The Revelation of Jesus Christ

R. E. Streeter

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 22:10).

"An exposition of the prophetic visions given to St. John on Patmos, revealing in the light of the teaching of Christ and his holy Prophets and Apostles not only the well ordered purpose of God but His marvelous foreknowledge in forecasting in detail the history of His faithful Church during her earthly pilgrimage, her future inheritance with Christ, and the future of mankind under the "new heavens and new earth" government, as set forth in the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

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To the Prince of the Kings of the Earth

IN BEHALF OF

ALL FAITHFUL WATCHERS

WAITING FOR THEIR DELIVERANCE

— AND OF —

ALL THOSE WHO PERSEVERE IN THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS

— AND OF —

ALL HUMANITY FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED, WAITING FOR THE TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS,

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Revelation 21:3-5).

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"COME UP HITHER, AND I WILL SHOW THEE THINGS WHICH MUST BE HEREAFTER" (REVELATION 4:1).

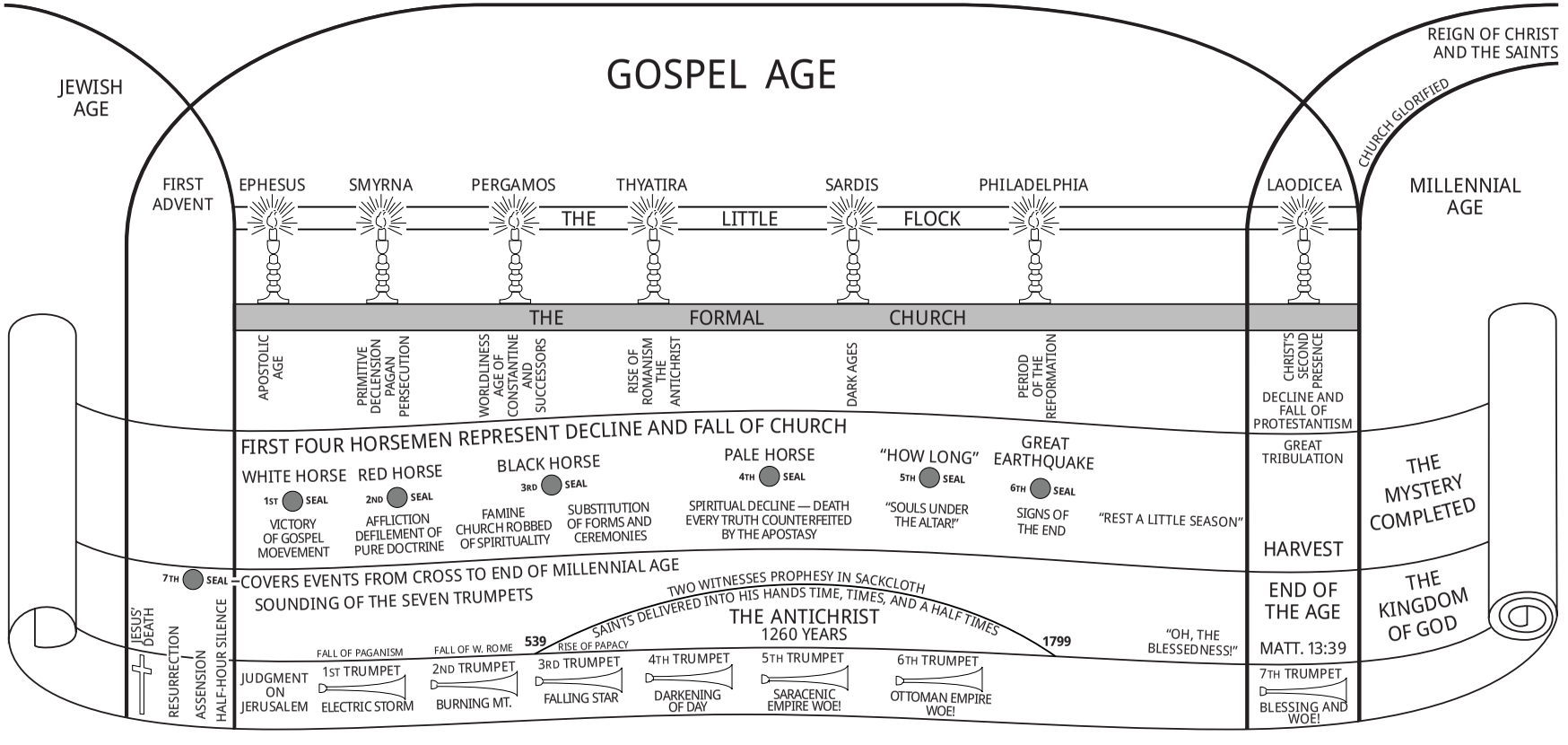

CHART OF REVELATION SYMBOLS

ILLUSTRATING THE HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE VISIONS OF THE APOCALYPSE — INDICATING TO WHAT EXTENT THE THINGS FORETOLD HAVE BEEN FULFILLED.

"AND I SAW ON THE RIGHT OF HIM SITTING ON THE THRONE, A SCROLL, HAVING BEEN WRITEN WITHIN AND OUTSIDE, FIRMLY SEALED WITH SEVEN SEALS" (REVELATION 5:1, DIAGLOTT).

"AND HE THAT SAT UPON THE THRONE SAID, BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW" (REVELATION 21:5).

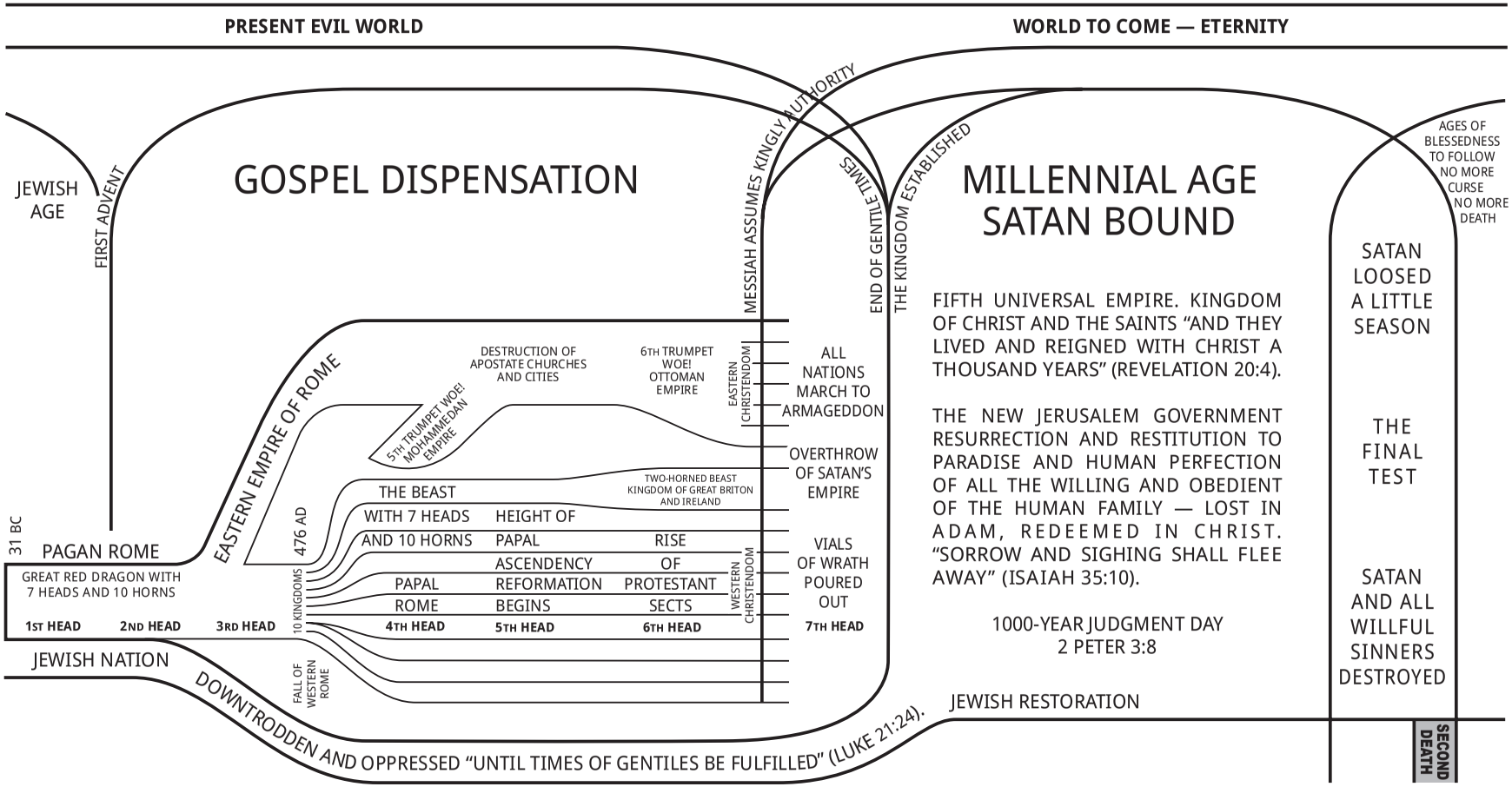

CHART OF REVELATION SYMBOLS

ILLUSTRATING THE HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE VISIONS OF THE APOCALYPSE — INDICATING TO WHAT EXTENT THE THINGS FORETOLD HAVE BEEN FULFILLED.

"AND GOD SHALL WIPE AWAY ALL TEARS FROM THEIR EYES; AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DEATH, NEITHER SORROW, NOR CRYING, NEITHER SHALL THERE BE ANY MORE PAIN" (REVELATION 21:4).

Foreword

Publisher's Foreword to this
2015 Edition

The supply of *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, by Randolph Elwood Streeter (1847-1924), has again gone out of print. As many desire to have a copy for personal study and contemplation, the Pastoral Bible Institute has decided to reprint it again.

Originally this work was published in two volumes, perhaps to avoid a misapprehension that it might be intended as yet another attempt to make a seventh volume of "Studies in the Scriptures." That no longer seems to be a likely problem. So here we reprint it more conveniently as a single volume for the benefit of its readers.

"Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:7).

Preface

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

In placing before the followers of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ this exposition of the Apocalypse, the Publishers desire to acquaint the reader with some of the facts that have moved them to issue this publication. First of all, it is their settled conviction that there is a rich blessing upon head and heart for all who humbly and reverently engage in the study of Revelation — that the visions given to St. John, which are declared to be a Divine prophecy, represent no small amount of Divine forethought and provision on behalf of the faithful children of God, for their support and comfort in the Narrow Way. And who that has undertaken to run the Christian race and to walk in the footsteps of the humble and lowly Nazarene has not most keenly felt the need of his "Lo, I am with you" and its fulfillment! Following the lamp of prophecy, the faithful all along the corridors of the age have realized "the day star arising in their hearts," and have been given full assurance that He who hath called them from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, will ultimately lead them out of this dark and troubled night time — far from the "city of destruction" into the Kingdom of His dear Son.

The original expositions, the substance of which constitutes the matter contained in this volume, were prepared and presented one by one to the Editorial Committee of the religious journal, THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM, at their request; the one who presented the expositions being a member of the Committee. The expositions appeared semi-monthly during the years 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922. There was no thought at the time on the part of any of the Committee members of attempting an exposition of the Revelation visions as a whole. Certain circumstances, which it is believed were providential, together with earnest inquiries coming from various Bible students, seemed to the Committee and to the Publishers to call for articles explanatory of certain portions of the Revelation. As a result of the keen interest that the articles created, and because of further suggestions and earnest inquiries that were received, the purpose of attempting a full exposition was gradually developed.

It should be further stated that the decision to publish these expositions in book form was arrived at only when it became apparent through the many requests coming in from all over the world that there was a very manifest desire for their publication. Indeed, it was not until these many requests were accompanied with substantial contributions and promises of assistance that the final decision was made.

It may be appropriately added that two other items that have influenced in the publication of the expositions in book form are:

(1) That what are generally considered the most able and reasonable expositions of the Apocalypse are now out of print, and consequently difficult to obtain. These are found mostly in the libraries of private individuals, many of whom have no interest in prophetic writings, and indeed some of whom have none in religious matters.

(2) These expositions written, some of them nearly a century ago, while very valuable on account of their explanations and applications of the fulfillment of the prophetic visions up to the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, and to a considerable extent in their forecasting fulfillments subsequently, they could not be supposed to contain the additional light that is now due on some of the closing visions, inasmuch as there have been remarkable events since, which, like those of past centuries, are the subject matter of several of the visions.

After many of the Revelation expositors of the Nineteenth Century had finished their labors in behalf of the Lord's people, a most remarkable manifestation of the Lord's providence on behalf of his people was in evidence, demonstrating as others in the history of the Church had, the interest and care that Christ has for his tried and tempted followers. This exhibition of the Lord's providence was represented in the issuing of several most unusual and luminous expositions of the Bible. Two of these, _The Divine Plan of the Ages#, and _The Atonement Between God and Man#, contain the most remarkable and convincing unfoldings of the Scriptures concerning the Divine plans and purposes for the human family that have ever been given to the Church by uninspired man. It was very apparent to many students of the Bible that the writer of these books, particularly in the two above mentioned, had obtained the key that unlocked many of the treasures connected with God's great Plan of Salvation for the human family. That key was concerning the nature, philosophy, and far-reaching effects of the great ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ as they relate to both the Church and the world.

These clear views concerning the great Redeemer's sacrifice caused many utterances of Christ, as well as many of those of the Apostles and Prophets, hitherto misunderstood or wrongly interpreted, to be made plain. These related to the great doctrines of Election and Free Grace. A true knowledge of these doctrines had also the effect of disclosing more fully the visions of the Apocalypse, particularly those that relate to the events connected with the closing scenes of this Gospel Age, as well as those that relate to the coming age. Those who have carefully and prayerfully read these works will, we are sure, be very thankful to our Lord and Savior for having made use of this devoted man of God to perform this much needed work of assisting his people in these times and the more trying ones to come. Though this servant of the Lord did not live to write an exposition of the Apocalypse as he had expected, brief comments are found here and there in his writings, which relate more especially to some of the closing visions — those that have reference to the closing scenes of the age. These brief comments are sufficient to show that he was a believer in the Historical school of interpretation — the school that applies the visions of the Apocalypse to the Christian Church from the beginning of its history to its end.

It seems apparent that had these earlier writers on the Apocalypse lived to enjoy this increased light now shining on the various features of the Divine Plan of salvation, they would have revised and supplemented their remarkable expositions in harmony with this added knowledge now enjoyed by many believers in this generation. The principle that is held and adhered to by the Publishers of the exposition now placed in your hands is that the writers of one generation advanced in their knowledge of the meaning and application of the Apocalyptic visions over the preceding one. This advance in knowledge was made, not by rejecting altogether previous interpretations, but rather by following the principle of prophetic interpretation given by Christ himself, contained in the words, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe." This principle is, as will be seen in these words, that of history unveiling prophecy, or as expressed in another statement of Scripture, that "The path of the just [ones] is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

In our intercourse with the Lord's people, we have observed with regret the impression of some that the study of the Revelation is not practical, indeed, not necessary. We are sorry that such sentiment exists, and can only regard it as a grave reflection on the wisdom of our Heavenly Father in providing the Apocalypse for His Church. The very fact that a special blessing is pronounced by Him upon those who read and hear the words of this prophecy ought, it would seem, to be sufficient of itself to emphasize that it is of more than ordinary importance. The book of Revelation completes the Divine canon of inspiration, and to as great an extent as any other book of the Bible, if not greater, constitutes a portion of the "all Scripture" necessary for the man of God to be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Those who have given heed to the persuasive exhortation in the Divine preface of the book — "Blessed is he that readeth," etc., can testify with full assurance and with grateful hearts, that a perusal and study of its much diversified contents cannot do otherwise than produce Christ-likeness, which is true holiness.

It has seemed with becoming propriety that considerable space should be devoted to the introduction of this work; this has been done in order that a substantial foundation might be laid for the expositions that follow. A general review of the Revelation is made, the nature and purpose of the Apocalypse is considered, together with the various schools of interpretation that have been in existence throughout the age. The importance and necessity for giving the most careful study first of all to the introduction to this work, can not be too urgently impressed upon the mind of the reader, as it will greatly assist in grasping the exposition of the visions of the Revelation as a whole.

It seems well to explain that the writer of the expositions has for years been quite familiar with the three different schools of interpretation of the Apocalypse — the Historical, the Preterist, and the Futurist — having made a thorough study, not only of the visions themselves, but also of the circumstances and causes which originated, led up to, and developed these three schools. The writer's conviction is that the Historical school is the correct one; and this is the

result of a careful, prayerful study of and meditation on the evidences claimed for these varying interpretations, covering a period of about forty years.

The Publishers desire it to be understood that no claim is made that this exposition contains all that may be said on the Apocalypse, or that all of its interpretations are absolutely correct, nor that it is a final exposition; nor does the writer claim originality of interpretation except in a very few of the visions. Thus the reader will observe as he pursues the study of this work that the writings and interpretations of the leading authors and expositors of the entire age have been given the most careful examination and study, and not infrequently their deductions and conclusions are endorsed and incorporated in this exposition; particularly those who have written during the past century. A list of the various historians, commentators, authors, and expositors whose writings have been consulted and from which quotations have been made, is found in the Appendix. However, though perfection is not claimed for this work, nor that it is the last word on the subject of the Revelation, yet it is the writer's conviction that whatever alterations or additions may be needed on account of the present rapidly changing scenes in connection with the fulfillment of the closing visions of the Apocalypse, will be in full harmony with the "old path" of Apocalyptic interpretation.

The quotations from Scripture herein given are not always from the authorized English version; rather it has been our endeavor to give the reader the benefit of such translations as would most clearly convey the sense from the standpoint of the oldest Greek manuscripts.

The writer desires to acknowledge gratefully the assistance received in the preparation as well as in the revising of the expositions, from suggestions and criticisms of those with whom he is closely associated in the service of the Lord, as also from letters that have come from various quarters of the world. If the reader receives a tithe of the help and blessing that the writer himself has received, he will be more than repaid for the toil and sacrifice of time spent in its preparation.

During the preparation of these expositions, many times has the prayer ascended for Divine aid and guidance, and the enlightening influence of His holy Spirit; many times have we turned aside from our labors, and alone with God sought special assistance. Indeed, He alone knows how this has been the earnest and incessant prayer of our heart. And now these pages are sent forth with the prayer of thanksgiving, and with the petition that He to whom we have desired to render this humble service, will accept it and grant the Divine blessing on both head and heart of the reader. With reverence and worship, and with devout aspirations in our hearts, let us come to the study of this last message of our Lord to his Church — the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

R. E. Streeter
Pastoral Bible Institute
1928

Introduction

The Purpose of the Revelation

It is a fact, whatever may be the cause, that there is a widespread prejudice on the part of very many Christian teachers against the reading and study of the book of Revelation. This prejudice exists, notwithstanding the fact that the book comes to us with even stronger claims to its Divine authority than any other of the sacred writings. This prejudice was, of course, foreseen by the Divine Author, and in order that it might not evilly affect those who reverently desired to acquaint themselves with every "word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," special encouragement was given to read and to hear it read. Like all other of the sacred writings, it has withstood all the assaults of its enemies, and its misguided friends, some of whom have sought to prove that the book was simply the product of man's ingenuity. Without taking into consideration in any measure the manifold evidences that are contained *inside* the book itself, it has been proved, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that no other book of the Bible is supported by so many *outside* evidences of its Divine origin. That the divinely chosen Apostle and beloved disciple of our Lord was the one specially privileged to receive the Divine communications and to behold the wonderful visions that make up the larger portion of the book, is not only stated therein, but is also a fact that is otherwise thoroughly established.

The title of the book reveals the nature of its contents. It is a prophecy. It is designed to make known things to come. The study of prophecy never has been and in all probability never will be popular. This is especially true of symbolic prophecy, which surely is a characteristic of the prophecies of the Apocalypse. Aside from the very many unquestionable fulfillments of its predictions in past history, it is quite generally held by the most eminent and devout students of the Apocalypse that the marvelous story it contains, the remarkable arrangement, order, and structure of its many visions, the character and choice of the symbols employed to tell its story, are of themselves most convincing evidences of its Divine origin.

It has been truly said that the visions are evidently designed to exhibit the true worshipers of God engaged in a violent conflict with evil, antagonistic powers, until the Advent of the Redeemer. The great central matter involved in the conflict is, Who has the right of authority over men? Who shall be recognized as worthy of their homage and worship? In different periods in connection with this terrible conflict, Christ, as the chosen of God, is represented in visions as appearing and claiming exclusive right in these matters. He is represented as encouraging and assisting those who are loyal to him, and holding out to them the promise of a reward of life eternal, of exaltation to his throne, and of a share in his glory, honor, and immortality. On the other hand, we have a long

succession of antagonistic powers, portrayed under various strange and startling symbols, falsely claiming the right that belongs to Christ alone, and endeavoring to compel men to make their homage to him subordinate to the homage rendered to themselves. The very matters involved in the conflict make it apparent that it is one between the true followers of Christ, and the false professors and open opposers; also, that the conflict covers centuries, and that it will be most terribly severe. The character of the symbols employed to describe these usurpers of Christ show that the most prominent ruling powers of the world, particularly the ecclesiastical, are those represented on one side of the great conflict.

This conflict is represented as being one in which all Heaven is most intensely interested. Its end and its result are finally described in the visions. When the usurpers and blasphemers of God have reached the climax of their career, a career which his sovereignty has permitted, and which he has overruled to the accomplishment of his grand purposes, then Christ is represented as interposing, and by terrible judgments, refutes their claims before the world, and accomplishes their destruction. Those who in the conflict continue loyal to him are then rewarded; his Kingdom is established over the earth, and the blessing of God begins to be realized by all mankind.

Is a Knowledge of History Necessary to an Understanding of Prophecy?

In the introduction of this study of the Apocalypse it is appropriate that something be said with regard to the two schools or methods of interpretation which are radically in conflict with the one adopted and followed in this exposition. These two schools are the Preterist and the Futurist. The one we understand to be the true one is called the Historical. Concerning the Preterist it seems sufficient to say that it is very generally discarded at the present time as unworthy of credence. Its teaching is that all the visions of the Apocalypse were completely fulfilled in the early centuries of the Church's history. The Futurist interpretation is that all its visions are yet to have their fulfillment after the Church has finished its course and has entered into its reward.

It will be to the point to note in this connection, that the words of the great Teacher Himself, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that *when* it is come to pass ye might believe," suggests a principle of interpretation important to be observed in the study of prophecy. It is obvious, then, that it would be impossible for any one to decide whether the predictions of the Apocalypse have or have not met their fulfillment either wholly or partially, without observing this divinely given principle. In other words, a certain knowledge of the events of history is essential in order to determine to what extent the visions have met fulfillment.

Strange as it may seem, there are some who claim that the Apocalyptic visions cannot have had a fulfillment in history, because, as they say, we are told to search the Scriptures, and are nowhere told to search the historians. God, they say, is His own interpreter. Such reasoning we believe is unsound. How could

we ever know that the prophecies of Daniel have met their fulfillment without acquainting ourselves with the records of history? A knowledge of history is absolutely essential to the intelligent understanding of prophecy.

We are not to compare prophecy with uninspired or profane history, say our Futurist friends. According to this theory, then, there could not have been any prophetic light thrown on the period of four hundred years prior to the First Advent. The same also would be true of the last eighteen hundred years. Such reasoning would lead us to very unsound conclusions.

When the Apostle exhorted that we do well to take heed to the more sure word of prophecy, he evidently intended that we should look to the events and occurrences recorded in history to see the fulfillment of what had been predicted by the Prophets; else how could we be profited by giving heed to the more sure word of prophecy? Let us consider for instance the prophecy of Daniel. In the vision of chapter 7 a tenfold division of the Roman Empire was predicted to take place before the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth. We know from Bible history that the Roman Empire was existing in its undivided form up to about 60 AD, but we are dependent upon profane history for the knowledge that it was still existing as a universal empire when St. John was divinely used to close the canon of Scripture by having imparted to him the visions of the Apocalyptic prophecy, which repeats this very same prediction of Daniel. How do we know that this prediction of Daniel has or has not met its fulfillment, unless from profane history? Profane history records the fact that just such a division of the Roman Empire occurred nearly fifteen hundred years ago. It is then an indisputable fact that our knowledge of the fulfillment of prophecy is dependent upon the faithful records of uninspired historians. The Savior's words, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29), are sufficient to substantiate this line of reasoning.

Another unreasonable, indeed rash statement made by some Futurist interpreters is that the events connected with the history of the Church of this Gospel Age are not subjects of prophecy. Those who make such a statement seem not to see that a knowledge of history is needful even to warrant such an assertion! How, we ask, without a knowledge of the history of the Gospel Age, can it be known that the visions of St. John in the Apocalypse do *not* present a connected outline of the leading and important events of Church history? The assertion is an entirely proper one that a knowledge of what has actually taken place is as needful to justify a denial, as an assertion of the fact. We must know a person as well before we can pronounce that a certain portrait does *not* resemble him, as in order to assert that it *does*.

"Trustworthy historians record events which they neither invented nor caused, but what occurred under God's providential government; it was He who caused, or permitted these events; they are in one sense as Divine as prophecy; that is, both proceed from Him. Prophecy is God telling us beforehand what shall happen; authentic history is men telling us what has, in the providence of God, taken place. ...

"We dare not for these reasons exclude the light afforded by history, in the endeavor to answer the questions: Is the prophecy of the Apocalypse fulfilled or partly so, or is it still unfulfilled? and is it in its general scope Christian or Jewish?"

The Futurist interpretation applies the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse to the Jews after the Church is glorified. Discovering amongst whom and under what circumstances the Futurist view had its origin, will surely have a bearing upon our conclusion as to the correctness or incorrectness of this method of interpretation. It originated in the Roman Catholic Church, and was a reply of the Roman Catholic theologians to the Reformers of the Sixteenth Century who applied those Apocalyptic visions that portrayed the great Apostasy, the Antichrist, to the Romish system.

Rome had her theologians, learned men, among whom were Ribera and Bellarmine. "Ribera was a Jesuit priest of Salamanca. In 1585 he published a commentary on the Apocalypse, denying the application of the prophecies concerning Antichrist to the existing Church of Rome. He was followed by Cardinal Bellarmine, a nephew of Pope Marcellus II, who was born in Tuscany in 1542, and died in 1621. Bellarmine was not only a man of great learning, but the most powerful controversialist in defense of Popery that the Roman Church ever produced. Clement VIII used these remarkable words on his nomination: 'We choose him, because the Church of God does not possess his equal in learning.' Bellarmine, like Ribera, advocated the Futurist interpretation of prophecy. He taught that Antichrist would be one particular man, that he would be a Jew, that he would be preceded by the reappearance of the literal Enoch and Elias, that he would rebuild the Jewish temple at Jerusalem, compel circumcision, abolish the Christian sacraments, abolish every other form of religion, would manifestly and avowedly deny Christ, would assume to be Christ, and would be received by the Jews as their Messiah, would pretend to be God, would make a literal image speak, would feign himself dead, and rise again, and would conquer the whole world — Christian, Mohammedan, and heathen; and all this in the space of three and a half years. He insisted that the prophecies of Daniel, Paul, and John, with reference to Antichrist, had no application whatever to the Papal power" (H. Grattan Guinness).

The earliest of what may be termed Protestant writers who adopted the system of Futurist interpretation are Todd and Maitland, the latter living from 1792 to 1866. There have been many since their day who have adopted their views, with some minor changes. These views are very little different from those of the two Roman Catholic theologians above mentioned. It cannot therefore be successfully disputed that the Futurist interpretation of the Apocalypse had its origin in Rome at the end of the Sixteenth Century and was designed to relieve the Papacy from the terrible stigma cast upon it by the Protestant interpretation. The claims of Papist leaders were that "the Papal head of the Church of Rome was not the power delineated by Daniel and St. John. Accurately as it answered the description, it was not the criminal indicated. It must be allowed to go free, and the detective must look out for another man, who was sure to turn up by

and by. The Historic interpretation was, of course, rejected with intense and bitter scorn by the Church it denounced as Babylon, and the power it branded as Antichrist, and it is still opposed by all who in any way uphold these. ... The Futurist school denies the application of these important, practical prophecies to the conflicts of the Church during the last eighteen centuries. It robs the Church of their practical guidance all through that period. This is the position taken by the Church of Rome, this is the position taken by the popes, cardinals, bishops, and other great teachers of that apostate Church. This is the prophetic interpretation they have embodied in a thousand forms and insisted upon with dogmatic authority. This has been the interpretation of proud Papal usurpers, of cruel persecutors, of merciless tyrants, of the Romanist enemies of the Gospel and of the saints and servants of God."

Solidity and Reliability of Historical Interpretation

The Historical interpretation given by the Reformers and the long line of martyrs and Christian confessors prior to the Reformation was taken up by reverent and able men of God after their predecessors had laid down the lamp of prophecy. Protestant interpreters have built upon the foundations erected by these saints of old, the true historic interpretation of the wonderful Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. "They have built up a solid and symmetrical system, a system which has developed slowly, which has progressed constantly, which has been born out of diligent investigations only, but of profound experience; a system whose truth has been sealed and demonstrated by its ever-growing correspondence with the actual course of events." Let us mention the names of some of these men who have unquestionably been used of God since the Reformation to further unravel the mysteries of the Apocalypse. We notice first, Joseph Mede, who lived in the first half of the Seventeenth Century. It is said that he was distinguished for meekness, modesty, and liberality, and that he devoted the tenth of his small income to charitable and pious purposes. His learning is spoken of as profound and extraordinary. His chief work was an exposition of the Apocalypse, which was translated into English in 1640. This godly and learned man prefaced his work with the prayer, "Thou who sittest upon the throne, and thou, O Lamb, Root of David, who only wast worthy to take and open this book, open the eyes of Thy servant, and direct his hand and mind, that in these Thy mysteries, he may discern and produce something which may tend to the glory of Thy name and profit the Church." It will not be our purpose to note his particular interpretations save to say that he followed the well-beaten track of the Historical interpretation; that his work on the Apocalypse was endorsed by the Puritan Church leaders; and that it was endorsed also by the Westminster confession, as is seen from the words recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of their solemn confession: "There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ and all that is called God." This confession of faith adopted just after Mede's death was subsequently accepted by the National Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Sir Isaac Newton, who lived in the latter part of the Seventeenth Century, further advanced the system of Historical interpretation. Contemporaneous with Sir Isaac Newton there lived several other interpreters of the Apocalypse. Among these were Jurieu and Daubuz, who were both exiled Huguenots, and "belonged to the five hundred thousand Protestants" who were compelled to leave France by the persecuting edict of Louis XIV, in revoking the edict of Nantes. Their sufferings under the Papal power turned their attention to the prophetic Word and in it they found consolation. Jurieu, for example, begins his prophetic work with the sentence: "The afflicted Church seeks for consolation. Where can she find it but in the promises of God?" His work is entitled *The Approaching Deliverance of the Church*. Therein he sets forth the thought "that the Papacy is the anti-Christian kingdom, and that that kingdom is not far from its ruin; that the present persecution may end in three years and a half, after which the destruction of Antichrist shall begin, which shall be finished in the beginning of the next age and then the Kingdom of Christ shall come upon the earth." This was published in 1637. Apocalyptic Historic interpretation continued to increase through the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries ... and the sacred light of these prophecies is still guiding the Church of God across the wide ocean of her dangerous way. Those steadfast stars of prophecy which lighted the persecuted Waldenses through the darkness of the Middle Ages, which lighted the progress of the Lollards and the Bohemians before the Reformation, which lighted the noble Reformers through the gloom and tempest three hundred years ago, and which have lighted watchful saints through troubled centuries, are shining still, in that high and holy firmament, whence no mortal hand can pluck them down; and they shall shine on — those glittering stars of prophecy — till they have fulfilled their glorious mission, till they have guided the Church in safety to her celestial haven, and their long-enduring radiance melts at last in the rising splendors of eternal day."

It is the teaching from analogy that the Church is a subject of prophecy. God's ancient people were never left without the guidance of the "lamp of prophecy." Is it reasonable to suppose that the Church of this dispensation would be left without this lamp? It was because of a failure to give heed to these prophecies, which were read every Sabbath day in their synagogues, and which were being fulfilled before their eyes, that the Jews fulfilled them in rejecting and crucifying their Messiah (Acts 13:27). Indeed, their history, as well as the condition of their home land during the last eighteen hundred years, was foretold by their Prophets. Furthermore, their future restoration to favor, and the great tribulations they are to encounter just prior to their conversion to the Messiah, are all described by their Prophets, not simply in a general way, but in the most minute detail. It is to the latter that Futurists wrongly apply the visions of the Revelation. We ask, Why apply the visions of the Revelation to the Jews when their history was already so minutely foretold by the Old Testament Prophets? It has been wisely asked: "Is it likely that there should be no analogy, but a perfect contrast, in the history of antitypical Israel? Has she no Egypt to leave, and no wilderness to traverse, no land to inherit, no oppressors to tyrannize over her,

no evil kings to mislead her, no reformers and deliverers to arise, no Babylon to carry her captive, no Temple to rebuild, no Messiah to look for, no judgments to apprehend?

"Are the Church's foes so much more obvious, her dangers so much more potent, that it should be superfluous to supply her with prophetic light to detect them? Because the Jews were an earthly people, and she a heavenly Church, is she therefore not on earth, and not surrounded by the ungodly? Are her enemies heavenly because the Church is so? Nay, but most earthly, for the wicked spirits against whom the Church wrestles, wage their warfare incarnate, in earthly, sensual, devilish systems, and in actual men, as did Satan in the serpent in Eden. Every conceivable reason would suggest her *greater* need of prophetic light." The Apocalypse is the book of the New Testament which answers to the prophets of the Old.

Furthermore, it is a fact that the holy Spirit through St. Paul gave utterance to a prediction that in its scope covered the whole Christian Age. It is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:7,8, and reads: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [hindereth] will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming [presence]." The hindering obstacle, whatever it may have been, was in existence when the Apostle wrote his epistle, and was to continue in existence until the rise of the "man of sin," the wicked one. This "man of sin" was to continue until the Lord's Second Advent, and then was to be destroyed. It is also a fact that the first generation of Christians were forewarned by our Lord Himself of the fall of Jerusalem and the terrible scenes associated with that fall. This prediction of our Lord was given for the benefit of the early Christians; and as has been truthfully said, "there is, therefore, no room for asserting that the fulfillment of the Apocalypse must be future because the Church cannot be the subject of prophecy whose sphere is the earth. If she may be the subject of one or two, she may equally well be the subject of a hundred, and the question must be decided on other grounds."

Again, St. John speaks of himself as a brother and companion in tribulation of those who are addressed: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9). Who can believe that St. John was speaking of the Jews as his brothers? At the time he wrote, the Apostle was suffering tribulation because of his loyalty to his Master, Christ. The same was true at this time (when Pagan Rome began its persecution) of many others whom he addressed, as history records. How appropriate, then, are his words! St. John was speaking as a Christian confessor at this time (not a confessor of the Jewish religion), as the words that follow show: "I John ... was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Again, in chapter 6, under the fifth seal, we have a symbolic vision referring to martyrs, of whom it is said that they were "slain for the Word of God, and

for the testimony which they held." This evidently means that they were slain for confessing their *Christian faith*; in other words, like St. John, they suffered because they were Christians.

In chapter 7, under the sixth seal, there is presented to us a company in heaven of whom it is said, they came out of great tribulation. These were not Jews, for it is stated that they were gathered out from "every nation and kindred and tongue." It is also said of them that they "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Unquestionably these were Christian martyrs also.

In the eighth chapter mention is made of "the prayers of all saints," and of "the prayers of the saints." Prayers ascend from suppliants on earth; and the word *saints* in New Testament language means Christians. The eminent expositor, Mr. Guinness, has presented on this point the following forceful argument:

"We have no right in the last book of the New Testament to revert to the Old Testament signification of this word [saint]. Let the general tone of John's Gospel and Epistles be recalled, and his choice of this word to designate true Christians, in the midst of an ungodly world, and falsely professing church, will be felt to be in beautiful harmony. What is the grand distinction made in John's Epistles between true Christians and those who are not? It is holiness, saintship. 'If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.' ...

"Such language shows that in the eyes of St. John, practical purity and holiness, saintliness, is the grand characteristic of Christians. When, therefore, we find him consistently designating a certain body by the distinctive appellation of 'the saints,' we conclude that those so called are true Christians, in opposition to the ungodly or to false professors. Where does John ever apply such a term to Jews? Where in the whole New Testament can the term be found so applied? Why then should we assert that it is applied to Jews here? Paul uses it forty-three times, and in every case as a synonym for Christians. Luke uses it four times in the Acts, and Jude twice in his Epistle, in the same sense; in fact, only once is it used in any equivocal sense in the whole New Testament. ('Many bodies of the saints which slept arose,' Matthew 27:52).

"We observe these 'saints,' who are thirteen times mentioned in the Apocalypse, doing and bearing exactly what we know from other Scriptures the saints of the Christian Church must do and bear in this dispensation. We find them watching, waiting, praying, enduring tribulation (chapter 13:10), resting in heaven (chapter 14:12,13), and at last manifested as the Bride of Christ, and as the 'armies which were in heaven' clad under both emblems, with the 'fine linen clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints'; we find them associated with the martyrs of Jesus (chapter 17:6), a clear proof that they can not be Jewish saints.

"In short, so far from the Church being actually and exclusively in heaven at the commencement of the prophetic drama of this book, she is seen on earth

during its entire course. She is seen collectively under various symbols, such as the one hundred and forty-four thousand, the two witnesses, the sun-clad woman, the armies of heaven, the New Jerusalem; and her members are seen severally as 'the saints.' They are seen first in their sufferings, and then in their glory; first slain for Jesus' sake, then enthroned beside him. Can it be questioned that the saints who pray, and wait, and suffer, and die as martyrs of Jesus, are the same saints, the 'called, and chosen, and faithful,' who are seen with the Lamb afterwards, as his Bride, and as his white-robed followers? If they are not, the unity of the book is gone, it becomes an incomprehensible confusion. If the saints who form the Bride of the Lamb in chapter 19 are not the saints who in the previous chapters witnessed for him in life and in death, then the lesson written most legibly on the pages of prophecy — the lesson that, in spite of ignorance and obscurity, the Church in all ages has learned from it — the truth that sustained millions of martyrs in their protracted sufferings and cheered them in their dying agonies — the truth with which this prophecy seems instinct, 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with him,' is utterly obliterated from its pages! The suffering 'saints' get no reward; and the happy, blessed Bride, rises not from a surging sea of sorrow and suffering to the joy of her Lord's embrace, and the glory of his throne. One of the great morals of the book is gone, as well as its dramatic unity. ...

"This system of interpretation involves besides, a logical inconsistency. The Bride is the Christian Church; her raiment identifies her with the previously mentioned 'saints,' and the 'saints' [this wrong interpretation says] are a Jewish remnant.[1] ...

"The only way of avoiding the force of this argument is to deny that the Bride of the Lamb is the Church; for it is evident that the Bride is identical with the saints, and it is evident also that the saints are on earth during the whole course of the book. Those who are resolved to prove that the Church is not represented as on earth in these visions must therefore not only deny that the saints are the Church, but seeing the saints are identical with the Bride, must also deny that the Bride is the Church; and many Futurists are to be found, who actually do deny this.

"Let it be granted then that, fulfilling all these types from Eden downward, and realizing all the figures of most intimate association and union which language can convey — the vine and the branches, the head and the members, the Bridegroom and the Bride — the white robed saintly Bride of Revelation 19 is the

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(1) "The future existence of a Jewish remnant is not denied, though their history and experience are mapped out by a certain school of prophetic interpreters, far more definitely than by the Word of God. That the remnant or remainder of the Jewish nation will be restored to Palestine before the Millennium, brought there into great trouble, and prepared by it to say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,' that Christ will appear for their deliverance, and that they will be converted at the sight of him, this much seems clear from Scripture. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and He has not cast away His people whom He foreknew."

Church of the redeemed; and we claim that without all contradiction, the Church is on earth during the action of the Apocalypse, and that therefore the Apocalypse is a Christian prophecy, fulfilled in the events of the Christian era."

History of Apocalyptic Interpretation

Considering the words of the Revelator, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy," two most interesting questions are suggested: First, To what extent have the Lord's people heeded this exhortation? Second, To what conclusions have they come regarding the scope and application of its sublime visions? A brief, general reply to these questions is that they have been read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested by the Church increasingly from the time they were given until the present time; and that, while in the period previous to the Reformation the followers of Christ who heeded the exhortation had no correct idea as to the length of time that would elapse before the complete fulfillment of the visions, they held that these visions portrayed the Church's history throughout the age, and not merely a closing fragment of that history, nor a Jewish remnant after the Church was glorified.

From Irenaeus (145 AD), a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John, to Chrysostom and Jerome (345 AD), there was a very general agreement on the following matters which may truthfully be said to constitute the key to Apocalyptic interpretation:

(1) That the "little horn" of Daniel 7, the "man of sin" of 2 Thessalonians 2, and the "beast" of Revelation 13, were to rule from Rome, and that these prophecies referred to one and the same power — the Antichrist.

(2) That the hindrance to Antichrist's full development and rule, mentioned by St. Paul (2 Thessalonians 2), was the Roman emperors reigning in the city of Rome.

(3) That the ten-horned dragon and the ten-horned beast of Revelation 12, 13, and 17, were the same as the fourth beast seen by Daniel (Daniel 7), and that they describe different aspects of the Roman Empire.

(4) That the "ten horns" on the beast seen by St. John and on the fourth beast of Daniel referred to a division of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, at a time future from St. John's day.

(5) That when this breaking up of the Empire would take place, the predicted Antichrist would then begin to rule.

It is a most remarkable fact that all the noted expositors throughout the entire age until now are agreed in these matters. It is true that the writers who lived during the first two and a half centuries supposed that when Antichrist became seated at Rome, his career would be a brief one. However, it is reasonable to suppose this would be the case in view of the Divine rule of progressive interpretation of prophecy.

In proving the above statements we quote first Irenaeus. In his book *Against Heresies*, chapter 26, he says, "John in the Apocalypse ... teaches us what the ten horns shall be, [that is, the same] which were seen by Daniel."

We thus see that this Christian writer, who lived only about half a century after St. John's day, linked together the vision of Daniel 7 with those visions that make up the much larger part of the Apocalypse.

Another quotation from Irenaeus (Book V, chapter 30) shows that he believed that the manifestation of Antichrist would require first the overthrow of the Empire of Rome then existing. The quotation reads:

"Let them await, in the first place, the division of the kingdom into ten; then in the next place, when these kings are reigning, and beginning to set their affairs in order, and advance their kingdoms, let them learn to acknowledge that he who shall come claiming the kingdom [dominion] for himself ... and containing the aforesaid number (666), is truly the abomination of desolation."

It seems clear that this writer, who in all probability saw those who had conversed with St. John, believed that the Apocalypse was already beginning to have its fulfillment in his day (145 AD). His forecast, although he was ignorant of it, covered nearly four centuries, for it is an indisputable fact of history that in 476 AD the Roman Empire fell, and shortly after, in about 539 AD, the Bishop of Rome was occupying the seat of the Roman emperors in the city of Rome, and was claiming supremacy in religious matters over all peoples of the Roman earth; and at this time the territory of the Empire was occupied by ten kingdoms.

Hippolytus, who is said to have been a disciple of Irenaeus, held that the Babylon of the Apocalypse meant Rome. Referring to this he says: "Tell me, blessed John, apostle and disciple of the Lord, what didst thou see and hear concerning Babylon? Arise and speak for it sent thee also into banishment."

Indeed, all the early Christian writers held to this view. Tertullian, who lived contemporary with Irenaeus and Hippolytus, thus writes: "Babylon in our own John, [that is, the Apocalypse] is a figure of the city of Rome, as being equally proud of her sway over the saints."

Augustine, who was born 354 AD, in his book, *City of God*, says: "Rome, the second Babylon, and the daughter of the first, to which it pleased God to subject the whole world, and bring it all into one sovereignty, is now founded." In another place he calls Rome "the western Babylon." In still another he says: "It has not been in vain that this city has received the mysterious name of Babylon; for Babylon is interpreted confusion, as we have said elsewhere."

It is evident from these quotations that the early Church Fathers understood that the Babylon of the Apocalypse meant Rome. And this had always been the interpretation of the Historic school, although for the past eight centuries events have proved that Papal and not Pagan Rome was meant. It would not be possible for those Christians living under Pagan Rome to conceive that Rome Christian could ever become such a terrible persecutor of the saints as was seen later on. It required a further unfolding of so-called Christian history to reveal this to the saints of God.

It was very generally believed as far back as the middle of the Second Century that the fall of Rome was imminent and that therefore the advent of Antichrist was close at hand. Justin Martyr, who suffered death as a confessor of the Christian faith, and who became a Christian only about twenty or thirty years after St. John's death, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (chapter 33), says: "He whom Daniel foretells would have dominion for a 'time, times and a half' is already even at the door about to speak blasphemous and daring things against the Most High."

Cyprian, whose conversion to Christianity took place in 241 AD, in his work, *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, wrote: "Since the hateful time of Antichrist is already beginning to draw near, I would collect from the sacred Scriptures some exhortations for preparing and strengthening the minds of the brethren, whereby I might animate the soldiers of Christ, for the heavenly and spiritual contest."

Irenaeus and Hippolytus thus interpret the mysterious number of 666 of Revelation 13. They give as the interpretation the word *Lateinos*. Irenaeus says, "*Lateinos* is the number 666, and it is a very probable [solution], this being the name of the last kingdom, for the Latins are they who at present bear rule."

Victorinus wrote an exposition of the Apocalypse about the close of the Third Century. "This is the earliest commentary in existence on the whole book. He interprets the going forth of the rider on the white horse, under the first seal, to have reference to the victories of the Gospel in the First Century. It will be seen that this view involves the Historical interpretation of the entire book of the Revelation."

Chrysostom, at the close of the Fourth Century, in his commentary on 2 Thessalonians, makes a very interesting and valuable statement concerning what St. Paul referred to as the "let" or hindrance to the revelation of the "man of sin": "One may naturally inquire, What is that which withholdeth — and after that why Paul expresses himself so obscurely, 'he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.' That is, when the Roman Empire is taken out of the way, then he shall come; and naturally, for as long as the fear of this Empire lasts, no one will readily exalt himself; but when that is dissolved, he will attack the anarchy and endeavor to seize upon the government, both of men and of God. For as the kingdoms before this were destroyed, that of the Medes by the Babylonians, that of the Babylonians by the Persians, that of the Persians by the Macedonians, that of the Macedonians by the Romans, so will this be by Antichrist, and he by Christ."

Chrysostom then gives a reason why St. Paul was so reserved in mentioning in his letter what the hindrance was, although he said he knew what it was and reminded the Thessalonian Christians in his epistle that he told them what it was when he was with them. Chrysostom, giving the Apostle's reason for his reserve, says: "Because he [St. Paul] says this of the Roman Empire, he naturally only glanced at it and spoke covertly, for he did not wish to bring upon himself superfluous enmities and useless dangers, for if he had said that after a little while the Roman Empire would be dissolved, they would now immediately overwhelm him as a pestilent person, and [also] all the faithful as living and

warring to this end [for the overthrow of the Empire]." Tertullian, who flourished the latter part of the Second Century, informs us that the Christian Church prayed for the emperors of Rome and for the stability of the Empire because they knew "that a mighty shock impending over the whole earth ... was only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman Empire."

Another whose writings clearly prove the character of Apocalyptic interpretation up to the beginning of the Fourth Century is Origen (born 185 AD); in his famous book against the Pagan writer Celsus, who was an opposer of Christianity, he says: "Paul speaks of him who is called Antichrist, describing, though with a certain reserve, both the manner and time and cause of his coming. ... The prophecy also regarding Antichrist is stated in the book of Daniel, and is fitted to make an intelligent and candid reader admire the words as truly Divine, and prophetic, for in them are mentioned the things relating to the coming Kingdom, beginning with the time of Daniel to the destruction of the world."

We close this brief summary of Apocalyptic interpretation for the first three centuries after the visions were given, in the language of Mr. Guinness: "It should be noted that none of the Fathers held the futurist gap theory, the theory that the book of Revelation overleaps nearly eighteen centuries of Christian history, plunging at once into the distant future, and devoting itself entirely to predicting the events of the last few years of this dispensation. As to the subject of Antichrist, there was a universal agreement among them concerning the general idea of the prophecy, while there were differences as to details, these differences arising chiefly from the notion that the Antichrist would be in some way Jewish as well as Roman. It is true they thought that the Antichrist would be an individual man. Their early position sufficiently accounts for this. They had no conception, and could have no conception of the true nature and length of the tremendous apostasy, which was to set in upon the Christian Church. They were not prophets and could not foresee that the Church was to remain nineteen centuries in the wilderness, and to pass through prolonged and bitter persecution under a succession of nominally Christian but apostate rulers, filling the place of the ancient Caesars, and emulating their anti-Christian deeds. Had they known these things, we may well believe their views would have completely harmonized with those of Historic interpreters of later times. The Fathers went as far as they could go in the direction in which Historical interpreters of these last days have traveled. Further, much that was dark to them in prophecy has become clear to their successors in the light of its accomplishment. Divine providence has thrown light, as it could not fail to do, on Divine predictions."

It was only about thirty years before the days of Chrysostom that the last cruel persecution of the Church by the Pagan government ended. It was at this point in history that the Roman government was changed from Pagan to Christian (so called). The persecutions of Pagan Rome had, to a large extent, the effect of holding all Christians together. It is true that many errors in doctrine had crept into the Church, but on the whole the Church was loyal to Christ. In Constantine's day, church and state became united and worldliness and error, like a flood, soon engulfed the simple, pure religion of Christ. It was at this time

that many true Christians began to separate from the great formal profession. These separations continued until the overthrow of the Imperial government and the official recognition of the Roman bishop (about 539 AD) as the religious ruler of Christendom. The true, loyal followers of Christ from this latter event, and even earlier, until the Reformation, were quite generally looked upon by the professing Church as heretics. These, as the records of history show, interpreted the visions of the Apocalypse that we have above cited, as having their fulfillment in the great apostate Church system — the Papacy. Roman Catholic writers, however, during this period, generally applied these visions as having had their fulfillment in Pagan Rome, although there were some writers remaining in the nominal system who continued to look for the Antichrist, and who applied the Apocalyptic visions as covering the history of the Gospel Age to the consummation. Among these were Primasius, who lived in the middle of the Sixth Century; the Venerable Bede, who lived in England at the close of the Seventh Century; Ambrose Anspert, who lived in the middle of the Eighth Century; Andreas, at the same time, who was a bishop of the Church in Caesarea. All of these interpreted the Apocalypse as covering the whole period of the Gospel Age, and they were, therefore, of the Historic school.

The period in which these expositors wrote was marked by the Papacy's gradual attainment of temporal dominion over the kingdoms of Western Rome. At the beginning of the Eleventh Century all the kingdoms of Europe were submitting to its control, and indeed giving a voluntary support to it, and were being employed by Papacy to persecute the saints of God even unto death. At this time some writers began to clearly recognize in Papacy the long predicted Antichrist, although there were numbers of true Christians still connected with the great professing Church. Referring to these, it has been said: "Two notions contributed powerfully to prevent their recognizing in the imperfectly developed Papacy the predicted 'Man of Sin.' They imagined that as the Eastern Empire of Rome, seated at Constantinople, still continued, the 'let,' or hindrance to the manifestation of the Antichrist remained, completely overlooking the fact that the anti-Christian power foretold in prophecy is definitely linked with the seven hills of Rome, and thus with the fall of the Western Empire, and the apostasy of the Latin or Western Church. Then they spiritualized and explained away a great deal of prophecy, and supposed that they were living in the Millennium, and that Antichrist would not be manifested till the brief outbreak of evil at its close. This false notion had fatal consequences. While these interpreters, in common with the generality of Christians at that period, were looking for the advent of the 'man of sin' in the distant future, he stole unperceived into their midst and usurped the place of Christ over his unwatchful flock."

Just before 1000 AD Gherbert of Rheims said of the pope that he was "Antichrist sitting in the temple of God." In the Eleventh Century Berenger affirmed the Roman See to be "not the Apostolic seat, but the seat of Satan."

During this whole period, however, there were little companies of believers, separated from civilization, as it were, who saw clearly in the succession of Roman bishops, the Antichrist of the Apocalypse. The Waldensian Christians

claimed that their forefathers left the nominal Church in the days of Constantine in the Fourth Century. However, we do not begin to have mention of them by that name in history until about the Twelfth Century. They have been generally called the "Israel of the Alps." They lived in what is known as the Waldensian valleys. "They were true Protestants long before the Reformation. They were lovers and students of prophecy from the oldest times. There is in existence a faithful history of this people written two hundred and fifty years ago by one of their pastors, Leger by name." It will be foreign to our purpose here to relate the terrible persecutions that these Christian confessors suffered at the hands of Rome. These matters are well authenticated events of history. The question before us is, How did these suffering saints interpret the Apocalypse? A noted writer of the Nineteenth Century, referring to Leger's history of the Waldenses, thus writes: "Leger tells with simple clearness the story of the Waldenses from the earliest times, quoting from ancient and authentic documents. He gives in full their confession of faith, and narrates the history of their martyrdoms. ... In this book of Leger's is their *Treatise on Antichrist*, written in the year 1120, eight hundred years ago. It is written in a language now extinct; Leger gives a French translation in parallel columns. In simple, telling terms that treatise brands the Romish Church as the harlot Babylon, and the Papacy as the 'man of sin,' and Antichrist. That was the faith and confession of the Waldenses."

Another body of Christian confessors commonly called the Albigenses, lived in the south of France, in Provence and Catalonia. History informs us that they were a civilized and highly educated people. In the year 1208, we have mention of them as undergoing terrible persecution at the instigation of the Papacy. Among these people there sprang up an extensive revival of true religion, and one of the natural effects was a bold testimony against the abominations of apostate Rome. Sismondi, the great Italian historian of whom it is said that "his mind was to the last open to truth; neither fettered by prejudice nor blinded by self conceit, and whose feelings on religious questions were especially intense," having on one occasion heard a sermon in an English church on eternal punishment, vowed never again to enter another church holding the same creed; and, to quote his own words, "never to contribute to spread what the English call their reformation; for by its side Romanism is a religion of mercy and peace" (*International Encyclopedia*). This man was an unprejudiced historian. In his history of the Albigenses, on page 7, he relates how these Christian confessors, as well as the Waldensian confessors, interpreted the vision of Babylon of the Apocalypse: "All agreed in regarding the Church of Rome as having absolutely perverted Christianity, and in maintaining that it was she who was designated in the Apocalypse by the name of the whore of Babylon."

It will not seem strange to any that Rome could not endure such a testimony, and it was at this particular period that Rome began that terrible war of exterminating heretics. The prophecies concerning this are mentioned in both Daniel and the Apocalypse (Daniel 7:21; Revelation 13:7).

The name John Huss is well known to every student of Christian history. He was martyred by Rome as a Christian confessor. He lived in the early part of

the Fifteenth Century — over a hundred years before the Protestant Reformation. How did he interpret the Apocalypse? His exact words are preserved on this matter. We quote from *Acts and Monuments*, Volume III, pages 497, 498, an epistle addressed by him to the people of Prague: "The more circumspect ye ought to be, for that Antichrist laboreth the more to trouble you. The last judgment draweth near but to the elect children of God, the kingdom of God draweth near. ... Know ye well, beloved, that Antichrist being stirred up against you deviseth divers persecutions."

From the same authority we have a letter addressed by Huss to the Lord John de Chum having special reference to the Apocalyptic harlot of Revelation 17. It reads: "By your letter which I received yesterday I understand first, how the malignant strumpet, that is of the malignant congregation, whereof mention is made in the Apocalypse, is detected, and shall be more detected; with which strumpet the kings of the earth do commit fornication, fornicating spiritually with Christ; and as is there said, sliding back from the truth, and consenting to the lies of Antichrist, through his seduction, and through fear, or through hope of confederacy for getting worldly honor."

We quote from another letter addressed to his friends, exhorting them not to be troubled because of the burning of his books:

"Master John Huss, in hope, the servant of God, to all the faithful, who love Him and His statutes, wisheth the truth and grace of God.

"Surely even at this day is the malice, the abomination, and filthiness of Antichrist revealed in the pope and others of this council.

"Oh how acceptable a thing should it be, if time would suffer me to disclose their wicked acts, which are now apparent; that the faithful servants of God might know them! I trust in God that He will send after me those that shall be more valiant; and there are alive at this day that shall make more manifest the malice of Antichrist, and shall give their lives to the death for the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall give both to you and me the joys of life everlasting.

"This epistle was written upon St. John Baptist's day, in prison and in cold irons; I having this meditation with myself, that John was beheaded in prison and bonds for the Word of God."

We call attention also to John Wycliffe, whose learning as well as simple faith and manly courage have never been questioned. He lived in the Fourteenth Century, and testified fearlessly against the abominations and errors of the Church of Rome. He translated the Scriptures into English and interpreted the Apocalypse just as the Waldenses did. He wrote a special treatise called *The Mirror of Antichrist*. From Wycliffe sprang the English Lollards, whose interpretation of the Apocalypse was the same as that of their leader. Lord Cobham, one of the Lollards, when brought before King Henry V and "admonished to submit himself to the pope as an obedient child," gave this answer: "As touching the pope and his spirituality, I owe them neither suit nor service, for as much as I know him by the Scriptures to be the great Antichrist, the son of perdition, the

open adversary of God, and an abomination standing in the holy place." This faithful confessor was condemned to death as a heretic.

We come now to the period beginning with the Reformation. Historians inform us that just before this time the terrible persecutions of Rome against the confessors of primitive, evangelical Christianity, had caused an entire cessation of public testimony against the abominations of the great anti-Christian apostasy. While it would not be correct to say that the application of the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse was the sole agency in bringing about the Reformation, yet it is undoubtedly true that these interpretations played a very important part in bringing about this great work. "The doctrinal and practical truths of Scripture guided the action of the Reformers as well as the prophetic. They opposed the Church of Rome, condemned alike by the doctrines, the precepts, and the prophecies of the Word of God. It might be difficult to say which of the three weighed with them the most. On each they were clear and emphatic. These three elements cannot be separated in estimating the springs of the Reformation. From the first, and throughout, that movement was energized and guided by the prophetic Word. Luther never felt strong and free to war against the Papal apostasy till he recognized the pope as Antichrist."

All the Reformers, with one consent, agreed that Rome was the "Babylon" of the Apocalypse, and the Papal pontiff the "man of sin." The Apocalyptic command, "Come out of her my people," was used by the Reformers to urge all true Christians in that system to separate themselves from it. To them, separation from Rome meant separation from Antichrist. In the year 1520, Luther wrote to Spalatinus these words: "I am extremely distressed in my mind. I have not much doubt but the pope is the real Antichrist." In the fall of the same year in a treatise entitled the *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*, Luther called the Papacy, "The kingdom of Babylon." On receiving the Papal bull of excommunication he again wrote to Spalatinus these words, "At last the Roman bull is come, and Eckins is the bearer of it. I treat it with contempt. You see that the expressed doctrines of Christ himself are here condemned. I feel myself now more at liberty, being assured that the popedom is anti-Christian and the seat of Satan."

In December he published two tracts in reply to the Papal bull, one of which was called, *Martin Luther against the Execrable Bull of Antichrist*. It was in this way that the Reformation was begun. In a *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* he gives utterance to the following (having reference to St. Paul's words in 2 Thessalonians 2:4): "Is not this to sit in the temple of God, to profess himself to be ruler in the whole Church? What is the temple of God? Is it stones and wood? Did not Paul say, 'The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are'? To sit — what is it but to reign, to teach and to judge? Who from the beginning of the Church has dared to call himself master of the whole Church but the pope?" In another of his writings he says that when Daniel "saw the terrible wild beast which had ten horns which by the consent of all is the Roman Empire, he also beheld another small horn come up in the middle of them. This is the Papal power, which rose up in the middle of the Roman Empire."

The Helvetic Confession, drawn up by the Reformers of Switzerland in 1536, contains an article condemning the Papacy as Antichrist. The same is true of the Smalcald Confession, adopted by Luther's followers in 1537.

John Calvin, in a letter to the Emperor, Charles V, says, "I deny that See to be apostolical, wherein nought is seen but a shocking apostasy. I deny him to be the vicar of Christ who in furiously persecuting the Gospel demonstrates by his conduct that he is Antichrist."

All the English reformers — Tyndale, Bradford, Ridley, Latimer, Cranmer, Jewel, and others — men who suffered martyrdom for testifying to the truth as it is in Christ, believed the pope to be the predicted Antichrist of the Apocalypse.

John Knox, the great Scottish Reformer, wrote a history of the Reformation, on the title page of which, a summary of its contents is thus given: "The manner, and by what persons, the light of Christ's Gospel has been manifested into this realm, after that horrible and universal defection from the truth which has come by the means of that Roman Antichrist." In his history he gives a list of the articles of faith, supposed to be those of the Lollards of Kyle. The thirty-second article reads thus: "That the pope is the head of the Kirk of Antichrist." Knox was in his early years attached to the Romish Church. He is supposed to have had his faith shaken in that Church about 1535, chiefly by the study of the "fathers." It was not, however, until about 1543 that he openly professed Protestantism. An incident is related of him that occurred in 1547. Becoming wearied of persecution he came to the castle of St. Andrew, intending to leave Scotland for Germany. While at the castle he is said to have taken the part of a godly Protestant preacher against Dean Annan, a Romanist. The Roman Catholic prelate was defeated in the discussion, and was compelled to take shelter under the protection and authority of his Church. He said that this authority "damned all Lutherans and heretics and therefore he needed no further disputation." John Knox's reply to this was: "Before we hold ourselves, or that ye can prove us sufficiently convinced, we must define the Church by the right notes given to us in God's Scriptures of the true Church; we must discern the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ, from the mother of confusion, spiritual Babylon, lest that impudently we embrace a harlot, instead of the chaste spouse; yea, to speak in plain words, lest we submit ourselves to Satan, thinking that we submit ourselves to Jesus Christ. For, as for your Roman Church, as it is now corrupted ... I no more doubt that it is the synagogue of Satan, and the head thereof called the pope to be the man of sin of whom the Apostle speaketh, than that I doubt that Jesus Christ suffered by the procurement of the visible Church of Jerusalem."

The "Key" to the Apocalypse

Another question that is logically suggested in this introduction and one closely related to the foregoing discussion is, What constitutes the "key" to the Apocalypse. There are those who believe that the "key" to unlock the meaning of the visions has not yet been given, but that at some future time it will be received by a specially chosen one, and then there will be a complete exposition

of all the visions of the Revelator which will be so clear that no one can possibly mistake its meaning and there will be no need of study to understand it. No time or space will be required in refuting this view, as it should be well known by students of the Bible that this is contrary to all God's methods in making known His Word. We are told to "search the Scriptures," to study to show ourselves approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of truth. Not only so, but we find that the order for this entire age has been to permit the Truth to be so beclouded with error that it has been with great difficulty that followers of Christ have held fast to it and walked in its light. And this is in accordance with what Jesus, addressing his disciples, said, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven." The fact of the matter is the Lord himself has furnished the key that unlocks the mysteries of the Apocalypse. It was placed in the hands of the Church over eighteen hundred years ago. The Church has not only been in possession of this key since the visions were first given to St. John, but she has made good use of it, and with increasing success, as history has lent its assistance. This does not mean that *all* its visions were divinely explained. It does mean, however, that enough has been explained, and explained so clearly, as to settle once for all that the Apocalyptic visions refer to the history of Christianity, false and true, and cover the entire Gospel Age.

Another, who has happily expressed the matter, has said: "No interpretation of the Apocalypse can be secure and stable, but that which is based on divinely given explanations of its symbols and visions. In seeking to understand the prophecy, our first question should be, What saith the Scriptures? The diligent use of the divinely given helps for the interpretation of the symbolic prophecy is the true and only way to its comprehension. ... Abandoning speculation and dogmatism, those who seek to understand symbolic prophecy, and especially the mysterious prophecies of the Apocalypse, should turn to the real helps which God has given to the comprehension of these portions of His Word. The primary key to Scripture is Scripture itself. The gate of entrance to the meaning of symbolic prophecy is Divine interpretation. The first duty of the student of prophecy is to listen to that which the revealing Spirit has said as to the meaning of its own mysterious utterances.

"He who would enter the temple of truth must be content to do so by the divinely given door. The Old Testament is certainly the entrance to the New, and in a special manner the book of Daniel in the Old Testament is the porch or passage leading to the Apocalypse."

Sir Isaac Newton, who is generally recognized as the most thorough mathematician and natural philosopher of his or perhaps of any other age (born 1642), was a most devout believer in the Christian religion, and wrote a book called *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel*. In this remarkable work he says: "Among the old prophecies, Daniel is most distinct in order of time, and easiest to be understood, and therefore in those things that relate to the last times [which Newton interpreted to mean the Gospel Age] he must be made the key to the rest." Concerning the connection of the prophecies of the Apocalypse with those of Daniel, he says, "The Apocalypse of John is written in the same style

and language with the prophecies of Daniel, and hath the same relation to that of all of them which they have to one another, so that all of them [those of St. John and those of Daniel] together make one complete prophecy."

As is well known, the book of Daniel contains several outlines of the history of the world's great empires. Its prophecies begin with Daniel's day, and reach without a single gap to the establishment of the Kingdom of God over the world. One of these prophecies is that of the image, stone, and mountain of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2); another is that of the vision given to Daniel himself, of the four beasts — the latter vision giving a more detailed account, in symbol, of the same course of events, and ending with the establishment of the Kingdom of God, as did the first one. There is scarcely a dissenting voice among prophetic expositors that the great empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Grecia, are represented respectively in the two visions, by the gold, silver, and brass of the image, and by the first three beasts of Daniel 7, and that these all passed into history less than a half century before Christ was born. There is the same general agreement that the great Roman Empire is symbolized by the iron legs of the image, and the fourth beast of Daniel's vision (Daniel 7). Indeed, the Scriptures themselves mention the above kingdoms as the ones represented in these visions. It was this fourth or Roman Empire in its Pagan form that was ruling the world when St. John was given the visions of the Apocalypse. It was this Roman government, under the Emperor Domitian, that banished St. John to the lonely Isle of Patmos. Now mark the "key" that opens the door to the portal of the Apocalypse. It is seen in that this fourth or Roman Empire is one of the chief subjects of the Apocalyptic visions. Three entire chapters are devoted to it, the twelfth, thirteenth, and seventeenth, besides its being incidentally referred to in at least ten other chapters. The obvious conclusion then is that all the events foretold in the Apocalypse belong to that order of things and to that course of history predicted of the fourth beast of Daniel, or the Roman Empire. It will thus be seen that the Apocalypse contains visions that take up the history foretold by Daniel, as well as fill in many important details of that history, the details being, as is divinely implied in statements in the opening and closing chapters of the Apocalypse, the history of God's servants in their relation to the world government of Rome, in its undivided, but more especially in its divided state. This divided state is symbolized by the ten horns on the head of the fourth beast of Daniel's vision (Daniel 7), and on the head of the beast of the Apocalypse (Revelation 12, 13, and 17).

How then, we ask, can it be successfully disproved that all the visions of the Apocalypse belong to this outline, as given in Daniel? and how can they be properly understood until they are fitted into this general outline, as part of a great symbolic revelation concerning the course and succession of events of this Gospel Age? We have already shown that earnest Christians who lived contemporaneous with St. John, as well as others who succeeded him in the early centuries, interpreted the "ten-horns" on the fourth beast as having reference to the governments into which the Western Roman Empire was divided in connection with the overthrow of the imperial power, ruling in the seven-hilled city;

furthermore, that the "little horn" of Daniel 7, that came up among the "ten," represented the political aspect of Antichrist; and still further, that the beast of Revelation 13 and 17, under one of its heads, was identical with the same "little horn" of Daniel 7, and the "man of sin" of 2 Thessalonians 2.

Evidence Adduced from Vision of Christ Dwelling Among the Candlesticks

This very apparent connection between the visions of the Roman Empire in Daniel and in the Apocalypse furnishes evidence of the correctness of the Historical interpretation, and the incorrectness of the Futurist. We have, however, that which is more important and convincing than even this. We have a Divine explanation of two of the chief visions of the Apocalypse that makes it absolutely necessary that we apply these visions to events which began long centuries ago, and which cover the whole course of history from St. John's day to the complete end of this Gospel Age. The first of these is the explanation by Christ himself of the vision of the one like a Son of Man walking amidst the candlesticks. Certain statements made in the messages sent by Him to the seven Churches contain the same thought. The second of these is the explanation of the revealing angel in chapter 17, involving five distinct matters that inseparably link the vision of the ten-horned, seven-headed beast and the harlot woman seated thereon, with five of the most prominent features of the past history of the Church. We will examine these in the order mentioned above.

The interpreter of this vision of chapter one is evidently our Lord Jesus himself. He says: "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches." It is to be observed that this divinely given interpretation binds its application to the Christian Church, and that the seven messages recorded also do the same. And that which is even more convincing is the fact that some matters presented in these messages are so intimately and profoundly connected with the prophetic visions seen subsequently by St. John, recorded in chapters six to twenty-two, that this of itself imparts a Christian character to those visions also, and conclusively proves that the Apocalyptic visions relate to the history and destiny of the Church of Christ. "This intimate connection is seen in the fact that the promises in the letters to the seven Churches relate to experiences and privileges and rewards set forth in the predictions which occur in the prophetic portion of the book." As an illustration, note the promise made to the overcomers in Smyrna — "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the Second Death" (Revelation 2:11). The Church at Smyrna, or the true Christians of the Pagan Roman persecuting period represented by it, experienced terrible persecution and suffering, and were noted for their endurance of afflictions and poverty. Note how closely the promise to the suffering Christians of those times is connected with the prophetic vision that describes its realization — "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection: on such the *Second Death hath no power*, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with

him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6). As one has said: "The Christian character which certainly attaches to the promise, must therefore also attach to the prophecy, for the thing promised and the thing prophesied are the same."

For a further illustration of this very marked connection between the promises to the Churches and the prophecies, we call attention to the promise to Sardis: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life" (Revelation 3:5). Note the connection in chapter nineteen where we have a picture of the "Bride" arrayed in fine linen, white and clean, which is said to be the righteousness of the saints. In chapter twenty-one those symbolized by the New Jerusalem are represented as having their names "written in the Lamb's book of Life." Here we have again the rewards promised in the earlier part of the Apocalypse, identified with the prophetic fulfillment at its close.

Consider next the special promise to the believers of Philadelphia: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name." Who can doubt that this is a Christian promise. The fulfillment of this promise is recorded in two prophecies of this book — chapter fourteen, in the vision of the Lamb standing on Mt. Zion and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having Christ's name and the name of his father written in their foreheads; and chapter twenty-one, in the vision of the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, in the foundations of which were the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb; and we have the vision further explained, that the New Jerusalem is a symbol of the Lamb's Bride (verses 9,10).

We next observe the promise contained in the message to the Church of Laodicea, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Revelation 3:21). The fulfillment of this promise is recorded in chapter 20, where we have the overcoming saints described as sitting on thrones, and living and reigning with Christ. The reward promised to Christian victors — the reigning with Christ — is identical with the reward of the victors over the power of the beast described in another part of the Apocalypse. Is it not manifest that the promises and prophecies have reference to the same Christian experiences and rewards. In view of all this, how can it be questioned that the Apocalypse is a Christian prophecy, and that it relates to the Church of Christ in its present experience of suffering and trial, and also its future experience of triumph?

We now come to consider the one and only Divine explanation of the prophecy that occupies, as we have already noted, so large a proportion of the Apocalypse. This is that of the harlot woman, "Babylon the Great," and the seven-headed, ten-horned beast that carried her. Concerning this vision (different aspects of which are seen in at least ten chapters of the book), we hear the revealing angel saying to St. John, "Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns" (Revelation 17:7,8).

It can hardly be questioned that the interpretation of this vision by the heavenly revealer was divinely intended to constitute a key to the unlocking of the remaining visions of the Apocalypse. Before considering the Divine explanation it will be necessary first to get the vision itself well in our mind. The vision is described by St. John in the words: "And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication; and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration [amazement]" (Revelation 17:3-6). It will be seen that the one important feature of the vision is that of the "woman" seated on the scarlet colored beast, and the effects produced upon the inhabitants of the earth by drinking of a golden cup which the woman holds in her hand. Preceding this description, one of the seven angels which had the seven vials of wrath addressed St. John in the words, "Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (verses 1,2). It will be observed from these words that what was to be specially explained to St. John was the judgment of the great harlot and the beast which carried her. This judgment would of course necessarily require an explanation of who the great harlot represented, as also the same of the beast which carried her. These things, the revealing angel does explain. Observe specially his words: "I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." Note carefully the five expressions that mark the angelic explanation.

(1) "The beast that thou sawest" (verse 8).

(2) "The ten horns which thou sawest" (verse 12).

(3) "The waters which thou sawest" (verse 15).

(4) "The woman which thou sawest" (verse 18).

(5) "The seven heads [which thou sawest]" (verse 9).

The angel's explanation of these five matters is the key to the Apocalypse. The beast, the horns, the heads, the waters, the woman, are all interpreted, and their interpretation involves the Historical interpretation of the Apocalypse. It is very apparent that the harlot woman constitutes the great and prominent feature of the vision. There is no need that any special interpretation be given to show that this harlot woman symbolizes a false church system of world-wide influence and power. The only explanation needed is concerning what church system is represented. While we have no direct statement that this harlot woman represents a false church system, we do have indirect evidence that is just as convincing. It is represented in the fact that she is exhibited in contrast with another "woman" which we know represents the true Church. Both women are mentioned under

two striking and contrasting symbols. The one is designated as both a harlot woman and an unholy city (Revelation 17:5); the other is represented as a pure, chaste woman and a holy city (Revelation 21:9,10). The one is called Babylon the Great; the other is called the New Jerusalem. The one is associated with the "beast"; the other with the "Lamb." The one is represented as in illicit union with the kings of the earth; the other is represented as the chaste Bride of the Lamb. The one is clothed in "purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls"; the other is arrayed in "fine linen, clean and white." The one is "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus"; the other is made up of the saints and includes the martyrs. The one is punished with both temporal and eternal judgments; the other is rewarded with everlasting honor and felicity. The interpretation of either one of these suggests the interpretation of the other. For instance, we have the chaste woman, the holy city interpreted to be the Lamb's Bride; the one must be the opposite — the false Church, the counterfeit Bride. To those familiar with church history it would seem that no Divine interpretation concerning what particular Church is described by the Babylonian harlot is needed. However, evidently in view of the fact that it is prophesied that all nations would be deceived into thinking that the church system represented was the true one, the revealing angel gives the information concerning what Church is referred to in the words: "The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." The angel's words clearly point to but one city, and that is Rome, for Rome was the only city that reigned over the kings of the earth in St. John's day. It is the only Church that has taken the name of a city. It is the only city that has had a Church hierarchy, which has exercised such a far-reaching dominion over nations and peoples and tongues. Furthermore, the Roman city is designated in the further explanation of the angel: "The seven heads are seven mountains [hills] on which the woman sitteth."[1] Who is not aware that this is a well known feature of the city of Rome? "All the Latin poets for five hundred years speak of Rome as the seven-hilled city. Rome is depicted on her imperial coins as sitting on seven hills. Among the early Fathers, Tertullian and Jerome may be cited as referring to this feature. 'I appeal,' says Tertullian, 'to the citizens of Rome, the populace that dwells on the seven hills.' Jerome, when urging Marcella to quit Rome for Bethlehem, writes: 'Read what is said of Rome in the Apocalypse of the seven hills.' " The names of the seven hills of Rome are the Palatine, Quirinal, Aventine, Coelian, Viminal, Esquiline, and Janiculan. Another explanation given by the angel is concerning the many "waters": "The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Such was certainly the position of Rome, and the church system ruled from Rome. The peoples and nations and tongues were for long centuries subject to her sway; and while her temporal authority over the kings is gone, she still claims it, and exerts a world-wide influence over very many peoples and tongues, and in the present time is increasing her influence and power.

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(1) This, however, does not complete the explanation of the seven heads.

A still further explanation of the revealing angel is that of the "ten-horns" on the beast. The ten horns are explained as symbolizing ten kingdoms, which, at the time that St. John was given the visions, were still future. Indeed, these ten horns are the same as those seen by Daniel on the fourth beast, which were divinely explained to him as the ten-fold division of the Roman Empire. The explanation as given by the revealing angel to St. John is contained in the words: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings [Kingdoms], which have received no kingdom as yet [that is, at the time St. John saw the vision]; but receive power as kings one hour ["at one and the same time," as rendered by noted translators] with the beast." As the ten horns, according to Irenaeus, a disciple of a disciple of St. John, are "the same as mentioned by Daniel," and since they came into existence on the division of the Roman Empire in the Fifth Century, the vision of the "harlot woman" seated on the beast could not possibly begin to meet its fulfillment, until the Roman Empire was thus divided. In the explanation of the angel, these horns or kingdoms are represented as first giving a voluntary submission to the harlot woman or city (government).

They are subsequently represented by the revealing angel as rising against her, "and making her desolate and naked, and eating her flesh and burning her with fire." Now this explanation by the angel is a faithful portrayal of outward Christian history for long centuries. It is universally agreed that in less than four centuries after St. John's day, the Western Roman Empire fell and its territory was divided into ten kingdoms, and that after a brief period these kingdoms all gave their support to the Roman bishop who sat at first as a religious ruler and next as a temporal ruler. Gibbon, the great historian, who was an unbeliever, has thus described this momentous event of history: "About the close of the Sixth Century Rome had reached the lowest period of her depression. By the removal of the seat of Empire [to Constantinople], and the successive loss of the provinces, the sources of public and private opulence were exhausted; the lofty tree under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground. ... Like Thebes or Babylon or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honor and dominion. Under the sacerdotal monarchy of St. Peter, the nations of the earth began to resume the practice of seeking on the banks of the Tiber, their kings, their laws, and the oracles of their fate." Referring to the Papacy which contained the "vital principle which again restored her to honor and dominion," Hallam, in his *History of the Middle Ages*, says: "Rome inspired all the terror of her ancient name; she was once more the mistress of the world, and kings were her vassals."

Cardinal Manning, in his book entitled *The Temporal Power of the Popes* (published in 1860, ten years before the fall of the temporal power of Papacy), thus refers to this remarkable event connected with the rise of the Roman Catholic system: "Now the abandonment of Rome was the liberation of the Pontiffs. ... The providence of God permitted a succession of eruptions, Goths, Lombards, and Hungarians, to desolate Italy, and to efface from it every vestige

of the Empire. The Pontiffs found themselves alone, the sole fountains of order, peace, law, and safety. And from the hour of this providential liberation, when by a Divine intervention the chains fell off from the hands of the successors of St. Peter, as once before from his own, no sovereign has ever reigned in Rome except the Vicar of Jesus Christ."

It is also a well known fact of history that, beginning in the Sixteenth Century, one after another of these kingdoms withdrew their support, and began to confiscate her landed estates in these kingdoms, and to gradually take away her power and influence, until in 1870 she ceased altogether to be represented in the councils of these kingdoms. How remarkable is the fulfillment of the prediction that the kings would eat her flesh, etc.!

The Inevitable Conclusion

It is our conviction that this Divine interpretation of itself proves the Christian character of the Apocalypse, and confines its fulfillment to a considerable extent to the events of past history; and that all that remains to be fulfilled of its visions are those that relate to the destruction of the false religious systems, symbolized by the woman, Babylon, and her harlot offspring; the destruction of the governments of earth, symbolized by the beast in its last form; and the establishment of the Kingdom of God, on the ruins of earth's empires.

An eminent writer sums up briefly all the different items of the prophecy: "The holy Spirit foreseeing, no doubt, that the Church of Rome would adulterate the truth by many gross and grievous abominations, that she would anathematize all who would not communicate with her, and denounce them as cut off from the Body of Christ, and the hope of everlasting salvation; foreseeing also that Rome would exercise a wide and dominant sway for many generations, by boldly iterated assertions of unity, antiquity, sanctity, and universality; foreseeing also that these pretensions would be supported by the civil sword of many secular governments, among which the Roman Empire would be divided at its dissolution, and that Rome would thus be enabled to display herself to the world in an august attitude of imperial power and with dazzling splendor of temporal felicity; foreseeing also that the Church of Rome would captivate the imaginations of men by the fascinations of art allied with religion, and would ravish their senses and rivet their admiration by gaudy colors and stately pomp and prodigal magnificence; foreseeing also that she would beguile their credulity by miracles and mysteries, apparitions and dreams, trances and ecstasies and would appeal to such evidences in support of her strange doctrines; foreseeing likewise that she would enslave men and (much more) women by practicing on their affections and by accommodating herself with dangerous pliancy to their weakness, relieving them from the burden of thought and from the perplexity of doubt by proffering them the aid of infallibility, soothing the sorrows of the mourner by dispensing pardon and promising peace to the departed, removing the load of guilt from the oppressed conscience by the ministries of the confessional and by nicely poised compensations for sins, and that she would flourish for many centuries in proud and prosperous impunity before her sins would reach to heaven and come in

remembrance before God; foreseeing also that many generations of men would thus be tempted to fall from the faith and to become victims of deadly error, and that they who clung to the truth would be exposed to cozening flatteries and fierce assaults and savage tortures from her — the holy Spirit, we say, foreseeing all these things, in his Divine knowledge, and being the ever-blessed teacher, guide, and comforter of the Church was graciously pleased to provide a heavenly antidote for all these dangerous, widespread, and long- enduring evils, by dictating the Apocalypse. In this Divine book the Spirit of God has portrayed the Church of Rome such as none but he could have foreseen that she would become, and such as, wonderful and lamentable to say, she has become. He has thus broken her spells; he has taken the wand of enchantment from her hand; he has lifted the mask from her face; and with his Divine hand he has written her true character in large letters, and has planted her title on her forehead to be seen and read of all: 'Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth' " (Wordsworth, *Rome, the Babylon of the Apocalypse*).

From the foregoing it would seem that the careful student, tracing the symbols of the visions of St. John, cannot avoid the conclusion that the Revelation of Jesus Christ was especially designed to portray in symbols the history of the falling away of the Christian Church from the faith, and its culmination in a great counterfeit system which would blind and deceive all except those whose names were written in the "Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 13:8). It is discovered also that the visions of Revelation describe in various symbolisms the history of the comparatively few faithful, consecrated ones as they came in contact with the world powers and endeavored to hold forth the Word of Truth in the midst of the surrounding ignorance and darkness, made so by apostate Christianity.

We may be very sure that the book of Revelation, which completes the Divine canon of inspiration, requiring as it did a supernatural method in giving it to the Church, has been and is especially at the present time, of vital importance to her service and ministry, and also to her growth and development in Christ. It was given, doubtless, to supply a special need, for the Church has always needed the help, encouragement and blessing which accompanies a knowledge of the "sure word of prophecy ... a light shining in a dark place" (2 Peter 1:19). There is no book in the whole Bible that to so great an extent as the Revelation reveals the Divine overruling of the events of history, both good and evil, for the Church's growth and development in grace and knowledge.

While there has been a gradual, progressive understanding of its visions as history has unveiled them, it was not until these closing years of the age that a clear understanding of its general scope could be given. The true character of the Divine Plan of human salvation became so perverted and distorted by the fallen Church systems that it could not be fully understood until the errors of the systems became separated from the Truth, and a clear understanding of the same was restored to the Church. This we believe has recently taken place, and is now a matter of history; indeed, this is the subject of several of the closing visions of the book. The fulfillment of these latter visions is of itself, as we shall endeavor to prove, evidence that "the days of the presence of the Son of

Man" are here. The words of Christ, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye might believe," are very significant in this connection.

It should be kept in mind in studying the book of Revelation that it was not designed to foretell *especially* the history of the world powers; for as it has been truly said, "The Church exists in the world, and its outward history is, to a very large extent, affected by it; and just as it would be impossible to write the story of one's life without taking into consideration his environment, so it would be impossible to write the history of the [true] Church without giving some of the history of the world in which the Church is giving its witness and testimony. Wars, revolutions, etc., have to a remarkable degree affected or been affected by the Church's testimony, and for this cause we have those occurrences in the past depicted under various strange and startling symbols. On the other hand, the Church's inward or spiritual history is affected by unseen agencies, both Heavenly and Satanic; and so, as in some of the visions, we behold her sustained, cheered, revived, and her influence enlarged; we know Christ, her great Head, is acting in her behalf, as portrayed in the symbolic visions of his walking in the midst of the candlesticks [Churches]."

It is very evident that these marvelous, prophetic visions were given for the guidance, assistance, and protection of the whole Church through the long, dark centuries of her witnessing to the Gospel. As we read of the experiences of God's consecrated ones of the past, we learn that these visions have proved to be a mighty power in their history, and that they have served to preserve the faith of the Church in times of peril and general apostasy. We have found that the knowledge of some of them, and the testimony thereto have had the effect of giving birth to great reformation movements, particularly that of the Sixteenth Century; that they have inspired confessors and supported martyrs in the cause of Christ, some of whom sealed their faithfulness at the stake, while others suffered terrible deaths in other ways. A knowledge of some of these prophetic visions has been largely instrumental in breaking the chains of priestcraft, superstition, and tyranny, and has brought multitudes out of bondage. The book of Revelation is Christ's last message to the Church — "I Jesus, have sent mine angel [messenger] to testify unto you these things in the Churches" (Revelation 22:16).

"He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

The Glory of the Gospel

Upon the Gospel's sacred page
The gathered beams of ages shine;
For, as it hastens, every age
Fulfills its prophecies Divine.

On mightier wing, in loftier flight,
From year to year the truth shall soar;
And, as it soars, its blessed light
Shall scatter darkness more and more.

More glorious still, as centuries roll,
Shall Truth's fair banner be unfurled,
Until in strength, from pole to pole,
Its radiance shall o'erflow the world —

Flow to restore, but not destroy;
As when the cloudless lamp of day
Pours out its floods of light and joy,
And sweeps the lingering mists away.

Chapter One

A Divine Prophecy in Signs
St. John's Salutation

(Revelation 1:1-8)

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1).

It seems very evident that St. John prefixed the title of the book after he had seen all the visions, and after he had recorded them. In these introductory words we have a very convincing statement that the book is a Divine prophecy, that it was given by God to Jesus Christ, and that it is for his servants the Church — for their benefit, for their instruction, for their guidance.

Some hold the view that the expression "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" has reference to the person of the Savior; that it means not a revelation in the sense of a communication of truth, but rather a manifestation of Christ's person at his Second Advent. A noted Futurist expositor has expressed this view: "The Apocalypse, or Revelation of Jesus Christ, means Jesus Christ revealed and uncovered to mortal view, and not merely Jesus Christ revealing, and making known hidden things to be recorded for our learning. ... The book is not the Apocalypse of the Apocalypse, but the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ." This, he says, "is the key to the whole book." This view is readily seen to be erroneous for the reason that the title reads, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ *which God gave unto him* to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." It is not, then, the Revelation of Christ's person, but rather a revelation in the sense of a communication given to him by God, his Father. It can not refer to a revelation of him in person, for the reason that the revelation which was given to him was a revelation of *"things which must shortly come to pass."* It is true that in the book, the person of Jesus Christ is frequently portrayed in the visions. However, these visions in which he is seen in person are designed to show his relation to the Church in the various operations of his office. For instance, his performing certain duties of his office as a priest is represented in his walking among the candlesticks (Revelation 1:13); his receiving the revelation of future events from the Father is portrayed in his receiving the sealed scroll (Revelation 5:7); his intercession in heaven in behalf of his Church on earth is seen in the vision where he is represented as presenting the incense and prayers which go up to the Father from the saints on earth. There are other instances in which he appears in vision, performing the duties of his office to his Church in her

suffering, witnessing state on earth, as also those which show his authority as King and Judge, which we need not mention.

Very truly has the meaning of the word *revelation* as used in this text been explained to be "a disclosure of an extraordinary character, beyond the mere ability of man, by a special communication from heaven. This is manifest, not only from the usual meaning of this word, but by the word *prophecy* in verse 3, and by all the arrangements by which these things were made known. The ideas which would be naturally conveyed by the use of this word in this connection are two: first, that there was something which was before hidden, obscure, or unknown: and second, that this was so disclosed by these communications as to be seen or known. The things hidden or unknown were those which pertained to the future; the method of disclosing them was mainly by symbols."

The well chosen language of another is interesting in this connection: "Note the simplicity of the introduction to this most wonderful book. The Apostle did not write the title as it appears in our Bibles — 'The Revelation of St. John the Divine.' On the contrary, he claims no credit for the revelation; for it was not his. As he distinctly explains, it was from our Lord Jesus Christ, and to him from God the Father. Nor was it even to St. John in any special sense; but, as he again declares, unto God's servants, sent by his 'servant John.' This simplicity, common to all the Apostles, commends them to us as men of humble mind — the very kind we should expect our Lord to use as special messengers to his people. This simplicity, this absence of boastfulness, so noticeable in the writings of all the Apostles, marks them as being in the ministry, not for the gratification of vanity, or for earthly rewards of any kind, but simply as the servants of God, who delighted to do His will, and to tell the Good Tidings, to the utter ignoring of themselves, except in so far as mention of themselves and their affairs might be necessary."

The revelations are given in symbols: "And he sent and *signified* it [revealed by signs or symbols] by his angel unto his servant John." To signify is to show or make known by signs or symbols. It is then a book of symbols — symbolic visions. Its true meaning, therefore, is veiled in symbols, and to understand it, a process of translation must take place. One has said as illustrating this: "If on opening a letter from a friend, the first sentence that met the eye was, 'I write in Latin in order that my letter may not be understood by all,' we should at once be prepared to translate as we read; we should not pore over a certain combination of letters and syllables, trying in vain to make some intelligible English word out of them; we would say the word is so and so, but the meaning is so and so. In reading the symbolic portion of the Apocalypse, we are bound to do the same; on no other principle can anything like a consistent interpretation be attained."

The symbols employed are drawn from nearly every phase of life. We have the sun, moon, and stars in the celestial world, and the earth, sea, rivers and their sources, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and fearful electrical storms, in the terrestrial. We have a pure, chaste woman representing the true Church, and an impure, harlot woman and her daughters representing the nominal, false

Church. We have victorious Roman warriors, rebel conspirators, and unjust, oppressive civil rulers also employed as symbols; while strange and unnatural beasts are among the most prominent.

Certain Divine laws must govern in the correct interpretation of these symbols. First, we must study the symbols themselves. When the sun is employed as a symbol, we need to study the relation the sun sustains to the material universe and man; if an earthquake, we need to become familiar with its effects upon the earth and its inhabitants. Second, we must remember that the fulfillment of the symbol, as a rule, must be looked for in another phase of life from that in which it is drawn. It will, we believe, be found that all or nearly all the symbols of Revelation are used and explained in other Scriptures, especially in those of the Old Testament prophecies. It will also be found that the various things employed as symbols are not always used to describe the same things; as waters sometimes mean peoples, and at other times, Gospel truths and blessings.

The symbolic pictures of Revelation were not given for the world to understand, nor even for those who are merely nominal Christians. They were given rather for the purpose of showing *unto God's servants* things that are shortly to come to pass. "The Lord God of the holy Prophets hath sent his angel to show *unto his servants* things which must shortly be done." "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel, to testify unto you these things *in the Churches"* (Revelation 22:6,16). Every statement in the book itself that has any bearing on this point shows that it is addressed to Christ's servants, the Church. The Epistles of Paul, Peter, John, James and Jude are all addressed to the "saints and the faithful in Christ Jesus," or to the Church, in such and such a place. We reason rightly from the Epistles that they are not for the world, not for the Jews, but for consecrated believers in Christ alone. Confusion has been and will always be the result if unbelievers, either Jew or Gentile, take these Divine messages as addressed to them. Why does not this argument apply with equal force to the Apocalypse? It certainly does.

"To show unto his servants." Who were Christ's servants at the time St. John saw the vision? There can be but one answer — those who were serving him at that time; those from among the Jews and those from among the Gentiles, who had become Christ's followers, his disciples. Some Futurists have endeavored to avoid this most natural interpretation of these words, by saying that if the words were addressed to Christ's followers, the address would read, "to show unto his sons"; in other words, because the Jews of the Jewish dispensation were called servants and not sons, therefore Jews are meant.

We think this is unsound reasoning. In the first place, the Jews had been rejected, cast off from favor at the time St. John saw these visions. They were no longer God's servants, they were *never* Christ's servants. They could become his servants only by receiving him as their Messiah and by yielding themselves entirely unto him. They would then become sons, serving sons, not serving servants. No one doubts that St. Paul, while a son of God, and an Apostle, was also a servant. The same is true of St. John and the other Apostles and, indeed, all who have come into harmony with God through Christ.

Again, we read that the Revelation was addressed to the seven Churches of Asia Minor, not to Jews or assemblies of Jews living in Asia Minor. St. John was told, "What thou seest, write in a book, and send unto the seven Churches." Now who constituted the Churches of Asia Minor? There can be but one answer — Those who had received Christ as their Savior and Lord, whether from among the Jews or Gentiles.

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things *in the Churches*," not to testify these things to Jews, or Jewish assemblies.

And finally, as confirmatory of this particular point, we have the Savior himself saying, at the close of each of the seven messages: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches"; not what the Spirit saith unto the Jews at that time, or even of some future time, as Futurists would have us believe (Revelation 2:7,11,17,29, 3:6,13,22). It seems a reasonable conclusion "that Jews and unbelievers have no more to do with this prophecy than they have with the Epistle to the Ephesians. They may possibly be alluded to in the one as in the other, but it is not for them, it is not mainly concerned with them; it is for us; Christians alone were Christ's servants in the days of Domitian, when John saw and heard these things; to Christians alone was it sent; the seven Churches represented the whole Church; and they take the children's bread to give to outsiders, who would rob the Church of her Lord's last gift.

"It is no use to say, 'Yes! but though given to the Church, it might still be a revelation of the counsels of God about others than herself.' *It might*, the Epistle to the Ephesians *might* have been a treatise on the state and prospects of the lost ten tribes, but it was not; the vision of Nebuchadnezzar might have been a vision of the restoration of Israel, but it was not; the visions of Daniel might have been visions of the seven Churches in Asia, but they were not, nor was it likely they would be, nor is it likely that the Lord Jesus in his last prophetic communication to his cherished Church, from whom for eighteen hundred years he was to be hidden, would have nothing more pressing, personal, and important to reveal to her, than the destiny of a future Jewish remnant, with which she has nothing in common."

Another very significant matter as proving that Christians and only Christians are addressed in this prophecy, is that the ascription of praise in the address recorded in chapter 1, verse 5, is none other than *Christian* praise, as the words, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," very plainly teach. The very next statement of the Apostle shows who are referred to in this passage. It is those who are to be made kings and priests. We read: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." Are the kings and priests unto God and his Father to be Jews, taken out from either this Gospel Age or any age prior to, or to follow this? Surely not. The ones referred to here are those mentioned by St. John as subjects of the First (chief) Resurrection. "They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6). Who can doubt that the ones referred to by St. John in chapter 1:5 are the same ones referred to in chapter 20 as having part in the First Resurrection?

Blessed is He that Readeth

A special blessing is pronounced upon those who read and hear it read. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3). Surely a book, the contents of which our blessed Lord Jesus esteemed of such great importance as to require that it be given in such a special, supernatural way, and that at its beginning should be introduced by such admonitory words as these, to study it, ought to be esteemed and prized highly. As another has said: "There is a blessing upon those who read this revelation, even though they do not understand, and a special blessing upon those who hear and understand the words of this prophecy and conform their lives to the things therein written."

It informs us of the condition in which the world and the church systems will be when he comes to rule. It tells us what that Advent will bring to his prepared and waiting saints; what it will inflict upon lukewarm believers; what will be the end of this present order, ecclesiastical, social, and political; in fact, it tells what will be the important issues of the great Day of God Almighty. It portrays what the condition of the great professed church systems will be until he comes; what the condition of his true people will be all along through the age till his Advent as a thief in the night. It pictures in strong and glorious symbols the Church's grand and blessed future, and the world's uplift through the gracious reign of Emmanuel and his overcoming saints. It is true that all these things and many others are portrayed in symbols; but a promise is implied in the words, "Blessed is he that readeth" — that all these symbols can be understood in a due time. Indeed, the time has now come for these things to be more fully understood, and some are realizing the blessing promised.

These words imply that the first essential thing in order to understand the book and to derive the blessing promised is to read it, or hear it, and thus get familiar with the visions and their orderly arrangement. All the visions of this most holy and sanctifying book may well be compared to the enacting of a great drama. This great symbolical drama is nothing less than a forecasting of the outward and inward history of the true and the nominal Church throughout their long eventful career until the Second Advent, and the exaltation to glory of the one, and the destruction of the other, in connection with that momentous event. Symbolic agencies, both animate and inanimate, are the performers.

This Divine drama of symbols is most systematically arranged in three acts — seals, trumpets, and vials. Each act contains seven scenes. We believe it will be seen that the first six seals bring the history down to our times, and give us a view of the "Temple" class and of the "Great Company" in glory. The occurrences under the seventh seal are doubtless retrospective and cover much the same period as the first six. It would appear that the trumpets and vials, together with certain parenthetical visions, indeed, all the visions following the sixth seal, are included in the breaking or loosing of the seventh seal. This arrangement of the visions was doubtless the one held by the later expositors, particularly D. N. Lord and C. T. Russell, as will be seen by their expositions hereinafter set forth.

The Salutation

Verses 4 to 9, inclusive, are no part of the Revelation given by God, the Father, to Christ, but rather an inspired preface, which deals more especially with St. John's feelings as he sat down to record or write a description of the wonderful, strange, and startling things he had seen in the visions which passed before him as he was in the spirit on the Lord's day. Segregating the various points contained in these verses, an eminent writer has very properly analyzed them as including:

(1) An affecting salutation: "John to the seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth" (verses 4,5).

(2) An exultant ascription: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (verses 5,6).

(3) A solemn prophetic allusion: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (verse 7).

(4) A devout theological recognition: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (verse 8).

Several of the matters involved in these utterances are supposed to be quite familiar to the understanding as well as to the experiences of true Christians, such being the ones for whom the visions that follow are given. As it is not the purpose in this exposition to deal specially with these lines of thought, we confine ourself to the consideration of the matters contained in verses 7 and 8.

It has been understood by most expositors that the words, "Behold he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him," are to be fulfilled literally — that Christ will appear in literal clouds and every human being will see with the physical eye the Son of God, at his Second Advent. It is our thought, however, that while a *personal* advent of the Divine Christ is taught in this and other passages, it should not be understood that human beings will literally see him. "I go my way [he once said] and the world seeth me no more." He being the express image of the Father, no human being could look upon him and live. The word translated "see" is the Greek *horao*, which, according to Dr. Young, means more frequently, to perceive, to discern, to take heed; and it seems to be in the sense of discerning that the word is used in this text. Many writers have taught that the Second Advent will be invisible to mortals and will be made known to the true Church through an understanding of the "sure word of prophecy," some time before the world will discern that it has taken place. The world will know later on through the great troubles, clouds, the like of which will never have been known before; also through the supernatural sights and occurrences that will be

in evidence in connection with the overthrow of the present world or order of things and the establishment of the new. We quote two writers of note, whose statements present splendid elucidations in regard to this. One of these wrote in 1856, and while it was his understanding that at the later stage of the Second Advent all will literally see him, yet it was his view that in its earliest stages Christ will be present for some time, and the world be utterly unconscious of it:

"We are repeatedly told [in Scripture] that the Day of Judgment shall come '*as a thief in the night*.' And how does a thief come? He not only comes stealthily, and at such an hour as we think not, but he is already on the premises, in the house and doing his work, before we are aware of his presence. And so shall it be with the coming of Christ and the Day of Judgment. He will be here judging the nations before we [many] know it. ...

"Of this one thing, brethren, I am fully assured, that the stupendous occurrences of the Day of Judgment will glide in upon the world as by stealth, and before a great number of even pious people shall be aware, that these great scenes have commenced; whilst the great mass of worldlings and politicians will not believe to the very last. ... 'As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away.' Perhaps it had rained a month before those wicked scoffers began to feel any special alarm. Perhaps many of them beheld the ark taken up by the swelling waters, and yet stood upon the hill- tops laughing at the old preacher's folly. Though the valleys were all covered and the waters rose higher and higher every hour, 'they knew not' until all were swept away by the shoreless waves. And so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. The nations shall be undergoing their judgment, the sainted dead shall be raised, the sainted living shall be translated, and the whole earth shall heave with the throes of judgment already present; and yet multitudes will go on as before, and refuse to believe what is transpiring. Nations in their desperation will continue to declare war, and make treaties, and form alliances, and join their armies, and gather together their warriors against the Lamb and his people, until at last ... the Son of Man will appear with his sainted host. ... If it is not to be so, why have Peter and Paul told us that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night? If it is not to be so, why has the Savior told us so earnestly to watch, and pointed out so many signs by which we are to be guided, and so repeatedly admonished us to take heed lest that day come upon us unawares? All these things prove that the Day of Judgment will come upon the world unknown except to the devoutest and most watchful of the children of men. How important, therefore, that we should study with the profoundest care what the inspired Prophets have written upon this subject for our learning! With what absorbing interest should we ponder the given signs by which we are to know when the great Day of the Lord shall come! Would it not be an awful calamity for the Church, which professes to be waiting for Christ, to be plunged in the midst of the scenes of that great Day, without so much as knowing that that Day has come?" (Joseph Seiss).

He Dwells in Light that No Man can Behold

Another, of more recent date, whose ministry has been of inestimable value to God's people in these last days, has expounded the text under consideration, "Behold he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds ... shall wail because of him":

"This Scripture is generally quoted as a proof that our Lord Jesus at his Second Coming will be visible to the whole human family; that they will all have great mourning when they see him; that it will be a sad day for them especially for the Jews. Our thought respecting the passage, in the light of other Scriptures, is different from this. In the first place, the Lord himself said, 'Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye shall see me.' Only the Lord's faithful followers were to see him. The Apostle Paul explains that Jesus' followers will see him because they are to be changed in the First Resurrection, 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.' The Scriptures clearly indicate that our Lord's present condition is the Heavenly, the spirit condition, not only as high a condition as before he came into the world, but still higher.

"The Lord prayed to the Father that he would glorify him with the glory that he had with him before he came into the world — 'before the world was.' The Father assured him that he had glorified him and would glorify him again (John 17:5, 12:28, Vatican MS). The Scriptures also assure us that our Lord in his glorified condition is far above angels, principalities, and powers (Philippians 2:9,10). When he was a man, he was 'a little lower than the angels' (Hebrews 2:6-9). The Scriptures declare that the Lord is now the express image of the Father's person (Hebrews 1:3), and also declare of him, 'Whom no man hath seen nor can see.'

"Another Scripture tells us that the coming of Christ will be for the blessing of the world. The very object of his coming will be for the lifting up of the poor and fallen race. St. Peter tells us that there will be 'times of refreshing,' 'times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets since the world began' (Acts 3:19-21).

"How shall we harmonize this last statement with that of our text, which says that he shall come with clouds; that every eye shall see him; and that all mankind 'shall wail because of him'? The answer is that in harmony with other Scriptures the coming with clouds would signify the coming in a period of trouble — the word 'clouds' being used to signify trouble — in the dark day. He is coming in clouds, in that the time in which he will first manifest himself to the world will be a very dark day to the world — 'a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation,' and, we are told, never shall be again (Matthew 24:21). That will be a dark, cloudy day.

"In that day, ultimately all eyes shall be opened; and all mankind shall see him with the eyes of their understanding — see him in the sense that we [the Church] see him *now*, and have knowledge of him and of the Father. A blind man sees in the same sense. He says, 'I *see now*' — meaning that he sees with his intellectual sight. It is far better to see with the intellect than with the natural sight. ...

"There is first of all to be a *parousia*, or presence, of Christ, which will be known only to his Church, his Bride class. The culmination of his work in the *parousia* will be the gathering of the Church to himself in the First Resurrection. The Scriptures go on to say that he shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance.

"The 'clouds of heaven' well represent the confusion in general. The world for a time will be in ignorance of his presence. But gradually they will come to know that they are in the time of trouble, the day of wrath, in which this age is to close. Then they will mourn. The whole world will be in mourning. If the world has mourned in the past, much more shall we expect it to do so when the trouble will be general. In the midst of that trouble, they will gradually learn of the grace of God. Human selfishness, they will find, has been so overruled as to lead up to the glorious Kingdom of Messiah, through which are to come all the blessings which God has promised" (C. T. Russell).

"The Alpha and the Omega"

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8).

Commentators differ in their interpretation of this passage, some applying it to the Lord Jesus, others to the Father. Mr. Barnes has said, "As there is ... a difference of reading in this place in the Greek text, and as it cannot be absolutely certain that the writer meant to refer to the Lord Jesus specifically here, this cannot be adduced with propriety as a proof text to demonstrate his divinity." As we find the same expression in Revelation 22:13 applied to the Lord Jesus, also practically the same in 1:17, we see no reason why it does not refer to the Lord Jesus. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. And the thought of their use here is explained to mean that Christ was the first and the last. In the light of other Scriptures we learn that reference is here made to the fact, as stated by St. Paul, that he was "the firstborn of every creature" (Colossians 1:15), and by St. John, that he was "the beginning of the creation of God" (Revelation 3:14). This is also what is implied in the expression so frequently employed in the Scriptures concerning Christ, that he was the only begotten Son of God, meaning evidently that he was the only direct creation of God, all other creatures and things being created by the Son, as stated by St. Paul, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him" (Colossians 1:16). "Our Lord's great honor is shown in that he was not only the first of God's creation, but the *last*. From this we are to understand that the great Jehovah did not directly employ His own power in creating either men or angels; but that He delegated His power to His only begotten Son."

The title *Almighty* is properly explained, we believe, as "an appellation often applied to God, meaning that he has all power," and used here with reference to our Lord Jesus to denote that he is able to accomplish what is disclosed in

the book of Revelation. "It is since his [Christ's] resurrection that the message has gone forth — 'All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me' (Matthew 28:18). Consequently it is only since then that he could be called the Almighty."

Adore and Praise the Lord

Praise the Lord! ye heavens, adore Him;
Praise Him, angels in the height;
Sun and moon, rejoice before Him;
Praise Him, all ye stars of light.

Praise the Lord, for He hath spoken;
Worlds His mighty voice obeyed;
Laws which never shall be broken,
For their guidance He hath made.

Praise the Lord, for He is glorious;
Never shall His promise fail;
He shall make His saints victorious;
Sin and death shall not prevail.

Praise the God of our salvation;
Hosts on high, His power proclaim;
Heaven and earth, and all creation,
Laud and magnify His name.

Chapter Two

St. John's Vision of Christ, His Commission to Write to the Churches

(Revelation 1:9-20)

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea" (Revelation 1:9-11).

Having concluded his salutation to the Churches, St. John proceeds to address them, and at once states the circumstances and the conditions that surrounded him at the time when he beheld the vision of Christ described in the succeeding verses. He begins by identifying himself with his fellow Christians, using the unassuming term of brother. He announces himself as simply a companion with his fellow Christians in affliction, and as possessing the one hope, and patiently waiting with them for the realization of the reward at the appearing of Jesus Christ. It is well known that St. John had been already severely persecuted, but he modestly refrains from making mention of this only as it is implied in his statement that he was a prisoner on the lonely Isle of Patmos, because of his faithfulness in proclaiming the Word of God, the Gospel of Christ. With becoming humility the beloved John avoids mentioning his previous testimony for the Truth, which had brought him this persecution, and also lightly passes over the persecution itself.

It appears to be a well established principle, observed in God's providence, that faithfulness to Christ, while it often brings persecution in some form, brings also clearer revelations of the Divine plans and purposes, and though it may even mean imprisonment, the service to others is not hindered thereby, but rather increased. Joseph in prison became the "revealer of secrets." Luther in bonds translated the Scriptures into his own tongue and gave to his fellow countrymen their first privilege of learning the contents of the Bible, thus breaking the chains of superstition that bound them to Papal idolatry. John Bunyan incarcerated wrote his world-famed "Pilgrim's Progress." Likewise, St. John in

banishment was the medium chosen to complete the Divine canon of Scriptures. And those who have faithfully followed as he did in the footsteps of Christ have had, as a rule, clearer unfoldings and a clearer understanding of the Divine Word.

In the Spirit on the Lord's Day

St. John informs us that he was in the spirit on the Lord's day, when he beheld this sublime vision of Christ. The word *spirit* may refer, as some think, to either the holy Spirit, or to some state of mind such as the holy Spirit produces — a spirit of elevated devotion — a state of high and uncommon religious enjoyment. A very worthy commentator has given a much better translation and interpretation, we believe: " 'I became in the spirit on the Lord's day.' It was not simply in the right and normal Christian state in which John found himself, as so many think, but carried out of himself by the power of the spirit; his senses closed to other things, his spirit awake to behold the things presented to him, and hear the voice that speaks to us also in him." Still another has very properly urged that "the visions granted to St. John, recorded in the book of Revelation, are in no sense and in no part to be understood as realities, and this is the significance of St. John's statement in our lesson, 'I was in the spirit on the Lord's day.' "

It would seem then that the statement "I was in the spirit" teaches us that the things he saw in the visions were not realities, but symbolical representations of great facts and realities. The expression "on the Lord's day" is variously interpreted. " 'On the Lord's day' does not mean, as some suppose, the prophetic 'day of the Lord,' for which there is a different expression, and which would not really apply at all to this first vision and what follows. It is the Lord's day, the day of Christian privilege, in which in the joy of his resurrection we look back upon his death. Yet this does not surely shut out the looking forward to his coming: 'Ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.' This is the only right attitude for the Christian to be in, as one who expects the Lord. And this is indeed why, as it would seem, the voice that John hears speaks *behind* him, and he has to turn to see the one who speaks to him. His attention is to be directed to the *present* state of the Church; turned back, therefore, from the contemplation of the coming glory, to what to one so engrossed is a thing behind.

"He turns, and sees seven golden candlesticks, or lampstands, as the word is ... They represent, as we are told, the seven assemblies (1:20), and plainly, as responsible to exhibit the light of the Spirit, during the night of the Lord's absence [the Gospel Age]."

The word here translated Lord's occurs in only one other place, namely 1 Corinthians 11:20, where it is applied to the Lord's Supper. It properly means *pertaining to the Lord*, to the Lord Jesus. It is, therefore, apparent that the expression refers to some particular day distinguished from all the other days of the week, a day particularly devoted to the Lord Jesus, for this is the natural meaning of the word Lord, as used in the New Testament. If the Jewish Sabbath were intended, as some Christians believe, the word *Sabbath* would have been used. The term *Lord's day* was generally used by the early Christians to refer to

the first day of the week. Supplementing this thought further it is explained that "although the words, 'on the Lord's day,' might not unreasonably be understood to signify that St. John in vision was carried down the stream of time to the great Millennial Day, the Day of Christ, the Lord's Day, nevertheless, we think it reasonable to understand him to mean also that he saw this vision on the first day of the week. And how appropriate it was that our Lord, who arose on the first day of the week, and who most frequently manifested his resurrection powers on that day, should on the same day reveal himself and certain great instructions to the Church through St. John, honoring the same day of the week.

It is no wonder, therefore, that Christian people from the very earliest times have held the first day of the week in special reverence as the symbol of the fulfillment of all our hopes, whereof God gave us assurance in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus on this day. Besides, to confine the meaning of the expression to the Millennial Day exclusively, would be to ignore the fact that the larger proportion of St. John's visions related not to the Millennial Day, but to the intervening time."

Mr. Barnes says that the term *Lord's day* "occurs twice in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians (about 101 AD), who calls the Lord's day, 'the queen and prince of all days.' Chrysostom (on Psalms 119) says, 'It was called the Lord's day because the Lord rose from the dead on that day.' Later Fathers made a marked distinction between the Sabbath and the Lord's day; meaning by the former, the Jewish Sabbath, or the seventh day of the week and by the latter, the first day of the week, kept holy by Christians. So Theodoret ... speaking of the Ebionites, says, 'They keep the Sabbath according to the Jewish law, and sanctify the Lord's day in like manner as we do.' "

The fact that St. John's attention was first called in this vision by hearing a voice behind him would suggest that the beginning of the message was not in St. John's day, nor from some future time, but that the things to be revealed had already commenced and were already to some extent in the past. As an evidence that this is the correct thought the reader is asked to consider the statement in Revelation 5, in which Christ is seen receiving the sealed scroll from the Heavenly Father. This is symbolical of what took place after his resurrection, nearly a half century before St. John saw the vision, namely his receiving the full knowledge concerning the history of the witnessing, suffering Church, as well as his Divine commission to carry out and execute the eternal purpose of God.

The "voice" that St. John heard was like a trumpet, which may either mean that its tones resembled a trumpet or that it was as though the voice spoke through a trumpet, seeming to imply that it was clear, distinct, and loud. The Hebrew trumpet, on account of its clearness, is often referred to as employed to summon people upon public occasions, as well as to marshal hosts for battle. Thus the symbol would seem to teach that St. John, as well as the entire Church of Christ whom he in some respects represented, were being officially summoned by him in no uncertain announcement — but by a message of great importance.

Visions are Not Realities

In addition to the words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," the Apostle was instructed by the voice to write down or make a record of what he saw, and of what he was to see, and to send the same to the seven Churches of Asia. St. John immediately turned to see from whom the voice proceeded and beheld ... "Seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (verses 12-16).

Most commentators have understood that the vision was an actual appearance of Christ himself; in other words, that Christ actually appeared to St. John on the Isle of Patmos, instead of its being a *vision* of Christ. A vision is not a reality, but something which is designed to picture, to symbolize, to represent the reality. The thought has been very ably expressed thus: "Visions are not realities, though they symbolically represent them. This is true, whether the visions come, as Daniel describes his, as 'visions of my head upon my bed,' or whether they come in broad daylight, as with the transfiguration scene, which our Lord declared was a vision (Matthew 17:9)." "We are not to regard the word picture of verses 13-16 as a portrait of our Lord in glory; for it is merely symbolical. When we shall see him in glory he will not look as here described. Nevertheless this symbolical picture has precious lessons for us, more valuable than an attempt to describe to our minds the appearance of our Lord as a spirit being, 'dwelling in light which no man can approach unto,' and which we cannot appreciate until we shall be changed to 'be like him and to see him as he is' (1 John 3:2, 1 Corinthians 15:50-53)."

The principal and most important symbols of this vision are interpreted by the "voice" that St. John heard. These important symbols are those of the "seven golden candlesticks" (lampstands) in the midst of which the one like unto a Son of Man was standing, and the "seven stars" which were held in his right hand. The explanation was made that "the seven stars are the angels [messengers] of the seven Churches; and the seven candlesticks [lampstands] are the seven Churches." This Divine explanation assists us to grasp the meaning of some of the other symbols; and other Scriptures where similar symbols are employed enable us to understand others of the vision.

The appellation "Son of Man" is used by the Prophet Daniel (Daniel 7) and is appropriated by Christ to himself, as we learn from frequent references to the same in the Gospels. This alone would be sufficient to prove that the personage of the vision symbolized Christ. Thus the description that "His head and his hair as white as wool and snow tells us of his wisdom, his splendor, and his glory. his eyes like a flame of fire tell us in symbol that our Master is all-seeing,

omniscient; that he is not deceived by outward forms and ceremonies; but that he can, and does, read every thought and intent of the heart. The contemplation of his glance should of itself purge and purify our hearts and cause us to put far from us, to the extent of our ability, everything which would have his disapproval.

"Having described the head, St. John mentions the hands and the feet. The remainder of the body was covered with a garment reaching from the head to the feet. This may *possibly* represent the fact that the glory of Christ was manifested in his own person, in his own ministry, and in that of his twelve Apostles, his representatives — St. Paul taking the place of Judas; and that with their death the body of Truth was almost veiled throughout the eighteen centuries intervening, until now, in the end of the age, the feet members of the Body of Christ will be illuminated by the Truth and will shine forth — not like the Head, but as polished brass."

"Copper is a symbol of humanity, and this copper being furnace-refined would seem to say that those who belong to the Body of Christ, and whom the Lord would use in his service, 'the feet' members of the Body, must, in their contact and dealings with the world, be refined, purified, clean — 'Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord's house.' The feet would thus represent the living members of the Body, all down through this age; and the refining process to each and all will be fiery trials.

"Thus understood, the figure of a Son of Man (a human figure) in the midst of the seven candlesticks, etc., symbolically representing Christ standing criticizing, judging, directing, in the midst of his Church, upholding his chosen stars or ministers, and represented in the various members by his people, is an impressive picture or symbol, full of instruction, leading us to expect the Lord's guidance in all the affairs of his Church, and to realize that things are not happening to her haphazard. To so recognize that the Lord's people in every part of this age have been 'feet' members of the Body, carrying forward his work, is not to contradict our previous application of Isaiah 52:7, which merely represents the 'feet' members of the present time, and identifies them as the ones who declare unto Zion, 'Thy God reigneth' — in this manner distinguishing these from their predecessors in the pilgrim way."

Commentators as a rule see no special symbolical significance in the expression, "and his voice as the voice of many waters." The suggestion offered by one presents the thought that there is a deep significance associated with it: "Waters tell of nations and peoples. The voice of men may have been flattering to the assembly [Church], but here is one voice equal to all. What shall be his verdict?"

An interpretation that seems to properly meet all the requirements is "that the Lord could and did speak to his Church sometimes as the voice of musical rippling waters of the brook, and sometimes as the roaring of the sea; or the many waters might be understood as peoples, nations, and languages, as elsewhere explained in this book, and that thus our Lord, present with his Church, would speak to her and through her by many tongues, in many languages."

We are next informed that St. John beheld proceeding out of the mouth of this symbolic personage, a sharp two-edged broad sword. "No part of the description could more thoroughly convince us that the description of our Lord given here is a symbolic one than does the statement that out of his mouth proceeded a two-edged sword. As a symbolic picture, however, it is full of meaning, speaking to us of the Word of the Lord, the sword of the Spirit, 'sharper than any two- edged sword' (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12). It reminds us that our Lord's words are not onesided, not directed merely against sin in one class, but that his Word is sharp, cutting in every direction, that sin is reproved by him as much when found in his most earnest followers as when found elsewhere."

The two edges of the sword cutting both ways is a striking symbol of the penetrating power of the Truth, or of the Word of God, proceeding from the mouth of God's messengers. In Isaiah 49:2, a prophecy referring to Christ, it is said: "And He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword," and in Hebrews we read, "The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two- edged sword."

"And his countenance as the sun shineth in his strength." The overpowering splendor of the sun is here used to describe the majesty and glory of the countenance of Christ. This figure is employed frequently in the Scriptures. "Let them that love Him [the Lord] be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might" (Judges 5:31). "And He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds" (2 Samuel 23:4).

Thus closes the description that St. John gives of the glorious personage of our Lord in his conduct and office as these stand related to his followers, the members of his Body, and their experiences throughout this Gospel Age. It is probable, too, that the vision was designed to impress upon the mind of St. John and of all Christ's followers a sense of the glory and majesty of his person, and thus enable him to appreciate the authoritative character and importance of the messages he was to receive and which he was to send to the seven Churches, particularly named by the "voice" he heard. And the full significance of the symbolical personage can be understood only by viewing it in the light of, and in connection with, the history of the true Church symbolized by the golden lampstands.

St. John next describes the first effects that the seeing of the vision had upon him: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead" (verse 17), that is, as if he were dead — deprived of sense and consciousness. He was completely overwhelmed with a sense of his own littleness. It is not probable that he would immediately recognize who was represented by the personage of the vision — not probable that the personage looked at all like the one whom he was accustomed to seeing and conversing with sixty years before. The effect upon St. John was the same as that produced upon Daniel when he saw a heavenly messenger; the same also as that produced upon Saul of Tarsus as he beheld a vision of the same Divine one. "So it is symbolically with the Christian, when once he gets a glimpse of the glories of the Divine character. When once we get a true view

of him with whom we have to do, as the great heart-searcher and caretaker of his Church, we fall before him, humbled to the dust, realizing that we are imperfect, that we cannot stand before our Master, that we are unworthy of his favor and blessing. But as our Lord [the one who represented him] touched St. John gently, raising him up, so he has spoken to us comfort, peace, and love, assuring us that we have a High Priest that can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, one who is able to sympathize and mercifully to assist, one who has bought us with his own precious blood, and who has accepted us and will number us as his Body members as long as we abide in him, seeking in our hearts to know and to do his will. To us his comforting assurance is:

" 'Fear not.' The same message the Father has sent us through the Prophet, saying, 'Their fear of Me is not of Me, but is taught by the precepts of men' (Isaiah 29:13). This is one of the first lessons which we must learn. We cannot come into close sympathy with our Lord and be taught of him respecting other features of his Plan until we learn to fear not, learn to have confidence in him as the one 'who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood,' and whose purposes toward us continually are for our welfare and, if we submit ourselves to his guidance, will bring us off conquerors and more than conquerors."

The expression, "I am the first and the last," having already been considered, we pass on to the words, "I am the living one: I was even dead, but, behold, I am living for the Ages of the Ages"; this language would immediately identify him in St. John's sight as representing the Lord Jesus Christ; for to no other personage could these words apply. He knew Christ had been put to death, and he knew that he was raised from the dead by the Father. This was also designed to allay St. John's fears. We are not to forget that while this was a vision of Christ, it was as actual to the Apostle as though the real Christ in his glory stood before him. To him it would be as real as if the Savior whom he had known in person sixty years before, the one whom he had so tenderly loved when in the flesh, the one whom he had faithfully served for those long years since he beheld him ascend out of their sight, was before him. To him it would be the same as if he saw that one whom he had seen laid in the tomb; the one who was to live forever. Likewise all the faithful, catching the inspiration of their Master's words to St. John, gladly acknowledge him as the one who was dead, "The one who really died for our sins, but who was as really raised out of death, by the Father. We must realize that he is alive forevermore, that death has no more dominion over him, that the work is finished, that neither sacrifices of the Mass nor death in any sense or form ever will be needed. his work is perfect; and, as he cried on the Cross, 'It is finished!'

"We must recognize that he has the keys, the authority, the power over the tomb, to deliver from it all who are therein imprisoned. We must also realize that he has the key, the power over death, in order that those whom he liberates from the prison-house of death, like those who have not yet gone into the tomb, but who are under the death sentence, may all be ultimately delivered, set free from the dominion of sin and death, delivered into the full liberty of the sons of God — righteousness and life everlasting (Romans 8:21)."

In view of all this St. John was instructed: "Write therefore[1] the things thou sawest, even those which are, and the things which are about to transpire after these" (verse 19). This is undoubtedly a better translation of the original text than that of the Common Version, and it makes clear the division or plan of the whole book of Revelation:

(1) "Write therefore the things thou sawest, even those which are, and

(2) "The things which are about to transpire after these."

The first evidently refers to the vision of Christ walking amongst the lampstands; the significance of the lampstands, and the messages to the Churches, are contained in the first three chapters. The second refers to the things that are about to transpire after this — symbolized in the prophetic visions from chapter 6 to the end of the book.

Interpreting the words as rendered in the Common Version, Mr. Barnes has very ably explained them as signifying the division of the book into three parts:

"(1) Write the things which thou hast seen. An account of the vision which thou hast had.

"(2) And the things that are. Give an account of those things which thou hast seen as designed to represent the condition of the seven Churches. He had seen not only the Savior, but he had seen seven lampstands, and seven stars in the hand of the Savior, and he is now commanded to record the meaning of these symbols as referring to things then actually existing in the seven Churches. This interpretation is demanded by verse 20.

"(3) And the things which shall be hereafter. The Greek phrase rendered *hereafter*, means '*after these things*,' that is, he was to make a correct representation of the things which then were, and then to record what would occur 'after these things': to wit, of the images, symbols, and truths, which would be disclosed to him after what he had already seen. The expression refers to future times. He does not say for how long a time; but the revelations which were to be made referred to events which were to occur beyond those which were then taking place. Nothing can be argued from the use of this language in regard to the length of time embraced in the Revelation — whether it extended only for a few years, or whether it embraced all coming time. The more natural interpretation, however, would seem to be that it would stretch far into the future years, and that it was designed to give at least an outline of what would be the character of the future in general."

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(1) There appears to be no excuse whatever for the translators of our Common Version to have omitted the word *therefore* from this text — an omission that no previous translator had made. No question has ever been raised as to the right of this word to a place in the text. "With what intention the illative particle is used is perhaps best referred to what immediately goes before: Seeing that I am this mighty one, the first and the last, who was dead and am alive, do thou, therefore, write; for the things declared by me are all steadfast and sure."

This same writer summing up the first chapter of the Revelator's visions has with becoming eloquence said: "Such is the sublime vision under which this book opens; such the solemn commission which the penman of the book received. No more appropriate introduction to what is contained in the book could be imagined; no more appropriate circumstances for making such a sublime revelation could have existed. To the most beloved of the Apostles — now the only surviving one of the number; to him who had been a faithful laborer for a period not far from sixty years after the death of the Lord Jesus, who had been the bosom friend of the Savior when in the flesh, who had seen him in the mount of transfiguration, who had seen him die, and who had seen him ascend to heaven; to him who had lived while the Church was founded, and while, it had spread into all lands; and to him who was now suffering persecution on account of the Savior and his cause, it was appropriate that such communications should be made. In a lonely island; far away from the abodes of men; surrounded by the ocean, and amid barren rocks; on the day consecrated to the purposes of sacred repose, and the holy duties of religion — the day observed in commemoration of the resurrection of his Lord, it was most fit that the Redeemer should appear to the 'beloved disciple' in the last Revelation which he was ever to make to mankind. No more appropriate time or circumstance could be conceived for disclosing, by a series of sublime visions, what would occur in future times — for sketching out the history of the Church to the consummation of all things."

The Seven Stars and the Seven Golden Lampstands

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven Churches" (Revelation 1:20).

The Savior speaks of the seven stars and the seven golden lampstands as a secret, and in explaining their meaning, He not only shows that they are symbolical, but also that his relationship to them, as described in the vision, is symbolical. A star evidently represents a teacher whose commission is to spread the light of God's Truth in the circle that surrounds him; and a lampstand represents a Church of Christ supporting such a teacher in the station he is qualified by Christ to fill. The thought evidently is that the Lord upholds and directs such teachers or representatives of his Churches, in proportion as they are found loyal and faithful to him.

In considering the significance of this vision of the seven stars and the seven golden lampstands, in the midst of which the Savior is represented as standing, and following closely his interpretation of its meaning, we may with confidence say that when the vision was given there were seven Churches of Christ existing in Asia Minor in the different cities mentioned, namely Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea; and the messages primarily applied to them.

We will examine first the primary significance of the lampstands and stars, that is, the significance as they relate to the seven Congregations or Churches

existing in Asia Minor at the time St. John saw the vision, and to whom he was commanded to send the messages. In doing this we believe we will be better able to correctly apply the symbols. The primary application to seven local churches existing in St. John's time would seem to be the basis of interpretation to be followed. The number seven denoting completeness would seem to signify that these seven Churches were selected as representatives of the *complete Church existing at that time*. It would hardly he reasonable to suppose that these seven messages were intended for these seven Churches alone; and this would imply that the many other churches existing at the time would also need the exhortations, reproofs, and encouragements contained in the messages. It is quite certain that at this time these Congregations contained both "wheat," true Christians, and "tares," mere professors. This is proved both from history and from the character of the messages themselves. The "lampstands," therefore, would symbolize these Assemblies as a whole, containing both true and nominal believers. This has, indeed, described the condition of the churches of Christ ever since that time. "There are many reasons for concluding that while the messages were given to the seven Churches specified, and were applicable to them, nevertheless these messages should properly have a still wider application to the whole Church of Christ, the number seven representing completeness and the order representing different epochs in the history of the Church. Thus the Church at Ephesus would represent the condition of the [whole] Church at the time of the writing of the messages; while the Laodicean Church would represent the Church in our day — in the end of the Gospel Age. The other Churches would correspondingly represent different epochs intermediate, between then and now" (C. T. Russell).

In all seven phases it has been the professed mission of the Churches represented by the lampstands to hold forth the light of life, the Word of Truth, and thus cause it to shine out in the surrounding darkness. "Alas, how poor the wicks have sometimes been! How feeble the light that has sometimes shone out into the darkness of this world! How much trimming has been necessary, and how much more may yet be required!"

As recorded in verse 11, St. John was commanded to send the messages to the Assemblies, Congregations. These messages, that is, the words of commendation, encouragement, rebuke, condemnation, etc., contained therein, are addressed to the angels as well as to the Churches. Each message opens with the words: "Unto the angel of the Church ... write" (Revelation 2:1). In the Savior's explanation he states that the stars are the angels of the seven Churches. Whom these stars or angels represent is a very important matter to settle. It is quite certain that they were not Apostles; neither was there a custom to have diocesan bishops, that is, bishops appointed over certain territories containing several churches, as has been a custom since. If there was anything of this nature existing in St. John's day, it did not have the sanction of Divine authority or approval. It was indeed this unauthorized kind of an official in the church, that gradually but surely developed into prelacy or Papacy. It is well known that the order established by the Apostles was that each congre-

gation have its teachers — elders, bishops, or pastors. These, doubtless, were the ones referred to as the "angels," messengers, symbolically called "stars," in the seven local Churches in Asia Minor. It should be borne in mind that the Savior has never abdicated his right, never given to another, the honor and responsibility of qualifying, placing, and upholding any of his ministering ones. The only Apostolic succession taught in the scriptures is that referred to by St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy, "And the things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Recognizing that these seven assemblies represented all the assemblies existing at that time, it is a most reasonable and Scriptural deduction then that the term "seven stars" would represent in the complete sense all the pastors and teachers of the different churches over the world at that time — those duly and Scripturally selected by the different congregations under the Lord's direction, to fill the positions, and thus represent them. These, like the assemblies themselves, would be more or less imperfect, but according to their faithfulness would be upheld and used by Christ in ministering, serving their respective congregations. The responsibilities of these pastors would be first to Christ; and their services and influence would be as far reaching as the Lord in his providence might see best to make them.

Concerning the messengers to whom the messages were addressed, Mr. Barnes has very truthfully urged: "This does not refer to them as a collective or associated body, for the addresses are made to them as individuals — an epistle being directed to 'the angel' of each particular Church (Revelation 2:1,12). The evident meaning, however, is that what was recorded should be directed to them, not as pertaining to them *exclusively* as individuals, but as presiding over, or representing the Churches, for what is recorded pertains *to* the Churches, and was evidently designed to be laid before them. ... There has been much diversity of opinion in regard to the meaning of the word *angels* here. By the advocates of Episcopacy, it has been argued that the use of this term proves that there was a presiding bishop over a circle or group of churches in Ephesus, in Smyrna, etc. ...

"It cannot be proved that the reference is to a prelatical bishop presiding over a group or circle of churches, called a *diocese*, for there is nothing in the word angel, as used in this connection, which would be peculiarly applicable to such a personage — it being as applicable to a pastor of a single church as to a bishop of many churches. There is no evidence that there were any such groups of churches then as constitute an episcopal diocese. The use of the word 'church' in the singular, as applied to Ephesus, Smyrna, etc., rather implies that there was but a single church in each of those cities. Compare chapter 2:1,8,12,18, see also similar language in regard to the Church in Corinth, 1 Corinthians 1:1,2. ...

"If it does not refer to a prelatical bishop, then it follows that it must refer to some one who presided over the church as its pastor, and through whom a message might be properly sent to the church. Thus understood, the pastor or 'angel' would be regarded as the representative of the church; that is, as delegated by the church to manage its affairs, and as the authorized person to whom

communications should be made in matters pertaining to it — as pastors are now. ... The supposition that a pastor of a church is intended, will meet all the circumstances in the case: — for, (1) it is an appropriate appellation; (2) there is no reason to suppose that there was more than one church in each of the cities referred to; (3) it is a term which would designate the respect in which the office was held; (4) it would impress upon those to whom it was applied a solemn sense of their responsibility. Further, it would be more appropriately applied to a pastor of a single church than to a prelatical bishop — to the tender, intimate, and endearing relation sustained by a pastor to his people — to the blending of sympathy, interest, and affection, where he is with them continually, meets them frequently in the sanctuary, administered to them the bread of life, goes into their abodes when they are afflicted, and attends their kindred to the grave, than to the union subsisting between the people of an extended diocese and a prelate — the formal, infrequent, and, in many instances, stately and pompous visitations of a diocesan bishop; to the unsympathizing relation between him and a people scattered in many churches, who are visited at distant intervals by one claiming a 'superiority in ministerial rights and powers,' and who must be a stranger to the ten thousand ties of endearment which bind the hearts of a pastor and people together. The conclusion, then, to which we have come is that the 'angel of the Church' was the pastor or the presiding presbyter in the Church; the minister who had the pastoral charge of it, and who was therefore a proper representative of it."

Bearing in mind that all these messages are addressed to the "stars," or ministering class which has been duly selected and recognized as representing each separate assembly, we observe that the messages are not meant for these alone, but for the various individuals who make up these assemblies as well. The command is for every one to hear "what the Spirit saith *to the Churches*," and we ask, To whom could the instructions, the exhortations, the encouraging commendations, the reproofs, the severe rebukes and threatenings contained in these messages of Christ be more properly entrusted in St. John's day than to the several pastors of the different Congregations mentioned as existing in the cities designated. It would be supposed that the men selected by these Churches possessed the necessary qualifications for such a ministry, and that they were chosen in the Scriptural way by these Congregations to serve them in this capacity.

"He Shall Give His Angels [messengers] a Charge Concerning Thee"

Applying the matters contained in these messages, indeed the whole system of Truth, to our day, we ask, Are not these duties of instructing, exhorting, rebuking, expected of those chosen to fill the position of teacher in the Church? It would seem that there could be but one answer. This conclusion is in perfect harmony with the words of St. Paul, that there is a ministry in the Christian Church and that various gifts or ministries are distributed in the Church; and as one is recognized as possessing these gifts he is elected in the Scriptural way by

the church to represent it. By this election, these persons possessing more or less of the pastoral gift become bishops or elders (the terms being synonymous). From the fact that these are addressed, we are enabled to discover something of the nature and responsibility of those filling such a position in the Church. We learn, in harmony with St. Peter's words, that this position is not one of *lordship*, but one of service — a service in which they are held responsible to God and to Him alone as to the manner in which they render it. It would seem to be one of the duties of this angel, bishop, or pastor, to read, expound, and make forceful the exhortations and the lessons, etc., contained in these messages. And so far as these are faithful in their special sphere of service and work, they are upheld by the Savior, who holds the seven symbolic stars in his right hand. The Divine care over his flock and the duties of shepherds or pastors is well expressed by Mr. Russell in the following comment on the ninety-first Psalm:

" 'For he shall give his angels [messengers] a charge concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways.' That is, God will raise up some faithful pastors and teachers who will 'watch for your souls as they that must give an account.' True, there shall arise false teachers, perverting the Word of the Lord and seeking by cunning sophistries to subvert your souls; but if in simplicity of heart God's children require a 'Thus saith the Lord' for every element of their faith, and carefully prove all things by the Word, they will be able to distinguish readily the true from the false. And having done so, the Apostle Paul (Hebrews 13:17) counsels us to have confidence. The Lord, our Shepherd, will care for the true sheep."

It would seem, then, to be in harmony with the Scriptures, to apply the term "star" to the shepherds, teachers, bishops, elders, pastors, *as a class*, of all the churches throughout the entire Gospel Age, and that these according to their loyalty and faithfulness are upheld by Christ. However, all the true light emanating from these, comes from the one divinely appointed source — the Prophets, Christ, and the twelve Apostles, whose teachings alone are infallible. It is true that there have been throughout the entire age, false stars or teachers who have deceived the many, and led into wrong paths.

Again we urge the reader to observe that these Divine messages were addressed to the "stars" or "angels" of the seven Churches, and that the form of address to each of the symbolical messengers was the same. The Common Version renders it, "Unto the angel of the Church ... write." The Diaglott translation, which in some instances is preferable to that of the King James Version, renders these words, "*By* the messenger ... write," etc., instead of "*unto*" or "*to* the messenger ... write," as all other translations render them. Some who accept the Diaglott as the correct translation, when applying the messages to seven distinct periods of the Church's history, have interpreted the text as teaching that the messengers are to do the writing for these several periods — a single individual writer for each period. This is manifestly not the correct interpretation of this passage as seen from verses 10, 11, and 19, where it is very plainly stated that St. John, himself, and not the angel is to do the writing. "And I [John] heard behind me a loud voice as of a trumpet, saying, 'What thou [John] seest write in a scroll, and send to those seven Congregations, etc.' " " 'Write therefore

the things thou sawest, even those which are, and the things which are about to transpire after these.' " These utterances comprehend everything contained in the book of Revelation; therefore, St. John was the writer. St. John was also the sender, and the messages we are about to consider are the translations of the same into the English language, and the "stars," "angels," or messengers, primarily, were the representative bishops or pastors of the seven local Churches to whom they were sent. In view of the foregoing we accept the rendering as given by nearly all translations: "*To* the angel ... write." The learned and devout Dr. Bengal recommended these epistles above everything to the study of young ministers especially.

Having therefore clearly recognized that the things commanded by Christ to be written were written by St. John over eighteen centuries ago, and that these writings have been preserved for us, and are in our possession today, we would logically next examine *what* is written, taking advantage of the help to be derived from the explanations of others to whom these messages belonged, as much as they belong to us today. In doing so, we find that as the history of the Church has unfolded, the light has increased, and therefore more and more clearly do we see that these seven messages have been applicable to all of the Church throughout its entire history. There can be no doubt of the fact that there is contained in each and all of these messages very important matters that were intended by Christ to apply to all of God's consecrated ones throughout the entire Gospel Age. This is plainly implied, indeed, it is stated in the words of the Savior addressed to each Church: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith *unto the Churches*." The vital importance of this exhortation is emphasized by the fact that these words are repeated seven times; and in each instance reference is made to *all* the Churches (Revelation 2:7,11,17,29, 3:6,13,22). Not to understand the matter thus would be to deprive the Church throughout the age of the most edifying exhortations and warnings to be found in all the volume of Divine inspiration.

It would seem, therefore, that the exhortations, the warnings, the threatenings, the encouragements, and the promises contained in the messages apply in the following special ways:

(1) To the seven particular Churches and their pastors mentioned by Christ as existing at the time St. John wrote.

(2) To all the churches and their pastors of St. John's day scattered over the Roman Empire.

(3) To the individuals of all these churches.

(4) To local churches existing in every generation since St. John's day. The words of Richard Trench, an eminent Scripture writer of the middle of the Nineteenth Century, are very pertinent on this point: "The seven must be regarded as constituting a complex whole — as possessing an ideal completeness. Christ, we feel sure, could not have placed himself in the relation which he does to them — as holding in his hand the seven stars, walking among the seven golden

candlesticks, these stars being the angels of the Churches, and the candlesticks, the Churches themselves — unless they ideally represented and set forth, in some way or other, the universal Church militant on earth."

Another of these older writers, Trotter, has spoken to good effect in this connection: "The number seven is used throughout the Apocalypse in a symbolic sense, and is admitted to be expressive of completeness or perfection. Why should the 'seven Churches' be an exception to the rule? Were the seven local Churches, the names of which are given, the only light-bearers or candlesticks? Did the light entirely cease to shine when these Asiatic Churches ceased to exist? Let these seven Churches, or candlesticks, be regarded as a sevenfold or perfect representative of the one Church, in its responsibility to Christ, as his light-bearer or witness before the world, and we have an interpretation at once consistent with the entire character of the book, and sufficient to account for the selection of seven local Churches, the divers states of which furnish for this a sevenfold or perfect view of the whole professing body."

(5) To individuals in the churches, existing in every generation since St. John's day. As one has well said: "In dealing with these epistles, every man, of every age, has a Divine thermometer whereby to tell exactly where he or his church stands in Christ's judgment, and one constructed and delivered to him by Christ himself for this specific purpose. They tell what Christ's judgment of each of us is, and what we may expect in the great day of his coming. In every age, and in every congregation, Christ is walking among his churches, with open, flaming eyes; and these epistles give us his opinion of what his all-revealing glance discovers."

(6) In a prophetic sense, they all apply to seven distinct periods or epochs of the Church since St. John's day.

(7) In a very special sense, to the period in which we find ourselves as Christians today.

One writer who has given very close attention to the unfolding of these seven messages has noted that each one embraces seven distinct parts, which fact of itself is of very deep significance: first, an address — "Unto the messenger ... write"; second, a citation of some one or more of the sublime attributes of the speaker, Christ — a different one for each particular Church; third, an assertion of Christ's complete knowledge of the sphere, duties, and doings of the persons or churches addressed; fourth, a description of the state of each, and such interspersions of praise and promise, or censure and admonition, as the case required; fifth, an allusion to his promised coming, and the character it will assume to the persons described; sixth, a universal command to *hear* what is said to all the churches; and, seventh, a special promise to the ultimate victor or overcomer.

In the last four, the order of succession of these parts is different from the first three, and the call to "hear" the messages is placed after the promise to the "overcomer"; but in each one, these seven parts may be distinguished, thus showing that there is a fullness, a completeness about the whole, which proves

that in their significance and application they cannot be confined to the few particular Churches to which the messages were originally addressed.

Messages Apply to Seven Distinct Epochs

From the world's standpoint the Churches existing in St. John's day were doubtless of little importance. They were despised or held in light esteem by the people of the world in general. However neglected, despised, or persecuted, we see by these special epistles of the Savior to them that imperfect as they were they were considered of more importance in heaven than any organization of earth, and had the first, chief place in the Savior's mind, as well as that of the Heavenly Father Himself. We again emphasize the fact of the very wide and general application of the reproofs, the rebukes, the warnings, the dangers, and the evils pointed out, as well as the special words of comfort and promise to the overcomers, to all the generations of the Church's history, both individually and collectively. However, the facts of history themselves have proved beyond any reasonable doubt that the peculiar characteristics described of each of these Churches, fit exactly seven distinct, successive epochs of the history of the Church in the order mentioned, which establishes the prophetic character of the messages themselves; in the measure that we become familiar with the history of these seven epochs, we will be able to see a most remarkable fulfillment of the messages. Their prophetic character has been recognized by many, if not by nearly all of the expositors who have written on the Revelation for the past two centuries. However, it is a perfectly reasonable supposition that all the various matters associated with these messages in their primary application to the seven particular Churches and their ministry, must be the Divine basis, as well as the Divine rule by which we interpret the symbols of the seven lampstands, among which the Savior is seen walking, and the seven stars held in his right hand.

In a very particular way these messages show us the moral and spiritual condition of these primitive Churches. From the fact that they were founded by the Apostles, one might naturally presume that they would be perfect patterns and models of excellence; that they would be pure in morals and free from evils, false doctrines, and the defections we find later on in history, as also in this last time. However, as we examine these messages, we find that those early congregations to whom they were addressed were very much like the churches that have existed in every generation since that time. There was equally as much to censure as there was to commend. There were loyal and true children of God, whose affections were centered on things above and whose citizenship was in heaven, but there were many whose love for Christ had lost its fervor; some whose affections were set on worldly things; others who had a name to live, but were dead to a real experimental knowledge of the saving power of Christ; and still others who were proud, boastful, claiming to be rich and increased with goods — with all that they thought was necessary for a Church to possess, and yet were so blind to the real riches that they are represented by the Savior as wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked — actually possessing nothing of the true inward qualities necessary to represent the Savior and

to perform his work. With five of the Churches out of the seven, the Savior finds serious fault. In one of these five, Laodicea, he finds nothing whatever to commend; and two alone, Smyrna and Philadelphia, are not specially reproved by the Savior, though even these find themselves in contact with elements which he severely condemns.

We conclude this general description of these messages in the language of Mr. Seiss, long since passed beyond: "Viewing these epistles, then, as descriptive of the entire Church, I find in them this item of fact: that the professed Church, as pronounced upon by Christ himself, is a mixed society, embracing interminglings of good and evil from its beginning to the end. Whether we take the seven Churches as significant of seven successive or as seven co-existing phases, they must needs reach to the end, and so depicture the entire Church. And as there is not one of these epistles in which the presence of evil is not recognized, so there can be no period in the earthly history of the Church in which it is without bad admixtures. Whether the Ephesian Church extends, as in some sense it must, from the Apostolic era to the consummation, or whether it relates mainly to the first period alone, and the Laodicean the last, we still have a vast deal which the Lord and Judge of the Church condemns, stretching its dark image from the commencement to the close. There were fallen ones, and some whose love had cooled, and some whose first works had been abandoned, and some giving place to the base deeds of the Nicolaitans, and some false ones claiming to be apostles, and were not, even among the [few] warm, patient, fervent, enduring and faithful Ephesians. In Smyrna were faithless blasphemers, and those of Satan's synagogue, as well as faithful, suffering ones, and those whom Christ is to crown in heaven. In Pergamos were those who denied the faith, and followed the treacherous teachings of Balaam, and the doctrines of the detested Nicolaitans, as well as those who held fast the name of Jesus, and witnessed for him unto death. In Thyatira we find a debauching and idolatrous Jezebel and her death-worthy children, and multitudes of spiritual adulterers, as well as those whose works, and faith, and charity, and patience are noted with favor, and who had not been drawn into Satan's depths. In Sardis there was incompleteness, deadness, defalcation, need for repentance, and threatened judgment, as well as names of those who had not defiled their garments. In Philadelphia we discover 'the synagogue of Satan,' falsifiers, those who had settled themselves upon the earth, and such as had not kept Christ's Word, as well as such as should be kept from the sifting trial, and advanced to celestial crowns. And in Laodicea there was found disgusting lukewarmness, empty profession, and base self-conceit, with Christ himself excluded.

"Never, indeed, has there been a sowing of God on earth, but it has been oversown by Satan; or a growth for Christ, which the plantings of the wicked one did not mingle with and hinder. God sowed good seed in Paradise; but when it came to the harvest, the principal product was tares. At earth's first altar appeared the murderer with the saint — Cain with Abel. ... And in all ages and dispensations, the plants of grace have ever found the weeds upspringing by their sides, their roots intertwining, and their stalks and leaves and fruits putting forth together.

The Church is not an exception, and never will be, as long as the present dispensation lasts. Even in its first and purest periods, as the Scriptural accounts attest, it was intermixed with what pertained not to it. There was a Judas among its Apostles; an Ananias and a Simon Magus among its first converts; a Demas and a Diotrephes among its first public servants. And as long as it continues in this world, Christ will have his Antichrist, and the temple of God, its man of sin. He who sets out to find a perfect church, in which there are no unworthy elements, and no disfigurations, proposes to himself a hopeless search. Go where he will, worship where he may, in any country, in any age, he will soon find tares among the wheat, sin mixing in with all earthly holiness; self- deceivers, hypocrites, and unchristians in every assembly of saints; Satan insinuating himself into every gathering of the sons of God, to present themselves before the Lord. No preaching, however pure; no discipline, however strict or prudent; no watchfulness, however searching and faithful, can ever make it different. ... The Savior himself has taught us that in the Gospel field, wheat and tares are to be found; that it is forbidden to pluck up the bad, lest the good also be damaged; and that both are to 'grow together until the harvest,' which is the end of the economy — the winding up of the present order of things — 'the end of the world [Age].' "

Christ, All In All

In Christ all fulness dwells: from him proceeds
All fallen man, poor, wretched, guilty, needs.
In him the contrite, bruised in spirit, and
Whate'er can heal the sorrows of the mind —
Forgiving love, that saves from blank despair,
Rich grace, that banishes each anxious care.

Soft pity, that relieves the bursting sigh,
And truth, revealing joys that never die.
Thrice happy they, who to his Word attend,
His favor seek, and on his strength depend.
'Tis theirs to know his heart-consoling voice,
To share his smile, and in his name rejoice.

To them, reclaimed in mercy from the fall
And heavenward marching, Christ is all in all:
In want, their treasure — in distress, their stay —
In gloom, their day-spring — vigor, in decay —
'Mid foes, their guard — in solitude, their guest —
In storms, their hiding place — in toils, their rest —
In bonds, their freedom — their relief, in pain —
In life, their glory — and in all things, gain.

Chapter Three

Christ's Message to Ephesus

(Revelation 2:1-7)

"Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (Revelation 2:1).

The Church at Ephesus was the first of the seven to be addressed by the Master. In his message to this Church the Savior is announced as the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, and who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands; and then, addressing the Church and its messenger, he describes their condition in the words: "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Revelation 2:2-4).

Let the fact be borne in mind that these words are addressed to the angel or pastor, and to the Church of Ephesus through its pastor or minister, who serves in spiritual things. We inquire, Who alone of all its members will hear — give heed? The Savior himself, seven times repeated, answers this question in the words: "Let him who has an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Congregations" (verse 7). It is important that we give earnest heed to this fact, that the only one who hears, in the sense of giving heed, be he messenger, bishop, or one who holds no position of responsibility or trust, is the "overcomer"; he alone is the one who truly hears and finally is chosen to inherit the promises, and to at last become of the little flock of joint-heirs in the heavenly Kingdom. This thought has been well expressed by another: "How hard is it to understand that while we may obey in much that in fact cost us little, the true test of obedience is just in that in which we are called to renounce our wills, and our wisdom, perhaps to forfeit the esteem and companionship of others, by doing what has only the Word of God to justify it, and must wait for eternity to find right appreciation!"

The one specially important point in this message to Ephesus is plain, and it is left to stand in solemn contrast with all the other matters that receive unmingled commendation. What were the seemingly commendable characteristics possessed by this Church and its angel or minister? Briefly summing these up we discover that he who holds the seven stars and walks in the midst of the candlesticks, found in Ephesus, works, labor, endurance, steadfast opposition to

evil, faithfulness and firmness in discipline, cheerfulness in bearing any burden, and a just hatred of deeds and practices which Christ also hates. One who fails to look closely at these qualities and contrast them with the one solemn charge, "Thou hast left thy first love," will most naturally inquire, Can it be possible to possess all these qualities and yet be lacking in this one all- important thing? The words of him who walked among the lampstands plainly answers that it is. The words also imply that the loss of first love must be the immediate cause of departure from true Christian life. Let us then examine more closely this message to Ephesus.

"Left Thy First Love"

Ephesus was the first Church, and as its name (first, desirable) indicates, it possessed advantages that were indeed desirable. Ephesus it was that labored and was patient and could not bear evil, to whom these words were addressed by the Savior, so expressive of disappointment. We inquire then, What is this "first love"? Was it love for the Truth alone? Was it love for the work, or service of proclaiming — of giving out the Truth? Ah, no! Ephesus did not fail here. Wherein then was her failure? What was her "first love"? Was it not that for which the Truth was made known to her? Was not the Truth given to the Christians of Ephesus for the purpose of begetting in them a true, a deep love for the Lord, to enable them to become acquainted with Christ himself, as an ever present Savior, Friend, Counselor and Guide? There can be but one true answer: It was.

"First love" then is something beyond the love of the Truth, and something beyond the desire for and service in connection with the Truth. It is love for the Lord himself — love for what he has done for us, and love for his own glorious personality which reflects the Divine attributes. This, the supreme and highest form of love, finds in him, its full and complete satisfaction. It finds expression in our desires and aims to please him who first loved us, and "whom having not seen we love." All other forms and degrees of love are incidental to this, our "first love."

A comparison of St. Paul's words of commendation to the Thessalonian believers will, we believe, enable us to discover the deep significance of these reproving words of Christ to the believers at Ephesus. The Apostle when writing to the Thessalonian believers thus commended them: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work *of faith*, and labor *of love*, and patience *of hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father; knowing brethren beloved your election of God" (1 Thessalonians 1:2,3). The fact that in the Savior's words to Ephesus, "works," "labor," and "patience" are mentioned, but "faith," "love," and "hope" are not coupled with them is remarkable, and seems to explain the situation and condition of these in Ephesus. In the Thessalonian Church faith, love, and hope were active, and it was these characteristics that produced the work, labor, and patience. These three most important of all graces, faith, hope, and love, clearly indicate that the Thessalonian believers were in the sweet enjoyment of the

person of Christ as Head, and that their hope of his Second Coming was clear and bright.

"Works" were in Ephesus, but Christ does not say "works of *faith*"; "labor" was there, but he does not say "labor of *love*"; "patience" was there, but he does not say "patience of *hope*." These were evidently dimmed. Let all three of the others be active, but if the freshness of what called them into action be lacking, they could become a creed, a mere belief, without the power. To assist to a better realization of the matter, we inquire, What is the first love in the natural, human relation, in one who is espoused as a chaste virgin to one husband? Who belongs to him? Who looks upon him as the one ideal man of the whole world? We answer, The espoused. It is she who is absorbed in him; who is guarding his honor and reputation; who is watching his countenance, living as in his presence, and forsaking all others for him alone. This it is for which the Church of God is called out of the world. She is called out because she is to be with him, because she is to reign with him; she will wait for his coming because he is hers. As has been truly said: "To leave this first love is to lose all. For whom are all the varied excellencies and beauties [of character] named but for him? The assembly, Church, is not adorned for the world; it is not to improve the world; it is not a companion and caterer to the world; is not responsible to it; owes no allegiance to it. If it is not absorbed with Christ, living in and for him, only for his admiration and smile and comfort, it has nothing distinctive from the nominal believer.

"Leaving this, then, all other apostasy is possible of the grossest and most abandoned kind. When a maiden betrothed to a man loses him out of her heart, she is ready for another. The assembly of God is thus. It (the loss of first love) is the root of all the sad things in the mournful story of the decline and fall of the Church, told in the book of Revelation. Unfaithfulness of heart is a crime to the sensitive heart of the betrothed; to get used to doing without the man of her affections, to be content without him, to be engaged with things that have not him in them. To the people of God, this prepares the way to be engaged with what Christ abhors. This is to be 'fallen.' In the first stage it is fallen — all these graces, industry, patience, sensitiveness to his headship, and fallen! A possible condition is this, is the teaching of these words of Christ."

Mr. Grant who has evidently given careful consideration to this question of "first love" and what the unfailing remedy is when it has relaxed, sums up the matter:

"How dreadful a dishonor to Christ is this, to lose one's first love! It is as if at first he was more than he proved on longer acquaintance! Is not here the very germ of final apostasy? ... Here is what makes the world to us such a battlefield. Capable, on the one hand, of enjoying all the joys of heaven; capable, on the other, of being attracted by that which lies under the power of the wicked one — the eye affecting the heart — day by day we are solicited by that which daily lies before us and from which there is no escape. Our danger here is first of all distraction, some gain to us which is not loss for Christ, or that dulling of the spiritual sense ... the dust of the way settles upon the glass in which Faith sees

her eternal possessions. Our remedy is the presence of him who with basin and towel would refresh his pilgrims, cleansing away the travel-stains that they may have part with him.

"Here alone first love is maintained. Here, in his presence, we learn his mind. The holiness of truth is accomplished in us. What is unseen but eternal asserts its power. The illusions of the prince of this world pass from us. The glory of Christ is revealed, and the eye here also affects the heart; he becomes for us more and more the light in which we see light, the Sun which rules the day, not only enlightening but life-giving; the light in which we walk is the 'light of life.'

"Now here ... first love cannot but be maintained. Who could be daily in his presence, ministered to by him, having part with him, and yet grow cold in response to his love? It is impossible. Where this is the case, intimacy has not been kept up. We have not permitted the basin and towel to do its work. Assurance of heart before him has been replaced by an uneasy sense of unfitness for his presence, the true causes of which we have not been willing fully to face, and for which the remedy has therefore not been found. ...

"What is the test, then, of 'first love'? Not 'work' — activity in outward service; this they had at Ephesus; not even 'labor,' for this too they had; no, nor yet 'endurance' — though a more manifest sign than either [of the above] of Divine power in the soul. Not zeal against evil, nor boldness to examine and refuse the highest pretensions [of those who claimed apostleship]; not suffering even for Christ's name, and that unwearied. All this is good and acceptable to God, and the Ephesians had it all, and yet says the Lord, 'I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love.'

"What, then, is the test of first love? It is in the complete satisfaction of the heart by its object. We know what power often there is in a new thing to take possession of one for the time being. And in first love, it is characteristic that it engrosses the subject of it. The Lord claims again and again the power to give this complete satisfaction of heart to his people."

The Deeds of the Nicolaitans

One special evil is mentioned by the Savior as existing in Ephesus, or at least seeking to gain a foothold there, which the Ephesian Church resisted, even to the extent of hating it. It is specially singled out by the Savior, and words of commendation are given to this Church for hating it. His words are: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate" (verse 6).

There is quite a general agreement among expositors concerning what Nicolaitanism is. It is interesting to observe that it was a thing that started in Ephesus in practice, and afterwards embodied itself in theory; and finally in Pergamos it is mentioned as becoming a feature of doctrine, and the Savior thus again expresses himself concerning it: "So in like manner thou hast also those holding the teaching [doctrine] of the Nicolaitans" (Revelation 2:15). It has been forcefully described as "something which put down the people [of God], superseded

them in their rights, and set them aside; for this is the plain import of the name, which Christ gives it, and the names which are divinely given are always exactly descriptive of the things or persons that receive them. We also know from the Scriptures and from the common representations of all ecclesiastical historians that the Church was hardly founded until it began to be troubled with the lordly pretensions and doings of arrogant men in violation of the common priesthood of believers, and settling upon ministers the attributes and prerogatives of a magisterial order against which Peter, Paul, and John were moved to declare their apostolic condemnation, but which grew nevertheless and presently became fixed upon the [professed] Church as a part of its essential system. We know that there is to this day a certain teaching and claim and practice in the largest part of the professed Church according to which a certain order severs itself entirely from the laity, assumes the right and titles of priesthood, asserts superiority and authority over the rest in spiritual matters, denies the right of any one, whatever his gifts or graces, to teach or preach in the Church, who has not been regularly initiated into the mysterious puissance of its own self-constituted circle, and puts forward its creatures (however glaringly deficient in those heavenly gifts which really make the minister), as Christ's only authorized heralds, before whom every one else must be mute and passive and whose words and administrations every one must receive, on pain of exclusion from the hope of salvation [or of losing their crown].

"We also know that this system of priestly clericalism and prelatical hierarchism claims to have come down from the earliest periods of the Church, and traces for itself a regular succession through the Christian centuries, and appeals to patristic practice as its chief basis, vindication, and boast. We know that it first came into effective sway in the period immediately succeeding the Pagan persecutions, reaching its fullest embodiment in Popery, and has perpetuated itself in the same, and in Laudism, Tractarianism, and Highchurchism, even to our day, and to our very doors. And if we would know what the Lord Jesus thinks of it, we have only to recur to these epistles, in which he lays his hand right on it, and says: 'This thing I hate.' "

Mr. Russell's views were in full accordance with the foregoing presentation; his clear statement was: "The 'doctrine of the Nicolaitans' seems to be the theory of lordship or headship in the Church. The strife as to who should be greatest existed amongst many of the patriarchs — fathers — of the prominent churches. At their councils there was a bitter fight for supremacy. The tendency was toward an earthly head, and of course many coveted the honor. The patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome were the most prominent. The first two dropped out of the conflict, but the strife continued for several hundred years between Constantinople and Rome. It was settled only by a division of the Church: the Eastern, or Greek Church, accepting the Patriarch of Constantinople for its head; and the Western, or Papal Church, acknowledging the Bishop — Pope or Father — of Rome.

"Many of the true followers of the Master in the churches denounced this attempt to disobey the direct command of Jesus, 'Call no man father' (Matthew

23:9). Of course, they received the promised persecution (2 Timothy 1:12). This class in Pergamos is commended by our Lord under the symbol of 'Antipas, my faithful martyr.' In the Greek, *anti* means against, and *papas* signifies father. In this stage of the development of the Church those who sought to be popular received the emoluments of the Church; but the promise to the overcomers is that of pleasure and honor that shall be eternal."

Nicolaitanism was only in its incipiency when mentioned in the message to Ephesus. It, as we have seen, became a *doctrine* in Pergamos. The evil of "Nicolaitanism" has always existed in the Church since shortly after its establishment. Every reform movement in the Church since the Apostles' day — every effort to get back to primitive simplicity of doctrine, of church order, and of methods of service, has, in the course of time, resulted again in sectarianism, and has left the faithful few (Protestants) in the "wilderness." Lording it over God's heritage, idolizing messengers and human organizations, symbolized by "Nicolaitanism," is responsible for these sad results. This evil has been repeated again and again in the Church's history. Even in the very closing hours of the Church's pilgrimage we are witnessing its repetition. Let him that readeth understand! How necessary, how significant, how timely the Savior's warning: "Take heed, let no man deceive you." *The worshipping of fallible men, the worshipping of imperfect human systems* — making idols of them, allowing them to occupy *the place that Christ and Christ alone should occupy*, has ever been Satan's method of taking away the liberty that is in Christ Jesus, and thus of marring the fellowship and destroying the unity of "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth."

As a faithful shepherd, when his sheep become frightened by strange voices in their midst, or bewildered and exhausted by the storm, utters his well-known welcome call, and thus gathers his sheep, so Christ, the Good Shepherd, who gave his life for his sheep, speaks and his sheep hear his voice and gather around him and are led into the shelter of the true fold; their fears are allayed, and once again they go in and out and find the green pasture and are led beside the still waters.

Are not the words of a faithful pastor fraught with timely significance to us now! "Dearly beloved, *one, and only one, deserves all the honor of the Church*, both now and forever, and that one is her true Lord and Master; and his name only should she own in any manner. He leads, he teaches, he feeds; and the various human agents used by him ... should neither take his place in her heart nor share his honor before the world."

The Good Shepherd, through his messages, reminds the sheep that they were called by him out of bondage into liberty (John 8:31). His Word reminds them that the enjoyment of Christian fellowship and unity is based upon their relationship to him as members of his Body; for all such are to be partakers of the one spirit; they are all called in one hope of their calling; they are all to recognize but the one Lord, to be of the one "like precious faith," to experience the one baptism, and to trust in the one God and Father of all (Ephesians 4:4-6).

But are we not to appreciate and to hold in proper honor those older ones, who in humility and faithfulness minister to our spiritual needs; who, in a certain sense, are under shepherds, and who watch for our souls? We answer, Yes; but how shall we honor them? Let us note the Apostle's words, "Remember them which have the rule over you [margin, are your guides], who have spoken unto you the Word of the Lord: whose faith follow, considering the end [object] of their conversation [conduct]. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:7,8). Ah! yes, these are the ones that we are to honor, to appreciate — those who have *the glory of the Lord* as the only object of their entire service for the saints. Does not the Apostle Paul say, "Follow me"? Yes, but hear him further, "Even as I follow Christ." Whom among men does the Apostle tell us to follow? Note his advice: Those "who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Hebrews 6:12).

There is indeed a marked difference between giving *worship* and *homage* to servants, and *loving, appreciating*, and *esteeming* them very highly for their work's sake. A severe test is often required to make manifest the difference. The one who gives undue honor to a servant of the Lord possesses, though perhaps unconsciously, a man-worshipping spirit; and when one object of worship is taken out of the way, naturally such a person desires another, and will soon find another, and transfer his allegiance to the same. On the other hand, the one manifesting the true spirit of appreciation for service rendered, does so because he sees in the servant the humble, submissive, unselfish, self-sacrificing spirit of the Master himself, and thus is caused to long for and strive for that same spirit.

"I Will Remove Thy Candlestick"

Ephesus, however, hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, and was commended by the Savior for so doing. Notwithstanding this — notwithstanding all her other good and commendable qualities, she had left her first love, and the words of the Savior are not only significant and applicable to Ephesus, but to all individual believers since who have done likewise. These words are:

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (verse 5).

Did Ephesus repent? We mean that local Church existing in St. John's day. History does not give us any information regarding this matter so far as those particular persons who made up that obscure, and doubtless despised Church are concerned. We do know, however, that the descendants, the successors, in later generations departed farther and farther away from the Savior, both in life and in precept; indeed, they went into apostasy, and today there is not the slightest semblance of a congregation that bears even the name Christian in the City. The lampstand was removed. But still we may be sure that there were a few individuals who heeded the words, "Let him who has an ear, hear what the Spirit saith unto the Congregations," and will inherit the promise given by the Savior to the overcomer: "I will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Concerning the meaning of this promise as applying to the spiritual overcomers, the heavenly joint- heirs, it is stated in the Scriptures that the paradise of God refers to both the heavenly and the earthly future state. "Our Lord refers to this paradise in language which identifies it with the first paradise of Eden, saying, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.' It will be remembered that all the trees in Eden were trees of life, but that the one in the midst of the garden was then a forbidden tree, the disobedient eating of which brought death on Adam and his race. That tree in the midst of paradise was called the tree of knowledge, and our Lord's promise is that the overcomers of this present age shall have full liberty to partake of that [which was prefigured by the] tree of knowledge, and under most blessed and satisfactory conditions, when the knowledge will be of benefit to them under Divine approval, and not bring a curse. It is this same paradise of the future on this earth that our Lord referred to when addressing the penitent thief, he said, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee this day, thou shalt be with me in paradise.' This paradise, we recall, is elsewhere referred to by the Apostles as 'the third heaven' — 'a new heavens and a new earth' (2 Corinthians 12:2, 2 Peter 3:13)."

Having considered this message of Christ to Ephesus as it related to the Church of that name in St. John's day, we now view it from its representative standpoint, that is, as it related to the period or epoch in history that seems to have been described by it. In regard to this we will say that all expositors who apply these messages to seven periods of church history are agreed that this Ephesian message described the condition of the Church as it was in St. John's day, about 100 AD, at which time this period was nearing its close. We find ourselves in agreement with one who gives us the following significant statement:

"The nature of the vision in which John received these epistles assumes that not these seven Churches alone, but in them the entire Church is to be contemplated. These seven Churches, then, besides being literal historical churches, stand for the entire Christian body, in all periods of its history. But how, or in what respects? In the first place, the seven Churches represent seven phases or periods in the Church's history, stretching from the time of the Apostles to the coming of Christ, the characteristics of which are set forth partly in the names of these Churches, but more fully in the epistles addressed to them. There has been an Ephesian period — a period of warmth and love and labor for Christ, dating directly from the Apostles, in which defection began by the gradual cooling of the love of some, the false professions of others, and the incoming of undue exaltations of the clergy and church offices."

The further statement by Mr. Russell is in full harmony: "The Church at Ephesus would represent the condition of the Church in the Apostle's day, at the time of the writing of the messages."

Referring again to the "stars" in the right hand of the symbolic personage representing Christ in the vision, we find that the Savior himself makes the

explanation that the stars are the messengers of the Churches, and in the light of the general testimony of the Divine Word we have seen that the symbolic stars may be applied variously:

(1) To the bishops or pastors of the seven particular Churches addressed in the epistles.

(2) To all the bishops or pastors over all the churches existing in St. John's day.

(3) To all the bishops or pastors of all the churches existing in the different periods or epochs of the Church's history. These who constitute the teaching or ministering class of all the churches in the different periods or epochs may in a sense be considered as symbolized by the stars in Christ's right hand, even as the particular seven addressed, originally; and a reasonable exegesis will not admit of leaving them out.

While it is not to be doubted that at different periods — critical periods in the history of the Church, Christ has called different men, special men, to declare or give emphasis to certain neglected truths, or to bring forth from the Lord's storehouse truths long hidden, lost sight of, or truths only due to be understood at special epochs, it would, however, be utterly erroneous, it would be carrying the matter too far, to say that the truths they thus brought forth were to be the ones, and only ones to be proclaimed, and the only ones necessary for the Church to know during these special times. It would be savoring of Nicolaitanism or Popery to claim that those truths that each specially chosen one gave out were to be sufficient for the Church until another was called. To illustrate: It cannot be doubted that Martin Luther was a specially prepared and called servant to emphasize certain neglected or hidden truths necessary for the Church to know; it would, however, be unreasonable and even dangerous to think that during the long period intervening between his call and that of John Wesley or any of the later reformers, no other truths were to be understood or made known. This has always led, when believed and carried to its logical conclusion, to the most egregious kind of sectarianism, and clericalism, and is by the Savior in this epistle denominated Nicolaitanism. It has had the effect of inculcating the doctrine of Nicolaitanism, which thing Christ has plainly set his seal against. *If* it would be Scriptural and proper to apply the seven messengers of the seven Churches to seven special men, called in these different epochs, it would be consistent to do so *only* by recognizing that these men would cease their work at death; and that their messages would not cover all features of truth, but only certain special truths needed. To do otherwise than this would, as we have stated, lead to very serious and egregious error. The unwholesome effects have been to cause certain Christian leaders to be looked upon as inspired. It has caused some to believe and teach that it is wrong to expect any further light than that proclaimed by the one supposed to be the messenger of each epoch; and some have been misled into trying to settle all matters of doctrine by the special so-called "star" or teacher, instead of by the Scriptures, which are ever the *sole rule* by which all matters must be finally determined and settled.

Chapter Four

Christ's Message to Smyrna

(Revelation 2:8-11)

"And unto the angel of the Church of Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive" (Revelation 2:8).

The name Smyrna signifies myrrh, and is so translated in Matthew 2:11, Mark 15:23, John 19:39. It is the name of an aromatic sap from a thorny tree, having a somewhat pleasant though bitter taste. It furnished one of the ingredients of the holy ointment, and was used by the ancients in embalming the dead. The use of myrrh, therefore, for sacred purposes, being associated with death and resurrection, seems to mark it as expressive and symbolical of something that is desirable and pleasing to God. As has been said: "It well describes a church persecuted unto death, and lying embalmed in the precious spices of its sufferings, such as the Church of Smyrna was. It was the Church of myrrh or bitterness, and yet agreeable and precious unto the Lord, holy in the midst of its tribulations." The words of the Savior, "which was dead and is alive," seem to be intended to bring before their minds thoughts of his own sufferings, death, and resurrection, thus making the hope of sharing in the First Resurrection bright, comforting, and sustaining. No complaint, no rebuke, no reproof is contained in the message to this Church, and its messenger, neither are there any special works mentioned to their praise. The message alleges, however, that there were those in their midst who were of the "synagogue of Satan," thus showing that they, like Ephesus, were tried by false teaching.

