Cambyses who continued for a little over 7 years. On his death, the throne was seized by an usurper, known to history as Smerdis, but called Artaxerxes in Ezra 4:7. His position as ruler was precarious, for he was faced by many enemies. Desperately searching for allies, he was not in a position to support such an unpopular cause as that of the Jews. Pressed by the powerful adversaries of Zerubbabel, and seeking to placate them, he issued a decree that the building of the Temple should cease forthwith (Ezra 4:21).

It seemed the death-knell to all Jewish hopes. Triumphantly their enemies demanded that the work cease in compliance with the Persian decree. By "force and power" (Ezra 4:23) they saw that it was carried out, probably demolishing all that had been built up (cp. Ezra 3:10 with Hag. 2:18 — 15 years later).

The work thus came to an untimely end. Instead of the Temple site being a hive of industry, with people active and happy in the work of Yahweh, the work ceased, the Temple grounds became deserted, the people returned to their domestic activities thoroughly discouraged.

A state of depression settled over the nation. The enthusiasm of the people had completely evaporated. They turned from the work of God, and gave themselves to building up their own material resources, spending lavishly on their homes whilst the Temple lay neglected (Haggai 1:4). They claimed that "the time had not come for Yahweh's house to be built" (v.2), thus using Scripture to justify their indolence and inaction in the work of God.

Why should this happen? Why did Yahweh permit the adversaries of Judah to triumph and His work to languish, even if only temporarily?

The answer is, to test His workmen.

Such questions are often asked as though the work of the Lord should never suffer reverse. Some reason in such a way as though the labor of the Truth should reveal only a triumphant

procession from one success to the next. And when temporary defeat comes (for absolute defeat is impossible in the work of God), it is sometimes interpreted as an indication that we should lay down our tools, declare that the "time is not ripe," and turn to other things.

Thus the work of Yahweh is permitted to "lie waste."

Actually, the opposition Judah received was the people's opportunity to demonstrate faith and courage. They should have considered it as a test on the part of Yahweh "to see what was in their hearts" (Deut. 8:2). Even though the time period decreed had not been fulfilled, there was no need to so completely turn from the work in hand. They should have heeded the example of David. He desired to build the Temple, but when told that the time was not ripe, he did the next best thing: he made preparations for the building that Solomon later took in hand (1 Chron. 29:2-5). Judah could have done likewise in the days of Zerubbabel, patiently awaiting the time when God would remove the difficulties then facing them. They let the opportunity to demonstrate their faith and confidence in Yahweh slip from their grasp; their enthusiasm withered away because it rested upon their own strength.

So the work ceased for a time.

It was at this period that the two prophets Haggai and Zechariah arose to revive the flagging enthusiasm of the people. Ezra 5:1 records:

"Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them."

These two prophets co-operated together in a wonderful work, supplementing the labors of each other. Zechariah seems to have been a young man (his grandfather had returned to the land with Zerubbabel — Neh. 12:4), Haggai was presumably an old man for he speaks as though he had seen the first Temple in its glory (Hag. 2:3). Thus youth and experience worked side by side providing a wonderful example to the people of Israel both young and old. Such co-operation is valuable in every age; it is inculcated by the Word, and makes for smoother, more effective work in the service of Yahweh.

The words of encouragement and exhortation proclaimed by the two prophets had the desired effect. They enthused the people to the work. Once again Zerubbabel and Joshua took the lead in reorganising the building of the Temple. The people became re-energised by a new-found zeal. The work of building was recommenced, and once again Jerusalem became the scene of enthusiastic labor.

But the adversaries of the Jews looked upon this stirring activity with the greatest antagonism. They challenged the Jews

as to their right to commence a work prohibited by the Persian authorities. They threatened that they would lodge a complaint with the government if it continued. But now the people were determined to proceed come what may, and refused to give heed to these threats. "The eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius" (Ezra 5:5).

For Darius Hystaspes now ruled, and a vast change had taken place in the Persian administration. The adversaries of the Jews had sought the help of the usurper Smerdis to obtain a decree forcing the Jews to cease their labors, but he had been overthrown in favor of the legitimate ruler. As enemies of Smerdis, the Jews automatically became the friends of Darius. He refused to take the complaint of the Samaritans on its face value, and made proper investigation into the matter. The archives of Persia were searched, and a copy of the decree of Cyrus was discovered. Darius endorsed this, and added to its provisions in favor of the Jews, by calling upon their very adversaries to assist in forwarding the work (Ezra 6:7-12)!

Here was direct evidence of Divine blessing. It caused great rejoicing among the people, and enabled the work to be brought to a successful completion. The record declares:

"And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel" (Ezra 6:14).

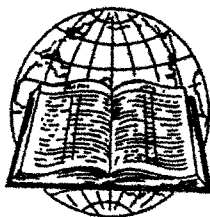
Finally, through much tribulation, the work was finished, the Temple rebuilt, and the worship of Yahweh restored. He had willed that this should be so, and the victory was His and not that of the people. The motives by which the people had contributed their energy and substance to the project had yet to be revealed, for "all things are naked and open unto Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). The prophecies of Zechariah bear witness to this fact.

They also reveal that the incidents of the time were typical of the work of the Lord Jesus at his first and second advents. As Zerubbabel and Joshua labored to build first the foundation and then the Temple, so did he and so will he. He laid the foundation of his spiritual Temple in the work he accomplished 1900 years ago; he will return to complete it and reveal the headstone. He will also supervise the building of a literal Temple in Jerusalem in the Age to come. His work in both particulars is foreshadowed in the stirring, heroic times of Zerubbabel and Joshua when the Jews struggled against tremendous odds to perform the work of God, and bring it to a successful completion. The prophecy of Zechariah, whilst relating to the future, is based upon the history of the past, upon events with which he was very familiar in his day. His visions,

built on the events of the times, must have been greatly encouraging, and yet also sobering, to the people. His prophecy is therefore not only predictive of the future, but filled with the drama of the past, and packed with exhortations to courage and faith which are applicable today.

We know very little of the prophet himself apart from the meagre references in Ezra and Zechariah. He was the grandson of Iddo, a priest who returned under Zerubbabel (Neh. 12:16). As both prophet and priest he would have been greatly interested in the completion of the Temple, and greatly excited to receive the visions of the glorious Temple to be erected in the future. As a priest of the Aaronic order he would be able to serve in the former, and as a king-priest of the Melchizedek order, he will be able to serve in the latter.

May the Divine blessing be with us as we study this wonderful book, that we might stand with Zechariah in that day of glory.



ZECHARIAH 14:9

Chronological Background

(See Isaiah 45:1-13. Jer. 25:11-12. Jer. 29:10)

- B.C. 606**—1st invasion by Nebuchadnezzar. Captivity begins, to last 70 years (Jer. 25:11-12. 27:8).
- B.C. 589-7**—Final invasion by Nebuchadnezzar in 9th year of Zedekiah which resulted in a two years' siege (2 Kings 25:1-2. 2 Chron. 36:21).
- B.C. 536**—Decree of Cyrus. The return organised under Sheshbazzar (Zerubbabel). The altar built in the 7th month (Ezra 1:1-8; 3:1-4).
- B.C. 535**—2nd month. Foundations of house laid (Ezra 3:8).
- B.C. 535-520**—Samaritan opposition — the work ceases until completion of 70 years from final invasion B.C. 587, when the Temple was destroyed (Ezra 4).
- B.C. 529**—Cyrus died — succeeded by Cambyses his son, then by Smerdis and Darius Hystaspes (522), a relation of Cyrus who reigned 35 years.
- B.C. 520**—2nd year of Darius. Haggai (6th month) and Zechariah (8th month) prophecy. The work is renewed amid blessing (Hag. 2:19). By a new decree, Darius supports the Jews (Ezra 4:24, with Ch. 6).
- B.C. 519**—In the 11th month, Zechariah receives his first seven visions (Zech. 1:7-6:15).
- B.C. 518**—Deputation from Bethel (see note Zech. 7:2) on the eve of the completion of 70 years from the destruction of Temple. Zechariah warns against mere formalism in religion, and promises a blessing for true repentance.
- B.C. 516**—Temple completed and dedication celebrated (Ezra 6:15).

The Second Year of Darius

The prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah are carefully dated. The two prophets labored in conjunction, stimulating the people to labor in the work of Yahweh. This was in the second year of Darius, king of Persia (Zech. 1:1. Ezra 4:24. Ezra 5:1). Significant dates of this year are as follows:

- 6th month—Haggai's first prophecy (Hag. 1:1-15).
- 7th month—Haggai's second prophecy (Hag. 2:1-9).
- 8th month—Zechariah's introductory exhortation (Zech. 1:1).
- 9th month—Haggai's 3rd and 4th prophecies (Hag. 2:10-23).
- 11th month—Zechariah's seven night visions (Zech. 1:7-6:15).

Analysis of the Prophecy

Theme:

This is enigmatically given in Zechariah 1:1, as expressed in the meaning of the names there supplied: Zechariah = "Yah hath remembered," Berechiah = "Yah hath blessed," Iddo = "The appointed time." These names in conjunction proclaim the message, "Yahweh hath remembered and Yahweh hath blessed at the appointed time." This is the encouraging theme of Zechariah's prophecy.

The prophecy is divided into four parts which should again be subdivided according to their various messages. The main divisions are as follows:

1. A series of seven visions given during one night, whilst the Temple was in course of being erected (Chps. 1-6:8).
2. A series of enacted parables that are shown to be typical of the future (Chp. 6:9-Chp. 8).
3. Undated prophecies which reveal the limitations of the work then being undertaken (Chps. 9-11).
4. Prophecy of the coming Day of Yahweh, setting forth the glorious consummation of His purpose (Chps. 12-14).

Zechariah's prophecies draw largely upon the events of his day as a foundation for his prophetic vision of the future. Thus his message was designed to give encouragement then and now, for it draws a vivid picture of the glory to be manifested upon earth in the age to come. Certainly his messages affirm that the humble willing service of faithful men and women will not go unnoticed nor unrewarded.

We proceed now to give a more detailed outline of the four parts of the Book of Zechariah, which were briefly introduced above.

Part 1: Early Prophecies — Chps. 1-6:8 Temple Being Rebuilt.

Introduction: True Repentance will be Rewarded — Chp. 1:1-6.

1. Vision : Zion shall see Prosperity — Chp. 1:7-17.
2. Vision : Four Craftsmen Terrify Israel's Adversaries — Chp. 1:18-21.
3. Vision : Jerusalem's Downtreading is Limited — Chp. 2.
4. Vision : A Change of Raiment for the High Priest — Chp. 3.
5. Vision : The Whole Earth to be Illuminated by Divine Light — Chp. 4.

6. Vision : The Flight of the Storks — Chp. 5.
7. Vision : Two Mountains of Brass and Four Chariots of War — Chp. 6:1-8.

Some authorities suggest treating Chapter 5 as two visions. However, a careful consideration of the matter will reveal it to be a continuous vision, the latter portion developing out of the former.

Notice that these seven visions commence with the statement that Yahweh "is sore displeased with the heathen" (Chp. 1:15), and conclude (after the four warrior-chariots have completed their mission) with the statement: "They have quieted My spirit" (Chp. 6:8).

In these seven visions, Yahweh strongly affirms His covenant to redeem and restore His people ("seven" is the covenant number!). They are graduated visions, revealing the following interesting sequence:

(1) Zion shall see prosperity due to (2) the work of the four craftsmen who will (3) cause the downtreading of Jerusalem to cease. (+) Jerusalem's glory will be graced by the coming High Priest (the Lord Jesus), who (5) will cause the Lampstand of the Spirit to illuminate the world, (6) darkened by apostasy, and (7) through his four warrior-chariots will overthrow the forces of the Gentiles.

Part 2: Enacted Parables — Chps. 6:9-8:23.

The seven night visions are followed by:

1. Exiles from Babylon invited to witness the coronation of Joshua — Chp. 6:9-15.
2. Deputation from Bethel instructed in the true principles of Godliness — Chp. 7.
3. Words of encouragement, outlining the future blessing of Jerusalem — Chp. 8:1-17.
4. Proclamation declaring that Fasts should be converted to joyful Feasts — Chp. 8:18-23.

Again notice the sequence as it applies to the future (when Gentilism will be overthrown by the conquests of Christ as outlined in the seventh vision):

1. The returning exiles from Babylon — Rev. 18:4 — will witness the coronation of the Lord Jesus in the Temple — Zech 6:9-15.
2. The nations will be instructed in the true principles of religion — Zech. Chp. 7 — See Isa. 2:2-4.
3. The Divine blessing will rest upon Jerusalem as the city of the great King — Zech. 8:1-17; cf. Matt. 5:35.
4. The mourning of the present age will be turned into joyful celebrations in "the future age" — Zech. 8:18-23.

Part 3: Later Prophecies — Chps. 9-11.

These messages are undated, and were probably given after the Temple was completed. They can be sub-headed thus:

1. Human Conqueror or Divine Prince of Peace?—Chp. 9.
2. The Future Work of the Good Shepherd—Chp. 10.
3. The Rejection of the Good Shepherd and the Scattering of the Flock (an enacted parable)—Chp. 11.

These prophecies reveal that Israel would again be scattered, the Temple again be overthrown, but that the ultimate redemption of the nation and people of Yahweh is nevertheless sure. Thus Zerubbabel, Joshua and their fellows (together with all who have ears to hear) were taught that they should delight in doing the will of Yahweh in anticipation of the ultimate glory to be revealed, and not limit their spiritual vision to laboring only for the establishing of the temporary restoration then taking place, which would, in due time, be again overthrown. The lesson remains today.

There is nothing permanent in that which is being set up now whether ecclesiastically or otherwise. All will be replaced at Christ's return. But if we labor faithfully in these temporary things, with our hopes centred upon that which will ultimately be manifested, our labor will not be in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15.58).

Part 4: The Final Consummation — Chps. 12-14.

These chapters provide a continuous prophecy, but can, for convenience sake, be divided as follows:

1. Israel to Seek the Good Shepherd — Chp. 12.
2. Israel to be Cleansed and Regrafted into the Olive Tree — Chp. 13.
3. The Glorious Consummation: Yahweh's Name Universally Honoured — Chp. 14.

It is evident that these last chapters are given over to the Day of Yahweh. There is continuous reference made to this fact — see Chp. 12:3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, Chp. 13:1, 2, 4; Chp. 14:4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21.

In these last chapters, Yahweh is mentioned some 30 times, Jerusalem some 22 times, and the nations some 13 times. The Day of Yahweh will see Him elevated over all, will witness Jerusalem magnified over the nations, and the Gentiles humbled before Earth's future King. That is the theme of these closing chapters of Zechariah's prophecy.

How to use these Notes

There are two ways in which we could have expounded the prophecy of Zechariah — (1) by a detailed exposition, or (2) by a verse by verse commentary. The former has the advantage of providing vivid word pictures of what the prophet has recorded; the latter has the advantage of taking the student directly to the Word, and inviting him to create his own pictures from the text itself, aided by comments supplied.

We have adopted the latter course. We do suggest, however, that in addition to these notes, frequent recourse be made to *Eureka*, where detailed expositions are given upon sections of the prophecy. In *Eureka vol. i*, Zechariah is dealt with at length in the section entitled: *The Apocalypse in Zechariah*, but that by no means exhausts the author's treatment of the prophecy. By consulting the Index to both *Elpis Israel* and *Eureka* numerous other references will be found to the prophecy, and these, we earnestly recommend, should be deeply considered.

As he studies the prophecy, the student needs to use his imagination to picture the vivid scenes therein recorded. Try to visualise what the prophet saw. As you read of the four horses of various colors down among the myrtle trees, see them there. Mentally behold the man with the measuring line, or Joshua in his filthy garments. Thrill to the coronation of Joshua, and participate in the discussion with the deputation from Bethel as they enquire concerning the fasts.

If we can create a mental picture of what we are reading, the subject matter will be more completely imbedded on our minds, and more permanently retained in our memories. Thus try to memorise the subject matter of every chapter, so that the whole book, in broad outline can be instantly brought into view. By these means we will begin to THINK upon the words of the prophet, and as we do that our study will have greater impact upon our thoughts and actions.

These notes are designed for Bible marking. We believe that this is a most valuable exercise, and in line with that which the kings of Israel were commanded to do. They were required to write for themselves a copy of the law, that it might be more greatly impressed upon their minds, and that they might take greater heed to its requirements (Deut. 17:18-20). As those who are called upon to be kings of the future age (Rev. 5:9-10), we are wise if we apply the spirit of this injunction to ourselves. We can do so through verse by verse marking of a Bible.

This takes time, but it is well worth the effort. It will help to engrave the things learned more completely on our minds. But what system shall we use? In *Consider Your Ways* (study notes

on Haggai), we have set out a system of Bible marking that we have personally found extremely valuable in our daily pilgrimage. We feel sure that the reader will likewise find some such system of immense help, and of lasting value.

The notes in this book are too voluminous for Bible marking as they stand, however. The reader will need to reduce them considerably. This also is a valuable exercise. Learn to economise with words. First read the chapter of the Bible, give it a heading, sectionise it, and then study it with these notes. Have by your side a notebook, and jot down therein what you desire to record in your Bible. Later on, mark it in the margin.

For example, note what we say concerning "The glory in the midst of her" in Zech. 2:5. In my Bible that is reduced to the following comment:

"The Shekinah glory absent from the 2nd Temple. Ezekiel saw it depart (Ezek. 8:4. 9:3. 10:4, 18. 11:23) but he also saw it return in a different form (Ezek. 43:2). The Jews saw the firstfruits of this new form at first advent (John 1:14). The Gospel call is to that end (Jer. 13:11. Acts 15:14. Isa. 43:7. 40:5. 66:18-19). Its fruit is to be manifested in Israel (Jer. 33:8-9)."

There is enough matter in this comment to occupy considerable time if I were expounding upon this theme, and I only have to notice the sequence of references placed together above, to know what the extract means. I know, before I look it up, what Jer. 13:11, Acts 15:14, etc., say, and I know how I would use them in exposition. That only comes with practice. A reference to Jer. 13:11 reminds me of the purpose of Yahweh in drawing Israel out of Egypt, what He required of them, and the cause of their failure.

Against the statement "Lord of hosts" I have marked in the margin of my Bible three references only, but they tell a story even as I look at them. They are: Isa. 55:4. 2 Tim. 2:4. Rev. 19:14. Without looking these passages up, I know that the first speaks of Christ as our Commander, the second shows that we have been called to be his soldiers and to please him, and the third tells of the time when we can be associated with him as constituents of his army bent on world conquest. And I know how all this can be linked with the belligerent title of Deity: Lord of hosts, or Yahweh Sabaoth — He Who Shall Be Armies, so that all that is necessary for me is this line of quotations. But others may require more comments in explanation thereof. Whatever system you use, *use it*. Simplify your comments, make them clear and so write them up that they will be easily understood ten years from now. Have recourse to prayer for guidance in your studies, persevere in these exercises, and the prophecy of Zechariah will live for you as it has never lived before, giving you inexpressible pleasure and profit in the process. You will perceive the joy set before you (Hebr. 12:2). The eyes of your understanding will be enlightened and you will see so much clearer the hope of your calling, and know so much better what is the riches of the GLORY of the inheritance, held out to the saints (Eph. 1:16-23).

CHAPTER 1

The Divine Scouts and Carpenters

INTRODUCTION - WARNING FROM HISTORY - Vv. 1-6

Zechariah calls upon the people to heed the lessons of the past and apply them to the present, giving themselves unreservedly to the service of Yahweh.

VERSE 1

"In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius"—See chronology. Already in the 6th and 7th months of this year, Haggai had exhorted the people to "be strong" in their determination to do God's will (Hag. 2:4), promising that if they laboured in the work of rebuilding the Temple to Yahweh's glory, He would be with them to help and bless them (Hag. 1:13). Now Zechariah adds his testimony.

"The word of Yahweh"—This is authoritative and will perform the purpose its Author desires of it (Isa. 55:11).

"Zechariah, Berechiah, Iddo"—These three names signify: "Yah hath remembered," "Yah hath blessed," "The appointed time," and thus express the theme of the book: "Yahweh hath remembered and Yahweh hath blessed at the appointed time." The seventy years of desolation predicted by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:12) were nearing their end, and the time of blessing was at hand.

VERSE 3

"Turn ye unto me"—The events of the times are typical of events yet in the future, when the full restoration of Israel will take place. At that time, a similar appeal will be made to the Jewish people (cp. Jer. 3:14).

"Saith the Lord of hosts"—Yahweh Tzva'oth, He Who Will Be Armies. This is the belligerent title

of Deity indicating that the hosts of heaven were prepared to come to the aid of those addressed. See its use in Haggai 2, and Paul's use of the title in Romans 9:29. It is an indication of the forces that could be enlisted on behalf of Israel, if the people would but turn to God.

VERSE 4

"Be ye not as your fathers"—The tragedy of Israel's history was the failure of the people to hearken to the voice of Yahweh's messengers, in consequence of which the threatened judgments fell heavily upon them (see 2 Kings 17:13-14; 2 Chron 36.15-17; Jer. 7:25-26).

"The former prophets"—Particularly Jeremiah (Jer. 35.15) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 18.30) Though their predictions were opposed by the false prophets of their day, and ridiculed by the people (Jer. 5.30-31; 6.13-14) they were vindicated when the threatened punishment came to pass.

"They did not hear"—See the repetition of this warning in Zech. 7:11 when the deputation came to Zechariah regarding the celebration of fasts.

VERSE 5

"Your fathers where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?"—The "fathers," namely those to whom the Word was spoken, as well as "the prophets" or those through whom the Word

THE MINISTRY OF ZECHARIAH THE PROPHET

came, had both passed away, but the Word had proved true. It alone "shall stand for ever" (Isa 40:6-8). Events foretold and fulfilled in the past bore witness to this fact. Predictions concerning the future would thus likewise be vindicated in due time. Zechariah was thus able to present most powerful credentials.

VERSE 6

"My words did they not take hold of your fathers?"—See margin

—"overtake." Yahweh's predicted punishments had been fulfilled, and in this His word had been vindicated. So complete had been the fulfilment, that even those who had initially doubted the warnings of the prophets, had been compelled to acknowledge the truth of their words. See Jer. 7:3. Ezek. 36:31. Lam. 2:8, 17. As Zechariah declared, God "had dealt with" Israel, according to its ways.

1st Night Vision: THE MAN AMONG THE MYRTLE TREES

Vv. 7-17

Between Zechariah 1:7 and 6:8, the prophet records seven visions that he received during the course of one night. In this first one, he was shown a man upon a red horse standing among myrtle trees. Behind him were three other riders on horses. From the shadows these four looked out upon the world, and saw with dissatisfaction that whilst Gentiles lived in peace, Jerusalem was in distress. The prophet then heard "good and comfortable words" spoken in regard to Jerusalem and Zion. He heard the promise given that Yahweh's house would be completed, and through prosperity the cities would spread abroad.

As with all the night visions seen by Zechariah, this one had an immediate application to the building of the Temple then underway through the supervision of Zerubbabel and Joshua. But the ultimate and complete fulfilment awaits the future, when the Lord will supervise the erection of the "house of prayer for all nations" predicted in Isaiah 56:7, Mark. 11:17.

The vision, therefore, was encouraging to those who were then laboring under difficulties, and in the face of the opposition of neighbouring nations who were "at ease" (Ezra 5:3-4). It revealed to them that their immediate work would be brought to a successful conclusion, whilst also revealing that what they were doing was typical of a greater glory in the future in which they could share. It showed that from the shadows Yahweh overlooked His people for good. His "eyes" were upon them (Ezra 5:5). Yahweh Tzvaoth fought for them through the Captain of the host (army) whom Joshua had seen (Josh. 5:15), and who stood in the position that Christ occupies now (Isa. 55:4). Thus the triumph of Zerubbabel and Joshua then, through the aid of the angelic ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14), foreshadowed the greater victory and triumph of the future when Christ and the saints take over the work of the angels (Heb.

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The myrtle trees symbolise the Feast of Tabernacles. Such a feast had been celebrated by the Jews that very year, and Haggai had stood up before the people to proclaim Yahweh's promise of help (Hag. 2:1). The Feast of Tabernacles was the feast of harvest, deliverance and rejoicing, and foreshadowed the glory of the Millennium (Zech. 14:16. Rev. 7:9-17).

VERSE 7

"The four and twentieth day of the eleventh month" — Three months after the initial message (v.1), and two months to the day after Haggai's proclamation of impending blessing (Hag. 2:18). Sufficient time had elapsed to indicate that the blessing was being poured out promising a bountiful season.

"The month Sebat"—Approx. February. A significant month, for then the almond tree blossomed, and the fig tree began to "put forth"—symbols that the time was at hand for the Divine blessing (Jer. 1:11-12. Song. 2:13).

VERSE 8

"A man"—Described as the messenger (angel, v.11), and apostle (one sent, v.10) of Yahweh. Thus pointing to Christ (Heb. 3:1). This man stands as the commander or leader of those behind him. That is the standing of Christ who is the appointed Leader and Commander of Israel (Isa. 55:4), replacing the authority of the angel initially placed over the nation (Exod. 23:20-21. Josh. 5:13). See Heb. 2:5-10.

"Red horse"—Bloodshed and war, for the horse was only used for war in ancient times. It is frequently used in Scripture symbolically for an army (Job 39:19-25. Zech. 10:3. Prov. 21:31. Jer. 8:6. Rev. 19:11-16). There were four horses seen by Zechariah, answering to the fourfold division of Israel (see Num. 2:3, 10, 18, 25), and the foursquare encampment of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:16). In Rev. 19:11-16, the saints are revealed in belligerent manifestation riding to war with Christ at their head, a similar representation of that seen by Zechariah. Into

the hands of the saints will be given the judgment of the nations (Ps. 149:5-9. Dan. 7:14-18. Rev. 2:26-27) and through the outpouring of this there will be brought about the redemption and peace of Jerusalem.

"Myrtle trees"—"The myrtle has been commonly associated with love, peace and immortality from time immemorial." (From Plants of the Bible.) As "thorns" are symbolic of rebellious Israel (Heb. 6:8), so the myrtle is of restored and repentant Israel (Isa. 55:13. 41:19. 61:3). Branches of the myrtle were used for decorative purposes in the Feast of Tabernacles which celebrated the rejoicing of deliverance (Lev. 23:40-43 cp. with Neh. 8:15). The myrtle is thus emblematic of peace and restoration. These horses among the myrtle trees show forth the ultimate purpose of God: to establish peace after the judgments of war. They are like scouts surveying the work of conquest that is shown as completed in the final vision received by Zechariah that night (Zech. 6:1-8).

"In the bottom"—Rotherham renders: "The shade." They were sheltering under booths made of the myrtles above, again emblematic of the Feast of Tabernacles and the coming epoch of deliverance and peace.

"Behind him"—As these are behind him, he stands forth as their Commander in chief. Behind him there are three other horses: so that there are only four in all. V.8 should read: "Behind him were horses: red, speckled and white" (see R.V.). These four horses represent the saints in belligerent manifestation. There are four because the saints comprise spiritual

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Israel (Eph. 2:12-13. Rev. 7:4-8), and thus take their pattern from the Israel of the past which was divided into four sections when it marched through the wilderness. Judah led the tribes then (Num. 10:14), and the Lion of the tribe of Judah will lead the saints in the future (Rev. 5:5. 19:11).

"Red"—Bloodshed (cp. Jer. 25:33).

"Speckled"—From a Hebrew word signifying to be spotted with bright red, an extension of bloodshed. The margin renders "bay," and in Arabic "bay," or "sorrell" was considered an omen of ill. Thus the colour can well represent the after-effects of war and bloodshed, even famine.

"White"—Heb. "laban" — used for the white of leprosy (among other things. See Lev. 13), and signifying pestilence. The millennium will be preceded by a time of intense trouble (Dan. 12:1), in which war, famine and pestilence (see Hab. 3:5. Ezek. 38:22. Zech. 14:12) will ravage those nations which refuse to heed the mercy of Yahweh (Isa. 60:12. Jer. 25:33. Dan. 7:11). By these disciplinary judgments even the most obstinate of nations will be ultimately humbled before Yahweh, that the blessings of the Kingdom might follow (Isa. 26:9).

VERSE 9

"The angel that talked with me"—The vision was supervised by a presiding angel, even as events are supervised by them for the benefit of the elect (Heb. 1:14).

VERSE 10

"These are they whom Yahweh hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth" — They constitute the "eyes" of Yahweh - cp. Zech. 4:10. In the past, the angels have acted in this capacity (Gen. 18:21. 2 Chron. 16:9. Dan. 4:17. Ezra 5:5). In the future, the saints will so act (Heb. 2:5. Zech. 4:10). Rotherham renders "walk" as "go." The saints

shall go to and fro throughout the earth, as the eyes of Yahweh, subjecting mankind to Christ until "all the earth sitteth still and is at rest." Before the actual outpouring of judgment in the future begins the work of conquest will first be surveyed (Isa. 40:10. Hab. 3:6).

VERSE 11

"The angel among the myrtle trees"—The "man" of v. 8 is here styled an "angel" because he is representative of Christ the Lord clothed upon with Divine nature. He is described as being "among the myrtle trees" to distinguish him from the presiding angel who explains the vision to Zechariah.

VERSE 12

"How long?"—This has been the continuous and unremitting cry of the saints down the ages (Dan. 12:6. Rev. 6:10. Hab. 1:2. Ps. 74:10. Rev. 13:10).

"These three-score and ten years"—The period of time since the captivity of Babylon (see Jer. 25:11). The Jews had claimed that the time-period had not been yet fulfilled (Hag. 1:2), and had turned from the work of God. But the seventy years had now fully elapsed since the destruction of the Temple, and Zechariah's contemporaries were to witness its restoration, the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the revival of the nation. As Jeremiah's time-period neared its end, Daniel had prayed for the restoration of the nation (Dan. 9:2), and he had been told that whilst the prophecy would, indeed, be fulfilled, it would be followed by the prophecy of seventy "weeks," at the end of which there would be witnessed the "finishing of transgression, the ending of sin offering, the making of reconciliation for iniquity, the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the sealing of the vision and prophecy, and the anointing of the Most Holy" (Dan. 9:24). All this was accomplished by the Lord Jesus at his first advent as an

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earnest of things to come. The prophecy, however, seems to call for a double application, so that the second advent will see the final fulfilment of that initiated at the first. In the Hebrew, the word "weeks" is literally "sevens" without specifying whether weeks, years, or jubilees are intended. Thus "seventy sevens" are "determined upon thy people." As seventy weeks on a day for a year principle (see Gen. 29:27. Ezek. 4.6), the prophecy was fulfilled at the first advent. But as seventy jubilees, it will be fulfilled at the second advent, numbering the beginning of the Jubilees from the time when all tribes had been allotted their portion of the land by Joshua. In Leviticus 25:8, the Jubilee is described as a "week of sabbaths," or seven sabbaths. It has been suggested that seventy of such sevens reach from the distribution of the land to the tribes unto the epoch of the establishment of the Kingdom in the near future (see W. H. Carter in *Prophecy and Chronology*). It is significant that Daniel should have been drawn to consider Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years (Dan. 9:2), and then immediately be given the prophecy of the seventy sevens (v. 24). It suggests some link between them. This link seems established by Zechariah's report of the angel's words, for they revealed that whilst there was a preliminary fulfilment of the vision then, the final and complete fulfilment is reserved for the future. Meanwhile, the vision would encourage them in the work they were then doing despite the discouragements they had experienced. They would know that Yahweh was looking out from the shadows upon their labours and would come to their help in time of need.

VERSE 13

"The angel talked with me with good words and comfortable words"—These were words that the prophet could take back to

the people to encourage them, impressing them with the realisation that they were labouring to bring to completion a work that foreshadowed God's ultimate purpose with Israel and Jerusalem.

VERSE 14

"I am jealous for Jerusalem"—This is the holy city, and the land is the holy land. The word "holy" denotes that which Yahweh has separated for His exclusive use. Where this "holiness" is not recognised, people and nations treat such things as common, and this desecration arouses the jealousy of Yahweh on behalf of His own. The same Hebrew word is also translated "zeal." Yahweh's zeal shall preserve the remnant of His people (Isa. 37:32), cause Him to arm His warriors against the enemies of His people and land (Isa. 59:17), supervise the successful prosecution of the coming war of conquest (Isa. 42:13. Zech. 8:2), gather the nations together for judgment (Zeph. 3:8), and establish the throne of David in glory (Isa. 9:7).

"For Jerusalem and for Zion"—The holy city and the holy mount, which Gentiles cannot oppress with impunity (Joel 2:18).

VERSE 15

"The heathen at ease"—The nations were at ease in the days of Zechariah, and indifferent to the struggles of the Jews to re-establish themselves in the land. In fact, they helped forward the affliction by putting every obstacle before the work in hand. The same attitude has been adopted by Gentiles towards the work of the Truth in every age; and is the attitude manifested by the world towards the revival of Israel in the present age. It is not right in Yahweh's sight that those who oppose His work and purpose should be at ease. In the days of Zechariah, He moved to vindicate His purpose with Judah, to restore the Temple, and to frustrate those

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opposing the work; in these days He shall do likewise, thus bringing His work to a successful consummation. Thus there was encouragement for the labourers of Zechariah's day in this vision, as there is for us today.

"They helped forward the affliction"—And thus offended Yahweh. See Jer. 2:3. 30:16. 50:7. Ezek. 26:2-3.

VERSE 16

"I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies"—This was true then, and will be true of the future (Luke 21:24). See Isa. 54:7. Jer. 30:18.

"My house shall be built in it"—The work to which the prophets and the people had put their hands in those times would be brought to a successful completion. That is the primary application of this statement, and therefore must have been of great encouragement to the prophet as well as to the people when he relayed to them Yahweh's message. But it also has its future, and more important, application. Yahweh's house, the Temple, is yet to be restored as a "house of prayer for all nations" (Mark 11:15-17. Isa. 56:7). Like the Temple of Solomon that foreshadowed it, it will be built according to Divine plans, and with the

aid of foreign labour (Isa. 60:10). The work will be supervised by Christ (Zech. 6:12). He shall officiate as King-priest (Ps. 110. Zech. 6:13). His immortalised followers will be associate king-priests (Rev. 5:9). All nations, and people, will assemble there for worship (Zech. 14:16. 8:22-23. Isa. 2:2-4). The Divine glory, once revealed by the Shekinah Light shining in the Most Holy (Ps. 80:1) will in the future be manifested through the immortalised saints (Ezek. 43:1-5. Dan. 12:3. Matt. 13:43).

"A line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem"—Extending its size (Jer. 31:39). This enlarged Jerusalem of the future will be a Temple-city, for it shall be "built to Yahweh" (Jer. 31:38).

VERSE 17

"Cry yet!"—That is, lift up your voice in a loud cry. He had a thrilling message for those times when the people were struggling against opposition to rebuild the Temple; it is a thrilling message for us today.

"My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad"—Rotherham renders: "Shall overflow with blessings." Not only Jerusalem, but all Israel will be rebuilt.

2nd Vision: THE FOUR HORNS AND THE FOUR CARPENTERS - Vv. 18-21

ISRAEL TRIUMPHANT OVER HER ENEMIES

Zechariah's attention is drawn to four horns, and he is told that these represent Israel's enemies. He is then shown four carpenters, and is told that these would overthrow the oppressors of Israel.

VERSE 18

"Four horns"—"Horns" in Bible symbology represent nations (Dan. 8:21-22. Rev. 17:12). The angel's interpretation (Zech. 1:19) shows that they represent the four great world powers of the image of Daniel 2.

VERSE 20

"Four carpenters"—Lit. "Artificers" or "craftsmen." The symbol was appropriate to the times, for there were many such who were faithfully labouring in the Temple. The honor reserved for them, as for all the chosen and faithful of every

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age is to "execute judgment upon the nations" (Rev. 2:26. Psalm 149:5-9). The carpenter of Galilee has led the way (Mark 6:3. Matt. 13:55). The number "four" identifies these craftsmen with Israel. There were four Cherubim (Ezek. 1), four Living Ones (Rev. 5:8), the four-sided new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:16). In Bible numerics, four represents creative works, as is suggested by the Hebrew root of the word. The sun appeared on the fourth day, pointing forward to the "Light of the world" (John 8:12) who appeared at the fourth millenium from creation, to lay the foundation of the "new creation" (Rev. 3:14). Israel was divided into four

encampments, under the standards of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan (Num. 2) with the Tabernacle in the middle, and thus became the symbol of the true Israel of God (Eph. 2:12) surrounding its spiritual Tabernacle, the Lord Jesus (Heb 9:11).

The four carpenters, or artificers, will not merely terrify the horns, but re-shape the world upon the enduring foundation of Divine law and wisdom.

VERSE 21

"To fray them"—This is short for "affray," and signifies to "terrify" or "put to fear," for which see Micah 7:16-20.

CHAPTER 2

Future Destiny of Jerusalem

3rd Vision: JERUSALEM'S DOWNTREADING LIMITED

In his first vision, Zechariah saw that Yahweh, from the shadows, overlooked the destiny of Israel, and through His Divine army he would move for its redemption. In his second vision, he was shown the means whereby the Gentiles would be terrified and overthrown. Now he is shown that Jerusalem's persecution is limited, and its exaltation to the dignity of Yahweh's throne is sure (Jer. 3:17). The prophet saw a man with a measuring line, and learned the purpose of his labors: Jerusalem shall be inhabited, Israel shall be restored, and the glory will return. Again, the vision of the night had relation to the labors of the day, for "a man with a measuring line" must have been a familiar figure to the workers in the Temple. Here, then, was a message of encouragement for them as well as for us.

THE MAN WITH THE MEASURING LINE—Vv 1-5

VERSE 1

"Behold"—The word indicates to "take note." The fortunes and misfortunes of Israel and Jerusalem are signs which every true son of God has observed with the greatest interest.

"Line"—The word in Hebrew is "chebel," a different word to that used in Ezekiel 40:3 or Zech. 1:16. The word occurring in those places indicates a measure as to size, but "chebel" is used in Scripture in the sense of measuring off for punishment (2 Sam. 8:2. Amos 7:8, 17). In the former place, David measured the Moabites, some for death and others for slavery. This has been the lot of Israel at the hands of the Gentiles throughout the ages.

VERSE 2

"To measure Jerusalem"—This indicates that a time limit is placed upon Jerusalem's afflictions, and though the time is not here specified, the fact that there is a "set time" to favour Zion is indicated elsewhere (Ps. 102:13. Heb. 11:3. Diag. Acts 17:26. Acts 1:7. Luke 21:24).

"Breadth and length thereof"—

The extent as well as the duration of Israel's affliction is limited. No matter how men might try, they will never destroy the Jew (Jer. 30:11).

VERSE 3

"The angel that talked with me"

He supervised the visions, explaining them to Zechariah (Ch. 1:9, 13, 14, 19. Ch. 1:11). He occupied the position now assumed by the spirit word: Rev. 2:7. 1 Pet. 3:22. Rev. 1:1.

"Went forth"—Lit. "came forward," to meet and direct the other angel.

VERSE 4

"Run, speak to this young man"

—To the man of v.1, calling upon him to cease measuring, for the time of blessing had come. A sense of urgency is suggested in the word "run." He was to hasten to limit the measuring of persecution. There was a partial fulfilment of that in the prophet's day, as both he and Haggai had revealed that the time of blessing had come (see note Zech. 1:1); but the fulness of the vision awaits the future.

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"Jerusalem"—Jerusalem is here used representatively of Israel as a whole, it is also in other places. e.g. Ezek. 23:4. Zech. 8:8. Thus the context speaks of Jerusalem as "towns (plural) without walls."

VERSE 5

"A wall of fire"—Such a wall protected Israel when the nation left Egypt (Ex. 14:19-20). It served as a visible token of the Divine presence. The Divine presence and protection is promised here again (see Isa. 26:1. 4:5).

"The glory in the midst of her" — In the Most Holy of the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple, the glory of Yahweh was manifested by a glowing light shining above the Mercy Seat between the Cherubim. Ezekiel, in a time of great apostasy, saw the glory of Yahweh depart from the Temple and city (Ezek. 8:4. 9:3. 10:4, 18. 11:23), and the people left to their own resources. But he also predicted the return of the Glory at the coming advent of the Lord, when the glorious "house of prayer for all nations" will be erected. The glory to return will be in a different form to that which departed, however. The glory of the past was a glowing light; that of the future will be the manifestation of Yahweh in a great company of glorified ones, the chief of whom declared that he was the "light of the world" (John 8:12). So Ezekiel declared "The glory of the Elohim (mighty ones) of ~~the~~ came from the way of the east (the direction in which it had departed (Ezek. 11:23); and his voice was like the noise of many waters (i.e. a great multitude) and the earth shined with his glory" (Ezek. 43:2). Here is Divine glory manifested in a multitude. It was the hope of Paul that he should attain unto it (Rom. 5:2). We are called to that glory, for Yahweh is taking "out of the nations" a people for His name (Acts 15:14), that is, for His glory (Isa. 43:7. Isa. 40:5. 66:18-19).

That is His purpose with Israel both national and spiritual (Jer. 13:11), and it will yet be accomplished (Jer. 33:8-9).

SAVE THYSELF, ISRAEL

—Vv. 6-7

VERSE 6

"Come forth, and flee" — Christ will "build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down" (Acts 15:16), by a complete national restoration "as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11). The services of Elijah and his associates will be used to that end. They will convey the Divine invitation to scattered Israel to return home (Mal. 4:5-6), and the full ingathering will then take place (Ezek. 39:25; Rev. 18:4). Israel will not only be saved but converted and transformed (Ezek. 20:33-38; Rom. 11:26).

"The land of the north" — The context describes this as all points of the compass, for "I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven." To the Hebrew, the north was the place of obscurity. The Hebrew word (Tsawphon) signifies "hidden," "dark," "unknown," and comes from a root meaning to hide by covering over, to hoard, or reserve. All these ideas are expressed in the word "north" as used in this verse. Israel was scattered into the land of obscurity, and was there hidden, reserved, or hoarded for Yahweh's purpose. From the same root as the word "north" comes the Hebrew expression translated "hidden ones" in Psalm 83:3. So from the place of obscurity, where Israel has been hidden or reserved, the people will be called back home.

VERSE 7

"Deliver thyself, O Zion" — In the days of Zechariah this was doubtless an appeal to those Jews in Babylon who had not returned under the decree of Cyrus. But the prophecy relates primarily to the

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future, when Babylon the Great shall come into judgment. Before the full weight of Divine vengeance will be unleashed against Catholic Europe, the Jews will be invited back home (see Rev. 18:4). The Revised Version renders: "Ho Zion, escape thou!"

RETRIBUTION ON THE GENTILES — Vv. 8-13

VERSE 8

"After the glory" — After the apocalypse of glory in Christ and the saints (1 Tim. 6:15-16; Rom. 5:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 3:12). The judgment of the household precedes that of the world (1 Pet. 4:17). After Christ is glorified in the saints (2 Thess. 1:10), he will turn his attention to the world at large.

"Hath He sent me" — Yahweh of hosts (armies) is the speaker. Christ is the manifestation of Yahweh, and the Commander of the Armies to be revealed (Isa. 55:4). The saints comprise the armies under him (2 Tim. 2:4; Rev. 19:14). As an army marches in the name of its commander so in this verse the unnumbered multitude of the saints is classed under the single word "me." Each one of them will be a manifestation of Divine glory, united in attributes and in nature with their head, even Christ, and their Father, even Yahweh.

"The apple of His eye" — The word should be "pupil." This is the most tender part of the body, and the one that reacts immediately to any foreign matter touching it. Thus no one can touch the people of God with impunity. See Jer. 12:14; Ezek. 36:22-24; Isa. 54:17; Rom. 11:28.

VERSE 9

"I will shake mine band" — In threatening aspect. The expression is used elsewhere as a symbol of the outpouring of Divine wrath (Isa. 11:15; 19:16).

"They shall be a spoil to their

servants" — The enemies of Israel who have reduced them to slavery, will become their slaves in turn. See Isa. 51:22-52:6; 60:14-15.

"Ye shall know" — See Exod. 29:46. Israel as a nation never came to really "know Yahweh," for to "know" Him is to lay hold of eternal life (John 17:3). To "know" in the true sense is to be begotten by Yahweh's seed, His Spirit word, in such a way as to produce fruit to His glory (1 Pet. 1:23; James 1:18, 2:18-20). When Israel shall see the fulness of Divine glory and power in the Lord Jesus and the saints, they will recognise how far they have failed to appreciate the goodness of Yahweh (Rom. 11:22). The apocalypse of Christ will make this manifest, and draw them close to their God.

VERSE 10

"I will dwell in the midst of thee" — This was Yahweh's purpose when He called His people from Egypt (Exod. 29:45), but though they would not then hear (Jer. 13:11), His purpose will be fulfilled in the future age (Jer. 33:9; Rev. 21:3).

VERSE 11

"Many nations shall be joined to Yahweh" — To be "joined" signifies "converted." (See Jer. 3:17-18; Zech. 8:22, 23; Isa. 60:12.) This will fulfil the promise to Abraham—Gen. 17:4; Rom. 4:18.

"I will dwell in the midst of thee" — See Ezekiel 48:8-13 where a section of territory is described as being taken out of the midst of the Land for the exclusive purpose of Yahweh. He will dwell in the midst of Israel in the person of Christ and the saints (Matt. 23:39, 13:43; Ezek. 48:35).

VERSE 12

"Yahweh shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land" — Ezekiel 48:8-13 shows that a large portion of the Land of Promise will be taken over by the Lord as a holy oblation, or portion, to be used

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exclusively for the universal Divine worship to be set up at the Millennium. In *Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy*, Brother Sulley shows that the area thus occupied by the Lord will constitute the territory that was originally given to the tribe of Judah which tribe will occupy contiguous land to the north. There will be a new allocation of land for all the tribes in the kingdom, so that Ezekiel and Zechariah are shown to be at one in this interesting and significant prophecy.

"Shall choose Jerusalem" — Cf. Mat. 5:35; 2 Chron. 12:13; Ps. 132:13-14; Isa. 49:14-16.

"Again" — It had already been chosen in the days of the prophet, so that this statement implied that

the people were yet to be scattered (as they were by the Romans) and regathered (as they are being regathered today).

VERSE 13

"Be silent, O all flesh" — Flesh in its various manifestations — both in individuals and in its social, religious and political institutions, will be humbled before the glory of Yahweh manifested in His son and His elect.

"He is raised up out of his holy habitation" — Notice margin. The Lord will be elevated from Zion, and before him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. See Phil. 2:9-11.

CHAPTER 3

The Coronation of the High Priest

4th Vision: YAH'S SALVATION

Under the type of Joshua, the high priest, the saving work of the Lord was revealed to Zechariah. Historically, this vision, like the others, is based upon the events recorded in Ezra 4, 5, 6. There, Joshua the high priest, is mentioned as being engaged in the building of the Temple (Ezra 4:1-6), a work that was so strenuously opposed by the adversaries (the satan) of Israel, that it temporarily ceased (v.24). Joshua, with the aid of the prophets and others, instituted a reform, and gave an example to his contemporaries by resuming the building activity once again (Ezra 5:2). The adversary (satan) continued to oppose the work, but now the "eye of their God" was upon the elders of Israel (Ezra 5:5), so that the work was successfully completed. The high priest, with garments soiled through working among the debris of the Temple, would be a familiar figure to the other laborers, for he toiled with them to build the house.

But when the work was finished, and the Temple built, a "change of raiment" was given to Joshua, and he officiated in the Temple he helped to build, wearing his priestly garments "for glory and for beauty".

What an apt figure for the Lord Jesus Christ. At his first advent, we see him with the soiled garments of humanity, figuratively down in the debris, laboring to build the foundations with the "eye of God" approvingly upon him. The work brought to a successful completion, the Lord received a "change of raiment" (Phil. 3:21).

It is obvious by the comment of v. 8: "I will bring forth My servant the Branch," that this vision related to the Lord Jesus. At his first advent he labored to lay the foundation of the spiritual Temple which is being built upon that which he then established (see v. 9. Eph. 2:20. 1 Pet. 2:6). In this work, he constantly had satan (the adversary) at his right hand to resist him, but in spite of all such opposition and temptation, he succeeded.

The vision follows the preceding one in natural sequence. Chapter 2 showed Yahweh dwelling in Jerusalem, filling it with Divine glory. Chapter 3 reveals the qualifications and nature of the Priest who will "bear the glory" (Zech. 6:13).

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The labors of Joshua and Zerubbabel in building the Temple were typical of the work of the Lord in building his spiritual Temple (2 Cor. 6:16), so that they are set forth as "men of sign (Zech. 3:8 - margin).

JOSHUA IN SOILED GARMENTS — Vv. 1-3

VERSE 1

"Joshua" — The Hebrew form of Jesus, and compounded of two words: "Yah" and "Salvation," thus, "Yahweh's Salvation," or "Yahweh will save." Though Jesus is our Saviour, he is only such through the power of God. Paul taught that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). Thus the salvation wrought was Yahweh's salvation, and all was an expression of His love (John 3:16). In this chapter, Joshua stands as a type of the one who became our high priest (Heb. 7:26).

"Standing before the angel of Yahweh" — Ezra records that the "eye of God" was on the work of Joshua (Ezra 5:5). The "eye of God" constitutes the angels who are ministering spirits overseeing human affairs for the benefit of the elect (Heb. 1:14). The overshadowing presence of the angels was evident during the ministry of the Lord Jesus. In time of need they were there to "minister unto him" (Matt. 4:11), to "strengthen him" (Luke 22:43).

"Satan" — Notice margin — "adversary." In the days of Joshua the Samaritans constituted the adversary (Ezra 4:1-5). In the days of the antitypical Joshua (the Lord Jesus), the Sadducees and Pharisees assumed that position.

"To resist him" — In Hebrew, to "satanise" him. The word comes from the same root as "satan," and the sentence could read: "The adversary stood at his right hand to oppose him." Both Joshua and Jesus experienced this.

VERSE 2

"Yahweh said" — According to

Jude 9, it was Michael the archangel who said these words. He did so as Yahweh's representative. Michael is the angel described as Israel's prince (Dan. 10:21), the captain of Yahweh's army (Josh. 5:15), Yahweh's name-bearer (Exod. 23:20), into whose hands the care of Israel was placed (Exod. 23:21-22). That authority and status has now been vested in Christ, who likewise bears the name of Michael (Dan. 12:1; 1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Pet. 3:22).

"Yahweh rebuke thee" — And this petition was fulfilled both in the days of Joshua (see Ezra 6:7), and in the days of Christ (Luke 21:20-24). Thus punishment fell upon those who tried to hinder the work of the Lord.

"A brand plucked out of the fire" — A Hebraism signifying one taken out of impending destruction. The Lord was one such, and led his followers from the fire that engulfed Jerusalem and its people in A.D. 70 (Acts 2:19-20).

VERSE 3

"Filthy garments" — A symbol of fallen human nature, from whence come the promptings of sin (Mark 7:20-23; Rom. 7:18). Christ triumphed even in spite of this nature, but because he bore it, it is said of him that he can be touched "with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4:15), he "bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24), the "iniquity of us all" was laid upon him (Isa. 53:6, 10). Thus Christ came in the nature common to humanity, a nature death-stricken because of sin (Rom. 5:12). Joshua fittingly typed this work of the Lord, for he laboured in the dirt and debris of the destroyed Temple, in order to lay the foundation of the new building. During this period, he

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worked as a layman, later to assume the office of a priest.

JOSHUA'S CHANGE OF RAIMENT — Vv. 4-5

VERSE 4

"Take away the filthy garments . . . I have caused thine iniquity to pass" — These statements in juxtaposition show that by "filthy garments" is meant either active sin, or the flesh. "Iniquity" as applied to the Lord Jesus (and v. 8 shows that the vision has relation to him) can only relate to the nature he had, which is identical with that possessed by all mankind. Jesus never sinned, and in his sinlessness, he triumphed over the flesh which moves every other person to actual transgression. In a Messianic Psalm (Ps. 31), Christ is represented as saying: "My life is spent with grief . . . because of mine iniquity" (v. 10). The word here rendered "iniquity" comes from a root signifying "to be bent," or "crooked," and thus relates to human nature, and not necessarily to active sin. Human nature will lead us to sin if we follow its desires; and it would have done the same in the case of Jesus, but he resisted it and submitted to the will of the Father — "not my will but Thine be done." This load burdened the Lord, as the Psalmist shows. But he "was upright before Him" (i.e. God), and kept himself from "his iniquity" (Psalm 18:23). In other words, he did not allow the flesh to have dominion over him; though bearing our nature he did not submit to its promptings.

"I will clothe thee" — Divine nature (2 Cor. 5:4). Moses was commanded to make special garments for the high priest and his sons designed for "glory and beauty" (Exod. 28:2-4). These pointed forward to the excellent character of the Melchisedec high priest. The priests were washed and ceremoniously cleansed before putting on these garments, and in

fulfilment of the type, the Lord became subject to a change from mortality to immortality.

"A change of raiment" — Lit. "Robes of state". R.V. — "rich apparel." These robes of state were the high priestly garments that Joshua was destined to wear when he would minister in that capacity in the rebuilt Temple. Seeing that such "change of raiment" (immortality) had been granted to Jesus Christ, it follows that he is now already officiating as high priest (Heb. 8:4-6) on behalf of his followers.

VERSE 5

"I said" — Zechariah as a type of the saints applauds the honour paid to the Son of God. Ginsburg, however, in his Notes to the Hebrew Text, states that some mss. have "he said." The Vulgate renders it in that way, and it seems more appropriate to the circumstances.

"A fair mitre upon his head" — The high priest wore a linen mitre on his head upon which was placed a band of gold engraved with the caption: "Holiness to Yahweh" (Exod. 28:36-39). White linen speaks of righteousness (Rev. 19:8), the gold speaks of faith. Both are combined in this mitre which represents "a crown of glory" upon the head. Such a mitre on the head points to an intellect dedicated to Divine glory (Rev. 14:1).

"The angel of Yahweh stood by" — Rotherham renders, "stood up." This would be in approval and reverence. Thus we read that the angels are subject unto Christ (1 Pet. 3:22).

JOSHUA'S ULTIMATE GLORY — Vv. 6-7

VERSE 6

"The angel protested" — Heb. = "solemnly declared." The RSV — "enjoined."

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VERSE 7

"If thou wilt walk in My ways"
— Christ's answer is given in Heb. 10:7.

"Judge" — The word signifies to rule, or judge as an umpire. It is used in the following places: Gen. 49:16; Deut. 32:36; 1 Sam. 2:10; Ps. 50:4, 72:2, 110:6. The use of this word in relation to a priest indicates royal authority in addition to priestly dignity. In other words, a king-priest.

"My house" — Joshua saw the Temple completed, and took his place as high-priest therein. Thus the prophecy had a preliminary application to him; but its true significance is to Christ, and the "house" in question constitutes the Ecclesia (Heb. 3:6).

"Shalt also" — In addition to ruling over the Ecclesia.

"Keep My courts" — There will be courts of judgment in the House of Prayer to be set up in the Age to come, over which the Lord will preside (Psalm 122:4-6). Christ's brethren will be with him in that day, helping to rule over those who shall appear before them (1 Cor. 6:2). The Psalmist spoke extensively of these courts of judgment (Ps. 65:4, 84:2, 10, 92:13, 96:8, 100:4. See also Isa. 62:9, etc.) In these verses, therefore, not only the spiritual Temple but the material one of the future age is also brought into view.

"I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by" — The RSV translates: "I will give thee right of access" i.e. among the angels, who were those then standing by. Christ and his brethren, made equal with the angels (Luke 20:36), will then take over duties now performed by the angels (cp. Heb. 1:14, with 2:5). This "right of access" among the heavenly company of angels will be granted them because of their victory over the flesh. See 1 Pet. 3:22 for the extent to which the Lord gained "right of access" among the angels.

THE BRANCH AND THE STONE — Vv. 8-10

VERSE 8

"Joshua" — He typified the Lord Jesus in his priestly capacity.

"Thy fellows" — Zerubbabel and his co-labourers (Zech. 4:7, 6:10-12). Combined they typified the multitudinous Christ.

"They are men wondered at" — Notice the margin: "men of sign." They were typical men, representing the Lord Jesus and his brethren. For other examples of "men of sign" see Isa. 8:18; Isa. 20:3; Ezek. 12:11, 24:24, etc.

"I will bring forth" — Yahweh will do it, implying the Divine parentage of the Lord Jesus (Luke 1:32-33).

"My servant" — The Lord is Yahweh's servant to accomplish His purpose. This was: to bring forth judgment to the Gentiles (Isa. 42:1), to restore Israel (Isa. 49:6), to be a saviour unto men (Acts. 5:31). Yahweh is the Redeemer of mankind, though His work of redemption, is accomplished through His servant, the Branch (2 Cor. 5:19).

"The Branch" — Heb. Tsemach, "branch" or "sprout." Not as Isaiah 11:1, but as Isaiah 4:2; Jer. 23:5, 33:15. Thus He is the beautiful branch, the righteous sprout of Yahweh. By Zechariah the branch was first revealed as a servant, and then as a king (Zech. 6:12).

VERSE 9

"Behold the stone" — Joshua and his fellows were labouring to restore the foundations of the Temple in the days when the prophecy was given. Their action provides the basis for the exhortation of this verse, it points to the foundation stone in the spiritual Temple, even the Lord Jesus Christ. Saints are called upon to "behold" that stone, and to shape their lives according to its specifications (see 1 Pet. 2:4-9). That is the stone that was rejected by

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the Jewish builders of Yahweh's spiritual house (see Matt. 21:42; Eph. 2:20; Isa. 28:16; Isa. 8:14; Gen. 49:24). The Stone is thus as Yahweh's signet, upon which He has "engraven the graving." The inscription ascribes Holiness to Yahweh (Exod. 28:36), which is inwrought by the Deity Himself. This foundation stone was laid before Joshua. It was also later associated with Zerubbabel (Chp. 4:9). Thus a relationship was established between it and them. This showed that "the Stone" was to be both King and Priest, for the civil and religious authority were vested in these two men.

"Seven eyes" — Seven is the number of completeness, and here represents the complete multitudinous Christ, as one with the Stone (John 17:21). The word "seven" in the Hebrew is the same word as is used for "oath," and points to the fact that the multitudinous Christ is bound together as one by the oath of the covenant. The saints are here described as the "eyes of Yahweh", for they will be sent throughout the earth to supervise all things on His behalf (see Zech. 4:10). They will thus perform work previously undertaken by the angels, for they, likewise, acted as the eyes of Yahweh in the past, supervising events on behalf of God, guiding them according to the Divine will (see Gen. 11:5; 18:21; 2 Chron. 16:9; Dan. 4:17). It is significant, that in Hebrew, the same word does duty for "eyes" as for "fountain," because the eyes are the fountain of the body, and in times of stress well out tears. The multitudinous Christ is likened to a "fountain of living water" (John 4:14, 7:38; Isa. 32:2), refreshing mankind with the doctrines they proclaim, if people will but hearken to them. But these same eyes can become as "fire" against the wicked who refuse to heed the gospel message (Isa. 30:27; Dan. 10:6).

"I will engrave the graving

thereof" — Yahweh shaped the Foundation Stone (the Lord Jesus) into which the eyes are fitted. The Lord Jesus first reflected the moral qualities of his Father, Who manifested Himself in flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). Flesh unaided could not accomplish what the Lord did, and therefore the Son is revealed as the one whom Yahweh "made strong for Himself" (Ps. 80:17). The spirit, which was poured out on him without measure, made him of "quick understanding in the fear of Yahweh" (Isa. 11:1-3), so that by the "indwelling of the Father" (John 14:10) Who figuratively "held his hand" (Isa. 42:6) he triumphed over the flesh. The victory revealed the mutual co-operation of Father and Son to that end (2 Cor. 5:19). As God shaped the Stone, so the "eyes" (the saints) must seek Divine strength from above (Phil. 4:13), for they, too, must reveal the "workmanship of God." See Isa. 60:21; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 4:6-7.

The writer, or engraver, is the seven-horned and seven-eyed spirit (Rev. 4:5, 5:6) who 'engraves the graving thereof' (Zech. 3:9). When the dead body (of Jesus) prepared for the spirit (Heb. 10:5) was restored to life, and had come forth from the sepulchre, the Spirit 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye' engraved upon it, or impressed it with every attribute necessary to constitute it 'the Lord from heaven,' making it 'both Lord and Christ.' The precious stone had come out of the earth, whence all precious stones also come, but it had to be cut, polished, embroidered and adorned, to bring out all the beauties of which it was susceptible. This the Spirit effected in the operation of raising the risen body to consubstantiality with the Deity. Now it matters not whether it be one man to be made 'the Lord from heaven' or a countless multitude of earthborns to be made the Holy Jerusalem 'descending from the Deity out of heaven,' the operation is the same. Every individual is subjected to a like

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polishing, embroidering and adorning, as saith the Spirit who will do the work. In the operation he is married to the Spirit in so close and intimate a union, that he becomes one body, flesh and bones, with the Spirit; so that all the earthiness and corruptibleness of his grave-body is 'swallowed up of life'; it loses its similitude to the nature of the first Adam; and acquires 'the heavenly image' of the Lord from heaven." (From "Eureka" vol. iii, p. 687).

"I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" — Compare with v. 4. What Christ did for himself, he did on behalf of others (Heb. 10:14, 7:27, 9:28). His sacrifice not only atoned for the sins of spiritual Israel, but provides the means whereby national Israel will be gathered to him again (see John 11:49-53; Zech. 13:1). The full scope of Christ's labours will not be reveal-

ed until the remarkable prophecy of Isaiah 66:7-8 is fulfilled. Zion is to "bring forth her children" by resurrection. From the graves there shall come forth those who will constitute the multitudinous Christ, and from the national grave there will be raised the national Zion of the future. Then will be fulfilled the words: "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."

VERSE 10

"Shall ye call every man his neighbour" — All war, feuds, antagonisms will be brought to an end, and perfect peace will be established. No longer, for example, will the distinction that Jews set between themselves and Gentiles exist, but mutual co-operation will be the order of the day. The "royal law," the golden rule of love will become the foundation of human relationships (Mic. 4:4; Contrast Psalm 28:3).

CHAPTER 4

The Coming Triumph of Light

5th Vision: THE LAMPSTAND, OLIVE TREES, AND GREAT MOUNTAIN

In this chapter, the prophet is figuratively awakened out of the sleep of death, to be shown the Lampstand of the Spirit whose light destroys the darkness of the world. The Lampstand is fed by the oil of two olive trees, one on either side. The figure then changes, and instead of the Lampstand destroying the surrounding darkness, he sees a great mountain the presence of which hinders the work of Zerubbabel in building the Temple. The problem is solved, however, the mountain is levelled to a plain, and the headstone of the Temple is brought forth with shouts of acclamation. In the face of this crowning glory, the prophet hears words of exhortation and encouragement: "Despise not the day of small things. . . ."

The chapter had an historical basis in the events even then taking place. These are typical of future developments. The opposition the Jews were then receiving constituted a "great mountain" of difficulty that threatened to prevent their labors reaching a successful completion. There was a need for a revelation of hope to dispel the darkness of depression and trouble that hemmed them in, and this vision provided it. It showed that the light of Divine truth would assuredly conquer, that the Temple would be completed, and a literal lampstand would shed forth its golden light in the Holy Place.

But that was only the type; and though it encouraged those who were then engaged in the work, Zechariah was shown that the true fulfilment awaits the future, after the resurrection. Then a glorious light will shine forth to destroy the darkness that shall rest heavily upon the Gentile world (Isa. 60:1-2), and the great mountain of power that will develop out of the crisis of the latter days to oppose the "little stone cut out" therefrom (Dan. 2) will be levelled to a plain. Finally, the glory of the headstone of God's Temple will be set up amid shouts of acclamation and praise.

The lampstand of the vision was seven-branched and of gold. It stood between two olive trees that were connected to it by two branches joined to two golden pipes. Through these pipes the golden oil was transmitted from the branches to the bowl of the Lampstand for the supply of the Lamps. By this apparatus of light, Jerusalem shall be made to shine, shall become a praise in the earth, and the face of the world shall be changed.