Those who recognize the Divine purpose for this age, that of calling and disciplining a special class for a future station with Christ in his Millennial Kingdom, will readily recognize that certain features of the seven messages stand out in special prominence as being related to the general progress of that glorious purpose. One phase of the developments of this age clearly noted in the messages is that of the gradual decline and apostasy of primitive Christianity, until the "tares," the worldly element, assume full control in the conduct of the affairs of the churches. This condition continues, with an occasional effort at reform, always relapsing into worse and worse conditions, until the end of the age is reached, when the professed Church is rejected altogether and the Divine judgments begin to come upon it.

Again it is observed throughout the messages that in the midst of this formal, worldly church can be seen, almost buried from sight, cast out, rejected, and generally looked upon as heretical by the world and the nominal body, the "little

flock" of tried ones, true Christians, struggling to uphold their Divine Master's cause. Sometimes these are seen encountering terrible persecution, even unto martyrdom; at other times, earnestly contending for the true faith, against the errors and perversions of the true Gospel, that have ever threatened, if it were possible, to thwart the Divine purpose.

The Period of Persecution

In the prophetic application of these messages, Smyrna describes the period of Pagan Roman persecution of the second and third centuries. There appears to be no difference of opinion amongst expositors who hold to the prophetic interpretation of these messages, respecting this application.

A careful examination of history clearly shows that the address to Smyrna fits this period, which lasted from the persecution by Domitian, (which was going on at the time St. John saw the vision) to Constantine — over two centuries. The power of Rome, absolute as it was throughout her wide- spread empire, when wielded against Christianity, left little room for escape anywhere while as a heathen, pagan power, it was antagonistic to all who professed the name of Christianity. The address to Smyrna, therefore, comes exactly in place here; and the very name "myrrh," used as this was in the embalming of the dead, reminds us of how "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

The Savior here mentions, as he does concerning each Church, the fact that he was fully aware of the seeming disadvantages, persecutions, and trials of his faithful followers; and this is expressed in the words: "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty" (verse 9). These words imply that the Church at Smyrna was a poor church so far as possessing worldly goods was concerned, and that they were continually buffeted and persecuted. Such a church could hardly be expected to accomplish much in spreading the light of Truth. All that could be looked for in this Church would be steadfastness and loyalty to the Lord; that they give most of their attention to the development of spiritual graces, the true riches. Indeed, the Savior specially commends them for this, in the words: "I know thy poverty [in this world's goods] (but thou art rich)" — doubtless rich in spiritual graces.

Interpreted from the prophetic standpoint, the message singles out one particular, special period of persecution to be endured by his faithful followers at this time. This is referred to in the words, "The Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days." According to these words, Smyrna was to have a period of tribulation of "ten [symbolic] days" — a day for a year, and nearly all ecclesiastical writers agree in applying this prophecy to those persecutions that raged most fearfully during the ten years from the decree of Diocletian in 303 AD to the Edict of Milan, by Constantine, in 313 AD. Even those who do not hold to the prophetic view of these epistles agree that Smyrna represents well the Church of this period in its last and most terrible struggles with Pagan Rome. Concerning this, Mr. Russell states:

"Thus the Lord informed his faithful servants of this period that theirs would be a time of great persecution. Pagan Rome, here symbolized as the Devil, has been [one of] the most devilish of all earthly governments, when viewed in the light of its bloody persecutions. The ten symbolic days refer to the last and most severe persecution under the Roman emperors — that of the reign of Diocletian, 303-313 AD. Those who have read the history of this period can understand the depths of the words, 'that ye may be tried.' Some of the most sublime pictures of Christian endurance that the world has ever seen were enacted during the Smyrna period of the Church. The call was for faithfulness unto death; the promise was that the overcomers should 'not be hurt of the Second Death,' but should receive the crown of life — immortality."

In speaking of one of the Pagan emperors (Marcus Aurelius) of the Second Century, whom secular writers, because of his extraordinary wisdom and virtue (?), have exalted beyond measure, the Historian Mosheim has said:

"It is not in his conduct toward the Christians that we must look for the reasons of these pompous encomiums; for, here the clemency and justice of that emperor suffer a strange eclipse. ... Without examining impartially their cause, he lent an easy and attentive ear to the most virulent insinuations of their enemies, especially to the malignant calumnies of the [heathen] philosophers, who accused them of the most horrid crimes. ... So that, if we except that of Nero, there was no reign under which the Christians were more injuriously and cruelly treated, than under that of the wise and virtuous [?] Marcus Aurelius. ... This emperor issued against the Christians, whom he regarded as a vain, obstinate, and vicious set of men, edicts, which upon the whole, were very unjust. ... In consequence of these imperial edicts, the judges and magistrates received the accusations which even slaves and the vilest of the perjured rabble brought against the followers of Jesus; and the Christians were put to the most cruel tortures and were condemned to meet death in the most barbarous forms, notwithstanding their perfect innocence, and their persevering and solemn denial of the horrid crimes laid to their charge. The imperial edicts were so positive and express against inflicting punishment upon such of the Christians as were guilty of no crime, that the corrupt judges, who, through motives of interest or popularity, desired their destruction, were obliged to suborn false accusers to charge them with actions that might bring them within the reach of the laws. Hence many fell victims to cruel superstition and popular fury, seconded by the corruption of a wicked magistracy, and the connivance of a prince [Marcus Aurelius], who, with respect to one set of men, forgot those principles of justice and clemency which directed his conduct toward all others. Among these victims, there were many men of illustrious piety, and some of eminent learning and abilities, such as the holy and venerable Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and Justin Martyr, so deservedly renowned for his erudition and philosophy."

Amongst the many martyrs of the Third Century were Vivia Perpetua and Felicitas; the former being only about twenty-two years of age, and Felicitas even younger. Both were young in the faith, of good family, liberal education, and honorably married. The history of Perpetua's martyrdom, except the closing

death scene, is related by herself, and is said to have been written by her own hand. The Historian Milman has given a long account of the sufferings of Perpetua. From her own account we give a brief extract:

" 'When we were in the hands of the persecutors, my father in his tender affection persevered in his endeavors to pervert me from the faith [to persuade her to give up her faith in Christ].' Her reply, in the face of a terrible death, was: ' "My father, this vessel [pointing to one near], be it a pitcher or anything else, can we call it by any other name?" "Certainly not," he replied. "Nor can I call myself by any other name than that of Christian?" My father looked as if he could have plucked my eyes out; but he only harassed me, and departed, persuaded by the arguments of the devil. Then, after being a few days without seeing my father, I was enabled to give thanks to God, and his absence was tempered to my spirit. After a few days we were baptized, and the waters of baptism seemed to give power of endurance to my body. Again in a few days and we were cast into prison. I was terrified; for I had never before seen such total darkness. O miserable day! from the dreadful heat of the prisoners crowded together and the insults of the soldiers. But I was wrung with solicitude for my infant. Two of our deacons, however, by the payment of money, obtained our removal for some hours in the day to a more open part of the prison. Each of the captives then pursued his usual occupation. In my anxiety, I addressed and consoled my mother, and commended my child to my brother; and I began to pine away at seeing them pine away on my account. And for many days I suffered this anxiety, and accustomed my child to remain in the prison with me; and I immediately recovered my strength, and was relieved from my toil and trouble for my infant, and the prison became to me like a palace; and I was happier there than I should have been anywhere else. ...

" 'After a few days there was a rumor that we were to be heard. And my father came from the city, wasted away with anxiety, to pervert me; and he said, "Have compassion, O my daughter, on my gray hairs; have compassion on thy father, if he is worthy of the name of father. If I have brought thee up to the flower of thine age, if I have preferred thee to all thy brothers, do not expose me to this disgrace. Look on thy brother; look on thy mother; look on thy child, who, cannot live without thee. Do not destroy us all." ... And I was grieved for the gray hairs of my father ... and I consoled him saying, "In this trial, what God wills, will take place. Know that we are not in our own power, but in that of God." And he went away sorrowing. ...

" 'Another day, while we were at dinner, we were suddenly seized and carried off to trial. The report spread rapidly, and an immense multitude were assembled. We were placed at the bar; the rest were interrogated, and made their confession. And it came to my turn; and my father instantly appeared with my child, and he drew me down the step and said in a beseeching tone, "Have compassion on your infant"; and Hilarianus the procurator, who exercised the power of life and death for the proconsul Timinianus, who had died, said, "Spare the gray hairs of your parent; spare your infant; offer sacrifice for the welfare of your emperor." And I answered, "I will not sacrifice." "Art thou a Christian?" said

Hilarianus. I answered, "I am a Christian." And while my father stood there to persuade me, Hilarianus ordered him to be thrust down and beaten with rods. And the misfortune of my father grieved me; and I was as much grieved for his old age, as if I had been scourged myself. He then passed a sentence upon us all and condemned us to the wild beasts; and we went back in cheerfulness to the prison.' "

The narrative then proceeds to another instance of the triumph of faith on the part of Felicitas, over the strongest of human feelings, the love of a young mother for her offspring. "She feared that her friends shared in her apprehensions, that on that account her martyrdom might be delayed. They prayed together, and her travail came on. In her agony at that most painful period of delivery, she gave away to her sufferings. 'How then,' said one of the servants of the prison, 'if you cannot endure these pains, will you endure exposure to the wild beasts?' She replied, 'I bear now my own sufferings; then, there will be one within me who will bear my sufferings for me, because I shall suffer for his sake.' " Concerning the last scene, we have the following most touching account from the same historian:

"Perpetua maintained her calmness to the end. When taken out to the execution ... they came forward in their simple attire, Perpetua singing hymns. The men were exposed to leopards and bears; the women were hung up naked in nets, to be gored by a furious cow. But even the excited populace shrunk with horror at the spectacle of two young and delicate women, one recently recovered from child birth, in this state. They were recalled by acclamation and in mercy brought forward again in loose robes. Perpetua was tossed, her garment was rent; but more conscious of her wounded modesty than of pain, she drew the robe over the part of her person which was exposed. She then calmly clasped up her hair, because it did not become a martyr to suffer with disheveled locks, the sign of sorrow. She then raised up the fainting and mortally wounded Felicitas, and the cruelty of the populace being for a time appeased, they were permitted to retire. Perpetua seemed rapt in ecstasy, and as if awakening from sleep, inquired when she was to be exposed to the beast. She could scarcely be made to believe what had taken place. Her last words tenderly admonished her brother to be steadfast in the faith."

The historian concludes: "We may close the scene by intimating that all were speedily released from their suffering, and entered into their glory." We would say, to rest in sleep, awaiting the First Resurrection, at our Lord's *parousia*.

We have given this little item of history, only one of very many, in order to give emphasis to the terrible trials that befell the footstep followers of Christ during the period from St. John's day, 100 AD, to the Edict of Milan in 313. The last ten years of this period constitutes evidently the special time referred to by Christ in this message to Smyrna. We shall have occasion to refer to the sufferings of Christ's followers in this period more particularly when we come to consider those visions that have special reference to the momentous events of those closing days of Pagan Roman history.

The words of the Master, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer," "Be thou faithful unto death," were in the possession of Christ's suffering ones during those trying years; indeed, it was then customary to have these messages read in the churches. It is quite essential to note that the Savior did not promise them exemption from suffering. They understood that to follow in his footsteps, to testify of him, would bring suffering; and like the Apostles in earlier years, they "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name." It was certainly comforting as well as encouraging to them to realize that he foresaw their sufferings, that he foresaw that these were necessary, and that he was not unmindful of their faithfulness. He exhorts and encourages them not to be afraid; and they laid hold by faith on the promise that he would be with them. Their sufferings were permitted that they might be tried, that their faith might be subjected to a test to prove its genuineness. The permission and design of the sufferings were of the Savior, even though Satan was allowed to be the agent in bringing them.

The words of the Master, "Be thou faithful unto death," meant to them literal martyrdom. It is, however, true of all sincere Christians, even to those who do not suffer martyrdom, that the same injunction and the same promise is applicable: Faithfulness to Christ until death, no matter how death may come, will bring the "crown of life" — immortality. The overcomer is the one who by faith realizes the sustaining power of Christ, the sustaining power of the Gospel, at all times, under all conditions, in all circumstances, whether it be in times of persecution, or otherwise; who will not yield his principles when opposed or persecuted, even though the taking of such a stand may be in the face of death. These Smyrna believers were faithful to the utmost, and if we are now living in the "parousia," the Second Presence of Christ, as many have come to believe, these faithful ones of Smyrna may now be enjoying the reward promised — immortality. As one has truthfully said, "The promise here made would be all that was necessary to sustain them in their trials. Nothing more is necessary to make the burdens of life tolerable than an assurance that when we reach the end of our earthly journey we have arrived at the end of our suffering and that beyond the grave there is no power that can harm us. ... Religion, therefore, does not come to us with any promise that we shall not die. But it comes with the assurance that we shall be sustained in the dying hour; that the Redeemer will accompany us through the dark valley; that the condition of death to us will be a calm and quiet slumber in the hope of the resurrection; that we shall be raised up again, with bodies incorruptible and undecaying; and that beyond the grave we shall not fear death in any form. What more is needful to enable us to bear with patience the trials of life, and to look upon death when it does come disarmed of its sting (1 Corinthians 15:55-57) with calmness and peace?"

Those of the "Synagogue of Satan"

Persecution, and that unto death, was not the only trial that these believers of the Smyrna period had to endure. The words of Christ, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan,"

plainly teach this. The term "Jews" here is applied by some to persons who professed the Jewish faith or religion, but were mere professors of this religion, and not true Jews. It is applied by others to Jews who were bitterly opposed to Christianity in any form. The claim is made that from two sources the troubles of Christians come: from the blaspheming Jews, and from intolerant Pagans — both actuated by the Devil. When Polycarp was martyred, whom some regard as the angel of the literal Church here addressed, the Jews joined with the heathen in clamoring for the good bishop's destruction, and were most forward in bringing the fuel for the fire which consumed him.

These interpretations, however, do not seem to us to be the thought contained in the text. What appears to be a more satisfactory explanation of the statement "which say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan" is that during this time, large numbers began to identify themselves with the Christian profession and were really false professors, hypocrites, claiming to be spiritual Israelites in the sense referred to by St. Paul — Gentiles grafted into the stock of Israel — and thereby becoming Israelites, "Jews." All such false professors would, of course, simply be "tares," claiming to be Christians but were not — a class similar in character to those Judaizing teachers referred to by St. Paul in his letter to the Galatian Church, who were causing some believers, who had experienced the blessing of liberty in Christ, to return again to the bondage of the law. Understanding that the adversaries spoken of in the text refer to a class within the professing Church, similar to the Judaizers of St. Paul's day, we discover in them the formal outward root of decline, leading to apostasy, as in Ephesus we see the internal principle of the same, in the loss of first love. With the loss of first love, a profession of Christ is generally kept up and that profession seeks to satisfy itself with forms and ceremonies.

While this state of things has not in the past nor is it at the present time called Judaism, yet when the significance of the term is looked at closely, it will be seen that it describes the condition that was developing at that time and is existing all around us today in the great professing church systems. It is this that has built again a priestly hierarchy, as necessary mediators between God and the professed people of God. It is this that, if it were possible, would rob God's people of their place and standing with God in Christ. It is this that has caused true Christianity, true Christian experience, to be hidden to the great masses of professors, as also to the world. It is in this that we have exhibited the triumph of the great Adversary, denominated by St. Paul as a form of godliness, lacking the power; and referred to by Christ in this message as "the synagogue of Satan."

This title describes most fully the gradual change that took place in the outward nominal manifestation of Christianity in the second and third centuries, and has continued from then until now. The word translated *church* means an assembly of "called out" ones. It is considerably different from the word *synagogue*. The Assembly of God is Christ's Body, assembled for fellowship and instruction, and none but such are recognized by God as his Church, his Assembly, no matter how many others may be gathered with them. "Ecclesia" is the assembly of those "called out." The word *synagogue* means merely a

"gathering together," no matter of whom. Synagogue is, of course, a Jewish word designating an assembly of Jews under the old dispensation. Ecclesia is a Christian word, and relates to an assembly of Christians of the Body of Christ. The "synagogue of Satan," therefore, in the Smyrna period would seem to imply the development and establishment in the Church of certain forces and influences corresponding in character and results to those Judaizing teachers of St. Paul's time, who sought to bring Christians under bondage to the Law and to forms and ceremonies, thus perverting the Christian faith, robbing it of its real life and the power of godliness.

"Judaism decided the eternal state of none. As a dispensation of law, it could give no assurance, it could preach no justification. For if the law says on the one hand, 'the man that doeth these things shall live in them,' it says also 'there is none righteous — no not one.' And that was not merely the effect, but the designed effect: 'We know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God.' ...

"Thus, as the law could not justify, it could not bring to God. The unrent vail is the characteristic of Judaism, as the rent vail is of Christianity. 'Thou canst not see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live' is the contrasted utterance to him who says, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father'; as is, 'who can by no means clear the guilty' the opposite declaration to that of the Gospel, that we 'believe on Him who justifieth the ungodly.' The darkness is passed from the face of God, and the true light — for God is light — shineth. We walk, therefore, in the light, as God is in the light, and have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

"The Judaizing of the Church means therefore, first of all, the putting God back (if that were possible; possible for our hearts it is) into the darkness from which He has come forth; replacing the peace which was made for us on the cross with the old legal conditions and the old uncertainty. Darker than the old darkness this, inasmuch as Christ for whom they only looked is come, and come [from this false standpoint] but to put his seal upon it all; come, and gone back, and declared little more, at any rate, than was said before, and only definitely shut out hope of any further revelation" (F. W. Grant).

It will thus be seen that it was in this period of Church history that the second step was taken in the direction of apostasy; certain set forms and ceremonies being introduced gradually took the place of the simple worship that was common in the little assemblies of the Apostle's day. This gradually led on to what may properly be termed a religion of ceremonies, penances, fasts, masses, formal prayers, vigils, abnegations, bodily macerations, by the observance of which the eternal salvation of its devotees was secured. This developed very rapidly in the next, the Pergamos period, and reached its fullest development in Thyatira, as we shall endeavor to show when we consider the message to that Church.

The Savior concludes the message to Smyrna with the usual searching exhortation, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches,"

showing that its application was not only to that period but to all times. The very last words are: "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the Second Death." The Diaglott renders this passage: "The Conqueror shall not be injured by the Second Death," and Rotherham translates it: "He that conquers, in no wise shall be injured in consequence of the Second Death." The meaning seems to be that those who are of the overcoming class of this age, having successfully passed their trial for life at the end of their course here, will then be free from all liability to failure, and therefore free from all liability to the Second Death penalty. They will be immortal beings and beyond the power of death. They will therefore not be hurt or injured by the Second Death.

In Revelation 20:6, we read concerning those who share in the First Resurrection, "on such the Second Death hath no power." Here again the reference seems to be to the Second Death penalty — that the "blessed and holy," having passed their trial, and having experienced complete deliverance, the Second Death can have no power over them.

Thus, in this Smyrna message, we see depicted the era of martyrdom under Pagan Rome, during which was manifested by Christ's true followers that faithfulness unto death which is a sweet savor unto God. It was, however, marked with further developments of defection on the part of some — a defection which resulted in the perversion of the faith, and in consequent departures from the holy and primitive simplicity of church order instituted by our Lord and the Apostles. Thus was gradually revealed in this second period of the Church's history a marked phase of Nicolaitanism, more commonly designated today, Clericalism.

Precious Promises

Hear what God the Lord hath spoken:
O My people, faint and few,
Comfortless, afflicted, broken,
Fair abodes I build for you.

Scenes of heartfelt tribulation
Shall no more perplex your ways;
You shall name your walls "Salvation,"
And your gates shall all be "Praise."

Ye, no more your suns descending,
Waning moons no more shall see;
But, your griefs forever ending,
Find eternal noon in Me:

God shall rise, and, shining o'er you,
Change today the gloom of night;
Yes, the Lord shall be your glory
And your everlasting light.

Chapter Five

Christ's Message to Pergamos

(Revelation 2:12-17)

"And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos write: These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges" (Revelation 2:12).

Upon careful examination of the meaning and derivation of the word Pergamos, we have a suggestion as to the condition of that Church, and also of the condition of the Church during that period in history represented by Pergamos; for we see in this Church and the period it covers that which corresponds to its name, just as in the cases of Ephesus and Smyrna. The name signifies "fortified," "height" — the thought, therefore, seeming to be, that which is exalted in an established or fortified position. Considering this in connection with the Savior's words, "I am aware where you are dwelling where Satan's throne is" — Satan being called "the god [ruler] of this world" — the name suggests worldly height or elevation. This seems to be in perfect harmony, as we shall see, with the general picture presented in the Savior's words describing this Church. Some very worthy and able expositors have offered some interesting suggestions as to the significance of the word Pergamos.

Mr. Grant observes: "It is remarkable that the word 'Pergamos' has a double significance. In the plural form, it is used for the 'citadel of a town,' while it is at least near akin to *purgos*, 'a tower.' Again, divide it into two words into which it naturally separates, and you have *per*, 'although,' a particle which 'usually serves to call attention to something which is objected to' (Liddell and Scott), and *gamos*, 'marriage,' Pergamos — 'a marriage though.' It was indeed by the marriage of the Church and the world that the 'city and tower' of [symbolic] Babylon the Great was raised; and such are the times we are now to contemplate [in this message of Christ]."

Mr. Seiss remarks: "Contemporaneous with the flowering of Nicolaitanism was another influential and characterizing feature manifested in the Church, of which the name Pergamos itself is significant — a certain marriage with worldly power, which the Savior pronounces as adulterous, idolatrous, and Balaamitic. ... Its development is located in the period immediately succeeding the Pagan persecutions [the days of Constantine the Great, and of the emperors succeeding], when the Church, according to all historians, sacred and secular, did consent to one of the most marked and marvelous alliances that has occurred in all its history. We know that there was then formed a union between the Church and the empire, which the fall of that empire hardly dissolved, and which has been

perpetuated in the union of church and state in the greater part of Christendom, down to this very hour. It was an alliance cried up at the time, and by many since, as the realization of the Millennium itself, and the great consummating victory of the cross. But Christ here gives his verdict upon it, pronouncing it an idolatrous uncleanness; Israel joining himself to Baal-peor; a fearful and disastrous compromise of Christianity with the world, which disfigured and debauched the Church."

Mr. Russell's view conforms to the foregoing: "Pergamos means an earthly elevation. The speaker is 'He who hath the sharp sword with two edges' [Greek, two mouthed] — the Word of God. During this period, while the nominal Church was growing popular, the true Christians were tested and proved by the introduction and development of Pagan and Papal ideas. The Pagan priests, unwilling to lose their positions of honor and influence amongst the people, sought to bend their ideas to fit the new religion. Thus while nominally professing Christianity, they brought many of their former ideas with them into the Christian Church. These were eventually grafted upon the true stock — 'the faith once delivered to the saints' (Jude 3)."

Another eminent Christian writer, A. J. Gordon, describes this period in Church history: "When the Church under Constantine became enthroned in the world, she began to be dethroned from her seat 'in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' For then did she forget her high calling, and became enamored of earthly rule and dominion. This, let us not forget, was the fatal temptation through which the Church lost her primitive purity, and brought upon herself all manner of dishonor and apostasy. What a tender, prophetic warning of such temptation is contained in that saying of Paul to the Corinthian Christians: 'I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ' (2 Corinthians 11:2). In the world, but not of it, the Church, the Bride of Christ, was to await the return of her betrothed Husband from heaven, that, arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints, she might be presented to him a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. If, during the time of her espousal, Satan could only alienate her affections by getting her enamored with the kings of the earth, so that she should accept their dowries instead of her heavenly inheritance, and put on their royal purple instead of her virgin white, his triumph would be assured. And this is literally what he did."

The same temptation under which the professed Church fell was presented by Satan to our Lord. The object was to seduce him from his love for the Church, that was to be redeemed by his own precious blood. That which was offered to him was, "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me," was the alluring prize set before our Lord by Satan. This very prize that Satan offered was in God's due time to be given to Christ. But the Divine program was that he should first suffer and then reign; that after he had suffered, he should first for a time appointed,

sit upon his Father's throne, "till his enemies be made his footstool." The Savior, however, resisted the temptation: "Get thee behind me, Satan," were his words. On another occasion, when he had spoken of his going up to Jerusalem to be rejected and suffer death, Simon Peter, doubtless having the thought of a reigning Messiah, and not understanding that he must first suffer, said to him, "Be it far from Thee Lord: this shall not be unto Thee" (Matthew 16:23). The Savior recognized immediately the old temptation, and resisted it with the same rebuking words, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Thus was the Savior true to his vow of consecration unto death, and true to his Church, for whom he was to pour out his life's blood; thus "accepting a present cross and rejection, instead of a present crown and dominion; choosing to be cast out by a world that knew him not, until after the 'times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power should be fulfilled' and the announcement made, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.' " Thus the prospective Second Adam resisted the temptation, of the old serpent.

Pergamos Yields to Fatal Temptation

The Church, which had passed through the terrible sufferings of the Smyrna period, was now to have another, and in many respects a more severe trial — a test of her loyalty to her Divine Master. It was at this time that the primitive hope, the Lord's Second Advent, which had for some time been growing dim to the vision of many of the professed followers of the Lord, suffered an eclipse, and even many of the true followers of the Lord were, for a time at least, deceived by the Arch-enemy. The Historian Gibbon, in referring to the effect the belief in Christ's Second Advent had upon his followers for two centuries, said that "it was productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians, who lived in expectation of that moment when the globe itself and all the various races of mankind should tremble at the appearance of the Divine Judge." The terrible persecutions which the Christians underwent in the long period from Domitian to Diocletian had the effect of keeping alive this hope of the Second Advent; particularly was this so on the part of the truly consecrated — "earthly disfranchisement making heavenly citizenship more real and dear." When the political controversies and wars in the empire were finally settled, and Constantine ascended the throne, the more perilous trial of peace was encountered. Constantine, influenced largely no doubt by worldly policy, became the patron of the professed Church of Christ, and sent forth an imperial decree that all persecution, should cease. The true followers of Christ, for a time at least, enjoyed, with the nominal Church, this cessation of persecution. Now came the great test: Would the Church "endure the test of imperial patronage as she bore the test of imperial persecution"? This was the chief test or trial that came to believers in Christ during this period. Those who remained true to the Lord, those who resisted the temptation of worldly patronage and the desire to rule before the appointed time, constituted the overcomers of this period.

The facts have been reviewed in an interesting way by one who, in referring to the great change that took place in Christianity in this period, said: "This fall

from heavenly to earthly citizenship was accompanied, moreover, by a gradual exchange of spiritual worship for carnal superstitions. Worse than carnal, indeed! Satan, who had tempted the Church into accepting earthly dominion from his hands, now seduced her into mixing his own ritual with her simple primitive services. For we must not forget that, according to the explicit teaching of Scripture, paganism is really demonism. 'The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God' (1 Corinthians 10:20), says the Apostle. Whether the deluded votaries of Jupiter and Mars knew it or not, it was really true that demons were the instigators and recipients of their worship. Idolatry is always and everywhere the religion of Satan, ordained for stealing from God the homage of human hearts and turning it to himself. And so, little by little, the elements of paganism began to mingle with the worship of Christ — holy water, candles, the wafer, images, processions, the adoration of saints and relics, the idolatry of the cross, and much more — of all which we may assert confidently what Cardinal Newman concedes concerning the first, that they were originally 'the very instruments and appendages of demon-worship.' "

Although the Church as a whole yielded to the subtle temptation of Satan, yet out of it was preserved a faithful company, who will at last be numbered amongst the elect ones, the one hundred and forty- four thousand who will constitute the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, and reign with him upon his throne. A portion of this faithful number of the Pergamos period are referred to and addressed by the Savior under the symbol of "Antipas, my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." In the Greek *anti* means "against," and papas signifies. "father." The true followers of our Lord at this and subsequent times bore witness against this disobedience to his words, "Call no man father" (Matthew 23:9). It must be remembered that this was the period of Church history that gradually merged into Papacy. A most prominent feature of Papacy is that of enforcing celibacy upon its clergy, declaring them to be married to the Church, and teaching all its members — sons and daughters — to call their clergy "father."

The Sin of Balaam in Pergamos

We now consider the particular evils mentioned by him out of whose mouth proceeded the sharp, two-edged sword. One of these, that of Nicolaitanism, we have already considered in the message to Ephesus. We observe a very significant difference between the way it is mentioned in this message to Pergamos and that in the one to Ephesus. In the Ephesus message it is designated "the deeds of the Nicolaitans." This was seen by true believers in Ephesus to be an evil, and it is mentioned as being abhorred, "hated," by the Savior. We noticed in our study of that period that Nicolaitanism referred to a *tendency* toward lordship in the Church — separating the Lord's people into two classes, the clergy and the laity. We see that what in the Ephesus period was manifested only in "deeds," gradually, in the Smyrna period, was developing (although under another name — "synagogue of Satan"), and in the Pergamos period had merged into a full-fledged doctrine (clericalism), becoming an important principle in its creed, and has been held as such ever since by the great professing church systems. We

have already dwelt upon this quite extensively, in considering the messages to Ephesus and Smyrna, and therefore rest the matter, to take up another very remarkable feature of this Church — one which describes another noted evil that became manifest in this period of Church history.

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (verse 14). It is generally understood that the meaning of the word Balaam is "destroyer of the people." *Brown's Bible Dictionary* gives it as a "swallower of the people," which means practically the same. Balaam seems to have been a prophet at one time, in at least outward nearness to the Lord. We may form a correct idea of his character as we read Jude's brief description of some teachers of his time, of whom he says, they "ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." He seems to have been a prophet who apostatized. "It will be remembered that Balaam, who had been a prophet of God, instructed King Balak how to tempt Israel to sin, and thus brought about what he could not accomplish by his own powers" (Numbers 23, 24, 31:16).

Balaam's sin was that for wages he counseled with the enemies of Israel, the Moabites, and advised Balak, their king, to draw the Israelites into forbidden friendships, and adulterous and idolatrous alliances, the result of which was that "twenty-four thousand were destroyed" (Numbers 25:9). The sin of Balaam evidently refers to the acts of those professed Christian teachers, the clericals, who counseled a union with the state, and a mingling on the part of God's professed people, in worldly gatherings, feasts, and pleasures. "When the Church and the world become on good terms with one another, and the Church has the things of the world to attract the natural heart, the hireling prophet is a matter of course, who for his own ends will seek to destroy whatever remains of godly separateness."

Regardless of how it may be with individuals who allow the natural heart to draw them away from heavenly, spiritual things, and regardless of how often individuals may be delivered and brought back, it is a fact proved by history that a church which has thus departed is never recovered. There may be many reformations or attempts to this end, but these are always more or less partial. The Church as a whole, in the age of Constantine, fell away to the world, and there has never since been a full recovery. This is one of the most vital matters connected with both individual Christians and assemblies of such. It is then a most important question: "How far are we as individuals and churches to maintain a separateness from the world?" It is certainly true that "our associations are judged of God as surely as any other part of our conduct." "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," is God's Word. That this is a very important matter, indeed vitally important, we know from the fact that it is stated that God cannot be to us a Father and we be to Him sons and daughters except as we heed his Word: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." The "yoke" that is forbidden has various applications. It may be applied to anything in which we voluntarily unite to attain a common object. Among social relations, marriage is

such a yoke; in business relations, partnership is such a yoke; and in the foremost rank of all — ecclesiastical associations, worldly alliance is such a yoke.

This matter of the Christian's call and duty to separate himself from the world is well illustrated in Pharaoh's four subtle objections to the full deliverance of God's ancient people from the land of Egypt. The first objection is expressed in his words to Moses: "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land [of Egypt]" (Exodus 8:25). The object in this proposal of Pharaoh, doubtless instigated by Satan, was to hinder full obedience to the command of the Lord to separate entirely from Egypt and its evil, idolatrous influences. Egypt is very generally understood to represent the world. Deliverance from Egypt represents deliverance from this "present evil world" (Galatians 1:4). The tendency of professed Christians in defining what constitutes "the world" or worldliness is to place it a point or two lower than the standard they themselves have reached. God's Word, however, defines it very explicitly and informs us that it is "all that is not of the Father" (1 John 2:16); hence the deeper our sense of fellowship with the Father, the keener will be our sense of what is worldly. "The more we are enabled in the power of an ungrieved spirit to drink in Christ's revelation of the Father, the more accurate does our judgment become as to what constitutes worldliness." It is most difficult to define where worldliness begins. One has said that it is shaded off gradually from black to white. It seems impossible to place a bound and say, "this is where worldliness begins"; but as the Christian walks close to the Lord, the keen sensibilities of his inner spiritual nature discern it. Possessing the power of the "new life" enables the individual Christian to mark the dividing line.

Moses' reply to Pharaoh was: "It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as He shall command us" (Exodus 8:26,27). There seems to be illustrated in Moses' reply what is meant by true separation from the world. The "three days' journey into the wilderness" seems to represent what the death, and the resurrection of Christ three days after, signify to a true Christian believer, namely his identification with him in his justification, and his identification with him in his consecration, being quickened by the spirit of Truth, to walk in a new life of separation from sin and worldliness.

Pharaoh's reply, "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; *only ye shalt not go very far away*," indicated that "if he could not keep them *in* Egypt, he would at least keep them *near* it, so that he might act upon them by its varied influences. In this way they might be brought back again, and the testimony more effectually quashed than if they had never left Egypt. There is always much more serious damage done to the cause of Christ by persons seeming to give up the world and returning to it again, than if they had remained entirely of it; for they virtually confess that, having tried heavenly things, they have discovered that earthly things are better and more satisfying."

The third objection of Pharaoh was to the Israelites taking their children when they should go to worship and sacrifice to God in the wilderness. The lesson seems to be to spiritual Israel — that they are required to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), a lesson to which many Christians fail to take heed.

Pharaoh's fourth objection was to their taking their flocks and herds. Moses' reply to this last attempt of Pharaoh to cause the Lord's people to compromise, is a grand illustration of how in consecration, the Lord requires not only that we give ourselves, but all that we have — all that we possess. "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind" (Exodus 10:25- 27). It is only when God's people take their stand upon this elevated ground of entire consecration, on which by faith Christ's death and resurrection places them, that they can have any clear sense of what the claims of consecration are. Moses' words, "We know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither" seem to teach that no one can have a knowledge of the Divine claim, or their responsibility, until they have, figuratively speaking, gone "three days' journey into the wilderness." It is only then that we know that "we are not our own; we are bought with a price."

The promise to the overcomer of Pergamos, like those of the other epistles, is to be realized by all the overcomers; and yet, like each of the other promises, it emphasizes the condition of those to whom it is primarily addressed. And the conditions under which these in Pergamos found themselves, and which they fully overcame, exist today. Therefore, the exhortations, the warnings, yea, the promises applicable to them, are no less applicable to us of today. The promise contains Christ's words of encouragement for those who are battling with and overcoming the world, and carries us beyond the scenes of strife, to the inheritance of which we already have the foretaste. The promise is twofold; the two things referred to being closely related the one to the other. It reads: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Revelation 2:17). The manna that fell in the wilderness, which was the food of the people of Israel, speaks of Christ himself — Christ coming down from heaven, becoming flesh, and giving his flesh for the life of the world, of which we are a part. He is our food. It is the design of the Word of God to reveal him — what he has done for us — to us. It speaks of our apprehension of him in his dying for us, and his living for us at God's right hand. The "white stone," on the other hand, speaks of the close relationship existing between Christ and the faithful believer. "In ancient times the Greeks and the Romans had a custom of noting and perpetuating friendship by means of a white stone. This stone was divided into halves, and each person inscribed his name on the flat surface, after which the parts of the stone were exchanged. The production of either half was sufficient to insure friendly aid, even from the descendants of those who first divided the stone. A similar custom was sometimes observed by a king, who would break a white stone into two parts, one of which he would retain, and the other part give to a special ambassador. That part could be sent

to the king at any time and would insure aid. Thus the divided stone became a mark of identification.

"Revelation 2:17 seems to refer to this ancient custom. The white stone signifies a precious token of the Lord's love, and the new name written in the stone suggests the Bridegroom's name. The statement indicates a special acquaintance with the great King of kings, secret between himself and the individual. The overcomers are not to be recognized merely as a class — the Bride class — but each will have the personal favor of the Lord. Of this no one will know save himself and the King. There is an individual and personal relationship between the Lord and the overcomers, who may be said to receive the mark of identification — the antitypical white stone — now, in this life.

"This mark is the sealing of the holy Spirit by which the Lord identifies the overcomers. While this is said to be a part of the final reward of the Church, yet from the very beginning of our experience we have this personal acquaintance with the Lord. The full seal of the holy Spirit will be given in the resurrection, when we receive the new body. Then we shall have the complete knowledge of the name by which we shall be known to the Lord and he to us forever."

The manna eaten in the wilderness, then, represents Christ himself and our apprehension of what He is to us; the white stone is a figure, expressive of his appreciation of us. How blessed is the interchange of affection thus expressed! The manna that fell down from heaven is wilderness food. It was in the wilderness that it fell. In Egypt, the world, it was not known. When the Israelites arrived in the borders of the land, the manna ceased. This speaks to us of the Divine provision in Christ for those who have come to him, for those who have come to realize that they need him, who realize that they are brought into a place where no natural provision can supply the food necessary to sustain the new life — a place where they are wholly dependent upon God for such food. God has, promised — made himself responsible — to supply all our varied needs; each need itself is designed to draw out new evidences of the Divine resources, new evidences of the riches of his grace in Christ. It is thus that the Lord speaks to the one who, true to his calling, finds in Christ his one necessity and satisfaction. "Bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure." "Meat" shall be given which "endureth unto everlasting life," and "water" which shall be unto him "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

It is very significant to notice, however, that the promise of the text, while it is the manna *of* the wilderness, it is not the manna partaken of *in* the wilderness. It is the *"hidden* manna." The hidden manna was that placed by God's command in the Ark and carried into the land, that after- generations might see and be reminded of the bread wherewith He had fed them in the wilderness. In this case, however, it was not eaten; but the Lord promises to the overcomer here that he shall eat of it. The hidden manna was the memorial sample of what had fallen long before; from one viewpoint it is typically the abiding remembrance of what we once tasted — the fresh reminder throughout eternity of Christ's work for us here. To "eat of the *hidden* manna," therefore, would mean to partake of

the Divine, incorruptible, immortal life. In one sense it is a continuation of what we now receive; hence we see how closely connected is the present with the life beyond. It is thus that the promise of the hidden manna appeals most solemnly to us while here. It is the way we live *here* that affects our reward *there*. The hidden manna and the white stone are eternal recompenses of the present time. In other words, it is but the "meat" that faith lives on now, that is, the "meat that endureth unto everlasting life." So that the spiritual experiences of the present time are the beginnings of what will continue in the life beyond. He who has fed of the antitypical manna in the wilderness and knows its taste, can feed of the *hidden* manna in the future.

In concluding the comments on this message, we note the inseparable connection between the two parts of the promise: The manna that fell in the wilderness speaks of our apprehension of Christ — his ransom sacrifice for us, as also his power to keep us — now; the hidden manna speaks of that Divine, immortal, incorruptible life, the reward of the future. The white stone speaks of Christ's appreciation expressed in his approval of us, both in the present life and in that which is to come. "The appreciation of Christ by us, manifest in our bearing the fruit of the Spirit, is the necessary basis of his answering approbation of us." The greatest reward we can possibly conceive of is to have now in this present life, his approbation, his approval, and at the end of our course to hear his "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Chapter Six

Christ's Message to Thyatira

(Revelation 2:18-29)

"And unto the angel of the Church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass" (Revelation 2:18).

The symbolic description embodied in the words: "These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire," seems to indicate very clearly the imminence of approaching judgment and an arraignment of the Church of Thyatira — a judgment of the most severe character. Considering this message from the prophetic standpoint, it is generally and very properly applied to the period immediately following that of Pergamos, which, as we have seen, was the age of worldly church history, when the professed Church enjoyed the patronage of the professed, Christian emperors, from 303 to about 539 AD.

We can readily see that by means of the doctrines of Nicolaitanism, or lordship over the people, and Balaamism, or world affiliation, which characterized those times, all kinds of corrupting elements were introduced, and the professed Church assumed another and more evil phase; indeed, merged into complete apostasy. Richard Trench, a voluminous writer on Bible topics, who is the author of a work entitled The Seven Epistles of Asia Minor, states that "for such Protestant expositors as see the Papacy in the scarlet woman of Babylon, the Jezebel of Thyatira appears exactly at the right time, coincides with the Papacy at its height, yet at the same time, with judgment at the door, in the great revolt [the Sixteenth Century Reformation] which was even then preparing."

The Reign of the Worldly Church

This period of Church history represented in the Thyatira message is very fittingly referred to by some writers as the period of the *reign* of the world-church; thus distinguishing it from the previous period of Pergamos — the Church's *uniting* with the world. It represents the period of the Papacy during which "the virgin Church was enduring the hardships of the wilderness; while the apostate Church sat on the throne of her royal paramour." Prophetic writers differ in fixing the exact date of the beginning of the Papal Church. The most fitting event as marking its beginning would seem to be when, by a decree of Justinian, the Roman emperor residing at Constantinople, a Roman bishop was made head of all the Churches of Christendom. This decree was first made in

533 AD, but does not seem to have been fully enforced until 538 or 539 AD. This development into apostasy was a gradual work.

"Systematized prelacy, and Balaamism [in the Pergamos period], made the emperor president of the church councils and the confirmer of their decrees, brought the community of saints into conjunction with 'Satan's throne,' and so gave being to that mongrel but mighty thing in which Pagan life was transferred to Christian veins, heathen pomp and ceremony commingled with Christian rites and sacraments, and the professed Bride of Christ transformed into a queenly adulteress, the harlot mother of a harlot household. And in all history there is not another character which so completely represents the Papal system — its character, works and worship — as the unclean wife of Ahab, the Jezebel of this epistle. She was a heathen married to a Jew; and such is the character of the Papal system in its main elements — Paganism joined to an absolute Judaism. She is described as calling herself a prophetess, and as undertaking to be the teacher of God's servants. ... This Jezebel is also described as having 'children,' alike with her, unsatisfactory to Christ; and whence but from that unclean source have we those semi-Papal national religious establishments, by which the Church of Jesus is befouled, hindered, and disgraced, even in many Protestant countries? We thus obtain from these epistles Christ's own direct verdict upon Romanism, both in its more offensive features in the old mother, and in its more modified forms in the daughters."

"The Book of Revelation (2:20-25, 18:7) pictures to us Queen Jezebel as representing a great religious system of this Gospel Age which did great violence to the Truth. Ahab [king of Israel] represented the worldly governments. His wife [Jezebel] represented a false Christian church system married to earthly governments. As Ahab represented the worldly governments claiming to be Christ's kingdoms, so Queen Jezebel pictured, or typified, a false church system, which, instead of maintaining its purity as the virgin Church of Christ, became married or united to these earthly systems. ... As the prophets of Baal were under the care of Queen Jezebel and under the patronage of King Ahab, so the priests and the religious representatives of a great church system have been the obedient servants of the great false institutions pictured by Ahab and Jezebel."

The chief evil pointed out in this Jezebel of Thyatira, by the one "whose eyes were as a flame of fire," and the evil that was the primal cause of all the others mentioned, is that she professed herself to be a prophetess. The Papacy or Papal Church claims and professes to be the only infallible teacher of God's truth. While holding to the Scriptures, this system claims to be their sole interpreter; indeed, claims the right to set them aside or add to them at will. There is certainly a true principle involved in the antitypical Jezebel's false claim, and one that ever needs to be given heed to by the Lord's people, and this is, "that infallible teaching *alone* can demand obedience, as alone it can, implicit faith. Allow that in *any degree* the guide may lead astray, and how can it be safe to follow her? 'If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch?' "

Rome, while a deceiver in most matters, has been very open and frank in this claim. No one of the Lord's people need be deceived by her in this. It should be

kept in, mind, however, that it is quite possible for one to judge and condemn the followers of Rome in this particular, and yet partake, unconsciously perhaps, of the very evils he is condemning, and to which he is in bondage. She is called "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," and it is said that by her "sorceries were all nations deceived," and that she caused all that dwelt upon the earth to "worship him [the Papal beast], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb." It is possible for the Lord's people to be deceived for a time and to receive and adopt some of Rome's unscriptural principles and practices and to follow them, and yet reject the full fruitage and development of them, as exhibited in the highest degree in Rome; indeed, the features of Romanism in this particular are very often found in the guise of Protestantism. "There is heard sometimes the voice of the woman who calls herself a prophetess, whether the woman's name be Jezebel or not." In modified forms these teachings, these claims of Rome, may be endorsed unconsciously by the Lord's people. Wherever the teaching of a church, of a religious organization, or of men (except it be the twelve Apostles) is in any measure maintained as authoritative (although it be over a body of Christians who claim to have no creed but the Bible, and to be guided by it), even here the voice of the woman is heard, even though the woman's name be certainly not Jezebel.

The infallible Word, the Scriptures, and these alone, are to constitute the test that must settle every matter for the "free-indeed" Christian. "[Any] imposed creed actually takes away any appeal to Scripture, becoming itself the only permissible appeal. If there be error in the creed, it will have to be maintained as carefully as the truth in it. If there be defect in the creed, the Scripture cannot be allowed even to supplement it. It [the Scriptures] is, in short, completely displaced from its rightful supremacy over men. The conscience is not allowed to be before God, and the most godly are just those who will be forced most into opposition against the human rule, thus substituted for the Divine.

"It is evident that Jezebel is right thus far, in that she connects her right of rule over the people of God with the infallibility of the prophetess. She displays, however, the falsity of her pretension by her refusal to submit her claims in this respect to be judged by that which she owns herself to be the Word of God. Her infallibility must not be tested, but received; whereas Scripture itself, with a claim no less absolute, on that very account submits to every possible test, assured that the more complete the test, the more will this claim be manifested and made good. The true coin fears not the test which would at once expose the counterfeit. Faith in Rome is credulity and superstition only: faith in Scripture is intelligent, reasonable, and open-eyed.

"In Scripture, the Church does not teach at all. The Prophets speak and the rest judge. The Word itself is the rule by which all is judged, and the conscience is kept directly in the presence of God Himself. All are exercised as to what is spoken: they are to take heed *what* they hear as well as *how* they hear. This exercise is necessary to maintain the soul in vigor and independence. Vigilance, the constant habit of reference to God, and walking before Him, are to be ever emphasized and insisted on.

"We tend continually to follow human authorities and traditional teachings, which God has continually to break through for us, sending us afresh to His Word, that our faith may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Thus alone true spiritual health is realized and preserved."

It was this letting go, losing sight of the Word of God, that brought into the professed Church of God all the evils symbolized by the expression, "to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." We found these evils beginning to come in Pergamos, but in the Thyatira period of church history it prevailed to such an extent that the professed Church became apostate. While there were plenty of perverters of the Word of God in the Pergamos period, none at that time claimed to be inspired of God, and the divinely appointed channel of Divine grace and truth. The Word of God was still honored in Pergamos, and had its faithful witnesses there; and these witnesses, through their enlightening influences, testified against the threatened evils of Nicolaitanism, Balaamism, and Jezebelism. But in Thyatira, the Word of God seemed to remain no longer.

Thou Sufferest That Woman Jezebel

It is Jezebel's teaching and doctrine that prevails in Thyatira, and while in this period of church history there were believers in the true doctrine, these believers, including the symbolical angel or messenger, the ministering class of that period, were unwilling or unable for some to testify, to witness, as they ought against Jezebel, for we hear the Savior saying to these: "I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

Concerning the little, despised, humble, local assemblies, the Waldenses, etc., and their pastors of this period, we should keep in mind that as a remnant, they are distinctly singled out in the Thyatira message, and that neither the Jezebel system nor her children are included among them. By so doing we will be better able to appreciate this testimony on the Lord's part as to what he saw commendable in them. How little do we know of the hidden lives of those who, amid the days of Roman pride and tyranny, walked humbly and in secret with their God. It is very comforting and encouraging to realize how fully Christ could appreciate their stand for him, even though in a measure defective, and how openly he will in the day of his manifestation acknowledge them as his own. "Like the devil-coats put upon their victims by the Inquisition of old, how many falsehoods have besmirched the memories often of those who in the day of manifestation will receive their crown of righteousness from the Lord the righteous Judge! Of how many Naboths has Jezebel suborned her witnesses that they have [been told that they] 'blasphemed God and the king,' because they would not surrender their inheritance for a price! Here is the record, that they are not forgotten, those nameless ones, or of dishonored names: 'works and love and faith,' how tested! 'and service,' amid what discouragement! 'and thy patience,' marked and emphasized in the language used — that long endurance!

"And then comes, last of all, that sweet witness of real Divine energy, which does not flag as what is merely human does — 'and thy last works to be more than the first.' Not simply the same as the first — that would be much to say, as it would seem, amid all the opposition, continuous, unrelenting, of all that held power on earth. But here it is 'more than the first,' for the works recorded are fruits of the life eternal, which, implanted within us, is a growth, a living energy, which, thank God! can burst all bands and defy all imprisonment. We have all remarked how the might of a living tree will break up and burst through the stones around its roots, as it forces its way up into the light of heaven. How much more will the energy of that eternal life ... which the Spirit of God [the Spirit of Truth] sustains, develop itself in the face of whatever hindrances. 'They go from strength to strength' is said of God's pilgrims through the valley of Baca; for it is Christ's strength perfected in human weakness."

As we become familiar with the history of those dark days, we are enabled to discover that there was, in the long line of these patient witnesses covering many centuries, a growth in courage as the days Went on. As they come more into the light, they take a bolder and more open stand against Rome; the coming Reformation under Luther and others had its precursors — Wycliffe, Huss, as illustrations; the torch of truth, as it is laid down by one generation of the Lord's followers, is taken up by another; and gradually testimony against, and separation from the apostate Church, becomes more decided. This is a great point, this spirit of separation — one of the greatest in character development; for we discover that what the Lord has against these saints of his, is declared to be their tolerance of the woman Jezebel without making any protest against her teachings.

The professing Church during these long centuries was hopelessly apostate, and it would very naturally seem useless on the part of the Lord's followers to testify against its false claims. Nevertheless, their full duty would require a public testimony of the Truth, that those deceived might also escape Rome's bondage. It was during the giving of such a testimony, in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, that the great Reformation established itself. True it was, that it was only the simple foundation truths of the Gospel that were proclaimed; but these needed first to be brought to light before the full measure of truth could be discovered as it was later on; and the facts of history show that wherever these foundation truths were proclaimed, God raised up noble defenders who rallied around them.

"But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come" (Revelation 2:24,25).

Viewing, as we have been, the seven messages or epistles to the seven Churches from the historical, prophetic standpoint, we have found that there has been a steady decline on the part of professed Christianity, and in the period represented by Thyatira, apostasy is reached. From this sad condition history informs us that every effort towards reformation that has been made since has

been only partially successful. Indeed, while the Sixteenth Century Reformation accomplished wonders in releasing the nations from Papal bondage, as we shall see in later visions, even this resulted at last in failure so far as bringing back primitive Christianity was concerned. It finally merged into the Protestant sects, which, as such, are now so leavened with evolutionary and inherent immortality theories, and Higher Criticism, that their final destruction is seemingly but a matter of a comparatively brief time. As one has said, referring especially to the Thyatira message as representing Romanism: "In Thyatira, our eyes are no more toward the past, but toward the future — the coming of the Lord: there is no more the call to repentance and doing the first works; the word is now, 'I gave her space to repent, and she did not repent.' The opportunity of repentance is therefore over; henceforth there can only be judgment — judgment which has accumulated terribly during the long delay."

The word *space* in the text, "I gave her space to repent," has been interpreted by some to represent a period of three hundred and sixty years. However, a comparison of Acts 19:22, 20:18, Revelation 6:11, 20:3, where the same Greek word is used, does not seem to support such an interpretation.

Bearing in mind what has been noted concerning the influence of the symbolical woman, Jezebel — that of the leavening of the pure doctrines of Christ, it will be interesting and instructive in this connection to observe the evident correspondence between the fourth parable given by Christ — that of the "leaven" (Matthew 13:33) — and this fourth message of Thyatira. The parable reads: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

The common interpretation of this parable is that it refers to the universal spread and final triumph of the true Gospel; the Gospel itself in this erroneous interpretation being represented by the leaven. It will not be in proper order at this point to treat this feature exhaustively. Suffice it to say that the figurative, Scriptural use of leaven, as well as the facts of church history, prove the above interpretation to be erroneous. Leaven is invariably used in the Scriptures to denote evil. It seems quite evident that the key which unlocks the meaning of this parable is found in Leviticus 2. The three measures of meal in the parable seem to refer to the "fine flour" of the meal offering of Leviticus 2. (The Revised Version renders it the *meal* offering instead of as in the Common Version the *meat* offering.) Into this meal offering the leaven was never to be put (Leviticus 2:11). The significant point in the parable is that the woman is doing what was expressly forbidden to be done. This follows logically and naturally the teaching of the three preceding parables — the Sower, the Wheat and Tares, and the Mustard Seed. It will readily be seen that the process of deterioration or decline of the professing Church is shown in these three parables; the third, the mustard tree and the fowls in its branches, representing the worldly Church in the period of the so-called Christian emperors — the Pergamos period. The fourth parable, that of the leaven, assumes a more decided character of evil, just as in the case of the fourth message, that of Thyatira.

The meal offering seems to represent Christ as the bread of Life, the food of the priestly people of God. The putting of the leaven in the meal seems thus to signify the adulteration of the Christian's food (Christ) by the woman, the apostate Church. The feast of unleavened bread which was enjoined to be observed in connection with the celebration of the Passover Feast, shows that the Jews were perfectly familiar with the use of this figure. The Lord's hearers could scarcely fail to apprehend the fact that leaven in meal represented a thing of evil significance, and not of good; and this is positively stated in the Word: "For whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel" (Exodus 12:15). This was, of course, well known, and rigidly held as an essential doctrine by the mass of people of our Lord's day. The ordinance concerning the meal offering to the Lord was no less familiar to them, and the prohibition of the introduction of leaven in any offering to the Lord made with fire, was very clearly understood by the Jew as conveying the thought of evil, and as a thing abhorrent to the Lord.

It is the very clear teaching of Scripture that Christ is the bread, the manna (John 6:32-35) of the Christian; and this food is administered to us in the way of doctrine, teaching. The Scriptures constantly speak of Christ in a figurative sense as food to be eaten or appropriated by faith, as absolutely essential for the Christian development. Christ is the Truth, and it is through the Truth we apprehend him as our Savior, our Advocate, our Intercessor, and our High Priest. The doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees, called leaven (Matthew 16:12), is error presented in the forms of external and self-righteous formalism (Phariseeism), or unbelieving rationalism (Sadduceeism). The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, then, represents the rejection of Christ as God's Word presents him, and as faith receives and enjoys him. In the Gospel of Mark (8:15) we have the leaven of Herod referred to. It seems here to represent the court party; and thus we have fully pictured the great triumvirate of evil — the world, the flesh, and the devil — as the corrupting, leavening, poisoning influences introduced into the pure doctrine of Christ.

Into these "three measures of meal" the woman of the parable is seen putting leaven, or evil, corrupting teaching. The woman undoubtedly represents the false Church, which is frequently in the Scriptures symbolized by a woman; a pure, chaste woman representing the true Church, and a corrupt, harlot woman, the false Church (Revelation 12:1, 17:1-6).

The parable of the mustard seed becoming a great tree, etc., represents the Babylonian character which the professing Church assumes in the days of the nominal Christian emperors, patterning in its earthly administration after the kingdoms of the world. It is very significant in this connection that the figure of a tree is elsewhere used to describe the great world-empire over which Nebuchadnezzar is depicted as ruling (Daniel 4). We thus have most clearly portrayed the reigning world-church, like the world-empire, making its own laws and promulgating its own doctrines. It is in this way that the leaven necessarily comes into the meal. How remarkable and true to history is the picture here presented. The

woman, the false Church, has in her hands the doctrine of Christ, the unadulterated meal, the Christian doctrine. As one has very forcibly described it:

"She has authority over it (the doctrine of Christ); she can knead and mould it at her will; she can add her traditions, her unwritten law, equal in authority to the written Word; she can interpret and fix its meanings. Here is the leaven: it is the leaven of Church-teaching, the essential error which wherever found, in whatever modified forms, quenches the Spirit of God, deforms and mutilates the Word of God, gives the conscience another master than the Lord Jesus Christ, and does all this cunningly in his name and by his authority, so that the souls of his people even bow to the forged decrees and shudder at the thought of resistance. [Let him that readeth understand!] For this is 'Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth'; and her merchants are the great men of the earth, and by her sorceries are all nations deceived."

We next have described in strong, startling, symbolical language, the threatened judgment upon Jezebel and her children: "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the Churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (verses 22,23).

Applying this language symbolically, as is evidently the only proper way, it would denote, not what would be represented by a bed of ease, but rather a bed of pain. It seems very evident that the purpose in these words of Christ is to contrast the state or condition represented here with her former condition of pleasure, enjoyment, and ease. The harlot's bed of ease and a sick-bed which usually follows, are thus contrasted. "One cannot be indulged in without leading on, sooner or later, to the horrid sufferings of the other." The same contrast is brought out in the vision of the final destruction of the Jezebel system, called there, "Babylon the Great" (Revelation 17:5). "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously so much torment and sorrow give her" (Revelation 18:7). "Those committing adultery with her" — those who imbibe her spirit of selfish ambition and worldliness, those who advance the claim of being the divinely appointed channel, etc. — will meet the same punishment, suffering the bitter disappointment and distress of the great tribulation coming, in which Babylon will eventually be destroyed. The expression, "I will kill her children with death," teaches that all systems that have taken on the spirit of the "mother," will suffer with her in the "plagues" that describe her troubles, when these plagues come on her, ending in the seventh plague, with her utter destruction.

One has noted in this expression a close connection of this Thyatira period with the Sardis period that follows: "He would kill her children with death, and Sardis, which follows, seems to be a still- born, a 'dead' child, though having a name to live. All this is serious, and none but eyes of fire could trace these markings of evil so acutely."

"And all the Churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts" (verse 23). Applying these words as addressed to the Church as a whole

throughout the entire age, we understand the meaning to be that the time would come in the end of the age when all who were members professedly or truly of the Church of Christ would see the wisdom and justice displayed in the judgments that would fall on apostate Christianity.

"Who Know Not the Depths of Satan"

"But I say to you, to the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who knew not the depths of the Adversary, (as they say) I will lay on you no other burden" (verse 24). The word "and" in our Common Version is omitted in many Greek manuscripts, and therefore the Diaglott translation, which we have used above seems to be the preferable one. The Savior now addresses all who had escaped the contaminating influences of Jezebel's doctrines. These had not known, experienced, the "depths of Satan." They were loyal to Christ as their Head; they had not yielded their consciences to another — a fallible teacher.

The words following in this connection, "I will put upon you none other burden but that which ye have, hold fast till I come," seem to convey the thought that the spiritual strength of the Lord's people at this time was sufficient only to enable them to hold fast the true doctrine of Christ, which Jezebel's teachings had almost buried out of sight. Those who attempted to be aggressive and dared to raise their voices in testimony against Jezebel's doctrines and blasphemous usurpation were either intimidated by threats or torture to silence, or lost their lives. Some of the visions that St. John saw later on portray the sufferings unto martyrdom of God's saints of this period.

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father" (verses 26,27). This promise to the overcomer seems to be given to remind the Lord's true people that Jezebel's rule, which was claimed by Rome to be the reign of Christ, was a usurpation, and that when he should take to himself his power, the overcomers would enter upon their inheritance and be associated with him in judging the nations, preparing them for the reign of righteousness over them.

"And I will give him the morning star" (verse 28). The "morning star" is one of the symbolical names given to Christ: "I am ... the bright and morning star" (Revelation 22:16). The morning star anticipates, precedes, the day. The sun ushers in the day. The promise of the morning star may therefore suggest that the overcomers who fall asleep shall be gathered to Christ *before* he manifests himself in the last act of judgment on the nations, and before he appears as the "Sun of Righteousness" with healing in his beams; for before this latter stage of the Second Advent the overcomers will all be with him; and with him "shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Thyatira presents to us a condition, a state of things, that exists until the Lord has come and delivered all his overcoming saints; not, however, until the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon the world, but until he comes and makes himself known

as the Morning Star, the Herald of the Day, before the Day fully appears. At any rate the thought would properly be that those who are given the Morning Star, Christ, will be given to possess and enjoy the closest of union and fellowship with him, with all that this signifies of ineffable glory and bliss throughout countless ages.

It will be noticed that in this epistle, as also the three that follow, the Savior makes a complete change in the position of the admonition: "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." In the three previous epistles the admonition is placed before the promise to the overcomer; while in this and the three that follow, the admonition comes after. This change is accounted for by some in what appears to be a reasonable way: "In the first three instances, it would seem to be the address of the spirit from within the professing body, calling to the world [those who have ears to hear] without; but in the last four it would seem that the spirit itself is without, and that the call is considered now as having the same relation to the body of the professed Church as to the world. It is thus intensely significant of prevailing apostasy which has so paganized the professing Church as to make true Christians as exceptional in the Church as in the world. As the pillar of cloud went up from before the camp of Israel, and took its place behind it, to sever the Lord's people from the Egyptians, so this change intimates that the Church as a body has become so blended with the world that a separation needs to be drawn between Christ's true people and it, the same as its calling was meant to sever it from the world. Hence, in all the epistles in which the Spirit's warning takes its place after the promise, the great body of the professed Church, as such, is treated as apostate, and hopelessly corrupt, whilst at the end, the fearful announcement is made that Christ is about to cast it loathingly from him.

"And in still another respect does Christ successively alter his attitude toward these Churches, indicative of growing displeasure on his part and gradual ripening for judgment on their part. He required of the Ephesians to repent of their decline of love, simply referring to the fact that he 'will come.' He enjoined upon the Pergamites to repent of their still worse defections, by the sharper announcement: 'Otherwise I am coming to thee quickly.' Concerning the Thyatirans, he gives a still more fearful picture of his coming judgment, and declares that he will cast Jezebel and her paramours into perdition, and slay her children with death. Upon the Sardians he threatens the disaster of arriving over them as a thief, at a moment of supposed security. The liars and errorists of Philadelphia he says he will humble in the utmost degree and bring upon those settled down in the world an hour of dreadful trial, the same as shall befall the world itself; and that he is coming quickly as already in the very act of it. And with reference to the loathsome Laodiceans, he represents himself as already present, appealing to them for the last time, and ready now to spue them out of his mouth.

"What then does all this mean, but that the Church as a professing body, pure and excellent as it was at the beginning, and with all the partial revivals that mark different periods of its career, and with all the myriads of [professed] saints it has embraced, is yet in the judgment of the Son of God Himself, a subject

of gradual and ever-increasing decline and decay, first in one direction, then in another, until it becomes completely apostate, and, as such, is finally and forever rejected? This will be for many a very sad and startling doctrine. It is a paradox. It crosses many a fond dream. It carries dismay to certain humanitarian theories, which are much preached up. It strikes the death blow to the doctrine of a temporal Millennium, and to the hope of an ecclesiastical renovation of the world. Contrary to much of the thinking which prevails, it shows the professed Church in process of conversion to the world, instead of the world in process of conversion, by its means, to Christ. But I am sure that it is the truth of God. Be the logical consequences what they may, I stand here upon the solid rock of Christ's own presentation of the case, as viewed from the Judgment Seat."

Chapter Seven

Christ's Message to Sardis

(Revelation 3:1-6)

"And unto the angel of the Church of Sardis write; these things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars" (Revelation 3:1)

There appears to be some diversity of opinion amongst expositors as to the derivation and meaning of the word Sardis. Malachi Taylor, in his work on the Revelation, gives as the significance, "the things that remain." Mr. Russell's thought is the same: "Sardis is said to mean 'that which remaineth.' " Joseph Seiss, in his work Lectures on the Apocalypse, written in 1869, gives the various meanings submitted by a number of authors, also a very interesting comment, in which is combined in one picture these meanings as suggestive of the various features of the Sardis Church described by Christ. Note the following:

"The name is variously derived. Some connect it with the precious stone called *sarda*, which was found about Sardis, and sometimes used as an amulet [charm] to drive away fear, give boldness, inspire cheerfulness, sharpen wit, and protect against witchcraft or sorcery. Others have derived if from the Hebrew, and have assigned it the significance of remnant, or an escaped few. Ebrard finds for it an etymological derivation, denoting something new, or renewed. These several explanations, though different, are not antagonistic, as applied to the condition of a church. They can be very well combined in one picture. Courage and boldness imply great conflict and danger. In a great conquest, many would be vanquished, but a remnant would escape."

While Mr. Seiss does not apply the Sardis message to the period of about two centuries before the Reformation, which seems to us the correct application, his comment on the significance of the word Sardis is very apt, and fits perfectly certain features of the message. It is true that those of this period escaping from Jezebel's false teaching — the "few names left in Sardis" — were but a small remnant. These the Savior pronounces "worthy," and are the last of those living in the days of Jezebel's reign as a queen who do not imbibe Jezebel's doctrine, and thus they escape what the Savior calls "the depths of Satan"; and upon whom he imposes no other burden than that of holding fast that which they had. This period of church history found the professing Body of Christ as a whole, from the Divine standpoint, what might be fittingly described as a dead carcass. As these "few names left in Sardis" became weary and were compelled one by one, by intimidation or persecution unto death, to drop the torch of Truth, the generation of the Philadelphia period took it up, and, as is described in that epistle, were by

the Divine Master specially protected as they delivered the important message entrusted to their charge for that dark period of the Church's history.

Up to the present stage of our consideration of these epistles of Christ, there has been very little difficulty in fixing with almost perfect exactness the periods in history which they represent. Indeed, there is a very general agreement in regard to this among expositors, that Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira apply to the periods of history we have given, namely Ephesus, the Apostolic age, and extending into the Second Century; Smyrna, the period of Pagan Rome's persecution of the saints, beginning in the Second Century and closing with the Edict of Milan, about 313 AD; Pergamos, beginning about this time, when it became a custom for Constantine, the Roman Emperor, to be chosen by the professed Church to preside over its councils, the Church thus assuming the condition of Balaamism (world affiliation) and ending when a Roman bishop, by a decree of Justinian, became firmly established in the city of Rome as head of the Church — Christ's Vicar, so-called, and when the symbolical Jezebel began her attempted rule over the consciences of men, about 539 AD. It is quite necessary to keep in mind, however, that the conditions described in these three messages did not cease with the ending of these periods, but have continued to prevail in professed Christianity, and still exist today.

We thus see that the Thyatira conditions, representing, as given by a number of expositors, the conditions existing in "the period of Papal persecutions," would not cease before, nor even at the Sixteenth Century Reformation. Some of the most severe Papal persecutions occurred long years after the Reformation began; the noted persecution — that of the Huguenots — continued as late as 1787. Truly the Papacy, in spite of the fact that it was shorn to a considerable extent of its power (having received a deadly wound), still continued in a very large measure to exercise authority over the saints, and to a certain extent to fulfill the prediction of Daniel 7, of "wearing out the saints of the Most High," until the end of the "time, times, and a half," in 1799 AD. Indeed, it still exerts a more powerful influence in religious matters over a large number of earth's peoples than all the other professed Christian organizations combined. It will thus be seen that of necessity each new period has its beginning while the conditions described in the preceding epistles are in operation, the one exception being that of the Pagan Roman persecution, which ceased shortly after Constantine ascended the throne.

Some Pre-millennial expositors, among them Taylor, Grant, and Seiss, apply the Sardis message to the Nationalized Protestant Church organizations that came into existence shortly after the Reformation was fully under way; while some Advent expositors bring the Thyatira period down to 1799, and there begin the period of Sardis. While it is true that the Nationalized Churches of Europe, as such, describe well the Sardis condition of "death," they do not represent a universal condition of worldwide deadness, which seems to be that pictured in the message to Sardis. Again, the Philadelphia message, as we shall endeavor to show later, fits so well the great, Reformation Movement, that it seems absolutely necessary to place the period of Sardis just previous to the time when the

Philadelphian movement began.

Concerning the other application (the Adventist), it will be noted that the conditions in the Protestant Churches from 1799 to 1833, as they fix it, do not seem at all to picture the Sardis conditions, the principal feature of which was a lack of spiritual life and activities. The opposite of this began to take place after 1799, as shown in the great revival of missions and the organization of Bible societies which characterized those times, and indeed the times until very recent date.

Sardis, the Darkest of the Dark Ages

The words of the Savior to the Sardis Church of St. John's day seem to describe the worst condition possible for a local church professing the name of Christ to be in. The primitive Sardis, as a local church organization, is represented in this message as "dead" — simply professing the name Christian, but exerting no measure of influence whatever, either in the lives of its members, or in that of proclaiming the pure Gospel. The "few" true Christians among them, referred to in the words of the Savior as "a few names ... that had not defiled their garments," were utterly powerless to recover the Church or improve the sad situation. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," are the words of him who is represented in the message as having the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. The fact that he possessed the seven spirits of God seems to teach that the Savior possessed the full measure of Divine power, and that whatever measure of this power would be necessary at this time, would be exercised to prevent an utter defeat of the Divine purpose in the selection of the foreordained number to complete his Body members. The star, the light-bearer, whoever he may have represented in primitive Sardis, was unable to exert any influence in the Church itself, neither in the surrounding darkness of the City. The language of Christ requires that we understand that the people of the City would be in perfect ignorance of what the true Gospel Message was, so far as this Church's influence was concerned. The very few real, true, disciples of Christ in this Sardis Church, we may be sure, would most naturally be discouraged, disheartened, lacking aggressive faith to lay hold on that power which alone could bring life again to the dead Church. Indeed, it seemed to be in a condition from which a complete separation was required on the part of believers, and a condition requiring an entirely new beginning. To locate the period in the Church's experience that is represented by Sardis it would seem therefore to require that we look for the very darkest time — the most discouraging and seemingly hopeless condition for the true cause of Christ that the historian has portrayed. The Dark Ages are always identified by historians as the period of Jezebel-Rome's arrogant, corrupt, and queenly reign. The darkest period of those long centuries of the Dark Ages was that just prior to the Reformation. Under Martin Luther and his associates the Reformation in the Lord's providence was inaugurated in a very special manner. The events connected with Christianity in the early days of the great Protestant Reformation were in many respects like those in the beginning of the Gospel Age. This period of the Reformation constituted a

new beginning. For a brief space of time prior to this, Christ had seemingly no *organized* effort to represent him that could be called evangelical.

The few of the Lord's true saints, who had fruitlessly protested against Jezebel's doctrines and blasphemous claims, became scattered and ceased entirely for a short time to bear witness. "Worn out" (this is the language of the Prophet — Daniel 7:25) by a long series of bloody persecutions, the object of which was to exterminate them and thus silence the voice of protest against the Jezebel system, these witnesses of Christ became discouraged, cast down, and needed some special, some supernatural help from the Divine Master to give them new life, that they might again stand on their feet and resume their divinely appointed work. Let us hear the historian as he portrays the conditions existing just before this time:

"About the commencement of this century [sixteenth], the Roman pontiffs lived in the utmost tranquility; nor had they, as things appeared to be situated, the least reason to apprehend any opposition to their pretensions, or rebellion against their authority; since those dreadful commotions, which had been excited in the preceding ages by the Waldenses, Albigenses, and Beghards, and more recently by the Bohemians, were entirely suppressed, and had yielded to the united powers of counsel and the sword ... none had the courage to strike at the root of the evil, to attack the Papal jurisdiction and statutes, which were absurdly, yet artfully, sanctified by the title of *canon law*, or to call in question the ancient and most pernicious opinion that Christ had established a vicegerent at Rome, clothed with his supreme and unlimited authority. Entrenched within these strong holds, the pontiffs looked upon their own authority and the peace of the church [?] as beyond the reach of danger, and treated with indifference the threats and invectives of their enemies. Armed, with power to punish, and abundantly furnished with the means of rewarding in the most alluring manner, they were ready on every commotion, to crush the obstinate, and to gain over the mercenary to their cause" (*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*).

Milner, another noted church historian, has said that at this date (1514), though the name of Christ was professed everywhere in Europe, nothing existed that could properly be called evangelical. All the confessors of Christ, worn out by a long series of contentions were reduced to silence. "Everything was quiet," says another writer — "every heretic exterminated." This, of course, we know was not literally true; for "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and just as in the times of the typical Jezebel, so at this time there were those represented by the typical "seven thousand" that did not "bow their knee to Baal." However, so far as any collective, public testimony was concerned, Christ's true witnesses were reduced to silence. The Lateran Council that was in session in 1514 congratulated itself that Christendom was no longer afflicted by heresies, and after a challenge had been sent out for any who denied Rome's claims to appear, and none responded, one of the orators of that Council ascended the rostrum, and addressing Leo X, said *"Jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistit"* — "There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule, and religious opposers resist no more." And again, "The whole body of Christendom is now seen to be subjected to its

head, i.e., to thee [Leo].” Who can doubt that the Sardis period of Church history is identified in these dark times, just before the Reformation? This period in history is the subject matter of one of the most startling and striking visions that passed before the eyes of St. John and is recorded farther on in the Revelation. Thank God for the “few names left in Sardis”! To these under the leadership of the Divine Master, are we indebted for the preservation of the faith. While as witnesses, their testimony was silenced for a time, the spirit of truth was soon again worked into the lives of their successors, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Reuchlin, and others, and empowered by Christ, a new, a second prophesying began.

“I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God” (Revelation 3:1,2).

“I know thy works,” said the Savior, addressing this Church of Sardis and its star or messenger. No particular evil is mentioned as existing in her midst, but if we are correct in applying the message prophetically to the period just prior to the great Reformation epoch, we may be sure that there was existing in this Church a combination of all those evils that we have found recorded in the other messages. The unequal yoking up with the world, the purely worldly spirit, so prevalent in the age represented by the Church of Pergamos, controlling in her councils; the wicked, corrupt teaching of that “woman Jezebel,” together with her persecuting spirit, pictured by Thyatira, had reached the condition called by the Savior “the depths of Satan.” The professing Church on earth had become wholly corrupt — indeed, “dead”; and this was the state of the visible Church in the period just prior to the great Reformation.

The fact that the Savior mentions the seven stars held in his right hand, seems to teach that he had entire control of the ministers in his Church and could keep and remove them at his pleasure.

The words, “Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain,” seem to be addressed to the exceptionally few disheartened ministers and secret disciples of those times; “the things which remain,” having reference to the true piety that still lived and lingered in this period. “Whatever there was of true religion among them, it was of importance to strengthen it, that the love of the Savior might not become wholly extinct. An important duty in a low and languishing state of religion, indeed, is to strengthen the things that still survive. It is to cultivate all the graces which do exist — to nourish all the love of truth which may linger in the Church; and to confirm by warm exhortation, and by a reference to the gracious promises of God’s Word, the few who may be endeavoring to do their duty, and who amidst many discouragements, are aiming to be faithful to the Savior. In the lowest state of religion in a church, there may be a few, perhaps quite obscure and of humble rank, who are mourning over the desolations of Zion, and who are sighing for better times. All such, it is the duty of the ministers of religion to comfort and encourage; for it is in their hearts that piety may be kept alive in the Church — it is through them that it may be hoped religion may be revived. In the apparent hopelessness of doing much good to

others, good may always be done to the cause itself by preserving and strengthening what there may be of life among those few, amidst the general desolation of death."

Spiritual Sickness and Death

The Master further exhorts them to "strengthen the things ... that are ready to die." There were doubtless some in the primitive Church of Sardis, as well as in the period represented by it, to whom these words would apply. It quite often is the case in individual experience as well as in a church, that spiritual life has almost ceased, and there seems to be only a spark remaining. The spiritually minded would always be expected to use their best endeavors to kindle again the flame of spiritual life. How frequently is it the case, however, that the messengers are not of this kind! The saying is generally true: "like people, like priest" (Hosea 4:9). A church generally has pastors of the character it chooses.

"For I have not found thy works perfect before God." A better translation of this passage is: "For I have not found thy works fully performed before my God." Evidently these words, like those preceding, and indeed those that follow, are addressed to the messenger, minister, and the "few names left." It is true that Christ expects of all his ministering servants that they perform certain works, and sometimes those of a special nature. It is also true that none could claim perfection in the performance of these works. The words as rendered above would therefore seem to indicate that a certain feature, or features, of that work were left undone; and this was true, not only of the minister and Church of primitive Sardis, but also of those represented by these in the period of history featured. There is always something lacking, some duties neglected or left unperformed by even a true minister and the spiritually minded of the Lord's people, when spiritual decline or deadness begins to find a place in the Church. May it not have been in this case that individual or collective witnessing, which secret discipleship fails always to perform, may be referred to in the words: "For I have not found thy works fully performed"?

The Savior next exhorts his few faithful ones in the words: "Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard." We may surely learn from these words that it is always profitable, especially in times of spiritual drought, for the Lord's followers to call to remembrance the days when they first came to know Christ as their Savior and Lord; to remember how it was that they were introduced into God's favor — how it was communicated to them, how it was that they obtained assurance and acceptance, and the various instrumentalities employed to bring these blessings to them. We may not be quite sure as to the particular things that the Master would have them call to remembrance. It may be that he desired to remind them that it was through the oral testimonies of others that they were brought to embrace Christ; or that it was through their own personal public confession of Christ before men that brought to them the full assurance of their acceptance with God. It is quite evident that in the period of church history just prior to the Reformation, these qualities and characteristics were lacking, deficient, incomplete. Mr. Barnes, referring to primitive Sardis, has supposed that

these words may refer to some peculiar manner in which the Gospel was first preached to them, as, by the labors of the Apostles and by the remarkable effusions of the holy Spirit; or to the ardor and love with which they embraced it. We might add that it may refer to the ardor and labor of those who were instrumental in giving the Gospel to them; to the favors and privileges conferred on these ministers of God; or to their own understanding of what the Gospel required of them when they embraced it. These surely are necessary things to call to mind when spirituality is declining.

"And hold fast and repent [reform]," the Savior further exhorts. The meaning of these words evidently is that they hold fast the truths that they had learned, and the measure of piety that remained among them; and to exercise godly sorrow for whatever measure they had departed from their former activities, and had lost the spiritual joys experienced when they first heard and received the Gospel of the grace of God. The exhortation teaches also that they were to turn again, and lay hold upon his Word and promises, that they were to engage again in active service and thus experience the joys that these promises and services would bring to them.

Continuing to address that class referred to as in a careless attitude, unwatchful, and as ready to die, and deeming it possible that they would not give heed to his exhortation, the Savior gives warning of what would be the result, in the words: "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." The warnings and threatenings contained in these messages apply more to individuals than to churches. The words, "I will come on thee as a thief," seem to imply that the ones referred to, those whose spiritual decline had reached such a critical state as would be described as unwatchful and in the words "ready to die," would be surprised suddenly, and find it then too late to reform, too late to regain their former standing. Considering the words from the standpoint that the Sardis *conditions* prevail to a considerable extent down to the time of the Second Advent, the following statement by Mr. Russell Is very pertinent and applicable:

"Many today have the Sardis characteristics. To such there is a fatal warning in Revelation 3:3. Seven times our Lord's Second Coming is described as being thief-like, stealthy. Only to those who are watching is the approach of a thief known. Those who are asleep will be awakened only after he has taken full possession, after his work of destruction has progressed. Although they may then arouse themselves, it is too late. They have been overtaken. Thus our Lord will be present, but invisible and unknown — except to the watchers — for some years after his arrival; and his Presence will be recognized by the sleepers only as the noise of spoiling the strong man's house gradually increases. Then slowly will they realize what it is and what the outcome will be."

The Savior next addresses the Sardis Church and its messenger, referring specially, however, to the overcoming class: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." The "few names" which had not defiled their garments, refer to the faithful few who had kept themselves free from the corruption that

prevailed in the Sardis Church and in the period in history represented by it. The words plainly teach that there were but a few persons who had not been contaminated to a greater or less extent with world affiliation, with the false claim of Jezebel to be an inspired teacher, and with her corrupt teaching. These few were like persons clothed in white garments, who were able to keep their garments from being soiled in the midst of those whose garments were defiled.

In Robes of White

The words, "And they shall walk with me in white," refer to a reward realized in the future life. This is evident from the words that follow: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." White is the emblem of purity and innocence, and very appropriately represents the state or condition of the saints in light. Whoever overcomes the world, the flesh, and the Adversary — overcomes sin and resists the temptations of this world — will be given this glorious reward. This hope is that of being with the Savior in his Kingdom, clad, figuratively speaking, in robes of actual righteousness, expressive of holiness and joy.

The assurance given to such overcomers is that their names shall never be erased from "the book of life." "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels."

"In this text, as throughout the Bible, the thought is maintained that the elect class, who will receive the highest glory, honor, and blessing from the Lord, must demonstrate their loyalty by overcoming. It is not sufficient that there shall be an overcoming of the will at the beginning of the Christian career, but subsequently there must be trials and testings endured, and these must be met in an overcoming manner. The consecration having been made, and the trials and testings having begun, the individual yielding under those temptations and testings, and continuing to be overcome by them, would prove that he is not sufficiently loyal; for the Lord has promised that his grace shall be sufficient.

"This overcoming is a gradual work, progressing throughout our Christian course, from the moment of consecration down to the conclusion of life. But the text apparently takes hold of the conclusion, rather than the beginning or the middle of the work, and implies that the individual has at the *end* of the trial, the *end* of his race course, this overcoming degree of righteousness, so that he may be classed as an overcomer. Such an overcomer will be clothed in white raiment."

A most remarkably clear and Scriptural presentation of what is represented by the "white raiment" as applied to a believer's standing in the present life, is found under the title, *White Raiment Loaned To Us:*

"The Scriptures give us to understand that at the very beginning of our Christian experience, we figuratively are clothed in white raiment. This white raiment represents *justification* — we are justified freely from all things. It is a robe without a spot. It is sometimes spoken of as Christ's robe of righteousness,

because it comes to us through Christ. It is to be had only through him. He is able to *impute* to us, to *loan* to us, grant to us temporarily this robe. It is spoken of as the wedding garment. At an oriental wedding, a wedding garment of white linen was used to cover over the clothing worn by each guest. It was loaned to the guest at the wedding by the host, when he appeared at the wedding feast.

"White linen signifies purity. So when Christ gives us the use of his merit, it is as a white garment to cover our imperfections. It is an imputation of his righteousness, which is to us justification. We are exhorted to keep our garments unspotted from the world. The imputation of righteousness given us, we are to preserve, to maintain. But we cannot fully maintain it of ourselves. Our tongues may sometimes say things that we wish they had not said, and our hands may sometimes do things we would not desire. Hence, God has provided a way by which our blemishes or transgressions may be eradicated — those not wilful. This way is our daily application for the cleansing of these unwilling transgressions, through the precious blood. Thus we keep our garments unspotted from the world. Thus our justification, our white robe, is maintained — should be maintained" (C. T. Russell).

It is, however, apparent from the words of the Savior to the Church in Sardis that to be clothed in white robes is also a reward given to the overcomer who finishes successfully his trial. This trial is completed at death. The reward, the white raiment, will be given at Christ's appearing. The significance of this figure of the white robe in this sense is also most clearly unfolded by this same writer in an article, *The White Raiment of The Kingdom:*

"But it is not sufficient that we have the imputation of our Savior's righteousness. This imputation is only a temporary arrangement. We need to come to the place where we shall have a righteousness of our own. Our flesh is imperfect. ... In spite of our best endeavors, things are bound to go more or less wrong. But we are to prove ourselves overcomers — 'more than conquerors.' The Lord has arranged that at the conclusion of our trial, at the end of the present life, all the overcomers shall receive the new body. This new body will be a body of actual purity. Thus, as the Apostle says, we shall 'be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' So our raiment will be changed from a garment of *imputed* perfection, our justification by faith, to that which represents *actual* perfection. At the resurrection we shall receive that body of inherent purity, without blemish, without spot, which is here pictured as 'white raiment.' "

The Savior next assures the overcomer, the one who keeps his "garment unspotted," and overcomes all the Sardis evils, that his name shall not be blotted out of the book of life. The teaching is that the Lord takes account of each one who receives Christ as his Savior, and presents himself in consecration to do his will, to follow in his footsteps unto death. Such are represented in figure as having their names recorded in a book of life as candidates, as runners for the heavenly prize — joint-heirship with the Redeemer, eternal life, immortality. The expression, "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life," evidently implies that some will fail at last of obtaining this prize and therefore will not be

numbered among the elect class. A similar thought is contained in the words of Christ, "Many are called, but few are chosen."

In the words of the Savior, "And I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels," we have the thought well expressed that "in the end, these overcomers will be so grandly developed that the Lord will not be ashamed to confess any of them, and to say, Here is one of my followers. Here is another. They have walked in my footsteps, and have overcome."

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." It is well to keep in mind that individuals are addressed in these words. Indeed, as has been truthfully said: "The Church of God, which is Christ's Body, is not composed of Churches, but of members, united together by that blessed Spirit which unites all to Christ the Head. Hence the 'Churches' or assemblies are only local gatherings of so many Christians as find themselves in the providence of God actually together. Each of these is, according to Scripture, the Church in that place. The place adds nothing in this title (the Church of God), nor is one gathering of its members superior or inferior to any other." We must not forget, however, in this connection, the difference between profession and possession. A dead Sardis is not in reality of the Body of Christ at all. The "few names left," being powerless to control in its counsels, the Church, as such, is cast off, rejected.

Chapter Eight

Christ's Message to Philadelphia

(Revelation 3:7-13)

"And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write" (Revelation 3:7).

It is very generally conceded that of all the seven messages, with the one exception of Smyrna, that addressed to Philadelphia is of the deepest interest and of the most vital importance to the faithful. This is true, we believe, for the reason that it describes a state and circumstances that receive only the sweet benediction of Divine approval. Surely the Lord's faithful followers cannot conceive of a more important, a more desirable, and a more blessed condition to be in than that which meets the unqualified commendation of the one whom they have learned to love above all others — a condition that gives conscious assurance that they are showing forth his praises, by manifesting a oneness with the Father and the Son that causes the world to believe that the Father hath sent him (John 17:21). There are warning words contained in the message to the angel and Church of Philadelphia, but no words of reproof or rebuke. The sincere, the conscientious believer will therefore desire to study carefully and prayerfully these, the Master's words, to discover what it is, that receives such unqualified approval, and having discovered it, he will seek Divine aid to practice it in his life and association with other of the Lord's people.

Viewing it from the prophetic standpoint, it is very evident that the Philadelphian message does not represent a condition existing in the professing church as a whole in any period in history since Pentecostal days. The state of the professed Church at the time the Philadelphian conditions are due to be looked for, is represented by Sardis, and is that of the darkest period of her apostasy. Neither does it represent any religious system or organization. It seems, rather, to describe a movement in the midst of professed, fallen Christianity, having for its object a revival or a restoration to primitive conditions. This movement, as we shall endeavor to show, seems to continue even after the Laodicean period and conditions have come in. Let the reader recall that the derivation of the names of these Churches as we have thus far examined them, have been either descriptive of qualities possessed by faithful believers themselves, or of favorable or unfavorable conditions existing in the professed Church surrounding them; and as the true Church class has met and come in contact with both these favorable and unfavorable conditions, Divine providence has always overruled, to test these, and to give them opportunity to prove themselves overcomers.

The Church of Brotherly Love

The name Philadelphia means "brotherly love," and we may be sure that an assembly of the Lord's people that receives such commendation from the Master, could represent only a movement that would possess a large measure of this grace; indeed, a movement that would in a very particular sense be distinguished by it. That the manifestation of this Christian grace on the part of the Lord's people is considered by him to be the most important thing (except the fundamental doctrines of Christ) connected with their witnessing and association together, is evidenced by the many references to it, in the instructions given to his disciples, as well as in those references commending this grace found in the writings of the Apostles. Indeed, one of the most sacred bonds even in the human relationship, is that which should exist between brothers and sisters. So close and tender is this tie, that any success or honor coming to one, arouses feelings of pleasure and emotions of joy in the hearts of all the others. Any injury, any loss coming to one, causes feelings of sympathy and emotions of pain to the others. Any disgrace brings sorrow and shame. God Himself is the author of this human tie, and so far as we know there is nothing like it in all His other creations. On account of the fall we see today only a faint suggestion of what it would be in its perfection.

God has been gathering out of this world of fallen ones a peculiar treasure. He is pleased to call them a holy brotherhood; His dear Son being the Firstborn of these many brethren, the Elder Brother, and all of them children of the Father's own begetting (Romans 8:29, Hebrews 2:11,12). He has instituted ways and means whereby all the peculiarities which go to make up the earthly relationship of brothers shall be lifted to a higher plane and be manifested to the world through them. This relationship was so entirely new — being described as a "new creation" — and of such a peculiar character, that a *new* commandment was given unto them. Concerning this, the Master, who was the beginning of this New Creation, when about to leave his disciples, said: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34). He further emphasized the importance of this new commandment by stating that obedience to it was absolutely necessary in order to abide in his love. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. ... This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:10-13).

The importance of the Philadelphian spirit is further emphasized in the fact that its possession gives positive assurance — is a sure evidence, that one has passed from under the condemnation that is on the world and has entered upon the new, the heavenly, spiritual life — lifted upon the plane of this holy, heavenly, brotherhood — and has become a child of God, a member of the New Creation. The Apostle's words concerning this are: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother

abideth in death" (1 John 3:14). The measure or standard of this love is the same as that which Christ exhibited in his love for his disciples, as we read: "By this we have known love, because he laid down his life on our behalf; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16, Diaglott). The manifestation of this love is stated by the Savior to be a distinctive mark, and the greatest possible evidence we can give to the world that we are his disciples — indeed, it is the greatest possible evidence to prove, to demonstrate, the Divine authority of the Christian religion. His words to this effect are: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

The most prominent and striking characteristic of the primitive Church at the time the promise of the Father was fulfilled and the holy Spirit was poured out upon them, was this Philadelphian spirit (brotherly love). This spirit is described in the words: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" (Acts 4:32-35). This same spirit was manifest in connection with the Second Advent movement, which occurred toward the close of the Philadelphian period. Of course, we are not to understand that their undertaking the communistic plan and the distribution of their possessions necessarily represented the Lord's good pleasure for them at that time, or for his followers since; nor that it was best for the furtherance of his cause; his providential overruling in scattering them would indicate to the contrary. However, we certainly have in this a perfect picture of the spirit of brotherly love, and it is an exhibition of the chief, the most important, the most desirable of all the Christian graces. This would naturally be one of the most prominent characteristics in any true reformation or revival, for every such revival represents simply an effort to restore or bring back normal, primitive conditions from which there has been a most deplorable departure.

A Movement to Recover Primitive Purity

Applying this Philadelphian message in the prophetic sense and as naturally following the others in the order of succession, it would be looked for in the period in history immediately subsequent to that of Sardis. This period in its beginning features is well represented by the Protestant Reformation movement. It should be kept in mind, however, that the Sardis conditions continued in the great nominal church system of Romanism, as well as in the Protestant nationalized systems that came into being soon after the Reformation. The Philadelphian candlestand in the prophetic sense, therefore, as we have noted, does not seem to represent a particular organization or system, but rather a movement of the spirit of God, sometimes inside and sometimes outside of the professed Christian systems; the object of which has been to recover the true Church, lost

amid the confusion and apostasy of Thyatira and the deadness of Sardis; a movement accomplishing as one of its objects the unifying of the members of Christ together in one, in the bonds of brotherly love. We are not to suppose that this movement is successful in the sense of bringing all the members of Christ's Body into one human organization. However, every true revival since the Reformation began has been very largely marked in its beginning by new fervency of spirit, fresh zeal, deeper earnestness, and of necessity is always accompanied by the Philadelphian spirit of brotherly love. The Philadelphian message then would seem to represent, not only a movement connected with the Reformation, but also all the movements we call true revivals that have had for their object the restoration of the true Church to primitive conditions — those that have occurred during and since the Reformation. Such movements have in a special, particular sense been continually operating since the Reformation began. Each one, however, has generally ended, so far as organization is concerned, in sectarianism, only to become the occasion for another movement to begin and end likewise. And these continue even after the Laodicean period begins, and will continue until the end, because the Philadelphian spirit is that which all overcomers in every generation have possessed; and it is the possession of this spirit that constitutes the most important characteristic of all overcomers. Such movements always cause the conscience to be purified by the opposition it necessarily has to endure and this invariably discovers and brings together the most spiritual. Consciences are exercised by the preaching of the Word of God; the need of Christ's presence by his spirit becomes more and more felt, and the real fellowship of saints is more and more valued, sought for, and experienced. In other words, the general character of all these movements manifests itself as Philadelphian. Every true spiritual revival has the tendency to *break up the sectarian spirit*, and every effort to press the claims of sectarianism causes the free indeed Christian to be compelled to separate himself, that he may continue to enjoy that true freedom found alone in Christ.

Concerning the period in history covered by the Philadelphia message and this separating feature characterizing it, Mr. Russell remarks: "This stage of the Church's history evidently began at the Reformation; and there are many still living [in the present Laodicean period, 1916] who possess the characteristics described. There is considerable similarity between the work begun on Pentecost and that of Luther and his friends. The Reformation was, in a sense, the beginning of a new era, a dawning of light where all had been darkness, the separation of the true from the false, and a new start in the way of truth. ... During the Philadelphian period, especially during the first and the last phases of it, the faithful have either been obliged to come out of the nominal temple [Church] or have been cast out for their straight testimony."

Sardis represents what might properly be termed a Christianized world, yet continuing to be the "world lying in the wicked one," with here and there a Christian. Philadelphia would seem to represent the operation of God's spirit in these comparatively few "working in living energy to deliver from that which is threatening to engulf the people of God in a flood of worldliness." A movement of

such a character can but have the effect of bringing the spiritually minded ones together and uniting them in the bonds of love, which is the Philadelphian spirit. It has always been true, however, and is no less true in the present Laodicean period, that many unite themselves to these movements who either do not possess, or after uniting fail to attain to the Philadelphian spirit of brotherly love.

Such, because of being carnal and walking as natural men (1 Corinthians 3:1-4), become ready subjects of the spirit of intolerance and bigotry, which always leads to dissensions and strife *over non-essential matters*, thus occasioning further testings and siftings in order to make manifest who are exercising the Philadelphian spirit, the spirit of the overcoming class.

Coming now to consider the message itself in its details, the first thing we see as seemingly in itself sufficient to locate the beginning of the Philadelphian period in history is, as observed in the preceding messages, that of the names and titles assumed by Christ in addressing this Church and its messenger. We cannot but notice that these very names and titles are those blasphemously assumed by the Popes, who had been claiming to rule in Christ's stead. The exercise of these false claims on the part of this great hierarchy, flooding as it did the world with its soul-defiling errors, until the pure Gospel had become entirely hidden from sight, was that which necessitated a new beginning, or what might be termed a second commission to preach the Gospel. This new beginning started by a recovery of the Bible and a diligent and independent study of it by the Reformers, Luther and others. The titles and names assumed by Christ in this epistle to Philadelphia would seem to suggest that one special work of the Reformers of the Sixteenth Century, the beginning of the Philadelphian period, would be that of exposing the false and blasphemous claims of the Papacy. The words of Christ, "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true," are in the original more an expression of title than of qualities possessed by Christ; indeed, they are expressive of both. A very striking rendering of these words which emphasizes this is: "These are the words of the True Holy One" (Joseph Moffatt's Translation). When we consider that Christ is the only one except the Father who can rightly assume this title, there is immediately suggested to the mind the similar title assumed by and accorded to the Pope, that of "His Holiness." Students of history are well aware that one of the features of the Reformation work, and a necessary one at that time, was to show the falsity and blasphemous character of Rome's claim. While there were a few all through the long period during which Rome's idolatrous counterfeits of Christianity and blasphemous claims were quite generally believed and acknowledged, who saw in this system the fulfillment of the predictions of Daniel (7:8,20- 26) and St. Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:3,4) concerning Antichrist, it was not until Luther's day that this false claim was so fully exposed as to enable large numbers, even of the world, to see it, and thus cause a most remarkable weakening of its power and influence over the nations, as also the consciences of men. In October, 1520, Luther was first made aware of the Pope's bull of his excommunication. His words on receiving it, as recorded by the historian, were: "I rejoice in having to bear such ills for the best of causes. Already I feel greater liberty in my heart;

for at last I know that the Pope is Antichrist, and that his throne is that of Satan himself" (D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*).

The words, "He that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth," are also a reminder of the false claims of Papacy. A reference seems to be made in this statement by the True Holy One to the claim that Papacy was making of fulfilling the prophecies concerning Christ's Millennial reign. David's throne, it is well known by students of the Bible, was a type of Christ's throne. Christ was born the heir to this throne. He is represented in this passage as possessing the key, the authority, to occupy that throne. In a due time appointed he will take to himself this authority and reign. The supporters of Papacy apply to the Popes and the power they exercised during the Dark Ages, the prophecies which speak of that reign: "On thee, most blessed Leo, we have fixed our hopes as the Savior that was to come." These were the words of an adoring bishop to the Pope at the fifth Lateran Council, as quoted by A. J. Gordon (*Ecce Venit*). He continues: "In his sovereign vicar, Christ has already appeared, and is already ruling, says Rome. 'In the person of Pius IX, Jesus reigns on earth,' exclaims Cardinal Manning [in 1871] 'and he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet.' "

It is well known that the Papacy claims to have the power to consign to what they erroneously call the torments of hell, as well as to open the door of heaven; in other words, that the salvation and damnation of the human race are in its power. The noted English expositor, Mr. Guinness, who visited America in 1860, said:

"It is difficult in this Nineteenth Century to credit the records which reveal the unbounded power of the Pope during the Dark Ages, and the nature and extent of the claims he asserted to the reverence and subjection of mankind. If kings and emperors yielded him abject homage, the common people regarded him as a deity. His dogmas were received as oracles, his bulls and sentences were to them the voice of God. The Sicilian ambassadors prostrated themselves before Pope Martin, with the thrice-repeated cry, 'Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.' 'The people think of the Pope as the one God that has power over all things, in earth and in heaven,' said Gerston. The fifth Lateran Council subscribed, just before the Reformation, a decree which declared that 'as there was but one body of the church, so there was but one head, viz., Christ's vicar, and that it was essential to the salvation of every human being to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.' 'Every spiritual, as well as every ecclesiastical office of Christ, was arrogated to himself by the "man of sin." '

" 'If Christ was the universal Shepherd of souls, was not he, the Pope, the same? If Christ was the door of the sheep, was not he the door? If Christ was the truth, was not he the depositary, source, and oracular expounder of the truth, authoritative, infallible, independent of Scripture, and even against it? If Christ was the Holy One, was not he the same, and did not the title, His Holiness, distinctively and alone belong to him? If Christ was the husband of the Church, was not he the same? With the marriage ring in the ceremonial of his inaugura-

tion, he signified it; and with his great voice in his Canon law and Papal bulls he proclaimed it to the world. The power of the keys of Christ's Church and Kingdom, given him, extended into the invisible world. He opened with them, and who might shut? He shut, and who might open? ... The souls in purgatory and the angels in heaven were subject to him; and it was even his prerogative to add to the celestial choir; by his canonizing edicts he elevated whom he pleased of the dead to form part of heaven's hierarchy, and become objects of adoration to men.' "

Considering the blasphemous character of the Papacy's claims to these titles and powers, and the wide extent to which they were received in Christendom, it can hardly seem otherwise than that the reference to and application of them by Christ to himself in this epistle can be but for the one purpose of severely rebuking those who made these preposterous claims, as well as calling the attention of his own people to the same.

"Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my name" (Revelation 3:8).

We do well to bear in mind the fact that this language is addressed primarily to both the faithful minister (star) and the Church of Philadelphia. Applying the words to the period of the great Reformation and up to very recent times, we would understand that the reformers of that period, Luther, and the many associated with him (indeed, in a sense, all who since their day have possessed the Philadelphian spirit, and have engaged in the divinely predicted work of cleansing the antitypical Sanctuary, the Church), are the ones addressed and represented in the Church of Philadelphia and its messenger.

The Open Door

The expression, "I have set before thee an open door," is evidently employed to denote that an opportunity to bear witness to the Truth, with an assurance of special Divine protection, would at this time be given by Christ to his faithful ministers. Keeping before our mind the fact that in the preceding centuries (those before the Reformation), faithfulness in bearing witness to the Truth meant the exposing of Rome's false claims, and that doing this brought persecution, torture by the Inquisition, imprisonment, or death, will enable us to better appreciate the deep significance of this expression, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

The history of the Church reveals that the time had now come when, in the Divine providence, the Truth, which seemed to have been crushed to earth, should be proclaimed; when a clear testimony should be given, not to the Lord's people only, but to the ruling powers also; indeed, to the whole world, which had been deceived, blinded and enslaved by Papacy's erroneous teachings and oppressive domination. In the Lord's providence the Reformers were protected in their witnessing by some of the world's princes. It indeed seems very clear that the Reformers of those times would have met the same fate as their predecessors,

Wycliffe, Huss, and others, had not Christ in some way caused the restraint of the powerful arm of the Papacy. Leo X, the pope then reigning, possessed almost absolute dominion over all the kings of Europe; and so great was the fear of his power that none dared to interfere with his decrees. Under these conditions, nothing short of an exercise of Divine power would enable these men to give their testimony. The historian expresses the fears and convictions of Luther's friends for his safety when he was about to start on his journey to appear before the council of the Pope's prelates, convened at the city of Worms, to answer to the charge of heresy: "His dejected friends believed that unless God should interpose by a miracle, he was going to meet his death" (D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*). Luther's own feelings are thus expressed: " 'The Papists,' said he, observing the distress of his friends, 'have little desire to see me at Worms; but they long for my condemnation and death! No matter! Pray not for me but for the Word of God. My blood will scarcely be cold before thousands and tens of thousands in every land will be made to answer for the shedding of my blood. The most holy adversary of Christ, the father and master and chief of manslayers, is resolved that it shall be spilt. Amen! The will of God be done!' Turning to Melancthon, he said with deep emotion: 'If I never return, and my enemies should take my life, cease not, dear brother, to teach and stand fast in the truth. Labor in my stead, since I can no longer work. If thy life be spared, my death will matter little.' "

How wonderful was the Divine providence exhibited in the life of Luther from childhood till he came to manhood's estate. He was a miner's son, one of the last from the world's standpoint to be chosen for such a work. But God's ways of selecting and preparing His servants are not usually man's ways. The great truths that he was to proclaim had to be first worked out in his own individual life. Indeed, he needed to feel to the utmost the evil effects of Rome's teaching, and the bondage of the same, before the truth of God's way of salvation could be seen and appreciated by him. He was caused to feel this bondage to its greatest extent; he was made to see experimentally how the truth had been perverted by Rome; he saw, not all at once, to be sure, how complete was Rome's apostasy. His first efforts were exerted wholly in the direction of a reform of the Church. After a few years he became convinced of the hopelessness of such efforts, largely through coming to understand the Divine predictions of Daniel (chapter 7), St. Paul (2 Thessalonians 2), and St. John in the Revelation, which he interpreted and proclaimed as portraying the various phases or aspects of Romish apostasy.

The message of the Savior continues: "for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my name." "Compared with the mighty hosts of their enemies, the little band of Reformers had but 'a little strength'; but they knew that they had the truth, and they fully trusted the Giver. Thus the Master could say, 'Thou hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my name.' " This was not only true of those in Luther's day who sought to recover true Christianity — the true doctrine of Christ — and give it again to the world, but it was true all through the Philadelphian period of those who instituted real and genuine revivals. The very richest truths of the Gospel, the clearest testi-

mony concerning the headship of Christ, have nearly always come from those who have broken the fetters of sectarian restraints. How many there have been, however, who, having been used of God to hold up successfully the simpler, or even the deeper truths of the Gospel of Christ through trusting in the power of God alone, have, after a time, sought the aid of human strength and worldly- wise methods, and thus have had the "door" of opportunity closed to their efforts. As soon as this occurs, as soon as there comes a claim that we are somebody or something, or as soon as there is an attempt to add to our strength — to hold our organization, our system, together, by the use of carnal methods, the door of true testimony soon ceases to be held open for us. "Little strength" is evidently one of the essential elements, and is another characteristic of the Philadelphian spirit. "God hath chosen the weak things to confound the mighty, and base things of the world, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

All true attempts to recover the primitive faith and piety (and such were the efforts which characterized one important phase of the Philadelphian spirit) if they have been in any measure successful from the Divine standpoint, have been by the exercise of that lowly, humble spirit shown by Saul when he was about to be chosen king over Israel. This spirit was expressed by Samuel when rebuking Saul for his departure from God in this respect, in the words: "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?" (1 Samuel 15:17). The "little strength" must be held on to — the place of separation unto, and entire dependence upon God must be maintained. These are the chief qualities that ensure true success in God's cause and do always receive the approval of the Divine Master.

We inquire, To what end was this Divine strength given to these weak ones? The reply is, in the effects produced, as expressed in the words of Christ: "Thou hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my name." How important it is, then, that we know what is meant by keeping God's Word! Surely it does not mean, as some have seemed to think, the fencing up of any portion of God's people by the formulation of a creed and the requiring of subscription to it. Who that has a true conception of Christ's Body, the Church, would ever think that he had the ability to frame a constitution and a confession, a creed, for it? It has always resulted in fencing off a greater or less number of the Lord's people from the rest; as has been truthfully expressed: "If you cannot agree, you are at best dismissed to go elsewhere, and find or make a party for yourself.

But he who will keep Christ's Word can bind himself to none — must preserve his individuality of conscience, subject to one Master only; as much so as if there were no other Christians but himself on earth: and in a true walk with God, the knowledge of Himself, acquaintance with His Word, increases with each step of the way. The light brightens to the perfect day, and in this brightening light we are called to walk, true to it, and to Him whose light it is. An immense thing it is, in a day like this, to be keeping, with an exercised heart, the Word of Christ! Not a word here and there; not following it until the cost may be too much; but through honor and dishonor, through evil report and good report. For is

there right obedience any where, when there is not in our purpose obedience every where?"

The significance of the expression that they had not denied Christ's name, as it applied to the primitive Church of Philadelphia in St. John's day, may have referred to some particular persecution at that time in connection with which the believers of the Philadelphian Church had been summoned before the magistrates and required to renounce the name of Christ — to disown any relationship or attachment to him, in a public manner. As applied to the Philadelphian period of church history, it would indicate that those addressed were comparatively a small, exceptional people in the midst of a large profession of Christ; these last not being recognized by Christ at all as members of his Body, the Church. The "name" of Christ may also signify the different offices that he fills in the great work of salvation, as, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins"; "They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us"; "And this is his name whereby he shall be called, the righteousness of Jehovah"; "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Matthew 1:21,23, Jeremiah 23:5,6, Isaiah 9:6,7). The meaning applied in this sense would be that they recognized Christ as the only one worthy of such titles, and the only one who could fill the requirements called for or demanded in such names.

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee" (verse 9). Concerning who and what are meant by those who called themselves Jews, but were of the synagogue of Satan, has already been considered in the message to Smyrna. It will be sufficient to note here that the expression, "synagogue of Satan," refers to the same class which Satan had used in the early centuries to work the downfall of the already declining Church. Judaism with its forms and ceremonies and ritual observances accomplished the Divine purpose in foreshadowing the various features of true Christianity and was set aside by God when it had accomplished its mission. The system known as "Babylon the Great" is merely a counterpart or prototype on a large scale of Judaism, and has taken the place of the equal or common priesthood of believers, and has substituted for the completed sacrifice of Christ and the salvation to be found only in Christ, its own perversion, such as the sacrifice of the Mass through which forgiveness of sins is offered. The many daughter systems that were born in connection with Rome's travail in the early years of the Reformation have taken on, to a greater or less extent, the ritualism, the sacerdotalism of Rome, the Mother system. It is principally with this great but divided sectarian Protestantism that the true Philadelphians have had to contend in bearing witness to the true Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The thought seems to be fully warranted that the Philadelphian caste of believers continues to describe the overcomers to the very end of the age; and these are easily distinguished from the Laodiceans of these closing days, of which more will be said later.

If we look back over history, from the great Reformation onward, we will discover that every revival of a study of God's Word, every earnest effort at evangelizing, every effort put forth to draw and unite true Christians in the bonds of "brotherly love," has, when persevered in, had the effect of breaking down the barriers of sectarianism and of liberating the people of God; but, alas, history and experience show that the imitation class, the tare element, is always found wherever there are true wheat, and out of such bold moves for Christian liberty and freedom, there almost invariably develops a new sect, which becomes dominated by the same partisan spirit of bondage, resulting again in the taking away of personal liberties in Christ. These movements have originated generally outside of denominationalism. The most important movement of this kind since the great Reformation, has occurred in this present, the Laodicean period, but, like all the other movements of the past, it has ended in sectarianism; and, having accomplished its purpose, the usual testings and siftings have come. These tests are designed of the Lord, at least in one particular, to make manifest those who possess the Philadelphian spirit of brotherly love and loyalty to Christ and his Word.

The words, "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee," carry us forward to the time when the Philadelphians who are really the overcomers in all ages of the Church's history, will enter upon their reward of joint-heirship in the heavenly Kingdom. The nominal and apostate believers, who have in past centuries despised, treated disdainfully, maligned, and persecuted the true believers, will then be constrained to give homage to these and to learn that they were the beloved of God. The Apostle Peter's words seem to have reference to the same thought, when he says: "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:12).

"So far as the word [*worship*] is concerned, it may refer either to spiritual homage, that is, the worship of God; or it may mean respect as shown to superiors ... The latter is the probable meaning, that is, that they would be constrained to acknowledge that they were the children of God, or that God regarded them with His favor. It does not mean necessarily that they would themselves be converted to Christ, but that, as they had been accustomed to revile and oppose those who were true Christians, they would be constrained to come and render them the respect due to those who were sincerely endeavoring to serve their Maker. The truth taught here is, that it is in the power of the Lord Jesus so to turn the hearts of all the enemies of religion that they shall be brought to show respect to it; so to incline the minds of all people that they shall honor the Church, or be at least outwardly its friends. Such homage the world shall yet be constrained to pay to it." This, however, will never be until this present evil world order has passed away and the corrupt religious systems have ceased to be, and the Church is glorified with her Lord.

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that

dwell upon the earth" (verse 10). The "hour of trial" that was to come upon the whole world, as it had to do with the primitive Church of Philadelphia, is interpreted by commentators who fail to see the prophetic sense of these epistles as applying to different periods of the Church's history, to be some widespread persecution adapted to test the fidelity of those who lived to see it. The trial pointed out, however, seems evidently to be the one spoken of by the holy Prophets and Apostles, as well as the Lord himself — the great time of trouble which will close the Gospel Age. Some of the scenes of this great time of trouble the Church has already entered upon. It is described as a time of trouble in which men's hearts fail them for fear of what is coming on the earth, in connection with which the whole present order of things will be terribly shaken, indeed, overthrown. Some Christians possessing the spirit of brotherly love, who find themselves in these times, will be severely tested, but will come off more than conquerors; others will fail to do so, and will lose the reward. The facts have been clearly expressed by another:

"Our Lord's words addressed 'to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia' had their fulfillment, we understand, during the period which closed somewhere about the time when the Harvest of this age began. We are not to think of the different epochs represented in the messages to the various Churches as being exact periods, as though there was a particular instant of beginning and a particular instant of closing. Rather we are to understand each to be a general period which laps over the one on the other. So this period of faithfulness to the Lord's Word of which our text treats seems to have been one of some length, just as this Laodicean period in which we live has covered a considerable time, but is nearly ended now, we think.

"For a long time God's Word was lightly esteemed. The transition from a poor understanding to a better understanding of it came on gradually. The two witnesses of God, the Old and New Testaments, long clothed in the sackcloth of the dead languages, gradually ascended to heaven, the place of honor and power, as the Scriptures symbolically represent the matter (Revelation 11:3-12). Then came the general announcement that the time of the Second Advent of Christ had come [was near]. This was sometimes called the Wolff movement and sometimes the Miller movement; for one was the leader [a light-bearer] in one part of the world, and the other [a star — light-bearer], in the other part. ... This proclamation of the Kingdom of Christ was a remarkable movement, which we believe is referred to by our Lord in the parable of the Ten Virgins who awoke and trimmed their lamps. But it was a false alarm. The Bridegroom did not come.

"This disappointment caused a sifting among the professed people of God. Some became all the more interested in the Bible as the Word of God, and did not doubt, while others became haughty and skeptical ... So these did not keep to the Word of God, but discarded its declarations. The promises and prophecies of the Bible relating to the Master's Second Coming, though *positive* and *numerous*, were abandoned by most of the great teachers."

Among these teachers who did not abandon the Bible and its prophecies, but reverently studied them, were some who were not connected with the Miller

movement. The significant developments connected with the Miller movement would of necessity imply the special study of "time" prophecies; this study resulted in the preaching of a set time (1844) for the Lord to make his Second Advent. The failure of these expectations proved the incorrectness of the interpretation; disappointment and consequent sifting came as a result. These events covered a period of about forty years, beginning near 1829. (Mr. Miller's death occurred in 1849.) During this whole period of forty years or more, it should be borne in mind that the Lord had other faithful servants who studied the Bible beside Mr. Miller and his associates, who were not Adventists; and we have the results of their studies in their writings. Not a few of these, as their writings show, had very much more correct views of the Second Advent and its effects upon humanity than did Mr. Miller and those who labored with him. These were not expecting, as Mr. Miller was, a literal burning of the earth and its inhabitants, and the complete end of probationary ages. They saw from the Scriptures that another age of probation would follow the present one. However, while they had much clearer views of the Lord's Plan, including the time features, even *their* knowledge was deficient when contrasted with the much clearer light possessed by the watchers of the present Laodicean time. These, whom we may truthfully say were faithful Philadelphians, also studied the time prophecies associated with the Second Advent era, and their writings show that they did not agree with Mr. Miller in regard to 1844 being the time — the general expectation among them being that the Second Advent might take place some half a century later than Mr. Miller predicted, although differing among themselves as to the exact date. This serves to show that the light kept increasing, and that each generation of faithful students in turn was assisted in the light of truth, and profited by the knowledge of those of the preceding one as well as by the mistakes. We thus have emphasized the truth of progressive interpretation, which has always been God's method, particularly so since the Reformation. Those of the watchers living in the beginning of the Laodicean period are no exception to this general rule, even though the due time has come for a clear understanding of all the general features of the Divine Plan. Of this, more will be said when we come to consider the Laodicean message.

In the Didst of the Hour of Trial

Considering the Miller movement as one occurring during the closing years of the Philadelphian period, Mr. Russell observed and described its effects and noted that as a consequence of the great Church leaders' discarding the Bible, particularly the prophecies, "the people know very little about the Bible. Of course, their faith could not be much greater than their knowledge.

"As a result, the work of the Miller movement was a sort of separation, as between those who kept the Word of God with patience and those who lost their faith in His Word. This persistent, patient faith of the true saints of God is what we think is referred to here by keeping 'the word of my patience.' The general hour of temptation [referred to in the Philadelphia message], therefore, would not come upon them, but upon those who came after them — the Laodicean

Church. The Philadelphia Church, which had patiently passed through so severe a trial of their faith, would not be subjected to the later test.

" 'The hour of temptation' has come upon us now. This hour of temptation has been the Harvest time. In many respects it has tested the Lord's people, and has proved who are faithful to the Word of God and who are not faithful to it. Hence the majority of the professing Christians of the world — probably more than three-fourths have lost all faith in the Bible, and have fallen into the various false and delusive theories of our day — Evolution, Higher Criticism, Christian Science, Theosophy, Spiritism, New Thought, etc. They have fallen from faith, from loyalty to the Lord's Word. They are not able to stand in this 'evil day.' "

Since the above words were penned in 1915 and this remarkable writer ceased from his labors, other, and more severe tests have come; indeed, the test that finally comes to all is now on. It is that of holding fast, not only to the Truth, but, above all, that of "holding the head," and permitting no human teacher or system to come into the heart and take the place of the Great Teacher of the Church. Loyalty to Christ and his message is indeed the test; and faithfulness to him will just as surely mean that a large measure of his spirit will be exemplified in the life of every true disciple — the Philadelphian spirit of brotherly love.

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3:11).

It is of peculiar and solemn significance that the Savior in his message to Philadelphia announces the imminence of his Second Coming, that it is near at hand. The language, therefore, seems to say that when this period of the Church's history has been reached, she will have approached closely unto the end of the age, and it will then be a comparatively short time until the official Second Presence of Christ will be revealed on the earth, when he will gather all the faithful unto himself and establish his Kingdom in fulfillment of the many Divine promises.

Only one message will then remain to be delivered — that to Laodicea. In that message the Savior announces not that he will come soon, but that he has come: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." This clearly implies that his Second Advent will then be an accomplished fact. It is the steadfast conviction of many of the faithful watchers who have given the subject of time prophecy and of our Lord's Second Coming the most sober and careful consideration, that the Church has already merged from the Philadelphian period into that of Laodicea.

Philadelphia, located as it is in the successive order of the seven epistles between Sardis and Laodicea, both of which represent conditions existing in the rejected church systems of Romanism and Protestantism, seems to stand, with its blessed principles of brotherly love, in marked contrast with these two Churches, as picturing that movement in which the brotherhood of God's saints is being more clearly made manifest. As already noted, Philadelphia does not seem to represent any system or organization, but rather that movement of the Spirit, the object of which is to emphasize the oneness of all true believers as children of the one Father, having one Lord and Master, one faith, one baptism,

members of the one Body, united together by the one Spirit in the bond of peace. As there is not one single thing in Laodicea to commend, Philadelphian conditions in Laodicea must not be looked for in an organized state, but rather as a *condition* manifested by individual believers both inside and outside of the organized professions. It is very apparent from the teaching of other Scriptures that all the true and overcoming believers in the Laodicean period will not be found in one organization of their own. This seems apparent from the fact that every religious organization, as such, will at last be "found wanting" and will go down in the closing scenes of the "hour of trial that is to try those who dwell on the earth." Therefore, all attempts to accomplish such a binding together will of necessity fail. The true overcomers will be lovers and defenders of God's Word, confessors of everything that is comprehended in "His name," and free from human bondage. Beyond all this, they will recognize and fellowship and cooperate in service, so far as they are permitted, with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus they will be manifesting in its fullness the Philadelphian spirit of brotherly love. This latter state or condition has always described the "more than overcomers" of all ages, and will continue to describe them in the rejected Laodicean period, even until the end.

Though the Savior in his message to Philadelphia expresses hearty commendation, we must not gather from this that there were no unfavorable conditions with which this Church had to contend and which they were required to overcome. However we find in the message special emphasis is given to the need for overcoming in one particular direction. It is contained in the solemn and Divine warning of the Savior: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." The overcoming, then, is represented in *holding fast* the Philadelphian character of love — brotherly love. This is that which even now in Laodicea is trying, testing, proving, the hearts of those who claim to possess so much of Truth. Let the followers of Christ now living take heed, then, that they are found to be true Philadelphians, though they do not belong in the prophetic sense to that period, which is in the past. Whatever other tests there may be — and there are other tests — whatever more is required, the Philadelphian character, the spirit of brotherly love is the great test, the final test. This test is not that of loyalty to a system, to an organization, to a human agent, to a messenger, but loyalty to Christ, which will mean holding fast to the Word, to the name, and to the patience of Christ. It will be "not the word of even the leaders of God's raising up. The truth must ever commend the man, never the man the truth. One great danger is, lest, having begun with the former principle, we slip into the latter. Even the truth they [the divinely called leaders] teach is not truth received till it has been gotten at the Master's feet and in communion with himself — till you can hold it, not with the eyes shut, but with eyes open — till you can maintain it for truth against the very instrument used of God to give it you, if need be. 'If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.'

"Then, Hold Fast! When it is no longer a question if it be the truth, but only of its consequences. Hold fast: though those who have held it with you, or before

you, give it up; though it separate you from all else whomsoever; though it be worse dishonored by the evil of those who profess it; though it seem utterly useless to hope of any good from it: in the face of the world, in the face of the devil, in the face of the saints — 'hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown'!

"For many a crown has been lost, and many a crown will be lost, if the Lord should tarry. Yet he who will hold fast shall find Christ's arms underneath him, Christ's hands upon his hands. He shall not only keep, he shall be kept; in the might of Christ's victory he shall stand, and the crown given he shall cast before the Giver of it as a trophy of his own conquest, and the fruit of his grace."

The proper holding fast to the Word, the name, and the patience of Christ, will always be in the Philadelphian spirit, the spirit of love — love for those whom Christ specially loves, love for those for whom He laid down his life. "[Though] no one has seen God at any time, [yet] if we love each other God dwells in us; and His love has been perfected in us." (1 John 4:12). Therefore, "Let brotherly love continue."

Next we have the cheering promise to the overcomer: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."

The "Temple" in this passage refers to the antitypical Temple, the glorified Christ, Head and Body. The use of the pillar as a figure here seems to have reference to the purpose for which the two great pillars for the porch of Solomon's temple of old were used: the one was called Jachin, meaning "establisher"; the other Boaz, meaning "in which is strength." The Philadelphian, who has in the present time, "little strength," becomes in that great antitypical Temple a pillar of strength. The true Philadelphian describes, in fact, the final overcomers; Philadelphia itself, the company of such. Pillars are simply expressions of strength. The word is used in 1 Timothy 3:15 as descriptive of "the Church [house] of God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

"And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name."

Reference is doubtless made here to the custom prevalent in all ages of writing records and histories upon pillars or obelisks. During the long centuries of the past, great Babylon had been claiming to be this antitypical Temple, the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God; and thus the true significance of the name of the New Jerusalem, the name of my God, the temple of God, and its pillars, was hidden, except to a few, during these same long, dreary centuries; while a counterfeit, of Satan's manufacture, is so called, having no resemblance whatever to God's Temple and its pillars, or to the Holy City. His faithful ones then will be pillars of strength in that Temple. They have, all down the centuries, been despised and looked upon as merely negativing everything in the midst of the multitude of names claimed by the false church in this world. But at last, all the names worthy of being known are permanently engraved upon the true Philadelphian overcomers. They have gone forth to him without the camp, in this

life, but then, no more to go out, but fixed, established as pillars in God's great temple, through which the whole testimony and character of God, written as it were on these pillars, will be made known to the world.

One of the clearest, most edifying and soul-refreshing interpretations of this wonderful promise to the overcomer is that given by Mr. Barnes, who wrote in 1851. It is strengthening to the faith of the devout believer as he discovers how God, from time to time, has unfolded His Word to various servants (who lived and wrote in the Philadelphian period, particularly in its closing years), for the encouragement and upbuilding of his people. While we do not find that they had the full, clear light of the "morning," they had on some matters as clear a vision as those faithful ones who have testified and are testifying outside of the various systems of the Laodicean period. This was eminently true of this Philadelphian writer. We quote from his comment on these words of Christ addressed to the Philadelphian overcomers:

"The promised reward of faithfulness here is, that he who was victorious would be honored as if he were a pillar or column in the temple of God. Such a pillar or column was partly for ornament and partly for support, and the idea here is, that in that temple he would contribute to its beauty and the justness of its proportions, and would at the same time be honored as if he were a pillar which was necessary for the support of the temple. It is not uncommon in the New Testament to represent the Church as a temple, and Christians as a part of it. (See 1 Corinthians 3:16,17, 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16, 1 Peter 2:5.)

"And he shall go no more out. He shall be permanent as a part of that spiritual temple. The idea of 'going out' does not properly belong to a pillar, but the Speaker [Christ] here has in his mind the man, though represented as a column. The description of some parts would be applicable more directly to a pillar; in others more properly to a man. Compare John 6:37, 10:28,29, 1 John 2:19, for an illustration of the sentiment here. The main truth here is, that if we reach heaven, our happiness will be secure forever. We shall have the most absolute certainty that the welfare of the soul will no more be periled; that we shall never be in danger of falling into temptation; that no artful foe shall ever have power to alienate our affections from God; that we shall never die. Though we may change our place, and may roam from world to world, till we shall have surveyed all the wonders of creation, yet we shall never 'go out of the temple of God.' When we reach the heavenly world, our conflicts will be over; our doubts at an end. As soon as we cross the threshold, we shall be greeted with the assurance, 'he shall go no more out forever.' That is to be our eternal abode, and whatever of joy or felicity or glory that bright world can furnish, is to be ours. Happy moment when, emerging from a world of danger and of doubt, the soul shall settle down into the calmness and peace of that state where there is the assurance of God Himself that that world of bliss is to be its eternal abode.

"*And I wilt write upon him the name of my God*. Considered as a pillar or column in the temple. The name of God would be conspicuously recorded on it to show that he belonged to God. The allusion is to a public edifice on the columns of which the names of distinguished and honored persons were recorded; that

is, where there was a public testimonial of the respect in which one whose name was thus recorded was held. The honor thus conferred on him 'who should overcome,' would be as great *as if* the name of that God whom he served, and whose favor and friendship he enjoyed, were inscribed on him in some conspicuous manner. The meaning is that he would be known and recognized as belonging to God; the God of the Redeemer himself — indicated by the phrase, 'the name of my God.'

"And the name of the city of my God. That is, indicating that he belongs to that city, or that the New Jerusalem is the city of his habitation. The idea would seem to be, that in this world, and in all worlds wherever he goes and wherever he abides, he will be recognized as belonging to that holy city; as enjoying the rights and immunities of such a citizen.

"Which is New Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the place where the temple was reared, and where the worship of God was celebrated. It thus came to be synonymous with the Church — the dwelling place of God on earth.

"*Which cometh down out of heaven from my God*. Of course, this must be a figurative representation, but the idea is plain. It is (1) that the [glorified] Church is, in accordance with settled Scripture language, represented as a city [a government] — the abode of God on earth. (2) That this, instead of being built here, or having an earthly origin, has its origin in heaven. It is *as if* it had been constructed there, and then sent down to earth ready formed. The type, the form, the whole structure is heavenly. It is a departure from all proper laws of interpretation to explain this *literally*, as if a city should be actually let down from heaven; and equally so to infer from this passage and the others of similar import in this book, that a city will be literally reared for the residence of the saints. If the passage proves anything on either of these points, it is, that a great and splendid city, such as that described in chapter 21, will *literally* come down from heaven. But who can believe that? Such an interpretation, however, is by no means necessary. The comparison of the Church with a beautiful city, and the fact that it has its origin in heaven, is all that is fairly implied in the passage.

"And I will write upon him my new name. The *reward*, therefore, promised here is, that he who by persevering fidelity showed that he was a real friend of the Savior, would be honored with a permanent abode in the holy city of his habitation. In the Church redeemed and triumphant [symbolized by the New Jerusalem] he would have a perpetual dwelling, and wherever he should be, there would be given him sure pledges that he belonged to him, and was recognized as a citizen of the heavenly world. [We would say, sharers in the heavenly government itself.]"

We should hardly expect that this man of God, who may well be regarded as one of the light-bearers of the Philadelphian period, would understand the full nature of the reward of joint-heirship with the Redeemer in his Kingdom. There were those, however, who lived in the latter part of the Philadelphian period who did have clear views of the reigning with Christ. From the writings of some of these faithful ones we have already quoted, and will, in the interpretation

of some of the visions farther on in the book, have occasion to refer to more of them.

The Philadelphian message closes with the seven-times-repeated individual application contained in the words: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches." There seems to be some special significance in the fact that while Christ utters these words, the hearer is to give heed to what the "Spirit" saith. It would seem to be that only those who possess a large measure of the holy Spirit would be able either to understand or to heed Christ's words. That spirit will cause all to feel a dependence upon the Father; it is a submissive spirit to the Father's will — a prayerful spirit, a holy spirit, a meek and humble spirit, an uncompromising spirit, a loyal spirit, a self- sacrificing, cross bearing spirit. In the very many tests that will be applied to the overcomer, many of them will have to be met and decided by the kind of spirit manifested by those who bring the tests or cause them to come. For in some of the siftings and separations that come along doctrinal lines, there will be among the Lord's true children some possessing scarcely sufficient analytical ability to decide for themselves the correctness of some of the doctrinal teaching advanced by professed teachers, who will be enabled to detect error and to decide where they stand *only by the spirit manifested*.

Chapter Nine

Christ's Message to Laodicea

(Revelation 3:13-22)

"And unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write" (Revelation 3:14).

With the message to the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans, we come to the close of these solemn epistles of Christ to his professed Church. Applying the messages prophetically, as representing the particular characteristics possessed by the Church in seven periods of the Gospel Age, there can be no question that the message to this Church and its star or teacher describes a condition existing in the very closing period of church history. It is very generally agreed by Pre-millennial expositors who have written since 1880, that we have now reached the period of Laodicea.

The Church of the Last Times

Joseph Seiss, in a series of lectures on the Revelation given about 1865, wrote as follows: "There is yet one other phase [of church history]. Shall I say that it is yet future, or that we have already entered it? Here are still *some* whom Christ loves, mostly suffering ones, under the rebukes and chastenings of their gracious Lord (verse 19). But the body of Christendom is quite apostate, with Christ outside, and knocking for admission into his own professed Church. ... Can any man scrutinize narrowly the professed Church of our day, and say that we have not reached the Laodicean age? Is it not the voice of this Christendom of ours which says, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing'? And is it not equally the fact that this selfsame Christendom of ours is 'the wretched, and the pitiable, and poor, and blind, and naked'? (verse 17). Did the '*Mene, Mene, tekel upharsin'* of Belshazzar's palace better fit the ancient heathen, than this modern Christian Babylon? Men talk of it as destined to glorious triumph. They proclaim it commissioned of God to convert the world. They point to its onward march as about to take possession of the race for Christ and heaven. But the '*Amen'* hath spoken, *'the faithful and true Witness'* hath given his word; 'I am about to spue it out of my mouth.' "

Another, writing a half century after these words were spoken, in 1916, said in this connection: "The message to the Laodicean stage of the Church pictures the nominal Church of today as our Lord sees her. ... Unknown to the Laodicean Church, our Lord has returned. He has stood at the door and knocked. Had they been awake, they would have heard. Our Lord clearly foretold that he would come as a thief; but he did not tell at what hour."

The fact that our Lord would be really although invisibly present at some time during the Laodicean period, was plainly stated by messengers of the Philadelphian period, amongst whom was Mr. Seiss, as we read:

"To the Philadelphians it is announced, as a subject of comfort and hope, that Christ *shall quickly come*. And to the Laodiceans he is represented as *already present*, knocking at the door, prepared to bless those ready to receive him, but to eject with loathing the lukewarm masses who fail in fervency and timely repentance. Laodicea thinks itself all it ought to be, and appropriates to itself all Divine favor and blessedness; and yet, the very Lord in whom it professes to trust is denied a place in it and is represented as barred out, where he stands and knocks as his last gracious appeal before giving over the infamous Babylon to judgments which are ready to sweep it from the earth. And with reference to the loathsome Laodiceans, he represents himself as already present, appealing to them for the last time, and ready to spue them out of his mouth."

It was in full harmony with the foregoing that Mr. Russell expressed as his conviction that the Second Presence of Christ began near the close of the Nineteenth Century. Referring to this, he says that since that time "we have been living in the Parousia of the Son of Man. Is there anything to corroborate this? Yes. In the first place, we look for the Lord's dealing with his people, the Church. We should expect that at the time of our Lord's coming his people would hear his 'knock' [Revelation 3:20] — the knock of the prophecies, and whoever would open his heart and receive the things in a consecrated attitude of mind the Lord would gird himself as a Servant and would come forth and serve him."

A Second Decline in Christianity

However, it would seem that we may not be positive in fixing an *exact* date when the periods represented by these messages begin and end; and this is especially true of the last, the Laodicean period. The fact as to when the period is reached, is made known to watchful Christians only; and this by the fulfillment of the *events* predicted. *Exact* dates of the ending of chronological periods may not be known so positively. This seems to have been the thought of the writer just quoted:

"We may not read the *time* features with the same absolute certainty as *doctrinal* features; for time is not so definitely stated in the Scriptures as are the basic doctrines. We are still walking by faith and not by sight. ... If in the Lord's providence the time should come *twenty-five years later*, then that would be our will." The view here set forth is the one this writer expressed regarding the different epochs referred to in these messages, as we read: "We are not to think of the different epochs represented in the messages to the various Churches as being exact periods, as though there was a particular instant of beginning and a particular instant of closing. Rather we are to understand each to be a *general period*, which *laps over* the one on the other."

Two facts seem to stand out prominently in the teaching of the two above quoted expositors — one with reference to the Philadelphian period, and

the other concerning the Laodicean. The first is that at some time when the Laodicean conditions would be prevailing, the Second Advent would take place; and there is implied the fact that when this event had occurred, it would be known only to a comparatively few. The second is that Laodicea seems to represent or picture what we see all around us — the failure and apostasy of Protestant Christianity — the same condition that the reformers in Sardis saw, just previous to the Sixteenth Century in Roman Catholic Christianity. In other words, Laodicea seems to depict the complete failure of Christendom a second time; the first time being that of Romish Christianity just before the Reformation and necessitating what might be called a new beginning. It is an indisputable fact that Protestantism sprang out of the bosom of Romanism, as Philadelphia conditions out of the bosom of Protestantism. Other visions of the Revelation that apply to the close of this latter period, which will be considered later on, depict a great, a general falling of stars (teachers) from heavenly to earthly things, and the shaking of the powers of the heavens, the ecclesiastical systems. Laodicea and its messenger seem to represent the culmination of this — that is, both the clergy class (stars) and laity class, (lampstands, churches), fallen from grace, judged, and found wanting. While there were some few notable exceptions in both these classes, and still are even at the present time, this, however, seems to be the general picture presented and described in the Laodicean message.

In our consideration of the preceding messages it has been our thought, as will have been noted, that these stars or messengers *apply to a ministering class of teachers*, rather than to seven particular individuals; and that the words of commendation, as well as the rebukes and reproofs, are as applicable to the stars as to the Churches themselves. Accepting, after careful examination, the translation of our Common Version (which is, in fact, the same as that of most all translations), that the word, "unto," or "to," and not "by," the angel of the Church of Ephesus, Smyrna, etc., is correct, we cannot see how, in applying these messages to different periods in church history, seven single individuals can be represented as stars — one for each period. It does not seem either reasonable or Scriptural to suppose that in the long periods represented by the different messages, some of them covering centuries, that the Lord would select and make use of but one individual only, unto whom all the others, living centuries after their death, were to look as their leader. For instance, in the Philadelphian period it cannot be questioned that Luther was a special "star," represented symbolically as held in the Savior's right hand as long and in proportion as he was faithful to the light given, and that his special work was to *begin* (not complete) the cleansing of the antitypical Sanctuary, the Church; so were Reuchlin, Zwingli, and Calvin, each doing his part in this divinely appointed work. Later on came Wesley and others, also accomplishing other needed reforms. Coming down to near the close of the Philadelphian period (about 1829 and on), we have Joseph Wolff and William Miller, leading stars in the predicted Second Advent movement. It was in connection with the reproach associated with this latter movement that very many stars, teachers, were led astray, fell from heaven, and were caused to despise the prophecies; and others to gradually

reject the Scriptures themselves as divinely authoritative. A few faithful Philadelphians, however, continued to hold fast to, and study the prophecies, thereby obtaining clearer light on the Second Advent and its associated events. All these, as well as those from Luther's day down to about 1880, contributed, under God, their share in causing the path of the just ones to shine more and more unto the perfect day. Does it not seem reasonable and Scriptural to conclude that all these *as a class* were represented in the *one star* or messenger of the Philadelphian period? Again, as having an important bearing on the interpretation of some, that seven individuals are represented and that these were all faithful servants, it should also be kept in mind that the words, Unto, or To the angel of the Church at Ephesus, Smyrna, etc., positively indicate that the condition of the messengers, as well as the Churches, are described, and both were held responsible for the conditions existing. It is therefore quite in order that Mr. Seiss remarks: "I gather from the delinquencies, which are subsequently laid to their charge, that these angels are but men of like passions with ourselves, nothing more or less than ministers of the Churches named, indeed, in the wide sense, of all churches in every age."

Another noted commentator, Josiah Litch, has truthfully said:

"The personal pronouns, *thou* and *thy*, addressed to the pastor, can never be made to refer to a church for an antecedent. The works expressed are [more particularly] the *works of the pastor*, not of the church. It is in this way that Christ indicates his intense personal interest in and superintendence over those whom he had placed as shepherds over the churches which by his Divine providence have been organized on earth. Is it not another way of saying, 'I hold thee in my right hand'? 'I watch thy acts and mark thy words, and hold thee responsible for the good or injury those words or acts do to my cause.' So what follows is in reference to the administrative work of a pastor. 'Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.' So far his pastoral work had the Divine approval, and he has still words of praise for him. 'And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.' These qualities all meet with his unfeigned approbation as being just what should distinguish the labors of a faithful pastor; but here the scene changes, and he is brought face to face with his faults, as seen by his Lord. 'Nevertheless, I have this against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' " (*Harmony of Daniel and the Apocalypse*).

Christ Rebukes the Ministry of Laodicea

That all but two of these messengers were rebuked by the Savior, indeed, were held equally, and probably more responsible than the individuals of the Churches for the wrong conditions existing, is plainly taught in that the words of Christ are addressed to them. We read, "*Unto the angel* of the Church at Ephesus write; I know thy works. ... I have this against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." We inquire, Whose works did the Savior know? Was it not the angel's or messenger's? Who was it that the Master said had left his first love? Is it proper to apply these words alone to the Church, leaving the messenger without

rebuke? It would hardly seem so. All the other Apostles were dead when St. John was told to write and send these epistles to the messenger at Ephesus. It will be well that we bear in mind that the condition described by Ephesus which was rebuked by the Savior, applied to the very close of the Apostolic age — indeed, to the very time St. John is commissioned to write these messages; and, of course, St. John at this time could not be one of these unfaithful stars, being an exile on the desert isle of Patmos; and this, of course, was true of those who were dead. There doubtless were others, a few, to whom the words of rebuke would not apply, just as there have been in every period. The conditions described were general, both as to rebukes and commendation.

There can be no question, however, that the Church is also addressed in the message, but this is seen, not in the words we have quoted, but rather in the words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches," as well as in the fact that St. John was instructed to write to them. It therefore seems most conclusive that the Lord's words are addressed and apply, not only to the Churches, but to the angels or messengers as well; and as we carefully examine the messages, it cannot but be noticed that the Savior's words imply that the angel addressed is equally and more guilty of the things charged, and is held responsible with the Churches for the wrong conditions existing in them. Both the angel and the Church of Pergamos are, as we have noted, held responsible for not testifying against the doctrines of the "Nicolaitans" and of "Balaam." It is both the angel and the Church that are rebuked for suffering that woman Jezebel to seduce God's servants, etc., in Thyatira.

A careful examination of the address to Laodicea will discover that it is a rejected, indeed, an apostate condition, that is described by Laodicea and its angel. Does it not seem the more reasonable to interpret this message as describing the utter rejection of both a *Laodicean ministry and laity* — indeed, the whole system of Protestant Christendom? However, there are a few exceptions — those who are in Babylon and who wait until they hear the voice, "Come out of her, my people."

Stars Held in His Right Hand

The one and only support that could reasonably be advanced for interpreting these stars to represent seven individuals is that the stars or messengers are, in the vision of chapter 1, held in the right hand of the Savior. Concerning this symbol, however, we think that all will agree that the fact of their being held in the right hand of the Savior does not prove that the seven stars or angels represent seven individuals; because all through the Revelation, angels do not represent single individuals, but *movements* comprehending *many individuals:* neither would it imply that they are infallible in their teachings, as were the Apostles. The Scriptures do not encourage the Lord's people to look for infallible expounders of the Word. This was what led to Papal and other usurpations of Divine authority, as all students of the Bible know.

What then is the meaning of this symbol of the seven stars being held in the Savior's right hand? We answer: Any interpretation must be in perfect harmony

with all other Scriptures relating to this matter. But what other interpretation can be given this symbol that harmonizes all the Scriptures concerning Christ's dealing with uninspired, fallible teachers, both faithful and unfaithful? May it not be that the intention of Christ in this symbol was to call to the mind of believers generally, an attribute of his which needs ever to be kept in mind? that is, that he had the power to *continue* if faithful, or *remove*, if unfaithful, these ministering servants of his, just as he had the power to remove the lampstands (Churches) themselves, when they proved unfaithful? This seems to be in harmony with all Scripture, and when held to, causes his people to hold the headship of Christ in its proper place, and to test the teachings of all by the infallible Word itself instead of by uninspired teachers' interpretations. In other words, the teaching of the symbol seems to be that of the tender care manifested by Christ in the interest of his faithful people by raising up among them true teachers, pastors, and protecting such in their ministry; or this care may be manifested by the removal of unfaithful teachers, pastors, or by the removal of his trusting, faithful people from the evil influence of unfaithful teachers, pastors.

Coming now more directly to consider the words of the message to the angel of the Laodiceans, we find that as in the cases of the other Churches, the stars or teachers serving them are equally, if not more responsible for the conditions prevailing; that in a general sense, *neither the messengers nor Churches* are any longer recognized as his mouthpieces; and that they were about to be spued out of his mouth — rejected, cast off from favor. All this is taught in the words of Christ: *"Unto the angel* of the Church of the Laodiceans write: I know thy [the messenger's] works, that *thou* art neither cold nor hot. So then because *thou* art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue *thee* out of my mouth." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

As throughout the preceding six stages of the Church's history, so in the seventh — that of Laodicea — God has provided those who would minister to the needs of the true saints. Amongst these there have been some whose usefulness has been specially recognized. But these specially called ones, while faithful even unto death, are not to be regarded as infallible in all their utterances. None of these as individuals are specially referred to in the message as the "angel" of Laodicea. They are mentioned, as all of his other faithful ones are mentioned, in the words: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Such faithful ones are not Laodiceans, although living in the Laodicean period. It would be proper to call them Philadelphians, in the sense that they possess the Philadelphian spirit of brotherly love — the spirit that has always, and will always characterize the overcomers. Such faithful servants, and those who emulate their example in following Christ, while *in* the Laodicean period, are not *of* Laodicea; even as they are in the world, though not of the world.

If the Common Version rendering, "the Church of the Laodiceans," instead of "the Church of Laodicea," is the correct one (and it is supported by many manuscripts), then we have a further support for applying the messenger of the Laodiceans to a *rejected clergy class* instead of a faithful minister outside of Laodicea. Furthermore, there seems also to be another special significance

attached to the words as distinguished from the other messages, as noted by learned commentators of the Philadelphian period who accepted this translation as correct. The Laodicean Church is not *the* Church *in* Laodicea, as in the other cases, but the Church *of* the Laodiceans. One has said that "it would seem as if the Church in its proper character of an elect company, had quite faded from view, and the world had now become the Church. The confessing body is hardly distinguished from any other *body*." The derivation of the word Laodicea, of itself supports this thought. There is a very general agreement as to the significance of the word. Mr. Russell gives the meaning as that of "a tried or judged people." Mr. Taylor, another writer on the Revelation, defines the word as "the people judging." Mr. Seiss thus refers to the significance of the word Laodiceans: "It is Laodicean, i.e., conformed to the popular judgment and will — the extreme opposite of Nicolaitan. Instead of a Church of domineering clericals, it is the Church of the domineering mob, in which nothing may be safely preached, except that which the people are pleased to hear in which the teachings of the pulpit are fashioned to the tastes of the pew, and the feelings of the individual override the enactments of legitimate authority."

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:14-16).

We learn from history that the name Laodicea was given to the city where the last of the seven Churches was located, by Antiochus II, after his enlargement of it, in honor of his wife Laodice, and that it is a compound of two words — *laos*, "people," and *dike*. Mr. Grant observes: " 'Dike' is given by the dictionaries as having three meanings closely connected: (1) of 'manner, custom, usage'; (2) of 'right'; (3) of 'requirement,' and so 'vengeance,' punitive justice. We have thus three possible meanings: 'custom of the people,' 'people's right,' 'judgment of the people.' And these three things have equally plain and solemn connection with one another." The writer next goes on to make application of these three related meanings of the word to the different features contained in this message to the Laodiceans. That they fit perfectly the general conditions existing in Protestant Christianity today, can hardly be questioned, "for," he proceeds to say, "it is indeed the 'people's custom' that is here [in this Laodicean message] unfolded. If under Popery it is rather the usurpation of the leaders that is the question, in Protestantism, with its open Bible, the people [who profess Christianity] are tested as never before." This responsibility of the people is on account of the wonderful privileges of our day.

In the early centuries of the Gospel Age, the art of printing was unknown, and the people of the world as well as the people of God were necessarily dependent upon the slow, toilsome labor of copyists for the multiplication of copies of the Word of God. To possess a copy of the entire canon of the Sacred Writings was a rare, an extremely rare privilege. When, in the Sixteenth Century, the Reformation was instituted, the printing press, although crude and deficient when

compared with that of the present time, had come into use. This made possible the greatest factor in the Reformation movement — the scattering of various portions of the Bible. Since the opening years of the Nineteenth Century, Bibles have become plentiful, and are found in nearly every home today. The responsibilities that are associated with a knowledge of its contents have been brought home, as never before, to the professed people of God — indeed to all people. It is true, men have been, and indeed still are ignorant of the teachings of the Bible, but it is now more assuredly a willing ignorance. They may, as they have in the past, seek to place the responsibility of their ignorance upon the fallen stars, the blind leaders, but their doing so has now necessarily another character from what it had in former days. As this noted writer has said:

"Hence it is the *people* who are now being manifested — their way which is being made apparent; and judgment, however delayed, must at last follow with proportional energy. Thus two significant applications of this word 'Laodicea' are made evident.

"But again, and connected with this, there is a feature of the last days which Scripture puts prominently forward — the self assertion which indeed on man's part has never been lacking, but which now pervades, in a manner not before seen, the masses of the population. That Protestantism has favored this, is one of the reproaches of the Romanists. And it is undeniably true that in one sense it has favored it. The breaking of ecclesiastical yokes — the yoke of a tyranny more prostrating than any other — with that awakening of the mind of man which is ever found where the light of the Word of God has penetrated — has produced a state of things in which, if Christ's yoke be not accepted, man's will will assuredly assert itself [even over the false guides] as never before. And so it has proved; and so Scripture long before declared that it would be. 'Laodicea,' in its ... sense, as 'people's right,' has become, morally, spiritually, and politically also, the watchword of the times. On the one hand, there is an immense march of civilization, a predicted running to and fro, and increase of knowledge; on the other, an uprise of what threatens [so-called Christian] civilization, and is ominous of an approaching end of the whole state.

" 'People's right!' The rights of the masses! and which the masses themselves mean to define and pronounce upon. ... Rights! what scale have you of rights? Listen to the voices from a lower level than you desire, which will interpret for you, and enforce their interpretation — socialism, communism, nihilism — dread names, not merely for the monarch, but for the man of property also, and for the law abiding citizen. ... This Laodicea of politics is destined to be the rock upon which all governmental reform will end in anarchy and chaos. He who can read the great typical book of nature may read the Scriptural presages upon a scroll written with lamentation and mourning and woe: 'And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth, distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken' (Luke 21:25,26).

"But the removal of the things that can be shaken will only make way for a Kingdom, not such as they anticipate, absolute [however it will be] beyond all the tyrannies of old, a 'rod of iron,' which shall break as potsherds all the opposing powers of man, yet be the Shepherd's rod under which the poor of the flock will lie down at last in peace, and none shall make them afraid."

How refreshing to turn from the consideration of present conditions to a contemplation of that coming rule such as the world has never seen! Hear the Prophet concerning that glorious time:

"He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him" (Psalms 72:2-4,7,8,11).

In considering this Laodicean message, it is impossible to separate political from ecclesiastical conditions — the world and the Church are so closely allied, so mingled together. As a matter of fact, "people's right," which is one phase of Laodicea, has become in ecclesiastical matters as well as political, the watchword of the times. The masses of the people are rising up and claiming their rights in ecclesiastical matters as never before. It should be remembered, however, that while the laity may dispossess the clergy, and dominion pass from one to the other, it will do this without reverting to the hands in which it belongs. Christ is the one Master, not clergy and not people. Ministers are indeed servants, but not servants of men, as the Apostle so emphatically asserts. "Ye are bought with a price; be ye not the servants of men: if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." As one has truthfully said: "Christ needs to be in his true place — a thing which so marks Philadelphia, but from which Laodicea excludes him as does Thyatira. Bring Christ in, and the ministers are his servants. Bring Christ in, and the people are his people. his service, on the part of all alike, is true and equal freedom at once to all."

We now consider the particular, the special marks pointed out by the Savior which distinguish the Laodicean message from all the others and describe so vividly the condition of Protestant Christianity, both clergy and laity today.

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (verse 14).

The word *Amen* means true, certain, faithful. Our Lord announcing himself as the Amen, seems to signify that he was the one who was true, and whose word could be depended upon. The thought seems to be that although both the clergy and the Church of the Laodiceans had proved themselves so untrue, so unworthy of representing him, he was the same, and his words both of promise and of threat would be carried out. The expression, "the faithful and true witness," is evidently designed to give emphasis to that which is implied in the word *Amen*.

The significance also seems to be that he is a witness for God and can approve of nothing which the God of truth would not approve.

The name or title, "the beginning of the creation of God," is a very important one as bearing on the rank or dignity of the Savior. It has been variously interpreted. Some have applied it in the sense that He is the author of all things. Mr. Barnes is authority for saying that the word translated "beginning" is not in accordance with the thought of authorship, but that it has reference, rather, to the commencement of a thing, denoting properly either primacy in rank or primacy in time. This author applies it to primacy in rank, and his words to this effect are:

"He is 'the beginning of the creation of God,' in the sense that he is the head or prince of the creation; that is, that he presides over it so far as the purposes of redemption are to be accomplished, and so far as necessary for those purposes. This is (a) in accordance with the meaning of the word, Luke 12:11 [where the word *beginning* is translated *magistrates*]; 20:20 [where the word is translated power], *et al ut supra*, and (b) in accordance with the uniform statements respecting the Redeemer, that 'all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth' (Matthew 28:18); that God has 'given him power over all flesh' (John 17:2); that all things are 'put under his feet' (Hebrews 2:8, 1 Corinthians 15:27); that he is exalted over all things (Ephesians 1:20-22). Having this rank, it was proper that he should speak with authority to the [messenger, pastor and] Church at Laodicea."

Other writers apply the expression to the New Creation, as beginning with Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church, when he was raised from the dead, the Son of God with power. The interpretation, however, which seems the most reasonable, and harmonizes all the Scriptures referring to Christ's dignity and honor, is that he was the only begotten Son, the first and only direct creation of God the Father: "Note also that our Lord (referring to his own origin), declares himself to be, 'The faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.' "

The Savior continues to address the Church and the messenger of the Laodiceans, in the words: "I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot" (verse 15). This expression is, of course, figurative. To be "cold," in the sense here suggested, would imply a condition where there was no pretension of religion. To be "hot" denotes the very opposite — a state of fervency, warm and zealous in the love and service of the Master. The state or condition reproved here is that of a profession of Christ with no warm-hearted love and service which he desired and had a right to expect of those who professed to be his ministers, his followers. Lukewarmness is the word in the next verse. "I would that thou wert either cold or hot" is used to express this condition. The meaning is that Christ would prefer no profession at all to one that was of a hypocritical character, where there was no glow of warm affection. The reason is most obvious. Evidently a cold state is preferable to Christ than that of lukewarmness. The cold, non-professing unbeliever represents a more honest condition. He could not be specially responsible in his ignorance and would not

therefore be blameworthy to the extent of the one who had some enlightenment and professed to be a follower of Christ, but was not living up to his profession. It would be far better to be even antagonistic to Christ, than to make a profession to be his ministers, his followers, to make vows of consecration, and then manifest indifference in fulfilling them. On the part of the non- professor, there is no concealment, no pretense. The one is a condition of either being deceived or of insincerity, if not hypocrisy. The other is generally, at least, honest. Honesty is one quality absolutely necessary to become a true disciple and have the Word of God take root, as Christ taught in parable: "But that on the good ground are they, which, in an honest and good heart, having heard [understood] the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15).

It has been truly said of insincere ones or hypocrites: "Of a man who is false to his engagements; who makes professions and promises never to be realized, we can make nothing. There is essential meanness in such a character, and there is nothing in it which we can respect. But, in the character of the man who is openly and avowedly opposed to anything; who takes his stand, and is earnest and zealous in his course, though it be wrong, there are traits which may be, under a better direction, elements of true greatness and magnanimity. In the character of Saul of Tarsus, there were always the elements of true greatness; in that of Judas Iscariot, there were never. The one was capable of becoming one of the noblest men that has ever lived on the earth; the other, even under the personal teaching of the Redeemer for years, was nothing but a traitor — a man of essential meanness. ... The most hopeless of all persons, in regard to salvation, are those who are [profess to be] members of the Church without any true religion; who have made a profession without any evidence of personal piety; who are content with a name to live. This is so, because (a) the essential character of any one who will allow himself to do this, is eminently unfavorable to true religion. There is a lack of that thorough honesty and sincerity which is so necessary for true conversion to God. He who is content to profess to be what he really is not, is not a man on whom the truths of Christianity are likely to make an impression. (b) Such a man never applies the truth to himself. Truth that is addressed to impenitent sinners, he does not apply to himself, of course, for he does not rank himself in that class of persons. Truths addressed to hypocrites, he *will not* apply to himself, for no one, however insincere and hollow he may be, chooses to act on the presumption that he is himself a hypocrite, or so as to leave others to suppose that he regards himself as such. The means of grace adapted to save a sinner, as such, he will not use, for he is [professedly] in the Church, and, chooses to regard himself as safe. Efforts made to reclaim him he will resist, for he will regard it as proof of a meddlesome spirit, and an uncharitable judging in others, if they consider him to be anything different from what he professes to be. What right have they to go back of his profession, and assume that he is insincere? As a consequence, there are probably fewer persons by far converted of those who come into the Church without any religion, than of any other class of persons of similar number, and the most hopeless of all conditions, in respect to conversion and salvation, is when one enters the [professed] Church deceived. (c) It may be presumed that,

for these reasons, God himself will make less direct effort to convert and save such persons. As there are fewer appeals that can be brought to bear on them; as there is less in their character that is noble and that can be depended on in promoting the salvation of a soul; and as there is special guilt in hypocrisy, it may be presumed that God will more frequently leave such persons to their chosen course, than He will those who make no professions of religion. Compare Psalms 109:17,18, Jeremiah 7:16, 11:14, 14:11, Isaiah 1:15, Hosea 4:17."

It would not be proper nor correct to say that all those who profess Christ in and of Laodicea are hypocrites, although from all the facts and evidences, the number of such must be considerable. There are varying degrees of hypocrisy, however, in Christendom. Some know more, and are more guilty; many are deceived; and it would be our thought that a goodly number are to a considerable extent sincere believers, but have never come to understand the requirements of discipleship, never possessed the qualifications necessary to understand those requirements, and therefore they could not possibly be warm in affection for Christ as a person, or zealous in his cause. Nevertheless the general condition described by the Savior here is that of lukewarmness — that of profession without possession; and as the appointed time for judging is come, such are spued out of his mouth. Another writer better expresses the meaning of lukewarmness as used in this message:

"It is lukewarm — nothing decided — partly hot and partly cold — divided between Christ and the world — not willing to give up pretension and claim to the heavenly, and yet clinging close to the earthly — having too much conscience to cast off the name of Christ, and too much love for the world to take a firm and honest stand entirely on his side. There is much religiousness, but very little religion; much sentiment, but very little of life to correspond; much profession, but very little faith."

In the Savior's words, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," we have the Laodicean spirit of pride and boastfulness described. One of the many evidences of a loss or lack of spirituality and of character likeness to Christ, on the part of those who continue to profess his Name, is that of a spirit of pride and boastfulness. This is manifested on the part of religious leaders and organizations today in their eagerness to give statistics, to advertise their doings. Meetings and conferences are convened for this purpose rather than for ministering to the people the Word of God. In not a few cases, the caucuses of political gatherings are mild indeed as compared with some of the methods of the professed followers of Christ in the conduct of business matters of the Church. In Laodicea most of the attention is given to the externals of Christian life, and to securing the approval and applause of the world. The principal cause of all this is that the conscience is not sensitive and tender before the Lord; the life of faith and trust has never been entered upon; and the heart, the affections, has never been occupied with a personal Christ. The writer last quoted above, who may be considered to be a Philadelphian believer, but who lived over into the Laodicean age, made application of

this message to present conditions of the professed Church, and very truthfully said, "It is self-satisfied, boastful, and empty. Having come down to the world's tastes, and gained the world's praise and patronage, the Laodiceans think they are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. Such splendid churches, and influential and intelligent congregations, and learned and agreeable preachers! Such admirable worship and music! Such excellently manned and endowed institutions! So many missionaries in the field! So much given for magnificent charities! Such an array in all the attributes of greatness and power! What more can be wanted? And will it answer to say that all this is not largely and characteristically the state of things at this hour?"

Let the following clear statement be carefully considered:

"The Scriptures draw to our attention the fact that the nominal Church of this present time, symbolical Laodicea (Revelation 3:17,18), claims also to be very rich. 'Thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.' Alas! this seems to be the prevalent condition of nominal churchianity on every hand. Only the few in her who are Israelites indeed, and who have not yet heard and obeyed the voice speaking in this harvest-time, and saying, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues' — only these very few know of the true riches; the remainder are deceiving themselves with a counterfeit wealth. They look with pride upon their numbers, and count them by millions: they rejoice in this wealth of numbers, not realizing that nearly all are 'tares,' not begotten by the good Word of the Kingdom: indeed very few of them know anything about the Kingdom at all, not being begotten of the Truth, but begotten of error" (C. T. Russell).

The Savior's words, "Thou art wretched," do not denote that those thus rebuked are actually conscious of that condition. The words refer to the condition itself, rather than the consciousness of it. The word "miserable," as here used, means a pitiable state, rather than one actually felt to be so. The word "poor" refers, of course, to their spiritual state: they are altogether lacking in those graces which are always the fruit of Christ's spirit. They are "blind" — blind to their true condition, blind to the signs of the times, blind to what constitutes true Christianity, and blind to the fact that their judgment is impending. They are represented as "naked" — not only void of what constitutes true righteousness in God's sight, but without the robe, the merit of Christ's righteousness, which alone is secured through faith in his ransom-sacrifice, faith in his precious blood shed once for all. Thus the writer last quoted continues:

"And so the Lord declares to Laodicea, 'Thou knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.' She is poor, in that she has so little of the Master's spirit, so little of the Truth and the spirit of the Truth. ... Laodicea is blind, in that the god of this world hath blinded her perceptions of God's character and plan and is leading her further and further away from confidence in His Word, under the guidance of her chosen and well-paid lords and masters, the clergy [fallen stars], who under the name of Higher Criticism and Evolution are rapidly taking away from her every good possession and thing which would be estimable in the sight of the Lord, and who are thus denuding

her, making her naked, taking from her the robe of Christ's righteousness, and leading her to trust, not in the precious blood of the redemption, the death of the Redeemer, but to trust in an evolutionary process which needs no Savior, which denies an atonement for sin, yea, denies that there is, or has been any sin to make atonement for; and claims, on the contrary that humanity has ground for pride in its own progress, which will be quite sufficient eventually to bring to them every desired blessing, without any Savior, and without his Kingdom, which God has promised as the hope of the groaning creation."

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. ... Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:18-20).

There is an evident reference in these words to the boastful claims which he said would be made by the Laodicean ministry and Church of possessing riches and having need of nothing. One has very appropriately expressed the thought suggested in this symbolic language: "So wealthy are they [the Laodiceans] that the Lord will not talk of *giving* to them. And indeed it would be a happy thing for them to exchange their riches ... false glitter for true gold, 'gold tried in the fire' — a frequent symbol ... in Scripture to represent what is Divine."

Gold, being the most valuable of metals, is used in the Scriptures to denote the most valuable of heavenly, spiritual things. In a general way it might be said truthfully that gold is emblematic of the religion of Jesus Christ, which makes the possessor of it rich indeed, even as it is enjoyed in the present life. Concerning this Mr. Russell points out: "The heavenly riches are to be attained in the resurrection, when the Millennial Kingdom shall be inaugurated, and the faithful overcomers, by their resurrection change, shall be richly endowed with all the good things which God hath in reservation for them that love him, and who prove their love by present-time devotions, sacrifices, etc. But, we should notice that there is a foretaste of these heavenly blessings granted to the faithful in this present life; these heavenly riches granted us now the Apostle speaks of as 'riches of grace' (Ephesians 1:7,18), and these grace-riches include faith, hope, and joy in the holy Spirit, and an ability to see and appreciate with the eye of faith things actually not seen as yet. The Apostle declares that these treasures of wisdom and grace — knowledge of Divine good things in reservation, and the fellowship with God which permits us to anticipate and enjoy those blessings in a measure now, are all *hidden in Christ,* 'in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' (Colossians 2:3). We must come into Christ, as members of his Body, the true Church, by sacrifice, before we can have the opportunity of even searching for these hidden treasures, or of finding any of them. And then, as we progress faithfully in our sacrificial service, as priests, walking in the footsteps of the great High Priest; we find more and more of these true riches of grace day by day, and year by year, as we progress.

"Moreover, another kind of riches comes to the Royal Priesthood, faithful in performing their self- sacrifices. These are riches of the holy Spirit. They find as they sacrifice the selfish interests, earthly aims, earthly projects, etc., in the service of the Lord and the Truth, that they grow more and more in likeness to their heavenly Father and to their Lord, and that the fruits of the holy Spirit abound in them more and more — meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love.

"Furthermore, they find a peace and a joy to which formerly they were strangers, and which the world can neither give nor take away. This peace and joy come through a realization that having given their all to the Lord, all of His exceeding great and precious promises belong to them. Now their faith can firmly grasp these promises as their own; they can realize that as their justification and call were not of themselves, but of the Lord, so all their course of sacrifice, in harmony with that call, is under Divine supervision and care, and sure to work out blessings; and that to whatever extent they shall work out earthly hardships, trials and sufferings, God will proportionately make them to work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the Kingdom (2 Corinthians 4:17)."

"And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." The reference here is to a medicament that was used for weak eyes. It was compounded of various substances supposed to possess a healing quality. The lesson is very manifest, and is in respect to the spiritual sight. That which Christ would furnish them would produce the same effect on their apprehension of Divine things as would the medicament prepared for the physical vision. The thought conveyed is that those who were blind to the true character of God and the beauties of salvation would have their eyes opened to see the wonderful works and plan of the Divine One. The above writer continues:

"Laodicea is indeed counseled to buy the true gold, the true riches of the Lord, and to use eyesalve that she may see, and to put on the garment of Christ's righteousness, that she may not be put to shame; but we have no intimation in the Scripture that she will give any heed to this counsel; on the contrary, the intimation is that more and more she will become a Babel of confusion, and that she will go down with the political and financial systems of this present age, in the great time of trouble with which this age will terminate, and which will fit and prepare mankind for the Kingdom of God's dear Son, and its reign of righteousness. 'When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness' (Isaiah 26:9)."

The words, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten," are evidently spoken of Christ's own followers, and not of the rejected, cast off Laodiceans. These words are in harmony with all Scripture referring to the Lord's dealings with such. One Scripture sums up His method of dealing in the words, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6). We are of course to understand this on the supposition that His children need chastening. It is, however, very doubtful if there has ever been any of God's children who has not at some time needed the rod of correction. Indeed, it is a proof,

an evidence of His love, if when His children go astray, and as referred to in this particular instance, partake in any measure of this Laodicean spirit which characterizes the professing Church in general of these days, He reminds them of it by permitting certain trials and difficulties to come upon them as corrections and reproofs. Thus do earthly fathers call back their children who are disobedient; and there is no greater evidence of a father's love than when with sorrow and pain to himself he administers such punishment as will call his child back from the path of disobedience.

The words of the Savior which follow, "Be zealous therefore, and repent," seem also to be addressed to such of his followers who have become to some extent, at least, lukewarm, and who may have partaken in a measure unconsciously of the spirit of pride and boastfulness. This is possible; indeed, those who have been blessed with the wonderful knowledge of the Divine Plan are very susceptible to the temptation to be proud and boastful of their attainments. Such are exhorted to be earnest and ardent in the service of the Master, and to cultivate the spirit of meekness and humility. We may be sure that if his true children partake of this wrong spirit, they will receive his chastening rod. This is guaranteed because of his love for such.

The Savior at the Door

The expression, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock," is, of course, figurative, and is drawn from the common usage of every-day life of one who has approached a dwelling and, standing at the door of entrance, gives the well known sign of his presence by knocking; thus he makes known his presence, and also his desire for admission. It implies also that the one knocking recognizes the right of the one inside to open the door or not, as he may please. The knocker would not force an entrance, and when assured that he is heard, if the knock be not heeded, he would turn away. This figurative utterance of the Savior was understood, as we have already noted, by some teachers of the Philadelphia period to denote the presence of Christ, his Second Advent at some time in the Laodicean period. Some others who lived in this, the Laodicean period, have expressed the same thought:

"We should expect that at the time of our Lord's coming his people would hear his 'knock' — the knock of the prophecies, and whoever would open his heart and receive the things in a consecrated attitude of mind the Lord would gird himself as a servant and would come forth and serve him."

Concerning the Savior's reply to the question of the disciples, "What shall be the sign of Thy presence?" let the reader weigh carefully the following significant statement by Mr. Russell:

" 'Ye shall see the *sign* of the Son of Man [in heaven],' does not signify that the Lord's disciples then living will see *him*, but that they will have an indication or evidence of his *presence* at that time. The *signs* of our Lord's Second presence will be found in harmony with, and corroborated by, the testimony of the Prophets, as was the case at the First Advent (Luke 24:44-46).

"The sign or proof of his *parousia* will be given *in heaven*. Not in the heaven of the Father's presence and before the holy angels, but in the symbolic heaven, the ecclesiastical heaven, the same heaven which the preceding verse tells us shall be so terribly shaken as to shake out its stars [teachers]. It is *in this heaven* — the professedly spiritual class — that the sign or evidence of our Lord's presence will first be apparent. Some will '*see*' the fulfillment of the prophetic declarations respecting this day of the second presence, in the marvelous unfolding of the Divine Plan of the Ages, and will recognize it as one of the *signs of his presence* (Luke 12:37). ...

"At the first presence, the humble Israelites indeed, whom God accounted worthy, were not confused, but enlightened, so that our Lord could say to them, 'Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear' (Matthew 13:17). So now in the second presence of the Son of Man, the opening up of the Divine Word, the discernment of the Divine Plan showing as well the Divine times and seasons, and the confusion upon 'Babylon' are satisfactory proofs of the presence of the King."

Again in a reference made in 1904 to the significance of the "knock," this expositor further stated: "His presence will be made known by the knock, and the knock would correspond to an announcement, through some special servant or servants, either orally or by the printed page, setting forth the evidences of the Master's presence. For instance, the publishing of time prophecies showing that the time is fulfilled — that certain prophecies marking events belonging to the close of the Gospel dispensation and the opening of the Millennial dispensation are accomplished, and that certain signs mentioned in the Scriptures are fulfilled — such testimonies are in the nature of a knock, which would be heard by such of the servants of the Lord as would be awake at that time. It is not for the servants in general to do the knocking, but for the Master himself to set in operation the forces and agencies he may choose to use for producing this knock and the announcement."

It will thus be seen that this writer's thought was that the "signs" or evidences of the Savior's presence at the Second Advent would be twofold: first, the fulfillment of certain chronological predictions; and, second, the fulfillment of certain, indeed, very many predicted events, the chief one of all being the spreading of a spiritual feast — the impartation of light and knowledge concerning the Lord's great Plan of Salvation. Additional evidences are given in other Scripture prophecies bearing upon the Second Presence, but those mentioned above, with the discovery on the part of the Lord's people of the predicted apostate Laodicean conditions, are the only ones taught in this message.

Concerning the chronological periods and their bearing on the matter of Christ's *parousia*, or presence, they are not mentioned in this message. It will be our purpose to consider them when we come to those visions of the Apocalypse in connection with which they are mentioned. Sufficeth here to say that from all the evidences that can be adduced today it seems most probable that we are now living in the dawn of the seventh thousand-year period, or the Millennium,

the early stages of which will be devoted to the displacing of the present order of things and the inauguration of the new; and that this fact, taken in connection with various prophetic pictures of Christ's Second Presence, of the close of this age and the dawning of the Millennial (pictures that are already being fulfilled in our midst), constitutes strong and convincing evidence that the "knock" of the Savior is due to be heard in our midst today. Yea, and with what solemnity do we then hearken to Christ's message to the Church of the Laodiceans!

As the figurative knock and the promise in connection with it is a personal, an individual one, the following inquiries are of the greatest conceivable importance: Have we heard the knock? Have we opened the door of our heart? Have we partaken of the feast spread? Do we know that we are in the Presence of the Son of Man? The question is not, Do we know the exact date when our Lord came? but rather, Have we apprehended the general evidence that the Savior has come and, through his specially chosen instrumentalities, has made known to us the wonders of the Heavenly Father's love, as manifested in the wonderful Plan of the Ages?

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Revelation 3:21).

To the overcomer living in the Laodicean period and surrounded by the Laodicean conditions, which constitute the chief things to be overcome, the promise is that he would be granted the privilege of sitting with Christ in his throne, even as he overcame and sat down with his Father in His throne. The teaching is that Christ is himself to be given a special Kingdom. And this is in harmony with all that the Scriptures have to say concerning Christ's future work in its relation to the human family. Note the following statements: "I appoint unto you a Kingdom, even as my Father hath appointed unto me." "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones," etc. "When the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, before him shall be gathered all nations," etc. "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." We might multiply passages in the Scriptures which plainly teach this truth. A careful comparison of them shows that this Kingdom or dominion is to be over this earth and its peoples; indeed, all who have lived on the earth since Adam will eventually come under this dominion. The object will be to restore such of them as will, to human perfection, and to give them everlasting life in a perfect earthly paradise. Concerning this feature, other Scriptures, as well as other visions in the Revelation, deal more particularly; and in future expositions, these will be considered.