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According to the vision, these things are to happen before Zerubbabel's eyes (Zech. 4:7). To that end, he must be raised from the dead, to play his part in "overthrowing the throne of the kingdoms and destroying the strength of the kingdoms of the nations" (Hag. 2:22). At that time, the Lampstand with its lamp (Christ and his immortalised brethren) shall illuminate all the earth, and bring the blessings of Divine administration to all nations.

AWAKENED OUT OF SLEEP—Vv. 1-5

VERSE 1

"The angel waked me"—This awakening typified the resurrection, indicating that the fulfilment of the vision will be in the future when Zechariah will be raised from the dead.

VERSE 2

"A candlestick"—This is an unfortunate translation; the word should be rendered "lampstand." The light came not from "candles" but from lamps supplied by oil from the two olive trees which Zechariah also saw. The figure is drawn from the Tabernacle, for there the darkness of the Holy Place was illuminated by the seven-branched lampstand that stood over against the table of shewbread (Exod. 26:35), the light of which enabled the twelve loaves of bread which stood upon the Table, and which were representative of the Hope of Israel, to be clearly seen. In fulfilment of the symbol, Christ called upon His followers to let their light shine before men (Matt. 5:14-15), a light that should reveal the Hope of Israel.

The Lamp of the Tabernacle was replenished by oil supplied by the children of Israel through the ministry of the Priests who conveyed it to the Holy Place (Exod. 27:20). In the symbol that Zechariah saw, however, two branches connected with two olive trees performed the work of the priests, for through them the oil poured from the trees to the reservoir of the Lampstand.

The Lord Jesus is the Lamp-

stem and Lamp-bowl or reservoir from whence the oil is distributed to the burners (the saints) who radiate the Light of truth after a process of combustion (see Rev. 1:12).

"Of gold"—The symbol of a tried faith, and not mere faith in the abstract (1 Pet. 1:7. Prov. 17:3. Job 23:10). In Lamentations 4:2, the "precious sons of Zion" are compared to "fine gold," being men of faith. In Jeremiah's time, however, those who should have revealed this quality proved themselves to be but "earthy," and were esteemed as but "earthen pitchers." In the Millennial age, this lampstand of gold, representing the complete community of the righteous, will illuminate the earth with Divine wisdom and understanding. "The righteousness of Zion shall go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isa. 62:1) By this means, all men will come to "know Yahweh," for "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea" (Hag. 2:14).

"A bowl"—The reservoir of the Spirit—thus symbolising the source of the light of the multitudinous Christ (Matt. 5:16. Phil. 2:15). This is the Lord Jesus: "There (in Zion) I will make to spring a Horn for David; I have prepared a Lamp for Mine anointed" (Psal. 132:17).

"Seven lamps thereon"—The Covenant light. In Rev. 4:5, this symbol is explained as representing the Spirit of God in multitudinous manifestation. The saints, in the Age to come will be Spirit-beings (1 John 3:2. John 3:6. 1

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Cor. 15:45-46) being clothed upon with Divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). They will then be "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36) who are described as "ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14). They will thus "excel in strength, hearkening unto the voice of Yahweh's word," being "ministers of His, that do His pleasure" (Ps. 103:19-22).

In the Hebrew (see margin), these "seven lamps" (or burners, are represented as being fed by "seven sevens" or forty-nine pipes (thus seven pipes establish the connection between each lamp and the reservoir of oil, the "bowl"). In Revelation 1, the Ecclesias are represented by seven lampstands, each, apparently with seven lamps, making forty-nine in all. These seven lampstands represent the one ecclesia dispersed throughout the world. In Zechariah's vision these Ecclesias are gathered together in one represented by forty-nine pipes feeding the seven lamps. How brilliant then will be the illumination when the "true worshippers" of all Ecclesias throughout the ages, are brought together to unitedly enlighten the world!

VERSE 3

"Two olive trees"—On either side of the Lampstand, the prophet saw two olive trees whose two branches pour oil into the bowl or reservoir of the Lamp to feed the lights above, and thus cause the illumination. This is in harmony with Bible symbology which speaks of two olive trees, one a good olive, the other a wild olive; the former representing Israel, the latter representing the Gentiles (Hos. 14:6. Rom. 11:17). The two olive trees associated with the Lampstand thus represent Jews and Gentiles drawn to one centre after Christ's return and, like Israel of old, providing oil for illumination through the Lampstand.

But the prophet noted that though the trees had many branches, only two (one out of each tree) connected with the gold-

en lampstand, to pour oil, via two golden pipes into the bowl (v. 12). Whilst the two olive trees represent Israel and the Gentiles in a national sense, the two branches represent those who have been separated from both as a people for the Lord (Acts 15:14). Thus they represent the true Israel irrespective as to their nationality by birth, for "they are not all Israel which are of Israel," but "the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. 9:6-8). In this vision, they represent the royal priesthood of the Age to come, who will convey the "oil" of all nations, on a basis of faith in Christ (the golden pipes leading to the reservoir) to shine forth as light through their ministrations (the seven lamps). If a similar vision were required to represent the Mosaic institution in this regard, there would be only one tree representative of Israel, and the branch would be representative of the Levitical priesthood which was separated from the nation, for the purpose, among other things, of conveying the prepared oil of the nation to the golden Lampstand in the Tabernacle. Two trees speak of the induction of all nations into Christ through the ministry of the royal Melchizedek priesthood yet to be revealed in the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

"MY SPIRIT SHALL CONQUER AND TRIUMPH"—Vv. 4-7

VERSE 4

"I answered"—Rotherham renders: "I responded." The vision called forth this response from the prophet.

"What are these, my Lord?"—The prophet desired to know more of the meaning of the vision, and the subsequent verses reveal this. First his attention is drawn to its basic meaning and application to his day. As the light of the Lampstand destroyed the prevailing darkness about it, so the Spirit of God would be adequate to con-

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quer the problems that were then facing the returned exiles who were striving to build the house of God in the face of great difficulties. The "despised day of small things" (v. 10) would witness a glorious consummation: the mountain of difficulty that faced the people would be levelled to a plain if they would but trust in God; the lampstand would be set up in the completed Temple and bring light to the darkness of its interior if they continued to labour in faith. The vision was therefore designed to encourage the people then, as well as setting forth a glorious symbolic prophecy of the future.

VERSE 5

"Knowest thou not what these be?" — As though as to say, You should know really! An understanding of God's purpose will enable us to see more clearly what is required of us, and to put confidence in God to help us. We thus become "strengthened by the Spirit (word) in the inner man" (Eph. 3:15-19).

VERSE 6

"Not by might" — i.e. of man.

"Nor by power" — i.e. of flesh.

"But by My Spirit:" — By Divine aid, and not by reliance upon the might of man or the power of flesh, all difficulties, all opposition, both now and in the future, will be conquered. That was the lesson that Zerubbabel, and all saints, must learn. Zerubbabel and his associates faced a mountain of opposition in the building of the Temple, but this vision revealed that it would be conquered, would be levelled as a plain, if they drew upon the means that Yahweh was prepared to make available to them. Paul learned the lesson, and taught that he could do "all things through Christ who strengthened him" (Phil. 4:13). Strength is available for us from the same source, because the "testimony of Jesus" constitutes God's spirit (John 6:63. Eph. 6:17. 1 John 5:6. John 17:17)

by which saints have been enabled to conquer (Rev. 12:11).

In the future, a mountain of Gentile opposition to the establishment of the Kingdom of God will arise, to be likewise levelled to a plain by "God's Spirit." All political power is destined to be humbled before the feet of the Lord Jesus and his followers. "But this will not result by the power and strength of Israel under any organisation they might constitute; for at that crisis their power and strength will have been utterly scattered; but it shall be accomplished by Yahweh's Spirit, which will raise Zerubbabel and his companions from among the dead, to be the captains of Israel together with the living believers; and will be the strength and power energising them all to the complete reduction of the Great Political Mountain of the Gentiles to the level of a summer threshing-floor; even to cause to go forth the Head, or Chief Stone, with shoutings of 'Grace, grace unto him!' " (Eureka vol. i, p.65).

As the light of the lampstand in the vision of Zechariah destroyed the darkness of the night, so will Yahweh's spirit manifested through His immortalised saints, destroy Gentile darkness at Christ's return (Isa. 60:1-2).

VERSE 7

"Who art thou, O great mountain?" — The book of Ezra shows how that a great mountain of difficulty opposed the labours of Zerubbabel in the building of the Temple. The surrounding nations bitterly resisted the Jews and were determined that their labours should fail. Those circumstances prefigure the opposition that will be raised from the Powers of Darkness at the setting up of the Kingdom at Christ's return. The symbol of Babylon was that of a great "mountain" (Jer. 51:25-26), and Babylon has its modern counterpart (Rev. 17:5). This great mountain of political and religious wick-

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edness, to be headed by Gog (Ezek. 38:1) and the Papacy (Dan. 8:25), and which will stand as the great opponent of Truth, will be reduced to a plain by the antitypical Zerubbabel, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Before Zerubbabel" — Zerubbabel was an associate of Joshua, the high priest, and therefore a "man of sign" (Zech. 3:8-mg). He organised the return of the exiles back to the land (Ezra 2:1-2), and laboured with Joshua and the prophets to restore the Temple (Ezra 3:2-8). He was a descendant of David, and therefore an ancestor of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 1:12), and doubtless because of his royal status, was appointed Governor of Judah (Hag. 1:1). As Leader of Israel, Son of David, Governor of Judah, and Builder of the Temple, Zerubbabel fittingly typified the Lord Jesus in his royal power, whilst Joshua did so in his priestly dignity. Combined, they foreshadowed the royal-priesthood of the Lord, when, in him, these offices will be combined (Zech. 6:13). Zerubbabel's name is suggestive of this. "Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel" signifies "The seed of promise (son of Shealtiel) sown in Babylon (Zerubbabel)." (cf. Hag. 1:1). Zerubbabel's full name, therefore, is suggestive of the Lord Jesus as the Branch of Promise shooting forth from the withered stem of Jesse (Isa. 53:2. Isa. 11:1).

In addition to typifying the Lord Jesus, there is a literal application of this prophecy that should not be overlooked. It was to be fulfilled "before Zerubbabel," implying his resurrection. In *Eureka* vol. 1, p. 66, Dr. Thomas comments as follows:

"Many of Zechariah and Haggai's countrymen, who had witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of Solomon by the Chaldeans, had lived to see the fall of Nebuchadnezzar's dynasty, and the completion of the new temple. They knew that the Burnt Mountain (Jer. 51:25-26) was

among the things of the past; and that Zerubbabel had had nothing to do with its burning and its downfall from the rocks: what, then, could the eternal spirit mean by the "Great Mountain" be apostrophized, as destined to become a plain before Zerubbabel after his resurrection from the dead? It was not the Chaldean, nor the Bear, nor the Leopard (Dan. Chap. 7) for they saw by Daniel that all these were removed by conquest in the ordinary way. What else could it be then, but the Fourth Beast dominion which is to be destroyed by the Saints? (Dan. 7:7-14). Here then is a work still to be accomplished. A great mountain to be levelled in the presence of Zerubbabel; and consequently, to be levelled after his resurrection, when he shall have wakened out of his sleep."

"Thou shalt become a plain" — The mountain of Gentile power (Babylon the Great — Rev. 18), shall be levelled to a plain before the might of the antitypical Zerubbabel (the Lord Jesus Christ). He will put down "all rule, authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24), and he will do this "not by might (of man), nor by power (of flesh), but by My spirit, saith Yahweh of hosts." This title of Deity is significant in the light of the context, for Yahweh of hosts (armies) is expressive of Yahweh in beligerent manifestation. The armies comprise Christ and the saints clothed upon with and using the Spirit of God (Rev. 19:11-14), and by it overcoming all resistance, subduing all nations.

"He shall bring forth the headstone" — The encouragement was first to Zerubbabel personally. He was assured by these words that faith would conquer every difficulty and bring to a successful completion the work of God to which he had put his hand. But the main purpose of the vision was prophetic. It showed that Christ would not only lay the foundation of the spiritual Temple as the antitypical

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Joshua the high priest (Zech. 3:9), but as Zerubbabel, the prince and ruler of Jerusalem, he would complete it, by bringing forth the headstone. Christ is both the foundation of the spiritual temple (1 Pet. 2:4-7), and its crowning glory (Heb. 12:2), so that the whole house will conform to his pattern, being an extension of himself (John 17:21-23).

"Grace, grace unto it" — Joy accompanied the completion of the Temple in the days of Zerubbabel (Ezra 6:22), foreshadowing the joy of the future when the "headstone" will make his appearance, and the Temple will be completed. Christ will then be revealed as root and offspring of David (Rev. 22:16), the alpha and omega (Rev. 1:8), the first and the last (Isa. 41:4), the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2), the foundation stone and headstone of the building. The fullness of grace will then be revealed, to be received with highest acclamation by those privileged to witness it. For the acclamation at that time, see 2 Thess. 1:10. Rev. 5:9-14. 19:1-7. Phil. 2:9-10. Matt. 23:39. The context of this last reference, taken from Psalm 118:26, has a close connection with the prophecy of Zechariah, for in v. 22, Israel after the flesh is represented as declaring: "The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner."

"DESPISE NOT THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS" — Vv. 8-10

VERSE 8

"The word of Yahweh came unto me" — In explanation of the vision.

VERSE 9

"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation . . . his hands shall also finish it" — This was true of the work of Zerubbabel in the past (Ezra 6:15); and true also of the work of the Lord Jesus in the future. There is a certainty of

accomplishment of work that Yahweh blesses (see Psalm 127).

VERSE 10

"Who hath despised the day of small things" — The tendency of flesh is to despise the "day of small things." Workmen for the Truth experience such contempt now. Men of flesh fail to comprehend that such an epoch of "small things" will lead to a glorious consummation of great things in the coming age, and therefore see little purpose in performing a small work faithfully that gives no prospect of immediate return. The man of faith, however, like Moses, has "respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11), and thus labors on in hope (2 Cor. 4:17-18). Both Haggai and Zechariah stressed the importance of laboring faithfully in the service of God with the vision of ultimate glory ever before the mind. Both knew that the Temple the people were striving to restore would be again overthrown, and the nation scattered (Zech. 5:9-11. 11:6), but both taught that if the people worked with the idea of giving God pleasure (Hag. 1:8) they will find their reward in the day when the latter-day Temple will be built under the personal direction of the Lord Jesus Christ. To that time, and not the present, they were to look, and with it in mind they were to work.

"They shall rejoice" — In the future age when the antitypical Zerubbabel shall build the Temple (Zech. 6:13).

"They shall see the plummet" — The measure for the building of the Temple. The Lord is the builder of both the spiritual and the literal Temples (1 Pet. 2:4-8). In regard to the former, the "measure" he holds will be used to exclude the wicked and incorporate the righteous within the building (see Isa. 28:17). It is foolish to "measure" our actions or lives on any other standard (cf. 2 Cor. 10:12). Those who have

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despised not the day of small things, will rejoice in that day, for they shall see a vindication of their labours on behalf of the Truth.

"With those seven" — The RSV commences a new sentence at this point: "These seven are the eyes of Yahweh . . ." The angel is explaining the vision to Zechariah, and has now passed on to reveal the meaning of the seven-branched lampstand. He identifies it with the "seven eyes of Yahweh that run to and fro through the whole earth". Those seven eyes represent the Spirit of God in multitudinous manifestation. The same symbol is reproduced in the Apocalypse where seven lamps and seven eyes are both said to represent the "seven Spirits of God" (Rev. 4:5, 5:6). There is only "one spirit of God" (Eph. 4:4), but in order to represent that one spirit diffused throughout a multitude, the number seven (representing that which is complete and yet manifested multitudinously) has been used. The "seven eyes of Yahweh" in past ages and even now are revealed as the angels of heaven. In the future age, however, a new race of angelic beings, who were once sons of Adam, will take their place (Luke 20:36, Heb. 2:5). See notes on Zechariah 3.9, and contrast with those on Zechariah 5:6.

THE TWO SONS OF OIL — Vv. 11-14

VERSE 11

"Then answered I" — Roth, "responded." The angel's statement regarding the seven eyes of Yahweh, had directed Zechariah's attention to the lampstand once again, and he responded with the question he now asks.

"What are these two olive trees?" — The Hebrew word for "olive" (zayith) is from a root signifying to "illuminate." Paul uses the symbol of two olive trees (a good and a wild olive) to represent Israel and the Gentiles, the two great

families of God. The former is His firstborn as Pharoah was reminded (Exod. 4:22); the latter is yet to be incorporated into His family, and "cultivated" for His pleasure. See Rom. 11:17, Hos. 14:6 for the use of the symbol.

The following comment in the *Dictionary of Life in Bible Times* is interesting:

"Ten years must elapse before the olive tree gives its first harvest, thirty years before the best. The exploitation of an olive orchard is therefore a long-term affair. The harvesting of the fruit takes place before it is fully ripe, sometimes it is picked, but most often the trees are shaken or beaten. Any extraction of the oil necessitates a preliminary bruising of the fruit. For this they were pounded in a mortar or crushed with a stone roller."

VERSE 12

"What be these two olive branches?" — The two trees stood one on each side of the lampstand so that they were both close to the centre of illumination. The oil, however, passed into the lampstand through two particular branches which represent those who are separated out of the nations (both Israelitish and Gentile), and therefore constitute what Paul calls the "Ecclesia (or called out ones) of firstborns" (Heb. 12:23—Diaglott). Before the appointment of the tribe of Levi, and house of Aaron to the priesthood, it was the privilege of all the firstborn in Israel, irrespective of their tribal descent, to perform the service of a priest (Cp. Exod. 24:5 with Num. 3:12-13, 8:16-17). This privilege will be restored to the "firstborns" (James 1:18) in the age to come, who, as a royal priesthood, will bring all nations to Christ and to Yahweh. Under the Law, it was the duty of the people to provide the oil for the Lampstand in the Tabernacle (Lev. 24:2, Exod. 27:20), and for the priests to tend the lamps, replenishing them with it (Exod.

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27 21 2 Chron. 13 10-11) The light in the darkness of the Holy Place, was therefore a token of the illuminated state of the people who were "of a willing heart to give" the oil, although they had no personal access to the Tabernacle. In the future age the royal priesthood will bring the oil of an enlightened world unto Christ and to the Father. Thus the oil is represented as flowing through the branches along the pipes into the Lampstand.

"The two golden pipes" — The oil of the nations (representing Divine knowledge) shall be channelled to the lampstand on a basis of faith (symbolised by the gold). See Rom 11 23 Zech 8 23

"The golden oil" — The Hebrew text reads only "the gold." Under the Mosaic order, Israel had to provide "pure olive oil beaten for the light." Oil was produced by harvesting the fruit of the trees, extracting the oil therefrom by beating or bruising, and purifying it by immersing it in boiling water. This separated all impurities from the oil and caused it to float on top, enabling pure golden oil of supreme quality to be skimmed off. Such oil caused the lamps to burn brightly.

All Mosaic institutions served as parables and "shadows of heavenly things" (Heb. 8 5) which were to be manifested later. Thus Israel and the nations shall yet bring forth fruit to the glory of Yahweh. Having been enlightened by the Spirit word, they will be willing in the day" (Ps. 110) when the "Lampstand" shall have been set up in Jerusalem. They shall readily give of their substance, as a token of their faith, after they have been "shaken" and bruised and purified like olive trees and their fruit (Hag. 2:7). Zechariah saw this spontaneous flow of "gold" — a token of faith — towards the Lampstand. Isaiah 60 seems to illustrate the same principle, v 1 — The Lampstand radiates its light from Jerusalem destroying

all darkness, v 6 — The Gentiles bring gold and incense with willing and enlightened hearts, v. 9 — Israelites do likewise, recognising the Holy One of Israel, v 19 — No more need for figurative sun or moonlight for 'Yahweh (manifested through the Lampstand) shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy Elohim thy glory"

VERSE 14

"These are the two anointed ones" — The reference is to the two branches and golden pipes that empty the oil into the Lampstand (v 12). They are described as the "two anointed ones" or "sons of oil" (see margin), and represent the purified and immortalised Redeemed gathered together in one. There are two such "sons" because they have been drawn out of the two great families of the human race — Israel and the Gentiles. They are sons of oil because they have been begotten by the spirit word (1 Pet. 1 22-25), and have been clothed upon with spirit nature (1 Cor. 15 44). See notes on Zechariah 4 2. A "son of oil" is literally one "filled with oil."

"The Lord of the whole earth" — The Ruler (Adon) of the whole earth. He is the Lampstand, for the Lampstand is Christ in multitudinous manifestation, as "the light of the world" (John 8:12). Zechariah's vision of the golden lampstand thus portrays Christ as both Light and Lord of the whole earth, at a time when Israel shall be restored, and the Redeemed shall assume their status of privilege as a royal priesthood, first subduing the nations, then educating them, and finally causing the light of truth to shine brightly in all parts.

This vision was well calculated to encourage Zerubbabel the builder and his co-laborers to be active in faith, in the certain knowledge that Yahweh supervised their work through "His eyes" which roved "to and fro

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through the whole earth." He knew of their problems, their strivings, their difficulties. But now He had revealed to them, that their labors were important, and provided a living parable of His purpose. As the Temple would be completed, the Lampstand would be set up in its place, and the priests would minister before it,

so will the greater glory be manifested when Christ as "the Lord of the whole earth," will be surrounded by his "sons of oil" to minister the things of God before all mankind, both Jew and Gentile. It was a grand, encouraging vision for Zerubbabel; a grand encouraging vision for us.

CHAPTER 5

The Flight of the Storks

6th Vision: THE APOSTATE HOUSE SET UP IN SHINAR

Hitherto all had been consoling and encouraging in the visions given to the prophet, but now there is a change. This is the sixth vision, and six is the number of man, or of flesh (Rev. 13:17-18). In it, Zechariah was shown how flesh would again corrupt God's way, and pervert that which was even then being set up. Apostasy would sweep Judah, Jerusalem would be overthrown, and wickedness would be driven from Israel to set up its house in the land of Shinar. There is a close connection between this vision and the one preceding it, for out of the land of Shinar was to develop the "fourth beast" whose latter-day manifestation will constitute the "great mountain" that the anti-typical Zerubbabel will level as a plain (Dan. 7:7-11). In harmony with the warning of Haggai 2:6, Zechariah was thus taught that the Temple then in course of erection was not the ultimate of Divine glory, but merely a means to an end. The work in which they were then engaged upon so faithfully, would end in wickedness. A "falling away" had to be expected; lawlessness would rear its head. Yet they were taught not to be discouraged, for their labors were not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58), as the future will reveal. Meanwhile it was necessary to show that to build a material Temple was of little value unless a true spirit motivated the people. The building meant little if the people refused to heed the Law or obey the will of God. In the development of apostasy, the divine curse would fall upon the guilty.

THE FLYING SCROLL. — Vv. 1-4

VERSE 1

"I turned" — Heb. Shub — "to turn (back)," hence "away" (Strong). The prophet takes up a new position. Whereas previously he was looking into the millenium (See notes Ch. 4:1), he now looks back.

"A flying roll" — or Scroll. It was "flying" to indicate movement. It is identified with "the curse that goeth forth" (v. 3), and is thus seen flying to indicate that the curse would not be limited to one place, but would extend wherever the Truth was corrupted.

VERSE 2

"The length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth ten cub-

its" — These were the measurements of the Holy Place in the Tabernacle, which figuratively was the ground or basis upon which Yahweh met with man. Attention is thus directed to the Law.

VERSE 3

"This is the curse" — See Jeremiah 29:18. The people of Israel not only became a curse to themselves, but among all people where they were driven (Zech. 8:13). The great apostasy developed out of trying to superimpose Judaism on the Truth (Acts 15:1-3).

"Goeth forth over the face of the whole earth" — R.V. = "land." The curse went forth first over the land of Israel and from there became co-extensive with the habitable (Luke 2:1).

"Every one that stealeth shall

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be cut off as on this side according to it"—This should be rendered, as per Rotherham's translation and Companion Bible, "Every one that stealeth hath been let off as on this side of it." The measure of Israel's iniquity was the way in which the law had been relaxed (Hab. 1:4). "Thieves" had been let off the punishment prescribed by the Law (the flying scroll) as recorded on "that side of it." The eyes of Israel's leaders had been closed to the iniquity of these thieves (Jer. 5:27-28) and opened to something else referred to in v. 6. Those "that stole," were the ecclesiastical thieves, who robbed Yahweh's words of their power (Jer. 23:30-31), or Him of His dues (Mal. 3:8).

"Every one that sweareth"—This refers to those who according to v. 4, were "false swearers" (Mal. 3:5), taking Yahweh's name in vain (Lev. 19:12).

VERSE 4

"I will bring it forth"—Yahweh declares His intention of exacting punishment according to the deserts of those who desecrated His name and brought themselves under the curse of the Law.

"It shall enter into the house of the thief"—It did when the Lord Jesus stood up to publicly warn the ecclesiastical thieves and false swearers of his day that the curse would fall upon their house. "How can ye escape the damnation of Gehenna?" he enquired... "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:33, 36-39).

"And shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof"—This was the fate of a house infested with the plague of leprosy. The priest was sent to inspect the house, and if it did not respond to treatment, it was proclaimed unclean. "And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of

the city into an unclean place" (Lev. 14:45). After the prophets had reported the evil condition of the house of Israel, God sent his Son thereto (Matt. 10:6) to inspect its state and to see whether there was a "fretting leprosy in the house," or whether it would be amenable to treatment. It was revealed to be so bad as to be beyond treatment. Thus it was broken down and carted away. The destruction of A.D. 70 witnessed this. Note the warning words of Jeremiah 8:11-12. The "time of visitation" was the time of inspection, when the house was "cast down" Isa. 10:3. Lk. 19:44.

THE WOMAN SHUT UP IN THE EPHAH — Vv. 5-8

The first part of the vision showed that Israel had defied the law, so that Yahweh's name was profaned, and His requirements flouted. Now the cause of this is revealed. Zechariah is shown a hollow measure. The covering is removed, and a woman, named "Lawlessness" is disclosed sitting comfortably therein. As she endeavours to escape, the cover is replaced, and the measure is borne off by two women with the wings of storks to the land of Shinar. There a house is established upon its own base. The woman and measure symbolise the sin of Israel which is set up in a different form in the land of Shinar.

VERSE 6

"This is an ephah"—The ephah was the most common Jewish measure, and therefore a symbol of trade in general. It symbolised the "measure" of their iniquity (see Matt. 23:32), for everything they did was done for gain, even their service at the Temple. As Peter says, they made merchandise of religion (2 Pet. 2:3. Mal. 1:10. Amos 8:5). Christ condemned those attending upon the Temple services because they had converted his house "into a den of thieves"

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(Mark 11:17). The ephah was about a bushel in size, and probably was shown here in the form of a basket, for the prophet next saw a woman sitting inside of it.

"This is their resemblance" — The word "resemblance" in Hebrew is "eye." The eye of all Israel was on the measure; commercialism governed all their aims and thoughts, even their service at the Temple. What a contrast to the seven eyes of Chapter 4:10 that are destined to run to and fro through the whole earth on Yahweh's behalf! The RSV renders "resemblance" as "iniquity." The iniquity was that the eye of Israel was intent upon the measure, upon the principle of gain, instead of being intent upon Yahweh. Thus the Law was relaxed, and thieves and false-swearers blasphemed God with impunity.

VERSE 7

"A talent" — Heb. *kikkar* — "circle." Evidently the ephah had a circular leaden cover.

"Of lead" — A base metal, providing a contrast to the gold of the lampstand (see Jer. 6:28-29).

"This is a woman" — The RSV clarifies this statement: "Behold the leaden cover was lifted up, and there was a woman sitting in the ephah." In the Hebrew, the verb, "sitteth" signifies to settle down comfortably. This woman was at the very heart of the religious commercialism of Israel. Whom did she represent? Babylon is symbolised as a woman (Isa. 47:7-8. Jer. 51:7), and the people of Israel had brought back with them some of the influence of Babylon. This found expression in a materialism that made them reluctant to sacrifice present advantage for the Truth (Hag. 1:4), and later encouraged some of their leaders to form unlawful alliances with the enemy (Neh. 13:28). This Babylonish influence permitted the ecclesiastical "thieves" and "false swearers" of vv. 3-4 to flourish. But for a time it was not openly

manifest that this influence was Babylonish in character. All that was obvious was a growing commercialism throughout the land, even in the worship of Yahweh, as the eye of all Israel was fixed upon the Ephah. But a closer examination revealed the real cause of all this, the importation of ideas and practises identified with Babylon. With the lid of the measure taken off, and the woman at last revealed, she tried to escape from the restricted lodging place to which even a nominal observance of the law confined her. In other words, the ideas and practises imported from Babylon would become more open and blatant throughout the land, a warning to those who conscientiously sought to do the will of God.

VERSE 8

"This is wickedness" — The name of the woman is, "Wickedness," or, more correctly, "Lawlessness," or the Lawless One (see also Mic. 6:10-11). Paul seems to make direct reference to this prophecy in 2 Thess. 2:8: "Then shall that Wicked (or Lawless One) be revealed..." Before this was openly revealed as such in Israel, or later in the Ecclesias, the "mystery of iniquity" was working, leavening the work of the Truth. In the case of Israel, this happened during the period when the ephah was first seen, and before the woman was revealed sitting therein. Later, in the Ecclesias, it was the secret working of the "mystery of iniquity," during Apostolic times. The prophecy before us, however, is concerned only with Israel at this stage.

"He cast it" — The RV = "her." The ministry of the prophets, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, lifted the cover of the ephah and revealed the presence of the woman. They showed the true nature of Israel's wickedness. Their words of warning and rebuke, however, resulted in a greater activity on the part of the "woman" (the Babylonish

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influence within the nation). The prophets, and the Lord, were vigorously opposed by those who had embraced these principles. But divine judgments (climaxing in those of A.D. 70) violently flung the woman back into the obscurity of the ephah, which was then closed up, and conveyed out of the land of Israel to that of Shinar.

"He cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof" — Babylonish influence was limited by the opposition of the prophets and the Lord Jesus, and by the judgments of God.

VERSE 9

"Behold, two women" — Jeremiah (Ch. 3:6-10) and Ezekiel (Ch. 23:4-5) both liken apostate Israel to two adulterous daughters, and they are reproduced here as possessing wings like a stork.

"The wind" — Divine judgment, often manifested in war and invasion (Jer. 4:11-13. 51:1-2. Dan. 7:2). Such was to drive the women from the land.

"They" — Though the nation was known only as Judah, representatives of the northern tribes were found therein, both in the days of Zechariah as in the days of the Lord (1 Chron. 9:1-2. Ezra 6:17. Matt. 10:6). Thus both the apostate daughters of Israel were found mingled together.

"Wings like a stork" — The stork was accounted unclean under the Law of Moses (Lev. 11:19). It is a bird of passage, migrating from country to country. Thus, both in its uncleanness, and in its migratory habits, it is an excellent symbol for apostate Jewry which has been driven from country to country since the divine judgment of A.D. 70. Moreover, the Hebrew name for the stork (*chasidah*) signifies that which is "pious," a "religious" bird!

"They lifted up the ephah" — A false concept of Judaism caused the Jews to oppose the Lord Jesus, and finally to put him to death.

It also planted the seeds of error in the early ecclesia, for the first heresy was an attempt to superimpose Judaism upon faith in Christ (Acts 15:1-5. 2 Thess. 2:3. Gal. 2:4. 4:17). After the overthrow of Judah's commonwealth in A.D. 70, the traditions of Judaism were taken up by the Church, and led to gross commercialism therein. The clergy came into being as a privileged class on the pattern of the levitical priesthood (cp. 2 Pet. 2:3), formalism, tithing based upon the Law, and abuses that stemmed from a faulty conception of the Mosaic covenant made their presence felt. The purity of the faith was left behind and the great Apostasy developed. Thus the two women, representative of a false Judaism, lifted up the ephah with the woman of Babylon inside it, and bore it throughout the world.

Dr. Thomas comments:

"When the Apostasy in Judah was fully matured, and when the Mosaic Law and institutions had vanished away as the result of the desolation of the Temple (A.D. 70), all that were not slain or imprisoned, became sojourners in the lands of the Little Horn of the Goat. This national dispersion of the Jews was the flight of the two women into the countries of the Fourth Beast dominion, then pagan. In their flight, the Judaic Apostasy from the Christian Faith was not left in Judea to grow up into a papacy there. But having been formed and organized in that country and propagated from that centre, it was expelled from thence, and driven by the national calamity, the wind in the storklike wings of the women, out of Canaan, that they might build for her a house in the land of Shinar" ("Eureka" vol. i, pp. 71-72).

"Between the earth and the heaven" — In symbolic language, the common people and the supreme rulers. Those in political authority embraced and supported the Apostasy (Rev 12:5).

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VERSE 11

"To build it an house" — The house of the thief and the false swearer, i.e., the false prophet (see Zech. 5:4 and Rev. 16:13). Such a "house" signifies a false form of religion.

"The land of Shinar" — The tower of Babel (confusion) was built at Shinar (Gen. 11:2), and to there, later, Judah was carried as a captive by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:2). Shinar is compounded of two Hebrew words: "shain"—a tooth, and "ar"—an enemy. Hence Shinar is the "land of the enemy's tooth", and relates to the serpent power. The fourth beast, symbolic of the Roman Empire, is described as having "great iron teeth" (Dan. 7:7), and is pre-eminently the "land of the enemy's tooth." It brake in pieces and devoured Israel, scattering the Jews into all parts of the earth. Its warlike influence can thus be likened to the wind in the storklike wings of the two women who carried the ephah, driving them into "the land of Shinar," not now the site of ancient Babylon,

but the mystical Babylon of the Apocalypse (Rev. 17:4-5), the city of Rome. Here, in the "land of the enemy's tooth," the mystical "land of Shinar," a house was built to the Apostasy: the perverted form of the Truth, driven by adversity from the land of Judah, was established on its own base in Rome, to be revealed in due time as the Papacy.

"It shall be established" — The RV has "she." The woman was to be let out of the ephah to be manifested in the fulness of her wickedness. See her displayed in all the glory of her lawlessness in Rev. 17:3-4. Roman Catholicism developed out of the Judaizing heresy of those who "claimed they were Jews but were not, and did lie" (Rev. 2:9. 3:9. Gal. 1:6-8).

This vision thus traced the spiritual decline of Israel until a commercialised Judaism arose, to supplant the true spirit and purpose of the Law by a deadening formalism, and to superimpose itself upon the truth in Christ causing the great Apostasy to arise in spiritual Babylon.

CHAPTER 6

The Ultimate Triumph

7th Vision: THE VICTORIOUS CHARIOTS OF YAHWEH

As six is the number of flesh, and seven is the number of the covenant, it is appropriate that the sixth vision should reveal the temporary triumph of the flesh in the house at Shinar, whilst the seventh vision reveals the ultimate and eternal triumph of the spirit over the flesh.

In this, the last of the night visions (Zech. 6:1-8), the prophet saw four chariots going forth between two mountains of brass. He was told that they represented the "four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord (Adon or Ruler) of all the earth" (v. 5). This expression links this vision with that of the two Olive Trees and Branches of Zechariah 4, for the former are likewise represented as "standing by the Lord of the whole earth" (v. 14). But whereas the Sons of Oil are "standing still", the chariots are shown in a state of activity — "going forth". Also, instead of "two" branches (representing those called out of Jews and Gentiles) there are "four" chariots, identifying them with the true Israel of God.

These four Chariots, wrote Dr. Thomas, "represent the resurrected saints in the execution of the judgments written (Ps. 149:9). The reason why there are four, and not three or five is because in the military organisation of Israel, the twelve tribes were set off into four camps: the Camp of Judah, the Camp of Reuben, the Camp of Ephraim, and the Camp of Dan (Num. 2). The standard of Judah's camp was a Lion; that of Reuben, a Man; that of Ephraim, an Ox; and that of Dan, an Eagle; and the faces of these four were united in the Two Cherubim of the Most Holy Place (see Ezekiel 1:10).

"Now, as the Saints, without regard to the accident of their fleshly descent, are all Israelites by adoption through Christ, their organisation is based on that of the twelve tribes; so that they come thereby to be represented by the standard of Israel's camps" (Eureka vol. i).

The four chariots were seen by the prophet going forth from between "two mountains of brass." In Nebuchadnezzar's image (Dan. 2), the brazen thighs were representative of the power of Grecia. Later in his prophecy, Daniel traced the development of Grecian influence from the time of Alexander the Great to the time after his death when the Empire he had established was divided into four parts (Dan. 8:21-22). Two of those parts are called the King of the North and the King of the South (Dan. 11:4, 9, 13) and

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answer to the Syrian and Egyptian powers of those times. But in the same revelation recorded in the same chapter, the prophet was shown that there would be a "latter day", or "time of the end" manifestation of these two divisions that originally arose out of the united power of Greece (Dan. 11:40). The latter-day powers of the North and South, will be headed by the Russian and Anglo-American confederacies which will comprise the "two mountains of brass", for in Bible symbology, a mountain represents a nation or empire. It will be when these two great confederacies are manifested in all their power, that the four chariots of the Spirit shall go forth from between them, to bring mankind under Christ's rule.

But whilst the vision relates to the future, it also had a message of encouragement for those days. Zerubbabel and Joshua, with Haggai and Zechariah were called upon to do the work of Yahweh in the face of discouragement and great opposition, which were as mountains of difficulties threatening to destroy the work attempted. This vision reminded them that they were working for Yahweh, and even as the four spirits of the political heavens of the age to come would reduce the mountains of Gentile power to a plain, so in those days, every difficulty would be overcome and truth would triumph in the land.

Dr. Thomas wrote: "Zechariah saw the Four Chariots of Cherubim 'going forth from between' these two mountains of political geography. He must, therefore, have seen them going forth from the Holy Land, which occupies that position. They first stand by the Ruler of all the earth as the Two Anointed ones . . . filled with the Spirit as a lamp is filled with oil . . . But the Four Chariots in motion are 'the called, the faithful, and the chosen,' in company with the King of kings, in actual conflict with the nations of the earth (Rev. 17:14) . . . They invade the north and the south, and then make their expeditions into all other parts of the earth. . . .

"But it would seem that there is an established order after which the conquest of the nations is to be affected. Zechariah seems to intimate that 'the north country' (Zech. 6:6) will be first invaded; and then 'the south country' (i.e. the confederacies of the North and South of the latter days) . . . The north and south being subdued, the time comes 'to fly upon the shoulders of the peoples towards the west, and to spoil the children of the east together' (Isa. 11:14). . . .

"Thus Zion's four chariots finally overthrow her enemies, and 'consecrate their commerce to Yahweh, and their wealth to the Ruler of all the earth' . . . No longer under the domination of ambitious rivals, seeking to increase the glory of their dynasties by international wars and spoliations, the populations of the world will live in peace and goodwill; and will circulate freely and safely from land to land (Isa. 19:23-25)" (Furcka vol i).

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THE VISION REVEALED

— Vv. 1-3

VERSE 1

"I turned" — Indicating a new vision; the prophet viewed a new aspect of the Divine purpose. See note Chp. 5:1.

"Four chariots" — Note what is said concerning them in v. 5, and compare this with Zech. 4:14. This identifies the chariots with the olive branches. Both symbols relate to the saints, but in this chapter, they are shown in belligerent activity against the powers that be (Ps. 149), whilst in Chapter 4, they are shown as resurrected, glorified and surrounding the Lord as his ministering priests. The number "four" points to the camp of spiritual Israel (Rev. 20:9, 21:16), for the saints comprise the true "commonwealth of Israel" (Eph. 2:12-13). In the wilderness, Israel marched in four companies (Num. 2:3, 10, 18, 25) with the standards of the leading tribes (identifiable with the four faces of the Cherubim—Ezek. 1) flying at the head of each section. The term "chariot" also links the symbol before us with the Cherubim (see 1 Chron. 28:18), for Yahweh inhabits the Cherubim as a charioteer drives his vehicle (Ps. 80:1, Ps. 18:10). The resurrected and glorified saints will be filled with Divine power, for Yahweh will dwell in them (Ps. 99:1-2), and through them will execute His purpose in the earth.

"Two mountains of brass" — As brass is used as a symbol for Greece (Dan. 2:39), and as the latter-day kings of the north and south (Dan. 11:40) are linked in prophecy with Greece (Dan. 11:2-5), so these two mountains represent the two great confederacies of the time of the end under Russian and Anglo-American control.

VERSE 2

"Horses" — The horses of the

chariots represent the forces commanded by the saints, and the colours of the horses, their operations upon their enemies. They are not literal horses, for Yahweh declares that Israel will be saved by Yahweh their Elohim, not by horses or horsemen (Hos. 1:7, Ps. 20:7). It is indicated in Scripture that Judah shall fight in conjunction with the saints, thus becoming "Yahweh's goodly horse in the battle" (Zech. 10:3). They shall fight and confound their enemies, because Yahweh is with them (vv. 5-6). They shall go forth against the north and south that these Gentile dominions may "give up" the people of God, and keep them back no longer (Isa. 43:6). Finally, all Israel, that is, all the tribes, will be re-engrafted into their own national olive-tree.

"Red horses" — Indicating bloodshed.

"Black horses" — Indicating famine and ravages consequent upon war (Jer. 14:1-6, Lam. 5:10).

VERSE 3

"White horses" — See note Zech. 1:8. The color of leprosy, here used to symbolise pestilence (cf. Hab. 3:5).

"Grisled and bay horses" — Eliminate "and" which is in italics, and notice the marginal rendering: "grisled, strong horses." The adjective "strong" probably relates to the strongly defined color of the "grisled" horses. The word "grisled" is from the Hebrew, *Berudim*, "hail-spotted" from *barad*, "hail." These horses indicate the final outpouring of judgment that will sweep away the last remains of Gentilism. See Isa. 28:17, 32:19, Ps. 18:13.

The four horses thus represent the effects of the war that shall be initiated by the saints. Those nations that resist will be finally overcome by judgments that will bring bloodshed, famine, pestilence and storm.

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THE VISION EXPLAINED

Vv. — 4-8

VERSE 5

"The four spirits of the heavens" — The armies of the political heavens of the age to come (Rev. 19:14). The number "four" is used because the military organisation of Israel was based upon the four-fold divisions of the tribes. They are as chariots in which Yahweh will ride to overthrow all opposition by the power of the spirit wielded belligerently (Ch. 4:6. See Hab. 3:8, 12).

"The Lord of all the earth" — Adon or ruler (see notes Zech. 4:14). Christ is the Commander of the Army (Isa. 55:4. Dan. 8:25 — "Prince of princes = Commander of commanders).

VERSE 6

"Into the north" — Two chariots go towards the north where Israel's most powerful and ruthless enemies are found (cp. Mic. 5:4-5); one towards the south where the nations are more amenable to Divine influence (e.g. Isa. 60:9). Only north and south are referred to because only two mountains are to be levelled, but these two mountains will incorporate the whole world at the time of the end.

VERSE 7

"The bay went forth" — This seems identified with the "red" of v. 2 in contrast to the "gristed-bay" of v. 3. The Hebrew (*'amots*) signifies of strong (color), which could apply to the red horses.

"Sought" — They were "restive." The Hebrew, *"baqash"* signifies to "search out," to "strive after" (Strong). So these horses were restive to search out, to strive after, and destroy the last remnants of resistance against Christ. The vision suggests that Christ will con-

duct specific campaigns against those nations that will resist him, invading the countries incorporated in the confederacies of the north and south, compelling them to submit. The going forth of the bay horses seems to imply a final "mopping up" process after the previous horses have done their work to bring the last remnants of Gentile resistance under the control of Christ (Mic. 4:3. Ps. 72:9. Ps. 149:9. Rev. 14:7).

"Walk to and fro" — Notice that this is said of the horses of Zechariah 1:10, the eyes of Zechariah 4:10, and now the chariots. All are symbols of the saints. The horses of Chapter 1 are as the scouts, surveying the work of conquest; the chariots of this chapter bring their labors to a successful completion, for the army of Christ will go forth in every direction to complete the work of conquest. See Isaiah 9:7.

VERSE 8

"Then cried he" — Heb. *Za'ak*, to shriek, or proclaim loudly as a herald, to announce or proclaim publicly. A public proclamation will loudly announce that the period of warfare is over, and the millenium is about to commence. It will be a worldwide declaration of peace after the terrible warfare of Micah 7:15-20.

"Have quieted my spirit" — Zechariah 1:15 announced that Yahweh's spirit was disturbed at the report that persecuting Gentiles were at peace, whilst Israel remained oppressed. But with the subjugation of the former and the elevation of the latter, His spirit will be quieted. The north country, as the arena of Israel's most antagonistic enemies will first feel the weight of Divine anger, but ultimately all nations will be humbled that they also may be exalted in the reign of peace that shall follow (Isa. 2:2-4).

The Coronation of Joshua

(Chapter 6:9-15)

The vision of the four chariots going forth into all the earth, and of the spirit of Yahweh being quieted in consequence of victories won, fittingly brought to an end the night visions that Zechariah saw. It was the seventh such vision, and took the prophet to the epoch of the seventh millenium, when for the Oath's sake, Israel shall be saved, and the nations subjected under Christ.

On awakening, the prophet was given instructions which are parabolic in their teaching, and dramatise the purpose of God. He was told to accept the gifts offered by certain exiles from Babylon and take them to witness the coronation of Joshua the high priest, who obviously types the Lord Jesus. In the hearing of all, the title and work of the antitypical Joshua is announced. He would be called the Branch, he will grow out of his place and build the Temple of Yahweh, he will combine in his person the dual positions of King-Priest.

Instructions were given that a crown be made for the purpose of the coronation, and that the exiles whose gifts had been accepted should witness the crowning of the priest. The crown should afterwards remain displayed in the Temple as a memorial to those exiles who had returned.

All this would doubtless be enacted as instructed. But what did it mean? A brief explanation of the parable was then given. It was intended to show that men "afar off" will one day come and build in the Temple of Yahweh, and that to such, suitable rewards will be given. It is therefore a parable with an exhortation to all who have come out of Babylon (Gentilism) encouraging them to build their characters in line with the foundation Stone that has been laid, that they might be built as "living stones" in the spiritual Temple that the Lord is building (1 Pet. 2:5).

VERSE 9

"And" — Rotherham renders as "then." We are not told when, but it was probably the following morning after the seven night visions. This would be appropriate, for having been given visions that point forward to the future glory, the drama the prophet was called upon to enact the following morning, would indicate the type of person in whom the glory will be revealed.

VERSE 10

"Take" — Heb. Laqach, "accept." The men described had brought gifts from Babylon for the Temple; these the prophet was told to accept. See Isa. 60:9-11. These men typified true Israelites who leave Babylon for Israel.

"Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah" — These names signify: "lasting, or durable," "Yah is good," and "Yah knoweth." The meaning of these names gives added significance to

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the verse, and in the Septuagint Version, they have been incorporated into the text as common words, thus: "Take the things of the captivity from the chief men, and from the useful men of it, and from them that have understood it; and thou shalt enter in that day into the house of Josias, the son of Sophonias, that came out of Babylon..." In this translation, Heldai is rendered as "chief men," Tobijah appears as "useful men," and Jedajah as "understanding men." These names express the character of true Israelites. They are men taken out of the Gentiles, men who are useful in their labors for Yahweh, men who delight in His Word. From such Zechariah accepted the gifts they had to offer.

"Josiah, the son of Zephaniah" — Here, again, the names are significant. Josiah signifies "Yah heareth," and Zephaniah means, "Yah hath bidden." So Josiah the son of Zephaniah, can be understood to mean that "Yahweh heareth him who is filled with that which He hath hidden," (Prov. 25:2), i.e., His truth. All these men were typical men, and their names had a significance in the enacted parable. They were men of faith who left Babylon because of the call of God, therefore they typify every man (whether Jew or Gentile) who separates himself from his environment in order that he might worship God in truth.

VERSE 11

"Take" — Accept their gifts. It was common for such gifts to be brought from Babylon to beautify the Temple (cf. Ezra 1:4, 6. 7:16. 8:25-26. And for the future see Hag. 2:8).

"Silver" — Whilst these returned exiles brought literal silver, and whilst this metal will undoubtedly be used by Christ in the Age to come to beautify the Temple, it also has a spiritual significance. Silver is the metal of redemption, for every Israelite had to pay a

half shekel of silver for this purpose (Exod. 30:12-16. Lev. 5:15) as the price of redemption (see 1 Pet. 1:18). The silver thus provided by the Israelites was then used to beautify the tabernacle (Exod. 38: 25-27).

"And gold" — This speaks of a tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7. Lam. 4:2. Job 23:10). Silver and gold in combination thus speak of redemption perfected by faith. These are gifts that we can offer for the beautifying of the spiritual Temple that Christ is building.

"Make crowns" — Heb. 'atarah, "crowns" (or circlets) such as kings (but not priests) occasionally wore (2 Sam. 12:30. 1 Chr. 20:2. Est. 8:15. Ezek. 21:26). The term is used figuratively as the symbol of glory (Ezek. 23:42. Lam. 5:16). Though the noun is in the plural, the verb is in the singular in v. 14. Rotherham renders the word in the singular as "crown." There was evidently only one crown made, but it was formed of several circlets, thus the use of the plural. Notice the statement of Rev. 19:12: "On his head were many crowns." Doubtless this refers to the same thing, namely many circlets which were woven into one crown, each of which indicated a further victory. So the crown to be made for Joshua celebrated the victory gained through him on the behalf of these returning exiles. It was a single crown made up of several circlets, even as Christ is set forth as both an individual and a community. He won the victory over sin and death first for himself and then for the people (Hebr. 5:3, 9).

"Set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech" — Eliminate "them" which is in italics denoting that there is no equivalent word in the original. The single crown was placed on Joshua, as it was on Jesus who gained the victory for us. In the act of placing this crown on Joshua there is foreshadowed the coronation of the Lord Jesus. Joshua was a priest, yet he was crowned with a crown

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reserved for kings. Thus the parable foreshadowed the time when the high priest would be also king. The Lord Jesus is our high priest, and is yet to be acknowledged as King. When he returns and takes up his great power (1 Cor. 15:25) and reigns, he will combine the two offices of priest and king. He will be High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, being both "King of righteousness, King of peace" (Hebr. 7:2).

Joshua's name is significant. As Yahshua, it is the Hebrew form of Jesus, and signifies "Yah's salvation." Josedech means "Yahweh hath cleansed," or justified. When the Lord was raised from the grave, and given divine nature, he was physically redeemed, and set before mankind as the only means of salvation and of justification. He was "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). All this is expressed in the name of Joshua the son of Josedech which signifies: "Yahweh hath saved for Yahweh hath cleansed."

Three "crowns" are referred to in the New Testament: the crown of life (Rev. 2:10, James 1:12), the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8), the crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:4). These are like circlets in the multiple crown that the Lord figuratively wears. They indicate his threefold ministry: on earth when his victory opened the way to life; in heaven where his intercession assures the justification or righteousness of saints; in the future when he will "make known" the power of the Gospel by assuming his lofty position as King-priest in the Temple-city of Jerusalem.

VERSE 12 ¶

"And speak unto him" — As a typical man he stood as representative of the Lord Jesus, upon whom all the words of all the prophets converge (1 Pet. 1:11-12).

"Thus speaketh Yahweh of hosts" — He who will be armies. This is the militant title of Deity (see Isa. 9:7),

and is appropriate here, for it will be through the manifestation of Divine anger in judgment upon the nations, that men will finally acknowledge the authority of the Son (Isa. 60:12, 26:9, Isa. 2:19, 31:7-9).

"Behold" — Consider him! See the exhortation of the apostle in Heb. 12:2.

"Behold the man!" — These are the very words used by Pilate when he led the king before his subjects 1900 years ago (John 19:5). The king was then crowned, but mockingly with a crown of thorns cruelly forced down upon his head. But the very nation that rejected him then will be glad to behold him as their King and Deliverer in the Age to come (Matt. 23:39) and witness his glorious coronation (Psalm 118: 22-26).

"The Branch" — See note Zech. 3:8. In Zechariah 3:8 the Branch is referred to as a bond-servant laying the foundation of the Temple, here he is referred to as the Man (ish) who is crowned king-priest. Thus the servant becomes the king. The Hebrew word here used for "branch" is not that which is used in Isaiah 11:1, but the word used to describe the Branch of Yahweh (Isa. 4:2); the Branch of David (Jer. 23:5), the Branch of Righteousness (Jer. 33:15); the Servant (Zech. 3:8) who becomes high-priest and king (Zech. 6:12).

"He shall grow up out of his place" — cf. Isa. 53:2, Jer. 33:15, John 12:24.

"He shall build the Temple of Yahweh" — Both the literal Temple (Isa. 56:7, with Mark 11:17) and the spiritual (1 Pet. 2:5, 2 Cor. 6:16, Eph. 2:20-22). As a servant he laid the foundation stone (Zech. 3:8); and as a king-priest he will complete the building. The foundation was laid 1900 years ago when he triumphed over sin and death (1 Pet. 2:6, Eph. 2:20); the completion will be manifested at his

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return when he will stand as chief of a glorious company of the redeemed.

VERSE 13

"Even he" — These words are pregnant with meaning. Joshua was the one seen in filthy clothing soiled because of the nature of the work he had been doing in building the Temple (Zech. 3); now he is seen glorified and crowned. So with the Lord Jesus. Despite the poverty, obscurity, humility of his first advent, despite his rejection, shame, crucifixion as a criminal, he is the one to be crowned and honored before all mankind.

"Shall bear the glory" — The majesty, honor, beauty. The word (Heb. *Howd*) is used almost exclusively for Divine splendor (see Ps. 8:1, 45:3, 148:13, Heb. 3:3, 1 Tim. 6:15, Rev. 19:16).

"Shall rule" — The servant-branch shall become king-branch. Because he humbled himself, he has been exalted (see Phil. 2:7-10). Lesson for us: 1 Pet. 5:6.

"A priest upon his throne" — A king-priest, as will be also the immortalised followers of the Lord in the day of his glory (Rev. 5:9-10). Thus he will be like Mechizadek who was both king and priest (Heb. 6:20-7:1, Gen. 14:18).

"The counsel of peace shall be between them both" — A complete fusion of kingly authority and priestly dignity without the antagonism that often disgraced these offices in the past. The word "peace" is the Hebrew word *shalom*, and comes from a root signifying "to be at one," "complete," "entire." The union of offices in Christ will bring all mankind both into subjection to God and into fellowship with Him. Thus men will enjoy true peace — not merely the cessation of war, but a state of union with Yahweh through Christ (Eph. 2:14, Ps. 85:8-10, Lk. 2:14).

VERSE 14

"And crowns shall be to Helem,

and to Tobijah and to Jedaijah" — Lit.: "And the crowns, it shall be." As stated before, there is one "plural" crown, made up of several circlets, and with this Joshua was to be crowned as a memorial to these men. Most translations show that the name "Helem" should be rendered "Heldai" as in v. 10. The Septuagint, however, renders: "The crown shall be to them that wait patiently, and to the useful men of the captivity and to them that have known it." This translation therefore translates the names of these men into the text, and so reveals their characteristics. These characteristics are those that the associates of Christ in his glory are expected to manifest now: Hope, Action, Understanding.

"And to Hen" — This name means "grace" or "favor." The Revised Version renders: "for the kindness (hen) of the son of Zephaniah (Yahweh's hidden one — Isa. 49:2.)"

"For a memorial" — After Joshua was crowned, the crown was placed in the Temple as a memorial of the coming glory of Messiah the king-priest of the future. It became a memorial to such men as are described in this section of the prophecy because such will participate in the glory then revealed. It was a memorial that the faithful labors of men who know the will of God and wait patiently for the manifestation of His glory will not be in vain.

VERSE 15

"They that are far off" — All converts were once in that position as regards the building of the spiritual temple (Eph. 2:13, Deut. 5:14-15); and all nations remain "far off" as far as true worship is concerned. But the building of the literal House of Prayer will bring them together in one common worship and hope; and "they that are far off" will come to Zion for that purpose (Isa. 2:2-3, 60:1-7, 9-10).

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"Shall come and build" — The call of the Gospel is an invitation to build upon the foundation of Christ in the spiritual Temple Yahweh will inhabit; and in like manner, the nations will be invited to assist in building the literal Temple under the direction of Christ in the future age (Isa. 60:10).

"If ye will diligently obey" — Obedience on the part of saints is necessary if they are to find a place in the spiritual Temple to be erected, and obedience will be required on the part of the nations if they are to be incorporated in the Kingdom Christ will set up (Isa. 60:12).

CHAPTER 7

The Fast Yahweh Approves!

SHALL WE FAST AS HITHERTO?

This chapter commences a new section of the prophecy which carries on to the end of Chapter 8. Two years had passed away since the night of the visions culminated in the enacted parable of the coronation of Joshua, and great progress had been made in the building of the Temple. To the joy of the people, they could see some results for their labors. Moreover, they had experienced the blessings of Yahweh in bountiful harvests. In view of this wave of prosperity, a deputation was sent to the prophet to enquire as to whether the people should maintain certain fasts that had been celebrated for 70 years since the city of Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed (v. 3). The question gave the prophet opportunity to show the people how little they had taken to heart the chastening they had received from the hand of Yahweh. The natural heart cannot long endure sorrow, it seeks to escape its burden. And with the passing of time the fasts had lost their significance. The manner in which they had been kept did not express true repentance and humility, for they had deteriorated into a mere external show of formalism and self-pity. The prophet warned the people of this (v. 6), directed their attention to the state of mind in which alone Yahweh finds delight (v. 9), and drew from the experiences of the past a warning for their times (v. 11).

Chapter 7 continues on to Chapter 8. The burden of Chapter 7 is that the people should fast by denying themselves, and doing the things in which Yahweh finds pleasure (vv. 9-10); the burden of Chapter 8 is that mere formal celebrations of these fasts should cease in view of the blessings already received from on High, and further ones shortly to be revealed.

DEPUTATION TO JERUSALEM — Vv. 1-3

yet another good year.

VERSE 1

"The fourth year of king Darius"
— Nearly two years had elapsed since the first vision (Zech. 1:1). The restoration of the Temple was going on apace (it was completed in the 6th year of Darius—Ezra 6:15). Throughout Judah, prosperity had replaced the previous adversity (contrast Hag. 1:6 with Hag. 2:19).

"Chisleu" — This is the month when rainfall increases. Perhaps the ample rain gave indication of

VERSE 2

"When they had sent unto the house of God" — Render: "Now they of Bethel." The Temple is never called the House (beth) of God (El), but always the House of Yahweh (v. 3). The Temple had not been completed at this stage, and therefore was not open for worship. This deputation, however, was sent from Bethel to Jerusalem to enquire of the priests whether the fasts of previous years should be maintained.

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"Sherezer and Regem-melech" — These names mean, "Protect the King," and "Friend of the King." The men thus described were evidently high officials associated in some way with the Governor, Zerubbabel. Though Zerubbabel was not a king, he was heir to the throne (1 Chron. 3:17-19).

"And their men" — The servants in attendance upon the officials.

"To pray before Yahweh" — See the Margin: "to entreat the face of Yahweh". They had a request to make to Yahweh, and thus sought the priests as a means of doing so.

VERSE 3

"To speak unto the priests" — The deputation required a general conference between priests, prophets and rulers.

"Should I weep" — The lamentation and fasting indulged in by the Jews had become a meaningless ritual in the face of great blessings received. The progress made in the rebuilding of the Temple and nation, the prosperity that was slowly manifesting itself among all the people, made constant lamentation unrealistic. Nor was it of any use. Yahweh did not want His people to indulge in an orgy of self-pity, but to reveal characteristics such as are outlined in vv. 9-10 of this chapter.

"In the fifth month" — When Jerusalem was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar, the Jews instituted certain fasts that celebrated dark incidents in the terrible destruction that took place. In the fifth month, the destruction of the Temple had taken place (2 Kings 25:8-9. Jer. 52:12), and this had been commemorated by a yearly fast. But now the Temple was rapidly being rebuilt, and the fast seemed out of place. Hence the request.

THE ANSWER: YOUR FASTS HAVE BEEN HYPOCRITICAL —

Vv. 4-7

VERSE 5

"Speak unto all the people . . .

and to the priests" — The deputation had approached the priests for an answer in the matter, but the priests were involved in the general condemnation, and were unable to give answer. It remained for the prophet to show both the people and the priests where they had been at fault.

"Ye fasted and mourned in the seventh month" — The seventh month celebrated the murder of Gedaliah, the ruler of the remnant who had been left in the land after many of the people had been deported (2 Kings 25:25. Jer. 41:1-3). His murder resulted in the ruination of the remnant. Fearing the wrath of the king of Babylon as a result, they fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them, and there they all perished. This national disaster had likewise been commemorated with a fast.

"Those seventy years" — Jerusalem was destroyed in 587 B.C., the 4th of Darius was in 518 B.C., thus 69 of the 70 years predicted by Jeremiah had passed away. The fact that the fasts are connected with this time show that they had relation to the destruction of the city. The exiled Jews are said to have instituted four such fasts: one in the 4th month (June) in commemoration of the breach made in the wall during the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. 52:7); one in the 5th month (July) in commemoration of the burning of the Temple (Jer. 52:12); one in the 7th month (Sept.) for the murder of Gedaliah (Jer. 41:1-2); and one in the 10th month (Dec.) in commemoration of the beginning of the siege (2 Kings 25:1). The Jews made enquiry only concerning the fast of the 5th month because the calamity it recalled was being repaired, but the prophet made reference to all the fasts (see v. 5, Chp. 8:19).

"Did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?" — Notice the repetition, for emphasis. The fasting was conducted in a spirit of self-pity, not in repentance to Yahweh. The Jews fasted because they suf-

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ferred, not because they acknowledged their wickedness. They mourned the loss of the Temple, the destruction of the City, the scattering of the Nation, but they did not recognise the cause of these calamities — their own rejection of the word of Yahweh (Hos. 4:6), their own wickedness and apostasy. Thus, very much like believers in every age, they were blind to their own shortcomings. Their fasts were a form of voluntary humility in the way condemned by the Apostle in Col. 2:23 and Christ in Mat. 6:16.

VERSE 6

"And when ye did eat, and drink, did not ye eat for yourselves?" — They had no reverence for Yahweh in the celebration of their festivals either. Their religious exercises — both feasts and fasts — did little more than satisfy their own ego, their own pleasure or self-pity.

VERSE 7

"Should ye not hear the words . . ." — The Jews had sent a deputation with the enquiry, "Shall we continue to fast as we have done?" The prophet takes up these latter words, and replies in effect: "There is no need for you to enquire this of me! Seek what the Word says. Listen to the warnings and reproofs of the prophets of the past, and apply the things they spake to yourselves." The fasts provided the people with the opportunity to carefully assess their own personal conduct, to see in the disaster that had befallen the city and nation a reflection of their own folly, and thus seek to amend their ways, mourning their personal shortcomings before Yahweh. The feasts provided them with an opportunity to rejoice in their Divine inheritance, and in remembrance of Yahweh's goodness to them, cause them to turn to Him in loving obedience. But that was not the case. The feasts and the fasts had degenerated into mere

religious formalism without power. The Jews had enquired: "Shall we do as we have been doing?" (v. 3). The answer was an emphatic "No!" They were to change their ways, to exercise true repentance from the heart, and not to rely upon mere formalism in their worship before God. Zechariah counselled them to seek the Word of Yahweh for an answer (See Deut. 10:12-13. 1 Sam. 15:22-23. Mic. 6:7-9). He called upon them to change their hearts, and not merely their fasts!

"When Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity" — Prosperity = Shalev—safe, at rest. This prosperity was a token of the obedience of the people to the Word (Ps. 35:27), and a contrast to the ruinous state of the city that had resulted when they turned from that Word (see Hos. 6:5-6).