It is not the thought that this promise to the Laodicean overcomers is for them alone; rather, all the overcomers throughout the Gospel Age will share in this reward. Indeed, the promises to the overcomers in each of these seven periods belong to all alike, even as the conditions described in each epistle have to be overcome by all alike. It seems to be the thought that the rewards promised to the overcomers are adapted to their triumph over their surroundings, in seven

orders. The rewards increase in degree from the first one made to the saints in Ephesus, to the last one to the saints in the Laodicean period, as the evils and the adverse circumstances over which the victories are won increase in severity. It would seem, then, that we have taught in this, seven steps or degrees upward in the rewards of the saints, all of which each individual saint attains. They seem to have been framed so as to describe all the evils and trying circumstances to be overcome by each individual, as well as the blessed realization of all the deliverances wrought, and the glory and honor that is to be realized by each in the future glorious Kingdom of the Son as well as of the Father of all.

The first promise, that of Ephesus, refers to a partaking of the "tree of knowledge" which was forbidden to Adam. This is secured by cherishing and holding fast to their "first love" for the Master and his Truth. All the overcomers will realize this great reward.

The second, that of Smyrna, proclaims a victory over adversities, persecutions, and afflictions, by faithfully testifying to their Christian faith under these conditions. The reward was the "crown of life," and immunity from death forevermore, which will be the happy lot of all in the future who prove faithful under these circumstances.

The third, that of Pergamos, is the gift of the "white stone," giving the assurance of Christ's acceptance and approval; and the "hidden manna," the Divine, incorruptible, immortal nature, as a reward for faithfulness in following the Master in a separation from worldliness, worldly patronage and friendship, and in a separation from the desire for rulership without him.

The fourth, that of Thyatira, promises authority and judicial administration over the nations, because of a recognition of Christ's authority over them, instead of the authority of the false and usurping Jezebel's church-rulership.

The fifth, that of Sardis, holds out the assurance that the overcomer's name shall not be erased from the book of life, but that they shall walk with him in white as a reward for keeping their garments undefiled, when all around them was a spiritual deadness.

The sixth, that of Philadelphia, promises a part in the New Jerusalem government, as well as to be made a pillar, an ornament, a support, in the great antitypical Temple of God, to go no more out forever, and this because of faithfully manifesting and striving to maintain the primitive spirit of brotherly love, and of holding fast to the Word of his patience.

The seventh, that of Laodicea, describes a promise of sharing in a dominion, of which no higher honor could he imagined; because of persevering in separation from the Laodicean evil conditions.

In whatever way we look at these promises, when taken together, they describe privileges, blessings and honors, of which the natural eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. It has been truly said that these seven promises form by far the most complete description to be found in the Scriptures of the good things which God has prepared for His people — them that love Him. In the language of Mr. Seiss:

"They set before us a destiny to which all the faithful shall attain, at which the lean, meager, shallow, shadowy, flimsy thing some present as heaven, sinks into insipidity and contempt. They present us with something fitting and competent to brace up the courage of the Church, to carry her to the pitch of bearing the cross, and crucifying herself with Christ, and actualizing her profession of expatriation from this world. They open to us prospects which put upon the commonplaces of heavenly anticipations the disgrace and shame of scarcely having caught the first syllables of what is laid up for true saints of God."

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

Chapter Ten

The Vision of the Throne

(Revelation 4:1-3)

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne" (Revelation 4:1,2).

Following the vision of Christ walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and after St. John had received the messages which he was to send to the angels of the seven Churches, he looked and saw a door opened in heaven, and heard for the second time the trumpet-voice of Christ. This time it was an invitation: "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." Immediately he was "in the spirit." In considering the expression "a door was opened in heaven" it will assist materially if we observe and bear in mind that the Scriptures speak of the sky as a solid expanse, or as an extended arch above the earth. In this expanse or arch the stars are represented as shining. Through apertures or windows in this expanse, the rain is represented as coming down (Genesis 7:11). This is of course figurative.

The simple meaning in this vision is that it was to St. John, *as if* such an opening had been made in the sky, and he was permitted to view a scene in heaven. What he saw was not an actual occurrence, but a vision representing such. The expression "in the spirit" denotes that he was in a state in which all his natural faculties were under Divine control. In this condition he beheld the visions recorded in the rest of the book of Revelation. The visions of the book from chapter six to its close may well be likened to a drama which tells the story of developments in both the true and nominal Church as well as in the world down to the time of Christ's glorious triumph over sin and death. The careful student will observe that the vision recorded in chapters four and five is largely synoptical and more in the nature of an introductory scene to this Divine drama which follows.

In this vision the Apostle saw first a throne set in heaven, and on the throne was seated the Eternal One. St. John does not attempt to describe the one on the throne, except by the simple statement that "He that sat thereon was like a jasper and a sardine stone." Perhaps this expression is intended to be suggestive or descriptive of the glorious qualities of this Divine One. That the one who is here represented in the symbol is the Heavenly Father, there can be no

question. All the symbolic transactions in the scene demonstrate that the Great Jehovah the Author of the Divine Plan, is the One represented, and was such as to impress St. John and the Church with the signal importance of the communications about to be made.

He next beheld a rainbow, completely encircling the throne (see Diaglott). The rainbow in the vision was not such as is seen from the earth — an incomplete circle. This which the Apostle saw completely encircled the All-Glorious and Perfect One. Looking at this symbolical rainbow in the light of the Genesis account (Genesis 9:12-17), will assist us to understand its significance. There we learn that the rainbow is the token of God's promise and agreement with the earth and mankind that there should never be another flood. The waters had just abated, and the sun for the first time was shining out through the last fragments of the mists and clouds as the storm of judgment was retreating. This it was that produced the rainbow effect, and seems to teach that the many troublous times portrayed by the visions throughout the Revelation, culminating at last in a general storm of judgment, will eventually be for man's good, for his correction, for his everlasting blessing. It is through these troubles and severe experiences that the followers of Christ are developed and perfected and will finally be made joint-heirs with him in his Kingdom for the blessing of all mankind. The rainbow then seems to announce that earth's storms are to cease, and speaks of the hope of life, of peace and blessing to come out of the trials encountered by the true Church, and out of the final storm of judgment experienced by the world, all of which is in full harmony with the Divine promise of blessed refreshment and restitution for man and his home, the earth — a "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

It is then manifest that the rainbow-encircled throne, in this aspect of the vision, describes Jehovah's sovereignty in its general attitude and conduct towards man in redemptive grace, in providing deliverance for him from the slavery to sin and death. We have in the Scriptures several symbolic descriptions of God's throne, but they differ widely in their surroundings from this one. The "emerald" appearance of the rainbow (greenish in color) is significant of the "olive leaf" of hope and promise that was brought to Noah by the dove when the waters of the flood were subsiding. The "emerald" effect of the rainbow therefore seems to suggest the springing up of new life — the restitution times, subsequent to the closing scenes of this dispensation, after the Church is complete and the world has passed through its judgment-troubles. Then all nations shall come and worship before God (Revelation 15:4).

The conclusion is unavoidable that the throne and its surroundings are symbolical of the rule of Jehovah; not, however, the rule of Jehovah *as it is related to His government of the universe;* nor the rule of Jehovah as represented by the "Great White Throne" of judgment during the Millennial Age; but rather it represents the exercise of his sovereignty and power in the execution of the Divine purpose for the blessing of the Church and the world. The vision then is designed to be a sublime introduction to the visions that follow, which portray the trials of the Church as it comes in conflict with the world powers, civil and religious; and is

intended to show the supremacy of Jehovah, the Divine interest in and supervision of this feature of the Divine Plan — the preparation of the Church for the blessing of the world — as it progresses to completion.

The Sealed Scroll

The Apostle had been told that he was to be shown "things which must take place hereafter." He was, therefore, in this trance condition, in a state of expectancy. He was not to have revealed to him the future things themselves, but rather the symbolic visions that *represented* these future scenes and developments. After beholding the symbolic actors and surroundings of the throne vision, which will be considered later on, St. John's attention was called to a sealed book, or scroll, in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. The sealed scroll was evidently a symbol. It could have but one meaning — that there were certain things in connection with God's plans and purposes for mankind that up to the time of Christ's resurrection had been kept secret, had not been revealed to even the Savior himself. The next symbolic transaction further proves that this is its significance: "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (Revelation 5:2).

At first St. John heard no response to this solemn question; and to him it seemed as though there was none to be found qualified or worthy to open the book and to make known its contents. It would be in harmony with the transactions of the vision to think that the Apostle John in this trance state supposed that the things to be made known to him were contained in the sealed scroll. Thus we account for his words: "And I wept much because no one was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon" (Revelation 5:4). We may be sure that these transactions were of intense interest to him. That his disappointment was inexpressible, is shown in the fact that he "wept much." While he was weeping, one of the twenty-four elders spoke to him words of comfort and encouragement: "Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

Following this, the Apostle beheld, seemingly for the first time, another symbolic actor in the vision: "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living ones, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (verse 6). St. John immediately recognized in this one, the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world. The vision was designed to show Christ receiving some of the rewards of his great sacrifice. The Apostle watched what was next to occur, and beheld the Lamb approach the Eternal One and receive the book out of His right hand. That the reception of the book by the Lamb marked in symbol an event of vast magnitude and became the means of solving some great problem is clearly taught by the fact that immediately, not only the actors about the throne joined in what would seem to be a hallelujah chorus of praise, thanksgiving, and worship, but the Revelator heard

additionally voices of a mighty throng which reverberated throughout heaven and earth, proclaiming blessing and honor and glory unto Him that sat upon the throne and unto the Lamb.

Concerning the significance of this majestic scene — the Lamb's receiving the sealed book, and the breaking of the seals, the observations of Mr. Russell are indeed luminous:

"The Heavenly Father, the Ancient of Days, is shown seated on the heavenly throne, and in His hand a scroll written inside and outside, sealed with seven seals. That scroll, representing the Divine Plan, known only to the Father, Jehovah Himself, was kept in His own power — in His own hand — until someone should be proved worthy to know it, and became its executor as Jehovah's honored agent and representative. The symbolic picture proceeds to show that up to the time our Lord Jesus suffered for us at Calvary, 'the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,' no one had ever been found (proved) worthy to take up the Divine Plan and even understand it. But when our Lord Jesus had proved his loyalty to the Heavenly Father by his obedience, not only in humbling himself to take man's estate for the suffering of death, but also in his obedience 'even unto death,' and still further, 'even unto the [ignominious] death of the cross,' then and thereby he did prove himself worthy of every confidence and trust."

The fact that our Lord did not receive the scroll before his death, and did not understand what was on the inside, would not conflict with the thought of his wonderful knowledge of Divine Truths during his earthly ministry. That he did have special knowledge was particularly indicated by the statement that at his baptism the heavens were opened unto him. This which he saw during his ministry would seem to correspond to what was written on the outside of the scroll referring to certain general information and knowledge. But the minutia and detail of the Divine Plan with respect to many of the things future were not revealed to him until he received the scroll and opened the seals after his resurrection. The same writer continues:

"Our Lord Jesus received the anointing of the holy Spirit when he came up out of the water at his baptism. Then the heavens were opened unto him. The higher things which he had not previously understood became clear. The Scriptures were unfolded to his view ... During these three and a half years he was the Messiah, the Sent of God. He was the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He had sacrificed his will, but this was not sufficient. God wished him to sacrifice not only his will, but actually to lay down his human life. ... Here the words of our text find their answer. The inquiry [Who is worthy?] compassed the period from before Jesus came into the world up to his resurrection from the grave. God had given the most honorable one of all the host of heaven the first opportunity to prove his worthiness to loose the scroll of God's great Plan, and to fulfill its provisions. He was given this opportunity because, as the First-born of Jehovah, He had the right to the first privilege of service. And he did not allow the privilege to go by. He accepted it. He was faithful. He humbled himself to human nature, and thus

he became the Lion of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe he was born as a man. ...

"Our Lord's worthiness was not then proved. It was not until he cried with his dying breath, 'It is finished!' that the demonstration was complete. ... Speaking in vision of the three and a half years during which our Lord is represented as slain, St. John the Revelator says, 'I beheld and lo, a freshly slain Lamb!' And the voices of myriads of angels were heard proclaiming, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!' (Revelation 5:12). Jesus had not proved himself worthy of this great honor when he made his consecration, but when he had finished his course in death he was then worthy to receive glory, honor, and power."

We believe we may safely draw the lesson, first, that the receiving of the scroll by Christ is designed to show that a full, complete knowledge of the Divine purposes for both the Church and the world, was given to him, as well as all power and authority to carry to completion the Heavenly Father's plans and purposes. This occurred even before his ascension, for he said to his disciples: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Second, that the time when the events of the vision of this throne scene began to occur was after our Lord's resurrection when he received the scroll.

Third, that the opening of the scroll, the breaking of the seals, etc., show the progressive order of the fulfillment of the events symbolized by the four horsemen, etc.

In a succeeding chapter the opening of the seals will be discussed at length. It will be to our profit at this point, however, to have before the mind a brief summary:

(1) The white horse and its rider is pictorial of the early Church arrayed in garments of simplicity and purity, with its immaculate doctrines and perfect unity, courageously riding forth, bearing the "Good Tidings" over the earth with the design to conquer such as had hearing ears.

(2) The red, black, and pale horses and their riders of the second, third, and fourth seals, depict those conquering forces that had to do with the gradual rise and development of the persecuting Antichrist, and the worldly, formal, false Church over which he ruled (Revelation 6:3-8).

(3) The fifth seal discloses a vision of a band of faithful martyrs who suffered during the supremacy of both Pagan and Papal Rome (Revelation 6:9-11).

(4) The sixth seal opens with a literal and symbolical darkening of the sun and moon, and falling of stars, and an earthquake. This brings us to the "time of the end." It is in connection with the fulfillment of the symbols of this seal, that the sealing of the "one hundred and forty-four thousand" is accomplished. In the closing events of this seal, this class is seen as the "temple" in heaven; another class also, the "Great Company," is seen serving before the throne, having come out of the "great tribulation" — the last great time of trouble which marks the change of dispensation from the rule and dominion of Satan to that of Christ (Revelation 6:12-17, 7:1-17).

It is therefore most obvious that the six seals cover the entire Gospel Age. This fact should be noted very carefully as it has an important bearing upon the interpretation of the succeeding visions, and will assist to an understanding of the events referred to in the breaking of the seventh seal.

(5) Under the seventh seal a new series of visions is brought to view, which, it will be manifest, covers to a great extent the same period of time as the previous six seals. In other words, as the trumpets sound under the breaking of the seventh seal, we are to look for the events symbolized by the first trumpet as also beginning near the Apostle's day.

This would seem to locate the "half hour's silence in heaven," which precedes the sounding of the seven trumpets (Revelation 8:1), as the period of the ten days of waiting for the promise of the Father of the gift of the holy Spirit, during which time nothing was to be done by the disciples. The "silence in heaven" would reasonably symbolize the quietness in the spiritual realm of operations so far as our Lord's disciples were concerned, during those days of waiting, previous to the day of Pentecost.

In the light of this view we are enabled to rightly understand and apply, in harmony with the types of the High Priest of the typical tabernacle, the symbolical vision of the angel that came to the altar receiving the "much incense *for* the prayers of the saints" (Revelation 8:3-5). The angel, of course, as the symbols show, represents Christ. Of this, however, we shall speak more particularly when we come to examine that vision.

In the vision of chapter 5, when the Lamb had taken the book out of the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, St. John saw: "The four living ones and the four and twenty elders fall down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed (us) to God with Thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation; and Thou didst make them to our God a Royalty and a Priesthood, and they shall reign on (over) the earth" (Revelation 5:9,10).

"It is at this point that the picture we are considering shows our Lord Jesus as the Lamb that had been slain, before whom obeisance was made, and who was proclaimed, 'Worthy the Lamb!' ... Thus is pictured to us the high exaltation of the Heavenly Father's representative, the 'messenger [servant] of the Covenant.' Because of his humility and complete submission and obedience to the Father's will he is proclaimed thenceforth the sharer of the Father's throne, and, by the Father's own arrangement, the proclamation was made throughout the Heavenly hosts, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing,' and finally 'every creature' shall catch the thought that Jehovah has very highly exalted His Only Begotten Son, even to association with Himself in the Kingdom, and shout their approval, saying, 'The blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne [of the universe — Jehovah] and unto the Lamb.' "

It will be noted that this last expression of obeisance (verse 13) is prophetic, and looks forward to the time of the consummation of the Father's great Plan.

Other Significant Symbols

In view of the foregoing considerations the Revelator's statement, chapter 4, verse 5, becomes more luminous. "Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices." This language is descriptive of the general effect and results upon mankind in connection with the carrying out of this great drama — the Divine Plan. Several times throughout the book of Revelation, St. John describes in this language what he heard and saw. Lightnings are forcefully significant of diffusions or flashes of knowledge, truth. "His lightnings enlightened the world" (Psalms 97:4). Voices signify proclamations and general discussions of subjects by those being enlightened. Thunderings are symbolic of tumults, controversies accompanying the dissemination and spread of knowledge. Down through the centuries as the Divine Plan has progressed, these effects — enlightenments, disturbances, commotions — have been noted among mankind, and particularly are these results to be seen in connection with those events that mark the close of this dispensation, the overthrow of Satan's empire and the coming in of the Kingdom of God, of which we shall say more hereafter (Revelation 8:5, 11:19, 16:18).

Summarizing the teaching of this fifth chapter: St. John evidently represents the Church; his seeing the visions represents the Church seeing the fulfillment of them; the words, "to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass," as also the words, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter," plainly teach that the prophetic visions are open for the Church's study; not, however, that they would be understood all at once, but gradually, a little at a time, as the events of the Church's history unveiled their meaning. This vision of chapters four and five explains most fully and clearly the opening verse of the Apocalypse, in the light of which we are enabled to paraphrase it thus:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ [symbolized by the scroll seen in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne], which God [the one on the throne] gave unto him [symbolized by the Lamb receiving the scroll], to shew unto his servants [the Church] the things which must shortly come to pass [the things symbolized by the sealed scroll — the prophecies of this book]; and he sent and signified it [made it known by signs or symbols] by his angel unto his servant John."

In brief, let us note the matter in the following order:

(1) God gave to Christ an understanding of all the prophecies of this book. This occurred after his resurrection, before his ascension to heaven.

(2) Christ gave, or caused St. John to see, over sixty years after, all the visions that were represented in this sealed scroll.

(3) St. John, according to Divine instructions, wrote these visions and gave them to the Church at that time.

(4) The visions themselves have been in the possession of the Church ever since that time.

(5) St. John, seeing the visions represented by the things in the sealed scroll gradually, a little at a time, represents the Church seeing the fulfillment as history has unveiled their meaning.

(6) They have therefore been unsealed, that is, open for the Church's study since they were given.

(7) The Church is very specially exhorted to read or hear the words of this prophecy, and is promised a blessing in so doing. The reason for this is that "the time is [was then] at hand."

(8) The facts of history show that some of the Lord's servants all down through the age have read, and, of course, studied the visions. The results of their studies have been published and they show a gradual, progressive understanding of the visions up to the present time. The visions, therefore, have been unsealed — open for study — and more or less clearly understood ever since St. John's day.

While it is true that God's servants are not commanded to study the Revelation of Christ, it is undoubtedly true that those who have, in the proper attitude of mind and heart, heeded the encouraging and persuasive words of the Savior to read or hear it read, have received the blessing promised. It is most reasonable to suppose that to receive any blessing whatsoever, at least a measure of understanding is required and is therefore given.

Chapter Eleven

The Twenty-Four Elders

(Revelation 4:4-8)

"And circling the throne were twenty-four thrones; and on the thrones twenty-four elders sitting, having been clothed with white garments, and on their heads golden crowns. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, four living ones, being full of eyes before and behind" (Revelation 4:4,6).

As we now inquire what are symbolized by the elders and living ones, we note that there have been in the past and in recent years four -principal views held by eminent expositors of the Revelation concerning who are represented by the twenty-four elders. These are as follows:

(1) That they represent the Church in the glorified state, after this age has ended. The Protestant Futurist interpreters naturally hold to this view, because it is the belief of many of them that the Church is glorified before any of the visions of the Revelation from chapter 4 and on have their fulfillment. These expositors believe that the witnessing, suffering saints pictured in the several visions of the Revelation, instead of representing the Church, describe a Jewish remnant in the time of Jacob's trouble, which, if this interpretation were correct, would be after the Church is glorified. This view is disproved by every symbolic reference to these witnessing saints throughout the Book. As a noted expositor has said concerning this matter:

"We observe these saints who are thirteen times mentioned in the Apocalypse doing and bearing exactly what we know from other Scriptures the saints of the Christian Church must do and bear in this dispensation [Gospel Age]. We find them watching, waiting, praying, enduring tribulation (chapter 13:10), and resisting unto blood, resting in heaven (14:12,13), and at last manifested as the Bride of Christ, and 'the armies which were in heaven,' clad under both emblems with the 'fine linen clean and white,' which is the righteousness of the saints; we find them associated with the martyrs of Jesus (17:6), a clear proof that they cannot be Jewish saints. In short, instead of the Church being actually in heaven at the commencement of the prophetic drama of this book, she is seen on earth during its entire course. She is seen collectively under various symbols, such as the one hundred and forty-four thousand (Revelation 7:4), and the sun-clad woman (12:1), the armies of heaven (19:14), the New Jerusalem (21:2); and her members are seen severally as the 'saints.' They are seen first in their suffering and then in their glory; first slain for Jesus' sake, then enthroned beside him. Can it be questioned that the saints who pray and wait and suffer and die as

martyrs of Jesus are the same saints, the 'called and chosen and faithful,' who are seen with the Lamb afterwards as his Bride and as his white-robed followers? If they are not, then the unity of the book is gone. It becomes an incomprehensible mystery" (H. G. Guinness).

(2) Another view is that the twenty-four elders represent angels. This interpretation, however, cannot be the correct one, because angels are represented in the vision as in the outer circle, outside of the elders (Revelation 5:11).

(3) Still another view — one presented by W. I. Mann — is thus stated: "Around the throne of God are seen twenty-four thrones, on which are seated twenty-four elders. Many opinions have been given in regard to whom these symbolize. With present light we present the following: ... There have been, as we count, twenty-four Prophets that have prophesied of 'things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.' Their testimonies here seem to be personified, exalted and enthroned."

Mr. Mann does not give the names of twenty-four prophets who prophesied of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, which, of course would be necessary, with many other things, to prove this interpretation to be correct.

The view of Mr. Mann is adopted and enlarged upon by some other expositors who give the names of twenty-four Old Testament Prophets that prophesied concerning one or more features of the Kingdom of God. This view would require, in order to stand the test of Scripture, that there were *exactly* twenty-four individuals in the Old Testament who uttered inspired predictions of one or more features of the Kingdom of God. A careful examination of the Scriptures will show that there are at least *five* who were inspired to foretell some of the important matters pertaining to the Kingdom of God beside the twenty-four referred to by those who hold to the above interpretation. Balaam's remarkable prophecy concerning Christ and Israel's future glory is left out of their enumeration (Numbers 24:1-19). Hannah's wonderful, inspired prediction, recorded in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, is counted as Samuel's. The prophetic Psalms are all attributed to David, which, of course, cannot be true, as some of the most important of them were given long years after David's death. Two of the most important, prophetic Psalms (45th and 46th), are, in the original Hebrew versions from which the Psalms are translated into English, credited to the sons of Korah. Psalm 50 is assigned to Asaph; also the eleven Psalms from the 73rd to the 83rd are assigned to the same author. Psalm 88 is attributed to Heman, the Ezrahite; and Psalm 89, which is a most remarkable prophecy of the Kingdom of God, is credited to Ethan the Ezrahite. Concerning the authorship of the Psalms, the following from an eminent writer will be interesting in this connection:

"When we speak of the Psalms of David, we use a popular and general form of expression. That the poet king is to be regarded as the founder of the Psalter there can be no doubt, and that a considerable number of the Psalms are due to his authorship. The incorporation of Psalms 18, in 2 Samuel 22, and its ascription to him — Samuel — is an important fact. In his time poetry and music attained a high development; and the varied experiences of his life imparted a depth of meaning to his words. But we have proof that the reigns of Jehoshaphat

and Hezekiah gave a fresh impulse to the outpouring of expressions of devout thanksgiving (2 Kings 18, 2 Chronicles 20). Again with the return from the captivity, fresh hymns would need to be composed for the service of the restored temple; and we may believe that the study of the Law under Ezra and Nehemiah further enriched the existing collection ... and it is best to regard David as the Founder of the Psalter, and to look for additions to the collection in the periods indicated above."

As further bearing upon the authorship of particular Psalms we quote from the same authority:

"One Psalm (90th) is ascribed to Moses; seventy-three bear the name of David; two, 72nd and 127th, are ascribed to Solomon; twelve, 50th and 73rd to 83rd, bear the name of Asaph, one of David's chief musicians (1 Chronicles 6:39); one Psalm is attributed to each of the sages, Heman the Ezrahite, and Ethan the Ezrahite (88th and 89th); eleven are attributed to the sons of Korah; see Psalms 42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87, 88" (*Summary of Books of the Old Testament, Oxford Teachers' Bible*).

This list of authorships has for its authority the original Hebrew versions used in the translation of our English Bibles. This will be seen by reference to the headings of the Psalms in Leeser's, and also the recent translation issued by the Jewish Publication Society of America. It will therefore be seen that as the Old Testament records discover at least *five more* writers (in addition to the twenty- four mentioned by those who have adopted Mr. Mann's view) who gave inspired predictions concerning the Kingdom of God, we must seek for another interpretation of these twenty-four elders.

Twenty-Four Elders Symbolic of the Church

We submit the view which appeals to us as being the correct one, namely that the twenty-four elders symbolically represent the Church. The entire throne vision in which these elders are seen is symbolical, and it would seem out of place not to see the Church, that is so closely related to Christ in the working out of the Divine Plan, symbolized in some way in the symbolical throne scene. In this connection it should be kept in mind that St. John is not in the throne scene, but is only a spectator of it. He here represents the Church on earth. We give a number of reasons why this view appeals to us as being the correct one:

(1) The number twenty-four, if it has any symbolical significance, would seem to apply to the Church and not personifications of twenty-four Old Testament prophecies uttered by twenty-four individual prophets. It is recognized by all intelligent Bible students that one of the functions of the Church is that of priesthood. In 1 Chronicles 24:3-5, we have stated that the typical priesthood was divided into twenty-four courses, preparatory to the typical Solomon's reign. We shall refer to this more at length later.

(2) The twenty-four elders are represented as occupying thrones. We know of no others except the Church who are to sit on thrones as kings, priests, and judges. We are not to obtain the impression, however, that they represent the

Church as reigning at the time of the vision, but rather in the mystical sense referred to by the Apostle Paul, "raised up and made to sit with Christ in the heavenlies" (Ephesians 2:6). We should keep in mind, as Mr. Guinness has clearly expressed: "The visions were not seen till the seals were broken, and the seals were not broken till the Lamb took the book. But the visions were seen [more than] eighteen hundred years ago; therefore, the Lamb took the book and broke the seals thereof [more than] eighteen hundred years ago; that is, the [symbolical throne] scene in which the Church is represented as taking part in heaven occurred [over] eighteen hundred years ago [indeed the most important matter portrayed in the throne vision took place before Christ's ascension]; but the Church was not actually in heaven eighteen hundred years ago, and therefore there is no ground for the assertion that the Church will be actually in heaven before the events symbolized in chapters 6 to 19, take place. The Church was in heaven in the only sense in which she will be there till the Marriage of the Lamb shall come, when John was on Patmos. Rather, to be more exact, when these matters were revealed to Christ after his resurrection, before his ascension, the Church was in heaven in an anticipatory sense, and thus the Apocalypse represents the Church as mystically in heaven, while still on earth, even as Ephesians 2 and Philippians 3, and other Scriptures do."

(3) The significance associated with their having on their heads "crowns of gold": this is also to be understood as symbolizing the future reign of the Church with Christ.

(4) The significance of the name itself: *elder* is in the Scripture a title of dignity, of age, or what corresponds with age, as referring to their future governmental work.

(5) The symbolical significance of their clothing: they were clothed in "white raiment," usually representing the "righteousness of saints," either imputed or actual.

(6) The song they sing: their song was a new one, which only blood-washed saints can sing: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9). Some hold that the word *us* is not in the original. Regarding the authenticity of this translation, the following by Joseph Seiss will be interesting as proving its correctness:

"Some critics and expositors have rejected this (us), for the reason that it is omitted in the Codex Alexandrinus, and in the Ethiopic version; though the latter is not much more than a loose paraphrase. The Codex Sinaiticus, however, which was discovered in 1860, and which is of equal antiquity and authority with the Codex Alexandrinus, contains it. The Codex Basilianus in the Vatican contains it. The Latin, Coptic or Memphitic, and Arminian, which are of great value, contain it. And so do *all other manuscripts and versions*. And to discredit it, simply and only because it does not appear in that one single Codex of Alexandria, is most unreasonable and unjust to the weight of authority for its retention. Dr. Tregelles, on full examination, was firmly convinced of its right to a place in

the text, (even) before the Codex Sinaiticus appeared, and the presence of this [Greek word translated *us*] in that manuscript, ought to settle the question of its genuineness forever. The evidences from the context, also argue powerfully for a construction which necessarily embraces it, whether expressed or not. We regard it as indubitably genuine."

If we keep in mind the fact that these elders are only symbolizations or personifications of the Church, the revised translation only serves rather to establish than to conflict with this interpretation. To quote another on this point: "The character of this intelligence, as looking at the *work* of the Lamb, rather than *naming themselves* as though it meant them is fully in place. It is *seeing* the work *in* and *of itself* and the one who accomplishes it, which would necessarily show that they represent symbolically the ones who are to be made priests and kings and are to reign on [over] the earth, or how could they know?" (Z. Taylor).

(7) The most conclusive proof, however, that the twenty-four elders symbolize the redeemed Church and not the personification of the utterances of twenty-four Old Testament Prophets, is their knowledge of heavenly, Divine things — the "hidden mystery." The Old Testament Prophets do *not* portray heavenly things, neither were the matters pertaining to the Church's earthly history, which are the subjects of the larger part of the Revelation visions, foretold by them. The Mystery hidden from other ages was first made known to the Church through its Prophets. St. Paul referring to this said, "which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men" (Ephesians 3:5). Again, he informs us: "Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom. and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in [under] Christ" (Ephesians 1:8-10). As further bearing on this, these twenty-four elders are represented in the succeeding visions as having an intelligent understanding of everything that occurs in connection with the Church's earthly career — an understanding which the Old Testament Prophets *did not have*.

In the vision of chapter 5, one of the elders shows his intelligence of heavenly things by informing St. John of the worthiness of the Lamb to open the sealed book; and the twenty-four show their intelligence by giving a reason for their iworshippingthe Lamb: "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed [us] by Thy blood," etc. In chapter 7:13-17, the question as to who is represented by the white-robed Great Company is answered by one of the elders: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple." In chapter 11:16-18, describing events that are to occur in connection with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, these elders all fall down and worship God, giving thanks and rehearsing everything that is to occur in connection with the reign of Christ. There is but one class in all the Scriptures that is represented as having such knowledge of heavenly, Divine Truth, and that one is the Church, the Body of Christ. Even angels are represented as only desiring to look into these things (1 Peter 1:12).

We need to keep in mind, however, that the vision does not represent the Church as actually in heaven at the time of the vision, but only in an anticipatory sense — the mystical, symbolical sense — as symbolizations of their exalted privileges "in Christ." All through the visions which describe the Church in the Gospel Age we find her suffering, witnessing, toiling, etc.; but her position by faith is that of seated with Christ in the heavenly places, already enjoying by faith the privilege of understanding and making known the great mysteries of the Divine Plan.

In concluding this consideration of the significance of the twenty-four elders, we give quotations from Mr. Barnes, whose expositions in general, and this in particular, show deep spiritual insight, as well as erudition:

" 'And round about the throne were four and twenty seats.' Or rather thrones — the same word being used as that which is rendered *throne*. The word, indeed, properly denotes *a seat*, but it came to be employed to denote particularly the seat on which a monarch sat, and is properly translated thus in verses 2,3. So it is rendered in Matthew 5:34, 19:28, 23:22, 25:31, Luke 1:32, and uniformly elsewhere in the New Testament (fifty-three places in all), except in Luke 1:52, Revelation 2:13, 4:4, 11:16, 16:10, where it is rendered *seat* and *seats*. It should have been rendered *throne* here, and is so translated by Prof. Stuart. ... It was undoubtedly the design of the writer to represent those who sat on those seats as, in some sense, *kings*, for they have on their heads crowns of gold, and that idea should have been retained in the translation of this word.

" 'And upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting.' Very various opinions have been entertained in respect to those who thus appeared sitting around the throne, and to the question why the number twenty-four is mentioned. Instead of examining those opinions at length, it will be better to present, in a summary manner, what seems to be probable in regard to the intended reference. The following points, then, would appear to embrace all that can be known on this subject:

"(1) These elders have a regal character, or are of a kingly order. This is apparent (a) because they are represented as sitting on 'thrones,' and (b) because they have on their heads 'crowns of gold.'

"(2) They are emblematic. They are designed to symbolize or represent some class of persons. This is clear because (a) it cannot be supposed that so small a number would compose the whole of these who are in fact around the throne of God, and (b) because there are other symbols there designed to represent something pertaining to the homage rendered to God, as the four living creatures and the angels, and this supposition is necessary in order to complete the symmetry and harmony of the representation.

"(3) They are [taken from] human beings, and are designed to have some relation to the race of man, and somehow to connect the human race with the worship of heaven. The four living creatures have another design; the angels (chapter 5) have another; but these are manifestly of our race — persons from this world before the throne.

"(4) They are designed in some way to be symbolic of the Church as redeemed. Thus they say (chapter 5:9), 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.'

"(5) They are designed to represent the *whole* Church in every land and every age of the world [Gospel Age]. Thus they say (chapter 5:9), 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, *out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*' This shows further that the whole representation is emblematic; for otherwise in so small a number — twenty-four — there could not be a representation out of every nation.

"(6) They represent the Church triumphant; the Church victorious. Thus they have crowns on their heads; they have harps in their hands (chapter 5:8); they say that they are 'kings and priests,' and that they will 'reign on the earth' (chapter 5:10).

"(7) The design, therefore, is to represent the Church triumphant — redeemed — saved — as rendering praise and honor to God; as uniting with the hosts of heaven in adoring Him for His perfections and for the wonders of His grace. As representatives of the Church they are admitted near to Him; they encircle His throne; they appear victorious over every foe; and they come, in unison with the living creatures, and the angels, and the whole universe (chapter 5:13), to ascribe power and dominion to God.

"(8) As to the reason why the number 'twenty-four' is mentioned, perhaps nothing certain can be determined. Ezekiel, in his vision (Ezekiel 8:16, 11:1), saw twenty-five men between the porch and the altar, with their backs toward the temple, and their faces toward the east — supposed to be representations of the twenty-four 'courses' into which the body of priests was divided (1 Chronicles 24:3-19), with the high priest among them, making up the number twenty-five. It is possible that John in this vision may have designed to refer to the Church considered as a priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), and to have alluded to the fact that the priesthood under the Jewish economy was divided into twenty-four courses, each with a presiding officer, and who was a representative of that portion of the priesthood over which he presided. If so, then the ideas which enter into the representation are these: (a) that the whole Church may be represented as a priesthood, or a community of priests — an idea which frequently occurs in the New Testament. (b) That the Church, as such a community of priests, is employed in the praise and worship of God — an idea, also, which finds abundant countenance in the New Testament. (c) That, in a series of visions having a designed reference to the Church, it was natural to introduce some symbol or emblem representing the Church, and representing the fact that this is [to be] its office and employment. And (d) that this would be well expressed by an allusion derived from the ancient dispensation — the division of the priesthood into classes, over each one of which there presided an individual who might be considered as the representative of his class. It is to be observed, indeed, that in one respect they are represented as 'kings,' but still this does not forbid the supposition that there might have been intermingled also another idea, that they were also 'priests.' Thus, the two ideas are blended by these same elders in

chapter 5:10: 'And hath made us unto our God kings and priests.' Thus understood, the vision is designed to denote the fact that the representatives of the Church ultimately to be triumphant are properly engaged in ascribing praise to God. The word elders here seems to be used in the sense of aged and venerable men, rather than as denoting office. They were such as by their age were qualified to preside over the different divisions of the priesthood.

"Clothed in white raiment. Emblem of purity, and appropriate therefore to the representatives of the sanctified Church. Compare chapter 3:4, 6:11, 7:9.

"And they had on their heads crowns of gold. Emblematic of the fact that they sustained a kingly office. There was blended in the representation the idea that they were both 'kings and priests.' Thus the idea is expressed by Peter (1 Peter 2:9), 'a royal priesthood.' "

It would thus seem that this vision, while some of its most important features begin to have a fulfillment before the commencement of the Gospel Age, even before Pentecost, as for instance the giving of the sealed book to Christ (Revelation 5:1-7), carries us forward to the very end of the age, indeed, to the very end of God's great Plan, when all creation will be giving praise and honor and glory unto Him that sat on the throne and unto the Lamb forever (Revelation 5:13). This accounts for the fact that the Church triumphant has a place in the symbolization of the throne vision. The vision is in a measure synoptical — affording a general view of the whole Divine Plan.

The Four Living Ones

"And the first living one resembled a lion, and the second living one resembled a steer, and the third living one having the face as of a man, and the fourth living one was like to a flying eagle. And the four living ones, having each of them six wings apiece, round about and within are full of eyes; and they have no rest day and night, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Omnipotent! the one who was, and the one who is, and the one who is coming' " (Revelation 4:6-8).

It is of course well known that expositors differ concerning what these four living creatures represent — their relation to the throne vision, and their agency in connection with carrying forward the Divine purposes. Most all expositors are influenced in their interpretations by erroneous views in regard to the state or condition of the saints in death; believing as many do that the dead have a conscious existence in the intermediate state, instead of the Scriptural view, that they are in the death-sleep — unconscious. Mr. Elliott's interpretation is that the twenty-four elders represent the saints in paradise, and the four living creatures, those living on earth. D. N. Lord's view is that the twenty-four elders represent the mass of the redeemed, and the living ones, those who are raised to special eminence. Mr. Mede's thought is that the living creatures represent the Church pworshippingon earth. Mr. Daubuz represents the beasts to be symbols of the Church on earth. Vitringa's view concerning the living ones is similar to the latter — that they symbolize eminent teachers in every age or generation. Moses Stuart, who wrote in the early years of the Nineteenth Century, inter-

prets the living ones to represent the Divine attributes. This view was adopted by Mr. Mann, for it is certain that he was not the first expositor who advanced it. We quote Mr. Mann's words:

"What, then, do the cherubim [living ones] symbolize? We think they personify the attributes of God. Scholars have suggested a number of attributes. We think that there are just four which are fundamental, namely Power, Wisdom, Justice, and Love. These four include all others. For instance independence, omniscience, holiness, and benevolence are dependent on or similar to the above mentioned in their absolute perfection as God has them. On these His throne is represented as being supported."

Mr. Barnes held nearly the same view as Moses Stuart and Mr. Mann, although he does not attempt to apply each one of these four attributes as distinctively characteristic of certain of the living creatures; neither does Mr. Mann attempt this. By some who adopt this interpretation, the first living creature, like a lion, is made to represent Justice; the second, like a calf [ox], is applied to Power; the third, which had a face like a man, is understood to represent Love; and the fourth, which was like a flying eagle, is said to represent Wisdom. It is our thought that these particular applications cannot be made to harmonize with the uses of these symbols in other Scriptures. Let us carefully study the various features of these living ones.

One important thing to keep in mind in seeking to discover the significance of these four living creatures is that the word translated beast in our Common Version conveys an utterly wrong thought. The Greek word used means properly a living creature, or as the Diaglott renders it, "living one." Nothing, however, is seen in their description that suggests that they have the appearance as men, except in the description of the third one, which is said to have a face *like* a man.

The description concerning their position as related to the throne is a very peculiar one, and evidently is designed to teach that they represent something that is closely related to the throne. The appearance to St. John as stated by him was that they seemed to be both "in the midst of the throne," and "around the throne." In the language of another: "The meaning would seem to be, that the four living creatures referred to occupied such a position collectively that they at the same time appeared to be *under* the throne so that it rested on them, and *around* it, so that they could be seen from any quarter. This would occur if their bodies were under the throne, and if they stood so that they faced outward. To one approaching the throne they would seem to be *around* it, though their bodies were *under*, or 'in the midst' of it as a support. The form of their bodies is not specified, but it is not improbable that though their *heads* were different, their bodies, that were under the throne, and that sustained it, were of the same form."

We think this a reasonable description of how these living ones appeared to St. John in the vision; and there is furnished in it a basis for an interpretation of what these living ones represent, and their relation to the throne of the Eternal One. It seems clear from the fact that the throne appears to rest upon them that

they cannot possibly represent any *living* intelligence, for the reason that the throne of God does not rest upon such. They would, therefore, be well calculated to represent the great principles or truths or attributes that support the Divine government.

The fact that they are represented as encircling the throne, and looking in every direction, together with the other symbols describing their appearance, would in addition seem to represent the providential government of God as it operates in carrying forward the Divine plans and purposes. Viewed from the above standpoint the symbol is not an uncommon one. The thrones of monarchs are frequently represented as supported by carved animals. This interpretation of the living ones seems also to add completeness to the vision as a whole: We have first the elders, representing or symbolizing the redeemed Church, bowing in reverence; next the angels in their own persons giving praise and honor unto Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb; and added to this, the various attributes of the Almighty One, together with the various acts in the administration of the Divine government, uniting in proclaiming His glory.

Mr. Barnes who notes the similarity of these living ones to the cherubim of Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 1:5), has thus commented on this resemblance:

"Ezekiel, whom John more nearly resembles in his description, saw four 'living creatures' — that is, living, animated, moving beings. ... They [the ones St. John saw] are evidently, like those which Ezekiel saw, symbolical beings ... In Ezekiel, they are either designed as poetic representations of the majesty of God, or of His providential government, showing what sustains His throne: symbols denoting intelligence, vigilance, the rapidity and directness with which the Divine commands are executed, and the energy and firmness with which the government of God is administered."

Mr. Barnes proceeds next to note a difficulty that naturally comes into the mind as connected with this interpretation that the living ones represent those principles or attributes upon which the Divine government rests, together with the administration of God's government. The difficulty has been noted by very many and is that the "living ones" as well as the elders are or seem to be represented as singing redemption's song. His comment, as associated with the removal of the difficulty, is well worthy of consideration. We quote it in full:

"'The nature of the case, and the similarity to the representation in Ezekiel, would lead us to suppose that the same idea is to be found substantially in John, and there would be no difficulty in such an interpretation, were it not that these 'living creatures' are apparently represented in chapter 5:8,9 as uniting with the redeemed from the earth, in such a manner as to imply that they were themselves redeemed. But perhaps the language in chapter 5:9, 'And they sung a new song,' etc., though apparently connected with the 'four beasts' in verse 8, is not designed to be so connected. John may intend there merely to advert to the fact that a new song was sung, without meaning to say that the 'four living beings' united in that song. For, if he designed merely to say that the 'four living beings,' and the 'four and twenty elders' fell down to worship, and then that a

song was heard, though in fact sung only by the four and twenty elders, he might have employed the language which he actually has done. If this interpretation be admitted, then the most natural explanation to be given of the 'four living beings' is to suppose that they are symbolical beings designed to furnish some representation of the government of God — to illustrate, as it were, that on which the Divine government rests, or which constitutes its support — to wit, power, intelligence, vigilance, energy. This is apparent (a) because it was not unusual for the thrones of monarchs to be supported by carved animals of various forms, which were designed undoubtedly to be somehow emblematic of government — either of its stability, vigilance, boldness, or firmness."

As bearing on the same difficulty, the text in which it is found seems to represent these "living ones" as having every one of them harps. Mr. Barnes comments on this construction of the words as erroneous, because it seems hardly possible to represent the living ones in the form of a lion, calf, and an eagle, as handling harps. " 'Having every one of them harps.' That is, as the construction and the propriety of the case would seem to demand, the *elders* had each one of them harps. The whole prostrated themselves with profound reverence; the elders had harps and censers, and broke out into a song of praise for redemption. This construction is demanded, because (a) the Greek word more properly agrees with the word elders and not with the word beasts; (b) there is an incongruity in the representation that the living creatures in the form of a lion, a calf, an eagle, should have harps and censers; and (c) the song of praise that is sung (verse 9) is one that properly applies to the elders as the representatives of the Church, and not to the living creatures, 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' "

"Full of Eyes Before and Behind"

The next striking feature connected with these living ones as described by St. John is that they were "full of eyes before and behind." This, their characteristic, in harmony with the interpretation that they represent in one aspect the administration of the government of God, would signify in general, omniscience, or more particularly, an ever-watchful and observing providence — that in the administration of the Divine government everything in connection with it is duly considered, and deliberately purposed; that nothing which has a bearing on that administration escapes notice, nothing can be hidden from the Eternal One, who sits upon the throne; and that all that is hidden in the symbolic sealed scroll in His hand has been pre-arranged. One of the significant features of the symbol is that as one approached the throne from any quarter there would be seen a multitude of eyes looking at him. The eminent expositor already referred to has very clearly explained the meaning of this very striking feature of the symbol: "The ancients fabled Argus as having one hundred eyes, or as having the power of seeing in any direction. The emblem here would denote an ever-watchful and observing Providence; and in accordance with the explanation proposed above, it means that, in the administration of the Divine government, everything is distinctly contemplated; nothing escapes observation; nothing can be concealed.

It is obvious that the Divine government could not be administered unless this were so; and it is the perfection of the government of God that all things are seen just as they are. ... As one looked on their faces, from whatever quarter the throne was approached, he could see a multitude of eyes looking upon him. 'And behind.' On the parts of their bodies which were under the throne. The meaning is, that there is universal vigilance in the government of God. Whatever is the form of the Divine administration; whatever part is contemplated; however it is manifested whether as activity, energy, power or intelligence, it is based on the fact that all things are seen from every direction. There is nothing that is the result of blind fate or chance."

St. John next proceeds to give a more particular description of the living ones. It is a very significant matter, bearing out the above interpretation, that the creatures selected to picture that on which the throne of God rests, together with the administration of His government, are the four that hold primacy in the earth — man, over all others in intelligence, wisdom, etc.; the lion over all the wild, untamed animals; the ox over the tamed animals; the eagle over the feathered tribe. If we are correct in our conclusion that the bodies of these living ones seem to be under the throne, supporting it, the description then is of their heads rather than their bodies. This is certainly the case with the third living one, as it is said that he had a face like a man. That which seems to be denoted by this particular description is that in whatever manner the government of God is administered, some of the characteristics of the lion, the calf or ox, a man, and a flying eagle, will be displayed. In our explanation of these we shall endeavor first to discover the distinctive qualities mentioned as existing in a lion, an ox, a man, and a flying eagle, that are manifest in the administration of the Divine government.

While it cannot be questioned that Justice, Power, Love and Wisdom are the great attributes of God, in which are comprehended all others, as Mr. Mann has truthfully said, and that they operate together in instituting and carrying to a completion the Divine Plan of salvation, yet we cannot see how these four great attributes *can separately, and in the order above mentioned*, be symbolized by these four appearances of the living ones. As an illustration of what we mean: It has been suggested that the lion symbolizes Justice. We do not know of a single Scripture where a lion is used to represent Justice; nor do any of the expositors from whom we quote thus interpret its significance. The various qualities of a lion both good and bad are used as similes in the Scriptures. The lion itself is, as generally understood, the monarch of the forest, the king of beasts, and becomes in the vision, it would seem, the symbol of supreme authority, sovereignty, dominion, and of government in general. This will be seen by comparing Genesis 49:9,10, Amos 3:8, Joel 3:16, Daniel 7:4. The significance of it in the vision under consideration is therefore to be applied to the one who sits upon the throne — that He is the Supreme Ruler of all, and His authority is absolute and universal. Another has observed: "It has been made a question whether the whole body had the form of a lion, or whether it had the appearance of a lion only as to its face, or front part. It would seem probable that the latter only is

intended, for it is expressly said of the 'third beast' that it had the face of a man, implying that it did not resemble a man in other respects, and it is probable that as these living creatures were the supports of the throne, they had the same form in all other particulars, except the front part. The writer has not informed us what was the appearance of these living creatures in other respects, but it is most natural to suppose that it was the form of an ox as being adapted to sustain a burden." Justice is said to be the habitation or foundation of God's throne; and applying this to the kingly qualities symbolized by the lion we have the suggestion that His supreme authority and rulership is administered in Justice.

The second living one is said to be like a calf — better rendered ox. The ox is used for carrying burdens and would signify patient endurance. It was used in the typical Jewish economy for sacrifice. The first seems to be the way it is used in this vision as applied to the throne and government of Jehovah. It would symbolize as applied to that which supports the throne, firmness, strength, stability, patient endurance.

The third living one is represented as having a face like the face of a man. It is this feature that specially distinguishes this living one from the others. It will be interesting as well as profitable in discovering the significance of this symbol to have in mind that in ancient sculptures it was quite common to see the head of a man with the body of an animal. It is evident that these were employed as symbols. Many of these were discovered by Mr. Layard in the ruins of Nineveh. Referring to their use as symbols, he states:

"I used to contemplate for hours these mysterious emblems and muse over their intent and history. What more noble forms could have ushered the people into the temple of their gods? What more sublime images could have been borrowed from nature by men who sought, unaided by the light of revealed religion, to embody their conceptions of the wisdom, power, ubiquity of a Supreme Being? They could find no better type of intellect and knowledge than the head of a man; of strength, than the body of the lion; of rapidity of motion, than the wings of a bird. These winged, human-headed lions were not idle creations, the offspring of mere fancy; their meaning was written upon them. They had awed and instructed races which flourished 3000 years ago. Through the portals which they guarded, kings, priests, and warriors had borne sacrifices to their altars, long before the wisdom of the East had penetrated into Greece, and had furnished its mythology with symbols long recognized by the Assyrian votaries" (*Nineveh and Its Remains*).

There is quite a general agreement that the aspect of a man in this vision denotes intelligence, wisdom, as "It is this which distinguishes man from the creation beneath him"; and if the explanation of the symbol is that of the administration of the government of God, "then the meaning of this emblem is that the operations of the government of God are conducted with intelligence and wisdom. That is, the Divine administration is not the result of blind fate or chance; it is founded on a clear knowledge of things, on what is best to be done, and what will most conduce to the common good. Of the truth of this there can be no doubt; and there was a propriety that in a vision designed to

give to man a view of the government of the Almighty, this should be appropriately symbolized."

"The fourth living one was like to a flying eagle." Keeping in mind the thought that it is a front view of these living ones that is being described by St. John, and their bodies would of course seem to him to be "in the midst," or under the throne, there would be no impropriety in supposing that the form of the body of this living one is not described. The body may have, like the others, formed a support to the throne and be the same as the others. "As in the case of the other living beings, so it is to be remarked of the fourth living creature also, that the *form* of the body is unknown. There is no impropriety in supposing that it is only its front aspect that John here speaks of, for that was sufficient for the symbol. The remaining portion, 'in the midst of the throne,' may have corresponded with that of the other living beings, as being adapted to a support. In further illustration of this, it may be remarked, that symbols of this description were common in the Oriental world. Figures in the human form, or in the form of animals, with the head of an eagle or vulture, are found in the ruins of Nineveh, and were undoubtedly designed to be symbolic."

The characteristic that seems to be employed in this symbol as distinguished from the other living ones, is that of the eagle's power in flight. The eagle is distinguished from other birds by the rapidity, power, and elevation of its flight. "No other bird is supposed to fly so high; none ascends with so much power; none is so majestic and grand in his ascent towards the sun." The symbol seems to describe the rapidity with which the commands of God are carried out in connection with the administration of His government. There are other qualities that distinguish the eagle from others of the feathered tribe, but in this instance the quality here described by a "flying" eagle seems to be the one that is used as a symbol.

It is said in the vision: "And they rest not day and night." Those who are employed day and night fill up the whole time. The meaning seems to be, as applied to the administration of God's government, that because of His possession of these glorious attributes, "the ways and works of God are continually, without cessation, bringing praise, glory, and honor unto Him."

It is further stated, that "when the living ones shall give glory and honor and thanks to the one sitting on the throne, to Him who lives for the ages of the ages, the twenty-four elders will fall down before the one sitting on the throne, and will do homage to Him who lives for the ages of the ages" (Revelation 4:9,10). Understanding the twenty-four elders to represent the Church, the meaning is that the Church and the Church's ministry throughout the age unites in praising God for all that characterizes the administration of His government. In connection with the vision the meaning seems to be that as there occurs any new manifestation of the principles that characterize the Divine government, the Church recognizes it, and in full acquiescence ascribes new praise to God.

"And they will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'Thou art worthy O Lord, even our God, to receive the glory, and the honor, and the power; because

Thou didst create all things, and on account of Thy will they were, and were created" (Revelation 4:10,11).

The interpretation herein set forth, that one signification of the four living ones in their relation to the throne vision pictures the Divine government in action, is a fitting introduction to the visions that follow in the Revelation, and is in perfect harmony with the historical character of those visions. The great purpose of the visions was to show unto God's servants things that would begin to take place shortly after the time the throne vision began to meet its fulfillment, which was just before Christ's resurrection. In the words of another: "The great design [of the visions of the Revelation] was to disclose what God was to do in future times, in the various revolutions that were to take place on the earth, until His government should be firmly established, and the principles of His administration should everywhere prevail; and there was a propriety, therefore, in describing the representatives of the Church as taking part in this universal praise, and as casting every crown at the feet of Him who sits upon the throne. ... To His providential dealings, to His wise and merciful government, they owe it that they are crowned at all, and they thus acknowledge it, by placing their crowns at His feet."

It will be seen that while this throne vision of chapters 4 and 5 portrays, in its most important transaction, Christ being given all knowledge of the Heavenly Father's purposes, yet in some of its features it spans the whole of the Gospel and Millennial Ages. We have now reached the close of the age when the symbolic transaction portrayed by the elders receiving and casting their crowns before Him who sat on the throne is about to be realized. We are enabled to look back and note with an appreciative understanding the significance connected with the various changes that have occurred, unfolding the Divine purposes, realizing that we are near the time when every foe of the Church is about to be overthrown and the whole earth shall bow before Him that sitteth upon the throne.

Chapter Twelve

The Lamb Opening the Sealed Book

(Revelation 4:9-6:11)

"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof" (Revelation 5:9).

We now come to what is divinely stated to be the prophetic portion of the Apocalypse. As we consider in detail the symbolic occurrences seen by St. John in connection with the breaking of the seals, and their application and fulfillment in the history of the Church, let the reader bear well in mind what has already been observed concerning the significance of the sealed scroll, the writing within and on the outside, its opening, etc. Just as the seals of the scroll were broken in the vision one by one in successive order by the Lamb, so, of course, the occurrences were seen by St. John one after another. This seems plainly to teach that the events symbolized by these occurrences begin to meet their fulfillment at the beginning of the age and continue in successive order until the end. The breaking of six of the seals brings the history to the end of the age. The breaking of the seventh discloses visions that carry us back to the beginning of the age again.

As we are now permitted to look back over eighteen centuries since the Revelation was given to the Apostle — these long centuries disclosing events of tremendous importance to the Church — we surely should be able to see the fulfillment of the seals more clearly than those who lived in former times. We conclude, then, that the opening of the seals, the unfolding of the things contained therein, has progressed during the entire Gospel Age; that it has required all the present age and indeed will require all the next age to complete the Divine Plan — to fulfill everything symbolized by the sealed scroll; and that though the Lord Jesus was made aware of important features of the Divine Plan at his consecration at Jordan, as represented by what was written on the outside of the scroll, yet that which was symbolized by the writing on the inside was not revealed to him until after his resurrection. We are encouraged by the Master's words wherein he assures us that as the Father revealed these things to him so he will reveal them unto us, his people. Realizing, then, that our Heavenly Father has hitherto counted us worthy to understand certain other features of His Plan, let us continue to be in that attitude of oneness with Him in which He will be pleased to grant us an understanding of the things contained in these wonderful visions.

The First Seal Opened

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living ones saying, as with a voice of thunder, 'Come.' And I saw, and behold! a white horse, and he who sat on him having a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he came out conquering, and that he might conquer" (Revelation 6:1,2).

Let it be noted first, that whatever connection the "living one" has with the vision, the invitation "Come," (the words "and see" as in the Common Version not being in the original) is not addressed, as some have taught, to St. John, but rather to the horseman. Understanding that these "living ones" represent the attributes, qualities, or principles upon which the Divine throne or government rests, as also the operation of these in connection with the administration of the Divine government, their acting in this vision would signify that all the events now about to occur would be under the Divine administration and would display the Divine principles operating to the accomplishment of the Divine purpose, in the call, trial, and development of the Church.

The horse and his rider were not to St. John's vision mere pictures on the scroll; they were the same to the Apostle as though a real living horseman appeared. The scene of the horseman's action was the earth. In our study of symbolic prophecy we have already learned, from those portions which the Scriptures themselves interpret, that there are two rules to observe: first, we should study the symbol itself before we endeavor to understand its application or fulfillment; second, we should never look for the fulfillment of a symbol in the same phase of life as that from which the symbol is drawn. The only exception to this is where objects are used which from their very nature, nothing could be found to describe, as the Redeemer or the Deity. Where these appear and are clothed in symbols, they always refer to themselves.

Therefore, in seeking to understand the meaning of the vision, let us first study carefully the symbol and discover from what phase of life it is taken. Very evidently the horseman is a warrior, as seen from the "bow," a common weapon of warfare at that time. This is also manifest from the fact that "he went forth conquering and to conquer." The symbol, then, is drawn from military life in the Roman Empire, a phase of life with which St. John was very familiar. The fact that a crown was given to him indicates, first, that he was a victorious warrior; second, that he was not a rebel, but warred in the interest of his own rightful king or ruler; and, third, that he was rewarded for his successful service.

The symbol therefore is that of a Roman general or commander who goes forth making conquests in the interests of his own kingdom, bringing into subjection new peoples and provinces, causing them to become subjects of his kingdom. The symbol being taken from the military life of the Roman Empire, we inquire, In what phase of life shall we find its fulfillment? The answer is that there can be but one phase of life that Christians should look for the fulfillment of the symbol, and that is the religious phase. But what was there in the religious world that is similar to a warrior making conquests and bringing peoples to

yield submission to his king? The reply is that the warrior upon the white horse is manifestly a representation of the true and faithful servants of Christ of the early Church, as in obedience to his command they went forth on their mission of proclaiming the pure Truth — the Word, causing eventually the overthrow of Pagan idolatry, and bringing many of its adherents to yield willing and glad submission to Christ, their King. It evidently has reference to the rapid spread of Gospel Truth in the first and second centuries during the "Ephesus" and the beginning of the "Smyrna" period. The horse represents truth or doctrine. The horse being "white" symbolizes purity — pure doctrines, and victory. The rider being crowned symbolizes success and reward. It will be well here to notice that in contrast to the horseman of the second seal, this one brought peace to his government. The significance of this will be noted as we consider the opening of the second seal.

The historian has not failed to record the rapid spread of Gospel Truth in the first and second centuries. The words of Origen, who lived 185 AD, in his reply to Celsus, describes the marvelous progress Christianity made at this time:

"Any one who examines the subject will see that Jesus attempted and successfully accomplished works beyond the reach of human power. For although from the very beginning all things opposed the spread of his doctrine in the world, both the princes of the time, and their chief captains and generals, and all, to speak generally, who were possessed of the smallest influence, and in addition to these the rulers of the different cities, and the soldiers and the people, yet it proved victorious as being the Word of God, the nature of which is such that it cannot be hindered; and becoming more powerful than all its adversaries, it made itself master of the whole of Greece, and a considerable portion of barbarian lands, and converted a countless number of souls to his religion" (Origen Against Celsus).

Tertullian, another Christian writer of the same time, says:

"The outcry is, that the state is filled with Christians; that they are in the fields, in the citadels, in the islands; they, the pagans, make lamentation as for some calamity, that both sexes, every age and condition, even high rank, are passing over to the profession of the Christian faith" (Tertullian's Apology).

The unbelieving historian, Gibbon, has said:

"While the Roman world was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion quietly insinuated itself into the minds of men; grew up in silence and obscurity; derived new vigor from opposition; and finally erected the triumphal banner of the Cross on the ruins of the Capital. Nor was the influence of Christianity confined to the period or to the limits of the Roman Empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is still professed by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portions of human kind in arts and learning, as well as in arms. ... It has been most widely diffused in the most distant shores of Asia and Africa; and by the means of European Colonies has been firmly established from Canada to Chile, in a world unknown to the ancients" (Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire).

While we recognize the fact that this rapid spread of Christianity ultimately led to a decline in spirituality and developed into a world-wide formal profession, yet wherever it has gone, a few comparatively of the true followers of Christ have been found. In this manner has God's purpose been accomplished in the gathering, the developing, the testing of the elect class. It must also be remembered that Christianity has exerted a powerful influence for good in holding up a standard of righteousness to the nations — an influence more or less enlightening them. In this wide-spread proclamation of the essential truths of Christianity, there was displayed on the part of Christ's followers a recognition of the Divine kingly power symbolized by the first living one like a lion. Their trust in this Divine power gave them courage to go forth and conquer. Thus was the administration of the Divine government made manifest.

The Second Seal Opened

"And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living one saying, 'Come.' And there came out another, a red horse; and to the one sitting on him was it given to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill each other; and there was given to him a great sword" (Revelation 6:3,4).

In examining this symbolic horseman, we discover from the great sword that was given him, that he, like the first, was a warrior; the only difference in this respect being that the great sword is suggestive of greater destructiveness than the bow. Like the first horseman he was an aggressive warrior. The result of this second warfare was that peace was taken from the earth. The significance of this is that he makes use of his "great sword" in the endeavor to overthrow the empire he ought to uphold, and thereby destroys the peace he should be striving to promote. This warrior is a usurper, and has turned his hand against his own government. Unlike the first warrior, his conquests were made for selfish ends, and he was not crowned. Civil war is here described.

This symbol, like the other, is drawn from military and political life in the Roman Empire. Familiarity with the history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire will enable us to call to mind the long line of conspirators and usurpers that rapidly followed each other from the reign of Commodus, 183 AD to Diocletian, 284 AD. These conspirators and their conspiracies made the lives of the rulers insecure, and frequently resulted in strife, bloodshed, and disaster among the people. Of all conflicts among men, civil war is one of the most terrible and cruel in its effects.

Here then we have the symbol; where shall we look for its fulfillment? This also is found in the religious world. The agents symbolized by this horseman are false teachers who usurp the power of Christ. It is what the Savior called, "Nicolaitanism," which early began to be established in the Church. It refers to the creation of the office of diocesan bishops, which came about in this way: It was the custom of the Lord's consecrated in each city to meet together for convenience in different assemblies. Necessarily, there would be a bishop or elder (which in the Scriptures are synonymous titles) of each of these assemblies. All were elected by the assemblies, and served as elders or bishops of the congrega-

tions that elected them. Before the Second Century closed, disagreement and strife arose concerning the settlement of disputes, either of doctrine or church government. Councils were held, at which certain persons were appointed who were given jurisdiction over a certain number of churches, to whom everything of this kind was referred. These decisions were final. These persons to whom were given the name diocesan bishops after a little time used their offices as a means of carrying out their own selfish purposes, claiming of course that these were of God. It was the beginning of what finally in the early part of the Sixth Century (539 AD) culminated in the usurpation of power by the Bishop of Rome as head of all the churches over the world. This began about the middle of the Second Century and by the powers assumed and exercised by these so-called bishops, discord, strife, and divisions (instead of peace, concord, and unity) were introduced into the Church. We quote the historian:

"In this (second) century the polity of the Church was quietly organized. There was an organized fellowship among the members; bishops had become influential; not in society but among the Christians; dioceses and parishes were established; there was a distinction between city and rural bishops; delegates of churches assembled to discuss points of faith or suppress nascent heresies; the diocesan system was developed, and ecclesiastical centralization commenced; deacons began to be reckoned among the higher clergy; the weapons of excommunication were forged; missionary efforts were carried on; the festivals of the Church were created" (Old Roman World).

The color of the horse, red, denotes that the pure doctrines symbolized by the white horse, had become defiled; false, impure doctrines were substituted and thus peace — that spirit of faithful and harmonious cooperation — was taken away and a state of strife and contention, envy and jealousy among God's professed people obtained. Thus would be required on the part of Christ's true followers, the development and exercise of the Divine qualities of firmness, strength, stability, and patient endurance, symbolized by the second living one like an ox.

The Third Seal Opened

"And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living one saying, 'Come,' and I saw, and behold! a black horse, and he who sat on him having a balance in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living ones saying, 'A chenix of wheat for a denarius, and three chenices of barley for a denarius; and the oil and the wine thou must not injure' " (Revelation 6:5,6).

This symbol is that of a civil ruler exercising the authority of a judge as shown by the balance (scales) in his hand; also by the mention of the wheat, barley, oil, and wine, the thought being that he exercised power over these articles. It describes a class of Roman emperors who instituted a series of unjust and excessive taxations, thereby causing poverty and famine among their subjects. A chenix was a little over a quart; a denarius was a day's wages for the average man. This would in ordinary times buy eight quarts of wheat, and a propor-

tionate quantity of barley. This utterance implies great scarcity, indeed famine, want. This is the symbol.

The fulfillment reveals a still further decline in the professed Church, and evidently refers to those so-called teachers and bishops who, professing to be placed over the flock to feed it, robbed the flock of spirituality and that which supported spiritual life. Discontinuing to preach Christ and the Word, they substituted forms and ceremonies instead. There were introduced at this time into the Church, formal fastings, celibacy, and asceticism as a so-called means of sanctification. The development of these conditions was gradual throughout the Third Century, and has continued ever since in the Romish Church and in some others. We quote again from Lord's Old Roman World:

"It was not till the Fourth Century — when imperial persecution had stopped; when Constantine [the Roman Emperor] was converted; when the church was allied with the state; when the early faith was itself corrupted; when superstition and vain philosophy had entered the ranks of the faithful; when bishops became courtiers; when churches became both rich and splendid ... when monachists [monks] had established a false principle of virtue ... that men of rank entered the Church. ... The Church was not only impregnated with the errors of Pagan philosophy, but it adopted many of the ceremonies of oriental worship. ... Communion tables became imposing altars typical of Jewish sacrifices, and the relics of martyrs were preserved as sacred amulets. Monastic life also ripened into a grand system of penance and expiatory rites. Armies of monks retired to gloomy and isolated places, and abandoned themselves to rhapsodies and fastings and self expiation. They were a dismal and fanatical set of men overlooking the practical aims of life. ... The Emperor decided points of faith."

Civil war, the symbol of the second seal, generally produces famine, that of the third; and herein we see the close connection between both the symbol and the fulfillment of the second and third seals.

If we are correct in our interpretation of the distinctive feature of the third living one — his having a "face like a man" — as denoting intelligence, wisdom, it would represent that these Divine qualities would need especially to be developed in the Lord's followers and exercised in carrying forward the Divine purposes in this state of affairs in the professed Church. All the real vital truths of Christianity had at this time been counterfeited by Satanic influences to such an extent as to deceive nearly all of the professed Church, indeed, nearly the whole world. It would, therefore, be only the exercise of Divine wisdom on the part of Christ's true followers that would enable them to perceive the condition of affairs, and to conduct themselves in harmony with the Divine purpose.

The Fourth Seal Opened

"And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living one saying, 'Come.' And I saw, and behold! a pale horse, and one was sitting on him, whose name was death, and hades followed after him; and there was given to him authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth" (Revelation 6:7,8).

In this symbolic horseman (personified as death) and his follower, hades (the state of death), we see a combination of the evils of the two preceding seals with the addition — to destroy with wild beasts. As showing that this is a symbolic picture we quote the masterly argument of another:

"It would require a very strong imagination to harmonize this statement with the commonly accepted view that hades is a place of torment of such immense size as to be capable of receiving and torturing the fifty thousand millions of the earth's population. Nor could any one see the slightest consistency in using a symbol representing such a place of torment riding on horseback. But the reasonableness of the symbols, death and the state of death, destruction ... stalking through the earth and sweeping off large proportions of the human family, is entirely consistent" (C. T. Russell).

This symbol is also drawn from the political life of the Roman Empire. It is that of a Roman emperor, who, like the second horseman, causes civil strife and war in the empire, and like the third, reduces his subjects to want and famine by excessive taxation. The significant addition to this is that he causes them to be killed by wild beasts in the arena. The fact that the horseman is personified as "death," and that "hades" followed him, is designed to add to the force of his inhuman and unspeakable cruelty.

The fulfillment is, like the others, found in the religious world. It portrays the heading up of the Antichrist, the establishment of the great persecuting Papal hierarchy, which claimed and assumed to rule in the place of Christ on the earth. This system commanded and encouraged all the evils of the two preceding symbolic horsemen, namely the substitution of forms and ceremonies for the preaching of the Word of God — the introduction of formal fastings, celibacy, and asceticism (monasticism), as a so-called means of sanctification. This system also introduced many other idolatrous practices into the Church. That, however, which is particularly described in this symbolic horseman is his "killing with the beasts of the earth." The beasts of the earth represent the governments of the divided Roman Empire. The meaning of the symbol is that the evil religious system, the Papacy, incited these governments, represented in their rulers, to persecute and to put to death, those Christians who refused to submit to its false teachings, its rule and authority. In the loosing of the seals Christ saw the gradual decline and fall of the Church, and the establishment of this wicked false system that had given to it power over the saints until a "time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:21,25, Revelation 13:1-8).

The doings of the fourth symbolic horseman reaches to 1799, when the "saints were delivered out of his hand" and his power to put to death ceased. He was given authority to kill with the "wild beasts of the earth." History has for all time decided the meaning of this symbol. Mr. Russell has very ably summed up the account of the historian:

"The persecutions of the Christians under Pagan Rome were not worthy of comparison with those under Papal Rome, being less frequent, more limited in extent and much less severe. It is stated on the authority of the early Christians,

that the majority of the Roman magistrates who exercised in the provinces the authority of the emperor, or of the senate, and in whose hands was the power of life and death, behaved like men of polished manners and liberal education, who respected the rules of justice. They frequently declined the odious task of persecution, dismissed charges against the Christians with contempt ... or suggested to accused Christians some legal evasion. ... How different the persecutions of Papacy, which laid hold not only of prominent opposers but of all, and whose persecutions lasted not for a few months only, but incessantly! ... Kings and princes who trembled for the security of their crowns, if they to any extent incurred the Pope's displeasure, and whose realms might be laid under a dreaded interdict, should they or their people refuse to render absolute obedience to the Pope's commands, were sworn to exterminate heresy, and admonished to purify their provinces from heretical perversity, on the pain of having their dominions wrested from them; and those barons who neglected to aid in the work of persecution forfeited their estates. Kings and princes, therefore, were not tardy in their efforts to comply with the mandates of the Papacy ... as early as the year 630 AD the Council of Toledo compelled the King of Spain, on his accession to the throne, to swear to tolerate no heretical subjects in the Spanish dominions. ... The Council of Oxford in 1160 consigned a company of Waldenses, who had emigrated from Gascony to England, to the secular arm for punishment. Accordingly, King Henry II ordered them, men and women, to be publicly whipped, branded on the cheek with a red hot iron, and driven half-naked out of the city in the dead of winter; and none were permitted to show them pity or to grant them the slightest favor. ...

"The Waldenses and Albigenses were the most numerous bodies of Protestants against Papacy; and when the literary awakening of the Thirteenth Century came, it was mainly from these that the truth shone out, though reflected and intensified in utterance by Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, and others. And their doctrines, backed by simplicity and morality, shone out with greater lustre in contrast, to the pompous pride and flagrant immoralities of the then exalted Papacy.

"Then it was that popes, councils, theologians, kings, crusaders and inquisitors combined their fiendish powers to exterminate every opponent, and to extinguish the faintest rays of dawning light. Pope Innocent III first sent missionaries to the districts in which the doctrines of the Albigenses had gained foothold, to preach Romanism, work miracles, etc.; but, finding these efforts unavailing, he proclaimed a crusade against them and offered to all who would engage in it the pardon of all sins and an immediate passport to heaven without passing through purgatory. With full faith in the pope's power to bestow the promised rewards, half a million men — French, German and Italian — rallied around the standard of the cross, for the defense of Catholicism and the extinction of heresy. Then followed a series of battles and sieges covering a space of twenty years. The city of Beziers was stormed and taken in 1209, and the citizens, without regard for age or sex, perished by the sword to the number of sixty thousand, as reported by several historians. The blood of those who fled to churches, and were murdered there by the holy crusaders, drenched the altars and flowed through the streets."

It will be recalled that the fourth living one was like a flying eagle. The eagle's power of flight seems to be the quality that constitutes the force of this symbol. In chapter 12 it is stated that the woman, representing the virgin Church, was given "wings like a great eagle." The symbol in general represents the protecting power of God over His people (Exodus 19:4). It would seem in the symbol under consideration to represent the exercise of the protecting power of God in giving a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures — lifting the Church on eagles' wings as it were, above the false doctrines and idolatrous rites, thus enabling her to escape the destruction that threatened her through Papacy's idolatries and persecutions.

Thus did our Lord Jesus, in the breaking of these four seals, have given to him a knowledge of the rise and exaltation of the false, persecuting church system; thus did he have revealed to him the cruel and terribly trying circumstances and conditions which the Heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom saw best to permit in order to develop the Little Flock of joint-heirs of the Kingdom; and he in turn gives to the Church this revelation. The details, the times and seasons, etc., of this history, are more minutely described in succeeding visions.

The Fifth Seal Opened

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Revelation 6:9-11).

It will be of special assistance to the student in understanding this and other visions of the book of Revelation, if he will keep in mind that the throne vision of Revelation 4 and 5 is continually before the Apostle's sight; he is continually beholding the Lamb as he breaks the seals and opens the book. For a time his attention would be diverted from the throne scene to the movements of the horsemen upon the earth; but during this time he would frequently hear voices proceeding from the actors of the throne vision. As an illustration, the four "living ones" say to the horsemen, "Come"; and in connection with the opening of the third seal, he heard a voice proceeding from the midst of the "living ones." And now in connection with the opening of the fifth seal his attention is taken away from the actions of the horsemen on the earth and turned again to the throne scene. Another object is seemingly for the first time brought to view. It is that of an altar, evidently an altar of sacrifice, as is shown in the symbolic transactions occurring in connection therewith. It was on the altar of sacrifice in the services of the typical tabernacle that the "bullock," representing the man Christ Jesus, was sacrificed, was consumed. It was also on this altar that the "Lord's goat," representing the footstep followers of Christ, was sacrificed. The altar in fact represents Christ's ransom sacrifice: The believer's justification is

accomplished "by faith in Christ's ransom sacrifice, represented in the brazen altar." Here in this vision we have a picture of Christ's followers, accepted in the merit of his sacrifice, following in his footsteps, faithful unto death — martyrs. The fiery trials and persecutions they encountered in connection with their testimony resulted in numerous instances in their suffering death. We are not to suppose, however, that all who were put to death by the great anti- Christian system were footstep followers of Christ — many of these, while doubtless believers, could not properly have had any claim to membership in this class.

Let us bear in mind again that the faithful martyrs were really not there in person under the altar. While they were to St. John's vision real enough, yet it was all a vision, a picture of the faithful, suffering souls, pouring out their lives, which in the Levitical type is represented as blood flowing down to the base of the altar. Thus Mr. Russell remarked:

"Some of these martyrs of the past are pictured to us under the fifth seal. ... This is a symbolical picture of justice long deferred crying for vengeance, representing those who are actually dead and know not anything, and cannot know anything until the resurrection."

The "white robes" being given to them, indicates their righteous standing before God and their acceptance through the merit of Christ.

The "little season," during which they were told that they should rest, is interpreted by one expositor to be three hundred and sixty years. This view does not seem to be well sustained, for there is nothing in the statement to indicate an exact period of time. As expressed by the writer last quoted: "The answer to this query before the seat of Justice is given. We are told that it would be but a little while until others are similarly maltreated, and the intimation is given that then [after the little while] the judgment will come which will compensate for the whole."

The period covered by the martyr cry would seem to have reached its climax when the twelve hundred and sixty years of Papal dominion over God's saints ended, about 1799. The "little season" of "rest," according to this interpretation, covers the period generally understood as the "time of the end." The language, "till both their fellow-servants and their brethren who were about to be killed even as they," teaches that others would lay down their lives in sacrifice before the number of the elect ones would be complete.

Chapter Thirteen

The Approaching End of the Age

(Revelation 6:12-17)

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:12-17).

It seems apparent that if we were to view the stupendous occurrences described in connection with the opening of this sixth seal from a literal standpoint, their fulfillment would mean nothing less than the end of the material world, and also man's existence in it. The fact, however, that in the immediate context (Revelation 7:1) four angels are represented as holding in check the threatening winds of destruction until certain ones of humanity were sealed, would indicate a delay until this work of sealing is accomplished. Since these startling occurrences are to be interpreted symbolically, it seems impossible to understand them as describing any thing short of an end of the present order of things, political, social, and religious.

It will be in order at this point in our exposition to call attention to the fact that many early expositors apply this sixth seal to the events occurring in connection with the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire in the Fifth Century. Their reason for this interpretation is their belief that the events described in connection with the loosing of the seventh seal *followed* immediately those of the sixth. We would be unable to concur in this interpretation. Such stupendous scenes depicted in this vision can have reference only to an end of the present order.

Literal Signs of the End

Understanding that the fifth seal describing the martyr cry of "how long," terminated with the Papacy's domination over the saints at the end of the Eighteenth Century, as already explained, we would expect that the events described

under this sixth seal would begin to meet their fulfillment *about that time*. Furthermore, we would understand that while these events would be of such a nature as to threaten the overthrow of the present order, yet they would be checked, held back for a time, until certain Divine purposes would be accomplished. This period during which the restraining influence would be exerted is in the fifth seal stated to be a "little season." It is evidently referred to by the Prophet Daniel as the "time of the end," during which there would be a most phenomenal increase of knowledge, and a "running to and fro." Certain events of a very startling nature did occur in connection with the ending of Papal domination over God's saints and were interpreted by many students of the Bible as indicating the beginning of the "little season." These events occurred in the material world in the order mentioned in this vision: first, the great earthquake at Lisbon in 1755; second, the darkening of the sun and moon in 1780; and, third, the falling of the stars or great meteoric shower in 1833. These three occurrences have been understood by many expositors as those referred to by Christ in his great prophecy: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Matthew 24:29). It would seem that the "great tribulation" mentioned here was fulfilled in the persecutions of Papal Rome, and ended in the closing years of the Eighteenth Century. They evidently have had a literal fulfillment in the past, and are now having a symbolic fulfillment. Concerning their literal fulfillment the following observations are interesting:

"On May 19, 1780 (still 'in those days,' the 1260 years of Papal power, but after that power had begun to wane and the brunt of the tribulation had passed) a phenomenal darkening of the sun occurred, for which scientists of that time and since have never been able to account. That this was no ordinary occurrence is sufficiently established by competent testimony.

"The darkening of the moon at its full the night following, seems to have been little less remarkable than this darkening of the sun. ... This unaccountable day, except as a sign from the Lord, is reckoned to have extended over 326,000 square miles — an area about twenty-five times the size of Palestine, to which the signs of the First Advent were limited. Indeed, the fact that these signs were chiefly confined to the New England and Middle States need not surprise us, when we remember that the first movement amongst the 'Virgins' (Matthew 25:1-5) was chiefly in the same locality. And that God should use the 'land of liberty' for sending the message of these signs to the world, is no more wonderful than that He has been pleased to send from the same quarter, many of the modern blessings and inventions and lessons recognized by the whole world, and aptly emblemized by the gift of the great French artist, Bartholdi, to New York harbor — the statue of 'Liberty Enlightening the World.' ...

"The noted astronomer Herschel, says:

" 'The dark day in Northern America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which will always be read of with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain.'

"Webster's Dictionary, 1869 edition, under the head of Vocabulary of Noted Names, says:

" 'The dark day, May 19, 1780 — so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England. In some places, persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barn-yard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree of duration in different places.'

"The Connecticut Legislature was in session that day and adjourned. The *Journal of the House* notes the matter as follows:

" 'A solemn gloom of unusual darkness before ten o'clock — a still darker cloud rolling under the sable curtain from the North and West before eleven o'clock — excluded the light so that none could see to read or write in the House, even at either window, or distinguish persons at a short distance, or perceive any distinction of dress in the circle of attendants; wherefore, at eleven o'clock adjourned the House till two in the afternoon. Friday, May 19, 1780.'

"A minister of that time, and an eye-witness, Reverend Elam Potter, preaching on the 28 inst., nine days after it, is reported to have used the following language:

" 'But specially I mention that wonderful darkness on the 19th of May, inst. Then, as in our text, the sun was darkened; such a darkness as was probably never known before since the crucifixion of our Lord. People left their work in the house and in the field; travelers stopped; schools broke up at eleven o'clock; people lighted candles at noon-day; and the fire shone as at night. Some people, I am told, were in dismay, and thought whether the day of judgment was not drawing on. A great part of the following night also was singularly dark. The moon, though in the full, gave no light, as in our text.'

"Tract No. 379, published by the American Tract Society — *The Life of Edward Lee*, says:

" 'In the month of May, 1780, there was a very terrific dark day when all faces seemed to gather blackness, and the people were filled with fear. There was great distress in the village where Edward Lee lived; men's hearts failed them for fear that the Judgment Day was at hand; and the neighbors all flocked around the holy man, for his lamp was trimmed and shining brighter than ever amidst the unnatural darkness. Happy and joyful in God, he pointed them to the only refuge from the wrath to come, and spent the gloomy hours in earnest prayer for the distressed multitudes.'

"We quote as follows from Judge R. M. Devins, in *'Our First Century':*

" 'Almost, if not altogether alone, as the most mysterious and as yet unexplained phenomena of its kind in nature's diversified range of events during the last century, stands the dark day of May 19, 1780; a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England, which brought intense alarm and distress to multitudes of minds, as well as dismay

to the brute creation — the fowls fleeing, bewildered, to their roosts, and the cattle to their stalls. Indeed, thousands of the good people of that day became fully convinced that the end of all things terrestrial had come; many gave up, for the time, their secular pursuits, and betook themselves to religious devotions. It was a wonderful dark day.'

"Judge Samuel Tenney, LL.D., wrote of this 'dark day' to the Historical Society in 1785, saying:

" 'Several gentlemen of literary ability have endeavored to solve the phenomenon, yet I believe you will agree with me, that no satisfactory solution has yet appeared.'

"Noah Webster, LL.D., wrote in 1843, in the *New Haven Herald*, concerning this dark day, and said, 'I stood and viewed the phenomenon. No satisfactory cause has yet been assigned.'

"Reverend Edward Bass, D.D., First Episcopal Bishop of Vermont, in his diary for May 19, 1780, wrote: 'This day is the most remarkable in the memory of man for darkness.'

"The darkening of the moon at its full the night following seems to have been little less remarkable than this darkening of the sun; a witness, Judge Tenney of Exeter, NH, is quoted as follows:

" 'The darkness of the following evening was probably as gross as has ever been observed since the Almighty first gave birth to light. I could not help conceiving at the time, that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable darkness, or struck out of existence, the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eye was equally invisible with the blackest velvet.' ...

"Half a century passed before the next sign appeared, the falling of the stars from heaven, as when a fig tree casteth her unripe fruit when shaken of a mighty wind. Our Lord's words found a fulfillment (though not their complete and only fulfillment, as we shall see later) in the wonderful meteoric showers of the early morning of November 13, 1833. Those inclined to quibble by urging that 'the *fixed* stars did not fall' are reminded that our Lord said nothing about fixed stars falling, and that *fixed* stars could not fall: their falling would prove that they were not *fixed*. The Scriptures do not distinguish between stars and meteors as is commonly done in our day.

"Shooting stars, and even meteoric showers are not uncommon every year, and some years more than others. It is computed that 400,000 small meteors fall to our earth annually. But these are nothing in comparison to the great shower of November 13, 1833, in which millions on millions fell.

"Prof. Kirkwood, in his work entitled *Meteorology*, says, 'Until the close of the last century they [meteoric showers] never attracted the attention of scientific men.'

"Prof. D. Olmstead, LL.D., of Yale College, wrote:

" 'Those who were so fortunate as to witness the exhibition of shooting stars on the morning of November 13, 1833, probably saw the greatest display of celestial fireworks that has ever been seen since the creation of the world, or at least within the annals covered by the pages of history. ... This is no longer to be regarded as a terrestrial, but a celestial phenomenon, and shooting stars are now to be no more viewed as casual productions of the upper regions of the atmosphere, but as visitants from other worlds, or from the planetary voids' (*New Haven Press*).

"Mr. Henry Dana Ward, at the time a New York merchant, later an author and Episcopalian minister, wrote:

" 'No philosopher or scholar has told or recorded an event, I suppose, like that of yesterday morning. A Prophet eighteen hundred years ago foretold it exactly, if we will be at the trouble to understand falling stars to mean falling stars. ... Truly the stars of heaven fell unto the earth as in the Apocalypse. The language of the Prophet has always been received as metaphorical; yesterday it was literally fulfilled' (*Journal of Commerce*, November 14, 1833).

"We quote the following account from *The American Cyclopedia*, Volume XI, page 431:

" 'The year 1833 is memorable for the most magnificent display on record. This was on the night of November 12, and was visible over all the United States and over a part of Mexico and the West India Islands. Together with the smaller shooting stars which fell like snowflakes and produced phosphorescent lines along their course, there were intermingled large fireballs, which darted forth at intervals, describing in a few seconds an arc of 30 or 40 degrees. These left behind luminous trains, which remained in view several minutes, and sometimes half an hour or more. One of them, seen in North Carolina, appeared of larger size and greater brilliancy than the moon. Some of the luminous bodies were of irregular form, and remained stationary for a considerable time, emitting streams of light. At Niagara the exhibition was especially brilliant, and probably no spectacle so terribly grand and sublime was ever before beheld by man as that of the firmament descending in fiery torrents over the dark and roaring cataract. It was observed that the lines of all the meteors, if traced back, converged in one quarter of the heavens, which was *Leonis Majoris*; and this point accompanied the stars in their apparent motion westward, instead of moving with the earth toward the East. The source whence the meteors came was thus shown to be independent of the earth's relation, and exterior to our atmosphere.'

"Prof. von Humboldt devotes fifteen pages of his work, *Personal Narrative*, to this phenomenon; and declares that it was visible over an area of eleven million square miles.

"M. Beupland, a French savant, who witnessed it in Humboldt's company, says of it: 'There was not a space in the firmament equal to the extent of three diameters of the moon that was not filled at every instant with bolides and falling stars' " (C. T. Russell).

Symbolic Fulfillments

In the symbolical fulfillments we notice as first in order that of the "great earthquake." We must not confound this earthquake with that recorded in Revelation 16:18. In a literal earthquake the surface of the earth in a great section of country is violently disturbed — mountains, hills, valleys, forests, and rocks being removed out of their places. The fulfillment can be found only in violent civil, political, and religious agitations and changes. The inevitable conclusion is that the French Revolution, beginning in 1789, is referred to. It was the French government that more than any other for centuries upheld and carried out the Papal decrees of persecution of the saints, and as in the visions, we now reach the end of Papacy's power in this direction, we would look for momentous disturbances in the French government. Mr. Guinness makes the following interesting observation:

"Taken as a whole the French Revolution was a convulsion, in which the angry passions of men, set free from all restraint, manifested themselves with a force and fury unprecedented in the history of the world, against monarchial, aristocratic, ecclesiastical, and religious institutions. Let these things be considered in the light of a mighty and successful revolt against, and overthrow of absolute monarchial power, and Papal tyranny and usurpation, and it will at once be granted that nothing similar had ever occurred previously, in the history of the fourth great empire. Terribly iniquitous had been the career of the monarchial power thus rudely overthrown; and fearfully corrupt the priesthood and religion thus utterly and with abhorrence rejected. A solemn character of retribution attaches to even the worst excesses of the French Revolution. The Papacy in the hour of its agony was exultingly reminded of its own similar cruelties against Protestants. Papists were treated according to the example set by Papists of other days, and the worst barbarities of revolutionary France could not out-Herod the previous barbarities of Papal France."

To this agree the words of Mr. Russell: "In the symbolic language of Revelation, the French Revolution was indeed a 'great earthquake' — a social shock so great that all 'Christendom' trembled until it was over; and that terrible and sudden outburst of a single nation's wrath, only a century ago, may give some idea of the fury of the coming storm, when the wrath of all the angry nations will burst the bands of law and order and cause a reign of universal anarchy. ... A nation intoxicated with Babylon's wine of false doctrines in church and state, and long bound by priestcraft and superstition, there vomited forth its pollution and spent the force of its maddened rage. In fact, the French Revolution seems referred to by our Lord in his Revelation to John on Patmos as a prelude to, and an illustration of, the great crisis now approaching. It should be observed also that the same causes which operated to bring about that great calamity, are now operating to produce a similar, but far more extensive revolution, a revolution which will be world-wide."

This great revolution began with an outbreak or insurrectionary movement at Paris in July, 1789, including the destruction of the Bastille. On January 21, 1793,

Louis XVI was beheaded. It was brought to an end in 1794 when Robespierre himself suffered on the guillotine the fate to which he had condemned countless numbers of his countrymen. Thus was fulfilled the *first* event of the sixth seal.

Concerning the other symbols and their fulfillments it has been observed: "The *sun* as a symbol represents the Gospel light, the Truth — and thus Christ Jesus. The *moon* as a symbol represents the light of the Mosaic Law. As the moon is a reflection of the light of the sun, so the Law was the shadow or reflection beforehand of the Gospel. The [twelve] *stars* as symbols represent the inspired teachers of the Church — the Apostles. The *heavens*, as already shown, represent the ecclesiastical powers of Christendom. A combination of these symbols is found in Revelation (12:1) where the 'woman' symbolizing the early Church is represented as clothed with the sun, that is, resplendent in the full, clear light of the unclouded Gospel. The moon under her feet represents that the Law which supports her is nevertheless not the source of her light. The twelve stars about her head as a crown, represent her divinely appointed and inspired teachers — the twelve Apostles" (C. T. Russell).

The sun, moon, and stars, and the electrical disturbances in the heavens exert a marvelous influence in the physical world. For the sun to become black and the moon to become as blood, would change their influence from good to evil. In the same manner, when the sunlight of truth becomes darkened, when those who are looked upon by the world in general as light (truth) bearers, substitute false pernicious doctrines for truth and become tyrannical persecutors, it can but result in great evil to humanity, and sooner or later bring the judgment of God upon the false light bearers. Concerning the symbolical fulfillment of this darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the powers of the heavens, the same writer goes on to say:

"Wherever we look we can recognize the fact that while God's consecrated people are being specially fed and enlightened at the present time, yet with the nominal Church it is not so. Its sun is being darkened; its moon is being turned into blood; and its stars are falling. The center of the Gospel light has from the first been the cross of Christ, the ransom; and however boldly Papacy set up the competitive sacrifice of the Mass, the saints of God have always held fast to this blessed centre of all God's promises, and of all His people's hopes. They have held to it, even though its philosophy has been almost entirely hidden from their view.

"True, there have been a few all along who, not understanding the ransom, and unable to harmonize it with other truths, and especially with their errors, rejected it. These, however, were rare exceptions to the rule. ... Today only a small minority of the professed ministers of the cross recognize its value or preach it. On the contrary, much of the teaching now aims to disclaim and disprove that we were 'bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ,' and substitutes for this the theory of Evolution, claiming that Christ's value to the sinner consists in his words and example merely. Thus the sunlight of the Gospel is daily becoming more and more obscure. ...

"As the sunlight of the ransom becomes obscured, so the moonlight of the Mosaic Law, which in its sacrifices foreshadowed the ransom, must of necessity become obscured also. It is no longer uncommon for public teachers to refer to the bloody sacrifices of Israel, required by their law, as barbaric. Once, when they saw by the true light of the Word of God, they appreciated the Apostle's statement that Israel's sacrifices were foreshadowings of 'better sacrifices' for sin; but now, refusing the antitype, the ransom, and denying original sin, and all need therefore of sacrifices for it — the typical sacrifices are repudiated also and esteemed barbaric. Thus the darkening of the Gospel sunlight results in the darkening of the moonlight. 'The moon shall be turned into blood.' And Joel (2:10) adds that 'the stars shall withdraw their shining,' which signifies that when the Gospel light is obscured, and the Law comes to be regarded merely as a meaningless and barbaric ceremony of blood, then the teachings of the God-ordained twelve stars of the Church (the Apostles) will also fade from view — cease to be recognized guides or lights.

"As we have seen, God has recognized or appointed twelve apostolic stars for the Church. From these and the moon and the sun all the enlightenment of the Church was to proceed. ... But Papacy, assuming ecclesiastical lordship of earth, has placed or 'ordained' various stars, lights, 'authorities,' 'theologians,' in her firmament and the various Protestant denominations have done likewise, until the whole number is innumerable. But God, while providing helps, evangelists, and teachers to His true Church has not ordained them with the authority of lights or stars. On the contrary, all of his faithful followers are instructed to accept as light only those rays of truth seen to proceed from the sun and moon and twelve stars ordained for that purpose."

Another of the symbolical signs that is to be fulfilled in this "little season," the time of the end, covered in the opening of this sixth seal is stated: "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." The fulfillment of this feature we would look for in the present ecclesiastical heavens in connection with an attempt on the part of the Protestant and Roman Catholic divisions of ecclesiasticism (the nominal heavens) to unite that they might prevent the overthrow of the present order, as has been expressed:

"Religious people in general, not discerning that God's time has come for a change of dispensation, will ignore reason, logic, justice, and Scripture in defending the present order of things. It will be of little consequence then that the ecclesiastical heavens (the religious powers, Papal and Protestant) will have rolled together as a scroll (Isaiah 34:4, Revelation 6:14). The combined religious power of Christendom will be utterly futile against the rising tide of anarchy when the dread crisis is reached. Before that great army [Joel 2:1-11], all the host of heaven [the Church nominal] shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll [the two great bodies which constitute the ecclesiastical heavens; viz., Papacy and Protestantism, as the two distinct ends of the scroll are even now rapidly approaching each other, rolling together, as we have shown]."

Concerning the fulfillment of the symbolism of verses 15-17, it would indeed seem reasonable to suppose that "as the trouble increases, men will seek, but in vain, for protection in the 'dens' and caves, the great rocks and fortresses of Society (Free Masonry, Odd Fellowship, and Trades Unions, Guilds, Trusts, and all societies, secular and ecclesiastical), and in the mountains (governments) of earth; saying, 'Fall over [cover, protect] and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come.'

"In that time, financial institutions, including insurance companies and beneficial societies, will go down; and 'treasures' in them will prove utterly worthless. These caves and rocks of the mountains will not furnish the desired protection from the wrath of this 'evil day,' when the great waves of popular discontent are lashing and foaming against the mountains (kingdoms)" (Revelation 6:15-17). The great collapse of present institutions portrayed in this vision is described by all the Prophets as well as by Christ and the Apostles. It is called by Daniel (12:1) "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." It is described by Christ (Matthew 24:21) as "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

What of the Night?

Watchman, tell us of the night —
What its signs of promise are,
Traveler, o'er yon mountain's height,
See that glory-beaming star!

Watchman, does its beauteous ray
Aught of hope or joy foretell?
Traveler, yes; it brings the day —
Promised day of Israel.

Watchman, tell us of the night;
Higher yet that star ascends.
Traveler, blessedness and light,
Peace and truth its course portends.

Watchman, will its beams alone
Gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveler, ages are its own;
See, its glory fills the earth.

Watchman, tell us of the night,
For the morning seems to dawn.
Traveler, darkness takes its flight,
Doubt and terror are withdrawn.

Watchman, will earth's sorrows cease,
And God's will on earth be done?
Traveler, yes, the Prince of peace,
Earth's appointed King has come!

Chapter Fourteen

The Great Whirlwind and the Divine Sealing

(Revelation 7:1-17)

"And after these things I saw four angels standing on four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (Revelation 7:1-4).

Another symbolic picture under the sixth seal representing strange and startling scenes passed before the Apostle's vision. The scene of the vision is the earth and its surroundings. St. John is represented as seeing all the varied signs indicating a great and terrible tempest; indeed that of a whirlwind seemingly about to burst in fury over the entire earth. This whirlwind is symbolic and is intended to portray the terrible scenes of the "great tribulation," mentioned in verse 14. The same scenes are referred to under another symbol, already considered, and are called the "great day of his wrath" (Revelation 6:15-17). The great whirlwind of ruin is represented as being held back for a time until a work is accomplished, figuratively described as sealing the servants of God in their forehead.

In connection with other startling scenes, St. John hears voices, which proclaim the full results of the ministry of the Gospel from Pentecost to the end of the "great tribulation" at the Second Coming of the Lord. The declarations of these voices are summed up as follows:

(1) "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (Revelation 7:4).

(2) And "after this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. ... And he [one of the elders] said to me, These are they which came out of [the] great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9,14).

In these two statements we have a description of what is termed the "little flock," and the "great multitude" — the two classes taken out of the world during the Gospel Age. While the full results of all evangelistic effort of the Gospel Age are declared in connection with the occurrences of this vision, yet the vision itself covers merely the period that is termed by the Savior in Matthew 13:39 the "harvest, the end of the age." The teaching undoubtedly is that in order to accomplish the necessary and important work of the "harvest," the awful "whirlwind" of the "great tribulation" is held in check — for after the whirlwind is let loose then will be the "night when no man can work." In this connection the following words written a quarter of a century ago, are worthy of very close attention on the part of those who are observants of the significant and notable signs of the times:

"Revelation (7:1-3) teaches us that the wars, whose dark clouds have threatened the civilized world so ominously for the past thirty years, have been miraculously hindered to give opportunity for 'sealing' the Lord's consecrated people in their foreheads (intellectually) with the present Truth. We are therefore to expect that when these winds of war shall be let loose, it will mean a cataclysm of warfare which shall divide kingdoms (mountains) — prefigured by the mighty wind shown to Elijah, which rent the rock. But God's Kingdom will not follow the epoch of war: the world will not thus be made ready for the reign of Immanuel. No, a further lesson will be needed and will be given. It is represented in an earthquake. Throughout the Scriptures an earthquake seems always to represent revolution, and it is not unreasonable to expect that an era of general warfare would so arouse the lower classes of Europe and so discontent them with their lot (and especially with the conditions which would follow such a war) that revolution would be the next thing in order. If so, the earthquake made known to God's people is the one referred to in Revelation 16:18. But severe though those revolutionary experiences will be to the world they are not sufficient to prepare men to hear the voice of God. It will require the fire from heaven — an epoch of Divine judgments and chastisements upon a maddened but unconverted world wild in anarchy, as other Scriptures show us. The results of their wars and revolutions and anarchy — the failure of their schemes and the lessons of Divine judgments will, however, have an exhausting and humbling effect and prepare man for God's revelation of Himself in the still small voice" (C. T. Russell).

The momentous events that have occurred in the world since the above words were written, particularly since the year 1914, seem most strikingly to confirm the correctness of this interpretation. To those acquainted with the Scripture prophecies that describe the manner in which this Gospel Age will close, it seems quite certain that we are living in the period of time covered by the vision of the four angels holding in restraint the symbolic winds of strife. Referring to some of the scenes connected with this great day of wrath as they will relate to the Lord's people, Mr. Russell's statement is of deep significance:

"The night of darkness and intense opposition to the Truth will ere long be upon us and will hinder you from engaging in the service. ... When that is true,

you may know that 'the door is shut,' that all the wise virgins have entered in, that all have been proved, and that all vacancies have been acceptably filled. All the special 'servants of God' having by that time been 'sealed in their foreheads' (given an intellectual appreciation of God's Plan), the four winds will be loosed (Revelation 7:1-3), and will produce the great 'whirlwind' of trouble in the midst of which the remnant of the Elijah class will be 'changed,' and exalted to Kingdom glory."

Concerning the whirlwind in connection with which the Prophet Elijah was taken away, which, if a type, seems evidently to have reference to the same scenes described in this vision of St. John, the same writer says:

"The whirlwind in the type should be interpreted, in harmony with general Scripture usage, as signifying a fierce trouble — a trouble, too, which would agitate the heavens or ecclesiastical powers as an earthquake would represent disturbances of the social conditions. Thus read in advance of the fulfillment the type seems to imply that the end of the Elijah class will occur amidst great ecclesiastical commotions, accompanied by fiery trials — thus we think probably the change will come to the last members of the elect 'body.' "

It would seem, therefore, that the great whirlwind of this vision, relates to the "great day of God's wrath," the period in which the present world order, civil and religious, will be swallowed up in anarchy. In the language of another, these symbolic winds represent "combinations and masses of men under the influence of new and exciting opinions; multitudes and nations roused to passion and uniting in a violent demolition of social and political institutions, and the destruction of those who obstruct their ambition or repress their madness, like the whirlwinds driving in every direction over land and sea, stripping the trees of leaves and boughs, and whirling them into the air, prostrating dwellings, wrenching the sturdy forests from their seats, and strewing the earth with ruin and the ocean with wrecks."

The four winds denote that in the climax of the trouble all the various combinations and masses of men will be acting at one time.

But who or what is represented by the four angels standing on the four corners of the earth who are commanded by the angel from the sun-rising to hold back the symbolical winds from blowing, and who, after the sealing work is accomplished, were given power to let them loose? Some endeavor to interpret them as representing the "little flock" of Christ's faithful followers. Let us examine this interpretation. First, we inquire, Is the "little flock" anywhere else represented in the vision? The answer is, They are referred to in plain literal language as "the servants of God" on the earth who are to be sealed. It is further noted that after the advent of the angel from the sun-rising, these servants become associated with him in the work of sealing also: "And he [the angel from the sun- rising] cried with a loud voice ... saying, Hurt not the earth ... till we [plural] have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." On this point Mr. Russell has remarked that "it is their mission [the mission of the servants] to gather together the elect and to seal them in the forehead (intellectually) with the knowledge of the Truth."

The angel from the sun-rising would, we believe, represent our Lord Jesus Christ, and his faithful saints. If this is the correct deduction, it is manifest at once that the four angels who hold back, and then finally loose the four winds, cannot be the "little flock," for these are engaged in the work of sealing, while the four angels are represented as having been commanded by the angel from the sun- rising to do an entirely different work, namely to hold the winds in check and to loose them after the Lord's servants have finished their work of sealing. Again we inquire, What do the four angels represent? As assisting in the elucidation of this point, we note that at a certain period in the vision these four angels were about to let loose the winds, and were commanded to still hold on for a time. Be it noted, too, that these four angels are therefore closely associated with the winds, indeed, they cause the winds (whirlwind). Let us keep in mind what is represented by the symbolic winds, and this will assist us to discover who caused them. It would seem that these four angels must refer to those forces of evil called by one of the Prophets (Joel 2:2- 11), "the Lord's great army." The same troublous time is doubtless referred to by this symbolic whirlwind. In this connection note the following interesting comment:

"Can it be that 'the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God' (Ephesians 6:17), in the hands of the people of God, who are filled with His spirit, shall accomplish the great work of overthrowing all the kingdoms of this world and giving them to Christ? ... It is evidently not the saints who are to constitute the Lord's great army, referred to by the prophets, for the overthrow of the kingdoms of this world: nor are the weapons of their warfare sufficient to this end. Their weapons are indeed mighty, as the Apostle says, among those who are influenced by them. Among the true people of God, who diligently apply their hearts unto instruction, His Word is sharper than any two-edged sword ... but not so do the weapons of this warfare operate upon the world. The army of the saints is, moreover, not a 'great army,' but a 'little flock,' as our Lord himself designated it (compare Luke 12:32, Joel 2:11)."

The angels that arouse these tempestuous winds do not represent the "little flock," for this is not their work; to overthrow the present order is not the work of the Church on this side the veil, although their declaring the truth of God's Plan may be a factor in the "increase of knowledge" (Daniel 12:4) which will bring about the discussions that cause these symbolic winds. The four angels represent rather the "authors, the propagators of these opinions; the fomenters and directors of the violence which they excite. That they are not to enter upon their work till the angel from the sun-rising can seal the servants of God implies that though the elements of devastation are already in existence, yet their being blown upon by a whirlwind is to be a consequence of their sealing. It is by that process that the religious and political atmosphere is to be brought into the requisite state for the generation of the great destructive tempest."

The four angels then represent all the powers that excite and direct the violent action of the various elements, factions, and parties that will have to do with this great whirlwind of trouble. In this symbolic picture the earth represents orga-

nized society; the sea, the irreligious, restless, unsettled masses of men; and trees, men as individuals.

In view of the foregoing considerations it is not to be wondered at that a careful examination of this vision and a comparison of its various details with the other Bible prophecies has led many earnest prophetic students to believe that we have already entered into that period of time during which the sealing process should be recognized as progressing amongst the faithful children of God — the time otherwise designated by our Lord as the Harvest time which he said was the end of the age. Mr. Russell was one of these who was quite positive, and his observations in this connection are worthy of the most careful consideration:

"The present is the time for the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads, before the storm of trouble bursts (Revelation 7:2,3); and every wise virgin should appreciate this privilege of the present, both for his own intellectual sealing with the present Truth, and also for engaging in the Harvest work of sealing others of the wheat class and gathering them into the barn of security, before the night cometh and the door of opportunity to labor is shut. . . . Observe that, when this night cometh, when the reapers *must* cease their labors, it will prove that this final work of the Gospel Age is accomplished ... for God will not permit anything to put an end to His work until it is finished."

"Between the time when Babylon is cast off, falls from favor, and the time when the plagues or troubles come upon her, is a brief interval, during which the faithful of the Lord's people are all to be informed on this subject, and gathered out of Babylon [and tested] ... This same interval of time, and the same work to be accomplished in it, are also referred to in symbol, in Revelation 7:3. To the messenger of wrath the command is given, 'Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.' "

"And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (Revelation 7:4).

Various interpretations have been given concerning whom the hundred and forty-four thousand represent. The view most general among Historical expositors of the Revelation is that they represent the entire "election" out of the Gospel Age, from Pentecost to the Second Advent; that ... "As a grand lesson of the Divine sovereignty, and as a sublime contradiction to all evolution theories, God elected to call to this place of honor (as 'the Bride, the Lamb's wife and joint-heir' (Revelation 21:2,9, Romans 8:17), not angels and cherubs, but some from among the sinners redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb. God elected the number to be thus exalted (Revelation 7:4), and predestinated what must be their characteristics if they would make their calling and election sure to a place in that company to be so highly honored; and all the rest is left to Christ, who worketh now as the Father worked hitherto."

"He ordained also that a certain specific number should be chosen from amongst men to be his [Christ's] joint-heirs in the Kingdom — participants with

him of the New Creation. We have every reason to believe that the definite, fixed number of the elect is that several times stated in Revelation (7:4, 14:1), namely 144,000 'redeemed from amongst men.' "

Some Futurist expositors cite as an objection to the interpretation that these 144,000 represent all the elect ones, that this number is stated by St. John as being the number selected in the comparatively brief period of the holding back of the four winds. Our reasoning, to the contrary, is that St. John simply states that he heard the entire number of the sealed ones, not necessarily that they were all sealed during the Harvest period. The sealing of these last ones had associated with it the impartation of special knowledge of the Divine Plan — a knowledge which was necessary for them to have that they might be enabled to overcome the many perils and dangers to be encountered and thus make their calling and election sure. This period is the same time described by the Master as fraught with special snares and pitfalls, making it necessary for God's people to "take heed" (Luke 21:24,25).

Concerning the significance of this sealing work, the remark seems well in place that "to seal the servants of God, is not to constitute them *as such;* it is *as His servants*, not as His enemies, that they are to be sealed, and the change wrought by their sealing is not so much in their character but their aspect. The symbol denotes, therefore, that the servants of God, ere the whirlwind of ruin begins, are to be led to assume a new attitude towards the nominal Church and anti-Christian rulers, by which, and in a manner never before seen, they are to be shown as His true people."

The question concerning the authority of God over the faith, worship, and methods of service of His true people, as distinguished from the claims made by a man, a man-made church system, or a religious or business organization, will become so thoroughly discussed and made so clear by Scripture interpretation, that the last faithful company of true believers on earth will understand and appreciate it, and will feel called as though by a voice from heaven, to separate and keep separate from all those who make and endeavor to force such claims. To rise to such a relation and fill such a position, has never been assumed and maintained by any body of believers since the "falling away" in the early centuries. It is one of the special tests that began to be applied to the Lord's consecrated at the beginning of the Harvest period — this time during which the tempestuous winds have been held back. It is a test that has recently been applied again by the Great Head of the Church, and continues even unto this present moment. Let us ever keep in mind that when a church or organization assumes the right of determining what the faith of its adherents shall be, they at once assume jurisdiction over them. When they claim that they are *the* channel, the *only* channel, through which truth must flow, they are asserting the powers of Christ and the twelve divinely appointed channels. When they go further and seek to compel in any manner or degree a submission to themselves, they usurp the authority and rights of God, and would compel an homage to themselves which is due only to Him. To perceive and appreciate these things is to discern the rights of God in their greatness and sanctity. To publicly assert and vindicate them, in opposition

to those who claim them, and to withdraw from such, will be to rise to an attitude toward them, and toward God, that His servants as a body *are now called upon to assume*. Let him that readeth understand!

Thus do we have depicted one of the characteristics of the sealing work of this angel ascending from the sun-rising. This sealing is accomplished by imparting through the holy Spirit of Truth a clear understanding of the Divine Plan. This understanding will cause the Divine attributes of wisdom, justice, love, and power to become fixed principles of action in all our dealings with our fellowmen. We shall again meet this elect company in our consideration of chapter 14:1-4, where they are represented as standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, and their peculiar relationship to the Lamb in this vision describes more definitely the characteristics of the Divine sealing. In regard to this sealing let us not make the mistake that some have made — that of making the seal of the living God, in possession of the angel from the sun-rising, to be the same as the seals that were on the scroll. The significance of the two uses of the word seal is not the same. This will be considered more fully when in our examination of chapter 8, the breaking of the seventh seal comes before our attention.

The reader's attention is now called to the significance of the expression: "An hundred and forty and four thousand *of all the tribes of the children of Israel*." We will be greatly assisted in our understanding of this if we keep in mind God's purposes and methods in the bestowment of His elective favors. In conferring His favors, He has chosen that it shall be to the Jew first (Romans 3:1, 9:4,5). But let it be carefully noted that "the great favor of becoming joint-inheritors with Messiah, which Israel, except the faithful 'remnant' (Isaiah 1:9, 10:22,23, Romans 9:28,29, 11:5), thus missed by their blindness and hardness of heart, was offered to believing Gentiles; not to Gentile nations, but to justified believers of every nation — though the favor was at first, for three and a half years [after Pentecost], confined exclusively to believers of the nation of Israel. Blinded as a people by national prejudices, the great prize which they were offered first, but of which they were unworthy, goes to a holy nation, a peculiar people, composed of a worthy 'remnant' of their nation, with others called out from Gentile nations, whom in their arrogant pride they once despised as 'dogs.' "

"Israel indeed desired and sought the best God had to give; but 'Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election [the 'little flock' selected from both Jews and Gentiles] hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.' "

Thus Gentile converts are compared to wild olive branches grafted in where the natural branches had been broken off the original cultivated olive tree — natural Israel. " 'Blindness in part' was to continue only 'until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in' (Romans 11:25), or, in other words, until the full number from among the Gentiles, who are to be members [with the remnant of Israel] of the Body or Bride of Christ, would be fully selected."

Briefly summing up the facts of Scripture that have a bearing on the interpretation of the passage under consideration (Revelation 7:4), the inevitable conclusion is:

(1) God predestinated that the number of the joint-heirs should be 144,000, but did not predestinate who the individuals should be.

(2) According to previous arrangements, God's own chosen people, Israel, should have the first offer. While He knew that there would not be enough faithful ones among them to make up the full number, He predetermined to leave the individual responsibility with them, and granted them sufficient time so that all the "elect" could have been of that nation, the quota of each tribe being 12,000.

(3) When the period of special favor ended, the call or invitation had not secured the requisite number to fill the quota of each tribe.

(4) God still retained the original cultivated "olive tree," but the rejection of this chief favor, except by a "remnant," left but few of these special branches on the olive tree.

(5) The call was then extended to those who would believe of the Gentile nations (wild olives), for a sufficient length of time to obtain the required number of special branches in each tribe.

Arrayed in White Robes Bearing Palm Branches

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 7:9-17).

Subsequent to the vision during which St. John heard the number of the elect, the sealed ones, his attention was diverted for a time from earthly objects, to witness a marvelous scene in the vast expanse, before the rainbow encircled throne. There he beheld an immense throng an innumerable company standing, clothed in white robes, and he recognized them as a band of saved ones from the earth — of all nations and tribes and tongues and peoples. The white robes, representing personal purity, completeness, perfection, shows their public acceptance before the Heavenly Court, in the presence of the angels and of the Lamb. They have in their hands palm branches, symbolizing, no doubt, the

ultimate victory they experience, their great joy because of their deliverance from the destructive elements of the great "whirlwind" of trouble, which came after the sealing of the elect was completed. They ascribe all the glory and honor of their salvation to God and to the Lamb, thus showing that their salvation is fully realized at last, and that their days of trouble and trial are over. Their conflict with sin and the powers of darkness is ended — they have entered into the bliss of the Haven of Rest.

That their salvation is finished is shown by their having been assigned stations before the throne, thus entering into the joys of the service of God in His temple. Whatever may have been the depth of their sorrow or the extent of their bitter disappointment and anguish, as they found themselves in the midst of the terrible scenes of the great trouble, their trials, afflictions, and sorrows are now all in the past, and the remembrance of them will only serve to increase their gratitude to their Deliverer, and add to their happiness. Their robes have been made spotless in the blood of the Lamb. Their forgiveness is complete; they will never need forgiveness again, as they will never more be stained with sin. Their full reconciliation to the one who sits upon the throne is shown by the fact that He takes up His abode in their midst. Nevermore are they to experience want, for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne is to feed them and lead them beside the fountains of living waters of truth.

Some one has most eloquently portrayed the bliss of this innumerable company of saved ones: "How glorious their change! How vast and majestic a change from the weaknesses, the sins, the conflicts, the miseries that before marked their existence, the agonies of death and the darkness and ruin of the grave, to which they were doomed because of their offenses! And in what harmony with this is the homage of the angelic hosts who witness their acceptance. They bend in prostrate homage and ascribe to Him the blessing and the glory and the wisdom and the thanks and the honor and the dominion and the might forever and ever, which implies that the redemption of this innumerable multitude is finished, and indicates their understanding of its nature, their sense of its greatness and beauty." The angelic host, the elders, and the living ones, who witness their acceptance, know the honor and dignity of the service they perform in the temple in which God Himself is to take up His abode.

As we carefully note the description of this great multitude, their blessedness, their joys, as they stand before the throne, and the welcome they receive from all the actors of the vision, there cannot help but arise in our mind the inquiry, What more could possibly be added to their bliss and happiness? If it were a question simply of their own satisfaction with their blissful state, there would seem to be nothing that could be added to their enjoyment. However, we are not having described in this picture the "little flock," the "joint-heirs," who inherit the glory that excelleth and who will be kings and priests unto God and the Lamb. The description of the future happiness and of the station the latter occupy and of their employment in the coming Kingdom is reserved to a future vision (Revelation 20:4,6, 21:9-27).

Who, then, is this great multitude? or to express this inquiry in the words of one of the elders who performed an important part in the vision, "These who have been invested with white robes, who are they?" St. John to whom the inquiry was addressed was unable to answer, but while endeavoring to restrain his eager desire to know, replied, "My Lord, thou knowest." Then the elder who seemed to have an understanding of everything connected with the Divine purposes, replied, "These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (verses 13,14).

It would be perfectly reasonable to understand from these words, first, that the four angels had loosened their hold of the four winds (Revelation 7:1), and the great whirlwind had spent its force — that the "great day of wrath" (Revelation 6:17) had come and its terrible scenes were past; second, that when the great tribulation (a more literal description of the great whirlwind) had swept in, following the sealing of the 144,000, it found a great company of the Lord's consecrated ones on the earth, to pass through the trials and afflictions of those terrible scenes in which the anti-Christian powers are destroyed; and, third, that their white robes (imputed righteousness of Christ) which, when the great tribulation began, were found to be spotted, would have to be washed in the blood of the Lamb before they could enter the Heavenly Court. This would imply that the scenes of the great tribulation were necessary to them to complete the development of character and the purification required to enter upon the enjoyment of their final state in glory.

In our endeavor to discover more particularly who are represented by this great multitude, we again caution the reader to keep in mind that the whole scene is symbolic — that what St. John saw represented an occurrence in the distant future from his day; also, that the event symbolized by the great whirlwind, and referred to more literally as the "great tribulation" has not yet occurred. The fulfillment is still future, though doubtless in the near future. More than this, a considerable number of these represented in the vision may possibly be now living upon the earth.

There have been several views held by Historical expositors of the Revelation concerning who are represented by this innumerable multitude. We believe, however, that those who have made the most careful and thorough examination of this text clearly recognize that this class represents a separate and distinct body from the "elect ones," "the one hundred and forty-four thousand." Some have held that the 144,000 represent those who are living at the Second Advent, and meet their "change" without dying. These expositors understand that the great multitude represents those of the saved ones who have lived throughout the age, and are resurrected at its close, and that these together with the 144,000 constitute one class. The general description, however, will not harmonize with this interpretation, for one is evidently an elect class and the other is not. Other Scriptures teach that the "dead in Christ shall rise *first,"* which would conflict with such an interpretation. There are other reasons why this interpretation cannot be the true one. The fact that they are described as serving God in His

Temple, distinguishes them from the "elect class," who are symbolized by the temple itself (1 Corinthians 3:16,17, 2 Corinthians 6:16). As observed by Mr. Russell:

"While the number of those who wear the robe of Christ's righteousness is, as compared with the numbers of the world, small indeed, yet how large a proportion of these are not walking in white, but have their robes greatly spotted by contact with the world, the flesh, and the devil — by unfaithfulness or by carelessness, worldliness. ... Is there no hope for these, who fail to be overcomers, who fail to walk in white, who fail to gain the crown and the immortality to be bestowed only upon the 'elect,' 'worthy,' 'overcomers'? Yes, thank God! We rejoice that there is hope for these, because they have not cast off their wedding garments, even though they have gotten them sadly spotted and soiled by contact with the world. ... After telling of the sealing of the elect class, the spiritual Israel, the peculiar people zealous of good works, the Little Flock, the Bride, the overcomers, a definite, predetermined number, 'a hundred and forty and four thousand,' gathered out of Babylon before the winds of the great tribulation are let loose upon the world, all of them bearing the seal or mark of God's favor in their foreheads — a noticeable intellectual evidence of Divine favor, the impress of the spirit of the Truth, as well as the Word of Truth, our Lord shows us the 'great multitude' of his followers, 'whose number no man is able to tell' (that is, it is not a foreordained or fixed number — none were called to be of this company), who will eventually stand before the Lord 'clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands' crying, 'salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.' Who are these who are not of the Bride, the elect class, the overcomers, is the question? The answer is 'These are they which came out of [the] great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore [on this account] are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple' " (Revelation 7:9,10,13-15).

Those who have studied and weighed carefully the words of our Savior in the Gospels, and those of the Apostles in their Epistles, cannot have failed to note that a distinct and definite destiny, as a reward, is to be realized by those faithful overcomers who in full loyalty follow in the Master's footsteps to the end of their race. Likewise we find in these utterances plain statements that teach unmistakably that some, because of a lack of zeal, etc., will lose the great reward, the prize, which the most faithful ones obtain, and yet be saved, "so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 5:5, 3:13-15). The Savior's words, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36), are among the exhortations that teach this same line of thought. The Apostle John's words: "Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye may receive a full reward" (2 John 8, Revised Version) is another warning that well supports this view. The Apostle Paul evidently teaches the same in his exhortatory letter to the Corinthians, as we read: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon

this foundation gold, silver, precious stones [Divine truths and corresponding character or], wood, hay, stubble [traditional errors and corresponding unstable character]; every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). A careful consideration of the following will be profitable in this connection:

"Other Scriptures (Revelation 7:9,13-17 and 1 Corinthians 3:15) show us that there will be 'a great company' who during this age have entered the race for the grand prize of joint-heirship with Jesus, and who fail to 'so run' as to obtain it. These, though 'castaways' as regards the prize (1 Corinthians 9:27), are nevertheless objects of the Lord's love; for at heart they are friends of righteousness and not of sin. Hence, by His providences through the circumstances of life, the Lord will cause them to come through 'great tribulation,' thus accomplishing for them 'the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.' (1 Corinthians 5:5). They consecrated their justified human life, and God accepted that consecration and reckoned them, according to their covenant, dead as human beings and alive as new — spiritual — creatures. But, by their failure to carry out the contract of self-sacrifice, they cut themselves off from the 'Royal Priesthood' — from membership in the Body of Christ."

"The marks of distinction between this 'great company' and the 'little flock' are very pronounced, both as respects their present course and their future blessing. The faithful overcomers watch and keep their garments unspotted from the world. And this is given as one of the special conditions of acceptance as 'overcomers' to joint-heirship with the Lord — 'they have not defiled their garments.' (Revelation 3:4). They have kept 'their garments unspotted from the world.' They have not been willing to permit sin to contaminate them and to separate them from the Lord, but have quickly applied for and obtained the precious blood to remove every stain. They are so heartily opposed to sin and so earnest about the keeping of this garment unspotted, that the Adversary gets no hold upon them — 'the wicked one catcheth them not' (1 John 5:18). All of this indicates a full submission of their wills to the will of Christ — they are 'dead with Him,' hence could not willingly practice sin. Their reward is the crown of life, immortality, to be seated in the throne, and to constitute the temple of which our Lord is the capstone, the chief cornerstone.

"Now contrast with these the 'great company,' lacking the intense love and zeal of the overcomers, they do not keep their garments with sufficient care, and as a result they lose all the rewards promised the overcomers; and, having failed in the race, they would get nothing, if it were not for our Lord's grace.

"But God's grace cannot admit to heavenly perfection those who have not robes of spotless righteousness; and hence we are shown that these who have not cared for their garments and kept them white must be put through a severe experience before they can in any sense of the word be sharers of heavenly favors. These severe experiences are shown in the symbol as washing their

robes in a great tribulation. But to show that not the penances or sufferings would cleanse the robes, though these might be necessary as proper punishments and disciplines, it is particularly stated that the efficacy for the cleansing is the 'blood of the Lamb.' Many will thus be purged, purified, and their garment now sullied by contact with the world, often in the garb of nominal churchianity, will be cleansed of every guilty stain, when they, realizing the folly of their course, shall repentantly appeal to the Lord and use his help.

"But sad disappointments attach to the experiences of this company; it is because they fear the reproaches of Christ that they shirk present privileges and opportunities for walking with him in white in the 'sufferings of this present time': behold, they not only miss the present joy and rejoicing of those who are faithful, but eventually they must come through still greater sufferings, if they would attain even to a lower place. ...

"Probably the majority of this 'great company' of tribulation saints are living today; for at no time in the past was there the same degree of knowledge of God and His Word, except in the early Church of apostolic times: never did so many profess to be the Lord's by consecration; and never were there so many subtle seductions from the 'narrow way' of self sacrifice."

The distinctions between the "little flock" and the "great company" are pictured in the wonderful prophecy of the King's Son, his Bride and the virgins her companions of Psalm 45, and we submit further remarks by the same author:

"It is appropriate that we should remind ourselves afresh of the beautiful suggestion laid before us through the Prophet David respecting the wedding garment of the Bride (Psalms 45:9-14). Here the Lord, through the Prophet, tells us that the Bride as the Queen shall be presented before the King in 'raiment of fine needle work' as well as in 'clothing of wrought gold.' The gold clothing, as we have heretofore seen, represents the immortality (an element of the Divine nature) with which the Church shall be invested in her resurrection glory. The raiment of fine needle work can be none other than the fine linen garment, clean and white, mentioned in Revelation. But here we have the additional suggestion given, that this garment will be finely embroidered. The robe that was merely loaned to us at first, and which constituted our invitation to the marriage, to joint-heirship with the King's Son, was not at first our own, it was merely loaned or imputed to us. But it became a permanent gift from the Bridegroom to as many as accepted the invitation to union with him; and examining it carefully, they found upon it in delicate outline a stamping in graceful lines, corresponding to the richly embroidered robe worn by the King's Son. The suggestion of copying his robe was not only thus hinted at, but it was plainly declared that all who would be accounted worthy to be his 'elect' companions, should in all respects be copies of the Bridegroom (Romans 8:29).

"The careful setting of the stitches in the embroidering of this wedding garment has been the chief duty and constant occupation of the espoused virgin while waiting for the nuptial feast, at the return of the Bridegroom. True, much of the embroidering now done by us is very imperfect, because of first, our unskil-

fulness, secondly, our imperfections, and thirdly, the disturbing influences about us (the world, the flesh, and the devil). Nevertheless, we can well understand that it is the blessing of experience that is designed, and that every painstaking effort is strengthening character, and bringing us into fuller sympathy with our Lord; and that he, when he inspects his Church, will take pleasure in even our imperfect results, if they give evidence that we have bestowed effort, because desirous of bringing all into conformity with his will; and he will accept of our imperfect work as though it were perfect, and in the resurrection he will grant us ideal bodies with ideal powers and the ideal character embroidered perfectly upon the new robe, which will be ours through his grace.

"And even here, the great company, the foolish virgins, not worthy to be the Bride, and hence rejected from that place of the 'elect,' are nevertheless pictured, in verses 14 and 15 — 'The virgins her [the Queen's] companions that follow her shall be brought to thee; with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought [even though it be through great tribulation they shall ultimately shout Hosanna!]; they shall enter into the King's palace" (C. T. Russell).

Another difference between these two classes is "distinctly shown in Revelation 7. The little flock — 144,000, the spiritual Israelites — represent the faithful members of the Body of Christ glorified; the other, a great multitude whose number was not fixed or predestinated by the Lord, which will come through tribulation and receive palm branches as servants before the throne, rather than crowns as overcomers in the throne."

As an aid to our understanding of the visions that follow, we here summarize our conclusions regarding the opening of the seven-sealed scroll, in the following manner:

(1) We have seen the Lord Jesus, the only one found worthy, given power by the Eternal One to open the seven-sealed scroll. Up to this point of our studies, six seals have been broken by him, the seventh yet remains. The breaking of the six seals was, to the Lamb, a revelation of the future history of his followers, embracing the whole Gospel Age. The particular time that this knowledge was given him was after his resurrection, before his ascension, when all power in heaven and in earth was committed to him.

(2) To St. John, who was a spectator of the Divine drama, it meant simply to see the symbolic transactions themselves.

(3) To the followers of Christ at this time it signifies that they have the privilege of seeing that the actors and events which the symbols foreshadow, have been graven very distinctly on the pages of history, and only a small measure now awaits fulfillment.

"And when [we read next] the Lamb opened the seventh seal," the complete scroll of Jehovah's purposes was made known to Christ. This must have taken place before his ascension. At this time, the words "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" had their fulfillment. It began at Christ's ascension to heaven. This symbolic silence is followed by St. John's beholding seven angels standing in the presence of God to whom were given seven trumpets.

Chapter Fifteen

The Half Hour's Silence and the Angel with the Golden Censer

(Revelation 8:1-5)

"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" (Revelation 8:1).

The last occurrence described by St. John under the sixth seal was that of the innumerable multitude in heaven standing before the throne. They are described as having just passed through the great tribulation, which was caused by the four angels letting loose the four winds. This event evidently closes the first series of visions, and it is seen that their fulfillment covers the entire Gospel Dispensation, and the New Dispensation is introduced. The seventh seal is here recorded as opened by the Lamb; the symbolic transactions that occur under it, in the order described, are as follows:

(1) The symbolic silence.

(2) The giving of seven trumpets to seven angels.

(3) The symbolic angel taking much incense for the prayers of the saints into the presence of God.

(4) The filling of the censer with fire from off the altar, and casting it to the earth, causing voices and thunders and also an electrical storm — flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

(5) The seven angels next seen making preparations to sound their trumpets.

(6) Finally, the sounding of the trumpets consecutively.

It will be well for the reader to bear in mind that as verses 15 to 19 of chapter 11 plainly state, the events occurring in connection with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, beginning with the events of the close of the Gospel Age, the Harvest, cover the entire thousand-year period of Christ's glorious triumph, which includes the resurrection of the dead and the restitution to Paradise of all the willing and obedient.

Some seem to be under the impression that in view of the fact that the seventh seal is described as being opened after the first six, therefore the events of the seventh must necessarily follow those of the preceding six seals. The incorrectness of this reasoning, however, is discerned at once, when we bear in mind that the transactions and occurrences of the six seals bring us down to the introduction of the Millennial reign, while the nature and character of

many of the events of the seventh seal are such that we *must* find their fulfillment somewhere during the reign of Satan and evil, and before the opening of the New Dispensation. In other words, the unavoidable conclusion is that the events under the seventh seal cover much the same period as the preceding six seals, namely the period of the Gospel Age, and that they have their fulfillment in the order given above. Many of the Lord's consecrated have in some way obtained the impression that the events of this seventh seal do not begin to be understood until the Harvest time. Our conviction is that this is not the correct thought, for as another observes: "During the Christian Age, some of the saints sought to understand the Church's future by examining this symbolic book, and doubtless all who read and understood even a part of its teachings were blessed as promised (Revelation 1:3). *The book kept opening up to such*, and in the days of the Reformation was an important aid to Luther in deciding that the Papacy, of which he was [at one time] a conscientious minister, was indeed the 'Antichrist' mentioned by the Apostle, the history of which we now see fills so large a part of that prophecy. Thus gradually God opens up His Truth and reveals the exceeding riches of His grace; and consequently much more light is due now than at any previous time in the Church's history."

The visions studied by Luther that enlightened his mind concerning the Antichrist, are recorded under this seventh seal. Let it not be overlooked that the subject matter of the visions of the seventh seal is the same as that of the six preceding seals — the toiling, suffering, persecuted Church of Christ, as it bears testimony to the Gospel, encountering opposition and tribulation at the hands of the anti-Christian powers. The chief difference between the events portrayed under the symbols of the first six seals and those of the seventh is that under the seventh, the rise and activities of the anti- Christian systems, and the eventful career of the true Church are described more in detail. The six seals are more in the nature of a general outline or picture; the seventh sets forth *many details*, and is a more complete view, in which we have revealed to us the various activities of the Church, her triumphs and victories in giving her testimony to the Truth, and its effect upon the various systems of error. Several very prominent epochs are described, particularly those of the "time of the end" and the "harvest" period. It will, therefore, be seen that the fulfillment of the first recorded visions of chapter 8, which are stated to be under the seventh seal, are to be looked for at the beginning of the Gospel Age, and not at its close.

In view of all the facts and circumstances, the logical conclusion is that the breaking of this seventh seal by Christ, signified that he had disclosed to him at this time all the various features of the Divine plans and purposes. The fulfillment of this scene in which the Lamb breaks the seventh seal must have occurred at or soon after his resurrection. The fact that on the occasion of his last conference with his disciples on the mountain in Galilee, just before his ascension, he told them that all authority and power was given to him, implies also that a perfect understanding of all matters in connection with which that power was to be exercised, was committed to him.

His resurrection from the dead proved that his great sacrifice was acceptable to the Father (Acts 17:31), although the merit of it was not applied in behalf of any until his appearance in the presence of God in heaven (Hebrews 9:24). The very fact of his resurrection by the Father proved conclusively that he was then worthy to understand and carry out the Divine will and purpose. It did not require the application of that merit in behalf of the Church to make him worthy to understand and worthy to execute all the Father's purposes. The acceptability of his sacrifice, therefore, made possible the giving of this wonderful power and knowledge to him prior to his ascension. However, before St. John himself saw the symbolical transactions of the seventh seal, before he saw or heard anything more, he informs us that a period of "silence" followed, lasting "about a half hour."

Up to this time the Apostle had been continuously hearing voices and witnessing symbolical occurrences either before the throne or upon the earth, etc.; but when the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there came a cessation of activities, both in the scene of the throne vision and on the earth. Concerning the symbolical significance of this "silence" there are two very important things that must not be overlooked in our investigation:

(1) The very fact that a half hour is mentioned implies that symbolic time is referred to.

(2) That while the expression, *half an hour*, would of itself refer to an exact definite period of time, yet the fact that the word "*about*" is used, meaning a little more or a little less, changes the complexion of the matter somewhat and leaves us to look for something that would be either a little more or a little less than a half hour of symbolic time. When symbolic time is employed in the Scriptures, a year of 360 days invariably is represented by a "day"; an hour being one twenty-fourth part of a day would, therefore, represent fifteen days; a half hour would be seven and a half days; and "about" a half hour would be either a little more or a little less than seven and a half days. Expositors of the Revelation have searched in vain for a period in history in which there was a cessation of activities in connection with the work of carrying forward the Divine purposes. Whenever an application has been attempted, the time feature has been ignored. One eminent expositor has explained the symbolic "silence" to be a brief but indefinite period when no new agents were to go forth to work important changes in the world. This interpretation is founded upon the fact that as this "silence" precedes the sounding of all seven of the trumpets, the fulfillment of it must also precede the events symbolized by all the trumpets. We believe that this is the only logical conclusion to be reached in locating the "silence."

Let the fact be borne in mind that all the seals of the scroll were opened by Christ, including the seventh (in the sense that he was given to know the entire significance of the scroll) before his ascension, which evidently teaches that he was given to understand *then* all the Father's plans and purposes; but that St. John himself did not have disclosed to him the symbolic occurrences of this *seventh* seal until the "silence" ended; this enables us to locate the symbolic "silence" as the period beginning at Christ's ascension, and ending with the descent of the

holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. This period was, as is stated in the Scriptures, ten days in length, which would fulfill the requirements of the symbol, "about the space of half an hour" — seven and one-half days. Immediately preceding his ascension to heaven, Christ commanded the disciples, that before beginning their work they tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on High (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4). Thus we see that according to a Divine command all activities on the part of the disciples were to cease during this period — they were to wait and tarry in silence. The reason for this command is very apparent: first, they needed to be endued with Divine power and illumination from on High and thus be qualified to execute the Divine commission; second, he must appear in the presence of God and there arrange for the imputation of the merit of his sacrifice in behalf of his followers, before this illumination and Divine power to enter upon this work could be given them. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come," the Gospel Age was fully opened and the Divine commission began to be carried out. Then the symbolic "silence" ended.

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets" (Revelation 8:2).

The seven angels standing in the presence of God represented, as will be seen later, the various agencies, animate and inanimate, that are at his disposal, and which he designed to use in the further fulfillment of the visions. Their being given seven trumpets would symbolize that everything was now in readiness for the work to proceed. The seven seals represented, as has been shown, Jehovah's plans unfolded *to* Christ. The seven angels with their trumpets represent the events and developments of the Gospel Age in greater detail, as gradually unfolded *by* Christ. However, before the seven angels make their preparation to sound their trumpets (Revelation 8:6), another vision is seen by the Apostle.

The Angel with the Incense

"And another angel came and stood by the altar having a golden censer; and to him much incense was given, that he should give it for the prayers of all the saints on that golden altar which is before the throne. And the smoke of the perfumes went up for the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the angel in the presence of God. And the angel took the censer and filled it from the fire of the altar, and threw it on the earth; and there were thunders and lightnings and voices and an earthquake" (Revelation 8:3-5).

We believe that it will be observed by the careful consecrated reader that we have set before us in this scene the most important matter connected with God's great Plan of Salvation. Those familiar with the typical atonement day services of ancient Israel will recognize at once the very evident correspondence. In those typical services the High Priest *alone* was permitted to do what this angel is represented as doing. No imperfect human being or agency can possibly be represented by this angel with the censer. Indeed, it would be blasphemous to think of this angel and his work as representing any imperfect human being or agency. The High Priest in Israel's arrangement represented Christ. This vision, therefore, is designed to picture our Lord Jesus presenting the results or value of

his sacrifice before God, which sacrifice was ultimately to effect the redemption of the Church and the world (1 John 2:2). The incense represented the actual perfection of the Man Jesus. That sacrifice began at his consecration at Jordan and was completed at the Cross. Its acceptableness was proved by his resurrection from the dead. Its formal presentation and acceptance in behalf of the Church was manifested after his ascension in the outpouring of the holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. There may also be seen in this vision of the offering of the "prayers of all saints," that which is taught elsewhere in the Scriptures, namely that Christ as the great High Priest having presented the merit of his sacrifice in behalf of his Body members (Hebrews 9:24), their offerings, their humanity, their devotion, their prayers, etc., are made acceptable to the Father (Romans 12:1, 1 Peter 2:5). Hence, Christ, the Head, having been offered up in the beginning of the Age, he is throughout this dispensation offering up the reckonedly perfect members of his Body. And so it is written, "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him" (2 Timothy 2:11,12). In the case of Jesus, the Head, his humanity, as a willing sacrifice, was a sweet and acceptable perfume to the Father, attesting at once the completeness of his consecration and the perfection of the sacrifice. As showing the evident correspondence between the office of Israel's High Priest and that of our Lord Jesus, note the following elucidation by Mr. Russell:

"The High Priest took with him (along with the blood) fire from off the altar, and his two hands full of sweet incense to cause the perfume; and so our Lord Jesus' fulfillment of his vow of consecration, during the three and a half years of his ministry, was a sweet and acceptable perfume to the Father, attesting at once the completeness of the consecration, and the perfection of the sacrifice. The sweet incense beaten small represented the perfection of the man Jesus."

The Common Version reads that there was given him "much incense, that he should offer it *with* the prayers of the saints." A preferable rendering in the Diaglott is *"for* the prayers of the saints." The thought evidently to be conveyed by the vision then is that before the prayers of the saints on earth could be answered, and before the saints could be presented as joint-sacrificers, the merit of Christ's sacrifice must be imputed and accepted for them. We thus see that as the prayers, offerings, and devotions of the saints throughout the whole Gospel Age, the antitypical Atonement Day, are offered up to God, the merit of Christ's sacrifice is there to make their offerings, prayers, etc., acceptable. The fragrance of Christ's acceptability gives efficacy to his people's prayers. "And the smoke of the perfumes [incense] went up for the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the angel, in the presence of God."

"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake" (Revelation 8:5).

As we now enter upon our consideration of the symbols of this verse, and their fulfillments, let us call to mind two matters, the first of which we have previously emphasized, that will assist to an understanding of the entire book of Revelation.

First, in the opening of the seven-sealed scroll we have pictured, Christ beholding the earthly history of his suffering, witnessing Church. This foreview was given to him by the Father.

Second, in the words cited above, "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar," etc., there is described, Christ beginning his activities in behalf of his Church.

The first event in connection with the beginning of these activities is described in filling the censer with fire from the altar and casting it to the earth. The effects of the commencement of these activities is described in the symbol by the thunders and voices and lightnings and the earthquake that followed. In brief, this symbol describes, among other things, judgments poured out. These judgments are of course to be looked for at the beginning of the age. Upon whom were judgments poured out at that time? The answer is, the Jewish nation, which at that time was a part of the Roman "earth," or order of things. Some might object to this application, because these judgments began before St. John had the vision. It will be remembered that the Apostle hearing the voice behind him (Revelation 1:10), signified that some of the visions of the Revelation had already had a fulfillment at that time. The vision we are now considering we believe is one of these. Let us briefly note some of the particular symbols:

The "angel" who came to the altar and filled his censer with fire therefrom was the same as the one who offered up the incense — Christ. The censer would represent God's Word. In the words of the Prophets and of Christ himself, we find threats of punishments to be meted out to the Jewish nation, because of transgressions against the Divine requirements. The rejection of Christ by that nation was the great transgression, which brought upon the nation the long-deferred judgments, punishments. The altar would represent Divine justice. In its use here it would seem to represent Divine justice in the act of inflicting punishment upon violators of justice, the Jewish nation.

"Fire" invariably represents destruction or agencies of destruction. The fire that was cast to the earth by the angel was to eventually destroy the Jewish polity. "Earth" symbolizes organized society or government. In this symbol it represents the Jewish government, which at the time of Christ was a part of the Roman earth. Israel as a nation had been threatened with judgments. The nation was called to repentance by John the Baptist. "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance," were his words addressed to them as they came to his baptism. He further said: "And now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he [Christ] that cometh after me is mightier than I. ... he shall baptize you [the Israelites indeed] with the holy Spirit and [the rest of the nation] with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:8-12).

Christ began his ministry to the Jewish nation with the words, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mark 1:15). He continually warned them

of judgments impending. He foretold the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and its temple, and their dispersion among all nations. He told them that he would send unto them prophets and wise men, who would be his mouthpieces (voices), and some of them they would kill, and some of them scourge in their synagogues, and persecute from city to city. And then foreseeing that they would not give heed to his messengers, he said, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:34,35).

"Voices" in the visions of Revelation represent human agencies who speak for God, or as in some instances, for others. In the instance under consideration, it represents the inspired teachers of the early Church beginning at Pentecost. "Lightnings" symbolize flashes of truth, proceeding from these divinely chosen human agencies. Thus do we have pictured before us the wonderful illumination of truth concerning the Divine Plan that broke the symbolical silence. Thunders symbolize controversies. Here we have depicted the effects of this apostolic preaching, causing discussions and controversies especially amongst the Jewish leaders and peoples. "Earthquakes" symbolize revolutions, or the overturning of governments. Several revolutions in different periods of the Gospel Age are described by earthquakes. While the meaning of the symbol is always the same, they are to be applied to different periods of the Church's history. As an illustration, in connection with the pouring out of the seventh vial (Revelation 16:18), which, as will be seen later, depicts the final scenes of the Church's history, all of these symbols are employed — "voices, thunders, lightnings, and a great earthquake." The "earthquake" there, however, describes the complete overturning of the present order of things. It is described as "an earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great."

The "earthquake" in the vision we are now considering refers to the overthrow of the Jewish polity in the year 70 AD. These judgments, however, did not reach their full termination until 135 AD. We quote the *International Cyclopedia:*

"The suppression of Bar-Cochba's insurrection (135 AD) marks the final desolation of Judea, and the dispersion of its inhabitants. ... These last attempts to throw off the Roman yoke ... were defeated after enormous and almost incredible slaughter."

Note also the following statement from *Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*:

"The God who had for so many ages protected the Jews with an outstretched arm, withdrew His aid. He permitted Jerusalem with its famous temple to be destroyed by Vespasian and his son, Titus, an innumerable multitude of this devoted people to perish by the sword. ... From this period the Jews experienced, in every place, the hatred and contempt of the Gentile nations, still more than they had formerly done. And in these, their calamities, the predictions of Christ were amply fulfilled, and his Divine mission further illustrated."

Chapter Sixteen

The Seven Angels with Trumpets The First and Second Sounded

(Revelation 8:6-9)

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound" (Revelation 8:6).

We logically look for the sounding of trumpets to follow the fiery judgments which were poured upon the Jewish nation in fulfillment of the symbolic picture of Christ casting the golden censer filled with fire to the earth. These judgments as we have seen resulted finally in the complete overthrow of the Jewish polity. The city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Romans in the year 70 AD; it was not, however, until 135 AD that their subjection was fully accomplished. This latter date marked the last attempt of the Jews to free themselves from the Roman yoke, and to re-establish their nationality. We will therefore look for the events symbolized by the first trumpet, sometime after 135 AD. And this will be found to be in agreement with all the noted expositors of the Historical school who have written during the past three centuries. Those who have written since the Nineteenth Century opened are agreed that six of these trumpet visions have met their fulfillment, some of them teaching that the seventh is at the present time meeting its fulfillment. The following general statement of Mr. Russell, will be found in agreement with these conclusions:

"The seven trumpets of Revelation are all symbolic, and represent seven great periods of time and their events. . . . Suffice it here to say that we find ourselves today in the midst of the very events which mark the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The great voices, the increase of knowledge, the angry nations, etc., taken in connection with time prophecies, establish this as a fact. Many events are yet to transpire before this seventh or last trumpet ceases to sound; as, for instance, the rewarding of the saints and prophets, the resurrection of all the dead, etc. In fact, it covers the entire period of the Millennial reign of Christ, as indicated by the events which are to transpire under it (Revelation 10:7, 11:15,18).

"The events mentioned under the preceding six trumpets of Revelation refer to humanity's doings, while the seventh refers specially to the Lord's work, and covers the 'Day of the Lord.' "

Two general facts or propositions are thus before us: first, that the fulfillment of the symbolic occurrences described in connection with the sounding of these trumpets covers great periods of time and their events; second, that the six refer to humanity's doings, distinguished from the seventh, which refers to the doings of the Lord.

In regard to the general significance of angels and what they may represent, it is important that we keep in mind that "the mighty angels, messengers, or agents of His power, are various, and may properly be understood as applying to and including all the various agencies, animate and inanimate, which shall be used by our Lord in the overthrow of the evil systems of the present, and in the chastisement of evil doers."

The sounding of literal trumpets when mentioned in the Scriptures is always for the purpose of making announcements of various kinds, as the summoning of an assembly, the mustering of hosts to battle, the sounding of an alarm giving warning of evils, dangers, or judgments threatened, and the proclaiming of good or evil tidings.

More than this, let the reader carefully consider that the sounding of trumpets in the Scriptures occurs in connection with movements in the world which bring enlightenment, liberty, and deliverance from error, superstition and oppression. The blowing of trumpets by the priests of ancient Israel, announcing the year of Jubilee, brought liberty from bondage, a recovery of rights, and a restoration of families to their original inheritances (Leviticus 25). This significant event in Israel's history, occurring every forty-ninth or fiftieth year, foreshadowed or typified the "times of restitution" for all mankind, the great antitypical thousand-year day of Jubilee. The blowing of the trumpets by the priests of Israel announcing their Jubilee typified the sounding of the seventh trumpet of Revelation. "In the type, the trumpet of Jubilee was to be sounded when the Jubilee year began, to proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof (Leviticus 25:10). The antitype [times of restitution] is ushered in with the sounding of the (symbolic) 'seventh trumpet,' the 'trump of God,' the 'last trump.' It is indeed the great trumpet; it announces liberty to every captive; and while at first it means the surrender of many expired claims and privileges, and a general time of disturbance and unsettling of usages, habits, etc., its full import, when rightly appreciated, is 'good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people.' "

With these impressions in mind as to the symbolical significance of angels and trumpets, we begin our inquiry as to the import of this symbolic picture.

Keeping in mind the Scriptural interpretation of the sounding of trumpets, and the fact that the first six refer to man's doings, in connection with his efforts to liberate the world from error and superstition, we believe it is reasonable to apply the events connected with the sounding of these six trumpets to movements associated with both the rise and decline of certain false religious systems. We believe it is also reasonable to expect that these movements would be associated with a proclamation of some features of gospel truth,

exposing erroneous and superstitious ideas concerning God and His dealings with mankind, and gradually weakening the hold and influence of these false systems upon humanity. This method of interpreting the occurrences depicted under the six trumpets is in perfect harmony with that of the seventh; the difference is that the seventh, being the "trump of God," would bring full light and liberty — a complete deliverance for both the Lord's saints and all mankind. The vision does not, however, have so much to do with the symbolical significance of the sounding of the trumpet as it does with that which St. John *saw* as *following* its sounding.

The First Trumpet

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

This symbol is drawn from the material world, and is that of a terrific storm of hail and fire (lightning), in connection with which the lightning flashes were incessant, setting fire to the trees and grass; and as such storms are accompanied by winds, there would be the spreading of destruction over the earth. Historical expositors have very generally applied the events that occur in connection with the sounding of the first four trumpets in the Fourth Century to the destructive incursions of the Gothic, barbaric hordes of the North into the Western Roman Empire, which resulted finally in its overthrow. It seems to us, however, that this great hail and fire storm of the first trumpet, so destructive in its work, most fittingly depicts the influences that worked together to cause the overthrow of the Pagan civilization; the overthrow of the Roman government itself, as we shall endeavor to show later, being depicted by the symbolic occurrences of the second trumpet. The hail and lightning, etc., proceeding from the literal heavens, would represent certain influences that had their rise in the symbolical heavens of Christianity. Hail, in this instance seems to represent those sharp cutting truths which exposed and eventually destroyed the chief root of the Pagan superstition — Polytheism.

A hail storm is generally accompanied by lightning and is produced by a certain electrical state of the atmosphere. That the fire of the symbol means lightning, may be seen from several Scriptures, "And the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire [lightning] ran along upon the ground" (Exodus 9:23, Psalms 105:32). "Hail" is used in the Scriptures as the symbol of judgment truths, and in this symbol very fittingly refers to judgments upon Paganism, which was the first enemy aside from Judaism that the Church encountered in its proclamation of the truth. "And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies" (Isaiah 28:17) is a prophecy that especially refers to the effects of judgment truths upon the false religious systems of the last times. It is thus by comparing Scripture with Scripture that we discover the meaning of symbols.

The hail and lightning are represented in the vision as mingled with blood. Blood, when visible, is employed in the Scriptures as a symbol of death by violence. It is used in this sense in Isaiah 34 in connection with a prophecy

describing the final judgments of God in the last days upon the "wild beast" nations of earth: "And the mountains [kingdoms] shall be melted with their blood. ... The sword [judgment truths] of the Lord is filled with blood [evidence that these judgment truths shall produce death, destruction of the nations]. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion" (Isaiah 34:1-8). It is used in this first trumpet symbol in the same way, and if correct in our application, it is designed to intensify the destructiveness of the judgments on Paganism.

Trees in the primitive method of building were used for pillars or posts. In harmony with this we find the figure of trees, according to their size and height, employed in many Scriptures to symbolize the several degrees of great or rich men, nobles, or subordinate rulers of the government. In Zechariah 11:1,2, we have this figurative use of trees: "Howl, fir tree, for the cedar is fallen; because *all the mighty* [*men*] *are spoiled."* The inference in these last words, *"all the mighty are spoiled,"* is that the prophecy does not refer to literal trees, but to men — leaders. Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon, is symbolized by a tree (Daniel 4:20-22, see also Isaiah 2:13, 10:17,18,19, Jeremiah 22:7,23, Ezekiel 17, 31:3,4). The application of this to the vision would seem to represent that the nobles, princes, and subordinate civil and religious Pagan rulers would renounce or become dead to the Pagan superstition, thus gradually working toward the end of Pagan civilization.

It will be seen that as *trees* symbolize the leaders, so *grass* by the law of analogy must symbolize the common people. In applying the symbol of the vision under consideration it would mean that the common people would become dead to Paganism and become absorbed in the Paganized Christianity that took its place.

It is stated that one third of the earth and the same of the trees were affected by the terrible storm. Earth in the passage would symbolize the organized Pagan Roman Empire. Applying the vision to the overthrow of Pagan civilization, we quote *Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History:*

"When we look attentively into the matter, we shall find that the execution of these rigorous laws that were enacted against the worshipers of the gods, was rather leveled at the multitude [green grass] than at persons of eminence and distinction [trees]; for it appears that during the reign and after the death of Theodosius, many of the most honorable and important posts were filled by persons whose aversion to Christianity, and whose attachment to Paganism were sufficiently known."

Another interpretation of the expression "third part," which appeals to some to be most reasonable, is that it applies to the Western part of the Roman earth. Mr. Elliott calls attention to a fact stated by Gibbon that during the period of the early trumpets, the Roman Empire was divided into three parts, and that it was the third and Western part that was destroyed. See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

As accounting for the large numbers, in fact practically all of the people (green grass) renouncing Paganism, and many embracing Christianity (?) during those days, let the following from Mosheim's History be carefully noted:

"There is no doubt that the victories of Constantine the Great, the fear of punishment, and the desire of pleasing this mighty conqueror and his imperial successors, were the weighty arguments that moved whole nations, as well as particular persons, to embrace Christianity."

Another important factor that was used to bring all mankind into the professing Christian Church was the establishment of schools in which the younger element were instructed in the truths (?) of Christianity. The same historian has noted this:

"There was just reason to apprehend that the truth might suffer if the Christian youth, for want of proper instructors of their own religion, should have recourse, for their education, to the schools of pagan philosophers and rhetoricians. Schools were established in many cities. Libraries were also erected, and men of learning were nobly recompensed. All this was indispensably necessary to the successful execution of the scheme that was laid for abrogating by degrees the worship of the gods [of Paganism]."

It will thus be seen by those who have a clear knowledge of the Lord's Plan that this first trumpet represented humanity's doings — unregenerate man's efforts to liberate his fellows from the bondage of superstition. It, however, like all of his efforts, measurably failed; though it served to bring the "little flock" class into new experiences of trial and testing.

Concerning this important event of human history which followed immediately the reign of Diocletian (about 313 AD), the following from an eminent writer emphasizes its special significance:

"In its internal character and far-reaching effects this revolution is one of the greatest and most remarkable that has ever taken place in the history of the world.

"The ruin of Paganism, as Gibbon has pointed out, is perhaps 'the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition.' During the long period of a thousand years the dark shadow of Paganism had covered the city and empire of Rome. Its temples were innumerable and adorned with the utmost magnificence. Its wealth, the accumulation of ages, was fabulously great. Its priesthood was established and endowed by government, the Roman emperor himself occupying the position of the supreme pontiff of the hierarchy. In the [early part of the] Fourth Century this monstrous system was brought to ruin. Working upwards from the lowest strata of society, the belief in the unity of the Godhead, and the divinity of the Christian religion, a belief commended by the lives, and sealed by the blood of martyrs, had gradually reached the highest classes in the community, and effected the conversion of the Roman Emperor. The conviction that 'the idolatrous worship of fabulous deities, and real demons, is the most abominable crime against the Supreme Majesty of the Creator' led to the subversion of the temples of the Roman world, and the total suppression of Paganism" (H. G. Guinness).

"Under Constantine, 324-337 AD, as all the world knows [says the historian] occurred the greatest revolution in Roman history since the birth of Christ, namely the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the state. ... From this time on, the political fortunes of the Empire possess only secondary importance; it is the struggles of the Christian sects and the rise of the Roman Catholic Church that mainly attract the attention of the historian."

Thus by compromise with the worldly spirit, the professed Church overthrew the system of Paganism, and in a sense made Christianity (in name) the State religion, only to have seductively introduced into her communion a paganized idolatrous worship. All this, however, was permitted to come and was overruled by Christ to test and develop the "elect" class, the "little flock." It is well to keep in mind that the testimony of the Truth was to have two effects: first, the drawing of those individuals who would receive it gladly into good and honest hearts, and cause such to bear fruit to the glory of God; and, second, to exert an indirect influence in enlightening the world, and to some extent delivering from error and superstition. The Church's testimony to the Truth would of necessity bring opposition and persecution from the Pagan priests, and this would be overruled by Christ to keep her pure, and to discipline and develop her for her future station. It would also be true that very many of the world who would become enlightened would themselves engage in the conflict of overthrowing superstition and error. We find that history records this to have been true. Most naturally this would bring a temptation to the Lord's followers to unite with these in this conflict, and thus they would have their efforts diverted from heavenly to earthly things — from spiritual things to human things. This is exactly what did occur, and all but a few of the Lord's followers lost sight of their true mission.

We learn from history that for a period of more than a century after its institution, the Church of Christ was faithful to her mission — not to try to overthrow the Pagan Roman Empire, but to preach the Gospel. The effects produced by her faithfulness were twofold:

(1) To draw to herself the true wheat.

(2) To exert an indirect influence upon many of the world, both upon those in high circles, and upon those in the common walks of life, to nominally embrace Christianity. The larger part of these in Scripture phraseology would be called "tares" — mere professors.

During nearly this entire period the Church encountered great opposition, and experienced terrible persecution, through the influence of the Pagan priests:

"Edicts of a severe nature were issued against them, and the magistrates, animated by the priests and by the multitude, shed their blood with a cruelty, which frequently exceeded even the dictates of the most barbarous laws" (*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*).

History informs us that at the beginning of the Third Century an event occurred that revolutionized public sentiment toward Christianity:

"About the same time Constantine the Great, who had hitherto manifested no religious principles of any kind, embraced Christianity. In process of time

... he was convinced of the falsehood and impiety of all other religious institutions; and, acting in consequence of this conviction, he exhorted earnestly all his subjects to embrace the Gospel [?]; and at length employed all the force of his authority in the abolition of the ancient superstition [Paganism]. His designs, however, with respect to the abolition of the ancient religion of the Romans, and the tolerating of no other form of worship but the Christian, were only made known toward the latter end of his life, by the edicts he issued for destroying the heathen temples, and prohibiting sacrifices."

History also tells of how a very large number of people made a profession of Christianity at this time, and these entered heartily into this work of overthrowing Paganism, and converting the whole Roman world. It was from activity in this work that the "little flock" of faithful ones kept aloof, and it was not long before these began to experience persecution, because they would not unite with and support the State Church.

The Second Trumpet

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed" (Revelation 8:8,9).

This second trumpet portrays what we believe to be the overthrow of a great kingdom or empire. The symbolism, which is that of a burning mountain being cast into the sea, is a very familiar one to students of prophecy. Bible students are generally agreed that a mountain when used symbolically nearly always refers to a kingdom. The Kingdom of Christ is frequently represented by a mountain: "And the stone which smote the image [of earthly empires] became a great mountain [kingdom], and filled the whole earth." This is explained by the Prophet, "In the days of these kings [kingdoms] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:35,44).

The Psalmist David when speaking of his kingdom makes use of this symbol: "Lord thou hast made my mountain to stand strong" (Psalms 30:7), evidently referring to the stability of his kingdom.

Empires and kingdoms being destroyed by revolutionary troubles, or other disturbing causes, are, in prophetic symbology, represented by mountains being carried into the sea. In one of the prophetic Psalms which portrays in symbolic language the terrible scenes that occur in connection with the close of this age, we have these words: "Therefore will not we [God's saints] fear, though the earth [organized society] be removed, and though the mountains [kingdoms] be carried into the midst of the sea" (Psalms 46:2). In one of the closing visions of the Revelation, that of the "seventh vial," we read that the "mountains were not found," meaning in this case that the kingdoms of earth were overthrown (symbolically burnt up) to make room for the Kingdom of Christ (Revelation 16:20).

Careful examination and comparison of all the facts of history, we believe, reveal to us that the symbolic vision of this second trumpet had its fulfillment about a century and a half after the Pagan religion had ceased to be in a national sense the religion of the Roman Empire. The symbolism is that of a *burning* mountain being cast into the sea.

In our endeavor to uncover the meaning of these symbolic visions of Revelation, we are keeping in mind the exhortation of St. Peter: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20,21). To our understanding the meaning of these words is not that God is necessarily going to choose some special individual and miraculously make known to him the meaning of Scriptural prophecy, but rather that we are to study their meaning, comparing Scripture with Scripture, carefully noting other prophecies in which the same symbols are employed that have had their fulfillment. Thus their meaning having been made evident, we should make use of this knowledge in the interpretation of prophecies not yet fulfilled.

One has said: "No single prophecy must be read alone, as if it stood apart from the rest, but in connection with the whole plan of it in the Word. It is comparatively easy to find some plausible application of a single passage; it is quite another thing to make this fit with a general prophetic testimony. Comparison of passage with passage on this subject is what we are invited and compelled to, therefore, if we would have truth instead of theory, realized certainty rather than conjecture. Moreover, it will be plainly of importance to find some comprehensive prophecy connecting itself with some fixed points on Scripture, with which others may be then securely connected."

In applying this rule to the prophecy of this second trumpet symbol, we discover that there is one other place in the Scriptures where the symbolism of a "burnt mountain" is employed and explained. It is in connection with a prophecy referring to the ancient Babylonian Empire, and reads: "I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done. ... Behold I am against thee O destroying mountain, [kingdom] which destroyest all the earth, and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain" (Jeremiah 51:24,25). This prophecy, as all Bible students know, refers to the complete overthrow of the ancient Babylonian Empire by the Medes and Persians 538 BC.

From this fulfilled symbolic prophecy we are enabled to ascertain the meaning of the vision under consideration. We learn:

(1) That a "burnt mountain" is employed by "holy men of old moved by the holy Spirit" to describe a destroyed kingdom.

(2) That a "burning mountain" symbolizes a kingdom in process of destruction.

(3) That a "burning mountain cast into the sea" would symbolize a kingdom which had been gradually disintegrating, finally becoming extinct.

We consider next the symbolic significance of a "sea." A sea that is calm symbolizes an orderly collection of men in a quiet and peaceable state or condition. A sea troubled and tumultuous describes a collection of men restless and turbulent and at war (Daniel 7:2). Waters (plural) frequently symbolize peoples (Revelation 17:15); a sea being a collection of waters becomes the symbol of a people gathered into one body politic. It is doubtless the "sea" condition represented by a collection of men at war or in commotion, that is employed in the symbol of this second trumpet.

The Fall of the Roman Empire

We inquire, Where or at what time in the history of this Gospel Age do we find that a great kingdom or empire was gradually overthrown, and in connection with its overthrow caused great disturbances and calamities to the "sea" class? There doubtless have been a number of such occurrences in history, but as a rule most of these have been of local significance only. How shall we know which of these is referred to in the symbolism of this second trumpet? The logical answer is that it would be the empire that follows, and is closely connected with the fulfillment of the first trumpet symbols. In our exposition of the first trumpet we noted that the great storm of hail, etc., which was the symbol employed under that trumpet, fitted perfectly with the disturbances and commotions associated with the efforts to overthrow the pagan religion (not the empire) in the second and third centuries and the early part of the fourth.

We inquire next, Was there, in connection with the gradual passing away of the influence of Paganism over the people of the Roman Empire, a great kingdom or empire that through wars and commotions was gradually overthrown soon after? Was the overthrow of that kingdom an event of great significance in the fulfilling of other inspired prophecies of "holy men of old"? If so, was it of special importance in connection with the development of the "little flock" of joint-heirs of the coming Kingdom?

Without doubt the answer is that there was such a kingdom overthrown which met all these conditions. This kingdom was one whose rise and fall occupied a very large place in the prophecies of Daniel. It was the one symbolized by the "legs of iron" of the great metallic image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2), and is described much more in detail in Daniel's vision (Daniel 7). It was the Western Roman Empire, symbolized by the "fourth beast" of that vision.

Less than two centuries after the ecclesiastical revolution in connection with the change of the religion of the Roman Empire from Paganism to Christianity, the Western Roman Empire, which had ruled the world from its capital city, Rome, since a short time before the birth of Christ, was overthrown, and began to be broken up into several lesser kingdoms. This event, next to the overthrow of the Pagan religion itself, is one of the most important in the history of the world since the birth of Christ. Its final collapse occurred 476 AD in which year Odoacer the King of the Heruli, took possession of the city of Rome and Romulus Augustulus, the last reigning emperor of Western Rome, was dethroned. The Eastern

Roman Empire with its capital at Constantinople, continued to exist, however, until 1453 AD. The Roman kingdom began its career in the city of Rome, which has been called the "eternal city." It was here that its central government was always located. With its overthrow the world entered upon a new era. The historian informs us that, "Modern history, in a comprehensive sense, begins with the downfall of the Western Roman Empire; for with that event the volume of ancient history was closed" (Swinton, *Outlines of the World's History*). It was only about half a century from this, in 533 AD, that a Roman bishop of the Church was declared in a decree of Justinian, the emperor of Eastern Rome, to be the head over all the churches of so-called Christendom; and from this time, the Roman bishops began to exercise a ruling influence, not only in the professed Church, but over all the kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was divided.

For two centuries, the fourth and fifth, the great empire of Western Rome was undergoing the process of dissolution. The Gothic hordes of the North had made incursion after incursion into its territory. It was, during this long period of disintegration, in a condition fittingly described in symbol as a "burning mountain." In harmony with the symbolism of Babylon given by Jeremiah, as referred to above, the Western Roman Empire after 476 AD became a "burnt [destroyed] mountain." The kingdom — ruling power — became divided (Daniel 2:41). Its ruling dynasty, which had held universal sway for about five centuries was (symbolically speaking) "cast into the sea" — the restless people at war. It continued, however, in the symbols of Daniel, to be described under the figure of the "fourth beast," but no longer the fourth empire universal; and entered upon that phase of its rule, symbolized by the "ten horns" of the "beast." These ten horns we are informed by the revealing angel, represented the ten kingdoms which on an average have occupied the territory of the original Roman Empire since that time (Daniel 7:20, Revelation 13:1).

The symbols of this second trumpet do not describe in detail the method by which this great empire was destroyed; but rather describe the effects produced on the "sea" class by the commotions which accomplished it. History, however, records it very fully, as being through the moral degeneracy and weakness of its ruling Emperors. Through these causes the Empire became an easy object of prey to the barbaric tribes of the North, who, through continuous invasions into its territories spread devastation in many provinces, spoiling the Empire of its wealth. It gradually grew weaker and weaker in its power to resist, until finally it succumbed to the king of the Heruli.

Most Historical writers who have attempted to expound this vision have applied it to a second stage of the invasion of the Roman Empire by the Gothic tribes — that of the Vandals. There are some who interpreting this second trumpet, apply the casting of the burning mountain into the sea, to England's breaking away from the Papacy during the reign of Henry VIII, in the beginning of the Sixteenth Century. England, however, was not overthrown or destroyed at that time, as the symbol of a mountain being cast into the sea invariably in Scripture symbology teaches; nor was this the proper time in history for the vision to have its fulfillment.

It now remains for us to consider those symbols that describe the effects produced upon the "sea" class by the wars and invasions of these barbaric tribes of the North in connection with the gradual overthrow of this great empire. The symbols to be considered are three in number:

(1) The third part of the sea becoming blood.

(2) The third part of the creatures in the sea that had life dying.

(3) The third part of the ships that sailed upon the sea being destroyed.

The sea becoming blood evidently describes in a general way the calamitous effects produced upon the people of the Empire as a whole by the invasions of these barbaric tribes, and also the effects of the misrule of the Roman emperors. Blood, when visible, as we have learned from Scripture usage, symbolizes death by violence. "Bloody times" are times of great calamities, brought about by the loosing of human passions. The scenes occurring in connection with wars and invasions of an empire and the misrule of its governing powers, together with its overthrow, are accompanied by great distress to the peoples, and are followed by periods of lawlessness — anarchy. Wars usually cause famine, and excessive taxation of the people in whose land war is waged, bringing discontent. On the overthrow of a government, the peoples are loosed from the restraining influences of its laws, and until a stable government is established, a state bordering on anarchy prevails. The significance of this symbol is very forcibly illustrated in the present time in the effects produced by the great war in Europe, resulting in the overthrow of the autocratic governments of Russia, Austria, Germany, and others. The contending factions of the "sea" classes, each endeavoring to assume the reins of government, cause a condition that very vividly pictures the meaning of this symbol of the "sea becoming blood."

Similar conditions existed during the invasions into the Roman territory, and also followed for some time the downfall of Western Rome. The historian describes the terrible condition existing in this period:

"In the beginning of this [fifth] century the Roman Empire was divided into two distinct sovereignties, one of which comprehended the eastern provinces, the other those of the West. ... Honorius, who governed the Western provinces ... neglected the great affairs of the empire, and, inattentive to the weighty duties of his station held the reins of government with an unsteady hand. The Goths taking advantage of this criminal indolence, made incursions into Italy, laid waste its fairest provinces, and sometimes carried their desolations as far as Rome, which they ravaged and plundered in the most dreadful manner. These calamities which fell upon the western part of the empire from the Gothic depredations, were followed by others still more dreadful under the succeeding emperors. A fierce and warlike people, issuing out of Germany, overspread Italy, Gaul, and Spain, the noblest of all the European provinces, and erected new kingdoms in these fertile countries; and Odoacer, at last, at the head of the Heruli, having conquered Augustulus, in 476, gave the mortal blow to the Western Empire and reduced all Italy under his dominion" (*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*).

The Roman bishop at this time was becoming very influential, and historians inform us that the people in general began to look to this ecclesiastic for help in their troubles; and in this manner events began to shape themselves in the direction of the Roman bishop assuming the powers of the civil rulers and gradually to take the reins of government in Rome. The third part would seem to represent that proportion of the empire experiencing these calamities.

The next part of the symbolism is that of the third part of the living creatures that were in the sea that had life, dying. The creatures in the sea represent the peoples as individuals or units that constituted the civilization of those times.

The civilization during the period of the Pagan Roman Empire was a Pagan civilization; that is, in religious matters, Polytheism, a belief in many gods, molded and fashioned the minds, customs, and habits of mankind of both the higher and lower classes ("trees" and "grass") in all the various relations of life. The symbols of the first trumpet, as we have seen, describe the indirect effects of Christianity upon this Pagan civilization, uprooting it, and finally establishing in its place a new, a so-called Christian civilization. It was, however, as all true Christians know, a very impure form of Christianity. In certain matters Constantine and the emperors which succeeded him ruled the professed Church. Constantine himself, however, sought without success to unite the various sects, and to harmonize the disturbances that arose on account of differences of belief. Gradually during this period the Pagan temples were either destroyed or converted into houses of worship for those who made a profession of Christianity.

Regarding the type of Christianity that existed in these times we read again from Mosheim:

"While the Roman Emperors were studious to promote the honor of Christianity by the auspicious protection they afforded the Church and their most zealous efforts to advance its interests, the inconsiderate and ill directed piety of the bishops cast a cloud over the beauty and simplicity of the Gospel by the prodigious number of rites and ceremonies which they had invented to embellish it. And here we may apply that well known saying of Augustine, that the yoke under which the Jews formerly groaned was more tolerable than that imposed upon many Christians in this time. The rites and institutions by which the Greeks and Romans, and other nations had formerly testified their religious veneration for fictitious deities were now adopted, with some slight alterations by Christian bishops, and employed in the service of the true God. These fervent heralds of the Gospel, whose zeal outran their candor and ingenuity, imagined that the nations would receive Christianity with more facility, when they saw the rites and ceremonies to which they were accustomed, adopted in the Church and the same worship paid to Christ and martyrs which they had formerly offered to their idol deities. Hence it happened that in these times the religion of the Greeks and Romans differed very little in its external appearance from that of the Christians. Gorgeous robes, mitres, tiaras, wax tapers, crosiers, processions, images, gold and silver vases, and many such circumstances and pageantry were equally seen in the heathen temples and the Christian Churches."

Such was the civilization that existed during the period of the Christian Roman Emperors, from Constantine about 313 AD to Romulus Augustulus 476 AD. We must not obtain the impression, however, that this Christian civilization was united or harmonious in its doctrines or forms of worship. On the contrary it was broken up into sects and divisions, very much the same as that of the present so called Christian civilization. While to a very large extent these various sects all looked to the emperors to guide and protect them in many ways, yet there was no unanimity of doctrine, or methods and forms of worship. During this period there was, according to the historian, a certain freedom and independence enjoyed in these matters by the various sects. The unification of these came after the overthrow of the imperial power which this second trumpet depicts. Indeed it had been foretold that the imperial power at Rome was the hindrance that would have to be removed before this unification under one head could take place. This head is the "man of sin," the Papacy (2 Thessalonians 2:5). Quoting again the same historian:

"We are not, however, to think that the same method of worship was uniformly followed in every Christian society, for this was far from being the case. Every bishop consulting his own private judgment, and taking into consideration the nature of the times, the genius of the country in which he lived, and the character and temper of those whom he was appointed to rule and instruct, formed such a plan of Divine worship as he thought the wisest and best. Hence, that variety of liturgies which were in use before the bishop of Rome had usurped the supreme power in religious matters and persuaded the credulous and unthinking that the model, both of doctrine and worship was to be given by the 'mother' Church, and to be followed implicitly throughout the Christian world."

With this brief summary of the history of those times we are enabled to understand the meaning of these symbolisms. The "living creatures" dying in the sea would seem to refer to the individual units of the Christian civilization of those times, represented by the clergy and laity, dying to this extent of freedom enjoyed in religious matters, and becoming absorbed, swallowed up in the Roman Catholic Papal system, which soon followed the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire.

"Ships" represent inanimate objects and in this case seem to represent the many denominations or sects. These, like the living creatures in them, were eventually extinguished, and lost their independent existence by being swallowed up in the great apostasy, the Papal system. Thus was the predicted hindrance removed. A new experience was now coming to the "little flock" class, as it came in contact with this great persecuting power — the Antichrist. The rise of this power, we believe, is portrayed in the symbolisms of the third trumpet.

Chapter Seventeen

The Third and Fourth Trumpets Sounded

(Revelation 8:10-13)

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (Revelation 8:10,11).

The Scriptures do not make any distinction between what are generally termed fixed stars, and meteors; that is, only one Greek word, aster, is employed to designate both. However, the very fact that the one in this third trumpet symbol fell from heaven, determines its nature as that of a meteor or falling star. The fact that it was burning as a torch, shows that it was of the nature classified by astronomers as an aerolite or "fire ball." The fact that it embittered the rivers and fountains indicates that it exploded, and scattered its poisonous elements upon them. That many men died because of the embittering of the waters, implies the poisoning of these waters by the scattering of its poisonous substances upon them. The deaths resulting must have been caused by drinking the waters, and imply that the "waters" themselves in this symbol cannot picture peoples, as some historical expositors in expounding this trumpet symbol teach, though it is manifestly true that in some of the visions, "waters" are employed as symbols to represent peoples, as in Revelation 17:15.

The symbolism used in this third trumpet then is that of the fall of a great meteor into earth's atmosphere, and its explosion, thus spreading its poisonous gases, etc., over the rivers and their sources, causing those who drank of them to die.

While the Scriptures make no distinction between meteors and fixed stars, so far as the word employed to designate them is concerned, yet in their use in symbolic language, we find a wide difference. Stars usually represent teachers. We have this use in Revelation 1:20, and it is so explained by Christ himself: "The seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand are the messengers (teachers) of the seven Churches." However, it is very necessary to keep in mind that there are only twelve fixed stars (teachers) in the Church in the sense of true, infallible guides of the Lord's people. These teachers (the twelve Apostles) were very specially chosen and inspired of God, and their utterances are always to be

final in settling matters of doctrine, teaching. They are referred to in the vision of Revelation 12, which describes the early Church: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Revelation 12:1).

While other teachers are symbolized by stars, such are not fixed (infallible) stars; that is, they are liable to err, and their teaching must be tested by the utterances of the twelve fixed stars, the Apostles. Thus it has been pointed out that: "God has recognized or appointed twelve apostolic stars for the Church. From these and the moon and the sun all the enlightenment of the Church was to proceed. And from these the true light, which has blessed the true Church, has proceeded. But Papacy, assuming ecclesiastical lordship of earth, has placed or 'ordained' various stars, lights, 'authorities,' 'theologians,' in her firmament; and the various Protestant denominations have done likewise, until the whole number is innumerable. But God, while providing helps, evangelists and teachers to his true Church, has not ordained them with *the authority* of lights or stars. On the contrary, all of his faithful followers are instructed to accept as light only those rays of truth seen to proceed from the sun and moon and twelve stars ordained for that purpose."

Stars are, however, used in the Scriptures to represent teachers, faithful and unfaithful, true and false, who, if faithful and true, are upheld and commended by Christ, but if unfaithful and false, are rebuked or condemned and cast off by him. Compare Revelation 1:20, 2:8-10, 3:14-18. Whoever, outside of the twelve Apostles, may be represented by symbolic stars, even though faithful, they must never be looked upon as inspired. In other words, it is required that their teaching must be tested by the sun, moon, and the twelve specially chosen inspired stars, the Apostles. The "star," or rather meteor, that fell from heaven in the vision under consideration could not, we believe, represent a true teacher.

The Falling Star an Apostate Teacher

The "star," or meteor of the vision we are considering represents a false, apostate teacher, and being specially designated as a "great" star, it must represent a very eminent one. Further evidence of this will be seen as we consider the symbolical significance of "fountains and rivers," and note the effect this "falling star" had in the scattering of its poisonous substances upon the same. It should be noted also that it could not represent a reformer in the Church. The Reformers, Luther, Zwingli, Reuchlin, Calvin, and others, *came out* of the fallen Romish church system, and their teaching, as all Bible students know, had the effect in a measure at least, of purifying or sweetening the polluted waters, instead of embittering or poisoning them. The Papacy, long before the Sixteenth Century opened, had so perverted and distorted the Truth, that one could hardly recognize it as the pure Gospel given to the Church in the apostolic days.

It is our conviction that the Roman Catholic Bishop, the Pope, and his successors are represented by the notable "star" of this third trumpet symbol. The Prophet Daniel was caused in prophetic vision to see the rise of this great ecclesiastical Bishop, the Pope.

The fountain or source of all truth is the ransom sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a positive fact that the so-called doctrine of the Mass has so polluted or poisoned this great fountain truth that it no longer has any effective power to cleanse the conscience of those who are deceived by it from dead works to serve the living God. "Christ's *continual* sacrifice was not actually canceled or abolished by Papacy, but it was set aside by a false doctrine advanced by that system — which gradually, but in the end fully and completely, set aside the merit of Christ's sacrifice as a *continual* and ever-efficacious one. This false doctrine is known as the Mass, or Sacrifice of the Mass.

"Protestants in general totally misunderstand this so-called sacrament. They suppose it to be merely a different form of celebrating the Lord's Last Supper, adopted by Roman Catholics. Others get the idea that it is a sort of special prayer. But these ideas are quite erroneous. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass is this: The death of Christ, they claim, canceled Adamic or original sin, but is not applicable for our daily shortcomings, weaknesses, sins, and omissions; it is not a *continual sacrifice*, ever meritorious for all our sins, ever sufficient and efficacious to cover as a robe every sinner and every sin, so as to permit the contrite one to come back into union and fellowship with God. For such sins the sacrifice of the Mass was instituted: it is esteemed by Papists as a further development of the Calvary sacrifice. Each time the Mass is offered in sacrifice it is, they claim, a fresh sacrifice of Christ, for the particular persons and sins to which the priest offering it mentally applies it. The Christ to be thus sacrificed afresh is first 'created' from wheat bread and wine by the officiating priest."

While it is true that this pollution of the foundation truth of God's Plan of salvation began to be manifest in a measure before Papacy came fully into power, yet it was Papacy that made a belief in it and the practice of it compulsory upon all Christians, as we learn from their own records:

"If any one shall say that the Mass is only a service of praise and thanksgiving, or a bare commemoration of the sacrifice made on the Cross, and not [in itself] a propitiatory offering [i.e., a sacrifice which itself makes satisfaction for sins]; or that it only benefits him who receives it, and ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities: let him [who so denies the power of this sacrifice] be accursed" (Canon 3, Council of Trent). (*Concil. Trid., Sess. 22. De Missae*).

The pollution of this fountain laid the foundation for a system that gradually counterfeited every Christian doctrine. It was the work of the reformers of the Sixteenth Century to restore this foundation truth to the Church. Other visions of the Revelation portray very minutely this great counterfeit fallen Church, whose "head" is fittingly described in the symbol of this "great star" (meteor).

We have thus far in our unfolding of the vision taken for granted that "fountains and rivers" in this instance symbolize the sources and channels of truth. We will now endeavor to prove that this is the correct interpretation. Sometimes, as we have noted in explaining other symbols, "waters" symbolize peoples. In other instances, particularly where mentioned as "fountains and rivers" together,

they are used to represent the sources and channels of truth. The true source or fountain of all Christian truth is the Word of God. The pure channels would be the divinely appointed agencies through which the truth flows, Christ, the Apostles and Prophets, and the other inspired Scripture writers. These originally pure channels have had introduced into them, impure, false teaching, false pagan ceremonies and rites. This, we have found, began early in the Gospel Age. St. Paul said in his day, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thessalonians 2:7). It developed very rapidly in the Fourth Century, the days in which the so-called Christian emperors ruled from Rome, and on the overthrow of Western Rome, it culminated in the Bishop of Rome claiming to be the successor of the Apostle Peter. This resulted in a very general recognition of him as the appointed channel of truth, succeeding the Apostles.

We have in other visions of the Revelation several uses of "fountains and rivers" as symbols. For example, in Revelation 7:17: "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." In Revelation 22:1 we read of a river employed as a symbol: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Both of these instances refer to the future Millennial conditions, and evidently picture the pure truth as it flows through the pure channels of those blessed times. In the outpouring of the third "vial" of Revelation 16:4, all seven of which, expositors in general understand refer to the last plagues (judgments) upon Christendom, we have another use of these symbols: "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood." Commenting upon this latter vision, Mr. Russell said:

"The river channels through which water (truth) has flowed, symbolize the founders and schools of these various systems — the places or men in whom these channels had their start or beginning. For a long time 'water' (truth) truly very muddy in some, but nevertheless a mixture of water, has flowed through these various systems of which many have partaken, and have been refreshed, but a change comes, and that which once refreshed, gradually becomes loathsome."

In the symbol of this third trumpet vision we are not considering the judgments or plagues upon these false religious systems of our day, but rather the rise of the "mother" system itself, its beginning in Papacy. This occurred in the early part of the Sixth Century. It is our conviction that this third trumpet symbol, depicts the embittering (poisoning) of the truth by Papacy's distortion and perversion of the original fount itself. The heaven from which this "great star" fell was, therefore, not the Papal heavens (they were not in existence at the time of this vision); rather it was the heavens preceding the rise of the Papacy, the period in which the professed Church was rapidly departing from apostolic purity of faith — the period just prior to the worldly age of Constantine and his successors on the so-called Christian imperial throne. The "mystery of iniquity" (2 Thessalonians 2:7), the desire to lord it over God's heritage, began to work in the Church as early as the Apostle Paul's day. This evil continued to develop

amongst the elders or bishops of the Church for two or three centuries. It at last culminated in a rivalry between four prominent bishops (stars) in the Church — those of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria. This contention for rulership was finally settled in 533 AD by a decree of Justinian, the emperor of Eastern Rome, declaring that the Bishop of Rome was the one to be recognized by all Christians, as the sole divinely appointed ruler in the Church. This Roman Bishop, therefore, we understand to be the "great star" that "fell from heaven" and fulfilled this vision, in embittering, poisoning the waters of truth. We should not say, however, that it referred to one particular man, except in its beginning, any more than the expression, "man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2:3), or the "man of God" (2 Timothy 3:17), refers to one man. It rather refers to the long line of so-called Christian bishops (popes), each one of whom has falsely claimed to be the vicar of Christ. They have ruled the Church throughout the Dark Ages and exercised an evil influence over all the nations and to a very large extent over the whole world up to the present time. A large portion of the Revelation is taken up in portraying the evil doings of the power of which this "great star" is the head.

The third part of the rivers and fountains becoming embittered (poisoned) by the poisonous elements that fell from this "great star" represents the proportionate extent of the deadly, evil influence that this "man of sin" (pope) had, and has since had, upon the truth of God's Word.

The many men who died because of drinking the poisoned waters, represent the many who have been influenced to accept the teaching and claims of this great false church system, and who thus suffer spiritually, losing all appreciation of and desire for the pure truth that comes from the true fountain, the Word of God, and the unpolluted, divinely appointed channels, the Apostles and Prophets.

Some noted Historical expositors in the past have applied the symbols of this third trumpet to the invasions of Western Rome by the Scythian hordes under Attila (whom they claim to be the "great star") and the evil effects of these invasions upon the people dwelling in the northern and western skirts of the Empire. The "rivers and fountains" are explained to be the peoples who lived on the outskirts of the Empire; and the embittering of the waters according to this interpretation refers to the infusion into the minds and dispositions of these, the restless, seditious spirit of these Scythian hordes, which was communicated to the central population, and finally caused revolts that overthrew the Empire.

Others apply the symbols of this third trumpet to events of the Sixteenth Century, interpreting the "great star" which fell from heaven to be fulfilled in John Calvin, and the effects of his teaching. In the light of the foregoing, neither of these interpretations seem justifiable.

In our study of this third trumpet symbol to discover the time or period of its fulfillment, we have, as in the other trumpet symbols, looked for great and noted events in the history of the Church, which have exerted a powerful influence over mankind and its affairs and also upon the testing and development of the "little flock." Thus far we have found the events symbolized by the three

trumpets, acknowledged by all historians to be the most noted. They followed each other in succession; they have continued to a large extent up to the present time to affect the destinies of mankind; and they have been overruled by Christ to the accomplishment of his great plans and purposes in the development of his called out ones. These three most notable occurrences of history are more fully depicted in later symbolic visions of the Revelation. As we consider the fourth trumpet symbols, we shall find described other evil effects upon the pure truth of God's Word by this false Christian Bishop, this "great star" of the third trumpet.

The Fourth Trumpet — the Eclipse of Hope

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise" (Revelation 8:12).

That we may more fully appreciate the connection and relationship between the events represented in this fourth trumpet symbol and those in the three preceding, we briefly summarize the very notable events in the history of the Church which we believe have constituted a fulfillment of the visions of the three preceding trumpets, as follows:

The first trumpet — the great storm of hail, etc., portrays the effects that certain truths of Christianity had upon the false, idolatrous Pagan religion and upon the Pagan government which *indirectly* caused its overthrow, and the substitution in its place of a paganized form of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire. This had its fulfillment in the second and third centuries, reaching its culmination in the days of Constantine the Great, in the beginning of the Fourth Century.

The second trumpet — that of the burning mountain being cast into the sea, describes in symbol the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire. The events that gradually accomplished its overthrow, occurred during the Fourth Century and the beginning of the fifth, 476 AD.

The third trumpet — the falling of the "great star" or meteor and its poisoning the fountains and rivers, etc., illustrates in symbol the apostasy of a Roman Bishop, and the establishment of a succession of the same, who perverted and defiled the true source and channels of truth. The center of the influence of this great false teacher has been the city of Rome. The time in history that this occurred was about a half century after the fall of the Western Roman Empire which would be 539 AD. It is well to keep in mind the fact that the evil influence of this succession of false teachers has been most keenly felt throughout all the centuries of the Gospel Age and still continues. It has been the cause of the sorest trial and severest testing of the Lord's consecrated that appears in the annals of history. We shall not be surprised, therefore, to find that the destruction of this and other false religious systems is most clearly portrayed in the symbols of the seven vials or seven last plagues of Revelation 16.

In view of the foregoing we should, therefore, look for the symbols of this fourth trumpet to have their fulfillment, not *after*, this order of false Christian teachers is destroyed, but rather shortly after its rise, and contemporaneous with its governing influence. Indeed, the symbols of this fourth trumpet we believe depict very strikingly, special particular features of what is termed by all historians the "Dark Ages," during which time the saints, according to inspired prophecy, were delivered into Papacy's power for a season (Daniel 7:25, Revelation 13:7).

Let us first study the symbols themselves. They are two in number and as they are such as are used very frequently in the Scriptures they are familiar to Bible students. First, the sun, moon, and stars are smitten so as to cause the third part of them to be darkened. Considering the matter from a purely natural standpoint, the effects of such a darkening of these heavenly luminaries would be that they would fail to give the third part of the light and heat that they were designed by the Creator to shed forth upon the earth and its inhabitants, thus producing calamitous effects upon the earth and upon all the terrestrial creation. Second, the effects produced by the darkening of the heavenly bodies is in the symbolism stated to be, to cause the day to be darkened for a third part of it and the night in like manner.

We will now consider the symbolical significance in the Scriptures of the sun, moon, and stars when mentioned together. We have one instance of their use in this sense in the case of Joseph's dream (Genesis 37:9), in which the sun, moon, and stars are represented as bowing down to Joseph. In this instance, they represented the different degrees of power and influence in Jacob's family; Jacob being represented by the sun, his wife by the moon, and the sons by the stars. Another instance, and one doubtless used the same as in the vision we are considering, is that found in Revelation 12:1, describing the true Church as a woman clothed in a robe of sunlight, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. The vesture of sunlight represents the pure unadulterated truth of the Gospel; the moon, the reflected light proceeding from the Old Testament illustrations — the types and shadows in the Law, and the utterances of the Prophets; the twelve stars, the twelve chosen Apostles, through whom the light from the Old and New Testament shines.

The picture then is that of the Church in its purity before the divinely appointed lights had become darkened. The sun is the supreme light of the material world, consequently when, in a symbolical sense, it will rise fully in the coming Millennial Day, all other lights will disappear — will not be needed.

The Church was originally given the benefit of all these lights. They are represented as shining out through the Church in this world's night. In a literal sense, it is the same sun that illuminates all parts of the earth; so in a symbolical sense, whatever parts of the earth have been enlightened by the true light, could be darkened by false teaching, or by substituting error for truth. This would be symbolized by the darkening of the literal sunlight. The sun can never symbolize darkness, error; and so it would be improper to speak of the Papal sun, in the sense that it is, or has a light of its own that could be darkened, for the reason

that the Papal power has obscured the light from these heavenly luminaries, and has become a propagator of error, false doctrines. Thus explained Mr. Russell:

"The sun as a symbol represents the Gospel light, the truth — and thus Christ Jesus. The moon as a symbol represents the light of the Mosaic Law. As the moon is a reflection of the light of the sun, so the Law [covenant] was the shadow or reflection beforehand of the Gospel. The stars as symbols represent the inspired teachers of the Church — the Apostles. . . . A combination of these symbols is found in Revelation (12:1) where the 'woman' symbolizing the early Church is represented as clothed with the sun, that is, resplendent in the full, clear light of the unclouded Gospel."

Shading of the Gospel Sunlight

In a general way, therefore, the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars would mean the darkening of the truths of the Gospel, the darkening of those truths foreshadowed in the Law and in the utterances of the Prophets, and the darkening of the truths contained in the writings of the twelve Apostles. From this standpoint the sun, moon, and stars of all the professed Christian systems would be the same sun, moon, and stars, and for these lights to be darkened would mean the same — the substitution in a measure at least, of error for truth, the difference between these systems being represented in the varying degrees that error has become mixed with the truth; or it might be a neglect of the use of these true lights which would result in wholly darkening the understanding with regard to God's plans and purposes.

We give herein an example of this method of interpreting this symbolism found in the writings of Mr. Russell. While the quotation is in connection with the unfolding of another vision, belonging to the closing days of the Gospel Age, yet the principle or rule of interpretation is the same as given above:

"Wherever we look we can recognize the fact that while God's consecrated people are being specially fed and enlightened at the present time, yet with the nominal Church it is not so. Its sun [light of truth] is being darkened; its moon [typical sacrifices, etc.] is being turned into blood: and its stars [teachers, who once had a measure of truth] are falling. The center of the Gospel light has from the first been the cross of Christ, the ransom; and however boldly Papacy set up the competitive sacrifice of the Mass, the saints of God have always held fast to this blessed center of all God's promises and of all His people's hopes."

We would, therefore, understand that the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars of these systems would be a measurable loss of the light of truth that proceeds from these divinely appointed luminaries.

We next consider the symbolical use of the word "day," and thereby discover the evil effects produced upon the Lord's people as also upon the world by this darkening of the day. It is generally understood by Bible students that the word *day* in Scripture usage, frequently refers to a period of time. It is also well known to be a symbol of a period of time in which the light of truth will fully shine, not alone to the Church but through Christ and the Church in glory to the whole

world. This "day" is called the day of Christ, the Millennial day (Philippians 1:10, 2:16). It is referred to in Malachi (4:2) and is there portrayed as the day when the Sun of Righteousness shall have risen with healing in his beams. All through this present age the true saints with more or less interest and blessing in proportion as the truth concerning this blessed "day" has not been darkened by Papal teaching, have looked forward to this time, this day of Christ's glorious reign upon the earth, as the fruition of all their precious hopes; and as the time when the sunlight of truth will shine forth for the blessing and uplifting of all mankind. In the Dark Ages, which covered the long period of Papacy's reign, this blessed hope, to a very considerable extent, was lost sight of, or became dimmed, that is, the Church was deprived of the help and blessing derived in looking forward by faith to this coming day. The Old Testament Scriptures in shadows and types, as well as in the utterances of the Prophets, foretold and described this glad day of heavenly sunlight, when the world would be blessed through the glorified Christ.

The apostate system to a large extent darkened the light proceeding from God's wonderful revelations that cheered the pathway of his saints, by claiming and teaching that these glorious prophecies were fulfilled in the reign of the Papal system over the nations. We quote an eminent writer in this connection:

"When the Christians were relieved from persecution by the policy of Constantine, and came into honor, after having been so long reckoned the filth and offscouring of all things, the cry was straightway raised, that the Kingdom had come [the Day had dawned]. But the result of this vain, 'Lo here!' was the introduction of two pernicious doctrines, that the Kingdom is possible without the second presence of the King, and the Church can become mistress of the world during her widowhood, and while Satan is still reigning prince. Further mischief followed: for there being nothing to support such views in the New Testament, those who entertained them were compelled to resort to the Old, and to cite from thence, the prophecies of Israel's [and the world's] future glory, in order that by a false application of them to the Church they might justify the prosperity which had accrued to her through her alliance with the Pagan [Paganized Christian] world" (Pember, *Antichrist, Babylon, and the Coming Kingdom*).

All the blessed features that belong in their fulfillment to that future Millennial Day were claimed by the Papal theologians as already taking place, and they taught that Christ had come the second time in the person of the Roman Bishop or Pope. For further references in proof of this see page 38 and the message to Philadelphia.

Is it a thing to be wondered at that Martin Luther, the great reformer of the Sixteenth Century, as he began to be enlightened by a proper understanding of the Scriptures, viewing Papacy's blasphemous claims in the light of prophecy, exclaimed: "It is most manifest and without any doubt that the Roman Pontiff with his whole order is the very Antichrist."

We thus are enabled to see the significance of the "day" being darkened as we note the distortion and misapplication of these Millennial Day prophecies by this

succession of false religious teachers (stars, meteors). During the long period of the Dark Ages, the Second Advent faith and the Millennial hopes disappeared. Not wholly, however, as we learn from the historians. Harnack, an eminent Bible expositor and Church historian, has said:

"It [the true hope of the Church and the world] still lived on in the lower strata of Christian society; and in certain under-currents of tradition it was transmitted from century to century."

As another writer has said:

"While the harlot Church, including the great body of nominal Christians, became completely dead to this truth, the true Bride, the woman in the wilderness, obscure, despised, and persecuted, still cherished it in secret. Hence all through the age we find glimmering rays from the Virgin's lamp falling here and there in the surrounding darkness. The Waldensian candlestick, with its motto, *'Lux in tenebris,'* threw stray beams of advent light into the encircling gloom. Read the following from the Noble Lesson, a famous treatise, originating in that body [Waldenses] about 1200 AD. 'O brethren, hear a noble lesson: we ought often to watch and be in prayer; for we see that this world is near its fall. We ought to be very careful to do good works, for we see that the end of the world is approaching.' ... But these were only broken rays, feeble heart reflections from those who had kept sight of 'the Bright and Morning Star,' in the midnight of the Church's apostasy. We do not forget that there were powerful outbreaks of expectation of Christ's return, like that which marked the dawn of the thousandth year of the Christian era. But the conception which characterized these was that of a Judge coming in terror, not of a bridegroom returning to bring joy to his watching bride. The patience of hope revived only in a panic of fear. The forebodings of this period having passed, Christendom relapsed once more into profound slumber concerning her primitive hope — a slumber disturbed only here and there by the dreams of those whom she counted visionaries and fanatics" (A. J. Gordon).

It was not until the dawning of the great Reformation that the hope of Christ's Second Coming and the Millennial reign of righteousness began to be revived; it was not until about 1829 that a distinctive Advent movement began to be felt world-wide in the Church; and it was not until some years after what is termed the Miller disappointment, which occurred in 1844, that the clear full light came.

"And the night in like manner": These are the closing words of this fourth trumpet symbol. "Night" by the law of analogy as contrasted with day represents the time of the reign of sin and death. The special lights for the night are the moon and the stars. The darkening of the night, therefore, would mean that the reflected light from the moon, proceeding from the prophecies, types, and shadows, etc., of the Law dispensation pointing to this Millennial Day would be dimmed, so as to make the darkness of this night of the reign of sin and death more intense.

The Lord's saints are creatures of hope. They are called in the Scriptures "the children of the day" (1 Thessalonians 5:5). They, in this night time of sin and

death live by faith in the light of this coming day. The hope that was set before them in the beginning of the age was that of the coming and the reign of Christ, including the hope of reigning with him. The hope of the resurrection, not only of the just but of the unjust as well (Acts 24:15), was perverted and distorted by the teaching of the immortality of the soul, etc., so as to cause these precious truths to be deprived of their blessed influence over the Lord's saints in both their life and teaching. The true hope of the Church became darkened, and thus were many deprived of the help and comfort designed to be given to the Church in its pilgrimage, wilderness state. In this way was the little flock of persecuted ones sorely tried. However, he who walked in the midst of the candlesticks was with them as he promised, supplying through faithful ones raised up for that purpose, the oil of truth necessary for their sustenance.

This fourth trumpet vision is quite generally applied by Historical expositors, to the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire, 476 AD. The sun, moon, and stars are applied by these expositors to the civil ruling powers. The darkening of these luminaries is explained by them to describe the evil influences upon the people of the Roman Empire, by the overthrow of the Roman government.

There are those who apply the symbols of this trumpet to the Baptist movement beginning in the days of the great Reformation. It cannot be truthfully said, however, in the light of history, that the Baptist Church movement caused the eclipse of these heavenly luminaries so that the Millennial hopes and prospects were lost to the Church. These blessed hopes, etc., had already been lost sight of before the Reformation began, and each reform movement, the Baptist included, has had measurably, at least, an influence to restore them again.

In our expositions thus far we have found that the Papal system has been quite frequently referred to. We have found its gradual rise portrayed in the horsemen of the second, third, and fourth seals — these describing the desire to rule in the Church, which at last culminated in this rulership becoming centered in the Roman Bishop. In the third trumpet we have depicted its embittering or poisoning the fountains and rivers of truth. In the fourth trumpet we have described its darkening the Church's hope by its false application of prophecy. We shall find it brought to view in other visions from chapter eleven and on, each vision portraying particular features of its evil influences upon both the Church and the world.

Chapter Eighteen

The Fifth Trumpet Sounded

(Revelation 9:1-12)

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (Revelation 9:1,2).

We now come in our studies to consider what are quite generally termed the "woe" trumpets — the fifth, sixth, and seventh. The reason for giving them this name is that they are preceded by a vision, giving an announcement to this effect, described by St. John as follows:

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" (Revelation 8:13).

It seems evident that one design of this introductory vision is to call special attention to the fact that the events fulfilling the symbols of the last three trumpets will be of a very calamitous nature to certain established systems and arrangements existing among men. We remind the reader that if we are correct in our interpretations, the four already considered have had their fulfillment in events occurring among the peoples living in the territory of the Western Roman Empire. We will endeavor to show that the events symbolized by the fifth and sixth have to do more especially with those living in the Eastern Roman Empire. The fulfillment of this vision of the "angel flying in mid- heaven," etc., should be looked for as preceding the events symbolized in connection with the sounding of the fifth trumpet.

The Angel Flying in Mid-Heaven

The "angel" it would seem must represent animate agencies; and as the utterances are in the nature of sounds of alarm, predictions, etc., the logical conclusion to be drawn is that they would refer to men who exercised a powerful influence in the professed Christian world. The vision, we believe, teaches that there would be announcements of great calamities coming upon the inhabitants of the world. However, this would not mean that those predicting these calamities understood the visions of the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets, or that their utterances were in any measure inspired, or absolutely true, but simply that the vision records in symbol that such things would occur just previous to

the fulfillment of the vision of the fifth trumpet. Neither must we understand that these men would give utterance to the words of the vision itself, but rather that in their preaching they would predict calamities coming to earth's peoples. The trumpet symbols indicate that they themselves portray judgments or woes, the seventh of which will be the final one, and will result in the destruction or overthrow of the entire present order of things and the ushering in of the new.

We shall endeavor to prove that the period in history when this fifth trumpet began its fulfillment was about a century after the rise of the Papacy. A very prominent date in connection with Papacy's rise was 539 AD. It was a little less than a century after this that an event occurred; fraught with great significance in connection with humanity's affairs. The period between the rise of Papacy and this event was marked by occurrences that fulfilled the symbolic vision of the "angel flying in mid- heaven." The destruction of the city of Rome, the overthrow of Christendom, and indeed the ushering in of the great Judgment Day, was proclaimed by many of the great nominal preachers. We quote one of the utterances of the most prominent of all the nominal preachers of that time:

"Our Redeemer desiring to find us ready and restrain us from love of the world, predicted the evils that are to attend its (the world's) old age, and the calamities that are to immediately precede its termination, that if we are not inclined to regard him with awe and tranquillity, we may at least when his judgment is nigh, feel a fear of being overwhelmed by his strokes. ... That earthquakes have overwhelmed numerous cities, you learn as often as you hear from other quarters of the world. We have pestilences without cessation. Signs, indeed in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, we have not yet beheld, but that they are not far distant we may infer from the change that has taken place in the air. Indeed, before Italy was given up to be smitten by the Gothic sword, we saw fiery armies battling in the heavens and the blood itself gleaming which was afterwards shed of the human race. And though no new commotion of the sea has hitherto arisen, yet as most of the signs foretold are already fulfilled, there is no doubt that the few that remain are to follow. ... Moreover, we wish you to know that the end of the present world is nigh. ... And as the end of the world approaches many things impend which had not occurred before, such as changes of the air, terrific appearances in the sky, unseasonable tempests, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and these signals of the end of the world precede it, that we may be found solicitous for our souls, looking for the hour of death, and prepared for the coming Judge" (Gregory the Great, *Homilies and Epistles*).

These words are the utterances of the one who occupied the Papal throne from 590 to 604; the one who was looked up to as representing the Redeemer himself, and whose words were echoed and re- echoed throughout the nominal heavens in those times.

The events symbolized by the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets, like those preceding, cover great periods of time. Indeed all of the trumpets refer to man's doings, except the seventh, and all but the first two portray the rise and progress of false religious systems that continue to the full end of the Age. The great preachers of those times (the Sixth Century) had so far departed from the true

faith that they had lost sight altogether of the real purpose of this age — that of the selection and development of the Church. Their appeals were to mankind at large. They endeavored to move them through fear of awful judgments — even that the end of the world was nigh — to become Christ's followers. Their interpretations of the character of the great Day of Judgment were very far from the truth, as many Bible students recognize.

However, as those important events symbolized by the trumpets were gradually unfolded in history, the Lord's consecrated ones began in a measure to understand their significance. The Reformers of the Sixteenth Century understood some of these visions of the Revelation quite clearly; and now, having reached a time when nearly their whole history has been spread out before us, we are enabled to see the fulfillment of nearly all of them very clearly.

In beginning the exposition of what we believe is the fulfillment of the fifth trumpet symbols we will consider first what the symbols themselves signify, seem to point to, or require. Hence we make the following observations:

(1) In a general way the chief symbol portrays the rise or beginning of a false religion; and as Papacy's rise has already been described in the symbols of the third and fourth trumpets, this false religion is evidently an entirely new one. This is seen in that it originates from a "star" that St. John saw as having fallen from heaven to the earth. A "fallen star" as already pointed out generally represents a false teacher.

(2) That it is a false religion instigated by this "fallen star" (teacher) is also evident in that smoke is represented in symbol as proceeding from the "pit of the abyss," which is opened by the "fallen star" (teacher). The term "abyss" is found in several places in the Scriptures. It occurs four times in the Revelation and once in the Gospel of Luke (8:31, see Diaglott). In Revelation 11:7 and 17:8 it is stated that the symbolic "beast" comes from the "abyss." The "beast" referred to in these two Scriptures is evidently the Papacy. In Revelation 20:1,3, where the word is translated "bottomless pit," Satan is represented as being cast into the "abyss," and placed under restraint for a thousand years. While we may not apprehend all that is implied in the words *abyss* and *pit*, a careful comparison of these Scriptures and their contexts we believe reveals that these terms, as symbols, are intended to describe a general state or condition rather than some particular place or locality, and would seem to signify complete restraint in a debased, degraded, depraved, and darkened condition of mind — restrained in a state of total spiritual darkness and uncertainty. Being without bottom would speak of the fact that those in this state have no basis of hope, nothing substantial in the way of a sure footing or foundation on which to rest their souls — a state of hopelessness and complete obscurity. This is somewhat the condition of fallen angels or spirits who are said by St. Peter to be cast down to Tartarus (mistranslated hell, 2 Peter 2:4), which is generally understood to be the region round about the earth, to which St. Paul also makes reference: "Because our conflict is not with blood and flesh, but with the governments, with the authorities, with the potentates of this darkness, with the spiritual things of wickedness in the heavenlies" (Ephesians 6:12).

However, we would not say that the fallen angels are really in the pit or abyss condition of utter spiritual darkness and hopelessness, for we read of the demons who were cast out of the man of Gadara by the Savior, that they besought him that they might not "go out into the abyss," indicating that they were fearful of getting into that condition. In addition to the above suggestions we believe the Scriptures justify the thought that the pit or abyss may properly stand for all cunning devices, philosophies, and sophistries which are the work of depraved fallen spirits, and in general all the occult and unseen powers of darkness, in the sense that all of these tend toward the state of total spiritual darkness and hopelessness.

(3) In view of the foregoing it is seen that the fallen star of Revelation 9:1 who received the key of the abyss would seem to refer to some eminent false leader or teacher who by reason of his peculiar temperament and environment was endowed with a disposition to investigate and inquire into the occult, and to receive suggestions from the unseen powers of darkness, by which there was developed a new false religious system. And this is in line with the Scriptural presentation of the matter, namely that all religious deceptions, delusions, and impostures have their origin from Satanic sources, and in common parlance would be spoken of as proceeding from the "pit." Thus is fulfilled the requirements of this particular feature of the symbolism of this fifth trumpet.

(4) That it represents a false religion is further seen from the fact that when the "pit" was opened by this "fallen star" (teacher), "smoke" was seen to proceed from it. Smoke, when employed as a symbol, has more than one significance. When described as proceeding from fire, it usually represents the thought of remembrance, as in Revelation 14:11, where we have portrayed in symbol the destruction of the evil systems of earth in a great time of trouble. The teaching of this Scripture seems to be that just as smoke is a continual reminder that there has been a fire, so the lessons of the great time of trouble symbolized by the fire will never be forgotten by mankind. However, in this vision of the fifth trumpet, where smoke is represented as hindering or obscuring the sight, particularly as shutting out the light of the sun, it represents gross errors and deceptions which obscure or darken the understanding of God's Word.

(5) The next significant symbol is that of the breeding of an immense swarm of locusts, as we read: "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power" (Revelation 9:3). "Locusts," spoken of sometimes in the Old Testament as grasshoppers, everywhere in the Scriptures represent invading, hostile armies. These insects in the Eastern countries always appear in large companies, and from their destructive qualities are considered as enemies of mankind, producing woes, disasters, etc. In Jeremiah 46:23 we read: "Cut down the forests [her peoples in cities] saith Jehovah that it may not be found in searching, although they surpass the locusts in multitude and they are without number." Again in Nahum 3:15-17 we have a reference: "There shall the fire devour thee ... it shall devour thee as the locust, the crowned princes are as the numerous locusts."

A Jewish Rabbi (Tanchum) has said in commenting on Joel 1:4-6 where a locust plague is pictured:

"It is in no way unreasonable to affirm that in the things related (in the text) concerning the nature of locusts and their actions, there is a parabolic expression of the invasion of enemies, their multitude and devastation and ruin of a country."

Josephus has said: "As after locusts we see the woods stripped of their leaves so in the rear of Simon's army, nothing but devastation remains."

Again we are assisted in the elucidation of this symbol by the information that locusts breed in the earth. Pliny says: "This insect has its name in Hebrew from *Geb, Goeb*, or *Geba*, which signifies a pit, ditch, or pool." It should be kept in mind, however, that "though they are *called* locusts, because in their general appearance and in the ravages they commit they resemble them, yet in the main they are imaginary creatures, and combine in themselves qualities which are never found united in reality." These symbolic locusts are said to proceed from the smoke that comes out of the pit of the abyss.

(6) The fulfillment in history of these symbolic locusts would further require that the armies symbolized would become a woe to all the inhabitants of earth where these invasions occur; but very specially to apostate Christians, the men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. Furthermore, it would be required that this woe would not be so much that of killing them, but rather of tormenting them; the torment being the infliction of the sting of the false religion that animates these armies in their conquest.

(7) The fulfillment of these invasions by the symbolic locust armies would require also that they run the usual course of conquerors, as locusts continue while they live to devour the grass and the trees. Locust plagues usually last about five months. One has said: "Locusts are produced in the spring, they die at the end of the summer, nor do they usually live longer than five months." It may also be interpreted to mean that the "five months" would represent symbolical time, which would be one hundred and fifty years.

In a general way then we would say that the symbolism of the fifth trumpet requires that we look for its fulfillment in a great false religious system that emanates from Satanic sources, and that gradually increases its influence and power over large numbers of the human family. We would further expect it to merge into a political power and attain great success in the propagation of this false religion by the force of armies; the one supreme motive in their conquests being that of bringing the peoples of earth to embrace this religion. Natural locusts are always used as a symbol of desolation and destruction. The effects of the armies of men, symbolized by these unnatural locusts, however, would be more to vex, trouble, and bring torment *to men* rather than to desolate vineyards, olive yards, and fields of grain.

In examining the records of history to locate the time of the fulfillment of this vision, it will be helpful to note its connection with the events of the previous trumpets. In our expositions of the first four trumpets we found that they had

all either been fulfilled or begun their fulfillment when the early part of the Sixth Century was reached. The third trumpet symbol describes the rise of the Papacy and its embittering or poisoning the waters of Truth; the fourth describes its darkening of the "blessed hope" of the Church by distorting and misapplying the prophecies concerning the same. We remind the reader that the events of the third and fourth trumpets have continued throughout the entire Gospel Age, since their beginning in the opening of the Sixth Century (539 AD). The Reformation in the Sixteenth Century, and other reform movements since, have in a measure brought back the light of Truth (cleansed the Sanctuary), and now having reached the period of the close of the age, when fuller knowledge is to be given, an understanding of these matters in the light of history becomes more lucid.

Opening of the Abyss

The events of history portrayed in the symbols of this fifth trumpet should therefore be expected subsequent to the year 539 AD. It will not require a very extensive searching of history to discover the event which *all* historians are agreed has exerted almost as powerful an evil influence over mankind as Papacy itself. This event, and those things which grew out of it, fill perfectly all the requirements of this fifth trumpet symbol, which without doubt is a complete description of the empire of the Saracens or of the rise and progress of the religion and the empire set up by Mohammed.

Immediately upon the advent of Mohammed into the religious realm, the claim was advanced that he was especially called of God to proclaim a new religion, as a result of which he had phenomenal success in securing converts. With undaunted courage and determination he carried out his declaration that it was the will of God that the new faith should be spread by the sword. The symbolism describes not only his career, but that of his Saracenic followers who, inspired by this false religion and its supposed rewards, attempted to subjugate the world to the Mohammedan faith.

Some have objected to the application of a fallen star to any other than a fallen apostate Christian teacher. We answer this objection in the words of Mr. Lord, who wrote in 1846:

"It is the office of a *fixed* star to give light, but not of a meteor generated in the atmosphere, which but gleams for a moment and then explodes and sinks to the earth. This star was of the latter kind, manifestly from the fact that it had fallen — not a sun of some other system, like the twinkling orbs that stud our evening sky; and its descent to the earth simply denotes its violent migration or dejection to a new scene of agency. It is regarded by others as a proof that Mahomet is not among the agents denoted by this star, that he had not filled any conspicuous station, either civil or religious, anterior to his assumption of the prophetic office and collection of a small band of disciples, at Mecca. But no such previous rank was requisite to constitute him a meteor. He became such by the generation of his religious system, and gathered a train proportional to his own dimensions, by the conversion of the few relatives and associates who accompanied him on

his ejection from Mecca. The descent of the meteor to the earth was a fit representation of his flight from that city to Medina. His opening the pit and emission of the smoke into the atmosphere, denote the promulgation of his doctrines at Medina; and its brooding on the surface and enveloping every object where it spread, the absoluteness with which his imposture took possession of the people and subjected them to his dominion."

We will first note how the symbols fittingly describe the beginning of Mohammed's career as the originator of the new religion. We quote the historian, who without being aware of it has recorded the events fulfilling this "sure word of prophecy":

"Mahomet or Mohammed was born in the sacred city of Mecca in Arabia in the year 570 or 571. Till the age of forty he lived without exciting much remark, and was known as an able, rich, and enterprising merchant, honorable in his dealings and strictly truthful in all that he said. ... In his frequent retirements to a mountain cave for secret thought and study he developed a religious system of his own. He one day, at a meeting of his kinsmen, made the startling announcement that he had received a Divine revelation to reform the faith and practice of the whole Arabian nation. He taught that though both the Jewish and the Christian faith were sent from God, yet he himself had received a more perfect one than either. He now called upon all his friends and kinsmen to acknowledge his authority [a characteristic of most false teachers], forsake their idols, and worship the one and only true God" (Swinton, *Outlines of the World's History*).

We quote another historian who mentions more particularly the preposterous self-exalted claims of this "fallen star" (teacher):

"Mohammed possessed a deeply religious nature, and it was his wont often to retire to a cave a few miles from Mecca and there spend long vigils in prayer. He declared that here he had visions in which the angel Gabriel appeared to him and made to him revelations which he was commanded to make known to his fellowmen. The sum of the new faith which he was to teach was this: 'There is one God and Mohammed is His prophet' " (*Myers' History*).

The *International Encyclopedia* describes more particularly the manner in which he received his revelations:

"He was forty years old when he received (as he claimed) the first Divine communication in the solitude of the mountain Hira, near Mecca. Gabriel appeared to him (he claimed) and in the name of God commanded him to 'read,' that is to preach the true religion and to spread it abroad by committing it to writing."

The same authority tells us that he was naturally subject to epilepsy:

"What part his epilepsy had on his visions we are not able to determine. Certain it is that after long and painful solitary broodings, a something — not clearly known to himself — at times moved him with such fearfully rapturous vehemence that during his revelations he is said to have roared like a camel, and to have streamed with perspiration; his eyes turned red and the foam stood in his mouth."

This authority goes on to say that he heard strange sounds and voices:

"The voices he heard were sometimes those of a bell, sometimes a man, sometimes they came in dreams or they were laid on his heart."

By noting this historian's account it will assist us further to an understanding of Mohammed's condition of mind, which was moulded to a large extent by the religious influences that surrounded him before receiving his (so-called) "visions":

"Waraka, one of his wife's relatives, who had embraced Judaism, spoke to him of the Jewish doctrines and told him the story of the patriarchs and Israel, not so much as it is told in the Bible, but in the Midrash; and the gorgeous hues of the legendary poetry of the latter seem to have made as deep an impression upon Mohammed's poetical mind as the doctrine of the unity of God and the morale — in its broad outlines — of the Old Testament, together with those civil and religious laws Scriptural and oral, which are either contained or fully developed in this record. Christianity exercised (also) a minor influence upon him and his spiritual offspring. All his knowledge of the New Testament, however, was confined to a few apocryphal [traditional] books; and with all the deep reverence before Jesus, whom, together with Moses, he calls the greatest prophet *next to himself*, his notions of the Christian religion and its founder were excessively vague."

Concerning his character we quote again the Historian Myers:

"No character in all history has been the subject of more conflicting speculations than the Arabian prophet. By some, he has been called a self-deluded enthusiast, while others have denounced him as the boldest of impostors. We shall perhaps reconcile these discordant views if we bear in mind that the same person may in different periods of a long career be both."

Smoke of Mohammedanism Darkens Sunlight

Concerning the influence that the religion he established has had upon humanity in beclouding the true Gospel, we note further the same historian's observation:

"Many of the doctrines of Islam are most unfavorable to human liberty, progress, and improvement. It teaches fatalism, and thus discourages effort and enterprise. It allows polygamy and puts no restraint upon divorce, and thus destroys the sanctity of the family life. It permits slavery and fosters despotism. It inspires a blind and bigoted hatred of race and creed, and thus puts far out of sight the salutary truth of the brotherhood of man. Because of these and other scarcely less prominent defects in its teachings, Islam has proved a blight and a curse to almost every race embracing its sterile doctrines. Mohammedanism is, however, vastly superior to fetishism or idolatry, and consequently upon peoples very low in the scale of civilization, it has had an elevating influence. Thus upon the negro tribes of Central Africa, where it is today spreading very rapidly, it is acknowledged to have a civilizing effect."

We have quoted the historian thus extensively that we may be able to appreciate the force of the symbolism employed under Divine inspiration to describe the origin, character, and influence of this baleful religion. Bible students who are familiar with the Scripture teaching concerning the influence the "wicked spirits" (fallen angels) have had in our world, have no difficulty in determining the origin of the visions and revelations of Mohammed. How fully and faithfully (although unconsciously), has the historian described the vision of the "star having fallen from the heaven to the earth," to whom was given the key of the abyss, out of which proceeded smoke, darkening the air and sunlight.

"And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth" (Revelation 9:3).

It seems almost needless to say that the locust army represents the followers of Mohammed during the period of the conquests of the Saracens (Arabians) and the establishment of what is known as the great Saracenic Empire that existed intact for a period of nearly two centuries. A prophetic expositor, Thomas Newton, has truthfully said, with regard to the gathering of the symbolic locust army:

"The Arabians are properly compared to 'locusts,' not only because numerous armies are frequently so, but also because swarms of locusts often arise in Arabia; and also because in the plagues of Egypt, to which constant allusion is made in these trumpets, 'the locusts' (Exodus 10:13) are brought by an east wind, that is, from Arabia which lay eastward of Egypt; and also because in the book of Judges (7:12) the people of Arabia are compared to 'locusts' or grasshoppers for multitude, for in the original the word for both is the same."

Swinton, the historian, also informs us that "it was in the furnace blast of religious enthusiasm that the scattered tribes of Arabia were fused into one nation."

Mohammedanism, or the great apostasy of the East, rose in the beginning of the Seventh Century. It was in 622 AD that the flight of Mohammed took place. This event forms the beginning of the Mohammedan calendar of today. He was received in Medina as a prophet and prince; the Historian Myers goes on to say:

"His cause being warmly espoused by the inhabitants of Medina, Mahomet threw aside the character of an exhorter and assumed that of a warrior. He declared it to be the will of God that the new faith should be spread by the sword. Accordingly the year following the Hegira (622 AD) he began to attack and plunder caravans. The flames of sacred war were soon kindled. The reckless confusion of his wild converts was intensified by the assurance of Mahomet that death met in fighting insured the martyr immediate entrance into Paradise. Within ten years from the assumption of the sword by Mahomet, Mecca had been conquered and the new creed established among all the tribes of Arabia."

Concerning the rapid progress of Mohammedanism in its attempted conquest of the world, Mr. Guinness writes:

"Mohammedanism is one of those great movements which has impressed a new and lasting character on a vast number of the nations of the world. No power known in history ever wielded the scepter over a wider sphere than this has done. In less than a century (from its rise) Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Armenia,

Asia Minor, Persia, part of India, Egypt, Numidia, Tripoli, Tanis, the Barbary States, Morocco, the African coasts as far as Niger, Spain, Sicily, Candia, Cyprus and even parts of Italy itself, had fallen under Saracenic sway and that sway extended not only to civil government but to religious faith as well."

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

This is an evidence that these were not natural but symbolical locusts, for a characteristic of the natural locust is to destroy all vegetation, even to strip the trees of their leaves.

History records that the avowed object of the Saracenic hosts was to exterminate Christianity, and everywhere the corrupt and idolatrous form of Christianity with which only they were familiar, and which prevailed in all the countries invaded, succumbed before the onslaughts of these fanatical religious armies. The historian has recorded that in the first ten years of the Saracenic conquests of the Eastern Roman Empire, thirty-six thousand cities and castles were captured and four thousand churches were destroyed.

The command of verse 4 does not imply that none of the Lord's truly consecrated ones would suffer from these incursions. It would be no violation of its meaning if some of these shared in the miseries of this Saracenic woe. The command is designed to describe more the *pretended policy* of the leaders of these armies. History records the fact that their conquests were made professedly not like those of ordinary warriors, as the desire for power, wealth, or the gratification of passion, but rather for the extermination of false worships, especially idolatry. They carried on all their wars under the pretense of propagating the worship of the one true God. It is true, however, that in the earlier stages of their conflicts, especially during Mohammed's life, true Christians, who were not infected with the idolatrous form of Christianity, were exempted.

"And it was said to them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months" (Revelation 9:5).

This was fulfilled in the conversion of millions to the Mohammedan faith. It actually exterminated the idolatrous form of Christianity in Northern Africa, all except a feeble remnant of the Coptic Church in Egypt, and millions more of professed Christians have groaned under its cruel oppression, and destructive exactions. It extinguished altogether the idolatrous forms of the Gospel in the lands where true Christianity had its birth. The Saracenic power, and the Turkish power (professing the same false religion) that succeeded it, have trodden down Jerusalem for long centuries. The Saracenic host everywhere gave men the choice of three things, the Koran (their religious creed), tribute, or the sword, and in those days, usually the former was chosen.

"And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them" (Revelation 9:6).

It is not difficult to conceive of a state of things so terrible, one in which the distress is so intense, that human beings would look upon death as a relief, and

they would look forward to it with a strong desire. In certain individual cases this has always been true, but the description here is of a time in history when, to a very wide extent, it would be true. History records that so terrible were the calamities or woes that came upon many of the inhabitants of the lands invaded by these Saracenic armies that it was literally true that men became weary of their lives.

The words, "The forms of the locusts were like horses prepared for war," seem designed to express similarity in their appearance; that is, St. John could think of nothing else in human affairs to compare them with. In a general way, "their crowns, their faces, their hair, their teeth, their breastplates, were symbolic of their dispositions, or the characteristics of their agency, rather than descriptive of their persons, and denoted traits by which the Saracens were most conspicuously marked, a daring pretense to right, cunning, effeminateness, voracity and insensibility to the miseries of their victims." The ravages of these Saracenic hosts covered the territory of the Eastern Roman Empire, principally.

We have already referred to a Scripture (Nahum 3:15-17) where the simile of crowns is employed: "The crowned princes are as the numerous locusts." The crowns would symbolize the numerous kingdoms and dominions acquired by them in their conquests. They are represented as having teeth as the teeth of a lion. In the same manner Joel describes the locusts (Joel 1:6) as a nation whose teeth are as the teeth of lions, that is, strong to devour. They are spoken of as having "breastplates as it were breastplates of iron." In this description reference is made to the hard shell or skin of the natural locust, which to them was their defensive armor. This figure is designed to describe the defensive, as the teeth describe the offensive arms of the Saracens. The sound of their wings denotes the general agitation, commotion, etc., which they caused, as also the swiftness of their conquests (see Joel 2:5).

They are three times compared to scorpions and to have had stings in their tails like the scorpions. This refers to the fact that the invaders were always followed by a train of men whose work was to spread the poison of their false degrading religion.

They are represented as having a king over them called the angel or messenger of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew was Abaddon, and in the Greek was Apollyon. All lexicographers are agreed that the meaning of this name is that of destroyer or exterminator. This evidently refers to Mohammed who was the instigator of all these desolating wars carried on in their endeavors to propagate their false religion. Mohammed, even after his death, continued to be their guide in the Koran, just as Christ is the Christian's guide in the Scriptures.

We now come to consider the time feature connected with this locust woe. It is said that they were to "torment men five months," or that "power was given them to torment men five months." We have already noted that the usual length of time of a locust scourge was five months. One eminent expositor of the Revelation explains this to mean that "they continued their scorpion career as tormentors until, like the locusts, they had run the usual course of conquerors.

They ran their course through a period proportioned to that which nations usually run from conquest to indolence, and from luxury to decay." However, believing the period to be symbolical, we note that it is not said that the duration of existence of this Saracenic power was five months, but rather that its power to torment men would cover that length of time. Understanding these months to be prophetic months, one hundred and fifty years would be the length of time of its aggressive warfare to propagate its false doctrines. And we learn from the historians that it was within that period that their successful conquests were made; after this time had passed they became divided, and their success ceased. Mr. Newton in his *Dissertations on the Prophecies* makes the statement:

"Read the history of the Saracens and you will find, that their greatest exploits were performed, their greatest conquests were made between the year 612 AD, when Mohammed first opened the bottomless pit (abyss) [put himself in contact with the powers of darkness] and began publicly to teach and propagate his imposture, and the year 762 AD, when the Caliph Almansor built Bagdad, to fix there the seat of his empire, and called it the city of peace. Syria, Persia, India, and the greater part of Asia; Egypt and the greater part of Africa; Spain and some parts of Europe were all subdued in the intermediate time. But when the Caliphs, who before had removed from place to place, fixed their habitation at Bagdad, then the Saracens ceased from their incursions and ravages like locusts, and became a settled nation; then they made no more such rapid and amazing conquests as before, but only engaged in common and ordinary wars like other nations; then their power and glory began to decline and their empire little by little to moulder away; and they had no longer, like the prophetic locusts, one king over them. Spain having revolted in the year 756 AD and set up another Caliph (successor of Mohammed) in opposition to the reigning house of Abbus."

It is held by some that this vision of the fifth trumpet symbol applies to John Wesley and the Methodist Church movement. We believe it will be clearly recognized, however, in view of the foregoing that the Wesleyan movement did not to any extent fulfill the conditions of this vision, but that, as is conceded generally by Historical expositors, this fifth trumpet symbol had its fulfillment in the rise of the Mohammedan religion and the invasions of the Saracens or Arabians.

It is worthy of note that twenty-two out of twenty-six of the most noted Historical expositors of the Revelation are agreed in applying this fifth trumpet vision to the Mohammedan power.

Chapter Nineteen

The Sixth Trumpet Sounded

(Revelation 9:13-21)

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates" (Revelation 9:13,14).

As we now study the sixth trumpet symbol, we believe that the suggestion in the preceding exposition will be seen to be fully confirmed, namely that the three trumpets, fifth, sixth, and seventh, refer in a very special sense to judgments or woes coming upon the inhabitants of the earth. (The seventh, however, will finally result in bringing blessings as well as judgments.) That this is true, is very manifest from the language of verse 12 of this chapter: "One woe is past; and behold, there come two woes more hereafter."

The woes depicted by the events of this sixth trumpet, like those of the fifth, will have to do more particularly with apostate Christian communities than other of earth's peoples. It is the second judgment (the fifth trumpet describing the first judgment) upon what is commonly termed Eastern Christendom. Neither of these judgments, however, produce repentance, as is seen from the closing words of the vision: "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, [mediatorial gods, as saints and angels] and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood [relics, images of saints, bones of martyrs, pieces of the wood of the supposed cross of Christ, etc.], which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk" (Revelation 9:20,21).

Concerning the idolatrous form of Christianity that existed at the time this vision began its fulfillment (about the Eleventh Century) we have the historian's account:

"The rites and ceremonies used in Divine worship, both public and private, were now greatly augmented among the Greeks, and the same superstitious passion for the introduction of new observances, discovered itself in all the eastern churches. The Grecian, Nestorian, or Jacobite pontiffs that were any way remarkable for their credit or ambition, were desirous of transmitting their names to posterity by the invention of some new rites, or by some striking change introduced into the method of worship, that had hitherto prevailed. This was indeed almost the only way left to distinguish themselves in an age where all sense of the excellence of genuine religion and substantial piety being almost entirely lost, the whole care and attention of an ostentatious clergy, and a super-

stitious multitude were employed upon the round of external ceremonies and observances, that were substituted in their place ... others again tortured their inventions to find out some new mark of veneration that might be offered to the relics and images of the saints" (*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*).

It will be seen that such a terrible perversion of the religion of Christ called for judgments. It was in this way that similar conditions in typical Israel were dealt with by Jehovah throughout their whole history.

We call attention at this point, to the fact that the fulfillment of this sixth trumpet vision continues to some extent until the seventh begins to sound. This is so stated in Revelation 11:14,15 as we read: "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." We will therefore expect to find in existence today the *successors* of those agencies that inflicted this woe, as well as of those upon whom the woe came.

The Revelator tells us that when the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, he heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Loose the four angels, which are bound in the great river Euphrates."

In this passage, as also in that of Revelation 8:3, the use of the "golden altar" as a symbol, is taken from the one in the holy of the Jewish temple, at which the priest officiated twice daily, morning and evening, in behalf of Israel (see Luke 1:8-11). In these two instances, however, it will be noted that there is no veil separating the two apartments, the holy and the most holy. This veil was rent in twain at Christ's death on the cross (Matthew 27:51). This evidently teaches that the way into the presence of God was now opened to believers of the Gospel Age. The golden altar, therefore, has to do with the Church. Its use in the Scripture under consideration, suggests the thought of Christ's intercession in behalf of the Church, receiving and answering their prayers, etc., on the ground of the merit of his sacrifice on earth. The "four horns" of the altar represent the power of that sacrifice. These horns of the altar in Israel's typical history had associated with them the thought of an asylum, a refuge for the protection of the Israelite, as will be seen by a comparison of Exodus 21:14, 1 Kings 1:50, 2:28, and other passages. We thus have suggested to our minds the significance of this part of the vision. As Mr. Newton argues:

"Such a voice proceeding from the four horns of the golden altar is a strong indication of Divine displeasure; and plainly intimates that the sins of men (apostates) must have been very great, when the altar, which was their sanctuary and protection, called aloud for vengeance."

It speaks of that which the altar in one aspect symbolizes, as profaned, and calling for judgments. The voice coming from the four horns of the altar, then, connects the judgments which are to occur under the sixth trumpet, with professed Christian communities and congregations which had set aside or perverted the truth of expiation for sin through the merit of the precious blood shed once for all.

The four angels bound at the river Euphrates, concerning whom the command was given that they should be loosened, represent certain agencies that for a time are under restraint, and then are permitted to exercise themselves and are to be used to bring judgment woes on apostate churches. The city of Babylon is employed in later visions of the Revelation to represent the combination of such churches. These judgments, however, will not be final, will neither bring them to repentance nor destroy them. Their final judgment is accomplished in connection with the outpouring of the vials of chapter sixteen, which is under the seventh trumpet. One of these vials, the sixth, which we believe is in process of fulfillment at the present time, will cause the drying up of the great symbolical river Euphrates. Thus the hindrances to "Babylon's" overthrow will be removed, and the way for the "Kings of the sun rising," Christ and his glorified Church, will be prepared. The reference in the vision to the great river Euphrates is evidently drawn from the incident that caused the overthrow of literal Babylon by Cyrus, when the channel of the river, which ran under the walls of the city, was turned aside from its regular course, thus permitting the armies of Cyrus to enter and capture the city.

The teaching in the vision under consideration is similar in some respects to the one in the sixth vial. The literal river Euphrates was evidently represented in the vision. In both cases the river Euphrates is symbolical and stands for "peoples" and all they represent in the way of influence and support (Revelation 17:15). Thus the four angels bound at the river Euphrates are understood to be symbolical of the four agencies or instrumentalities which for a time were restrained, held back from operations, *at* the symbolical waters of the Euphrates, that is, at those countries or "peoples" which are outside the lands where the judgments were to fall; then in due time when the command came, the hindrances were removed and the four agencies were one after another permitted to go forth and inflict certain judgments. In the sixth vial (which will be considered in its order) the drying up of the river depicts judgments that prepare the way for the armies of Christ and his glorified saints to reign over the earth. In this sixth trumpet the loosing of the angels bound at the symbolical Euphrates, will also loose armies, but as we shall endeavor to show, of a very different kind. It is evident from the fact that the river Euphrates is used in the symbolism, that we are to have described in this sixth trumpet symbol, a terrible woe — judgment on the apostate Church communities.

"And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them" (Revelation 9:15,16).

While St. John calls these strange appearing, weird creatures *horses* and *horsemen*, it should be kept in mind in applying the symbols that they were not horses and horsemen in reality. The Apostle seems to give them this name, because he could think of nothing in the natural world that they so nearly resembled. If they were real horses and horsemen, as we understand these terms, they could not symbolize real horses and horsemen. This would conflict with the

law of symbols. His designating them such, however, enables us to discover the correct application of them to great cavalry armies. We will not need therefore to search the Scriptures to discover what real horses and horsemen symbolize.

It will be remembered that in our exposition of the vision of the fifth trumpet, we found the "locust army" to be a symbol of the devastating conquests of the Saracens under Mohammed, and the Caliphs, his successors. In these conquests many of the apostate Christian communities were laid waste. This was called the "first woe"; and it was indeed a woe to those peoples; yet notwithstanding their terrible severity, the votaries of this idolatrous form of Christianity continued to engage in their God dishonoring worship, that is, such of them as were not, through fear, compelled to embrace Mohammedanism. The Saracen Empire reached the zenith of its power one hundred and fifty years from the time Mohammed began his conquests. It existed for a much longer period, but at this time it began to be divided, and finally broke in pieces. Another power, however, which had embraced the same religion (the Mohammedan) succeeded it, and unto this day it has been known as the Turkish or Ottoman Empire. It began its rise about the middle of the Eleventh Century. It derived its origin from the Tartar tribes of Asia. This great power was the only one that succeeded the Saracens that in any respect fulfilled the symbolisms of this sixth trumpet; and in this power all the conditions required by the symbols are met.

Unbinding the Four Angels

The symbolism requires the release of four divisions of invading armies (verses 14-16). These conditions were met in the Mohammedan Tartar tribes of Asia who ravaged the Eastern Roman Empire from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, and one of the divisions, the Ottoman Turks, has continued up to the present time, as is well known. They came from outside the Roman Empire as the symbol requires (bound *at* the great river Euphrates), and consisted of four different tribes or divisions. They and their successors constituted an innumerable host of warriors, and their manner of warfare was of the most dreadful and destructive character. They constituted a cavalry host (verse 16). Before invading the Roman territory they each acquired great power in eastern countries and thus became ambitious to conquer the world; thus they were released. A detailed account of the rise and conquest of these four tribes and their merging into empires is found in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapters 57, 64, and 65.

The first of these tribes was that of the Turkmans, or, as frequently called, the Seljukians. Their first leader was Togrul Beg, who overturned the Saracenic Empire of the Caliphs and founded a kingdom at Baghdad about 1055 AD. His being "loosed" is represented in his conquest of Persia and Media. He and his followers were most zealous Mohammedans, and Togrul Beg was a vigorous promoter of the faith he professed. As a reward for his success he was declared to be the temporal lieutenant of the vicar of the Prophet. By this exaltation to the position of the defender of the Mohammedan faith he and his successors were incited to make conquests of Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, and lesser Asia,

and to become like a scourge to the idolatrous Christian inhabitants. Besides compelling many of them to pay tribute, and to witness the humiliation of their priests and bishops, they slaughtered many. Under Alp Arslan, their chief leader after Togrul Beg, Asia Minor, which had previously been invaded by the Saracens, was brought completely under the dominion of these Seljukian Turks.

The second tribe or division was that of the Moguls or Tartars, their principal leader being Genghis Khan, about 1200 AD, who, having conquered Persia, passed the Euphrates, devastated Syria, subdued Armenia and Iconium, and finally conquered the Seljukian dynasty. Gibbon says: "Since the invasion of the Arabs (Saracens) in the Eighth Century, Europe had never been exposed to a similar calamity as by this Mogul host."

He also mentions the fact of the destruction of the idolatrous Christian communities of Asia Minor by them. Another historian writes concerning this power and its evil effects upon mankind:

"While the power of the Seljukian Turks was declining in Western Asia, the Moguls, a fierce and utterly untamed tribe that first issued from the easternmost part of Chinese Tartary, were building up a new dynasty among the various tribes of the central portion of the continent. In the year 1156 was born their greatest chieftain, Timujin, afterwards named Genghis Khan or 'Universal Sovereign,' the most terrible scourge that ever afflicted the human race. At the head of vast armies made up of numerous Turanian hordes, he traversed with sword and torch a great part of Asia. It is estimated that his enormous empire was built up at the cost of fifty thousand cities and towns, and five millions of lives — a greater waste, probably than resulted from all the crusades. The successors of Genghis Khan still further enlarged and strengthened the monarchy, so that it came to embrace, besides the best part of Asia, a considerable portion of Europe as well. At length the immoderately extended empire fell into disorder, and became broken into many states" (*Myers' History*).

Consulting the *International Encyclopedia*, we learn: "In the course of his sanguinary career, Genghis is said to have destroyed by wars and massacres, no fewer than five or six millions of human beings. His conquests were generally accompanied by acts of appalling barbarity, yet we seem to trace through the dreadful history of this man, some indications of a civilizing tendency. Himself a Monotheist, a stern believer in God after the fashion of Mohammed."

The third agency that was loosed as a scourge, or woe, was that of the restored empire of the Moguls under Timur, or Tamarline. The historian has faithfully recorded the terrible scourge or woe that this power became, particularly upon the false professors of Christianity. We read:

"The Turks and Tartars who extended their dominions in Asia, with an amazing rapidity, and directed their arms against the Greeks, as well as against the Saracens, destroyed wherever they went, the fruits that had sprung up in such a rich abundance from the labors of Christian missionaries, extirpated the religion of Jesus in several provinces and cities where it flourished, and substituted the impostures of Mahomet in its place. Many of the Tartars had formerly professed

the Gospel and still more had tolerated the exercise of that Divine religion; but from the beginning of this century [fourteenth] things put on a new face; and that fierce nation renounced every other religious doctrine, except that of the Alcoran (Koran). Timur Beg, commonly called Tamerline, their mighty emperor, embraced, himself, the doctrine of Mahomet, though under a form different from that which was adopted by the Tartars in general. This formidable warrior after having subdued the greatest part of Asia, having triumphed over Bajazet, the emperor of the Turks, and even filled Europe with terror at the approach of his victorious arms, made use of his authority to force multitudes of Christians to apostatize from their holy faith. To the dictates of authority he added the compulsive powers of violence and persecution and treated the disciples of Christ with the utmost barbarity. Persuaded, as we learn from the most credible writers of his life and actions, that it was incumbent upon true followers of Mahomet to persecute the Christians, and that the most ample and glorious rewards were reserved for such as were most instrumental in converting them to the Mohammedan faith, he employed the most inhuman acts of severity to vanquish the magnanimous constancy of those that persevered in their attachment to the Christian religion of whom some suffered death in the most barbarous forms, while others were condemned to perpetual slavery. ...

"In the vast regions of the eastern world, Christianity (?) lost ground from day to day and the Mahometans, whether Tartar or Turk, united their barbarous efforts to extinguish its bright and salutary lustre. Asiatic Tartary, Mogul, Tangut, and the adjacent provinces where the religion of Jesus had long flourished, were now become the dismal seats of superstition, which reigned among them under the vilest forms" (*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*).

The fourth and last agency of woe that was loosed was that of the Ottoman Turks. We quote the historian:

"The latest, most permanent and most important of the Tartar sovereignties was established by the Ottoman Turks who were an offshoot of the Seljukians. Gradually this martial race seized province after province of the Asiatic possessions of the Byzantine (Eastern) emperors. Through quarrels that were constantly distracting Constantinople, they at last gained a foothold in Europe (1353). During the reign of Amurath I (1360-1389) a large part of the country known as Turkey in Europe fell into their hands. Amurath was followed by his son Bajazet, who by the rapid advance of his arms, spread the greatest alarm throughout western Europe. The warriors of Hungary, Germany, and France united their armies to arrest his progress; but their combined forces, numbering 100,000 men, were cut to pieces by the sabres of the Turks on the fatal field of Nicopolis in Bulgaria (1396). Bajazet now vowed that he would stable his horse in the Cathedral of St. Peter's at Rome, and there seemed no power in Christendom to prevent this sacrilege. Before proceeding to fulfill his threat, however, Bajazet turned back to Constantinople, which he believed in the present despondent state of its inhabitants, would make little or no resistance. Now it happened that just at this time, Tamerline was leading the Moguls on their career of conquest. He directed them against the Turks in Asia minor, and Bajazet was

forced to raise the siege of Constantinople and hasten across the Bosphorus, to check the advance in his dominions of these new enemies. The Turks and Moguls met upon the plains of Angora, where the former suffered a disastrous defeat (1402). The battle of Angora checked for a time the conquests of the Ottomans, and saved Constantinople to the Christian world for another period of fifty years. The Ottomans gradually recovered from the blow they had received at Angora. In the year 1421, they made another attempt upon Constantinople, but were unsuccessful. Finally, in the year 1453, Mahomet II, the Great, sultan of the Ottomans, laid siege to the capital with an army of 200,000 men. After a short investment, the place was taken by storm. The cross, which since the time of Constantine the Great (325) had surmounted the dome of St. Sophia, was replaced by the Crescent, which remains to this day. The consternation which the fall of the Byzantine (Eastern) Empire created throughout Christendom was like the dismay which filled the world upon the downfall of Rome in the Fifth Century. All Europe now lay open to the Moslem barbarians, and there seemed nothing to prevent their marching to the Atlantic. But the warriors of Hungary made a valiant stand against the invaders, and succeeded in checking their advance upon the continent. ... The Turks have ever remained insensible to the influences of European civilization and their government has been a perfect blight and curse to the countries subjected to their rule" (*Myers' History*).

Read also the account of another historian:

"The power of the Ottoman Turks commenced in Asia Minor and was laid by Othman or Ottoman (born 1258) who, originally ruler of a small mountain district forming the frontier of ancient Bithynia and Phrygia, gradually extended his dominion till it became one of the most flourishing states of Asia Minor. The advance of the Ottoman dynasty after this was rapid. Not only did all Asia Minor fall under Turkish sway, but in the 14th Century the Turks crossed the Hellespont, made Adrianople their capital, and reaching out from there, gradually stripped the Byzantine emperors of Thrace, Macedon, Servia, and Southern Greece. At length Mahomet II ascended the Ottoman throne, and from the moment of his accession, directed his efforts to the capture of Constantinople. At the head of an army of 300,000 men, supported by a powerful fleet, he laid siege to the celebrated metropolis. ... At last on the 29th of May, 1453, the Turks stormed the walls, having previously battered them with cannon (then used for perhaps the first time); Constantine fell, sword in hand, boldly disputing every inch of ground; multitudes of his subjects were massacred; the Crescent waved over the Church of St. Sophia and the Byzantine [Eastern Roman] Empire fell forever" (Swinton, *Outlines of the World's History*).

Concerning this most notable event of history and its effects on nominal Christianity, we have this further account from *Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History:*

"The ruin of the Grecian (Eastern Empire) was a new source of calamities to the Christian Church in the greatest part of Europe and Asia. When the Turks headed by Mahomet II, an accomplished Prince and formidable warrior, had made themselves masters of Constantinople in the year 1453, the cause of (nominal) Christianity received a blow from which it has never as yet recovered.

Its adherents in those parts had no resources left which could enable them to maintain it against the perpetual insults of their fierce and incensed victors, nor could they stem that torrent of barbarism and ignorance that rushed in with the triumphant arms of Mahomet, and overspread Greece with a fatal rapidity. The Roman pontiff, Pius II, wrote a warm and urgent letter to Mahomet II to persuade that prince to profess the Gospel, but this letter is equally destitute of piety and prudence."

"And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions: and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt" (Revelation 9:17-19).

St. John having described the vision as it appeared in a general way now proceeds to portray its particular features. The peculiar appearance of those he designates horses and horsemen now engage his attention. The horsemen are represented as having breastplates of the color of fire (red) and of hyacinth (blue) and of sulfur (yellow). Breastplates are defensive armor, giving boldness and courage to those who use them. We are familiar with this symbol when it is applied to a Christian. In this Scripture, however, it is not used with reference to a Christian. The breastplate of a warrior is also a means of striking terror and astonishment to the enemy. The red, blue, and yellow are designed to denote the terror of their appearance when marching to war.

The horses are represented as having heads as, or similar to, the heads of lions. A lion when employed in the Scriptures as a symbol is used variously. The lion has many special distinguishing qualities, as courage and victory over his antagonist. In the lion also resides fierceness and rapacity. In this latter sense the lion is used as a symbol of Satan (1 Peter 5:8). Sometimes it is applied to a wicked rapacious king. It is so used by St. Paul: "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion," evidently referring to the wicked emperor, Nero. A lion in general is the symbol of a king. The Musselmans call Ali, Mohammed's son-in-law, "the lion of God, always victorious." One has said "to have the head of a lion portends obtaining victory." Christ is called the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" because of his kingly qualities, etc. The use of it as applied to these symbolic horsemen is evidently that their appearance was such as to strike terror; they were fierce and rapacious, and always victorious.

It is said that out of their mouths issued fire, smoke, and sulfur (brimstone). As fire, smoke, and sulfur are destructive agencies, this would denote that they were to be terrific, irresistible, and most destructive assailants. These symbolic horses are represented as having tails like serpents, with heads, with which they injured. In this particular they resemble the locusts of the fifth trumpet. The only difference being that the different tails are adapted to the different creatures — the tails of scorpions to the locusts, the tails of serpents with heads to the horses. The significance, however, is the same. These Turkish religious

warriors drew after them the same poisonous train as the Saracens; that is, they professed and propagated the same false doctrines, etc. They hurt, not only by their conquests as warriors, but also by the spread of their false religion; and it was true that wherever they established their rule, there also they established their false religion. Gibbon has recorded that the professed Christians were not allowed to exercise their religion except on conditions of tribute and servitude; but even under these conditions they were compelled to endure the scorn and ridicule of the victors, and to submit to having their bishops and priests abused and humiliated, as well as to witness the apostasy of their brethren, the compulsory circumcision of many thousands of their children, and the subjection of many more thousands to a debasing and hopeless slavery. The symbols require and meet their fulfillment in these Euphratean horsemen, in that death or torture always accompanied them in their conquests.

The description further is that the four angels were unbound who had been prepared for the hour, and day, and month, and year. One has said, that this statement is usually regarded as denoting the period during which they were to exercise their office as slaughterers of the idolatrous. This does not, however, seem to be the import of the language. It seems rather to teach that they, these armies, were prepared and made ready to execute the command at any time — any day, hour, month, or year that God would appoint. If it is to be understood this way, it is expressing only the same thing by different words, just as the expressions "peoples, nations, multitudes, and tongues" are used together in other places of the Revelation. However, if it be taken to represent symbolic time, 391 years and 15 days would be that time. If we were to take the last of these powers that were loosed — the Ottoman Turks — we have a very significant fulfillment. It was the 29th of May, 1453 AD, that Mohammed II captured Constantinople. Three hundred and ninety-one years from that time brings us to 1844 AD. It was in this year that the Sultan of Turkey was compelled by the so-called Christian nations of Europe to sign an edict of toleration, abolishing forever its continual practice of executing for apostasy, those who changed their belief from the Mohammedan to the Christian faith. This he did entirely against his will, because it was against the precepts of the Koran, and contrary to what had been their practice since their existence.

The grand Vizier writing to the English government on this matter, said: "The laws of the Koran are inexorable as regards any Musselman who is convicted of having renounced his faith. No consideration can produce a commutation of the capital punishment to which the law condemns him without mercy." The reply of the English government was "Her Majesty's government requires the Porte to abandon once for all, so revolting a principle. If the Porte has any regard for the friendship of England, it must renounce absolutely and without equivocation the barbarous practice which has called forth the remonstrance now addressed to it." Russia at the time wrote: "We positively expect no longer to witness executions which excite the indignation of Christendom." Finally the following concession was obtained with great difficulty: "The sublime Porte engages to take effectual measures to prevent henceforward the execution and putting to

death of the Christian who is an apostate. Henceforward neither shall Christianity be insulted in my dominions, nor shall Christians be in any way persecuted for their religion."

This surely was a positive proof that Ottoman independence ceased that year. Since then, the Turkish government has been compelled to shape its course in accordance with the wishes of the so-called Christian nations of Europe. It was indeed a "compulsory sheathing of the sword of persecution," which had been relentlessly wielded during the whole period of its terrible history. But still further events in these latter days are to be observed by faithful watchers: The expulsion of the Sultan of Turkey from Constantinople in connection with the World War which accomplished his removal as head of the Turkish Empire, is indeed significant, as it marks an important step towards the final overthrow and destruction of that system.

Chapter Twenty

The Mighty Angel, The Seven Thunders, and the Little Book

(Revelation 10:1-11)

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire" (Revelation 10:1).

As introductory to a consideration of the most remarkable visions described in chapters ten and eleven and their fulfillment in history, we would remind the reader that they form no part of the events of the sixth trumpet vision. The sixth trumpet, as we have seen, has especially to do with events connected with the activities of the Turkish Ottoman power. The history of this power, although covering much the same period, is not described in these two chapters. The visions recorded in chapters ten and eleven are of such a character as that they are readily seen to be what may be termed parenthetical; and one of the most remarkable of these visions is retrospective. This is the vision of the prophesying of the "two witnesses," which occupies the larger portion of chapter eleven. It carries the history back at least to the rise of Papacy, which we have interpreted as portrayed in the third trumpet symbol. The scenery of the vision we now consider is transferred from Eastern to Western Christendom. The parenthetic events described are recorded between chapter nine verse twenty-one, and chapter eleven verse fourteen. We quote, omitting the parenthesis: "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts. ... The second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded," etc.

The symbols employed to describe the person, the surroundings, as also the words of this mighty angel are of such a character as to denote that Christ is the one represented. As one has said: "O what a glorious vision to rejoice the heart of the Evangelist! What a contrast to all that had been figured to his view since first the seven trumpet-angels prepared themselves to sound! Indeed we may say, with what a superiority of glory in it to that of any figuration of the future fortunes of the Church, from the commencement of the Revelation until now;

and, as it proved, with nothing comparable to it afterwards, until the vision that foreshadowed the glories of the consummation." Not that the vision is intended to teach that St. John actually saw Christ, but rather that it was a vision or representation of Christ. Neither is it intended to teach that Christ appeared in person at the time the vision began its fulfillment. This we will endeavor to show when we consider the time in history that the vision met its fulfillment. It seems evident also that as in the vision of Christ's appearance to St. John, recorded in chapter 1, the members of his Body are in some sense likewise represented in this symbolic angel; as set forth in the language of another:

"The feet, described as like furnace-refined copper, would represent ... the living members of the Body, all down through this age. ... Thus understood, the figure of a son of man (a human figure) in the midst of the seven candlesticks ... is an impressive picture or symbol, full of instruction, leading us to expect the Lord's guidance in all the affairs of his Church, and to realize that things are not happening to her haphazard."

The vision we are now considering, however, differs somewhat from that of chapter 1, in that instead of representing Christ's care of his Church from the beginning all along through the age, this one is designed to picture the same thing *at an extremely critical time in her history*. More than this, we believe it will be seen that wherever in the history of the Church the vision begins to have its fulfillment, it covers the period from that time to the end of the age. That it represents Christ acting in behalf of his Church at a very critical period in her history is discovered in the startling symbols (differing from those in the vision of chapter 1) that describe and surround the personage of the vision. This will also be seen in the peculiar actions of this "strong angel" — actions which are of course all symbolic.

We will first notice the evidences that Christ is the one represented in the vision. For example, observe the authority with which he speaks and acts. It is this same "strong angel" that utters the words: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses," etc. (Revelation 11:3). No ordinary angel or other intelligent created being could give authority to men to proclaim his Word. It therefore must represent that one to whom all power in heaven and in earth was given (Matthew 28:18). Again the sun-like brightness of his face is an evidence that Christ is the one represented in the symbolism. The sun always represents the pure light of Truth, proceeding (in this instance) from him who is "the Truth." The rainbow encircling his head is another evidence that this deduction is correct. The rainbow speaks of hope, of the fulfillment of a covenant or promise. This application of the rainbow has been observed in a previous vision. In the vision we are now considering, we observe Christ remembering the promise that he gave to his Church, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). This, with other significant features of the vision teaches that this particular period of the Church's history to which the vision applies is one in which her continued execution of the great commission given her needed, in a very special manner, His help and encouragement. The cloud with which he was invested (clothed), being emblematic of glory and power,

indicates that Christ is the great actor in the vision. The cloud is, doubtless, not a natural cloud, but a "glory" cloud, or halo, similar to that which covered the ark of the covenant in the most holy of the Jewish tabernacle. The symbol, then, is designed to represent Christ acting, not directly, but indirectly. His acting would be seen or manifested in a display of his power and providence, through specially chosen ones, in behalf of his cause, his true Church.

"And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth" (Revelation 10:2).

In a general way the expression, "he placed his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth," would signify lordship over earth and sea. The earth representing organized society, and the sea, the restless, turbulent masses of mankind, is designed to teach that he possessed and exercised full control of all human affairs, and would, in a special manner, exercise that power in the interests of his Church and Cause, during the period of the fulfillment of the vision. It would seem also to imply that the period from the time the vision commences, when human affairs are in an orderly condition, to the end of the age, when the sea or anarchistic conditions begin to threaten, is spanned by the distance between the two feet.

We call attention to a very striking difference between this vision of Christ and that of chapter 1. In the latter he is represented as holding the "seven stars" in his right hand, whereas in this he is represented as holding a "little book" (scroll) which St. John afterwards, in a command from heaven, is told to go and take from the angel's hand and eat. The little scroll doubtless represents God's Word, or certain portions of that Word which needed to be specially emphasized at the time the vision applies. There is an explanation of what is represented by eating a book or scroll in one of the visions of the Prophet Ezekiel. The Prophet is shown a scroll, and is commanded to eat it. We have the significance of this very clearly explained in the Prophet's words: "Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And He [Jehovah] said unto me, Son of Man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with My words unto them. ... All My words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears" (Ezekiel 2:9,10, 3:1-3,10). Thus it is learned that in the vision under consideration, among other things is taught that at the period in history to which the vision applies, there would be a special giving of God's Word to the Church.

We now notice the very significant action of this angel, and let it be carefully observed that it takes place *before* St. John receives the book from the angel's hand. This is brought to our view in the words of the Apostle: "And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth."

We have learned by an examination of Scriptures in our consideration of a previous vision that a lion *itself*, when employed as a symbol, has various meanings. One use of it is that of kingly authority. We have discovered also that frequently the peculiar traits or habits of a lion are the things referred to in the symbol, sometimes referring to good and sometimes to bad traits possessed by the object to which the symbol refers. This use of the symbol we have noted

in examining one of the features of the sixth trumpet. In the vision we are now considering the peculiar trait or habit of the lion's roar and its effects are the things to be considered. Some one has said that "the roaring of a lion is in itself one of the most terrible sounds in nature." We have an instance in Amos (3:1-8) where the lion's roar is likened to God's voice speaking a judgment message to apostate Israel of old: "Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel ... which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you. ... The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken."

We have another instance of the use of the same symbol in Joel which contains a still further thought: "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain" (Joel 3:16,17). The comment of another on this Scripture is indeed worthy of consideration: "That this expression is metaphorical, needs no remark. God's being said to roar out of Zion and Jerusalem intimates both the courage of the Jews (His people) fighting under His protection, and the certainty of their success. As a lion, when he roars, makes the woods and plain to resound, and the beasts of the field to tremble, so God being here compared to this fierce creature, His voice is justly said to make the very heavens and earth to shake, the plain meaning of which is, all would be thrown into the utmost consternation, like a man seeing a roaring lion coming upon him to devour him, or as if he saw the very heavens and earth themselves moving and in the utmost disorder."

The use of the symbol in both these passages is evidently the same as the one we are now considering. The sudden appearance of this symbolic personage, and the peculiar and startling symbols that clothe and surround his person, would indicate that Christ's cause, which in the beginning of the age had been entrusted to his people, was, at the time the vision meets its fulfillment, in great danger of utter defeat at the hands of his enemies. It would further teach that the interests of his cause were such as to require that his voice be heard in testimony against his enemies, the anti-Christian system — that a testimony against the same would then be needed and given. It would also teach that the Lord's consecrated ones, at the time the vision begins to have its fulfillment, would need and have given to them special Divine strength and courage and protection, enabling them to successfully cope with the powers of darkness entrenched in the anti-Christian system, the Papacy. Considered in connection with what follows in the vision, that of giving the "little book" to St. John, it would imply that previous to this time the true Church, symbolized by the Apostle, had seemingly been encountering defeat. The loud voice itself seems to represent a message spoken through specially called human agencies, in the same sense that John the Baptist represents himself as the "voice of one crying in the wilderness," meaning that he is giving a message of the Lord. The symbols considered thus far require a special manifestation of Christ in history, at a time when his cause was in most urgent need of it.

Keeping in mind the fact that God's plan for this age is that of taking out the "elect ones," the joint- heirs with Christ for his Kingdom, should cause us to look for a period in history when the carrying out of this plan was imperiled and would have been thwarted altogether were it not for a special manifestation of his power that infused new life into his followers, his tried ones. The response to this symbolic cry was that of seven thunders uttering their voices. Thunder when used as a symbol, as will be seen by carefully examining the Scriptures, relates to various things. In Psalms 29:3, thunder is called the voice of God: "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth." It is used in this Psalm in a comparative sense, as will be seen in the words that follow: "The voice of the Lord is powerful ... is full of majesty." The verses that follow in the Psalm describe the effects of the Lord's voice, "It breaketh the cedars," etc. The summing up of the significance of the words is that "the Lord will give [His] strength unto His people" (Psalms 29:11).

When thunders are said to proceed from the throne of God as in Revelation 4:5, they represent God's glorious and awful majesty; but when fire comes down in connection with it as in Revelation 8:5, it represents some judgment of God upon the world. Very frequently thunders represent the voices of men in controversy. Sir Isaac Newton, a very reverent and godly believer and Biblical expositor, said: "Thunder or the voice of a cloud represents the voice of a multitude." In the vision we are now considering, the thunder-voices are described as being a response given to the lion-like voice of the mighty angel. It would therefore seem to represent the effects produced upon the peoples of earth by the message delivered through the voice (messengers) of Christ at the time of the vision — that this message would affect different classes oppositely, producing controversies. The fact that St. John was forbidden to write the things which the seven thunders uttered would signify that it would not be necessary to disclose what these controversial voices uttered. We would remind the reader that all the things thus far noted in the vision had their fulfillment before the receiving and the eating of the little book by St. John.

Has This Vision Yet Been Fulfilled? Answer by the Historian.

Having before us in the brief outline above, a general sketch of the symbols of this vision and what they would logically be expected to teach and require in their fulfillment, we now inquire: When did the vision begin to meet its fulfillment, and what were the events, occurrences, and proceedings in history that accomplished it? As it seems evident that the vision covers a long period of time, it will be interesting to discover when it began to be unfolded in history. If it is yet future, we certainly would be assuming the role of a prophet to even attempt to foretell the time when it will be fulfilled. This, we would not do. If it is in the past, it should be our privilege as students of prophecy to locate it in the records of the historian. Was there ever a period in history when there were events and instrumentalities corresponding to the angel that appeared, uttering his voice as a lion, to which the voices of seven thunders responded?

In our search to discover this time, it will be helpful to keep fresh in mind what we have heretofore noted, namely that the trumpet visions touch upon all the prominent, worldwide transactions that have occurred in connection with the Church's history from the beginning of the age to the end. Let the reader note again what we have found to be the order in which these transactions occurred:

(1) The overthrow of the Pagan religion about 325 AD.

(2) The downfall of the Western Roman Empire (Christian, so-called), 476 AD.

(3) The rise of Papacy and its polluting the channels of truth, beginning about 539 AD.

(4) The evil influence of the Papacy in beclouding the true hope of the Church and the world — the hope to be realized through Messiah's Kingdom.

(5) The advent of Mohammed into the religious realm, and the great judgment woes that came upon earth's inhabitants, particularly upon those who were the followers of the Paganized form of Christianity that prevailed in the many lands invaded by the Mohammedan armies; as the historian has recorded, the agencies who propagated the false Mohammedan religion by the force of armies, were in two divisions. One of these, that under the Saracens, operated under the fifth trumpet symbol.

(6) A second agency or division represented in four other Mohammedan powers, were the Ottoman Turks, who operated under the sixth trumpet symbol. While the last of these great powers, with its corrupt religion, has continued up to the present time, the aggressive efforts to propagate its false religion through the force of armies ceased long ago.

In our search to discover the time in history when the vision under consideration — the lionlike voice of the angel — began its fulfillment, it will be well to keep in mind that the symbols require that we look for a great movement in the interest of true Christianity, one that is in a very special sense inspired by the great Head of the Church, and that it is at a time when the cause of Christ has seemingly met an utter defeat.

Searching the annals of history we discover an event recorded by all historians which fulfills every feature of the first part of this symbolic vision. This event was one that affected in a most remarkable manner the general condition of mankind, and the Lord's consecrated in particular. Historians have filled many large volumes in describing these occurrences. The effects of these great transactions are seen today in not only the professed Christian world, but in the nations and peoples of earth as well. This event began to transpire in the early part of the Sixteenth Century, and is called the Great Protestant Reformation.

Scripture expositors very generally apply this vision to this great movement. One of these speaks of it as fulfilling certain predictions of Daniel. He calls it the beginning of a work of "cleansing the sanctuary," the Little Flock class, from errors that had been received through the Papacy. He refers to it as a work that has had to do with bringing back to the Church the holy vessels (precious truths) that had been lost sight of, except by a few, for long centuries previous.

Before noting how the events of history have unveiled this wonderful, prophetic vision, we will first note that the conditions existing in both the civil and religious world just previous to the great Reformation were of that nature that called for such a display of Christ's power operating through specially chosen agencies, as is portrayed in the opening verses of this symbolic vision. These conditions are described in the closing verse of chapter 9 which is under the sixth trumpet. These words are: "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Revelation 9:20,21).

The Darkest of the Dark Ages

The intelligent Bible student will understand that the evils referred to in this description are used in a figurative sense to describe the condition of the prevailing form of the apostate, idolatrous Christianity that existed during the aggressive conquests under the sixth woe trumpet. The expression, "the rest of the men," etc., seems to refer more particularly to those living in the territory of the Western Roman Empire, which, at the time, was divided amongst the ten kingdoms, symbolized by the horns on the beast and on the dragon of Daniel 7 and Revelation 12, 13, and 17. These kingdoms at the time were all under the dominating influence of the Papacy which ruled from the city of Rome. These to a very large extent escaped the calamitous occurrences of the two woe trumpets, the fifth and sixth. The period in history referred to is the one just before the Sixteenth Century, the darkest period of the Dark Ages. Let us carefully note the words of the historian concerning the state or condition of the Church and the world at this time:

"At this date (1514 AD), though the name of Christ was professed everywhere in Europe, nothing existed that could properly be called evangelical. All the confessors of Christ, 'worn out' (see Daniel 7:25) by a long series of contentions were reduced to silence" (*Milner's History*).

Another historian referring to the same time has said:

"About the beginning of this century [the sixteenth] the Roman pontiffs lived in the utmost tranquility; nor had they, as things appeared to be situated, the least reason to apprehend any opposition to their pretensions, or rebellion against their authority, since those dreadful (?) commotions which had been excited in the preceding ages by the Waldenses, Albigenses, and Beghards, and lately by the Bohemians, were entirely suppressed and had yielded to the united powers of the council and the sword (of Papacy). Such of the Waldenses as yet remained, lived contented under the difficulties of extreme poverty, in the valleys of Piedmont, and professed to themselves no higher earthly felicity than that of leaving to their descendants that wretched and obscure corner of Europe which separates the Alps from the Pyrenean mountains; while the handful of Bohemians that survived the ruin of their faction, and still persevered in their opposition to

the Roman (Papal) yoke, had neither strength nor knowledge adequate to any new attempt, and therefore instead of inspiring terror (concern) became objects of contempt (by Papal authority). We must not, however, conclude from this apparent tranquility and security of the (Roman) pontiffs and their adherents, that their measures were applauded or their chains worn without reluctance. ... None, however, had the courage to strike at the root of the evil, to attack the Papal jurisdiction or statutes, which were absurdly, yet artfully, sanctified by the title of *canon-law*, or to call in question that ancient and most pernicious opinion, that Christ had established a vicegerent at Rome, clothed with His supreme and unlimited authority. Entrenched, therefore, within these strongholds, the pontiffs looked upon their own authority and the peace of the Church as beyond the reach of danger, and treated with indifference the dreams and invectives of their enemies. Armed moreover with power to punish, and abundantly furnished with the means of rewarding in the most alluring manner, they were ready in every commotion to crush the obstinate, and to gain over the mercenary to their cause; and this indeed could not but contribute considerably to the stability of their dominion" (*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*).

Another writer describing those times has said concerning the assembling of the Lateran Council (from 1512 to 1514), one of the chief objects of which was the uprooting of heresies (and wherever Rome finds heretics we may confidently expect to find the true witnesses of Christ):

"By fire and sword, by dungeon and halter, by denunciation and excommunication, the work of extermination had so far advanced, that no voice could anywhere be heard daring to utter a protest against Rome, except that it was thought that a few forlorn followers of the martyred Huss, who still hid themselves in the wilds of Bohemia, might possibly venture forth, and the matter was tested by a Papal bull, summoning them to appear at the council (May 5, 1514). The day arrived, but not one witness appeared, and the orator of the occasion ascended the rostrum, and amid the tumults of applause made the never-to-be-forgotten proclamation of triumph: 'There is an end of resistance to Papal rule and religion, there is none to oppose. The whole body of Christendom is now subject to thee, Leo X' " (F. E. Tower, *Advancing Kingdom*).

This was at the close of the period represented in Revelation 3:1 by the Church at Sardis. This period, as we have already noted, was the darkest period of the Dark Ages, a time when, as Christ himself foretold, there were but a few names left in Sardis who had not defiled their garments (Revelation 3:4).

Can we wonder, as in our imagination we view this sad and dreadful condition of affairs in the history of God's Church, that there was a need of a lion-like voice to protest against this apostate system. Indeed, there was a crying need that the very foundation truths of the Gospel should be given again, and that agencies especially called by Christ and providentially protected should begin to proclaim them again. It is at this state and stage of the Church's history that this glory-enclouded, rainbow-encircled angel (Christ) suddenly makes his appearance upon the stage of Apocalyptic scenery. Similar incidents, even in the less

important affairs of men and nations, have occurred. Have we not heard of an army defeated, worn out and crushed before a relentless foe? Have we not heard of a commander, who, far away from the scene of conflict, hastened with accelerated speed to the scene of action, and by infusing a new spirit into his weary, worn out, and disheartened soldiers, turned defeat into victory? Was the great Commander of the disheartened armies of heaven any less interested in his weary, worn-out, and discouraged soldiers who had seemingly been crushed in their conflict with the powers of darkness, so largely in control of the anti-Christian systems?

We have now reached in our exposition what is quite generally understood to be the Philadelphia period of the Church's history, when a "door" was to be opened that no human power could shut, when those who had a "little strength" would be called out and enlightened and be specially clothed with the power from Christ to remove the Papal rubbish from the foundation truth of God's sanctuary, and to protest loudly against great Babylon's abominations. This we believe is the period when this vision we are considering began to have its fulfillment. The mighty symbolic angel represents Christ appearing, not in person, but in the form of certain courageous champions of the truth; thus by his own spirit through the Word of Truth, he raised up agencies to give the Bible to every people, tongue, and nation, etc., and thus prepared the way for the closing testimony of the Harvest time. The Word of God had long been buried in the sackcloth of a dead language; and the sacred manuscripts in which it was enclosed were hidden away in monasteries, convents, and theological universities. Indeed, it has been truly said:

"So long had the Bible been buried in Latin, so long withheld from the people, so long made void by the traditions of men, that it was as a new book, given afresh to the Church, when it was as it were rediscovered, restudied, and republished by the Reformers."

Luther's Part in the Reformation

The Reformation began in Germany with the discovery of the Bible. At the age of twenty, Martin Luther discovered a Bible in the University of Erfurth, where he was a student. The historian tells us that he was astonished, amazed. We cite the account of this most interesting occurrence:

"One day he opened several books of the library one after another to see who the authors were. One of the volumes which he opens attracts his attention. He has never seen one like it. He reads the title. ... It is a Bible! a rare book, at that time unknown. His interest is strongly excited. He is perfectly astonished to find in this volume anything more than those fragments of gospels and epistles which the Church has selected to be read publicly in the churches every Sabbath day. Hitherto he had believed that these formed the whole Word of God. But here are so many pages, chapters, and books of which he had no idea. His heart beats as he holds in his hand all this divinely inspired Scripture, and he turns over all the leaves with feelings that cannot be described. The first page on which he fixes

his attention tells him the history of Hannah and young Samuel. He reads and his heart is filled with joy to overflowing. The child whom his parents lend to Jehovah for all the days of his life; the song of Hannah, in which she declares that the Lord lifts up the poor from the dust, and the needy from the dunghill, that He may set him with princes; young Samuel growing up in the presence of the Lord: the whole of this history, the whole of the volume which he has discovered made him feel in a way he has never felt before. He returns home, his heart is full. 'O!' thinks he, 'would it please God one day to give me such a book for my own!' Luther as yet did not know either Greek or Hebrew, for it is not probable that he studied these languages during the first two or three years of his residence at the University. The Bible which had so overjoyed him was in Latin. Soon returning unto his treasure in the library he reads and rereads, and in his astonishment and joy he returns to read again. The first rays of a new truth were then dawning upon him. In this way God put him in possession of His Word. He has discovered the book which he is one day to give his countrymen in that admirable translation in which Germany has now for three centuries perused the oracles of God. It was perhaps the first time that any hand had taken down this precious volume from the place which it occupied in the library of Erfurth. This book lying on the unknown shelves of an obscure chamber is to become the book of life to a whole people. The Reformation was hid in that Bible" (D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*).

The same historian commenting upon the results of Luther's study of the Bible says:

"Later on when soul agony had driven the young student from his loved university into a Benedictine convent, to seek the salvation for which he longed, it was the same blessed book, with its glorious doctrines of forgiveness of sins and justification by faith alone that calmed his storm-tossed spirit, and quickened his soul to new spiritual life. Staupitz, the vicar-general of his order, who proved himself a true pastor to the young monk, gave him a Bible of his own. His joy was great. ... The Reformation, which commenced with the struggles of a humble soul in the cell of a convent at Erfurth, has never ceased to advance. An obscure individual, with the Word of God in his hand, had stood erect in presence of worldly grandeur, and made it tremble. This Word he had opposed first to Tetzel and his numerous host; and these avaricious merchants (of indulgences) after a momentary resistance had taken flight. Next, he had opposed it to the legate of Rome at Augsburg; and the legate, paralyzed, had allowed his prey to escape. At a later period he had opposed it to the champions of learning in the halls of Leipzig, and the astonished theologians had seen their syllogistic weapons broken to pieces in their hands. At last he had opposed it to the Pope, who, disturbed in his sleep, had risen up upon his throne and thundered at the troublesome monk, but the whole power of the head of Christendom this work had paralyzed."

The great work of giving the Bible to the world covered a period of about a century. The period beginning 1522-1534, when Luther's translation of the Bible into the German language was begun and completed, up to 1611, when the King

James translation into English was finished, may be called the great era of Bible translations. Luther's translation was reprinted thirty-eight times in Germany before 1559, and meanwhile the New Testament had been separately printed in seventy- two editions. Numerous other translations in Dutch, Swedish, etc., were based upon the work of Luther. During the above mentioned period, the following versions in English were printed: Tyndale's New Testament, 1525; another issue of the same in 1534; Coverdale's Bible, 1535; Matthew's Bible, 1537; Taverner's Bible, 1539; The Great Bible, 1560; The Bishop's Bible, 1568; Rheim's New Testament, 1582; and the King James Bible, 1611. The numerous translations of the Bible into languages beyond the pale of Christendom in the Nineteenth Century, were executed chiefly under the auspices of Missionary Societies (see *International Encyclopedia*).

Martin Luther's study of the Bible was confined almost exclusively to the great foundation doctrine of Christianity — justification through faith in Christ's meritorious sacrifice. This truth at the time was almost completely lost sight of through the false counterfeit doctrine of the mass. It was the propagation of this blessed truth, together with a bold, fearless testimony that the Papacy was the Antichrist, and the Papal Church was the "mother of harlots" of Revelation 17, that constituted the special work of Luther and his associates. His ability to see the Papacy in its true light was through a study of the symbols of Daniel and Revelation, as also the predictions of St. Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2. We quote in this connection Luther's own words recorded by the historian:

"Early in the year 1520, he wrote to Spalatinus thus: 'I am extremely distressed in my mind. I have not much doubt but the Pope is the real Antichrist. The lives and conversation of the popes, their actions, their decrees, all agree most wonderfully to the descriptions of him in Holy Writ.' In the autumn of the same year he printed a treatise on *The Babylonish Captivity of the Church*. In this he exposed the impostures of indulgences; he showed that their object is to rob men of money by the perversion of the Gospel. In this animated production Luther called the Papacy, the Kingdom of Babylon. One December 10, 1520, Luther called together the professors and students in the town of Wittenberg, and publicly burned the Papal bull [of excommunication]. The die was now cast. Luther had declared war against the Roman pontiff. He had boldly denominated him the man of sin, and exhorted all Christian princes to shake off his usurpations. In this manner was the Reformation inaugurated" (H. G. Guinness).

What the historian has given us as to the activities and influence of Martin Luther in his protests against the desecration of holy things on the part of the great anti-Christian system is true also of a number of other men of eminence who, at the same time and since, joined in the work of protest and were actively engaged in uncovering for fellow-members of the Church many of the truths that had been long hidden, and in making manifest the invalidity and perversions of the Papacy. Amongst these were Knox, Calvin, Wycliffe, Melanchthon and the Wesleys. Each in his own way, and according to the circumstances and opportunities thus had a part, we believe, in the fulfillment of this vision, in sounding forth throughout the earth the lion-like voice of protest against the great apos-

tasy that had made all nations drunk with the wine of her false doctrines. No wonder this world- wide Protestant movement had the effect upon Christendom described by "seven thunders" uttering their voices — creating controversies, discussions, arguments by many parties, factions, and sects, producing more or less of confusion and discord. And St. John was told not to reveal what the seven thunders uttered, which teaches in symbol that the controversies, theories, strife, etc., together with the spirit of sectarianism and the establishment of various creeds containing great errors which followed the Reformation, would not be of benefit or profit to the true Church — would not be for her spiritual nourishment — her help and enlightenment being designed to come from the Lord and his Word alone — through the eating of the "little book."

It was not, however, until the "seventh trumpet" began to sound that, with an *open* Bible and the many helps necessary to understand its teachings, together with the fruitage of the Reformation, and certain experiences necessary to awaken hunger for the Truth, the due time arrived for special messengers of these last times to begin to eat the little book in the full sense of the symbol to bring to light all the wonderful features of the Divine Plan of the Ages; though the rays of light on the imminency of Michael's (Christ's) Kingdom began in the Second Advent movement in 1829, and the eating of the "little book" has been in process of fulfillment up to the present time. It may properly be said that Martin Luther and his associates ate sufficiently of the little book to turn the whole current of human affairs into new channels, and to divide Christendom into two parts — Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, and cause several nations to be liberated from Papal bondage. Other of God's people down the centuries have obtained more and more knowledge of God's Word and have continued the work, but it was not until the seventh trumpet began to sound, and the time came for the last message to be given that the whole of the "little book," the message of Michael's Kingdom, etc., was due to be eaten (understood).

Though the great work of bringing out of the Divine storehouse (the Bible) the mysterious features of the Divine Plan was hindered from time to time by the formation of sects, nevertheless, there has been all along a company of God's saints who have kept free from sectarian bondage. Through this class the work was continued, and the way prepared for the last, and as many think, the greatest movement of Church history in which it has been the blessed privilege of many today to have a part — a work which we believe is rapidly drawing to a close. We are now awaiting with thrilling interest its completion.

Having noted in the Protestant Reformation Movement the fulfillment of the early part of this vision, namely the coming forth of the strong angel sounding his voice as a lion, we are now prepared to inquire more particularly respecting the fulfillment of those symbolic developments that followed, recorded in chapter 10.

The Seven Thunder-Voices

"And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice

from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not" (Revelation 10:3,4).

Obviously the "seven thunders" uttered their voices as a result of the loud cry of the angel described as like the roar of a lion, which, as we have seen, refers in its beginning stage to the bold, fearless preaching of Luther and his companions, as in protest they lifted up their voices with all the energy they possessed against the abominations of the Papacy.[1]

Thunder is generally understood to be caused by a reunion of the atmosphere after electricity has passed through it. The symbolical significance of its use in this vision seems to denote the effects produced in the various departments of human life by the message of the Reformers. The historians inform us that the loud voice of the Reformers reached to the remotest regions of the Roman earth. The matters involved in their utterances were discussed by all classes — rich and poor, kings and nobles, even the peasants that toiled in the fields and workshops. The civil, political, social, and religious atmosphere was most powerfully disturbed. The truths that were discovered and proclaimed by the Reformers, brought denunciations from the Papal throne, controversies and strife among all classes, as well as blessings to truth seekers. However, from the solemn utterance of the angel being so closely related to these thunder-voices, it would seem that some of the utterances were especially erroneous and harmful and needed to be divinely corrected.

An eminent expositor has commented on the seven thunder-voices, showing their connection with the words of the mighty angel:

"The seven thunders that followed the utterance of his message denote violent expressions of thought and passion of those whom the agents he represented were to address. They were seven thunder-voices uttering an intelligible response to his message as appears from the Apostle's procedure to write, and the direction he received not to write what they had spoken. Their loudness denotes the vastness of the multitude by whom that which they symbolized was

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(1) There are some who understand the seven thunder-voices to refer to the writings which have unfolded the Message of Michael's Kingdom during the past fifty years. This interpretation, we believe, will be seen to be altogether inconsistent, for, be it noted, the voices of seven thunders are not said to come from the Lord or from any one representing him in any sense, as they should come from such personage if they really represented Holy Writings or messages concerning Michael's Kingdom. The seven thunders come from some other source. We ask the reader to carefully note that, as we have already seen, and as will be still further confirmed hereafter, the "little book" that St. John was given to eat, represents the messages contained in the writings which unfolded the Truth concerning Michael's Kingdom. This being true, the seven thunder-voices *must* represent something else. But note further: the lion-like voice was heard and the seven thunders uttered their voices *before* the "little book," representing the Truth, was given to St. John which would mean that whatever the significance of the "seven thunders," they had their fulfillment *in advance of and before the writings and clear explanations of the Message of Michael's Kingdom were given to the saints.* This leaves us to look elsewhere for the fulfillment of the symbol of these "seven thunders."

uttered. The reason that it was not to be written, doubtless, was that it was not inspired, but merely expressive of their thoughts and affections who uttered it, of much then that was mistaken and evil, and which therefore, if written, would have led the reader and hearer of the Apocalypse to dangerous misconceptions. The solemn voice of the angel was a response to those thunder-voices, designed obviously to correct an error which they had expressed in regard to the period when the empire of the saints was to be established on earth. ... It foreshows, therefore, that they [the seven thunders] who were to respond to this message [represented in the lion-like voice] ... were to entertain an expectation of the immediate overthrow of Antichrist and establishment of the Redeemer's Millennial Kingdom.

"The appeal of the angel to the Creator of all things for the truth of his asseverations, denotes that they whom he symbolized, unlike those who uttered the seven thunders, were to found their teachings respecting the commencement of that reign on the Word of God alone, and make it the sole rule of their faith and ground of their hope. ... The attack on the Papacy by Luther, Zwingli and their associates, and proclamation in opposition to the false doctrines and impious superstitions of the Romish Church of the great truths of the Gospel, instantly produced a thunder explosion of passion from the people of Germany and Switzerland and subsequently the other nations of Europe. Of these multitudes there were many, especially in Germany, who not only anticipated the speedy overthrow of Antichrist and the establishment of the empire of the saints, but assumed the office of prophets, predicted the immediate fall of the apostate church, and claimed for their announcement the authority of inspiration" (D. N. Lord).

The same writer proceeds to quote from history, the fanatical doings of some of these:

"A body of persons sprung up at this period, 1522, who asserted that they had communications from God and had received a command to slay all the wicked and constitute a new world in which the pious only and innocent should live and rule. ... In November, 1524, the peasants in several parts of Germany engaged in seditions, and in the spring of 1525 vast bodies rose, especially on the borders of the Danube, and made war on the Papal ecclesiastics, partly in order to greater civil and partly in order to religious freedom. This contest was excited in a degree by a class of rash preachers of whom the principal was Thomas Muncer, who abandoned the Gospel, and proposed a new doctrine. He taught that while the Roman Pontiff chained the minds of men by too severe laws, Luther unloosed these chains indeed, but granted too great indulgence ... that if we would gain salvation we must not only abstain from flagitious crimes, but chasten and macerate the body by fasting, look grave, be taciturn and wear a long beard. Having prepared his followers by these instructions, he further taught them that God manifested His will by dreams, made them the great instrument of his schemes, and when he succeeded in interpreting one, boasted of it in his public addresses. When he had in this manner induced a large number to join him, he began to enroll those who promised him assistance in his attempt to slay the ungodly and institute

a new magistracy asserting that he had a commission from God to destroy the old rulers and establish new; collected a vast crowd of followers half armed and without discipline, to accomplish his purposes, and perished, and a vast body of his adherents, in the attempt.

"At the distance of ten years a party of similar fanatics was again organized under Cnipperdoling, who claimed prophetic gifts, was constituted their king, and asserted that the Kingdom of Christ was to be like his till the day of judgment, in order that the wicked being wholly destroyed, the pious and elect might reign. He taught that it was lawful for the people to abolish their magistrates; that although the Apostles were not commanded to assume a civil jurisdiction, yet the present ministers of the Church ought to take the sword, and by force constitute a new republic; that this was the time in which all the prophets had foreshown that righteousness was to prevail throughout the whole world; the time in which Christ had said the meek should possess the earth. Another sect under a fanatical weaver named Claus Starck professed the most extravagant doctrines. They asserted that the world was threatened with a general devastation of which the Turks were, perhaps, to be the instruments. No priest was to remain alive, nor any ungodly man; but after this bloody purification the Kingdom of God would commence and there would be one faith and one baptism."

Let the reader carefully observe that the utterances of the seven thunder-voices appear to be the direct cause of the solemn asseveration that follows: "And the angel which I saw stand up, on the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things that are therein, that there should be time no longer."

It is very generally agreed that the words of the angel, affirmed as they are in so solemn a manner, are of the utmost importance. Mr. Barnes sets forth that the King James translation does not give the true sense; and this is the judgment of scholars generally. One expositor has given as his opinion that the word "time" refers to the chronological period of 360 years, rendering the words, "There shall be no longer yet a time." In his interpretation he reckons 360 years from some early period in the Reformation, bringing us up to the time when the seventh trumpet would begin to sound, and the mystery of God (interpreting this latter expression to mean the ending of Israel's blindness, and the completion of the elect class, the Body of Christ) would be finished. We were inclined at one time to think that this was correct. After a more careful consideration of the passage and its connection, together with a more exhaustive examination of the different authorities concerning the correct translation, we have been led to the conviction that it is not the correct view. The closing words of this verse have been variously translated. The translation of the Common Version, "There should be time no longer," would imply that the end of time had come. This translation is quite generally admitted to be an incorrect one. Mr. Elliott translates the words: "that the time shall not yet be"; Mr. Lord, "that the time shall not be yet." Mr. Barnes accepts this translation as the one more in accord with the Greek

text, as also, the one most in harmony with the correct interpretation of the vision. Let his words be carefully noted:

"In regard to the general meaning of this passage in its connection, we may remark that it cannot mean, literally, that there would be time no longer, or that the world would then come to an end absolutely, for the speaker proceeds to disclose events that would occur after that, extending far into the future. Chapter 10:11, and the detail that follows (chapter 11) before the sounding of the seventh trumpet is such as to occupy a considerable period, and the seventh trumpet is also yet to sound. No fair construction of the language, therefore, would require us to understand this as the meaning that the affairs of the world were then to terminate. The connection, then, apart from the question of grammatical usage, will require some such construction as that above suggested — 'that the time' to wit, some certain known or designated time, 'would not be *yet,'* but would be in some future period; that is, as specified by verse 7, 'in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound.' *Then* 'the mystery of God would be finished' and the affairs of the world would be put on their permanent footing. This, would imply that, at the time when the angel appeared, or in the time to which he refers, there would be some *expectation* or *general belief* that the mystery was then to be finished, and that the affairs of the world were [then] to come to an end. The proper interpretation would lead us to suppose that there would be so general an expectation of this as to make the solemn affirmation of the angel proper to *correct* a prevailing opinion, and to show that the right interpretation was *not* put on what *seemed* to be the tendency of things. As a matter of fact, we find that this *expectation* did actually exist at the time of the Reformation; that *such* an interpretation *was* put on the prophecies, and on the events that occurred; that the impression that the Messiah was about to come, and the reign of the saints about to commence, was so strong as to justify some interference, like the solemn oath of the angel to *correct* the misapprehension."

When the Mystery of God shall be Finished

The statement of the mighty angel correcting the wrong impression and affirming that the time was not yet due for the establishing of the Kingdom is evidently closely related to the words that immediately follow:

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished as He hath declared to His servants the prophets" (Revelation 10:7).

The mystery of God can refer to nothing else than the secret of His Plan for the removal of the curse from the earth and the redemption of the world. St. Paul assures us that the whole creation longs for it, waits for it in travail and pain (Romans 8:22,23). This message from the mighty angel assures us that this sublime mystery shall be fully revealed and brought to completion in the days of the voice of the seventh angel. As we come in a succeeding volume to look into the events of the seventh angel sounding, this thought is fully confirmed.

In discussing what is meant by the mystery (secret) of God, which is to be made known when the seventh angel should begin to sound his trumpet, and also as to when this mystery (secret) is to be fully disclosed, Mr. Russell observes that the full knowledge of the mystery of God's purposes for the Church and the world is not to be understood until or *during* the sounding of the seventh trumpet:

"In the age to come, when God shall 'pour out His spirit upon all flesh,' as during the present age He pours it upon His 'servants and handmaids,' then indeed all will understand and appreciate the promises now being grasped by the 'little flock'; and they will rejoice in the obedience and exaltation of the Church. ... *Then* the 'mystery' will have ended; for the world will have come to see that it was the spirit of God in Christ, and the spirit of Christ in us — God manifested in the flesh — which they had hitherto misunderstood. ... In *point of time*, the mystery of God will be finished *during* the period of the sounding of the seventh [symbolic] trumpet (Revelation 10:7). This applies to the mystery in both senses in which it is used: the mystery or secret features of God's Plan will then be made known and will be clearly seen; and also the 'mystery of God,' the Church, the embodiment of that Plan."

Receiving and Eating the Little Book

"And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth" (Revelation 10:8).

In this part of the vision, as in the others, St. John represents the Church at the time of its fulfillment. The vision seems to require that at the time this part begins to meet its fulfillment, a successful effort would be made, under Christ's special supervision, to give the Word of God to the Church. As the Word of God, with the commission to proclaim it, had been once given in the beginning of the age, this would imply that it had been lost, or lost sight of, and was now to be given a second time. This seems to be confirmed by the command given to St. John after he had eaten and digested its contents: "And he says to me, it behooves thee again [a second time] to prophesy to peoples and nations and tongues and kings," which clearly implies that there was to be a second general world-wide proclamation of the Gospel on the part of the Church while in her earthly pilgrimage.

"And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter" (Revelation 10:9,10).

In our consideration of this vision we should note carefully every action of the angel and of the Apostle, because in the fulfillment each act is seen to cover a considerable period of time. To state the matter more in detail: The approach by St. John to the messenger (Christ), requesting that he might have the little scroll,

his receiving it, his eating and digesting it, and the command to proclaim again world-wide that which he had eaten — the Message of God, the Glad Tidings — covers what, from one standpoint, would be called a long period, reaching to the time when the events of the seventh trumpet begin to have their fulfillment; and when the Gospel, the Glad Tidings, is being fully understood by the Lord's consecrated, the Little Flock; not until then would the mystery of God be fully disclosed.

As noted heretofore it was following the loud voice like a lion and subsequent to the "seven thunder- voices" that St. John was given the "little book"; and that the *giving* of the book to him by the angel and his receiving it symbolizes the great work of giving God's Word afresh in all languages to the Church. This great work covered the long period from the opening of the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth Century, shortly after which time the translation of the Bible into all languages was completed.

The *eating* of the "little book" has been applied by Historical expositors generally to the study of the Word of God in Luther's day. However, in the light of history unveiling prophecy, we are now enabled to see that it was not until the present time, the harvest of the age, that the mystery of God, the mystery of the Divine Plan of the Ages, began to be clearly understood. While it is true that Luther and his associates studied very diligently the Word of God, it is apparent to all Bible students that their understanding of the Divine Plan was very limited.

Summing up the results of the study of the Word of God up to about 1870, we observe that one of the most important of these results is that of the discovery of the only way of salvation (justification) through faith in the merit of Christ's sacrifice. Associated with this, other precious truths of Scripture were from time to time brought to light. Clearer and clearer views were gradually discovered concerning the heavenly destiny of the Church, also some of the features of the earthly, Millennial period — the times of Restitution. The privileges associated with Christian living, such as that of a union with Christ, by faith in the many precious promises contained in the Gospels and the Epistles, were more fully enjoyed.

As already noted the Papacy was clearly recognized to be the Antichrist of Daniel and the Apocalypse. This latter caused quite a general revival of the Historical school of Apocalyptic interpretation amongst Protestant expositors. This school began in its initial stage shortly after St. John received the visions. It is in full harmony with this school that Mr. Russell and many other expositors of the Apocalypse have written.

Thus it seems proper to apply the symbol of the "eating of the little book," as beginning in the days of Luther and continuing on to the end of the age. During the first half of the Nineteenth Century considerable progress was made in understanding the "Mystery of God," the Divine Plan. It was in the middle of this period that the "Miller movement," which more especially had to do with the study of the "time" prophecies, occurred. There were also other noted Bible

expositors during this period — some who had very much clearer views of the "Mystery of God" than did Mr. Miller — and these contributed their share in the work of making clearer the Divine Plan. This fact has been seen in the Message to Philadelphia.

Thus the eating of the "little book," while *beginning* in the days of Luther, did not reach its complete fulfillment until the present harvest period; indeed it is still in process of fulfillment. It was about 1868 that a little company of Bible students who were free from all sectarian restraints, met together in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, from time to time to search the sacred writings. The ultimate result of these studies was that a clear understanding of the Divine Plan of the Ages was obtained. These precious truths were, later on, published in a volume entitled *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, and from time to time the details were further elucidated in other volumes. The manner in which this knowledge was obtained is now a matter of history. We quote the words of one whose ministry of Divine truth has been a wonderful blessing to the Lord's consecrated: "Many are the inquiries relative to the truths presented in Millennial Dawn and Zion's Watch Tower, as to whence they came and how they developed to their present symmetrical and beautiful proportions — Were they the results of visions? Did God in any supernatural way grant the solution of these hitherto mysteries of His Plan? Are the writers more than ordinary beings? Do they claim any supernatural wisdom or power? Or how comes this revelation of God's truth?

"No, dear friends, I claim nothing of superiority, nor supernatural power, dignity or authority; nor do I aspire to exalt myself in the estimation of my brethren of the household of faith, except in the sense that the Master urged it, saying, 'Let him who would be great among you be your servant.' (Matthew 20:27). ... 'We also are men of like passions with yourselves' — of like infirmities and frailties, earnestly striving, by overcoming many besetments, discouragements, etc., to press along the line toward the mark of the prize of our high-calling, and claiming only, as a faithful student of the Word of God, to be an index finger, as I have previously expressed it, to help you to trace for yourselves, on the sacred page, the wonderful Plan of God — no less wonderful to me, I assure you, than to you, dearly beloved sharers of my faith and joy.

"No, the truths I present, as God's mouthpiece, were not revealed in visions or dreams, nor by God's audible voice, *nor all at once*, but gradually, especially *since* 1870, and particularly *since* 1880. Neither is this clear unfolding of truth due to any human ingenuity or acuteness of perception, but to the simple fact that God's due time has come; and if I did not speak, and no other agent could be found, the very stones would cry out. ... I will not go back to tell how the light began to break though the clouds of prejudice and superstition which enveloped the world under Papacy's rule in the Dark Ages. *The Reformation movement, or rather movements, from then until now, have each done their share in bringing light out of darkness*. ... Let me begin the narrative at the year 1868, when the Editor, having been a consecrated child of God for some years, and a member of the Congregational Church and of the Y.M.C.A., began to be shaken in faith regarding many long- accepted doctrines. Brought up a Presbyterian, and indoc-

trinated from the Catechism, and being naturally of an inquiring mind, I fell a ready prey to the logic of infidelity as soon as I began to think for myself. But that which at first threatened to be the utter ship-wreck of faith in God and the Bible, was, under God's providence, overruled for good, and merely wrecked my confidence in human creeds and systems of misinterpretation of the Bible.

"Gradually I was led to see that though each of the creeds contained some elements of truth, they were on the whole, misleading and contradictory of God's Word. ... I soon began to see that we were living somewhere near the close of the Gospel Age, and near the time when the Lord had declared that the wise, watching ones of His children should come to a clear knowledge of His Plan. At this time, myself and a few other truth-seekers in Pittsburgh and Allegheny formed a class for Bible study, and from 1870 to 1875 was a time of constant growth in grace and knowledge and love of God and His Word. We came to see something of the love of God, how it had made provision for all mankind, how all must be awakened from the tomb in order that God's loving Plan might be testified to them, and how all who exercise faith in Christ's redemptive work and render obedience in harmony with the knowledge of God's will they will then receive, shall then (through Christ's merit) be brought back into full harmony with God, and be granted everlasting life. This we saw to be the Restitution work foretold in Acts 3:21. But though seeing that the Church was called to joint- heirship with the Lord in the Millennial Kingdom, up to that time we had failed to see clearly the great distinction between the reward of the Church now on trial and the reward of the faithful of the world after its trial, at the close of the Millennial Age, that the reward of the former is to be the glory of the spiritual, Divine nature, while that of the latter is to be the glory of restitution — restoration to the perfection of human nature once enjoyed in Eden by their progenitor and head, Adam" (C. T. Russell).

It was in view of this clear unfolding of the Truth that Mr. Russell was led to make the following statement:

"Oh, the blessedness of this favored time! Oh, the harmony, the beauty, the grandeur of the Divine Plan as it began to unfold when the 1335 days were 'touched'! It is to express, as far as lies within our power, this 'blessedness' and fuller unfolding of the Divine Plan, now due to be understood by all the 'holy people' now living, that this Scripture Studies series is being published. ...

"This message concerning Michael's Kingdom, gradually opening from 1829 onward, is symbolically represented in the book of Revelation (chapter 10:2,8-10) as a 'little book,' which the 'wise' of the 'holy people,' represented by St. John, are instructed to eat. And St. John's experience, as expressed in verse 10, is the experience of all who receive these truths [concerning Messiah's Kingdom]. They bring wondrous sweetness: Oh, the blessedness! But the after effects are always more or less a blending of the bitterness of persecution with the sweetness. And the effect upon those who patiently endure to the end is to purge, purify, and refine, and thus to make the Bride of Christ ready for the marriage and exaltation due toward the close of the Day of Preparation."

An examination of the writings of other of God's saints discloses the fact that others were beginning to see in a considerable measure the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly calling. It was in this way that Christ manifested himself in the due time appointed to make known the Divine Plan concerning the mystery of the Kingdom. It was at this time and since that the vision of the eating of the little book is meeting its fulfillment in its fullest sense.

The Second Great Commission

"And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (Revelation 10:11).

Expositors generally have applied this symbol altogether to the proclamation of the message that was given in connection with the Reformation Movement. However, as the time had not come then for a full understanding to be given, this reformation movement referred to in the symbol, applies not only to the events of Luther's time, but also to other events, which have occurred since, as a result of the work of the reformers of Luther's day. None can dispute that this Reformation Movement and its influence upon mankind, have continued up to the present time. The reformation efforts up to the present Harvest time produced the following results:

First, the establishment of Protestantism (although at the present time it has developed into an "ism" without the protest); second, the weakening of the Papal system and its loss of temporal power; third, the liberation of several nations and their peoples from Papal bondage; fourth, the cleansing from defiling errors of a company of the Lord's consecrated; and, fifth, the preparing of the way for a clear understanding of the Divine Plan of the Ages, and the proclamation of the Message of Michael's (Christ's) Kingdom in its due time.

When light is given on God's Word and it is received into the heart and life, especially when it is opposed to the erroneous teaching that prevails, there always follows a Divine call to proclaim it. This was especially true in Luther's day when he experienced the blessing of forgiveness and favor with God. It was the increased light received by Luther that caused him to discover how Papacy had hidden this blessed teaching from humanity. It was his own blessed inner experience of this precious truth that caused him to proclaim it and testify against the great religious system that had perverted and defiled it. The same has been true in a much deeper sense since the full clear light of God's wonderful Plan has come to be understood during the last half century; and all this is portrayed in the vision under consideration. When St. John had eaten the "little book" he heard the voice saying: "Thou must prophesy again before peoples, nations, languages, and tongues." It will be noted by the careful student that this commission is a second one, the first being given at the beginning of the Age, and this one at the close. St. John, in these actions, represents those who in these closing days come to understand and receive the wonderful Message into good and honest hearts. This blessing brings responsibility, and responsibility is one of the characteristics of a call to proclaim the blessed truths that have been

so edifying and precious. The proclamation world-wide of this precious Message has, like the reception of the truth by the Lord's consecrated, been having its fulfillment for the last half century.

"And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe," are the words of Christ. A realization of the fact that there are still splendid opportunities of giving out the Message should constitute a strong impetus to all the faithful watchers to labor on in the Lord's service, continuing to bear the Message and to witness to the Truth whether others hear or whether they forbear, for surely it cannot be in the far distant future when the dark night "wherein no man can work" will be an accomplished fact. When that time arrives it will mark the final and complete fulfillment of the second great commission given to the Church in the flesh, to bear the Message world-wide.

"Vessels of Mercy, Prepared Unto Glory"

Vessels to honor, made sacred and holy,
Meet for the use of the Master we love,
Ready for service all simple and lowly,
Ready, one day, for the temple above.

Vessels, it may be, all empty and broken,
Marred in the Hand of inscrutable skill
(Love can accept the mysterious token)
Marred but to make them more beautiful still.

Vessels, it may be, not costly or golden;
Vessels, it may be, of quantity small,
Yet by the Nail in the Sure Place upholden,
Never to shiver and never to fall.

Take all Thy vessels, O glorious Finer,
Purge all the dross, that each chalice may be
Pure in Thy pattern, completer, diviner,
Filled with Thy glory and shining for Thee.

Chapter Twenty-One

Measuring the Temple of God

(Revelation 11:1-2)

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (Revelation 11:1,2).

It will be noticed that while this symbolic scene is an entirely new one, it nevertheless is in close connection with the vision we have been considering. Let us therefore have before the mind the essential features of the vision recorded in chapter 10.

(1) The sudden and startling appearance in the Apocalyptic scenery of the mighty rainbow-encircled angel (messenger), represents Christ acting in behalf of his Church in the most critical period of her history — the opening of the Sixteenth Century — the fulfillment of the vision continuing on to the end of the age.

(2) The little opened book in the hand of this mighty messenger we found to be a symbol of the Word of God, which had been lost sight of for centuries because of Papal influences.

(3) The messenger placing his feet upon the sea and land, teaches that at this time Christ would in a very special sense exert his power in controlling the affairs of the earth in the interests of his Church.

(4) His cry, as when a lion roars, represents Christ speaking through his true followers of that time, and since, against the prevailing apostasy in the Church.

(5) The resultant "seven thunders" represents controversies in the religious world, the utterances of which St. John was forbidden to record.

(6) The receiving of the little book from the angel, and the eating of it by St. John describes in symbol the receiving in a special sense the Word of God afresh by true followers of Christ.

(7) The second commission to disseminate the Message and to give a world-wide witness to the Truth, we found to have its complete fulfillment in modern times.

St. John in this, as in the previous vision of eating the "little book" and prophesying before many peoples, nations, etc., represents the Lord's consecrated at the time of the vision's fulfillment. The command to measure the temple, etc., is

given by the same one who told him to eat the "little book" — the mighty angel of Revelation 10:1 (compare Revelation 11:3). That which St. John now beheld was Jerusalem, its temple, courts, and worshipers, all of which are employed in the vision as symbols.

It will be evident to the Bible student that before we can understand what the things are that are referred to in the vision, it will be necessary to become familiar with the typical nature of Jerusalem, its temple, courts, and worshipers. These are among the things referred to by the Apostle Paul as "shadows of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1). In other words, the temple, courts, altar, worshipers, and the sacrifices and services performed in connection with the Jewish worship were Divine types of the various features of the great Plan of salvation, called in this vision, "the mystery of God" (Revelation 10:7). A digesting of the knowledge of this Divine Plan was typified in St. John's eating the contents of the "little book."

In the vision we are now considering, another phase of the work to be performed by the true followers of Christ is pictured, and the work covers the same period as that of the previous chapter — from the Reformation down to the present time. In a general way, as applicable to the true Church, the vision describes the work to be done as that of determining exactly the meaning of all matters pertaining to the Christian religion, as Christ's sacrifice, the terms of membership into the true Church, the consecration and sacrifice of Christ's Body members, and the relation of all these things to the human family at large. The occasion for such a work to be done was that the professing Church on earth had become apostate.

The Papacy had perverted the Scriptural teaching concerning the Lord's Memorial Supper, claiming that it is a real sacrifice, termed by them the sacrifice of the Mass; thus the teaching is that every time the Mass is celebrated Christ is sacrificed afresh, and this was constituted an essential article of faith. They had changed the simple office of ministering servants into a priesthood, thus perverting the Scripture teaching that the priesthood is made up of *all* consecrated believers. The Papal altar had almost entirely replaced the pulpit. Every truth that was originally committed to the Apostles had been perverted, indeed counterfeited. "It has been by means of a *counterfeit Christianity* that Satan has through the Papacy, resisted the spread of true Christianity. The Papacy has its counterfeit high priest, the Pope; its counterfeit sacrifice, the Mass; its counterfeit Bible, tradition; its counterfeit mediators, the virgin, the saints and angels; the forms have been copied, the realities set aside. Satan inaugurated and developed a system, not antagonistic to Christianity, but a counterfeit of it; and as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so (that is by imitation) he has withstood Christ." All except those whose names were written in heaven were deceived.

The first thing that is related in the vision is that the Apostle was given a reed like unto a rod, with which he was to measure the temple, etc. The rod seems to be a symbol of the revealed will of God concerning His Plan contained in the Bible. It was to typify or foreshadow this, that the temple, etc., was constructed,

and its services and sacrifices instituted. The rod being given to St. John is designed to teach, therefore, that a clear understanding of the various features of the Divine Plan would, during the period covered by the vision, be gradually unfolded to the Lord's consecrated, the wise of the holy people. And the Prophet, in a vision referring to the Millennial morning, has expressed a similar thought: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isaiah 60:1). Likewise the poet has summed up the matter:

> "Daughter of Zion! awake from thy sadness!
> Awake! for thy foes shall oppress thee no more;
> Bright o'er the hills dawns the day-star of gladness,
> Arise! for the night of thy sorrow is o'er."

Divine Truths Adjusted and Set in Order

The altar mentioned in the vision seems to refer to the altar of sacrifice in the *inner* court, sometimes called the *holy place*. This does not mean that the golden altar in the "holy" is to be omitted in the symbolic measurement; this would be included in the measurement of the temple and of the worshipers, who performed services at this golden altar, indeed at the golden candlestand and golden table as well. It should be kept in mind that while this work symbolized by measuring the temple, etc., began in the days of the Reformation, it was not finished, it did not reach a culmination, until the present time. Mr. Russell's exposition of this feature will be found to be most interesting:

"The revelation of God's Word, as now made to the John class, is a *more perfect* measure than it ever was before. We have many excellent translations, some of them from very ancient manuscripts. ... And by these, as well as numbers of valuable helps, such as English, Greek, and Hebrew Concordances, a more perfect understanding of the text can be had, as well as of correlative passages, than was ever before possible to either learned or unlearned. The injunction to the John class is, 'Rise [arouse yourselves to an important work, requiring all your effort], *Measure the Sanctuary*. Test, try, prove, by the rule given you, the sanctuary of truth — the position you occupy as the Lord's 'royal priesthood.' Prove all things, hold fast that which is good, and reject all not up to the measure of your rod.

"Not only measure the doctrines in which the Church is standing, but measure those who worship therein. ... Let the Word of God be the only rule of faith, doctrine, teaching, and also the rule of practice. ...

"But he was also to measure the altar — and, beloved, we have in this little work been endeavoring to measure it. To the surprise of many (joyfully we hope) we have seen the size of the altar to be a hundred fold longer and broader than we had before supposed. ... Yes, once we supposed that Jesus had provided only for the 'little flock'; but now we find since the rod is put into our hands, that Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man — to be testified in due time, and to prove of practical value and benefit to all. Once in our ignorance, misguided by the creeds of men, framed in the Dark Ages, we supposed that all

probation would cease with this Gospel Age — that the 'little flock' only would be saved. But now we measure it by our rod, and learn that while yet sinners, God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son to die on their behalf and as their ransom.

"And by means of this knowledge afforded in measuring the sanctuary and altar, we have come to 'trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men — especially of them that believe.' And now, while seeking the great, grand prize of our (believers) High Calling to the Divine nature, we can rejoice in the love of God in the general salvation of mankind, and their restoration to the perfection of humanity — in due time. Oh, the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love of God which passeth all understanding.

"Again, it was while we were engaged in measuring the altar, that we came to see more fully, what sacrifice is expected of those who have consecrated to become followers in the footsteps of Jesus. We have covenanted to become dead with him — living sacrifices — if we might be of the Royal Priesthood and reign with him in the Millennial Age of glory to the Church and blessing to the world."

Measuring the golden altar would have to do especially with the unfolding of the various truths symbolized by that altar in connection with the services of the holy. These truths would be Christ's intercession, the prayer life of the consecrated, the acceptableness of the services and sacrifices of the consecrated through Christ's holy and perfect offering and intercession.

Measuring the worshipers (Levites and Priests) would signify making clear the call, the consecration, the sacrifice, and the present and future work and privileges of the antitypical priests, the prospective joint-heirs with Christ. Measuring the temple itself, would include the unfolding of the truth concerning the two conditions of the consecrated, namely the present earthly and the future heavenly state, represented in the two apartments of the temple.

The command to leave out the court in this measurement is designed to teach that the religious systems existing at the time the vision would meet its fulfillment would be nominal systems cast off from favor. This will be clearly seen when we call to mind that the Gentiles of the Jewish Age, when these typical scenes were being enacted, were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise and had no part in the service only as they became proselytes. These, in the vision under consideration, being in possession of the court, would show that cast off systems are referred to.

"There is undoubtedly reference here [says Mr. Barnes] to the 'court of the Gentiles,' as it is called among the Jews — the outer court of the temple to which the Gentiles had access, and within [beyond] which they were not permitted to go. ... To an observer this would *seem to* be a part of the temple [precincts], and the persons there assembled a portion of the true worshipers of God; but it was necessarily neither the one nor the other. In forming an estimate of those who, according to the Hebrew notions, were true worshipers of God, only those would be regarded as such who had the privilege of access to the inner court, and to the altar. In making such an estimate, therefore, those who had no nearer access

than that court, would be omitted; that is, they would not be reckoned as necessarily any part of those who were regarded as the people of God. ... They occupied it, not as the people of God, but as those who were without the true Church, and who did not appertain to its real communion. This would find a fulfillment if there should arise a state of things in the Church in which it would be necessary to draw a line between those who properly constituted the Church and those who did not; if there should be such a condition of things that any considerable portion of those who professedly appertained to the Church ought to be *divided off* as not belonging to it, or would have such characteristic marks that it could be seen that they were strangers and aliens. ... Now this will apply with great propriety ... to the manner in which Papacy was regarded by the Reformers, and should be regarded at all time."

In the Reformation, as well as down the centuries since, efforts measurably successful have been made to obtain a knowledge of the truths symbolized by the sanctuary, altar, etc., but Bible students today know that a full knowledge was not given during this time; indeed, was not given until the present Harvest time, when it is ours to realize a cleansed sanctuary.

In the foregoing, it would seem that we have abundant testimony as to the fulfillment of this part of the vision respecting the measuring of the temple of God.

The Holy City Trodden Forty-Two Months

"And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (Revelation 11:2).

The picture before us in this symbol is that of the nations (Gentiles) treading under foot the holy city forty-two months. To understand what is symbolized by the holy city, it will be necessary to keep in mind that the symbol must be explained in harmony with Jerusalem's association with and relation to the typical Jewish temple and its worshipers. In Revelation 21, the holy city, the New Jerusalem is, as explained there, a symbol of the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, that is, the glorified Church in her future exaltation and reign with Christ. In the vision we are now considering, however, the symbol of the holy city is not employed in this way, but rather is used in connection with the Church's earthly state, its period of witnessing and suffering for the truths of the Gospel. The fact that the holy city is associated with and related to the Jewish typical temple and worship, necessitates that we discover the divinely appointed relationship that Jerusalem of old sustained to the typical temple and services as performed in the typical dispensation, the Jewish Age. In considering it from this standpoint, we discover that Jerusalem, the holy city, was the divinely appointed seat of authority, the center from which the Divine instruction, the word of God, went forth, which word of command was to control in the affairs of Israel in olden times. Thus the Prophet referring to the operation of God's Kingdom in the future dispensation declares, "the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

In the light of these facts, therefore, we believe the holy city, used as a symbol by the Revelator in relation to the Church's experiences during this Gospel Age, would signify the place of the Truth, the Message, the Word of God — in other words, the Sanctuary or citadel of holy Truth. As further elucidating this point and in confirmation of the same, we quote the language of two expositors of modern times who give much evidence of not only a very comprehensive knowledge of history, but of a deep insight into the visions of St. John:

"The holy city was the city in which the ancient temple stood, and the priests and daily worshipers resided, and to which those dwelling elsewhere went to offer homage. The prediction, therefore, that the court without should be given to the Gentiles, and that they should tread the holy city forty-two months, denoted that they should constitute the congregation of visible worshipers during that period, and *exercise the civil polity under which the church should subsist;* and as during the continuance of the [typical] temple the Gentiles were aliens from God and idolaters in contradistinction from the Jews who were His covenant people, it denotes that the visible should be an apostate and idolatrous church during that period, and give occasion thereby for the testimony of the witnesses against false teachers and usurping rulers. This is seen also from the fact that the Gentiles have belonged to the visible Church and constituted it for a much longer period than the forty-two months. There has been no purely Jewish Church since the first ages. The relation, therefore, in which the Gentiles were to constitute the Church during that period, was not literally as Gentiles in opposition to Jews, but as apostates from God in contradistinction from true worshipers" (D. N. Lord).

The words of Mr. Barnes are in full confirmation of the foregoing:

"The statement that the holy city was to be trodden under foot, verse 2 ... must mean that the true Church would thus be trodden down by those who are described as 'Gentiles.' So far as pure religion was concerned; so far as appertained to the real condition of the Church and the pure worship of God, it would be as if the whole holy city where God was worshipped were given into the hands of the Gentiles, and they should tread it down, and desecrate all that was sacred for the time here referred to. Everything in Rome at the time of the Reformation, would sustain this description."

Our next inquiry logically is with regard to the forty-two months. Are we to understand this to refer to literal or symbolical time? We answer, the very fact that it is used in connection with a symbolic vision would seem to be sufficient evidence that symbolical time is referred to. Another evidence that this is correct is that the vision refers to the earthly, preparatory state of the Church — a time during which it has seemed to be God's purpose to hide, in a large measure at least, an understanding of prophetic visions until the events symbolized in the visions would, to a considerable extent, have unfolded themselves in history.

Another evidence, and one that cannot be successfully controverted, is that the fulfillment of the vision is associated with great events of past history — events which require the use of symbolical time. In this connection we call attention to the fact that the same mystical period of time is employed in the

prophecies of Daniel, although stated in a different form, namely a "time, times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:25). Its use in this prophecy of Daniel is in connection with a politico-religious power, symbolized by a "little horn" that comes up after and among the "ten horns" of the fourth beast of Daniel's vision. It is agreed by all historical students of Daniel and Revelation that the beast referred to represents the Roman Empire; and its ten horns represent the divisions of that Empire which took place in the fourth and fifth centuries.

There is also a general agreement that the "little horn," in connection with which this mysterious number (time, times, and a half) is used, is the Papacy, its rise occurring about 539 AD. The prophecy states that the saints (the Lord's consecrated ones) would be given into his hand for "a time, times and a half," which interpreted, symbolically, would represent twelve hundred and sixty years — a "time," representing 360 years; "times," (two) representing 720 years; and "a half," 180 years; the sum of which is 1260 years. Indeed, in the vision we are considering, we have it so stated: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth" (verse 3). The period referred to in the prophecy of Daniel in which it is stated that the saints should be given into his (Papacy's) hand for this length of time, ended in 1799, when the Papacy ceased to have power to persecute Christ's true followers.

The same great evil power and the same period of time are doubtless referred to in the vision we are now considering. The meaning then of the statement, "the holy city shall they tread forty-two months," is that during a period of twelve hundred and sixty years, the Sanctuary, the Truth, and the things pertaining to the true worship, would become perverted and trodden down of the nations, the civil powers, the ten kingdoms over which the Papacy would exert a controlling influence; and the saints of God in their efforts to proclaim the truths of the Scriptures would be out of favor with both the civil and religious powers. Other prophecies show, however, that *before* the 1260 years run their full course, there would be a revolt on the part of some of these kingdoms from Papal control (see Revelation 11:13, 17:16).

Chapter Twenty-Two

The Two Witnesses Prophesying in Sackcloth

(Revelation 11:3-10)

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth" (Revelation 11:3,4).

The Greek word translated witnesses in this vision is used thirty-two times in the New Testament, and invariably refers to individuals, generally the Apostles, and the many other witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. It always has contained in it the thought of one who bears testimony, either in a judicial sense, as in Matthew 18:16, 26:65, or one who in any way or manner, testifies to the truth of what he has seen or known, as in 1 Timothy 6:12, 1 Thessalonians 2:10, Romans 1:9, Luke 24:48, Philippians 1:8. In the latter instance the word is rendered record. The word is also used in the Scriptures in the same sense as the word martyr is now used, that is, to describe one who suffers persecution or even death in bearing witness to the truth. It is so rendered in the case of Stephen (Acts 22:20). It is translated martyr in Revelation 2:13 and 17:6, the first instance referring to "Antipas, my faithful martyr"; and the last instance in connection with the vision of the symbolical harlot woman, the apostate Church who is represented as "drunken with the blood of the martyrs [witnesses] of Jesus." In Hebrews 12:1, the same Greek word is used to describe the Old Testament saints. It has been divinely arranged that the "Word of God" requires the "man of God" to have it become a witness, and it is in this way that the word seems to be used in this vision.

Examining carefully the symbol, we note first that the expression, "These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks [lampstands]," seems to mean that these two witnesses are symbolized by the two olive trees and the two candlesticks. That churches in the Revelation are represented by candlesticks or lampstands, there can be no question, for the reason that Christ himself interprets such to represent churches: "The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches" (Revelation 1:20). We therefore accept this Divine interpretation as the basis of interpreting the other feature of this vision. The symbolism in this vision, however, seems to be more complex — more than churches seem to be referred to. In seeking to discover the full significance of the symbol, we

note in the words, "These are the two olive trees," etc., an evident reference to Zechariah 4:2,3,11,14. There the Prophet saw in a vision a candlestick or lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top, and seven lights on its seven uprights, with seven branches for the lights. Two olive trees also stood, one on the right side and the other on the left. Zechariah is represented as inquiring of the Divine messenger who had been conversing with him what these two olive trees were, or what they represented.

The first reply of the messenger seems to be a general one, as relating to the entire vision: "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel[1] saying, Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. ... Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it." The significance of this explanation seems to be that Zechariah was given the word of the Lord to encourage Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest (his associate), in the work of building the temple of the Lord. However, it seems manifest that Zechariah did not understand this explanation to be a particular, a definite answer to his inquiry, for we read that afterwards he repeated the question: "And I answered [inquired] again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord. Then said he, These are the *two anointed ones*, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zechariah 4:1-14).

It seems evident that there is here a reference to the ceremony that was performed in the anointing of priests and of others for their special work or service for the Lord. If we are correct in our understanding, then it seems that the two olive trees or branches in this vision of Zechariah represented Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest, who were clothed with Divine power to act as instruments of God in superintending the work of building the second temple; after the return from Babylon. This incident occurred in 520 BC.

In Sackcloth of Humiliation

Applying this explanation of the Divine messenger to the vision under consideration, we understand it to signify that all through the long period of the twelve hundred and sixty years of the treading down of the citadel of truth, and the defiling of the antitypical temple, the Church, (except for a brief period of three and one half years) the Lord would have faithful teachers or pastors, symbolized by the two olive trees, ministering the Word of God, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to His true children gathered together in little companies, churches (candlesticks). That this is the true interpretation will be seen to be confirmed in the actions, etc., of these witnesses described farther on in this vision. Thus the expression, "These are the two olive trees, and the two

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(1) Or as another translator renders it: "Thus the Ever-Living commands to Zerubbabel."

candlesticks standing before the God of the earth" (verse 4), would signify that they represent those ministering servants of the Lord, who, like Zerubbabel and Joshua, who superintended and encouraged the Lord's people in Zechariah's day in the work of building the typical temple, encouraged and instructed the members of the little churches, candlesticks, during the long period of the defilement of the antitypical temple, by the great apostate system.

To sum up the whole matter briefly, the symbol seems to teach that during the long period of the twelve hundred and sixty years, except during a brief period of three and one half years (which will be referred to later), there would be little churches (candlesticks) supplied with the Word of God by members of the anointed priesthood (olive trees). Witnessing in sackcloth would mean witnessing churches bearing testimony to the Word, humiliated and downtrodden, but sustained through the long period of Papal apostasy, amid persecution, suffering, poverty, sorrow, and humiliation — out of favor with both the civil and the religious powers of the world. And as the testimony would be based upon the teaching of the Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, the meaning would also seem to be that these also would, to the masses of the professing Church, be hidden in the sackcloth of a dead language.

Again, "fire proceeding out of their mouths and devouring their enemies" (verse 5), would seem to teach that they represent those who, like Moses and Elijah, (Numbers 16, 2 Kings 1), call fire down from heaven and devour their enemies. In the instances referred to, however, the fire was real, in this it is symbolical. The fire proceeding out of their mouths seems designed to teach that in their testimony for God, and in their defense of themselves, they would use only the truths of His Word. We have an illustration of fire used in this sense in Jeremiah, where the faithful Prophet was called to give testimony against Israel of old. His words are: "But His Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jeremiah 20:9,10). Another instance is found in Jeremiah 5:14: "I will make My words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them."

The expression, "if any one desire to injure them, thus must he be killed," evidently signifies that for these witnessing ones to resort to any other method in their defense or testimony, for them to seek the aid of the civil magistrates, or the use of carnal weapons, would be inconsistent with the character of true witnesses. It doubtless teaches also, that the consumption of all enemies of the Truth, the anti-Christian systems, would be accomplished by a gradual testimony of the Truth, and that they would be destroyed by the judgments of the Second Advent.

This is so stated in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, where the gradual and final destruction of Antichrist is described, as we read, "And then shall that Wicked [one] be revealed, whom the Lord shall *consume* with the spirit of his mouth [the truth], *and shall destroy* with the brightness [bright-shining] of his coming [presence]"; that is, the bright shining of truth on every subject will be that which will eventually be used to destroy the anti-Christian systems.

Spiritual Drought in the Days of Their Prophecy

It is further said of these witnesses that "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will" (verse 6).

A reference is here made to Elijah, the Prophet, who foretold the drought in the days of Ahab, king of Israel (1 Kings 17:1, James 5:17); and the prophecy was fulfilled, in that it rained not for a period of three years and six months, which typically refers to the period of 1260 years mentioned in the vision under consideration. We quote Mr. Russell's explanation of this type:

"Elijah was 'three years and six months' in the wilderness, and during that time there was no rain, and a great famine was in the land (James 5:17, 1 Kings 17:7, 18:2).

"The Church was three and a half symbolic years (a day for a year — 1260 literal years) in the wilderness condition, during which there was a spiritual famine because of the lack of truth — the living water. (Compare Revelation 12:6, 11:3, Amos 8:11.)"

The fuller meaning of the expression in the symbol is that the blessings of the Gospel and the Divine favor and protection would be withheld from those who failed to heed, and who despised the testimonies of the Scriptures as proclaimed and exemplified by those making up the little churches (candlesticks) during the twelve hundred and sixty years of their preaching.

Their having "power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will" (verse 6), would mean that those represented by these witnesses are like Moses and Aaron, the agents who inflicted the literal plagues of this character upon Egypt. In Scripture language the prophets of God are often said to be the authors of the plagues or judgments which they declare and foretell, and in this sense, it may be said that the woes, plagues, that come on apostates, proceed from them, that is from their unfolding of the prophecies to this effect. Undoubtedly, however, the full accomplishment of the prophetic judgments proclaimed by the witnesses will be in the "day of the Lord" when the "vials of wrath" of Revelation 16, will be poured out.

It would, therefore, seem from these statements concerning the symbolic actions of these witnesses, together with the similar use of the vision of Zechariah, that the Word of God would, during the twelve hundred and sixty years (except during a brief period of three and one half years), be proclaimed by those referred to in the prophecy of Daniel, as the "saints," against whom the fierce "little horn" prevailed (Daniel 7:20,21); in other words, it would be proclaimed by the pastors and teachers of the little churches [lampstands] existing during this period. We quote from several noted expositors:

"The witnesses, therefore, cannot be any two men or any two churches, but must be a succession of men, and a succession of *churches*" (B). W. Newton.

"The two olive trees and two lamps, which symbolize the two witnesses, are those doubtless, or like those exhibited in vision in Zechariah, chapter 4:4,11-14, of which the trees that distilled the oil into the lamps, represented the teachers, and the lamps, the recipients of their doctrines, or believers. The two witnesses are the teachers, then, and the recipients of the truth, in whom it exerts and displays its power, as the oil transmitted from the olive trees to the lamps burned and diffused its light through the temple" (D. N. Lord).

"These two olive branches were subsequently declared (Zechariah 4:14) to be 'the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.' The olive trees, or olive branches (verse 12), appear in the vision of the Prophet to have been connected with the ever-burning lamp, by golden pipes, and as the olive tree produced the oil used by the ancients in their lamps, these trees are represented as furnishing a constant supply of oil through the golden pipes to the candlestick, and thus they became emblematic of the supply of grace to the Church. John uses this emblem, not in the sense exactly in which it was employed by the Prophet, but to denote that these two 'witnesses,' which might be compared with the two olive trees, would be the means of supplying grace to the Church. As the olive tree furnished oil for the lamps, the two trees here would seem properly to denote ministers of religion; and as there can be no doubt that the candlesticks, or lamp-bearers, denote churches, the sense would appear to be that it was through the pastors of the churches that the oil of grace which maintained the brightness of those mystic candlesticks, or the churches, was conveyed. The image is a beautiful one, and expresses a truth of great importance to the world — for God has designed that the lamp of piety shall be kept burning in the churches by truth supplied through ministers and pastors" (Albert Barnes).

The foregoing is in harmony with St. Paul's words in Ephesians 4.

"These witnesses unquestionably represent the faithful evangelistic churches, which held fast the Gospel all through the Dark Ages of Roman apostasy. They are called candlesticks, and we are told in the first chapter of the book, that candlesticks symbolize Churches. They are called 'olive trees,' and this figure is used in Zechariah (where two olive trees are seen supplying the candlestick with oil) to represent faithful ministers. The double symbolism seems to predict that all through the darkest period of anti-Christian apostasy, faithful pastors would exist. They might be few and feeble, persecuted and hidden, small in numbers, and inconspicuous in status; yet acting as Christ's faithful witnesses and holding forth the Word of life, they would alight amid the darkness, the lamp of truth. The number *two* is used apparently in compliance with the law of testimony: 'In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.' These witnesses are not individuals, but churches, and their prophesying or preaching lasts all through the Dark Ages, through the entire period of Papal domination, with the exception of the brief interval, during which they are to all appearance killed. In addition to witnessing for Christ and to his Gospel, these evangelical churches would also witness against the Roman Antichrist, and his assumptions" (H. G. Guinness).

The interpretation offered by William Miller regarding the two witnesses, is of interest in this connection. We quote from a sermon preached by him in 1842:

"The angel in his allusion to the two olive trees quotes Zechariah 4:3: 'And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.' Here the olive trees are used in a figurative sense, and properly denote the 'sons of oil' or the two cherubim, which stood over the ark, and spread their wings over the mercy seat. The wings of the cherubim stretched from either side of the house, and their faces turned inwards down upon the mercy seat, and the glory of the God of Israel was above the cherubim. These cherubim are a lively type of the Old and New Testaments. ... These cherubim were made of olive trees and overlaid with pure gold. Again, the angel tells Zechariah what the two olive trees are: Zechariah 4:4-6, 'So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my Lord? ... Then he answered and said unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel,' etc. Here we are plainly told [?] that the two olive trees are the Word of the Lord, and the angel tells John, that the two witnesses are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks. Candlesticks are the means of light as is the Word of God. And David says, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.' Therefore, I humbly believe that I have fairly and conclusively proved that the two witnesses are the Old and New Testaments."

While agreeing in part with Mr. Miller, we observe that he ignores two very important things in his interpretation of this vision. One is the fact that the Savior himself explained that a candlestick or lampstand represents a church (Revelation 1:20). The other is the interpretation of the messenger to Zechariah (Zechariah 4:14), that the olive trees represent "the *two anointed ones* that stand by the Lord of the whole earth," which applies them to living intelligences, human beings. He therefore bases his conclusion wholly upon his wrong interpretation, we believe, of the two cherubim of the inner apartment of the tabernacle. A seemingly reasonable interpretation of the cherubim as given by Mr. Russell is as follows: "As the ark represented the Christ, so the mercy seat, glory-light, *and cherubim* represented Jehovah God. ... The two cherubim represented two other elements of Jehovah's character, as revealed in His Word, namely Divine love and Divine power."

This last writer, while not giving a full interpretation of these witnesses, refers to them as representing the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We quote his words when calling attention to the closing of the twelve hundred and sixty years of Papacy's domination over the saints:

"And forth came, and are coming, the Sanctuary class, the 'holy people,' weak, and halt, and lame, and almost naked, and blind, from the dungeon darkness and filth and misery of Papal bondage. Poor souls! they had been trying to serve God faithfully in the very midst of the lurid flames of persecution, clinging to the cross of Christ when almost every truth had been swept away, and courageously endeavoring to emancipate God's two witnesses (the Old and New Testaments), which had so long been bound, and which had prophesied only under the sackcloth of a dead language."

The events of history as they disclose the work of the Little Flock of God's consecrated ones during the long period of Papacy's dominating the world, have been such as to fulfill every feature of these striking symbols. We shall refer to the historian's account of these transactions in our consideration of the very remarkable and startling symbols contained in the verses that follow. It will be evident to the thoughtful Bible student that while the events recorded in the symbols of chapter ten reach down to and beyond the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the vision we are now considering *is retrospective*, that is, it goes back in history to the rise of the great apostate Christian system and portrays very fully the Great Reformation, and brings us down to the period of the sounding of the seventh trumpet. We learned in the previous exposition that the beginning of the sounding of the seventh trumpet would be discovered by the events occurring, among which would be a clearer, more nearly correct understanding of the "mystery of God" — the hitherto mysterious features of the Divine Plan. It would be in this way that the Master's Presence would be discovered.

Seeming Difficulties Considered

"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them" (verse 7).

Having discovered that the symbols used to describe the two witnesses comprehend, first, the little churches in possession of truth from the two great divisions of the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, enough to preserve their consecration and to discover the great Christian apostasy, and, second, faithful pastors serving these churches with the truth, the Scriptures, we are prepared to consider the vision of the "wild beast" warring on the same. First in order is the consideration of the expression, *"when they shall have completed their testimony."* That this does not refer to the last testimony of the Church on earth is seen from the fact that the symbols which follow their (symbolical) death, describe a continuation of their testimony under different, indeed increasingly favorable conditions, when the anti-Christian system would gradually begin to be shorn to a considerable extent of its power to persecute and hinder them. In other words, the expressions, the slaughter of the witnesses, their lying dead in the streets of the great city three days and a half, their resurrection and ascension to heaven, are all to be understood symbolically, as describing occurrences during their present earthly witnessing. It should also be kept in mind that these occurrences cover comparatively a long period of time.

It is admitted that it would *seem* from the Common Version translation that not until the full end of the 1260 years would the Papal war on the witnesses and their slaughter (suppression), take place. It reads, "And *when* they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." It should be noted, however, that if we understand the "beast" that makes war on the witnesses to be Papacy (and there is no other solution), we meet with an insurmountable obstacle in applying the words, "And when they shall have

finished their testimony," as meeting their fulfillment in 1799, for the reason that the inspired record states that *when* they shall have finished their testimony the beast shall make war on the witnesses and overcome them, and kill them. Now the Papal beast did not make war against the witnesses *at this time;* no such event, nor anything like it, occurred *at* or *after* 1799. Indeed, the very opposite occurred, for it was *at this time — the* period of the French Revolution — that Papacy received its most terrible blow, at the hands of Napoleon — a blow that so weakened its power that it was utterly unable to wage a war of extermination on the witnesses of Christ. It was at this time that the witnesses — the saints, and the Word of God as well — were delivered out of Papacy's power. It was at this time that the witnesses, whether they be understood to represent Christ's saints or the Word of God, or both, ascended to heaven (Matthew 11:23), that is they came into favor with the powers that be. Furthermore, the overcoming, or death of the witnesses and their lying dead in the street of the great city *was a result* of the Papal war, and nothing occurred in 1799 or since, that can be construed to fulfill these symbols. On the other hand, it is an indisputable fact of history, that all these things occurred in the period *before, during*, and *since* the great Reformation, reaching their culmination in the humiliation of Papacy in 1799. That Papacy should wage war on the witnesses and overcome them is foretold in another vision of the Revelation, as we read: "And it was given unto him [the beast] to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (Revelation 13:7). Who can doubt that the same "war" is referred to as in this vision. History records this event, as we shall see.

Another matter that has a very important bearing on the vision's interpretation that is well to have in mind is, that if it were possible to apply this part of the vision to 1799, there would be a passing by, an ignoring in the Apocalypse of the most critical, trying experiences that the true saints of God ever encountered in connection with their testimony or witnessing for their Lord and Master. It would be incredible to believe that those three centuries before the Reformation, which marked the most terrible persecutions that the saints of God ever experienced, would be passed over in silence, or at least no special mention be made of them in the Apocalyptic visions; this would be true, if we applied all the symbols of this vision to the end of Papacy's domination in 1799.

The indisputable facts of history, as we find them, fulfill every feature of the vision, and should cause us to examine very carefully and critically the seemingly conflicting words: "And when they shall have finished their testimony the beast that ascendeth out of the Abyss shall make war against them and shall conquer them." In doing this it will be necessary to examine the translation. Thus we discover that there are several different renderings given by able and eminent Scripture writers. Of these we note three:

"And when they shall be about finishing their testimony" (Newton).

"And whenever they shall have finished their testimony" (Stuart).

"And when they shall have perfected their testimony" (Elliott).

This last, as we shall endeavor to show, seems to be the correct translation; for thereby we are enabled to see a most wonderful and beautiful harmony of

this remarkable vision with the facts of history. Mr. Elliott's translation of the passage under consideration is: "And when they shall have *perfected* their testimony," instead of, "And when they shall have *finished* their testimony," as given in the Diaglott. The question to be decided is whether the Greek verb should be rendered perfected or finished. Concerning this Mr. Elliott says:

"Let it be remembered, then, that *to finish*, is by no means its only, or only frequent, sense; but quite as frequently [it has the significance] to *complete*, or *perfect*. So in effect our translators [of the Common Version] render this [same] verb in Revelation 15:1, 'For in them is *filled up* the wrath of God.' For '*filled up*' is there intended evidently in the sense of completed. Liddell and Scott thus speak of this verb: 'The strict signification [of this verb] is not the ending of a departed state, but the arrival of a complete and perfect one'; therefore it signifies most properly *to bring* [the testimony] *to such a state of completion and perfectness*. ... My conclusion is that much in the same way the two Apocalyptic witnesses' testimony is viewed in the prophecy as a thing of growth, and that so soon as, having gone through the preliminary stages, it should have come to embrace all the subjects of protest [against Papal errors] that it was intended to embrace, and shown forth also all its [the testimony's] evidence of Divine inspiration — so soon it might be said, according to the mind of the Spirit, that the testimony was perfected, or had reached its culminating point; yet not so as to imply that the testifying was to be then at an end; but rather that it was thenceforth to be continued [after the resurrection of the witnesses] in its complete and perfected form."

Mr. Elliott next shows what the testimony that was required of the witnesses before their testimony would be suppressed for three and one half years comprehended. His words are: "Obviously a protestation for Christ against each of the successively developed, and enforced anti-Christian errors of the Apostasy; errors as defined (not by a commentator so as to suit his own hypothesis of interpretation, but) by the Apocalyptic prophecy itself."

This writer next enumerates the errors of the Apostasy, noting the places in the visions of the Apocalypse where they are symbolically referred to. It is not the purpose in this connection to point out the particular places in the Apocalyptic visions in which these gross errors are referred to as characterizing the anti-Christian Apostasy. It will be sufficient here to say that they relate to an utter perversion of those vital, fundamental truths, that all true Christians recognize as entering into, and as constituting that which is an absolute necessity to a vital, living union with Christ as Savior and Lord. These errors, as all true Christians know, are:

(1) The Sacramental error; in other words, the so-called sacrifice of the Mass, which was claimed by the great apostate Church to be a continuation of Christ's sacrifice.

(2) The Mediatorship of departed saints (so called).

(3) The Paganized idolatrous worship of saints, martyrs, relics, etc., that prevailed almost universally in the Dark Ages of the great anti-Christian Apostasy.

(4) The false claim of the Romish Church to be the true Church of Christ on earth.

(5) The false claim of the Pope to be the Head of the Church.

These constitute the successively developed characteristics of the Apostasy, noted in the Apocalypse. The protestation of Christ's witnesses, of course, embraced them all. As soon as they had given such a witness, and proved the same by the sacred Scriptures, it could be truthfully said that their testimony was *perfected*, in the Divine sense intended by the expression: "And when they had *perfected* their testimony." It is an established fact of history that such a testimony was given during those dark centuries of the great Apostasy. However, it was not until the Twelfth Century that a testimony against all these egregious errors was finished — not until the Twelfth Century that this testimony was *perfected*. Furthermore, when the testimony of these witnesses was *perfected*, by their making a bold, fearless announcement that the Romish Church and the Papacy fulfilled the Apocalyptic visions of the harlot and the beast, we reach an epoch in history when the Papacy instituted by a decree of the third Lateran Council, a systematic warfare against these witnesses of Christ. The expressed avowal of this decree was the extermination or utter suppression of the testimony of the witnesses. This occurred in 1179. Mr. Mede observes that: "Never before this time [that is the Twelfth Century] had suspicion arisen of the Papacy being anti- Christian." Another writer adds: "The beast made not war against the witnesses immediately from the commencement of his existence, but in the Twelfth Century; at which time the war was made by him against both Albigenses and Waldenses, and saints of Christ, called, as it might be by whatever other name."

Concerning this Mr. Elliott writes: "From early times we have seen that the witnesses both of Eastern and Western origin made protestation against the sacramental error, the Mass, and the Mediatorship of saints; setting forth Christ as the one source of life, Christ as the one Mediator and Intercessor; and his Church constituting the faithful, the only true Church; and against the idolatrous forms of worship of the Church of professing Christendom. But against Rome, Papal Rome as the predicted head of the apostasy, and Babylon and Harlot of the Apocalypse, and against the Roman Popes as Antichrist, they for centuries protested not. Nothing meets us nearer to a protestation on this point than the Paulikians saying, 'We are Christians; ye are Romans,' until we come to Berenger's notable statement, made in the Eleventh Century, 'that the Romish Church was a Church of malignants, and its See, not the Apostolic seat, but that of Satan.' And that was but an insulated voice; and made by one who shrunk from acting the confessor. It was a hint, however, not lost. A century later came the time of Peter Valdes [Waldo] and his disciples. The Noble Lesson, written by one of them somewhere between 1170 and 1200, marks in what it says of Antichrist a preparation of mind, indeed more than a preparation to make the great step and recognize the predicted Babylon, Harlot, and Antichrist in Rome and the Popedom; a step of advance actually taken ere the termination of the Twelfth Century, by the Waldenses, or orthodox associated Paulikians, and other secta-

ries. Just at this time the mighty act was done of the translation and circulation of the Scriptures, far and wide, in the vulgar tongue. Then the witness testimony might indeed be considered to have been brought to its culminating point and perfected.

"And what then followed? Forthwith the Popedom — of which previously, the separate members alone, acting independently of the Head [the Pope] had moved against heretics — roused itself collectively in the third Lateran General Council of 1179, and declared war against them."

Putting the Witnesses to Death

In Revelation 17:7-18 we learn that the ten-horned beast represented the Papal Roman Empire in its divided state, the ten horns representing the ten European kingdoms under the power or control of the Papacy; the Papacy itself being represented by the beast's head; or in other words the beast's head was the ruling power at Rome. In Revelation 13:7 we have reference made to this "war against the saints": "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," and in verse 5 it is stated that his dominion will continue "forty and two months."

This awful beast, representing a masterpiece of satanic ingenuity in the form of a great evil system, was said to come forth from the abyss (the deep), that is, it was born of the invisible powers of darkness, and originated out of the ignorance, superstition, and depravity of humanity — of which Satan took advantage. The kingdoms presided over by Papacy for a long time before the Reformation were all united together as persecutors of Christ's true followers, being incited by Papacy; but up to a certain time the object of such war was to cause them to recant and to join themselves to the Roman Catholic communion. The warring mentioned in the Scripture under consideration, however, differs from the other in that the avowed object of this war was to kill, exterminate, destroy them, and thus silence their testimony. This seemingly successful attempt of Papacy to exterminate Christ's faithful witnesses is recorded by all historians, and meets fully all the requirements of this symbolic vision. We quote in this connection:

"At the third Lateran Council (1179 AD), the Popedom roused itself collectively to a war of extermination against heretics. Previous to this, separate members of the system, acting alone and independently, had opposed the truth by force and cruelty. But in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, Romanism then in the plenitude of its power, gathered itself together for a great, determined, united, and persistent effort to crush out all that opposed its supremacy, and to clear Christendom of heresy. ... During these three centuries ... the furnace was heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated. Persecution raged systematically. The fourth Lateran Council in 1215, sanctioned all former plans for the extirpation of heresy, urged their adoption with renewed vigor and subordinated secular authority [the 'great city'] to spiritual power for the purpose. If kings would not clear their dominions of heresy, their

subjects were to be absolved from all allegiance to them. Crusades against heretics were to be organized, and to secure the same privileges and rewards as crusades against the Turks. The Holy Scriptures were to be interdicted to the laity; even children were to be forced to denounce their own relatives.