THE FASTING THAT YAHWEH DESIRES — Vv. 8-10

VERSE 9

"Thus speaketh Yahweh of hosts" — The words that follow (cp. v. 11) reveal that the basic mistake of the people taken into captivity had been their failure to heed the Word of Yahweh, and the manifestation of a cold, empty formalism in their worship. The same blunder, warns Zechariah, was still being made (vv. 4-6).

"Execute true judgment" — Show your feelings in actions worthy of repentance. In Isaiah 58:3-7, Yahweh had revealed that the fast in which He truly delights was not a negative, mere formal abstinence, but a positive denial of self to help others. The first answer to the question posed by the deputation, therefore, was, Yes, fast before Yahweh, but let your fasting be of the kind in which He can find delight, as he has set forth in the earlier prophets.

"Shew mercy and compassion every man to his brother" — This is the fast He requires, denial of

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self to help one another. The Hebrew word for compassion (*Rachamim* from *rehem*, "the womb") implies the bond of love and affection that should be manifested between members of a family. Israel comprised the family of God, and therefore was bound to mutual help by the brotherly covenant (Amos 1:9) that should have united them as one.

VERSE 10

"And oppress not" — Otherwise the Redeemer of such will act against you.

"Let none imagine evil against his brother in your heart"—Yahweh desires a complete change, not only externally, but internally as well (cp. Ps. 51:6).

THE CAUSE OF THEIR CONDITION — Vv. 11-14

VERSE 11

"But" — This is why you have had to fast 70 years!

"Pulled away the shoulder" — See Margin. They withdrew their shoulder from the yoke of the Law. The metaphor is taken from refractory oxen that refuse to put their necks under the yoke, and that must be disciplined to force them to do so (see Hos. 4:16. Neh. 9:29. and compare Matt. 11:29).

"Stopped their ears" — See mg. They deliberately refused to hearken.

VERSE 12

"Hearts as an adamant stone" — No intreaty or instruction could make any impression on that hard surface! (cp. Jer. 17:1. Ezek. 3:9).

"Lest they should hear" — Hebrew—*Shamah* to "hear intelligently" implying not merely the hearing, but the doing as well, as

Prov. 19:20-21.

"In His spirit by the former prophets" — Cp. Neh. 9:30.

"Therefore came a great wrath"— Cp. 2 Chron 36:16.

VERSE 13

"They cried, and I would not hear" — In times of trouble, Israel turned to Yahweh, but He refused to hearken to their cry because it did not express true repentance; they had only turned to Him because there was nowhere else to turn. This was shown by the fact that in times of prosperity they refused to heed His word. Yahweh desires our loving service, not only in times of trouble, but at all times; and in return He has promised, "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee" (cp. Josh. 1:5-7. Deut. 31:6-8). Israel had not fully learned that lesson, and the prophet took the opportunity of bringing it home to the people. The specific answer to their question is given in Zechariah 8:19. See Jer. 11:11, 14. 14:12. Isa. 1:15. Prov. 1:27-28.

VERSE 14

"I scattered them" — It was Yahweh Who had done this, not the Babylonians. They were merely the medium by which His purpose was accomplished. But Yahweh scattered them for a purpose. The word in the Hebrew is *Zarah* and signifies to "whirl," "storm," or "winnow." The scattering was for the purpose of winnowing the nation, in order that the chaff might be destroyed, and the grain retained. Jeremiah had told those who went into captivity that they had been so treated "for their good" (Jer. 24:5), and Amos makes the point that in the scattering of Israel Yahweh will never let the least grain be destroyed (Amos 9:9).

CHAPTER 8

Present Blessings Foreshadow Future Ones

In Chapter 7 Zechariah had given a negative answer to the Deputation from Bethel; in Chapter 8 he provides them with a positive one. In Chapter 7 he showed that external fasts, and religious formalism are useless in the absence of a true conversion of the heart; in Chapter 8 he reveals that when true repentance is manifested glorious blessings will be experienced. In Chapter 7 he told the deputation that Yahweh did want them to fast, but the fast was to be a spiritual one (vv. 9-10); in Chapter 8 he reveals that the mere formal fasts, the orgy of self-pity in which they were indulging, should cease.

Chapter 8 is divided into two parts, prefaced by the statement: "The word of Yahweh came" (vv. 1, 18). These two parts are separated into a series of divine proclamations: vv. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 14, 19, 20, 23. The first section proclaimed the promise of ultimate glory for Israel which was typified in the revival then taking place. In view of this wonderful future, it calls upon the people to put away evil, and submit to Yahweh in word and deed. The second section gives the specific answer to the question stated in Zechariah 7:3, as to whether the fasts of the past 70 years should be continued. It provides the reason why they should be replaced by festivals of greatest joy.

FULL RESTORATION PROMISED — Vv. 1-8

VERSE 1

"The word of Yahweh of hosts"
—This is the militant title of Deity, and it is significant that it is used in connection with the prophecies of this chapter. It is the Divine army of heaven that will guarantee the fulfilment of all that is proclaimed. Paul uses the title in Romans 9:29 in that way. But the title relates not to the past or present merely, but is prophetic of the future. Yahweh of armies, signifies "He who will be armies." The armies in which Yahweh will reveal His power are those shown in Revelation 19 with Christ at their head (vv. 11-21). They are the armies of the immortalised saints, and it will be

through their victories—the execution of the judgments written (Psalm 149) — that Jerusalem will be finally elevated.

VERSE 2

"I was jealous" — The R.V. changes this to "I am jealous." Yahweh does not change in His attitude towards Jerusalem and Zion (cp. Jer. 31:3. Mal. 3:6).

"For Zion" — This was the place that He selected above all others to place His name there. See Deut. 11:12 with Psalm 132: 13-14.

"Fury" — Heb. chemah, from a root signifying "to be hot," hence "heat," or "warmth." Yahweh feels keenly the desecration of His land and people, and this arouses his jealousy against those who oppress

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them. The passion of a lover, or husband, springs from love and concern for the object of his choice, and manifests itself in anger against those who would harm her. Thus Yahweh punished the nations that touched Israel, although Israel was worthy of discipline. He did so with perfect justice, for the motives of Israel's oppressors were those of personal aggrandisement; God was not in their thoughts (see Isa. 10:12-13. Ezek. 25:3-4).

VERSE 3

"I will dwell" — "Shakhan," from whence is derived the work *Shekinah*, or dwelling. The *Shekinah* glory shone between the Cherubim and above the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon, but it was absent from the Temple built by Zerubbabel (see note Zech. 2:10). However, Ezekiel saw in vision the glory return to the Temple of the future age (Ezek. 43:1-2), but whereas, in the Tabernacle and Temple it appeared as a light shining in the darkness of the Most Holy (Psalm 80:1), in the future age it will be revealed in a company of immortals, all of whom will manifest the glory of the Father (Rom. 5:2). Thus Ezekiel, describing the glory of the God of Israel, declared "His voice was like a noise of many waters," i.e. a multitude (Ezek. 43:2). He thus described a multitude in one, a multitude (many waters) so joined together, as to constitute the one multitudinous Christ revealing the glory of Yahweh (Rom. 5:2) both in character, in nature (2 Pet. 1:4), and in Name (Rev. 3:12). In this glorious community will be seen the fulfilment of Christ's prayer: "I pray for them which shall believe on me through the word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the glory which Thou gavest me.

I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:20-22). This is the glory that will flood the Temple of the future.

"A city of truth" — It will become the centre from whence will emanate Divine Truth for the guidance and elevation of all mankind. See Zeph. 3:13. Jer. 3:17. 31:23. Isa. 1:24-27. 4:2-4, 26:1-3.

"The holy mountain" — See Isa. 2:2-4. Ezek. 43:12.

VERSE 4

"Old men and old women" — The verse presents a picture of peace and security. Longevity will be greatly extended in the Millennium. Cf. Isa. 65:19-22.

"Streets of Jerusalem" — In Zechariah, "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are used in two ways: firstly, to indicate the places so named; secondly, for the nation as a whole. "Zion" is used in this latter sense in Zechariah 2:7, and Jerusalem in Zechariah 8:8. In the verse now before us, it is sometimes thought that the "streets of Jerusalem" should be understood literally. However, the Hebrew word (*Rechowb*) signifies not streets as we know them, but open spaces. Davidson renders it, "to become wide, open extended," "to make broad, enlarge." In Isaiah 30:23, 33, it is rendered "large" i.e. enlargement. So aged men and women are described as "dwelling" in the enlargement of Jerusalem (they would hardly dwell in the streets!) Jerusalem, itself, will not have streets, for it will be a Temple-city. Ezekiel saw it as "a frame of a city" (Ezek. 40:2), comprising a mile-square range of buildings enclosing a circular Temple surrounding Mt. Zion. Adjacent to Jerusalem (its enlargement) will be the houses of the mortal Levites (Ezek. 45:5. 48:13-15) in which will be found old men and women, and young children at peace and happy. The term "Jerusalem" is used in vv. 7-8 of this chapter as expressive of the nation as a

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whole of which the capital is the symbol, for Israel will not be re-gathered to dwell only in the city itself but to populate the whole land, which will be the enlargement of the city.

VERSE 5

"Playing in the streets thereof" — The happiness, joy and contentment here suggested speaks of the spiritual regeneration of the nation and its restoration to Divine blessing.

VERSE 6

"If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant" — See margin, "hard." or "difficult."

"In these days" — R.V. renders "those" days, i.e. the days of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7). At that time, the solution of the problem of Israel will be beyond human power to solve. But Yahweh's power will be adequate for the purpose. See Ezek. 37:25-28. Mic. 7:15-20.

VERSE 7

"From the east country, and from the west country" — Heb. Me'eretz Misrah, "Land of the rising of the sun." "Me'eretz

meblo hushshamesh — "Land of the going down of the sun" (see mg.). From wherever the sun shines, the Jews will be brought back to the land. The phrase thus signifies from all parts of the earth. See use of the phrase in Ps. 50:1. 113:3. Mal. 1:11.

VERSE 8

"They shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem" — Obviously this cannot signify the city alone, otherwise the verse would teach that all the Jews who are restored from all parts of the earth will return to Jerusalem. Here, the city by metonymy stands for the land, being its spiritual and political head. The people, though physically occupying all the land, will spiritually dwell in Jerusalem as per Ps. 90:1. 91:1.

"My people" — This indicates their changed status. See Hos. 1:10-11. 2:23.

"In truth" — The people will accept the truth in Christ Jesus (Zech. 12:10. 13:1).

"In righteousness" — Or justification. They shall be justified thereby, being accepted on a basis of faith (Jer. 4:2. Rom. 11:23, 26-27).

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR CURRENT TIMES — Vv. 9-13

Notice that this is still part of Zechariah's address to the deputation from Bethel — Chapt. 7:2. He explains that the blessings then experienced should be viewed as a guarantee of blessings yet to come.

VERSE 9

"Let your hands be strong" — In view of the wonderful future that Yahweh promised the nation, the prophet encouraged the people, as Haggai had done before him (Hag. 2:4). He called upon them to labour faithfully, courageously, and patiently in the work before them in spite of current difficulties, in the assurance that Yahweh will bless such labours by granting those who manifested them a participation in the joys of the future age.

"Ye that hear in these days" — Haggai had likewise promised immediate blessings for his Jewish contemporaries (Hag. 2:18).

"The prophets" — Haggai and Zechariah.

VERSE 10

"For before these days" — Zechariah could point to an improvement in the condition of the people resulting from the way they had laboured in the work of Yahweh. The blessings even then received (and which prompted the

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question posed by the deputation from Bethel) were tokens of the greater blessings to come when the fulness of v. 13 will be manifest in the earth.

"No hire for man or beast" — They had been plagued with unemployment (Hag. 1:6).

"No peace" — Unsettled conditions due to the antagonism of surrounding nations (Ezra. 4:4).

"Every man against his neighbour" — Domestic strife and dissatisfaction.

VERSE 11

"But now . . ." — Seeing the people were labouring faithfully in the work, an immediate blessing was promised: "The seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew, and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things" (v. 12). Haggai promised the same blessings (Hag. 2:19).

VERSE 12

"The seed shall be prosperous" — Note the margin. The seed shall be sown in peace without the ravages of war which would destroy the work of peace.

"The heavens shall give their dew" — Previously the land suffered the effects of drought (Hag. 1:9-11). These things were recognised by faithful Hebrews as coming from Yahweh (cp. Ruth 1:6).

VERSE 13

"And it shall come to pass" — All the blessings then being received were but tokens of greater ones that the future will yet reveal. As Yahweh was good to Israel then, so He will be in the future.

"A curse" — Hebr. "gelalah" — a reviling, a thing lightly esteemed. See Isa. 43:28. Jer. 42:18. 24:9. Ezek. 36:20.

"O house of Judah and of Israel" — See Ezek. 37:21-22.

"Ye shall be a blessing" — Yahweh originally called Israel out of Egypt that the people might reflect His glory, but as Jeremiah declared (Ch. 13:11), "they would not hear." Nevertheless, this purpose, solemnly promised to the patriarchs, shall be fulfilled ultimately (Jer. 33:6-9). The national redemption of Israel will be followed by blessings that will extend through Israel to all nations (Jer. 3:17. Isa. 2:2-4. Psalm 68:29. Psalm 72). This will be accomplished through the Lord Jesus (Yah's Salvation) for "I (Yahweh) will save you."

"Fear not, but let your hands be strong" — Do not fear. trust in God and be encouraged.

FEAR YE NOT! — Vv. 14-15

VERSE 15

"I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah" — Notice that Israel is excluded. These words apply to Zechariah's day; but those of v. 13 look to the future, and to the full restoration of the nation.

WHAT YAHWEH DELIGHTS IN — Vv. 16-17

VERSE 16

"These things ye shall do" — They were to be doers of the word, not hearers only (James 1:22).

"Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour" — They were to be energetic in setting God's truth before the notice of others.

"Execute the judgments of truth" — They were not only to speak the Truth but to obey it in action.

"Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts" — Exclude inward thoughts of wickedness so that Truth dominates the heart, eradicating all evil secret thoughts one towards another. They were thus so **SPEAK** the Truth, to **DO** the Truth, to **THINK** the Truth. Thus

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is what Yahweh desired, and not the mere empty formalism of their fasts. On the other hand, false oaths, secret evil, warfare among brethren, hypocrisy that professes but does not act upon the truth, and a fear to confess it before men, are "things that I hate, saith Yahweh" (v. 17). See Ps. 19:14.

VERSE 17

"Love no false oath" — They were not to harbor deceit or perjury, but allow the principles of the Truth to so rule them that false actions would be automatically excluded.

FASTS CONVERTED TO JOYFUL FESTIVITIES — Vv. 18-19

VERSE 18

"The fast of the fourth month" — This recalled the breaching of

the walls by Nebuchadnezzar in the 11th year of Zedekiah through the famine that desolated the city (Jer. 39:2-3. 52:6-7).

"The fast of the fifth month" — Recalled the destruction of the city and temple (2 Kings 25:8-9. Jer. 52:12).

"Seventh month" — Recalled the slaying of Gedaliah with the consequent final evacuation of the land (Jer. 41:1-2).

"Tenth month" — Recalled the beginning of the siege in the 9th year of Zedekiah (2 Kgs. 25:1. Jer. 39:1. 52:6-7).

"Joy, gladness and cheerful feasts" — Festivals in which the people rejoiced in the goodness of Yahweh to them. Thus through His mercy and bounty their fasts were converted into feasts.

THIS TRANSFORMATION TYPICAL OF FUTURE CHANGES

— Vv. 20-23

Amos proclaimed that the feasts of Yahweh would be converted into fasts because of the folly of the people (Amos 8:10). He spoke of a terrible famine that would come and be the cause of mourning, a famine not of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of Yahweh. Isaiah, on the other hand, predicted the time when the fasting and mourning of true Israelites will be converted into joyous celebrations of Yahweh's goodness and mercy (Isa. 61:2-3. 65:19. Jer. 33:10-11).

VERSE 20

"It shall yet come to pass" — The converting of the fasts of Judah into joyous festivals, is shown as a type of what shall be revealed throughout the world when Christ returns.

VERSE 21

"The inhabitants of one city shall go to another" — This appears to be a voluntary service as distinct from the compulsory national service of Zechariah 14:16. It suggests that in the future age, a city might experience some outstanding blessing, and the inhabitants decide to show their great appreciation to Yahweh, by a

voluntary pilgrimage to the land to worship before the King. Other, neighbouring cities hear of this, and join the company for the purpose. Similar voluntary services are implied in Isa. 2:2-4. Psalm 122. In addition to these voluntary pilgrimages and the compulsory one prescribed in Zechariah 14:16, there will be special monthly and weekly services as shown by Isaiah 66:23, as well as other services referred to by Ezekiel. In short, services of varying nature will be constantly conducted in the Temple.

"Let us go" — The desire of one community to ascend to Jerusalem for worship will spread to another, and widespread enthusiasm will

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result, as worshippers throng towards Zion.

VERSE 22

"Lord of Hosts" — Yahweh Sabaoth. Yahweh manifested through His army of glorified saints with Christ at their head (Rev. 19:14). The thronging worshippers will recognise that the benefits they experience in the Millenium are due to the warfare successfully waged by Yahweh Sabaoth. He will have destroyed all oppressors, and established righteousness in the earth.

"Strong nations shall come to seek Yahweh" — Hebr. *baqash* — to seek, inquire. Notice the changed attitude! Their pride having been humbled, they learn to fear Yahweh (Prov. 8:13). Flesh being aware of its limitations and utter helplessness, shall seek Yahweh, the fountain of wisdom, the source of strength. They have to seek God first, then he shall bless (2 Chron. 15:2-4).

"To pray before Yahweh" — Hebr. *chatah* — to beseech, deprecate — not just to pray habitually. They shall recognise Him as "the giver of every good and perfect gift" (James 1:17). With repentant hearts they shall beseech God for His blessing (cp. 2 Kgs. 13:4, same word). Everyone praying before the priest in Jerusalem shall be considered as praying before Yahweh (cp. Deut. 19:17. 1 Sam. 1:9, 10, 12). They will acknowledge God as manifested in His Son, the High Priest of the age to come.

VERSE 23

"Ten men" — "Ten" is used in the Bible in the general sense of completeness (see Amos 6:9. Dan. 1:20. Eccles. 7:19. Lev. 26:26. Gen. 31:7. Num. 14:22 etc). The Hebrew word comes from a root signifying "accumulation" (Strong), that is,

to the extent of the digits. Ten represents completeness, for it is another first after nine. Thus "ten men" is a general term signifying "men everywhere." But in addition to that, it is claimed that there are ten distinct groups of languages in use today among Indo-Europeans (See F. F. Bruce: "The Books and The Parchments"). Thus it seems that whereas the ten toes of Daniel 2 divide the nations politically, here, in Zechariah, they are divided philologically. In stating that these men come out of "all languages," the verse would imply that the official, universal language of the future age will be Hebrew, and whilst each group may retain its own form of speech, there will be a universal acknowledgement of Hebrew as the chief language (Zeph. 3:9).

"Shall take hold of" — Shall be identified with (Isa. 3:6. 4:1). In this case they identify themselves with the hope of Israel.

"Out of" — All nations will not at first accept Christ, and those that remain obstinate will perish (Isa. 60:12). The words, "out of" implies the total overthrow of certain systems (Dan. 7:11-12), and the salvation of other nations. These will comprise the Ecclesia (called out ones) of the Millenium.

"The skirt" — The Israelites were commanded to make a riband of blue on the borders of their skirts, to remind them of their heavenly calling (Num. 15:38-39). This heavenly calling of Israel will be recognised by the nations in the age to come, who are here shown figuratively taking hold of the "skirt of him that is a Jew."

"God is with you" — In the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, described in Matthew 1:23 as "God with us." See also Ezekiel 43:7.

CHAPTER 9

Human Conqueror or Divine Prince of Peace

There is an obvious break in Zechariah's prophecy at Chapter 9. Though no date is given, it seems as if the work of the Temple must have been completed, and in view of this a new series of visions relating to the time of the end, engages the attention of the prophet.

In this chapter, the proud and haughty Greek warrior, Alexander the Great, as an instrument in the hands of Yahweh to effect His purpose, is contrasted with the humble though all-powerful King of the Jews. The former was ruthless in power; the latter full of grace and mercy. The former rode pompously against Jerusalem on a high-spirited steed; the latter entered the city upon an ass. The former was humbled outside the city walls; the latter was applauded and honored as he entered its precincts.

Alexander was an amazing general. Against great odds he won remarkable and decisive victories. His conquests spread his power swiftly throughout the then-known world bringing powerful nations under his rule. But, remarkably, Judah escaped the terrible devastation that was experienced by other nations who resisted him. This remarkable deliverance is outlined in this prophecy illustrating the Divine protection that overshadowed the people of God.

The chapter traces the progress of Alexander the Great when he invaded the Middle East after the battle of Issus in south-eastern Asia Minor (B.C. 333). Alexander inflicted such a defeat upon the numerically greater forces of the Persian Darius, as to immediately manifest himself as the next world ruler. The victory opened Syria and Palestine to his lightning-like conquests, and exposed Egypt to his victorious advance. A detachment of his forces quickly overran the land of Hadrach, taking the key towns of Damascus and Hamath. He fulfilled the prophecy of Ezekiel 26 by destroying Tyre, and he overwhelmed nations that had previously oppressed Judah.

In advancing against Egypt, he demanded tribute of the Jews, and when it was refused, he threatened to destroy Jerusalem. Marching on the city, for this purpose, he was met by the High Priest and his companions dressed in their robes of state. They had emerged from the city in procession to plead with Alexander not to destroy it. The haughty conqueror was so impressed with the sight of this procession of unarmed priests with Jaddua at their head, courageously advancing to meet him in all their regalia, that descending from his horse, he prostrated himself before them. When he was

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asked why he should do this, he declared that he had had a vision of this procession in a dream at Dios in Macedonia, before leaving on his campaign of world conquest.

Thus Jerusalem escaped the bloodshed and devastation that fell on other cities such as Guza.

At verse 9, the prophecy breaks off to contrast Alexander with Christ. The just and lowly King of Israel who comes not for violence but for salvation, is considered against the background of the violent, haughty King of Grecia. Christ is revealed as a true King and Deliverer; not a human conqueror at the head of invincibly marching forces and leaving a trail of violence and bloodshed behind him, but a Divine Prince of Peace; not one who inspires fear and dread, but one whose coming calls forth songs of greatest joy; not a foreign tyrant, but Israel's own King; not cruel and oppressive, but infinitely righteous; not slaying people indiscriminately, but providing salvation; not glorying in the flesh but meek and lowly; not astride a prancing steed, but riding upon a humble ass, an animal of peace.

He is shown as the hope of Israel, and through his leadership Israel's forces will triumph over the world power of Grecia. Glorious victories, greater and more enduring than those of Alexander, are predicted for Israel when Yahweh shall save them as a flock, the people of His pasture. The prophecy ends with a song of joy consequent upon vast changes that shall then be brought about.

It is said that Alexander died at the age of 33 as the result of a drunken orgy when celebrating yet another victory in Babylon. The Lord Jesus also died at the same age, and in figuratively the same city (Rev. 11:18), but for a different reason. Through His death He gained the victory over death (Heb. 2:14), making it possible for the "prisoners" to emerge "out of the pit wherein is no water" (i.e. the grave). The chapter is a thrilling one of vivid contrasts between Alexander the human conqueror, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the divine Prince of peace.

ALEXANDER'S SWEEPING VICTORIES — Vv. 1-7

VERSE 1

"The burden" — From the Hebrew root "ussah" — to lift up. It can signify to lift up the hand in threatening aspect. Thus it is an oracle of doom.

"In the land" — The R.V. has "upon the land." The prophecy relates to the land of Hadrach; it was not given in that land.

"Hadrach" — It has been identi-

fied as Hatarika mentioned by Assyrian kings as an Aramean district near Damascus and Hamath (H. Rawlinson). The decisive battle of Issus in which Alexander defeated the Persians, laid open Syria and Palestine to his attack. He invaded the land of Hadrach, occupied Damascus, and from there moved against Tyre and Sidon.

"Damascus shall be the rest thereof" — R. V.: "Damascus shall be its (the burden's) resting

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place." The divine judgment on nations that had previously afflicted Israel would rest heavily on Damascus as it did.

"When the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the Lord" — Rotherham, supported by the R.V., renders: "Yahweh hath an eye upon men, and upon all the tribes of Israel." His eye overlooks the affairs of men and nations, and He moves for the protection of the vindication of His people Israel. See Jer. 32:19-20. Ps. 14:2. Heb. 4:13. Ps. 66:7. Prov. 15:3.

VERSE 2

"And Hamath also shall border thereby" — The RSV renders: "Hamath also which borders thereon." Hamath was adjacent to Hadrach and Damascus. It was a city on the Orontes, the capital of a portion of Syria, and forming, at one time, an independent kingdom of the same name. It is mentioned in Num. 34:8 as portion of the northern border of the land granted to the tribes. So the prophecy shows how Alexander would move south ever nearer to the land of Judah.

"Tyrus and Zidon, though it be wise" — The clever diplomacy of these peoples shall avail nothing. Despite their reputed wisdom (see Ezek. 28:3), they would not avert the clash with the Grecian forces.

VERSE 3

"And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold" — The prophecy of the destruction of Tyre is given in Ezekiel 26. Nebuchadnezzar initiated the attack, and destroyed the city on the mainland. But the Tyrians removed their wealth to an island off the coast of Syria, and continued to defy their enemies, and build again their power. Ezekiel had predicted that Tyrian power would be irreparably destroyed, the stones, dust and timber of the city would be thrown "in the midst of the water." and the

site made "like the top of a rock" (vv. 12-14). So complete would be the destruction of Tyrian power, that the city would be "built no more." Alexander fulfilled this. Though Tyre "built itself a strong hold" in its island fortress, and the Macedonian lacked the naval power to destroy it, he built a wide ramp connecting the mainland with the island, using the ruins of the mainland city to accomplish his purpose, and so "throwing the stones, dust, and timber into the waters." Across this ramp his forces marched to overthrow Tyre forever. These events comprised a remarkable and detailed fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy. The wealth and power that insular Tyre had accumulated since the destruction of the mainland city by Nebuchadnezzar were taken over by Alexander and his Grecian forces.

VERSE 4

"Behold" — The word suggests an exclamation of amazement: Look!! as though as to impress the remarkable fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy.

"The Lord" — Alexander, like Nebuchadnezzar, was but a tool in the hands of God who guides the destiny of nations. See Jer. 27:6. Deut. 28:49. Zeph. 2:12.

"She shall be devoured with fire" — After a seven months' siege this was fulfilled and Tyre was destroyed.

VERSE 5

"Ashkelon shall see it, and fear" — The remarkable overthrow of Tyre, the energy and skill of Alexander in war, the manner in which he overcame every obstacle in his path, put fear in nations that stood in the way of his progress further south. The Philistine cities next occupied his attention and were one by one defeated.

"Gaza also shall see it, and be very sorrowful" — Or, "severely distressed." Gaza chose to oppose

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Alexander and stoutly resisted him, but was decisively overthrown after a five months' siege. To teach a lesson to surrounding nations, Alexander treated the citizens extremely harshly. After the city had surrendered, he ruthlessly slew 10,000 of them, and had the king of Gaza dragged to death through the streets of the city behind a chariot. Thus "the king perished from Gaza," and destruction came upon Ashkelon.

VERSE 6

"A bastard shall dwell in Ashdod"—The Septuagint renders it, "a foreigner" shall dwell there. The RSV has, "a mongrel people," or a mixed community. The term suggests the gradual decline in once powerful Philistia. Foreigners took over, where once the Philistines proudly ruled.

VERSE 7

"I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth"—The metaphor is that of beasts of prey gorging themselves with flesh so that the blood drips from their mouths, but not entirely consuming the prey because it is taken away. In this case, Alexander and his Macedonian soldiers are the beasts of prey, and the Philistines comprise the victims. A remnant of the nation remained.

"He that remaineth shall be for our God"—The remnant of Philistia that remained after being humbled by Alexander was ultimately conquered and converted by the Jews under the Maccabees (B.C. 175-163) to whom God granted "a little help" (Dan. 11:34-35).

"He shall be as a governor in Judah"—The RSV = "as a clan in Judah." Philistia became a province of the nation established by the Maccabees, the borders of which extended almost as widely as those of Israel in the days of David.

"As a Jebusite"—The Philistines were subdued and converted by the Maccabees as David subdued the

city of Jebus, and converted its prince Araunah. See 2 Sam. 24:15-25. 1 Chron. 21:18-29. And see Jcs. Ant. iii. 15. 5.

VERSE 8

"And I will encamp about mine house"—The term "house" relates to the land and people of Israel as well as the Temple (Hos. 8:1. 9:15). A remarkable protection overshadowed Judah during the invasion of Alexander, as it did later when Antiochus Epiphanes invaded the land. Alexander marched against Jerusalem, determined to take it, but being met by the procession of priests from the city headed by Jaddua the high priest (Jos. Ant. xi. 8. 3) he recognised this as a vision he had seen prior to leaving Macedonia, and instead of destroying it, he made obeisance to the priest. After the terrible destruction and bloodshed that had been experienced by the surrounding nations, the remarkable deliverance of Jerusalem could only be attributed to Divine protection. A similar invasion of the land was experienced shortly after B.C. 170 when Antiochus Epiphanes returned from his Egyptian campaign to take Jerusalem by storm. He was determined to absolutely destroy the power of Judah, and did bring upon it great distress and bloodshed, but ultimately it was his power that was broken, and Judah arose greater than ever. The distress that Antiochus brought upon the country was followed by the revolt organised by the Maccabees, a Jewish family of priests that refused to submit. Gathering supporters around them they retired from the cities to commence a guerilla warfare against Antiochus Epiphanes. Remarkable victories were won by them, despite the fact that they lacked the arms and trained soldiers of the Syrians under Antiochus. Ultimately the power of Antiochus was broken, and the Maccabees reigned over a greatly extended nation as a kind of king-priests. The events of this time are used in Scripture as typical of those

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when Christ shall overthrow his enemies and reign over a greatly extended Empire. Both during the invasion of Alexander, and the war with Antiochus, it was made abundantly evident that Yahweh "encamps around His house" (see Psalm. 34:7).

"Because of him that passeth by"—Alexander the Great (see v.8).

"Because of him that returneth"—This identifies Antiochus Epiphanes with the prophecy, as well as Alexander. Whereas the latter marched against Jerusalem when he first entered the land enroute for Egypt, Antiochus did so on his return from attacking Egypt. Antiochus is therefore "him that returneth."

"No oppressor shall pass through them any more"—Following the attack of Antiochus, Judah rose to a greatness that caused her neigh-

bours to fear. In A.D.70, however, Judah was destroyed by Rome. In the initial stages of Roman power in the East, she entered as a friend and not as an enemy, so that in a sense these words could apply to those times. It is obvious, however, that the events of this chapter are typical of events that shall yet happen, when a power from the North shall enact the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes, and laying hold on Egypt, will return to besiege and devastate Jerusalem, only to be destroyed and overthrown for ever by the Lord Jesus who shall return as King. These events are predicted in Daniel 11:40-45, and Zechariah's comment shows conclusively that the fulfilment of this prophecy yet awaits the future.

"For now have I seen with Mine eyes"—Yahweh will look towards His people to deliver them. See similar expression: Exod. 3:7.

THE CREDENTIALS OF ISRAEL'S KING—V.9

Having shown how Yahweh can deliver His people in the remarkable escape of Jerusalem in the face of Alexander's impending attack; and having predicted that He will encamp about His people (though they would not entirely escape invasion and bloodshed) in the later attack by Antiochus Epiphanes, which is typical of the Russian invasion of the last days, the prophet is now shown the credentials of Israel's King as a source of salvation. The King appears first as one seeking salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass. But the victory he gained then laid the foundation for national victories to be won in the future: victories over death and the grave, and victories over Israel's enemies.

VERSE 9

"Rejoice"—Heb. *gyl*, "to spin round" under violent emotion as in excess of joy. The verse before us captures the excitement, joy and relief at the manifestation of Israel's Saviour and King. It is significant to note the five points of contrast in this verse between Alexander and Christ. They are as follows:

(1) "He cometh unto thee"—He comes to redeem Israel, not to crush it as did Alexander.

(2) "He is just"—The chief virtue of a King (2 Sam. 23:3). See Isa. 11:3-5. Ps. 45:6-7. Jer. 23:5-6. Isa. 9:6-7. In contrast to this, Alexander was capricious and violently unjust, especially against those who offended his towering ego.

(3) "He is a saviour"—Contrast with Alexander's action against Gaza and other places where he asserted his authority, not by saving, but by destroying. See Psalm 18:27.

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(4) "He is lowly"—The word (any) signifies submissive, approachable. He was submissive to the Father (Phil. 2:5-8). The word suggests the attitude of one subjecting himself to the affliction of evil men. The proud, dashing impatient Alexander was the very opposite.

(5) "Riding an ass" — The animal of peace, the symbol of Israel. Josephus says that foreigners identified the ass with Israel (Against Apion 1.7). This animal was used by the judges and kings of Israel as a symbol of their rank (Jud. 5:10. 10:4. 12:14. 2 Sam. 16:1-2). When David wanted to impress the people that Solomon was to be king, he commanded that he ride his ass through the streets of the city (1 Kings 1:33, 38). The ass is a high-spirited animal, an excellent worker, and the only animal the *firstborn* of which could be redeemed (by a lamb!) under the law (Exod. 13:13), all other *firstborns* being either destroyed or offered in sacrifice. Thus it was chosen as a symbol of Israel who can be redeemed by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. In contrast to this animal of peace, the horse was the animal of war, and was imported from and identified with Egypt. As a proud-stepping animal the horse symbolises the haughtiness of flesh. What a contrast is thus presented in this verse! The King of Israel on the animal of peace, contrasted with the Grecian monarch on his high, uplifted, prancing steed. Christ is shown riding the ass and leading the colt. It is a symbol of the King in power. The full-grown ass speaks of the true Israel of God, the colt that is led, speaks of Israel after the flesh. When Christ manifests himself as King he will be associated with the true, spiritual, glorified Israel, and will lead Israel after the flesh, so that it will become the "first dominion" throughout the world (Mic. 4:8). Consider also Gen. 49:11. When the Lord rode into Jerusalem on the ass, the people recognised his kingly dignity, for it was the appropriate animal for the circumstance, but they did not ap-

preciate the spiritual import of the Ass and the Colt—spiritual and natural Israel of the future, both acknowledging their king.

"Behold, thy King" — Cited Matt. 21:5.

"Cometh unto thee"—For your benefit, not like Alexander to conquer and destroy.

"Having salvation" — Notice the margin: "saving himself." The Lord saved himself that he might save others. As the Good Shepherd, he laid down his life that he might take it up again in more powerful form in order to save his sheep (Joh. 10:11). It would not have been much use the shepherd merely dying. He had to die in order to live. And that is what the Lord declares in John 10:17. "I lay down my life, that (Gr. "hina" with the design, purpose, or result) I might take it again... this COMMANDMENT have I received of my Father." The Lord's sacrifice in life and death ensured his personal resurrection to glory (Heb. 13:20) as well as the salvation of all who come unto God through him. His dedicated life ensured that he would obtain redemption from the body of mortality in which he came. By thus conquering, he led the way for others to conquer. In saving himself, he saved others (Rom. 4:25).

The Jews, however, esteemed him only as "smitten of God" (Isa. 53:4). The very fact that he died was to them an evidence that he was not the King of Israel but an impostor. They quoted this very Scripture (Zech. 9:9) to disprove his claim: "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him" (Matt. 27:42). "Save thyself, and come down from the cross" "Himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe" (Mark 15:30-32). "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us" (Luke 23:39). All these sayings lay hold on Zechariah 9:9, and were

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used by the Lord's detractors as Scriptural evidence to refute his claim.

THE KING SAVES OTHERS—Vv. 10-11

VERSE 10

"I"—The Septuagint, Rotherham and Gesenius render this as "he."

"Cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem"—Complete destruction of Israel's enemies, and the full restoration of Israel to the land (cp. Mic. 5:10-11. Ezek. 37:21-22) Micah 5:10 shows that prior to Christ's return the Jews will put their trust in these "horses and chariots" there described as "thine" and representative of the arm of flesh (Jer. 17:5).

"Speak peace to the heathen"—Permanent world peace on the basis of righteousness (Ps. 72). The verse thus speaks of total world disarmament ("cut off the chariot") and the establishment of world peace. He speaks peace—or proclaims it authoritatively (Isa. 9:6. Ps. 85:8. Isa. 32:17).

"His dominion shall be"—Universal dominion. This is a quotation from Psalm 72:8 showing that the Psalm is Messianic in character. It formed part of the prayer of David, expressing his longing desire for the establishment of this future kingdom (Psalm 72:20. 2 Sam. 23:1-7).

VERSE 11

"As for thee also"—That is, Zion (v.9). The vision now addresses true Israelites who are identified with Zion (Psalm 87:5. Heb. 12:22).

"By the blood of thy covenant"—The blood of the King. See Luke 22:20. Heb. 13:20.

"Sent forth thy prisoners"—Those shut in by sin and death; prisoners in the grave. See Isa. 49:8-9. Rev. 1:18.

"The pit wherein is no water"—Both Joseph (Gen. 37:24) and Jeremiah (Jer. 38:6) were placed in such a pit typifying death. It here symbolises the grave. As they came out of the pits in which they were placed, so true sons of Zion shall be liberated from the power of the grave to receive life eternal (Hos. 13:14. 1 Cor. 15:55-56).

VERSE 12

"Turn you to the strong hold"—To Yahweh. Lay hold on Him in confidence of future blessings. See Nah. 1:7. Ps. 27:1. Prov. 18:10. John 17:11, 12).

"Prisoners of hope"—In Hebrew, "prisoners of the hope."

"Even today do I declare"—Even in this day of lowest distress, do I promise you comforts double to your distress.

"Render double"—This is the privilege of the firstborn (Deut. 21:17), and Israel is the firstborn nation of Yahweh (Ex. 4:22). Those who embrace the hope of Israel in Christ assume that position in place of Israel after the flesh who have been deposed (see Heb. 12:23—Diag. James 1:18. Rom. 9:6-7. Rev. 14:4). But the privilege of firstborn also brought a double share of responsibility, so that whilst a double portion of inheritance is granted those who grace their position a double portion of punishment will be meted out to those who disgrace it. See Isa. 40:2. Jer. 16:18. Isa. 61:7.

THE MACCABEAN STRUGGLE AS TYPICAL OF ISRAEL'S ULTIMATE VICTORY—Vv. 13-15

The Maccabees defeated the Power from the north (Antiochus) that had taken the city of Jerusalem, and then set up their authority therein as king-priests. From Jerusalem they extended their boundaries

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on all sides, until they incorporated the nation's previous enemies. These were either converted or put to the sword. The Edomites were one such nation incorporated within the borders of the greatly-extended state of Israel, and Herod the Idumean who reigned in the days of Christ was a descendant of those who had been converted at that time. These events are here shown to be typical of Christ's future conquests.

VERSE 13

"Bent Judah for me" — Judah is represented as the bow, and Ephraim as the arrow. In the days of the Maccabees, Judah provided the main support, though there were many of the northern tribes who had returned to the land, and fought for it. This shall be repeated at Christ's return. He shall save Judah first (Zech. 12:7), and they shall "fight at Jerusalem" against the power from the north (Zech. 14:14). In these places, Judah is a political term, and relates to the people in the land. Those scattered abroad are accounted as Ephraim, or the ten tribes. All tribes are to be restored to the land (Rom. 11:26. Ezek. 48). Ezekiel 20:23-37 speaks of how scattered Israel will fight its way back to the land after Christ's return. He will save Judah first (the Jews in the land), and use them as his bow in battle, and then regather those who remain scattered, whom he will use as his arrow. This will occupy considerable time (Mic. 7:14-17). See Eureka Vol. ii, p. 31.

"Zion . . . against Greece" — The circumstances of the Maccabees are thus shown as typical of events at the time of the end. The "king of the north" (Dan. 11:40) is shown by the prophet to be a latter-day manifestation of Grecian power (see Notes on Zechariah 6:6).

VERSE 14

"Yahweh shall be seen over them" — The glorified saints will have the name of Yahweh named upon them (Acts 15:14. Rev. 3:12. Isa. 30:27), and will officer the Israelites in their conquests over the Gentiles.

"His arrow as the lightning" — See Psalm 144:5-6. Lightning speaks

of Yahweh's spirit, and it will be by the manifestation of this that victory will come to the saints as Israel's rulers — the king-priests (like the Maccabees) of the age to come (Zech. 4:6. Rev. 5:9-10).

"Blow the trumpet" — The Shopbar trumpet — used for alarm in war (Num. 10:9), and in sacred ceremonies such as the Day of Atonement (Lev. 25:9). Armageddon will not only manifest the judgment of God in war, but will comprise a day of national atonement for mankind in general (See notes Rev. 15:8).

"Whirlwinds of the south" — The army that shall be recruited from the south, from Sinai (Deut. 33:1-2. Hab. 3:1-3), and thus relating to the glorified followers of the Lord. The word south, in Hebrew, is Teman, and comes from the root "yaman" signifying "right hand" (the Israelite always accounted the east as the front). These are "whirlwinds of the Right Hand" for the Commander of this army (Isa. 55:4), comes from the "right hand" of the Father (Ps. 80:17). Bro. Thomas: "This sudden and unexpected attack of a hitherto unheard of power will come upon the whole habitable 'as a thief' (Rev. 16:15). The Christ in fulness in the Great City Babylon and none suspecting even that the Lord Jesus had individually descended from heaven! Could any surprise be more complete!" (Eureka Vol. iii p. 590).

VERSE 15

"Shall defend them" — Heb. ganan to defend by throwing a completely protective cover around and over anyone. This was the case when the Maccabees won their victories, for Daniel declares that they were

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"holpen with a little help" (Dan. 11:34), how much more when Christ and the saints officer the forces of humbled, disciplined and regenerated Israel.

"They shall devour" — Fulfilling Num. 23,24.

"Subdue with sling stones" — But note the margin: "Subdue the stones of the slings." The Revised Version has: "tread down the sling stones." The sense of the passage is that the weapons used against them prove powerless (Isa. 54:17); the sling stones have missed their mark and fall harmless to the ground where they are trodden contemptuously in the mire by the victoriously marching hosts.

"They shall drink" — The rest of this verse expresses the tokens of sacrifice. In drinking wine, the warriors identify themselves with the blood shed recognising the righteousness of such warfare. Armageddon is related by Ezekiel to a great national sacrifice of which the birds and beasts of heaven and earth (the nations) are invited to partake (Ezek. 39:17). Those that are prepared to do so acknowledge the righteousness of Yahweh in defending His city in such fashion, and by submitting themselves under the authority of the Son will be incorporated in the Kingdom he will establish throughout the world; those who refuse to partake of this sacrifice will be destroyed (Isa. 60:12).

"Make a noise" — Rejoice.

"Filled like bowls" and as the corners of the altar — The blood of sacrifices was caught in bowls and splashed upon the four horns of the altar (Exod. 24:6. Lev. 4:18), this blood representing life dedicated to Yahweh. The figure of this verse indicates that the victories won by Israel will cause the conquered Gentile powers to submit to Christ, dedicating their national lives to him. There were four horns of the altar, representative of the four divisions of Israel, and thus the blood of the

conquered is represented as being splashed on the horns of the altar.

Brother Thomas writes: "The Brazen Altar, which was four-square, had four horns of brass, one at each corner; and in sacrifice, the blood was applied to the horns by the priest's finger; and the rest was all poured out beside the bottom of the altar" (He gives as reference, Exod. 29:12, a portion of Scripture which indicates that the animal the blood of which was thus used was a sin-offering). "These horns represent the same thing as the four Cherubim, the four Carpenters, the four Living Ones... only in the Brazen state, which precedes the Millenium. As horns of brass they 'execute the judgments written,' as a consuming fire" (Eureka vol. i, p. 177).

VERSE 16

"Sure I am as the flock of His people" — Israel will be restored to its former privileged status (see Ps. 80:1) under the good shepherd (Ezek. 34:20-23. Psalm 100. Isa. 40:10-11).

"Stones of a crown" — A contrast to the enemies of Israel represented as sling stones trodden underfoot in the mud (v.15). The word "crown" is "mezer" in Hebrew, and according to Dr. Strong, signifies something set apart or a dedication such as of a priest or a nazirite. The word is used of:

(1) The golden band on the high priest ascribing Holiness to Yahweh (Exod. 29:6, 39:30. Lev. 8:9 — and see Jer. 2:3).

(2) The king's sign of office (2 Sam. 1:10. 2 Kings 11:12. 2 Chr. 23:11—and see Ps. 89:39, 132:18).

(3) The Nazirite's badge of unshorn hair, the hair of consecration (Num. 6:7. 9. Jer. 7:29. Num. 6:4, 5, 8, 12, 13, 18, 19, 21).

Thus the term shows that Israel will be elevated as the royal-priestly nation dedicated to Yahweh

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as were the Nazarites in the days of their vows. They will rise to the status suggested in Exod. 19:5-6, a status enjoyed on an even greater height of glory by the saints (1 Pet. 2:9).

"Lifted up as an ensign"—R.V. = "Lifted on high" or margin, "glittering on high." RSV = "They shall shine." Berkeley = "brilliant." Israel will glitter as a saved remnant over the land, a separated, royal, priestly nation that will attract the notice of all other nations, and draw them to the one unifying worship of the future age. See Jer. 33:9.

**ISRAEL SINGS THE PRAISES
OF ITS KING — V. 17**

VERSE 17

"How great is his goodness"— Seen in the redemption He brings mankind individually and nationally (Rom. 11:22. Psa. 31:19. Ps. 145:7).

"His beauty" — The royal, priestly dignity he will reveal. Isa. 33:17. Ps. 45:2.

"Corn" — Grain and wine are used symbolically of prosperity and truth (Deut. 33:28. Ps. 4:7. Isa. 55:1).

"Cheerful" — Hebr. "nub" = to grow, be fruitful. R.V. = "flourish." Under Messiah, Israel shall flourish as never before. As. v. 10 is a quotation from Psalm 72:8, this seems to be a reference to Psalm 72:6, 16.

CHAPTER 10

Divine Deliverer of Israel

This chapter illustrates what Paul expresses in Romans 11:26: "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Israel, which according to the prophet's words shall go through a time of spiritual drought, is admonished to seek Yahweh, who is able to provide bountiful "rain and grass in the field" for rich pasture. So the flock which was to be scattered due to the negligence of the false shepherds is not left without hope. The Good Shepherd is to be revealed in due time. Zzchariah sees him regathering and restoring, leading the sheep from all parts of the world back to the fold which he has prepared for them. This chapter then reveals the work of the Good Shepherd in the age to come when the nation of Israel shall be raised from the depth of despair to the height of glory and triumph as Yahweh's people.

A PRAYER FOR DIVINE BLESSING — V. 1

VERSE 1

"Ask ye" — A prayer for help.

"Rain" — Only Yahweh can give this. See Jer. 14:22. Ruth 1:1 with v.6 (note). Rain is figurative of the blessings of the Truth (see Deut. 11:13-14, 32:1-2), whilst apostasy is likened to spiritual drought (see Amos 8:11-13). The blessings of a bountiful rain (the outpouring of God's spirit-word) are promised in Hos. 6:1-3. Joel 2:28. Now Israel is told to ask, or pray, for it. Such a prayer will bring a blessing to the nation, in contrast to the idolatry of v. 2 which brings sorrow. In addition to this figurative rain (the truth) that shall be poured out upon Israel at Christ's return (Ezek. 36:25-28), there will also be bountiful literal rain granted the land, even as it is promised in Isa. 30:23.

"In the time" — Of Christ's return.

"The latter rain" — Heb. "malqosh" the spring showers. These swell out the grain and thus perfect the harvest (cp. Hos. 6:1-3). The pouring out of the truth will do this for Israel after the flesh. It will "strengthen them" (v.12) to

do His will. See Ezek. 36:26.

"Shall make bright clouds" — See margin: "lightnings." This is the spirit unveiled, which shall be revealed through Christ and the saints. As lightning causes rain (Jer. 10:13, Ps. 135:7, Ezek. 11:19), so the Spirit revealed through the glorified followers of Christ will result in "rain," the proclamation of the Divine purpose in truth.

"Showers of rain" — This is the blessing of the Good Shepherd (see Ezek. 34:26). These showers will cause the "pasture" to grow to feed the flock (see Deut. 32:2).

"To every one grass in the field" — The verse gives a glorious figurative picture of spring; with grain ripening after bountiful rains, with lush pasture in the fields for the sheep to consume, with widespread joy and happiness in the revelation of Divine goodness. This verse should be linked with the last verse of chapter 9.

THE CAUSE OF ISRAEL'S APOSTASY — Vv. 2-3

VERSE 2

"The idols have spoken vanity" — The teraphim. These were small household oracular divinities (Ezek. 21:21, Jud. 17:5, Hos. 3:4). Al-

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though they were inconsistent with the pure worship of Yahweh (1 Sam. 15:23. 2 Kings 23:24), they are referred to repeatedly in Israel's history (e.g. Gen. 31:19, 34). Archaeology has shed light on the teraphim. From the site of ancient Nuzu, south-east of Niniveh, and not far from modern Kirkuk, have come the Nuzu documents found in excavations conducted between 1925-1941. These have shown that possession of such household gods has implied leadership of the family, and in the case of a married daughter the possession of them has assured her husband of the right to her father's property. ("Light from the Ancient East" p. 55). In Israel's case, it will be revealed that their trust in such teraphim has been in vain. Possession of such will not entitle them to any claim of the land of their forefathers. The right to the Land of Promise is conditional, and Israel has not lived up to these conditions and terms. At Christ's coming, it will be clearly revealed that not Israel, but Yahweh is the titleholder of the Land (Lev. 25:23. 1 Chron. 29:15). He shall give it as a possession to those He has found worthy of it (Acts 7:5. John 8:39. Gal. 3:29), and Israel after the flesh will be resettled in the land for Abraham's sake (Lev. 26:41-42. Rom. 11:28).

"The diviners" — Heb. *g'zsum*. People who claim authority to forecast apart from Yahweh. The word signifies to cut, or divide, the idea being to cut or divide an animal victim to discover certain omens and so forecast events. See Ezek. 21:21 and compare with Isa. 44:25-26.

"Therefore they went their way" — Moved by false visions and ideas, they pursued their own course, rather than seeking Yahweh's way.

"They were troubled" — Heb. *anah* = to be "bowed down," to be severely afflicted. See Ezek. 34:5.

"There was no shepherd" — No

true shepherd. See Ezek. 34:5 and compare with v. 23 and John 10:1, 8.

VERSE 3

"Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds" — Though there were no true shepherds, there were those who had been appointed to that position, but who abused their positions of responsibility and destroyed the flock instead of feeding it (Ezek. 34:2).

"I punished" — R.V. = "I will punish." The punishment is yet to come.

"The goats" — R.V. = "he goats", that is, the leaders. See Isa. 14:9 (margin). Ezek. 34:17. Jer. 50:8. The leaders of the people were more guilty than the people, and will receive the greater punishment at Christ's coming.

"Hath visited" — Yahweh will visit the nation in the person of His son, to discipline and to bless (Ruth 1:6. Lk. 1:68-75).

"Hath made" — The R.V. has "will make". This will be fulfilled in the future.

"As his goodly horse" — Heb. *Sus hodoho* = The horse of his majesty. Judah will be disciplined and regenerated, and will go forth to battle like a war horse suited to the Lord of divine glory to ride majestically to victory. Zechariah speaks of Judah as disciplined and humbled (Zech. 13:9); as educated and cleansed from wickedness (Zech. 12:10, 13:1); as victorious over the nations (Zech. 9:13-15). See how Christ's army will be associated with symbolical horses in his conquests against the nations (Rev. 19:11-14 — notes. Zech. 1:8, 6:2-8 notes).

THE CURE OF ISRAEL'S APOSTASY — V. 4

VERSE 4

"Out of him" — Out of Judah.

"Came forth the corner" — R.V. = "the cornerstone," or Christ.

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See Isa. 28:16. Eph. 2:20. The cornerstone is the stone which forms the corner and foundation of a building, uniting together that which would otherwise be diverse and disjointed. Christ is the support and foundation of true Israel, and will stabilise the nation in the future. The Hebrew word is "pinnah" and is elsewhere rendered "chief" (Jud. 20:2. 1 Sam. 14:38 marg.). "stay" (Isa. 19:13). Christ is the chief and stay of Israel, but contrast Romans 9:32-33.

"The nail" — The word implies a stout peg upon which to display articles of value or glory (Ezek. 15:3). Christ, as the nail, does and will display the glory of his Father's house (Isa. 22:23. Zech. 6:13).

"The battle bow" — The one who will successfully wage war against the enemy. See Psalm 5:5 with Ps. 64:7. Rev. 19:11. Ps. 2, 110, etc.

"Every oppressor" — Better, "every ruler". These are the king-priests of the coming age — Rev. 5:9-10.

VICTORY IN CONTRAST TO THE DEFEAT OF APOSTASY —

Vv. 5-7

VERSE 5

"They shall be as mighty men" — The men of Judah shall be as gibborim, mighty in battle — Zech. 14:14.

"Because Yahweh is with them" — Manifested through Christ and his glorified followers. See Zech. 14:3. The result will be a national triumph — Deut. 32:30.

"The riders on horses shall be confounded" — See margin. The riders on horses are those who govern and direct the war-horse, i.e. Gentile rulers. These shall be confounded at the might of Judah and ashamed at the defeats they will experience. Mic. 7:15-16.

VERSE 6

"I am Yahweh" — The covenant name of God, proclaimed when He was about to save Israel from Egypt, and which, in its significance, guarantees the perpetuity of the nation. The name signifies, "He who will be," and thus proclaims the future intentions of Deity. Notice how these are referred to in this verse: "I will strengthen," "I will save," "I will bring them again," "I will have mercy," "I will hear them," for I am Yahweh (He who will be).

"I will hear them" — This implies their conversion. The means are outlined in Zech. 13:1-4. Rom. 11:23. Micah 7:18-20.

VERSE 7

"Ephraim" — The northern tribes, Israel scattered abroad.

"Shall be like a mighty man" — Scattered Israel will have to fight their way back to the land (Ezek. 20:33-38).

"Rejoice as through wine" — They will be stimulated by the amazing victories they shall achieve (Mic. 7:15-20). Elijah will be sent to recall scattered Israel (Mal. 4:5), who will then endeavour to leave the lands of their dispersion for the Promised Land. Their intentions will be misunderstood, for as Israel will then be invaded, it will seem as though they want to return merely to join in battle against Russia in the land. Such attempts will be resisted by the European confederacy, so that the Jewish communities throughout these lands will have to force their way out. In this they will be assisted by God as Ezekiel 20:33 shows, and will succeed in doing so in the face of tremendous odds.

"Their heart shall rejoice in Yahweh" — They will be converted (see Ezek. 20:37-38. Ezek. 37:26).

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THE FLOCK RESTORED —

Vv. 8-9

VERSE 8

"I will hiss for them" — The Hebrew word signifies to "pipe" for them, such as a shepherd does to gather together his flock, using a rough reed or bamboo pipe for the purpose. See Jud. 5:16. In this chapter, therefore, we have the work of the good shepherd gathering together his flock, piping for them so that they come running to him.

"They shall increase as they have increased" — The RSV renders, "as in the past." See Exod. 1:8-22 for an example of how they increased in the past.

VERSE 9

"And" — This verse summarises the means that will be employed to humble and restore Israel. The One who brought them to political death to punish them will also re-gather them. In that day it will be seen that the punishment was an act of mercy designed to bring home to them the enormity of their offence so as to reclaim them.

"Sow them among the people" — To sow is to bury, thus speaking of the political death of Israel (see 1 Cor. 15:36).

"They shall remember Me" — This will be through the work of Elijah who will be sent forth for the purpose of proclaiming to scattered Israel that Messiah has returned (Mal. 4). He with his associates will be sent out before Armageddon, though the restoration will be after it.

"They shall live" — Implying a political resurrection (Ezek. 37:12-14. Jer. 31:17).

"And turn again" — R.V. = "return" i.e. to the Land and to Yahweh. They shall do what Yahweh demands of all who desire His blessing. His condition is: "Turn ye unto Me and I will turn unto you" (Zech. 1:13).

THE MANNER OF THE RETURN — Vv. 10-12

VERSE 10

"Out of the land of Egypt, and out of Assyria" — The Jews of the dispersion will be restored from countries from all points of the compass (Deut. 30:3-4), but will enter the Land from either the north or south (Isa. 11:11, 16. 27:12-13). They will thus have to pass over either the River Euphrates or the River Nile, so that they will be nationally baptised as in the days of Moses (1 Cor. 10:1).

"The land of Gilead and Lebanon" — Gilead is east and Lebanon west of the Jordan. So, entering from the north or south, the Jews shall spread out east and west on both sides of the Jordan.

"And place shall not be found for them" — They shall grow into a numerous and powerful nation, being the "first dominion" in the Empire of Christ (Mic. 4:8). See Isa. 49:20.

VERSE 11

"He" — The second Moses, even Christ — Isa. 11:15. Acts. 3:22.

"With affliction" — The R.V. = "of affliction."

"Shall smite the waves in the sea" — They shall go through dry-shod, as in the days of Moses, thus being nationally baptised (1 Cor. 10:2). As baptism is a symbol of death and burial, so the sea becomes a "sea of affliction" (Mic. 7:19). The sea in question is the Red Sea through which Israel passed under Moses.

"The deeps of the river shall dry up" — The river Euphrates is referred to. The waters of this river shall be parted also, to allow the Israelites who enter the land from this direction to pass through (Isa. 11:15-16).

"The pride of Assyria shall be brought down" — Assyria is used prophetically to represent the latter-day northern confederacy (Mic.

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5:5-6). Its pride shall be brought down by the victories won by Israel returning to the land.

"The sceptre of Egypt shall depart away" — A new order of rulers (the glorified followers of Christ) will take over the governing of the nations. Egypt prophetically relates to the southern confederacy of nations, including the Anglo-American powers. Their power (sceptre) shall depart away. Egypt as a nation will also be brought into subjection to Christ (Pa. 68:30-31. Isa. 19:23-25).

VERSE 12

"I will strengthen them in

Yahweh" — The complete conversion of Israel after the flesh. See Ezek. 36:26-27. Zech. 13:9. Hos. 2:23. 3:5. Rom. 11:26.

"They shall walk up and down in His name" — This phrase implies walking up and down throughout the world — Zech. 1:10. 6:7. The complete conversion of Israel will thus be displayed throughout the world, to become a powerful testimony to all nations influencing them to likewise seek the favor of the King (Jer. 33:9. Zech. 8:23). This will be accomplished for "Yahweh's sake" (Isa. 48:11), for this "He waits" (Isa. 30:18), and in its fulfilment He will be glorified (Isa. 44:23, 46:13).

CHAPTER 11

The Rejection of the Good Shepherd and the Scattering of the Flock

Zechariah Chapter 10 prophesies the regathering of the flock by the Good Shepherd (see v.8); Chapter 11 reveals why the flock was scattered. It commences with a figurative description of the devastation that swept guilty Judah in A.D. 70. Sweeping down from the north, from Lebanon (v.1), it involved Bashan in the east, descending to the lower Jordan valley (v.3), and onwards to Jerusalem. The prophet's words vividly describe the swift destruction of the land, the despair of the "shepherds" in consequence, and the fear of the flock.

Condemnation is heaped upon the so-called shepherds of Judah who failed to care for the flock, in consequence of which they are cut off. The prophet then enacts the parable of the Good Shepherd (vv. 1-14), dramatises the conflict which would ensue between the Lord and the so-called shepherds of his day, predicts his betrayal, the scattering of the flock, the breaking of the brotherhood of Judah and Israel, the manifestation of a "foolish shepherd," and finally, the vindication of the Good Shepherd in the punishment that shall be heaped upon the idol shepherd who leaveth the flock.

It will be noticed that Zechariah himself enacts the parable of the Good Shepherd, thus dramatising the "determinate counsel" of God with the Lord Jesus.

THE OVERTHROW OF THE JEWISH STATE — A.D. 70

VERSE 1

"Open thy doors, O Lebanon"— Lebanon is at the northern extremity of the land, and is here invited to open its doors to the invader (Rome) who was to come from that direction. Lebanon signifies the White One, an apt name for the tall mountain with its peaks covered in snow. It is used in Scripture to symbolise Israel's glory (Isa. 10:34), the apex of which was the Temple in Jerusalem (Luke 21:6). Both the land of Israel and the Temple are probably here referred to, so that the Romans, sweeping down from the north, destroyed the glory of Jewry when

they overthrew the Temple. Lebanon is addressed as the walls of a fortress, and invited to open its doors to the destroyer from the north.

"Fire may devour thy cedars" — The cedars of Lebanon symbolise the leaders or chief ones of the nation (Isa. 37:21-24. Ezek. 17:22-24). The prophecy shows that these would be overthrown by the fire of war.

VERSE 2

"Howl, fir tree" — The lesser trees are invited to lament at the overthrow of the chief ones, and as the fire sweeps along to threaten them also.

"Howl, O ye oaks of Bashan" —

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See Isa. 2:13 where these are used as figurative of people. Bashan is south-east of Lebanon, so that the fire of war is represented as sweeping southward to encompass the whole land — as it did when Rome invaded Judah and destroyed it in A.D. 70. The figure of this verse expresses the wailing of the wind through the trees as it fans the fire of judgment. The prophet hears it howling in the branches, and feels the heat of the flames fanned by the wind and fed by the timber.

"The forest of the vintage is come down" — RSV = "The thick forest has been felled!" The fire of war and judgment has swept through the forest of Judah and destroyed it.

VERSE 3

"There is a voice . . ."—Notice the words in italics indicating there are no equivalent words in Hebrew. The original introduces a dramatic, excited style: "Listen! The howling of shepherds" etc.

"Their glory is spoiled" — The figure is that of a fire sweeping the forest, destroying the tall trees, and also eating up the pasture beneath. The shepherds are the spiritual leaders of the people, and in Isaiah 40:6, the people are likened to grass. All this is represented as being destroyed by the fire of war.

"The roaring of young lions" — Figurative of the tribes of Israel (Ezek. 19:1-2), here seen as roaring in anguish at the destruction that involves them.

"The pride of Jordan is spoiled" — The pride, or splendor, of the upper Jordan is the lush growth of its banks. This was once the favorite haunt of lions. The figure of the chapter represents the fire sweeping down to consume the "glory of Jordan" forcing the lions to vacate their haunts, and thus driving them away. The judgment of A.D. 70 did this to the remaining tribes of Israel (the lions); they were driven from their haunts and scattered throughout the world.

THE CAUSE OF THE CALAMITY — Vv. 4-8

VERSE 4

"Thus saith Yuhweh" — A careful consideration of the following verses will reveal that Zechariah was called upon to enact the parable of the good shepherd. He must have carried with him the instruments of the shepherd, and gone through the motions of all that is referred to in these verses, cutting asunder his staff (v. 10), demanding his price (v. 12), casting the money to the potter (v. 13), and so forth. If this is recognised, the significance of this prophecy will be better appreciated. His parable reveals the cause of the calamity that he predicted would come upon the people — the rejection of the Good Shepherd.

"Feed the flock of the slaughter" — The word "feed" signifies "shepherd," and "the flock of slaughter" are those destined for slaughter by the mighty of the land. See the use of the term in Psalm 44:22, and notice how Paul uses this figure of speech in relation to the Ecclesia in Romans 8:35-36. So Zechariah was told to shepherd or feed God's flock that by its rulers was accounted good only for slaughter and eating (see Ezek. 34:1-3).

VERSE 5

"Whose possessors slay them" — The Gentiles had become possessors of the flock of Yuhweh (see Jer. 50:7).

"They that sell them" — The leaders of Israel, by their folly, sold the people into the hands of their oppressors.

"I am rich" — The leaders claimed that they benefited by delivering the nation into the hands of its oppressors. For an example of this, note the words of Caiaphas in John 11:49-50.