"All sorts of methods were to be used for the detection of heretics; bishops were to gird themselves for the work of ferreting out and exterminating them; and all the Franciscan and Dominican monks were to supply instruments for carrying out this process of inquisition and blood. The Waldenses and Albigenses were, of course, especially singled out for extermination. A crusade was proclaimed against them and plenary absolution promised to all who should perish in the holy [?] war. Never was a more merciless spirit of murder exhibited than by these terrible crusaders against the meek and lowly and Christian-spirited Vaudois. The Inquisition — the invention of Dominic, or rather Gregory IX — established its horrid tribunal for making inquest after unseen, secret, 'heresy'; and wherever any revival of true religion took place, or any confessors of Christ could be found, they were hunted, if possible to death. Genuine disciples of Christ, under whatever name they might pass, whether called Petrobrussians, Catharists, Waldenses, Albigenses, Wycliffites, Lollards, Hussites, Bohemians, or any other name, it mattered not — to the torture and the stake with them if they held fast the Gospel of Christ! Savonarola, one of the wisest and worthiest of his age, was burnt at the stake in 1498. [John Huss suffered the same in 1415.] Seven years of cruel war was waged against the Hussites, and a civil persecution more bitter still. Eighteen thousand soldiers were sent into the valleys of Piedmont, towards the end of the Fourteenth Century, to exterminate the Waldenses of Piedmont, and appropriate to themselves all their property. The Christians of Val Louise in Dauphiny, were actually exterminated, burned alive and suffocated in the caves in which they had sought refuge. Four hundred infants were found dead in their mother's arms, and 3,000 perished in the struggle. Lorente calculates from official reports that in the forty years prior to the Reformation the Inquisition alone burned 13,000 persons and condemned 169,000. The latter half of the Fifteenth Century was a time of Satan's raging against the saints. But in spite of racks, and prisons and sword and flame, the voices of the witnesses of Jesus were still raised in behalf of the Truth and against the powers and pretensions of Antichrist. At last, however, as the Fifteenth Century drew to a close, the furious crusade seemed about to accomplish its object. The 'beast' had all but conquered and killed the witnesses according to the prediction. The strong figure employed of the witnesses lying dead for three and a half days means of course that their testimony was silenced [for 32 years]. They no longer prophesied; they were silent, helpless, extinct for a brief period. They 'were worn out.' The wild beast from the abyss had prevailed against them. For the moment the struggle was over" (H. G. Guinness).

The historian's record of this condition of affairs existing amongst the Lord's consecrated just before the Reformation, has already been noted. Let us for a moment view the terrible symbol here employed, as forcefully described in the language of the writer last quoted:

"There stands the fierce wild monster from the abyss. He has prevailed against his defenseless victims. The struggle has been long and hard; it has made him all the more savage and impatient but it is over at last! His jowls still drop gore, his claws are red with blood, as he stands glaring with his fierce eyes on the pale cold silent corpses of Christ's two witnesses, so long empowered from above to resist and defy his might. As John (in the vision) watched the sad scenes, did there not occur to his mind scenes in the amphitheater of Pagan Rome, scenes such as Dore has imagined and painted for us, scenes with which the exile of Patmos was all too familiar. The arena strewn with the cold, stiff corpses of the faithful witnesses of Christ, and the victorious wild beast glutted with their flesh and blood, standing guard over the remains. That was the symbol. *The reality was witnessing churches silenced by long and bloody persecution*."

Do we not see now what is meant by this strange and startling symbol — the prophesying of the witnesses and of their being slaughtered? How plainly do we have taught us that this complex symbol predicts that all through the darkest period of the anti-Christian apostasy, faithful churches, having faithful pastors ministering the Word of God, would exist. This period covers what is known to historians as the Dark Ages, when the world seemed to make no progress; when spiritual enlightenment and civilization were almost at a standstill; when the preaching of the Word of God, and the simple primitive worship were, by the great nominal Church, supplanted by forms and ceremonies — in fact by the establishment of a paganized Christianity, where all the forms, ceremonies and rites of Paganism were crystallized into so-called Christian symbols, and falsely called the religion of Christ. It was the reign of Antichrist — the mock Millennium of the Papacy. And who among Bible students does not know that as that system increased in power and influence, all who dissented from its teachings were treated as heretics, cast out of society, threatened, tortured, or persecuted unto death? Who that is acquainted with history is ignorant of the fact that the Bible, which in the first two centuries was loved and cherished by all Christians as the sole guide in spiritual matters, was gradually lost sight of and buried in the rubbish of Papal superstition? And from the Twelfth Century to the sixteenth, even amongst the clergy of the Church of Rome it was scarcely known. Nay more, the Bible was taught to be pernicious, and a dangerous book for the people to have access to; so that the great mass of the people looked for their knowledge of the Christian religion to come from the debauched clergy of Rome. Such, in brief, is an outline picture of those long centuries.

But thank God there was another side to this picture. There were a few here and there who did not bow down to Papal altars; and throughout this long period true churches ministered over by faithful and true pastors — weak in numbers, it is true, and located mostly away from the centers of civilization, existed. We read of the Paulikians in the East. We also read of the Berengarians, Wycliffites, Lollards, Hussites, Bohemians, Waldenses, Albigenses, in other parts of the Roman Empire. These all had faithful ministers. They clung to the Bible and held tenaciously to the uncorrupted doctrines of Christ, and had sufficient knowledge to understand that the great Church nominal was apostate. But amongst them

all none were so noted as the great witnessing Church of the Waldenses. The motto of this Church was as given by the historian, " *'the light that shineth in a dark place,' and their symbol or crest, a lighted candle on a candlestick, the very symbol employed in this Divine prophecy* of them and their fellow-witnesses." This Church, until the period just previous to the great Reformation, possessed a remarkable missionary spirit, and in spite of interdictions and persecutions numerous, they spread the measure of truth they held in every direction; and not even the cruel rack and all the devilish instruments of torture that their enemies could devise could compel them to recant or to deny their allegiance to their Divine Master. In this connection we quote a few lines from Dante, who wrote in the Thirteenth Century. His poem on Hell, Purgatory and Paradise shows that he saw Papacy in its true colors:

"Woe to thee, Simon Magus! woe to you
His wretched followers, who the things of God
Which should be wedded unto goodness, them
Rapacious as ye are, do prostitute
For gold and silver!

"Your avarice
O'ercasts the world with mourning; under foot
Treading the good, and raising bad men up,
Of shepherds like to you; the Evangelist [John]
Was aware, when her who sits upon the waves
With kings in filthy whoredom he beheld
She who with seven heads towered at her birth
And from ten horns her proof of glory drew,
Long as her spouse in virtue took delight.
Of gold and silver ye have made your god,
Differing wherein from the idolater,
But that he worships one, a hundred ye?
Ah Constantine to how much ill gave birth
Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower
Which the first wealthy Father [Bishop] gained from thee!"

In his poem on Paradise he further describes Papacy:

"My place he who usurps on earth hath made
A common sewer of puddle and of blood,
No purpose was of ours that the keys
Which were vouchsafed me should for ensigns serve
Under the banners that do levy war
On the baptized; nor I for sigil [seal or signature] mark
Set upon sold and lying privileges,
Which makes me oft to bicker and turn red.
In shepherds clothing greedy wolves below
Range wide o'er all the pastures. Arm of God
Why longer sleepest thou?"

In his poem on Paradise he refers to the Apostle John as

> "... The seer
> That ere he died saw all the grievous times
> Of the fair bride, who with the lance and nails
> Was won."

"You will observe [says Mr. Guinness] that these beautiful and touching words recognize the *Historical* interpretation of the Apocalypse. The Apostle John according to Dante 'saw all the grievous times' through which the Church was destined to pass. And what Dante saw, the Albigenses saw and the Waldenses. What wonder was there in this? Would not the wonder have been had the saints remained blind to a fulfillment of prophecy so plain and palpable that even the world recognized it."

The poet Milton, born of godly parents in 1608, also understood these wonderful visions of St. John regarding Papacy. In one of his poems he thus describes these terribly momentous times of suffering for the Little Flock of Christ's followers:

> "Avenge O Lord Thy slaughtered saints whose bones
> Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
> Even those who kept Thy truth so pure of old;
> When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones
> Forget not; in Thy book record their groans,
> Who were Thy sheep and in their ancient fold
> Slain by bloody soldiery, that rolled
> Mother and infant down the rocks;
> There mourns the vales redoubled to the hills and they
> To heaven, their martyred blood and ashes sow.
> O'er all the Italian fields where still doth sway
> The triple tyrant, that from these may grow
> Abundant fold, who having learned Thy way
> Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

Lying Dead in the Street of the City

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (verse 8).

From what we observe foregoing we are prepared to understand that the symbol of the witnesses lying dead in the street of the great city, means simply that the testimony of the Scriptures which had been given by Christ's true followers was silenced — the Word of God had none to publicly witness to its teaching; the little companies of consecrated ones were scattered. As the Historian Milner expresses it, the confessors of Christ "worn out by a long series of contentions were reduced to silence." Another writer informs us that "everything was quiet, every heretic [?] exterminated." The Lateran Council that closed its session in 1514 AD congratulated itself that the Church was no longer

to be troubled by heresies. This was announced by a public proclamation: "There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule, and religious opposers exist no more. ... The whole body of Christendom is now seen to be subjected to its head, i.e., to thee [Leo X]."

"The pillars of Rome's strength were visible and palpable, and she surveyed them with exultation from her golden palaces. The assembled prelates [of this Lateran Council] separated with complacency and confidence, and with mutual congratulations on the peace, unity, and purity of the apostolic [?] Church. The power of Rome was de-facto paramount in the Church" (Waddington).

"The edifice of an unlimited Papal monarchy had at that time come victoriously out of all the preceding fights, and established itself on a firm basis. In the last Lateran Council at Rome, the principle of an unlimited Papal power was established in opposition to the principle of general councils, and the Waldenses and Hussites had no more any importance to fight against Papacy" (Neander.)

Another writer, Cunningham, is quoted in "Romanism and the Reformation" as saying: "At the commencement of the Sixteenth Century Europe reposed in the deep sleep of spiritual death. There was none that moved the wing or opened the mouth or peeped."

It was the first and only time in the history of the Church of Christ that its testimony was silenced. So far as any united, collective testimony is concerned Christ's witnesses were silenced.

In the statement, *lying dead in the street of the great city*, the city undoubtedly refers to symbolical Babylon, Christendom, controlled and dominated by the forces of the Papal system. The literal streets of a city are its public thoroughfares; anything committed to or exposed in the street would be brought prominently to the public view. Thus the persecution and suppression of the two witnesses were given all the publicity that was possible for those times — they were in the full view and gaze of the public throughout the great symbolic city, which is spiritually called Sodom (wicked and corrupt and doomed to destruction — for type see Genesis 19), and Egypt (typical of oppression and of the worldly state of separation from God), where also our Lord was crucified — it was by depraved humanity that our Lord was put to death.

"And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves" (Revelation 11:9).

In view of the foregoing facts regarding the relentless war that was carried on against the witnesses just prior to the Reformation, resulting in their suppression and death, it seems a most reasonable conclusion that it was between the dates, May 5, 1514, and October 31, 1517, that the three years and a half, during which the symbolic transaction described as the dead bodies of the two witnesses remaining unburied, and exposed to public gaze and derision, find their fulfillment. The expositor, Mr. Barnes, summing up the conclusion from the historian, writes:

"But it was with remarkable accuracy that a period of three years and a half occurred from the time when this proclamation [the proclamation that all heresy and opposition to Papacy was suppressed] was made, and when it was supposed that these 'witnesses' were 'dead,' to the time when the voice of living witnesses for the Truth was heard again, as if those witnesses that had been silenced had come to life; and 'not in the compass of the whole ecclesiastical history of Christendom, except in the case of the death and resurrection of Christ himself, is there any such example of the sudden, mighty, and triumphant resuscitation of his Church from a state of deep depression, as was just after the separation of the Lateran Council, exhibited in the protesting voice of Luther, and the glorious Reformation.' All accounts agree in placing the beginning of the Reformation in 1517 AD. See Bowers' History of the Popes, also Murdock's Mosheim. ...

"The remarkable coincidence in regard to time — supposing that three years and a half are intended — will be seen from the following statement. The day of the ninth session of the Lateran Council, when the proclamation above referred to was made, was, as we have seen, May 5, 1514; the day of Luther's posting up his theses at Wittenberg (the well known epoch of the beginning of the Reformation), was October 31, 1517. 'Now from May 5, 1514, to May 5, 1517, are three years; and from May 5, 1517, to October 31 of the same year, 1517, the reckoning in days is ... in all 180, or half of 360 days, that is, half a year; so that the whole interval is precisely to a day three and a half years.' Elliott, II 402, 403. But without insisting on this very minute accuracy any one can see, and all must be prepared to admit that, on the supposition that it was intended by the spirit of God to refer to these events, this is the language which would be used; or, in other words, nothing would better represent this state of things than the declaration that the witnesses would be 'slain,' and would be suffered to 'remain unburied' during this period of time, and that at the end of this period, a public testimony would be borne again for the truth, and against the abominations of the Papacy, as if 'the spirit of life from God should again enter into them, and they should stand upon their feet' (verse 11)."

Thus we are enabled to see from the historian the period during which the witnesses were silenced. The proclamation of the ninety-five theses[1] referred to were propositions advanced by Luther which he offered to maintain and did actually maintain, that nearly all the great dogmas of Rome were against Scripture.

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(1) One of the principles contained in these theses was afterwards expressed by Luther: "I, Martin Luther, unworthy herald of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, confess this article, that faith alone without works justifies before God, and I declare that it shall stand forever in despite of the Emperor of the Romans, the Emperor of the Turks, the Emperor of the Tartars, the Emperor of the Persians — in spite of the Pope and all the cardinals with the bishops, priests, monks, nuns — in spite of kings, princes, and nobles — and in spite of all the world and the devils themselves; and if they endeavor to fight against the truth, they will draw the fires of hell upon their heads. This is the true Gospel and the declaration of me, Doctor Martin Luther, according to the teaching of the Holy Ghost."

The Witnesses Denied Sacred Burial

Concerning the expression, they "shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put into graves," we believe the thought intended to be conveyed is that the individuals faithful to Christ and his Truth who were left here and there in Christendom, but who had ceased to bear witness because of the awful persecutions, would now be subjected to great humiliation and would be derided and scoffed at and abused. It was customary in the ancient nations to deny burial to the lowest criminals. This usage prevailed among the Jews during and before our Lord's day. The bodies of the lowest criminals were cast into the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) and burned. The teaching seems to have gained credence among the Jews that such were unfit for resurrection — a future life. The unrepentant heretic (?) was, and is today, by the Papal hierarchy, denied burial on consecrated (?) ground, and considered an outcast of both God and man. The figure under consideration is drawn from these literal transactions. Mr. Barnes, quoting from Waddington and D'Aubigne, says:

"One of the punishments constantly decreed and constantly enforced [by Papacy] in reference to those who were called heretics was their exclusion from burial as persons excommunicated and without the pale of the Church. Thus in the third Lateran Council (1179 AD) Christian burial was denied heretics; the same in the Lateran Council 1215 AD, and the Papal decree of Gregory IX, 1227 AD; the same again in that of Pope Martin, 1422 AD; and the same thing was determined in the Council of Constance, 1422 AD, which ordered that the body of Wycliffe should be exhumed, and that the ashes of John Huss, instead of being buried, should be collected and thrown into the lake of Constance. It may be added that Savonarola's ashes were in a similar manner cast into the Arno, 1498 AD, and that in the first bull entrusted to the Cardinal Carjetan against Luther, this was one of the declared penalties that both Luther and his partisans should be deprived of ecclesiastical burial."

In the language of this same commentator the significance of the symbol would then be that "they [the witnesses] would be treated with indignity, as if they were not worthy of Christian burial ... they would be treated after they were silenced, like unburied corpses, putrefying in the sun."

"And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth" (verse 10).

The rejoicing and exulting over the death of the witnesses would represent that the Papacy and its followers would deem themselves rid of the annoying testimonies to the Truth and their denunciations of the Papal abominations. It was true that there was always rejoicing, and even public celebrations of victories over the humiliation of Christ's faithful tried ones. That referred to here, however, describes particular rejoicings and celebrations at this date, May, 1514, over the supposed *complete* suppression of "heretics." The historian has recorded this special rejoicing. One writer has said of this when referring to the Papal proclamation[1] of triumph made by the orator of the occasion of the last Lateran Council, May 5, 1514:

"This was the hour when Papal Rome seemed to triumph, and when the silence of death and the grave appeared to oppress all opposing voices. And the merry-making, the giving of gifts, the joyous festivities, with which the announcement was celebrated, as described by contemporary writers, eclipsed in splendor any that had been witnessed in the seven-hilled city since the days of her ancient greatness" (F. E. Tower).

Some Interpretations Not Corroborated by History

Some Adventists, also others more recently, who quote from Smith's *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*, have applied the three and one half days (years) as beginning in 1793 and ending three and one half years after. The quotation from this work on prophecy is as follows:

"In 1793, a decree passed the French Assembly suppressing the Bible. Just three years after, a resolution was introduced into the Assembly superseding the decree, and giving toleration to the Scriptures. That resolution lay on the table six months, when it was taken up, and passed without a dissenting vote. Thus, in just three years and a half, the witnesses 'stood upon their feet' " (Uriah Smith).

Our firm conviction is that the symbols themselves, as well as the undisputed facts of history, will not admit of this application of the vision. We quote the historian's record of the transaction cited by Mr. Smith as occurring November, 1793:

"With these reforms [?] effected, the revolutionists next proceeded to the more difficult task of subverting the ancient institutions of religion. Some of the chiefs of the Commune of Paris declared that the Revolution should not rest until it had 'dethroned the King of heaven as well as the king of earth.'

"An attempt was made by the extremists to have Christianity [?] abolished by a decree of the National Convention; but that body fearing such an act might alienate many who were still attached to the church [?] resolved that all matters of creed should be left to the decision of the people themselves.

"The Atheistic chiefs of the Commune of the capital now determined to effect their purpose through the church itself. They persuaded the (Roman Catholic) Bishop of Paris to abdicate his office; and his example was followed by many of the clergy throughout the country. The churches of Paris and of other cities were now closed and the treasures of their altars and shrines confiscated to the state. Even the bells were melted down into cannon. The images of the Virgin and of the Christ were torn down, and the busts of Marat and other patriots set up in their stead. And as the emancipation of the world was now to be wrought, not by the Cross, but by the guillotine, that instrument took the place of the crucifix and was called 'the Holy Guillotine.' All the visible symbols of the ancient [false]

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(1) This proclamation was: "There is an end of resistance to Papal rule and religion; there is none to oppose. The whole body of Christendom is now subjected to its Head, that is to thee, Leo X."

religion were destroyed. All emblems of hope in the cemeteries were obliterated, and over their gates were inscribed the words, 'Death is eternal sleep' " (*Myers' History*).

The careful Bible student will see from this record of the historian that instead of this being a suppression of the Scriptures and of evangelical testimony — the death of Christ's witnesses — it was a judgment on Papacy and the great apostate Church. It will also be noted that even this was local in its effects — confined to France alone. And as finally settling the matter that this great and startling event of French history could not fulfill this grand symbolic vision of the Revelation, it will be noted that the chronological feature fails utterly in meeting the requirements of the vision. We quote the historian in this connection:

"November 10, 1793, the Catholic worship superseded by reason;

"May 30, 1795, the public exercise of the Catholic religion authorized" (M. A. Theirs, *Chronology of The French Revolution*).

Again we read from *Myers' History* bearing upon this latter occurrence:

"The Fall of Robespierre (July, 1794). — By such terrorism did Robespierre and his creatures rule France. ... The awful suspense and dread drove many into insanity and suicide. The strain was too great for human nature to bear. A reaction came. ... They [the people] began to turn with horror and pity from the scenes of the guillotine. The first blow at the power of the Dictator [Robespierre] was struck in the Convention. A member dared to denounce him upon the floor of the assembly as a tyrant. The spell was broken. He [Robespierre] was arrested and sent to the guillotine with a large number of his confederates. ... The delirium was over. France had awakened from the ghastly dream of the reign of terror (July 28, 1794).

"The Reaction. — The reaction which had swept away Robespierre and his associates continued after their ruin. ... The deputies that had been driven from their seats in the Convention were invited to resume their places and the Christian [?] worship was reestablished (May 30, 1795)."

However, while it is not corroborated by the facts of history nor the symbols themselves that the death of the witnesses and their lying dead in the street of the "great city" were fulfilled in the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution, this remarkable occurrence so disastrous to Papacy's power is portrayed in another part of this very remarkable vision, as we shall endeavor to show. Indeed all the events symbolized in this vision do not reach their culmination until the seventh trumpet sounds.

The bodies of these witnesses lying dead in the street of the great city would, in addition to what we have already shown, denote that God's Truth so long proclaimed amidst the most terrible persecution ever known, was, just before the Reformation, cast down in the street. Error had for a little time triumphed over Truth. This figure is used in other places in the Scriptures. The Prophet Isaiah uses it in the language, "Judgment is turned away backward, for truth is fallen in the street" (Isaiah 59:14). The symbol would also mean that the little

companies (churches) existing previous to this time here and there in Christendom, were broken up and their members scattered. The Lord's Little Flock of consecrated ones were compelled, because of the terrible persecution, to cease for this brief space of time to assemble themselves together; or at least this was the state of things that Papacy and its supporters (Christendom) believed was existing for the three and one-half years prior to October, 1517.

Chapter Twenty-Three

The Resurrection and Ascension of the Witnesses

(Revelation 11:11-13)

"And after three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them" (verse 11).

Examining this symbol closely we discover that the entering of the spirit or breath of life from God into the witnesses fitly represents the infusing of new life into those who receive the truths of the Gospel. Particular reference, however, is made to the experiences of those who had been under the fear, bondage, and thraldom of the false Christianity that prevailed in the days before the great Protestant Reformation; especially the experiences of those who were sincerely and earnestly seeking to secure God's favor by the observances of the Romish superstitions. Faith in Christ's sacrifice brings joy and peace. It would bring what is commonly and Scripturally denominated Christian assurance of acceptance with God. The effects of its reception brings with it a discovery of the utter falsity of the Romish methods taught to secure pardon, peace, and assurance of salvation. This experience came to Martin Luther about 1510, on his finding the Holy Scriptures. This incident described by the Historian D'Aubigne, we have already alluded to.

Another historian takes up the narrative when these experiences of Luther had ripened and the responsibilities to God, as a result of such a knowledge and experience, began to be felt by him:

"While the Roman pontiff slumbered in security at the head of the church, and saw nothing throughout the vast extent of his dominion but tranquillity and submission; and while the worthy and pious professors of genuine Christianity almost despaired of seeing that reformation on which their most ardent desires and expectations were bent, an obscure and inconsiderable person arose, on a sudden, in the year 1517, and laid the foundation of this long expected change, by opposing with undaunted resolution, his single force to the torrent of Papal ambition and despotism. This extraordinary man was Martin Luther, a native of Aisleben in Saxony, a monk of the Augustine eremites [order of hermits] who were one of the Mendicant orders, and, at the same time, professor of divinity in the Academy that had been erected at Wittenberg, a few years before this period by Frederic the Wise. The Papal chair was at this time filled by Leo X. Maximilian

I, a prince of the house of Austria, was King of the Romans, and Emperor of Germany; and Frederic, already mentioned, Elector of Saxony. The bold efforts of this new adversary of the pontiffs were honored with the applauses of many, but few or none entertained hopes of their success. It seemed scarcely possible that this puny David could hurt Goliath, whom so many [Christian] heroes had opposed in vain. None of the qualities or talents that distinguished Luther were of a common or ordinary kind. His genius was truly great and unparalleled; his memory vast and tenacious; his patience in supporting trials, difficulties, and labors incredible. ... It would be equally rash and absurd to represent this great man as exempt from error and free from infirmities and defects; yet if we except the contagious effects of the age in which he lived, and of the religion in which he had been brought up, we shall perhaps find but a few things in his character that render him liable to reproach.

"The first opportunity that this great man had of unfolding to the view of a blinded and deluded age, the truth, which had struck his astonished sight, was offered by a Dominican, whose name was John Tetzel. This bold and enterprising monk had been chosen on account of his uncommon impudence by Albert, archbishop of Mentz and Magdeburgh, to preach and proclaim in Germany those famous indulgences of Leo X, which administered the remission of all sins, past, present, and to come, however enormous their nature, to those rich enough to purchase them. The frontless monk executed this iniquitous commission, not only with matchless insolence, indecency, and fraud, but even carried his impiety so far as to derogate from the all-sufficient power and influence of the merits of Christ. At this, Luther, unable to smother his just indignation, raised his warning voice, and in ninety-five propositions maintained publicly at Wittenberg on the 30th of September, in the year 1517 [and nailed to the church door October 31st], censured the extravagant extortion of these questors, and plainly pointed out the Roman pontiff as a partaker of their guilt, since he suffered the people to be seduced by such delusions from placing their principal confidence in Christ the only proper object of their trust. This was the commencement and foundation of that memorable rupture and revolution in the church which humbled the grandeur of the lordly pontiffs, and eclipsed so great a part of their glory" (*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*).

Truth Crushed to Earth shall Rise Again

Thus do we have recorded on the page of history the great event that began the fulfillment of the vision of the resurrection of Christ's witnesses. The foundation truths of Christian life and experience began again (a second time) to be spread far and near. Parts of the Scriptures were translated into the language of the people and began to be scattered and read all over Germany; and not only in Germany, but as time went on, all over Christendom. Luther translated the whole Bible into the German language. The witnesses sprang up all over the world, and the truths that Huss and others taught a hundred years before, and up to the time of their complete suppression in 1514, were again proclaimed worldwide. These truths were chiefly those that had to do with making more clearly

manifest God's way of salvation through Christ alone; and with this there was also a testimony against the prevailing apostasy. The events connected with the rise of Protestantism were recognized by the Reformers themselves later on, as the resurrection of the witnesses. Even their enemies gave expression to utterances that established the correctness of this interpretation. Pope Adrian, Leo's successor, expressed himself in a communication to the Diet of Nuremberg:

"The heretics, Huss and Jerome, *seem now to be alive again* in the person of Luther."

However, while it is true that the war of the "beast" on the witnesses continued on fiercely, and did not cease entirely until about 1799, the beginning of the "time of the end," the warring after 1517 was different, in that before this time the "beast" prevailed against "the witnesses" and finally silenced, suppressed them — "wore them out." Since then, however, he has never been able to silence them all — never been able to crush them out in all countries.

Who were these that composed this great cloud of human resurrected witnesses to the truths of the Holy Scriptures? We answer, a few of their names (like the "great cloud" of Old Testament witnesses of Hebrews 11) are graven on the pages of history. Among them were Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Zwingli, Reuchlen, Farrel, Latimer, Ridley, Knox, and others; later on we have the Wesleys, and nearer our day William Miller, H. G. Guinness, C. T. Russell, and others.

We quote some of the words of Luther, the first of these human witnesses to the Scriptures of truth. When summoned to appear at the Diet of Worms in 1521 to answer and retract the charge of heresy, he was ill, and his friends besought him not to heed the summons which involved, for that time, a long journey. He said in a letter to the Elector:

"If I cannot perform the journey to Worms as a man in good health, I will be carried thither in a litter. For since the Emperor has summoned me, I can regard it only as the call of God. If they intend to use violence against me as they probably do ... I commit the matter into the hands of God. He still lives and reigns who preserved the three Israelites in the fiery furnace. If it be not His will to save me, my life is of little worth. ... Who shall say whether my life or death would contribute most to the salvation of my brethren? ... Expect anything of me but flight or recantation. Fly I cannot, still less can I recant."

Other significant words of Luther show his confidence in God:

"It is a glorious thing to think of, that we sinners believing in Christ and feeding on his flesh should have him dwelling in us. ... I have sometimes seen Christians halting in their walk, and ready to fall, but when the hour came that they must wrestle with the enemy, or plead their Master's cause before the world, Christ on a sudden stirred within them, and so strong and valiant did they become that Satan was dismayed and fled from their presence."

"Such an hour," says the historian, "as he spoke was soon to come upon himself; and Christ, who 'abode' with him, was then to be his present help."

Speaking of his anticipated appearance before the assembly of the Pope's prelates, he said:

"I am ready to answer for myself — for it is not in the spirit of recklessness, nor for the sake of worldly profit, that I have taught the doctrine that is laid to my charge; I have taught it in obedience to my conscience, and to my oath as a doctor of the Holy Scriptures; for God's glory have I taught it — for the salvation of the Christian Church — for the rooting out of gross superstitions and grievous abuses ... the overthrow of tyranny and impiety in countless forms."

The historian in referring to his appearance before the august assembly of ecclesiastical and civil potentates at Worms says:

"Thus was the purpose of God fulfilled. It was His will that this light, which He had kindled in the world should be set upon a hill; and emperors, kings, and princes were all busily employed, though they knew it not, in executing what He had appointed. It is an easy thing for Him to raise the meanest to dignity. An act of His power, operating through successive years, suffices to lead the offspring of a Saxon peasant from the lowly cottage of his childhood to that imperial hall in which assembled sovereigns awaiting his coming. In His presence none are either small or great, and when He wills it, Charles [the Emperor] and Luther meet on the same level."

As in his journey he approached nearer to the city where the great trial was to be held, and observed on every hand how Papacy's followers longed for his condemnation and death, he said:

"No matter! Pray not for me but for the Word of God. My blood will scarcely be cold before thousands and tens of thousands in every land will be made to answer for the shedding of it. The most holy [?] adversary of Christ, the father and master and chief of manslayers is resolved that it shall be spilt. Amen! The will of God be done! Christ will give me his spirit to overcome these ministers of Satan. I despise them while I live, I will triumph over them in death. They are striving hard at Worms to force me to recant. My recantation shall be this: I said formerly that the Pope was Christ's vicar; now I say that he is the adversary of the Lord, and the apostle of the devil."

The historian goes on further:

"When he was told that all the pulpits of the Franciscans and Dominicans were ringing with imprecations against him, he said: 'O how it delights me to hear it.' He knew that he had obeyed the will of God, and that God was with him — why then should he fear to set out? Purity of intention and a conscience void of offense, impart to the servant of God a hidden, yet incalculable strength which never fails him — a strength in which he goes forth against his enemies with that assurance of victory which no adamantine breastplate, no phalanx of trusty spears can ever afford."

We are further informed that as he proceeded on his journey to the place of trial, a dense crowd accompanied him:

" 'Ah,' said some, 'there are plenty of cardinals and bishops at Worms! ... You will be burnt alive and your body reduced to ashes, as they did with John Huss.' But nothing daunted the monk. 'Though they should kindle a fire whose flame should reach from Worms to Wittenberg and rise up to heaven, I would go through it in the name of the Lord and stand before them — I would enter the jaws of the behemoth, break his teeth and confess our Lord Jesus Christ.' "

Another striking incident is related:

"One day when he had entered into an inn, an officer made his way through and thus addressed him: 'Are you the man who has taken in hand to reform the Papacy? ... How can you expect to succeed?' 'Yes,' answered Luther, 'I am the man. I place my dependence upon the Almighty God whose word and commandment is before me.' The officer deeply affected gazed on him with a mild expression and said: 'Dear friend, there is much in what you say; I am a servant of Charles [the Emperor] but your Master is greater than mine. He will help and protect you.' "

He was thus advised by Spalatin, his old and aged pastor, in a message:

" 'Abstain from entering Worms.' Luther turning his eyes on the messenger said: 'Go tell your master, that though there should be as many devils at Worms as there are tiles on the roof, I would enter it.' "

The historian describes the state of mind Luther was in as he came to the final crisis:

"On the morning of the 17th of April, he was for a few minutes in deep exercise of mind. God's face seemed to be veiled — his faith forsook him — his enemies seemed to multiply before him, and his imagination was overcome by the aspect of his dangers. His soul was like a ship driven by a violent tempest rocked from side to side — one moment plunged in the abyss, and the next carried up to heaven. In that hour of bitter trial, when he drank of the cup of Christ, an hour, which to him was as the garden of Gethsemane, he threw himself upon his face upon the earth, and uttered those broken cries, which we cannot understand, without entering in thought into the anguish of those depths from whence they rose to God. 'O God, Almighty God everlasting! how dreadful is the world! behold how its mouth opens to swallow me up, and how small is my faith in Thee! Oh! the weakness of the flesh and the power of Satan! If I am to depend upon any strength of this world — all is over. ... The knell is struck. ... Sentence is gone forth. ... O God! O God! O Thou my God! help me against all the wisdom of the world. Do this I beseech Thee! Thou shouldst do this ... by Thine own mighty power. ... The work is not mine but Thine. I have no business here. ... I have nothing to contend for with these great men of the world! I would gladly pass my days in happiness and peace. But the cause is Thine ... and it is righteous and everlasting! O Lord, help me! O faithful and unchangeable God! I lean not upon man. It were vain! Whatever is of man is tottering, whatever proceeds from him must fall. My God! My God! dost Thou not hear? My God! art Thou no longer living? Nay, Thou canst not die! Thou dost but hide Thyself. Thou hast chosen me for this work. I know it! ... Therefore, O God, accomplish Thine

own will! Forsake me not, for the sake of Thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, my defense, my buckler, and my stronghold.' After a moment of silent struggle, he continued, 'Lord — where art Thou? ... My God where art Thou? Come! I pray Thee, I am ready. ... Behold me prepared to lay down my life for Thy Truth ... suffering like a lamb. For the cause is holy. It is Thine own! I will not let Thee go! no, nor yet for all eternity! And though the world should be thronged with devils — and this body which is the work of Thine hands, should be cast forth, trodden under foot, cut in pieces ... consumed in ashes ... my soul is Thine. Yes I have Thine own Word to assure me of it. My soul belongs to Thee, and will abide with Thee forever, Amen! O God, send help! Amen!' "

Was this cry of anguish heard? Ah yes, and answered too:

"Never had any man appeared before so august an assembly. The Emperor, Charles V, whose kingdom extended across both hemispheres, his brother, the Archduke Ferdinand, six Electors of the Empire, most of whose successors are now crowned heads — twenty-four dukes, many of them territorial sovereigns, and among whom were some who bore a name in after times held in fear and horror by the nations who accepted the Reformation — (the Duke of Alva and his two sons), eight margraves, thirty archbishops, bishops and prelates, seven ambassadors, including those of France and England, the deputies of ten free cities, a number of princes, counts and barons of rank, the Pope's nuncios, in all two hundred persons. Such was the imposing assemblage before which stood Martin Luther. ... In the ante-chambers [of the town hall] and window recesses there were more than five thousand spectators, German, Italian, Spanish, and of other nations. As he drew near the door which was to admit him to the presence of the judges, he was met by a valiant knight, George Freundsberg. ... This old general seeing Luther pass, touched him on the shoulder, and shaking his head blanched in many battles, said kindly, 'My poor monk, thou hast a march and a struggle to go through, such as neither I nor many other captains have seen the like in our most bloody battles. But if thy cause be just and art sure of it, go forward in God's name, and fear nothing. He will not forsake thee.'

"And now the doors of the hall were thrown open — Luther entered, and many who formed no part of the Diet gained admission with him. ... Meanwhile the guards made way for Luther. He stepped forward, and found himself in front of the throne of Charles V. All eyes were turned upon him. ... After a moment's pause John Eck the Chancellor of the Archbishop of Treves ... rose and in a clear sonorous accent, first in Latin and then in German said:

" 'Martin Luther, his sacred and invincible Majesty has cited you before his throne, acting on the opinion and advice of the states of the holy Roman Empire, to require you to answer to these questions. First, Do you acknowledge these writings to have been composed by you?' At the same time the speaker pointed with his finger to about twenty volumes placed on a table in the center of the hall, immediately before Luther. 'Secondly,' continued the Chancellor, 'are you prepared to retract these works, and the propositions contained therein, or do you persist in what you have therein advanced?' Luther without faltering was about to answer the first question in the affirmative when Jerome Schurff, hastily

interrupting him, exclaimed aloud: 'Let their titles be read.' The Chancellor, advancing to the table, read the titles. ... The enumeration being gone through, Luther spoke as follows, first in Latin, then in German:

" 'Most gracious Emperor, Princes, and Lords! His Imperial Majesty puts to me two questions. As to the first, I acknowledge the books, the names of which have been read, to be of my writing. I cannot deny them.

" 'As to the second, seeing it is a question which has reference to faith and the salvation of souls — a question which concerns the Word of God, the greatest and most precious treasure of heaven or earth — I should act rashly if I were to answer without reflection. I might say less than circumstances demands, or more than truth requires, and so sin against the Word of Christ — Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I deny before my Father who is in heaven. Therefore it is, that I most humbly desire his Imperial Majesty to allow time, that I may answer without offending the Word of God.'

"This reply ... was worthy of the Reformer and the assembly. It was fit that he should act calmly and circumspectly in a question of such grave importance, that this solemn moment of his life might be clear from the suspicion of passion or precipitancy. Besides by taking reasonable time, the deliberate firmness of his resolution would be the more strikingly apparent. Many men in the history of the world have brought great evils on themselves and their contemporaries by a hasty word. Luther restrained his own naturally impetuous temper: he suppressed the words that were on his tongue, and kept silence when all the feelings that inspired him struggled for utterance. ... The Diet on reassembling agreed to grant the request ... to allow one day's delay but on condition that he make answer by word of mouth and not in writing."

During the interval, the record runs as follows:

"Luther composed his thoughts. He felt that tranquillity of soul without which man can do nothing great. He prayed; he read the Word of God, he glanced over his own writings and endeavored to give a suitable form to his answer. ... The moment when he was to make his appearance was approaching. He drew near the table on which the volume of the Holy Scriptures lay open, placed his left hand upon it and raising the other to heaven, he vowed to adhere to the Gospel, and to confess his faith freely, even though he should be called to seal his confession with his blood. This done he felt the peace of his soul increased. At four o'clock the herald presented himself and conducted Luther (again) to the hall of the Diet."[1]

Another writer in referring to this eventful scene has said:

"The least failure now, any sign of fear, the smallest hesitation or weakness, one word of apology, a single step to the rear and all is lost. It is one of those

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(1) For a more complete description of this memorable scene, we refer the student to the great historical work from which we have been quoting: D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation*.

sublime moments of history, when under God, the welfare of ages and generations depends on the courage and steadfastness of a single will."

Continuing further from D'Aubigne:

"His enemies expect his fall, they believe that he will yield, that he will retract, that they shall triumph through the overawing presence of an assembly of kings and ecclesiastics and the near prospect of martyrdom. And when they beheld him entering the hall with his pale face and downcast eye, they deem their cause is won. Very different are their thoughts when they see the flash of his eye at the question, 'Will you or will you not retract?' and hear from his lips the intrepid reply:

" 'Since your most serene majesty and high mightiness requires from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the Pope or to the councils, because it is as clear as day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless, therefore, I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, and unless they thus render my conscience by the Word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience.'

"And then turning a look on that assembly before whom he stood, and which held in its hand his life or death: 'I stand here and can say no more — God help me. Amen.' "

The witnesses, as represented in such as Luther and the bold stand he maintained for the Holy Scriptures, and represented additionally in the little company of Christian confessors who had been gathered into a church previous to this at Wittenberg, were again coming to life. The resuscitation of the two witnesses continued. The Bible began to be translated into the language of the people. All over Christendom the great work which was evidently the work of God sped on. Persecution continued — terrible persecution. The great slaughter of St. Bartholomew's day occurred half a century after. However, their testimony was never again silenced. How much do Bible students owe to the steadfast, invincible courage of Martin Luther, of Calvin, of Zwingli, of John Knox, of the pilgrim fathers and a host of others! Do we prize the great privileges that were purchased for us at so great a cost? We still possess them. Shall they ever be taken from the followers of Christ again?

Nor has the day passed when the powers of darkness have ceased their efforts to throttle and take away from the saints their God-given rights and liberties in Christ as New Creatures. Though we are living at a time far in advance of Luther's day, the forces of darkness would still beguile footstep followers of the Lamb of the simplicity of their faith, of their personal freedom of conscience, and of their right to settle every matter of faith and practice by the infallible Word of our Lord and the holy Apostles and Prophets. The Adversary would still by his blinding influences set up a human arrangement and system and by terrorization and intimidation would cause many to bow before an unsanctified and an unholy shrine.

Do we in these days value the right to exercise individual judgment and that Christian liberty established in the Scriptures, and for which these faithful men of God in the past devoted their lives and suffered and endured so much to maintain? or do we esteem them lightly, and ignominiously yield these sacred privileges to some who seek to lord it over God's heritage? It has been truly said that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," and the Lord's people must ever be on guard that freedom of conscience and judgment may be preserved. "And great fear fell upon them which saw them" (verse 11). In order to understand the symbolical significance of these words, it will be necessary to consider the vision as though it were a death and an awakening of two literal human witnesses. Considering it in this way we can easily imagine how rejoiced would the murderers of these witnesses be as they beheld those who had troubled and tormented them lie dead in their sight. No more would they hear their disturbing testimonies against their false and impious doctrines. What amazement and consternation would come upon them when, after three and a half days, they would see them rise from death and stand again upon their feet! Indeed this is the symbol. It is designed to show the amazement, fear, and consternation of the Papal hierarchy and its followers as they heard again the voices proclaiming the truths of the Word of God, and unfolding the prophecies that describe the Papacy as the Antichrist. It would not only cause them to experience a renewal of their former troubles, but it would indicate to them that Divine favor was being shown to the witnesses, and possibly indicate the vengeance of God about to come upon themselves. The historian informs us that this was the effect produced upon the Papacy and its supporters when a testimony to the truth and against the Apostasy was first given by Martin Luther and his associates.

The Witnesses Ascend to Heaven

"And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them" (Revelation 11:12).

We urge the reader to bear in mind that this language, like that used elsewhere by the Revelator, is to be understood symbolically. The symbol of the ascension of the witnesses to heaven will be seen to be greatly elucidated if we consider the words of Christ when speaking to the people of Capernaum who were privileged to witness his miracles, and to hear the words of him who spake as never man spake: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven" (Matthew 11:23). This expression is very evidently figurative, and signifies that the people of Capernaum were "exalted unto heaven" in the sense of having great favor shown to them at the time and of having exalted privileges. A similar thought is contained in the vision we are considering — that whereas, before the great Reformation movement began, God's consecrated ones, the little gatherings of God's people, who held to the Scriptures, had been out of favor altogether with the nations, the civil powers, they would now be brought gradually but surely into favor with them. The enlightening influences of the truths proclaimed by Christ's true followers after their revivification would materially

affect nations, to the end of liberating them from Papal bondage and fear, and thus give favor more and more to the Lord's people to scatter and proclaim the truths of Scripture.

It should be kept in mind, however, in considering this symbolism of the ascension of the witnesses, that like the others of this remarkable series of visions of Revelation 10 and 11, the fulfillment covers a comparatively long period of time. Indeed, we believe it will be seen that this symbol covers the remainder of the period of the twelve hundred and sixty years.

The vision of the ascension of the witnesses embraces in its significance all the notable events of history effected by the great Reformation which have had to do with the bringing in of all the blessed privileges of freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience — the translating and giving of the Bible to the people, the liberty to interpret it and proclaim it far and near without being molested or hindered by the powers that be — indeed, all the wonderful privileges that have come to the Lord's people since the Reformation, and especially since their deliverance from the domination of Papacy in 1799. It reaches down to the opening events of the Nineteenth Century, when the great Bible Societies were organized and the Bible was circulated in all languages, amongst all peoples. It embraces all the great blessings that have come to the Lord's people since the Reformation and especially in the period described by the Prophet Daniel as the "time of the end," when "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12).

It should be kept in mind that the work of publishing the Scriptures in languages of the people began with Luther and was taken up in other countries by other reformers. Its circulation, however, continued to be bitterly opposed by Papacy and some of the governments of earth, even up to 1799 and to some extent since that time. It was of frequent occurrence that large numbers of copies of the Scriptures were seized and publicly burned. The great work of proclaiming the Truth, however, continued steadily on in spite of terrible persecution in some places. Some of the governments of Christendom became nominally Protestant, and thus were God's consecrated ones assisted in their work of scattering the Truth, in the measure they understood it. The great Protestant movement spread all over Christendom and made great in-roads upon the Papal Church even in France, which was the first nation in the early centuries to give its support to the Papacy.

A war of extermination was waged by Papacy against this movement in France and in 1572 the horrible slaughter of St. Bartholomew's day occurred in which many thousand Protestants were slain by the adherents of Papacy and some four hundred thousand were banished from the French kingdom. However, as is described in the next verse of this vision, a reaction occurred at the close of the Eighteenth Century, and France became infidel in its belief, and revolted against the Papal government and the Roman Catholic institutions, inflicting upon Papacy's power a blow from which it has never since recovered. As some of the countries gradually freed themselves from Papal influence, the under-

standing of the Scriptures that Papacy was the Antichrist increased in those countries. It was not, however, until the twelve hundred and sixty years had nearly reached their termination, in 1799, that the Papal power to persecute ceased entirely.

We thus see that the fulfillment of the vision of the ascension of the witnesses signifies the exaltation of the Lord's true people to favor with the civil powers, and also the exaltation of the Scriptures to a place of dignity and influence, as the sole rule of faith and practice, in place of the dogmas and decrees of Papacy.

The fulfillment of the vision would further signify the gradual work of establishing little companies of believers all over Christendom where Papacy previously had full control. It would include giving to the Lord's people the privilege of living under governments that accorded liberty of conscience in matters of religion to the extent of their being permitted to promulgate the truths of the Bible without fear of molestation, and also their being brought into favor with the civil authorities.

It is proper at this stage of our exposition to note that while the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century was a great religious revival, yet like all movements of this character, it stopped short of accomplishing full results. Toward the close of many of the reformers' lives, there was a disposition to court the favor of the governments that became nominally Protestant and to become united with them. In this way, to a certain extent, the freedom necessary to obtain a full, clear knowledge of the Scriptures was held back. This, however, was over-ruled by the Lord, to accomplish His purpose. In this connection we quote the words of another who has well expressed the situation:

"The love of the world and a desire to be in power, influence and ease were the snares which first seduced the Church and brought forth Papacy; and the same desires and endeavors interrupted the Reformation. Luther and his companions at first boldly denounced, among other of the Papal errors, the union of church and state; but when, after some years of brave resistance to powerful opposition, the Reformation began to have some influence because of numbers, when kings and princes began to flatter the reformers, and avenues to social and political preferment opened before them, the evils of church and state union, which once they saw and opposed in Papacy, were lost sight of. The reformed churches in Germany, Switzerland, etc., stepped into the very shoes of Rome, and stood ready to unite with and favor any political party, or prince, or government, willing to own and recognize them. Thus some of understanding fell, and from being leaders of reform they became leaders into temptation. Thus the reform movement, well begun, was greatly checked.

"But all this could not frustrate God's Plan. By His wisdom it was overruled for good. It served, as Papacy's error had done, to further test the true saints, to prove whether they were really followers of men or of God. It has served this purpose all the way down, from that time to this — 'to try them, and to purge, and to make them white' " (C. T. Russell).

The Part Played by Napoleonic Wars

As noting the still greater work of reform that was marked at the ending of the twelve hundred and sixty years of Papal ascendancy over the saints, hear again this author:

"When Napoleon [in 1799] boldly ignored both the blessings and the curses of Papacy, yet prospered phenomenally, his course not only greatly weakened the Papal influence over civil governments, but it also weakened the influence of the various Protestant systems, in matters civil and political — which influence had grown very strong in two and a half centuries [since 1517]. ... Napoleon and his co-workers were godless men, animated by their own selfish ambitions for power; but God, unknown to them, was overruling their course and causing it to work out His own designs, which it effectually did [in bringing favor to Christ's Witnesses]. ...

"Napoleon's work together with the French Revolution broke the spell of religious superstition, humbled the pride of self-exalted religious lords, awakened the world to a fuller sense of the powers and prerogatives of manhood and broke the Papal dominion against which the religious Reformation had previously struck a death blow, but which its after course had healed (Revelation 13:3). The era closing with 1799 AD, marked by Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, sealed and defined the limit of Papal dominion over the nations [and saints]. There, the time appointed (1260 years of power) having expired, the predicted judgment against that system began, which must finally 'consume and destroy it unto the end' (Daniel 7:26).

"This date also clearly marks the beginning of a new era of liberty of thought, and the realization of individual rights and privileges, and has already been distinguished by its rapid strides of progress toward the full accomplishment of the work mapped out for this Time of the End. As a single illustration, notice the rise and work of the various Bible Societies — 'pestiferous Bible Societies,' Rome calls them, though it cannot now hinder them. And the sacred volume which once she confined in chains, kept covered in dead languages, and forbade her deluded subjects to read, is now scattered by the million in every nation and language. The British and Foreign Bible Society was established in 1803; the New York Bible Society in 1804; the Berlin-Prussian Bible Society in 1805; the Philadelphia Bible Society in 1808; and the American Bible Society in 1817. The extent of the work done by these societies during this [nineteenth] century is wonderful. Bibles by the million are published yearly and sold at low prices, and many thousands are given away to the poor. It is difficult to estimate the wide influence of this work. While much is doubtless lost, the result in general is to break the bonds of slavery and superstition, political and ecclesiastical. Its quiet teaching — that popes, priests, and laity, as well as kings, generals, and beggars, must all render an account to one Lord — is the greatest of all levelers and equalizers.

"Though the religious reformation movement throughout Europe had severely shaken Papacy's influence, yet the reformed churches had so closely

imitated her policy of statecraft, affiliation with earthly empires, and claims of clerical authority over the people (that the 'clergy' constitute a special and divinely appointed rulership in the world), that the first effect of that reformation became greatly modified, and left the people and the civil rulers largely under superstitious awe and subserviency to everything called church authority. The reform divided among several sects much of the superstitious and unwholesome veneration formerly concentrated upon Papacy alone. But the political reform witnessed during this Nineteenth Century, dating particularly from 1799, the 'Time of the End,' though very different from the former, is none the less a reformation. The revolution and independence of the American colonies — the successful establishment of a prosperous Republic, a government by the people and for the people, without the interference of either royalty or priestcraft — had set a new lesson before the now awaking people, who for so many centuries had slumbered in ignorance of their God-given rights, supposing that God had appointed the church to the supreme rulership of earth, and that they were bound to obey those kings and emperors sanctioned by the church, no matter how unjust their demands, because she had declared them to be appointed by God through her."

While these words quoted were not designed by their author to portray the gradual fulfillment of this vision of the "ascension of the witnesses to heaven," yet as already noted they describe what he understood was the significance of this symbolic expression. Let us consider the explanation of another eminent expositor of this vision:

" 'And they heard a great voice from heaven.' Some manuscripts read, 'I heard' — but the more approved reading is that of the common text. John says that a voice was addressed to them calling them to ascend to heaven. Come up hither. To heaven. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud. So the Savior ascended, Acts 1:9, and so probably Elijah, 2 Kings 2:11. And their enemies beheld them. That is, it was done openly, so that their enemies, who had put them to death, saw that they were approved of God, as if they had been publicly taken up to heaven. It is not necessary to suppose that this would literally occur. All this is, manifestly, mere symbol. The meaning is, that they would triumph as if they should ascend to heaven, and be received into the presence of God. The sense of the whole [vision] is, that these witnesses, after bearing a faithful testimony against prevailing errors and sins, would be persecuted and silenced; that for a considerable period their voice of faithful testimony would be hushed as if they were dead; that during that period they would be treated with contempt and scorn, as if their unburied bodies should be exposed to the public gaze; that there would be general exultation and joy that they were thus silenced; that they would again revive, as if the dead were restored to life, and bear a faithful testimony to the truth again, and that they would have the Divine attestation in their favor, as if they were raised up visibly and publicly to heaven. ... All that is here represented [the ascension of the witnesses to heaven] would be fulfilled by a triumph of the truth under the testimony of the witnesses; or by its becoming gloriously established in view of the nations of the earth, as if the witnesses

ascended publicly, and were received to the presence of God in heaven. All this was fulfilled in the various influences that served to establish and confirm the Reformation, and to introduce the great principles of religious freedom, giving to that work ultimate triumph, and showing that it had the favor of God. This would embrace the whole series of events, after the Reformation was begun, by which its triumph was secured, or by which that state of things was gradually introduced which now exists, in which the true religion is free from persecution; in which it is advancing into so many parts of the world where the Papacy once had the control; and in which, with so little molestation, and with such an onward march toward ultimate victory, it is extending its conquests over the earth. The triumphant ascent of the witnesses to heaven, and the public proof of the Divine favor thus shown to them, would be an appropriate symbol of this" (Albert Barnes).

How long shall we be permitted to enjoy these blessed privileges? Will the great anti- Christian system ever again, in God's providence, be permitted to lift its head in pride and arrogance? Will it ever again be permitted to gain and exercise the power it once possessed to make war on God's saints? We will not attempt to speculate concerning these matters, but will watch closely the rapid unfolding of history as it fulfills other visions of the Revelation, concerning the closing events of the Divine Drama of the Ages. These visions picture the utter destruction of this system, as also other systems that partake of its spirit and unite with it, as prophecies seem to intimate they will, in taking away the liberties of the sons of God. The consideration of these matters will come in connection with the study of visions found farther on in this grand book of symbols — visions designed for the comfort and encouragement of God's saints in times of trial.

The Great Earthquake

We will now consider another effect produced by the great Reformation, on Papacy, and the nation that for a thousand years was its most devoted servant in carrying out its persecuting decrees against God's witnesses. These matters are brought to view in the symbols contained in the next verse:

"And the same hour was there a great earthquake and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand" (verse 13).

The expression, "in that hour," would in harmony with the interpretation foregoing, refer to the closing of the twelve hundred and sixty years of Papal domination over the saints. It was immediately after this time that the saints of God came under very favorable conditions to study and understand God's Word — His truth concerning Christ's Kingdom, and were thus prepared to proclaim a last world-wide testimony.

We would, therefore, look for the fulfillment of the events symbolized by the great earthquake, and the fall of a tenth part of the city just before the opening of the Nineteenth Century. An earthquake, as we have seen in previous expositions, is designed to represent a revolution. While the general effects of the

Reformation caused many revolutionary disturbances amongst earth's nations, the one referred to in this vision must have reference to a particular, a very special one, occurring at this particular time — just before the opening of the Nineteenth Century. It must refer to one that would not only weaken, but end Papacy's power to persecute and "wear out the saints of the Most High." This great symbolical earthquake can refer to no other event than that of the great French Revolution and Reign of Terror. This event is by all historians said to be the most terrible of its kind that had ever occurred in human history. The time this event occurred, as we have already seen, marked the beginning of a new era, not only for the Lord's people, but for all mankind as well. It was also the most severe blow to Papacy's power and influence that had ever been given since the great Reformation began. The "great earthquake" is applied by many expositors to this notable event of human history. We quote Mr. Russell's reference to the event as fulfilling this part of the vision:

"In the symbolic language of Revelation, the French Revolution was indeed a 'great earthquake' — a social shock so great that all 'Christendom' trembled until it was over; and that terrible and sudden outburst of a single nation's wrath, only a century ago, may give some idea of the fury of the coming storm, when the wrath of all the angry nations will burst the bands of law and order and cause a reign of universal anarchy. It should be remembered, too, that that calamity occurred in what was then the very heart of Christendom, in the midst of what was regarded as one of the most thoroughly Christian nations in the world, the nation which for a thousand years had been the chief support of Papacy. A nation intoxicated with Babylon's wine of false doctrines in church and state, and long bound by priestcraft and superstition, there vomited forth its pollution and spent the force of its maddened rage. In fact, the French Revolution seems referred to by our Lord in his Revelation to John on Patmos as a prelude to, and an illustration of, the great crisis now approaching."

Mr. Guinness after describing some of the awful scenes of the Reign of Terror, says:

"Let these things be considered in the light of a mighty and successful revolt against, and overthrow of absolute monarchial power and Papal tyranny and usurpation, and it will at once be granted that nothing similar had ever occurred previously in the history of the fourth great empire. Terribly iniquitous had been the career of the monarchial [Roman Catholic] power thus rudely overthrown; and fearfully corrupt the priesthood and religion thus utterly and with abhorrence rejected. A solemn character of retribution attaches to even the worst excesses of the French Revolution. The Papacy in the hour of its agony was exultingly reminded of its own similar cruelties against Protestants. Papists were treated according to the example set by Papists of other days, and the worst barbarities of revolutionary France could not out-Herod the previous barbarities of Papal France."

Still another writer remarks concerning this great political and ecclesiastical earthquake:

"They are withal eloquent of retribution, they bespeak the solemn presence of Nemesis, the awful hand of avenging power. ... They call to remembrance the Protestants murdered by millions in the streets of Paris, tormented for years by military dragoons in Poiton and Bearn, and hunted like wild beasts in the Cevennes. ...

"In no work of the French Revolution is this, its retributive character, more strikingly and solemnly apparent than in its dealings with the Roman Church and Papal power. It especially became France, which after so fierce a struggle had rejected the Reformation, and perpetuated such enormous crimes in the process of rejection, to turn its fury against that very Roman Church on whose behalf it had been so wrathful ... to abolish Roman Catholic worship, as she had abolished the Protestant worship; to massacre multitudes of priests in the streets of the great towns, to hunt them down through her length and breadth, and to cast them by thousands upon a foreign shore, just as she had slaughtered, hunted down, and driven into exile hundreds of thousands of Protestants ... to carry the war into Papal territories, and to heap all sorts of woes and shames on the defenseless Popedom. ...

"In one of its aspects the Revolution may be described as a reaction against the excesses, spiritual and religious, of the Roman Catholic persecution of Protestantism. No sooner had the torrent burst forth, than it dashed right against the Roman Church and Popedom. ...

"The property of the church was made over to the state; the French clergy sank from a proprietary to a salaried body; monks and nuns were restored to the world, the properties of their orders being likewise gone. Protestants were raised to full religious freedom and political equality. The Roman Catholic religion was soon after abolished.

"Bonaparte unsheathed the sword of France against the helpless Pius VI. ... The Pontiff sank into a dependent ... Berthier marched upon Rome, set up a Roman Republic, and laid hands upon the Pope. ... The sovereign pontiff was borne away to the camp of the infidels ... from prison to prison, and finally carried captive into France. ... He breathed his last at Valence, in the land where his priests had been slain, where his power was broken, and his name and office were a mockery and a byword. ... It was a sublime and perfect piece of retribution, which so amazed the world at the end of the Eighteenth Century; this proscription of the Roman Church by that very French nation that had slaughtered myriads of Protestants at her bidding; this mournful end of the sovereign pontiff in that very Dauphine, so consecrated by the struggles of Protestants and near those Alpine valleys where the Waldenses had been so ruthlessly hunted down by French soldiers. ... Multitudes imagined that the Papacy was at the point of death, and asked, would Pius VI be the last pontiff, and if the close of the Eighteenth Century would be signalized by the fall of the Papal dynasty. But the French Revolution was the beginning and not the end of the judgment. France had but begun to execute the doom, a doom sure and inevitable, but long and lingering, to be diversified by many strange incidents, and now and then by

a semblance of escape, a doom to be protracted through much pain and much ignominy" (T. H. Gill, *The Papal Drama*).

Thus ended the "time, times, and a half," the twelve hundred and sixty years of Papal domination over the saints of God. This great symbolical earthquake fittingly marks the beginning of that period described in the vision as the ascension of the witnesses to heaven, just as the Reformation marks that of their resurrection.

The statement that the "tenth part of the city fell" has been variously applied by Historical expositors. Those who crowd nearly all the events portrayed in the symbols of the tenth and the eleventh chapters of the Revelation into the brief period of the Sixteenth Century, have explained this symbol to refer to the breaking away of England (one of the ten kingdoms of Christendom) from the Papacy. If these grand symbols could be crowded into so brief a space of time, it would not be true, however, that England was referred to in this symbol. England did not break away from the Papacy because of its accepting the Reformation or because it became infidel in its belief. It was rather because England's king, Henry VIII, was unable to obtain the consent of the Pope to divorce his queen Katherine. There was no protest on the part of England's government, as represented in Henry VIII, against Papal abominations. The Reformation in England was effected by more humble instrumentalities — Ridley, Latimer, Cranmer and others, who saw clearly the abominations of the Papacy, and embraced the truths of a pure Christianity. These were persecuted even unto death by the government of England, and it was not until some time after the reign of Henry VIII that the government really favored the Reformers.

Others have applied this symbol to Papacy's loss of a tenth part of its influence and power. The great Protestant Reformation was a cause of the loss of a greater proportion of Papacy's power and influence, however, than would be literally represented in one tenth.

Others, (and seemingly, more reasonably) apply it to the breaking away of the French government from Papacy. The "great city" is quite generally interpreted to be Christendom. Christendom is generally understood to represent the ten kingdoms, which, on an average, occupied the territory of the Western Roman Empire during the twelve hundred and sixty years. These are symbolized always by the ten horns on the fourth beast (Roman Empire) of Daniel's prophecy, and on the beast of Revelation 13 and 17. In harmony with this, then, the tenth part of the city would seem to represent in symbol one of these ten kingdoms. How strange and significant is it that in Divine providence the kingdom that gave its support to Papacy in the beginning of its history, and for a thousand years had been a willing instrument in carrying out its cruel, persecuting decrees, should be the one that would turn against and become the instrument in God's hand of executing judgment upon it.

"And by the earthquake were destroyed seven thousand *names* of men" (verse 13).

The expression "*names* of men" is a very peculiar one, and should be examined closely. A very reasonable, and seemingly the correct interpretation and application of these words is, that during the "Reign of Terror" there were swept away all the various names or titles belonging to the nobility and clergy, together with all the minor or petty offenses attached to both. The record of this occurrence by the Historian Gill is very significant:

"In a country where every ancient institution and every time-honored custom disappeared in a moment, where the whole social and political system went down before the first stroke, where monarchy, nobility and church, were swept away almost without resistance, the whole framework of the state must have been rotten — royalty, aristocracy, and priesthood must have grievously sinned. Where the good things of this world, birth, rank, wealth, fine clothes, and elegant manners, became worldly perils, and worldly disadvantages for a time — rank, birth, and riches must have been frightfully abused. The nation which abolished and proscribed Christianity (?), which dethroned religion in favor of reason, and enthroned the new goddess at Notre Dame in the person of a harlot, must needs have been afflicted by a very unreasonable and very corrupt form of Christianity. The people that waged a war of such utter extermination with everything established as to abolish the common forms of address and salutation, and the common mode of reckoning time, that abhorred 'you' as a sin, and shrank from 'monsieur' as an abomination, that turned the weeks into decades and would know the old months no more, must simply have had good reason to hate those old ways, from which it pushed its departure into such minute and absurd extravagance" (T. H. Gill, *The Papal Drama*).

"And the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven" (verse 13).

"The remnant," would refer to those left in the "great city" — Christendom. The knowledge of the downfall of the French government and the Roman Catholic hierarchy existing in France, became known all over Christendom, and the revolutionary sentiments which caused this overflow were also spread far and near. The National Assembly passed a resolution offering assistance to the people in other parts of Christendom to overthrow their rulers, etc. All these things, we are told by the historian, caused fear and consternation among the ruling classes and law-abiding ones, lest the revolution should extend into their dominions and cause like disaster. The wars of Napoleon before he became emperor were waged in behalf of the revolutionary government, France. His successes in these wars contributed greatly to increase the fears among the ruling powers of Christendom, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. There seemed to have been a general recognition that these terrible events that were occurring in France were indications of the Divine displeasure. Mr. Guinness has thus described the state of affairs in Europe at this time:

"In the reign of Louis XVI came to its crisis a tremendous, unparalleled movement, which put an end at once to absolute monarchy, aristocracy, and ecclesiastical power in France; and which communicated to the neighboring nations in

Europe, the shocks of revolution and the fierce fires of democracy, together with an anti-ecclesiastical mania, that has never since been allayed."

Concerning the expression, "They gave glory to the God of heaven," as expressed by Mr. Barnes: "It does not mean, necessarily, that they would repent, and become truly His friends, but that there would be a prevailing impression that these changes were produced by His power, and that His hand was in these things. This would be fulfilled if there should be a general willingness among mankind to acknowledge God, or to recognize His hand in the events referred to; if there should be a disposition extensively prevailing to regard the witnesses as on the side of God, and to favor their cause as one of truth and righteousness; and if these convulsions should so far change public sentiment as to produce an impression that theirs was the cause of God."

That the Bible and those who have so nobly stood for its defense during and since the Reformation period have in a marked manner come into public favor, that these have been very generally recognized as the source of "liberty enlightening the world," cannot be disputed by any; and herein there appears to be the substantial fulfillment of the words, "They gave glory to the God of heaven." Surely a careful examination of the testimony of the historian is all that would be required by the earnest and reverent student in order to reach the conviction that the vision of the witnesses in sackcloth, their death, resurrection, and ascension have been fulfilled in the events and transactions of the past four centuries.

Our God

Holy and Infinite! Viewless, Eternal!
Veiled in the glory that none can sustain,
None comprehendeth Thy being supernal,
Nor can the heaven of heavens contain.

Holy and Infinite! limitless, boundless,
All Thy perfections, and power, and praise!
Ocean of mystery! awful and soundless
All Thine unsearchable judgments and ways!

Therefore archangels and angels adore Thee,
Cherubim wonder, and seraphs admire;
Therefore we praise Thee, rejoicing before Thee,
Joining in rapture the heavenly choir.

Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises,
Who shall not fear Thee, and who shall not laud?
Anthems of glory Thy universe raises, Holy and Infinite!
Father and God!

Chapter Twenty-Four

Concluding Thoughts

(To Volume One of the original edition)

With the examination of the vision of the "two witnesses," this volume of the exposition is concluded. (The content of this single book was originally published in two volumes.) We trust that it has not been in vain that the reader has thus far with us traced on the pages of history the fulfillment of these sublime visions.

As was pointed out in the early portion of this volume, the object of this exposition is to demonstrate that the visions of this most holy and sanctifying book have been having their fulfillment in connection with the eventful career of the true Church of Christ in its witnessing to the truths of God's Word, and in its encountering the opposition of the world, but more especially the opposition of the false, counterfeit profession of Christianity, which has existed since the early centuries of the Gospel Age. The more familiar we become with the general outlines of the history of Christianity, the more we are moved to exclaim, What a marvelous exhibition of Apocalyptic pictures we have had pass before our eyes, disclosing indeed the great Drama of all time! What a wonderful unfolding in symbol of the career of the Church of Christ has been disclosed to our vision! How vast and unbounded are the great and important events of human history that have been crowded into these remarkable symbolic pictures! How great has been the number of historical books necessary to record the fulfillment of what was forecast in only eleven brief chapters! None but the Divine mind could have chosen and employed the symbols that have portrayed so many important events! This is, in itself, an evidence of the Divine authenticity of this most remarkable book.

We have found in these symbolic visions, a faithful and true forecasting of the history of the footstep followers of Jesus Christ as they have endeavored to obey the command of their Divine Lord and Master, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." We have had disclosed to our view in the varied and stupendous events which have fulfilled these strange and startling visions, the fulfillment of the Master's promise to his Church, "Lo, I am with you all the days even unto the end of the age." Most vividly do we have described in some of these visions the great dangers the true Church has encountered; the many searching trials she has experienced; the terrible conflicts she has been engaged in with the unseen powers of evil and of darkness. We have seen how she has been encouraged and upheld by the imparting of Divine knowledge and power, without which she would have been unable to meet with courage and fortitude,

the great trials and difficulties encountered in connection with her witnessing to her Lord. We have had described in a number of these wonderful pictures, the severe persecutions she has encountered, and the terrible sufferings she has endured, the trying situations in which she has at times found herself, in the fulfillment of her Divine mission. We have beheld the faithful followers of Christ living in the very midst of the apostate system, endeavoring to bring about a reform of the same. We have beheld them discouraged, disheartened, laboring, in the midst of worldliness, formalism, and apostasy, to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering. We have seen the true saints seemingly entirely defeated, "worn out" — with but a few names left, and these giving no open testimony to the truths of the Gospel; and in the vision just considered, we have beheld the Divine Lord and Master come to the aid of his followers, and raise up special ones to help them in their hour of extremest need.

As we have watched the progress and development of the Divine Drama, we have felt and appreciated that bond of union that unites the true followers of Christ today with those of past generations. We have more fully realized that these faithful witnesses of past generations were our brethren in Christ. We have sympathized with them in their trials and sufferings, even as though the whole Divine Drama were being enacted on the stage of the present day. We have rejoiced as we have witnessed their victory unto death secured, even as our own, through faith in "the blood of the Lamb" and by the word of their testimony; and we have been encouraged in that they loved not their lives unto death.

As we consider and meditate upon these most remarkable visions that the aged Seer of Patmos beheld and recorded in so brief a space of time, and as we cast our eyes back and note the long period of time that it has taken to fulfill them, we are filled with awe and reverence, and find it impossible to doubt that he who said that they were designed to "show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass," has kept his promise and disclosed their fulfillment to his faithful Church. The hidden things of the sealed scroll, the meaning of which was first disclosed to Christ, has little by little, been revealed to those who "have ears to hear." Other parts of Scripture have revealed the meaning of the symbols; and the events of history have disclosed their fulfillment.

The parenthetic visions recorded in chapters ten and eleven, close, as we have seen, with the one referring to the French Revolution and its effects since on the nations of Christendom. With the words of verse 14, "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly," the vision of the trumpets is taken up again. It has required only eleven brief chapters to unfold the Divine Program of centuries and to disclose the Drama of the Ages. The closing verses of chapter eleven sum up in a few words the events of the seventh trumpet, the consideration of which, including the remaining portion of the Apocalypse, will be taken up in the succeeding volume.

The most significant, the most startling, and indeed the most solemnly important matter disclosed to us in the unfolding of this great Drama thus far is, that we are most certainly living in the last times — in the very closing hours of this

dispensation, and on the eve of the most stirring and colossal events that this earth has ever witnessed — events which will be none short of the fulfillment of the prayer of our gracious Redeemer — "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Preface

(To Volume Two of the original edition)

Progress in the study of the Book of Revelation as in all other portions of the Divine Message, brings increasing interest and joy. Indeed the devout and reverent child of God realizes as he looks upon this great symbolic drama and sees the stately steppings of God — sees unmistakably that blessed and happy goal toward which the Divine Plan is leading — that he is brought more closely in touch with those spiritual and hallowed influences that give energy, support, and perseverance in the Christian life.

And is not this in full accord with the prayer of the Master in behalf of his followers on the eve of his death, "Sanctify them through Thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth" (John 17:17). And is it not also in line with the prayer of St. Paul: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power" (Ephesians 1:17-19).

In sending forth this second volume of the Revelation series the Publishers are deeply gratified in stating that messages have been received from all parts of the civilized world assuring them that the reading of Volume 1 of this series has brought genuine gladness, peace, and joy, and a better understanding of those great and mysterious truths — "mysteries of the Kingdom," that Jesus promised would be revealed to his followers. We thank the Giver of all good for this evidence of His blessing. These messages from far and near have truly been appreciated and have been an inspiration in the labor and task of preparing this second volume that is now placed in the hands of the Lord's people.

For many years there has been an increasing conviction, derived both from experience and from observation, that these wonderful visions of St. John were not only given to comfort and encourage God's faithful people, but are, in these days, specially necessary to their establishment and growth in grace. Indeed, history has demonstrated that they have been this in a large measure throughout the entire Gospel Age. Even at the very beginning of the age its principal visions were measurably understood, and it was seen that they were in a very important sense associated with the visions of Daniel; indeed a continuation and development of those of this Prophet. The interpretations of some of its visions by those who were associates of St. John, have formed a basis of interpretation upon which the whole system of the Historical school has developed.

In the production of this work, access has been had to writings that were made when St. John himself was alive, containing comments on some of the visions of the Revelation. In fact quotations have been freely made from writers who have lived in practically every generation of the Church's history from St. John's day down to the present. It has been found, just as would be expected, that the understanding of the visions has been on the increase until this day. The events of the Sixteenth Century Reformation began to throw strong rays of light on many of its visions; and since then Apocalyptic literature has increased in a most remarkable degree. Herein the reader has the benefit of these writings.

It is the conviction of not a few of Christ's followers that we are now living in the period referred to in Divine prophecy as "the time of the end" — the period in which there would be given increased knowledge on all the various features of Divine revelation. As the visions of the Apocalypse constitute the last word of Christ to his Church, we would most naturally expect to find in them that which the "wise" of his people need in order to assist them in finishing their course.

Many sober and devout men have come to believe that the answer to the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," is about to be realized. It will be in the establishment of this Divine rule and authority over the world that the next petition of this inspired prayer, "Thy will be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven," will begin to be realized. The complete establishment of this Kingdom will not be accomplished in a moment, nor without a tremendous disturbance of the present order of things. The present arrangements, civil, religious, and social will form no part of the new order. Their removal will be, as the Scriptures teach, in connection with great revolutionary disturbances, tumults, and disorders in church and state, as also in the social arrangements. These upheavals will cover a considerable period of time, and will be taking place while statesmen and religious leaders and law- abiding people will be seeking remedies, which they hope will prevent the utter collapse of the present civilization. It would be expected that the whole civilized world will be in the throes of revolutionary troubles incidental to the birth of the new order, and will be wholly unaware of what the disturbances and troubles portend. The day of the Lord is to come in "as a thief in the night." The change of the Church, both of those who have fallen asleep in Christ, and those who will be living at that time, will be taking place while these things are transpiring, but this will be known only by the few. A large portion of the expositions of this volume have to do with the visions that describe the events of this transition period. It seems clear that the transfer of earth's dominion will be of a character entirely different from what has been generally understood.

The sublime purpose in the Divine mind in the establishment of this Kingdom over the earth should be borne in mind. That purpose is expressed in the writings of all the holy Prophets since the world began. It is briefly summed up in the words of inspiration: "The Lord will make bare His holy Arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

The great Resurrection Age will be ushered in when all those who have died throughout the long centuries of human history will be awakened from the sleep of death. The Divine object to be accomplished in this reign of righteousness will be to give all mankind an opportunity, with full light, to attain unto life eternal in an earthly paradise. Indeed, that will be the great Age of Probation; the saints, the elect Church of this Gospel Age, having already passed their time of trial and probation, will at that time be associated with Christ upon the heavenly, spirit plane in the work of rescuing mankind in general. That future age will accord to all the full benefits secured by Jesus Christ by his ransom sacrifice. That age of Probation is called the "times of restitution." It constitutes the chief theme of all God's holy Prophets of old. The symbolic visions of the last three chapters of the Apocalypse describe these glorious scenes.

Those who understand that Christ, since his ascension and appearance in the presence of God, is in no sense or degree a human being, but rather a Divine, spirit being, are better prepared to understand those Scriptures that portray the overthrow of the present order, as well as the inauguration of the new order. Such will not expect that Christ will be visibly present on the earth during the period of his reign. Indeed, while the marvelous effects of his rulership will be in evidence everywhere, and it will be known to all earth's inhabitants that these effects proceed from his Kingdom, nevertheless, he, in person, will neither be on the earth, nor yet be visible to human beings living on the earth.

Some of the expositions contained in this volume have reference to the manner that present institutions, political, and ecclesiastical, will be overthrown. We acknowledge of course that the events of the future alone will determine their correctness.

And now, the Publishers place this volume, like the preceding one, in the hands of the truth-seeker, in the confidence and with the earnest prayer that the Divine blessing may richly attend the ministry of the Word herein presented, and cause it to bring forth fruitage that may indeed be to the praise of the glory of His grace, and give inspiration, true solace, and consolation to His faithful children in their earthly pilgrimage as onward they press toward the City of God.

R. E. STREETER

Chapter Twenty-Five

The Seventh Trumpet Sounded

(Revelation 11:14-19)

"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:14,15).

As introductory to a consideration of the symbols of the seventh trumpet vision, we here call the reader's attention to the fact that the parenthetic visions recorded in chapter 10, verse 1 to chapter 11, verse 15, end at this point. The events of the seventh trumpet are immediately introduced with the words: "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." The woes themselves should not be confounded with the trumpets. As has been seen, the fifth and sixth trumpets represent certain movements connected with the unfolding of the Divine Plan, covering long periods of time. The woes represent those calamitous events which came upon apostate Christian communities during the periods covered by the trumpets. Viewed in this light it will be seen that the events described in chapters ten and eleven up to verse 15 cover much the same period of time as the sixth trumpet, but do not represent the woe itself. The woe feature of the sixth trumpet falls on apostate Eastern Christendom. The agency employed to inflict this woe was that of the Turkish-Ottoman power.

Regarding the significance of the words, "The second woe is passed," we find that in one sense the woe ended when the Turkish-Ottoman forces were restrained in their attempt to perpetuate their ravages on the territory of Western Christendom. It is an undisputed fact of history that "from the date of the fall of Constantinople before the advance of the Mohammedan hordes, 1453 AD, up to the great naval battle of Lepanto, 1571 AD, the Turkish power had been continually *advancing* in Europe. The Euphratean flood rose higher and higher, till it reached its highest point under Solomon the Magnificent, in the middle of the Sixteenth Century. It remained stationary at high- water mark for half a century, and even as late as 1669, Candia was added to the dominions of the Porte. But the last quarter of the Seventeenth Century was a time of fierce struggle, and of alternate victory and defeat. Wars with Russia and Austria severely shook the Ottoman power, and the war which was closed by the Peace of Carlowitz, signed in 1699, broke forever the aggressive power of the Turkish Empire."

In another and more complete sense the Turkish-Ottoman power can not be said to have ended until it was compelled to yield to the control of the allied

powers of Europe. History further informs us that "in 1844, the Porte was compelled by the Christian nations of Europe to issue an edict of religious toleration, abolishing forever its characteristic and sanguinary practice of execution for apostasy, that is, for the adoption of the Christian faith. As this was entirely against its will, because against the precepts of the Koran, and contrary to the practice of all the ages during which Mohammedanism had been in existence, it was a most potent proof that Ottoman independence was gone, as a matter of fact, though often mentioned still as a plausible fiction of diplomacy, and that henceforth it had to shape its conduct in accordance with the views of its neighbors, the Christian nations of Europe. It was a compulsory sheathing of the sword of persecution, which had been relentlessly wielded for over twelve centuries, a most marked era in the overthrow of Mohammedan power." Does it not seem most clear that from this last date is to be reckoned the space of time covered by the word "quickly" or "speedily" — "The third woe cometh speedily."

In the case of the seventh trumpet the same distinction should be made regarding the woe and the trumpet. The seventh trumpet itself, and the events that occur during its sounding, cover a long period — a thousand years, as we shall see; but the woe feature of this seventh trumpet refers to those calamitous events that accomplish the complete overthrow of all Christendom. They are referred to in the words of verse 18, "and Thy wrath is come." This woe is very specially portrayed in chapter sixteen, and is called "the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God" (Revelation 15:1).

Seventh Trumpet Announces Transfer of Earth's Sovereignty

The first thing recorded in connection with the sounding of the seventh symbolic trumpet is that of an announcement of the transfer of earth's sovereignty: "And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (verse 15). The question most naturally arises, From whence, and from whom proceed these voices? Mr. Barnes, Mr. Lord, and some others have interpreted the word *heaven* here to refer to the heaven of God's presence, and they ascribe the voices to angels. Mr. Elliott's view, however, appeals to us as being the true interpretation, although he speaks with some hesitancy. He says:

"It does not appear clear, thus far [1860], whether these voices were from the heavenly ones in the inmost part of the mystic temple; or, like other voices said [in other visions] to sound in heaven also, from servants of God elevated into the political heaven of human ascendancy and power. We may not improbably suppose the latter; and that they proceeded from the witness or Protestant body, elevated into political ascendancy ere the close of the former (sixth) trumpet."

It seems very evident that the "heaven" of this vision in which the voices were heard is not the "new heaven" of Revelation 21:1, which represents the new spirit ruling order of God's future Kingdom, nor the heaven of God's presence, but rather the *present* heaven — the present ecclesiastical systems of the

close of the Gospel Age. It is among these ecclesiastical systems that these loud trumpet-voices will be heard.

An exposition of these words written in 1902 by Mr. Russell conveys the startling thought that this feature of the vision has been meeting its fulfillment for some years past; and while we may not be able to fix so definitely the date when the Kingdom power was assumed by Christ, nevertheless the evidences are that the vision has been in process of fulfillment for some years:

"Almost all expositors recognize that the seven trumpets of Revelation are symbolical and not literal — indeed that this entire book is a book of symbols, and that so far it has been symbolically fulfilled. Christian people in general understand that five of these trumpets have already 'sounded,' and are in the past — we would say six ... The 'last trumpet' — 'The trump of God,' is as much symbolic as were its predecessors, and marks a much larger and more important fulfillment than any of them. Its fulfillment extends through a period of 1,000 years; its events mark and coincide with all the various features of the Millennial reign of Christ. ...

"If now we have gotten a glimpse of the purport of the seventh trumpet, and are no longer expecting its fulfillment as a voice upon the air, but in the glorious events of the Kingdom, what shall we say respecting the 'great voices,' which, at its very beginning, are to announce that the time has come for the establishment of the Kingdom? We answer that we are not to expect them to be angelic shoutings in the sky, nor mutterings of thunder. We are to remember that the voices are symbolic as well as the trumpets, and in this direction we look for the fulfillment of this declaration which must be due about the present time [time of writing]."

It is a startling thought to most Christian people that some of the visions that have reference to Christ's exercise of authority in connection with the establishment of his Kingdom will be in process of fulfillment and the world be unaware of it. Some students and writers of the "sure word of prophecy," however, who lived nearly a century ago, believed this would be the way the great event would be ushered in. Identifying the seventh trumpet of this Apocalyptic vision with the "last trump" of St. Paul (1 Corinthians 15:52), one writer in 1856 thus expressed his convictions:

"That this seventh trumpet of John is 'the last trump' of Paul is evident from the events which are attributed to the sounding of both. Paul says of 'the last trump,' that when it sounds, 'the dead shall be raised and we shall be changed.' All agree that it refers to the period of the judgment. And so also when John's 'seventh angel' sounded his trumpet, 'there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and the four and twenty elders worshipped God, saying, Thy wrath is come and the time of the dead that they should be judged.' The last trumpet, then, or the trumpet which is to usher in the scenes of judgment, is just such a trumpet as were the six that preceded it; and its sounding is to be understood in the same way that they sounded. ... We can point directly to the several

events to which they refer. ... The fifth refers to the Saracenic woe, inflicted by Mohammed and his fierce armies. The sixth introduced the woes inflicted by the Tartar tribes or Turks, in their furious devastations. ... They certainly refer to occurrences ... that have already transpired upon earth, none of which have been ushered in by audible signals from the heavens. The trumpets belong simply to the scenery on the panorama by which these events were brought before the Apostle's view, and not to the events themselves. And as there was no audible, startling, miraculous, wide-sounding, celestial bugle-note to announce to the world the fulfillment of the predictions connected with the six trumpets, so I infer and conclude that there is to be no audible trumpet-blast from mid-heaven to inform the world when the day of judgment has come. For aught you or I know, the last trump has already sounded, or is now sounding in the sermons and books of many able and earnest preachers and laymen in various parts of the world, who are striving to awaken men's minds to a sense of what is approaching, and crying into the ears of the slumbering Church, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet him.' ...

"Of this one thing, my brethren, I am well assured, that the stupendous occurrences of the day of judgment will glide in upon the world as by stealth, and before a great number of even pious people shall be aware that these great scenes have commenced; whilst the great mass of worldlings and politicians will not believe it to the very last. ... The nations shall be undergoing their judgment, the sainted dead shall be raised, the sainted living shall be translated, and the whole earth shall heave with the throes of judgment already present; and yet multitudes will go on as they did before, and refuse to believe what is transpiring. Nations in their desperation will continue to declare war, and make treaties, and form alliances, and join their armies, and gather together their warriors against the Lamb and his people, until at last to their ... consternation, the Son of Man shall appear with his sainted hosts" (Joseph Seiss).

It will be seen that this writer, at the time he wrote these words, believed that there were two different aspects of the Second Advent of Christ, the first of which would be known only to his watching saints, during which period their resurrection and change would be going on. The second aspect would be when this resurrection and change is completed, for at this stage of the Advent the saints are represented as being with him in the *final* judgment scene (Revelation 19:14). It is very apparent at the present time to many of the Lord's people that the events described in the words, "And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ" (verse 15), have been for some time in process of fulfillment — that these "great voices" have been for some time heard in the ecclesiastical heaven, the heaven of the vision.

Fulfillment in These Latter Days

About the time the Twentieth Century opened, a most remarkable movement among the witnesses of Christ began to be observed in all parts of the world — a movement which continued to increase in power and influence. Up to the

beginning of the Twentieth Century it had attracted very little attention, and was little known. It had, however, in its initial stages been going on for some years previous, unobserved by the world, and indeed, by the great professed church systems. This movement, like all other movements of its kind prior to this, beginning with the Reformation, was the outcome of Bible study. One of the chief results of this study was that of obtaining a clearer view of the ransom sacrifice of the Great Redeemer — that it was made for all mankind, and that at a divinely appointed time in the near future all the individuals of the human family will be benefited by that sacrifice to the extent that by a probation or trial an opportunity will be given them of obtaining everlasting life as human beings, with a perfect earth as their home. This was understood to be described in the Scriptural expression of "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21). The idea of a future probation beyond the tomb for the great masses of mankind who had died without a sufficient knowledge of Christ's sacrifice for sin to avail themselves of its benefit, was not an entirely new teaching. This had been discussed and advocated by Christian writers prior to this, indeed for centuries, although not attracting much attention, nor received with favor in the professed Christian world. That which was distinctly *new* in this movement was that of making clear:

(1) The Scriptural foundation upon which this future probation rests — that Christ "tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9,10).

(2) The period of time when this will take place: "He gave himself a ransom for all, *to be testified in due time*" — the seventh millennium or seventh thousand-year period.

(3) The manner in which it will begin — by the establishment under Christ of God's Kingdom over the earth, with the generation then living, and proceed by an actual awakening of all who have gone into the tomb.

As closely associated with this teaching came a clearer knowledge of God's elective purposes in the present age and those of the past. Even this truth was not entirely new, because others had taught it, although very imperfectly. Some had previously taught that the purpose of God for this Gospel Age was to gather out a class who would obtain a heavenly inheritance, but their teaching concerning it was more or less confusing, imperfect. The teaching concerning this elective feature of God's Plan was one that was prominently connected with this movement. Many adherents, who became very aggressive, were gathered to this movement, and inside of sixteen years immense quantities of literature in nearly every known language were distributed over the earth; in addition to this, thousands of public lectures were given in many of the great halls of Christendom. The truths above mentioned were the ones especially emphasized in the literature distributed, and in the lectures given. These are facts of history; and have attracted as much attention in ecclesiastical circles as the Reformation Movement under Luther and his associates.

In connection with these "loud voices in heaven" there was an exhaustive examination of the "appointed times and seasons" — the chronological periods

of the Bible, which led to the conviction that six thousand years of the world's history ended near the close of the Nineteenth Century; that the appointed rule of Gentile nations, termed "The times of the Gentiles," would run out early in the Twentieth Century. Additionally, the various prophecies, particularly those of Daniel and the Revelation, viewed in the light of the signs of the times, revealed that we were living near the close of the Gospel dispensation and approaching nigh unto the period of Christ's reign. A careful study of all these Scriptures now, while disclosing some chronological inaccuracies, has established in the minds of thousands of students of the Bible that the literature distributed contained the truth on the above mentioned subjects, and bears the test of the closest and most searching Scripture study. Thus do we have fulfilled the words of the vision: "And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

It will thus be seen that one of the first events to be made known to the members of the Body of Christ living at the time of his return would be the fact of his "presence," that earth's great King has come to Zion, that he has taken unto himself his great power. This has been one of the first evidences that the seventh trumpet has begun to sound. The time of his presence was not to be known until after it had become a fact. He was to come as "a thief in the night" — quietly, unobserved, and with no outward, supernatural demonstration (Revelation 14:14, 16:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:2).

In one of the parables our Lord revealed in what way his presence would first be made known: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately" (Luke 12:35,36). These words evidently teach that our Lord's presence would be made known by what is figuratively described as "knocking." The knock doubtless refers to the fulfillment of the sure word of prophecy. "For we have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise" (2 Peter 1:19).

"The parable implies that at our Lord's Second Coming he will have arrived before any of his faithful servants will be aware of the fact. His presence will be made known by the knock, and the knock would correspond to an announcement through some special servant or servants, either orally or by the printed page, setting forth the evidences of the Master's presence. For instance, the publishing of time prophecies showing that the time is fulfilled — that certain prophecies marking events belonging to the close of the Gospel dispensation, and the opening of the Millennial dispensation are accomplished, and that certain signs mentioned in the Scriptures are fulfilled — such testimonies are in the nature of a knock, which would be heard by such of the servants of the Lord as would be awake at that time. ... The knock is to be the evidence of the presence, and the servants are not to know in advance, but are to know at the time of the arrival, and that without seeing" (C. T. Russell).

It is a matter of history now that there has been just such a publishing of time prophecies as would fulfill this figurative prediction, and the attention of all the Watchers in every part of the professed Christian world has been called to them. The unfolding of these time prophecies has served its purpose. It has been sufficient to convince many Christians that we have been for some time past in the days of the presence of the Son of Man. The great object of these time prophecies has been to make known to the Watchers the change of dispensation, and the nearness of the full establishment of Christ's Kingdom. This would be true even though some of the expectations have not been realized as to certain details, and as to the exact time of certain events which the Scriptures indicate are to occur in connection with the inauguration of Messiah's Kingdom.

These are not all the evidences, however, that the Watchers have had given to them to prove that we are in the period of the sounding of the seventh symbolic trumpet. The parable brings to our attention a special service that will be performed by the Master to his faithful ones at his Second Advent. This service is referred to in the words of the parable: "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:37). The great central teaching contained in these words is that our Lord at his Second Advent would make known to his people special truths not before due to be understood. These truths are those concerning the mysteries of Christ's Kingdom; in other words, the Divine Plan of the Ages. The same thought is brought to view in the symbol of the eating of the "little book," considered previously. Again it is referred to in the prediction of Daniel 12:12, "O the blessedness of him that waiteth and cometh unto the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days"; also in the message of the Master to the Church of Laodicea: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice [knock], and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20).

All these events have likewise been matters of history for some time, and while some who have once believed are beginning to doubt, the faithful Watchers have no difficulty in seeing the events that have fulfilled these prophetic utterances. In 1904 the writer above referred to thus remarked:

"Those who will hear the knock will be such only as are awake and ready, expecting him and on the alert for the knock. These will receive a special spiritual feast. It will be special because it is on a special occasion and intended as a special reward for their manifestation of interest and devotion. It will be special also, because the Master of the household, turned to be its servant, would have all the keys to all the riches of grace and blessing, and, as elsewhere explained, will bring forth from his treasuries — his pantries — things new and old, substantials and delicacies. The faithful ones will surely have a royal feast, such as never before was granted them.

"These things, we hold, have already been fulfilled. ... The servants of the household are taking notice, and each one as he opens his heart and mind to the fact of the Lord's presence receives a fulfillment of the blessing promised —

receives a feast of fat things, spiritual — an understanding and appreciation of the Divine Plan and a soul nourishment and strengthening such as was never his before. That this serving of the servants by the Master should be understood to be an individual work and not merely a collective service and feast, is evidenced by the Lord's statement in Revelation 3:20. Here the Lord represents the same event in connection with his message to the last phase of his Church nominal, the Laodicean phase. He says, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man [individual] hear my voice [knock], and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.' "

World Redemption Proclaimed Under the Seventh Trumpet

From the foregoing review of facts as to the marvelous unfolding of prophetic truths and the proclamation of the same in these latter days — truths that announce the great change of dispensation and the imminency of Christ's Kingdom, we see most surely the fulfillment of the "voices in heaven" saying "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ." These voices can be none other than those of the faithful Watchers, the faithful disciples of Christ, eager to make progress in the light and to bear testimony to the same as fast as they see it. And these indeed constitute the symbolic "two witnesses" as they continue to exist on down to our day.

It is very significant that this last testimony of the witnesses on earth, which is still continuing, is taken up by the "twenty-four elders" in the symbolical throne vision. We read: "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned" (verses 16,17).

It will thus be observed how closely related is all that takes place in the symbolical throne scene with the events connected with the witnesses of Christ on earth. We will also notice how wonderful is the knowledge possessed by these symbolical twenty-four elders of the throne vision. They continue very briefly in their words of thanksgiving and praise to make mention of the great events that are to come to pass during the thousand years of Christ's reign. They first state the condition of the nations when the Divine sovereignty is assumed: "And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come," evidently referring to the last plagues, particularly described in chapter 16, that will cause the overthrow of Christendom. They next rehearse the stupendous events that will occur during the reign of Christ: "And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail" (verses 18,19).

The "temple of God" in this vision symbolizes the Church. The "ark" of the Lord's covenant represents the Christ, Head and Body. The thought conveyed by the vision seems to be that during the early part of the sounding of the seventh trumpet the meaning of these symbols would be clearly seen. It may also mean that the symbolical "measuring" (verses. 1,2), would be completed. And still further it may refer to the time when the world itself may come to understand; this would be when all the temple class are glorified.

The "lightnings" — the flashes of truth; the "voices" — proclamations of truth; the "thunders" — controversies produced by these proclamations; the "earthquake" — the great earthquake of Revelation 16:18, the downfall of Christendom; the "great hail" (Revelation 16:21) — all refer to the terrible judgment scenes in connection with the "last plagues" of Revelation 16. Thus these events that are rehearsed represent a brief summary of the final scenes connected with the downfall of Christendom, and the complete establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth.

The visions of chapters 12 and 13 are retrospective; indeed they may properly be said to be parenthetical. They are designed to picture in detail the gradual rise and development of the "beast" that came up out of the "abyss," and made war on and silenced the witnesses. The woe or plagues of the seventh trumpet are again taken up in the close of chapter 14, also chapter 16. It will be seen therefore, that the visions of chapters 12 and 13 are not under the seventh trumpet chronologically.

Thine Is the Power

Our Father, we long for the glorious day
When all shall adore Thee, and all shall obey.
Oh, hasten Thy Kingdom, oh, show forth Thy might,
And wave o'er the nations Thy scepter of right.
Oh, make up Thy jewels, the crown of Thy love,
And reign in our hearts as Thou reignest above,
For Thine is the Power!

Our Father, deliver Thy children from sin,
From evil without and from evil within,
From this world, with its manifold evil and wrong,
From the wiles of the Evil One, subtle and strong;
Till, as Christ overcame, we, too, conquer and sing,
All glory to Thee, our victorious King,
For Thine is the Power!

(Continued, next page)

Our Father, Thy children rejoice in Thy reign,
Rejoice in Thy highness, and praise Thee again!
Yea, Thine is the Kingdom and Thine is the might,
And Thine is the glory transcendently bright;
For ever and ever that glory shall shine,
For ever and ever that Kingdom be Thine,
For Thine is the Power!

Chapter Twenty-Six

The Sun-Clad Woman, the Dragon, and the Man Child Ruler

(Revelation 12:1-6)

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Revelation 12:1-6).

In our study of this vision, consideration will first be given to the symbol of the woman invested with the robe of sunlight, seen by St. John in the heavens. The woman is very generally understood to represent the Christian Church, although expositors differ in their explanation of the meaning of some of the details. An explanation that meets the requirements is thus expressed: "A combination of these symbols [the sun, moon, and stars] is found in Revelation (12:1) where the 'woman' symbolizing the early Church is represented as clothed with the sun, that is, resplendent in the full, clear light of the unclouded Gospel. The moon under her feet represents that the law which supports her is nevertheless not the source of her light. The twelve stars about her head as a crown represent her divinely appointed and inspired teachers — the twelve Apostles" (C. T. Russell).

Another has explained the symbol much the same: "The woman is the representative of the true people of God, obviously, from the persecution she endures from the dragon, and her flight into the desert and subsistence there through the period during which the witnesses prophesy. Her sunbeam robe, her station above the moon, and her crown of stars, bespeak her greatness, conspicuousness, and majesty" (D. N. Lord).

"And being pregnant, she cried out, travailing and being pained to bring forth" (verse 2). This symbol is frequently employed in the Scriptures:

"Travailing (with child) is a symbol of great endeavors to bring something to pass, not without much difficulty, pain, and danger. And the compassing of the end, which the persons represented in the symbol aimed at, is a deliverance from the pain and danger they labor under.

"Hence the symbol of travailing with child is often used in the Prophets to denote a state of anguish and misery — Isaiah 26:17,18, 66:7, Jeremiah 4:31, 30:6,7.

"And also in the New Testament, the pains of childbearing are used to signify the sorrow of tribulation and persecution, as in Mark 13:8, John 16:21,22, 1 Thessalonians 5:3. In Romans 8:22, Paul compares the earnest desire of the creation for the Kingdom of Christ to the pains of a woman in travail" (Thomas Wemyss, *Symbol Dictionary*).

Taking up next the consideration of the dragon symbol, we discover that a dragon in the Scriptures seems sometimes to signify a large fish, or marine serpent, as in Isaiah 27:1, where the Leviathan is also mentioned (see also Psalms 74:13). Sometimes it appears to signify a venomous land serpent: "The dragon shalt thou trample under foot" (Psalms 91:13). It is sometimes used for the devil, who is called "that old serpent" (Revelation 20:1). From the fact that the dragon in the verses under consideration is represented as having seven heads, ten horns, a tail, and an appetite for flesh, it seems clear that an animal is employed here as a symbol. However, like the beast of Revelation 13, it is a fictitious animal. Applying the law regulating the interpretation of symbols, we should look for the fulfillment in another phase of life from the one from which the symbol is taken. An animal, when used in the Scriptures as a symbol, represents a government. In this instance the imperial Pagan Roman government seems to us to be the one pointed out.

In this vision we have portrayed both secular and religious history. The secular or civil history begins to have its fulfillment in the symbolism of the "great red dragon," and is continued in that of the symbolic "beast" of chapter 13. The connecting link in the history contained in the two chapters is found in the statement in chapter 13:2: "and the dragon gave him [the beast] his power, and his throne, and great authority," indicating plainly that the political power exercised by the symbolic beast of chapter 13 is derived from that of the political power of the symbolic dragon of chapter 12. The events of history covered by the two chapters, no matter where they begin, reach to the vision of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion (Revelation 14:1), which evidently refers to Christ's assumption of kingly authority at the period beginning with the deliverance of the true Church. In the close of the same chapter we have the vision describing the destruction of the "vine of the earth," the false Church. The religious or church history contained in the vision is found in the symbolism of the woman, who is seen first as clothed with the robe of sunlight, etc., then as becoming pregnant, and later on as taking flight into the wilderness, etc.

The Vision Located in History

Having given a brief analysis of some of the requirements of the symbolic vision, we now inquire, Where in history are we to look for the beginning of the fulfillment of this vision? Studying the vision closely we notice a symbolical "time" feature referred to in verse 8, and certain other matters stated in the vision itself that enable us to clearly find its location. This "time" feature is associated with the symbolical woman's flight and sojourn in the wilderness. It is stated that the sojourn of the woman (the true Church) in the wilderness was for a period of a thousand two hundred and sixty days. We immediately associate this period with that of the prophesying of the two witnesses in sackcloth for twelve hundred and sixty days, and as we have found that these days represent years (1260 years), likewise we find that those in this vision do the same. Of necessity, therefore, we are carried back in history at least twelve hundred and sixty years. Furthermore, as the flight of the woman into the wilderness represents, as we shall endeavor to show, the *gradual* depression and recession from view of the *true* Church, we must discover the time in history in which the visible Church, that is the Church as seen and recognized by the world as the Church, first becomes worldly and therefore corrupt in God's sight; when true believers are, as it were, lost sight of *in* the great mass of worldly profession, or are seen to separate *from* it. As we have already seen, this was that period in history represented by the Pergamos lampstand (Revelation 2:12-16) — the period beginning with Constantine the Great's accession to the throne of the Roman Empire. It was in the early years of the Fourth Century, when Constantine became ruler of the Western Roman Empire, and the Pagan Roman government became professedly Christian, that the depression and recession from view of the true Church *began* to take place. The events to be looked for would of course be in the consecutive order as set forth in the vision — the great red dragon sweeping the sky with his tail and casting down one-third of the stars; the birth of the man child and his exaltation to heaven, followed by the departure of the woman into the wilderness.

It seems hardly necessary to say that it is very generally understood by expositors that the great red dragon is a symbol of the Pagan imperial government of the Roman Empire, the one that held sway for over two centuries from the beginning of the Christian era. A further confirmation of the conclusion that the vision under consideration begins to meet its fulfillment in the days of the Pagan Roman government is found in the fact that the name *dragon* is at this time first given to it. It is recorded in history that a dragon was employed by the Pagan Roman government itself as a symbol of its sovereignty; and not only so, but we learn from history the exact time when it first began to be so employed. Note the following from Mr. Barnes:

"The general interpretation which refers this vision to Rome may receive confirmation from the fact that the dragon was at one time the Roman standard. ... Ammianus Marcellinus (16,10) thus describes this standard: 'The dragon was covered with purple cloth, and fastened to the end of a pike gilt and adorned with

precious stones. It opened its wide throat, and the wind blew through it; and it hissed as if in a rage, with its tail floating in several folds through the air.' ...

"The dragon was first used as an ensign near the close of the Second Century of the Christian era, and it was not until the Third Century that its use had become common, and the reference here, according to this fact, would be to that period of the Roman power when this had become a common standard, and when the applicability of this image would be readily understood. It is simply Rome that is referred to — Rome the great agent of accomplishing the purposes of Satan towards the Church. The eagle was the common Roman ensign in the time of the Republic and in the earlier periods of the empire, but in later periods the dragon became also a standard as common and as well known as the eagle."

On this point Mr. Elliott says that "in the Third Century it [the dragon] had become almost as notorious among Roman ensigns as the eagle itself; and is in the Fourth Century noted by Prudentius, Vegetius, Chrysostom, as well as Ammianus Marcellinus; also in the fifth, by Claudian, and others."

Another strong indication as to the particular period in history when the vision began to have its fulfillment is found in the fact that the "diadems" were on the "heads" of the "dragon," instead of on the horns as in the case of the beast of chapter 13:1, which fact of itself suggests that the period of the vision is that *prior* to the cessation of the imperial rule in Western Rome in 476 AD, and before the ten kingdoms and Papacy begin their exercise of power.

Thus do the symbols themselves establish the time for the beginning of the fulfillment of this vision of chapter 12 as that of Pagan Rome, particularly the reign of Diocletian. He, according to all historians, is the one who ruled the Roman Empire during the last great persecution of the Church by Pagan Rome. This persecution began in 303 AD and continued until 313 AD.

The Woman in Travail

In view of the foregoing it seems clear that the woman's cry, and labor to bear, represent the importunate desires, prayers, and endeavors of the Lord's true people in the days of Pagan Roman persecution, particularly the time of the ten years' persecution under Diocletian, to have a government that would use its authority and power to cause persecution to cease. Such a state of affairs as is thus described, existed in the true Church just prior to the reign of the so-called Christian emperors. That such importunate desires and prayers were proper, and in harmony with true Christianity, is seen in the instructions given by St. Paul to Timothy, in the language: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Timothy 2:1,2).

It is said of the dragon that "his tail drew [dragged, hauled] the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." There are two interpretations of this symbol, one of which is that it refers to Christian teachers falling in the sense of apostatizing, and adopting the Paganized counterfeit Christianity

that gradually came in after Constantine's accession to the throne, about 312 AD. A seemingly insurmountable difficulty with this interpretation is that this action of the dragon occurs prior to Constantine's accession to the throne, and during the period of the Pagan government's persecution of the true Church. It was not until the ending of these terrible years of persecution that desires for worldly favor and dominion began to become rife in the Church. The "ten days" of persecution (Revelation 2:10) extended from 303 to 313 AD.

The other interpretation, which seems the more reasonable one, and which is in harmony with the facts of history, is that it represents the attempt of the Pagan government to exterminate the Church by removing the Christian teachers from their stations, by imprisoning them; by forcing them to work in the mines; by frequently depriving them of their sight; and by subjecting them to all manner of inhuman violence. The historian, without being aware of it, has thus recorded events that seem clearly to meet the fulfillment of this part of the vision:

"In the year 303, when this emperor (Diocletian) was at Nicomedia, an order was obtained from him to pull down the churches of the Christians, to burn all their books and writings, and to take from them all their civil rights and privileges, and render them incapable of any honors or civil promotion. This first edict, though rigorous and severe, extended not to the lives of the Christians ... it was, however, destructive to many of them, particularly to those who refused to deliver the sacred books into the hands of the magistrates.

"Not long after the publication of this first edict against the Christians ... Diocletian, by a new edict, ordered all the bishops and ministers of the Christian Church to be thrown into prison. Nor did his inhuman violence end here; for a third edict was soon issued, by which it was ordered, that all sorts of torments should be employed, and the most insupportable punishments invented, to force these venerable captives to renounce their profession, by sacrificing to the heathen gods; for it was hoped, that, if the bishops and doctors of the Church could be brought to yield, their respective flocks would be easily induced to follow their example. An immense number of persons, illustriously distinguished by their piety and learning, became the victims of this cruel stratagem throughout the whole Roman Empire, Gaul excepted, which was under the mild and equitable dominion of Constantius Chlorus [father of Constantine the Great]. ...

"In the second year of this horrible persecution the 304th of the Christian era, a fourth edict was published by Diocletian. ... By it the magistrates were ordered and commissioned to force all Christians, without distinction of rank or sex, to sacrifice to the gods, and were authorized to employ all sorts of torments, in order to drive them to this act of apostasy. The diligence and zeal of the Roman magistrates, in the execution of this inhuman edict, nearly proved fatal to the Christian cause" (*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*).

Persecutions by Pagan Rome

We thus have depicted in this brief extract from the pages of the historian, the most terrible persecution, the most severe trial, testing, that the Church

had ever experienced up to that time. It was indeed an attempt on the part of the Pagan Roman government to utterly exterminate Christianity.

At the time of this last persecution of the Church by Pagan Rome, there were four emperors ruling over the Roman Empire — Diocletian and his three subordinate associates, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius Chlorus; the last ruling at Britain and Gaul. It is a matter to be specially noted that during this last persecution those Christians who lived in Britain and Gaul, under Constantius Chlorus, enjoyed freedom from persecution. In fact, this emperor seemed very favorably disposed toward his Christian subjects. Constantine, his son, was even more so. The Christians throughout the Roman Empire, seeing this favorable inclination of the young Constantine, were led to hope that he, an heir to the throne, might be their deliverer. On account of the fierceness of this last persecution, this hope grew into fervent prayer that he might be elevated to the throne. This is what we understand to be the fulfillment of the woman in travail.

Mr. Lord, as bearing on this point, quotes from Eusebius, commonly called the father of ecclesiastical history, who, at the time he wrote, was a zealous supporter of Constantine the Great: " 'The Emperor Constantius Chlorus was distinguished through his whole life for mildness and clemency towards those under his rule, and friendliness to Christianity. ... And he alone after a peaceful and glorious reign, left his empire at death to a legitimate, a modest, and a religious son. On his demise, Constantine, who had long before been assigned to that office by the Almighty, was immediately saluted Augustus by the army, and became a zealous emulator of his father's veneration for the Christian religion.' "

That prayers were offered up in his behalf that he might be elevated to the throne, is thus recorded by another professed Christian author, Lactantius:

" 'The Lord has heard the prayers which were offered continually by you and the other brethren. ... and tranquillity being restored through the empire, the Church lately prostrate [under Diocletian] has again risen, and the temples of God which the emperor [Diocletian] had overturned, are by His mercy, re-erected in greater beauty than before. For He has raised up princes, who have put an end to the cruel sway of the tyrants, and given protection to the people, so that already, as though the late clouds were dispersed, all are gladdened with peace and serenity. Those tempests have passed away. ... God in His pity has relieved His afflicted servants and wiped away the tears of the mourners.' "

We next read that the "dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered for to devour her child as soon as it was born." This feature of the vision seems to refer to the fact that the Pagan rulers and priests were aware that the Lord's people were about to favor the elevation of the young prince Constantine, because of the expectation on their part that he would restrain their Pagan persecutors and give them deliverance. A brief summary of the history that meets the fulfillment of this symbol is as follows:

The Pagan party (ruler and priests), seeing the attitude of the young Constantine toward the Christians, sought all ways to prevent his accession to the throne. Therefore, just before the death of his father, the young Constantine was taken

and held a prisoner at the court of Galerius at Nicomedia. He managed, however, to escape, making a swift journey to Boulogne, France, thence to Britain, where at the death of his father, 306 AD, he was proclaimed emperor. The other associate emperors were obliged on account of his extreme popularity in Britain to acquiesce in his accession to the throne. It was only a very short time, however, before efforts were made, particularly by Galerius, to cause his overthrow. This increased a feeling that already existed on the part of Constantine to aspire and strive to be the *sole* ruler; and some twenty years before his death, which occurred in 337 AD, he succeeded in overthrowing all his rivals. It was during the civil wars (which ended in the overthrow of his rivals), that he professed to become not only a friend, but a convert to Christianity; and history informs us that he attributed his success in attaining sole rulership to this fact.

Her Child Caught up to God

We thus see the fulfillment of that part of the vision described in the words that follow: "And her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne." The following comment on these words seems fitting and appropriate: "That her son was suddenly caught up to God and His throne, denotes both that he was rescued in an extraordinary manner from the attempts of the Pagan emperors to destroy him, and exalted to supreme power in the empire; and that he became in that station a usurper of the rights of God, and an object of idolatrous homage to his subjects."

Some, who do not seem to be familiar with the Scripture teaching concerning God's relationship to human governments of the world, make objection to this application of the words. It is, nevertheless, in perfect harmony with God's overruling providence in the setting up and putting down of rulers. The Prophet Daniel gives expression to this truth in the words: "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and *setteth up over it the basest of men*" (Daniel 4:17). The same thought is brought out by St. Paul when he said: "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). God saw that it was best, in view of His purpose in the election and character development of His Son's joint-heirs, to permit one who afterwards proved to be a base man to occupy the highest seat of authority on earth, and thus bring His true Church into new experiences for their testing and trial. The state of affairs that soon came in after Constantine's accession to the throne placed Christians under a most severe temptation — the temptation to grasp for honor, power, and glory, in the time appointed for their humiliation. One eminent writer has thus defined God's relationship to the rulers and governments:

"In the case of Pharaoh, the perverse king of Egypt, God declared, 'For this very purpose I raised thee up, that I might show forth My power in thee.' God did not approve of Pharaoh, but used him to show forth His own glory. God also used king Cyrus of Persia as a servant to perform His bidding. All of these recorded instances show a vital interest on God's part as to who shall come forward, and who should be retarded when these matters would affect His own Plan. We are not to understand that these different kings represented God's

choice as respects their loyalty to Him, but that these were the ones through whom the Divine Plan in operation could be signally manifested and outworked. ... We understand that God does exercise a supervisory oversight in respect to them — not that He has authorized them to represent Him, or that He is responsible for their deeds and acts, but that He is so controlling matters as to cause them to outwork His own arrangements" (C. T. Russell).

It is in this sense that Constantine's throne was God's throne. "For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Daniel 4:25). Constantine and his successors on the throne represent the "man child."

Desiring doubtless to promote what he understood was the cause of Christianity, shortly after his accession to the throne Constantine issued a decree declaring the Christian religion the religion of the empire. By his orders the pagan temples were either destroyed or converted into houses of worship for the Christians. Thus Christianity became popular, and large numbers joined the nationalized churches. Constantine himself assumed authority in the temporal matters of the Church. Concerning this we quote Mr. Lord:

"He [Constantine] became in that station a usurper of the rights of God, by assuming an absolute authority over the religion of his Christian subjects. In prescribing their faith and worship, he treated their religious obligations as under his jurisdiction, and thence the rights and legislation of the Most High as subordinate to his, and dependent on his for their efficiency. ...

"He summoned the council of Arles in 314 to re-judge the cause of the Donatists. The following is a part of a letter addressed by him on that occasion to the bishop of Syracuse: 'We have ordered a great body of bishops from different and almost numberless places to assemble at the city of Arles, by the first of August, and write to direct you to take public vehicle, with two of the second order whom you may choose, and three youths, who may serve you on the way, and present yourself at the aforementioned place on that day, that by your gravity, and the judgment of others who are to assemble, this disgraceful contest, which has so long continued, may be terminated in harmony.' " Eusebius further wrote: " 'The decrees which the bishops had enacted in the councils, he [Constantine] ratified, so that it was not lawful for the prefects of the provinces to rescind their canons.' "

Constantine sought by force to impose the creed of this council on all his subjects, to prohibit all assemblies of dissentients from the Catholic (universal) Church, to confiscate their property and suppress their books. Eusebius cites a letter of Constantine addressed to these dissenters which we quote in part:

" 'Know by this law, ye Novatians, Valentinians, Marcionites, Paulists, Cataphrygians, and all who form sects by private assemblies, your folly is involved in so many falsehoods and your doctrine imbued with such poisonous drugs, that the healthy are led by you to disease, and the living to eternal death. ... Wherefore as the plague of your errors can no longer be borne, we make known by this law that no one of you may hereafter dare to convene a congregation; and

accordingly command that all the edifices in which you hold such assemblies be taken away; it being our design not only not to allow your superstitions and senseless assemblies in public, but not even to permit them in private houses, or in any separate places; but what is far better that as many of you as are desirous of the true and pure religion, should come to the Catholic Church, and partake of its sanctity, through which you may be able to attain the truth. ... And that the magistrate may have the requisite power for this remedy, we have commanded as has already been mentioned, that all the houses of your superstitions, that is, the oratories of all sects ... be without contradiction taken away and immediately delivered to the Catholic Church; but other places adjudged to the public, that no opportunity be hereafter left you of assembling. Accordingly, let not your forbidden congregations from this day venture to meet in any place, whatever, whether public or private. Let this be published.' "[1]

Lack of space forbids us to further enlarge on the usurpations of the rights of Christians by Constantine. Suffice it to say that he claimed and exercised the right to punish those who disobeyed these decrees. "He deposed and appointed bishops at his pleasure. ... He banished Arius, ordered that all books written by him and his partisans should be burned, and threatened death to any who should attempt to conceal them."

Is it anything to be wondered at that we read next: "And the woman fled into the wilderness [or desert], where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days"? *Literally* a desert or wilderness in the Scriptures means a place where there are few inhabitants; a place remote from the habitations of men, where one might be concealed and unknown. Mr. Russell has given the meaning as follows: "A wilderness condition is one of separation from the blessings of civilization; it is a cut-off condition, a separation from the world ... an outcast from the privileges and advantages of the world's society." Another has observed: "This would well represent the fact that the true Church became for a time obscure and unknown, *as if* it had fled away from the habitations of men, and had retired to the solitude and loneliness of a desert."

The flight of the woman into the wilderness, while beginning at a particular date in history, seems to have covered a long period of time. This, which is in harmony with the facts of history, seems to be the most reasonable way to apply this part of the vision. The *flight*, then, would cover an *era* — beginning about the time of Constantine's accession to the throne of the West, 312 AD, and reaching to the time when the Papal Antichrist was fully developed, which was about 539 AD. The length of the period from Constantine's accession, when the last great persecution of the Church by Pagan Rome ceased, to the time when Protestantism was fully established, was 1260 years — 312 to 1572. This reaches to the time when the great slaughter of the Huguenots in France on

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(1) Let the reader bear in mind that all this occurred over two centuries before what is termed today, the Roman Catholic system, came into existence.

St. Bartholomew's day occurred. The length of the period from Papacy's beginning to exercise authority in the city of Rome to the time when the saints were delivered out of the hands of Papacy was likewise 1260 years — 539 to 1799.

The Church of the Waldenses

It is a fact of note, in this connection, that the body of true Christians known as the Waldenses, trace their beginning (not by that name, however) back to the beginning of the Fourth Century, when Constantine ascended the throne. Mr. Lord agrees with this, and in his exposition has pointed out that:

"A body of true people of God, thus disappointed in their expectation of a rule from princes professing Christianity more favorable to their purity and peace, retired into seclusion, continued withdrawn from notoriety for many ages, and still subsist in total separation from the apostate Church. The Church of the Waldenses has existed through every period of its history, in entire separation from the nationalized church of the kingdoms, to which the territory they inhabit has at different periods belonged. It has had a ministry of its own, consisting only of presbyters [bishops, pastors, or elders] and deacons, and perpetuated by its own ordination. It has held, professed, and vindicated the great doctrines of the Gospel, that God has the sole right to legislate in respect to His worship; that the Scriptures are the only authoritative rule of faith; that Christ is the only Redeemer; that his salvation is to be obtained only by a specific acceptance of him as a sacrifice and justifier ... and that it is by the renewing agency of the Spirit alone that men are led to repentance, faith, and love; that neither rulers nor ecclesiastics have any right to oppress and persecute, but that all are required to live meekly, purely, and justly toward one another, and with fear, humility, faith, and love toward God. It has disowned the authority alike of civil magistrate and the nationalized church, to dictate its faith and worship. 'They obstinately maintain that nothing that is not expressly commanded by Christ, or taught by the Apostles, can ever be constituted a law by those of a later age, though decreed even by general synods, inasmuch as the later Church has no legislative authority.'

"It has publicly disowned the Romish Church as apostate, proclaimed the predictions of its overthrow, and relied on the promise of the redemption of the world and an everlasting kingdom of righteousness. ... There is adequate evidence that it has subsisted in the valleys of the Cottian Alps through the whole period from the commencement of the 1260 years. ... It is admitted by their enemies that they have existed there more than seven hundred years, that they were among the earliest dissentients from the Catholic Church, and that they claimed to have occupied the valleys in which they still reside from the Fourth Century."

A Roman Catholic writer, Reiner de Haerit, is thus quoted by Mr. Faber: " 'Of all the sects of the present or former times, no one is more mischievous to the [Roman] Church, than that of the Waldenses, and for three reasons — it is of longer continuance, some referring it to the fourth, others to the First Century;

it is more widely diffused, being found in almost every country; and it is distinguished for its piety toward God and virtue toward men.' "

This seems to establish as a fact that the true Church *began* its wilderness experience early in the Fourth Century, in the days of Constantine. This symbolic flight of the woman continued for over two centuries, until the full establishment of Papal ascendancy over the saints, about 539 AD.

Referring to the period when the visible Church became apostate the following is to the point: "Here, then, under Constantine's reign, the opposition of the empire to Christianity gave way to favor, and the Imperial Pontifex Maximus became the patron of the professed but really apostate Church of Christ; and, taking her by the hand, he assisted her to a place of popularity and splendor from which she was able afterward, as the imperial power grew weak, to put her own representatives [the Roman bishops] upon the religious throne of the world as Chief Religious Ruler — *Pontifex Maximus*" (C. T. Russell). "She grasped for her glory in the time appointed for her humiliation, and vainly thought to reign in the earth while her King is absent in the heaven. ... which dominion and sovereignty are, however, caught away from the true Church, whose portion is for the present the wilderness and rejection" (A. J. Gordon, *Ecce Venit*).

Chapter Twenty-Seven

The War Between Michael and the Dragon

(Revelation 12:7-17)

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:7-12).

It is the general conviction that this striking and marvelous vision met its fulfillment in the great conflict between Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth Century. The period in history is the same as that of the previous vision — the days of Pagan Roman persecution, culminating in the elevation of Constantine to the throne of the Roman Empire. It is quite necessary to keep in mind when interpreting this vision, that the persecution of the Church by the Pagan government, up to that time, had in a measure the effect of keeping the Church pure and of keeping it united. However, even in the Apostle's day, "tares," imitation Christians, had to some extent identified themselves with the Church, but up to the time of Constantine's accession to the throne, when Pagan persecution ceased, Christ's followers, who constituted the "many called," had been able to present in a large measure an unbroken front before the world.

The "dragon" is here designated the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan. He is therefore the *symbol* used, and is evidently the same one referred to by Christ as the "prince of this world," and by St. Paul as the "god of this world," who is represented as blinding the minds of them that believe not the Gospel. He is the same one who in the form of a serpent deceived Eve, and caused the fall of our first parents. He is the great fallen angel, so frequently referred to in the Scriptures. This is proved by the fact that in the conflict he has

associated with him other angels also fallen. The conclusion that Satan is the one mentioned in the vision is confirmed as we consider the nature of his opponents; these are Michael the archangel, and his subordinates, the holy angels.

Symbolic Picture Drawn from the Fall of Satan

The "heaven" which is employed as a symbol in this vision, in which this conflict took place, is the unseen, heavenly, spirit world. The fulfillment will be found in transactions occurring on the earth. The symbols employed to describe this conflict are, therefore, drawn from a literal transaction, the early stages of which were possibly in evidence before man's creation, and have continued since. That occurrence is the fall of Satan and his rebellion against Divine authority and against the Divine empire; additionally, the fall of holy angels and their association with Satan. To understand the vision and its application in history it will be necessary to have a general knowledge of this literal occurrence.

While the history of Satan's rebellion against Divine authority is not all clearly given in the Scriptures, we do find many references to it, and these enable us to gather with certainty the following facts:

(1) That Satan was a created being, having at one time his abode in the heaven of heavens; the inference being that he was honored with his existence in creation's early morning, as he is called Lucifer, bright one, son of the morning (Ezekiel 28:12-15, Isaiah 14:12).

(2) That at some remote period he rebelled against God's authority (Isaiah 14:12-15).

(3) That because of such rebellion he was expelled from heaven; this our Lord witnessed (Luke 10:18).

(4) That he was the one who in Eden used the serpent to cause the fall of our first parents (Genesis 3:1-5, 2 Corinthians 11:3).

(5) That his abode when the vision we are considering had its fulfillment, was in the region around the earth, and he was using the Pagan rulers in an endeavor to thwart God's purposes in the selection of the Church or kingdom class (2 Corinthians 4:4, Deuteronomy 32:16,17, 1 Corinthians 10:20).

(6) That he is the chief or prince of numerous fallen angels, and that these are organized into a kingdom that is opposing God and His purposes in every conceivable manner (Matthew 9:34, Luke 11:15-18).

Bearing well these facts in mind we will not be surprised that he is designated by Christ, the "prince of this world," and by St. Paul, its "god," or ruler, and that he is the great author and propagator of all the false religions of earth, and has controlled to a considerable extent the nations of earth through fallen angels (Daniel 10:13). Paganism, being at the time of the vision's fulfillment the highest type of idolatry, is the religion through which he succeeded to the greatest extent in blinding and deceiving humanity in their state of condemnation and alienation from God. After the cessation of persecution which took place under the Pagan rulers, the Roman government became what is generally termed by historians, Christian Rome, and continued in Eastern Rome for over a thousand

years, and in the Western, for over two centuries. At the close of the latter time the Western Empire had become divided, Papacy had come into existence, and had begun to exert a controlling influence and rule *in* and *from* the city of Rome over the kingdoms into which the Western Empire was divided. It was during these two centuries that a Paganized form of Christianity gradually developed.

The war described in this vision preceded the elevation of Constantine to the throne of the empire, and continued for a few years after. Keeping in mind these facts will enable us not only to see the appropriateness of the use of this past conflict of heavenly beings to symbolize the conflict of Christianity with Paganism, but also to see in the language of the vision that Satan and his angels are the symbols of the evil Pagan rulers and priests, and that Michael and the holy angels are the same of the many true believers on earth.

In a later vision (Revelation 20) we have a scene in which is described a time when Satan's power will be completely restrained for a thousand years, at which time all the idolatrous paganized forms of Christianity will be destroyed. The overthrow of the Pagan religion, however, described in this vision we are now considering, does not bring in this much to be desired condition, as the symbols that follow very plainly teach; one of which is that of the flight of the woman (true Church) into the symbolic wilderness — a place of separation from the nationalized nominal church that was instituted after Constantine's accession to the throne. It is doubtless also true that Satan and the fallen angels literally were the *invisible* instigators of the attempt of the Pagan civil and religious authorities to overthrow the Christian religion.

We have in this symbolic vision, then, an obedient archangel, and the holy angels, his followers on the one hand, and the great fallen angel, Satan, and the unholy angels, his followers on the other, represented as engaging in a conflict, a war with one another, in which Satan, unable to hold his ground, is at length cast out of heaven, and dejected with his angels to earth. That these holy and unholy heavenly hosts are *employed as symbols* of men, is very evident from the fact that the overcomers among the "many called" ones in the conflict are described as not loving their lives unto death, which could be said only of men and of martyrs, not of heavenly angels. This is also seen from the fact that they are described as overcoming in the war — not through the use of worldly weapons, but "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Satan and the fallen angels symbolize unbelievers, Pagans, antagonists to Christ and his cause, who endeavor by persecuting Christ's followers to suppress their testimony, and thus to maintain the supremacy of the Pagan religion. The fact that Satan is represented as accusing their brethren before God, proves that the war, on the part of Christians, was one of religion and not for political power or supremacy. We sum up a brief outline-interpretation of the vision in the language of another:

"The angel war, then, it is apparent ... was symbolic of the struggle of the faithful teachers, confessors, and martyrs of the Gospel on the one hand, to spread and give supremacy to Christianity, and of the Pagan priests and their active abettors, the persecuting rulers especially, on the other, to maintain the dominion of idolatry. It was not a strife for political power, manifestly, from the

means by which the victory was gained. They overcame the dragon, not by the sword, but by the blood of the Lamb, and by their testimony. ... As the symbol war was one of force, analogy requires that that which it symbolizes should be one of authority and persuasion. The victory of Michael was such a success of the Christian army as to turn the whole current of public belief and feeling in their favor, and produce at length a revolution in the civil government, by which, instead as before, of accusation as apostates, they were formally recognized as true worshipers of God, tolerated in their faith and worship, and [erroneously] inspired with the expectation that the commencement of Christ's Millennial reign was at hand. The period of this war was the period, therefore, of the persecutions of Diocletian, Galerius, Maxentius, Maximin, and Licinius; and the victory, that change of public feeling wrought by the testimony and faith of the teachers of the Gospel, and sufferings and constancy of the confessors and martyrs that rendered persecution and Paganism itself unpopular, prompted Constantine to espouse the cause of the Christians, and finally led to the rejection of Paganism as the religion of the State" (D. N. Lord).

Satan Operating Behind the Scenes

Satan, who in the vision is called the old serpent, is first mentioned in connection with this symbolic war. One object, doubtless, of mentioning this great adversary of man is to show that it was his power operating invisibly behind the scenes. He was the author of the purely Pagan religion, and his power had become thoroughly entrenched in the government of Pagan Rome. The overthrow of the Pagan government is represented by Satan and his angels being cast to the earth.

In order to understand the symbolic significance of Michael and his angels, and the part that those symbolized by them take in the great conflict which resulted in the overthrow of Paganism, it will be necessary to know something of the conditions existing in the Church of Christ during the period of the Pagan Rome persecutions, and on to the elevation of Constantine, and his successors on the throne. Even in the Apostle's day the "mystery of iniquity," one aspect of which was that of ambition and lordship in the Church, had already begun to develop. Shortly after the Apostle's day the "tares" increased in the Church and many non-overcoming believers associated themselves with them. No general separation of the truly consecrated, however, took place until after Constantine's accession to the throne. The truths of the Gospel slowly but surely exposed the abominations of Paganism, the religion of the Roman Empire, and this caused the Pagan rulers and priests to attempt to destroy the Christian religion which, in both a pure and to a considerable extent an impure form, was spreading all over the Roman world. Thus is described the conflict of Paganism and Christianity, symbolized in this vision by the conflict between Michael, as represented in Christ's true followers, and Satan, as represented in his followers, the Pagan rulers and priests.

Just before Constantine ascended the throne of the Roman Empire, the truths of the Gospel had so far exposed the abominations of the Pagan religion, that

some of the rulers, as well as many of the people, became favorably disposed toward nominal Christianity. This was what gradually brought about a cessation of persecution. Note the following in this connection:

"The horrible evils afflicted on the unoffending and virtuous Christians, touched multitudes of the idolaters with sympathy and sorrow; while their invincible constancy, and the joy and exultation with which they met the most ignominious and hideous death, impressed them with wonder, begat the feeling that they were supported by a supernatural power, and thus gave birth to the wish that they should be freed from persecution, and allowed the profession of their religion in peace."

Lactantius, an ecclesiastical historian, who was a contemporary of Constantine the Great, thus writes:

"Another reason that the people of God are permitted to be persecuted, is that they may be multiplied. Nor is it difficult to show how or why that takes place. Many are repelled from the worship of the gods by a dislike of their cruelty; for who does not regard their sacrifices with horror? Some approve of virtue and the faith. Some are led to suspect that it is not without cause that the worship of the gods is regarded as wrong by so many [Christians] who prefer to die rather than do that which others do that they may live. Some feel a desire to know what that good is which is adhered to even to death, which is preferred to all that is pleasing and dear in life, from which neither the loss of goods nor of life, neither pains of body, nor tortures of the heart can deter. Such considerations have great influence, but the causes that have chiefly augmented our number are these: The crowd standing around, hear the martyrs say in the midst of their torments, that they sacrifice not to statues made by the hands of man, but to the living God, who is in heaven. Many perceive and feel that this is true. Then, as is usual in regard to things that are not understood, in asking one another what the cause can be of that perseverance, many things that pertain to religion are introduced, investigated, and learned, which from their excellence, necessarily give pleasure. Moreover, persecution itself, as always happens, strongly impels to belief."

It will thus be seen that the deportment of the Lord's people when enduring terrible tortures and death, had a very marked effect on the population generally, both Pagan and professed Christian, causing them to wish for the destruction of this tyrannical persecutor, and to hail Constantine as a deliverer.

The sentiments generally held and expressed by the great mass of professed Christians then living, over the fall of the Pagan power, are described in the words of the loud voice heard in the symbolical heaven: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. ... Therefore rejoice ye heavens and ye that dwell in them." The recognition by Constantine of the Christian religion, and his becoming a patron of the Church's teachers and professors, caused a general impression in the professed Church that the Kingdom of God, Christ's triumphant reign, was at hand. We quote from the above writer concerning this remarkable fulfillment of verse 10:

"Let us celebrate the triumph of God with gladness; let us commemorate His victory with praise; let us make mention in our prayers day and night of the peace, which after ten years of persecution, He has conferred on His people."

Eusebius, another contemporary of Constantine, writes:

"The people therefore being freed from all fear of the court with which they had before been overwhelmed, held festal days with great splendor. There were everywhere illuminations. They who were before dejected, looked on one another with joyful aspects and smiles, and with choirs and hymns through the cities and country gave honor first to God, the Supreme Ruler of all, as they were taught, and then to the pious [?] emperor and his children. The miseries and impieties of the past were forgotten; joy and exultation prevailed at the blessings now promised, and happy anticipations of the future. Philanthropic edicts were everywhere published by the emperor, and laws that displayed his munificence and piety."

At the fall of the Emperor Licinius, Eusebius represents the Church as uniting in thanksgiving for deliverance, and congratulations at the overthrow of idolatry and what was supposed by many deceived ones to be the establishment of Christ's Kingdom:

"Let thanks be given by all to the Almighty Ruler of the universe, and to Jesus Christ our Savior and Redeemer, through whom we pray that peace from external foes may be uninterruptedly preserved to us, and tranquillity of mind. ... Let us sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done wonderful things. His right hand has saved Him, and His holy arm. The Lord has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the presence of the nations. We may now appropriately respond to the inspired command to sing a new song, inasmuch as after such direful spectacles and narrations, we now have the happiness to see and celebrate what many holy men before us and the martyrs for God desired to see on earth, and did not see, and to hear and have not heard. ... Admiring and adoring with all our souls we testify to the truth of the Prophet's words, 'Come and see the works of the Lord, what wonders He hath wrought in the earth, abolishing wars to the end of the world. The bow He has broken; He has dashed the arms; the shield He has burned in the fire.' "

It is doubtless true that many of the faithful followers of Christ, as well they might, engaged in this great rejoicing; but as they became aware of the true situation that was brought in by this great victory, their joy was turned to dismay and sorrow, because of the corruptions of the true Gospel which followed. It is very evident, however, as history shows, that the great mass of professed Christians at this time regarded their sudden increase to a majority, and the change in public sentiment towards them by which persecution from Paganism ceased, to be an indication that the Kingdom of God had come. That this change was to produce a woe instead of a blessing to earth's inhabitants, is seen in the words of the Revelator which follow.

Paganism Overthrown, Satan Joins the Church

"Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (verse 12).

Mr. Elliott in his great work, *Horae Apocalypticae*, thus comments on these words:

"It surprises me that so many commentators should have regarded this denunciation as the concluding part of the song of triumph. ... It would surely be a strange appendage to any song of triumph. ... On the other hand, its similarity of expression and form to the several denunciations of coming woes under the trumpets, suggests the presumption ... that this, like them, is to be regarded as a detached and solemn notification by the dictating prophetic spirit, of some woe on the Roman Empire, soon about to follow."

It seems also to refer to the fact that Satan, the great author of evil, and the god of this world, was, at the time, cast out from the Roman mundane heaven and the long-held throne of the Pagan government. It was only to assume, however, shortly afterwards, authority over the beast government which took the Pagan government's place (Revelation 13:2). "Incapable of repentance [says Mr. Elliott], that evil spirit is represented in Scriptures as only gathering fresh malice against Christ himself, and Christ's cause and Church, from each partial victory they might have gained over him; and the terrible consciousness of the ceaseless shortening of his respite from the sentence of God's final judgment. ... '*Knowing* that his time is short,' may here mean simply, persuaded. ... Now it is reasonable to suppose that the Devil knows not, any more than the angels in heaven, the exact time of the last judgment; and might thus anticipate, as the early Christians did [erroneously], that it would follow speedily on the breaking up of the Pagan Roman Empire."

Mr. Lord, commenting on these words, says: "That the dejection of Satan and his angels was to be a woe to the earth and the sea, indicates that the decline of the Pagan party into a minority, was to exasperate its priests and rulers, and lead them to more violent methods to overwhelm their antagonists and reinstate themselves in authority."

And this is indeed what history records as following this victory. "The predictions of a woe to the land and the sea from the overthrow of the idolatrous party had a signal fulfillment in the exasperation and violence of the Pagan chiefs toward their subjects generally, as well as the Church, from the defeat of Maxentius to the final fall of Paganism. Maximin, the emperor of Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, suspended the persecution on the fall of Maxentius, and the grant of toleration to the Church by Constantine and Licinius, but soon renewed it with far greater violence, and an avowed purpose of exterminating the Church from his dominions. Persons of distinction were appointed to the Pagan priesthood in all the cities, the rites renewed with pomp and zeal, and the magistrates and people given to understand that they could do nothing more acceptable to the prince, than to assail and slaughter the Christians. They accordingly plotted

against them in extraordinary ways, suborning the most profligate accusers, and traducing them by the most infamous imputations, by which all the magistrates of all the provinces were induced to assail and persecute them with greater fury than at any former period.

"Licinius, who succeeded him in the empire of the East, in 319, renewed the war on them, and continued it with the utmost virulence till his fall in 323. He began by encouraging false accusations against the bishops; then enacted arbitrary laws prohibiting them from assembling in synods, entering each other's churches, or communicating with one another, in order that he might generate pretexts for putting them to death. He banished all who held the Christian faith from the palace, and from his retinue, and drove them into exile; and threatened death to all who should thereafter profess Christianity. ... At length he proceeded to open and direct war on the ministers and members of the churches, subjecting them to the most horrible tortures, slaughtering them, in great numbers, and endeavoring to exterminate them from his dominions. Multitudes fled from the cities to the country, to deserts, and to mountains. Some escaped to the Western Empire, and the whole would have soon shrunk from sight or been devoured, had not Constantine interposed and extricated them from his power."

Thomas Newton, in his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, has thus quoted from a letter addressed to Eusebius by Constantine concerning this event of Church history that fulfilled this prophecy: " 'Liberty being now restored, and that dragon being removed from the administration of public affairs by the providence of the great God, and by my ministry, I esteem the great power of God to have been made manifest even to all.' "

Mr. Newton informs us (deriving his knowledge from the ecclesiastical historian, Eusebius): "A picture of Constantine was set up over the palace gate, with the cross over his head and under his feet, and 'the great enemy of mankind who persecuted the Church by the means of impious tyrants in the form of a dragon,' transfixed with a dart through the midst of his body, and falling headlong into the depths of the sea; in allusion, as it is said expressly, to the Divine oracles in the books of the Prophets, where that evil spirit is called the dragon and the crooked serpent." This expositor further says: "For now it was no longer in the power of the heathen persecutors, as Satan accused holy Job before God, to accuse the innocent Christians before the Roman governors, as the perpetrators of all crimes and the causes of all calamities. It was not by temporal means or arms that the [true] Christians obtained this victory (verse 11), but by spiritual, by the merits and death of their Redeemer, by their constant profession of the truth, and by their patient suffering of all kinds of torture even unto death; and the blood of the martyrs hath been often called the 'seed of the Church.' "

The victory of the *true* followers of the Lamb at this time was not that of establishing Christianity as the national religion, but rather that of their triumph in being faithful unto death. This triumph or victory was manifested in their maintenance of a Christ-like conduct in all their sufferings, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for his name. There can be no doubt that they rejoiced when their persecutions ceased, but they did not count it a triumph for

the cause of their Master to have a mere professor (Constantine) elevated to the throne of the empire, only in as far as it released them from persecution. They doubtless knew that the time of their rejoicing over the triumph of their Master's cause would be when they would be united to their Lord at his coming enthronement in glory and power. On the other hand there can be no doubt (because the historian has so recorded it) that professed Christians in general, whose understanding of the Word of God was very deficient, believed that Christianity had received a wonderful impetus when Constantine was elevated to be the sole ruler of the Roman Empire; and the supporters of the Papacy, as well as many nominal Protestant believers, entertain the same thought today.

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (Revelation 12:13,14).

We have described in the symbolic words, "the dragon persecuted the woman," the snare which marked Satan's second effort to destroy the true Church. It will be noticed that the word translated *persecuted* in the Common Version is rendered *pursued* in the Diaglott. The Greek word *dioko* translated *persecuted* here is rendered *follow* in Romans 9:30,31, 14:19, 1 Corinthians 14:1, Philippians 3:12, 1 Timothy 6:11, and is so translated in this instance by eminent expositors of the Revelation who believe that it better expresses the truth contained in the symbol. Rendering it thus, the truth brought out is that the Pagan priests and their followers when they saw that Paganism was overthrown, pursued or followed the "woman," and sought to join her society, or in other words sought to unite with the Church. Mr. Lord forcefully sums up the matter:

"The dragon who followed the woman symbolizes the Pagan priests and their abettors who had been defeated in their attempt to maintain their idol worship, and had fallen into a minority. Their following after her denotes their attempt to join her society by a profession of Christianity. ... Eusebius asserts, 'that two great evils distinguished the reign of Constantine — the violence of profligate and insatiable men, who harassed every condition of life; and the indescribable hypocrisy of those who entered the Church and deceitfully assumed the Christian name.' And he represents their promiscuous assumption of the new religion as occasioned in a large degree by the Emperor's treating the mere profession as a satisfactory proof of a genuine conversion. ... It was natural that crowds of the worldly should be drawn to the Church when Christianity became the religion of the court, and a profession of it a passport to office and honor."

Divine Protection over the Virgin Church

According to historians it is true that the Pagan priests and rulers and the larger number of their followers did unite with the false, nominal, nationalized church rapidly merging into Papacy. What became of the *pure* Church that fled to the symbolic wilderness? How was she protected from the serpent's attempt to corrupt her? We have the answer in the beautiful symbol which follows:

"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (verse 14).

We have this symbol explained in Exodus 19:4, as the protection of God over His people: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself." It is a symbol, then, of God's care over the true followers of Christ, in their being privileged to obtain a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. In this way was she protected from the false doctrines and idolatrous rites with which the visible, nominal Church, at the time developing into Papacy, became flooded.

"The gift to the woman of the wings of an eagle denotes that aids were granted her in her flight that were supernatural, and peculiarly suited to bear her above the dangers with which she was threatened by the intrusion of Pagans into the Church. As the wings were an addition to her body, and became a part of her nature, they denote not an exterior instrument, but a gift that formed a part of herself, and an intellectual and spiritual gift; therefore, knowledge, faith, wisdom, constancy, love, by which she was borne above the torrent of false doctrines, superstitions, rites, and idolatries in which the dragon endeavored to engulf her."

The period covered by this sojourn in the symbolic wilderness, in which the true Church was nourished, has already been explained in the previous chapter, as that of the "thousand two hundred and threescore days."

We have described in the next verse another attempt on the part of the serpent to destroy the true Church:

"And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth" (verses 15,16).

Again it is necessary for the reader to keep specially before the mind the highly symbolic character of this vision, that the terms, Satan, great red dragon, serpent, etc., symbolize not only the actions of the empire, but also those particular manifestations of the characteristics, energies, and activities of Satan, as these continue to be exhibited in the rulers or governmental powers of the Roman Empire from Constantine's day down to the fall of the Western Empire in 476 AD, and also of the Eastern Empire to its overthrow by the Turks in 1453. The imperial power was both civil and religious. The entire arrangement was Satanic workmanship; hence the appropriateness of its being called by his name.

In this vision the dragon is seen casting out of his mouth water as a river. This of course would not describe an act of Satan personally, but we are remembering that the vision is portraying a great Satanic system that is serpent-like, dragon-like; hence the fitness of the symbol of a fictitious monster, an amphibious land and water animal, employed to describe the particular activities of Satan during this period of human history. We read in Job 40:23 of behemoth, who "drinketh up a river," and "trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth." It is uncer-

tain what animal is referred to here, but the action ascribed to it certainly assists to an interpretation of the vision under consideration. The following, which is in perfect harmony with the facts of history of those times, is a most reasonable interpretation of this peculiar symbol:

"As it is appropriate to a monster dragon, which may be supposed, like behemoth, to draw up Jordan into its mouth, to represent it as ejecting water as a river to bear away the woman, so the means employed by the rulers of the Roman Empire, symbolized by the dragon, to destroy the true people of God, must be supposed to be such as were appropriate to their peculiar character as usurpers of His rights, and patrons of superstition and idolatry. And they were doubtless the flood of false doctrines and superstitions and impious rites, introduced by Constantine and his successors. The earth which absorbed that flood, denotes the people generally of the empire, who eagerly embraced the religion thus adulterated to their taste, and by their conspicuous and exulting reception of it, occupied the attention of the rulers, and allowed the small body of dissentients to escape their sight" (D. N. Lord).

It is an indisputable fact of history that Constantine and his successors on the throne (both of the Eastern and Western Empires) in league with the apostate bishops, introduced a flood of false doctrines, superstitions, and idolatries, into the Church. Amongst these was the veneration of the cross, and the ascription to it of miraculous powers; the worship of relics, such as the bones of the saints and martyrs, etc. It was during this period that the false doctrine of the intercession of Mary and the saints was introduced, and the conversion of the simple worship of the Apostolic Church into gorgeous ceremonials. It was also during this period that the celibacy of the clergy was encouraged, and the arrogation of the throne and prerogatives of God by both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers. "These falsehoods, follies and impieties introduced, or adopted by the emperors, encouraged by their example, sanctioned by their laws, and enforced by the penalties of excommunication, imprisonment, the forfeiture of civil rights, banishment, and death — came armed with an overpowering force to all who were not fortified against them by the special aids of the Divine Spirit, and like a resistless torrent, bore away the great mass of the Church."

Based on an erroneous supposition that the serpent in this place represents Satan, the fallen, wicked, spirit being, some writers have interpreted the water coming out of his mouth to represent the utterances which issued forth from evil agencies, even the infidel writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This was the interpretation of Mr. Faber, a voluminous writer on prophecy during the first half of the Nineteenth Century. This is not only in conflict with the proper understanding of the phase of life from which the symbol is drawn, and its application to the Roman government of that *early* period, but also with the particular time stated in the vision for its fulfillment. It was during the period of the woman's flight, which was at the beginning of the 1260 years, that the water was cast out of the dragon's mouth to engulf the woman, and not near the end of her sojourn in the wilderness.

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17).

The anger of the dragon denotes that those he still continues to symbolize, (the civil rulers, Constantine and his successors, professing now, however to be Christian rulers) exhibited the same intolerant and persecuting spirit as their Pagan predecessors. This evil disposition or spirit was manifested in persecuting the true Christians, and in suppressing their religious liberties. The Christians referred to in this verse are doubtless those individuals who continued in association with the nationalized, but fallen Church, but who protested against its blasphemous claims and usurpations, false doctrines, and idolatrous worship. This condition of things continued during the period of over two centuries, when true believers were separating themselves from the false Church; indeed, until the Papacy came into existence.[1] This, as we have seen, was the period covered by what is symbolized by the woman's flight into the wilderness. The separation of true believers covered this long period, and history records the fact that there was not a single body of evangelical Christians that withdrew from the nationalized church, or rejected its false doctrines and professed a Scriptural faith, and offered a pure worship, and testified against the errors, but what was assailed by both the civil and religious rulers of this long period.

The phrase, "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ," fittingly describes true Christians, who faithfully served God, and bore testimony to the true Gospel, even to becoming martyrs to Christ's cause.

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(1) It continued also in the Eastern Empire until its fall in 1453 AD.

Hymn of the Waldenses

Hear, Father, hear Thy faint, afflicted flock
Cry to Thee from the desert and the rock,
While those who seek to slay Thy children hold
Blasphemous worship under roofs of gold;
And the broad, goodly lands with pleasant airs
That nurse the grape and wave the grain, are theirs.

Yet better were this mountain wilderness,
And this wild life of danger and distress —
Watchings by night, and perilous flight by day,
And meetings in the depths of earth to pray —
Better, far better than to kneel with them,
And pray the impious rite Thy laws condemn.

Yet, mighty God, yet shall Thy frown look forth
Unveiled, and terribly shall shake the earth;
Then the foul power of priestly sin and all
Its long-upheld idolatries shall fall.
Thou shalt raise up the trampled and opprest,
And Thy delivered saints shall dwell in rest.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

The Vision of the Ten-Horned Beast — Antichrist

(Revelation 13:1-10)

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Revelation 13:1,2).

The Revised Version renders this first sentence: "And he [that is, the dragon] stood upon the sand of the sea." This rendering seems preferable and we adopt it for the reason that, "besides being a reading of the highest manuscript authority ... it seems to have also much superior internal evidence to support it — seeing that it perfectly accords with the appropriateness of the figure that the dragon should stand on the flood-brink, to make over his empire and throne to the wild beast thence evoked by him; while, on the other hand, there could be no reason why St. John, having witnessed from his usual position the flood [sea] itself, should need personal transference to its brink (or the ocean brink, if so the reader prefer), to see the wild beast rising therefrom" (E. B. Elliott).

As the "dragon" of the previous vision is a symbol of the Roman government during the reign of Paganism, and up to the fall of Western Rome, so the "beast" of this vision is a symbol of the Roman government after the division of its territory into ten parts and its power becomes distributed amongst ten kingdoms. This is portrayed in the vision by the ten horns on the head of the beast. That this division of the Roman territory met its complete fulfillment early in the Fifth Century, is a very important matter to settle, for the reason that if it cannot be proved from history, then our futurist friends have some foundation for their belief that Antichrist will yet appear. On this account it seems that here is the proper place to give careful consideration to the matter.

It is very generally conceded by Historical writers that the dragon of chapter 12, the beast of chapter 13, and the scarlet beast of chapter 17, all refer to different stages, phases, or pictures of the Roman government that bears rule until the Kingdom of God is established in its place. There is also a very general

agreement among these expositors that the Western power corresponds to the fourth beast that the Prophet Daniel saw in vision. He saw the same beast until it was slain and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame (Daniel 7:11), to make way for the establishment of the Kingdom of the Son of Man and the saints.

"We find in the Apocalypse no beasts answering to Daniel's first three, but the fourth reappears very prominently, with his ten horns; we find no periods corresponding to the seventy weeks, or the 2300 days, but the 'time, times, and a half,' is repeated in several forms, and in the same relative connection. We find in the closing visions, features that identify them with the final scenes of Daniel, and it is difficult to resist the conviction that the intervening Apocalyptic visions must be symbolic predictions of the moral and spiritual aspects of all that has happened to the Church of Christ, from John's day to the present time, and all that shall happen to the close."

As this "beast" government receives its power, throne, and authority, from the "dragon" (verse 2), it must necessarily represent that phase of Roman rule which receives its legal authority from the imperial government, symbolized by the dragon — the dragon continuing to symbolize the Eastern Roman government at Constantinople. The fact that the "diadems," in the vision of the beast, are seen upon its horns, instead of upon its heads as in the case of the dragon, indicates that the time or period in which the vision begins to have its fulfillment is when the kingdoms symbolized by the "ten horns" have all begun their rule.

In our search to discover whether this division of the Roman Empire has yet taken place it will be helpful to examine Daniel's prophecy where the same tenfold division of the Roman Empire is symbolically described. The prophecy reads: "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast (Roman Empire) ... and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it (the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, and the Grecian); and it had ten horns." In explaining this vision the heavenly revealer said: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings [kingdoms] that shall arise" (Daniel 7:7,23,24).

Ten Horns Picture the Breaking up of the Roman Empire

It is very generally agreed that this fourth beast with its ten horns, was the same as the beast with its ten horns seen by St. John; and that they both, in this aspect, refer to the same period of time, namely when the ten kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was divided begin to be first seen in history. The breaking up of the Roman Empire, as recorded by all historians, was accomplished during the fourth and fifth centuries by the conquests or invasions of what are commonly called the Gothic hordes of the North. This was the period of time when, in the fulfillment of the vision, St. John saw the dragon stand upon the seashore, and the beast gradually emerging from the sea. The "sea" would represent the disturbed, turbulent condition amongst the peoples of the Roman Empire, as a consequence of these barbaric Gothic invasions.

History informs us that at the close of the Fifth Century, "only the shadow of the empire in the West remained. All the provinces — Illyricum, Gaul, Britain, Spain, and Africa — were in the hands of the Goths, the Vandals ... and various other intruding tribes. Italy, as well as Rome herself, had become again and again the spoil of the insatiable barbarians. The story of the twenty years [from about 456 AD] following the sack of the capital by Genseric affords only a repetition of the events we have been narrating. During these years several puppet emperors were set up by the different leaders of the invading tribes. A final seditious movement placed upon the shadow-throne a child of six years named Romulus Augustulus. ... He had reigned only a year, when Odoacer, the leader of a tribe of German mercenaries [the Heruli], dethroned him, and abolishing the title of emperor, took upon himself the government of Italy" (Myers' History). "When Odoacer was proclaimed king of Italy, the phantom assembly that still called itself the Roman senate sent back to Constantinople the tiara and purple robe, in sign that the Western Empire had passed away" (White's Eighteen Christian Centuries).

The last form or "head" of the Roman Empire previous to the enthronement of the beast under its Papal head, thus ended in 476 AD with the dethronement of Romulus Augustulus. To this all historians agree. It must, therefore, be at this time, or at least about this time, that we should look for all the ten kingdoms.

Another very important matter to settle before seeking to discover these ten kingdoms is the location and extent of the Roman territory in which we are to look for them, that is, whether this territory covers the empire in the East, or the empire in the West, or both. This is an important feature for the reason that all the characteristics of this "beast" power — its blasphemy against God and His tabernacle, its warring against God's saints, and the length of time it would dominate over them — indicate that it represents the ten-fold division of the Roman Empire. This ten-fold division of the empire, or the ten kingdoms under the headship of the Antichrist, is represented in this vision of St. John as one of the "heads" of the beast. It is very generally agreed that the "little horn," seen by the Prophet Daniel coming up amongst the ten on the fourth beast (Daniel 7), is identical with the "head" that rules this beast seen by St. John, and that they both describe one and the same power — the Antichrist.

This being true, we are enabled by the vision of Daniel to discover the exact period in history when the Antichrist is to be looked for. It will be seen that the "little horn" comes to view after all the ten are formed, and does so by rooting up three of the first horns. This means that the Antichrist does not come into existence until ten kingdoms occupy the territory of the old Roman Empire, and that it comes into power by causing the overthrow of three of the first ten kingdoms. Still further, as it is very generally agreed that the "Man of Sin," referred to by St. Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2, also represents the Antichrist, and also that the one thing that hindered the full development of the "Man of Sin" was the continuance of the imperial rulership in the Roman City, we would not, therefore, look for all the ten kingdoms until after 476 AD, when the last emperor was dethroned. We quote Sir Isaac Newton, a profound student and

prophetic expositor, concerning this important matter of the location of the ten kingdoms.

"Seeing the body of the third beast [of Daniel 7, the Grecian Empire] is confined to the nations on this side the Euphrates, and the body of the fourth beast [Roman Empire] is confined to the nations on this side of Greece, we are to look for all the four heads of the third beast [Grecian Empire] among the nations on this side of the Euphrates, and for all the eleven horns [little horn and ten horns] of the fourth beast [Roman Empire] among the nations on this side of Greece. Therefore we do not reckon the Greek Empire [Eastern Empire] seated at Constantinople, among the horns of the fourth beast [Roman Empire] because it belongs to the body of the third [Greece]."

Mr. Elliott goes on to say concerning this matter: "It is of course a necessary preliminary to our enumeration of ten kingdoms answering to the ten horns of the beast, that we satisfy ourselves geographically as to the extent of Roman territory on which, and chronologically as to the time at which such kingdoms ought to be sought. It is chiefly from adopting their several lists to more or less of the fullest territorial extent of the Roman world, and to epochs earlier or later in the prolonged period of the flux and reflux of the Gothic waters [peoples] over it, that interpreters agreed on the main principles of their expositions, have yet in their lists more or less differed from each other. ... With regard then to the first point, it seems reasonable to me that we should seek the ten kingdoms on the territory not of the whole Roman Empire, but of the Western only. ... It was over this part only of the Roman world that the Gothic flood swept away the old imperial government, and made room for new kingdoms to arise; and yet again, over this part only that the authority of the eighth or Papal head was properly or permanently established."

It is well to keep in mind that the Futurist position is that the ten kingdoms have not yet appeared; and of course if this be true, then the "little horn," which is by both Futurist and Historical writers understood to describe the political aspect of the Antichrist, has not yet made its appearance. It is generally understood by the Futurist that the ten kingdoms must be looked for on the territory which was subjected by the Roman Empire at the time of its widest dominion; in other words, on the territories occupied by the Roman, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Grecian Empires. We believe that this is a mistake. Concerning this another has said:

"A very little consideration will show that prophecy regards the four empires as being as distinct in territory as in time; as distinct in geographical boundaries as in chronological limits. They rise in a definite sequence; the supreme dominion of one does not in point of time overlap the supreme dominion of the following one, nor is the territory of a former 'beast' or empire ever regarded as belonging to a later one, though it may have been actually conquered. Each has its own proper theatre or body, and the bodies continue to exist after the dominion is taken away. This is distinctly stated, both in connection with the fourfold image and with the four beasts. ... The three earlier beasts did not cease to exist when the fourth arose. 'Their dominion was taken away, yet their lives

were prolonged for a season and time.' (Daniel 7:12). That is to say, the first three empires are regarded as coexisting with the fourth, after their dominion has ended. This proves that they are regarded as distinct in place as well as in time. They continue to be recognized as territorial divisions of the earth after the disappearance of their political supremacy. Now the Eastern Empire of Rome, which it acquired by conquest, occupied precisely the same territory as the Grecian Empire had done, and its conquest in Asia occupied the territories which originally formed the Babylonian and Medo-Persian Empires. None of this territory belongs to 'the legs of iron' [of Nebuchadnezzar's vision]. It constitutes the golden, silver, and brazen portions of the image. It cannot be regarded as forming any part of the empire proper and peculiar to Rome.

"The ten horns or kingdoms of the fourth empire must none of them be sought in the realms of the third, second, or first, but exclusively in the realm of the fourth, or in the territory peculiar to Rome, and which never had formed part either of the Grecian, Medo- Persian, or Babylonian Empires" (H. G. Guinness).

"As to the time, it seems to me that the list of kingdoms should be made with reference to some period subsequent (only not long subsequent) to the completion of the number ten on the platform of the Western Empire: and, in regard at least to Daniel's vision, prior of course to that eradication of three of them predicted by him. [Daniel 7:8,20,24,25.] ... Thus, in fine, there existed at the epoch of 532 AD the following ten kingdoms on the platform of the Western Roman Empire; viz., the Anglo-Saxons, the Franks of Central, Alleman-Franks of Eastern, and Burgundic-Franks of Southeastern France, the Visigoths, the Suevi, the Vandals, the Ostrogoths in Italy, the Bavarians, and the Lombards; ten in all" (E. B. Elliott).

When the Dragon Gave the Beast His Power

The year following this, in 533, one of the most significant events in connection with the rise of the Papal Antichrist occurred. It was in this year that Justinian, the Eastern Roman emperor, issued a decree constituting the bishop of Rome the head of the Church on earth. Thus do we have the fulfillment of the expression, "and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." For some time previous to this there had been a rivalry — indeed, a dispute, between the bishop of Rome, and other ambitious, aspiring bishops of other cities, concerning which of them could, as they expressed it, rightly claim the honor of Apostolic succession, etc. This decree of Justinian settled the matter in favor of the bishop of Rome. The decree was not enforced, however, until the armies of Eastern Rome under Belisarius overthrew the Ostrogothic power, that under Theodoric ruled in Italy. This was in 538 or 539 AD, and without doubt, marked the beginning of the period of the twelve hundred and sixty years, when the saints were delivered into Papacy's hand (Daniel 7:25). It was the beginning of the Papal Antichrist; also the time when the ten kings began to give their power and strength unto the beast, as represented in its Papal head. In regard to the number ten being used to designate these kingdoms, we quote several authors of note. Sir Isaac Newton, with reference to this matter, said:

"Whatever was their number afterwards, as some of those kingdoms at length fell, and new ones arose, they are still (in the prophecy) called the ten kings from their first number."

Mr. Elliott comments on these words of Mr. Newton:

"Indeed it is to be observed that not only did a thus divided form continue for ages afterward to characterize the great commonwealth (if we may so call it) of Western Christendom, but the decuple number of kingdoms seemed to continue in a manner their standard numeral type. At certain long subsequent epochs of note, notwithstanding many intervening revolutions and changes in Western Europe, the number ten will be found to have been observed on from time to time as that of the Western Roman or Papal Kingdoms. So Gibbon, with reference to the Twelfth Century, speaking of Roger, first king of Italy, 1130 AD, thus writes: 'The nine kings of the Latin world might disclaim their new associate, unless he were consecrated by the authority of the Supreme Pontiff.' "

The next feature in order in this vision is that the beast had seven heads. These are understood very generally by expositors to represent the seven successive forms of government that ruled from the city of Rome from its beginning, either its earliest beginning, 753 BC, or when it exercised world- wide dominion, 31 BC. There is a general agreement that Papacy is represented by one of the heads of this beast. As the full explanation of these seven heads is given to St. John by the revealing angel, and recorded in the vision of chapter seventeen, we will leave the full consideration of them until we come to a study of that chapter.

It is stated in verse 3 that St. John "saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed." There is a difference of opinion among expositors as to which one of the beast's heads is referred to in these words. The cause of this difference is almost wholly from the fact that they begin to count these seven heads from a different epoch in history. Many of the older commentators begin to count at the time when the city of Rome (not the empire) was founded. Nearly all of these make the head that was wounded to death to be the imperial, which ended in 476 AD. They understand this to be the seventh head, and the Papacy to be an eighth head. We note several seemingly insurmountable objections to this interpretation:

(1) The visions that symbolize the Roman Empire in chapters 12, 13, and 17, invariably represent it as having seven heads and not eight. This is explained by the above mentioned expositors by saying that the eighth head took the place of the one that was wounded to death, the imperial. The description, however, does not state that this head died, but rather that its deadly wound was healed — an incident which seems to teach that the form of government symbolized by this head would receive a terrible wound, but would recover from it. This very fittingly describes what was done to Papacy by the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, culminating in 1799, when the Pope for a brief space of time was dethroned. However, in harmony with the vision, he was shortly reinstated by Napoleon, and later on recognized by the allied powers of Europe. Thus, "his deadly wound was healed."

(2) It would seem that the proper time in history to begin to count these seven heads or forms of government would be when the third beast empire of Daniel 7, the Grecian or Macedonian, and its four heads or divisions, had been swallowed up by the Roman, which was not until Egypt, the last division, was conquered in 31 BC. It would appear manifestly improper to begin to count these seven heads over a century before even the first beast, the Babylonian Empire, was seen in the vision by Daniel, which would be necessary if we began the count when the city was founded — about seven centuries before the fourth beast, symbolizing the Roman Empire, was seen by the Prophet.

(3) When St. John was given the vision, only three forms of government had existed in the city of Rome from its founding in 753. These were the kingly, lasting until 508 BC; the republic, lasting until about 27 BC; and the imperial, beginning with Octavius or Augustus Caesar. While it is true that there were several forms by which the republic was ruled, sometimes by Consuls, sometimes by Tribunes, sometimes by Decemvirs, and sometimes by a Triumvirate, it was all the time a republic, these officers being elected by the people. This will be seen by a reference to any historian (see Myers, Swinton, and the Encyclopedias). It would seem, therefore, that the proper place to begin to count the seven heads would be when the last head of the third beast empire was overthrown. That head was Egypt. The year that this event occurred is understood by all historians to be 31 BC. The form of government existing at this time was the republic.

(4) If we were to understand the Papacy to be an eighth head or form of government, and (as is understood by nearly all expositors) these heads should all be found in Rome, the seven-hilled city, then, as it is a fact that Papacy lost all control or authority in the Roman city in 1870, the present Victor Immanuel dynasty would be a ninth head. The unveiling of prophecy by the events of history thus seems to have proved the incorrectness of the interpretation that Papacy is represented by an eighth head. The term eighth in Revelation 17, seems rather to refer to the eighth or last form the beast may assume; this form would be the beast without a head or government, in other words, anarchy. With the statement that the head that received the deadly wound and was healed represented Papacy, we leave the further consideration of the matter until we take up in order the revealing angel's explanation to St. John, found in chapter seventeen.

Before proceeding to the consideration of the other features of the vision which relate especially to Papacy's character and doings, we note, as having a very important bearing on a correct interpretation of this vision of the beast, and its further description in Revelation 17, that it will be quite necessary to locate these ten horns, that is, to locate where on the beast's heads, St. John saw them. It will be evident to the thoughtful student that they could not be upon those heads (forms of government of the Roman Empire) that in their fulfillment were in the past, or had passed into history before the division of the empire in 476 AD, whether we begin to reckon from 753 BC, or 31 BC, for we are told that "the ten horns are ten kings," representing the division of the empire into ten. The very suggestion of this matter, keeping in mind the period in history when the

kingdoms symbolized by the ten horns began to rule, leads us to conclude that they all must be found on the Papal head, whichever one represented Papacy, because these ten kingdoms constitute Papacy's supporters throughout a large part of the whole career, and they do not begin to turn against her until the Sixteenth Century, as, we have seen, and as is recorded in the vision: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the harlot [Papal Church] and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (Revelation 17:16).

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion" (verse 2).

It will be observed by the careful student that the three beasts referred to here in the description of this one wild beast, were the same used in the prophecy of Daniel 7; Babylon being represented by a lion, Medo-Persia by a bear, and Grecia by a leopard. The significance of the body of the beast being likened to a leopard is thus described:

"Well do the Scriptures symbolically represent Papacy as a leopard beast (or mottled government — Revelation 13:2). In one place it is liberal, almost white in its professions or appearances; in another quarter it is black, corrupt, degrading, brutal; and in still other places it has various neutral and tawny shades of correspondence to the natural depravity of the people it rules with its rod of eternal torment and its staff of purgatory.

"In Spain [one of the ten horns] which has been for centuries one of its dark spots — as dark as the general civilization of the people will permit, the 'leopard' has been accustomed to have its way, and is now incensed that freedom of worship, or even of thought, should be dreamed of" (C. T. Russell).

In regard to the beast being described as having feet like the feet of a bear, and a mouth like that of a lion, we have this striking comment by Mr. Barnes:

"The idea here seems to be that of strength, as the strength of the bear resides much in its feet and claws. At the same time, there is the idea of a combination of fierce qualities — as if the blood- thirstiness, the cruelty, and the agility of the leopard were united with the strength of the bear. ... The mouth of the lion is made to seize and hold its prey, and is indicative of the character of the animal as a beast of prey. John has thus brought together the qualities of activity, blood-thirstiness, strength, ferocity, all as symbolic of the power that was intended to be represented."

It is true that these characteristics are intended, doubtless, to apply to the ten kingdoms (as well as Papacy), nearly all of which, as kingdoms, had embraced the idolatrous form of Christianity that prevailed when the Roman bishop was constituted by the Emperor Justinian's decree to be the supreme head of Christendom. Mr. Lord has thus described them:

"These separate dynasties are with propriety united in a single symbol [ten horns], and exhibited as one great combination of usurping tyrants, from the similarity of their arrogations, policy, and rulers. ... They all adopted, in a large degree, the laws of the ancient [Roman] Empire as their common law. They

united in the same usurpation of Divine rights, in imposing the same false religion [paganized Christian] on their subjects, and in a similar hostility to the true people of God. They all nationalized the Church and all persecuted dissenters. They were to their subjects in strength, ferocity, and bloodiness, what an animal would be to its victims that united in itself the agility of the panther [leopard], the strength of the bear, and the mercilessness and voracity of the lion."

"And all the world wondered after the beast" (verse 3).

"The word wondered here used ... means properly to be astonished; to be amazed; then to wonder at; then to admire and follow. ... And the general idea is, that the beast received such a universal reverence, or inspired such universal awe, as to be properly called worship or adoration. There can be no doubt of the propriety of this, considered as applicable to that secular Roman power [ten kingdoms] which sustained the Papacy. The homage was as wide as the limits of the Roman Empire had ever been, and might be said to embrace 'all the world' " (Albert Barnes).

"For hundreds of years Papacy has not only deceived the kings of the earth as to its power and claimed Divine authority, and ruled over them, but even in the Church, God's Temple, where Christ alone should be recognized as Head and Teacher, it has seated itself and claimed to be the only teacher and lawgiver; and here it has deceived all, except the few, by its phenomenal success and boastful claims. 'All the world wondered' — were astonished, deceived, bewildered — 'whose names were not written in the Lamb's book of life,' and many whose names are written as saints of God were seriously perplexed. And, this deception is the stronger because of the very gradual formation of these ambitious designs and their yet more gradual realization. It extended over centuries, and, as an ambition, was already secretly at work in Paul's day. It was a process of little by little adding error to error — the supplementing of one man's ambitious declarations by those of another and another farther down the stream of time. Thus, insidiously, did Satan plant and water the seeds of error, and develop the greatest and most influential system the world has ever known — Antichrist" (C. T. Russell).

"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with, him?" (verse 4).

That they "worshipped the dragon," signifies that they continued still to reverence, give honor to the imperial government ruling from Constantinople. And this, as history shows, continued to be true for several centuries, until the Eastern Empire and Church became separated from the Western, as it did afterwards. That they worshipped the beast, implies that the people looked upon the rulers of the ten kingdoms under Papacy as possessing authority and rights in civil and religious matters belonging alone to God. In other words, they were recognized as having power to dictate the form and method of Christian worship. The word worship, as used here, means to extend reverence and homage; to show respect to one who is a superior, to kings and princes, etc.

"The word may be used here to mean that homage or reverence, as to a higher power, was rendered to the dragon; not strictly that he was openly worshipped in a religious sense as God. Can any one doubt that this was the case under Papal Rome; that the power which was set up under that entire domination, civil and ecclesiastical, was such as Satan [whose instrument originally was Paganism] approved, and such as he sought to have established on the earth? And can any one doubt that the homage thus rendered, so contrary to the law of God, and so much in derogation of His claims, was in fact homage rendered to this presiding spirit of evil?

" 'And they worshipped the beast.' That is, they did it, as is immediately specified, by saying that he was incomparable and invincible; in other words, that he was almighty. ... It was the policy of rulers and princes in those times to augment in every way possible the respect in which they were held; to maintain that they were the vicegerents of heaven; to claim for themselves sacredness of character and of person [pictured, as we have already explained, in the "diadems" on the heads, now transferred to the horns]; and to secure from the people a degree of reverence which was in fact idolatrous. Never was this more marked than in the times when the Papacy had the ascendancy, for it was its policy to promote reverence for the power that sustained itself, and to secure for itself the idolatrous veneration of the people" (Albert Barnes).

Along this line another has called attention to the fact "that when, in 455 AD, the city of Rome was invaded and plundered by the Vandals, and all around was distress and desolation, Leo, the bishop of Rome, improved the opportunity for impressing upon all, both barbarians and Romans, his claim of spiritual power. To the rude and superstitious barbarians, already greatly impressed by what they saw about them of Rome's greatness and wealth, Leo, arrayed in his pontifical robes, exclaimed: 'Beware! I am the successor of St. Peter, to whom God has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven and against whose church the gates of hell cannot prevail; I am the living representative of Divine power on the earth; I am Caesar, a Christian Caesar, ruling in love, to whom all Christians owe allegiance; I hold in my hands the curses of hell and the benedictions of heaven; I absolve all subjects from allegiance to kings; I give and take away, by Divine right, all thrones and principalities of Christendom. Beware how you desecrate the patrimony given me by your invisible King; yea, bow down your necks to me and pray that the anger of God may be averted.' "

Great Swelling Words of Blasphemy

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven (verses 5,6).

"In its true significance, the word 'blasphemy' is applicable to any indignity offered to God. Bouvier defines it thus: 'Blasphemy is to attribute to God that which is contrary to His nature, and does not belong to Him — and to deny

what does.' (See Webster's Unabridged Dictionary under heads of Blasphemy and Blasphemously.) And in evidence that this is the sense in which the word 'blasphemy' is used in the Scriptures, notice the manner in which our Lord and the Pharisees used it: ... (John 10:33,36, see also Mark 14:61-64).

"With this, the proper definition of 'blasphemy,' before us; how evident it must be to the simplest minds that Papacy's great swelling words and boastful claims have, one and all, been blasphemies. The establishment of a counterfeit Kingdom of God was a libel upon God's government, a gross blasphemy, and a misrepresentation of His character and Plan and Word. God's character, i.e., His 'name' was blasphemed in the thousand monstrous edicts, bulls, and decretals issued in His name, by the long line of those who claimed, as vicegerents, to represent His Son; and God's tabernacle, the true Church, was blasphemed by the false system which claimed to take its place — which claimed that its faithful were the true and only tabernacle or Church of God. But we must let history tell us of these great swelling words, these blasphemous assumptions, which successive popes, as the head of Antichrist, uttered and approved.

"In a work entitled, 'The Pope the Vicar of Christ, the Head of the Church,' by the celebrated Roman Catholic, Monsignor Capel, is a list of no less than sixty-two blasphemous titles applied to the pope; and, be it noticed, these are not mere dead titles from the past, for they were arranged by one of Papacy's foremost living writers. We quote from the list as follows:

" 'Most Divine of all Heads,' 'Holy Father of Fathers,' 'Pontiff Supreme over all Prelates,' 'Overseer of the Christian Religion,' 'The Chief Pastor — Pastor of Pastors,' 'Christ by Unction,' 'Abraham by Patriarchate,' 'Melchisedec in Order,' 'Moses in Authority,' 'Samuel in the Judicial Office,' 'High Priest, Supreme Bishop,' 'Prince of Bishops,' 'Heir of the Apostles; Peter in Power,' 'Key-bearer of the Kingdom of Heaven,' 'Pontiff Appointed with Plenitude of Power,' 'Vicar of Christ,' 'Sovereign Priest,' 'Head of all the Holy Churches,' 'Chief of the Universal Church,' 'Bishop of Bishops, that is, Sovereign Pontiff,' 'Ruler of the House of the Lord,' 'Apostolic Lord and Father of Fathers,' 'Chief Pastor and Teacher,' 'Physician of Souls,' 'Rock against which the proud gates of hell prevail not,' 'Infallible Pope,' 'Head of all the Holy Priests of God.'

"All these blasphemously flattering titles have been applied to and received by the Roman pontiffs with complacency and marked satisfaction, as rightfully belonging to them" (C. T. Russell).

"And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months [twelve hundred and sixty years]" (verse 5).

We have already considered the significance of this symbolic time period as having special reference to Antichrist. It was the period of the prophesying of the witnesses in sackcloth, and the treading under foot of the (symbolic) holy city in chapter 11. The period began in 539 AD and ended in 1799, when Antichrist's power to "act" against the saints ceased. Bishop Newton has given us the full significance of these words:

"He hath also power to continue or rather to practice, to prevail, and prosper forty-two months. ... It doth not, therefore, follow that the beast is to continue to exist for no longer a term, but he is to practice, to prosper and prevail forty-two months; as the holy city is to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles forty-two months (Revelation 11:2)."

"It was the spiritual authority officially attached to him, which constituted the principle of the Romish bishop's headship over the kings, as also his anti-Christian usurpation, and blasphemy against the Most High in after ages. ... And what and whence this spiritual power, but from his being supposed to be officially the representative of the Apostle Peter, with the power of the keys centered by Christ in him; and so, by speedy consequence, Christ's Vicar upon earth; or to use St. John's most singularly characteristic appellation, Antichrist?"

And such was the claim of the bishop of Rome for nearly a century before the decree of Justinian in 533. The legate of Pope Celestine in the council of Ephesus in 431 AD, thus proclaimed it before all Christendom: "It is a thing undoubted that the Apostle Peter received the keys and power of binding and loosing; which Peter still lives and exercises judgment in his successors even to this day and always." Mr. Elliott quotes from a sermon preached by Pope Leo on St. Peter and St. Paul's day in 451 AD: " 'As being the See of the blessed Peter, thou Rome, art made the head of the world; so as to have even wider rule through Divine religion, than by the power of earthly domination.' " Gelasius, bishop of Rome from 492 to 496, made this same claim. Mr. Elliott says: "In a letter to Faustus, he wrote, 'Things Divine are to be learned by the secular potentates from bishops, above all from the Vicar of the blessed Peter.' In a letter to the emperor Anastasius [Gelasius thus wrote]: 'There are two authorities by which the world is governed, the Pontifical and the Royal; the sacerdotal order being that which has charge of the sacraments of life, and from which thou must seek the imparting to thee of salvation. Hence in Divine things it becomes kings to bow the neck to priests; specially to the Heads of Priests, whom Christ's own voice has set over the universal Church.' "

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (verse 7).

On reading these words the earnest student's attention is drawn immediately to the beast of chapter 11:7, which made war against Christ's witnesses. This we considered previously. There can be no question that the two beasts are identical; the actions ascribed to both are the same. They are both represented as making war against the true people of God, and as overcoming them; and the period of time in which they continue is the same — 1260 years. Practically all Protestant Historical expositors understand this to be so. It would be quite necessary that St. John, seeing in the preceding vision the doings of this beast from the abyss, should be given further knowledge concerning it. This knowledge is now supplied, not only in the chapter we are considering, but in visions further on. "Here (in chapter 13) the beast is described at large, who (in chapter 11) was only mentioned before."

Concerning the seeming lack of identity of these two beasts, in that one originates from the "abyss" and the other from the "sea," we will consider in another chapter, on the seven heads, since the two subjects are closely related.

All Worship the Beast Except Followers of the Lamb

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (verse 8).

Regarding the wide extent of dominion exercised by the Papacy, the following words are significant:

"The extent and the character of Papal dominion during the Dark Ages is in our days, little realized. ... The world can smile now at the puerility of the proud and preposterous pretensions, of the poor old man who occupies the chair of St. Peter in his Vatican prison in Rome. It listens to his loud claim to infallibility with a laugh of contempt. ... But of yore it was quite another thing. Every utterance of the tiara-crowned monarch was heard with awe, every command was implicitly obeyed. Men trembled under his curse, and gloried in his benediction, as if they had been those of Deity. ... Already in the Eighth Century, Gregory II boasted to the Greek Emperor, 'all the kings of the West reverence the Pope as a God on earth,' and facts fully justify the assertion. Pepin, for example, when aspiring to the crown of France, prayed the Pope to authorize his usurpation; and as soon as he had done so, the Franks, and indeed the whole Western World, recognized his title. Even the great Emperor Charlemagne, was willing to receive from the Roman Pontiff his crown and dominion. 'The Lord John, apostolic and universal Pope,' says the council of Pavia, 'hath at Rome elected, and anointed with the holy oil, Charlemagne, as emperor.' The western kings of Europe accepted the position of subserviency to the Sovereign Pontiff, by admitting into their coronation oaths a promise, 'to be faithful and submissive to the Popes, and the Roman Church.' ... 'Under the sacerdotal monarchy of St. Peter,' says Gibbon, 'the nations began to resume the practice of seeking on the banks of the Tiber, their kings, their laws, and the oracles of their fate.' ... If kings and emperors bowed thus before the Pope, it will easily be believed that the reverence of the common people for his person and office, and their submission to his arrogant and blasphemous pretensions, was complete" (H. G. Guinness).

It needs no comment concerning who are represented by the excepted ones — those whose names have been written from the foundation of the world in the scroll of the life of that Lamb who was killed (Diaglott). They are seen in the visions of the Revelation under various symbols and are always recognized as the true and faithful followers of Christ, who, although they may be deceived for a time, preserve their loyalty to their one Head under all circumstances.

"If any man have an ear, let him hear" (verse 9).

"This expression occurs at the close of each of the epistles addressed to the seven Churches, and is substantially a mode of address often employed by the Savior, in his personal ministry, and quite characteristic of him. ... The idea here

is that what is said respecting the 'beast' was worthy of special attention, as it pertained to most important events in the history of the Church."

"He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patient endurance and the faith of the saints" (Verse 10).

These words as applied to the saints seem to refer to a general principle of God's dealings in His providence. The Savior said, "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The thought seems to be that the Lord's true people would be strongly tempted to defend the Lord's cause by force, and that those who would yield to this temptation would experience a reaction. Bishop Newton in commenting on these words has thus interpreted them:

"It is added by way of consolation to the Church, that these enemies of God and of Christ, represented under the character of the beast, shall suffer the law of retaliation, and be as remarkably punished and tormented themselves: 'He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he who killeth by the sword, must be killed by the sword.' Such a promise might administer some comfort; and indeed it would be wanted; for the patience and the faith of the saints would be tried to the utmost, during the reign of the beast. 'Here is the patience and faith of the saints.' Of all the trials and persecutions of the Church this would be the most severe, and exceed those of the primitive times — both in degree and in duration."

Mr. Russell adds the thought:

"There were some who asserted that Papacy was a usurpation of the titles and power of the true Head and Ruler of the Church, and claimed their rights to the individual liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. Such used the 'sword of the spirit,' which is the Word of God in the defense of their liberty, and such were put to death by Papacy — it overcame the saints during its 1260 years of power."

Chapter Twenty-Nine

The Vision of the Two-Horned Beast

(Revelation 13:11-14)

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live" (Revelation 13:11-14).

That the visions of the two-horned beast and the image of the beast have been specially difficult ones for the earlier expositors who lived during the first half of the Nineteenth Century to understand, may be seen from the words of Mr. Elliott, one of the most noted of them:

"From the difficulties and ill success of commentators in the explanation of the image of the beast here spoken of, it has been designated by Vitringa (and the statement has been repeated by other expositors) as the cross of interpreters, and certainly the unsatisfactoriness of all previous solutions that I have seen of the beast's image seems to me very obvious."

It will be our purpose before attempting to discover the fulfillment of this vision in history — if indeed it has had a fulfillment — to consider the meaning of the symbols. Concerning the Scriptural use of a beast as a symbol there should not be any difference of opinion. A beast symbolizes an empire, a kingdom, or a worldly government. "We might here remark [says Mr. Russell] that nothing in this word 'beast' [of itself] is specially derogatory or invidious, neither in our use of the word, nor in the Scriptural use. Throughout the. Scriptures, in the symbolisms of Daniel and the Apocalypse, beasts are freely used as symbols for nations, governments, earthly powers, though never used as representing the Divine power — the true Church, the true Kingdom, which shall ultimately prevail." We might add that for centuries governments have been represented by the symbol of a beast, for instance, the British government is represented by the lion and the unicorn, and the Russian government by the bear. In the Scriptures the nature and character of the government is determined by the beast's actions and, when represented as speaking, by its words.

It is very important to bear in mind, as definitely stated in the vision, that this is "*another* beast." This, it would seem, cannot be consistently interpreted to mean anything else than that it is to be considered as entirely distinct and separate from the power or government represented by the ten- horned beast which preceded it, and which we have interpreted to be, as is quite generally understood, the *divided* Western Roman Empire, united under one ecclesiastical "head," the Papacy. In making application, therefore, of the vision in history, we will need to look for a government separate and distinct from the government represented by the first beast, considered in the previous chapter.

Another feature connected with the application of this vision in history is that it follows in point of time the division of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, the rise of the Papacy, and the Papacy's becoming a recognized ruling head in religious matters over these kingdoms. We shall, therefore, look for it some time after this state of affairs has developed in history. Another thing to be observed in an effort to identify it in history is that *after its rise*, it continues contemporary with the ten- horned kingdom and the Papacy. This is seen in the statement that it exercises in his sight all or, as is probably meant, similar power to the ten-horned kingdom under its Papal head. A further very important feature to be noted in an endeavor to locate it in history is that this two-horned beast, unlike the ten-horned beast, which emerged from the sea, comes up from the earth. The origin of the ten-horned beast and the Papal head, it will be recalled, was in connection with the disturbances amongst the "sea" class — disturbances which were caused by the invasions of the barbaric hordes of the north, and their establishing kingdoms in the territory of the Western Roman Empire. The two-horned beast, on the other hand, rises out of settled governmental conditions; that is, without disturbances among the people incidental to warring invasions. One has said as denoting the symbolic significance of this feature: "The former beast was represented as rising up out of the sea, indicating that the power was to rise from a perturbed or unsettled state of affairs — like the ocean. This second beast [emerges] from that which was more settled and stable — as the land is more firm than the waters."

A feature descriptive of both beasts is that they are represented as having "horns"; the distinguishing feature being that the first beast, the one from the sea, has ten, and this one from the earth has but two. As the ten horns of the first beast are divinely interpreted to represent ten kingdoms or governments (Daniel 7:24), so to interpret in harmony with this, the two horns should represent two governments. Furthermore, as the ten governments were united under a religious head, likewise we should look for two governments in a similar way united.

Similarities to Ten-Horned Beast

The horns on the second beast are stated to be like those of a lamb. A lamb uses its horns for defense only, and this would cause us to look for a government that used its religious authority only for defense. Other expressions in the vision denote that the important feature is the religious characteristic of the

power represented. There is a marked difference between the use made of the ten horns by Papacy and the use made of the two horns by the ruling authority of this second beast. We learn in Revelation 17, that the ten kingdoms symbolized by the horns gave their power and strength to the beast under the decrees of Papacy. Their power and strength was given not simply for defense, but rather to propagate, increase and spread its religion by force over the whole world.

It is further said of the two-horned beast government that it exercised all the authority of the ten- horned beast in his presence. This would not necessarily mean similar authority in *extent*; nor, as some have interpreted it, to have all the power of the first beast government delegated to it. It would seem rather to mean that it exercised a singular authority in its particular sphere or territory; that is, authority or power in both civil and religious matters. The expression, "in his presence" (Diaglott), as we have already explained, would seem to mean that it would (after its rise) exercise this power contemporary with the first beast government.

A very significant feature of this two-horned beast government is its manner of speaking — "he spake like a dragon." We have interpreted the dragon to represent the imperial, despotic government of the Pagan Roman Empire, and also the paganized Christian government ruled from Constantinople, which succeeded the Pagan. To speak like a dragon would be to exercise authority in issuing decrees in a harsh, proud, arrogant manner, as was the general character of those emperors who ruled the Roman Empire before its division.

The fact that it does great signs, even to causing fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men, by the which it deceives those that dwell on the earth, teaches that in this way the government symbolized by the two-horned beast would claim powers that belong alone to the Almighty, and seek to prove that it enjoys the cooperation and sanction of the Almighty.

Another feature descriptive of it is that it would in some way, not mentioned, cause the earth and those who dwell therein, to worship or reverence the first beast — particularly stated to be the one who received the deadly wound and was healed. And finally, and seemingly the most important feature of all, is that it would be an agency in causing an image or likeness of the first beast government to be made.

Views of Eminent Expositors

Recognizing what seems to be a Divine law in the interpretation and application of these visions — that of a progressive understanding of their fulfillment as history unveils their meaning — we most naturally and properly inquire, what has been the interpretation of this vision by expositors in general? We answer, There has not been that unanimity in the interpretation of this vision that has prevailed in the interpretation and application of the vision of the ten-horned wild beast. We give, in brief, the interpretations of some of the most noted expositors.

Mr. Elliott interpreted this two-horned beast to be "*the Papal Clergy*, united under the Pope in his ecclesiastical character as the Western Patriarch; and

acting so as to support him in his usurped and far loftier character of Christ's vicar on earth, or Antichrist." Its two horns were interpreted by him to be its secular and religious powers. This same expositor understood the "image of the beast" to represent "the Papal General Councils of Western Europe."

Mr. Barnes, in his *Notes and Comments*, interprets the two-horned beast to represent the Papacy itself in its exercise of ecclesiastical and civil power. The image of the beast, he interpreted to represent the Holy Roman Empire established under Charlemagne in 800 AD. Mr. Lord says that "all the characteristics of the two-horned wild beast are found conspicuously in the hierarchy of the Italian Catholic Church within the Papal dominions." He interprets its two horns to be the spiritual and temporal power, and not two kingdoms. The image of the beast he understood to have been fulfilled in the Gothic rulers (ten kingdoms) forming a union of their several national churches into a single hierarchy, under Papacy's prompting, and subjecting it to the Pope as its supreme legislator and judicial head, after the model of the ancient civil empire under Constantine and his successors.

In his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, Thomas Newton says: "The beast with two horns like a lamb, is the Roman hierarchy, or body of the clergy regular and secular." He further says, "This beast is otherwise called the 'false prophet,' as we shall see in several instances [Revelation 16:13, 19:20]; than which there cannot be a stronger or plainer argument to prove that false doctors or teachers, were particularly designed. For the false prophet, no more than the beast, is a single man, but a body or succession of men, propagating false doctrines, and teaching lies for sacred truths." The image of the beast is thus commented upon by this writer: "What appears most probable is, that this 'image' and representative of the 'beast' is the Pope. He is probably the idol of the Church. ... He is nothing more than a private person, without power and without authority, till the two-horned beast or the corrupted clergy, by choosing him pope, give life unto him and enable him to speak and utter his decrees, and to persecute even to death, as many as refuse to submit to him and to worship him."

Stephen N. Haskel, a Seventh Day Adventist, in *The Story of the Seer of Patmos*, published in 1905, thus writes about this matter: "The beast which came up out of the earth in the sight of the Prophet [St. John], symbolizes the United States; and the two horns represent the two foundation principles of the government, Protestantism and Republicanism. ... The life of Protestantism is gone, the life of Democracy is lost. The professed Protestant nation is imitating the Papal power of Rome, thus forming the image to the beast. As time progresses, it will be seen that the image will receive, more and more, the life of the beast. ... America is the home of Protestantism, but her churches today are Protestant only in name. ... Two things characterize the Remnant [true Church] people during the formation of the image of the beast. According to Revelation 12:17, they keep the commandments of God and have the spirit of prophecy."

Mrs. E. G. White, another Seventh Day Adventist expositor, in *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*, a work published in 1888, has thus commented on this vision: "The prophecy of Revelation 13 declares that the

power represented by the beast with lamb-like horns, shall cause 'the earth and them that dwell therein' to worship the Papacy — there symbolized by the beast 'like unto a leopard.' The beast with two horns is also to say 'to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast'; and, furthermore, it is to command all, 'both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond' to receive 'the mark of the beast.' It has been shown that the United States is the power represented by the beast with lamb-like horns, and that this prophecy will be fulfilled when the United States shall enforce Sunday observance, which Rome claims as the special acknowledgment of her supremacy."

It will be noted that all these expositors, except Adventist, apply this vision of the two-horned beast, to the Papacy — the Roman Catholic Church or hierarchy in some one or other of its forms or aspects. We cannot concur in these interpretations, as it would seem hardly proper to apply the vision in any sense to Papacy in its association with the ten kingdoms of Western Europe, for the simple reason that it is definitely stated to be *another*, a second beast.

Another strong objection to thus applying the vision is that the Scriptures interpret horns to represent kingdoms or governments. In Daniel 7:24, the ten horns are explained by the revealing angel to represent ten kings or kingdoms. In Daniel 8:20 the two horns seen on the ram are explained to be two kings or kingdoms — the kingdoms of Media and Persia; and the "notable horn" that is seen on the goat is explained to be the king of Grecia, understood quite generally to be Alexander the Great and his sons, the latter reigning for a brief time after his death. This being the very general symbolic significance of horns in Scripture, we cannot, therefore, properly apply this two-horned beast to the United States, because the United States is not made up of two governments. Neither would it seem proper to interpret the two-horned beast as representing a combination of civil and religious authority vested in a single government, or even a succession of governments. For these, and other reasons, which will be referred to later, we will need to look further for a kingdom or government meeting these Scriptural requirements.

It will be noted that the symbols require a government, similar in certain respects to Papacy; that is, a succession of rulers like Papacy, supported by *two* governments instead of *ten*, as in the case of Papacy. We are limited it would seem in our search for a government meeting these characteristics to the territory of the ancient Western Roman Empire, where the Papal ecclesiastical head and its ten horns are located. Surely the United States does not in any sense or degree meet this requirement. It is stated in the vision that the two-horned beast causes an image to be made like the first beast that received a deadly wound. If we are correct in our understanding that the beast which received the deadly wound was that form or aspect of the beast under its Papal head, and that this wound began to be inflicted in the Sixteenth Century Reformation, then it seems plain that we should look for the government that would fulfill this vision of the two-horned beast since Papacy received the deadly wound.

As we scan the pages of history, we find that at the beginning of the Sixteenth Century Reformation, all the governments of Western Europe were united

under the Papacy as their ecclesiastical head. This combination describes the first beast of this chapter, referred to in the first ten verses. Papacy at this time, as well as for some time prior to this, was vested with full ecclesiastical power, and with authority to set up or depose the kings of these governments. The Reformation, which began in 1517, brought about a great change.

The Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland

About the year 1534 an event occurred in connection with one of the ten kingdoms that up to the present time has filled nearly all the requirements of the two-horned beast, and from present indications it would seem will fulfill the others; and no other government has come to view since, that has done this. The particular occurrence to which we refer is that of England's separation from the Papal head, and the events in connection therewith. Let us carefully note the historian's account of these transactions:

"The Pope issued a decree excommunicating Henry [VIII] and relieving his subjects from their allegiance. Henry on his part called Parliament, and a celebrated bill known as the Act of Supremacy was passed (1534). This statute made Henry the Supreme Head of the Church in England, vesting in him absolute control over all its offices, and turning into his hands the revenues which had hitherto flowed into the coffers of the Roman See. ... Henry now set up in England a little Popedom of his own. He drew up a sort of creed which everybody must believe.[1] ... Thus was the English Church cared for by its self-appointed shepherd. What it should be called under Henry it would be hard to say. It was not Protestant; and it was just as far from being Catholic [except that it reverenced the Roman Catholic doctrines]" (*Myers' History*).

We quote another historian:

"Henry VIII was declared by the Parliament and the people supreme head on earth of the Church of England. ... Besides, he considered the title of head of the English Church as if it transferred to him the enormous power which had been claimed, and indeed usurped, by the Roman Pontiff, and in consequence of this interpretation of his title he looked upon himself as master of the religious sentiments of his subjects, and as authorized to prescribe modes of faith, according to his fancy. ... When Henry VIII ... was declared supreme head upon earth of the Church of England, George Brown, a native of England, and a monk of the Augustine order, whom that monarch had created in the year 1535 archbishop of Dublin (Ireland) ... caused the king's supremacy to be acknowledged in that nation (Ireland)" (*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*).

Concerning the two horns of the beast, Mr. Russell with good reason states: "It is one ecclesiastical system; and the two horns show that it is supported, and its authority recognized by two kingdoms. ... Remember that [for a church] to be

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(1) This creed embodied most of the false doctrines of Papacy. It was not until after the time of Henry VIII that the Reformation Movement began to affect the Church in England.

simply aided, or supported by the empire does not make a symbolic 'beast'; no, a beast is a government, and to become a symbolic beast [in the way described], a church must needs become an element in, or part of the government. This was not the case in those mentioned [the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, the Dutch Reformed Church, nor the Lutheran, in those countries in which those Churches were established]. No. there is but one church which this symbol fits perfectly, viz.: The established 'Church of England and Ireland.' This system, like the Papal, was a blending of church and state, an ecclesiastical empire... . Now let us see about the two horns: England of course was one of them, and ... Ireland was the other. ... History says that in 1537 the Irish Parliament in Dublin 'passed the Act of Supremacy, declaring Henry VIII Supreme Head of the Church, prohibiting intercourse with the court of Rome, and making it treason to refuse the oath of supremacy.' Henry VIII also took the title of King of Ireland. Thus we see that the second horn came up within the brief space of [about] five years after the first. The fact that Ireland was not a powerful horn matters not, for it was stronger than some that supported the Papal beast."

History substantiates the words of this author, as we read: "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland is, since the union of Ireland, the full official designation of the country more generally known as Great Britain, or the United Kingdom" (*International Encyclopedia*).

"The 'two horns like a lamb,' would seem to indicate that this beast would be peaceably inclined — not inclined to be aggressive, but merely using the horns for defense." This has been a particular characteristic of this politico-religious government during most of its reign, in which particular it has differed from Papacy. It is true that the two-horned beast in the Sixteenth Century, like Papacy, used force to cause its own subjects to submit to its authority in religious matters (which is portrayed in the vision), but it did not attempt to extend its conquests *in these matters* outside of its own dominion.[1] Papacy, however, sought by force of arms to extend its religious authority over the whole world. In the last two centuries England has become very lamb-like and liberal to its subjects in matters pertaining to religion. "The Reformation Movement had not reached England at this time, and certainly it was much needed. The Clerical Convocation which could acknowledge such a head was not far from being as corrupt as Papacy."

The requirement of the symbol which describes the two-horned beast as coming up from the earth, in contradistinction from that of the ten-horned beast emerging from the sea, is fully met. The union of Great Britain and Ireland, as to both the civil and the ecclesiastical power or authority under Henry VIII, was introduced without any disturbances or troubles amongst the people from invasions by outside people, as *was* the case in the rise of the ten-horned beast and the subserviency of the ten kingdoms to the Papacy.

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(1) Its dominion, however, both civil and ecclesiastical, has since reached all parts of the world.

"And he Spake as a Dragon"

The meaning of this statement as given by Mr. Barnes is that "he spake in a harsh, haughty, proud, arrogant tone — as we should suppose a dragon would if he had the power of utterance." Thomas Newton explains this: "He had a voice of terror, like the dragon or Roman emperors, in commanding (spiritual) idolatry, and in persecuting and slaying the true worshipers of God and faithful servants of Jesus Christ." These expositors, as we have seen, apply these words to Papacy. We must remember, however, that this second "beast" is said to exercise a similar, though not so extensive a power as Papacy. In other words, in this second beast we are to look for a government which, like Papacy, would usurp God's power, and exercise for a time at least, arrogant, persecuting domination in both civil and religious matters. And these characteristics perfectly describe Henry VIII as also *some* of his immediate successors in the Sixteenth Century.

Some have classed Henry VIII as a reformer. History, however, shows that he was in no sense a reformer. Indeed he was a great foe of the Protestant reformers. D'Aubigne, the great historian, said in this connection:

"The moment when Henry aimed his first blows at Rome was also that in which he began to shed the blood of the disciples of Christ. Although ready to throw off the authority of the Pope, he would not recognize the authority of Christ: *Obedience to the Scriptures is, however, the very soul of the Reformation*.

"The king's contest with Rome had filled the friends of the Scriptures with hope. ... 'The king is one of us,' they used to boast; 'he wishes his subjects to read the New Testament.' ... Language such as this aroused the clergy. ... 'If we would not have Luther's heresy pervade the whole of England, we must hasten to throw it (Tyndale's Translation of the New Testament) in the sea.' ... The bishops led the attack. 'We must clear the Lord's field of the thorns which choke it,' said the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Convocation on the 29th of November 1529; immediately after which the bishop of Bath read to his colleagues the list of books that he desired to have condemned. There were a number of works by Tyndale, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Ecolampadius, Pomeranus, Brentius, Bucer, Jonas, Francis Lambert, Fryth, and Fisk. The Bible in particular was set down. 'It is impossible to translate the Scripture into English,' said one of the prelates. 'It is not lawful for the laity to read the Bible,' said another, 'you will make us all heretics.' 'By circulating the Scriptures,' exclaimed several, 'you will raise up the nation against the king.' Sir Thomas More laid the bishops' petition before the king, and some time after, Henry gave orders by proclamation that 'no one should preach, or write any book, or keep any school, without his bishop's license; that no one should keep any heretical book in his house; that the bishops should detain the offenders in prison at their discretion, and then proceed to the execution of the guilty; and, finally, that the chancellor, the justices of the peace, and other magistrates, should aid and assist the bishops.' Such was the cruel proclamation of Henry VIII, the father (?) of the English Reformation."

The historian then recited the martyrdom of many of the noble Reformers, and summing up he says: "Thus died in the Sixteenth Century, the disciples of

the Reformation sacrificed by Henry VIII. ... Thus were the witnesses to the truth struck down by the priests, by Sir Thomas More, and by Henry VIII."

Henry's reign wrought very little change in the forms and doctrinal teachings of the Roman Church; and so we read further: "It is carefully to be observed here that this downfall of the Papal authority in England was not productive of much benefit, either to the friends or to the cause of the Reformation. For the same monarch, who had so resolutely withdrawn himself from the dominion of Rome, yet superstitiously retained the greatest part of its errors along with its imperious and persecuting spirit. He still adhered to several of the most monstrous doctrines of Popery, and frequently presented the terrors of death to those who differed from him in their religious sentiments" (*Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History*).

King of England Head of the Church

Edward, son of Henry VIII, succeeded him as supreme head of the Church of England and Ireland. During his reign many changes of this character were instituted. The historian in referring to this informs us: "These sweeping changes in the old creed and in the services of the Church would have worked little hardship or wrong had only everybody . ... been left free to follow what religion he would. ... By royal edict, however, all preachers and teachers were forced to sign the Forty-two Articles; and severe enactments, known as 'Acts for the Uniformity of Service,' punished with severe penalties any departure from the forms of the new prayerbook. ... Many persons during the reign [of Edward] were imprisoned for refusing to conform to the new worship; while two at least were given to the flames as 'heretics and contemners of the Book of Common Prayer' " (*Myers' History*).

That the sovereigns of these latter times still possess the same title, the same historian bears testimony: "This title (Defender of the Faith) was retained by Henry after the secession of the Church of England from the Papal See, and is borne by his successors at this day, though they are 'defenders' of quite a different faith from that in the defense of which Henry first earned the title."

"These matters," says Mr. Russell, "are very imperfectly understood by people in general [today]. But are the same titles — 'Supreme head of the church on earth,' etc., still applied to the English sovereigns? Yes; and, furthermore, the crown worn shows the title, for it is surmounted by a cross. And the present 'Great Seal of England,' besides describing Victoria [who reigned when this was written] as the defender of the faith, illustrates it by a picture of the Queen, supported on either side by figures representing Justice and Religion, which sit at her feet. The Queen is shown as holding in her hand a globe (representing the earth), the upper half of which is light colored (representing Christianity), and thus surmounted by a cross which in symbol declares her to be the supporter or head of the Church universal. This is the same exactly as seen in the hands of the Popes in many pictures. It represents as a whole that this head of the Church on earth is the upholder, supporter, of the truth. Paul said: 'Christ is the head of the Church,' and that we are to 'grow up into him in all things, which is the

head even Christ.' Again he repeats that 'God gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body.' (Ephesians 1:20-22, 4:15, 5:23, Colossians 1:18). It is the Church on earth that St. Paul is speaking of, hence any Pope, Queen, Council, Assembly, Conference, or any other man or company of men, who claim or exercise the powers of the true Head, Jesus, are opposing him."

As bearing still further on the present condition of the national church government of England, and the interpretation of this vision, the same writer continues:

"From 1538 to 1871 — 333 years — the title of the Church was, 'The Church of England and Ireland,' thus recognizing both 'horns.' On January 1, 1871 (by action of Parliament and the consent of the Queen, the head of the Church), the Irish Church was dis-established, or that horn cast off. So, too, all of the horns which once supported Papacy have broken off from her; the difference being that in Papacy's case the horns have turned against her, and in the case of the second beast, it casts off the Irish horn of itself, believing it to be a weakness, rather than a strength."

Makes the Earth and Those Who Dwell Therein to Worship the First Beast

The expression, "All the authority of the first beast [Papacy] he executes in his presence," very fittingly applies to Henry VIII, and simply means that *in his own territory*, he executed a similar authority to that of Papacy; that is, an authority in both civil and religious matters, and that he did this in the presence or sight of the Papacy — while Papacy was ruling. It will be admitted that the expression, "and makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship [to respect, to reverence, to honor] the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed," seems difficult to interpret as applying to the influence Henry VIII exerted over the people toward the Papal system. The language at first seems to imply that the two-horned beast acts in sympathy and cooperation with the first beast, Papacy; and this is one of the chief utterances in the vision that causes commentators so generally to apply the vision to some phase or aspect of Papacy. It will be noted, however, that a similar expression is found in the vision of the first beast, where it is said that the people "worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast." This does not mean that the people under Papacy worshipped, or reverenced, intentionally, knowingly, the imperial Roman government either in its Pagan or Christianized form, which the dragon represented, but rather, that they did so by supporting and submitting to the imperial government's decree, respecting the paganized Christianity that the Papacy established.

Applying this to the words: "and makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship [to respect, to reverence, to honor] the first beast," etc., the thought would seem to be that because of Henry VIII's assumption and usurpation of the same Divine power as Papacy, not only did the two-horned beast fail to enlighten mankind concerning the erroneous and indeed blasphemous claims and usurpations of Papacy, and its influence over the people, but rather it served to encourage, to establish these claims, because it became apparent that Papacy's power and influence was so much greater and wider that it caused the great

masses of men to hold to that one, which, because of its longevity, seemed to be the one of Divine origin. Thus it has been truthfully set forth that:

"The Church of England claimed all the powers and authority which Papacy claimed. [Note Mosheim previously quoted.] It claimed to be *the* Church; it acknowledged and repudiated some of the corruptions complained of by the Reformers, such as the sale of indulgences, transubstantiation [this last not in Henry's day], etc., and abandoned those as well as the name Roman, for which they substituted the word Holy, calling it the original 'Holy Catholic [universal] Church.' It claims the same governmental authority and the same veneration for its decrees as Papacy. And by establishing a similar system, devoid of some of the grosser Papal errors, it attracted attention of all to those errors, as being the only possible fault of Papacy. And when some of those errors were shortly after discarded by Papacy, the inference was that both beast systems were right. People of that day, as now, seemed to think those systems proper and right, if their powers, etc., were properly exercised; but from God's standpoint the systems are abominations, and wrong from the very center. The systems are based upon errors, and, like a corrupt tree, 'cannot bring forth good fruit.'

"The very basis of both those systems is their claim to be the 'Kingdom of God' in reigning power. That idea once admitted justifies their persecution of individuals and nations, forcing them to submit and bow in obedience. Scripture accords these powers to the 'Kingdom of God' — when 'the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the governor among the nations; all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee.' (Psalms 22:27,28). He shall 'dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel.' (Psalms 2:9). Unto him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess (Philippians 2:11). And if their claim be good, who can object to them for carrying out the Scriptural statements?

"These Antichrists [that is, rulers in Christ's place], to make their claims of Kingdom power appear true, had simply to take another step in compelling obedience, backing up their right to do so by the Scriptures just quoted. And not only was this great evil sanctioned, but their claim once admitted, that the Kingdom was established and the reign in progress, those who admitted it were hindered from looking for the true Head of the Church to set up the true Kingdom under the whole heavens, which shall break in pieces present imperfect governments — establish righteousness in the earth and cause every knee to bow and every tongue to confess, to the glory of God' " (C. T. Russell).

Thus by falling into and adopting the same errors as the Papacy, the two-horned beast causes its subjects to worship or honor the first beast.

It should be borne in mind, however, that if we are correct thus far in adopting this interpretation and application of this vision, there is much of it yet awaiting fulfillment. One of these features is that regarding the image of the beast. It is stated that this two-horned beast government is in some way to be used to make an "image" or likeness to the first beast; and that in some way it is to give life, or Divine authority, so-called, to this image. This seems to teach that under the

leadership, or at least under the influence of this Church of England government, the Protestant sects or denominations will become united in a great federation; and this federation will be that which will constitute what in the vision is called the "image of the beast." Other visions of the Revelation seem to teach that this great religious federation will in some way become united to the beast, Papacy, or at least that it will cooperate with Papacy as a necessary policy to uphold the present governmental order, which will then, because of world-wide revolutionary troubles and disturbances, be threatened with an overthrow. It is not difficult even now for prophetic students to see that in this way there will be created a very general respect or reverence for Papacy, because of its supposed, far-reaching authority over its own adherents, supporters; and because of the use that could be made of that authority in an attempt to hold back the rising tide of revolution and anarchy.

"He Doeth Great Wonders"

Another way by which the government symbolized by this two-horned wild beast may be identified is that it possesses a characteristic that has been peculiar to all the false religious systems or governments of the centuries of the past. This is described in the words: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (verse 13).

This has always been a characteristic of the Papal Antichrist, and many, in fact all of its supporters have been deceived by these so-called miracles or signs. In the case of the two-horned beast, the symbol in the verse quoted that is designed to picture this is drawn from a literal fact of Old Testament history. The special instance referred to is recorded in 1 Kings 18:19-39, where a scene is described in which Elijah proved the Divine authority of his call as a prophet of Israel, in contradistinction to the Baal prophets who claimed miraculous powers from their god, Baal. Concerning which was the true God (Jehovah or Baal) was to be demonstrated by fire coming down from heaven in the sight of the people, and lighting the wood under the altar upon which a sacrifice had been placed as a burnt offering. The miracle was wrought in answer to Elijah's prayer; but failed in the case of the prophets of Baal.

The thought evidently designed to be conveyed by this symbol is that the power symbolized by the two-horned beast would seek to prove its so-called Divine authority by signs or evidences. It is stated that this two-horned beast exercised the same authority as the first beast, Papacy. It is a well known fact that the performance of miracles was a characteristic claim of Papacy. The most preposterous, indeed, blasphemous claim of Papacy is that of authority to delegate to its priests the power to change the bread and wine of the Memorial Supper into the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. It has been this, more than anything else that has blinded the people, and hindered their understanding God's Plan of Salvation in Christ. In this connection, as applied to the Church of England, hear again the historian:

"The overthrow of Papal supremacy was indeed effected by Henry VIII; but that Monarch rather hindered than favored the reformation of doctrine [justifi-

cation through faith in Christ as the sin- bearer]" (*International Encyclopedia*). "As regards the relations of the English people to the Catholic Church, all that had been done thus far (by Henry VIII) was to declare that the Pope had no jurisdiction in England. There was no thought of secession from the unity of the Catholic faith, and this fact Parliament in 1534 took pains to declare. ... Hitherto, though professing independence of the Church of Rome, Henry still maintained and enforced by bloody laws most of its doctrines" (Swinton, *Outlines of the World's History*). "The doctrines of purgatory, of indulgences, of masses for the dead, of pilgrimages, of the adoration of images and relics, were (after his day) condemned; but the doctrines of transubstantiation and of confession to a priest were retained" (*Myers' History*).

Concerning Henry's persecution of those who refused to acknowledge him as the Supreme Head of the Church, and give assent to the doctrines of the same, the following is to the point:

"The royal reformer (?) persecuted alike Catholics and Protestants. Thus, on one occasion, three Catholics who denied that the king was the rightful Head of the Church, and three Protestants who disputed the doctrine of the real presence [of Christ] in the sacrament (a dogma which Henry had retained in his creed), were dragged on the same sled to the place of execution. The most illustrious of the king's victims were the learned Sir Thomas More and the aged Bishop Fisher, both of whom were brought to the block because their consciences would not allow them to acknowledge that the king was rightfully the Supreme Head of the Church of England."

"Transubstantiation is a word used by the scholastic writers of the Roman Catholic Church to designate the change which Roman Catholics believe to take place in the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine, in virtue of the consecration. ... Some Anglican [Church of England] divines who hold the real presence of the body and blood, would appear to content themselves [at the present time] with remaining silent as to the mode of the presence. Dr. Pusey [a celebrated English clergyman, and one of the chief promoters of the high-church movement in the Church of England, who died in 1882] goes so far as to say that the dispute between Anglicans and Romanists [concerning this doctrine] is 'probably a dispute about words.' ... According to the Catholic doctrine which has been explicitly defined as an article of faith (Council of Trent), 'the whole substance of the bread is changed into the body of Christ and the whole substance of the wine into his blood.' ...

"The Anglican Church [of today] is divided on this ... into two parties; with one, the symbolical view of the rite is predominant; the other party reprobate this view as 'low' and maintain an objective mystical presence" (*International Encyclopedia*).

Who among intelligent Bible students can fail to see the falsity of this so-called miracle! In this connection Mr. Russell further observes:

"This government, like Papacy's, claimed heavenly power, and its denunciations were regarded as from heaven judgments or fire [the symbol employed in

the vision] being called down upon offenders. 'And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by the signs which it was given him to do in the presence of the (first) beast' (verse 14). We make a distinction between the earth and those who dwell on it. As the earth symbolizes those obedient to and supporting the beast, so 'those dwelling on the earth,' we understand to mean independent Christians who do not support either of these systems."

In summing up our conclusions we note that the requirements of all the symbols thus far cited in connection with this two-horned beast have met their fulfillment in the civil and ecclesiastical government of England. This may be seen by placing in contrast the doings, etc., of the first beast and its Papal head, with this second and its head:

The first beast (government) has ruled by a long line of popes from the city of Rome. The second lamb-like beast has ruled by its kings and queens from London, England.

The first beast had ten horns or governments which for long centuries supported it. The second beast had two horns or governments which for over three centuries supported it.

The first beast, at the present time, has lost the support of nearly all these ten governments. The second beast has likewise lost the support, religiously, of one of the governments that supported it.

The first beast in its ruling head for centuries exercised and still claims both civil and ecclesiastical powers over its subjects, thus arrogating to itself powers belonging only to God. The second beast in its ruling head, as represented in its kings and queens, has exercised and still claims both civil and ecclesiastical power over its subjects, thus arrogating to itself powers belonging only to God.

Through the enlightening influences since the Sixteenth Century Reformation both the first and the second beasts have been led or compelled to yield religious freedom to their subjects. Both of these powers are becoming more and more influential in political and religious matters as a result of the great troubles that have come to the earth through the World-war.

The second beast is seeking measures toward a union of all the Protestant religious systems, and making overtures to the Papacy for a union with it.

The Sovereignty of God

God Almighty! King of nations! earth Thy footstool, heaven Thy throne!
Thine the greatness, power, and glory, Thine the Kingdom, Lord, alone!
Life and death are in Thy keeping, and Thy will ordaineth all,
From the armies of Thy heavens to an unseen insect's fall.

Reigning, guiding, all-commanding, ruling myriad worlds of light;
Now exalting, now abasing, none can stay Thy hand of might!
Working all things by Thy power, by the counsel of Thy will,
Thou art God! enough to know it, and to hear Thy word: "Be still!"

In Thy sovereignty rejoicing, we Thy children bow and praise,
For we know that kind and loving, just and true, are all Thy ways.
While Thy heart of sovereign mercy, and Thine arm of sovereign might,
For our great and strong salvation in Thy sovereign grace unite.

Chapter Thirty

The Vision of the Image of the Beast

(Revelation 13:15-18)

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six" (Revelation 13:15-18).

We now come to the consideration of a vision that seems to relate to the closing events of the history of the Protestant sects, and which doubtless up to the present time has had but a partial fulfillment. This is recognized by some of the later expositors who see Protestantism's fallen condition and are separated from it. Mr. Russell was amongst these; note the following written in 1915:

"When the earthquake, or revolution, so prominently mentioned in the Scriptures [Revelation 16:18], shall have come, that, no doubt, will be the time when the kings and the captains of industry, of finance and of politics will in self-defense greatly exalt the power of religious leaders. Then we may expect that the Federation of Churches will exercise a power in the world such as has not been since the days of Papal supremacy. In the symbolic language of Revelation, that will be the time in which the 'image of the beast' will have life and work great wonders, threatening, commanding, in the name of Heaven (Revelation 13:11-18)."

That this expositor at that time believed that the "image of the beast" began to meet its fulfillment some years previous to the time he wrote these words, will be seen from the following language:

"We have already pointed out a general organization of 'the image of the beast' effected in 1846, and are waiting for what in the symbol is referred to as the 'giving of life to the image.' "

In order to understand this symbolic vision, which in some of its features evidently describes the most prominent events connected with the closing scenes of the Gospel Age now terminating, it will be helpful, indeed necessary, to have a clear understanding of the present state of Christendom as it is viewed

from the Divine standpoint. The reason for this is that it has been from out of these conditions, undoubtedly, that the image of the beast has been rising, and that its symbolic actions have been and will continue to be gradually meeting their fulfillment. It is also quite essential to be acquainted with the prophetic utterances of Christ and the Apostles that portray Christendom's (both Roman Catholic and Protestant) present fallen condition. Let us therefore refresh our minds with a brief summary of the present condition of Christendom as it appears from the standpoint of enlightened Bible students, who have an understanding of the true mission and work of the Church in this Gospel Age.

Western Christendom is divided into two parts, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The Papacy since 1870 has ceased to be a "head" of the symbolic beast, in the Scriptural sense of that term, for the reason that then it ceased to exercise even a limited civil or political authority — no longer since then having a territory of its own over which it has an autocratic control in either civil or religious matters. It lost every vestige of civil authority, when in 1870 it was obliged to surrender the city of Rome to Victor Immanuel. As an ecclesiastical system, however, it is still the most powerful and the most united of any religious system in the world, and at the present time it is anticipating that soon it will regain its former power. In this respect, and as noting Protestantism's attitude towards Rome, the "mother," the words of a noted Protestant clergyman of New York, uttered on the occasion of an Inter-church conference recently, are very significant:

"When an official of the Roman Church was approached on the question of cooperating with Protestant Churches in this movement [of world evangelization], he pointed out that while Roman Catholicism was united, Protestantism is going in every direction. He observed that when Protestantism has found itself sufficient to unite, it will be time to suggest cooperating with a united Roman Church. So it is (this clergyman proceeds to say) that the world today looks eagerly to the Protestant Churches, and listens for their message; preeminently for the necessity of a united Protestantism."

This unity, according to this Protestant (?) clergyman, has not been fully perfected as yet, although from the rapid advances that have been made since the great war, it seems evident that it will very soon be accomplished. When this is completed, the next logical step will be to imitate Papacy and appoint an administrative head. In this respect the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States has already patterned after Papacy. This Church, in the United States, is an offshoot of the Church of England, only differing from that Church in that its form of government was changed when the colonies separated from England after the American Revolution. This was done in order to conform to the United States Constitution. At this time the king of England ceased to be the head of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. It has, however, recently (doubtless a step in the furtherance of a "united Protestantism") felt the necessity of appointing a head. We quote in evidence of this from the *Boston Herald* of December 9, 1919:

"The city of New York is to become to the Protestant Episcopal Church in America what the city of Rome is to the Roman Catholic Church. Instead of a Pope it is to have a presiding bishop, chairman of a council, which will correspond in many of its functions to the College of Cardinals. The entire Episcopal Church under the American flag, with its almost 2,000,000 communicants, is to be administered from the Episcopal 'Vatican' in the Metropolis, just as is the entire Roman Communion with its almost 300,000,000 communicants from the chair of St. Peter in the Eternal City on the Tiber. ... One striking difference between the Episcopal 'presiding bishop' and Pope Benedict XV is that Bishop Gailor is elected only for a term of six years, whereas the occupant of the Vatican throne is elected for life."

As further showing the state of Christendom, we note that the only government today in Western Christendom that possesses the characteristics of a "beast," in the sense in which an ecclesiastical and civil government is a symbolic "beast" — the civil ruler being the head of the church — is that of Great Britain. The influence of this great church government extends into its colonies which are scattered all over the world. The English government has for some centuries past been reckoned as Protestant. While the influences of true Protestantism have for about two centuries caused this professed Christian government to be very "lamb-like" in its claims and exercise of religious authority, there has nothing occurred, legislatively, to deprive this ruler of his title as Supreme Head of the Church of England. The religious church system of this government claims apostolic succession, and therefore is the only one at the present time except Papacy that can fulfill the symbolism and give "life" (so-called Divine authority) to the "image of the beast." This image of the beast (organized united Protestantism) is rapidly developing out of present conditions, preparatory to a fulfillment of all the requirements of this vision. We have in the previous chapter identified this great ecclesiastical and civil government of England with that of the two-horned lamb-like beast portrayed in verses 11-14.

The Image of the Beast Now in Evidence

In the foregoing we have given a brief synopsis of the condition of Christendom at the present time, for the reason, as already stated, that out of these various elements and conditions it seems quite evident to many prophetic students that this image of the beast has begun and is being rapidly developed. We remark here that the word *image*, as used in this expression, means likeness; that is, similar in its claims and use of power to that of Papacy. In previous verses of this chapter we find that the beast of which this image is to be a likeness is the one mentioned in verses 3 and 14, as having one of its "heads" mortally wounded, which, however, was afterwards healed.

We have previously indicated that this beast represented the ten kingdoms of Western Europe under its Papal head, and that the Papal head is the one referred to; also that the Reformation Movement of the Sixteenth Century, as well as the further effects of that Movement in 1799, accomplished this wounding of the Papal head, from which a partial recovery was realized. We also found

that in 1870 it received a wound, from which, up to the present time, it has not recovered.

The present state of Protestant Christendom and its rapid unification points to Protestantism, civil and ecclesiastical, as that, out of which the symbolic image of the beast is to rise. Indeed it has already begun to fill up some of the requirements. Before proceeding to give evidence that this is the correct interpretation, or make application of the vision, we inquire, What would be required to constitute Protestantism an image of Papacy, or of the Papal beast? The answer is, Protestantism in becoming an image would be expected to indicate its own rejection and disownment of much of the truth respecting the Divine Plan, and its acceptance of a perversion of the things pertaining to God; thus, following methods and proceedings like that of the beast of which it is an image. In speaking of such a state of Protestantism, we desire to be understood as referring to the great system itself, and not necessarily to all of its individual membership. This rejection, so far as it relates to Protestantism as a system, has evidently taken place, and is proved by the following:

(1) In its ceasing, as a system, to *protest* against Roman Catholic usurpation of Divine authority and its false doctrines, etc.; because it did vigorously protest against Papacy at one time, the name Protestant came to be used in connection with the Reformation Movement.

(2) In its failure to acknowledge openly the unscripturalness of many of its own false doctrines; these are stated in certain articles of the Evangelical Alliance, formulated at the time of its organization in London in 1846. This Alliance was made up of representatives of practically all denominations existing at that time.

(3) In its quite general rejection of the Scriptural teaching that the ransom sacrifice of Christ has secured for all mankind, in a due time appointed by God, a full, fair trial for eternal life.

(4) Indeed, in its almost universal rejection of the great doctrine of atonement for sin.

(5) In its erroneously claiming itself to be the Kingdom of God, established by Christ, that is to bring the promised righteousness and peace foretold by the ancient Prophets. This Kingdom was proclaimed by Christ and his Apostles, and according to their teaching it was to be introduced only by his Second Advent.

(6) In its substitution at the present time of the teaching of moral, social, industrial, political, and other reforms, for the preaching of the good news of the coming of the Kingdom, which alone is to be the remedy for all humanity's present woes and evils.

(7) In its unbelief in, and its despising of "the sure word of prophecy," and its consequent blindness to the "signs of the times."

(8) In its desire and efforts at the present time to bring about a union with Roman Catholicism.

(9) In its boasting of its own self-sufficiency and large following.

All of these things and others which might be mentioned mark its fall from God's favor.

The next thing that would be required to constitute an image of Papacy would be a manifestation of a desire on the part of the different divisions of Protestantism for some central head or council possessing Divine authority to settle doctrinal questions of dispute, and thus decide who and what is orthodox. We note that it would be quite reasonable to suppose that the beginning stage of such a movement would be similar to that which began to take place in St. Paul's day, and which in later times resulted in Papacy's claim to headship. Now it is a well known fact of history that the beginning stage of such a movement occurred in 1846 in the organization of what is known as the Evangelical Alliance. It is also true that there has been a class of Christians, small in numbers to be sure, who have kept separate from the false doctrines that have been held by, and are so characteristic of the various denominations constituting the Evangelical Alliance.

It is proper and fair to say here, however, that no doubt the object of many who were instrumental in calling that conference of Protestants was a good one; and had the conference been satisfied with the adoption of some of the articles that were formulated to constitute a bond of union, it would have been commendable to God, and would have assisted to an obtainment of a deliverance from many grievous errors, and an advancement to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ. No true Christian could object to the following:

"**Article 1**: The Divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.

"**Article 2**: The right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

"**Article 6**: The justification of the sinner by faith alone" (*International Encyclopedia*).

Some of the other Articles, however, were so erroneous, viewed from both the standpoint of the Scriptures as well as the standpoint of sanctified reason, that the comparatively few intelligent *Bible* Christians of those times could neither accept, subscribe to, nor support them. Of these are:

"**Article 3**: The unity of the Godhead, the Trinity [so called].

"**Article 8**: The immortality of the soul ... and the eternal punishment [torment] of the wicked" (*International Encyclopedia*).

The first session of this conference "was formed in Free Mason's Hall in London, England, August 19-23, 1846, at a meeting of about 800 persons — Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Reformed, Moravians, and others" (*International Encyclopedia*).

In commending some of the work accomplished by the Evangelical Alliance since its organization, we have the very significant statement from the same authority:

"These instances are sufficient to show that the power of Christian public sentiment, as expressed by the Alliance, already [1895] commands respectful hearing everywhere, *and must ultimately be universally obeyed*."

Regarding the significance of this movement of the Protestant denominations as bearing on a partial fulfillment of this vision of the image of the beast, and the effects of the Alliance at the time and since upon intelligent, enlightened Christians, the following words are very instructive:

"Thus 1846 AD ... found an unorganized nucleus of Christians, who not only agreed with the 'Disciples' regarding simplicity of church government, the discarding of all creeds but the Bible, and the abolition of all titles by its ministers, but with the 'Baptists' relative to the outward form of baptism, and with Luther in regarding the Papal system as the Man of Sin, and the degenerate church the mother of harlots and abominations. These, standing aloof from any compromise or affinity with the world, taught vital piety, simple trust in the omnipotent God, and faith in His unchangeable decrees; and, in addition, while recognizing Christ as Lord of all, and now partaker of the Divine nature, they were guarded against the unscriptural as well as the unreasonable theory that Jehovah is His own Son and our Lord Jesus is his own Father; and they began to see that eternal life and immortality are not present possessions, but are to be expected only as gifts of God through Christ in the resurrection.

"And, as though God would arrange that thereafter there should always be a class representing His Sanctuary cleansed, kept separate from the various sects, this very year 1846 witnessed the organization of Protestant sects into one great system, called *The Evangelical Alliance*. This organization, mindful of the new views (of the cleansed Sanctuary) clearly defined its faith in human immortality, adding it as the ninth article of its creed. Thus it separated, and has since kept separate from other Christians, a company of God's children — the Lord's cleansed Sanctuary — a sanctuary of truth. And to this cleansed Sanctuary class other meek and faithful children of God have been added daily ever since; while from it have been eliminated such as lose the spirit of meekness and love of the truth. To maintain their standing as the cleansed Sanctuary, against organized opposition and great numbers, becomes a severe test of courage and faith, which only a few seem able to endure: the majority follow the course of their predecessors, and endeavor to make themselves respectable in the eyes of the world" (C. T. Russell).

We will now consider the special characteristics described in the symbols of this vision of the image of the beast, for it is only by an understanding of their meaning that we will be able to discover what has been fulfilled, and to discern those things that await fulfillment. One of the most significant things mentioned is that when this image is fully developed, it will "both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast [bow down to its decrees] should be killed." The meaning of this is that it will assume and exercise authority in both civil and religious matters. This will require a union of church and state. The assumption and exercise of such authority would mark it

as having symbolical beast qualities. This, we have noted in a previous chapter, was a power usurped and exercised by Papacy in the Dark Ages, and still claimed by it. To be an image or a likeness of Papacy, therefore, would require cooperation in some very marked way on the part of organized Protestantism with the civil governments in a similar exercise of power. Clothing with such power is described in the symbol as "giving breath [life] unto the image."

Concerning how this "life" is to come, and its likeness to Papacy's once exercise of power, Mr. Russell's words written in 1910 will be deeply interesting at this time. The words referred to are a comment on an incident that took place at that time at a clerical conference of ministers of different denominations in New York, presided over by the Protestant Episcopal Bishop, David Greer. All the speakers were advocating and pledging themselves to work for a union of Protestant churches. We quote the account of the incident referred to:

"Speaking for Presbyterians, the Revelation Dr. George Alexander, moderator of the New York Presbytery, declared they stand ready to meet Episcopalians half way. Bishop Greer had mentioned the moderator by name, saying he wished he might have the privilege of laying on of hands upon such a leader as he. Replying, the veteran Presbyterian leader said he would not seriously object."

Mr. Russell's comment follows:

"Here we have exactly what we have been looking and waiting for since 1881, when we announced the Federation of the Protestant Churches to be set forth in the Bible as one of the prominent features of the harvest of this Gospel Age. We then pointed out that the attempt to organize Protestantism, first made in 1846 through the Evangelical Alliance, would reach consummation soon. We pointed to the Scriptures which indicate that this Protestant Federation will so considerably resemble the Roman Catholic Institutions as to properly deserve to be called its 'image,' and that the 'image' already existed in a disorganized condition, as represented in the terms of Protestant orthodoxy and their cooperation with Catholicism. We pointed out that the important matter waited on and necessary to the power and activity of the Protestant 'image' is the 'life' which it is to receive from the Protestant Episcopal System."

Speaking of the time when this apostolic (?) succession will be conferred, he further remarks:

"Then, they think, we will present to the world a large system and a bold front and command their attention to the voice of the Church and the Voice of God coming down through the 'apostolic succession' — just as the Catholics do — a mild 'image' of Catholicism, but full of its power and vigor. ... To us the Scriptures indicate that the prosperity of the Federated Protestant 'image' will for a little time be so great, so pronounced, and its arrogance become so great that the sympathy of the masses will be entirely alienated and turned into bitterness."

Since these words were written, in the light of history unveiling prophecy, the correctness of this writer's interpretation of the vision is becoming more and more confirmed. Concerning developments in the social and political world that

would hasten rapidly the vitalizing of the "image," his words written at an earlier date than this (1910) are now under present conditions very significant and more confirmatory of the correctness of the interpretation:

"Meantime Socialism (which, although not so intended by its best and ablest leaders, is incipient anarchy, because even its best propositions would prove unworkable under present selfish conditions) will be making strong headway throughout Christendom, and will be causing more and more perplexity to the great, the rich, the mighty, the wise, the influential, according to the course of this world. The quickened 'image' will be closely related to the chief captains of industry, finance and politics, and the dread of Socialism and irreligion and anarchy will draw them more and more closely together and make each the more energetic in support of the other.

"As a result of these conditions we may expect an increasing disregard of the rights and constitutional prerogatives of all who are not directly active supporters of the powers that be, political, financial, and religious. The freedom of speech and freedom to circulate literature will be greatly abridged, under the plea that such abridgment is necessary for the public welfare, which in some respects will be the truth. Anything not fully in line with the rulers of that time will be reckoned as in opposition; and ... will probably come under the ban with those of Socialism — though their teachings be as opposite as the poles. The period following will seemingly be the time when the door will be closing — and opportunities for service will be increasingly diminished, though opportunities for suffering for the Truth's sake may increase."

The effects of this giving of life to the image of the Papacy, will be to "cause all who will not worship the image [bow down to it] to be killed." While this feature was fulfilled in both a literal and symbolical sense by Papacy (that is, Papacy did both literally and symbolically kill), yet we would expect the symbolical feature to be the one more particularly described in the image. Regarding this we quote further from the above author:

"Doubtless, some of the first enactments will be against anarchy, social evils, immoralities, etc., and be very gratifying to all lovers of peace and order. Subsequently, however, we may be sure that this power will be exercised against Socialists, as being of a class calculated to disturb the public peace and to unsettle the present order of things. Still further along, all who are dissenters from the Church confederation will come under the ban and under the pressure, with a realization that liberty of thought on religious subjects has much to do with all liberty, and with the thought that the repression of liberty must mean the suppression of all religious teaching along independent lines, or, as we say, Scriptural lines. ...

"So far as we are concerned these restrictions and suppressions must not move us [true Christians] to an abandonment in any degree of the wisdom that cometh from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, easy of entreatment and full of mercy and good fruits."

Lift up our Heads and Rejoice

The advice given to the Lord's consecrated by this wise teacher, concerning how such suppressive measures should be received, and how the Lord's true people should conduct themselves when these times will be ushered in, is worthy of very careful consideration:

"Instead of feeling even angry with those who would use restraint, we must be prepared to regard their course as our Lord regarded the course of those who suppressed him, and his answer to Pilate must satisfy us. His words were, 'Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above.' (John 19:11). If the power for suppression is given by our Lord, it will mean to us the good tidings that the Kingdom is very near at hand, and all the more we will lift up our heads and rejoice, knowing our deliverance is at hand, and that just a little further, after the great storm of anarchy, the Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth clearly and gloriously to the blessing of all the families of the earth, under the administration of the Kingdom of God's dear Son, of which, by the grace of God, we hope to be members."

As further illustrating the meaning of this symbolical killing, we quote:

"The worship and the killing are symbolic as well as the image, and this signifies that all who will not bow to the decrees of the Evangelical Alliance shall be esteemed as heretics, shunned and cast out by all who are Orthodox (?), i.e., all who worship its decrees. ... To be cut off from any one church now implies dismemberment from all orthodox churches; which implies of course, that you are a heretic, and not at all a son of God. ... To those of us who regard only the heavenly organization, and who look for the smile of the true Head of the Church only, and who accept His Word as the only limitation of faith and knowledge, such cannot worship either the beast or his image, after they come to realize it, but will 'worship God' only."

The fulfillment of the vision in this latter respect is in operation and has been for some time past; the false doctrines keeping all who love and are determined to encourage and support only truth, outside of these sectarian organizations. Concerning in what way the two-horned beast, the Church of England, caused the formation of the image, the position set forth below seems well taken:

"She advised this by her example. From the year 1800 to 1846 was a time in which great numbers of new sects arose, whereas before that they were few and prominent. This gave rise to uneasiness among the various older denominations, who wondered whereunto this thing would lead. As the Bible came to be read more and more by the masses, occasional individuals would feel free to preach what they thought it taught, regardless of denominational creeds and the views of older sects. As a consequence Protestants were fast splitting up into fragments. They began to say, By what means shall we check and stop this disposition to individual thought and opinion relative to the teachings of Scripture? They wanted to stop the very thing God desired, viz.: that each individual should be free and independent of restraint, with his faith based, not on the views of others, not on the decisions of councils or presbyteries, nor in the decision

of the Pope, nor in the things approved of the head of the English Church, but in the Word of God.

"The question came — How can we restrain these preachers? This was a quandary to all except the Roman and Episcopal Churches, since these both claimed the 'apostolic succession,' and that this by ordination conferred upon their ministers special power and authority to preach and to administer the 'Sacraments'; hence that no others had a right to do so, but were clerical pretenders. Other denominations could not claim this continuation of apostolic power through their preachers, but simply set them apart by prayer, consequently those of one denomination could not object, that the preachers of other denominations, as well as all laymen, were not as truly authorized of God to expound the Scriptures as their own clergy.

"But the example of the Church of England showed what a prestige she had by reason of the voice of authority with which she commanded a reverence for her clergy and her teachings. The teaching by example was not lost. The various denominations felt a necessity for some common Standard of Doctrine which would be supported and upheld by all of them, and thus give prestige to their teachings, and bring the combined influence of all against any further advance in knowledge or the development of any different phase of Truth. Thus they would protect themselves by being able to say — The combined opinion of all Protestants is against you; therefore you are heretics, and therefore we will shun you. ... This was done by the formation in 1846 of the 'Evangelical Alliance.' It was stated to be one of the objects of the Alliance (and we believe the principal one) to 'Promote between the different Evangelical denominations an effective cooperation in the efforts to repel common enemies and dangers.' ...

"It is far from my wish to say that they purposely combined against the unfolding of truth, nor would I say this of Papists. But I do say, that by their action they were following Papacy's tactics, and that in that Alliance they did make the 'image of the beast.' ...

"How much the image resembles the Papal beast may be judged from the fact that Papacy acknowledged the image — owned it as a creditable likeness — by the Pope's sending 'Greetings' to the last [at the time of this writing] meeting of the 'Evangelical Alliance' — 1879. Strange to say the delegates to the Alliance had so far lost sight of the principles and doctrines which led to the protests against the Papal Church (that it was the Harlot Church — Antichrist and Man of Sin, mentioned in the Scripture), that they actually felt flattered by the Pontiff's notice, instead of becoming alarmed and examining how and why he who is 'The (chief) Antichrist,' should feel pleased to greet them as fellows. A prominent Presbyterian minister present at the above named meeting mentioned the 'Pope's Greeting' with evident pleasure and satisfaction" (C. T. Russell).

We now consider another feature in which this great Federation has been becoming and will more and more become an image to Papacy. This feature is contained in the words:

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (verses 16,17).

The meaning of this symbolism is thus most reasonably explained:

"All classes of Christians must bow; all must, in some way, give evidence of their support of the image and consecration to its interests and laws; either a public, open profession of being members of the Alliance, and hence supporters (mark in forehead) or at least a giving of some assistance and influence to the principles of image organization — (the right hand support). ...

"The buying and selling refers to dealing in spiritual things. None may be recognized as having any right to teach or preach or baptize or administer the emblems of our Lord's death, except those licensed to do so by some orthodox member of the image. And acts of such persons (unlicensed] are not counted valid."

In summing up the conclusions thus far in the interpretation and application, the following words from the same authority are very helpful to a comprehensive understanding of the vision:

"These things fit together wonderfully; nor should it surprise us that in giving an account of the Church and its later times, all three of these great systems should be mentioned thus by our Lord. The English church system is certainly a beast in the same sense as Papacy was, with the different characteristics noted; and the Evangelical Alliance is certainly a perfect image of it. It is what in politics or business would be termed a 'ring' — a religious ring or monopoly, organized to hinder others from going into the work of truth-seeking."

The Mysterious Number of the Beast

We now, in conclusion, come to the consideration of what is meant by the "number of the beast." A solution of this seems to be required to prove that one has the correct interpretation of this whole vision of the thirteenth chapter, as the words of St. John imply:

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six" (verse 18).

A very important matter connected with the solution of this enigma is to determine which of the two wild beasts is referred to — the ten-horned wild beast, which under its Papal head represented Papacy, or the two-horned beast which represented, as we understand, the church government of England. It is generally understood to refer to the former. The following interpretation is submitted as being very reasonable:

"There are three Latin words inscribed on the Pope's crown, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, the Vicarious Son of God. This title attached to the Pope would seem to be an illegitimate one. He is not the vicarious Son of God; he is not the vicar of

Christ; he is not reigning instead of Christ; and therefore every intimation to the effect that he is the substitute or representative of Christ in reigning power would seem to be that much of a blasphemy. Not that the Pope and the Catholics understand that they are blaspheming. I presume they feel fully confident that this is all very true of him. But to our understanding it is untrue, and he is in a false position, and is really Antichrist, or the counterfeit Christ, as the Bible would express the matter."

V	—	5
I	—	1
C	—	100
A	—	0
R	—	0
I	—	1
U	—	5
S	—	0
F	—	0
I	—	1
L	—	50
I	—	1
I	—	1
D	—	500
E	—	0
I	—	1
		666

The numerical signification and the sum of these letters, *"Vicarius Filii Dei,"* is shown in the accompanying formula.

We give in this connection a very interesting dissertation on this matter from an exposition written in 1828:

"Mention having been made of the 'number of the beast' or 'the number of his name' (for they are both the same), the Prophet proceeds to inform us what the number is, leaving us from the number to collect the name, verse 18 — 'Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast.' It is not therefore a vain and ridiculous attempt to search into this mystery, but on the contrary is recommended to us upon the authority of an Apostle.

" 'For it is the number of a man'; it is a method of numbering practiced among men; as 'the measure of a man' (Revelation 21:17) is such a measure as men commonly make use of in measuring. It was a method practiced among the ancients to denote names by numbers; as the name *Thouth* or the Egyptian Mercury was signified by the number 1218. ... St. Barnabas, the companion of St. Paul, in his epistle discovers in like manner the name of Jesus crucified in the number 318. It hath been the usual method in all God's dispensations for the holy Spirit to accommodate his [its] expressions to the customs, fashions, and manners of the several ages.

"Since then this art and mystery of numbers was so much used among the ancients, it is less wonderful that the 'beast' also should have his number, 'and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.' Here only the number is specified; and from the number we must, as well as we can, collect the name. Several names possibly might be cited, which contain this number, but it is evident that it must be some Greek or Hebrew name; and with the name also the other qualities and properties of the beast must all agree. The name alone will not constitute an agreement; all other particulars must be perfectly applicable; and the name also must comprehend the precise number 666.

"No name appears more proper and suitable than that famous one mentioned by Irenaeus, who lived not long after St. John's time, and was the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John. He saith, that 'the name *Lateinos* contains the number of 666; and it is very likely, because the last kingdom [fourth empire of Daniel 7] is so called, for they are Latins who now reign; but in this we will

not glory'; that is, as it becomes a modest and pious man, in a point of such difficulty, he will not be too confident of his explication. *Lateinos* with *ei* is the true orthography, as the Greeks wrote the long *i* of the Latins, and as the Latins themselves wrote in former times. No objection therefore can be drawn from the spelling of the name, and the thing agrees to admiration.

L	—	30
A	—	1
T	—	300
E	—	5
I	—	10
N	—	50
O	—	70
S	—	200
		666
R	—	200
O	—	6
M	—	40
I	—	10
T	—	10
H	—	400
		666

"For, after the division of the empire, the Greeks and other orientalists called the people of the Western Church, or Church of Rome, Latins; and as Dr. Henry Moore expresses it, they Latinize in everything. Mass, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, decretals, bulls, are conceived in Latin. The Papal councils speak in Latin ... Nor is the Scripture read in any other language under Popery, than Latin. Wherefore the Council of Trent commanded the vulgar Latin to be the only authentic version. ... In short all things are Latin; the Pope having communicated his language to the people under his dominion as the *mark* and character of his empire. They themselves indeed choose rather to be called Romans, and more absurdly still, Roman Catholics; and probably the Apostle [John], as he hath made use in some Hebrew names in this book [Revelation], as 'Abaddon' (Revelation 9:11), and 'Armageddon' (16:16), so might in this place likewise allude to the name of the Hebrew language. Now *Romith* is the Hebrew name for the 'Roman beast,' or Roman kingdom; and this word, as well as the former word *Lateinos* contains the just and exact number 666" (Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies*).

The numerical signification of these letters, and the sum of the same, is found in the accompanying form.

The reader will bear in mind that in this enumeration, in the Greek word *Lateinos* we give the corresponding numerals represented by the Greek letters, and in the case of the Hebrew word *Romith*, the numerals represented by the Hebrew letters.

As we shall meet in later visions of the Revelation the expressions, beast, image of the beast, mark of the beast, and number of the beast, descriptive of systems or characteristics which the last company of saints will have to overcome in order to be accounted worthy of kingdom honors (see Revelation 14:9, 15:2, 20:4), it is necessary to keep in mind what these systems and characteristics are:

(1) The beast, representing the Papal head, or Papal system, to which the ten kingdoms once gave their support, and which in our day they have turned against.

(2) The image of the beast, representing organized Protestantism in some way united to the civil governments, and in sympathy with Papacy.

(3) The mark of the beast, representing the fear, reverence, manifested on the part of professed Christians in a feeling that in some way they must recognize or support as Divine institutions these professed, united religious systems, or *any that make the claim of being the channel* through which alone truth can flow. To have the mark, does not in any way require a union with Papacy itself, but it does require that they, like Papacy's followers, would have a fear to be separated from these human church systems or organizations, or a feeling that they must belong to or support them as Divine institutions.

It will, we believe, be very interesting and profitable to close the present chapter with one of the very last utterances of Mr. Russell:

"As our own eyes of understanding have opened, we have sought to show to the Church, and to the world as far as possible, the great Divine Plan of the Ages — wonderful, beautiful, far superior to anything human! Bible students the world over are reading the Bible and the signs of the times in a new light; for God's own time has come for lifting the veil of ignorance and darkness which for so long He has permitted Satan to put before our eyes. To our understanding the present war is pictured in the Bible, as due to begin in 1914. It is a great 'wind.'

"Following the great war, the Bible teaches, a great earthquake — social revolution — will take place. In connection with that earthquake will come an exaltation of religious sects, Catholic and Protestant, on the side of the kings and princes — political, social, financial, religious. Next will come the downfall of all present religious systems. Speedily the symbolic 'fire' of the Bible will consume the earth — anarchy. Following the anarchy quickly will come the long-promised Kingdom of God, for which Christians have prayed, saying, 'Thy Kingdom come,' most of them with but little conception of the true meaning of their words. During the reign of that Kingdom, 'a still small voice,' the Message of Truth and Grace, will come to all mankind. The world's uplift will progress; and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall gradually fill the whole earth. The longed-for haven of rest will then be attained, 'the desire of all nations.'

"All the true disciples of Jesus will see and hear in this present 'due time.' 'My sheep hear my voice,' said the Master. If any, therefore, are in Babylon and do not hear the voice of the Lord now calling them out of this great apostate system, our plain inference is that they are not his true sheep. This does not mean that all will hear at the same moment. Some are dull of hearing; they may not be living very near to the Lord. But so surely as they are his sheep they will hear; and so surely as they are following in his steps they will hear clearly, and obey promptly."

Let us clearly understand what is meant in its fullest sense by the "mark of the beast." It is a characteristic of Papacy's followers. Let us be very sure that we are real, true Protestants, not alone against Papacy's claims, but against any who make claims of a similar character, and in some way seek to enforce them.

Chapter Thirty-One

The Vision of the Lamb on Mount Zion

(Revelation 14:1-5)

"And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1).

In chapter 13, we saw described in symbol the great anti-Christian apostasy in its various stages. We saw first its earlier phase — Papacy defiling the Truth and persecuting God's saints. This persecution continued through the long period of its supremacy. And in the closing verses of the same chapter we saw what seems to describe the last and final phase of the anti-Christian apostasy — confederated Protestantism as the image of the beast, for a time acting in sympathy with Papacy; the civil powers also for a time cooperating with both. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, this seems to be the last form that the "powers that be" will assume in opposition to God's saints before the destruction of these evil systems by the epiphania (bright-shining) of his *parousia* (presence), which destruction seems to begin with the Papal hierarchy itself.

As we thus have set before us the very trying conditions in which the last members of Christ's Body will soon find themselves, and over which they must be victorious, it is most comforting and strengthening to faith to discover in the vision we now consider, a description of the assumption of Divine authority, and the exercise of Divine power operating to accomplish the overthrow and destruction of this last great anti-Christian combination. The visions of Revelation that follow this one all relate to the last great conflict of this age between truth and error — a conflict which is exhibited in several different stages. The part that the last members of the saintly class will have in these final scenes will, it seems to us, be that of giving a simple testimony to the Truth — a testimony given in a fearless yet meek, humble, and submissive spirit — submissive to the Father's will, realizing that He will not permit any experiences to come to them that will not be for their good and His glory. This testimony will be like the last testimony of Christ given to the religious rulers of the Jews, and the civil power of Rome. It will be well that the true followers of the Lamb examine carefully those Scriptures that describe the Master's attitude and final testimony to those powers that then existed — the one, the Jewish religious power, the instigator and accuser; the other, the Roman civil power, the executor of the decrees of the former.

From the foregoing it is obvious that the vision we now consider — the Lamb standing on Mount Zion — brings us to the beginning of the most thrilling period in the history of the true Church, and the world; indeed, to the momentous events that occur in connection with the overthrow of the enemies of Truth, and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. A careful study of the vision can hardly fail to produce the conviction that the Lamb standing on Mount Zion is a symbolical representation of Christ's assumption and exercise of kingly authority. Carefully searching the Scriptures to discover the significance of this symbolism we find that the symbol of the literal Mount Zion of old, the place where the typical David's throne was located, is frequently employed to picture this assumption and exercise of Divine authority and power over human affairs; this authority and power being vested in Christ. As one writer, commenting on the visions of the apostasy, described in chapter 13, and connecting this vision with them, has truthfully said:

"The manifestation of evil is complete; we are now to see God's dealings as to it. These acts of Satan and his ministers [described in chapter 13] are a plain challenge of all His rights in [spiritual] Israel and the earth; and further patience would be no longer patience but dishonor. Hence we find now, as in answer to the challenge, the Lamb upon Mount Zion, that is, upon David's [antitypical] seat; and as the beast's followers have his mark upon them, so the followers of Christ, associated with him here, have his and his Father's name upon their foreheads. What this means can scarcely be mistaken.

"Zion is not only identified in Scripture with David and his sovereignty, but very plainly with the sovereign grace of God, when everything intrusted to man (in King Saul's day) had failed in Israel — priesthood had broken down, the ark gone into captivity in the enemy's land, and although restored by the judgment of God upon the Philistines, was no more sought unto in the days of Saul. He, though Jehovah's anointed king, had become apostate. All might seem to have gone, but it was not so; and in this extremity, as the seventy-eighth Psalm says, 'Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep ... and He smote His adversaries backward. Moreover, He refused the tent of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah — the Mount Zion which He loved. ... He chose also David His servant.' Nor was this a temporary choice: as a later Psalm adds, 'For Jehovah hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest forever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it.' (Psalms 132:13,14). ... The Lamb on Mount Zion shows us the true David on the covenanted throne, and Zion by this lifted above the hills indeed" (F. W. Grant).

Ancient Zion Symbol of the Kingdom

In Micah 4:1-3, we have this same symbolic use of the word Zion in connection with a prophecy describing the establishment of God's Kingdom over the world: "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain [kingdom] of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains [kingdoms] ... for the Law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off."

In the Psalms we have another special use of the word Zion in this particular. It will be noted as we quote it that it portrays the same things we find described in this Revelation vision and its context, namely the gathering of the Lord's saints to Himself in connection with fiery-trial judgment troubles upon their enemies. It reads:

"The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" (Psalms 50:1-5).

Again we have a prophecy concerning Jehovah's giving to His Son authority to execute judgment upon His enemies, in which Zion is used in this same sense. It reads: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion; rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies" (Psalms 110:1,2).

We have a very remarkable portrayal of symbolic Zion in Hebrews 12:18-28. In this Scripture as in the others referred to, as well as in the vision under consideration, we have Zion employed to represent the Heavenly Kingdom. These words of St. Paul describe the distressing troubles of those times in connection with which Christ will be assuming kingly authority and power, described in this Revelation vision as the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. We refer the reader to a very interesting unfolding of this Scripture, which is applied as describing this great event:

"The Apostle draws a parallel between the marching of Israel from Egypt and the Red Sea, up to Mount Sinai, where, under the leadership of the priesthood, they came under the Law Covenant, with all who hope to become God's people, marching under the lead of Christ and the 'royal priesthood' toward another mountain — to Mount Zion, the Kingdom of God, the Millennial Kingdom. ...

"When we consider how the Israelites approached Mount Sinai as a host, and that they did not all get there at the same moment nor the same hour, nor even in the same day, we find the parallel of this in the fact that the Lord's people throughout this age have been gradually approaching this Kingdom — not all at once, but one after another throughout the age. The last members of the Royal Priesthood are only getting close to the Kingdom, Mount Zion, now; and are to be followed in turn by all the hosts who will become true Israelites during the Millennial Age, when light and knowledge shall be freely granted. ...

"But although we are approaching these grand and glorious things, we are not to expect that they will all be ushered in in a peaceful manner; on the contrary, as the Apostle points out (verses 26,27), there will be a correspondence between the great time of trouble, with which the Millennial Age and its New Covenant for mankind will be ushered in, and the way in which the Law Covenant to the Jews was ushered in — only that the New Covenant will be ushered in on a

much grander and antitypical plane. There will be a shaking here, as there was a shaking there; but instead of its being the physical earth that will shake, it will be the symbolical earth — society. And not alone the social structure, but also the heavens, or ecclesiastical structure, is to be shaken here. As the Apostle's words clearly intimate, the shaking will be a much more wonderful one than was its type, even as every antitype is much greater than its type. He explains that the shaking here is to be so thorough that it will shake everything that is shakable, and that only the fixed, permanent, righteous things shall ultimately remain. And those things that shall be permitted to remain, he declares (verse 28) pertain to the Kingdom of God, which is immovable, unshakable.

"It is this Kingdom [symbolized by Mount Zion] toward which all of the Lord's people march throughout this Gospel Age, that will then be fully attained amidst all that great shaking and confusion of the great day of trouble which is just before us. And as Moses went up into the quaking mountain, and was lost to the sight of the people below, so at, and in conjunction with these mighty manifestations of the time of trouble the entire Church [one hundred and forty-four thousand] will be 'caught up,' gathered to the Lord, changed to his likeness — passing through the portals of death, though they [the last ones] shall not sleep, but be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (C. T. Russell).

We note that it is the earlier aspect or phase of Christ's rulership as King, that in which the Lord's saints are being gathered to him, that marks the time of this vision of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. The first act in connection with this assumption of kingly power is stated in other Scriptures as being the resurrection of those members of Christ's Body who had slept up to that time. The remainder of the hundred and forty-four thousand continue in the flesh for a time, and as they finish their course, they experience their change one by one to Divine, heavenly conditions, without sleeping. These, in the succeeding visions of this chapter, as we shall endeavor to show later, are portrayed as performing a service under the leadership of Christ, who will be present though invisible, that has an important bearing in connection with the full establishment of the Kingdom, in its blessing aspects to the world. This work is, first, to declare a message, announcing that the time of judgment is come — evidently the great thousand-year Judgment Day; second, to announce the fall from favor of symbolical Babylon; third, to give a warning to the Lord's people, counseling them to separate themselves from the beast system and its image, and to be watchful and careful that they keep themselves free from the mark of the beast. This work is recorded in the visions that follow.

All these things show that it is the beginning stages of Christ's presence that is described in the vision of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. Indeed it will be found to be true that all the visions that follow, beginning with the one under consideration, refer to the closing events in connection with the deliverance of the last members of the Church and the judgments on Christendom; the only exceptions being those in chapters 17 and 18, where the revealing angel gives in his explanation, a retrospective view of the doings of the anti- Christian system of Papacy, and those of chapters 20, 21, and 22, which will be fulfilled after the

change of the Church. Many Bible students have for some time understood that this assumption of authority by Christ will not be visible to either the Church or the world. The fact of this assumption of authority will be made known gradually, first to the watching ones of the Lord's people, and finally to the whole world. The period in which the Lord is secretly present, gathering the faithful is called the "*parousia*" (presence) of the Lord. The manner in which the "presence" will be made known, revealed to the world, is described in the word "*epiphania*." The word *epiphania* means "bright-shining," and the significance of the word in this connection is that the knowledge of his presence will be made known to the world gradually, by the *epiphania*, bright-shining of truth along all lines. This bright-shining noted in the outward signs of the times, will, of course, be first realized by the Watchers, and finally by the world after the Church has been glorified. At last the bright-shining of truth will be so clear, that even the supporters of the anti- Christian systems will be made aware of the untruthfulness of their claims. This will cause the work of destruction, as described by St. Paul: "whom the Lord ... shall destroy with the *epiphania* [bright-shining] of his *parousia* [presence]" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

We quote in this connection from an article entitled, *The Parousia of Our Lord Jesus and his Subsequent Apokalupsis and Epiphania*:

"Foregoing we drew the line of distinction between the *parousia* and the *epiphania* or *apokalupsis* of our Lord quite sharply, to assist the reader in noting their difference of signification. As a matter of fact, however, the *bright-shining* of the present one is due to begin shortly after the *parousia* begins; and again as at the First Advent it will be true that the 'Light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.' The *revealing* of the Lord's presence begins with the faithful of the Church speedily, and gradually extends to the world in general. Up to the time when the strength of the trouble breaks forth, only the faithful Watchers discern the *parousia*, and only by them can the bright-shining [*epiphania*] of the Lord's presence be appreciated. To these the bright-shining of the Lord's presence, the increasing brilliancy of the light of Truth respecting the Word and character and Plan of God is an ever increasing joy and pleasure; thus it is that 'ye brethren, are not in darkness,' respecting the events of the day of the Lord, but know in advance that its tribulation will come upon the world as travail upon a woman (1 Thessalonians 5:3,4).

"While the revealment of our Lord's presence thus illuminates the hearts of his faithful ones as the Day-star (2 Peter 1:19) and causes them to understand, and not be in darkness with the world in respect to His plans, present and future, the bright-shining of the Lord's presence shall affect nominal Christians, and the civilized world in general also, but in a totally different manner, for the character of Christ's 'harvest' work, during this period of his presence, is such as to cause a general opening of eyes along the lines of justice and injustice, righteousness and sin, the rights of mankind and the wrongs of mankind. The light which has been shining out for the past twenty years, is awakening the world to a realization of its rights and its wrongs, to a realization that the earth belongs to mankind in general and not exclusively to a few who have seized it and fenced it. This

same light is exposing the corruption, and falsity of many long-venerated theories and institutions, monarchial, religious, political, and financial. It was in reference to this light of his presence at the Second Advent that our Lord declared that this day of his *presence* would bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the secret counsels of the heart, for there is nothing hidden that shall not be uncovered (Luke 8:17). And in this connection let it not be overlooked that the Apostle declares that Satan's power to deceive the world through Antichrist is to be consumed by 'the *bright-shining* [*epiphania*] *of his presence* [*parousia*]' (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

"Thus seen, the bright-shining of the present one is causing great joy to the hearts of the faithful, who wait patiently for him and the deliverance which he has promised, but the bright-shining, as it affects the worldly, has the effect of quickening their selfish propensities, producing discontent, and is thus preparing the world for the great climax of catastrophe, predicted in the Word of the Lord, as the consummation of this age; the overthrow of all the governments and institutions of this present order of things in anarchy — 'a time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation' (C. T. Russell).

It is doubtless this present period of the Lord's presence — the period in which the Master has been and is dispensing the present Truth to his saints, that is depicted in this vision of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. However, some may ask, How can this be, when in the vision it is stated that standing with him on the Mount is the complete hundred and forty-four thousand? Does not this imply that the hundred and forty-four thousand, which according to many commentators represents the complete number of the Elect out of this age, are all with him in glory? To those who understand the manner of the Second Advent, and also that of the deliverance of the Church, all is clear. As touching this we note that this vision is the first one in the Revelation in which all the members of the elect company are represented as complete and with Christ, the Lamb. And this is true in the fulfillment of the vision, as will be seen when we consider that the first act in connection with the exercise of authority and power is the resurrection of all this class who have "slept" throughout the Age. These surely are with him then; yes, it may be they are even now with him in glory. There is a sense, however, in which it is true that the others — those who are alive in the flesh when he comes, and others who may consecrate later, are with him, as we read in Revelation 17:14: "And they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Keeping in mind that the period of the Lamb's standing on Mount Zion covers the whole time from the beginning of his assumption of Divine power, exercised in the awakening and resurrection of his sleeping ones, to the time when the remaining ones who are living in the flesh will have attained to the mark of acceptability as chosen, accepted ones, it will be seen that the whole elect number are all with him. Thus, it can be truthfully said that they are all with him — the larger number with him in glory, the remainder with him on the earth, following him wherever he leads. The correctness of this interpretation of the vision is further confirmed by the fact that the Marriage of the Lamb, which of course represents the union of *all* the Bride class with the

Heavenly Bridegroom in glory, is not recorded in this vision, though it would be if all the members were glorified at once. This great event is not recorded until these last members of the Bride class have, as we shall see later, given a warning cry that Babylon has fallen (from favor), and all this class have become entirely separated, and have experienced what is symbolically described as having the Lamb's name and the name of his Father written in their foreheads; indeed not until great Babylon (the Papal hierarchy) has met its doom does this greatest of all events occur (compare Revelation 18:2,15,21, 19:1-3,5-8).

Having His Name Written in Their Foreheads

We inquire next, What is the significance of the words, "having his name and the name of his Father written in their foreheads"? This is a very significant symbol, and is better appreciated when viewed in the light of the significance attached to a name during Israelitish history, when the name stood for character. In chapter 7 we have the same company pictured as undergoing the process of sealing in the forehead, signifying that a knowledge of the Truth was given to them that they might obtain a clear view of the Divine character as revealed in His plans and purposes for the Church and the world.

In the vision under consideration we have this work described as having been accomplished — that they had attained unto the character-likeness of their Lord. In the accomplishment of this great work not only was it essential that a knowledge of the Truth be given, but certain severe trials were also needed to strengthen and prove this character likeness to their Divine Lord and Father. We have seen as we have studied some of the visions preceding this one, that by coming in contact with the false religions of earth, the saints of past generations suffered because of their loyalty to the measure of Truth then understood by them. This had the effect of developing and crystallizing their characters, and their resurrection was the proof of their acceptance into this honored company. And now, as we shall see in the visions that follow, those of this class living and becoming enlightened in the period of the *parousia* have had, and will still have opportunity to strengthen and prove their loyalty to their Divine Lord and Master under more trying conditions, and thus develop that character-likeness symbolized by having his name written in their foreheads. The partial fulfillment for some time past of the visions that follow enables us to discern more fully the severe and trying experiences just ahead.

The symbol of having the name written in the forehead, we believe, pictures something more definite, however, than the foregoing. While describing something that characterizes all of the "elect" class throughout the age, it seems to refer more especially to those who live in the period when the image of the beast is fully developed and acting. It appears to refer to some outward mark that will distinguish these from all others who profess the name of Christ, something that will make them conspicuous, even to the world at large. Mr. Lord has noted, and thus described this:

"To have the name of God and of the Lamb written on the forehead, is to be brought to a public and decisive manifestation of allegiance to the Most High,

and Him alone, as of title to religious homage, and right to impose religious laws. ... As the worshipers of the image of the wild beast impress on themselves its mark and number, by entering the society of that apostate hierarchy, submitting to its rites, offering its idolatrous worship and obeying its sway; so the worshipers of God become impressed with His name and the name of the Lamb, by refusing to join that idolatrous train and publicly asserting the sole right of God to institute the laws of religion and receive a religious homage, paying to Him alone the worship He demands, and placing in Christ exclusively the trust he requires as Redeemer. ... The distinguishing characteristic of the sealed, is a full and emphatic denial and resistance of the assumed right of civil rulers and legalized hierarchies to legislate in the place of God, make their will the ground of obligation and rule of faith and worship, and treat a dissent from it as a crime against them, and against the Almighty."

"I Heard the Voice of Harpers"

"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth" (verses 2,3).

The first thing necessary to note before seeking to discover the symbolic meaning of the "voice from heaven," and the "song" that is represented as being sung before the throne, etc., is that it must begin to meet its fulfillment in the period beginning with Christ's assumption and exercise of power in the resurrection of the "elect" class, who had "slept" up to that time, and ending with the time when the last living one of the "elect" class is changed and has become united with him. We would conclude therefore, in harmony with the prevailing belief amongst many of the Lord's people, that we have for some time been living in this period; that this vision must have been in process of fulfillment for some years past.

Coming to the significance of the vision we note that there are but two principal symbols to explain in the above words — the "voice from heaven," and the "song" that was being learned and sung.

The "voice from heaven" in this instance represents living persons speaking for or in praise of God. We learn this by the similes used by St. John to describe this voice. Similes occur quite frequently in the Revelation visions, and should be distinguished from symbols. A simile is defined as "a comparison of two things, which, however different in other respects, have some strong points of resemblance; by which comparison, the character or qualities of a thing are illustrated or presented in an impressive manner. Thus [by way of illustration], the eloquence of Demosthenes was like a rapid torrent; that of Cicero, like a large stream that glides smoothly along with majestic tranquillity" (Webster).

Applying this definition to the "voice" of the vision, we note that St. John says, "it was *as* [like] the voice of many waters, and *as* the voice of a great

thunder";[1] but that which enables us to determine the character of the sound is described in the words that follow: "the voice which I heard was as [like] that of harpers playing on their harps." We conclude, therefore, that the combination of these three elements produced a harmonious, musical sound, pleasing to the ear, pleasing to God.

In the history of typical Israel, the harp was the chief instrument used in connection with celebrations and seasons of great rejoicing in giving praise to Jehovah. We have recorded such celebrations in connection with the dedicatory services at the completion of the first and second temples (2 Chronicles 5:12, Nehemiah 12:27). It was also true that harp music was a most prominent feature in revival services in connection with great reformations and purifications of the temple services, which, sometimes for long years, had been neglected or defiled by a false worship; as that in King Hezekiah's day and another in Josiah's (2 Chronicles 29:25, 35:15).

Keeping in mind the sad departures on the part of God's professed people, and the defilement of Truth prevailing in Christendom in connection with the Lamb's assumption of kingly authority, we believe that these harmonious notes like the sound of harpers playing on their harps, would be because of the culmination of a great reform movement among God's true people, accompanied by a wonderful unfolding of Truth and engaged in by peoples of many languages (many waters).

Some of the older expositors, among them Mr. Elliott, have endeavored to apply this wonderful vision of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion to the great Protestant Movement of the Sixteenth Century; that being a time corresponding in some of its particular features to some of the great reform movements in typical Israel's history. The objections to such an application are insurmountable, for the Lamb did not assume kingly authority in the Reformation, neither had the full number of the "elect" been called at that time; and furthermore, as we have endeavored to show in a previous exposition (Revelation 10:1), the Sixteenth Century Reformation Movement was only a beginning of the cleansing of the antitypical temple (sanctuary class), which did not culminate until 1846. However, as we see that since that year there has developed a falling away, a departure from God on the part of the great Protestant systems, like that which existed in King Saul's closing days, just before the typical David ascended the throne of Jehovah, it is difficult to avoid the conviction that the fulfillment of this vision must be looked for since 1846, and as we shall endeavor to prove has been a matter of history for some time past.

When we consider in connection with this that all the prophecies are in agreement that we are in the end of the age, the harvest period, we should expect that among the Revelation visions there would be one that portrays the assump-

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(1) In the other instances where thunder is heard by St. John, it was real thunder, and symbolized controversies. In this, however, it was like the sound of thunder, and being accompanied by a sound like harpers playing, it will be seen that thunder in this instance does not denote controversies.

tion of authority by the antitypical David. And still further, when we consider the fact that the great Reformation Movement of the Sixteenth Century accomplished the giving of an open Bible to the world, and has finally culminated in the true sanctuary class obtaining a clear understanding of God's great Plan of the Ages, and that the last twenty-five years have witnessed a most remarkable work engaged in by the "elect" class, and doubtless many others with them, in spreading the knowledge of this wonderful revelation of truth far and near, and in many languages, it is not difficult to see in this the fulfillment of the voice from heaven as the sound of many waters and as the sound of thunder and as the voice of harpers playing on their harps. To those who have been associated in this movement, and who are familiar with the Church's history in the Gospel Age, there can hardly be any disagreement that in the wonderful unfolding and proclamation of Divine Truth there has been nothing that can compare with it, since Apostolic days. The dissemination of certain writings called *Scripture Studies*, and the distribution of tracts in many languages, the assembling in great conventions of thousands and thousands of the Lord's people all over Christendom, have certainly been, as the vision portrays, a voice as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of harpers playing on their harps. How transcendent has been the harmony of this voice with the Scriptures of truth and the Divine character! Concerning the Scriptural significance of this, it has been said:

"The whole Divine testimony must be in harmony, whether it be communicated by the Law, the Prophets, the Lord, or the Apostles. Their entire harmony is the proof of their Divine inspiration. And, thank God! we find that harmony existing, so that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments constitute what the Lord himself designates 'the harp of God.' (Revelation 15:2). And the various testimonies of the Law and the Prophets are the several chords of that harp, which, when tuned by the holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts, and swept by the fingers of the devoted servants and searchers after Divine Truth, yields the most enchanting strains that ever fell on mortal ears."

Only the Elect May Sing the Song

It is well to keep in mind, however, that while this wonderful, symbolic "voice" of harps describes a harmonious unfolding of the wonderful Plan of God as contained in all the Holy Scriptures, this has been accomplished largely through the printed page, and has been engaged in by many besides the "elect" class. It is evidently in connection with this particular that we are to discover the difference between the "voice" and that of the "song" being sung before the throne, etc. The last thirty or more years has been the period arranged in the Divine purpose for learning to sing the song. The present time is the one arranged, in the same Divine purpose, to prove who have really and truly learned to sing it. To many of those who have engaged in the work of proclaiming it, present conditions are proving that they are not among the singers, that they do not belong to this heavenly choir. The vision declares that no one was able to learn that song but those of the "elect" class, the hundred and forty-four thousand. It is one thing to be engaged in its proclamation; it is quite another thing to be able to sing it.

We may truthfully say that it is the bridal hymn. It is doubtless the same blessed truths portrayed by the symbolic "voice" that is represented in the "song," but it must be kept in mind that a knowledge of these Divine truths was given to enable the last members of the "elect" Bride company to prepare themselves for the Marriage. This class, one by one, have been brought into the antechamber of preparation, one by one have learned to sing the song, and one by one have been and are in the present time passing beyond. In the language of the poet, it has been with such:

"A little while to keep the oil from failing A little while faith's flickering lamp to trim; And then the Bridegroom's coming footsteps hailing, We'll haste to meet him with the bridal hymn."

These living saints upon the earth, who represent the hundred and forty-four thousand, are said to be singing the new song before the throne, the four beasts, and the twenty-four elders. Again let us keep in mind that this whole matter is a picture merely. Thus, pictorially, those who sing the song are represented as seeing Jehovah as the great Ruler of the Universe, as the Author of this marvelous program; they see in the Plan, the Lamb, Christ, as the most important agent; then they see also the completed and glorified Church, represented in the twenty-four elders, the Bride class, as destined to occupy positions of close proximity to the throne; they see the activity of certain great qualities or attributes (the living ones) and in consideration of all this view, this knowledge concerning these details — that is to say, as one translation puts it, "in the presence of," "before," all of these facts and sights represented in the throne vision, they sing; that is, being enlightened by the Truth, they become active in its ministry, in announcing it, in bearing testimony to it, in telling the Truth, in explaining it in various ways, and in making it known to others.

Thus, while in verses 1-3, the twenty-four elders, and those who sing the song, might appear to represent two different classes, yet when viewed from the standpoint indicated above, we believe they will be seen to be different symbols of one and the same class — presenting this class from different standpoints. Just as the Bible clearly gives us pictures of the Church in glory, as well as pictures of the Church in sacrifice and suffering; and just as now, we, as members of the Church in sacrifice, speak to others and explain to them respecting the Church in glory (as though we regarded it as a body of people in which we had no part), while all the time hoping ourselves to be members of that Church in glory; so when those who represent the hundred and forty-four thousand sing the song "in the presence of the four and twenty elders," they are speaking and telling of the class of which they expect to be members by and by. It thus seems to us that we get the force of this picture only as we recognize that it is in a symbolical sense that these saints of the Church sing this song before the throne, before the beasts, and before the elders; the elders representing the Church from one particular standpoint — from the standpoint of what the Church is destined to be — while those who sing the song represent the Church from the standpoint of what she now is while still in the flesh and undergoing some unusual experiences in the close of her earthly career.

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins" (verse 4).

This description of one of the characteristics of the "elect" class, the hundred and forty-four thousand, is not to be understood literally, any more than that of the others described. A comment on this statement is very instructive in this connection. It was given in reply to a question, which we give with the answer:

"Question. — You have already suggested that the expression, 'These are they which are not defiled by women' (Revelation 14:4) symbolically refers to earthly church organizations, represented as women — Babylon, mother and daughters. Now, I want to inquire, Have not all or nearly all of us who now enjoy the light of Present Truth been at one time or another in Babylon, connected with some of these church systems or 'women'? If so, have we not all been thus defiled? If not, what is signified by the defilement?

"Answer. — To our understanding, the point where defilement begins is after the light of Truth has reached the Lord's people, and opened the eyes of their understanding to see the difference between the Church whose names are written in heaven and the human organizations whose memberships are written on earth. After we have come to see something at least of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Divine character and Plan, and to appreciate something at least of how the Lord and His Plan have been misrepresented by these women (systems) and His character traduced, and after we have heard thus the voice of conscience and of the Lord's Word, saying to us, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues' — then it is that our defilement of conscience begins, if we refuse to obey the light that God has granted us, and the voice of His Truth. Whoever, for social or financial or other mercenary reasons, holds to that which he sees is built upon a wrong principle, and upholding wrong theories, in defamation of the Divine character, is defiling his conscience, will be unworthy to be counted an overcomer, and will fail to have a part in the First Resurrection."

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (verse 4).

This is a literal statement, and the truth contained in it is found everywhere unfolded in the sacred Word. Mr. Barnes has very comprehensively and truthfully unfolded their deep significance:

"This is another characteristic of those who are redeemed — that they are followers of the Lamb of God. That is, they are his disciples; they imitate his example; they obey his instructions; they yield to his laws; they receive him as their counselor and their guide. Whithersoever he goeth — as sheep follow the shepherd (Psalms 23:1,2). It is one characteristic of true Christians that they follow the Savior wherever he leads them. Be it into trouble, into danger, into difficult duty; be it in Christian or heathen lands; be it in pleasant paths, or in roads rough and difficult, they commit themselves wholly to his guidance and submit themselves wholly to his will."

"These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb" (verse 4).

This figure — "a first-fruit," confirms the truthfulness of the interpretation that the hundred and forty- four thousand represent the entire "elect" class of the Gospel Age. The expression is used first in relation to Christ: "Christ, the first-fruits," etc. (1 Corinthians 15:23). Keeping in mind that the whole "elect" company, Christ the Head and the Church his Body, are called "The Christ," will enable us to appreciate the words of the Apostle James in this connection: "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (James 1:18). It is very apparent to Bible students that the First Resurrection is made up of this entire elect company. It is also understood by the same that this First Resurrection began when the Lamb in the vision was seen standing on Mount Zion, and that it is not yet completed, as other visions which follow this one clearly show. These we shall consider in their order.

"And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault" (verse 5).

This, the last characteristic of these "elect" ones, is one of the most significant as expressing character-likeness to Christ. They are open, frank, honest in all that they do, and especially in their intercourse with their fellowmen. They do not in any degree practice deceit, fraud, or hypocrisy. They are sincerely and truly what they profess to be, and are thus blameless before God and their fellowmen.

An eminent writer has used the plot of the Song of Solomon to describe the characteristics of those who will at last be numbered among the Bride company. His comment is as follows:

"The central idea of the Song of Solomon is the same as that of the Apocalypse. According to Ewald, the commentator, who has given the most subtle analysis of this exquisite poem, the plot is this: 'On the one hand, a king in all the splendors of his glory, transported with admiration, overflowing with passion; on the other, the poor and simple shepherd to whom the Shulamite [maiden] has plighted her faith; the former present, the latter absent; the maiden called to decide freely between these two rivals. Such is the conflict in all its moral grandeur.'

"Translating Oriental poetry into Apocalyptic symbolism, the book of Revelation yields us the same conception.[1] Immanuel, the Shepherd Bridegroom ... in [the heavenly] Paradise, is ever sending word to his espoused Church on earth, 'Behold I come quickly.' But she, in her long waiting, is constantly solicited and wooed by royal suitors — purple and gold and precious stones being offered her — to withdraw her heart from her heavenly Consort, and to accept a throne with the kings of the earth. The harlot bride, a fallen daughter of God, clothed with scarlet and decked with jewels, and giving in fornication with the rulers of this world, appears upon the scene, hating and hunting this unsullied spouse of Christ and driving her into exile. But in spite of all these trials of her faith on the one hand, and all these solicitations of kings and these proffers of Solomonic

(1) "The Seer [St. John] That, ere he died, saw all the grievous times Of the fair Bride — who with the lance and nails Was won" (Dante).

wealth and splendor on the other, her heart is still true to her absent Lord, and her noble answer [in the poem] is, 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love it would be utterly contemned.'

"And yet the trial is one of intense and protracted severity. Her Lord delays his return long beyond her expectation; and the world mocks at her bridal hope, incredulously asking, 'Where is the sign of his coming?' Besides, it is an invisible and far-off Lover to whom her heart is plighted, one who appears only in visions of hope, and 'who in his sublime austerity scorns to use any sensuous means for attracting his people to himself.' In a word, her choice must be between an earthly Solomon, crowned with present glory and honor, and the Beloved whom the world has rejected, and who now stands without, knocking, his head wet with the dews of the night. 'Sometimes he comes down and manifests himself to the eyes of her faith. She sees him as in a dream; she delights herself spiritually with his presence — then suddenly he vanishes. And then once more she is alone, carrying on the contest with Solomon, who draws near in all his pomp, and tries to cast his spell upon her. But she remains faithful to him who is invisible; she sees the moment approaching in which, the true love of her God having won the victory in her heart over all the arts of the seducer, she will be fetched away by him, and — more fortunate in this respect than the Shulamite herself — will be able to follow him to those spiced mountains where he pastures his flock amongst the lilies' (Godet, *Studies on the Old Testament*). ...

"For where is the true Bride of Christ at this time? Before the face of her enemy she has 'fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there.' ... The time of the harlot's enthronement is the time of the Bride's exile; while the one is sharing a crown with the princes of this world, who crucified the Lord of glory, the other is sharing rejection with him whom the world knew not. What pathetic sorrows are hers during all this wilderness period! Because she will not be seduced from her bridal affection, all manner of opprobrium is heaped upon her. Even the watchmen, when they find her, smite her and wound her, and the keepers of the walls take away her veil from her. But in spite of all violence and scorn of men, her heart is with the absent Bridegroom, saying: 'I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love.'

" 'My heart is with him on the throne,
And ill can brook delay;
Each moment listening for his voice:
"Rise up and come away." '

"But now the long hoped-for consummation has arrived. The cry, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him,' sounds upon the air. She who kept her garments unspotted from the world is ready to be married, and stands clothed in her wedding vesture: she, also, who lived wantonly with the kings of the earth, is ready to be condemned, and stands 'arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones.' [Revelation 17:4.] Hardly has

the 'Alleluia' over the judgment of 'the great harlot which did corrupt the earth with her fornication' [Revelation 19:1,2] died away, before another is heard: 'Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.' (Revelation 19:6,7). ... 'Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?' (Canticles 8:5). Who, indeed, but she whose countenance was often bedewed with tears, whose feet were often torn with the thorns of the desert through which her enemies pursued her? But now the reproach of her widowhood is taken away, the bridal veil is upon her face, and the nuptial joy is in her heart."

"The night is fast passing, the day is at hand,
Day is at hand;
We've sighted the portals of Beulah land,
Sweet Beulah land.
Then sing, weary pilgrim, you're nearing the strand,
Nearing the strand,
Where loved ones are waiting in Beulah land,
Sweet Beulah land."

Joined to Christ

Joined to Christ in mystic union,
We Thy members, Thou our Head,
Sealed by deep and true communion,
Risen with Thee, who once were dead —
Savior, we would humbly claim
All the power of this Thy name.

Instant sympathy to brighten
All their weakness and their woe,
Guiding grace their way to lighten,
Shall Thy loving members know;
All their sorrows Thou dost bear,
All Thy gladness they shall share.

Everlasting life Thou givest,
Everlasting love to see;
They shall live because Thou livest,
And their life is hid with Thee.
Safe Thy members shall be found,
When their glorious Head is crowned!

Chapter Thirty-Two

The Messages to the Three Angels

(Revelation 14:6-13)

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Revelation 14:6,7).

In harmony with other visions where angels are represented as proclaiming a message from God, we interpret this symbolic angel to represent a company of the Lord's consecrated. It would therefore seem to point to an organized movement. The angel's flying in the midst of heaven would represent a very conspicuous movement in the religious world. That the message was a truthful one is indicated in its being called the "everlasting Gospel." In other words it was the true Gospel. That this message of the true Gospel was to be preached to all who dwelt upon the earth, is explained in the words that follow to mean, "to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" — signifying nothing less than a world-wide message. A "voice" represents a human agency, either one or many; in this case, it seemingly represents many.

One of the very significant features of this vision, and one which without other assistance should enable us to discover the time when it will meet its fulfillment is that this proclamation of the everlasting Gospel is made contemporaneous with the announcement of the Judgment Day; thus indicating their close relation. We conclude therefore, that the vision could not be fulfilled until a full knowledge of what is comprehended in the Glad Tidings had been made known to those engaged in this movement. This full, clear knowledge was not realized until very modern times. No expositor previous to the middle of the Nineteenth Century ever thought of associating the great Judgment Day as the Scriptures do with the proclamation of the Gospel, the Glad Tidings. The Glad Tidings of great joy, which in God's due time is to be realized by *all* people, had been, because of apostasy, utterly lost sight of until in the closing years of the Nineteenth Century, when it was in a very special way restored to the true Church. Careful attention to this enables us not only to locate the period when this vision had its fulfillment — beginning some time toward the close of the Nineteenth Century, but also enables us to recognize the fulfillment as being contemporaneous with that of the vision last considered — the Lamb standing on Mount Zion.

Many expositors, among them those whom we have frequently referred to in the previous chapters, have applied this vision to the great Reformation Movement of the Sixteenth Century; others to that of the great world-wide foreign missionary movement which occurred in the opening and middle years of the Nineteenth Century. Adventist expositors have quite generally applied this vision, as also that of the preceding one, to the Second Advent movement under William Miller, which culminated in the disappointment of Mr. Miller and his associates in 1844. In none of these movements, however, was there a clear, full understanding of the Gospel; neither was the judgment day of the world looked upon by any of these expositors as being good news for unconverted humanity who had died; on the contrary it was proclaimed as bad news for such. The true character of the Judgment Day was not fully understood by those who engaged in any of these movements; indeed it was not understood until clear views concerning the manner of the Second Advent began to be seen.

We conclude therefore that this angel flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting Gospel to preach, etc., must represent in its beginning features at least, a very unique movement among the living saints of the harvest period, and that it is, to a large extent a matter of history. Up to the closing years of the last century the truth respecting the full Gospel had been so perverted and beclouded by the errors of the creeds, both of Romanism and Protestantism, that a clear knowledge of the same which would be required to fulfill the vision, did not exist in either of these great nominal Christian bodies, neither among those associated in the Miller movement.

The proclamation of this symbolic angel was that "the hour of His judgment is come." In a sense it had already begun, because this Judgment Day must first begin at the house of God, and this, not only in the true spiritual house, but in the nominal spiritual house as well. It would signify, as we shall endeavor to show when considering the visions that follow in this chapter, that the time had come to prepare the way for the realization by all mankind of the blessed things referred to in the Glad Tidings, the true Gospel, the one preached by Jehovah to Abraham — "in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This preparation for a realization of these blessings by the world would of necessity include the destruction of the enemies of truth — the false religious systems. The matters described in the "voice of many waters," and the "song" of the hundred and forty-four thousand (Revelation 14:2,3), refer more especially to the unfolding of the true Gospel *to* the Lord's consecrated who would engage in this movement; on the other hand, the message of the symbolic angel of the vision we are now considering refers to a public proclamation given *by* the Lord's consecrated after they had received a knowledge themselves. Before such a public ministration could be engaged in, it would be necessary that the "new song" be well learned and appreciated. The message given to the public, as is well known by all who engage in the service, emphasizes chiefly that the Glad Tidings when rightly understood is that the Day of Judgment is at hand, and that this Judgment Day is the one so frequently referred to by the Prophets as a judgment that eventually will cause great rejoicing.

Coming Judgment Day, Good Tidings for All

With what rapture is this Gospel of the Judgment Day portrayed by one of God's holy Prophets of old:

"O sing unto the Lord a new song:
Sing unto the Lord, all the earth.
Sing unto the Lord, bless His name;
Show forth His salvation from day to day.
Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all the people.
O sing unto the Lord a new song;
For He hath done marvelous things:
His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory.
The Lord hath made known His salvation:
His righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the nations.
He hath remembered His mercy and His truth toward the house of Israel:
All the ends of the earth hath seen the salvation of our God.
Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth:
Make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
Let the floods clap their hands:
Let the hills be joyful together
Before the Lord; *for He cometh to judge the earth*:
With righteousness shall He judge the world,
And the people with equity" (Psalms 96 and 98).

It is a message that is designed to cause men to fear God — not with that slavish fear that the creeds of Christendom inculcate, but rather with that reverential fear that regards Him with the supreme awe that is due Him because of His infinite greatness, His infinite mercy, His infinite love. It is designed to cause men to have a true conception of God's character and attributes and thus give Him glory. The beneficial effects produced in the minds of many in the world by this public witnessing to the Truth, can be seen in the present time only in a very small measure. Enough is revealed, however, to show that many, not necessarily consecrated ones, are being blessed and comforted and caused to have a new, a better, a truer conception of the great God, as seen in His Plan for all His creatures. Many of this class have been delivered from the fears that the erroneous creeds of Christendom engendered, particularly the fear of eternal torment. And we may truthfully say that this work is not yet entirely completed; it is still going on. Indeed, the sorrow and suffering incidental to the great war have prepared and mellowed some hearts to appreciate the message and thus bring comfort to some who mourn. This feature of the work has been, and is preparing the way, so that when the great predicted troubles fully come, a much larger number of humanity will then be glad to read the messages that at

the present time lay quietly enclosed in volumes that are stored away, possibly never having been opened prior to this.

This symbolic angel-movement is a proclamation of the glorious times of restitution which are described by all God's holy prophets. It is one of the last messages given to the Church in the flesh to declare before her change to glory. This proclamation is going on. It is being given when the world is experiencing trouble, disaster, and threatened collapse on every hand.

The visions that succeed this one, which we next consider, show that other proclamations, messages that meet their fulfillment before these blessings can come to the world, are to be given by the same class. Indeed, the events of the present time all point to the fact that we are near the crisis in human affairs that will fulfill succeeding visions of judgment, which, however, will be followed quickly by the ushering in of the new order of things. These startling events that are now transpiring, so descriptive of judgment investigations, are to the faithful Watchers sure premonitions, harbingers of the dawn of the Millennial Morning. In this connection the following words are found to be fraught with solemn instruction and significance:

"Many even who are not of the Watchers are noting the signs of our times and are startled, and led to exclaim, What do these things mean? — This remarkable latter-day advance in science, art, and mechanical invention? — This latter-day discontent in the midst of plenty and luxury? — This latter- day growth of millionaires and paupers? — This growth of giant corporations of world-wide power and influence? — Why are national policies and public men and their utterances and doings criticized (judged) by the masses as never before? — And what means it that with an apparent growth in wealth and numbers in all denominations of Christians there is a growing dissatisfaction, discontent in them all: a growing tendency to criticize the creeds and the preaching and everything? ...

"The Scriptural answer is, The hour of God's judgment is come; the time when 'Christendom,' political, financial, social, and ecclesiastical, is being judged — being tried in the Divine balances. And the Scriptures declare that she will be found wanting, and will be adjudged unworthy to further administer the affairs of earth, which will be turned over to the elect 'little flock,' according to the Divine promise (Luke 12:32).

"The secret of the matter now is the same as in the Jewish 'harvest,' when John explained, saying, 'There standeth one among you whom you know not' (John 1:26)."

It will have been noted that in our expositions of these two visions recorded in chapter 14:1-5,6,7, we do not find that the fulfillment of the one succeeds the other in point of time, but rather that they occur contemporaneously; that is, we find that the voice St. John heard, "as the voice of many waters," and "as the voice of harpers harping with their harps," together with the "new song" sung by the hundred and forty-four thousand, refers to the glorious revelations of present Truth given to God's saints, while the angel flying in mid-heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach, etc., refers to a general proclamation of the

true Gospel throughout Christendom by the Lord's saints; and we understand that both of these have been having their fulfillment contemporaneously for some years past. It will be necessary to call attention to this point further as we consider succeeding visions. These two visions will not be completely fulfilled until all the elect class have been sealed, which we believe will be indicated by the ushering in of the dark night that precedes the full dawning of the Millennial Day (John 9:4). The "loud voice" of the flying angel will doubtless decrease in volume; indeed, the Lord has permitted the development of conditions and circumstances that have lessened the volume of tone to a very large extent. These incidents are doubtless providential, and are having only the designed effect of proving who have and who have not learned the "new song" — who appreciate and who do not appreciate the glorious message of present Truth so as to cause them to "hope perfectly for the gift that is to be given them at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13, Diaglott). Let us learn to distinguish the grand and perfect harmony of this new song from the many confusing and discordant voices that are being heard throughout Christendom today!

It will be of interest to the reader in this connection to note the comment of Mr. Barnes given in 1850 on this vision. Though not possessing a clear knowledge of all the features of the Divine Plan (the full Truth not then being due), his exposition shows remarkable spiritual discernment:

"The Gospel is here called everlasting or eternal, (a) because its great truths have always existed, or it is conformed to eternal truth; (b) because it will for ever remain unchanged — not being liable to fluctuation like the opinions held by men; (c) because its effects will be everlasting — in the redemption of the soul and the joys of heaven. In all the glorious eternity before the redeemed, they will be but developing the effects of that Gospel on their own hearts, and enjoying the results of it in the presence of God. ...

"When that time will be, the writer [St. John] does not intimate farther than that it would be *after the* beast and his adherents had attempted to stay its progress; and for the fulfillment of this, therefore, we are to look to a period subsequent to the rise and fall [from favor] of that great anti- Christian power symbolized by the beast and his image. "The main idea is, that when God shall be about to cause His Gospel to spread through the world, there will be, as it were, a solemn judgment on that anti-Christian power which had so long resisted His Truth and persecuted His saints, and that on the fall of that power His own Kingdom will be set up on the earth; that is, in the language of Daniel, 'the Kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High' " (Daniel 7).

The Second Angel's Message

"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (verse 8).

This second angel and his message we understand refer to another movement of the saints of the "harvest" period, beginning a little later, but continuing contemporaneously with the one just considered. It is, therefore, like the preceding one, largely a matter of history, but its fulfillment is not yet complete; and like the other, it will continue in a measure until the "dark night" sets in, when all such testimony will, because of the conditions then existing, have to cease. On this point, Mr. Barnes observed: "It is not necessary to suppose that this [vision] would, in the fulfillment, succeed the other [the vision preceding] in time. The chapter is made up of a number of representations, all designed to illustrate the same general thing, and to produce the same general effect on the mind — that the Gospel would be finally triumphant, and that, therefore, the hearts of the troubled and afflicted [of God's people] should be comforted. The representation in this verse, bearing on this point, is that Babylon, the great enemy [of the true Church], would fall to rise no more."

It is of no little significance that we have in this vision for the first time in the Revelation the word Babylon mentioned. The ancient empire of Babylon and its capital city, located on the great river Euphrates, had long before St. John's day ceased to exist. That both the city and the empire are employed as symbols in this and several subsequent visions, all Historical expositors are agreed. Mr. Barnes expresses the general thought of expositors concerning its significance, as follows:

"In reference to the meaning of the word [Babylon] in this place, it may be remarked (1) that the general characteristics of [literal] Babylon were that it was proud, haughty, insolent, oppressive. It was chiefly known and remembered by the Hebrew people as a power that had invaded the holy land; that had reduced its capital and temple to ruins; that had destroyed the independence of their country, subjecting it to the condition of a province, and that had carried away the inhabitants into a long and painful captivity. It became, therefore, the emblem of all that was haughty and oppressive, and especially of all that persecuted the Church of God. (2) The word must be used here to denote some power that resembled the ancient and literal Babylon in these characteristics. ... We are to seek, therefore, in the application of this, for some power that had the same general characteristics which the literal Babylon had. (3) ... All the circumstances require us to understand this of Rome — at some period of its history — for Rome, like Babylon, was the seat of empire, and the head of the heathen world; Rome was characterized by many of the same attributes as Babylon, being arrogant, proud, oppressive; Rome, like Babylon, was distinguished for its conquests, and for the fact that it made all other nations subject to its control; Rome had been, like Babylon, a desolating power, having destroyed the capital of the holy land, and burnt its beautiful temple, and reduced the country to a province. Rome, like Babylon of old, was the most formidable power with which the Church had to contend. Yet it is not, I suppose, Rome considered as *Pagan* that is here meant — but Rome considered as the prolongation of the ancient power in the *Papal* form."

This interpretation of symbolic Babylon very well represents the consensus of opinion of all expositors who lived previous to the middle of the Nineteenth Century. Mr. Guinness in his able work, *The Approaching End of the Age*, has given a more exhaustive exposition of symbolic Babylon than those who preceded him, and it is a treatise well worthy of consideration by all Bible students. The much clearer understanding of the true Gospel, together with an unfolding of certain events connected with the decline of Protestantism, enables one to have a better, a much clearer conception of this Babylon symbol, than that held by the earlier expositors. Concerning this subject another has written:

"It has been very generally and very properly claimed by Protestants that the name 'Babylon' and the prophetic description are applicable to Papacy, though recently a more compromising disposition is less inclined so to apply it. On the contrary, every effort is now made on the part of the sects of Protestantism to conciliate and imitate the Church of Rome, and to affiliate and cooperate with her. In so doing they become part and parcel with her, while they justify her course and fill up the measure of her iniquities, just as surely as did the Scribes and Pharisees fill up the measure of their fathers who killed the Prophets (Matthew 23:31,32)" (C. T. Russell).

After describing typical Babylon, empire and city, this expositor in the same connection gives a brief but comprehensive unfolding of this symbol:

"Such was the typical city; and, like a great millstone cast into the sea, it was sunken centuries ago, never again to rise: even the memory of it has become a reproach and a byword. Now let us look for its antitype, first observing that the Scriptures clearly point it out, and then noting the aptness of the symbolism.

"In symbolic prophecy a 'city' signifies a religious government backed by power and influence. Thus, for instance, the 'holy city, the new Jerusalem,' is the symbol used to represent the established Kingdom of God, the overcomers of the Gospel Church exalted and reigning in glory. The Church is also, and in the same connection, represented as a woman, 'the Bride, the Lamb's Wife,' in power and glory, and backed by the power and authority of Christ, her husband. 'And there came unto me one of the seven angels ... saying, Come hither, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. And he ... showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem' (Revelation 21:9,10).

"This same method of interpretation applies to mystical Babylon, the great ecclesiastical kingdom, 'that great city' (Revelation 17:1-6), which is described as a harlot, a fallen woman (an apostate church; for the true Church is a virgin), exalted to power and dominion, and backed, to a considerable degree, by the kings of the earth, the civil powers, which are all more or less intoxicated with her spirit and doctrine. The apostate Church lost her virgin purity. Instead of waiting, as an espoused and chaste virgin, for exaltation with the Heavenly Bridegroom, she associated herself with the kings of the earth and prostituted her virgin purity — both of doctrine and character — to suit the world's ideas; and in return she received, and now to some extent exercises, a present dominion, in large measure by their support, direct and indirect. This unfaithfulness to

the Lord, whose name she claims, and to her high privilege to be the 'chaste virgin' espoused to Christ, is the occasion of the symbolic appellation, 'harlot,' while her influence as a sacerdotal empire, full of inconsistency and confusion, is symbolically represented under the name Babylon, which, in its widest sense, as symbolized by the Babylonian Empire, we promptly recognize to be Christendom; while in its more restricted sense, as symbolized by the ancient city Babylon, we recognize to be the nominal Christian Church."

This same writer, further enlarging on the significance of symbolical Babylon, goes on to say that many sincere Christians had not, at the time he wrote these words, become sufficiently awake to the decline of Protestantism to discern the relationship existing between the various sects of this latter system and that of Papacy. He informs us of a fact seen by a considerable number of students of Scripture today, that Protestant Churches no longer have the spirit of the Reformation:

"Protestantism, as it exists today, is not the result of the Great Reformation, but of its decline; and it now partakes to a large degree of the disposition and character of the Church of Rome, from which its various branches sprang. The various Protestant sects (and we say it with all due deference to a comparatively few devout souls within them, whom the Lord designates as 'wheat,' in contradistinction to the overwhelming numbers of 'tares') are the true daughters of that degenerate system of nominal Christianity, the Papacy, to which the Revelator makes reference in applying to her the name 'Mother of Harlots.' (Revelation 17:5). And let it not pass unobserved that both Romanists and Protestants now freely own the relationship of mother and daughters, the former continually styling herself the Holy Mother Church, and the latter, with pleased complacency, endorsing the idea, as shown by many public utterances of leading Protestant clergymen and laymen.

"But let us see how the Protestant systems sustain this relationship of daughters to Papacy. Since Papacy, the mother, is not a single individual, but a great religious system, in keeping with the symbol we should expect to see other religious systems answering to the illustration of daughters of similar character — not, of course, so old, nor necessarily so depraved, as Papacy — but, nevertheless, 'harlots' in the same sense; *i.e.* religious systems claiming to be either the espoused virgin or the Bride of Christ, and yet courting the favor and receiving the support of the world, at the price of disloyalty to Christ.

"To this description the various Protestant organizations fully correspond. They are the great daughter systems.

"The birth of these various daughter systems came in connection with reforms from the corruptions of the mother Church. The daughter systems parted from the mother under circumstances of travail, and were born virgins. However, they contained more than true reformers; they contained many who still had the spirit of the mother, and they inherited many of her false doctrines and theories; and it was not long until they fell into many of her bad practices and proved their characters true to the prophetic stigma — 'harlots.'

"But let it not be forgotten that while the various reformation movements did valuable work in the 'cleansing of the sanctuary,' yet only the temple class, the sanctuary class, has ever been the true Church, in God's reckoning. The great human systems, called churches, have never been more than nominally the Church."

"Come Out of Her My People"

With what solemn meaning indeed do the words of this writer come home to the Lord's people in these closing days. The reader should bear well in mind that the particular characteristics of the decline of this great Reformation Movement described in the above quotation — ending in later times in the formation of the daughter sects — are, in these closing days finally, and for the last time we trust, repeated again in our very midst — in the midst of that body of people who have professed to represent a cleansed sanctuary, free from the spirit of Babylon. Alas that so many have overlooked the fact that it is as individuals that we are called to membership in the Bride of Christ, and our identity as members of a human system or organization counts for nothing in the eyes of the Great Head of the Church. We need as individual Christians more than ever to keep in mind the various peculiarities of the spirit of Babylon, for it is its spirit, even more than its letter, that is to be overcome.

It is a well established fact that a few of the eminent godly men who had not come to see clearly all that is embraced in the full everlasting Gospel before they finished their service in death, nevertheless saw, and to a large extent engaged in the work of this symbolic angel in declaring the fall (from favor) of Protestantism, and associated it with Papacy as about to receive her final doom. Let the reader note the clear statement of Mr. Guinness in this connection, speaking of Papacy's failure to give heed to the judgments that have been sent on her:

"Rome has proved herself irreformable and deserving of the dreadful doom so long decreed against her. ... And when we turn our eyes to the reformed Protestant churches of Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and England, what do we behold? The power of godliness to a greater extent, a purer creed, an open Bible, an educated people, a general respect for the things of God, and some vital godliness, some faith. But even here how much of covert or open infidelity, what rationalism, what skepticism, what 'broad church' views, what oppositions of science falsely so-called! What worldliness, what national sins, what confusion and strife in the church, what loathsome vice and ungodliness in the world! National churches honeycombed with infidelity, even when not relapsing back to Popery under another name, and Non-conformist churches fast admitting the same deadly leaven. Where can we find a Christianity worthy of Christ? Where a church, like a chaste virgin, fit to be his Bride?

"The Christian Church as a witness for God in the world has failed, like the Jewish nation, and become apostate. There is a little flock, there is a true Church, but its members are scattered abroad and almost invisible in the great Babylon; they are the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, they are the

called and chosen and faithful who follow the Lamb, they are those who have turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven; they are those who have not the form only, but the *power* of godliness, those who keep themselves unspotted from the world, and overcome through faith. They are found in every section of the professing Church, and the Lord knoweth those that are His — 'They shall be mine saith the Lord of Hosts, in the day when I make up *My* Jewels.'

"But for the rest — for the vast professing body which bears the name of Christ, it has not continued in the goodness of God, it has turned His grace into licentiousness, its sentence has gone forth, it must be 'cut off.' ... The professing Church has long been unworthy of the sacred name it bears. ... Instead of being the instrument of spreading the truth of the Gospel among men, it is the worst hindrance to their attaining that knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, in which life eternal lies; like the Pharisees of old, it stands as the great obstruction, neither entering itself into the Kingdom, nor suffering those who would to enter in. ... The church is confounded with the world, and the true saints are strangers in its society; it is no longer the pillar and ground of the truth, it is the hotbed of heresy, false doctrine, and corruption of every kind. ... An end must come to all this! Not only does the Word of God predict it, not only does our own sense of righteousness demand it, but the solemn analogies of history distinctly intimate it. Let the undeniable fact that past apostasies brought down the judgment they deserved, forewarn men what must be the end of the existing apostasy of the professing people of God. Babylon must fall! Great Babylon must come in remembrance before God, who will give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath, for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities! The testimony of the Apocalypse is full and fearful as to the doom that is now impending over Christendom."

The above words were written in 1880, and were quoted by Mr. Russell in his monthly journal in December of that year. A. J. Gordon in 1889 utters a no less solemn warning:

"Every age has ended in judgment, and so shall the present dispensation close. As apostate Judaism met its doom in the destruction of Jerusalem, so apostate Christendom expiates its sentence in the overthrow of mystical Babylon. This destruction will fall, we believe, [first] upon the literal city of seven hills, as the visible center and capital of the apostasy. What other systems beside the Papal may be involved in the judgment is a most solemn question to be pondered. It is plainly intimated that the mother has daughters, and therefore that Babylon the Great has outlying suburbs which are in fellowship with her. Let him that readeth understand."

Mr. Lord looked for the fulfillment of this vision in the future of his day (1846). He saw very clearly, as will be observed in the quotation below, the failure of the Reformation in the formation of the Protestant sects, and that those who in any measure united with or received support by the civil powers, were part and parcel of Babylon. In this connection his words which we quote are very significant:

"The Protestant churches [sects] so far from going out of great Babylon, continued in her community by still acting on her [the mother's] principles, arrogating the same dominion over the laws of God, and uniting in the same manner with the civil powers in imposing their creeds and rites on others, and persecuting dissentients. ... The Protestant nationalized churches, therefore, great as was the sum of her [the mother's] false doctrines which they rejected, inasmuch as they thus imitated her, in an arrogation of the throne of God, and elevation of their authority above His rights and will, still continued to belong to great Babylon, and if they subsist at that time [the time of judgment described in the vision], are to share in her fall."

The fulfillment of this vision recorded in Revelation 14:8, as we have before seen, is simply that of an announcement, a proclamation of Babylon's fall, that is her fall from favor. This announcement has been having its fulfillment for many years. Her fall (destruction) is portrayed in chapter 18. Mr. Russell has frequently in his writings given this as his understanding of the meaning of this vision. In 1900 he said:

"More evident does it become, daily, that our Lord's declaration, 'Babylon is fallen!' does not signify the outward collapse of 'Churchianity'; but that nominal 'Christendom' has fallen from Divine favor; just as the fall of national Judaism from Divine favor, at the rejection and crucifixion of Messiah at his first presence, meant not the collapse at the moment of that religio-political system. ... The collapse will be sudden and awful when it does come; and while only the few realize the fallen- from-grace condition of Babylon in the present, none will be ignorant of her collapse when it comes.

"But when we say that nearly all will fall — 'a thousand shall fall at thy side' — we do not mean that they will all fall into open immorality; nor that they will abandon church organizations, nor that the fallen ones will even know that they have fallen. On the contrary, the fallen ones as usual will think that they are rising higher and higher — getting rid of error, etc. They will be thoroughly blind to the fact that with the errors and superstitions they are getting rid also of the truths and the faith which alone constituted them Christians in God's sight. This is the sense in which Babylon is falling ... and hence God's call, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues' (Revelation 18:4)."

The next clause in the vision gives a reason why Babylon has utterly fallen from favor, become apostate, rejected. It is because she "has given all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." This statement expressed in different forms is found several times in the subsequent visions. In chapter 17, the woman upon whose forehead the name Babylon is written, holds in her hand a golden cup, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication (verse 4); and St. John was told that the "inhabitants of the earth had been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (verse 2). Again, St. John saw the woman, the mother of harlots, "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus" (verse 6). Briefly stated, the meaning of the expression in the vision we are considering is that the great harlot, the mother system, had at the time

the vision meets its fulfillment, succeeded in causing so-called Christendom to drink and become stupefied with false religious doctrines and was on this account ripe for judgment. The Reformation Movement exposed to view some of these false doctrines, and caused many to see the apostate mother system in its true light. The failure of the Reformation Movement, by the formation of sects, gradually brought in the present apostate condition. Those represented in this movement by the angel crying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon," are those who in the last half century have been proclaiming this fact. The expression "the wine of the wrath of God," is interpreted in two ways. As given by some: "The meaning here is, that the nations had drunk of that cup which brought on the wrath of God on account of her 'fornication.' ... The word 'fornication' here is used to denote spiritual uncleanness; that is, heathen and superstitious rites and observances. The term is often used in the Scriptures as applicable to idolatry and superstition."

Others interpret the expression as meaning that these false doctrines made the nations to become infuriated, causing them to carry out the mother system's cruel decrees against those who opposed her abominations. Mr. Russell comments on this expression:

"In horror and wonder we ask ourselves, Why did kings, and princes, and emperors, and the people at large, permit such atrocities? Why did they not arise long ago and smite down Antichrist? The answer is found in the Scriptures (Revelation 18:3): The nations were drunk (stupefied), they lost their senses in drinking the mixed wine (doctrine, false and true mixed) given them by the apostate Church. They were deceived by the claims of Papacy."

Will the indirect enlightening influences of the Truth ever again become so obscured as to cause another, although brief manifestation of this symbolical drunkenness to act against the Truth?

The Third Angel's Message

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:9-12).

The vision of this third angel and the message of solemn warning proclaimed by him, undoubtedly represents another phase of the special movement among the Lord's consecrated ones in the harvest period or closing of the age. The proclamation that the saints are represented in the vision as giving implies that they have obtained the knowledge that all the various phases of the anti-

Christian systems embodied in the term Babylon, have fallen — been rejected and cast off from God's favor, and that their destruction is close at hand. In 1881 Mr. Russell explained this vision as at that time beginning to meet its fulfillment:

"The third [angel's] message (verses 9-11) concerning the worshipers of the beast and his image — showing the nominal Church in the colors in which the Word of God paints it, pointing out how all who remain in her either in spirit or name, in opposition to the Word of God, saying, 'Come out of her,' will be subject to torment and vexation so long as they are worshipping creeds and doctrines and organizations of men. The remembrance of which distress (smoke of torment) will never be forgotten."

Concerning this vision of the third angel and his message, as also the two preceding, this same writer said: "All three of these messages yet continue, and will doubtless continue to be repeated by others so long as they contain truth due to the Lord's children."

The history of the last forty years has to many minds confirmed these utterances. The Lord has continued to give increased knowledge on this and other visions, and now it is beginning to be seen and made known that the fulfillment of this third angel's message will involve more significant matters pertaining to the last testimony of the Lord's consecrated. Later writings of this author show that its complete fulfillment could not take place until the image of the beast (Confederated Protestantism) had received its life (authority) — indeed, not until the great predicted federation of Christendom had become an accomplished fact, and the great triple-alliance would feel compelled to act, to hold back the rising tide of insubordination to governmental authority, lawlessness, that has long threatened.

The *complete* fulfillment of the vision is therefore in the future — the near future, it would seem. It appears to describe the final testimony of the last of the Lord's faithful followers. Keeping in mind the predicted usurpation of Divine power that will be exercised by this last great federation of Christendom, as described in the vision of the image of the beast (Revelation 13:15-18), will enable us to see that certain seemingly necessary laws will be enacted which will so conflict with the Christian's duties and obligations to the great Head of the Church as to make obedience to their laws impossible for conscientious Christians. In other words, to be obedient to the "powers that be" at that time will require on the part of true loyal Christians a violation of conscience before God. The vision of this third angel and his message, therefore, would seem to require a more conspicuous movement than as yet has taken place — a movement involving a testimony against this last anti- Christian federation, and a very conspicuous exhortation to fellow-Christians to keep themselves separate and free from it. As Mr. Lord has expressed:

"The great principles on which the pure and apostate Church proceed are ... to be brought into the most open and violent antagonism; the worshipers of God are to give the most public and perfect demonstration of the truth and inflexibleness of their allegiance, by resigning their lives, rather than apostatize; and the

anti-Christian powers and their vassals are to give the most resistless proof of their deliberate and incorrigible apostasy by continuing their rebellion amidst threatenings of avenging judgments."

It is only by discovering what the Scriptural requirements and obligations of the Christian are to the "powers that be," that will enable him to understand what, and what alone, could possibly be involved in this exercise of authority on the part of this great federation that could cause Christians to be brought into such trying conditions. It is quite certain that nothing of this nature has yet occurred in this harvest period. It becomes therefore a matter of the utmost importance that the true followers of Christ should know, understand, what are their duties and obligations to worldly governments, good or evil. Speaking of the Christian's attitude and duty to the world-powers under conditions and circumstances of this character, one has thus expressed what seems to sum up very clearly the Scripture teaching in this respect:

"The Prophets declare that because of the increase of knowledge a still more general and wide- spread dissatisfaction will finally express itself in a world-wide revolution, in the overthrow of all law and order ... but that in the midst of this confusion the God of heaven will set up His Kingdom, which will satisfy the desires of all nations. ...

"Knowing this to be the purpose of God, neither Jesus nor the Apostles interfered with earthly rulers in any way. On the contrary, they taught the Church to submit to these powers, even though they often suffered under their abuse of power. They taught the Church to obey the laws, and to respect those in authority because of their office, even if they were not personally worthy of esteem; to pay their appointed taxes, and, except where they conflicted with God's laws (Acts 4:19, 5:29), to offer no resistance to any established law (Romans 13:1-7, Matthew 22:21). The Lord Jesus and the Apostles and the early Church were all law-abiding, though they were separate from, and took no share in, the governments of this world."

"Christians should recognize the true character of these kingdoms, and, while they keep separate from them, should render to them due respect and obedience, because God has permitted them to rule. As Paul teaches, 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God' (Romans 13:1)."

"The true Christian ... realizes that under Divine providence he is not to expect his rights in the present time, nor to strive for them; but that, on the contrary, he sacrifices them to the will of God — to the doing of the Lord's will so far as he may have opportunity, and to the having of the Lord's will done in him according to the Lord's wisdom and providence. If oppressed and dealt with unjustly, he will look to the Lord for deliverance, and whatever way it shall come will accept it as of Divine arrangement; and whatever God does not provide in the way of deliverance along reasonable and just lines he will accept as the rulings of His providence, and render to the Lord thanks for His watch-care and seek to learn the lessons of patience and experience and longsuffering, which these trials may

inculcate; recognizing in such a case that these trials, from whomsoever they come, are permitted of the Lord if not ordered by Him, and intended for his welfare and spiritual development."

"It is our business to render obedience to the laws, customs, usages, of this world, in so far as these do not infringe upon our conscientious obligations to the Lord and the Truth. ... The commands of the judge or court are to be obeyed — whatever others might be disposed to do, Christians are never to be found in contempt of court, but are to obey its rules to the very letter, whether they consider them just or unjust, because the judge is the representative of the law, and God permits the law and the judge, and commands us to be subject to whatever He permits. If, therefore, as our Lord explained, some one shall sue us at the law, and take away our coat, or if it include our cloak also, all that we had, we are not to resist; we are to be obedient to the powers that be. This does not mean, however, that we shall willingly submit to the coat or cloak or other articles being taken from us illegally or unjustly without process of law."

"The Apostle [Paul] declared that he was a debtor both to the Jews and to the Greeks; and looking at matters from a similar standpoint, we may say likewise, that we are under many obligations to many people. ... We owe a debt to the community and commonwealth in which we live for the measure of peace, order, social convenience, and advantages every way, which we, in common with others, share; we owe a debt to our nation at large in consideration of the many blessings, liberties, advantages, etc., which come to us through it by Divine providence" (C. T. Russell).

Here is the Patience of the Saints

From these clear Scriptural unfoldings of our duty and relation to the powers that be, it will be seen that this great predicted federation of civil and ecclesiastical power will in some way be moved to exercise such an arbitrary authority as to bring the enlightened Christian into a position in which the choice of obedience to God or man will be the supreme test. In the light of the foregoing this could be nothing less than a compulsory enactment to either unite with or give support to this great federation's usurpation of God's place in the conscience of the Christian. This is doubtless what is meant in the words of the Revelator, "Here is the patience [patient endurance] of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (verse 12). It will be remembered that a similar statement to this was made in connection with the first beast's usurpation of Divine power, causing the terrible persecutions of the Dark Ages (see Revelation 13:10). The teaching evidently is that the great trials of true Christians at *that* time and those who live in the *last* time, will require patient endurance of wrong under most trying and difficult circumstances. One writer has said, "Here the patience of the saints is sustained in a reign of terror such as never yet has been." Mr. Barnes comments on this verse (Revelation 13:10) as it relates to the Dark Ages:

"Nowhere on earth have the patience and the faith of the saints been put to a severer test than under the Roman (Papal) persecutions. The same idea occurs in chapter 14:12."

We give his comment on this latter verse respecting those who exercise this patience in these persecutions and trials:

"They will show that they belong to those who keep the commandments of God, and are His true children. Or, perhaps the meaning may be — 'here is a disclosure respecting the final destiny of these persecutors, which is adapted to comfort and sustain the saints in the trials which they will endure; an encouragement to constancy in obeying the commands of God, and evincing the meek faith of the Gospel.' "

It will be noted that Papacy is still, at the time of this fulfillment, denominated the beast, because it still (although having lost temporal power) possesses and will then exercise all the beastly characteristics. It is so recognized because it continues to claim temporal as well as ecclesiastical authority over the hearts and consciences of men; and furthermore, it is still recognized by millions all over the world as having this authority, and these bow, even at the present time, in submission to its decrees, in both temporal and ecclesiastical matters. "Papacy," says Mr. Guinness, "is served by an extensive sacerdotal organization, embracing about a thousand bishops and half a million of priests. This organization controls the convictions and actions of two hundred millions of persons, belonging to more than thirty nations." Its adherents, both of clergy and laity, have increased to much larger proportions since these words were written.

Concerning the punishments described in the vision to be meted out to the worshipers of the beast and the image of the beast, the older commentators are inclined to interpret these symbols to mean eternal torment. Mr. Barnes, commenting on the expression, "the smoke of their torment shall rise up forever and ever," said:

"This does not indeed affirm that their individual sufferings would be eternal — since it is only a declaration that the 'smoke of their torment ascends'; but it is such language as would be used on the supposition that they would suffer forever, and as can be explained only on that supposition."

Thank God, the true knowledge of God's Plan enables us to see clearly the symbolical signification of these and the contextual words. A later comment on this verse, also Revelation 19:3, where the same expression is used, and others referring to the same time and same occurrences, is perfectly reasonable and harmonious with the Scripture teaching on this much misunderstood subject:

"Of Revelation 14:9-11 we remark, incidentally, that all will at once concede that if a literal worshipping of a beast and image were meant in verse 9, then few, if any, in civilized lands are liable to the penalty of verse 11; and if the beast and his image and worship and wine and cup are symbols, so also are the torments and smoke and fire and brimstone.

"Revelation 19:3, speaking of one of these systems, says: 'Her smoke rose up forever and ever.' That is to say, the remembrance ('smoke') of the destruction

of these systems of deception and error will be lasting, the lesson will never be forgotten — as smoke, which continues to ascend after a destructive fire, is testimony that the fire has done its work (see also Isaiah 34:8-10)."

We conclude our consideration of this vision of the third angel and his message with the inquiry, What is meant by the expression "in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb"? (verse 10). The meaning evidently is that the judgments that will destroy the anti-Christian systems will be in the days of the presence of the Son of Man, and will be witnessed by all the holy messengers of the harvest period, some on the other side of the veil, and others, the much smaller number, on this.

"Blessed are the Dead who Die in the Lord"

"And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Write — from this time blessed are those dead, who die in the Lord; Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow after them" (Revelation 14:13).

It is interesting and instructive, as confirming the principle of prophetic interpretation, namely that history unveils prophecy, to note how the earlier commentators labored to overcome the difficulties connected with the interpretation and application of this "voice from heaven." They understood that a great blessing would come to all those who died in the Lord, but were unable to see what special blessing would come to those who died in the Lord at the time of the vision's fulfillment. Mr. Barnes, who wrote in 1850, thus comments on the words, "from henceforth":

"This word has given no little perplexity to expositors, and it has been variously rendered. Some have connected it with the word *blessed* — 'blessed henceforth are the dead who die in the Lord'; that is, they will be ever-onward blessed; some with the word *die*, referring to the time when the Apostle was writing — 'blessed are they who *after this time* die in the Lord,' designing to comfort those who were exposed to death, and who would die as martyrs; some as referring to the times contemplated in these visions — 'blessed will they be who shall die in those future times.' Witsius understands this as meaning that from the time of their death they would be blessed, as if it had been said, *immediately* after their dissolution they would be blessed. Doddridge renders it, 'henceforth blessed are the dead.' The language is evidently not to be construed as implying that they who *had* died in the faith before were not happy, but that in the times of trial and persecution that were to come, they were to be regarded as peculiarly blessed who should escape from these sorrows by a Christian death."

Mr. Barnes, in summing up his understanding of the text, fails, as we should expect, writing at that early time, before the *parousia*, to solve the difficulty. We quote his conclusions:

"The design, therefore, of the verse is to impart consolation and support to those who would be exposed to a martyred death, and to those who, in times of persecution, would see their friends exposed to such a death."

Mr. Elliott offers the following: "After this a voice from heaven was heard by St. John to follow, saying, 'Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth,' etc. In which voice the words *from henceforth blessed*, or, as they may be rendered, *from time near at hand*, referred to, I conceive, and indicated the near approach of the grand epoch of blessedness predicated in Scripture of departed saints: I mean the blessedness of their reward and joy at Christ's coming. ... Where then the distinctiveness of the vision? [Mr. Elliott means here, the distinction between those who died formerly and those at this time.] For, although doubtless another notice, just previously given, did intimate that it is to be eminently an era of trial both to the faith and the patience of Christ's true saints, and one to show very notably whether they will keep, as their one rule of action, 'the commands of God,' and of doctrine, 'the faith of Jesus,' yet many such times of trial had been before — I cannot but add that the intimation seems to imply a settlement of the great Pre-millennial question. For how could the saints' blessedness and reward be viewed as imminent, if a millennium of the spiritual evangelization of the world were expected to precede it?"

Mr. Lord, in his comment on these words, although brief, seems to us to approach nearer to the true interpretation:

"To die in the Lord, is to die for his sake as a witness to his truth. ... That their works are to follow with them, denotes, doubtless, that they are immediately to be raised from death, and as kings and priests in Christ's Kingdom on earth, to resume their work towards the nations and exert an important instrumentality in converting them to the homage of God." Another commentator comes even closer, we believe, to the true interpretation. His writing is later than those already quoted:

"Faith too is sustained in another way, namely by the special consolation as to those who die as martyrs at this time: 'And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord *from henceforth*.' That is clearly encouragement under peculiar circumstances. All who die in the Lord must be blessed at any time; but that only makes it plainer that the circumstances must be exceptional now which require such comfort to be so expressly provided for them. Something must have produced a question as to the blessedness of those that die at this time; and in this we have an incidental confirmation — stronger because incidental — that the resurrection of the saints has already taken place. Were they still waiting to be raised, the blessedness of those who as martyrs join their company could scarcely be in doubt. The resurrection having taken place, and the hope of believers being now to enter alive[1] into the Kingdom of the Son of Man at his appearing, as the Lord says of that time, 'He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved' (Matthew 24:13), the question is necessarily raised. What shall be the portion of these martyrs, then, must not remain a question; and in the tenderness of Divine love the answer is explicitly given. Specially blessed are those who die from henceforth: they rest from their

(1) In this we believe he is evidently in error.

labors; they go to their reward. The Spirit seals this with a sweet confirming 'yea' — so it is. Earth has only cast them out that heaven may receive them; they have suffered, therefore they shall reign with Christ. Thus accordingly we find in the twentieth chapter, that when the thrones are set and filled, those that have suffered under the beast [and we would add, the image of the beast also] are shown as rising from the dead to reign with the rest of those who reign with him. Not the martyrs in general, but these of this special time are marked distinctly as finding acknowledgment and blessing in that 'first resurrection,' from which it might have seemed that they were shut out altogether.

"It may help some to see how similar was the difficulty that had to be met for the Thessalonian saints, and which the Apostle meets also with a special 'word of the Lord,' in his first epistle. They too were looking for the Lord, so that the language of their hearts was (with that of the Apostle), '*We* who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord.' They had been 'turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven'; and with a lively and expectant faith they waited.

"But then what about those who were fallen asleep in Christ? It is evident that here is all their difficulty. He would not have them ignorant concerning those that were asleep, so as to be sorrowing for them, hopeless as to their share in the blessing of that day. Nay, those who remained would not go before these sleeping ones; they would rise first, and those who were alive would then be 'caught up *with them* to meet the Lord in the air.' This for Christians now [before the resurrection occurs] is thus the authoritative word of comfort. . . . For them the old difficulty appears once more [severe tests of faith through persecution at the hands of the image of the beast], and must be met with a new revelation [contained in the words "Blessed are those dead who die in the Lord from this time"]. How perfect and congruous in all its parts is the precious Word of God! And how plainly we have in what might seem even an obscure or strange expression — 'blessed *from henceforth,'* a confirmation of the general interpretation of all this part of Revelation" (F. W. Grant).

All of these expositors wrote before 1850 with the exception of the last, who wrote we believe in the closing years of the Nineteenth Century. So far as we have been able to discover, the first one who clearly unfolded this Scripture and proclaimed it in the "heaven" of the vision, was Mr. Russell. He, and those associated with him in his work, seem to be represented by the "voice." In this statement of verse 13 we have another convincing confirmation of the fact that the interpretation given herein of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion is now meeting its fulfillment. It is a matter of proving the fulfillment of prophecy by the unfolding of history — "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it come to pass, ye might believe." We quote Mr. Russell's words:

"Uniformly throughout the Bible except this one instance death is represented as a dreadful disaster, a terrible enemy, a devouring monster, and the grave as a great prison, permitted of our loving Heavenly Father, only because men had become sinners and must be destroyed. ...

"In view of the general expression of enmity to death, in the Scriptures, the above solitary text speaking of it as a blessing, is rather peculiar until we notice that the application is limited by the word *'henceforth'* ["this time," Diaglott]. Not always, but henceforth death may be a blessing. But notice another limitation; it will not henceforth be a blessing to *all* mankind, but only to those in the Lord — members in particular of the Body of Christ, the Little Flock to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom — to all others death will continue to be an enemy until its final destruction in the Millennial reign (Hosea 13:14).

"Again, it is unusual to speak of those already dead as dying; but the spirit uses this seemingly incongruous expression, evidently desiring to limit the application of the death blessing to a certain class, 'Blessed are the dead (dead to the world — crucified with Christ — 'ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God'), who die in the Lord from henceforth.'

"Now, we are full of interest to know when, from what time forward, will it be blessed for the special class mentioned, to die. These words were written for our edification and we should be able to know when they apply; especially if we are *in* the Lord and *dead* to the world; for it was part of our Master's promise that the spirit should guide us into an understanding of the Truth and show us things to come (John 16:13). If as we believe the last members of the Body of Christ are now living — 'the feet of him' — it is time that we understand this passage, which clearly refers to the feet. ...

"But we inquire, In what respect will death be a blessing to us now, that it has not always been to other members of the Body? We answer, The difference is that we shall not sleep, but we will be instantly invested with our heavenly, spiritual bodies, being changed in a moment, dropping all that is human and earthly, and being clothed upon with our heavenly condition. In the case of Jesus, there were nearly three days of sleep — the unclothed condition between the times when the earthly body was resigned and the heavenly body was received — Paul and others have been nearly two thousand years waiting 'unclothed' or 'asleep in Jesus,' and this is one of the principal reasons why death was undesirable even to Christians: We do not wish to be unclothed, even for a moment, but we do desire to be clothed upon or have the change an instantaneous one (1 Corinthians 15:52).

"Herein consists the blessing to those of the Body now taken. Death of the human will be instantaneous with the perfecting of the Divine nature, hence it will be a blessed 'change.' 'Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.' "

"Nowhere in the Scriptures is death represented as in any sense a blessing, except in this one instance; and here it is particularly limited and made applicable to a certain specific time — 'from henceforth.' And even then, notice, it is blessed only to a special class — 'the dead who die.' This expression must not be considered a blunder, but as a very pointed and forcible description of the small class to whom death will be a blessing. This class constitutes 'the feet of him.' And, as already shown, each member of the Body of Christ must finish his sacrifice in actual death.

"These alone are the dead who die. They are reckoned of God as being already dead and they are exhorted so also to reckon themselves: 'Reckon ye yourselves dead indeed unto sin.' No other dead men can be said to die but this class of dead ones, who must finish their course of sacrifice in actual death.

"Thus will God help Zion in the dawning of her morning — in the morning of the eternal day of Christ's triumph. Thus He is already helping her. One by one, imperceptibly to the world, the saints are now being changed, and are joining the company of the Church triumphant; and those who remain to the last proclaim the everlasting Gospel until the door is shut and all opportunity to labor is at an end. Then they will 'stand' in faith and patience and await their change, accepting deliverance joyfully through whatsoever agency God may be pleased to permit its accomplishment.

"Thus they will be saved from that great hurricane of trouble which will follow their departure, as well as preserved in the forepart of the battle in which a thousand will fall into infidelity, and be overcome by the various pestilences of error, to one who will stand (Psalms 91:7)."

"Changed in a Moment"

We have seen that it was this writer's interpretation (and we believe it was well founded) that the vision of the Lamb and the hundred and forty-four thousand standing on Mount Zion, the voice of the harpers, the singing of the song by the hundred and forty-four thousand, the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, the announcement of the Judgment Day, and the proclamation of Babylon's fall, were all due to have their fulfillment, and have been in process of fulfillment simultaneously, during the harvest time of this Gospel Age. Thus as these various events of transcendent importance were fulfilling, the "voice from heaven" was heard to say, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth," that is, from the time of the events just mentioned, blessed indeed are the dead who die in the Lord. The meaning therefore would seem to be that this proclamation marks not only the time of the resurrection of the sleeping saints of the past Gospel Age, but also indicates that from that time forward those who finish their course in death will experience their change immediately by the power of the First Resurrection; these events are surely due in connection with the presence of the great King. The events named above — the Lamb upon Mount Zion, the harpers, the singers, the announcement of the everlasting Gospel, etc., are events that follow immediately the Second Coming of Christ, whose presence is invisible, and for a time, of such secrecy as to be known only to the Church. Then in close connection with the advent of the Savior, and the fulfilling of these events, the resurrection of the sleeping saints is due, as the Apostle announces — "The dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall [as we die] be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." It is, therefore, these who are "alive and remain" unto the presence of the Lord that come under the benediction of this announcement: "Blessed are the dead who die"! Blessed are these who from the date that marks the Second Presence of Christ as King, finish their

course and die in the Lord. Why blessed? Because they will not need to wait and remain asleep in death; but as they finish their sacrifice, they are "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and join the heavenly throng that has gone before. Mr. Russell adds:

"Accordingly, when the setting up of the Kingdom was due, their awakening from the sleep of death was due. Why should their waiting and sleep continue after the Lord is present and the time for his Kingdom has come? There can be no reason for it; and we believe, therefore, that they 'sleep' no longer, but are now risen, and with and like their Lord. And if their continuance in the sleep of death is no longer necessary, neither is it necessary that any of the saints who now die in this time of the Presence of the Lord and the setting up of his Kingdom should 'sleep' or wait in death for a resurrection at some future time."

Chapter Thirty-Three

Reaping the Harvest of the Earth

(Revelation 14:14-19)

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped" (Revelation 14:14-16).

As introductory to the exposition of this portion of the Apocalypse, we believe it will be of advantage in grasping its significance and application to bear clearly in mind that at the time of the vision described in the opening verses of this chapter, or very soon thereafter, all the succeeding visions of this chapter begin to meet their fulfillment, and continue contemporaneously to the end of the Church's earthly history. All the symbols of this vision of verses 14-16 indicate that in this respect it is like the preceding visions. It is designed, however, to represent a different picture of the harvest, the consummation of the age.

The special symbol employed is that of a gathering of the ripened crop at harvest time. There can be no doubt concerning who is represented by the personage seated on the white cloud in whose hand was the sharp sickle. Nearly all expositors are agreed that the Lord Jesus Christ is here represented. The fact that St. John describes him to be one "like a Son of Man" immediately brings to mind the vision that the Apostle saw at the first, recorded in chapter 1. In that instance the person he saw was also one "like a Son of Man." There, however, the symbols that surround, or are associated with him, differ widely from those of this vision. There the Son of Man is represented as in the midst of seven golden candlesticks (lampstands). St. John was informed that these candlesticks represent the seven Churches — the professing Christian Church throughout the age; and the one like a Son of Man in the midst of them represents our Lord Jesus, our glorified Master — although in person absent from the Church, yet by his spirit and providences, present. As has been said:

"We see that our Lord Jesus ... has been present with his Church throughout the past eighteen centuries and more, protecting the interests of his cause and directing in respect to all of his people's affairs, especially inspecting and caring for the Church as a light bearer, a candlestick."

Thus he fulfilled his promise, "Lo, I am with you all the days even unto the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). The symbols that surround his person in that vision disclose the nature, etc., of the work that he was to perform in overruling in the affairs of the world for the good of his Church throughout the age. The symbols that surround his person, in the vision under consideration enable us, as in the other, to see the character of his work. In this case it is his work in the end of the age — that of superintending the work of reaping or gathering the ripe fruitage of the age. That he was to assume the office of Chief Reaper at the Second Advent is plainly taught in several parables in which he is represented as the "Lord of the harvest," or the Chief Reaper (Matthew 13:30).

The fact that the vision represents him as being seated on a "cloud," reminds us of the fact that when he went away, a cloud received him out of the disciples' sight (Acts 1:9); and also of the words of chapter 1 describing the manner of his return: "Behold, he cometh with clouds" (Revelation 1:7). That the cloud in this latter instance, as also the one of this vision, is a symbol, is quite generally understood. The peculiar symbolical manner in which the events of all the visions of the Revelation are portrayed proves this. Clouds are quite frequently employed in the Scriptures as symbols. In Isaiah 19:1, Jehovah is represented as riding on "a swift cloud." This represents the distress and troubles incidental to the overthrow of the Egyptian government and its idols; the various agencies used being represented as under Jehovah's leadership or providence (see also Psalms 104:3, 97:2, Joel 2:2). In the vision we are considering, however, it is a white cloud. This would seem to indicate a work of judgment, bringing blessing, rather than that of judgment troubles — a work that is to be accomplished under the direction of Christ, the Son of Man.

The sickle is suggestive of harvest time and harvest work. In this instance it doubtless represents what is generally termed, Harvest Truth. The golden crown symbolizes the Divine nature and authority of the kingly Reaper. The vision describes in a general way the work of gathering the ripe fruitage of the Gospel Age — the saints, who are to be united to Christ as his Bride. This is briefly but very comprehensively described in the symbolic words: "And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped" (Revelation 14:16).

Mr. Barnes, commenting on the expression, "Son of Man," says: "It is probable that there is here a designed reference to the passage in Daniel [7]. The meaning is, that one appeared on the cloud in a human form, whom John at once recognized as he to whom the appellation of 'the Son of Man' peculiarly belonged — the Lord Jesus. The meaning of that term had not been fixed in the time of Daniel (7:13); subsequently it was appropriated by the Savior, and was the favorite term by which he chose to speak of himself" (Matthew 8:20, 9:6, 11:19, 12:8,32,40)." In regard to the golden crown on his head, this commentator says that this is "appropriate to him as King. It was mainly in virtue of his kingly power and office that the work was to be done which John is now about to describe." Commenting on the words of the angel addressing Christ, "For the time is come for Thee to reap," we have these words: "That is, 'the harvest

which Thou art to reap is ripe; the seed which Thou hast sown has grown up; the earth which Thou hast cultivated has produced this golden grain, and it is fit that Thou shouldst now gather it in.' This language is appropriately addressed to the Son of God, for all the fruits of righteousness on the earth may be regarded as the result of his culture."

Commenting on the words, "For the harvest of the earth is ripe," Mr. Barnes says that it is "the 'harvest' in reference to the righteous — the fruit of the good seed sown by the Savior and his Apostles and ministers. The time alluded to here is the end of the world [Age], when the affairs of earth [for this age] shall be about to be wound up. The design is to state that the Redeemer will then gather in a great and glorious harvest, and by this assurance to sustain the hearts of his people in times of trial and persecution." Regarding the meaning of the expression, "And the earth was reaped," he says: "So far as the righteous were concerned. The end had come; the Church was redeemed; the work contemplated was accomplished; and the results of the work of the Savior were like a glorious harvest."

The words of another expositor, writing in 1846, are very interesting, and assist in the elucidation of this vision:

"They who are harvested by him are also human beings on the earth, and living therefore and mortal, and are doubtless the saints. ... As crops are harvested for the purpose of preservation and appropriation to the uses for which they are raised; so the reaping of the subjects of this harvest denotes their being gathered for preservation and appropriation to the ends for which they are sanctified. ...

"This beautiful symbol thus foreshows that ere the final destruction of the vassals of Antichrist, the living saints are to be gathered together for preservation."

Replying to some expositors who regard the reaping of this vision as symbolizing a punishment and destruction of men by judgments, this expositor in the words which follow refutes such an interpretation:

"There is nothing in a harvest or vintage which necessarily implies that when used as symbols, those who are the subjects of them are to be destroyed. They are not necessarily processes of destruction, nor in order to the destruction of what would otherwise continue to subsist unchanged; but rather of collection and preservation in order to appropriation to some subsequent use. Whether, therefore, they are used as symbols of a gathering for destruction or not is to be determined not by themselves, but by adventitious terms and representations connected with them. Thus, the vintage [in the vision which follows, Revelation 14:17-20] is shown to be in order to destruction, by the representation that the clusters are thrown into the great winepress of God's wrath. But as no such representation is made in respect to the harvest [the vision under consideration], there is no ground in the symbol itself for the ascription to it of such a meaning. Instead, that omission implies that the end for which the subjects of the harvest are gathered, is different from that for which those who are symbolized by the grapes are reaped; and that they are saints of God, therefore; and this

is corroborated by Christ's representation that he is to send forth his messengers to gather together his Elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (D. N. Lord).

Mr. Russell has thus referred to this vision:

"The truth then due was the sickle, and it separated the 'Israelites indeed' from the nominal Jewish Church; and of the true wheat there was but a fragment compared to the professors. So also is the harvest of this age. The harvest of the Gospel Age, like that of the Jewish Age, is under the supervision of the Chief Reaper, our Lord Jesus, who must then be present (Revelation 14:14). The first work of our Lord in the harvest of this age will be to separate the true from the false. The nominal Church, because of her mixed condition, the Lord calls 'Babylon' — confusion; and the harvest is the time for separating the different classes in the nominal Church, and for ripening and perfecting the wheat class."

"The recognition of the harvest work in actual process is proof of the Lord's presence, since he declared that he would be the Chief Reaper and Director of the entire work, and that this would be his first work — 'Behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. ... And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped' ('In the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, gather,' etc.)"

In another instance in commenting on the title "Son of Man" as applied to Christ, he says: "Our Lord identified himself with this description in his Revelation (14:14), where he represents himself as one 'like unto the Son of Man, and having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle' — the Reaper of the Harvest of the Gospel Age."

"And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe" (Revelation 14:15).

Some expositors have noted what to them seems a difficulty in interpreting these words, namely that this angel seems to be giving instruction to the one seated on the white cloud that the time had come to reap, and issuing a command to the same, to begin the work. The difficulty in brief is, how could any one give instruction to Christ as to the time to reap, or how could any one command him to reap? Mr. Barnes avoids this seeming difficulty by interpreting the temple from which the messenger comes, to represent Heaven, the place of Jehovah's throne, and the angel who comes forth and utters the cry, to be a special heavenly, angelic messenger from the court of Jehovah; so also Mr. Elliott. Mr. Lord avoids the seeming difficulty by making the one "like a Son of Man," who sat upon the cloud, to be a symbol, not of Christ, but of human beings who were raised from the dead in glory, receiving instructions that the time had arrived to reap, and a command to proceed with the work.

We believe it is more consistent and harmonious, however, to understand that this angel crying with a loud voice, like those of the three others already referred to in previous expositions, represents another phase of the movements under

God's true saints on earth during the period of the harvest; a movement in which the actors are not, however, instructing or commanding, but, having discovered through the "sure word of prophecy" that the time had come for their Master to reap, began petitioning that he, the Chief Reaper, would send forth laborers to accomplish the harvest work. In other words, it was the spirit of Christ, the Chief Reaper now present, operating in his true saints on earth, and calling for Christ himself, recognized by them as present, to lead his people forth to accomplish their last divinely commissioned task of gathering the true wheat.

The temple from which these saints represented by the angel are seen coming forth, we would understand to symbolize the various sects or divisions of the professed Church in which these saints are found at the beginning of the harvest period. The temple is frequently employed as a symbol of the various systems containing both mere professors and the Lord's true people. We thus see that this vision covers the harvest period, and describes the work that has progressed, and is progressing, of separating the Lord's saints from sectarianism unto himself, and gathering them into the Heavenly Garner. This does not mean their separation from one sect, and gathering into another sect or organization, but rather their coming into the enjoyment of that true Christian liberty in which nothing more, nothing less, is required by one Christian of another, than adherence to those truths that are alone necessary to constitute them true Christians, members of the true Church, the Body of Christ. Such was the Church Christ established, in which all were accounted free to study his Word, and obtain a knowledge of the same according to their mental ability to grasp; and thus grow in both knowledge and grace. Such a liberty enjoyed will of necessity willingly consent that other Christians may hold and express opinions with which we disagree, until they are convinced by reason and Scripture that these opinions are untrue.

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God" (verses 17-19).

It seems clear that we have portrayed in the above language, the gathering together of the various religious and semi-religious institutions and organizations of Christendom, preparatory to their destruction. The last feature of the destruction itself is described in the symbolism of verse 20. As in the vision just considered we have noted the work of the Chief Reaper in the separation unto himself of the "wheat" class, his true followers, from the "tares," mere professors, by the harvest sickle of truth, so in this we have described the gathering together of the nominal Christians, false professors of every kind for symbolic destruction. It is very proper to call the first, the *harvest*, and the second, the *vintage*. In both we have the same closing events of the age portrayed as are described by the Savior in the parable of the "wheat and tares," namely the

separating of the true from the false, preparatory to their being gathered into the Heavenly Garner, and the bundling of the "tare" systems, preparatory to their being cast into the symbolic "furnace of fire," for destruction (Matthew 13:40-42). The following citation connects these two Scriptures as describing the same:

"We are now fast nearing the latter end of the harvest period, when the burning of the tares and the gathering and treading of the fully ripe clusters of the 'vine of the earth' (the matured fruits of the false vine — 'Babylon') are due."

Another comment by the same author seems to show that it was his thought that the gathering of the fully ripe clusters of the "vine of the earth," and the gathering or bundling of the "tare" systems were identical; also that the treading of the great winepress of the wrath of God refers to the very last feature of the age:

"The treading of the winepress is the last feature of harvest work. The reaping and gathering is all done first. So this treading of the winepress of the wrath of God into which 'the vine of the earth' (the false vine, which has misappropriated the name Christian and Christ's Kingdom) is cast when its iniquitous clusters are fully ripe (Revelation 14:18-20), represents the last work of this eventful 'harvest' period" (C. T. Russell).

Concerning what is represented by the "vine of the earth," Mr. Elliott, in his *Horae Apocalypticae*, seems to have the correct thought. His comment is as follows:

"The vine to be gathered was called 'the vine of the earth,' and designated ... first and chiefly, the ecclesiastical body and church of Antichristendom; inclusive, however, of its chief secular supporters also. So the Jewish vine signified ... the Jewish nation as a church with church privileges (Isaiah 5). Like as of ancient Judah, so of Christendom it might have been said, 'I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me?' For too [very] soon [after the Apostle's day] notwithstanding all its privileges, the Christian Church and people apostatized; 'their vine degenerating into the vine of Sodom, their grapes becoming grapes of gall, their clusters bitter, and their wine the poison of dragons.' (Deuteronomy 32:32). For a greatly protracted period the long-suffering of God was foreshown as bearing with it. But now that period was over; its clusters were more than ripe; and its fated time of punishment, like that of the Jewish vine long before it, fully come."

It is doubtless true that "the vine of the earth" in its widest significance describes what is commonly misnamed Christendom (professed Christian organizations, national, religious, and social). It seems evident from the fact that the prophecies that picture the closing scenes of the age are now meeting their fulfillment, that Christendom is getting ready rapidly for the "winepress" of destruction. How clearly this is seen in the great work of reconstruction now going on — a work made necessary and induced by the devastating effects of the great war, which itself is a subject of prophecy. Nearly all the nations that

were engaged in the war were professedly Christian nations, and the work of reconstruction is being engaged in by both civil and religious leaders. The principle that is influencing the leaders in this work, with a few notable exceptions, is not Christian, but rather that of selfishness, individual and national. It seemed during the dark days of the World-war that the spirit of national selfishness was to a considerable extent to become eliminated and there would come out of it something of a brotherly feeling among the nations. It is now very apparent, however, that the lessons of the great trouble will to a considerable extent go unheeded. As expressed by Mr. Russell twenty-five years ago:

"Selfishness is the controlling principle, not only with the major part of, but with nearly all Christendom, and is bearing its own bitter fruit and ripening it now rapidly for the great vintage of Revelation 14:19,20."

The Ancient Winepress as a Symbol

Without understanding something of the construction and use of a literal, ancient winepress, it will hardly be possible to understand its use and application as a symbol in this vision. The following description will be to the point:

"From the scanty notices contained in the Bible we gather that the winepresses of the Jews consisted of two receptacles or vats, placed at different elevations, in the upper one of which grapes were trodden, while the lower one received the expressed juice. The two vats are mentioned only in Joel 3:13: 'The press is full; the vats overflow' — the upper vat being full of fruit, the lower one overflowing with the must (wine). The two vats were usually hewn out of the solid rock (Isaiah 5:2, margin; Matthew 21:33). Ancient winepresses so constructed, are still to be seen in Palestine" (Peloubet and Adams, *International Bible Dictionary*).

Another description having associated with it the meaning as a symbol, is very instructive:

"A winepress among the Israelites was like a threshing floor; and therefore we read that Gideon was threshing in one of them (Judges 6:11). The form of it seems to have been this: Suppose a bank of earth raised in a convenient circumference, or else a floor sunk below the surface of the ground about it, that the grapes and the juice may be kept in; then on one side a pit was sunk much lower than the floor, to place the vats to receive the new pressed juice falling into them. This floor was the winepress. Hence we may easily understand why our Savior expressed the making of a winepress by digging; as also Isaiah in chapter 5.