"Their own shepherds pity them not" — The spiritual leaders of Judah had no pity for the flock as

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both Ezekiel (Ch. 34) and the Lord (John 10:13) declared.

VERSE 6

"For I will no more pity"—The people were little better than the leaders, for they followed the latter in their wickedness, and thus deserved the punishment heaped upon them. See Jer. 5:31.

"I will deliver every one into his neighbour's hand"—This speaks of factional strife and bloodshed, and these evils characterised the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Whilst the Romans were hammering at the walls of the city, the Jewish defenders inside were quarrelling and fighting among themselves, and blood was daily shed by those who should have been united against the common enemy.

"And into the hand of his king"—The Jews had rejected Jesus and claimed that Caesar was their king (John 19:15), and into the hands of this king, claimed as their own, they were given!

"And they"—The Roman legions under Vespasian and Titus.

"Shall smite the land" — As they did in one of the worst sieges in all history. The word "smite" is from the Hebrew "kitteth" and is from a root signifying "to beat in pieces" as with repeated blows of a hammer. These repeated blows on the part of the iron hammer of Rome brought the Jewish state to a complete end.

ZECHARIAH ENACTS THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD — Vv. 7-14

VERSE 7

"And" — R.V. = "So I fed" (i.e. shepherded). He performed the symbolic act of a shepherd to the people, doubtless appearing in their midst with the instruments of a shepherd and explaining to the curious, who may have enquired the reason for this, what was meant by the act.

"Even you, O poor of the flock" — Notice the marginal rendering, "Verily the poor of the flock." He enacted the work of Christ who went to the "poor in spirit" to set before them the principles of God. For the use of this expression see Ps. 10:2, 9, 14:6, 18:27. James 2:5. Mk. 12:37. Isa. 66:2.

"I took two staves"—Heb. *maggel* — Shepherds used a "rod and staff", though sometimes these were combined in one instrument (Ps. 23:4). The rod was for beating off wild beasts (1 Sam. 17:34-35), and for counting the sheep (Lev. 27:32). The staff was armed with an iron hook at the end, to pull in and hold straying sheep. Should one fall into a bog, the hook could be helpful to drag it out. Figuratively, the rod and staff spoke of defence and counting, and were for guidance and assistance in trouble.

"Beauty" — Pleasantness or Graciousness. Yahweh's grace was manifested towards Israel, but it was broken when the people rejected the Messiah (Matt. 23:12. 1 Thess. 2:15-16).

"Bands" — This spoke of unity (see margin) and fellowship in Israel, founded upon the things of Zion (Isa. 25:7. Jer. 3:17-18). There is no hope of this for natural Israel until Jerusalem is restored (Ezek. 37:21-22).

"I fed the flock" — Zechariah did this typically, though it was fulfilled by the Lord Jesus. The prophet doubtless gathered those who were interested around him and expounded to them the prophecy that had been revealed unto him.

VERSE 8

"Three shepherds also I cut off" — Who these were typically as far as Zechariah is concerned is not revealed. Perhaps his enactment of this prophecy brought him into verbal conflict with some of the appointed "shepherds" of the nation. As far as the fulfilment of it is concerned, the three shepherds

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whom the Lord "cut off" probably relate to the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes — the so-called shepherds of Judah. The Hebrew "khalad" rendered "cut off" signifies either to destroy or to disavow, and probably the latter idea is expressed here.

"In one month" — The closing weeks of the Lord's ministry witnessed an increasing hostility between him and the so-called shepherds. His indictment of them became more public and outspoken until they could bear it no longer and clamored for his crucifixion.

"My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me" — Thus is expressed the mutual antagonism that existed between the Lord and the false shepherds of his day during the closing weeks of his ministry. The word "loathed" signifies to "become impatient," and the impatience of the Lord erupted in the open rebuke and forthright denunciation of the leaders that is recorded in Matthew 23. Publicly he indicted them for the folly of their ways, until they seethed with anger and indignation against him.

VERSE 9

"Then said I" — Zechariah is still enacting the part of the good shepherd, and apparently came into conflict with some of the leaders of his day. But the fulfillment of the parable is found in the words and actions of the Lord Jesus.

"I will not feed you" — Jewry had its opportunity, and having set before the people the principles and action required, the nation was rejected when it did not respond. It had turned from the shepherd, and the shepherd could do nothing more for it (1 Sam. 15:26).

"That that dieth, let it die" — Israel cast off as a nation. Death and captivity ("cut off") became the lot of the people.

"Let the rest eat every one the

flesh of another" — In the siege of A.D. 70 famine and want were so much in evidence that this literally took place, as Moses had predicted (Deut. 28:53), and Josephus recorded. He relates how mothers ate their babies in the siege, so terrible was the want of food.

VERSE 10

"That I might break my covenant" — Set aside, or annul it (Roth.). The cutting asunder of the staff called Beauty or Grace, indicated that Grace would be cut off from the nation, for it had rejected God. This divine grace had ensured its protection from Gentile oppressors, but now that restraint would be removed, and Gentiles allowed to overthrow Jewry (see Matt. 22:7).

"Made with all the people" — Heb. "Hammim" — peoples, in the plural, a term reserved for Gentiles. The covenant with the Gentiles was to restrain them from oppressing Israel, but with the breaking of the staff Beauty, or Grace, this was annulled.

VERSE 11

"It was broken in that day" — i.e. when the staff was cut asunder. As the staff represented Divine grace, which was personified in the Lord, the breaking of the staff symbolised the crucifixion of the Lord by the Jews and Romans. Having thus repudiated the Good Shepherd, grace was no longer available for the nation. They had broken His instrument to help.

"That waited upon me" — This defines the type of poor who were fed (v. 7) and so helped in the time of trouble.

"Knew that it was the word of Yuhweh" — The remarkable events associated with the death of the Lord, and his subsequent resurrection revealed beyond all doubt that his crucifixion was appointed of God. See John 19:35-40. Acts 2:23.

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VERSE 12

"And I said unto them" — Zechariah is still enacting the parable. The prophecy has antagonised certain of his contemporaries, particularly the leaders of the people. Apparently they rejected the implications of his message, and now he demands his price.

"If not forbear" — He emphasised that he was no hireling!

"Thirty pieces of silver" — This was more grossly insulting than no pay at all. It was the price of a slave gored by an ox (Exod. 21:32), and was the price paid by the priests to Judas to betray the Lord (Matt. 27:3). Though grossly insulting and contemptuous of the labors of both the prophet and the Lord, it was appropriate to the circumstances, for both acted in the capacity of a slave to Yahweh. Christ is Yahweh's slave to perform His work (Isa. 42:1), and he was gored by the Israel ox. Note the comment of Psalm 22:12: "Many bulls have compassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round . . ." They gored him when they crucified him.

VERSE 13

"Cast it unto the potter" — Supply the elipsis: "Cast it down that it might go unto the potter." That this addition is required is shown by the subsequent action of the prophet: "I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of Yahweh." He cast them down in the Temple that the potter might have them, thus anticipating the very action of Judas. See Matt. 27:3-10. Notice that in this place Matthew attributes the prophecy to Jeremiah, not to Zechariah: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet . . ." Matthew's words are doubtless literally true. He was quoting a saying of Jeremiah not recorded in his prophecy but retained in memory by the Jews as an unwritten prophecy. This was not

unusual. Jude quotes the saying of Enoch in vv 14-15 of his epistle. a saying that is not recorded elsewhere, and in Acts 20:35 Paul quotes a saying of the Lord Jesus that is not recorded in any of the Gospels. Internal evidence indicates that Zechariah was greatly influenced by the writings of Jeremiah, and perhaps this "saying" of the earlier prophet is incorporated in the writings of Zechariah.

"A goodly price" — The prophet is using the language of irony before flinging the price down in the House of Yahweh.

VERSE 14

"I cut asunder mine other staff" — The prophet publicly performed the act to underline the significance of his prophecy. Both grace and fellowship were denied the nation when the prophecy enacted by Zechariah was fulfilled.

"Break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel" — The unity of the nation and its fellowship with Yahweh were destroyed by its rejection and crucifixion of the Good Shepherd. The nation was completely broken up as a result and scattered among all nations, and the semblance of unity that once existed, as well as the Temple which was the symbol to Israel of unity with God were completely overthrown.

THE WORTHLESS SHEPHERD

Vv. 15-17

VERSE 15

"Yahweh said unto me"—Zechariah now enacts another parable.

"The instruments"—This foolish shepherd has all the appearance and claims of the good shepherd.

"Foolish shepherd"—The word "foolish" in Hebrew, signifies "wicked" or "impious". This foolish or wicked shepherd relates to the false prophet of Revelation 16:13, the "wicked one" of 2 Thess. 2:3-8

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VERSE 16

"I will raise up" — God permitted the development of the Roman apostasy in order to test His true servants (see 2 Thess 2:11, 1 Cor 11:19, Joh 10:4-5, Rev 13:5-8) What God permits He is said to do

"A shepherd" — The papacy.

"Shall not visit those that be cut off" — He will not help those who are driven away from the flock and are in danger of wild beasts. He will not perform the functions of a good shepherd though he might claim to be such and have all the appearance of such.

"He shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces" — So rapacious will this hireling be that he shall consume everything that comes his way, leaving nothing remaining. The RSV renders, "tearing off even their hooves"

VERSE 17

"Woe" — The doom of this

system is announced not only by Zechariah, but by Paul (2 Thess. 2:8), and by the Revelator (Rev. Chps 17, 18)

"Idol shepherd" — The word "idol" in Hebrew signifies "good for nothing," "worthless" and is so rendered by the R.V. The shepherd is worthless, like the idols Rome worships. See Isa. 44:10.

"The sword shall be upon his arm" — The sword shall be wielded by the saints (Psalm 149:6-9, Rev. 19:15), and cutting off his arm they shall leave him powerless to fight. The arm of Rome is its secular power which shall be completely overthrown by the conquests of the saints. The "right eye" of Rome is its Ecclesiastical power, known as the Holy See. This is to be utterly darkened, so that Roman Catholicism in both its secular and ecclesiastical departments will be completely overthrown. With the foolish shepherd thus rendered powerless, the people will be converted to Christ.

Addendum to Chapter 11

In vv 7-11, the poor of the flock are referred to if the A.V. or the R.V. are followed. However, the Companion Bible, Rotherham, and the RSV following the Septuagint, join two Hebrew words together to form one, and make the word the sheep merchants' linking it with the word Canaanite in Zechariah 14:1

In our notes there, it will be seen that we identify the Canaanite with the spiritual merchants who have desecrated the things of Yahweh, and a similar usage of the word would be appropriate in the chapter before us. Thus Christ, as the good shepherd, ministered to the "flock destined to slaughter" in the face of the merchants (the spiritual merchants) who were only too ready to sell the flock that they might be made rich. In verse 11 they are represented as "watching" him, as he went about his shepherd duties, and verse 12 would be addressed to them.

When we come to Zechariah 14:21, however, the statement is made that "there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of Yahweh of hosts" The Canaanite was there when the Lord visited it during his ministry on earth, for the word 'Canaanite' signifies a trader, and is frequently used in the Bible for the spiritual merchants who are an abomination in the sight of Yahweh (Rev. 18:11-12). If the word "Canaanite" or "merchant" is adopted in Chapter 11 the prophecy is teaching that whereas the Lord had to minister in the sight of these spiritual merchants at his first advent, and indeed, found that they had converted the House of Yahweh into a den of thieves (Mark 11:17), they will not be tolerated at his second coming, when the glorious House of Prayer for all nations shall be established. The Canaanite will no longer be permitted either in the House

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of Yahweh, or outside of it, for his existence, as a spiritual merchantman will cease (Zech. 13:3-5).

Thus the alternative reading is very attractive, but there are one or two features that mitigate against it.

First of all, the reading is said to be doubtful, and only possible by manipulation of the Hebrew text. And even granted that, there remain difficulties. According to it, the Lord, as the good shepherd, tended the flock "FOR the sheep-merchants," which was hardly the case, and later on (v. 11), those same "sheep-merchants" or Canaanites, are said to "know" that it was the word of Yahweh. Now this was recognised by the "poor of the flock," but was it recognised by the shepherds and spiritual merchants of Christ's day? The Revised Version renders: "thus the poor of the flock that gave heed unto me knew that it was the word of Jehovah."

This, indeed, was the astounding revelation that came to the "poor of the flock." The death and resurrection of the Lord brought home to them as never before the truth of what he had proclaimed. One almost would believe that the Lord had Zechariah 11:11 in mind when he told his disciples: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20).

Both renditions are susceptible of remarkable and beautiful interpretations, but that presented in the A.V. and R.V. seems to bring out more completely the different groups involved: the flock, the buyers, the sellers, the false shepherds, the good shepherd, and the "poor of the flock" who, following the good shepherd, and "waiting upon him" or "watching him" (v. 11), alone came to know that the things happening before their eyes were the fulfilment of the word of Yahweh in truth.

CHAPTER 12

Israel to seek the Good Shepherd

THE COMING DAY OF YAHWEH

Chapter 12 commences a new prophecy that continues on to the end of Chapter 14. The theme of this long, extended prophecy is the Coming Day of Yahweh; a Day when Yuhweh will be vindicated by the outpouring of compelling judgments. See Ezek. 39:8. Isa. 2:10-22. Isa. 15:1-6. Zeph. 1:7. The Day of Yahweh is thus not the return of Christ, but His vindication in judgment. There have been similar days in the past (Isa. 13:1-6. Zeph. 1:7), as there will be in the future.

Notice the significant repetition⁸ of the phrase, "In that day" contained in this section of Zechariah's prophecy: Chapter 12:3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11. Chapter 13:1, 2, 4. Chapter 14:4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21. For this Day, Yahweh "waits". Isaiah declares: "Therefore will Yahweh wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you; for Yahweh is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him" (Isa. 30:18). In that Day, also, He will repair the breach made when Jewry rejected the Good Shepherd, and when the staves Beauty (Grace) and Bands (Unity) were severed. In that Day, also, Israel will learn that everything that has been done has been for the ultimate good of the nation — even its punishment. Ezekiel 14:22-23 declares: "Ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem . . . and they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings; and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord Yahweh."

As is appropriate, in these closing chapters of Zechariah's prophecy which deal with that Day, Yahweh is mentioned some 30 times, Jerusalem some 22 times, and the nations some 13 times. It is emphatically HIS Day. As he will dominate events, so His Name dominates the prophecy; it is the Day when Jerusalem shall be elevated to glory, thus constant reference is made to it; and it is the time when the nations will at last be humbled under His power, so they too are brought into the picture.

That Day will soon be revealed in the earth. It will be the time when the followers of the Lord will be glorified, so that every care should be taken in studying the wonderful events that will then take place in the earth.

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THE AUTHORITATIVE CHARACTER OF THE MESSAGE — Vv. 1

VERSE 1

"The burden" — Heb. "massah" = to lift up, heavy. To lift up the hand in threatening aspect, or a message freighted with weighty warnings, judgments or even promises (cp. Isa. 15:1, 17:1. Zech. 9:1).

"The word of Yahweh" — This word inevitably accomplishes the purpose of Yahweh when sent (Isa. 55:11).

"Which stretcheth forth the heavens, etc." — A common form of introduction (Isa. 44:24-28, 42:5-6. Dan. 4:35. Amos 4:11-13), indicating that God as Creator has the power to perform His purpose. His omnipotence revealed in natural creation demonstrates His ability to accomplish the redemption of Israel. See Psalm 147:1-5, Jer. 33:20-26. Heavens and earth are frequently used in Scripture for political order on earth, and the time is coming when "heaven" and "earth" in that sense (the administration and the political order of the people) will be as much Yahweh's creation as the literal heaven above and earth beneath (Psalm 19). Then, the political heavens and earth will reflect the glory of God as the literal heavens and earth did at the epoch of creation. Isaiah declares that God did not create the earth in vain, but that He has a purpose with creation (Isa. 45:18. See Num. 14:21).

"The spirit of man within him" — Heb. ruach. The spirit of God is all pervading (Ps. 139:7), and without it man could not live on earth (Job. 34:14). This spirit is here called the "spirit of man" because it is loaned to man for the duration of his life (Ecc. 12:7, Job 37:10. Psalm 104:30). This spirit is as necessary to life as is the breath of life and the blood that courses through the veins of man. It is

the cohesive force of all creation, and is thus styled as being "within man." See "Elpis Israel" pp. 34-35.

THE FUTURE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM — Vv. 2-4

VERSE 2

"Jerusalem a cup of trembling" — See margin. Cup of poison or of slumber. Criminals were given a cup of mixed wine to dull their senses before execution (Jesus rejected the cup offered him on the cross (Math. 27:33-34). Jerusalem will become such a cup. The nations will be hopelessly intoxicated with the thought of the prize, and will be led on to drink the cup of doom (Jer. 25:27-29. Psalm 75:8).

"Unto all the people" — This does not relate to A.D. 70 when only Rome besieged the city; it refers to the future siege of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1-2).

"When they shall be in the siege both against Judah and Jerusalem" — The R.V. renders: "And upon Judah shall it be in the siege against..." The nations will be intoxicated with the idea not only of taking Jerusalem, but destroying the Jews in the land. Thus the prophet predicted that Judah would be politically represented in the land in the last days, and would be in trouble. He also implied that a spirit of anti-semitism will dominate the latter-day invader (Ezek. 37:11-13, 38:10-12. Jer. 30:5-8. Deut. 4:30—R.V.).

VERSE 3 1

"A burdensome stone" — A stone so weighty that the combined efforts of all flesh to lift it only result in it falling back and crushing those who struggle with it. Thus the Jewish problem is beyond man's ability to solve.

VERSE 4

"Every horse with astonishment" — With "panic." The horse symbolises the war-machine, the armies of the invaders. Panic will sweep

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them outside the city of Jerusalem. See Ezek. 38:20-21. Zech. 14:13.)

"I will open Mine eyes"—Indicative of favor. See Ps. 80:1. Num. 6:23-27. Ps. 33:18, Ps. 34:15. Rom. 11:26. Contrast the closing of His eyes to Israel (Isa. 1:15, 8:17).

"Every horse of the people"—Plural, "peoples," i.e., the Gentiles. See note Zech. 11:10. Blind to the Divine purpose, they will blunder into irreparable trouble. See Isa. 30:28. Mic. 4:12.

JUDAH RALLIES AGAINST THE ENEMY—Vv. 5-6

VERSE 5

"The governors of Judah"—R.V. = "Chieftains." The leaders of Judah outside of besieged Jerusalem.

"In their heart"—With deep conviction (Mat. 12:34). They will witness the amazing overthrow of the Russian Gog, and will recognize this as Divine intervention. See Zeph. 3:16-17.

"The inhabitants of Jerusalem, etc."—See margin: "There is strength to me and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in Yahweh of hosts." The manifestation of Divine judgment against the warring hosts outside of Jerusalem will impress all Jews in the land of the reality of God. Whilst the Gentiles are struck with blindness (v. 4), Jewish eyes will be opened to the Truth. They will see the manifestation of Yahweh of Hosts (Armies) in the army of Christ and the saints (Rev. 19:14).

VERSE 6

"Like an hearth of fire among the wood"—R.V. "pan of fire." The Jewish forces in the land will complete the destruction of Gog after the initial judgment at the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. See Zech. 14:14. Judah shall fight at Jerusalem, destroying the remnant of the invading army as a pan of fire eats up the wood.

"They shall devour"—See Zech. 9:15. 14:14.

"The people"—Plural. The Gentiles. See note Zech. 11:10. They will overthrow the remaining Gentile armies after the destruction at Armageddon.

"Jerusalem inhabited again"—After the siege, for during that time, the Jews shall be driven from the city (Zech. 14:2).

ELEVATION OF JERUSALEM AND JUDAH—Vv. 7-8

VERSE 7

"He will save"—From Gog and from sins, which is an essential part of Christ's mission.

"Judah"—Judah is used in its national and not its tribal sense. Those Jews in the land are accounted as Judah, as they were in the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, even though representatives of all tribes were present. See Neh. 4:10, 16, 6:7, 17, 18. That all tribes were represented then is shown by the record of 1 Chron. 9:2-3. Ezra. 6:17.

"First"—Thus following the type of David, who first reigned over Judah in Hebron (2 Sam. 5:3. 2 Sam. 2:1-4), and later extended his rule over all Israel. His 40 years of warlike reign subdued Israel's enemies and paved the way for the peace and prosperity of Solomon's reign and the building of the Temple. This was typical of the work of the greater David and Solomon, who will be both man of war and man of peace; who will rule first over Judah, then over all Israel (Ezek. 37:22), then over all nations (Zech. 14:9), and will build the Temple of Yahweh. As in the days of David, forty years will be occupied in subduing the nations" (Mic. 7:15).

"The glory"—Glory is here used in the sense of prestige. The "house of David" referred to will not have greater prestige than other Jews of Jerusalem, for this

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glory will be taken from those who delight merely in fleshly descent, and given to the immortal rulers, who are truly the House of David as promised in 2 Sam. 7: 11 and Isaiah 55:3. God told David, "I will make thee an house," even though David then had posterity. He referred to those who would embrace David's hope, and emulate his faith, and would be the immortal associates of his Son in the age to come. This immortal house of David is referred to by Zechariah in v. 8. It is obvious from this verse, and succeeding ones, that at Christ's return the tribes will not only be restored, but some of the principal families of previous ages as well. But though some may be able to claim relationship with David, there will be no glorying in the flesh, they will not be able to assert themselves over other inhabitants of Jerusalem.

"Do not magnify themselves against Judah" — RSV renders: "May not be exalted over that of Judah." All will be humbled before Yahweh and His Divine family headed by the Lord Jesus. There will be no exaltation of flesh. 1 Cor. 1:29.

VERSE 8

"He that is feeble" — Note the margin. Made feeble through fear. See Jer. 30:6 where the prophet shows that the "time of Jacob's trouble" will cause fear to be manifested by the people.

"As David" — Suddenly energised with strength for battle and faith in Yahweh, even as David was when he fought with Goliath. They will be thus changed because they will realise that Yahweh is with them in the person of His son (Zech. 9:14. Mic. 7:16). The promised blessing of Moses will then be fulfilled (Lev. 26:7-9. Deut. 32:30).

"The house of David shall be as God" — The immortal house of David (2 Sam. 7:16. Isa. 55:3. 1 Pet. 2:5) will be as the Elohim, the angels (see Luke 20:36). The word Elohim, here translated God, is rendered "angels" in Psalm 8: 5, a translation endorsed by Paul's use of the word in Hebrews 2:7. Clothed upon with divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) manifesting the glory of God (Rom. 5:2), and bearing His name (Rev. 3:12), they will be seen as a new race of angelic beings.

"As the angel of Yahweh before them" — In the past the affairs of Israel were placed in the care of angels, chief of whom, as far as this authority over the nation was concerned, was Michael (see Exod. 23:20. Josh. 5:14 — mg. Dan. 10:21). But the work of the angels will be taken over by the glorified followers of the Lord in the coming age (Heb. 2:5). In leading the nation to war, and later ruling them in peace, the saints will be "as the angel of Yahweh before them," or in their sight (Zech. 9:14).

THE DOOM OF JUDAH'S ENEMIES — V. 9

VERSE 9

"I will seek to destroy" — All Judah's enemies will be sought out. Not satisfied with defence, the divine army, using also the Jewish people, will go into attack to "rebuke strong nations afar off" (Isa. 2:4. Zech. 9:13. Psalm 149). Those who absolutely refuse to submit will be destroyed (Isa. 60:12). In the verse before us, however, the word "destroy" is the Hebrew shamed and signifies "to desolate," "pluck down," etc. It is rendered "overthrow" in Prov. 14: 11. All the nations that come against Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1) will be overthrown and humbled, but not all will be completely destroyed.

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JUDAH IS HUMBLED AND CAUSED TO MOURN — Vv. 10-14

VERSE 10

"I will pour upon"—Here is a contrast to the "destroying" of the previous verse. Whilst those who come against Jerusalem are humiliated, Judah will be elevated. See Ezek. 39:29, 36:25-29, Jer. 31:31-34. As the Jews experience the Divine goodness, and come to recognise their past blindness and folly they are humbled to the dust. The revelation thus granted them will call for a national day of humiliation. They will recognise their guilt, and that the land has been defiled by blood (Num. 35:33). This will require some formal ceremony of expiation, such as is suggested by the requirements of the Law in connection with an unsolved murder (Deut. 21:1, 5) and the plea that follows (v. 7). Some such ceremony seems suggested by the remaining verses of this chapter.

"The house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem"—These are taken as representing the whole nation, both high and low.

"The spirit of grace"—Which was rejected when the staff "Beauty" was cut asunder. It will be brought home to the Jewish people by the revelation of Truth in regard to the Lord Jesus (Ezek. 36:26) which will cause them to "sorrow for the burden of the king of princes" (Hos. 8:10), particularly when they learn of Yahweh's favor and how it was rejected in the past.

"Of applications"—The manifestation of Divine Grace will cause them to seek the other Staff—Bands, or fellowship with God, and unity with one another.

"Look upon"—R.V. = "Look unto . . ." Same verb as in Num. 21:9. They will look unto him for help.

"Me"—Notice how the first person pronoun (vv. 2, 3, 4, 6, 9,

10) is intermixed with the third person pronoun (vv. 4, 5, 7, 8) throughout this chapter. The Lord Jesus Christ is Yahweh in manifestation (see Matt. 10:40, John 13:20, 5:23). Thus, when the Jews rejected him they rejected Yahweh; when they crucified him, they crucified Yahweh, for he was "God with us" (Math. 1:23) "God manifest in flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). The terrible revelation that the nation has been guilty of such a sin as that, will come home to the Jewish people with stunning force, bringing about the abject mourning predicted in this chapter; a mourning that will humble every Jew to the dust, and make him pliable to the Divine guidance. See Eureka vol. 1, pp. 100-105 for outstanding comments on this theme.

A NATIONAL DAY OF REPEN- TANCE AND MOURNING

— Vv. 11-14

VERSE 11

"A great mourning"—Like the death-wail in Egypt (Exod. 11:6). This will arise because the Jewish nation will recognise its folly at last. It will realise that all the pain and persecution of the past could have been avoided if they had sought God in truth. They will mourn their lost opportunities as they recognise their past blindness. Such mourning will not be limited to Israel, but will be the lot of all nations (Matt. 24:30). They will see the Son of Man with the clouds of heaven—surrounded by his glorified followers, then made his associates in the ruling of the nations. (Read the excellent comments of Brother Thomas in Eureka vol. 1, pp. 148-150.)

"The mourning of Hadadrimmon"—This was the mourning for Josiah. A specific day was set aside for it, and a special service was conducted, a service in which Jeremiah participated (2 Chron. 35:24-26). This suggests that there

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will be a specific ceremony of mourning and repentance in the future, when Israel will humble itself before Christ and seek Divine help for its rehabilitation. A service of induction back into the good Olive tree for the broken-off branches is indicated in Romans Chp. 11 and Ezekiel Chp. 43. See also Ezek. 16:60-61.

VERSE 12

"The land shall mourn" — Though the ceremony of national mourning will take place in Jerusalem, all Israel will participate, so that the whole nation will be humbled.

"Every family apart" — Each family will be separated to itself so as to permit the greatest heart-searching, and manifestation of

deepest contrition.

VERSE 14

"All the families that remain" — The identity of families as well as tribes will be revealed in the day that Yahweh restores the Tabernacle of David as in the days of old (Amos 9:11. Ezek. 48). The royal house (David and Nathan) and priestly tribe (Levi and Shimei) will lead the national repentance. The four names mentioned in v. 12 in conjunction form a sentence: The Beloved (David), he has given (Nathan), to be joined (Levi), to the famous (Shimei). These names thus spell out the story of Israel's restoration. As the beloved nation the people will be given to be joined to him who will then be famous in all the earth.

CHAPTER 13

The Cleansing of Israel

Lamentation and repentance pave the way for forgiveness and cleansing which now takes place.

A FOUNTAIN FOR CLEANSING — V. 1

VERSE 1

"Opened to the house of David"
— As part of the rebuilding of the Tabernacle of David as in the days of old (Amos 9.11).

"To the inhabitants of Jerusalem" — For they are representative of the whole nation. See Zech. 8:8. 2:7. All Jews in the land "dwell in Jerusalem" in a spiritual sense.

"A fountain for uncleanness" — Under the Law of Moses, contact with death was accounted as defiling, and when it occurred, an elaborate ceremony of cleansing was prescribed. This included sprinkling the person or thing accounted unclean with running water (Num. 19.17-18) which figuratively stands for the cleansing doctrine of Truth (John 15:3. Psalm 119:9). A figurative fountain of living water was opened at the first advent of Jesus as he revealed when speaking with the woman of Samaria at the pool (John 4:14). The Jews, however, in rejecting the Lord, closed up that fountain as regards themselves, refusing to "submit to the righteousness of God" (Rom 10:3). When it is revealed, at the second advent, that they are guilty of the blood of Jesus, they will recognize the need of seeking forgiveness. The doctrine of Christ (the fountain of living water) will provide the means, and this will be opened at Jerusalem for all who like to avail themselves of its cleansing power. Paul taught, "They also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again" (Rom. 11.23). The foun-

tain will provide them with knowledge and understanding, and on a basis of faith they will be restored back into the good Olive tree.

FALSE TEACHERS DESTROYED — V. 2-5

VERSE 2

"I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land" — "Name" is synonymous with power (cp. Acts 3:6), so that the power of idolatry will be cut off. But idolatry is not limited to paganism, for Paul teaches that "covetousness is as idolatry" (Col. 3:5). All such worship of materialism or self will be destroyed. Ezekiel shows how the facts of past idolatry will be brought home to the nation (Ezek. 43:7—the "carcasses of their kings" signifies the idolatry of the kings) in order that it might be repudiated as part of the terms of the new covenant by which they will be restored to favor.

"The prophets" — All false teachers will be destroyed, including "the false prophet" (Rev. 16.13).

"The unclean spirit" — Or false teaching. Spirit is frequently used for teaching (see John 6:63. 1 John 5.6. Eph. 6:17. Ezek. 36:26) including false teaching (1 John 4.1-3). Spirit is the impulse, which moves a person consequent upon belief whether it be the "spirit of uncleanness" or "the spirit of supplications" (Zech. 12:10). So an end will be brought to false teaching, to the "unclean spirit."

VERSE 3

"Prophesy" — This does not necessarily mean to foretell events, but includes the idea of teaching and preaching in general (1

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Cor. 14:3). False teaching is the idea expressed.

"His father and mother that begat him shall thrust him through" — There will be such revulsion against error in the Day when the Law shall go forth from Zion, and people everywhere will be seeking God in truth (Isa. 2: 2-4), that a person's closest relations shall be the first to accuse and execute a false teacher. The principle laid down in the Law will thus be restored (Deut. 13:6-9).

In "Eureka," Brother Thomas states: "If the ecclesiastics were to be dealt with upon this principle at the present time, not a soul of them would escape death on the spot; for it is their craft to 'speak lies in the name of Yahweh,' and to wear peculiar garments for professional deceit. The world that now fawns upon and flatters their vanity, and glorifies their foolishness, will then curse their memorial. In that day of affliction to the Apostasy, it is testified that 'the Gentiles shall come unto Yahweh from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanities, and things wherein there is no profit' (Jer. 16:19). This is what they will say of Presbyterianism, Lutherism, Methodism... all false, vain and unprofitable. The fall will be the ruin of the clerical demoniacs, who, like Othello, will then find 'their occupation gone.' Then 'they will weep and mourn; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more' (Rev. 18: 11). Place, power, position, and wealth will all be dissipated; and the saints who will have subdued them, will take possession of all their goods, and 'send them empty away.' Then, woe betide the clergy-

man or rabbi, who shall attempt to dole out his old foolishness to the people; for..." (see Zech. 13:3-4).

VERSE 4

"The prophets shall be ashamed" — The manifestation of Divine glory and truth in the person of the Lord Jesus will cause all false prophets to be ashamed of their error. See Zech. 12:10, and compare with Ezek. 43:11. Those so ashamed will be forgiven.

"A rough garment to deceive" — See margin. "A garment of hair," (Heb. addereth, same as 2 Kg. 2:8 and Josh. 7:21, 24) that is, a distinctive garment such as prophets sometimes wore (2 Kings 1:8, 2:13). The clergy wear a distinctive garment today.