"The meaning of the symbol is very easy. The Indian Oneirocritic in chapter 196 explains it of great conquest, and by consequence much slaughter. It is so used in Isaiah 63:3: 'I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: And I trod them in Mine anger, and I trampled upon them in Mine indignation, and their life blood was sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all Mine apparel.'

"And in Lamentation 1:15, the destruction of Judah is represented under this type: 'Jehovah hath trodden down all my valiant ones in the midst of me: He hath

called an assembly against me, to crush my young men; Jehovah hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a winepress.'

"And the symbol is extremely proper. The pressure of the grapes till their blood comes out, as their juice is called in Deuteronomy 32:14, aptly representing the great pressure or affliction and effusion of blood."

Commenting on Revelation 14:19, this writer thus elaborates:

"To tread a winepress, as before remarked, is a prophetic description of destruction. The images of this vision are very strong and expressive. The largest winepresses were used to be in some places out of the city. So in [Revelation 14] verse 20, 'The winepress was trodden without the city,' and seems to intimate the great numbers that shall be involved in this general destruction. This judgment seems to be in the future. No past period or event appears exactly applicable to it. It must be, therefore, left to time to more fully explain it" (Thomas Wemyss, *Symbol Dictionary*).

Concerning what the great winepress itself symbolizes, we quote the words of Mr. Russell:

"It pictures to our minds the last features of the great time of trouble which shall involve all nations, and of which we are so abundantly forewarned in the Scriptures."

Concerning who is to tread the winepress we have this explanation by the same writer:

"The fact that the King of kings is represented as treading the winepress 'alone' indicates that the power exerted for the overthrow of the nations will be Divine power, and not mere human energy. It will be God's power that will punish the nations, and that will eventually 'bring forth judgment [justice, righteousness, truth] unto victory.' 'He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of His lips [the force and spirit of His Truth] shall He slay the wicked' (Isaiah 11:4, Revelation 19:15, Psalms 98:1). To no human generalship can the honors of the coming victory for truth and righteousness be ascribed. Wild will be the conflict of the angry nations, and world-wide will be the battlefield and the distress of nations; and no human Alexander, Caesar or Napoleon will be found to bring order out of the dreadful confusion. But in the end it will be known that the grand victory of justice and truth, and the punishment of iniquity with its just deserts, was brought about by the mighty power of the King of kings and Lord of lords."

It will be noticed that in this last citation we have the thought that the great victory over the enemies of God, the great "vine of the earth," will be accompanied by a wonderful outpouring of truth; not alone truth on God's Word, but truth concerning the rights and wrongs of men, both high and low — truth which will expose or bring to the lime-light the unrighteousness, selfishness, injustice and un- Christlikeness upon which the present so-called Christian civilization is founded, and has been built. And this is in perfect harmony with the Apostle Paul's description of the overthrow of the "man of sin" (the Papal hierarchy), one

of the very noted events that will occur seemingly just before this treading of the symbolical winepress. The remarkable diffusion of knowledge which began to come in the opening years of the Nineteenth Century, the beginning of the "time of the end," and which has greatly increased since, is doubtless one factor that has exposed the false claims of the great religious systems and governments of Christendom.

It is doubtless those unfoldings of the prophecies by God's messengers, concerning the apostate condition of Christendom that are referred to by the "sickle" in the hand of the angel of this vision. During the harvest period these unfoldings have had and will continue to have in a greater measure an effect of exposing the claim of these false religious systems to be the representatives of God. The truth on these and many other matters is beginning to reach the lower classes, and will finally array class against class in the great Armageddon conflict, the last phase of which seems to be portrayed in this great winepress treading of verse 20.

Concerning the gathering together of the "tare" systems described in Matthew 13, which seems to describe in a general way the same transactions as the gathering of the ripe clusters of the "vine of the earth," we have this explanation by the above writer:

"The Truth now due is the sickle in this harvest, just as a similar sickle was used in the Jewish harvest. The reapers, the angels or messengers, now, are the Lord's followers. ... Not only is this the time for the gathering of the saints by the Truth (into oneness with their Lord and each other, and out of fellowship with mere professors, tares), but it is also a time for cleaning up the field by consuming the tares, stubble, weeds, etc., preparatory to the new sowing. In one sense the 'wheat' is gathered out from among the tares — because of the greater abundance of tares — as when the Lord says, 'Come out of her, my people.' Yet, in another sense, the separation is properly represented by the tares being gathered from the wheat. Really, the wheat has the place by right; it is a wheat-field, not a tare-field (the world of mankind being counted the ground out of which the wheat and also the tares grow or develop); so it is the tares that are out of place and need to be removed. The Lord started the wheat-field, and the wheat represents the children of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:38). And since the field or world is to be given to these, and already belongs to them by promise, the parable shows that really it is the tares that are gathered out and burned, leaving the field, and all in it, to the wheat. The tares are returned to the ground (world) whence they came, and the first-fruits of the wheat are to be gathered into the garner, so that the earth may bring forth another crop.

"The sickle of truth prepares this class for the freedom wherewith Christ originally made all free, though the same sickle has an opposite influence upon the tares. The spirit of the tares is towards sectarian greatness and show, rather than toward individual obedience and allegiance to God. Hence, present truths [the sickle], the tendency of which they at once discover to be to condemn all sectarianism, and to test each individual, they reject and strongly oppose."

The Second Angel with the Sickle

Let the thought be impressed upon the mind of the reader that the sickle that gathers the wheat is the same sickle that gathers the tares — it is the Truth and not the angel. From the foregoing we have clearly seen that the events of our Lord's parable are identical with the vision of gathering the clusters of the vine of the earth, and we have in the same a basis for the unfolding of this part of the vision. With the foregoing facts in mind we now proceed to notice some of the particular symbols of the vision under consideration, the first feature of which is contained in the words: "And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle" (verse 17).

All of the older expositors from whose writings we have frequently quoted interpret this angel to be a heavenly being, coming out from the temple in heaven, the place of God's abode. These make the gathering of the clusters of the vine of the earth to be accomplished by heavenly angels. We cannot, however, concur in this thought.

We inquire then, Who or what is represented by this angel? Close attention to the interpretation given above of the parable of the wheat and tares, which corresponds to this vision, would seem to teach that this angel represented a human movement on this side rather than one of literal angels or glorified saints beyond the veil. Noting the identity of the two sickles, the one in the hand of the "Son of Man," the Chief Reaper, the other in the hand of the angel that came out of "the temple which is in heaven," we are led to the conclusion that the various features of present Truth given by Christ during the harvest, through a study of His Word, are represented by the sickle in the hand of the angel. We accordingly interpret this angel to be the living saints of the harvest. "The temple in heaven" from which he came out, we would understand to represent the nominal temple; and the coming out, to be the separation of God's saints from the nominal temple, Babylon. The "heaven" then in harmony with this interpretation would represent the nominal, symbolical heavens of the Babylonian systems. The sickle of present Truth is the agent of their call and coming out, as we read, "Come out of her, my people," etc. (Revelation 18:4). In this instance, however, all the truths, of whatever character, which reveal the apostate condition of the fallen systems are doubtless referred to.

It is well to keep in mind as having a very important bearing on the interpretation of succeeding visions that in this one we have only a supplementary — an outline prefiguration of the gathering and destruction of the false "vine of the earth," the false Christian systems, nations, institutions, etc. In the visions of chapters 15 and 16 we have a much more complete and detailed description of this great judgment of Christendom.

Another feature that properly comes under our consideration at this point is that contained in the statement: "And another angel came out from the altar which had power over fire" (verse 18). In our endeavor to discover the significance and application of this vision of the angel coming forth from the altar, etc., and its relation to the angel with the sickle, we note first that the symbolism is

doubtless suggested or drawn from a particular service that was performed by the Aaronic priesthood, recorded in Leviticus 6:9-11. This is seen in the fact that this angel, like the priest in the above instance, is associated with the altar service, the altar of sacrifice, and has power over the altar fire. We ask the reader to note carefully this Leviticus incident, considering the following matters that seem to be referred to in the vision under consideration:

(1) The fire over which this angel has authority doubtless refers to the fire that consumed the daily sacrifice.

(2) It was the priest's duty to keep this sacred fire burning continually.

(3) It was also his duty to gather together the ashes that were mixed with the propitiatory offering, as sacred things, and to lay them beside the altar.

(4) It was further his duty after their accumulation to change his garments and carry the ashes as sacred things outside the camp to a clean place.

Justice Long Deferred

In our effort to discover the significance of these things, let us not conclude that this Revelation vision is the antitypical fulfillment of the Levitical transaction; rather, the particular features mentioned are drawn from this typical service and are designed to assist in understanding and applying this vision. Still further, we notice that the events that will fulfill this altar symbol are very evidently associated with those described in Revelation 6:9-11 — the souls crying under the altar, and the response. The connection between the two visions will be readily seen as we briefly review the explanation of the vision of chapter 6:9-11. Referring in a general way to the significance of the cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" we have the words:

"This is a symbolical picture of Justice long deferred crying for vengeance, representing those [God's saints] who are actually dead and know not anything, and cannot know anything until the resurrection. The answer to this query before the seat of Justice is given. We are told that it would be but a little while until others are similarly maltreated, and the intimation is given that then [after a little while] the judgment will come which will compensate for the whole."

It will be recalled that we interpreted this martyr cry to have had its fulfillment at the close of the 1260 years of Papal ascendancy over the saints, 1799. The connection between that vision and the one under consideration is this: In this we are now considering, the time had come to respond to that cry from under the altar of Divine Justice to bring vengeance upon the persecuting systems, "the false vine of the earth." We would understand therefore that this angel who came from the altar represents a distinct movement among the Lord's consecrated under Christ — a movement which emphasizes these coming judgments, declaring that the time to respond to this cry of the martyrs is at hand. The feature of the vision described as the gathering together of the clusters of the vine of the earth is now fulfilling before our eyes. The treading of the

winepress is evidently an event of the future. We quote from a noted commentator, explaining some of the particular symbols of this altar angel:

"As to the angel that had to announce to the one just mentioned the precise moment for his putting in the sickle of execution ... his description is remarkable both as being the one 'that had authority over the fire' (that is the altar fire), and as appearing to come forth 'from out of the altar.' He answered evidently ... to those Levitical priests of the Jewish earthly temple, whose office it was to keep the sacred fire ever burning on the altar, in order to the consumption of the daily holocausts and of the voluntary burnt-offerings and peace offerings; as well as also to look to the ashes left from the burning, and take charge of them as sacred things. Thus his bearing part in the prefigured judgment might seem to indicate two things respecting it. (1) It indicated that it was as a sacrifice to the Divine Justice that the vine was to be gathered, and its clusters trod in the winepress ... the heaven-derived altar-fire being the perpetual visible symbol among the Jews of God's justice ... (2) It pointed to one special cause of God's wrath against the earth's inhabitants, namely their slaughter of the martyrs; whose [symbolical] ashes, as of acceptable self-devoted holocausts, mixed with those of the great propitiatory burnt-offering, had long been accumulating (under this angel's charge, it is to be supposed) beside the Apocalyptic [symbolical] altar. Already early in the drama a voice had been heard by St. John from the souls of the witnesses slain for Christ beneath the altar, 'Lord, how long dost Thou not avenge our blood on those that dwell on the earth.' ... Now, however (and perhaps with some last notable act of martyrdom marking the epoch), the cry of this angel issuing forth from the interior of, or hollow beneath the altar, proclaimed that their number was completed ... the asserted power of the two witnesses to bring down fire from heaven against their injurers to consume them, about to be fearfully illustrated before the world; and the earth to disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain" (E. B. Elliott).

The following comment by Mr. Russell, which has special reference to the Great Company's connection with this last "great time of trouble" (Revelation 7:9-11), in which the false "vine of the earth" will be destroyed, is to the point and has an important bearing on this symbolic angel and his cry. It was given in an explanation of the antitypical fulfillment of the words of the Savior to the Jewish nation, "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matthew 23:35). The comment follows:

"This was the 'wrath to the uttermost' which came upon Jerusalem and that seems to have squared up the account so far as the past was concerned. A new beginning was made there, just as a new dispensation began. The antitypical Priesthood and the antitypical Levites then came on the scene, and throughout this Gospel Age also the Lord has taken cognizance of the death of all His consecrated people. If any one is guilty of the death of one of the Lord's saintly, consecrated ones, he brings himself under a special obligation and responsibility.

There seems to be a special charge of Justice against whoever is culpable, or responsible for the death or persecution of His saints. There is a suggestion along this line (Revelation 6:9,10), where the souls of those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the testimony of the Word of God are said to cry out, 'How long! How long! oh Lord, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.' This seems to symbolically picture, not the crying of any individual, for these individuals were dead and had no knowledge, no appreciation of the things at all — 'the dead know not anything' — but it was Justice that cried, as in Abel's case, after he was dead. They had nothing to do with the crying of their blood. It was the voice of Justice."

This cry of the angel who was seen by St. John coming out of the altar, then, seems to represent the cry of Justice speaking through the unfolding and proclamation of those prophecies that describe the just judgments of God about to be poured out on Christendom.

Chapter Thirty-Four

Treading the Great Winepress of the Wrath of God

(Revelation 14:20)

"And the winepress was trodden outside of the city; and blood came forth out of the winepress, even to the bridles of the horses, a thousand six hundred furlongs off" (Revelation 14:20).

The time of great trouble so clearly pointed out in Bible prophecy which closes the present age, this order or arrangement of human affairs, ecclesiastical, social, and national, is now seen by the earnest student of prophecy to cover a much longer period of time than some have supposed. It is already to some extent a matter of history, and has developed more or less in spasms in these last times. However, the present world troubles are not yet looked upon, except by a few enlightened ones, as being a fulfillment of prophecy, or as in any sense related to the providence of God at this time. To see these things taking place as Scriptural fulfillments is one evidence to the Lord's consecrated that the day of their deliverance, and the great Judgment Day of mankind draweth nigh.

The "vine of the earth," referred to in this vision is a very comprehensive symbol, and includes all the organizations, religious, social, fraternal, and national, described in the word Christendom. Let it be borne in mind that Christendom is described under several symbols in the Apocalypse, the "vine of the earth" being one of the very significant ones. The great increase and general diffusion of knowledge is bringing to light how contrary to the Great Teacher's precepts is the principle that animates, with few exceptions, these organizations that profess to a greater or less extent to be Christian. This unholy principle is selfishness. The fruitage of the true vine that Christ referred to when He said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:1), is that fruit of love — love for God, love for all who are seeking to serve Him, love for our neighbor, love for all. The fruitage of the many branches of the vine of the earth is that of selfishness; and while it is true that these branches are all to be destroyed, the great central object to be realized in this winepress judgment is that of pressing out and separating this fruitage of selfishness. The symbol seems to portray it in this way, and when we read that the fruit of this vine of the earth is cast into the great winepress of God's wrath, it is describing principally the destruction of this fruitage of selfishness. As expressed by another:

"Selfishness is the controlling principle, not only with the major part of, but with nearly all Christendom, and is bearing its own bitter fruit and ripening it now rapidly for the great vintage of Revelation 14:19,20."

We are not to suppose, however, that this will be accomplished in so brief a space of time as might seem to be portrayed in this symbol. That which will be destroyed in this winepress judgment will be the outward manifestation of selfishness; the inner working of it will require the whole of the great Thousand-year Judgment Day for its destruction. The suppressing of the outward manifestation could be accomplished only by a general leveling process — troubles and commotions of such a character, as would cause high and low, rich and poor, master and servant, to be brought to the same level and to feel their utter dependence one upon another; and even more than this, to cause them to look to a higher power — to God, in their hour of extremity. The conditions that will bring this about are described in a general way in the strong figurative language of the Prophets. We read: "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him" (Isaiah 24:1,2 See also Zephaniah 3:8). The gradual weakening of these powers has been going on for some time. While it is true that when events have occurred which seemed to indicate their overthrow near at hand there has been a temporary recovery, yet when the time divinely appointed for its destruction shall come, nothing can prevent it.

The vision of the great winepress treading does not, however, describe these progressive features, but rather that of the last final feature of the great time of trouble — that feature that will usher in immediately the Kingdom of God. This is according to the observation of Mr. Russell: "It [this winepress symbol] pictures to our minds the last features of the great time of trouble which shall involve all nations, and of which we are so abundantly forewarned in the Scriptures."

Prophetic Views of Winepress Treading

To be the final, last feature of the great time of trouble that will involve all nations would necessitate the development of such a state of affairs as would not only result in the destruction of Christendom, but would require also such a trouble as would cause all Christendom, all the world, to see that it was none other than the hand of the Almighty that had brought it about; and further, such as would cause all the adherents and supporters of the existing nominal Christian organizations that make up the present so-called Christian civilization to cease longer to claim the name Christian. Concerning this last feature of the trouble, this great winepress treading, we have a reference in Isaiah 63:1-6. Commenting on this Mr. Russell further says:

"The symbolic Edom of Isaiah's prophecy corresponds to the symbolic Babylon of Revelation, and of the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

Thus the Lord designates and describes that great system to which men ascribe the misleading name, Christendom — Christ's Kingdom. As all of the land of Edom symbolizes all of 'Christendom,' so its capital city, Bozrah, represented Ecclesiasticism, the chief citadel of Christendom. The Prophet represents the Lord as a victorious warrior who makes a great slaughter in Edom, and specially in Bozrah. ...

"The reply to the Prophet's inquiry — 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?' — is, 'I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.' It is the same mighty one described by the Revelator (Revelation 19:11-16), the 'King of kings and Lord of lords,' Jehovah's Anointed, our blessed Redeemer and Lord Jesus.

"For our information the Prophet inquires further, saying, 'Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winepress?' Hear the reply: 'I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the nations there was none with Me: and I trod them down in Mine anger, and I trampled on them in my fury; and their blood was sprinkled on my garments, and all my raiment have I stained; for the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redeemed was come. And I looked, and there was no one to help, and I was astonished; and there was no one to Support; and then my own arm [power] aided Me; and my fury, this it was that upheld Me. And I stamped down nations in my anger ... brought down to the earth their victorious strength.' And the Revelator adds, 'He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God' (Revelation 19:15)."

"It is a time for the world to reap its whirlwind harvest — for the reaping of the vine of the earth, and the treading of its fruitage in the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God" (Revelation 14:18-20)."

"As the chaff [of the Jewish nation] ceased from all pretension to Divine favor as the triumphing Kingdom of God, before that harvest closed in the great fire of religious and political contention, which consumed that system, so it shall be with the tare class of so-called 'Christendom.' They will be consumed; they will cease to be tares; they will cease to deceive either themselves or others; they will cease to apply to themselves the exceeding great and precious promises which belong only to the overcoming saints; and, when their various so-called Christian kingdoms, and their various religious organizations, rent by discords induced by the increasing light of truth, will be consumed in the fire already kindled, 'the fire of God's zeal' (the great time of trouble with which this age will end — Zephaniah 3:8), they will cease to claim for their worldly systems the name 'Christendom.' "

"All of these things are to be accomplished in the closing days of the Gospel Age, because, as the Lord states through the Prophet (Isaiah 63:4, 34:8), 'The year of my redeemed is come,' and 'it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.' All through the Gospel Age the Lord has taken cognizance of the controversy, the strife and contention, in nominal Zion. He has observed how his faithful saints have had to contend

for truth and righteousness, and even to suffer persecution for righteousness' sake at the hands of those who opposed them in the name of the Lord; and for wise purposes the Lord has hitherto refrained from interfering; but now the day of recompenses has come, and the Lord hath a controversy with them, as it is written, 'For the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying and killing and stealing and committing adultery they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish.' (Hosea 4:1-3). This prophecy, so true in its fulfillment upon fleshly Israel, is doubly so in its fuller application to nominal spiritual Israel — Christendom.

" 'A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations: He will plead with all flesh: He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord.' 'Hear ye now what the Lord saith ... Hear ye, O mountains [kingdoms], the Lord's controversy, and ye [hitherto] strong foundations of the earth [society]; for the Lord hath a controversy with His [professed] people.' 'He will give those that are wicked to the sword' (Jeremiah 25:31, Micah 6:1,2).

"Hear again the Prophet Isaiah concerning this controversy: 'Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein: the world, and all things that come forth of it [all the selfish and evil things that come of the spirit of the world]; for the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath [taking the future standpoint] utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter ... and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion' (Isaiah 34:1,2,7,8).

"Thus the Lord will smite the nations and cause them to know His power, and He will deliver His faithful people who go not with the multitudes in the way of evil, but who wholly follow the Lord their God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. And even this terrible judgment upon the world, as nations, thus dashing them to pieces as a potter's vessel, will prove a valuable lesson to them when they come forth to an individual judgment under the Millennial reign of Christ. Thus, in His wrath, the Lord will remember mercy" (C. T. Russell).

Winepress Trodden Outside of City

The particular time and place of the last momentous event of the great time of trouble is stated in several prophetic descriptions and seems to be revealed in one of the symbols of this vision, in the language: "And the winepress was trodden outside of the city." It is essential first to understand what is symbolized by the "city." Students of Bible symbology are agreed that a city is symbolical of a center of influence and power, such as a controlling government or kingdom. There are only three cities mentioned in the Revelation, or three senses in which a city is used symbolically:

(1) The "holy city" that was trodden under foot of the nations (Revelation 11:2). This we interpreted to signify the citadel of truth, the sanctuary class of the Gospel Age.

(2) The "great city," in one of the streets of which God's witnesses lay dead for three and one-half years (Revelation 11:8). This we interpreted to be symbolic Babylon — in its narrowest significance, the Papal hierarchy, and in its widest significance, Christendom.

(3) The "Holy City, the New Jerusalem" of the glorified state, which is divinely interpreted to be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife (Revelation 21:9,10).

The problem for solution then is, outside of which of these symbolical cities will the very last great crisis of the age take place — a crisis that will result in the establishment of God's Kingdom? Can it be outside of the city or "citadel of truth" which is represented in the true Church class, this side the veil? And the answer is that this construction would not meet the requirements of the symbolical city here referred to. As we examine those Scriptures that portray the final scenes of the time of trouble it will be seen that they refer to events that transpire after all the spiritual or at least the Kingdom class have passed beyond the veil. Thus it is manifest that the "citadel of truth," or the sanctuary in this sense will no longer be here. We ask then would it be reasonable to think that it would be the New Jerusalem, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, that would be referred to? We think not for two reasons: first, this city, the New Jerusalem, when first seen, begins to exert a benign and healing influence over the inhabitants of earth (Revelation 21:1-4); second, this city "comes down" or begins to exert this influence after the great winepress feature is over. Compare Revelation 19:19,20 with Revelation 21:1-4.

We are therefore led on to the conclusion that it must be outside of Christendom, the "great city," that this last feature of the time of trouble, the treading of the "wine-press of the wrath of God" occurs; and if it be so, it should not be difficult to locate this place. The world at the time this momentous event occurs will be divided into Heathendom, Christendom, Mohammedanism, and the Jewish government or Commonwealth. Then the query: Which of these fills the symbol outside of the "great city," Christendom? The reply is that God's Kingdom will not be established in connection with the last features of the great time of trouble in Heathendom; neither in the land governed by Mohammedanism; and as Christendom itself is the "great city," we are left to conclude that it will be in the Jewish State or Commonwealth, that this most significant event will occur. And this view is in harmony with all the statements of the Prophets that describe the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and also explains, as we shall endeavor to show, every feature of the awful symbolism of the treading of the great winepress of God's wrath, and its tremendous effects. In proof of this we notice that there are several prophecies which clearly point out that it is in Israel's land, after the restoration has commenced, that the last feature of the great time of trouble occurs, as we read: "For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they

shall possess it" (Jeremiah 30:3, see also verses 4-11, Zechariah 12:8-10). Mr. Russell has thus commented on the various Scriptures that describe this final feature of the time of trouble as taking place in Israel's land after the restoration:

"While the trouble and distress of this day of the Lord will be first and specially upon Christendom, and eventually upon all nations, the final blast, we are informed by the Prophet Ezekiel (38:8-12), will be upon the people of Israel regathered in Palestine. ... He represents them as gathered there out of the nations in great numbers, and, with considerable wealth, inhabiting the formerly desolate places; and all of them dwelling safely at the time when the rest of the world is in its wildest commotion (Ezekiel 38:11,12)."

Commenting on the causes and nature of this time of trouble in Israel's land we have these words:

"But yet one more wave of anguish must pass over that chastened people; for, according to the Prophet, *the final conflict of the battle of the great day will be in the land of Palestine*. The comparative quiet and prosperity of regathered Israel near the end of this day of trouble, as well as their apparent defenseless condition, will by and by stimulate the jealousies of and invite their plunder by other peoples. And when law and order are swept away, Israel will finally be besieged by hosts of merciless plunderers, designated by the Prophet as the hosts of Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38), and great will be the distress of defenseless Israel. 'Alas!' says the Prophet Jeremiah, 'for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it' (Jeremiah 30:7)."

Again, in Ezekiel 38:16, we are informed that it is in connection with the Lord's deliverance of Israel in this last feature of the great time of trouble that the nations are caused to recognize Jehovah as Israel's Deliverer:

"The Prophet [Ezekiel] foretelling these events as though addressing these hosts, says, 'Thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts [Europe and Asia are north of Palestine], thou and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army: And thou shalt come up against My people of Israel as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days [apparently the closing scene of the day of trouble], and I will bring thee against My land, that the nations may know Me, when I shall be sanctified in thee [set apart, distinguished as Thy conqueror], O Gog, before their eyes' (Ezekiel 38:15,16)."

Moreover, it will be in Israel's land that the establishment of the earthly phase of the Kingdom will take place, at the conclusion of this final great trouble. "The overwhelming destruction of these enemies of Israel (bringing the end of the time of trouble and the time for the establishment of God's Kingdom) is graphically described by the Prophet Ezekiel (38:18 to 39:20). It can be compared only to the terrible overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts, when essaying to repossess themselves of Israel, whom God was delivering. In this particular also Israel's deliverance is to be 'according to [like] the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt' — 'marvelous things' (Micah 7:15)."

Furthermore, the nations of Christendom will be represented in these armies that will be overthrown — destroyed in this great invasion of Israel's land:

"We read, 'For I will gather all nations [as represented in the hosts of Gog and Magog] against Jerusalem to battle. ... Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle.' (Zechariah 14:2,3). ...

"After describing that the coming of this army from the north-quarters against Israel (regathered to Palestine 'in the latter day,' 'having much goods' and 'dwelling peaceably') will be suddenly, and 'as a cloud to cover the land' (Ezekiel 38:1-17), the message is, 'Thus saith the Lord God, Art thou he of whom I have spoken in olden time by My servants, the Prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years, that I would bring thee against them?' The Lord then declares His purposed destruction of the wicked host; and the description seems to indicate that it will be accomplished by an outbreak of jealousy, revolution, and anarchy amongst the various elements composing the great mixed army: a revolution and strife which will involve whatever may still remain of the home governments [of Christendom] of the various peoples, and complete the universal insurrection and anarchy — the great earthquake of Revelation 16:18-21.

"The testimony of all the Prophets is to the effect that the power of God will be so marvelously manifested in Israel's deliverance, by His fighting for them (incidentally for all), with weapons which no human power can control — including pestilence and various calamities — poured upon the wicked (Israel's enemies and God's opponents) until speedily all the world will know that the Lord has accepted Israel again to His favor, and become their King, as in olden times; and soon they as well as Israel will learn to appreciate God's Kingdom, which shall speedily become the desire of all nations."

Another argument is that it is in Israel's land that the conversion of the nation of Israel will take place, as we read, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him" (Zechariah 12:9,10). Then again, it will be in Israel's land, and with Israel as a nation, that the great event, the inauguration of the New Covenant, under which the blessing to all mankind is to come, will take place (Jeremiah 31:31-34). It is to Israel's land that the collapsed nations will look for help in the great (then) successful work of reconstruction (Micah 4:1-4). And, as meeting the requirements of the vision, Israel at that time, according to all the prophecies describing their full return to favor, will be no part of Christendom, but a Jewish Commonwealth, and thus will be "outside of the city."

There are many other prophecies that very plainly locate the last features of this great fall of the enemies of God, the nations of Christendom, in Palestine. One of these has this winepress symbol connected with it to describe the terrible destruction. It is that of the prophecy of Joel 3, which very manifestly describes

the same notable events already considered — those of Ezekiel and Zechariah. The prophecy first pictures the restoration of Israel to their land (Joel 3:1). It next speaks of a gathering of all nations into the valley of Jehoshaphat (verse 2). The Prophet then, evidently speaking for Jehovah, calls upon the nations in the words: "Assemble hastily together and come, all ye nations from every side, and gather yourselves together: there doth the Lord strike down thy mighty ones. Let the nations awake, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the nations from every side. Put forth the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, tread down (the grapes); for the press is full; the vats overflow; for great is their wickedness" (Joel 3:11,12, *Leeser's Translation)*.

In closing this part of the exposition it will be interesting to the reader to know that it was the thought of Mr. Elliott, author of *Horae Apocalypticae*, that this treading of the wine press symbol would occur in Palestine. This was also the interpretation of F. W. Grant, several times quoted in previous chapters.

We next consider that feature of the symbol described in the words, "and blood came forth out of the winepress, even to the bridles of the horses, a thousand six hundred furlongs off."

That the expression, "and blood came forth out of the winepress, even to the bridles of the horses," is symbolical, there can be no question. As an introduction to what seems to be the significance of this symbol, we quote the words of Thomas Newton:

"It is said that the 'blood came even unto the horse bridles' (verse 20), which is a strong hyperbolical way of speaking to express vast slaughter and effusion of blood; a way of speaking not unknown to the Jews, for the Jerusalem Talmud describing the woeful slaughter which the Roman Emperor Hadrian made of the Jews at the destruction of the City of Bitter, saith that 'the horses waded in blood up to their nostrils.' Nor are similar examples wanting even in the classic authors; for Silius Italicus, speaking of Hannibal's descent into Italy, useth a like expression of 'the bridles flowing with much blood.' "

Blood, when visible, we learn from Scripture usage, is a symbol of death; and frequently, of destruction by violence, of great slaughter. In a corresponding prophecy (Isaiah 34:3), we have a similar expression: "And the mountains [kingdoms] shall be melted with their blood"; and again (Isaiah 34:7): "And their land shall be soaked with blood." These Scripture citations are strong hyperbolical expressions of great slaughter, destruction. About all the commentators interpret the symbol to refer simply to the great final slaughter of the enemies of God, as represented in Christendom.

"A Thousand Six Hundred Furlongs Off"

But what shall be said of the thousand six hundred furlongs off? What lesson can this feature of the symbol convey? We might mention several recent expositions of this furlong measurement that have come to our notice of late. Two of these make the furlongs (stadia) to represent days. These expositions purport to find in this measurement the number of days that shall elapse before a certain

event — the change of the last member of the Church class. To us these interpretations are strained and of a highly speculative character and seem to be based upon a determination to discover the exact date of the change of the last members of the Church. It is our thought that the Lord has not revealed this feature, although it behooves us to be in readiness at any time for that event. We might mention other highly speculative and fanciful interpretations which have failed, but will refrain, believing that to the earnest and sober student of the Lord's Word the above will suffice.

We submit an interpretation which we believe is in perfect harmony with the Scriptures already noted, to the effect that this winepress treading of the vision under consideration occurs in the land of Palestine, and describes the last feature of the time of trouble there. The land of Palestine or a portion of it might be considered as fulfilling the symbol of the vat into which the blood flowed. Certain methods of measurement of this land seem to fit perfectly this thousand six hundred furlong measurement. We quote an expositor in this connection, noting, however, that further light than that which he had, indicating who or what will be represented in this final gathering of God's enemies in the land of Palestine, causes us to disagree with a few of his conclusions. And this variation on our part is simply and solely because more light on this great event is now due, than when this writer gave his exposition, about seventy years ago. The quotation follows:

"As to the remaining particulars of the figuration we may observe, in passing, that the gathering of the vine's clusters by the angel's sharp pruning hook, and the casting them into the winepress of the wrath of God, seemed to indicate acts preparatory to the winepress-treading; the former perhaps meaning some signal separation, by sharp judgments, of Antichrist's members from those of Christ; the latter, the overruling of their own wicked wills ... to accomplish the gathering of the anti- Christian body to the fated field of vengeance."

Concerning the locality of this winepress-treading of what Mr. Elliott (the writer we are quoting) calls the "fated field of vengeance," he speaks of it as "the glorious holy mountain," Palestine, and associates this event with the deliverance of Daniel's people in connection with the great time of trouble (Daniel 12:1). Note his words, as further elaborating this point:

"And let me not fail to add, in corroboration of these views, that there are three other well known prophecies in the Old Testament, viz., in Ezekiel 39, Joel 3, and Zechariah 12, which seem all to point similarly to some grand destruction of an anti-Christian confederacy in the mountains of Judah or Israel, immediately at, or before the final conversion and restoration of the Jews and the commencement of the consequent glorious predicted times of blessedness [times of restitution].

"After all which agreeing evidence, it seems to me that we shall probably not err in looking confidently for the coincident occurrence of the two grand events following, viz.:

"(1) The homeward return of the Jews from captivity in fullness and strength like as when the mighty Euphrates stream of their conquerors is forced backward by the mightier influences of the tide of the Southern Ocean. [The words of the Psalmist, "Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south," Psalms 126:4, are the words upon which Mr. Elliott bases his poetical exposition.]

"(2) The gathering into, and the destruction in Judea of the Papal Antichrist; and perhaps, too, of the Mohammedan Turk."

He further enlarges on this point:

"Two things seem clear about it:

"(1) That the treading-floor, as all admit, can scarcely be different from the Armageddon of the other series of Apocalyptic prophecy;

"(2) That its description here as 'without the city' (a figure in itself very appropriate, let me observe, as both the king's and other winepresses of old were actually situated outside the walls of Jerusalem) is a characteristic that agrees well with that prediction in Apocalypse 19, which represents the beast and his adherents as slain by Christ after the destruction of Babylon, the great city, and consequently away from it. [We would understand the beast referred to by this writer to be the final eighth and last form of Roman rule.]"

Mr. Elliott next comments on the significance of the thousand six hundred furlongs. He states that some commentators have interpreted this to represent that the great scene of slaughter would reach to the whole length of the holy Land — one thousand six hundred furlongs, two hundred miles, being about the length of that land. (Pliny calculates the length of Palestine to be 189 miles.) Mr. Elliott's understanding of the matter differs from these commentators:

"The number 1600 is, as sundry patristic as well as other expositors have observed, a square number. And both the circumstance of wine fats — square, it might be, or of other shape — dug in the earth or rock, being a constant appendage of the natural winepress, and that of their being expressly mentioned in the parallel figurative prophecy of Joel ('Come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great,') concur to make it probable that in the Apocalyptic picture [under consideration] this appendage of the wine fat was not wanting, and that the 1600 furlongs expressed its square. Supposing which to be the case, the depth of blood mentioned might be that in the wine fat; a uniform depth, and one gauged easily, and as usual; whereas, on the hypothesis of a stream of 1600 furlongs in length, it is hard to conceive how the depth should not vary, but be still up to the horses' bridles throughout the length of the 1600 furlongs. Indeed I doubt the words admitting that sense. What the square intended, if such it be, is a little dubious. If we take the number 1600 as the square of 40, then the area will be one of 5 miles to a side, equal to 25 square miles. If on the other hand, the 1600 furlongs be explained to give the circuit of the square, 400 to each side, then the square area will be vastly greater, being one not of 5 miles to each side, but of 50. Even on the smaller scale, the figure would

indicate tremendous slaughter. Its executor we are told in another Apocalyptic prophecy is to be the Word of God, the Lord Jesus (Revelation 19:15). For he it is that is there described as treading the winepress of the wrath of God; being the Omega, as well as Alpha, of the judgments of the consummation. With which other description of the great winepress treading, the present is connected not otherwise only, and by general resemblance of the main subject, but also by that singular standard of measure, 'up to the horses' bridles.' For it indicates horses and horsemen to be present on the scene of slaughter; the same fact that appears prominently also in the picture of the winepress-treading described in Apocalypse 19; this latter being executed on 'them that sat on horses,' among others, in the beast's army, by him that sat on the white horse; and with his saints, themselves on white horses, likewise, following him. ... Nor does it seem undeserving of remark, that the extent of the hill country of Judah, between the two seas has been estimated at about fifty miles square."

Of all the interpretations that have come under our observation concerning this symbol, significant of terrible destruction, this seems to us to be well substantiated and to open the way for a correct solution; indeed, understood from the standpoint that this last winepress feature of the time of trouble occurs in the land of Palestine, wherein will then dwell a Jewish Commonwealth, and consequently outside of Christendom, we believe the following conclusions are most reasonable:

Two features of an eastern vintage are implied in the words of the vision: first, the winepress into which the grapes are cast and trodden; and second, the winevat into which the blood of the grapes flows.

The treading of the winepress of God's wrath seems to clearly represent the final feature of the great conflict of the "Word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords," and his armies, the glorified saints, with the last representatives of the anti-Christian hosts of Christendom (Revelation 19:11-21). The scene of the conflict is the Holy Land — outside of Christendom; and in harmony with this interpretation the immense symbolical winevat into which the blood is represented as flowing, etc., would represent the territory of the fatal field of destruction. The great quantity of blood, represented in the symbol as up to the horses' bridles, is designed to teach the extensiveness of the destruction. While the destruction will include the loss of many lives, this is not the chief thing represented in the symbol. It is rather the great and final victory of truth over error, bringing all the many various elements of Christendom, the opponents of God, to an enforced and complete submission to His will. On the other hand it will bring great rejoicing on the part of those friendly to righteousness, as represented in the new order, the Kingdom of God.

Chapter Thirty-Five

The Seven Last Plagues

(Revelation 15:1-8)

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God" (Revelation 15:1).

The "heaven" of the vision is evidently the symbolical heaven — the ecclesiastical, the religious world. The pouring out of these seven vials of the wrath of God is a symbolic description of the various aspects of the Divine judgments on the different organized systems of apostate Christendom, the seventh of which results in the complete overthrow of the same. Chapter 14:17-20 we have seen gives in symbol a brief sketch of the same judgments. The events portrayed in the symbols of the seventh vial are those relating to the very last closing judgment scenes of the age. It should be kept in mind that the events that mark the complete downfall of everything in Christendom that falsely bears the name of Christian are closely related to the events portrayed in the symbol of the treading of the winepress (Revelation 14:20), although the latter occurs in the land of Israel. These matters are described more fully in the seventh vial. The pouring out of the vials of the wrath of God are also a fulfillment of the predicted troubles and calamities threatened by the third symbolic angel (Chapter 14:9,10). These are to affect in a special manner the supporters or worshipers of the systems symbolized by the beast and his image.

We are not to suppose that these "vial" judgments are successive in their fulfillment in the sense of occurring in consecutive order; rather, close examination reveals that all except the seventh begin in a measure at nearly the same time and, as observed by Mr. Russell, continue contemporaneously with accumulative force and severity until the end:

"It is well to remember that one plague or evil goes on increasingly, after a second and third, etc., are added, until in the end the entire seven forms of evil will be operating simultaneously."

A very important matter to settle in connection with the interpretation of these "seven last plagues" is the time when they are to have their fulfillment. It will be apparent that they cannot begin their fulfillment until all the anti-Christian systems, including the last one, that of the image of the beast, has come into existence. If we are correct in interpreting the "image of the beast" as the federated Protestant sects, surely we cannot look for the fulfillment of the plagues any earlier at least than the beginning of the organization of this federation. This beginning was accomplished in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance

in 1846. Furthermore we could not expect their fulfillment until the seventh trumpet begins to sound; for it is very evident that the seven last plagues are to be poured out when the seventh trumpet is sounding. This will be seen from the fact that when mention is made of the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Revelation 11:15-18), we read that the time of God's wrath is come, which wrath is evidently portrayed in the seven last plagues. The seventh trumpet, however, is not only a trumpet of "woe," but also a trumpet of blessing; it is associated with the impartation to the Lord's people of a knowledge of the "Mystery of God" — the secret features of the Lord's Plan of the election of the Church to heavenly glory, and of restitution for the world to earthly glory. The seventh trumpet is therefore both a "woe" trumpet and a blessing trumpet — to the beast and the image systems it is a "woe" trumpet or plague, to the true saints, a blessing.

Relationship of Ten Plagues of Egypt

There seems to be a correspondence between the plagues of Egypt and the seven last plagues of this vision. The *ten* plagues of Egypt would seem to correspond to the last *three* trumpets and the "*seven* last plagues" of the Revelation. The first three plagues of Egypt seem to correspond with the last three trumpets of the Revelation. The fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets (the last three) are woes or plagues; likewise the seven vials are called plagues. The correspondence is this: The first three plagues or woes of Egypt affected all the land of Egypt, including the land of Goshen, where typical Israel dwelt. The fifth and sixth trumpets likewise affect both antitypical Israel and the world. The seventh trumpet is both a woe and a blessing trumpet — woes or seven plagues on the true Church's enemies, and blessing and exemption from these woes for the true Church, or Israel of God. The Church are exempt, in that the outpouring of truth, imparting a correct knowledge of the Divine Plan, enables them to be delivered from and lifted above the errors of the false systems and thus to escape the "plagues."

The position of the last members of the true Church, the overcomers, is portrayed in the vision which St. John beholds in connection with the vision of the seven angels having the seven last plagues — that of the victors on the glassy sea. This vision seems clearly to belong to the same period when the last plagues are being poured out. Six of the plagues seem to meet fulfillment before the glorification of all the Church class; the seventh after that event. The following from two noted writers is pertinent here:

"Here we see the importance of an understanding of the symbols of chapter 13; for unless we understood what those symbols [the beast and image] meant, we could not understand who is overcoming their influence. In this way God has made His Word self-interpreting. The understanding of one part or symbol is the key to an understanding of another. In harmony then with Revelation 13 we understand the overcomers here referred to [chapter 15:2- 4] to be those Christians who are free from Papacy — the beast — and from organized sectarian Protestantism — the image — and from all who bear the characteristics of their

number — that is, free to the extent that these have no influence over their actions, professions, or thoughts — free indeed.

"This serves, too, to show about when the plagues are due, and when this sea of glass condition may be reached; for if, as seems clear, the image was formed by the organization of the 'Evangelical Alliance,' in 1846, then it is equally clear, that the overcomers of the 'image' could not occupy this position of favor and exaltation prior to that date. This furnishes a general reason for believing that the plagues must commence this side of the date mentioned [1846], since it is during the pouring out of the plagues that the 'overcomers' occupy this condition upon the 'sea of glass' " (C. T. Russell).

Mr. Elliott, writing about twenty years before this writer, took precisely the same position regarding the "sea of glass" condition being contemporaneous with the "plagues." He says:

"The harpers [of Revelation 15:2], must hence naturally be construed as servants of God *living* at the time of the vials' outpouring, and spectators of the judgments contained in them. ... It hardly accords with Apocalyptic usage, in these prophetic visions, to speak of God's servants as victorious over an earthly enemy, except where victorious over him on the earthly scene, and before the world's eyes; a case the direct reverse to that of the earlier of Christ's saints under the beast's reign in their day and generation. For of them it is stated, not that they conquered the beast, but that the beast conquered them (Revelation 13:7, 11:7); and their ultimate predicted victory over the beast upon this earthly scene, by the beast's kingdom giving place to their Lord's Kingdom, is declared in the very song of the harpers to be an event, at the time symbolized in the vision, still future. 'For all nations *shall come* and worship before Thee' "[1]

Last Three Trumpets Also Related

Concerning the correspondences between the plagues of Egypt and the seven last plagues of Revelation we have a further statement:

"The record is given of ten plagues upon Egypt, three of which came on both Egypt and Israel, but from the 'seven last plagues' all Israel were exempt. To appreciate fully the above statement, one must read six chapters in Exodus, beginning with the seventh. It is when the fourth plague is threatened that the Lord says: 'I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarm of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between My people and thy people; tomorrow shall this sign be.' (Chapter 8:22,23). [The antitype of this division, as all Bible students know, has been having its fulfillment for the last forty years and more. We would understand that this separating work is not one of gathering the Lord's people while in the flesh into one organization or sect,

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(1) Mr. Elliott, understanding that the image of the beast is Papacy, makes the seven last plagues begin in 1799, which is manifestly erroneous.

but rather one of separating them from the plagues, by a knowledge of truth, or by their change to glory.]

"In describing the scenes associated with the deliverance of the Church down here, John the Revelator speaks of 'seven last plagues' also, which we may reasonably expect to stand in the order foreshadowed in the type. 'Seven *last* plagues' implies that others [the woe trumpets] preceded them, as in the type."

In this same connection we submit a late utterance by Mr. Russell, which is in harmony with the above:

"The first three (of the Egyptian plagues) ... appear to have been common to the Israelites as well as to the Egyptians, the land of Goshen being spared from the remaining seven plagues. ... During this series of plagues Pharaoh relented a little occasionally to the extent that he agreed that the males of the Hebrews should go forth, as requested, to sacrifice in the wilderness, the females and children being held as hostages for their return. But this brought out the answer that when they would go it must be all of them, including their cattle and herds, and to this Pharaoh would not hear, until Egypt was smitten with the tenth plague, and all the first-born of Egypt (humanity and animals) died; then he urged them to go. The chastisement was sufficient. So it will be in the end of the [present] time of trouble that is approaching, and which [time of trouble] is figuratively represented by these plagues, especially 'the seven last plagues' (Revelation 15).

"When the last plague [corresponding to the tenth of Egypt] has been poured out, as a vial of Divine wrath, 'the powers that be' will realize that it is useless to fight against God. And as Pharaoh and his people received a severe retributive punishment for every evil they had inflicted upon the Israelites, and as their first-born became retributive representatives of the Israelitish babes they had caused to be drowned in the Nile, so their flocks and herds, and the crops that were destroyed by the locusts and insects, etc., and all the troubles upon them, were retributive punishments, for the unjust exactions made of the Israelites. So we may suppose that the great troubles and losses which will come upon 'the powers that be' of the present time, in the approaching trouble, will, in some sense or degree, be a retributive requirement — an offset for a not sufficiently benevolent and just treatment of many under their control in the present time, when the blessings and inventions of our day should be accruing more generally to the benefit of the masses."

"It is well worthy of note that these first three (Egyptian) plagues were shared by the Israelites as well as by the Egyptians, but in the succeeding plagues, as Moses pointed out in advance, the Israelites were spared. The land of Goshen was protected."

Let the reader carefully observe the significance of these statements and what is implied by them — that two of the ten plagues must have preceded the seventh trumpet, which the evidence shows is already sounding. This means of course that the fifth and sixth trumpets have finished their sounding. These affected both the world and the Lord's people. Still further, let it be observed

that while the seventh trumpet is the third of the woe (plague) trumpets, its fulfillment as a woe or plague can refer only to those features under it that relate to the "seven last plagues." It was the understanding of Mr. Russell in 1882 that the first two "woes," the fifth and sixth trumpets, met their fulfillment in Mohammedanism. We find nothing in his later writings in which he repudiated the statement then made.

Victors of the Glassy Sea

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest" (Revelation 15:2-4).

We first inquire, What is the significance of the "glassy sea," upon, beside, or above which the overcoming saints are seen standing? We believe that it will be not only of interest but of profit to the reader, as confirming the truthfulness of the progressive manner in which the visions of Revelation were understood as history unveiled them, to cite what other of God's servants understood by this symbol. Mr. Barnes interprets this "sea of glass" condition as being in heaven. His comment written in 1850 is as follows:

"Stand on the sea of glass. That is before God. They are now seen in heaven, redeemed and triumphant."

This to us seems incorrect. Mr. Elliott appears to have grasped much more clearly the true significance of the symbol — that it refers to a condition of God's saints on this side of the veil; although his application in history seems incorrect. We quote from his quite lengthy discussion of the symbol written in 1860:

"We have to consider the scene on, or by, which the harping took place; viz., what seemed in the vision '*as it were a glassy sea mingled with fire*.' And here thus much seems clear; that it was not the glassy sea-like expanse before the throne, described on the first opening of the Apocalyptic scene before St. John (Revelation 4:6): seeing that, had this been the case, the *definite article* [the] ought, according to the analogy of Apocalyptic usage, to have been prefixed to the word, on this present re-mention of it."

After discussing quite fully this matter Mr. Elliott next says:

"Another thing equally evident is that the sea meant is not (so as some have supposed it) the *brazen sea, or laver*, of the old Jewish temple. In the Apocalyptic temple of vision there is not a hint of any such laver appearing represented. Moreover how could that which was *brazen* be called *glassy?* Or wherefore changed into something *glass-like* in the Apocalyptic temple imagery? The fact is, that even on the first mention of the more common and notorious *appurtenances of the old temple* in the Apocalyptic temple-scene, the article is prefixed,

according to another well-known rule of grammar, because of the notoriety of the thing to the Jewish observer: e.g., in regard to *the brazen and the golden altar, the outer court*, and the *ark of the covenant* (Revelation 6:9, 8:3, 11:2,19). So that the absence of the article prefix in the case before us, furnishes here too a further corroborative proof (notwithstanding the contrary views of various modern expositors) that the *laver*, or *sea*, of the old *Jewish* temple could not be intended. Thus the *glassy sea* in the passage before us would seem to have been nothing described elsewhere in Scripture as in the old Jewish temple; and nothing elsewhere as in the Apocalyptic temple of vision."

Mr. Elliott next states that in his first study of the vision it seemed to him as though the symbol was drawn from the fiery appearance of the Red Sea in connection with Israel's crossing the same. However, he says:

"After fully reconsidering the subject, I have come in fine to a strong impression that the symbol must be one borrowed from *volcanic phenomena:* the 'glassy sea as it were mingled with fire,' which was presented to St. John's eye in vision, being a flood of vitrified rock and lava, spreading in destructive inundation over the territory of the anti-Christian beast, i.e., the mystic Egypt, as well as Babylon, of the Apocalyptic earth; and with the fire that fused it breaking forth continually from the mass, as from the glowing lava from Vesuvius: while the harpers, escaped triumphantly from out of his Egyptian domination, stood, with their harps, unharmed upon its edge."

Saints Rejoicing Above the Sea of Trouble

The reader will bear in mind that Mr. Elliott is here explaining the symbol itself and not the fulfillment. The fulfillment he understands to refer to the fiery troubles in the world incidental to the pouring out of the vials of wrath, from which the saints of God escape because of their knowledge of the meaning of the judgments upon the false religious systems of earth. In regard to this he says: "The figure (symbol) is not unused in Scripture elsewhere in designating God's fiery judgments." The interpretation offered by Mr. Russell meets the requirements:

"Having then ascertained who these overcomers are, and about when they thus stand, we pass on to consider the 'sea of glass mingled with fire,' on which they stand. Sea, as heretofore explained, we understand to symbolize the masses of the people, and fire, the judgments, or trouble. We therefore interpret this to mean — the people in trouble, under the judgments of God. Above the troubled people are the overcomers — calm, serene, untroubled. Their position shows that their standing is by faith (Matthew 14:29). To the eye of faith all is transparent as glass."

Our next inquiry is, What is represented by the song that is being sung by these overcomers of the systems symbolized by the beast and the image? The comment by the author last quoted is indeed a wonderful unfolding of this symbol. Writing in 1883, he said:

"These overcomers sing a song. A song symbolizes a beautiful and harmonious expression. It is the song of Moses and the Lamb. That is, the song or preaching of these overcomers is in perfect accord with the Law and the Gospel. It is the same which Jesus (the 'Lamb') taught, and which Moses taught in the Law and types. Not only does the description of the overcomers indicate that they are but a little fragment of the nominal Church, but the words of this song teach us the same — that the class who proclaim these things are few.

"The words of the song are given, or the leading points of the preaching which will be done by the overcomers — 'Saying, Great and wonderful are Thy works, O Lord God, the Omnipotent.' Alas! how few are sufficiently acquainted with God's plans to recognize the fact that they are great and wonderful. Very few can sing this first note of the song, and fewer yet can sing it to its close. The second note is, 'Righteous and true are Thy ways, O King of the nations.' (Diaglott). Look at this; we can sing of the righteousness and justice of God's dealing with the nations, since we have come to see how He has permitted evil and death to come upon all, as a lesson, to teach us to appreciate life and righteousness. We can see righteousness, justice, mercy, and love in God's dealing, since we see in His Word that there is to be a 'restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets since the world began.' (Acts 3:21). Who, but those who see the restitution to be accomplished in the next age, could sing this part of the song? Not one; Christendom in general fears to think of God's justice in dealing with the nations in general, the great majority of whom have gone down into death without any knowledge of the only name whereby we must be saved. The righteousness, and justice, and love of God's dealing, can be seen only by looking at the work of the next, as well as at that of the present and past ages. Yes indeed, we rejoice to proclaim to all who have an 'ear to hear' — Just and true are Jehovah's ways in ruling the nations.

"The next note is in perfect harmony with the last — 'Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? since Thou alone art bountiful.' Our great Creator's every dealing is an act of favor — even the evil which man was permitted to bring upon himself is to be overruled for good; and we ask ourselves the question, Who shall not fear and glorify God when, in the coming age, His wonderful goodness is manifested, and when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth? We would be inclined to believe that every one should praise His love everlastingly, were it not that Scripture clearly discloses a Second Death, which tells of some who will be accounted worthy of it.

The Song — Glad Tidings of Great Joy for All People

" 'For all the nations shall come and worship in Thy presence, because Thy righteous acts are manifested.' This is the last note of the song, and is full of force and meaning. How few are proclaiming, either publicly or privately, this part of the song. Some believe that many of the nations now dead are in a place of mental or physical torture, there to remain to all eternity. Others claim that they are dead, and will never again have life; others that those who are dead will be raised from death to pass a mock trial, and be destroyed. But how few can

sing this song of restitution, declaring that all nations shall yet come from death, and shall worship their Lord and Redeemer, when brought to a knowledge of the Truth (1 Timothy 2:4). Even Sodom, a nation long since destroyed, shall come and worship (Ezekiel 16:48-63).

"Another symbol is the 'harps of God.' The song is sung in tune and harmony with the harps. The harp of God we believe to be the Bible, its many strings or chords are the Law, Prophets, Psalms, Gospels, etc. Many Christians have the 'harp,' but few have it so strung and tuned that they can bring forth harmony enough to accompany 'the song of Moses and the Lamb.' The overcomers have the harp well in hand — in fact, without it and the inspiration of its music, they never could have been overcomers. They have them tuned, too. How forcible this picture! Truly, it would have been incomplete without the harp of God.

"Another thought is suggested — the overcomers not only have the harp and know how to sing this song of restitution, but they do sing it. There are some of God's children who have their harp considerably in tune, and who know the song, but who do not proclaim the Glad Tidings of coming restitution; they fear to face the opposition which this course would bring — the unpopularity which would attach to anything outside the religious rut of so-called orthodoxy. These are not among the overcomers; they have not yet gotten a victory over the influence of the beast and image; they are yet in some bondage. All of the overcomers sing the song. Each of us should inquire of our own hearts whether we are tuning our harps and singing this song. Now is the time.

"Many of the Lord's dear children in mystic Babylon's captivity, have sat down beside her rivers so defiled by the mire of worldliness and error and wept when they remembered God's favor to Zion in times past. They laid aside the harps of God, hanging them on the willows that weep over the grave of truth in Babylon. They that carried them away captive (the Babylon system) require of them a song and mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.' Yes, Babylon would like to see Zion's captives happy beside her muddy streams; and in the midst of her worldliness, would like to hear an occasional song of Zion, that she might boast of the Lord's favor. But 'how shall the captive daughters of Zion sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' (Psalms 137:1-6). To all such we cry: Take down your harps from the willows; flee out of Babylon into full liberty of thought and expression; tune your harps and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Sing of God's mighty love and the 'restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets.' ...

"Yes, dear brethren and sisters, we have to some extent at least gotten the victory over the beast and his image, etc. The song is ours and we are singing it. ... Then tune up your harps, dearly beloved, and sing aloud our glad song of 'Jubilee.' Sing to your dear friends who love God, despite what seems to them His injustice. But if they will not hear, sing to the world. It will be a 'bow of promise' to them when they go further down into the time of trouble. And if you cannot do this, sing it loudly in your own heart. It will joy and comfort give you, to think of our Father's love and realize that 'His mercy endureth forever.'

(Psalms 136). It will open and warm your heart and enrich it with love, both for your Father and for those who are the objects of His care and love.

"All who are true Watchmen can at this time see clearly, as one man, and can together harmoniously sing the new song of Moses and the Lamb — the song of restitution, so clearly taught; not only in the Law of Moses, which was 'a shadow of the good things to come,' but also in the clearer revelations of the Lamb of God contained in the writings of the New Testament, saying, 'Just and true are Thy ways.' 'All nations shall come and worship before Thee' (Revelation 15:3,4). ...

"And we are told the reason why so few can sing this song — that it is only for those to sing who have 'gotten the victory over the beast and his image and his mark and the number of his name.' These symbols, representing earthly institutions which now hinder and bind and enslave the Lord's people to creeds, must be overcome by every soul that would hope to be able to appreciate this song, and to sing it in his daily life to others according to his opportunities. Those who try to sing this song while in Babylon find their mistake."

God's Saints Coming Out of the Temple

"And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened" (Revelation 15:5).

The opening of the "temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven" as revealed to St. John should not be understood as a transaction taking place in heaven, the place of God's abode, as some expositors teach; but rather that it is entirely pictorial, its symbols being drawn from the Jewish tabernacle or temple; and we believe it portrays one of the very important matters made known to the Lord's consecrated of the Gospel harvest period — to those represented as having gotten the victory over the beast and his image. It is evidently designed to teach the discovery on the part of the Lord's true saints of the significance of those things symbolized by the temple.

Let us examine first the expression, "the tabernacle of the testimony." We discover that the same Greek phrase is found in Acts 7:44, and is there rendered in the Diaglott the same. The expression is that of Stephen. A careful examination of the words in their connection enables us to understand it as having reference to the tabernacle erected under Jehovah's instructions, when the children of Israel were in the wilderness or desert. He says: "Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the desert, as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen."

St. John further informs us that he saw this tabernacle of the testimony *in heaven*. The heaven referred to is the same heaven in which he saw the "seven angels having the seven last plagues" (verse 1) — the symbolical heavens, the religious or ecclesiastical heavens. He also tells us that he saw this tabernacle *opened*. St. John seems to represent the true Church at the time of the vision's fulfillment. It seems designed, therefore, to teach that at the time the vision

meets fulfillment, the Lord's true saints would have disclosed to them the true significance of those things typified by the tabernacle of the testimony.

It is well to notice the relationship this vision sustains to others heretofore explained. We recall the vision of Revelation 13, where we are informed that besides other evil doings, the great anti- Christian system there portrayed "blasphemed God and His tabernacle and those who tabernacled in heaven." The meaning is that this system had misrepresented and distorted God's character, and His true tabernacle, the Church; not alone by defiling the truths concerning them, but also by claiming itself to be the true tabernacle — the Church of God.

We also recall the vision in which a command was given to St. John to "measure the temple of God," etc. (Revelation 11:1). Briefly stated the meaning of this measuring the temple and its worshipers and altar, etc., would be to "take a just estimate of what constitutes the true Church, as distinguished from all other associations of men; to institute a careful examination into the opinions in the Church on the subject of sacrifice or atonement — involving the whole question about the method of justification before God; and to take a correct estimate of what constitutes true membership in the Church; or to investigate with care the prevailing opinions about the qualifications for membership. This would find a fulfillment if there should arise a state of things in the Church in which it would be necessary to draw a line between those who properly constituted the Church and those who did not" (Albert Barnes). Such a state of things actually existed in the professed Church at the time the Reformation began, and this symbolic measuring may in a sense be said to have begun at that time. The vision under consideration, however, applies to the period in history when this symbolic measuring was concluded namely the present harvest period.

The expression, "after these things," does not mean *after* in the sense of their fulfillment, but after St. John saw the vision of the "victors of the glassy sea," mentioned by him in the preceding vision. The fact seems to be that the two visions are contemporaneous in their fulfillment.

"And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles" (Revelation 15:6).

It will be to the point in this connection to note two very striking correspondencies between this vision and that of the seventh trumpet (Revelation 11:15-19). The correspondence we notice first is that in both visions we have portrayed as opening to St. John's sight the symbolical tabernacle or temple: "And the temple of God was opened in the heaven, and there was seen the ark of the Lord's covenant in His temple" (Revelation 11:19). And in the vision under consideration: "And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened" (Revelation 15:5).

There can scarcely be any question that the two visions refer largely to the same thing and apply to the same time. Both occur in connection with the beginning of the sounding of the seventh trumpet; and both imply that during the whole period of Antichrist's power and evil influence the significance of this symbolical

temple or tabernacle was misunderstood. This does not mean, however, that there were none called, or that none made their calling and election sure to the heavenly inheritance during the long period of the temple's defilement. In the Divine overruling, all the truth and light necessary to the accomplishment of the Lord's purpose in the call — the consecration and development of the heavenly class of joint-heirs of the Kingdom — has been permitted to shine.

The second correspondency is that stated in the words, "Thy wrath is come" (Revelation 11:18), evidently referring to the false religious systems of Christendom. This expression is doubtless a general statement of that which is more particularly described in the symbols of the seven last plagues, "for in them is filled up the wrath of God" (Revelation 15:1).

In regard to the general significance of angels, as employed in the Apocalypse, the following is to the point: "The mighty angels, messengers or agents of His power, are various, and may properly be understood as applying and including all the various agencies, animate and inanimate, which shall be used by our Lord in the overthrow of the evil systems of the present, and the chastisement of evil doers." As the special part of the work that the "victors of the glassy sea" are to accomplish in connection with this destruction seems to be represented in this vision, we would therefore understand that the "seven angels" represent the living saints, those who had gotten the victory over the beast, and his image, and mark, etc. A difficulty in this is that the saints in their earthly state seem to do the work of smiting or destroying the false religious governments and religious systems. Would not this be out of harmony with our Lord's instructions in regard to the work appointed for the Church of the Gospel Age?

In order to understand that this is only a *seeming* objection, it will be necessary to have in mind the two phases and stages of the work that is to accomplish the overthrow of the false religious systems. One phase is that of exposing the falsity of the claims, as also the errors of these false religious systems; the other has to do with the agencies used to destroy them. Both of these works are stated in the Scriptures as accomplished by the Lord. It is the first that is represented in this vision and in other places as the work of the saints. It will be the unfolding and disseminating of those Scriptures that describe the true Gospel of God, as well as those that expose the real condition of *nominal* Christianity, that is the work described as being accomplished by the living saints of the closing years of the age. This is in perfect harmony with other Scriptures that describe these judgments of God. The words of St. Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth [that is, by the proclamation of His Truth], and destroy with the brightness [bright-shining] of his coming [presence]" is one of these, and evidently means that the truth on all matters in this day of "increased knowledge" will expose the false claims of these systems, and thus cause their destruction — not by God's "little flock," but by His "great army" (Joel 2:1-11) — the rising masses, the "sea" class. In this connection let us consider the following:

"The next thing shown to John is the coming of the seven messengers out of the temple to pour out the plagues. [Revelation 15:6.] Since it is the saints who are 'to execute the judgments written' (Psalms 149:9), we interpret these 'seven angels' to mean, the saints — the living saints, they being the representatives or active agents of the entire anointed company — as 'the feet of him.' It is the feet, or last part, who sing the restitution song of Moses and the Lamb, above the sea mingled with fire. 'How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.' (Isaiah 52:7). These same feet as representatives on earth of the entire Body, are to pour out the seven vials, or be associated more or less directly with the judgments coming" (C. T. Russell). The temple from which they come out is the nominal, in other words the professing, but now rejected Church of the harvest or end of the age.

These seven angels are represented as "clothed in white linen," that is, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, justified by his blood. They are also represented as "encircled about the breasts with golden girdles." The girdle is the symbol of servitude; the gold of divinity. The meaning seems to be that as servants of God, they have a Divine message to give.

Seven Vials Full of Wrath

"And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever" (Revelation 15:7).

The use of vials or cups as symbols of God's wrath is not uncommon in Scripture, and an examination of those texts where they are used enables us to form a correct understanding of their meaning in this vision. In Isaiah 51:17, this symbol of a "cup of wrath" is presented with much forceful meaning. "Jerusalem is represented figuratively as staggering under the effects of [drinking] it, destitute of that assistance which she might expect from her own children, not one of them being able to support or lead her." Another writer, Lowth, thus describes the symbol of a "cup of wrath":

"As the evil which happens to men is the effects of God's justice and severity, and the good that happens to them is the effects of His bounty and goodness, therefore in the sacred writings, the one is represented by a cup of wrath, and the other under the symbol of a cup of salvation."

In Jeremiah 25:15, we have another use of this symbol in which God is represented as saying to Jeremiah: "Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me." The meaning of these symbolic words is that God was about to send heavy judgments upon the nations who were the objects of His displeasure. "The Prophet who announced them is considered as acting the part of a cup-bearer, carrying the cup round to those who were appointed to drink of it, the effects of which were to appear in the intoxication; that is, in the terror

and desolation that should prevail among them. It is not to be imagined that the Prophet went round in person to all the nations and kings here enumerated, but that he did so in a vision, or else he actually did what is figuratively designed; that is, he publicly announced the judgments of God, severally against them, as we find in chapters 46-51 inclusive, and which the seventy [Septuagint translators] have introduced in this place."

In the light of these Scriptures, the cup and its contents seem to represent calamitous effects of God's wrath as manifested or displayed in the execution of His judgments upon His enemies. God Himself was the primal cause; Jeremiah was the one called and chosen by Him *to make the announcement of this judgment wrath;* and other agencies were used to accomplish the work of execution. This seems to be the meaning of these seven vial judgments: God, as represented in Christ, is the primal cause; the living saints of the harvest time make the announcement; and various other agencies execute them.

Applying the meaning of the symbols as used by Isaiah and Jeremiah to St. John's vision we would understand that the vials and the plagues contained therein represent similarly the calamitous effects of God's wrath as manifested in the execution of His judgments on the anti-Christian systems. Applying the same as illustrated in Jeremiah's receiving at the hand of God the cup, signifying that he was the one called and chosen of God *to make the announcement* of this judgment wrath, we would understand that the seven angels' receiving at the hand of one of the living ones the seven vials of God's wrath represents a similar transaction, the only difference being that in this case, instead of the symbol representing the call and choosing to be direct from God's hand, as in the vision of Jeremiah, it is from the hand of the "living one" which seems to be a personification of God's attribute of Justice as manifested in the administration of His government. Mr. Barnes thus comments on this part of the vision:

"Which one of the four [living ones] is not mentioned. From the explanation given of the design of the representation of the 'four beasts,' or living creatures, in the Notes [Barnes'] on chapter 4:6,7, it would seem that the meaning here is, that the great principles of the Divine government would be illustrated in the events [the pouring out of the plagues] which are now to occur. In events that were so closely connected with the honor of God and the triumph of His cause on the earth, there was a propriety in the representation that these living creatures, symbolizing the great principles of the Divine administration, would be particularly interested."

The number seven, mentioned in connection with both the angels and the vials of wrath, represents completeness, and is designed to show that the proclamation of the truths which expose the errors and false claims of the religious systems will have seven distinct phases or aspects. Though these plagues are administered separately and each begins at once to take effect, yet when the process is finished and the last one is inflicted, they will operate contemporaneously, and will finally cause the destruction of these systems and governments. The final act, however, will be executive, that is, it will be accomplished by Christ himself and the glorified saints, beyond the veil. It would seem that it will

be at this latter stage of the judgments, under the seventh plague, that the Great Company, mentioned in Revelation 7:9, will finally recognize the hand of God.

"And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled" (Revelation 15:8).

The earlier expositors, as we have noted, nearly all interpret these temple symbols and their occurrences described in this vision (verses 5-8), as representing or symbolizing scenes in heaven, the place of God's abode. The angels are interpreted by them to be literal, heavenly beings. They failed to see, at least in this vision, that its court and holy are employed as symbols, and describe the earthly conditions of the probationary Church. It was not until the early part of the harvest period, when God's great Plan of Salvation began to be revealed in all its grandeur and beauty, that it became possible to clearly understand these types and shadows. Mr. Elliott, as will be seen by consulting his exposition, saw this in a measure, but failed to apprehend that when employed as symbols in the Revelation, the defiled condition of the holy was recognized and portrayed. Mr. Russell's interpretation of this verse is one in perfect harmony with the types of the tabernacle and temple as representing certain features of the Plan of God; and also with the fact that a correct understanding of the Plan revealed the defiled condition of the holy, as pictured in the Revelation symbols. The fulfillment of this vision as forecast by him in 1882 is now a matter of history; thus his interpretation can be tested by the facts of history:

"When they [the seven angels] had all gone forth from the temple it was filled with smoke, so that none could enter it. The temple symbolizes the nominal Church. The coming of the messengers out of the temple, symbolizes the coming of the overcomers out of the nominal Church. When all such have come out, the temple (Church) will be so full of smoke (confusion), that no man would care to go into it. It was 'filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power,' that is, the glorious harmony and beauty of Truth as presented by the overcoming class, shows the deformity and confusion of man-made creeds. As the Truth, though rejected, shines out with increasing glory, the whole nominal temple is seen to be full of smoke — confusion and darkness; and all who remain in it become so blinded by it, that they cannot see the glory of God either as displayed in His Word or its fulfillment in passing events."

A reasonable explanation of the words, "No one was able to enter the temple, till the seven plagues were completed," would be that no person who had a clear knowledge of the Truth — no one who had "gotten the victory over the beast," etc., could possibly unite with, or in any way give support to these fallen religious systems. Indeed, no person of mature mind who exercised his reasoning faculties could subscribe to, or support in any way the creeds of the false Church represented in the great mother and daughter systems. After the pouring out of the seven plagues the *true* temple of truth will be opened to receive those who will then accept of the privilege of obtaining earthly glory — human perfection, in the Millennial Age, the times of restitution.

Chapter Thirty-Six

Seven Vials of Wrath Poured Out

(Revelation 16:1-21)

"And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth" (Revelation 16:1).

The temple from which this voice is heard seems to be the same as that mentioned in the preceding vision, the great nominal Church systems, now being rejected and forsaken by the Lord. The loud voice seems to be the voice of Christ, God's representative. A comparison with a prophecy of Isaiah, which doubtless refers to the same events and time, enables us to see that this is the correct interpretation of these words. The translation of the words of Isaiah as given by Ferrar Fenton is as follows: "Depart, Depart, go out from there, and touch not now the vile! Come out from her, depart, and bring the vessels [the precious truths] of the Lord. You will not go in haste, or marching as in flight; but the Lord before you march, Israel's God will guard your rear" (Isaiah 52:11,12).

A careful consideration of the context will show that this prophecy relates to the period when the Lord shall return to Zion; in other words, the Second Advent of Christ. We quote the two previous verses: "Lift Watchman your voice, shout together and cheer, when clearly you see that the Lord comes to Zion; burst out into cheers with Jerusalem's ruins, for the Lord comforts His people — delivers Jerusalem! The Lord strips His strong arm, in the sight of all nations, all borders of earth will then see our God is victorious!" (verses 9,10).

The words of verses 11 and 12 connect with this Revelation vision, and show clearly that the exhortation is for the Lord's true people who have in their possession the holy vessels of Divine truth to no longer be contaminated with the errors of the false systems, Babylon and her offspring. Furthermore, the words, "Israel's God will guard your rear," plainly teach that He will be the last one to forsake the nominal temple, to reject altogether the professing Church of the last days of the harvest. This seems most clearly to show that the loud voice from the temple is the voice of Christ, Jehovah's representative. The same momentous event, and the same period is referred to in Revelation 18:4-6 (Fenton's translation): "Then I heard another voice from the heaven, saying, 'Come out of her my people! that you may not be partakers with her sins, and that you may not become *recipients of her plagues;* for her sins are piled up as high as heaven; and God has remembered her wickedness. Repay to her what she has given; and redouble it in accordance with her doings. The cup which she has poisoned, poison it double for her.' "

First Vial Poured on the Land

We now come to consider the symbolic portrayal of the plagues which gradually but rapidly consume and finally produce the complete destruction of the great false systems, commonly called Christendom.

"And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image" (Revelation 16:2).

We will not be surprised when we examine the interpretation and application of this symbolic vial, as given by expositors in general, to find that they apply it to a period much earlier than the harvest. Indeed, we find that there has been a general disposition to apply this first vial judgment to the outbreak of infidelity, beginning just before the French Revolution and Reign of Terror. This outbreak of infidelity, according to these expositors, was caused through the circulation of the infidel literature of Voltaire and others of those times. This had the effect of exposing the false doctrines and worship of the Roman Catholic Church, thus weakening its power and influence. It was not until later years that the fall from favor of Protestantism began to be seen. It was the thought of these expositors that these vial judgments would affect only the Roman Catholic system. They understood that the image of the beast described a particular aspect or phase of Romanism. The larger number of these lived and wrote before the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, which we understand to have been the beginning of the image of the beast.

Those who keep before their mind the progressive character connected with the understanding of these visions, as history has unfolded them, will recognize that it was impossible for these expositors to understand the full significance of prophetic visions. In the light of the events of history since the Evangelical Alliance was formed in 1846, the various aspects of the anti-Christian apostasy, as represented in these symbols of the "beast," "mark of the beast," "image of the beast," and "worshipers of the image" are more clearly seen. In this fuller light, as we have already shown, we could not look for the first vial judgment to begin until after the "image of the beast" — organized sectarian Protestantism — had come into existence.

In considering the interpretation of these seven vial symbols, it will be of advantage to keep in mind the following basic principle, already noted, namely "that one plague or evil goes on increasingly, after a second and third, etc., are added, until in the end the entire seven forms of evil will be operating simultaneously" (C. T. Russell).

It was the thought of this writer that all except the seventh of these plagues had begun in a small measure to meet fulfillment at the time he wrote these words. With this introductory word we submit the interpretation offered by Mr. Russell as being most reasonable:

"These evils, called plagues or bowls of wrath, are designed to rid the world of every form of evil and wrong. The class symbolized by the land or earth, we understand to mean all people under religious restraint, of whatever name or

order. Land or earth as a symbol represents settled, organized religious society, as sea represents the restless, irreligious unsettled masses of humanity. Those having the mark (characteristics) of the beast (Papacy) and those worshipping his image (Protestantism), as hitherto shown, are the great mass of non-overcoming and nominal Christians.

"It is upon this [latter] class that the trouble [plague or evil] first comes. While Roman Catholics constitute an important proportion of this earth class, yet the trouble does not affect them at first, as shown from the fact that the ulcer is not upon those worshipping the beast, but on those worshipping the image and having the marks or characteristics of the beast (Papacy), which indicates clearly the various shades and degrees of Protestantism.

"Their trouble is compared to an ulcer — 'an evil and malignant ulcer.' To appreciate the symbol let us consider the literal: An ulcer is a running sore; it is an evidence of constitutional disorder, and very painful. A cancer in its worst stages becomes a malignant ulcer. An ulcer is a cankerous sore, that is, one which eats, corrupts, and destroys. Now carry the thought — what an ulcer or bad cancer is to a man will illustrate the character of the consuming, life-draining trouble coming upon the systems constituting Protestantism, so-called, which ultimately will destroy it. It arises from within itself; it is a constitutional disorder, caused by the errors inherited and retained from the 'mother of harlots and abominations.' There is no cure for this evil — the blood is poisoned, it has permeated the entire body, and death must ensue.

"There was a time — in the days of Luther and the Reformation when the daughters might have been radically healed, but her false ministers 'healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying Peace, peace; when there is no peace.' (Jeremiah 8:11). Now there is no balm in Gilead, there is no physician there — therefore she is not healed. Her King is not in her, she is spued out of his mouth (Jeremiah 8:22, Young's Translation. See also Revelation 3:16 and 18:23). There is no remedy, these systems must die. The disorder comes from within. Already these disorders have broken out, and though the canker is carefully concealed, the bad odor and distress are noticeable."

As this interpretation and forecasting of the fulfillment of this first vial symbol was made forty years ago, it will not be a difficult matter to test its truthfulness. The interpretation in brief comprehends the following matters:

(1) That this "vial" or "plague" would affect the various sects of Protestantism and their supporters.

(2) That the cause of the plague would be an inward one, namely the false doctrines inherited from the mother system, the Church of Rome, and the retention of these false doctrines in their creeds.

(3) That evidences that these false doctrines would eventually cause the death of the different sects began to be seen by God's true saints long years ago.

(4) That the evil effects of these false doctrines retained in the creeds would continue to increase more and more in the forty years that would follow this exposition.

(5) That the disease produced by the retention of these false doctrines would eventually prove fatal and result in death to these various sects of Protestantism.

(6) That the incurability of the disease was because of these sects being cast off from God's favor, that is, because her "King was no longer in her."

(7) That Roman Catholicism and its supporters would not be affected by this first plague.

Those who are acquainted with the history of the Protestant sects of Christendom for the past forty years, and whose spiritual vision is not dimmed, have no difficulty in identifying each one of these peculiar features described in this symbolic vision of Revelation with this analysis of the same as meeting their fulfillment in the forty years that have passed. Some of the faithful Watchers living today can remember well the conditions that existed in Protestantism just a few years before this exposition was written. The signs of decay began to be very manifest after the great Moody awakening of 1877 and 1878. The teaching of "Evolution" and "Higher Criticism" began about that time, and has since slowly but surely caused the undermining of faith in the Divine authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures. The false doctrines of human immortality, eternal torment, and others, inherited from the mother system — doctrines which were supposed quite generally to be taught in the Scriptures, continued to be retained in the creeds, notwithstanding the fact that these false doctrines, except human immortality, were gradually, secretly, rejected by the chief supporters of these sects. The effect of such secret rejection of them, while believing them to be taught in the Scriptures, could mean but one result — that of gradually undermining faith in the Scriptures. The false doctrine of human immortality, however, was quite generally retained, and as this was taught as a basis or foundation for all hope of a future life, the true doctrine of the ransom sacrifice of Christ was gradually eliminated in the preaching of the professed ministers of Christ, though there were some notable exceptions.

It is not necessary to describe the gradual departure of these sects as a whole from the foundation truths, the positive essentials, the possession of which can alone prove them to be in any measure "plants of the Divine planting" — and we are informed by the Divine Master that "every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." (Matthew 15:13). It is necessary only to note their condition at the present time to discover that the great climax of apostasy has been reached, and the next thing in order is their "rooting up." The fact that there are still in these sects individuals who endeavor to hold on to these fundamentals and continue to give the sects their support, is no evidence that these systems, as such, have not been judged and "found wanting" — that they are no longer plants of the Divine planting. The Scriptures plainly teach that the systems will continue to contain some, indeed many of the Lord's (deceived) consecrated ones, until the seventh vial is poured out. It is, however, only the symptoms of death, increasing more and more, that is portrayed in the symbolic ulcer's appearance on those who have the mark of the beast and who are worshipers of the image.

There can be no question, however, that the discovery of the untruthfulness of these false doctrines of eternal torment, etc., inherited from the mother system, associated with the belief on the part of the great leaders and supporters of the Protestant sects that these false doctrines were taught in the Scriptures, leading logically to a practical rejection of the Scriptures themselves, has caused these leaders and supporters to have more or less torment of mind. This will be seen as we note the peculiar position in which they have been placed by their unbelief in the Divine authority of the Scriptures. If they were honest, they would have to admit that their organizations have no more Divine authority than any of the fraternal, benevolent societies of the world. This has evidently caused considerable torment of mind, because of their unwillingness to acknowledge these things, and by thus doing be compelled to stifle the voice of conscience. The same trouble of mind caused by stifling the conscience would be felt by those who still persisted in believing in the fundamentals of Christianity and who yet continued to give these various sects their support. The most terrible torment of mind is yet to come, and will take place in connection with the great climax, the death- throes that naturally follow the continued existence of this deadly disease. This will be in connection with the last phase of the great time of trouble coming upon these rejected systems.

How true it is that the saints who have, through the knowledge of God's great Plan of the Ages, "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark" are delivered from this first plague, and, as we shall endeavor to show in succeeding chapters, will be delivered from the entire seven.

Second Vial Poured on the Sea

"And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea" (Revelation 16:3).

The symbols employed in this vision of the second plague — the sea becoming blood, as of one dead; and every living soul dying in the sea — are not dissimilar to some we have found used in other visions of the Revelation. In some respects the symbols of this second plague or vial resemble those of the vision of the second trumpet. In that, as in this, it is the symbolic sea that is affected. In the trumpet symbol, however, only one-third of the sea, and one-third of the creatures in the sea were affected; whereas in this all of the sea and all of the creatures in the sea are affected. This would indicate that the second plague judgment will be final, in that the sea class and those individual units that comprise the sea would cease to be, that is, as such. The sea as a symbol as we have seen, usually represents the masses of mankind; in this instance, seemingly the irreligious masses, those not under the restraint of religious influences.

The second trumpet symbol — that of the burning mountain cast into the sea — we interpreted as representing the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire, 476 AD. One third of the creatures in the sea being destroyed, we explained as representing that proportion of the sea class becoming absorbed in the new professed Papal Christian civilization that followed. This feature of the second plague symbol we explain the same, only that when fully completed, all of the

sea class — "those in the sea" — will become absorbed in the new order, the new heavens and new earth condition in which "there will be no sea" (Revelation 21:1). In other words, this second plague is designed to teach that the dreadful conditions brought about by this great judgment plague will finally result for good in that the irreligious masses of mankind will be brought to acknowledge the righteousness of God's claims to their homage and worship. This recognition will be in connection with the full establishment of God's Kingdom over mankind, as we read, "For all nations shall come and worship before Thee, *because Thy judgments are made manifest*"; these judgments being symbolized by the "seven last plagues" (Revelation 15:4). We have already noted that these seven last plagues are designed "to rid the world of every form of evil and wrong ... to cause the ending of the present reign of evil, and a necessary preparation for the reign of righteousness."

It will be seen that the second plague has special reference to no other but the "sea" class. The period of time covered is the same as that of the first plague. In other words the great unrest and disturbances caused by the discontent of the "sea" class, which conditions mark the beginning of the second plague, commenced about the same time that the indications of death began to be manifest in the Protestant religious systems — the image of the beast — these death indications being symbolized by the appearance of the "ulcer" of the first plague on the worshipers. The two visions are contemporaneous in their fulfillment and increase in severity until their destructive work is completed.

The exposition we have given thus far of this second plague would be sufficient to cover the explanation of the vision were it not for the particular statement that the sea became as, or like the blood of a dead man. It would seem that there must be some special significance attached to this expression, which is found only in this vision. To understand the significance will require a careful examination, for we must discover the difference between the blood of a dead man and that of a living man. Here again we are assisted by Mr. Russell's very able presentation:

"To appreciate the trouble on this [sea] class we must study the symbol. Blood in a living creature is full of vitality, but the blood of a dead person is the very reverse. After death, the blood rapidly begins to separate into two parts — a watery liquid called serum, and a more solid substance termed clot. As soon as this separation has been accomplished, the clot begins to putrefy or corrupt. Applying this, we understand it to teach that a great and thorough disintegration will occur in this large [irreligious] class of humanity, after which, one element will rapidly corrupt and putrefy. Among the irreligious masses have been numbered such noble specimens of humanity as Stephen Girard, George Peabody, and Peter Cooper, besides many less notable, honestly skeptical souls.[1] The result of the commingling of such with the masses imparted a life principle

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(1) These words were written in 1883. Since that time there have come on the stage of human life many other men of like stamp.

and vitality. But reading this plague, we realize that a separation of these two elements is due, the result of which will be decay and death to every principle of morality and virtue in this class — when every living thing (active element of virtue and benevolence) in this sea class will perish. In other words, remove the element which advises prudence, morality, and right-doing, from the counsels of the restless masses — from the Labor Leagues, and other associations, and let the lower element control itself, and the result would quickly be the destruction of life, property, laws, and peace — a grand reign of anarchy in the name of communism.

"From other Scriptures we are taught to expect just such an uprising which eventually shall overthrow the kingdoms of earth. But the beginning of this is all we must look for now [1883] — the separation of the serum from the clot — of the vital from the corrupting element. This seems to be now in progress. Men of noble minds who realized the oppression of the masses by money and governments and desired to assist in their amelioration are forced to withdraw because of the spirit of recklessness which pervades the masses, leading to assassinations in other countries and threats of the same in this land. ...

"But we should remember that the full results of this evil or plague will not be felt for many years; it has its beginning only, now."

We believe it will be seen that this forecast of events made over forty years ago perfectly fits the symbols of this second plague vision. It is a most remarkable prediction, and to our mind shows that this expositor had, through a knowledge of God's wonderful Plan and the sure word of prophecy, and the signs of the times, a clear apprehension of all that has occurred in the sea class of humanity up to the present time; and the near approach of the overthrow of the present order in a state of anarchy. It is a most reasonable interpretation of this second plague vision, and the history of the past forty years has confirmed its correctness. While it is not yet completely fulfilled, all the signs of our times point to this near completion. The disposition that has existed for some time, particularly since the great World-war, on the part of the rank and file of the labor organizations to disregard the wise counsels of the conservative, law-abiding leaders, is tending to force a separation of these two elements. This evil is assuming a more and more threatening character and indicates the great crisis as near at hand. It is clear, even to many who have no knowledge of the sure word of prophecy, that this great crisis can hardly be averted much longer. The critical, strained conditions existing in both the labor and capital world, together with the increased cost of living, and the demands of labor for higher and higher wage, point to a serious locking of arms in conflict between these two classes. The student of the Bible, however, is enabled to look beyond the present troubles, to the time when the great King, who is divinely appointed to rule, and who is clothed with power to execute the Divine purposes, and endued with wisdom to solve all these perplexing problems, will assume authority and bring order out of chaos, absorbing the "sea" class.

Expositors have very generally applied the vision of this second plague to the events of the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution. This is not to be

wondered at, for the scenes that occurred in connection with this momentous event and the causes which led to it were very similar to the terrible scenes that are now closing this age, and the causes leading up to the same. In many respects, however, this application fails. The events of the French Revolution particularly the Reign of Terror were to a large extent local and confined to France, while those depicted in this vision are world-wide in extent. The events of the French Revolution and Reign of Terror resulted largely in weakening the Papal system, from which it has partially recovered; while the vision of this second plague has a special reference — not to Papacy, but to the "sea" class of humanity, and describes a final ending of the same. There can be no question, however, that Papacy will be affected indirectly by this judgment plague; indeed, all the religious governments will be affected. These events, as we shall see, are portrayed in a special manner in other of the "plague" visions. Furthermore, this plague cannot be located so far back in history as the French Revolution, but must meet its fulfillment after the image of the beast is formed, which was, as we understand, in 1846. Still further, when this vision of the second plague begins to meet its fulfillment, these evil occurrences among the irreligious classes symbolized, increase more and more in severity until the "sea" class is absorbed in the new order, the new earth state.

Third Vial Poured on Rivers and Fountains of Waters

"And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments" (verses 4-7).

Two of the principal symbols employed in this vision of the third plague, namely fountains and rivers, are found in the third trumpet vision. In that, as also in this, the fountains and rivers are affected, although in a different way. In the trumpet symbol the fountains and rivers are represented as becoming embittered (poisoned); in this third plague vision the fountains and rivers are changed to blood, thus becoming distasteful, loathsome, to those accustomed to drink of them. The fountains and rivers, when pure, are the true sources and channels of truth — Christ, the Apostles and Prophets, etc. In this vision of the third plague the Protestant (so-called) impure, muddy channels seem to be represented. These systems inherited from the "mother" system, Papacy, many egregious errors, and for a long time they retained and taught zealously these errors in connection with a certain measure of truth. In the symbol under consideration there seems to be represented the fact that a time came when through increased knowledge and independent thinking this mixture of truth and error became distasteful, loathsome. In the vision this is represented by these fountains and rivers changing to blood.

We are familiar with the interpretations of this vision given by many expositors. Nearly all of them since the Reformation make the fountains and rivers of this vision to represent peoples, which is consistent with their erroneous interpretation of the same in the third trumpet. The only interpretation that seems to meet all the requirements of the symbol is the one given below; and its application to the history of the Protestant sects for the past forty years will be found to be most reasonable. This explanation and application of this feature of the vision was made in 1883:

"This third element of trouble results from the turning of the rivers and fountains of water into blood. Running waters symbolize truth. The river channels through which water (truth) has flowed, symbolize the various sects or denominations. The fountains symbolize the founders and schools of these various systems — the places or men in whom these channels had their start or beginning.

"For a long time, water — truly very muddy in some, but nevertheless a mixture of water — has flowed in these various systems, of which many have partaken and have been refreshed. But a change comes, and that which once refreshed, will [and we may truthfully add, has] (gradually) become loathsome as blood. (Blood has been advised as a medical remedy, but in such cases it is taken immediately on being drawn from the animal, else it would be poisonous for its change is rapid — hence a river of blood could symbolize only loathsomeness and death.)

"This we understand to be a picture of a change rapidly taking place in religious channels — their creeds, though containing as much truth and error as ever, they are coming to regard differently. General enlightenment is greater, and what was once received without question is now becoming loathsome and death-like. As in a similar plague (literally) upon Egypt, the people digged wells for water because they could no longer drink of the bloody rivers, so here — independent thinkers are digging for themselves, for purer waters than the regular channels afford. Truly this turning of the waters of their channels into blood, is among the causes of anxiety and great annoyance to the sectarian, but only the few yet [in 1883] realize this trouble."

We next inquire regarding the significance of the succeeding part of the vision — that of the utterance of the angel of the waters, expressing assent to the justice displayed by the Almighty in the sending of this plague: "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus." The older expositors, in harmony with their interpretation of the "temple," the "seven angels" coming out of the temple, etc., as representing scenes and occurrences taking place in heaven, apply this angel to a heavenly being or beings. But in harmony with our interpretation of these features thus far, we believe it to be more consistent to understand this angel to represent those in the harvest time who, because of their understanding of the truth concerning the wonderful Plan of God and the near approach of the time for blessing the world, are enabled to see the necessity as

well as the justice on the part of God in exposing the errors of the creeds and making them obnoxious, loathsome to the supporters of the sects and denominations. As observed by Mr. Russell:

"The angel of the waters — or the messenger of the real Truth — is able to see in this a righteous judgment of God against those systems."

Next in the vision are the words, "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." Whatever may be the import of these words, they express the reason assigned for the plague coming upon the false religious systems. Keeping in mind that the plague signifies that the mixture of truth and error of the creeds becomes so loathsome that they can be no longer received by the supporters of the sects, and instead of their searching the Scriptures to discover the pure, unadulterated waters (truth) they ignore or reject the pure channel, will assist to a comprehension of this peculiar, but very significant expression. The inclination on the part of commentators in general is to understand these words, "they poured out the blood of saints and of prophets," to refer to the persecution by these systems of the saints and prophets unto death. This is the interpretation of nearly all expositors. We believe the following is more reasonable and correct, and shows remarkable research and insight into the fulfillment of the vision. The more it is considered in the light of the facts of recent history, the more its correctness, we believe, will be seen. However, this can be grasped only by those whose knowledge of "present truth" has opened their eyes to see the true situation in the various Protestant sects and denominations. We give the interpretation:

"The direct cause of this trouble is mentioned — they had poured out the blood of the saints and prophets.

"Is it inquired in what sense this was done? We answer that blood in a person is life, and to pour it out is to waste it. The life of the saints is truth — God's Word — as it is written: 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life,' and 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit [vitality, life] of prophecy.' Hence to have wasted the life principle of saints and prophets would be to have wasted the words and testimony of Jesus. This they did by neglecting his Word, and receiving instead the traditions of men, which errors have corrupted and defiled the truths they possess to such an extent that the thinking ones are fast coming to that condition where they cannot drink from those channels.

"In these very channels, or systems, where the teaching of Satan has been preserved, viz.: that man has an existence which can never cease, and hence must continue forever (Genesis 3:4), nine-tenths of them in misery, in these same channels, the teachings of the Prophets that the wages of sin is death, but that God has provided for 'times of restitution of all things, spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began' (Acts 3:21) is neglected, cast aside, wasted. And hence it is that they will get blood to drink shortly. The creeds of these systems being so mixed with error by the retaining of Satan's lie and the rejection of the Lord's testimony, both through the words and example of prophets and saints, they will soon come to recognize them as too obnoxious and nauseating to be palatable to either themselves or the world" (C. T. Russell).

Thou Gavest Them Blood to Drink

Since the above exposition of this plague was given, events have occurred which have resulted more and more, not only to confirm its correctness, but to give further light on one of its peculiar features. This is that contained in the expression: "Thou gavest them also blood to drink." The rejection of those portions of the creeds that have misrepresented and maligned God's character, instead of causing an honest searching of the Scriptures, which would have resulted in the discovery that they were not taught in them, has resulted in a wave of what is termed Higher Criticism, which is nothing less than another form of infidelity — a disbelief altogether in the Scriptures as a Divine revelation. The great religious leaders who hold this teaching are found chiefly in Protestantism, and continue, inconsistently, to retain the name Christian.

The final terrible scenes of the age, when this and each of the other plagues will be in operation, will be caused very largely by this movement of Higher Criticism, Modernism, etc., which has the effect, not only of undermining faith in the Scriptures, but also of causing an utter disregard of God and His claims. It will be in connection with these terrible scenes that the truthfulness of the Sacred Writings will be most thoroughly demonstrated. Then the great so-called religious leaders — the Higher Critics — will be compelled to acknowledge the truthfulness of the Divine Word. It will not be difficult to imagine the terrible anguish of mind of these self-exalted religious leaders when they are forced, almost against their will, to give up their unbelief, their infidelity; and this anguish will be but increased as they have a very forceful illustration of the terrible effects of their teaching in the awful scenes of the great tribulation, such as never was before. "Thou gavest them blood to drink."

"And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments" (Revelation 16:7

The altar referred to here is doubtless the altar of sacrifice). The words proceeding from the altar are in response to the messenger of the waters (truth). The significance of this part of the vision is thus explained by the same writer:

"The altar represents the class of prophets and saints whose testimonies for truth were sealed with their lives, the testimony of whose lives had been wasted. These speak not audibly, but in that figurative way in which Abel's blood is said to have cried out. The testimony of these condemns the present systems as worthy of having this trouble or plague, because of their previous disregard of truth. While nominal church systems have become great and popular in worldly favor, both in the days of the Prophets and ever since, in the days of the saints, yet now as ever, this success and popularity has been the result of an alliance with the world and a participation of its spirit. Since, as well as in the days of the Prophets, to live separate from the world and to boldly advocate the Truth in opposition to the worldly mixture of error, has cost persecution and either literal or symbolic beheading — or cutting off. The testimony of every sacrifice for truth acceptable to God is here represented as condemning the course of these systems and justifying the retribution represented in this third plague — 'for they are worthy.' "

Fourth Vial Poured on the Sun

"And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory" (Revelation 16:8,9).

It was the disposition of expositors who lived just subsequent to the French Revolution to apply this vial symbol as they did the preceding ones to the calamitous events that occurred in connection with that revolution. The sun is interpreted by these expositors to represent the revolutionary rulers of those times, and the scorching rays of the sun to describe the despotic sway and oppressions of these rulers. Those blaspheming God on account of the plagues are understood to be the people of France. This interpretation would be a most natural one to those who understood these vial plagues to refer to judgments on Roman Catholicism. The unfolding of the events of history since that time has revealed that not only was this too early a date to apply the vision, but that this woe plague as also the others have a much wider application.

The sun when used as a symbol, generally represents the light of the Gospel; in a wider sense it sometimes represents the light of truth in general. There is no symbol employed in the Scriptures that is more common. It is used in many of the Old Testament prophecies, and is found very frequently in the Revelation visions. Among the symbols of the fourth trumpet there is portrayed a darkening of the sunlight, which we interpreted to represent the substitution of gross errors for the truths of God's Word by the false religious system of Papacy. We also found the same symbolism used in the fifth trumpet, which we interpreted to mean the darkening of the sunlight of truth by the great eastern apostasy of Mohammedanism.

The effects produced in the world by the darkening of the Truth by Papacy was the bringing in of what is generally called the Dark Ages — a period of ignorance and superstition, affecting both nations and individuals. The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century caused the Gospel sun to shine in a measure; but the formation of the Protestant sects prevented it from shining in its fullness. There was a sufficiency of light, however, shed by the Reformation to liberate to a large extent the nations from the yoke of Papal bondage, bringing in as the Nineteenth Century dawned a gradual increase of knowledge. In the opening years of the Nineteenth Century the Bible began to come in — to the possession of the people in general. It was not, however, until about 1874 that the full blaze of Gospel sunlight began to shine for the benefit of the Lord's consecrated. About this time also the masses of mankind, because of a more general diffusion of knowledge, were aroused to more independent thinking. Matters pertaining to the rights and wrongs of man then began to be discussed, and this has gone on increasingly up to the present time. The various organizations of labor and capital, etc., existing today began to be formed in those days. This increase of knowledge has caused discussions and contentions over the rights and wrongs of the classes and has become more and more heated as the days have come and

gone. The tendency is at the present time towards a concentration of all these organizations into two classes, in opposition one to the other. The shaking and unsettling of the present order of things is causing conditions that are bringing great trouble and disturbance of mind to mankind in general as the various remedies provided by legislators are tried and fail to bring the hoped-for cure. All this, it is generally admitted, has been caused by an increase of knowledge, described in this symbol as an unusual increase and diffusion of sunlight. This seems to be what is portrayed in this fourth plague symbol.

"Here the misery of some is caused by an increase of sunlight. ... The increase of the sunlight means an increased brilliancy of Gospel light and knowledge. This increase of light is to affect all classes, as is indicated by its not being limited to a certain class as the other plagues are limited; to 'sea,' 'land,' 'rivers,' etc. It comes upon men — mankind in general and upon representative leaders of men, in particular. It is the increase of light — knowledge — which is causing independence of thought and action among all classes of society. It causes differences between kings and subjects, between capital and labor, between clergy and laity; the increasing light is doing it all. It is Gospel light too; for no matter how infidels may scoff at the Bible and affect to have superior liberty to that which it teaches, it nevertheless remains a fact, that the grandest liberty is that where Christ makes free; and the essence of Gospel light is in the Master's words, 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.' It is truth that is spreading — truth on every subject: truth relative to the rights and authority of kings; truth relative to the rights both of capital and labor; truth relative to the claimed superiority and lordship of a self-elevated class termed the clergy."

To the consecrated, enlightened follower of Christ all these things which are to a very large extent troubling the minds of the great leaders of men, as well as the enlightened law abiding classes, are only causes for rejoicing, knowing that not only their redemption draweth nigh, but also the deliverance of the groaning creation is very soon to be realized. They know that these are the signs that were foretold to indicate the ushering in of the better day for our world. This trouble (plague) is necessary, and is one special feature of the birth throes of the new era.

"The conflict is between truth and superstition — light and darkness; it will be a severe struggle, but truth is mighty and shall prevail; debasing the proud and exalting the humble. Those whose deeds are evil — who are in the wrong — hate the light, is the Master's testimony. It would curtail their power and lower their position to elevate all others to equality. These are scorched or troubled by the increase of light, and none more so than religious lords, for it is the increase of light which doubtless helps to turn the waters of their cherished channels into blood — corruption — making their doctrines and creeds, which emanated from fountains of the Sixteenth Century, distasteful and obnoxious.

"After preaching for years doctrines which called God just and loving, but proved Him to be worse than the gods of the heathen — after having defended for years their sectarianisms, some of which teach that God has foreordained

the salvation of a 'Little Flock' and their children, but has also foreordained eternal misery as the lot of the great mass of humanity and their offspring — thus teaching, that 'there are infants in hell not a span long,' etc. — no wonder that such who worship and honor their sect and such teachings, more than they do God and His Word, would feel scorched and annoyed with the great light and heat of truth, as it is now beginning to shine out and reach them.

" 'And they blasphemed the name of that God.' Blasphemy, as the word is used in Scripture, does not signify profane swearing, but rather a misstatement of character. For instance Jesus was accused of 'blasphemy' because he said he was the Son of God (John 10:33). These zealous sectarians become so angry against present unfoldings of Truth which prove the love and mercy of God as well as His justice, that they go to the very extreme of opposition and grossly misstate God's character and often wrest His Word from its true import to sustain their theories.

"This, which is a plague to others, is a wondrous boon to those who are out of Babylon and humbly enjoying the leading of God's spirit from the one fountain direct — the Word of God. This increase of Gospel light, and consequent increased light thrown upon the Law shadows — showing the true teachings of the tabernacle and its services and sacrifices, are pointedly foretold in symbol by the Prophet (Isaiah 30:26) who says: 'The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.' It is the same day (period) in which He assembles the outcasts, and makes up His jewels."

Fifth Vial Poured on Seat of Beast

"And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds" (Revelation 16:10,11).

It seems quite evident that this fifth judgment plague finds its fulfillment in Papacy. This is seen in the fact that it is represented as being poured out on the "throne of the beast." There is a very general agreement amongst expositors on this point. Mr. Russell states: "This pictures to us trouble coming upon Papacy (the beast); not so much upon the masses of Romanists as upon those in authority, its rulers — the throne power — their clergy. Papacy's walls are higher, its claims are stronger, and its claims to Divine authority and infallibility of longer standing than those of the Protestant system — her daughters; therefore she the longer escapes the increasing light of this 'Day of the Lord,' and hence the longer escapes the trouble consequent to her errors. But she shall not escape the trouble."

With regard to the particular time to apply the vision there is a variation among expositors. A very general tendency on the part of those who lived just subsequent to the French Revolution, is to apply it to occurrences in connec-

tion with that most remarkable event. For several reasons previously stated this would seem to be too early a period. It would rather seem to represent events in Papacy's career occurring subsequent to the time when it made its greatest, most blasphemous claim to the throne power, against the Most High. It was at this very stage of her blasphemous claims that the Prophet Daniel seems to have reference when describing the judgment that took away Papacy's temporal authority. "I beheld *then,"* Daniel says, "because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake" (Daniel 7:11). This voice was heard in 1870.

It should be kept in mind that Papacy had already experienced what may properly be termed preliminary judgments. The great Reformation Movement and the occurrences of the French Revolution, as also the revolutionary disturbances in Europe which succeeded the French Revolution, had terribly shaken Papacy's power and influence. These we have found depicted in other visions. As we have noted, the seven plagues are stated to be the seven *last* plagues in which is *"completed the wrath of God."* Despite the disastrous effects that the Reformation and the French Revolution had upon Papacy, it did not reach the climax of its blasphemous claims until 1870. This is the date of two very remarkable events, which were only two months apart. The first occurred July 18, and was that of the Papal decree of infallibility, which is considered quite generally to be the most blasphemous of all its claims against the "Most High." The second occurred on September 20, of the same year, and was that of the loss of all temporal authority. Concerning these two events a noted writer has said:

"Pius IX sent out his famous encyclical letter, *summoning* the Ecumenical Council for 1870. Six archbishop-princes, 49 cardinals, 11 patriarchs, 680 archbishops and bishops, 28 abbots, 29 generals of orders, 803 spiritual rulers, representing the Church of Rome throughout the world, obeyed the summons to attend this Vatican council, which solemnly decreed the dogma that the occupant of the Papal chair is, in all his decisions with regard to faith and morals, infallible. Arrangements had been made to reflect a glory around the person of the pope by means of mirrors at noon, when the decree was made [July 18, 1870]; but the sun shone not that day. A violent storm broke over Rome, the sky was darkened by tempest, and the voices of the council were lost in the rolling of the thunder!

"On the very day following this culmination of Papal arrogance and self-exaltation, was declared that terrible Franco-German war, in which the French Empire of Louis Napoleon — by the soldiers of which the Pope was maintained on his tottering throne — fell. *The temporal sovereignty of the Papacy fell with it*. No sooner had the French troops been withdrawn from Rome, and the French Empire collapsed, than the Italian government announced its intention of entering the Roman States, and did so. On September 20, 1870, Rome was declared the capital of the kingdom of Italy, and became the residence and the seat of the government of Victor Immanuel. The [London] *Times'* summary for that year says: 'The most remarkable circumstance in the annexation of Rome and its territory to the kingdom of Italy, is the languid indifference with which the transfer has been regarded by Catholic Christendom. A change which would once have *convulsed the world*, has failed to distract attention from the more

absorbing spectacle of the Franco-German war. *Within the same year the Papacy has assumed the highest spiritual exaltation to which it could aspire, and lost the temporal sovereignty it had held for a thousand years.'*

"The temporal dominion of Rome Papal has already been consumed. Not a nation in Europe remains under it, and men marvel that they ever did bow beneath it. The *spiritual* power of Papacy, its idolatrous religion remains, and will remain to the end; but the *secular power* is a thing of the past" (H. G. Guinness).

This fifth plague symbol seems to describe more especially Papacy's reversal of these decrees, etc. We give a definition of the Papal claim to infallibility, and note at what time this blasphemous claim became centered in the Papal "throne":

"Infallibility in controversial theology means the immunity from error in all that regards faith and morals, which is claimed by the Roman Catholic Church [as represented in its head, the pope] ... Infallibility, as put forward by the Roman Church, which involves not alone an actual historical immunity from error, but also such a positive and abiding assistance of the spirit of God as will at all times both protect against the possibility of error, and guide and direct in the faithful teaching of all necessary truth. The infallibility claimed by the Roman Church is thus of two kinds, passive and active — the first (Matthew 16:18), in virtue of which the Church never can receive or embrace any erroneous doctrine, no matter by whom proposed; the second, in virtue of which she is charged with the function (Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15, Ephesians 4:11-16) of permanently teaching to the world the essential truths of God, of actively resisting every access of error, and of authoritatively deciding every controversy by which the oneness of belief among the faithful may be endangered. Catholics regard this gift as a natural and necessary accompaniment of the authority in matters of faith with which they believe the Church to be invested, and which if not guided in its exercise by such infallible assistance would be a false light, and an attractive but dangerous instrument of delusion" (*International Encyclopedia*).

Up to the year 1870 this infallibility was supposed to be centered in the decisions of the great general councils presided over by the pope, but at the general Ecumenical Council convened at Rome in 1870, it was decided that this power and authority was centered in the pope. In regard to this matter we quote further from the above authority:

"Two very important and practical questions, however, arise regarding it, both of which have been occasions of much controversy even among Catholics themselves, viz.: as to the subject, that is the seat or the organ of this infallibility, and as to the object, that is, the matters to which it extends. ... By the decree of the Vatican Council, 1870, this controversy has been decided; and it is now agreed that the doctrinal decrees of the pope teaching *excathedra* are to be accepted as possessing the same infallibility which attaches to the teaching of the Church."

And they Bit their Tongues

Papacy's kingdom being darkened by this plague seems to refer to a time when there would be a lack of unity and harmony among her leaders, as expressed by Mr. Russell:

"It [the trouble] comes on the throne or ruling class, and their kingdom is filled with darkness — uncertainty — absence of former unity and harmony, and in their trouble the pain will be increased by tongue-biting."

This symbol of biting the tongue is a very peculiar one and evidently has a deeper significance than that attached to it by most all expositors. The general idea has been that this expression refers simply to the effects on Papacy because of the troubles that came to her on account of her loss of power and influence by Napoleon. We believe, however, that it refers to matters that have occurred since 1870 and will meet fulfillment in a deeper sense in the near future.

It is our thought that the symbolic expression of "biting their tongues," etc., refers to Papacy's being compelled to take back some of its former claims, thus proving these claims to be false. Already has this feature begun to have a fulfillment; indeed, had begun its fulfillment in 1883. Thus explains the same writer:

"The tongues of Papacy are its decrees and utterances, past and future. To bite, then, in pain, implies contradiction and denial of former utterances. Whether this signifies a contradiction and reversal of previous utterances of the Papal hierarchy, or whether it means controversy and differences between the living rulers of the Church, we may not decide, but it will probably include both of these difficulties, and in their attempt to justify their contradictory teachings, God's character will be further dishonored, misrepresented, or blasphemed."

Concerning this peculiar symbol an illustration is cited of its fulfillment as having already taken place at the time he gave the forecast in 1883. We quote this illustration, especially calling attention to the fact that it has had a more complete fulfillment in the events since that time, thus confirming this application:

"As an illustration of this symbol, 'biting their tongues,' we note Papacy's present humiliating concessions and contradiction of her former teachings, in her present recognition of the Protestant governments of Europe, which Papacy not only did not create, but actually cursed, and encouraged her faithful to use every means to destroy. This biting is occasioned by the pain and humbled condition in which Papacy finds herself. She has lost all temporal power, and to maintain long her spiritual influence, feels that she must not antagonize the governments which she can no longer claim the right to control."

As further showing the fulfillment of this symbolism we quote from a secular journal of June 1, 1920, a very recent decision of the Pope, rescinding a former decree which forbade Catholic rulers to visit the king of Italy at Rome on account of the present Italian dynasty taking the dominion of Rome away from the Pope in 1870 and making the city its capital:

"Pope Benedict has issued an encyclical letter announcing that while he maintains the claims of the Holy See to temporal power, he rescinds the order forbidding Catholic rulers to visit the king of Italy in Rome. It is understood that the first monarch to visit Rome under the new conditions will be King Alphonso of Spain. ... Continuing, the pontiff renews the protests made by his predecessors for the purpose of protecting the rights and dignities of the Holy See and asks

that, once peace being re- established, the abnormal conditions affecting the head of the Church shall also be brought to an end, as, he says, they are prejudicial to the tranquillity of the peoples.

"His Holiness urges the nations to join together fraternally to reduce if not to eliminate the military expenditures which are weighing heavily upon the finances of the various States. . . . The pontiff declares that the Church will not fail to cooperate with this association of peoples with an efficiency to which history [?] bears witness."

Of course, students of prophecy know well that the object of all this is to attain on Papacy's part its former influence and control in human affairs. To appreciate in its fullest sense how humiliating it must be for Papacy to make these concessions, it will be necessary to keep in mind that the whole line of popes are, in the Scriptures, portrayed under the symbolism of one man, the "Man of Sin"; and also to have in mind the boastful, blasphemous claims made by this power in the past, although on account of the bright shining of truth, its claims have not been of so public a nature until quite recently. The following are amongst the false claims that have been made: That it is the only true Church; that it is essential to salvation to be subject to the Roman pontiff; that it has both temporal and spiritual dominion over all kings and kingdoms; that it is infallible in its teachings and decrees; that it has the right to turn over heretics to the civil power to be punished. Mr. Russell adds:

"When we remember that it was the same Papal system which in its prosperity had 'a mouth speaking great things' (Daniel 7:8-25, Revelation 13:5), making boastful claims, it should not surprise us that God should ordain as part of its reward that it should eat its own words."

It is well to keep in mind the fact that it is the spread of Bible Truth that has compelled Papacy to take back, to disannul, many of her former decrees. It is especially worthy of note that the Bible has been the means used to gradually consume the false doctrines of Papacy. This is the means particularly specified by St. Paul that was to do this, as his words show: "Whom the Lord shall consume by the spirit of his mouth," that is, by his Word.

"Holy Scripture is of course the form in which the word or spirit of the Lord's mouth, retains a sensible existence, and influences human society. 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'

"Does not the extreme jealousy with which the Papacy has always endeavored to bury the Bible in an unknown tongue, or to undo its teachings by false interpretations, betray its inveterate antagonism to the power destined to 'consume' it? 'There is an instinct of apprehension, a consciousness, which, antecedent to experience, divines danger; it seems discernible in the alarm with which Romanism recoils from Holy Scripture.'

"The Creed of Pius IV — that creed, a belief in which is, according to Papal declaration, essential to salvation — expressly states that the Bible is not for the people: 'Whosoever will be saved' must renounce it. It is a forbidden book. Bible Societies are 'Satanic contrivances.' Bible burnings are most Catholic demon-

strations. All this dread of Scripture, all this violent opposition to its circulation, is a plain proof that the Papacy recognizes in the Word of God its worst antagonist. Experience shows it is right.

"Wherever the Word of God has free course, the power of the Papacy is at an end. The Reformation sprang from a recovered Bible; and wherever, as in Scotland, the popular mind is imbued with Scripture, Romanism has no chance. It is the absence of Bible knowledge that enables the Papacy to retain its sway, in Spain and other European countries, in Mexico, in Brazil, and in parts of Ireland. ...

"Pius IX, in his Encyclical Letter of 1850, speaks of Bible study as 'poisonous reading,' and urges all his venerable brethren with vigilance and solicitude to put a stop to it. A clergyman lost his wife in Rome, and wished to put a text on her tombstone. The Pope refused permission, not only on the ground that it was unlawful to express a hope of immortality as to a 'heretic,' but because it was 'contrary to law, to publish in the sight of the Roman people any portion of the Word of God'! ...

" 'After the day of Christianity had dawned, she was able to cover Europe with darkness; and by the exclusion of the Bible, to perpetuate that darkness from age to age. The enormity of this wickedness cannot be known on earth. But she cannot conceal from herself that, despite her anathemas, her *indices expurgatorii*, her tyrannical edicts, by which she still attempts to wall round her territory of darkness, the Bible is destined to overcome in the conflict. Hence her implacable hostility — hostility founded to a large extent on fear. ... To Popery a single Bible is more dreadful than an army ten thousand strong. ... When she meets the Bible in her path, she is startled, and exclaims with terror, I know thee who thou art! Art thou come to torment me before the time?'

"For the last three hundred years, ever since the Reformation, the Papacy has been in process of consumption by the spirit of the Lord's mouth. It will ere long [when the seventh plague is poured out] be 'destroyed by the brightness of his coming.' "

Other Changes in the Attitude of Rome

As still further proving what seems to be the correctness of this interpretation and application of this very significant symbol, we call attention to a letter written by Pius X in which there are utterances that are in direct conflict with these decrees and anathemas of Pius IX against the Bible. The letter was written in 1905. Supplementing the letter we quote a comment on the same by the *Christian Intelligencer* in an article entitled "The Pope on the Bible":

"It betokens a marked change in the attitude of the Church of Rome toward the Bible for the laity, when the Pope gives his blessing to an association engaged in sending it forth in the language of the people. The St. Jerome Association is engaged in this for Italy, and when requested to bestow his blessing on the new work and the spread of the Gospel, the Pope answered:

" 'Gladly do I give my blessing, and that with both hands and with full heart, for I do not doubt that this work will produce the richest fruit and is already blessed by God. The more we read the Gospel the stronger our faith becomes. The Gospels are writings that are valuable for everybody and under all circumstances. I have lived among the common people and know what they want and what pleases them. Tell them the simplest Bible stories and you will have attentive listeners and effect blessed results.

" 'Your purpose is to spread the Gospels. You are doing a noble work. Some people think [Pius IX, for one] that the peasants, with their plain, everyday way of thinking, would not profit by the reading of the Scriptures. This is incorrect. The average peasant is a shrewder thinker than we may suspect, and knows how to draw the correct lessons from the Scriptures, often even better than many of the preachers. But it is not only the common people and the lower classes who will profit by the reading of the Scriptures.

" 'No matter how many prayer books and books of devotion there may be for the priest, none is better than the Gospels. This is an unsurpassed book of devotion, the true bread of life. I grant an especial apostolic blessing on all those who preach the Gospel, who hear and read it, whether on a Sunday or a week day. I bestow my blessing on all members of the St. Jerome Society and all who cooperate in the sacred work of spreading the Gospel.' "

This certainly is a contradiction and reversal of previous utterances of the Papal hierarchy, and it produced at the time, controversies and differences between the living rulers of the Church. As further illustrating this pope's attempts at reform, which the reader will note is a direct reversal of the decrees and anathemas of Pius IX, and which thus establishes more fully the foregoing interpretation of this feature of the vision, we quote from an article by *The Bulwark:*

" 'Back to the Gospels!' comes the cry from the Vatican, sounding the knell of Catholicism. After centuries of crafty misrepresentation of the Scriptural teachings, the Church of Rome has been forced to acknowledge the error of its ways, and at last a man has been found honest enough and of sufficient boldness of heart to say, 'We have sinned; let us return to the truth.' A reformer in the Vatican! It is a difficult *role to* play. Will Pius X be able to carry it through effectively?

"Five centuries ago John Huss made the first attempt, in Germany, to bring about a reformation in the Catholic Church, but the time was not yet, and the priests were too strong for him. Despite the fact that he carried a safe-conduct, under the seal and hand of the German Emperor himself, for his journey to Constance, he was seized, condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake. A century later saw the rise of three mighty champions for Truth — Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli — who successfully drew from the otherwise rotten body of the Almighty Church of the Middle Ages the only healthy elements therein, wherewith to build up the real Church of Christ. The rich priests and tyrannical nobles, however, assisted by the cunning and unscrupulous Jesuits, tightened their hold upon the ignorant masses and wrapped the cloak of ignorance more closely around them. These brought a rich income to their worthy masters, who repaid them with adulterations of Christ's teachings suited to their vile purposes. The

truths of the Gospels became hidden or utterly unrecognizable under the accumulated dogmas of centuries of Popery.

"From the many official booklets which have been published of late [1905], and which have been directly inspired by the present Pope [Pius X], it is easy to see that he, along with many of his high- placed followers, has come to the conclusion that some measure of reformation has become an urgent necessity within the Roman Catholic Church, otherwise the mighty edifice may totter to a fall."

This article goes on to enumerate some of the reforms at which Pius X aims, and which are indeed interesting. We shall be confined, however, to a general statement as showing the way these proposed reforms were received by some of the noted officials and official organizations of the Papacy:

"Reform literature has been particularly in evidence throughout Italy of late [1905], and the publication of pamphlets goes on continually. Bishop Bonnemelli of Cremona, for instance, has published a pastoral letter in book form, and with the full permission of the Pope, which may be taken as a typical example. Referring to the worship of the Virgin Mary, he says: 'It shocks Christian feeling and common sense to see the Virgin Mary and many saints placed upon the same level as our Lord Jesus Christ.' The Bishop then goes on to criticize the superstitious worship of St. Antonius of Padua and the financial exploitation connected therewith. 'Not only are there people who believe in him,' he says, 'but there are those who turn him to good business account, and also others who afford permission for the conduct of such transactions.' "

Continuing the article shows that doubtless through the advice of influential leaders in the Romish Church these commendable efforts of the Pope were checked; and the fact that we hear nothing about these reforms continuing in the Papal dominions is evidence that they have failed. Quoting further:

"Since the above article was written, a Rome corespondent informs us that Pius X has appointed a committee consisting of several Cardinals and Doctors of Catholic Divinity, to consider and decide upon the measures of reform to be adopted. The Intransigents and Jesuits, continues the correspondent, are highly indignant at the lines of the policy taken up by the Pope, as they can see only too well that should the meditated reforms be carried out, the knell of the priesthood's power is sounded, and their hitherto uncurbed license at an end. These latter views find strong confirmation in the fact that outside of Italy the Catholic priests are careful not to breathe a word of the movements, pregnant with meaning, which are going on in Papal circles, since they fear, and with good cause, that as soon as the Vatican announces that the dogmas hitherto propagated by them as Gospel truths are entirely wrong and merely the results of former abuses on the part of the clergy, people will immediately come to the conclusion that where so much is false it is useless to look for aught that savors of the truth, and will, in their disgust at the manner in which they have been misled, turn their thoughts towards the true faith and so swell the ranks of the Protestant believers."

While this reform movement has evidently ceased, we have illustrated in the above quotation one of the ways in which the Roman Catholic laity over the world may become enlightened, that is, through defections in its own priesthood, for it is plain that the Scriptures teach that it will be by such an enlightenment concerning Papacy's false claims that the system will finally be destroyed. The expectation on the part of the writer of the above article, however, that there will be a flocking to Protestantism at the time of this exposure, is without any Scriptural warrant. Protestantism, to a very large extent, has discarded the Scriptures as a divinely inspired writing.

Mr. Barnes, commenting upon this fifth plague, applies it as follows:

"Here, however, there was a direct blow aimed at that power, yet not such as to secure its final overthrow, for that is reserved to the pouring out of the last vial, verses 17-21. All that is represented here is a heavy judgment which was merely *preliminary* to that final overthrow, but which affected *the very seat of the beast*. The phrase, 'the seat of the beast' means the *seat* or *throne* which the representative of that power occupied; the central point of the anti-Christian dominion. ... I understand this as referring to the very seat of the Papal power — Rome — the Vatican."

Commenting on the expression, "And his Kingdom was full of darkness," Mr. Barnes gives as the meaning of this, "confusion; disorder; distress; for darkness is often the emblem of calamity (Jeremiah 13:16, Isaiah 59:9,10, Ezekiel 30:18, 32:7,8, 34:12, Joel 2:2)."

In concluding our examination of the fifth plague vision it will be to the point as bearing on the fact of its having had only a partial fulfillment up to the present time, to keep in mind the suggestion "that the full results of this evil or plague will not be felt for many years; it has its beginning only, now. It is well also to remember that one plague or evil goes on increasingly, after a second and third, etc., are added, until in the end the entire seven forms of evil will be operating simultaneously."

It will thus be seen that when the seventh plague is meeting its fulfillment, each of the others will also be operating, and together will work to the accomplishment of the Divine purpose — the overthrow of every form of evil and wrong, producing genuine repentance, reformation, on the part of those who live through that judgment period.

Chapter Thirty-Seven

Seven Vials of Wrath Poured Out

(Revelation 16:1-21 — Continued)

Sixth Vial Poured on Great River Euphrates

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared" (Revelation 16:12).

There can be no question that the great river Euphrates is used in this sixth plague as a symbol. There will be suggested to the mind of the student of the Apocalyptic visions almost immediately the use of this symbol in the sixth trumpet vision; and at once the question arises, Is there not some correspondence or connection between the two. In considering the sixth trumpet the river Euphrates was interpreted to represent that which bound or held in check for a time, the four angels — the Turkish-Ottoman forces in their invasion of the Eastern or Greek Christendom. In this sixth plague symbol it is represented as something that stands in the way of or hinders what is termed the coming of the kings of the east, or the kings from the sunrising (Diaglott), and the exercise of their office work.

Before attempting to make an application of what is meant in the vision by the drying up of the great river Euphrates, may we not find the key to the correct interpretation in the discovery of who are meant by the kings of the sunrising? There is a general disposition on the part of expositors who wrote in the first half of the Nineteenth Century to apply these kings from the sunrising to peoples living in the eastern parts of Europe and Asia, and the drying up of the river Euphrates to the removal of those obstacles that stand in the way of their conversion to Christianity. Mr. Elliott thus expresses this thought: "What then so signal a removal of obstructions to the Christianization of a great part of the East as the drying up of the flood of the Turkman host and power? What so notable a preparation of the way for princes and peoples from the East, like the Magi from the sunrising of old, to come to the Christian temple [Church] and enter, and worship?"

Mr. Barnes, in summing up his conclusions concerning this matter expresses a similar thought: "All that is *fairly* implied in the language used here is, that the kings of the east would be converted to the true religion, or that they were at the time referred to in a state of readiness to be converted if there were no hindrance or obstruction. There was some hindrance or obstruction to their

conversion; that is, as explained, from the Turkish power; in other words they would be converted to the true faith if it were not for the influence of that power."

Those who see that the fulfillment of these plagues must occur in connection with the very closing events of the age, and that they portray the judgments on those powers that stand in the way of the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ and his saints, have no difficulty in identifying these kings from the sunrising as the glorified kings and priests who are to reign with Christ in the great work of blessing all nations — all the peoples of the earth. Thus Mr. Russell sets forth the matter:

" 'The drying up' is 'to prepare the way of the kings from the sunrising.' These kings we understand to be the saints — those who, with Christ, will be 'kings and priests' to reign over the earth (Revelation 5:10). They come, not *to* the sunrising, but *from* the sunrising. They come bringing light with them. This is a beautiful symbol of how 'the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.' They bring with them light, liberty, and joy to the groaning creation, for 'the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings [beams].' The object of all these changes is to prepare mankind for the rule of righteousness — the Kingdom really of God's appointment, which is to take the place of these which Antichrist has attempted to authorize."

Bearing in mind that this *heavenly* Kingdom is to have an *earthly* phase, may it not be proper to apply the symbol to this aspect of the Kingdom also? The earthly or human aspect of the Kingdom for the blessing of all the families of the earth, we understand, will be made up of the Old Testament saints, worthy ones, who will be raised from the dead. The place from which they will exert their influence will be Jerusalem and the land of Palestine, which until quite recently has been in possession of the Turkish-Ottoman Empire.

Understanding these kings from the sunrising to represent the two classes of the Kingdom, we ask, Is it not reasonable to apply the symbol of the drying up of the great river Euphrates, to the removal of those powers and influences that obstruct or hinder the establishment of the Kingdom of God in both its heavenly, and its earthly aspects? A careful examination of the Scriptures in which the great river Euphrates is used as a symbol gives support to this double application. In Isaiah 8:7, the Euphrates is used as a symbol of the king of Assyria and his armies, and the overflowing of its banks, to those armies desolating the land of Judah, as we read: "The Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river [Euphrates] strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass through Judah."

In another Scripture the river Nile is used in the same way. In this case the application is to Egypt. It reads: "Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers? Egypt riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof" (Jeremiah 46:7,8). The context shows that the armies of Egypt are overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar at the

river Euphrates. Mr. Lowth commenting on this Scripture says: "The Prophet describes by way of vision the march of the Egyptian army, coming on like a flood ... which expressions allude to the overflowing of the river Nile."

The drying up of a river, then, in accordance with the symbolical use of a river in these Scriptures would represent the taking away or removing of the power and influence of an empire or kingdom, or removing that which supports its source of wealth and power. In a literal sense we have this illustrated in the drying up of the main stream of the great river Euphrates to allow the king of Persia, Cyrus and his armies, to enter and capture the great city of Babylon. It would seem, then, that the kings from the sunrising represent the two phases of the Kingdom. The drying up of the great river Euphrates has its application to the removal of those obstructions of every kind that stand in the way, or are opposed to the joint-heirs of the heavenly Kingdom, as well as the earthly representatives of the same, occupying their divinely appointed stations.

We ask, then, What has stood in the way, or what still stands in the way of the establishment of the earthly phase of the Kingdom? We answer, The ownership and occupancy of Jerusalem and the Holy Land by the Gentiles. For nearly thirteen centuries with the exception of a brief period of about ten years, the great Ottoman or Turkish Empire held possession of Jerusalem and the land of Palestine. In 1917, a very significant date in symbolic time prophecy, this Turkish power was forced to deliver over the government of that land to England — an event most remarkable in connection with the fulfillment of the prediction of the drying up of the Euphrates.

This, however, does not complete the fulfillment of the symbol in even its earthly aspect. The complete drying up of the great river Euphrates, would be accomplished only in the Jews' gaining complete possession of their land under a government of their own. This would require that even England, a friendly power to the Jews, would have to relinquish its governmental authority in that land. Furthermore, there would be required the removal of all those obstacles in the land itself, that is, the removal of the peoples now living in the land; either their removal or their cessation of opposition to the ownership and rulership of the Jews over Palestine. When all these things have come to pass, the way will be prepared for the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God; the Old Testament worthies will be resurrected from the dead, and take their divinely appointed places in connection with the blessing of all the families of the earth, the dead as well as the living.

We next inquire, What is it that stands in the way of the kings of the sunrising, those who will be the heavenly, spiritual rulers, taking full control of earth's affairs? In considering this we will need to apply the other use of the symbol of the drying up of the great river Euphrates. This is the one suggested by the literal drying up of that river in connection with the overthrow of literal Babylon.

"Literal Babylon was built upon the river Euphrates. Its wealth, supplies, and sustenance came largely from this source. It had immense walls and strong gates over the river. Within the city, in bondage, were Israelites, God's covenant

people, and to overthrow Babylon and deliver these, God appointed Cyrus the Median General (Isaiah 45:1-5, Daniel 5:30,31). He, coming to this strong city, did not attack it directly, but, by digging another channel for the waters of the river, he dried up the old channel, through which he marched his army under the gates and captured the city.

"That this historic fact is used as the basis of a symbol in Revelation, none can question. Babylon and her fall are frequently mentioned, and here the drying up of the Euphrates adds to the correspondence. While 'Babylon' is used as a general name for the entire nominal Church, it is used and is specially applicable to that portion of it called 'the Mother of Harlots.'

"This sixth plague, or form of evil, is upon Babylon, the Mother, and while other systems have channels, or rivers, her system is built upon the 'Great River.' 'And in her forehead was the name written, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth.' (Revelation 17:5). Following the literal, and applying it to the symbol, we reason that the waters of this great river represent the people who, by their influence and money, support Papacy — from which Babylon the Great draws her revenues. And to this agrees the explanation by the angel: 'The waters which thou sawest where the harlot sitteth are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues' (Revelation 17:15).

"The millions of Papacy's subjects are of every tongue and clime, and this symbol shows that a disaffection is to spring up between the subjects and the Church authorities which will turn aside her support and 'dry up' her revenues, and thus speedily lead to Babylon's complete destruction. 'The drying up' will probably require years for its accomplishment."

Waters of Euphrates Drying Up

Still later, in 1910, this same writer taught that this symbol had a much wider significance, and applied to all the nominal Church systems. We quote his words to this effect:

"In Revelation we read of the drying up of the Euphrates River, that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared (Revelation 16:12). This is symbolical, of course. It calls our attention back to the typical Babylon and her fall before Cyrus.

"We are to expect a parallel to this in connection with mystical Babylon — *Christendom*. In the symbolical language of Revelation, waters symbolize people; hence the turning aside of the 'waters' would represent the alienation of the people and the alienation of the people would be indicated by their withholding of financial support.

"Gifts of money to ecclesiastical institutions represent love or fear. The increasing light of modern times has not only decreased love for the creeds of the 'Dark Ages,' but it has also decreased fear for their threatenings. As a result neither love nor fear is operating as strongly today as once it did in the minds of the masses. What wonder if the result would be the drying up of the Euphrates and the ultimate collapse of mystic Babylon! The matter is under the control of

the antitypical Cyrus of whom it is written, 'Thus saith the Lord to His anointed [typical], to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two- leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places.' (Isaiah 45:1-3). Thus saith Jehovah, 'That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, he is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.' (Isaiah 44:27,28). As the typical Cyrus encouraged and gave liberty to the Jews to return from Babylonian captivity, so the antitypical, our present Lord, will see to the drying up of the Euphrates and also to Israel's opportunity and encouragement to return to the land of Abraham."

In a later article, in 1914, under the heading of *Waters of Euphrates Drying up*, we have another reference to this vision, showing that at that time according to this writer's understanding, the sixth plague was making rapid strides in its fulfillment, as a few brief extracts from the article will show:

"Germany is being overwhelmed with a deluge of infidelity, unparalleled in its entire history. The Monist Federation is endeavoring to draw together the cultured strata of the people into a solid phalanx against Christianity. The Social Democrats are pushing the general masses into a fanatical hatred of church and state and in the pulpits a Liberalism is spreading, which is almost utterly devoid of the spirit of the Gospel.

"While in believing circles earnest efforts are being put forth for individual salvation, and Mission Work is being done amongst the people, to stem the destructive tide, it becomes more evident every day, that 'the State Church is doomed in her struggle with infidelity.'

"General strike against the Church is the latest slogan. The 'No-Creeders' (Monists) in league with the Socialists, convened mass meetings in Berlin, Brunswick, and Saxony, in which every means of incitation was employed in an appeal toward a secession from the State Church. At these meetings over 1,300 persons signed a declaration announcing their intention to secede from the Church. Four thousand more followed, and according to judicial court-records received toward the end of December, 17,000 secessions took place in December up to the 23rd, and the day after Christmas 8,000 more announced their intention. These are alarming figures!

"To the Socialists the Church Boycott is a political campaign issue. They aim at depriving the Church of her revenues and thus result in her over-burdening the State."

In the exposition of 1883, Mr. Russell's thought was that this withdrawal of the support of the people from the Papacy would be caused by her success in conciliating all the kingdoms, both those which she appointed and those appointed and sanctioned by the daughter [Protestant] Churches. "In this she is

arraying herself directly on the side of these kingdoms, and in opposition to the increasing desire and effort of the people for liberty." Concerning this he says:

"Therefore, when present tendencies have produced a closer affiliation of religion and state than has existed for some time, it will result in leading the masses to throw off the yoke of the church as well as the state, since both will be leagued against their cherished ideas of liberty and equality. The support of the people — the waters of the Euphrates — being thus withdrawn, the Babylon Church organization will become weak and helpless, by reason of the drying up of the waters from its channel."

The correctness of the foregoing application of this symbol in the light of history unveiling prophecy can hardly be questioned. All the signs of our times bearing on this particular matter point to a near completion of this plague. Indeed, when considered in connection with the fulfillment of the five previous plagues the evidence is indisputable.

Three Impure Spirits like Frogs

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet" (Revelation 16:13).

The beast and the dragon are not new symbols. We have frequently met them in our previous expositions of the Revelation. We have noted that when speaking of the beast as applied to Antichrist, reference is made to that stage or state of the old Roman Empire and the kingdoms that at the present time occupy its territory after it came under the control of Antichrist or Papacy. The Papacy itself, as a combination of a civil and religious government, and as once a head or ruling power over these kingdoms is represented by the beast. While it has lost its temporal authority over all the kingdoms and governments of earth, it continues to claim it, and the great mass of Roman Catholics acknowledge and obey its decrees as more binding than those of human governments. It is, therefore, still Scriptural and proper to call this great power, the beast, and it continues to be thus designated until the central hierarchy at Rome is completely destroyed.

The reference to the dragon symbol in this sixth plague vision is the first since its mention in chapter 13. There it is represented as giving to the beast its throne and authority. This we understand to refer to an official decree of the emperor Justinian, in 533, by which the Roman Bishop was made head over all the churches of Christendom. The central seat of government was at this time located at Constantinople in the East. As this decree of Justinian was issued over two centuries after the Pagan religion had ceased to be the religion of the government, it will be seen from this Scripture that the dragon continues to be the symbol employed to represent the Eastern civil-religious governmental power centered at Constantinople. The form of religion that this government administered while professedly Christian, in reality was nothing but a Paganized form of Christianity. Thus the appropriateness of the dragon symbol.

The dragon, it would seem, continues to symbolize the Paganized-Christian government in the East, at least until the fall of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453. This Eastern government is frequently referred to by historians as the Eastern or Greek Empire, for the reason that the territory it controlled was largely that of the ancient Greek Empire. The church systems united to the several governments occupying that territory are at the present time denominated Eastern Christendom and seem still to be described in the Scriptures under the symbol of the "dragon." This was what Mr. Lord understood was the power represented in the sixth plague symbol as the dragon, as we read: "It is the symbol of the rulers of the Eastern Roman Empire, supporting an apostate church, and arrogating the right of dictating the religion of their subjects." Applying the symbol of the dragon to the vision of the sixth plague, which he understood at the time he wrote had not met its fulfillment, he says: "At the period of this event, a government is to subsist in Thrace or that vicinity that shall nationalize the religion of that empire as under its last imperial head." When Constantinople fell, many of those professing the Paganized form of Christianity then prevalent, were forced to relinquish it, and accept the Mohammedan faith. The apostate Christian religion, however, has continued to be held by vast numbers, and in most instances is united to the governments. This combination of civil and religious affairs at the present time is called Eastern Christendom, to distinguish it from Western Christendom.

The false prophet referred to in this vision of the sixth plague is generally understood to refer to the same power as that described in Revelation 13, as the "image of the beast." This, as we explained when considering that chapter, represents the last stage of the fallen (from favor) Protestant organizations, out from which will then have come all the real, true heirs of the Kingdom.

Briefly summing up the symbols of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet of this vision, we understand the dragon to represent the religious rulers of Eastern Christendom; the beast, the religious rulers of Roman Catholic Christendom; and the false prophet, the Protestant Federation, or a combination of all the Protestant sects.

The significance of these unclean spirits represented as coming out of the mouth of the dragon, etc., is well illustrated by what St. John says of lying spirits (teachings), that had gone forth in his day. The reference seems to be to certain anti-Christian teachings, of which human teachers were the visible propagators (1 John 4:1-3). Their significance may also be illustrated by the vision of Micaiah, in which it appeared that a lying spirit had gone forth, and that it had spoken by the false prophets of king Ahab, to draw him to the battle of Ramoth Gilead (1 Kings 22). Mr. Barnes refers to these unclean spirits thus: "They are not here probably symbols of *persons*, but *of influences* or *opinions* which would spread abroad, and which would characterize the age (period) referred to. The reference is to what the 'dragon,' the 'beast,' and the 'false prophet' would *do* at that time in opposing the truth, and in preparing the world for the great and final conflict."

As this part of the vision is largely future in its fulfillment, it will be necessary to wait the unfolding of history to determine with certainty what this teaching

will be. That which seems most reasonable, and in full harmony with other Scriptures which describe the manner in which the age will end, is thus given by Mr. Russell:

"These three classes will all give forth one kind of teaching, called symbolically unclean spirits (impure, erroneous teaching), like frogs.

"This harmonious teaching in which these can all unite, we believe to be the dogmas of 'the divine right of kings,' the 'authority of the clergy,' and the claim that mankind is bound to submit to these and be controlled by them. Many of these — kings and clergy — and many of those who will recognize their claims, will doubtless be honest, but will be thus in opposition to God, because they know not that they are in the hour of His judgment and that the time for the displacement of these Antichrists and the governments of their appointing has come. It is a blessed fact that these beastly governments will eventually give place to the Kingdom of God; that the times of the Gentiles will end by being fulfilled; and while this is now due to be understood and appreciated by the saints — those entirely consecrated to God's Word and will — yet 'none of the wicked shall understand'; hence they will be found fighting against God and His arrangements.

"Each of these systems will utter the same things, and these utterances will have the effect of gathering the kingdoms of earth together to the great Battle of Armageddon.

"The symbolism of Scripture, rightly understood, is very forceful, and there is always a close resemblance between the symbol itself and the thing symbolized. When the holy Spirit uses a frog to represent certain doctrines or teachings, we may be sure that the application will fit well. While a frog is a small creature, yet it puffs itself up until it almost bursts with the effort to be somebody. A frog has a very wise look, even though it does not know very much. Then a frog croaks whenever it utters a sound. ...

"The three most prominent characteristics of a frog, then, are pomposity, an air of superior wisdom and knowledge and a continual croaking. The spirit of all [the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet] will be boastful; an air of superior knowledge and wisdom will be assumed; all will foretell dire results to follow — any failure to obey their counsels. However conflicting the creeds, the differences will be ignored in the general proposition that nothing ancient must be disturbed, or investigated, or repudiated.

"The Divine authority of the Church, and the Divine right of kings, aside from the Church, will not be allowed to conflict; for both will be endorsed. Any persons or teachings in conflict with these boastful, unscriptural claims will be branded as everything vile, at the mouths of the frogs, croaking from pulpits and platforms, and through the religious and secular press. The nobler sentiments of some will be strangled by the philosophy of the same evil spirit which spoke through Caiaphas, the high priest, respecting our Lord Jesus. As Caiaphas declared it expedient to commit a crime in violation of justice, both human and Divine, to be rid of Jesus and his teachings, so this frog-like spirit will approve of any and every violation of principle necessary to self-protection. ...

Come Together to Armageddon

"The ecclesiastical kings and princes, with their retinue of clergy and faithful adherents, will be gathered in solid phalanx — Protestant and Catholic. The political kings and princes, senators, and all in high places, with their henchmen and retainers, will follow in line on the same side. The financial kings and merchant princes, and all whom they can influence by the most gigantic power ever yet exercised in the world, will join the same side, according to this prophecy. They do not realize, however, that they are coming to Armageddon; yet strange to say, this is a part of their very cry, 'Come together to Armageddon!'

"Speaking of our day, our Lord declared, 'Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.' (Luke 21:26). The kings of Europe know not what to do. All sectarianism is being shaken. Many people of God are in perplexity.

"The croaking of the frog spirits, or doctrines, will gather the kings and princes, financial, political, religious, and industrial into one great army. The spirit of fear, inspired by the croaking, will scourge the passions of otherwise good and reasonable men to fury — desperation. In their blind following of these evil spirits, evil doctrines, they will be ready to sacrifice life and everything on what they mistakenly suppose is the altar of Justice, Truth, and Righteousness under a Divine arrangement.

"Many noble people in this great army will assume an attitude quite contrary to their preference. For a time the wheels of liberty and progress will be turned backward, and medieval restraints will be considered necessary for self-preservation — for the maintenance of the present order of things and for the prevention of the new order which God has decreed, the due time for which is at hand. Even those who may be God's people do not stop to consider whether it is His will that things should continue as they have been for the past six thousand years. The Bible says that such is not God's will, but that there is to be a great overturning, that a new order is coming in.

"For a brief time, as we understand the Scriptures, these combined forces of Armageddon will triumph. Free speech, free mails, and other liberties which have come to be the very breath of the masses in our day, will be ruthlessly shut off on the plea of necessity, the glory of God, the commands of the Church, etc. The safety-valve will be sat upon, and thus will cease to annoy earth's kings with the sound of escaping steam; and all will seem to be serene — until the great social explosion described in the Revelation as an *earthquake* will take place. In symbolic language an earthquake signifies social revolution, and the Scriptural declaration is that none like it ever before occurred (Revelation 16:18,19). See our Lord's reference to it in Matthew 24:21."

Events that have occurred since this exposition was given, and especially those transpiring in the world at the present time, all show that this forecast is most reasonable and causes us to have a strong conviction that we are very near the great crisis in human affairs, the great battle of Armageddon that will complete this vision. Let us note further:

" 'And they gathered them together into that place which is called in Hebrew Armageddon' (verse 16). Armageddon means Mount of Destruction; and this describes what will be the result of this doctrine. It will unite all these systems in one cause as against the masses of the people and their liberties, and the result will be the total destruction of all those erroneous systems of church and state. They shall fall.

"The fifteenth verse is abruptly thrown in as a parenthesis. It reads literally thus: 'Lo, I come as a thief! Blessed the one watching and keeping the garments of himself; so that not naked he may walk, and they see the shame of him.' This is very significant. It declares that at the time when this evil doctrine will be apparently uniting all upon the side of law and order — upon the side of kings and clergy — our Lord will then be present, but secretly and unknown except to the watching ones. Only those who are truly his and watching in the light of his Word will not be deceived by this impure teaching, but will realize his presence and the necessity of the foretold fall of all these things, because the rightful King is present to remove these out of the way of his Kingdom.

"The position of this declaration — thrown in disconnectedly — is significant. It teaches that our Lord will be present before the impure teaching begins to gather them to their destruction."

It will be profitable to the Lord's consecrated ones to know what Mr. Russell's thought was concerning the attitude or position the saints should assume when this great battle is fully introduced:

"The Lord's saints are not to be in this battle at all. God's consecrated people, longing at heart for Messiah's Kingdom and the glorious year of Jubilee and Restitution which it will inaugurate, will patiently abide the Lord's time, and wait unmurmuringly for it. Their lamps trimmed and burning, they will not be in darkness respecting the momentous events of the impending battle; but they will be of good courage, knowing the outcome portrayed in the 'more sure word of prophecy,' to which they have done well to 'take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn' (2 Peter 1:19). ...

"The attitude of the people of God should be that of great thankfulness to the Giver of every good. They should make provision for the great storm that is coming and keep very quiet, not unduly interested in the side of either rich or poor. We know in advance that the Lord is on the side of the people. He it is that will fight the Armageddon Battle, and his agency will be that peculiar army — all classes. When this great 'earthquake' of social revolution comes, it will not be a mere handful of anarchists, but an uprising of the people to throw off the great power that is strangling them. Selfishness is at the bottom of the whole matter."

Perilous Times

Watchman, how readest thou touching this hour?
Fearful corruption in places of power;
Presidents, princes, and kings in dismay —
Tragic unfoldings, the news of the day.

Is it the sign of the *presence* again
Of the Messiah, in person to reign?
Has sin attained to its manhood of power?
Is this its zenith? Is morning the hour?

Jesus is come! O let it be known,
Jehovah's Anointed now takes the throne;
He takes the helm and the power to command,
He'll guide affairs on the sea and the land.

Jesus is come! let all the world hear;
"Who's on the Lord's side" let him draw near,
Come with your armor, your loins girt about;
Come with your trumpets, and join in the shout.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

Seven Vials of Wrath Poured Out

(Revelation 16:1-21 — Continued)

Seventh Vial Poured on the Air

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done" (Revelation 16:17).

The seventh plague is to affect the "air," which is of course employed as a symbol. One has said in regard to this: "The other vials were poured on different parts of the symbolic world — the land, the sea, the rivers, the sun, the throne of the wild beast, the Euphrates, and the effect of each limited to its peculiar scene. That this is poured into the air which envelops the globe indicates that the great changes which follow it are ... to extend to all the kingdoms of the earth."

Mr. Elliott regards the symbol as applying to some extraordinary convulsion, darkening the political atmosphere. Mr. Barnes thus comments on the symbol:

"Why the vial was poured into the air is not stated. The most probable supposition as to the idea intended to be represented is, that as storms and tempests seem to be engendered in the air, so this destruction would come from some supernatural cause, as if the whole atmosphere should be filled with wind and storm, and a furious and desolating whirlwind should be aroused by some invisible power."

Careful attention to the fact as seen in the other plagues that the land, sea, fountains, rivers, etc., refer to different phases of humanity or human affairs, will enable us to see the significance of this symbol of the air. As we examine the Scriptures we find that the air as a symbol is associated with Satan's control in the affairs of the world. He is called the "god of this world," "the prince of this world," "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (2 Corinthians 4:4, John 14:30, Ephesians 2:2). The following explanation of this symbol is in perfect harmony with its use in these Scriptures, particularly the last, as we read:

"As already shown, the 'air' here mentioned [1 Thessalonians 4:17] symbolizes spiritual rule or power. Satan has long occupied the position of 'prince of the power of the air' (Ephesians 2:2), and has used for his co-workers and joint-rulers in it many of the great ones of Babylon, who, under his blinding errors, verily think they are doing God service. But in due time the present 'prince of

the air' shall be bound, and shall deceive no more; and the present heavens, the great Antichrist system, will 'pass away with a great noise,' while the new Prince of the air, the true spiritual ruler, Christ Jesus, will take the dominion and establish the 'new heavens,' uniting with himself in this power or 'air' his Bride, the 'overcomers' of the Gospel Age" (C. T. Russell).

Another reference by this writer to the air as a symbol is as follows:

" 'The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night [unobservedly] in the which the heavens [present powers of the air, of which Satan is the chief or prince] shall pass away with a great [hissing] noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth [social organization] also, and the works that are therein [pride, rank, aristocracy, royalty], shall be burned up.' "

These Scriptures describe in a general way what is represented in the symbols of the seventh plague. The symbols seem to denote and point to a great climax in which all the preceding plagues represented in the various features of the six are in full operation together, in connection with which the present order will pass away.

"Seven is often used as the symbol of completeness; so this seventh plague completes the trouble coming, and will result in the complete unveiling of Satan's deceptions and the binding or destruction of his power and influence."

The temple in this seventh plague vision, as in other places where reference is made to it in these closing judgment visions, represents the Church — though in a defiled state; indeed, as seen in the vision already considered (Revelation 15:5,6), in a rejected, cast off condition, out of which the true saints are described in symbol as coming. This seems, of necessity, the proper interpretation, for the reason that from St. John's day and on throughout the entire age, the Church in an organized state has been in a more or less defiled condition. The Reformation began in an effort to cleanse the Temple, the Church. At this time the Temple, or Church of God in an organized state, had become completely apostate, and was controlled by the "Man of Sin." The Apostle Paul pictured the fallen Church and its head at this period, in the words: "He shall be as God sitting in the temple of God."

The character of the Reformation movement gradually changed as it became apparent that the great organized temple of the Roman Catholic system was the Antichrist and was rejected of God. The movement gradually culminated in the organization of sects, as Lutheran, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodists, etc. No one of these organizations, nor all of them together, ever have constituted the true Temple or Church. While they have in the past been used of God, they have all to a greater or less extent been made up of both true and false believers. As time has continued they have degenerated rapidly, until today, as organizations, they are cast off, rejected. The true Temple or Church has not yet been organized, but its members are now represented as "stones," which are being prepared, formed. This is the state of the true Temple throughout the age. When all these scattered, separate stones are prepared, they will be placed in their several positions and form the true Temple, and from this true Temple of God,

which under another symbol is described as the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, will proceed the restitution blessings for the world, long ago promised by God through His holy Prophets. This holy Temple of God is referred to in Revelation 3:12, where we have recorded the promise: "To him that overcometh, I will make a pillar in the Temple of my God." It is also mentioned in Revelation 7:15, where a certain "great company" of saved ones are mentioned as serving God in His Temple. This latter vision, as will be seen from the context, and as explained previously, refers to the time after all the judgment plagues on the nominal false temple will have resulted in its destruction; and when all the "stones" of the true Temple will have been brought together, and made a holy Temple in the Lord, and thus become the habitation of God.

The "loud voice" proceeding from the temple in this seventh plague vision comes not from the true Temple, for it is not then in existence, but rather from the nominal, rejected, castoff temple. The Scriptures seem clearly to teach that in the great climax of the tribulation there will be many true saints in the nominal church temple. These are not of the elect Kingdom class; because before this part of the vision has its fulfillment, the Kingdom class will have all come out. It will be those still in the nominal temple, who will first recognize the nature of the judgment plague. These are the ones who in a loud voice cry out: "It is done."

"The result of this trouble [plague] brings conviction to some. This is shown by the great voice from the temple, saying, 'It has been done'! (Literal translation). ... When the seventh has been poured out, we hear this nominal temple saying, 'It has been done'; we are now convinced of the truths uttered by the faithful messengers whom, in our ignorance and pride, we cast out from us; who told us that we were in darkness, and great distress was coming upon us, and that our systems, which we so fondly cherished, were to crumble into dust. It has been done even as they declared; Babylon is utterly destroyed; as a great millstone cast into the sea, she shall rise no more.

"This temple class, which finally recognizes God's dealings when these systems are entirely destroyed, is the same which we have found elsewhere mentioned in Scripture, and which we have designated the second company, who, though losing the prize promised to overcomers of the beast, etc. (Revelation 20:4), are 'saved so as by fire [these severe judgments] in the day of the Lord Jesus.' This blessed result upon this second company gives us an intense interest in and longing for the destruction of the enslaving systems mentioned in succeeding verses as the result of this seventh trouble."

This seventh plague, considered as distinct and separate from the six preceding, is all in the future, the near future we believe. It is quite essential to keep in mind that the bowls and their contents do not represent truth, but rather, as previously explained, they represent calamities, troubles coming upon the various phases of the systems of Christendom. It is the truth, however — truth along various lines, that will eventually bring these calamities — the great final troubles which will cause the overthrow of the present order and remove every

evil and wrong from the earth. The interpretation of this writer, like all of his forecasts of the future, is most reasonable, because it is in perfect harmony with all the prophecies that portray the downfall of all the systems, governments, etc., that have been under the control of the "god of this world." From what we have seen of the fulfillment of his forecasts of the preceding six plagues, we are caused to await with confidence the startling occurrences already threatening that will mark the completion of these judgments upon Christendom.

The symbols mentioned next in connection with the seventh plague are familiar ones and such as we have frequently met with in other visions. St. John informs us that in connection with his hearing the loud voice, etc., "there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great."

"Lightnings signify diffusion of knowledge ... (Psalms 97:4). Voices signify proclamations and general discussion of subjects by those being enlightened. Thunderings signify tumults accompanying the increased enlightenment."

The symbolism is a very significant one, and implies, when considered with the other symbols, that the diffusion of knowledge and the discussions and controversies of this judgment plague will bring to mankind as a whole the realization that the old institutions, civil and religious — the present order of things — is ending.

The next symbol, that of an earthquake, is likewise a familiar one and is found frequently in the Scriptures. All commentators are quite generally agreed that an earthquake symbolizes a revolution. This symbol was quite fully explained in the comment on Revelation 6:12 where it is used. *There*, however, we understand the French Revolution to be referred to. *Here*, it is represented as "a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great," and there would seem to be no question concerning what revolution is referred to in this symbolic vision.

"An earthquake would symbolize a revolution, and here brings to our attention the greatest revolution which ever has or ever will take place on earth. This is the great revolution mentioned by the Prophet, in which every mountain and hill (the high ones) should be brought low, and the valleys (humble ones) be exalted, bringing all humanity to a common level as a preparation for the righteous reign of the Lord's Anointed."

The Great City Became Three Parts

The breaking up of the alliance between the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet is described in the language: "And the great city became three parts, and the city [Sinaitic reading] of the nations fell" (verse 19).

The earlier commentators, as we would suppose, fail to get a clear apprehension of this vision, since they apply these vial judgments to Papal Rome only. Mr. Barnes remarks concerning this division of the great city, however, are very interesting:

"All that it seems to me can be said now [at the time he wrote, 1850] on the point is, (a) that it refers to Papal Rome, or the Papal power; (b) that it relates to something yet future, and that it may not be possible to determine with precise accuracy what will occur; (c) that it probably means that, in the time of the final ruin of that power, there will be a threefold judgment; either a different judgment in regard to some threefold manifestation of that power, or a succession of judgments as if one part were smitten at a time. The certain and entire ruin of the power is predicted by this, but still it is not improbable that it will be by such divisions, or such successions of judgments, that it is proper to represent the city as divided into three portions."

It will be seen by the careful student of the Bible, who has come to recognize clearly God's wonderful Plan, and particularly the fall from favor and rejection of the Protestant systems, that it was hardly possible for this writer, or other noted writers of those times, to get a clear knowledge of this symbol of the "great city" being "divided into three parts." None of the commentators living and writing before 1878 grasped the significance of this symbol. Mr. Russell's interpretation of this is both reasonable and harmonious:

"The great city here evidently represents these united three elements which attempted in union to rule over or control the world. This union and power will continue for a while, but, as here shown, they will again separate — be divided into three parts. Seeing that their alliance and mutual support has failed to control and keep subject the restless and turbulent masses, each will attempt to adopt an individual policy in their effort to adjust and settle society; but their efforts will be fruitless, and will only hasten the crisis of the hour; as a consequence, we read, 'The city of the nations fell down.' "

Accepting the Sinaitic reading in this last statement, that it is the "city" rather than the "cities" that fell, we understand that it is the same great city, Christendom, that is referred to. The above interpretation is based upon the Sinaitic reading and is in perfect harmony with the thought that the triple-alliance represents the three parts of Christendom, and in the separation they still continue properly to be called Christendom. We give this writer's interpretation of verse 19, in which he emphasizes the fact that the severity of the judgments is felt more by the religious elements than by the civil:

"But, though the kingdoms shall fall, the religious element of the union shall not escape. Under the name Babylon they all seem to be included (as elsewhere), saying, 'Babylon the great was remembered before God, to have given her the cup of the wine of the indignation of His wrath' (verse 19). This signifies that the fiercest of the trouble — the wine or extract of the wrath — will be upon the Babylon systems more than upon the political division."

The next symbol is designed to picture the terrible, disastrous effects of these seven last plagues so far as the present order of things is concerned — all the various features of the entire seven being concentrated in this seventh and final one. The symbols employed — that of mountains and islands disappearing, particularly the first, are of frequent occurrence in Scripture.

Mountains when used as symbols usually represent kingdoms. God's Kingdom which is to succeed the present order of things is symbolized by a mountain (Daniel 2:34,35,44). In this vision of the Revelation all the kingdoms of the world are portrayed as mountains. The particular reason for their use here is to show that they pass away, cease to be, as conveyed in the expression "and no mountains were found" (verse 20). In other Scriptures, particularly in the prophetic Psalms, this destruction or passing away of the kingdoms is represented symbolically as mountains being swallowed up by the sea; the sea representing the turbulent masses of humanity in the throes of revolt against governments. St. John noted also that, "every island fled." Islands, as symbols, when employed in connection with mountains, describe republics; being supposedly governments of the people, they are nearer the symbolic "sea" level. The symbols of islands fleeing away, and no mountains being found, would represent the complete overthrow of all human governments of every kind:

"(Islands seem to symbolize Republican governments — organizations of people slightly above the 'sea' level.) This would be the natural result of the overthrow of monarchies or kingdoms, symbolically called mountains, as indicated in Psalms 97:5. 'The hills melted and flowed down like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.' This is a grandly expressive illustration of the passing away of earth's dominion. In this day of the Lord — the day of his presence, the day of the establishment of his Kingdom in the earth — some of the mountains [kingdoms] will melt, or gradually come down to the level of the people, by the fire and great heat, caused by increase of truth and knowledge, while others remaining firm will be overwhelmed — by the 'sea' — in revolutions. This last form is described in Psalm 46, which seems to give a complete picture of this seventh plague. It reads thus: 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear, though the earth [society] be removed, and though the mountains [kingdoms] be carried into the midst of the sea [overthrown by the ungovernable masses]; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled [in great commotion], though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.' While kingdoms (mountains) shall give place to republics (islands), so the islands in due time shall also flee away, as we find it here recorded (Revelation 16:20). That is, the spirit of liberty will overleap all bounds and order, and end in anarchy. But notice that when the republics are swept away, it will be after kingdoms have all been overturned, as indicated by the expression — 'No mountains were found.' It is in a similar manner that the Master speaks of the 'sea and waves roaring' as the beginning of trouble and cause of fear. And Peter refers to this time of trouble, which shall burn as an oven, as the time when the earth and all earthly elements shall be consumed and give place to a new earth (society) and new heavens (government), then there shall be no more sea (people not religiously restrained)."

We now come to consider the symbols that describe the final great catastrophe that marks the downfall of Christendom, portrayed in these visions of the seven last plagues. This description is found in verse 21 and reads: "And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a

talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."

Second Advent expositors as a rule interpret nearly all of these plague symbols as being literal transactions, for they believe the plagues describe the complete destruction of all the human family except saved ones. Those expositors who have a clearer knowledge concerning another age to follow this one — an age of probation, have clearer light on these visions, and generally interpret them as symbols. We will find, as a rule, that they seem to be in a considerable measure correct in their interpretation of the visions that in their day had become matters of history. Mr. Lord's interpretation of this symbolic hail storm is certainly instructive:

"A hail storm is a symbol of sudden, and resistless strokes, by which in a violent political revolution, men are smitten down from dignity, independence, and happiness, to helplessness, vassalage and ruin; as such a storm strips the leaves and fruits from the trees, and dashes down the crops of grass and grain. Such a devastating tempest is to beat down the men who belong to the train of Antichrist, and they are to blaspheme God because of their calamities. The revolutions and contests, indicated by these symbols, are doubtless to follow the Advent of the Son of God to raise the saints from death. ... and to occupy a considerable period."

Mr. Barnes' comment, as will be seen, does not attempt to explain the significance of the hail, although recognizing that the language is symbolical. His words are in connection with a summary of all the plagues, and read as follows:

"This finishes the summary statement of the final destruction of this formidable anti-Christian power. The details and the consequences of that overthrow are more fully stated in the subsequent chapters [17, 18, and 19]. The fulfillment of what is here stated will be found, according to the method of interpretation proposed, in the ultimate overthrow of the Papacy. The process described in this chapter is that of successive calamities that would weaken it, and prepare it for its fall; then a rallying of its dying strength; and then some tremendous judgment that is compared with a storm of hail, accompanied with lightning, and thunder, and an earthquake, that would completely overthrow all that was connected with it, and that sustained it. We are not indeed to suppose that this will literally occur; but the fair interpretation of prophecy leads us to suppose that that formidable power will, at no very distant period, be overthrown in a manner that would be well represented by such a fearful storm."

It will be noted that Mr. Barnes makes the plagues to come upon Papacy alone and fails to see the fall of Protestantism, and the judgments that are to come upon that system, as well as upon the so- called Christian nations in general. Mr. Lord makes their application more general, and world-wide.

The Hail Shall Sweep Away the Refuge of Lies

We regard the following as a most reasonable interpretation of this great symbolical hail storm:

"Hail is solidified water. If water or rain, causing fruitfulness and refreshing to earth, be a symbol of truth, refreshing and causing gracious fruits in humanity, then hail must signify truth delivered in such a way as to be dangerously destructive to things with which it comes in conflict. These will be heavy — a talent each — about the weight of a man — sufficient to break down everything before it. This recalls the symbolic use of this same word by Isaiah, 'And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies and the waters [truth] shall overflow the hiding place.' (Isaiah 28:17). Untruth — error — falsity, is the bane of the world, and the time of trouble would be incomplete, and the world still unprepared for the reign of righteousness, were it not for this hail. Recalling a similar plague which came literally upon Egypt, we find that it injured only those Egyptians who had not respect to the words of Jehovah (See Exodus 9:19-21); and we may safely reckon the same of this symbolic hail; it will smite down and subdue only those who are in opposition to it, and that for their good" (C. T. Russell).

It will be remembered that we found this symbol employed in connection with the first trumpet, which we interpreted to refer to the effects of truth upon the Pagan civilization, causing its overthrow in the second and third centuries.

Concerning this last great outpouring of judgment truth, causing these plagues, calamities — God's wrath on Christendom, the same writer continues:

"We need not suppose that this hail comes last, for in giving an account, something must be mentioned last if all occurred simultaneously. These various things described will occur, or be in process at once — voices, thunderings, hail, and lightning among the people, causing the earthquake, fall of Babylon, and mountains, etc. This is more than hinted at, in the fact that these same events, mentioned under the seventh seal and seventh trumpet, are mentioned indiscriminately as one event."

In closing this exposition of the seventh plague, which doubtless describes the last judgment on Christendom, we note whence this symbolic hail comes:

"The hail, be it remembered, 'comes down from heaven': Heaven, as already defined, symbolizes spiritual powers, but not any longer corrupt and vitiated spiritual powers, for these have passed away. Babylon has been cast as a millstone into the 'sea' to rise no more. This is the new 'heavens' which shall gradually take the place of the old, which is to 'pass away with a great noise' or tumult — voices, thunderings, etc. Yes, thank God, he that in verse 15 announces his presence as a thief will have not only broken down the kingdoms of the present, but will also have set up that Kingdom for which our Lord taught us to pray: 'Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as in heaven.' 'Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness; for His anger endureth but a moment; in His favor is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning' (Psalms 30:4,5). 'Blessed be His glorious name forever; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory Amen and Amen' " (Psalms 72:19).

There remains only one more matter to consider in connection with this last great plague. It is stated that "men blasphemed God because of the plague of

the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." In considering this we should keep in mind that there are different classes of individuals in the world at the time of these troublous scenes who will be affected by the plague. This statement would seem to refer to that element, found in nearly all denominations, made up largely of the chief rulers and spiritual guides, who have a zeal but not according to knowledge, and who, on finding that the judgment hail — Truth of these last times — is uncovering and exposing the blasphemous and God dishonoring creeds of the past, are aroused to bitter antagonism against the Truth, and being blind and ignorant concerning what is taking place, they enter all the more zealously upon a campaign to defend and propagate these false doctrines that blaspheme and misrepresent the Divine character. The ultimate result, however, of this downpour of symbolical hail will be the clearing away of all error, superstition, and ignorance (Isaiah 28:17), and thus to prepare the way for the shining forth of the Sun of Righteousness for the blessing and uplifting of all the willing and obedient.

It will be necessary to keep before our minds when we come to consider the succeeding chapter that while St. John had heard in the visions the name "Babylon" mentioned several times by the revealing angel, he had not been given an explanation of what Babylon itself represented. In the vision which follows these seven last plagues — the vision recorded in chapter 17, an explanation is given of the various features connected with the time of the rise of Babylon in history, its evil influence over the nations, etc.; and in chapters 18 and 19, a fuller description than that given in the plagues, is given of the judgments that cause its destruction. We will therefore see that chapter 17 is retrospective in some of its features gradually bringing the history down to our day.

Chapter Thirty-Nine

The Vision of the Harlot Woman

(Revelation 17:1-6)

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Revelation 17:1,2).

It would appear from these words, "I will show thee the judgment of that great harlot," etc., spoken by the revealing angel to St. John, that this woman, designated the great harlot, had been seen in visions by St. John before. The fact that the name Babylon had been mentioned in connection with preceding visions (Revelation 14:8, 16:19), and that this name was emblazoned on the forehead of the great "Mother of Harlots" (Revelation 17:5), together with the fact that the actions or deeds of the harlot are mentioned in the past tense, would seem to establish the conclusion that in some way the Revelator's attention had already been drawn to this symbolic woman. This fact has been noted by commentators; one of them has observed: "It is apparent from the representation, that the woman had already been beheld by the Apostle sitting where there were seven mountains and many waters; that she was exhibited in that scene in a vision which is not recorded, and for the reason doubtless that her agency with the kings, who were exhibited in connection with her, was unsuitable for description."

We shall be confined in this chapter chiefly to a consideration of the harlot woman. Let us note first the significance of the words of verse 3: "And he [the angel] conducted me, in spirit, into a desert." The spirit that St. John is represented as being in, and the desert or wilderness into which he was conducted, are doubtless symbolical and have special reference to the state and viewpoint necessary for one in order to understand the vision. The significance of this expression has thus been noted:

"And this fact is recognized by the Revelator, who shows that all who would get a true view of Babylon must, in spirit, take their position with the true people of God 'in the wilderness' — in the condition of separation from the world and worldly ideas and mere forms of godliness, and in the condition of entire consecration and faithfulness to and dependence upon God alone. 'So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman ... Babylon' (Revelation 17:1-5)."

That St. John seeing the vision is symbolical of the Church seeing the fulfillment is thus suggested:

"The vision of this chapter 17 is one introductory to the judgments of Babylon, and explanatory to St. John (to St. John as the symbolic man) of its causes and reasonableness. Such is God's usual method, when about to execute any very notable act of vengeance. He shows his Church its justice beforehand; thereby at once vindicating His own honor, and giving warning to such of His people as may thus far have been deceived by the offending party, to separate from it, and so escape its imminent doom" (E. B. Elliott).

We may learn in a general way what the harlot woman represents by contrasting her with another symbolic woman that St. John saw (Revelation 12:1). A woman is a common symbol employed in the New Testament Scriptures to represent the Church of Christ. Especially is this true in the Revelation. The pure Church is represented by a pure, chaste woman, indeed, a virgin; the false Church by an impure, fallen woman.

We have first the true Church described as a woman clothed in a robe of sunlight, crowned with twelve stars, occupying a station above the moon; and again as clothed in fine linen, clean and white. This signifies that the pure Church is robed in the righteousness of her Lord, and is resplendent with heavenly Truth, having twelve special light bearers (stars), the twelve Apostles (Revelation 12:1, 19:8). This picture, while from God's standpoint and from the standpoint of a truly enlightened Christian describes the true Church throughout her long career, yet she has never been seen by the world or any one as being united in one congregation or in any one system since shortly after Pentecost,[1] the tares beginning to be seen amongst the wheat at that time. The "mystery of iniquity," was in evidence even in St. Paul's day, and finally resulted in a union with human governments.

In contrast with the true Church we have in the vision under consideration the harlot woman robed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold, precious stones, and pearls. This in general is a symbol of the glittering splendor of earth, of worldly grandeur — thus in another way picturing her apostasy (Revelation 17:4).

Again we have the pure Church described as a chaste and pure virgin espoused to Christ (Revelation 14:4, 2 Corinthians 11:2); on the other hand we see the fallen Church as a "Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth" (Revelation 17:5). In another vision we have the pure Church represented as being persecuted, pursued by the dragon into the symbolic wilderness and almost overwhelmed (Revelation 12:6,13-17); further on in this vision we see the harlot represented as drunken with the blood of the saints, and seated upon a beast that received its power from the same dragon (Revelation 17:3,6, 13:2).

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(1) The work of the harvest period is that of separating unto the Lord and not into another sect or organization.

The true and virtuous woman dwells alone in the symbolic wilderness, not in favor with the kings (Revelation 12:6); the harlot exercises a subtle authority over the kings and is in illicit union with them (Revelation 17:2,18). The pure woman is finally seen as the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, and is hailed as such by a great multitude (Revelation 19:6,7); the harlot is seen stripped of her robe of worldly splendor, and hated, insulted, and torn by the very kings who once upheld her (Revelation 17:16).

The Bride is last seen in the enjoyment of heavenly glory (Revelation 21:10-27); the harlot is lost sight of, as like a great millstone cast into the sea she sinks out of sight, and is found no more forever (Revelation 18:21).

The Woman Sitting on Seven Mountains

To those familiar with Church history there would seem to be no need of a Divine interpretation concerning what particular church is described by the Babylonian harlot. In view of the fact, however, that it is prophesied that all nations would be deceived into thinking that the church system represented was the true Church, the revealing angel gives the information concerning what church is referred to in the words: "The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." The angel's words clearly point to but one city, and that is Rome, for Rome was the only city that reigned over the kings of the earth in St. John's day, or since. It is the only church that has taken the name of a city. It is the only city that has had a church hierarchy that has exercised such a far-reaching dominion over nations and peoples and tongues. Furthermore, the Roman city is identified in the further explanation of the angel: "The seven heads are seven mountains [hills] on which the woman sitteth." Who is not aware that this is a well known feature of the city of Rome. "All the Latin poets for five hundred years speak of Rome as the seven-hilled city. Rome is depicted on her imperial coins as sitting on seven hills. Among the early Fathers, Tertullian and Jerome may be cited as referring to this feature. 'I appeal,' says Tertullian, 'to the citizens of Rome, the populace that dwells on the seven hills.' Jerome, when urging Marcella to quit Rome for Bethlehem, writes: 'Read what is said in the Apocalypse of the seven hills.' The names of the seven hills are the Palatine, Quirinal, Aventine, Coelian, Viminal, Esquiline and Janiculan."

We have frequently in previous chapters called attention to the fact that the early commentators (those who wrote before 1850), with one or two notable exceptions, did not see what is so apparent today, namely the fall of Protestantism; and therefore they would naturally apply these various symbols of anti-Christian apostasy to the various aspects of the Romish Church system, only. The Romish apostasy was from its beginning seen by a few of the Lord's saints, and in the Reformation the fact of its apostasy became to a very large extent known throughout Europe. There, doubtless, the first call out of Babylon was heard by God's saints; and now, finally comes the call out of both the great Babylonian mother system and the daughter systems (the image of the beast), as

well. Concerning the significance of the name "Mother of Harlots" the following comment by Mr. Russell is instructive:

"Names were formerly given as expressions of character or work; as, for instance, Mary was commanded to call her child's name Jesus, which means Deliverer or Savior, because he should save his people from their sins. The name Babylon, applied by the Spirit to the Church of Rome, expresses her character, for Babylon means mixture — confusion (see Leviticus 18:23). This union of the woman [Church] with the beast [empire] constitutes the spiritual harlotry of which she is guilty.