VERSE 5

"He" — A suspected false prophet being accused of propounding error will have to repudiate any such leanings, and give token of his true occupation.

"I am an husbandman" — A tiller of the ground, an occupation incompatible with the duties of a prophet as Elijah revealed to Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21). Such a declaration forms part of the defence of the suspected false prophet.

"For man taught me to keep cattle from my youth" — The R.V. renders: "For I have been made a bondman from my youth." A suspected false prophet in his defence will have to give conclusive proof that the accusation is wrong. From youth he has been in a state of bondage which makes false propheting impossible. Upon some such line will a defence be stated in repudiation of the accusation that he is a false prophet.

CHRIST'S IDENTITY REVEALED — V. 6

False teaching will be eradicated from Israel by the revelation of the identity of the King. As Thomas was convinced by seeing the wounds in the hands of the Lord (John 20:27), so Israel will likewise be convinced of truth by the same means. This verse is placed

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in this position to show the means by which false teaching will be destroyed. It is therefore in its proper context.

VERSE 6

"One shall say"—As representing all Israel. The manifestation of Christ as the victor of Armageddon will be followed by some such question on the part of those who will be caused to look upon him as a remarkable Deliverer (Rom. 11:26).

"Unto him"—To the main subject of this prophecy—the smitten King.

"What are these wounds?"—This was the evidence that convinced Thomas (John 20:27).

"In the house of my friends"—He does not say that he was wounded by his friends, for that would be incorrect, but in the "house of his friends." They were not friends who pierced him. See Psalm 22:16. Zech. 11:4, 7, 10-14).

WHY HE WAS WOUNDED

—Vv. 7

VERSE 7

"Awake, O sword"—The explanation of the previous verse is continued. It is now explained why he was wounded. It is revealed that his death was not mere murder, and the Jews would not have succeeded against him but that his death was Divinely required (John 11:51-52. Acts 2:23, 4:28. Phil. 2:8). This statement is cited in Math. 26:31.

"Against my shepherd"—Christ is the Good Shepherd, and as he himself declared, he received a commandment from the Father to lay down his life in order that he might take it up again (John 10:18). This was necessary in order to effectively act the part of the good shepherd. A dead shepherd is useless to the flock, but Christ lay down his life, with the express objective of receiving life with greater power once again. This he clearly explains in the

parable of the Good Shepherd. The word "that" in the statement: "I lay down my life that I may take it up again," is the Greek *hina* and signifies, "to the end that" with emphasis on purpose, design, and result (Bullinger). The curiosity of Jews having been aroused concerning the wounds in the hands of the Lord, opportunity will be then taken to explain the real significance of such piercing.

"The man"—Heb. *geber*. It signifies "mighty man," man of war. Christ firstly gained a victory in enduring the trial which took him to the cross, and at the time of the fulfilment of this prophecy he will furthermore have manifested himself as mighty in battle.

"My fellow"—Heb. *hamith*, "to associate," "a kindred, comrade, or relation." The terms Father and Son illustrate the relationship. Both co-operated with the other (John 10:30, 16:32. 2 Cor. 5:19) to make the victory possible. The term "fellow" implies Divine parentage, and indicates that God was manifest in the flesh for the purpose of revealing Himself as a Redeemer or near-kinsman as the term indicates. To save mankind, Yahweh had to reveal Himself as such, and He did so through the Lord Jesus.

"Smite"—The Hebrew word is derived from the same root as the word for "wound." These words are cited in Mark 14:27.

"The sheep shall be scattered"—This relates to the disciples of the Lord. They, as the sheep (not goats) of the flock were scattered in consequence upon the shepherd being smitten (Math. 26:36).

"I will turn mine hand upon the little ones"—See Matt. 18:10. This indicates a Divine overshadowing of the followers of the Lord, even in affliction. See Isa. 1:25. Math. 26:32.

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HOW ISRAEL WILL BE HUMBLD — Vv. 8-9

The Lord declared that Israel will not see him until the people say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Matt. 23: 39). The great tribulation that shall overtake the nation in the latter days will accomplish this. It will humble Israel, and cause the nation to seek the intervention and help of God, thus preparing them to acceptably receive the Lord. See Jer. 30:7.

VERSE 8

"And it shall come to pass" — As Yahweh overlooks spiritual Israel for good, so does He also work on behalf of the nation (Amos. 9:9).

"Two parts therein shall be cut off and die" — This shall inaugurate the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). When Russia sweeps down throughout the land, the Jews will be inexorably swept aside. In their desperation, they will attempt to resist, but this will only result in greater devastation and bloodshed. Two-thirds of the people will thus be cut off and die. The remainder will be spared to glorify God, for they will constitute the true grain (Amos 9:9). The Gentiles will be devastated just as sorely as Israel, if not more so. See Daniel 12:1. Jer. 25:29.

VERSE 9

"I will refine them as silver" — The metal of redemption. See note on Zech. 6:11. They will be disciplined, purified and finally redeemed when embracing the Truth in Christ Jesus.

"As gold" — The symbol of faith. See note on Zech. 6:11. On a basis of faith they will be again engrafted into the good Olive tree.

"They shall call" — They shall be spiritually renewed, and thus turn to God in Truth (see Ezek. 6: 9-10. Hos. 8:10). "Call unto me and I will answer thee" saith Yahweh (Jer. 33:3). This attitude He rewards abundantly (vv. 6-8).

"On My name" — Jews hesitate to use the Divine Name today, but they "profane" it nonetheless as Ezek. 36:20-23 shows. In the future age they will use it with understanding, and rejoice in its significance. It will become their family name (Ps. 68:3).

"It is My people" — Turning to God in truth and righteousness, He will acknowledge them as His people. See Jer. 32:38. Ezek. 37: 23-28. Hos. 1:9-10. Isa. 59:20-21. Rom. 11:26. They will be incorporated into His family, and will bear His name as before (Num. 6:27).

CHAPTER 14

The Glorious Consummation

The final vision commences with a dark picture of war, siege, spoil, violence and bloodshed, but it concludes with a glorious vista of triumph and victory as Yahweh's power is recognized throughout the earth. A remarkable victory outside Jerusalem, tremendous upheavals of nature, a transformed world unified by a common rule, a common worship, a common ideal, provide the foundation of the glorious millennial reign of Christ. Jerusalem, in which is established a more glorious Temple than that of Zerubbabel, becomes the centre of all this. To it the nations ascend in worship, and there they see a dedicated city, wholly given over to Yahweh, so that HOLINESS TO YAHWEH (the caption on the plate of gold worn by the high priest — Exod. 28:36) is stamped on all its institutions, whilst from its precincts the Canaanite is excluded. In this glorious vision of the future, Zechariah was shown the ultimate result of all his labors at that time. Though the Temple the Jews were then building would be overthrown; though the nation then in the making would be again scattered, though the enemy would temporarily triumph, they could labor on in hope, in the sure and certain conviction that Yahweh's purpose will ultimately be realized and His glory will flood the earth as the waters cover the sea. The glorious consummation revealed in this last chapter of Zechariah's prophecy is nothing less than the fulfilment of the gospel preached to faithful Abraham: "All nations shall be blessed" (Gal 3:8).

LAST GENTILE TRIUMPH OVER JERUSALEM — Vv. 1-3

VERSE 1.

"Thy spoil shall be divided" — Jerusalem will fall to the Russian onslaught. This chapter should be studied in conjunction with Ezekiel 38, Daniel 11:40-45, Joel 3, Revelation 16:16. In Zechariah 9:8, the prophet was shown that the army of the latter days that shall encamp against Jerusalem will be "returning" from an attack on Egypt, and his words there show undoubtedly that Daniel 11:40-45 relate to that time. The King of the North shall sweep down in a lightning attack on Egypt which shall not escape, but then, due to "tidings out of the east and north," he will make his way up to Jerusalem to besiege the city. These tidings out

of the east and north could well be the presence of Christ at Sinai (east of Egypt), and an attempt by the Western powers to consolidate their position in Israel, at Jerusalem, and so cut off the communications of the Russian Gog. His bold and confident drive on Jerusalem will bring the armies of all nations there to battle. Initial success will be to Russia. Jerusalem will fall, and the spoil of the city will be divided among its conquerors, whilst the Jews will be taken into captivity or driven from the city (see Zech. 12:6). At this apex of Russian success, however, Divine intervention will snatch away the fruits of victory.

VERSE 2

"For I will gather" — Yahweh will bring all nations to Jerusalem

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to judgment (Zeph. 3:8). The city which witnessed the humiliation of the Lord at the hands of Jews and Gentiles, will see the manifestation of His glory (Zech. 12:9. Ps. 76:1-3, 12). Such a crisis is necessary in order to humble the Jewish people preparatory to elevating the nation. See Ezek. 39: 25-26, 14:23. Deut. 4:30.

"Half of the city shall go forth into captivity"—An attack is made on the city of Jerusalem, and half of it is destroyed; it is strongly defended, so that half of it also remains. The city, today, is divided into two parts: the old section being in the hands of the Arabs, and the modern section being occupied by the Jews. The Russian attack will be against the city as a whole, and evidently there will be hand to hand fighting as fierce attempts will be made to defend it. The fall of Jerusalem will be an element of despair to Jews in this their "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:5-7), a time of trouble that will involve all nations (Dan. 12:1. Jer. 25:29-33).

VERSE 3

"Then"—At a time when complete despair shall sweep Israel, when all shall seem lost, and the enemy appears brutally triumphant.

"Yahweh"—As a "Man of War" to repeat the victory experienced by Moses over Pharaoh (Exod. 15:3). He will manifest Himself in the multitudinous Christ.

"Go forth"—From his place of hiding at Sinai. Isaiah 26:21 declares, "Behold, Yahweh cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." See Deut. 33:1-3. Hab. 3:1-2. Yahweh is represented as "going forth" before the hosts of Israel in the past (Jud. 4:14. 2 Sam. 5:24. 1 Chron. 14:15). He went forth as their Commander. Now He does so in the person of His Son (Isa. 55:4. Hab. 3:13. Rev. 19:11-16).

"As when He fought"—Once again the earth will witness manifestations of Divine power as it did in ages past. The silence of centuries will be broken as the roar of Judah's lion is heard (Isa. 42:14. 17:12-14). In the past, Yahweh manifested Himself belligerently through His heavenly host (Exod. 23:20. Josh. 5:14. 10:14. 23:3. Jud. 4:15). In the future, He will do so through the multitudinous Christ, then clothed upon with Divine nature, made equal unto the angels (see Isa. 9:7). The Name of this army of the future is Yahweh of hosts, or He Who will be (manifested in) an army.

TREMENDOUS EARTHQUAKE

—Vr. 4-5

VERSE 4

"His feet"—Yahweh's "feet." The Scriptures make reference to Yahweh's "hand" and "arms" (Isa. 40:10. 52:7, 10). "eyes" (Zech. 4:10), "name" (Isa. 30:27), and "feet." The name of Yahweh will be named upon all who "overcome" (Rev. 3:12), and they will then comprise one united Body (John 17:21) working in complete co-operation and harmony, each part contributing to the work of the whole (Eph. 4:16), and all subject to the Head, even Christ. Each part of the Body will apparently be given different duties to perform. Some will be sent to pour out the judgments of God in war, others will be given duties of a different nature. Here the "feet" of the multitudinous Christ or Yahweh are seen standing on the Mount of Olives, having been sent forth to destroy the nations gathered to battle. Whilst the "feet" are thus engaged, the "eyes," and "arms," etc., may well be occupied in other duties elsewhere.

"The Mount of Olives"—The central eminence of a mile long line of limestone hills. It rises almost 200 feet above Mt. Zion, but is to be ultimately overshadowed by it (Isa. 2:2).

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"On the east" — Here the glory left Jerusalem (Ezek. 11:23. Acts 1:12), and from here it is to return (Ezek. 43:1-2).

"The Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst, and half shall remove" — Terrific seismographic upheavals will tear the mount from its foundations, causing fear and panic throughout the assembled armies (Ezek. 38:19. Isa. 30:25. Isa. 2:19. Joel 3:16). A vast valley will be formed where now the line of hills exist. The earthquake will violently alter the contour of the whole land, as Zechariah goes on to reveal.

VERSE 5

"And ye shall flee" — The Jews shall flee, both from the enemy and from the severity of the earthquake.

"To the valley of the mountains" — Eliminate "to" which is in italics to indicate that it is not in the original. The Jews will not flee "to" the valley formed by the earthquake, but they shall flee from it, they shall "flee the valley."

"Unto Azal" — See margin. This word is from a Hebrew root signifying "to separate." The margin indicates that the valley spreading from the east shall extend to the place separated. This will be Jerusalem. Scientists say that Jerusalem is surrounded by four faults that divide or separate it from the rest of the country round about. The earthquake will apparently divide Olivet and form a large depression throughout the land adjacent to Jerusalem (see v. 10). Jerusalem, itself, however, will not be depressed, but rather elevated. The faults surrounding Jerusalem as traced by scientists indicate how this may be done. Mt. Zion will then become "beautiful for elevation" (Ps. 48:2—Heb. text), and as the place separated, will constitute the Most Holy (Ps. 24:3-4. Ezek. 43:12).

"Like as ye fled from before the

earthquake in the days of King Uzziah" — There is only incidental reference to this earthquake (Amos 1:2. Isa. 5:25, etc.). The narrative of 2 Chron. 26:15, however, states that Uzziah was "marvellously helped, till he was strong." It could be that this is a reference to the earthquake by which he was helped against his enemies. The "great earthquake" of the future, will not only alter the contour of the Land of Promise as indicated in Zechariah 14, but will set off a chain of earth tremors throughout the globe that will cause fear and consternation in all parts of the world, and will plunge Rome into the abyss (Rev. 18:21, 8:21).

"The Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee" — Yahweh my Elohim indicates Yahweh manifested in a multitude, even the multitudinous Christ. The character of the people comprising this host is revealed in the word "saints." They will comprise a body of people separated from the world, and dedicated to Yahweh, the honored and glorified members of those whom the Gospel has separated "out of the Gentiles, a people for His name (Acts 15:14).

YAHWEH'S OWN DAY—Vv. 6-7 VERSE 7

"One day known to Yahweh" — This is His day, the time when He will be vindicated before all flesh, and His purpose in creation will be partially consummated (it will not be completely fulfilled until the end of the thousand years' reign of Christ — 1 Cor. 15:28). Throughout the world Yahweh will be honored and glorified. Dr. Thomas translates these verses: "And it shall be in that day there shall be no brightness, the splendid ones drawing in. And it shall be one day that shall be known to Yahweh, neither day nor night, but it shall be at the time of evening there shall be brightness." The R.V. supports this by rendering it as "the bright ones shall contract themselves." The "bright ones" are

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the glorified followers of the Lord. They will be then "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36), and like them able to shine forth in glory as the angels did at the sepulchre of the Lord (Mat. 28:3), or "contract" themselves as they did when they appeared unto Abraham as men (Gen. 18). The glorified followers of the Lord shall shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of the Father (Matt. 13:43), but will also be able to restrain that glory when necessary.

The Day of Yahweh referred to here is the millennial "day" of one thousand years (2 Pet. 3:8, Rev. 20:4) which will not be an epoch of "day and night," but of constant shining forth of the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4), whose glory shall never fade.

"At evening time it shall be light" — The shining forth of brightness, as far as the "splendid ones" are concerned will be seen at "evening time," that is, at the beginning of this epoch of one thousand years. The "evening" is at the beginning because a Bible day commences with the evening: "the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. 1:5).

At this "evening time" therefore, the saints shall shine forth in fulness, of glory, though prior to that (when they are subduing the nations), they will "contract themselves." Bible prophecy indicates that a Jubilee period of about 50 years will elapse between the return of Christ and the beginning of the millenium, or thousand years of peace (Rev. 20:6). This will be a period of Judgment, first in relation to the household (1 Pet. 4:17), and then, by the hands of the saints, in relation to the world at large (Psalm 149:7-9). During this epoch, the Kingdom of God will be established as a "stone" to grow into a mountain filling the whole earth (Dan. 2:35). During this time, also, the Millennial Temple will be built (Isa. 60:10), and Israel restored in its fulness (Mic. 7:15). Then will

follow the "evening," or beginning of the Millenium when the Lord Jesus and his glorified followers will enter the completed Temple at a ceremony of inauguration (Ezek. 43:1-2), filling it with glory. Until then, the saints will "restrain themselves" as far as the shining forth of glory is concerned, and will appear as normal humans, as the angels did to Abraham, Lot, or the inhabitants of Sodom. But with the judgments over, all such restraint will be unnecessary, and their full glory will be seen. Ezekiel describes how the glory shall come from the way of the east and fill the Temple at its inaugural ceremony (Ezek. 43:4).

LIVING WATERS HEAL THE DESERT — V. 8

VERSE 8

"Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem" — In previous ages a stream of water issued from Jerusalem to feed the Pool of Siloam. The earthquake will open up new springs throughout the Land (Isa. 43:20), including Mt. Zion where a tremendous river of water shall gush forth, which, flowing east, will heal the waters of the Dead Sea. Ezekiel gives a graphic account of this (Ezek. 47:1-12), whilst other prophets also refer to it (Joel 3:18, Ps. 46:4, Isa. 30:25, 33:21, 41:18, 43:19-20). Ezekiel declares that this stream of water shall flow down the southern side of the elevated Mount Zion, to emerge from underground out of the northern and southern entrances of the Temple. These waters will therefore originate from under the altar on the top of Zion (Ezek. 43:12-16), and will flow out of the Temple eastward towards the Dead Sea, whose waters will be healed (Ezek. 47:8). This is symbolic also of the Divine purpose. The altar is figurative of Christ (Heb. 13:10), and from him shall gush forth a stream of living water consisting of the teaching and laws he shall issue forth for the education and control of mankind (John 4:10-11. John

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7:37. See also Jer. 2:13. 17:13. Isa. 2:2-4, and this shall have the effect of healing the nations, who are figuratively a "sea of death" (Isa. 57:20).

"Half of them toward the former sea and half of them toward the hinder sea" — The "former" sea is the Dead Sea (see margin), the "hinder" sea is the Mediterranean. The water that will issue forth from Zion will be divided into two streams (Ezek. 47:1-2, 9 margin), both of which first flow eastward (Joel 3:18). One pours its waters into the Dead Sea so that it is healed (Ezek. 47:8), the other apparently flows east and then north-west to finally empty its waters into the Mediterranean. The present Jordan Valley (greatly changed by the earthquake) will possibly form into a great inland lake of fresh water.

"In summer and in winter shall it be" — These waters will not be dependent upon rain, but will be fed by the spring that shall gush forth from Mount Zion.

UNIVERSAL MONARCH — V.9

VERSE 9

"And Yahweh shall be king over all the earth" — See Ezek. 37:27-28. Psalm 2:5-6. 72:8-11. Isa. 2:4. Isa. 54:5. Zech. 4:14. 6:5. The proclamation that Yahweh reigns on earth as universal Monarch in the person of His Son will be made in the Temple at its inaugural service (Ezek. 43:7).

"There shall be one Yahweh and His name one" — The R.V. renders: "Yahweh shall be one and His name one." In that day Yahweh will be manifested in a vast multitude of glorified ones who will bear His name (Rev. 3:12), His nature (2 Pet. 1:4), and His glory (Rom. 5:2). Though numbering ten thousand times ten thousand (Dan. 7) they will comprise one Family, upon which will be named the name of Yahweh (Isa. 30:27). As the king-priests of the Age to come (Rev. 5:9-10) they

will be spread throughout the world (Mal. 1:11), and yet they shall comprise a unit, being "one" with God and His Son (John 17:21). This unity in multiplicity is what Zechariah is expressing: a great number bound together as one: the fulfilment of the purpose of the Gospel (see John 17:17-23).

THE EXALTATION OF JERUSALEM — Vv. 10-11

VERSE 10

"All the land shall be turned as a plain" — The effects of the tremendous earthquake will be widespread, and will completely change the contour of the Land. The R.V. renders this: "The land shall be made like the Arabah." The Arabah is the present depression of land in the Jordan valley, and this statement declares that all the land south of Jerusalem shall be changed from its present hilly state to form a vast depression or plain. This will accentuate the position and height of Jerusalem which will appear greatly elevated in consequence. The natural "faults" surrounding Jerusalem, referred to above (v. 5), will permit this to happen without the city itself being dragged down with the plain.

"From Geba" — Geba was in the territory of Benjamin, 6 miles north of Jerusalem.

"To Rimmon" — Rimmon was about 33 miles south-west of Jerusalem, situated on the southern border of Judah (Josh. 15:21, 32). The territory thus defined is that which is set apart for Divine use (Zech. 2:12), and styled by Ezekiel the "holy oblation" (Ezek. 48:9-12), or the territory set aside for Divine worship in the Age to come. The city Yahweh Shammah (Ezek. 48:35), south of Jerusalem, which will accommodate worshippers converging on to Jerusalem to visit the Temple, will be set up within this territory.

"It shall be lifted up" — Mount Zion itself will be elevated, to

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dominate the whole country (Ps. 68:15-16), calling the people to worship (Deut. 33:19).

"Inhabited in her place"—Notice the margin: "Shall abide in her place." Lit. in her "underparts." The tremendous earthquake will affect the rest of the countryside, but due to the natural faults underneath Jerusalem, Mount Zion itself will not be shifted out of place by the earthquake. See note V. 5 Ps. 125:1.

"From Benjamin's gate", etc.— See Jer. 31:38-40. The new city to be built will be a Temple-city, built "to Yahweh" (Jer. 31:38). It will extend from the tower of Hananeel which was on the north-eastern corner, to the hill Gareb which cannot be identified, to compass about to Gosh, which can be identified with Golgotha. The whole of the Valley of Hinnom shall be incorporated in this new Temple-city (Jer. 31:40) as well as the Kedron, all being "holy unto Yahweh." The borders of the new boundaries of the city defined by Jeremiah and Zechariah exceed those of any previous city built on the site.

VERSE 11

"And men shall dwell in it" — Ezekiel describes how that both mortal and immortal priests will be found attending to the service of it.

"There shall be no more utter destruction" — Lit. "a curse." Its status shall be completely changed in that regard. It will be a blessing not a curse (Zech. 8:13).

ISRAEL'S ENEMIES OVERTHROWN — Vv. 12-15

VERSE 12

"Yahweh will smite all the people" — Lit. "peoples" or Gentiles. See Psalm 110:5-6. Isa. 34. Isa. 66:15-16. Mic. 4:11-13. The manifestation of Divine majesty will be comparable to the effect of nuclear power. See 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

"Their flesh" — The invasion of Israel on the part of the confederated Gentile powers was a manifestation of fleshly power, and now flesh is humbled before the majesty of heaven.

"Their eyes" — These had "gloated" on Zion, and are now suitably punished. (See Mic. 4:11).

"Their tongue" — They had spoken blasphemous words against the city and its king, but are now silenced forever. Thus appropriate judgments are poured out upon all forms of rebelliousness.

VERSE 13

"A great tumult" — Heb. Mehumah: "confusion", or "panic". The manifestation of Christ in power, the tremendous upheavals of nature, will cause this. See Ezek. 38:21. As a result, the confederated, Gentile forces will turn their weapons one against another.

VERSE 14

"And Judah also shall fight" — The remnant that remains (Zech. 13:9) will attack the enemy in possession of the city.

"At Jerusalem" — The Septuagint render "in," some translate "for," the RSV has "against." All are correct. The Jews will fight for and in the city, and against the enemy who will have taken possession of it (v. 2).

"Gold, silver, etc."—The wealth of the Gentiles will flow towards Jerusalem to glorify the Temple. See Isa. 60:9. Hag. 2:8-9.

MILLENNIAL WORSHIP

Vv. 16-19

VERSE 16

"Every one that is left of all the nations" — This does not mean every individual, but every one of the nations that are left. This is shown by the context where the "family of Egypt," etc., is referred to. There will be various forms of service in the Age to come. Some

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will be voluntary, as is indicated in Zechariah 8:20-23; others will be compulsory, like that described in the verse before us. Doubtless different representatives will be sent up each year, so that gradually all will have the opportunity of ascending for worship (Isa. 2:2-4. Isa. 66:23). Some nations, however, will not survive the judgments to find a place in the Kingdom (Isa. 60:12).

"To keep the Feast of Tabernacles" — This was the Feast of Ingathering or Harvest (Lev. 23:33-44. Deut. 16:13-15) when the people "rejoiced before Yahweh" (Lev. 23:40), in full realisation of Divine blessing as seen in the harvest. It was celebrated by Israelites dwelling in booths, and in Revelation 7:9, it is identified with the millenium.

The Feast originally celebrated the joy of deliverance after the anxiety of the Passover period (Lev. 23:43), and prophetically expressed the same principle for the future. At that time, invitation will be extended to all nations remaining after the Divine judgments have been poured out, to associate together in such worship (Isa. 45:20-22). For that purpose they will ascend to Zion where the King in his beauty will preside (Isa. 33:17), that they may worship at Yahweh's footstool (Ezek. 43:7).

Under the Mosaic order, the time of keeping the Feast was governed by the harvest of the Land (Lev. 23:39), and this could well remain a principle of its future observance. As the harvest ripens at different times in various parts of the earth, this would provide for a constant succession of worshippers ascending to Zion — a picture suggested by Isaiah 66:23. These nations will comprise the fulness of the harvest to Abraham, constituting him the "Father of many nations."

VERSE 17

"Whoso will not come up"

— Thus flouting the Divine mercy. This provision shows that rebellion will be a possibility, even during the Millenium, even though the saints will exercise an iron control (Rev. 2:26-27). As Isaiah reminds us, the wicked deal unjustly, even "in the land of uprightness," and refuse "to behold the majesty of Yahweh" (Isa. 26:10).

VERSE 18

"The family of Egypt" — Egypt is singled out for special mention, for throughout Scripture it is associated with rebellion and sin. See Isa. 30:1-2. Rev. 11:8.

"That have no rain" — See Margin. There is no word for "rain" in the original. The Septuagint renders: "Then upon them shall be the overthrow . . ." The sternest measures will be taken on such a persistently rebellious nation, for its very preservation in the Kingdom is itself an act of mercy.

ISRAEL THE PRIESTLY NATION — Vv. 20-21

VERSE 20

"Upon the bells" — Margin: "the bridles." It was usual to decorate horses in times of rejoicing and victory, and such an occasion seems suggested here. The "bridles" rivets attention upon that which controls and guides the horses. The glorified elect will exercise this power (see Zech. 10:3. Rev. 19:14. Rev. 5:9-10).

"Horses" — The symbol of national power and war. This will be controlled and directed by the "riders" of the future age: the associates of Christ.

"Holiness unto Yahweh" — This was the inscription on the plate of gold worn by the high priest (Exod. 28:36), and indicated that the wearer was separated and dedicated unto Yahweh in thought and action (see Jer. 2:3). Thus it denotes a priestly community such as Israel will constitute, both spiritually and nationally.

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It was Yahweh's purpose in calling Israel out of Egypt to constitute the people a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:5-6. Jer. 13:11), and His purpose with them in that regard will yet be accomplished (Jer. 33:9). When Israel failed, the same call went forth to Gentiles (1 Pet. 2:9), calling upon them to separate themselves from their previous associations, and identify themselves with Israel (Eph. 2:11-12). In the future age, Israel as a nation, with the saints as king-priests, will form the channel of approach in worship to Yahweh for all other nations. Israel will then be the "holy nation" in fact, Yahweh's firstborn son, chief over other national sons, and as the position of firstborn conferred the privilege of a double portion of inheritance (Deut. 21:17), the priestly dignity (Num. 8:14-16), and the royal authority (2 Chron. 21:3), all these prerogatives will be vested in Israel. To Israel will be granted a double portion of inheritance (Micah 4:8), as well as the priestly dignity and royal authority. As a nation it will set before men the principle of "Holiness to Yahweh" thus drawing all peoples to the true worship (Zech. 8:23).

"Like the bowls before the altar" — Dedicated to Divine service, thus indicative of the priestly functions. Israelites, both mortal and immortal, will receive the sacrifices of the people, as the bowls received the blood of the offerings. See Note Zech. 9:15.

VERSE 21

"Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah" — This territory is within the borders of the Holy Oblation, the territory set apart as the special inheritance of Christ in the Age to come (notes Zech. 2:12). All life there will be dedicated to Yahweh (Ezek. 48:10-12).

~ "Shall come and take of them, and seethe therein" — This implies the restoration of animal

offerings in the Temple of the future age — a fact taught in many other prophecies of the Scripture (Isa. 60:7. 19:21. 56:7. Jer. 33:17-18. Ezek. 44:11, etc.).

Such a form of sacrifice will be necessary in order to graphically impress the people of that Age — when sin and death will be greatly modified — with the fact that there is need to approach God through the Lamb of His providing. There could be a tendency otherwise for people to feel self-sufficient and self-righteous. The literal shedding of animal blood in sacrifice will dramatically impress worshippers with the fact of man's mortality and need of redemption. Such sacrifices are not designed to supersede the Lord's of course, but will serve as a memorial of it, as the communion of bread and wine does now. Sacrifice was discontinued when Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Gentiles, because the Temple erected there had been appointed of God as the sole centre for such offerings (Deut. 12:5-7. Ps. 132:13-14). At present, Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, but when their time is up (Luke 21:24), and the Temple is restored, animal sacrifices will again be required.

The expression in Zechariah 14:21 implies not merely sacrifice, but the sacrificial feast of fellowship by which the offerer is joined in communion with Yahweh. Such a sacrificial feast is suggested in Isaiah 25:6-7.

"There shall be no more the Canaanite" — The term Canaanite is used in this verse for Ecclesiastical traders, or the clergy. The use of this word throughout Scripture illustrates that fact. When Abraham entered the Land of Promise, the record states that "the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. 12:6). The word Canaanite comes from a root "kana" signifying "to bend the knee," hence to pretend humility, and thus a trader. Because of this, the RSV renders the word in Zech.

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14:21 as "trader." The Canaanites were a people cursed of God (Gen. 9:25), and thus the enemy of the righteous. They are a fitting type of the spiritual traders, the ecclesiastical merchants of the world (Rev. 18:11), who trade in the "bodies and souls of men" (v. 13 — margin), and are prepared to "bow the knee" or humiliate themselves to gain an advantage. There were many such in the house of Yahweh, when the Lord visited it 1900 years ago, and drove from its precincts the traders in religion who desecrated it. He indignantly told them that they had turned the holy place into a "den of thieves" (Mark 11:17).

This form of ecclesiastical trading will be rigorously suppressed in the Millennium, whilst normal, legitimate trading (under different principles to those manifested today, of course) will continue (Isa. 23:18).

It is significant, that whilst the clergy are described as Canaanites, or merchantmen, their churches are Scripturally described as "bazaars" or places of business. In *Exposition of Daniel*, Brother Thomas makes this point when expounding Daniel 11:39. He declares that the term "most strong holds" in which a strange God was to be acknowledged with "gold, silver, precious stones," etc., by the Apostasy is from the Hebrew, *Mitzahrai Mahuzzim*, which signifies "Bazaars of Guardians," the guardians being the patron saints of Rome and its harlot daughters.

Peter warned of these "Canaanites" who, he declared, would

make "merchandise" of the followers of the Lord (2 Pet. 2:3). His prophecy was fulfilled, so that their numbers in the earth today are legion, because error is in the ascendancy, and men fear not Yahweh. But the time is hastening when the judgment of Yahweh of hosts will be poured out upon these wicked perverters of the Truth, so that both they and the systems of error they control, shall be removed. The outpouring of this judgment on Babylon the Great will cause "the merchants of the earth to weep and mourn for no man buyeth their merchandise any more" (Rev. 18:11). Men will then turn to Yahweh in truth, rejoicing in the glorious benefits of Christ's reign, and particularly in the elevating influence of Divine worship. With joy will they turn to one another and say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

May the time soon come when the death-knell of Roman Catholicism shall toll out the iniquitous system with its Idol Shepherd and its harlot daughters, when the shackles of slavery to sin and religious superstition shall be snapped for ever, because "Yahweh of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously" (Isa. 24:23).

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