"But the same [Babylon] applies to her entire family; her daughters inherit both her nature and name, for she is a 'mother of harlots,' and her works they do. Some of her daughters have followed very closely in her footsteps, in mixing church and state. Such are 'The Church of England' and other state churches. And such would other daughters be, also, if they could find empires willing to support them.

"The same spirit of confusion — the Church walking in unlawful union with the world — is seen on every hand. The Church (nominal) and the world walk hand in hand, unite their interests, and make merry together. It is the worldly element and its wealth that is sought by every sect to support and sustain the Church in the degree of luxury she wishes to enjoy. Alas, the name Babylon is emblazoned on the brow of every sectarian system the world over! [Let every true saint consider these words.]"

Another very instructive and forceful description of this Babylon, "Mother of Harlots" symbol is thus expressed:

" 'The Babylonish Church has the outward body, or form of religion, but not the inward spirit of vital piety; consequently the Babylonish Church is spiritually dead.'

"All fallen sects, from which the inward spirit of vital religion has departed (or is departing), bear upon their foreheads the likeness or semblance of the 'Mother of Harlots,' and of all abominations. It is admitted that the Papal Church is the first in the transgression, consequently the designation, 'Mother of Harlots,' applies only to her. Hence, the symbolic description of the great harlot will apply to every apostate sect that bears her likeness or semblance. Let us note carefully the marks of apostasy in the Babylonish [Mother] Church. She is proud, haughty, high-minded, seeks worldly power and greatness; says in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. [Revelation 18:7.] She is artificially and gaudily attired, arrayed in gold and pearls. [Revelation 18:16.] She is rich, lives deliciously, and makes rich the merchants because of her costliness. [Revelation 18:15.] She despises and persecutes the true saints of God. [Revelation 17:6.] She seeks the friendship of the world, and is guilty of spiritual fornication. She fellowships the world, provides carnal entertainments for them, invites them to God's holy temple to engage in festivals, lotteries, fairs, and carnal devices, thus making of God's house a den of thieves. These are the marks of apostasy, and wherever they bear sway and predominate, be it in

'beast,' [or image or wherever found], and the spirit of mystic Babylon; and the command of God is, 'Come out of her, my people,' etc. (Revelation 18:4)."

The harlot woman is represented also as being seated on many waters (verse 1). This symbol is explained to St. John by the revealing angel in the words: "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (verse 15). We quote another:

"The Babylonian harlot is represented as enthroned upon many waters, which are nations and peoples. She is not only a church, but a church ruling nations; that is, she claims a temporal as well as a spiritual sway. She governs the beast and his ten horns; and so unites a civil and a religious supremacy. Now this is one of the most striking characteristics of the Church of Rome, and of that Church only. Other churches may be so united to the state that the state assumes the unlawful right to govern them; but no other church assumes the right to govern the state, yea, and all states, and to make all men her subjects. Rome did this, and does so still, even in her decrepitude and decay. She claims two swords, she holds two keys, she crowns her Pontiff with two crowns, the one a mitre of universal bishopric; the other, a tiara, of universal dominion. 'There is indeed a mystery on the forehead of the Church of Rome, in the union of these two supremacies; and it has often proved a mystery of iniquity. It has made the holiest mysteries subservient to the worst passions; it has excited rebellion on the plea of religion; it has interdicted the last spiritual consolations to the dying, and Christian interment to the dead, for the sake of revenge, or from the lust of power. It has forbidden to marry, and yet has licensed the unholiest marriages. It has professed friendship for kings, and has invoked blessings on regicides and usurpers. ... Pius IX, in the year 1848, addressed the people of Rome thus: "It is one of the many great blessings which God has lavished on Italy, that our three millions of subjects should have two hundred millions of brother subjects of every language and nation." So that to the present day, Rome, by her extravagant and guilty claims, does all in her power to identify herself with the harlot of the Apocalypse, who sits upon many waters, which are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues' (see Hyslop's *Two Babylons*)" (H. G. Guinness).

Identified by her Characteristic Attire

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls" (verse 4).

We have already seen what the clothing and ornamentation of this harlot woman in a general way were designed to represent. This description of her attire is in perfect keeping with that of a literal harlot. We believe that this representation is designed to teach how the mother system uses all the seductive arts and worldly attractions that wealth can purchase to allure and blind all but true worshipers to bow down at her altars. Some of the daughter systems have followed the example of the mother.

We identify the Romish Church as the "Mother of Harlots" of the Apocalypse by her characteristic attire. The characteristic dress of the popes, cardinals, arch-bishops, etc., is of purple, scarlet, and gold, adorned with precious stones and pearls. This is the manner in which they dress in their churches, in their conclaves and in their processions. The robes and mitres of Romish popes and bishops are covered with gold and silver, and adorned with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, chrysolites, jaspers, pearls, and all kinds of jewels and precious stones. The Papal diadem or crown surpasses all those of other monarchs. The Church of Rome, alone in these particulars meets all the requirements described of the Mother of Harlots of the Apocalypse.

The next descriptive symbol seen by St. John was a golden cup in the harlot's hand, full of abominations and impurities of her fornication (verse 4). A cup, when employed as a symbol in the Scriptures, has various meanings. In this Scripture it would seem to represent the boastful claim of the Roman Catholic Church system to be the only repository and dispenser of Divine Truth.[1] In her case, however, the contents of the cup alone proves the falsity of the claim. It seems also to denote the enticing means and specious pretenses by which this system allures people to idolatry. It is used in this sense by the Apostle Paul when contrasting idolatry and its rites with the memorial cup of our Lord: "Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons" (1 Corinthians 10:21). One has said that the harlot's name and cup represent her idolatry and artful agency in seducing the nations to apostasy. Mr. Elliott sees the "woman" here depicted before St. John "as a double character, viz., as a harlot to the ten kings, and a vintner or tavern-hostess vending wines to the common people (just according to the custom of earlier times, in which the harlot and the hostess of a tavern were characters frequently united), so, the Church of Rome answered to the symbol in either point of view; interchanging mutual favors, such as might suit their respective circumstances and characters, with the kings of Antichristendom; and to the common people dealing out for sale the wine of the poison of her fornication, her indulgences, relics, transubstantiation-cup, as if the cup of salvation, therewith drugging, and making them [figuratively] besotted and drunk."

Another expositor has said: "What is that chalice [cup] which the woman lifts aloft? 'Having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.' Idolatry and spiritual apostasy are clearly symbolized here" (A. J. Gordon).

Comparing Jeremiah 51:7, where this same symbol is employed, with this Revelation symbol, this writer proceeds:

"Euphratean Babylon was the prolific mother of idolatry — that idolatry which Scripture clearly shows to be the liturgy of demons — and with this she seduced God's ancient people into spiritual fornication. And now the Church, having become paganized by absorbing into herself the literal elements of this

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(1) The Scriptures never recognize but one — that mentioned in Ephesians 1:22,23.

ancient heathenism, is photographed as mystical Babylon, in her turn enticing to idolatry and spiritual unchastity.

"It is no exaggeration to say that the Eucharistic cup which Rome now puts to the lips of her communicants [priests] with its mixture of miracle and magic, resembles more nearly the chalice of the ancient Chaldean 'Mysteries,' than it does the chaste and simple memorial cup which Christ left in the hands of his [prospective] Bride, the Church; and, in view of the transformation which has taken place, what startling significance is there for Romanizers in the Apostle's saying: 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of demons'! (1 Corinthians 10:21) — startling, if it indeed be true, that the Bride of Christ, who in the beginning is described as having 'turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and wait for His Son from heaven,' is become such that she is now turning men from God to serve idols, seducing them to make an image of the sacrament, before which they fall down in worship."

On Her Forehead a Name Written

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (verse 5).

"In symbolic prophecy, the term Babylon is applied at times only to the Church of Rome, called 'Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots.' The name could apply only to her for centuries, so long as she was the only mixed system and would tolerate no others; but other ecclesiastical systems, not so great as the 'Mother,' nor yet so wicked, nor so radically wrong, sprang up out of her, through various attempted though imperfect reforms. Errors, tares, and worldliness in these also largely predominating, the name Babylon is used as a general or family name for all the nominal Christian systems, and now includes not only the Church of Rome, but all Protestant *sects* as well; for, since Papacy is designated the Mother system, we must regard the various Protestant systems which descended from her as the daughters — a fact very generally admitted by Protestants [so-called], and sometimes with pride" (C. T. Russell).

It will thus be seen that while the "mother" system, because of her greatness, unity, and idolatrous rites and ceremonies, is very clearly distinguished from all others, it is not so easy a matter to see all of those who make up the daughters. These can be discovered only by their spirit — in some respects like the "mother's" — manifested sometimes in claims to be "the channel," God's chosen "arrangement." There are other ways of distinguishing the daughters, but it would seem that this is a most prominent one.

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(1) "If any shall say that this holy sacrament should not be adored, nor carried about in processions, nor held up publicly to the people to adore it, or that its worshipers are idolaters, let him be accursed" (Council of Trent)."

"The Revelator intimated that it would not be difficult to discover this great mystical city [the mother system — See Revelation 17:18], because her name is in her forehead; that is, she is prominently marked, so that we cannot fail to see her unless we shut our eyes and refuse to look."

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration" (verse 6).

In these words we have the most marvelous characteristic of the Romish Church described: "Drunken with the blood of the saints," etc. "And when I saw her, I wondered with great wonder," writes St. John. "And now [says one] that history has filled in every detail of the crimson outline of prophecy, *we* wonder with even profounder amazement that such a demoniacal tragedy could ever have been enacted in the name of Christianity. But we remember that the woman who did these things was 'drunken.' And there is no intoxication so profound as that induced by Pagan superstition tinctured with Christian blood. Even Martin Luther, while yet in the delirium tremens of Popery, raged with this blood thirst. 'So intoxicated was I, and drenched in Papal dogmas,' are his words, 'that I would have been almost ready to murder, or assist others in murdering, any person who should have uttered a syllable against the duty of obedience to the Pope.' Nay, even those who have been sobered by generations of Protestant abstinence from persecution, if they once return to the cups of the harlot, speedily exhibit symptoms of the old appetite, as witnessed, for example, in the oft- quoted saying of Dr. Manning, now Cardinal [in 1880], when urging Romish aggression in England: 'It is yours, right reverend fathers, to subjugate and subdue, to bend and to break the will of an imperial race' " (A. J. Gordon).

Another has thus commented on these words: "In horror and wonder we ask ourselves, Why did kings, and princes, and emperors, and the people at large, permit such atrocities? Why did they not arise long ago and smite down Antichrist? The answer is found in the Scripture (Revelation 18:3): The nations were drunk (stupefied), they lost their senses in drinking the mixed wine (doctrine, false and true mixed) given them by the apostate Church. They were deceived by the claims of Papacy."

Mr. Gordon continues: "It has been estimated that the Papacy has directly or indirectly slain fifty millions of martyrs on account of their faith ... whose only crime was that they would not own allegiance to Antichrist. Let charity discount the number by one half if it were possible, and let her suggest every conceivable palliation for the murder of the rest, and we still have the most ghastly chapter which the volume of history contains. Would that we might mingle our weeping with floods of repentant tears from the eyes of this cruel mother, if, forsooth, we could thereby mitigate the wrath treasured up against the day of wrath which her crimes have earned. But, alas! we find *'Te Deums'* sung over Huguenot slaughters, but not one Papal *Miserere* can we discover. Commemorative medals are still extant signalizing the massacre of St. Bartholomew, but not one *monumentum lacrimarum* over the event is to be found in all the archives of

the seven-hilled city." Bellarmine, her great cardinal, said that "heretics ought to be visited by the secular powers with temporal punishments, and even with death itself." In speaking of the saints of God who protested against the iniquities of Rome he stated: "If you shut them in prison or send them into exile, they corrupt those near them with their words, and those at a distance with their books; therefore, the only remedy is to send them betimes into their own place."

Another writer has said: "Under these maxims Rome has always acted. What a long roll of bloody persecutions is her record! The extirpation of the Albigenses, the massacre of the Waldenses, the martyrdom of the Lollards, the slaughter of the Bohemians, the burning of Huss, Jerome, Savonarola, Frith, Tyndale, Ridley, Hooper, Cranmer, Latimer, and thousands of others as godly and faithful as they, have been her acts. The demoniacal cruelties of the Inquisition were invented by her mind and inflicted by her hand — that inquisition which was for centuries the mighty instrument of her warfare against devoted men and women whose crime was only this, that they 'kept the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.' The ferocious cruelty of the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands; the bloody martyrdoms of Queen Mary's reign; the extinction by fire and sword of the Reformation in Spain and Italy, in Portugal, and Poland; the massacre of St. Bartholomew; the long and cruel persecutions of the Huguenots and all the infamies and barbarities of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which flung its refugees on every shore of Europe, were perpetrated by Papal Rome. Her victims have been innumerable. In Spain alone Llorente reckons as sufferers of the Inquisition, 31,912 burnt alive, and 291,450 so-called penitents forced into submission 'by water, weights, fire, pulleys, and screws and all the apparatus by which the sinews could be strained without cracking, and the bones bruised without breaking, and the body racked without giving up the ghost.' A million perished in the massacre of the Albigenses. In the thirty years which followed the first institution of the Jesuits, nine hundred thousand faithful Christians were slain. Thirty-six thousand were dispatched by the common executioner in the Netherlands, by the direction of the Duke of Alva, who boasted of the deed. Fifty thousand Flemings and Germans were hanged, burnt, or buried alive under Charles V. And when we have added to this the blood shed of the Thirty Years' War in Germany, and the long agony of other and repeated massacres of Protestants in England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands, we have to remember that for all this, 'no word of censure ever issued from the Vatican, except in the brief interval when statesmen and soldiers grew weary of bloodshed and looked for means to admit the heretics to grace.' "

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

Chapter Forty

The Vision of the Scarlet Colored Beast

(Revelation 17:7-18)

"And the angel said to me ... The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition" (Revelation 17:7,8).

These words of explanation by the revealing angel very evidently describe in a general way three states as well as three periods in the scarlet colored beast's career, the last of which will witness its destruction. The first mention in the Apocalypse of this ten-horned, seven-headed "beast" is in chapter 13, where we have its origin or rise in its ten-horned state described. (Its rise as a universal empire is described in Daniel 2 and 7.) In chapter 13 it is represented as ascending up out of the sea. The dragon that is seen standing on the shore of the sea, is represented as giving to the beast its power, throne, and great authority. This, we have interpreted to represent the Emperor Justinian's giving to the Papacy by a decree, power over the saints of God. The eastern part of the Roman Empire afterward called the Eastern or Greek Empire, with its capital at Constantinople, is named the dragon.

"The beast that was," according to this interpretation, would represent the Western part of the Roman power during the long period of ecclesiastical and temporal authority exercised by the Pope, *beginning* to end in 1799, and fully ending in 1870, when it lost all vestige of temporal sovereignty. The "is not" state, would represent its condition since 1870 — its present condition. Events of the near future will alone prove what the third state of the beast will be. It would seem that this last form may be the peoples and nations, or body of the beast, without an organized government — the anarchistic phase in connection with which the Papal Church and all ecclesiastical and civil governments will go down to make way for the Kingdom of God, the fifth universal empire, which will be under the control of the Son of Man (Daniel 7:14,27).

We next have a most remarkable and significant statement by the angel, to the effect that the dwellers of earth, except those whose names are recorded in the book of life, will be moved with wonder and amazement when seeing the beast, "that was, and is not, and shall be present." These words of the angel seem to emphasize a fact regarding the beast — that it existed once under its Papal head, then ceased in that phase for a time, and afterward confronted the inhabitants of the earth again. The question is, In what form will it confront the

world again? Understanding that the Prophet Daniel saw the beast, the Western Roman Empire, until it was slain and its body was given to the burning flame, would cause us to suppose that this stage when it will confront the world again represents the period of anarchy when the governments existing up to that time will be destroyed. Furthermore, in Daniel we are informed that this destruction occurs *after* the judgment on the "little horn" (Papacy) had resulted in taking away its dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end.

"I beheld, *then*," said Daniel, "because of the great words which the horn spake [it was in 1870 that Papacy's most blasphemous "words" were made — the claim of infallibility]: I beheld even until the beast was slain, and its body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Daniel 7:11). We shall see as we consider the further explanation of the angel in the Revelation visions that the consuming process, preceding the destruction of the "little horn," Papacy, is accomplished by the beast that carried her, which means the nations that supported her. The destruction of the beast in its last form is described in Daniel 7 and Revelation 19.

It will be only fair to note that the older expositors interpret these words of the angel different from the above. "The beast that was" is explained by them to refer to the Western Roman Empire before it fell in 476. The "is not" state they interpret to refer to the brief period between 476 AD and the rise of Papacy, a period of a little over half a century. "The beast that is," its last form according to these writers, represents Papacy as it has existed since its rise in the Sixth Century.

The revealing angel next proceeds to explain what is represented by the seven heads, in the words, "Here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains [hills] on which the woman sitteth." The angel, as we have already noted, explained these words as referring to the seven-hilled city of Rome. He further states: "And the kings are seven; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come, and when he may come he must remain a little while." This is quite generally understood to represent the seven successive forms of government that have ruled from the city of Rome. The angel's explanation most naturally suggests the question, Does the expression, "five are fallen," mean that such was a fact at the time St. John saw the vision? or, does it refer to a future time from St. John's day, namely a time when the woman was drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and when the judgment upon the woman was about to begin to be experienced — the judgment referred to in the angelic utterance to St. John: "Come, and I will show thee the judgment upon the great harlot"? It would seem that the latter view is the correct one for the following reason:

The fourth beast or Roman Empire (a later phase or aspect of which the scarlet colored beast of the vision under consideration describes) did not come into prophecy until the first three beasts, the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Grecian, had passed away (see Daniel 2:40, 7:23). The third or Grecian beast had four heads, which represented that this empire was divided into four parts. The last one of these, as we have previously seen, was Egypt, and did not come under

the fourth beast or Roman dominion until about 31 BC. The seven heads on the fourth beast represent seven forms of government that would rule successively from the city of Rome, but history finds only one as having ceased or passed away in St. John's day. This was the republican form which ended in 27 BC. The form ruling in St. John's day was the *second* or military imperial.

We are aware of the fact that most of the expositors who wrote before the middle of the Nineteenth Century begin to count these heads from the time that the city of Rome began its existence, in the Eighth Century before Christ. Following Livy, a heathen historian, they count five forms of government as having passed away at the time of St. John's vision. However, other historians conflict with this enumeration. All are agreed that the first form, the kingly, existed until 509 BC, and that it was succeeded by the republic, which lasted until 27 BC. We quote: "The history of Rome as a republic covers a period of 482 years — from the termination of kingly rule, 509 BC, to the termination of republican rule by the establishment of the empire under Augustus, 27 BC" (Swinton, *Outlines of the World's History*). We are aware of the fact that there were different forms of the republican rule. The form of government, however, was always a republic administered by the people's chosen representative.

Carried Down the Stream of Time

It is our understanding, then, that St. John was transported *in spirit* from the Isle of Patmos, and from the year 96 AD, down the stream of time to 1799, when the harlot woman is represented as being "drunken with the blood of the saints" — the time when Papacy's judgments had begun, by the humiliation and dethronement of the Pope by Napoleon. At this time five of the heads had fallen, and the sixth head, the Roman republic was ruling. St. John is thus represented as seeing the judgment on the Babylonian harlot beginning. At this time (1799) the much larger part of the vision of the beast with its ten horns had met its fulfillment and was in the past. When the angel explains the vision as a whole, as given in this chapter, nearly all of it was future from 96 AD.

If our understanding of the angel's explanation of these seven heads is correct, then the Victor Immanuel Dynasty, ruling since 1870, is the seventh head, and the next or eighth form of the beast will be the beast without a head, which would be anarchy. It was in 1799 AD, that the beast under its Papal head, ceased to have power over God's true saints. It was at this time that the "time, times and a half" of Daniel 7:25 and the "forty-two months" of Revelation 13:5 ended. It was at this time that the judgments on the Papal system began in earnest. These judgments began to be executed by Napoleon, and then followed a checkered history during which several revolutions resulted at different times in temporarily removing the Pope, when finally they reached their climax in so far as temporal dominion is concerned through the agency of Victor Immanuel in 1870.

"This last government [seventh head, Victor Immanuel Dynasty] has now continued as head of Rome since September, 1870; and today more than 150,000,000 Catholics [220,000,000 at the present time — 1924] are biding their

time, waiting and longing for the auspicious moment when a blow can be struck for its overthrow; vainly hoping for a restoration to Rome of Papal sovereignty; while the prophetic symbol demands, not the restoration of Papacy, or any other government, but the rising of the beast itself without a head; in other words the peoples and nations, or body of the beast without an organized government, as the next verse will show: 'And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition' (verse 11)."

This *eighth is not a head*, since the beast had but seven. *This eighth is the beast as it is to be after its seventh or last head has fallen*. This last or eighth state will be anarchy. The expression, "and is of the seven," signifies that the nations ('waters' verse 15) on which the woman sat, have been of the seven; and are already taking on a separate existence as the inter-nations, or peoples of all nations.

Summary of the Seven Heads

"The reader cannot fail of seeing our present locality in the world's history; and that we are on the verge of great events. And if he will revert to near the end of the last century, may judge somewhat of the character of the events which are to follow the fall of this last head of Rome. ... 'And they that dwell upon the earth shall wonder [whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world], when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is [this last its final, eighth form]' (Revelation 17:8).

"The state of chaos and reign of terror in that demoniac equality and atheistic liberty which deluged France in blood, under the Commune; when such monsters as Dupont, Robespierre, and their class could wield the guillotine and ride the storm, is only a faint picture of the fully developed Commune, or headless monster. ... And the character of coming events can be gathered by what then occurred in France, with this difference: the Commune came to the surface in only one of the ten divisions of the empire at that time and was soon driven back; while now it is to become a universal scourge. And not only are all the kingdoms of the world that are on the face of the earth to be thrown down, but there is to be want of employment so that there shall be 'no hire for man, nor hire for beast' (Zechariah 8:10); the natural outcome of this growing want of confidence between man and man."

The historical enumeration of these heads beginning 31 BC, when the last head of the Grecian beast, Egypt, was overthrown by the Romans, would be as follows:

(1) The Roman Republic ruling from 31 until 27 BC;

(2) The Military Imperial government ruling until Diocletian 303 AD;

(3) The Despotic Imperial ruling until 476 AD[1];

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(1) The change of the Roman Empire from Military Imperial introduced by Augustus, is thus noted by Gibbon: "Like Augustus, Diocletian may be considered as founding a new empire."

(4) The Odoacean Dynasty until about 539 AD;

(5) The Papacy, until it received a death wound in 1799 AD;

(6) The Republic under Berthier for about two years, after which, Papacy was reinstated;

(7) The Victor Immanuel Dynasty since 1870.

The eighth form (not head) of the beast would be the future anarchistic state of the peoples (who have always constituted the body of the beast) — the peoples in a condition of anarchy. It will thus be seen that the beast in one form or another continues to exist until destroyed. The words of Daniel are very significant in this connection: "I saw until the beast was slain and its *body* destroyed and given to the burning flame." At each of these periods a change of form takes place. The present form is the Victor Immanuel Dynasty. Every "head" up to its last or eighth form rules from the city of Rome.

The older expositors speak of the eighth form of the beast as an eighth head, representing Papacy as both a political and ecclesiastical ruler, and that as such it would continue until its complete destruction. However, as we view the present state of Papacy, it seems quite evident that while it still exists as an ecclesiastical power, exercising a very great influence as such over a large portion of the human family, it has lost altogether its temporal authority, and therefore *has ceased to exist as a civil government* — a "head" of the symbolic beast. Papacy, as a "head" of the beast, received a deadly wound beginning in the great Reformation Movement and culminating in the terrible blow at the hands of Napoleon, who took possession of the city of Rome, carried the Pope a prisoner to France, and set up a Roman republic in the city where the Pope had reigned supreme for a thousand years. It seemed for a season (two years) as though this wound was a fatal one; however, the deadly wound was healed, and Papacy recovered its temporal authority, being reinstated by Napoleon. This state of things continued with varying fortunes to Papacy until 1870, at which time Victor Immanuel took possession of the City, making it his capital. The Pope at this time took refuge in the Vatican palace — every vestige of temporal authority gone. Thus Papacy ceased to be a "head" of the Roman "beast" — the Victor Immanuel Dynasty becoming a "head" in its place.

The Seventh Head

Therefore, in the light of history unveiling prophecy, it would seem that so far as the successive order of these "seven heads" is concerned, the older expositors erred. Mr. Russell evidently saw this, for in 1896 he understood that the Victor Immanuel Dynasty was the seventh head of the beast. We quote his words, which when carefully considered reveal a very important point, namely in what manner he understood Papacy, as a religious power, would be finally destroyed:

"To our understanding the present Italian government is the seventh head of the 'beast' (Revelation 17:9-11), which has continued a 'short space,' represented in the present monarch and his father Victor Immanuel. According to this prophecy Rome will never have another head — the eighth condition will be the

beast without a head — either a republic or anarchy. If a republic, we shall shortly expect anarchy, 'perdition.' All the signs of our time corroborate prophecy, and bid us lift up our heads and rejoice that our redemption draweth nigh."

Regarding the interpretation of the ten horns, we refer the reader to the explanation given of the same in connection with the unfolding of chapter 13. It will be sufficient to note here those details not considered there, which are mentioned in this chapter by the revealing angel in his explanation to St. John. The words of the angel are: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings (kingdoms), who have not [yet] received a kingdom; but they receive authority, as kings, one hour with the beast. These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast" (verses 12,13).

This statement of the angel has been thought by some expositors (because of its being considered apart from its connection we think), to apply to the future. The thought on the part of these expositors, with some minor variations, is that these words refer to Papacy as a temporal sovereignty restored and becoming supported by the ten kings (kingdoms) who, because of this support, will again be anointed by Papacy as divinely appointed kings (so-called); that this will continue for a brief time, after which the kingdoms will again turn against Papacy and make her "desolate and naked," and at last "burn her with fire." We desire to notice that if this is yet to meet a fulfillment, it will be a second fulfillment, for the reason that all these descriptive symbols have certainly been fulfilled, and are now matters of history. For this reason it is our conviction that this interpretation which places the fulfillment future is not the correct one, as we shall endeavor to further prove. In doing this let us consider first the words of the revealing angel: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet."

"If you allow, as the text demands, that the seeing [by St. John] is down the stream of time to where the judgment is [beginning to be] executed on the Papacy [1798 AD], while the explanation [by the angel] is back at the date of the prophecy [96 AD], all is harmony."

In this Scripture we are considering it should be understood that the angel is giving a rapid survey from 96 AD even to the end. In his explanation of this part of the vision he states what actually occurred in history a few centuries from St. John's day. This was, first, that the Roman Empire did at that time become divided into ten kingdoms; and, second, that these same kingdoms did subsequently receive power as kings with the beast through its Papal head. It was not long after Papacy's exaltation and establishment, 539 AD, as all historians are agreed, that these ten kingdoms did become of one mind by becoming Roman Catholic, and by so doing gave their power and strength to the beast (Papacy) for centuries. But some see a difficulty here and say, It reads that they received authority as kings "one hour" with the beast, and how could one hour apply to so long a period in history? In reply we would say first that it is a fact of history which cannot be successfully disputed that the ten kingdoms did receive power from Papacy, they having previously become Roman Catholic, and that this perfectly fulfills the prophecy. It is also equally true that nearly all the other

features of the vision have met their fulfillment. Furthermore, it is generally admitted that the "hour" mentioned cannot refer to symbolical time, that is, to fifteen days or to a literal hour. it will be seen then that in either method of interpreting the vision it will be necessary to examine carefully the words translated "one hour," and thus discover, if possible, its meaning.

Mr. Elliott, who was an eminent Greek scholar, as well as commentator, rendered these words: "The ten horns are ten kings which receive power at *one and the same time* with the beast." He says that this is the true, as it is the most natural, rendering. He further states that it is in this sense that the patristic expositors generally understood it; and as regards modern expositors, he says, it has so been explained by persons of the most differing schools of interpretation; so of the Roman Catholic expositor Bossuet; as well as Protestants, Mede, Daubuz, Vitringa, Whiston, etc.; so among living expositors, the Futurist Burgh, as well as anti-Futurist Wordsworth, and spiritualist, I. Williams. Mr. Elliott further enlarges: "There is no doubt that accusatives of time *may* signify duration; but seldom, I believe, except after verbs signifying action such as may imply time [here it evidently does not]: e.g., Matthew 20:12, 'They worked one hour'; Matthew 26:40, 'to watch one hour.' Not often after verbs ... of action instantly completed. In most cases of the latter character the accusative of time, marks the time *at* which, not the time *for* which. So John 4:52, 'Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.'

"That the numeral ... even by itself, often bears the sense of *the same* is indubitable. As the point is one of considerable importance let me give a few examples from both the Old and the New Testament (O.T. Septuagint) 'We dreamed both of us *in one and the same night*, he and I' (Genesis 41:11); 'We are all the sons of *one and the same* man' (Genesis 42:11); In the New Testament Philippians 2:2, 'of *one* mind,' or more literally, 'thinking the one and same thing'; Ephesians 4:4,5, where the sense is evidently, not that the Christians had each but one Lord, numerically, instead of the many lords of the heathen; or but *one baptism*, numerically, in contrast with the various baptisms of the Jews; but that they were united by the bond of *one and the same* Lord, *one and the same* baptism and *one and the same* hope. And so, indeed, as the very next verse to the passage under consideration, Revelation 17:13, 'These have *one* mind'; i.e., *one and the same*."

In concluding this which seems to us to be the true significance of Revelation 17:12,13, we will say that our deductions are in perfect harmony with the requirement of the vision — that the beast under its Papal head and the ten horns (kingdoms) reigned contemporaneously.

Making War with the Lamb

The next feature of the vision is contained in the words: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14).

There is doubtless in these words a general statement of the fact that during the entire period of Papacy's reign a conflict has been going on between Christ and Papacy and its supporters; and that during this period, there have been called out ones, who were chosen and faithful, associated with Christ. This conflict, at one stage, seemingly resulted in these called out ones, saints, being overcome (Revelation 11:7-10, 13:7). These words of the angel, however, teach that the victory will at last be with the Lamb and his followers. There seems to be a reference here to that which is more fully portrayed in Revelation 19:11-21.

Mr. Barnes' comment on this verse is worthy of our consideration, and reads:

"These shall make war with the Lamb. The Lamb of God — the Lord Jesus; that is, they [the ten kingdoms] would combine with the Papacy in opposing evangelical religion. It is not meant that they would openly and avowedly proclaim war against the Son of God, but that they would practically do this in sustaining a persecuting power. It is unnecessary to show how true this has been in history; how entirely they sustained the Papacy in all its measures of persecution. 'And the Lamb shall overcome them' — shall ultimately gain the victory over them. The meaning is that they would not be able to extinguish the true religion. In spite of all opposition and persecution, that would still live in the world, until it would be said that a complete triumph was gained."

In the words "And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these will hate the harlot, and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and burn her with fire" (Revelation 17:16, Diaglott), we have described the first stage of the judgment on the Babylonian harlot. The beast here must, of course, be the same which is represented as carrying the harlot. It cannot be an individual Antichrist, as Futurists would have us believe. To believe this, we would have "the grotesque figure of the woman riding upon a man, a symbolical monstrosity of which revelation could not be guilty. Besides, there is no precedent in Scripture for making a beast signify an individual man. If Daniel gives the key to Revelation, as is generally admitted, a beast means a dynasty, or civil government. It is the *body* of the beast, the Papal Empire, with its ten kingdoms, including rulers, people, territory, and dominion, that is here evidently meant. These that have long supported the harlot church, now turn and rend her. It is useless to say that by identifying the Papacy with the beast this verse would compel the conclusion that the Roman Pope finally destroys the Roman Church. There is a *head* and a *body* of the true Church; the Head is called *The Christ* and the Body is called *The Christ* (1 Corinthians 12:12); but it does not follow, therefore, that when it is said that 'Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it,' we must conclude that he loved himself and gave himself for himself; for though Christ and the Church are mystically one, their actions and offices are separable. So the Papacy, as *head* of the Roman Empire in its ten-kingdomed condition, is called the beast (Revelation 13:4,5,6); and the empire itself as the body, is called the beast (Revelation 17:3). But though symbolically one, their actions and career are distinguishable. It is clearly the *body* of the beast that is figured as carrying and supporting the harlot — the Roman Empire under the sway of the Roman Church, the empire supporting the Church, and the Church ruling

the empire. But when the consuming judgments begin, this is changed. Just what was predicted we have lived to see — the kingdoms once subject to the Papacy snapping their concordats and alliances, till the woman's bit and bridle are utterly broken; those kingdoms turning upon her, and stripping her of her endowments, rejecting her authority, and tearing away her territory. So we have beheld it wonderfully come to pass in these latter days. Events often constitute an indisputable exegesis. So long ago as 1607 AD, Brightman, the commentator, 'searching what and what manner of time' the Spirit signified by this prophecy, concluded that about 1800 AD, the dismantlement of the Roman Church would begin. In August, 1797, the French ambassador in Rome wrote to Napoleon: 'Discontent is at its height in the Papal states; the government will fall to pieces of itself. We are making it *consume by a slow fire*. It will soon crumble into dust.' The next year the Papal government was overthrown, and an infidel democracy reared on its ruins. 'The churches and convents,' says Allison, 'the palaces of the cardinals and nobility, were laid waste. The spoilation exceeded all that the Goths and Vandals had effected' " (A. J. Gordon).

The wealth of the Romish Church system in the zenith of its power was immeasurable. It not only possessed the wealth of the cities and provinces of the ten Italian States, but through its monks and nuns held possession of a large share of the landed territory in all the European kingdoms. The dominion of the Popes was supreme in all the Italian States, and they also exercised a subtle and despotic influence over all the kings of Europe. Their spiritual influence once extended over a large part of the civilized world — to the king on the throne, as well as to the peasant that tilled the soil. In fact, it was once even considered necessary, in order to secure salvation, to be subject to the Roman Pontiff. How remarkable has been the change from that condition. The territorial possessions of the Pope have been lost to him, and the immense landed property belonging to the different orders of monks and nuns in European countries, have been largely confiscated by the state. The political power of the Popes, once a dread reality in Europe, has departed. The spiritual influence, although great at the present time, is small compared with past generations.

The words of the angel, "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled," signifies that all this is according to the Divine permission, and is overruled by Him in the accomplishment of His great purpose of selecting and schooling the joint-heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom. "Kings and princes are under the control of God, and whatever may be their own designs, they are in fact employed to accomplish His purposes, and are but instruments in His hands." It is further shown that this is for a limited time — "until" — and that time has, as we have seen, run its course, and the kings have continued to be still His instruments in gradually destroying her influence in the world; and when the due time comes, which seems near at hand, other agencies will arise and be His instruments in accomplishing her destruction. This may be, it would seem so far as the hierarchy at Rome is concerned, by a rising of the Italian people in a state of revolutionary anarchy; and so far as her priesthood and supporters over the

world, and the daughter systems themselves are concerned, their destruction will be accomplished by a general world-wide uprising.

"And the woman, which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Revelation 17:18).

"Rome would of course be understood by this language in the time of St. John, and all the circumstances, as we have seen, combine to show that Rome, in some form of its dominion, is intended."

Undoubtedly, the Papal hierarchy, whose seat of power is located in the seven-hilled city, is represented by this great city. Its destruction is described in the symbols of chapter 18. The fires of liberty so long pent up are now breaking forth, and the storm clouds of indignation are already seen on the horizon. Soon this great power of evil will be destroyed forever.

Millennial Hymn

O Church of Christ! behold at last
The promised sign appear —
The Gospel preached in all the world
And lo! the King draws near.

With girded loins, make haste, make haste
Thy witness to complete;
That Christ may take His throne and bring
All nations to His feet.

And Thou, O Israel, long in dust,
Arise! and come away;
See how the Sun of Righteousness
Sheds forth the beams of day.

Thy scattered sons are gathering home,
The fig tree buds again;
A little while and David's Son
On David's throne shall reign.

Then sing aloud, O Pilgrim Church,
Brief conflict yet remains;
And then Immanuel descends
To bind thy foe in chains.

Chapter Forty-One

The Decline and Final Overthrow of Babylon

(Revelation 18:1-24)

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (Revelation 18:1-3).

This chapter portrays the rejection and destruction of the great Mother of Harlots, the system generally known as the Papal hierarchy. The destruction of the beast and the false prophet, both of which are comprehended in the Babylon symbol in its largest sense, is described in chapter 19, and occurs as we shall see after the Church is glorified.

The statement, "after these things," we understand to mean after St. John saw the vision recorded in chapter 17, and after he had the explanation by the symbolic angel. The vision of this chapter, portraying the judgment upon Babylon, is introduced to St. John by "another" angel, whom he saw come down from heaven, having great authority. The effect of the advent of this angel was to illuminate the earth with a halo of light, which evidently proceeded from his person. All of this of course is symbolical.

The angel's descent from heaven, together with his proclamation of the fall of Babylon the Great, etc., is seemingly, like other uses of this symbolism in the Revelation, the representation of a great movement or religious awakening among men. The effulgence proceeding from his person, illuminating the earth, seems to describe the light of Truth being proclaimed in organized society, and having the effect of exposing the apostate character of the "Mother of Harlots." This is implied in the loud cry of the angel, "Fallen! Fallen! is Babylon the Great! and is become a habitation of demons, and a haunt of every unclean and hated bird." These words teach, not her destruction, but her fall in the sense of her utter rejection as a system. The symbolism is evidently taken from the description of ancient Babylon, after its fall (Isaiah 13:21,22, 14:23). As ancient Babylon after her overthrow became the abode of wild beasts, and her aban-

doned houses were filled with doleful creatures, as owls, satyrs, etc., so this symbolical Babylon after her fall becomes the habitation of those things that these in general symbolize or represent.

"How true it is, that the most execrable of society seek and wear the garb of Christian profession and ceremonialism, in some of the various quarters (sects) of Babylon. Every impure principle and doctrine, somehow and somewhere, finds representation in her. And she is a 'cage' which holds securely not only the Lord's meek and gentle doves, but also many unclean and hateful birds. Of all the defaulters, and deceivers of men and of women, how many are professedly members of Christ's Church! And how many even use their profession as a cloak under which to forward evil schemes! It is well known that a majority of even the most brutal criminals executed die in the Roman Catholic communion. Babylon has contained both the best and the worst, both the cream and the dregs, of the population of the civilized world. The cream is the small class of truly consecrated ones, sadly mixed up with the great mass of mere professors and the filthy, criminal dregs" (C. T. Russell).

After St. John heard the proclamation announcing the fall of this great harlot mother system, Babylon, the symbolic angel announces another reason of her fall, her rejection. This is stated to be "because of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, all the nations have fallen." The same thought contained in these words is rendered in chapter 17:2, "and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." This seems clearly to teach that her rejection was, and her final destruction is to be in consequence of her propagation of an idolatrous perversion, indeed a counterfeit of true Christian doctrine, causing the nations and peoples of the earth in general to lose all taste for and appreciation of true Christianity.

It would seem that there is also a more specific meaning attached to this utterance, for we know that it is not true that all the inhabitants of the so-called Christian world have accepted all of Rome's doctrines. It is quite true, however, that there has been a very general acceptance of a certain egregious error upon which all of Rome's false doctrines are founded — that of inherent immortality — that death is not death, but a change to another state of existence. The error, like the leaven of the parable which the woman hid in three measures of meal, has been very generally accepted as truth, and because of this, humanity in general, both in the Church and out of the Church, are not able to reason correctly on the various doctrines of Christ, namely the state or condition of the dead, the resurrection, the future life, the judgment day, heaven, hell, the person of Christ, his ransom sacrifice, his present intercession for believers, and his future mediation for all mankind. The origin of this error is contained in the lie of Satan addressed to Eve, "Thou shalt not surely die." The elimination of this falsehood of Satan would have the effect of destroying the systems of Roman Catholicism, Spiritism, Theosophy, Buddhism, Hinduism, and nearly every sect of Protestantism; and not only so, but every religion of Heathendom.

The symbolic angel further states that the merchants of the earth had become enriched by trafficking in her delicacies (Revelation 18:3). The merchants referred to, symbolize the nobles and dignitaries of the Church, who hold the patronage of her benefices. They, and others also, have grown rich by trafficking in these things. All that art and music can furnish to make her worship attractive has been introduced into her idolatrous ritual. Those who furnish these things have in the past been enriched, or at least have gained a livelihood thereby.

That Ye Receive Not of Her Plagues

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Revelation 18:4,5).

It is most evident that this call out of Babylon, like the announcement of its fall, comes from heaven. In other words, it is the Lord Himself who calls. The "voice," as in other instances where the symbol is employed, represents the human agencies used. As the visions of the Revelation describe two great fallen, rejected systems, the Papal and the Protestant, from which His people are to separate themselves, the call includes a command to come out of both. It is seen quite clearly by many of the Lord's saints at the present time that both the mother and the daughter systems have fallen from God's favor, and have been rejected by Him. It was seen just as clearly by many of the Lord's saints in the Reformation and subsequently, as history shows, that the great mother system was even then a fallen, rejected one.

It would seem apparent, therefore, that the fulfillment of this vision under consideration, as applied to the great Romish system, the more wicked of the two, began in the great Reformation Movement four centuries ago. The illumination of the earth by the first angel and the voice from heaven seem to denote that at that time, sufficient light, truth, was given to expose the false doctrines and corrupting influence of the great "Mother of Harlots," and to cause a cry for the Lord's people to separate themselves from it. This would denote that at the time when the exposure of Papal corruption would begin, some of God's true saints would be more or less entangled in this corrupt system. In fact, this was true all through the history of the Romish Church, up to the period of the Reformation; some of the most devoted and godly of men were connected with this great apostate Church. History furnishes us the names of many prominent saints of God who up to this time had thought it their duty to remain in her fold, hoping by so doing to accomplish her reformation.

A statement by Mr. Russell bearing upon this point seems indeed confirmatory of the above as to the time when this vision of Babylon's fallen condition was to begin to have its fulfillment, particularly as it relates to the Romish system:

"The Reformation was, in a sense, the beginning of a new era, a dawning of light where all had been darkness, the separation of the true from the false, and a new start in the way of Truth. No doubt all the powers of Satan were exerted

to close the door then opened; but 'He that is true' had said, 'which no man can shut.' Compared with the mighty hosts of their enemies, the little band of Reformers had but 'a little strength'; but they knew that they had the Truth, and they fully trusted the Giver. Thus the Master could say, 'Thou hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my name.'

"During the Philadelphian period, especially during the first and the last phases of it, the faithful have either been obliged to come out of the nominal temple or have been cast out for their straight testimony. The reward promised them is that they will be, not simply an unimportant part, but a vital one — a pillar in the true and eternal Temple — a part which cannot be removed while the structure exists. During their trial state their names were cast out as evil. They were branded as infidels and heretics."

Concerning the necessity of Divine interference in behalf of the cause of Truth during those times, it has been truthfully said:

"A system which travesties the truth, hardens the conscience, enslaves the mind, corrupts the heart, which buries the Bible, prostitutes the ministry, profanes the sacraments, persecutes the saints, betrays and butchers the flock of Christ, and outrages all that is sacred and all that is Divine — deserves and demands to be exposed, detested, judged, destroyed, and swept out of an injured world.

"And God raised up the Reformation to do this work of protest, exposure, condemnation, and deliverance. ... He who had raised up the Prophets and Apostles in olden times, He who raised up confessors and witnesses in the Middle Ages, raised up reformers in the Sixteenth Century, lion-like men, to undertake this mighty enterprise and accomplish this glorious work. ... We wish to invite your special attention to the fact that the convictions of the Reformers with reference to the character of the Papal Church, and the duty of separation from it, were largely derived from their study and interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures. ... To the Reformers, Rome was the 'Babylon' of the Apocalypse, and the Papal pontiff the predicted 'Man of Sin.' Separation from the Church of Rome and from its pontifical head, was regarded by them as a sacred duty. They urged on all Christian persons within the Church of Rome, the Apocalyptic command, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' To them separation from Rome was not separation from Christ, but from Antichrist. This was the principle upon which they began and prosecuted the work of the Reformation, The principle which directed and supported, and rendered them invincible" (H. G. Guinness).

Reformers Saw Man of Sin in Prophecy

In the fall of 1520 Luther printed a treatise on the *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*. In this treatise Luther called the Papacy "the kingdom of Babylon." A little later he boldly denominated the Papacy the "Man of Sin" (2 Thessalonians 2), and exhorted all Christian princes to shake off his usurpations. In another publication he says: "When Daniel saw the terrible wild beast which had ten

horns, which, by the consent of all is the Roman Empire, he also beheld another small horn come up in the middle of them. This is the Papal power, which rose up in the middle of the Roman Empire."

Philip Melancthon, a man of wonderful ability and application, a companion of Luther, composed the celebrated Confession of Augsburg in 1530. As this confession was to be read publicly to the Roman Catholic Emperor, Charles V, in the presence of princes and Roman Catholic dignitaries, Melancthon sought to avoid arousing the anger of the Roman Catholic Church, and for this reason toned it down. Luther chided Melancthon for this, and said: " 'Satan sees clearly that your Apology has passed lightly over the articles of purgatory, the worship of saints, and, above all, of the Pope and of Antichrist.' " Referring to the Second Thessalonian epistle later on, however, Melancthon waxed bold, and said in another treatise, " 'Wherefore I affirm that no heresy hath arisen, nor indeed shall be with which these descriptions of Paul can more truly and certainly accord and agree, than to this Papal kingdom.' "

John Calvin, in the conclusion of a letter to the emperor, Charles V, said: " 'I deny that See to be apostolical wherein nought is seen but a shocking apostasy; I deny him to be the vicar of Christ, who in furiously persecuting the Gospel, demonstrates by his conduct that he is the Antichrist.' "

William Tyndale, who first translated the New Testament from Greek into English, and who suffered martyrdom on account of his faithful testimony for his Master, in his exposition of 1 John 2:18, spoke on this subject: " 'Though the Bishop of Rome and his sects give Christ these names [His rightful names], yet, in that they rob him of the effect, and take the signification of his names unto themselves, and make of him but a hypocrite, as they themselves be, they be the right Antichrists, and deny both Father and Son; for they deny the witness that the Father bore unto His Son, and deprive the Son of all the power and glory that the Father gave him.' "

Indeed, all the other English Reformers, including Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, Bradford, and Jewell, gave testimony to the fact that the great Romish system was the anti-Christian apostasy foretold by Daniel, St. Paul, and St. John; likewise later on did John Knox of Scotland. Latimer's words to this effect are: " 'Yea what fellowship hath Christ with Antichrist? therefore it is not lawful to bear the yoke with Papists. Come from among them, and separate yourselves from them, saith the Lord.' "

Ridley gave this testimony: " 'The See of Rome is the seat of Satan, and the bishop of the same, that maintaineth the abominations thereof — is Antichrist himself indeed; and for the same causes this See at this day, is the same that St. John calls in his Revelation, Babylon and spiritual Sodom and Egypt, the mother of fornications and abominations upon earth.' "

True Christ of Prophecy Contrasted

Of all the Reformers, none gave testimony more clearly than Jewell. In a commentary on Thessalonians he proves the Pope of Rome to be the "Man of Sin," the Antichrist. We quote a few sentences from this exposition:

"Some say that he [Antichrist] should be a Jew of the tribe of Dan; some that he should be born in Babylon ... some that Nero was Antichrist; some that he should be born of a friar and a nun; some that he should continue but three years and a half. ... These tales have been craftily devised to beguile our eyes, that whilst we think upon these guesses, and so occupy ourselves in beholding a shadow, or probably conjecture of Antichrist, he which is Antichrist indeed may unawares deceive us.

"He will come in the name of Christ, yet will he do all things against Christ, and under pretense and color of serving Christ; he shall devour the sheep and people of Christ; he shall deface whatsoever Christ hath taught; he shall quench that fire which Christ hath kindled; those plants which Christ hath planted he shall root up; he shall undermine that house which Christ hath built; he shall be contrary to Christ, his faith contrary to the faith of Christ, and his life contrary to the life of Christ.

"Christ was humble and lowly. The Prophet, in his own person, speaks of Him, Psalms 22: 'I am a worm, and not a man; a shame of men, and the contempt of the people.' And the Apostle saith, Philippians 2: 'He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Behold his parents, his birth, his cradle; behold his life, his disciples, his doctrine, and his death; all were witnesses unto his humility. He saith of himself, 'The Son of Man hath not where to rest his head'; and to his disciples he saith, 'The kings of the Gentiles reign over them, and they that bear rule over them are called gracious lords; but ye shall not be so.' And again, 'Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'

"Now, on the other part, take view of Antichrist. Behold his birth, his place, his chair, his estate, his doctrine, his disciples; and all his life you shall see nothing but pomp and glory. ... He is proud in life, proud in doctrine, proud in word, and proud in deeds; he is like Lucifer, and sets himself above his brethren, and over nations and kingdoms.

"He makes every knee to bow down to him and worship him; he makes kings to bring him water, to carry his train, to hold his cup, to bear his dish, to lead his bridle, and to hold his stirrup; he claims power over heaven and earth; he saith he is lord over all the world, the lord of lords, and king of kings; that his authority reaches up into heaven and down into hell; that he can command the angels of God; that he condemns whom he will condemn; that he makes saints at his pleasure; that whatsoever he blesses is blessed, and that whatsoever he curses is cursed.

"He sells merits, the forgiveness of sins, the sacrifice for the quick and the dead; he makes merchandise of the souls of men; he lays filthy hands upon the Lord's anointed; he removes kings and deposes the states and princes of the world. This is Antichrist; this is his power. Thus shall he work and make himself. So shall he sit in the temple of God. The people shall wonder at him, and shall have him in reverence; they shall say, Who is like unto the beast? Who is so wise, so mighty, so godly, so virtuous, so holy, so like unto God? So intolerable and monstrous shall be his pride."

Cranmer, who when sorely tried by his persecutors recanted, but later repented, when brought to the scaffold to be burnt, said: "Forasmuch as my hand offended, writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished therefor; for may I come to the fire, it shall first be burned; and as for the Pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy, and Antichrist, with all his false doctrines."

When the fire was kindled and began to burn near him, he stretched out his arm and put his right hand into the fire, holding it there immovable, his eyes being lifted to heaven and often repeating the words: "This hand hath offended; O this unworthy right hand!" And finally, as the flame enclosed around him, he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" and died.

John Bradford when led to the stake, took a fagot in his hand, kissing it; and then standing by the stake, with both hands uplifted to heaven, he cried, "O England, England! repent thee of thy sins; repent thee of thy sins; beware of idolatry; beware of false Antichrists; take heed they do not deceive thee."

All of these saints of God sought to expose the errors and abominations and usurpations of Romanism, and called upon their fellow-Christians to come out of this false system. These men were the successors of those mentioned as the faithful ones of "Thyatira," and the "few names even in Sardis" who had not defiled their garments (Revelation 2 and 3).

It will be seen, therefore, that in the beginning of the Sixteenth Century it became evident to some of the Lord's saints, chiefly through an understanding obtained of the visions of the Prophet Daniel and of St. John, and also the Second Thessalonian epistle of the Apostle Paul, describing this great corruption of Christianity, that reform was impossible, and a loud cry went forth for God's saints to separate themselves from this corrupt and idolatrous Church. This warning cry continued to be heard and heeded to a greater or less extent until the close of the Eighteenth Century, at which time the Papacy, as we have seen in other visions, suffered the greatest humiliation it had ever experienced up to that time. This was at the hands of Napoleon; and since then the Papacy has become more and more humiliated, by being shorn of its landed estates as well as of its power and influence by other rulers. Thus was fulfilled the prediction of the gradual consumption of the Mother system's power and influence, foretold by the Prophet Daniel and by St. Paul, as well as by St. John.

We are not, of course, to understand that all who engaged in this movement were of the Lord's "little flock" of consecrated ones, nor that all who came out of the Romish Church during this period were of the "little flock" class. On the contrary, those who were truly the Lord's constituted the few. In this connection it is well to keep in mind that it was during the period following the Sixteenth Century that the Protestant sects were organized; thus preparing the way for the "image" of Papacy, the Protestant Federation to be formed, and for the rejection of the Protestant image also. This necessitated a call out of the daughter systems of the great harlot. That which now alone remains to be fulfilled of this Revelation vision is the complete destruction of these systems, symbolized by the mother and daughters.

"This chapter [Revelation 18] may be regarded as a still further explanatory episode, designed to show the effect of pouring out the seventh vial (chapter 16:17-21) on the formidable anti- Christian power so often referred to. The description [symbolism] in this chapter is that of a rich merchant-city reduced to desolation, and is but carrying out the general idea under a different form."

This judgment seems to refer, not to the followers of Papacy, but rather to the great hierarchy itself; that is, the symbol discriminates between the city and its inhabitants. This would signify that in the fulfillment there is a distinction between the hierarchy of the Church and its members. What the walls and dwellings of a material city are to the people whom they protect and shelter, the hierarchy of a Church is to the members who place themselves under its authority.

"The symbol is that of a literal city like Babylon, of palaces and dwellings, of merchants and artisans, of merchandise and luxury, having a sea and land, and sustaining relations to civil rulers. [That to which the symbolic city refers is] an analogous structure of human beings, sustaining a relation of authority and supremacy towards vast multitudes of fellow-beings, resembling that of a city of walls and edifices, towards the population that is sheltered within it. It is an organized body of men, therefore, or an assemblage of organizations that exercise official influence and dominion over a community of communities. It is not a political body, inasmuch as it is distinguished from the kings and great men of the earth. It is therefore ecclesiastical, and is the organized body of the rulers and teachers of the nationalized Church, not the whole body of the Church itself; no more than the walls and edifices of a city are the population that inhabit it. It is that vast hierarchy of rulers and teachers whose authority and sway overshadow the unofficial multitude of the Church, as the walls and dwellings of a city invest and shelter the inhabitants that reside in it."

The words, "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works," etc., are not addressed to the Lord's true followers, but rather to the agencies that will be used to destroy this great harlot system.

"Her punishment is to be a wholly different event from her fall, and is speedily to follow that catastrophe, and is to be inflicted by the hand of men; it is to be the work of the multitude in place of the rulers, as is shown by the regrets of the kings and nobility at her destruction. These retributions are to overtake her suddenly. Her 'plagues shall come upon her in a day, death and mourning and famine, and she shall be burned with [symbolic] fire' " (D. N. Lord).

In an introduction to an exposition of the different visions portraying this anti-Christian system, its fulfillment in past history is noted by Mr. Russell:

"We hope to prove, to the satisfaction of every conscientious reader, that this great apostasy or falling away mentioned by Paul has come, and that this Man of Sin has been developed, has sat 'in the temple of God' (the real not the typical), has fulfilled all the predictions of the Apostles and Prophets concerning his character, work, etc., has been revealed, and now, since 1799 AD, is being consumed by the spirit of the Lord's mouth (the truth), and will be *utterly destroyed* during this day of the Lord's wrath and revelation with flaming fire of retribution, already beginning. ...

"The book of Revelation, too, is in large part a detailed symbolic prophecy concerning this same Antichrist."

It would seem from the words, "She saith in her heart, I sit a queen ... and shall see no sorrow," that the overthrow of the great Papal system will be at a time when she will be loud in her boastful claims to be the one true Church of Christ. The following from a Roman Catholic journal of a few years ago is a sample of its present claims:

"The Papacy will regain its temporal sovereignty, because it is useful and convenient to the Church. It gives the head executive of the Church a fuller liberty and a fuller sway. The Pope can be no king's subject long. It is not in keeping with the Divine office to be so. It cramps him and narrows his influence for good. Europe has acknowledged this influence, and will be forced to bow to it in greater times of need than this. Social upheavals, and the red hand of anarchy, will yet crown Leo or his successor with the reality of power which the third circle symbolizes, and which was once recognized universally."

"The Papal dominion (and much of the abject reverence of the people for ecclesiasticism in general), as already shown, was broken down at the beginning of the Time of the End — 1799; and, though the subsequent process of consumption has been slow, and there have been occasional signs of apparent recovery, which never seemed more flattering than at present, the assurance of Papacy's final destruction is positive, and its death-struggle will be violent. First, however, she must attain more of her old-time prestige, which will be shared with a confederated association of her daughters. Together they will be lifted up, that together they may be violently thrown down. ... (C. T. Russell).

The Crisis of the Near Future

"As we call to mind the long train of evils by which Babylon has oppressed and worn out the saints of the Most High (the true Zion), and how it is written that God will avenge His own elect, and that speedily; that, according to their deeds, He will repay recompense to His enemies; that He will render unto Babylon a recompense (Luke 18:7,8, Isaiah 59:18, Jeremiah 51:6), we begin to realize that some fearful calamity awaits her. The horrible decrees of Papacy — the reproach and reward of which Protestantism also is incurring by her present compromising association with her — for the burning, butchering, banishing, imprisoning, and torturing of the saints in every conceivable way, executed with such fiendish cruelty in the days of her power by the arm of the state, whose power she demanded and received, await the full measure of just retribution; for she is to receive 'double for all her sins.' ...

"That the punishment of Babylon will be great is assured. It is written prophetically that, 'Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.' 'And He hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.' 'Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her, even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works. In the cup which she hath filled, fill to

her double. How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.' (Revelation 16:19, 19:2, 18:5-7). While the broadest application of this language is, of course, to Papacy, it also involves all who are in any degree in confederation or sympathy with her [and we may add, all who partake of her spirit of boastful claims, etc. Let him that readeth understand!] All such will be sharers in her plagues (Revelation 18:4). Although the kings of the earth have hated the harlot and cast her off (Revelation 17:16), still she says, 'I sit a queen and am no widow,' loudly boasts of her right to rule the nations, and claims that her former power will soon be regained" (C. T. Russell).

"I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." On this passage Mr. Barnes remarks: "This is indicative of a state where there was nothing feared, notwithstanding all the indications which existed of approaching calamity. All this indicates security and self confidence. In this state we may expect to find Papal Rome, even when its last judgments are about to come upon it; in this state it has usually been; in this state it is now, notwithstanding all the indications that are abroad in the world that its power is waning [through the plagues that have come to her] and that the period of its fall [destruction] approaches."

While this vision, as applied to the Romish Church hierarchy, the mother system, is clearly seen at the present time by the Lord's consecrated who have been served with the present Truth, and indeed has been seen by many for centuries, the symbol undoubtedly describes a much wider, a more extensive enlightenment concerning the false claims, etc., of this degenerate system. Indeed, as prophecy seems to teach that the final overthrow of this false system will be accomplished by the rise of the masses against it, this would require that many of its now ignorant, earnest supporters would become enlightened concerning its false and blasphemous claims. Possibly therefore there may be a more conspicuous movement than has yet taken place, which will have to do with a more extensive uncovering of the true character of this great religious hierarchy, the Mother of Harlots.

It is not necessary to suppose that such enlightening influences would proceed altogether or to the greatest extent from the Lord's consecrated; no more than that the liberation of the nations from Papacy's yoke in the great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century was accomplished altogether through the efforts of the Lord's consecrated of those times. The Lord's people will doubtless continue to proclaim the Glad Tidings of deliverance through the Kingdom even unto the end, or until their work in this particular is stopped, which may be by the great troubles that will come in connection with the overthrow of the present order.

While the call out of the mother system to some slight extent continues, and occasionally one hears the call and obeys it, the call out of the daughter systems is the special one during the harvest period, and continues to grow louder as we approach the time of judgment. It must be ever kept in mind that the call is to come to the Lord Himself, and not into other new religious organizations. All such religious organizations will share to a greater or less extent, in proportion

to their guilt, in the judgment punishments in which Babylon is destroyed. Let the following by Mr. Russell be carefully considered:

"Since it is the Lord who calls His people out of Babylon [including its different precincts], we cannot doubt that, whatever may be His agencies for giving the call, all truly His people will hear it; and not only will their obedience be tested by the call, but also their love of Babylon and affinity for her errors will be tested. If they approve her doctrines, methods, etc., so as to be loath to leave her, they will prove themselves unworthy of present Truth, and deserving of her coming plagues. But the words of the call indicate that God's true people in Babylon are not to be considered as implicated in her sins of worldliness and ignoring of Divine Truth, up to the time they shall learn that Babylon is fallen — cast off. Then if they continue in her, they are esteemed as being of her, in the sense of approving her wrong deeds and doctrines, past and present, and shall be counted as partakers of her sins, and therefore meriting a share of their punishment, the plagues coming upon her (see Revelation 18:4)."

In another of his expositions the same writer observes that:

"Though coming out of Babylon [Rome and her daughters] is one step, and a long one, in the direction of complete overcoming, it is by no means the last one; and we should be careful to guard against a disposition to rest after every advance step of the way.

" 'Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor once at ease sit down:
Thine arduous work will not be done
Till thou hast gained thy crown.'

"The step out of Babylon has generally been preceded by other steps of obedience, which in turn have exercised and strengthened the character for subsequent conflicts and victories. And it will be followed by various other tests and opportunities for overcoming, in view of which Paul (Galatians 5:1) wrote, 'Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with a yoke of bondage.' Every one who comes to realize the liberty of the sons of God and full freedom from Babylon's bondage should expect to meet other attempts of the great Adversary to bring him into other bondages, or to stumble him. The Lord permits these severe testings, that the class now sought may be manifested, and prepared for His service in the Kingdom of glory.

"For those who would obey this command to come out of Babylon, there is but one place of refuge; and that is, not in a new sect and bondage, but in 'The secret place of the Most High' — the place or condition of entire consecration, typified by the most holy of the tabernacle and temple."

We would merely add to the above, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear!"

Kings and Merchants of Earth Mourn Over Her

"And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the

smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come" (verses 9,10).

These kings or governments here mentioned are of course the ones that have succeeded those who in the Dark Ages supported this great Mother of Harlots; and in view of the fact that in the great Reformation, and especially since 1799, until quite recently, they have manifested a hatred toward her, by robbing her of her power and influence, the following deductions bearing on future events seem indeed reasonable:

(1) That another change in the attitude of these governments toward Papacy is yet to come — one that will be favorable toward her. Indeed, we see this already fulfilling to a considerable extent.

(2) That these governments will in considerable measure survive her punishment — in fact, will witness and lament over it.

(3) That through fear these governments will stand as it were at a distance, leaving the executors of the Divine wrath to fulfill their commission without obstructing them. This shows that this final plague of God's wrath will be accomplished by the lawless masses, as is taught in other Scriptures, of whom the governments at the time will stand in fear. The destruction of the last phase of the "beast"[1] and of the "false prophet," is seen as a later event (Revelation 19:20).

"And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more" (verse 11).

In order to understand this feature of the vision let us keep clearly in mind that the symbolism is that of a great commercial city, and the merchants are those who have engaged in commercial intercourse with this city. The enumeration of the articles of merchandise in the verses that follow seems to have been given for the purpose of filling up the symbolism, as also the statement regarding the cessation of this traffic; thus setting forth the utter desolation that comes to great Babylon. The merchants, as we have already explained, symbolize the nobles and dignitaries of this system, who have held her patronage and benefices. These, and others who have grown rich or have obtained a livelihood in serving the peoples by holding the cup containing her idolatrous rites, ceremonies, etc., will witness the overthrow of this great religious hierarchy without being able to interfere or intercept it. These also are to lament over her.

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her" (verse 20).

The term *heaven* as employed here, would seem to symbolize the true heavenly, righteous, spiritual class — those who are right with God, who are true co-workers together with Him and who recognize the righteousness of His cause; and this spiritual class is made up of such as those mentioned in the text

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(1) The last phase of this Apocalyptic "beast," as we have seen, is the beast without a head — the Romish system, both civil and ecclesiastical, in a state of anarchy.

— "ye holy apostles and prophets." "There is a strong contrast between this language and that which precedes. Kings, merchants, and seamen, who had been countenanced and sustained by her in the indulgence of corrupt passions, or who had been enriched by traffic with her, would have occasion to mourn. But not so they who had been persecuted by her. Not so the Church of the redeemed. Not so heaven itself. The great oppressor of the Church, and the corrupter of the world, was now destroyed; the grand hindrance to the spread of the Gospel was now removed, and all the holy in heaven and on earth would have occasion to rejoice. This is not the language of vengeance, but it is the language of exultation and rejoicing in view of the fact that the cause of truth might now spread without hindrance through the earth."

In the next verse (21), reminding us of the prophetic action that Jeremiah instructed Seraiah to perform when he came to literal Babylon and read the prophecies of Jeremiah concerning the fall of that city (Jeremiah 51:60-64), St. John saw a mighty angel take up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." "Interpretation is hardly needed in all this. The detail of judgment seems intended rather to fix the attention and give us serious consideration of what God judges at last in this unsparing way. Surely it is needed now, when Christian men are being taken with the wiles of one who in a day of conflict and uncertainty can hold out to them a rest which is not Christ's rest; who in the midst of defection from the faith can be the champion of orthodoxy while shutting up the word of life from men; who can be all things to all men, not to save, but to destroy them; at such a time, how great a need is there for pondering her doom as the word of prophecy declares it, and the joy of heaven over the downfall of the sorceress at last."

The next verses (22-24), are designed to portray her complete desolation, indeed her destruction. Not only shall her traffic, her merchandise cease, but there shall be no sign of life in her at all; no pleasant sound of music, no mechanic's craft, no light of lamp, no voice of bride groom and of bride — all of which is designed to teach that her destruction is to be final and complete. As a millstone when thrown into the depths of the sea sinks forever from the sight of men, so she is to be swept from the earth and leave not a trace of her greatness or mischievous dominion; because she is a sorceress, whose whole agency has been to seduce men from God; and a murderess who has shed the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain in the empire for the Word of God during her sway.

"What a tremendous doom thus awaits these apostate powers! What a demonstration it is to form, that God rejects them! What a refutation of their impious pretenses that they are his ministers, that they are exclusively invested with authority to teach His will, and that they enjoy His sanction in their usurpations, their idolatries, their blasphemies, their persecution of His worshipers! And what an illustrious vindication of the witnesses and martyrs who resisted alike their seductions, and their vengeance, and maintained allegiance to the King of kings!" (D. N. Lord).

Chapter Forty-Two

The Destruction of Babylon and the Marriage of the Lamb

(Revelation 19:1-10)

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments; for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever" (Revelation 19:1-3).

It is most obvious that the events portrayed in these visions of chapter 19 are yet to meet their fulfillment. Indeed, to a considerable extent, as we have endeavored to show in the preceding chapter, this is true also of chapter 18. For while it is clearly seen by students of the Revelation that Babylon in both its Papal and Protestant aspects has fallen from God's favor, it is of course apparent that as great systems they still exist. Chapter 18 describes the rejection and destruction of the great mother system, the Papal hierarchy. The destruction of Babylon, in its widest sense, commonly termed Christendom, is portrayed in chapter 19. This being true it becomes apparent to the reverent student of the Revelation that the prophecies describing these future events will be better understood in detail as history gradually unveils them. However, in their general outlines they can even now be clearly seen.

Four Phases of Babylon

It will be recalled that we have in our previous expositions noticed that several distinct, separate phases of the great anti-Christian apostasy are embraced in the one symbol Babylon. The first and chief of these is that of Babylon the Great, the mother system, which seems to have comprehended, previous to its losing its temporal power in 1870, the Papal hierarchy in its exercise of both civil and ecclesiastical authority from the city of Rome; and since that time, the same Papal hierarchy in its exercise of ecclesiastical authority only.

The second aspect of symbolical Babylon is that of the Protestant, daughter (harlot) systems of the great mother, as pictured since their efforts to form a federation began, and since their fall from Divine favor in more recent times, early in the present harvest period, has become manifest.

A third aspect of symbolical Babylon is that of the same daughter systems as they will appear in the near future, it would seem, when this great federation is consummated and it begins to act authoritatively. This we have interpreted to be described under the two symbols of the "image of the beast" (Revelation 13:14), and the "false prophet" (Revelation 16:13, 19:20).

The fourth aspect of the Babylonian symbol is that of the so-called Christian nations, which to a greater or less extent have been made drunk by the wine — false doctrines — of the great mother system, as described in the symbolic language of the Revelation.

All four of these phases or aspects of Babylon are understood by many prophetic students to be comprehended in the term Christendom, which in all these aspects is to be destroyed in the judgment troubles described in the closing visions of the Revelation. It is very apparent, however, that these different divisions or phases of Babylon are not to be destroyed all at the same time.

It is well to keep in mind that the symbols of the Apocalypse clearly distinguish between the Papal and the other aspects of Babylon. The symbol of the "Mother of Harlots," upon whose forehead is written "Babylon the Great," without question has reference to the Papal aspect of Babylon. The destruction of the various divisions or aspects of Babylon will take place in the period called the time of trouble that marks the closing scenes of the age — a period which occupies a considerable length of time. It is very apparent from the description in chapter 18 that the Papal aspect of Babylon is destroyed first. In our consideration of chapter 16, we saw that before the final collapse of all, there will be an alliance of the various branches of Babylon. The object of this will be to uphold the present order of things, which at the time will seem in danger of falling because of the threatened risings of the masses. For a time, in connection with this alliance, the great mother system will exert a powerful influence. This alliance however will soon break up, and immediately the mother system will be destroyed. This condition of things was seen by Mr. Russell and thus described:

"But the Bible declares that this reign 'as a queen' will be a short one, and that the fall of Babylon will be tremendous — like a great millstone cast into the sea. It will be during the power of this so- called 'queen,' for a little season, that the world will be under a great strain as respects any presentation of the Truth. And those found loyal to God and to principle will doubtless suffer therefor.

"At the time of Babylon's fall, the mighty ones of the earth, financial and political princes and kings, will stand afar off, keeping clear of too close an affiliation with her, although they will greatly lament her destruction, realizing that it forebodes their own. Then very shortly will come the complete overthrow and destruction of the present Gentile governments, symbolically represented in the Bible as a great conflagration which will consume the whole earth — all institutions — religious, social, political, and financial."

Carefully viewing the symbolic picture in the light of all the developments and facts of history, our conviction is that chapter 18 portrays the judgment on that aspect of Babylon that is comprehended in the symbol of the great harlot,

referred to so frequently in the Revelation visions as corrupting the earth (organized society) with her false doctrines. This symbol is very generally, and we think correctly understood to represent the Romish Papal government or hierarchy, which is very appropriately named the "Mother," because out from her, since the Reformation, have come the Protestant sects (harlots). Many of her false doctrines, have also been retained in the creeds of these sects, nearly all of which, as also the so-called Christian nations, have been so permeated with Rome's false dogma of inherent immortality that a clear conception of the great plans and purposes of God becomes absolutely impossible.

It will be noted that the "image of the beast," which we have interpreted to be the great Protestant Federation, and the "false prophet," another symbol of the same, are not mentioned in the judgment vision of chapter 18. Still further as confirming this interpretation it will be noted that the "kings" of the earth and the symbolic "merchants" stand afar off lamenting over the fall, destruction of Babylon, the mother, in chapter 18, which is clear evidence that these other parts of Babylon for a time survive her fall. Indeed, it seems clear that if all Christendom is represented as destroyed by the judgment portrayed in chapter 18, there would be no governments or supporters either civil or ecclesiastical left anywhere in Christendom to mourn and lament over her destruction.

The Last Form of the Beast

And still further in this same connection, the "beast" in its last form still continues to exist after the destruction of Babylon occurs — the destruction described in chapter 18:21; thus chapter 19:19,20 clearly shows the subsequent destruction of the beast. It should be kept in mind that the beast symbol does not always refer to Papacy. Let it not be forgotten that the fourth beast of Daniel 7, the Roman power in its varied conditions of rulership from its rise until the end of the age, is referred to as the beast. The Papacy is frequently referred to as the beast because of its exercising a controlling influence over the kingdoms that occupy the territory of the old Roman Empire.

In Revelation 17, the fourth beast (empire), exercising the power of its ten horns (kingdoms), is called the "scarlet colored beast," because by these ten horns the ecclesiastical system of Papacy is supported. Likewise, when these ten horns turn against Papal ecclesiasticism, as portrayed in the great harlot, and exercise their power for its humiliation and consumption, they exercise the beast's (the fourth empire's) power, and in this way are properly called the "beast." In chapter 19 the beast seems to refer to the last form of the fourth power of Daniel's vision — the peoples of all nations, the body of the beast without an organized government, the last or eighth phase of the beast, both civil and religious, in a state of anarchy, foreshadowed by the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution. There would be included in this beast symbol, as used in chapter 19, that which will be left for a time of Roman Catholic ecclesiasticism, as represented in the local churches and other semi- religious organizations over the world which belong to this system, in a state of disintegration — the Papal hierarchy itself having been destroyed. Both of these seem to be mentioned in

Daniel's vision as the "body of the beast" which is referred to in the words: "I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body [various portions and fragments of that system] destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Daniel 7:11). Revelation 19:20 evidently refers to the same event.

And finally it will be noticed that the "false prophet" (Revelation 16:13) which is another symbol of organized, united, federated Protestantism — the image of the beast after it has received life — continues to exist after the destruction portrayed in chapter 18, and comes to its end only when the last or eighth form of the beast is destroyed, which occurs immediately before the binding of Satan.

It seems very apparent that the judgment scene described in the closing verses of chapter 19:11-20 occur *after* the "Marriage of the Lamb" takes place. It is the last judgment scene, and seems to meet its fulfillment in close contiguity with the great "winepress" treading of chapter 14:20, in connection with that phase of Christ's Second Advent in which he is represented as coming with his saints (Revelation 19:11), and not that phase described in Revelation 14:1 symbolized by the Lamb standing on Mt. Zion, which occurs at the beginning of the harvest.[1]

Taking into consideration all these matters leads us to the conclusion that the destruction portrayed in chapter 18 refers to that of the great mother system, the great harlot, upon whose forehead is written, "Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth"; and that this event will occur *before* the "Marriage of the Lamb," or before the completion of the First Resurrection. It is after St. John hears the announcement that the Marriage of the Lamb has come that he beholds the vision of the opening of the heavens and the coming forth from the same of the Son of God; and as the symbol shows, he is clothed in robes of a judgment executive, riding upon a white horse, and followed by the armies of heaven, evidently the glorified saints, likewise riding upon white horses. The description which follows shows that the object of this descent is to destroy all that remains of the anti-Christian powers of evil (Revelation 19:11-20), to bind Satan, and to introduce the victorious Millennial reign (Revelation 20:1).

With these introductory and preparatory unfoldings we now proceed to consider the vision of chapter 19 more in detail. The chapter opens with the statement that a loud voice is heard, which seems to proceed from a great multitude in heaven. In a general way that which is represented in the words of the voice is that of great rejoicing that will take place because of the fall and destruction of the great mother of harlots, the ruling authority or ecclesiastical hierarchy, located at Rome. There is also implied in the words that those who are symbolized by the loud voice had come to understand that this destruction was a just judgment proceeding from the hand of God.

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(1) Chapter 14:1, as we have seen, describes Christ's assumption of kingly power — his coming as a thief to gather his saints unto himself.

The "heaven" from which this loud voice proceeds is understood by Messrs. Barnes, Lord, and most others, to be the heaven of God's presence, the abode of angels. The great rejoicing over the fall of the false religious hierarchy is understood by most of these as proceeding from angels and others of the heavenly host. There can be no question concerning the fact that heavenly angels and others of the heavenly host are observing with intense and unabated interest the things that have been occurring on earth in connection with the eventful history of Christ's true followers. There can be no question that the cruel persecutions and sufferings that have come to Christ's followers at the hands of the mother of harlots have been amongst those vital causes that have aroused the indignation and sympathy of the heavenly hosts. And when the hour of her destruction arrives, without doubt there will be great rejoicing in heaven over her fall.

However, by a further and more careful examination of this vision we believe the conclusion is justified that the heaven of the scene is the symbolic heaven and will have its fulfillment here on earth. Accordingly, the loud voice of rejoicing would represent peoples in the ecclesiastical heavens who will see in the downfall of the Papal hierarchy a judgment of God, and who are moved to rejoice in the great deliverances wrought thereby. This is the interpretation Mr. Elliott gives to this vision and he indicates it as synchronous with the Jewish restoration:

"I infer that the Jews will probably just at, or after this catastrophe [the fall of Papacy], be converted ... join, and indeed take the lead, in the earthly Church's song of praise on this occasion. The language used to designate this song in the Apocalyptic prefigurations being now for the first time Hebrew, 'Hallelujah,' a circumstance certainly very remarkable and noted by many previous commentators (Brightman, Vitringa, Daubuz, and Bickersteth) as having the meaning I suggest: not to add that its probability is enhanced as I think by the fact that the Jews themselves — at least some of the most learned of their Rabbis, have supposed that the restoration of their people is to follow on the fall of Rome."

If we may infer that Mr. Elliott means the complete restoration of the Jews, we can agree with him. We have given his interpretation simply as confirmatory of and as elucidating the thought that the rejoicing referred to in the vision, takes place here on earth, rather than in the heaven of God's presence.

Mr. Russell, in a general way describing the final doom of Babylon the Great, comments on the words of the Scripture under consideration:

"Only then [that is, on the occasion of Babylon's fall] will the people realize their wonderful deliverance, and that her overthrow was by the hand of God (Revelation 19:1,2)."

Another of his comments reveals his thought that some of the Kingdom class would still be on this side of the veil and witness the great harlot's fall:

"However, instead of the Kingdom waiting for the living members to finish their course, the Kingdom work began at once ... We read similarly that the Kingdom reign will begin before 'Babylon' falls; and that Babylon will fall as a result of Kingdom judgments — discerned later by some in her who are represented as getting light and liberty through Christ after her fall. They say: 'True

and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great harlot which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand' (Revelation 18, 19:2-7)."

Still another comment on the closing words of this same symbolic loud voice very evidently shows that it was his understanding that chapter 18 referred to the destruction of Papacy alone. His words are significant:

"Revelation 19:3, speaking of one [not all] of these systems, says: 'Her smoke rose up forever and ever.' That is to say, the remembrance ('smoke') of the destruction of these systems of deception and error will be lasting, the lesson will never be forgotten — as smoke, which continues to ascend after a destructive fire, is testimony that the fire has done its work (see also Isaiah 34:8-10)."

We next have recorded that the twenty-four elders and the four living ones join in the rejoicing that is mentioned in verses 1 and 2 over the fall of the great harlot. We read: "And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia" (verse 4).

It will be noticed that this is the last that we have mention of the "elders" and the "living ones." There seems to be a peculiar significance to this fact, namely that it is *after the fall of the Papal hierarchy* that the Church, symbolized by the twenty-four elders, all pass beyond the veil. The four living ones, also being seen no more would indicate that that feature of the administration of the government of God which had to do with the completion of the elect Church was now finished.

"And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God all ye His servants and ye that fear Him, both small and great" (verse 5).

The throne is represented as resting on the four living ones. As we have seen, the four living ones appear to stand for or represent certain essential qualities, attributes, or foundation principles that support the Divine government. The voice from the throne calling upon all the servants of God of every rank to praise Him would imply that the overthrow of the great mother of harlots was a result of the enforcement of these principles and of the activities of these attributes, and was a vindication of the wisdom and righteousness of Him who sat upon the throne, thus causing all who had become acquainted with Him to acknowledge and praise Him.

Referring to this voice of exhortation proceeding from the throne, to praise God, and the response to it in the succeeding verses, Mr. Seiss offers the very able interpretation: "The subject of praise here called for seems to look two ways, embracing the judgment just executed [on the Mother of Harlots] and new glories about to be realized, of which that judgment is the pledge and inauguration. The voice which gave the first and second *Alleluias* was the voice of a vast heavenly multitude (verses 1-3). The *Amen* and the third *Alleluia* were from the elders and living ones. These [voices] all center in the display of Divine truth, justice, and almightiness in the judgment of great Babylon, and the avenging of the blood of the saints out of her hand. If there be any other servants and fearers of God great or small, they are also called to join in the exulting praises for the

same. But as response comes to this admonition from the throne, the songs take in other subjects, and seem to embrace all that is described in the latter part of the chapter.

"The Alleluia that now comes with redoubled power and majesty, celebrates the assumption of the Kingdom by the Lord God, which would seem to imply that the victory of the battle of the great day is included. The Marriage of the Lamb, the readiness and array of the Bride, and the blessedness of those who are called to the Marriage banquet, are likewise recounted, which can hardly be taken as coincident with the fall of Babylon. A point would therefore seem to be indicated in this call from which the contemplation is *backward* to Babylon's overthrow and *forward* to the fall of the beast and the contemplation of the Church's blessedness in her Lord, the main stress gravitating now toward what follows the judgment of Babylon.

"No sooner does the voice from the throne give command for praise than John heard [verse 6] as a voice of a mighty multitude, and as a voice of many waters, and as a voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia, because the Lord God, the All-Ruler, hath assumed the Kingdom. This is a mightier *Alleluia* than either of the preceding. It refers also to an ampler subject. The judgment of great Babylon demonstrated indeed that God is mighty, and that He is the All-Ruler. It also showed a potent taking up and enforcement of His sovereign and righteous authority. But what was thus shown in one aspect and relation is at once followed out to a much wider and more direct assumption of active rule and sovereignty.

"We thus begin to see something of the dawn and character of those better times to come, when once the 'mystery of God' is finished. Tyrants, despots, and faithless and burdensome governments shall then be no more. Like wild beasts, full of savage instinct for blood and oppression, have the world-powers roamed and ravaged the earth, treading down the nations, their will the only law, the good and happiness of men the farthest from their hearts. But it will be otherwise then. 'The Lord shall be King over all the earth,' and therein is the signal and pledge of the dominion of right and everlasting peace. Wars shall be no more. Injustice and unequal laws shall be done away. Enemies will be powerless. Men will then have their standing according to their moral worth. The salvation of God will be nigh to them that fear Him. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. And sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Therefore the voice of eternal right is, 'Praise our God, all His servants, those that fear Him, the small and the great,' and from all the holy universe comes the song, in volume like the sea, in strength like the thunder, 'Alleluia, because the Lord God the All-Ruler hath assumed the Kingdom.' "

His Wife Hath Prepared Herself

"The Marriage of the Lamb is come, and His Wife hath made herself ready" (verse 7).

The union of Christ with all the faithful overcomers of the Gospel Age by the power of the First Resurrection is the great event that is set forth in these words.

Just as these overcomers in their earthly trial state are spoken of figuratively as espoused to Christ as chaste virgins, so at the time of this vision's fulfillment the full number to complete the Bride are represented as having faithfully carried out their vows of espousal and are united to him, to share in all the glories and honors of Christ, taking his name and partaking of his nature Divine. As a bride by her marriage is united to her husband through life, so the overcomers are by their union with the Lamb to be exalted to stations as joint-heirs forever in his Kingdom, and this is doubtless what is shown in the symbol. Their marriage, therefore, of necessity involves their resurrection to the Divine nature, the nature of their Lord. It is important to notice that it is at this point in the Revelation visions that Christ takes complete possession of affairs in this world, and the vision following represents in symbol his glorified Church associated with him, descending from the opened heavens to overthrow all that remains of opposition to his peaceful reign over the earth for the restitution of all things, the blessing of all mankind.

As to who is represented by this latter great voice of verses 6 and 7, "as it were the voice of a great multitude," we may not state with positive assurance. With considerable foundation the statement has been made that we have here a representation of Christians known as the second class or "Great Company" — less faithful than those designated as the "Little Flock." Their announcement concerning the reign of the Lord God having begun, and concerning the marriage of the Lamb, denotes an intelligence that could not be reasonably accredited to the world of mankind, nor yet to the masses of professing church members at this particular stage of matters; for at this time the present order of things will not have passed away, and the last great struggle, portrayed in verses 11- 15, will not yet have passed. Hence the proclamation of this great multitude just prior to this time, that the Lord God reigns and that the Marriage of the Lamb has come, that the Wife has made herself ready, etc., would logically lend support to the thought that the second company of Christians, who fail to attain the prize and crown of life, are at this time made aware of the significance of events and are led to understand that the Gospel Church has been completed and that all are glorified. It would be reasonable too to suppose that they would have this intelligence in advance of others, in view of their association with members of the Bride class before they had all been glorified, and in view of the fact that they had not been repudiated by the Lord as his people. Mr. Russell very well observes in this connection: "They will, no doubt, be greatly dismayed when they afterwards realize that the Bride has been completed and united to the Lord, and that they, because so listless and overcharged, have lost that great prize; but the beauty of God's Plan, which they will then begin to discern as one of love, both for them and for all the world of mankind, will quite overcome their grief, and they will shout 'Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honor to Him, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herself ready' (Revelation 19:6,7)."

"And it was given her that she should be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure; for the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints" (verse 8).

The change in the translation of the word "righteousness" in the Common Version to that of "righteous acts" in the Diaglott and other translations, conveys a different meaning to the expression. The words, "And it was given her" (evidently at the time of her marriage), implies a reward. The symbol of "fine linen," when applied to the Church during the period of her espousal, refers to the imputed righteousness of her Lord, Christ. In this verse it is explained differently.

What a wonderful reminder and fulfillment we have described here of the words of the Apostle in his letter to the Hebrews — "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." God has observed and noted the little services that have been performed by His saints as unto Him. He speaks of them in this vision as "righteous acts." This has reference to their faithfulness, while here on earth, to Him and to the Truth. It is a reminder of the days when they suffered with him, when they labored on in faith to help his little ones, his brethren; a reminder of the little sacrifices made with a desire to serve his cause — of the hours spent in visiting and ministering to his sick, his suffering, his helpless ones. Any little service, no matter how small, prompted by the motive to please Christ, is in these words that come forth from the throne, among those called the "righteous acts of the saints." Whatever of filling up of the sufferings of Christ for his Body's sake, the Church; whatever of weariness in toil to please him, is now remembered as that of Mary's service — "she hath done what she could," or of the "widow's mite" — "she hath given all that she hath." These and all other acts which are done as unto him, are not forgotten, are carefully recorded. How precious the thought! How encouraging to know that those eyes so keen to detect evil, are as keen to see all that is done for him. All these things are what will bring to his Bride, her future glory; not one thing of the old nature, the old life, will make up her glory, but all of Christ. "Nothing of a reformed man reaching up to higher manhood," will add to her glory; rather it is all the works of the new man — "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." "For the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

Invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (verse 9).

This word "Write," seems to make it a proclamation to those left on earth who will read these words and understand them after the Marriage of the Lamb, the union of Christ and his saints has taken place. Various interpretations have been given these words. Some understand those addressed to be the Old Testament saints; but the command for St. John to "Write," seems to make it apply to those who will at the time of the vision's fulfillment hear these words, as an invitation. The marriage supper always follows the marriage. It seems not to apply to the Bride, but to others.

Mr. Lord has applied this invitation to the Marriage Supper to a different class of persons from the raised and glorified saints denoted by the Bride, and says that it applies to unglorified saints left on the earth after the Bride is glorified. Mr. Russell says: "This will be the Nuptial Feast, in honor of the Marriage of the Lamb, after his Wife hath made herself ready (Revelation 19:7-9). At that feast, we are assured, will be a secondary company, not worthy to be of the Bride class. These may be figuratively styled the bridesmaids, the Great Company class; for after the account of the gathering of the Bride we have the Lord's Message to these subsequently delivered from Babylon [not the Mother], saying, 'Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.' "

Worship Only God

"And I fell before his feet to worship him. And he says to me, 'See; no! I am a fellowservant with thee, and of those brethren with thee who have the testimony of Jesus; worship God.' (For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of this prophecy)" (verse 10).

St. John at this stage of the symbolic visions seems to have been entirely overcome with the majesty of the revealing angel, and of the wonderful truths disclosed in the angel's words; and in this rapturous state he fell down to the earth before the angel in the attitude of worship. Some have supposed that St. John took the angel to be his Lord and Master, Christ. However this may be, it is certain that his falling before the angel is designed to teach the Lord's followers a very important lesson — that it is wrong, even idolatrous, to give to the creature the adoration and honor that belong alone to God. Nothing is more plainly taught in the Scriptures than this. It has been this worshipping of men, of organizations, etc., that is, ascribing to them qualities or attributes belonging only to the Creator, that has frequently caused God's people to fall. "The response of the angel to the Apostle when falling to worship him is eminently beautiful, indicating a befitting sense of the sanctity of God's rights, and exalting the services of the witnesses of Jesus to an equality with his own. I am a servant of the same order as you and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; for you and they in proclaiming that testimony before the nations and kings of the earth are to fulfill essentially the same office as I, guided by the revealing spirit, have fulfilled in interpreting the prophecy to you."

In this work of interpreting the visions of the Revelation God has used many servants. Therefore we should refrain from making the angel apply to any one individual, as many seem to have made the mistake in doing. Even though it were possible, which it is not, to apply it to one individual, we should recognize that the individual is simply bearing testimony to the same Message to which all the members of the Body of Christ are called to bear witness. These are all, whether literal or symbolic angels, whether Apostles, Prophets, or other teachers, appointed for this work, and should be regarded as brethren, and none should claim or receive adoration, or even honor, that would cause them to be looked upon or recognized as "great ones." "What hast thou that thou didst not

receive?" are the words of St. Paul in this connection. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils."

All who own Christ as the one to be honored even as the Father is honored will always refuse other honor than that of being servants, bond-slaves together of His will and grace. How ready is the natural, fallen heart, in some way if not in this, to give the glory which is Christ's alone to some visible object, creature, or organization! Rome's idolatrous forms of worship to saints and angels is only a grosser form of what even some of Christ's followers are often found doing and for which rebuke has often been needed. Our God is a jealous God. He is very jealous of any usurpation of His rights, etc., and we put ourselves in opposition to Him when we in any measure assume these or accord them to others. "Let him that readeth understand!"

Chapter Forty-Three

The Word of God and His Armies

(Revelation 19:11-16)

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God" (Rev 19:11- 13).

Let it be observed that this vision as seen and recorded by St. John follows immediately the announcement of the Marriage of the Lamb. .It is plainly manifest that in its fulfillment the same order is observed — that it follows at once the Marriage of the Lamb. If we are correct in this conclusion, then it will be apparent that the vision will meet its fulfillment after all the Kingdom class have passed beyond the veil. More than this, it seems quite certain that the vision portrays in highly symbolical language the last momentous scenes in connection with the end of this Gospel Age — that of the last great deadly conflict between truth and error, the battle of Armageddon. The result of this conflict will be the very speedy destruction of all the systems, civil and ecclesiastical, in active operation at that time, as well as those in a state of disintegration, that are found in any measure antagonistic to the reign of righteousness — the Kingdom of Christ and his saints.

The overthrow of the Romish hierarchy, the central governmental system of the Roman Catholic ecclesiasticism, which is described in a previous vision, seems to occur immediately before all the Kingdom class is changed to glory, and is an occurrence producing most eventful changes in Christendom (Revelation 18:9-24). The scenes connected with the fulfillment of the vision under consideration are of even much greater magnitude and will be accompanied with changes in every department of life of the most stupendous character, surpassing anything that has ever occurred in the history of man. Indeed, these changes will be accompanied, as this and other Scriptures show, by supernatural occurrences — transactions which will be of such a character as to cause all who pass through them to be brought to acknowledge the sovereignty of God and Him alone. It would most naturally be supposed by Bible students who understand God's Plan that the great event, the Marriage of the Lamb, would be speedily followed by this closing scene of the Gospel Age, for the reason that the Divine Plan for this age would then be completed.

This vision is one of several in the Revelation that portray, in harmony with many other Scriptures, these closing scenes. In the interpretation of the vision, however, commentators have differed. Those who teach that Christ's Second personal Advent does not take place until the end of the thousand years, the Millennium, while believing that this vision meets its fulfillment at the beginning of the thousand years, interpret it to be a symbolical picture, not of a personal advent of Christ in the sense of commencing his reign on earth, but merely of a manifestation of the effects of his power in acts of judgment and justice — a manifestation which in no sense differs from the manner in which he has been present in his Church, and operating in her behalf throughout the age, as portrayed in the symbolic vision of his walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, or as taught in his words, "Lo I am with you all the days even unto the end of the age." This view was taught by Stuart, Faber, Bush, Vint, Whitby and many others. Those who hold this view are commonly called Post- Millennialists on account of their belief that Christ personally and visibly comes to earth at the end rather than at the beginning of the Millennial Age. This view is one that is disproved by all the Scriptures that describe Christ's Second Advent, and the elective character of this age.

On the other hand there are those who believe that Christ comes personally in advance of the Millennial reign and for the purpose of introducing his Kingdom and the thousand year reign with his saints on the earth. These are commonly called Pre-Millennialists. It is the thought of this class of expositors that these words of verses 11-13 of chapter 19 describe the visible appearance of Christ in his own person; in other words, that St. John saw not a vision designed to represent the Second personal Advent of Christ, but rather that he saw Christ in person, in a kind of a heavenly-fleshly body, descending from heaven to earth.

What seems clearly to be the difficulty with the first view is the failure to see in the vision a portrayal of an advent of Christ in the sense of assuming and exercising his kingly power. That which is obviously the difficulty in the second view is the failure to see that this description of the victorious rider is a vision and is not to be understood literally but is pictorial of certain developments and proceedings and triumphs that follow Christ's Second Coming. In the execution of the judgments portrayed in the vision it is quite generally understood by the expositors of the latter view that he will be seen with the eye of flesh by all mankind who will be living at the time of the vision's fulfillment. It seems evident, however, that while the Scriptures teach very clearly a personal advent of the Divine Christ, in the sense of his exercising Kingdom rule, yet that advent will be invisible to mortals, for he is now clothed with a Divine body which "no man hath seen nor can see" (1 Timothy 6:15,16). Indeed, the Second Advent of Christ is an event represented as having already taken place in a previous vision — that of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion (Revelation 14:1). Furthermore, all the visions of chapter 14, and many of those that follow, have their fulfillment after that event, during the period of his presence.

Our Lord's Apokalupsis — Unveiling

The vision we now consider describes a different phase of his presence. While the visions of chapter 14 and some that follow, recorded in succeeding chapters, represent him as officially present during the whole period from the scene of the Lamb on Mount Zion onward, and indicate that his presence is known and recognized by the Watchers, yet that presence does not become known to the world in general until the period when the vision now under consideration meets its fulfillment. Indeed, that which is taught in the vision we now consider is that of the *manifestation* of Christ and his Church to the world. The revealing to the world follows closely the end of the Harvest, the completion of the First Resurrection, the exaltation of the Church. This fact seems quite definitely presented in this vision before us. His presence, while real, will be made known to the world in the acts of power displayed in the judgments which will overthrow the present order. The fact that the Advent has already taken place has been gradually made known to the Lord's consecrated for some years past by many events and circumstances of modern times that were predicted to be in evidence in connection with the Lord's Second Presence. The following expresses very clearly the thought of many Bible students regarding the manner in which Christ has been officially present in the world conducting a work preparing the way of his Kingdom:

"We know of his presence, not by the light of human science, but by the light of God's Word. We know of his presence, not as men recognizing a man, but as new creatures recognizing our Head, our Captain, our Bridegroom. We see him not by human sight, but the eyes of our understanding being opened and enlightened by the light of our lamp we see him, whom we love and adore, present to test those who claim to be his, and to select his 'faithful,' 'undefiled,' 'chaste virgins' — to 'make up His jewels': those who are accounted worthy to 'follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,' and to be his joint-heirs, glorified together with him, 'the Bride, the Lamb's Wife' (compare Revelation 14:4,5 and 21:9)."

An utterance illustrating the manner of the Second Advent, particularly as to the secrecy of his presence for a time, is made by Christ himself in describing that Advent, and reads: "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the *parousia* [presence] of the Son of Man be." (Matthew 24:37). It is well to keep in mind in considering the meaning of this verse that the words were spoken by the Savior in reply to the question, "What shall be the Sign [indication] of Thy coming [*parousia*, presence] and of the end [consummation] of the age?" (Matthew 24:3.

"Notice, that the comparison [made by the Savior] is not between the *coming* of Noah and the *coming* of our Lord, nor between the *coming* of the flood and the *coming* of our Lord. The *coming* of Noah is not referred to at all; neither is the *coming* of our Lord referred to; for, as already stated, *parousia* [the Greek word] does not mean *coming* but *presence.* The contrast, then, is between the time of the presence of Noah among the people '*before* the flood,' and the time of the presence of Christ in the world, at his Second Advent, *before* the fire

— [which symbolizes] the extreme trouble of the Day of the Lord with which this age ends. ...

"The point of comparison is stated clearly, and is readily seen if we read critically: The people, except the members of Noah's family, were ignorant of the coming storm [flood], and unbelieving as to the testimony of Noah and his family, and hence they 'knew not'; and this is the point of comparison. *So* shall also the *presence* of the Son of Man be. None but those of the family of God will believe here [that is, before the vision we are considering has its fulfillment]: others will 'know not,' until society, as at present organized, begins to melt with the fervent heat of the time of trouble now impending. This is illustrated by the words, 'As in the days that were before the flood, they were eating, and drinking, and marrying [Luke (17:28) adds 'planting and building'], until the day Noah entered into the ark, and knew not ... so shall also the *parousia* [the presence] of the Son of Man be.' In the time of the *presence* of the Son of Man, therefore, the world will go on with its eating, drinking, planting, building, and marrying — [these things] not mentioned as sinful doings, but as indicative of their ignorance of his presence, and of the trouble that will prevail in the world. This, then, is our Lord's answer to the question of the disciples — What shall be the sign [indication] of Thy presence [*parousia*] and of the end or harvest of the age? In substance, he says: There will be no sign for the worldly masses; they will not know of my presence and the new dispensational changes. Only the few will know, and they will be taught of God (in a way not here explained) before there is any sign (indication) which the worldly would discern" (C. T. Russell).

The world will discern, will become aware of the Lord's Advent, when that which is typified by the "flood" comes — the fiery judgment troubles described in this vision we are now considering. It will be at the time this vision meets its fulfillment that Christ's presence will become known to the whole world.

In summing up these conclusions we would say that the vision represents that stage of the Second Advent of Christ which will have to do with the destruction of those things of the present order that will at that time remain — the enemies of truth and righteousness, particularly the systems and remnants of the same. The fact that he is present, that his Second personal Advent is an actual fact, will at the time of this vision's fulfillment become known to all mankind.

If we are correct thus far in our expositions of the visions of the Revelation relating to the Second Advent era, commonly called the Harvest — then the following great events, seemingly in the order given below, remain yet to be fulfilled before the blessings of the Kingdom begin to come to the world:

(1) The completion of the triple alliance described in Revelation 16:13,14.

(2) The disruption of the same, occurring in connection with the symbolical great earthquake under the seventh vial, described in Revelation 16:19.

(3) The destruction of the great Mother of Harlots (Revelation 18:21).

(4) The Marriage of the Lamb, which follows the resurrection of his joint-heirs (Revelation 19:7,8).

(5) The manifestation of Christ and his joint-heirs to the world at the close of the great tribulation, out of which the Great Company will be delivered (Revelation 7:9,14). The vision we are now considering portrays this stage of the Second Advent, as we shall endeavor to show.

(6) The binding of Satan (Revelation 20:1).

(7) The inauguration of the New Covenant with the nation of Israel after their time of trouble is over.

Christ the Victorious Conqueror

Proceeding now to an investigation of the various features of this vision, it is our firm conviction that the personage seen by St. John represents our Lord Jesus Christ. This is shown by the symbols connected with and surrounding this personage, as also the titles ascribed to him. This same manifestation of Christ in his execution of judgment on the false religious systems is frequently referred to in the visions of the ancient Prophets. One of these prophetic visions is found in Isaiah 63:1-6.

"The Prophet Isaiah (63:1-6), taking his standpoint down at the end of the harvest of the Gospel Age, beholds a mighty Conqueror, glorious in his apparel (clothed with authority and power), and riding forth victoriously over all his enemies, with whose blood all his garments are stained. He inquires who the wonderful stranger is, saying, 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?' ... The reply to the Prophet's inquiry — 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?' — is, 'I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.' It is the same mighty one described by the Revelator (Revelation 19:11-16), 'the King of kings and Lord of lords,' Jehovah's Anointed, our blessed Redeemer and Lord Jesus."

Mr. Barnes says that "there can be no doubt that the Messiah is intended, as he goes forth to the subjugation of the world." Still another observes that "The Marriage of the Lamb ... is speedily followed with the closing scenes of the world [Age]. It is the battle of the great day of God Almighty. ... The sublime Hero of the scene is [symbolizes] none other than our ever blessed Lord Jesus. His name is not given, but the marks and inscriptions which he bears and all that is said of him, infallibly identify him as the same Jesus who went up to heaven from the summit of Mount Olivet."

We inquire, If this feature of the Second Advent is to be invisible, that is, if no human being will see him in person, then in what way will this feature of the Second Advent be made manifest to the world? The reply is that it will not be revealed to the world by his riding on a literal white horse; nor as having a literal sword going forth out of his mouth that with it he should smite the nations. Rather it is that these things, together with all the other features describing this person and his actions, are symbolical. Some one may inquire, May it not be even though all these things are symbolical, that the vision as a whole represents a *visible* descent of the Son of God to earth? Not so, we answer. If visible it must

be by some kind of veiling of his glorified person, and if we keep in mind what we have learned respecting our Lord's glorious change of nature at his resurrection, that he is now the highly exalted, immortal, Divine one, dwelling in light that no man can approach unto, it becomes evident that no mortal man could look upon him in his glorified body, or upon his majestic person, and live. In view of these facts the vision under consideration could not represent a visible manifestation of the person of the glorified Christ. But let it be borne in mind that while his presence will not be visible to the physical sense, there will be a manifestation of such a character, accompanied by such supernatural demonstrations, as will constitute convincing evidence to the beholders that the Divine Ruler, Christ, has taken to himself his great power, and is using that power to destroy the enemies of Truth in whatever way they may be operating. Furthermore, these supernatural manifestations will be of such a character as to sanctify God in the eyes of all the world and cause all who live through the troubles to acknowledge his rulership. One aspect of the same scene seems to be referred to in Ezekiel 37:28, 38:23, 39:27,28.

The particular delineations that are associated with this person are of course symbolical, and represent the different attributes and characteristics which will be exercised by Christ in the great judgment work he is at the time to perform. The first thing of a symbolical character that appeared to St. John's vision was that of the opening of the heaven.

The meaning of this as given by Mr. Barnes appeals to us as being both reasonable and clear: To St. John beholding the vision it was as though there was an opening in the sky, that is, in the expanse above — in the visible heavens as they overspread the earth. The Hebrews spoke of the sky as a solid expanse; or as a curtain stretched out; or as an extended arch above the earth — describing it as it appears to the eye. In that expanse or arch, the stars are set as gems (Isaiah 34:4); through apertures or windows in that expanse the rain comes down (Genesis 7:11). These expressions of Scripture in many places evidently have a symbolical meaning associated with them. As illustrating this we call attention to several: At Christ's baptism (Matthew 3:16), it is said that the heavens were opened and the holy Spirit descended. Again in the instance of Stephen's martyrdom, the heavens are represented as opened to him and he saw the Son of God seated at the right hand of power (Acts 7:56). Another instance is that in connection with St. Peter's vision in which he saw heaven opened and a certain vessel descending unto him (Acts 10:11). Another use of the same is found in Revelation 4:1, in which St. John saw a door opened in heaven. Now all these instances, while seemingly real to those who described them, were visions and are evidently symbolical, each one designed to teach a distinct truth. The one in connection with the Savior's baptism was intended to teach that heavenly things were at the time opened to his spiritual vision, the Divine benediction, represented in the holy Spirit of peace and truth symbolized by the dove, abiding on him. In the case of Stephen the opening of the heavenly expanse was designed to comfort him and to show him that he had the approval of the one who sits at the right hand of God. In the case of St. Peter, the meaning is that the revelation

made to him in the vision had its origin in heaven. In the case of St. John (Revelation 4:1) the same thought is brought out, that the Revelation visions then to be given to him were from God.

The opening of the heavens and the sudden appearance of the white horse and his rider is like these other incidents, a vision. The design of the vision is evidently to represent the manifestation of Christ at his Second Advent to the whole world, riding forth as a mighty conqueror in majesty and glory. It would represent, therefore, that Christ's mission to earth is to be a heavenly, Divine one; and the symbolic surroundings connected with the personage determine in addition that his mission is one of awful judgments, these judgments to be executed upon God's enemies.

"And Behold a White Horse"

We inquire next, What is the symbolical significance of the white horse? The horse is employed in Job 39:19-25, Proverbs 21:31, Zechariah 10:3 as a symbol of war, conquest and victory, or triumph. A white horse is used in both triumphal and bridal processions; and thus employed would denote victory and purity.

The rider of the horse is said to be called, "Faithful and True" (verse 11). We are reminded of the fact that this was one of the names or titles Christ applies to himself in the message to the Church of Laodicea (Revelation 3:14). The attributes here referred to — "faithful and true," are peculiarly appropriate to Christ, and particularly as they apply to this judgment vision. In these judgment acts he shows his faithfulness in delivering the Church from all its enemies, and his truthfulness in fulfilling the promises given her.

"In righteousness he judges and makes war" (verse 11). The teaching is simply that all these acts of judgment that will be executed will be righteous, just punishments; that the war that he institutes and engages in, unlike all other wars, which are largely incited by ambitious men, made in most instances for the purpose of conquest, has for its object the furtherance of righteousness, and is for the good of all; and it is to this end that this great destruction of evil men and systems is accomplished.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire" (verse 12). The meaning seems to be that his eyes were bright, sharp and penetrating, indicating Christ's ability to penetrate into the very thoughts, motives and purposes of men. We speak sometimes of a fiery look or glance, which is indicative of just indignation at willful disobedience and sin. "His eyes like a flame of fire tell us in symbol that our Master is all-seeing, omniscient; that he is not deceived by outward forms or ceremonies, but can and does read every thought and intent of the heart." Another commentator on this verse has said:

"To judge rightly he must see through and through, search all depths, look beneath all masks, penetrate all darkness, and try everything to its ultimate residuum. Hence this flaming vision, which likewise tells of the fierceness of his wrath against his enemies. There is often something wonderfully luminous, penetrating, overawing in the human eye. Men have been killed by the look of

kings. It is like the living intellect made visible, which seems to read all secrets at a glance, and before which the beholder cowers. It is this infinitely intensified flashing like a sword of fire from the visual orbs, that the holy Apostle here beheld in this [vision of the] Warrior-Judge. It is an eye- flame of Omniscient perception, and an outbreaking indignation and wrath which seizes and unmans the foe before he sees the sword."

"And on his head were many crowns" (verse 12). The significance of this is well illustrated in both sacred and profane history. When King David overthrew the Ammonites and captured their king, he placed upon his own brow the crown of the vanquished monarch in addition to the crown that was already his (2 Samuel 12:30). It is recorded in traditional writing that when Ptolemy captured and took possession of Antioch he placed two crowns upon his head, thereby declaring himself king of both Egypt and Asia. It is well known that the Pope wears a triple crown, which shows his claim to three sovereignties combined in one. It has been already noted that the "dragon" has seven diadems, and the "beast" has ten diadems on his horns, the last indicating a combination of ten sovereignties (Revelation 12:3, 13:1). The significance in this vision, therefore, obviously is that of an accumulation of dominions through conquests and victories; and the lesson in this Revelation symbol seems to be that Christ is now arrayed against the last form of the beastly power — with which, through his followers, he previously had many conflicts, and now as the winner of many battles, he has become the ruler of all sovereignties, his rightful due and possession. In chapter 10 he is represented as the mighty angel whose right it is to rule the symbolical earth and sea. The "rainbow" is there seen upon his head, indicating that his power and interposition were specially and providentially exercised at that time of urgent need, in fulfillment of his promises to his own, of Divine guidance and protection. He comes in the vision we are now considering, personally, as the great Warrior-King and Judge, to put down usurpers combined against his right to rule — a right that was purchased by him through the sacrifice of his human life at Calvary (Romans 14:9). He thus becomes the King of kings and Lord of lords.

"And he had a name written, that no one knew but he himself" (verse 12). This statement, expressing secrecy as to the "name" of the illustrious one, would seem to teach that so far as humanity is concerned they do not recognize nor appreciate him, nor his true worth or offices. He has indeed been highly exalted far above all other creatures so that he justly claims the title "King of kings and Lord of lords"; but the world knows it not. Mankind is still under a pall of blindness, superstition, and ignorance, and has yet to learn concerning the glorious office of the "Word," the "Logos," the Son of God, and of those who share with him as his joint-heirs. And though the statement reads, "No one knows except himself," this need not be understood to exclude his followers — those who are members of him, of his Body — the Bride. Do not the saints indeed, made partakers of the holy Spirit, and given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven — do not these truly understand the meaning of the title, "The Word of God," Jehovah's special mouthpiece, the King of kings and Lord of lords? Do

not all such even now proclaim the office of their Lord and Bridegroom, and announce him as earth's rightful King at the door? "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God" (verse 13). The symbol in this verse seems to be that of a victorious warrior in garments covered with blood who has already been engaged in bloody conflicts, and who is again about to enter upon another, a final battle in which he will accomplish a lasting victory in the destruction of all his foes. In fact, the whole plot of the great Revelation Drama is but a picture of successive conflicts of the Body members of this great Commander, under his providential leadership, each conflict bringing the Divine Drama nearer and nearer to its close. In this last and final one these members are represented as having been glorified and clothed with Divine power, to be associated with him as witnesses in this final overthrow of his and their foes. We might possibly carry this thought further than this, and note that it was the same one, "The Word of God," in his pre-human state that fought for Israel in the days of Joshua, when under his providential leadership their enemies were destroyed. It was the same one who "fought from heaven," against the kings of Canaan, by the waters of Megiddo; when "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Judges 4 and 5). The mantle dipped in blood seems to signify, then, a memorial of past conflicts, and that at the time of this vision's fulfillment the Victor in them all is to engage in another conflict in which he will destroy all the great combinations of evil that have for centuries sought to blot out of existence his ransomed Church and have opposed his rule as King of kings.

The Logos, the Word of God

Concerning the title of this victorious Rider, "The Word of God," we find this term "Word" is translated from the same Greek character, *Logos*, as that used in John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word," the "*Logos*."

"Here our Lord, in his prehuman existence, is referred to as 'The Word' (Greek *Logos*). 'In the beginning was the *Logos*.' Dr. Alexander Clarke says, concerning this word *Logos*: 'This term should be left untranslated for the same reason that the names *Jesus* and *Christ* are left untranslated. As every appellative of the Savior of the world was descriptive of some excellencies in his person, nature, or work, so the epithet, *Logos*, which signifies a word, a word spoken, speech, eloquence, doctrine, reason, or the faculty of reason, is very properly applied to him.' The Evangelist, in his epistle, uses the same title in respect to our Lord again, denominating him 'The Word of life,' or the '*Logos* of life' (1 John 1:1). ...

"The statement, thus understood, implies that our Lord Jesus, in his prehuman existence, as the *Logos*, was with the Father in the very beginning of creation. This confirms the inspired statement that the *Logos* himself was 'the beginning of the creation of God'; this is the precise statement of the Apostle, who assures

us that our Lord is not only 'the Head of the Body, the Church,' and 'the first-born from the dead,' but also the beginning of all creation — 'that in all things he might have the preeminence.' His words are: 'He is the image of the invisible God — first born of all creation; because by him were all things created, those in the heavens and those on the earth, visible and invisible — whether thrones, or lordships, or governments, or authorities: all things were created by him and for him, and he precedes all things, and in him all things have been permanently placed.' (Colossians 1:15-18). Hear also the word of prophecy concerning the Only Begotten, not only declaring his coming exaltation as King of earthly kings, but describing him as already being Jehovah's first-born, saying, 'I will make him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.' (Psalms 89:27). Note also that our Lord (referring to his own origin), declares himself to be, 'The faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God' (Revelation 3:14)."

Armies in Heaven Followed Him

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in fine linen" (verse 14).

It would seem, when all the other features associated with this vision are taken into consideration, that there could scarcely be room for any difference of opinion among students of the Revelation regarding the thought that these "armies of heaven" represent the glorified saints. The vision being seen by St. John after the announcement of the Marriage of the Lamb, and the call of other of the consecrated ones who were left in the tribulation to participate in the Marriage celebration, the "Marriage Supper," seems all sufficient to prove this. The Scriptures seem to teach that it will be in connection with some of the severest troubles of the "great tribulation" that the last of the joint- heirs with Christ will meet their change. The overthrow of the great "mother" organization, the Roman Catholic ecclesiasticism, as indicated by the visions preceding the Marriage of the Lamb, seems to be an event that will be witnessed by some of these joint-heirs while in the flesh. This vision of the descent of Christ and his armies from heaven follows immediately this event. There is quite a general agreement among expositors that these armies of heaven represent the glorified saints. We quote a few very striking comments which show this:

" 'And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clad in white, pure, fine linen.' These are the veteran fighters that taking on them by faith the armor [described in Ephesians 6:10-18] while here, [in the flesh] have stood against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age; against wicked spirits in the heavenlies. They were seen as conquerors in chapter 12, when the dragon was cast out of heaven, through their overcoming him; veteran warriors through the centuries since Christ went on high, and the holy Spirit came down. These are the overcomers of the different conditions of the assembly of God [the seven Churches representing seven periods of the Church's history] through the second and third chapters. And now they come down ... to take their place with him in reigning" (M. Taylor).

"When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven, in flaming fire [judgments] taking vengeance upon them that know not God and obey not the Gospel, he does not come alone. He is married now and his Bride is with him. Even before the flood, Enoch prophesied of this epiphany of the promised one and said, 'Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all.' (Jude 14,15). They are with him now, therefore, they must have been taken before. John saw, and writes, 'The armies, the ones in the heaven were following him.' Christ is the Head and Leader, and he goes before; the saints follow in his train. The promise from the beginning was that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head and here it is emphasized that he himself treadeth the winepress of the wine of the anger of the wrath of the God, the All-Ruler. He himself is the Great Hero and Conqueror in this battle. But he is [the Messenger of] 'Jehovah of hosts.' He has many under his command. The armies of the sky are his and he brings them with him, even the 'called and chosen and faithful.' ...

"They wear no armor. They are immortal, and cannot be hurt; and they are not the executors of this vengeance. It is Christ's own personal victory in accordance with the Apostolic declaration that 'for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.' (1 John 3:8). He bears the only sword and he alone uses it. He treadeth the winepress alone. Those who accompany him in the scene of conflict therefore need no weapons. The Sword of the Great Captain is enough. Their defense is in him and their victory is in him ... it is David who slays Goliath, and the hosts of God's Israel have only to follow up the mighty triumph, shouting their songs along the path of victory" (Joseph Seiss).

"These hosts of the redeemed on white horses accompany him to be witnesses of his victory, and to participate in the joy of the triumph, not to engage in the work of blood, for he has said, 'I have trodden the winepress alone' (Isaiah 63:3)" (Albert Barnes).

"In the power of this, he now comes forth; the armies that are in heaven following their white horsed Leader, themselves also upon white horses, sharers with him in the conflict and the victory, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. It is this fine linen which we have just seen as granted to the Bride, and which needed the blood of the Lamb to make it white. It is therefore undoubtedly the same company here as there, only here seen in a new aspect, even as the Lord himself is seen in a new one. ...

"The Lord comes then, and all the saints with him. How impossible to think of a providential coming merely here! 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear [be manifested to the world],' says the Apostle, 'then shall ye also appear [be manifested] with him in glory.' (Colossians 3:4). 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?' he asks elsewhere" (F). W. Grant.

"In the Apocalypse, the key note of the final revelation is sounded, 'Behold he cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they which pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him.' To that coming all the preliminary letters to the Churches, and all the subsequent actions of the

[Revelation] prophecy are directed; the opening of its seals; the sounding of its trumpets; the pouring forth of its vials. Under the sixth vial the startling utterance is heard, 'Behold I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.' After the fall of Babylon heaven is opened and 'the King of kings and Lord of lords,' whose name is 'Faithful and True,' the 'Word of God,' comes forth, followed by the army of his white robed saints" (H. G. Guinness).

"Hark the song of exultation breaking forth from heaven! ... And immediately [following the marriage of the Lamb] a triumphal procession is seen moving forth from the direction whence comes the song: 'And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth he judge and make war.' This majestic Rider we met at the very opening of Apocalyptic history (Revelation 6:2), but then he [in the person of his Church] was going forth in peaceful conquest: 'And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him had a bow' — 'Thou didst ride upon Thine horses, upon Thy chariots of salvation: Thy bow was made quite bare' (Habakkuk 3:9), 'and a crown was given unto him.' This is the '*stephanos*,' the crown which in Scripture is so repeatedly set before the Christian as the prize for his spiritual overcoming, and which is fitly worn by him who in the days of his flesh could say, 'I have overcome the world.' 'And he went forth conquering and in order to conquer' — not only to effect the present victories of redemption, but to win the ultimate sovereignty of the world.

"'This final conquest has now arrived; for as the white-horse Rider comes forth from heaven, we behold, 'and on his head were many crowns.' Not the *stephanos* now, but the *diadema* is the symbol of his supremacy. The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ; and all the crowns of all the kings have passed over upon his brow. The long succession of world-wide monarchies which we beheld in Daniel's vision has intervened; the stone cut out of the mountain without hands now smites the image upon its feet, and itself fills the whole world. How striking the picture of the final transfer of earth's sovereignty to Immanuel! To Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, the first in this line of universal monarchs, God said: 'Thou O king, art a king of kings.' (Daniel 2:37). Now that this bloody line terminates in the overthrow of mystical Babylon — whose sovereign, the pope, has long arrogated both temporal and ecclesiastical supremacy — Messiah takes up both the successions, and also takes the long abused title attaching thereto: 'And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords' " (A. J. Gordon).

It is well for the faithful student to keep in mind here that while this vision describes the Lord Jesus' heavenly army, which is composed of the glorified saints, there is an earthly army that will engage in this final conflict. This is called Jehovah's great army and is not composed of saints of God. When we come to that part of the vision that relates to the opponents in this great and final battle between truth and error, we will consider who these are (Joel 2:11).

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (verse 15).

The sword referred to here is not a literal one. No one could possibly conceive that this statement of St. John is to be understood literally. Undoubtedly to St. John's vision it seemed a literal sword, even as all the other transactions in the vision seemed literal. Let us keep in mind in considering this remarkable scene, that it was in every sense of the word a vision; but while a vision, it points to a most real and literal and terrible transaction.

We are here reminded of the Psalmist's words, "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Most Mighty" (Psalms 45:3). The warrior carries his sword on his thigh; in this instance, however, the sword proceeds from his mouth. The sword in addition to its representing the Word of God seems in this instance to be the emblem of authority and majesty as well. Standing for authority and majesty it would include the thought of authority to punish his enemies. The Apostle Paul uses it in this sense when referring to the world rulers: "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain" (Romans 13:3,4).

There is a very general agreement that the sword of verse 15 represents the sword of Truth. "He who now takes his great power to reign is shown in symbol (Revelation 19:15) as the one whose sword went forth out of his mouth; 'that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.' That sword is the Truth (Ephesians 6:17); and the living saints, as well as many of the world, are [even] now being used as the Lord's soldiers in overthrowing errors and evils." This has been true in a sense throughout the Gospel Age; however, the vision we are considering describes something different. "Let no one hastily infer a peaceable conversion of the nations to be here symbolized; for many Scriptures — such as Revelation 11:17,18, Daniel 12:1, 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Psalms 149 and 47 — teach the very opposite."

"It is the same sword that we have seen in chapter 1:16, 2:12, in the address to the assembly [Church] in Pergamos, which had become nationalized; and now [at this time] the nations Christianized though not Christ's own, are to be under judgment of the sword, which is the Word of God" (M). Taylor.

"Judgment is now [at the time of this vision] impending: 'out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he may smite the nations.' So Isaiah: 'He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked.' (Isaiah 11:4). It needs but a word from Him to cause their destruction; while it is judgment no less according to His Word: it is that long and oft threatened, slow to come, but at last coming in the full measure of the denunciation" (F. W. Grant).

"It is 'sharp' like the sickle, and fulfills the same office. It is the word of almighty Justice. It proceeds out of his mouth. So Isaiah 11:4. This shows the

ease with which he accomplishes his purposes. He speaks and it is done. He commands and it is accomplished. Something of this was pre-intimated when the armed mob came forth against him in Gethsemane: 'When Jesus spake to them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.' (John 18:6). If so mild an utterance prostrated his enemies, then what will it be when he girds and crowns himself for the 'battle of the great day of God Almighty' — when he comes, with all the cavalcade of heaven to tread the winepress of the fierceness of Jehovah's anger? 'The Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two- edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow' (Hebrews 4:12); and when that Word goes forth in execution of almighty wrath upon those in arms against his throne, what a flow of blood, and wilting of life, and tornado of deadly disaster, must it work!" (Joseph Seiss).

This treading of the winepress is the same, doubtless, that is referred to in Isaiah 63:2,3, and Revelation 14:20. It is to be the last feature of the time of trouble.

"And he has on his mantle and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords" (verse 16). The authority, majesty, and dominion of Christ seems to be expressed in that the name, "King of kings and Lord of lords," is engraven upon both his mantle and his thigh. The governments of the world have for long centuries abused a lease of power from Jehovah. The time has now come when the lease has expired. Symbolic beasts have held the sword of authority, and reigned. And at this stage of history, as represented in this and preceding visions, they have combined unwittingly to hold it against the rightful King and his armies. He is now represented as manifested in his majesty to use that authority and power to overthrow, to destroy this combination of kings and lords, and to inaugurate the Millennial reign for the blessing of all the families of earth.

Hail the King!

Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious!
See the Man of Sorrows now;
From the fight returned victorious
Every knee to him shall bow.
Crown him! crown him!
Crowns become the Victor's brow.

Crown the Savior! angels, crown him!
Rich the trophies Jesus brings;
In the seat of power enthrone him,
While the vault of heaven rings.
Crown him! crown him!
Crown the Savior King of kings.

Sinners in derision crowned him,
Mocking thus the Savior's claim;
Saints and angels crowd around him,
Own his title, praise his name.
Crown him! crown him!
Spread abroad the Victor's fame.

Hark! those bursts of acclamation!
Hark! those loud triumphant chords!
Jesus takes the highest station;
Oh what joy the sight affords!
Crown him! crown him!
King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Chapter Forty-Four

Christendom Gathered to Armageddon

(Revelation 19:17-21)

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great" (Revelation 19:17,18).

Let it be borne in mind that the vision described in these words is closely associated with, indeed is a continuation of the one described in verses 11-16. It will be recalled that the symbols employed in that part of the vision are descriptive of a great warrior and his armies who were about to engage in deadly conflict. This conquering warrior and his armies, as we observed, represent our Lord Jesus Christ and his glorified Church. However, before St. John saw, or at least before he described the enemy forces, his attention was drawn to the strange and startling scene of an angel who appears to be standing in the sun, and who in a loud voice utters the words quoted above.

The import of the language implies that whoever may be represented by this angel, foresees or anticipates the result or outcome of this terrible battle. The assembling of the birds in response to the angel's call evidently refers to what is frequently the case after a great battle, namely the assembling of vultures and other birds of prey over a battlefield to feed on the flesh of the dead and disabled wounded. The words of the angel, therefore, indicate that the symbols are drawn from a most sanguinary and cruel battle in which the carnage and slaughter is most terrible, and the bodies of the dead are left unburied for the birds of prey. This great battle is symbolical, and is quite generally understood by expositors to be identical with the closing scene of the one called in Revelation 16:14,16, "the battle of that great day of God Almighty"; and further described in the words, "He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon [Mount of Destruction]." The words of this symbolic angel are in themselves sufficient to show that the description in the closing verses of this nineteenth chapter is that of one of the final destructive acts of the judgment of Christendom.

It will have been noted in our expositions of the visions relating to the harvest period that we considered one very significant gathering (which of course preceded the one of this vision), namely the gathering out of the rejected, religious systems, the Elect, the wheat class, the overcoming saints (Revelation 14:14-16). This gathering will have been completed and these overcomers it would seem will have entered into glory with their Lord before the vision we are now considering meets its fulfillment. Another, a second gathering, will have been completed before this vision meets its fulfillment; this is the one described as the gathering of the ripe clusters of the vine of the earth, preparatory to their being cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God (Revelation 14:18-20).

The gathering or assembling referred to in the words of the angel standing in the sun is that of those represented by the birds of prey, the vultures, which will of course take place at the conclusion of the great winepress feature of the time of trouble. While this great battle is undoubtedly a symbolical one, and the great slaughter is more especially designed to portray the destruction of the various governments, systems, and organizations that will then be found in opposition to the establishment of God's Kingdom of truth and righteousness, yet there can be no question that there will be a most dreadful and appalling slaughter and loss of human life in connection with the destruction of these systems. It seems to be one of those visions that combine both symbolical and literal statements.

The Angel Standing in the Sun

Coming to the consideration of the symbols of the vision more particularly, we inquire first, Who or what is represented by the angel who is seen standing in the sun? It is of interest to note that nearly all commentators who wrote before 1890 quite generally understood this angel to be one of the spiritual, heavenly messengers. Mr. Lord, who wrote in 1846, is a notable exception, and seems to us to come much nearer to the truth in his exposition. In the light of the events of history unveiling more clearly these Revelation visions that embrace the closing scenes of the age — the harvest and the vintage — his explanation is indeed remarkable and convincing and constitutes a basis for invaluable assistance at the present time in obtaining a clear insight into what seems to be the true and correct interpretation. It was his understanding that the angel stationed in the sun, who summons the birds of prey to assemble to the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of the anti- Christian host, is a symbol of either one conspicuous person or a class of persons that have been made aware of the impending destruction and are in a position of close observation of the great leaders of this vast anti-Christian host, although not of their number. This person or company of persons are to warn these of their impending destruction.

The interpretation that this angel represents a class of persons living on the earth at the time of Christ's manifestation with his saints in judgment seems to us to be the correct one. The angel, then, would represent a company or class who, after the glorification of the Church, the joint-heirs of the Kingdom, have knowledge of the fact that the destruction of this great anti-Christian host is at that time to immediately occur. It seems quite clear, then, that in the Divine

order and chronological arrangement of the associated visions, all the Kingdom class have passed beyond the veil at the time of this angel and his proclamation; indeed, the Kingdom class are seen in the preceding part of the same vision as the "armies of heaven," who are following the symbolical personage seated upon the white horse. We have seen that this personage represents Christ as he is about to execute the final judgment on his enemies, the anti-Christian host.

The sun, to our understanding, is in all the Revelation visions a symbol of the light of God's truth. The angel standing in the sun would therefore represent a company of persons on earth blessed with a knowledge of Divine truth — not alone the truth respecting God's great Plan of the Ages, but also the truth respecting the very last judgment on those powers, civil and ecclesiastical, which are left after the judgments have fallen upon the great Mother of Harlots — a company who understand that this judgment is then *immediately* to take place. More than this, whoever this company may be, it seems evident that it is comprised of those who have become acquainted with the fact that the selection of the Bride of Christ is at the time of the vision's fulfillment complete, and that all of these elect ones are glorified and with their Divine Lord. The proclamation made by this angel implies that the momentous events of that time will culminate in the complete destruction of those organizations, civil, social, and ecclesiastical, symbolized by the "beast," the "kings of the earth," and the "false prophet."

Keeping in mind then that this vision meets its fulfillment in the very closing period of the great time of trouble, the great tribulation (Daniel 12:1, Revelation 7:9,14), and *after* the glorification of the Church, would it not seem to the careful student of the Revelation that there could be but one class on earth at this particular time possessing such knowledge of the Divine plans and purposes; and may not that class indeed be the one that is called in Revelation 7:9 the "Great Multitude [Company]." It is quite generally understood by those who have given this matter careful study that the class referred to in Revelation 7:9 is comprised of certain devoted and consecrated Christians who are left on the earth, after the Little Flock class have all been changed, to complete the development of their character and fit them to participate in the celebration of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. One feature connected with the crystallizing of their characters would most naturally seem to be the giving of just such a testimony as is symbolized in the calling of the birds of prey to gather to "the great supper of God." It is from out of this great tribulation that these are represented as coming in Revelation 7:9-14.

It will have been noted that in connection with the pouring out of the seventh vial judgment, there is heard a voice proceeding from the nominal temple, saying, "It has been done." We cannot fail to notice a close connection between the words of the angel who is seen standing in the sun with the words of this voice. It will be recalled that Mr. Russell applies the words, "It has been done," as proceeding from the Great Company, uttered in connection with the fall of the ecclesiastical systems. We quote his words: "But now, when the seventh has been poured out, we hear the nominal temple saying, 'It has been done' ...

This temple class, which finally recognizes God's dealings when these systems are entirely destroyed, is the same which we have found elsewhere mentioned in Scripture, and which we have designated the second company, who, though losing the prize promised to overcomers of the beast, etc. (Revelation 20:4), are 'saved so as by fire [these severe judgments] in the day of the Lord Jesus.' "

In strong symbolical language the utter defeat and overthrow of the opposing forces is next recorded (verses 19,20), following which we have the statement of St. John that "all the birds were satiated with their flesh" (verse 21). We inquire, Who are represented by these "birds" of prey? A very interesting and clear interpretation of this symbol is given by Mr. Russell. His explanation is that these birds, vultures, represent Communists, Infidels, Socialists, Anarchists and Nihilists.

"All these fight in the battle of the great day, though ignorant of him whose Kingdom they help to establish. These are the vultures of Revelation 19:17,18,21, who battle for plunder and get their fill [eat of the supper] in the overturning of earth's kingdoms; because the time is come for Messiah to take the dominion of earth and to overthrow the oppressors and corrupters of the earth (Revelation 19:15 and 11:17,18), preparatory to the establishment of everlasting peace upon the only firm foundation of righteousness and truth.

"Meantime, while those who are in opposition to the Kingdom of God and its scepter of righteousness, impartiality and justice, are being gathered [not after they have been gathered as described in the vision under consideration] to the great slaughter referred to above (See Luke 19:27), the Lord's professed Church is having its trial completed."

We next inquire, Who are represented by the kings, commanders, etc., the flesh of whom will satiate these symbolical birds of prey? The answer is found in the following comment:

"The ecclesiastical kings and princes, with their retinue of clergy and faithful adherents, will be gathered in solid phalanx — Protestant and Catholic. The political kings and princes, senators, and all in high places, with their henchmen and retainers, will follow in line on the same side. The financial kings and merchant princes, and all whom they can influence by the most gigantic power ever yet exercised in the world, will join the same side, according to this prophecy. [Revelation 16:12-16.] They do not realize, however, that they are coming to Armageddon [Mount of Destruction]."

Developments that Must Precede

We should bear in mind that this Armageddon conflict will have been going on for some time before the events of the vision we are considering meet their fulfillment. The gathering of the forces to this conflict has been in process of fulfillment for some years past and occasional skirmishes have occurred in connection with the strikes, lockouts, etc., of the capital and labor troubles. The real Armageddon conflict, however, is from our present viewpoint still future, as has been pointed out:

"The image of the beast must yet receive life — power. It must be transformed from a mere mechanism to a living force. Protestant Federation realizes that its organization will continue to be futile unless it receives vitalization — unless its clergy directly or indirectly shall be recognized as possessed of Apostolic ordination and authority to teach. This, the prophecy indicates, will come from the two-horned beast, which we believe symbolically represents the Church of England. Highhanded activities of Protestantism and Catholicism, operating in conjunction for the suppression of human liberties, await this vivifying of the image. This may come soon, but Armageddon cannot precede it, but must follow — perhaps a year after, according to our view of the Prophetic Word."

Since these words were written events have occurred that seem to confirm this interpretation of Scripture concerning how Federated Protestantism will receive Apostolic ordination (?). The following from the *Literary Digest* of September 25, 1920, under the title, "The Lambeth Plan for Church Reunion," is very significant in this connection:

"From solemn contemplation of hates and misunderstandings engendered by the World War the Lambeth Conference [held in London], composed of 252 Anglican [Church of England] and Protestant Episcopal bishops from the British Isles, America, and other parts of the world, turns to a proposed union of all Christendom as the chief hope against the forces of disorder. ... On the question of ordination the Conference suggests that 'if the authorities of other communions should so desire, we are persuaded that, terms of union having been otherwise satisfactorily adjusted, bishops and clergy of our communion would willingly accept from the authorities [other denominations] a form of commission or recognition which would commend our ministry to their congregations, as having its place in the one family of life.' In return the signers of the manifesto assert their 'hope that the same motive would lead ministers [of other denominations] who have not received it to accept a commission through episcopal ordination, as obtaining for them a ministry throughout the whole fellowship,' and their belief that 'in so acting no one of us could possibly be taken to repudiate his past ministry.' Such resolutions as these 'can only have been inspired by Christian charity at its highest,' says the *London Guardian*, official organ of the Church of England, and it fervently declares:

" 'It will be forever memorable that at this moment when doubt and uncertainty are clogging the energy and obscuring the ideals of the nation, and when the very foundations of civilization are being threatened by the forces of disorder, the bishops of the Anglican communion have shown the way to strengthen and unite the only power by which they can be combated.' "

It would seem as though in the settlement of this question of so-called Apostolic ordination by the union of the Church of England with the other Protestant denominations, we have the explanation of the change in the symbol "image of the beast," to that of the "false prophet"; the latter symbol being more expressive of its authoritative teaching characteristic. Papacy, already united, may in the near future, we believe, gain for a brief space of time a powerful influence

in the world, and become allied to the civil powers and Federated Protestantism in a vain attempt to keep down the masses in their efforts to seek relief from oppression, fancied and real. This, the Scriptures teach, will fail, and a disruption of this "triple-alliance" will take place. The Armageddon destruction will then immediately begin, and the first system to go down will be the great "Mother of Harlots," which we understand to represent the Roman Catholic hierarchy located at Rome. This, as we have endeavored to show, indeed, as portrayed in the order of the visions themselves, will occur before the Marriage of the Lamb, which represents the glorification and union of all the elect Kingdom class with their Lord. That solemn and significant event, the downfall of the great mother system, leaves the kingdoms of the earth in a state of threatened disintegration, yet still standing, but fearful that their destruction is also near. These kingdoms in this distressing condition gradually merge into the last or eighth form of the fourth beast — the last of the four great empires of Daniel's visions. The Protestant Federation, called in the vision under consideration, the "false prophet," is also left for a time after great Babylon, the mother system, falls. It is at this stage of the Armageddon battle that the vision of verses 17-21, chapter 19, seems to meet its fulfillment. It will be shortly after this time that the world will become aware that Christ has assumed the reins of authority. This stupendous event, we believe, will be first manifest in Israel's land, outside of Christendom.

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (verses 19-21).

Do we once more inquire, What is symbolized by the "beast," the "kings of the earth and their armies," and the "false prophet"? Then let us briefly review:

Considering these in their order we will take up first the beast symbol. As we have traced its long dark career down through the ages, we have found its complex history in brief, as follows:

Primarily and in a general sense it represents the fourth universal power, Rome, that in the vision of Daniel 7 is represented by the fourth nondescript beast, from its beginning in prophecy about 31 BC, down through its various aspects or changes to its last form, in which it is destroyed. This destruction is portrayed in the vision of Revelation 19:19-21. Daniel describes it first when it rules from the city of Rome over all the civilized world, from its beginning until about four centuries after Christ. He describes it next at a time when its universal sway ceases, and its ruling authority is distributed among the ten kingdoms into which the great empire became divided about the Fourth Century. He sees it again when these governments into which its territory became divided are dominated over by Papacy- the "little horn" (power) that rose up among the

ten about the Sixth Century. He describes it next when the temporal dominion of the "little horn," Papacy, is taken away. This was fully accomplished in 1870; although its power to persecute, "to wear out the saints of the Most High" (Daniel 7:25), ceased in 1799. Daniel finally sees it after the Papal hierarchy, the mother system is destroyed — he "beheld till the beast was slain and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." This is the final picture and is the one referred to in the vision under consideration. "And the beast ... was cast alive into the lake of fire" (Revelation 19:20). All these aspects are portrayed in Daniel 7:7-28.

St. John in the Revelation was given visions of this same fourth power. These visions describe the same things that Daniel saw under other striking symbols. In addition, the Revelation visions describe more fully and in greater detail the history of the beast. One striking difference is that in the Revelation the beast is represented as having seven heads. These seven heads represent the seven successive ruling powers, beginning about 31 BC, all of which have exercised authority in and from the city of Rome. The most noted and important one of these heads or successions (frequently called the beast) in its relation to the saints, is the beast under its Papal head. This head exercised a ruling influence to a greater or less extent for more than twelve centuries over the saints and also over the nations of Christendom. In the sense of exercising temporal authority this Papal head is identical with the "little horn" of Daniel 7, and passed away in 1870. It is because of Papacy's dominating influence over the saints and kingdoms of Christendom that it is frequently denominated "the beast." The seventh head is the Victor Immanuel Dynasty, now ruling, and it is said of this head that it would continue but a short time (Revelation 17:10). This seventh or last head will be followed by the last or eighth form of the beast, which is that described in the vision we are now considering — the nations of Christendom in a state of disintegration, bordering on anarchy. While it seems to us the Papal hierarchy will never gain temporal dominion again, it will, however, gain a temporary rise to power and influence in the affairs of the nations. It is in the exercise of this power and influence amongst its followers, in union with the civil powers and federated Protestantism, that it continues to be referred to as the "beast" in Revelation 16:13. In connection with the using of its power in this triple-alliance in a dominating oppressive sense it is destroyed. This, as we have seen, will probably be accomplished by an Italian uprising. At this time the last form of the beast fully comes into existence, and as described in both Daniel and the Revelation, is destroyed in the fire — anarchy — Daniel 7:11, Revelation 19:20.

The kings of the earth who, in association with the beast, make war against him who sits on the horse are, as explained foregoing, the ecclesiastical leaders, the clergy and their faithful adherents — Protestant and Catholic; the political kings, princes, senators and retainers; the financial kings and merchants, and all whom they can influence by the most gigantic power ever exercised in the world.

The "false prophet," it would seem, is another symbol of Federated Protestantism and refers to the image of the beast when it receives life or authority

to act with Papacy and the civil powers in an oppressive authoritative manner. This union will seem to be an absolute necessity on account of the revolutionary conditions that will prevail — conditions which will then be threatening the overthrow of the present order, as has been observed:

"In Revelation 16:13 we find mention of the false prophet, another representation of the image — the vitalized product of the Evangelical Alliance, which has taken the form of Church Federation, and has today a great deal of vitality."

The Last Great Battle

We inquire next, In what sense will those referred to by the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies, be making war against the one seated on the white horse and against his army? A reasonable answer to this is that as the time at last draws near for Christ's Kingdom to be established, these referred to in the vision as opposing the victorious Rider will be found trying to uphold the present order and hence will be in opposition to God's will. It should be kept in mind, however, that this vision we are now considering refers to events subsequent to that phase of the Armageddon conflict referred to in chapter 16:13, which at first is followed by the downfall of the mother system, the Papal hierarchy (Revelation 16:19, 18:21). The beast, therefore, in this vision, as we have endeavored to show, represents the last form of the fourth empire, the nations of Christendom ready to disintegrate in anarchy. In regard to the sense in which these great systems are found warring against Christ, one expositor has thus briefly explained the matter: "We are no doubt to interpret this according to the Lord's words to Saul of Tarsus — 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?' " Saul was ignorantly opposing Christ by persecuting his followers; and likewise these nations, etc., will be ignorantly opposing God's purpose in endeavoring to uphold the present order.

"Many noble people in this great [earthly] army will assume an attitude quite contrary to their preference. For a time the wheels of liberty and progress will be turned backward, and medieval restraints will be considered necessary for self-preservation — for the maintenance of the present order of things and for the prevention of the new order which God has decreed, the due time for which is at hand. Even those who may be God's people do not stop to consider whether it is his will that things should continue as they have been for the past six thousand years. The Bible says that such is not God's will, but that there is to be a great overturning, that a new order is coming in."

As having a further bearing on this matter, it is necessary to keep in mind that there are two great forces that have been gathering for this Armageddon conflict — the one, the triple alliance, will seek to uphold the present order of things; and the other, the masses of the people united against this alliance, will seek to overthrow it. It will readily be seen that those forces that are seeking to overthrow the present order, though operating more or less selfishly and ignorantly of the Divine Plan, will work out God's will and purpose. This force or army will be the masses of the people comprising many different classes. These

have for some time past, and with a large measure of success since the great war, been mustering their various forces and elements into one great federated union. The battle lines are daily becoming more distinctly drawn. These have been seeking relief from wrongs, real and fancied, through legislation. As expressed by another: "The masses will seek relief through the ballot and the peaceful readjustment of earth's affairs for the elimination of evil, for the placing of monopolies and utilities and the supplies of nature in the hands of the people for the public good. The crisis will be reached when the hitherto upholders of the law shall become violators of the law and resisters of the will of the majority as expressed by the ballot. Fear for the future will goad the well meaning masses to desperation, and anarchy will result when Socialism fails."

It will be through these causes that the present order of things will begin to go down. As the time will have then come for Messiah's Kingdom to be fully established, it will be seen that these masses of the people will, though unaware of it, be accomplishing God's purpose and can properly be said in this sense to be on the Lord's side.

"The very thing which they [the powers, civil and ecclesiastical] sought to avert by their union, federation, etc., will be the very thing that they will hasten. Other Scriptures [the principal one being that under consideration] tell us that God will be represented [in this final conflict] by Messiah, and that he will be on the side of the masses. 'At that time shall Michael [the God-like one — Messiah] stand up.' (Daniel 12:1). He will assume authority. He will take possession of his Kingdom in a manner little looked for by many of those who erroneously have been claiming to be his Kingdom, and authorized by him to reign in his name and in his stead.

"Our Lord Jesus declared, 'His servants ye are unto whom ye render service.' Some may be rendering service to Satan and to error, who claim to be rendering service to God and to righteousness; and some may serve ignorantly, as did Saul of Tarsus, who 'verily thought that he did God service' in persecuting the Church. The same principle holds true reversely. As an earthly king does not hold himself responsible for the moral character of each soldier who fights his battles, so the Lord does not vouch for the moral character of all who enlist and fight on his side of any question. His servants they are to whom they render service, whatever the motive or object prompting.

"The same principle will apply in the coming Battle of Armageddon. God's side of that battle will be the people's side; and that very nondescript host, the people, will be pitted at the beginning of the battle. Anarchists, Socialists, and hot-headed radicals of every school of reason and unreason, will be in the forefront of that battle. He who has any knowledge of army life knows that a great army is composed of all classes."

Indeed, this host is in Joel 2:11 called the Lord's (Jehovah's) army. His army will be made up of all those who see the errors, etc., in the civil, ecclesiastical, political, social, and financial world, and who engage in a world-wide crusade to right them. This army will be made up of patriots, who love their country;

reformers, who, seeing many of the social and degrading evils, will first discuss them, and then seek to root them out by legislation; socialists, who mistakenly see in their theories, a remedy for these evils; anarchists, who have but the one purpose, the overthrow of the whole present governmental orders; the ignorant and hopeless masses, who comprise the majority, and who are ready to join any movement that may seem to them would better their condition.

A Day of Recompenses

However, we must not get the impression that this nondescript host has God's sanction in their course. It is simply a case in which "He makes the wrath of men to praise Him." These shall not escape their share of punishment. This is plainly taught in another Scripture (Zephaniah 1:7-9,14-18) that describes this day of trouble under the same symbol. Mr. Russell thus quotes and comments on this prophecy:

"The Lord hath prepared a slaughter, He hath bid His guests. [Compare Revelation 19:17.] And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's slaughter that I will punish the princes and the king's children ... and I will inflict punishment [also] on all those [marauders] who leap over the threshold on that day, who fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit. [This shows not only that there will be a great overthrow of wealth and power in this time of trouble, but that those who will for the time be the instruments of heaven in breaking down present systems will also be punished for their equally unjust and unrighteous course; for the coming trouble will involve all classes, and bring distress upon all the multitude.]' ...

"The attitude of the people of God [who will witness the beginning of this conflict] should be that of great thankfulness to the Giver of every good. They should make provision for the great storm that is coming and keep very quiet, not unduly interested in the side of either rich or poor. We know in advance that the Lord is on the side of the people. He it is that will fight the Armageddon Battle, and His agency will be that peculiar army — all classes."

On the side of the triple-alliance will be those who will seek to uphold the present order, some actuated by policy, some by selfishness, and some sincerely, not seeing how a better order can be instituted. All these things have been for some years gradually shaping themselves for this final great Armageddon conflict; and a knowledge of them enables us better to comprehend the symbolic vision under consideration, describing the unseen, supernatural forces operating in this great work of overthrowing apostate Christendom.

In connection with the seventh vial St. John is shown in vision the breaking up of this triple-alliance or league; probably caused by its failure to accomplish its purpose of holding in check the turbulent masses. This is described under the symbol of the "great city," Christendom, becoming divided into three parts (Revelation 16:19). It is necessary to keep in mind that it is in connection with or immediately following the disruption of this triplealliance, that great Babylon, the mother system, in its governmental aspect, frequently designated the "beast,"

comes in remembrance before God and is destroyed (compare Revelation 16:19 with Revelation 18:21). It is our thought that this great event is brought about, doubtless, by a revolutionary uprising of the Italian peoples. Those who are carefully watching recognize that the present condition of affairs in Italy is gradually approaching a crisis which shows the trend of events in this direction. The following from a secular paper is very significant in this connection:

"In Rome, which has just passed the fiftieth anniversary of the city's existence as capital of united Italy, there are problems more difficult than those faced by England with her labor and Irish troubles, or by Germany with the load of defeat on her back. ... The most serious Italian trouble appears to be an outbreak of the most radical element against religion and all that represents it, as shown in the effort to break into the churches. There is more danger of trouble, serious and not to be remedied, from that direction than from any outbreak of 'Sovietism' in the factories."

In the interview that the Knights of Columbus were permitted to have recently with Pope Benedict, the *Glornale d'Italia* said: "The Knights of Columbus gave the Pope to understand that if grave troubles should arise in Italy, he could find protection and hospitality in America. After Rome was occupied by Italian troops in 1870, a French vessel awaited the orders of Pope Pius for a year at Civita Veechia, and the Knights said that in the event of a new crisis an American ship would take a similar position." All three of these events — the completion of the triple-alliance, the breaking up of the same, and the fall of the Papal government — are yet future, and must meet their fulfillment before the conditions in Christendom described in the vision under consideration will have obtained. In other words, it is our understanding that these three great events meet their fulfillment before the Marriage of the Lamb takes place, and of course, before the manifestation of Christ in judgment against the present order, which we understand is described in the vision under consideration. It would seem that all the various features of the great Armageddon conflict, until that stage of it described in this vision as the casting of the beast and false prophet into the "lake of fire," will be looked upon by the world in general as natural occurrences, indeed, as in no sense to be understood as specially directed by God, or the result of Messiah's exercising his great power, any more than have all similar occurrences of past history.

It will therefore be seen that if we are correct in our interpretation of the order of these coming events, then the beast in the vision we are considering represents the fourth power of Daniel's vision (Daniel 7) about to assume its last or eighth form. Keeping in mind the several forms or aspects assumed by the one symbolic "beast" in its long career of deception and blood, will enable us to understand better the words of verse 20. Thus we would read these words: "And the [fourth] beast [of Daniel 7 in its last, eighth form] was [at last] taken, and with him the false prophet [Federated Protestantism] that [in its aspect of the two-horned beast] wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image."

As St. John in vision watched with burning and absorbing interest the checkered career of this beast in its various forms and aspects as it warred against the saints of God, persecuting them unto death, and deceiving and blinding the people of the world respecting God and His character, we can imagine something of his feeling of rejoicing when he saw the "beast" at last captured, and cast alive into the symbolical "lake of fire." And likewise it is the privilege of the saints of God at the present time, to rejoice, as they look back in history and recall the black and dreadful crimes of the power symbolized by this beast in its varied forms, and realize that its career and dominion will soon be ended, that it is soon to be destroyed forever, and give place to the Kingdom of God's dear Son and his Bride. Then the blessings of Messiah's rule will begin to come to those who once ignorantly upheld and blindly worshipped at the altars of the beast and its image.

We inquire finally, What is symbolized by the "lake of fire," into which these civil and ecclesiastical hosts shall be cast? We answer, The "lake of fire," like the other features of the vision, is symbolical:

"And 'the beast and the false prophet,' the great false systems which have long oppressed and misled nominal Christendom, shall never escape from it. These systems [not both at the same time but at different intervals] are said to be cast 'alive' (that is, while they are still organized and operative) into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (Revelation 19:20).

"The great time of trouble, the Lord's judgment, which will utterly destroy these systems, will undoubtedly cause great social, financial, and religious difficulty and pain to all those identified with these deceived and deceiving systems, before they are utterly destroyed.

"The beast and false prophet systems, which during the Gospel Age have deceived and led astray, will be cast into a great, consuming trouble in the close of this Gospel Age. The torment of those systems will be *aionion*, i.e., lasting. It will continue as long as they last — until they are utterly consumed."

A comparison of verse 21 with that of verse 18 seems to show that the supporters of the present order, the supporters of the beast power before its disintegration, are referred to. These were explained to be the civil and ecclesiastical potentates, the great financial kings, as individuals, and those standing with them. The broad-sword of truth and judgment will cause these to see that it is God's Kingdom they are opposing, and after their complete fall from the positions of prominence, they will yield, some willingly we believe, and give allegiance to the new order.

Thus it will be seen that this remarkable vision teaches that before the incoming of the new order, the great anti-Christian systems, and the supporters of the same, which have so long opposed and misrepresented, unwittingly to a large extent, the Gospel and its great Author, and which have persecuted the saints, must be destroyed that the masses bound up in those systems may be given opportunity to yield obedience to the Divine authority of the Kingdom. And in this great conflict of the near future, the Truth and its supporters will

be as victorious as though in a literal sense the Lord Jesus Christ should wage battle with these opposing forces, overthrow them with great slaughter, capture their leaders, imprison and finally destroy them.

This great destruction is closely associated in point of time with Jacob's trouble which takes place in Israel's land. Let the reader note the following words respecting this matter and at the same time bear in mind the significant events that have occurred since these words were written, namely the capture of Jerusalem, the liberation of the land of Palestine from Mohammedan control, and its being given to God's ancient people for the purpose of forming a Jewish State:

"Still another thing intervenes. Although the Jews are gradually flowing into Palestine, gradually obtaining control of the land of Canaan, and although reports say that already nineteen millionaires are there, nevertheless, prophecy requires an evidently larger number of wealthy Hebrews to be there before the Armageddon crisis be reached. Indeed, we understand that 'Jacob's trouble' in the Holy Land will come at the very close of Armageddon. Then Messiah's Kingdom will begin to be manifested. Thenceforth Israel in the Land of Promise will gradually rise from the ashes of the past to the grandeur of prophecy. Through its divinely appointed princes, Messiah's Kingdom, all- powerful, but invisible, will begin to roll away the curse and to lift up mankind, and to give beauty for ashes."

These stupendous events are rapidly hastening to their culmination, and when accomplished will have prepared the way, so far as human opposition is concerned, for the thousand-year reign of Christ and his glorified saints. These enemies being removed there will still remain one more enemy to be disposed of — the "dragon," expressly stated in the next chapter to be that serpent of old, Satan, the Devil (Revelation 20:1-3).

Chapter Forty-Five

The Overthrow and Imprisonment of Satan

(Revelation 20:1-3)

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Revelation 20:1-3).

In the vision preceding the one here recorded St. John had portrayed to him in symbol the last act in the final overthrow of the present order — generally termed Christendom. We have seen that this most significant event will result in a dreadful and unspeakable destruction of human life; and that which has hitherto been termed Christendom will be left in a chaotic condition, without a government, either civil or religious. Notwithstanding this fact the Scriptures teach that a remnant of humanity will survive that great catastrophe, and with these the new dispensation will commence. Nearly all the ancient prophets of Israel have depicted the various aspects of this utter collapse of so-called Christian civilization.

Nor is the reason for this collapse far to seek — the time has at last come for the fulfillment of our Lord's prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," and before that Kingdom can control, the present kingdoms and arrangements under Satan's dominion must be displaced. The nations of Christendom have made boastful claims of being the most enlightened concerning what constitutes Christian ideals and requirements, and they are therefore held the more responsible and will have more to answer for, on account of their inconsistencies and unholy practices, and will consequently suffer most in the judgment troubles (Isaiah 24). These judgments will also extend to those nations that have been in close commercial and other relationships with Christendom; but the heathen tribes and peoples will most naturally be the least affected and will suffer less, being less responsible than enlightened Christendom. When the new order of things is introduced at Jerusalem, the heathen nations, together with the others, will then hear the true Gospel and become recipients of the great blessings of restitution that will then be due (Isaiah 66:19).

Such a condition of affairs as is portrayed in the collapse of civilization in the end of this present evil world has occasionally in a limited, local sense, occurred in past history. The French Revolution, particularly that aspect of it known as the Reign of Terror is an illustration in a local sense, of the conditions that seem to be described as prevailing in the whole civilized world when this present order is overthrown. All of these catastrophes in the past have been followed by a reorganization, a reconstruction of human affairs. Satan, the great adversary of God, is referred to by Christ and St. Paul as the "prince" (ruler), and as the "god" of this world, or present order, and this being true, it is most reasonable to suppose that at such times he has exerted a powerful influence in the work of reconstruction and reorganizing governments. In so far as Satan has been able to accomplish this work, he has had as his object the continuation of his control and the furtherance of his empire upon the earth. This was true after the French Revolution, when Papacy, his chief agent in ecclesiastical matters, was reinstated. It will therefore be seen that before the earthly phase of the new, just, righteous government can be successfully organized, Satan, whether operating personally, or through other invisible agencies under his influence — the demons — must be placed completely under restraint; and this is the principal thing evidently that is intended to be described in this vision of the binding of Satan.

The recent World-war, the most cruel in human history, the effects of which according to the world's statesmen, are even now threatening the overthrow of the present civilization, has made it necessary for the great leaders of the world to come together and formulate plans for a work of reconstruction, which would be better described from the Scriptural standpoint as a work of propping up the old world or order of things. This work is that which is occupying the time and attention of some of the world's greatest leaders and statesmen at the present time. We may be very sure that so far as he is able the "god" of this present order is exerting a molding influence in this work of so-called reconstruction. The reorganization of the affairs of Christendom, civil and ecclesiastical, in which the attempt will be made to prop up the present order, is portrayed in the previous Revelation visions. This portrayal, it will be recalled, is that of a great federation of the three parts of Christendom. It would seem that this will be Satan's final effort to continue his waning influence and power in human affairs and to keep the present order from collapsing; but the visions plainly teach that it will fail — the present order will go down.

Humanity in general has little or no conception concerning the influence that Satan and the fallen angels (demons under Satan's control) have exerted in this world. Indeed, only a few even of the Lord's people have any proper conception of this matter. However, when the Scriptures are carefully examined, it will be found that he is at the head of a most gigantic and powerful organization of wicked spirits, whose chief interest and work has been to build up and establish a great empire over the affairs of this world, and to deceive and blind humanity concerning the attributes and character of God. The prime motive and incentive that has ever spurred Satan on in this evil work is not so much his enmity to man as it is his ambition to be exalted as a mighty ruler; hence his spirit of rivalry

toward God and his hatred of Jehovah and righteousness (Isaiah 14:13,14). The Scriptures inform us that as the "god [mighty one] of this world," he it is that has "blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:4); that he is the "spirit that now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2); and that he is the author of false doctrines, called doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1). In the book of Revelation (chapter 12) it is plainly taught that his seat of authority, the place where he received homage in the beginning of the age, was in the great system of Paganism, and that when Paganism fell, in the Fourth Century, he transferred his power and influence to the perverted Christianity then ruling, and later on set up his throne in that so-called Christian system of Romanism.

Satan at the Courts of Earthly Governments

We have a hint here and there in the Scriptures which indicates that Satan has his representatives at the courts of worldly governments. A remarkable suggestion to this effect was made by the angel Gabriel who had been sent from the court of heaven in response to the earnest importunate prayer of the saintly Daniel (who had discovered by reading Jeremiah's prophecy that the seventy years of captivity were closing) that his people might be restored from Babylon to the land of their fathers. The angel Gabriel's words to Daniel were, "Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for [on account of] thy words [prayer]. *But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days*: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia" (Daniel 10:12,13). It has seemed to expositors inconceivable that a human prince of Persia could withstand, hold back, for twenty-one days, a mighty angel who had been sent by God on so important an errand, and that before he could fulfill his commission, the Archangel, Michael, would have to be sent to his assistance. For this reason the conclusion generally reached by expositors is that this one called by Gabriel, "the prince of the kingdom of Persia," was a powerful, fallen angel, who secretly represented Satan at the court of Persia's king. It would not be a great strain on our imagination to believe that Satan has had in the past, and has at the present time, his ambassadors or representatives at all the worldly, national courts of earth.

Therefore, it will be seen that the binding of Satan has its two aspects: one affecting his power and influence amongst the fallen angels; the other, as it has to do with human governments, organizations, individuals. It would not be reasonable to suppose that the binding or restraint of his power and influence in either of these directions would be accomplished in a moment, but would rather be brought about in a gradual way. The binding process would refer particularly to the gradual taking away or restraining of his power and influence, which, when completed, would be followed by what is symbolized by his being cast into the "abyss," etc.

The vision of St. John describing this binding and imprisonment of Satan has reference to the time when not only the restraint of his power and influence will be complete but when that which is represented by his incarceration in the abyss also will be effected. In brief, the vision is a symbolical description of the restraining of Satan's power and influence amongst fallen angels and men, and finally his imprisonment.

In considering the particular symbols it will be noted that he has four names given to him by the Revelator: the Dragon, that Old Serpent, the Devil, and Satan. These names evidently describe his evil characteristics in their operation amongst men. The dragon is first mentioned in chapter 12 and is there portrayed as a great monster having seven heads and ten horns. This of course is not Satan himself, but a symbolic picture of Satan's connection with the earthly government of Pagan Rome. Regarding the symbolical dragon being called that "Old Serpent, the Devil, and Satan" (Revelation 12:9), as we previously explained, Satan, the wicked spirit being, was the originator of Paganism and was the power behind the scenes, and in one part of the vision is represented as inciting and inspiring the Pagan Roman government in its warring against Michael and his angels. After the dragon is cast down from his throne in the Pagan Roman power, at the fall of Paganism, he is represented as giving his power unto the beast (Revelation 13:2) — the beast being another symbol of the Roman power when it was changed from Pagan to Christian (?). The dragon is next mentioned as continuing to receive worship (Revelation 13:4), which would signify that Satan continues to exercise the same power and receive the same homage in the professed Christian power of Papacy that he did in Pagan Rome. There is no special mention made of the dragon again until under the sixth vial (Revelation 16:13) he is seen acting in connection with the beast and the false prophet.

Coming now to the vision under consideration, we apply the dragon symbol as having special reference to Satan's connection with earthly governments — political world-powers. When these political world-powers are destroyed, swept away forever, the dragon phase of Satan's power ceases forever. There seems to be a special significance in the fact that this particular designation as applied to Satan ceases with his Pre-millennial imprisonment. When the thousand years are ended and he is loosed out of his prison for a little season he is not called by the name "dragon." The significance seems to be that he never again, after his imprisonment at the beginning of the thousand years, exerts an evil influence upon or gets possession of the sovereignties of the earth. When Christ begins his reign with his saints, Divine power holds control of the sovereignties, both heavenly and earthly, forever. Whoever these are, therefore, whom Satan succeeds in deceiving when he is loosed at the end of the thousand years, they cannot be the governing or ruling authorities, but are those "in the four quarters of the earth" (Revelation 20:8) — those that come from earth's distant corners. The dragon phase of Satan's power will forever cease when the confederated kings, etc., meet their final end at the close of Armageddon.

The name given to Satan — "Serpent of Old," is evidently an allusion to the temptation in Eden, and designed to identify him with the one who tempted Eve

and caused the fall of our first parents. The name *serpent* is also designed to refer to his subtlety, his character as a deceiver of mankind. It was in the form of a serpent that he deceived and beguiled Eve. It has been by the exercise of these same evil propensities that he has deceived the whole world, introduced his false doctrines, and corrupted the Church. Since the temptation and fall in Eden and onward to the glorious Apocalypse of Christ and his saints, Satan fulfills the character designation of the "serpent."

The word *devil* (Greek: *diabolos)* is found about thirty-five times in the New Testament, and means an accuser or slanderer, a calumniator or malignant falsifier. These have also been prominent characteristics or traits of Satan from the very beginning of human history. "He was a murderer [murderous liar] from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, for he is a liar, and the father of it," are the words of our Savior concerning him (John 8:44). It is his lie to Eve, "Thou shalt not surely die," that has corrupted the Scripture teaching concerning the future life, and more than anything else has caused God's character to be maligned and misrepresented amongst the nations and peoples of the earth, as also the ecclesiastical systems.

The word *satan* means an adversary, an opposing spirit. It is a Hebrew word and is transferred into the New Testament. It is used in this sense very often in the Scriptures, and represents that characteristic of the chief of the fallen angels, who is described as the great adversary of both God and men.

The one possessing all these particular characteristics is represented in this vision as being bound and cast into the abyss by a mighty angel. Who or what is represented by this angel is not stated. There have been several different interpretations given by expositors; but that by Mr. Russell given many years ago appeals to us as being the correct one, and his latest utterances prove that he continued to hold to this interpretation up to the time of his death:

"The word angel signifies messenger, and this picture [Revelation 20:1] shows us that God will send some messengers with authority and power to subdue Evil — the adversary of truth and right. In this work of binding, many agencies will doubtless take a part — an increase of knowledge probably being one of the strongest. Yet all of these agents are typified by the one messenger [angel]. There is that about this figure which seems to indicate that Christ Jesus and his Body, the Church of the First-Born, is the one in whose hand is the power of authority to bind and control Evil — 'To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgments written — this honor have all His saints' (Psalms 149:8,9). ...

"Many may be the instruments [angels] used in this work [of binding] ... some moral and upright infidels, honest in their unbelief; and some God-dishonoring and defiant unbelievers; to displace errors and prepare a place [the world] for the Truth. So too, among the nations, He may make the wrath of man to praise Him, and perhaps use bloody-handed Communists, as advocates of civil rights, and for the overthrow of evil and oppressive governments. But the result will be that Satan shall be bound for a thousand years."

It would seem then that the angel who did the work of binding represents those agencies of various kinds that Christ uses to accomplish this work; and that the binding of Satan is the restraining of his power and influence to do evil, etc. This binding work is going on in the period of the Second Presence of Christ, and is caused by his exercise of Divine authority, which is represented by the "key."

Satan's Empire Plunged into Disorder

Concerning when this binding began and how it will proceed and when it will end we quote further:

"The Lord's parable (Matthew 12:27-29) respecting the binding of the 'strong man' seems to imply that it will begin in a sudden manner. He says that if that 'strong man' knew at what time the thief would come he would watch and not suffer his house to be broken up. He thus intimates that Satan would not know at what time the catastrophe would come upon him and his arrangements and that therefore he would be taken somewhat at a disadvantage.

"As to what constitutes the 'house' of this 'strong man' would be another matter. His 'house' here would stand for his household, which at the present time would include the fallen angels. These fallen angels, who have been subject to Satan as their prince, will in some sense of the word be thrown out of harmony with him. The time at which we might expect this would be in the Second Presence of our Lord, and it would seem that, from about the time of our Lord's *parousia*, disorder began to operate in Satan's household and that these different endeavors that we see in many quarters to carry out certain schemes more or less antagonistic the one to the other, might be the result of this disorganization. It would further seem that there are different bands of evil spirits working upon humanity. These various hostile bands may work a great deal of havoc, perhaps equally as much as could have been done had they all remained in organized relationship to Satan himself. But still the undermining or overthrow of his authority seems to be in progress."

Concerning the binding of Satan's power and influence in human affairs, and as to what is represented by the "chain" that was in the hand of the angel, we have another very interesting, reasonable, and helpful comment by the same writer:

"We believe that every advance step of light and knowledge is that much of a restraint upon darkness and evil and superstition. We properly enough speak of the chains of superstition, the chains of darkness, which bound mankind for a long time; and very properly we say that these are of the Adversary. Now, have we anything to indicate that light will serve as a 'chain'? Did we ever hear of light being a chain? We answer that there has never yet been a manifestation of that kind. There is nothing in the past operation of light that served as a chain, but it seems that now it should operate thus. 'Whatsoever doth make manifest is light,' and that which makes manifest is a 'chain,' is a restraint upon that which is darkness. So here are the two — light and darkness; the Prince of Light and the Prince of Darkness. The Prince of Light has only recently invaded, as it

were, the land of the Prince of Darkness to commence his work. This work is first, chiefly in the Church and in the restraining of the [symbolical] 'winds' and the 'powers' and the troubles coming upon the world; but meantime the whole world is getting awake, not necessarily to the light of truth, but getting awake to the chains of darkness which are upon them and of which they are striving to rid themselves. ...

"In connection with the binding of Satan we read that he shall be 'bound for a thousand years, that he might deceive the nations no more till the thousand years be finished' — implying that deception was one of the main things in which he had been previously engaged and that henceforth he would be so restrained or disabled, whether by the light of 'present truth,' or by light of science, or whatever it might be, that he would not be able to deceive the world in the same manner as formerly.

"We believe that the restraining of his influence is in operation. ... In respect to the temperance question, also, we see that enlightenment is proceeding and people are making rapid advancement in the knowledge that alcoholic liquors are dangerous.

"And so the education of the world goes rapidly on. ... The knowledge that is spreading is wonderful. And the thought that practically all this is being accomplished by the *world* itself, and that we [the Lord's people] have little or nothing to do with it, makes it appear still more wonderful. This work is being done by people who do not believe in the true religion; they do not know God aright; the majority of them, so far as we can gauge their own testimony, repudiate the Bible. They believe in a vague way in a God of some kind, . . . Nevertheless they are free from the shackles of the darkness of the past and apparently have no desire to go back, but forward. It would appear, then, that all of the things peculiar to our day in the way of restraining error are part of the binding of the Adversary. We may be doing our little mite in that direction by advertising sermons, giving out literature, etc.

"As to the question when the great Adversary's binding will be accomplished, we believe that it will not be brought about until the time that the 'Great Company' class is completed."

Summing up the interpretation, we would understand that all the agencies that have had to do with the exposing of the errors of the great systems and organizations termed Christendom are symbolized by the angel employed by Christ to bind Satan, in the harvest period now closing; and that truth is symbolized by the chain. Furthermore, we think it in perfect harmony with this exposition to conclude that the binding of Satan here applies more especially to the particular time of its completion, after the change of the "Great Company" class.

The period of Satan's restraint is stated to be for a thousand years. From the days of St. John down to the present time, expositors, with scarcely an exception, though differing with one another regarding the nature and character of those times, have understood these years to be literal.

In the Bottomless Pit

After Satan's binding, and the restraint of his power and influence in the affairs of humanity have been accomplished, and after the overthrow and collapse of the present order of things is complete, there remains yet one more thing necessary to make further evil operations of his power and influence impossible. This is his complete subjection and banishment, either by destruction or by his being placed in a condition in which he will be utterly helpless to deceive or in any way injure mankind, who during that period of a thousand years will be having their judgment, trial, or probation. We learn in the symbolic words that follow that the latter is what is to be done — that he is to be cast into the "abyss," which is shut up and sealed that he might deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are ended. Concerning the symbolical significance of the "abyss," we have already explained in a previous chapter. Briefly stated, it signifies a state or condition rather than a place. The abyss being without bottom is strongly suggestive of a condition of restraint in which Satan will be without any foundation for hope — no basis on which to formulate any plans — all will be total darkness, uncertainty, hopelessness; he will be awaiting his final punishment, which will be his utter destruction.

The sealing up of the abyss is designed to further strengthen the symbol — to show the utter powerlessness of Satan and his followers to do harm or to escape from the bonds that hold them. This binding and imprisonment of Satan portrayed in this Revelation vision, is not the only place in which it is mentioned in the Scriptures. Jehovah, through the Prophet Isaiah, had long before St. John's day, foretold it, as we read: "It shall come to pass in that day [see context], that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited." That it occurs in connection with the establishment of the Lord's Kingdom is also shown: "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously" (Isaiah 24:21-23).

In this Scripture we have just as clearly revealed as in the one under consideration, the judgment of the great evil governmental powers, both the unseen, spiritual, and the earthly; and it is just as clearly revealed that the judgment is governmental, not individual, and that it is not the final one.

It should be kept in mind that the Millennial period represents righteousness *reigning* on the earth, rather than righteousness in its full sense *dwelling* on earth. While it is true that righteousness shall flourish and be the predominating characteristic of those times, it is also a fact that the Scriptures teach that there will be exceptions to the general rule. We read in one of the prophecies respecting those times that "the strangers shall submit themselves unto Me" (Psalms 18:44). In the margin this is rendered "lie" or "yield feigned obedience," which evidently means that they shall submit to superior power, but not in heart; and this is implied in the next verse, which reads: "The strangers shall fade

away, and be afraid out of their close places." The Prophet Isaiah also describing Millennial conditions says: "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants [in general, doubtless] of the world will learn righteousness," but further adds, "Let favor be shewed to the wicked [the goat class], yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness [the Millennial earth] will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." (Isaiah 26:9,10). Likewise the Prophet Zechariah speaking of the same times pronounces the punishment of those who do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the glorious King (Zechariah 14:16,17).

With the binding of Satan and his being cast into the "abyss," the forces of evil lose their great inspirer and leader. Evil itself is thus deprived of its source or fountain. As one has truthfully said: "While the stream of evil may no longer flow from its 'source,' there still remains that which already issued forth to deal with; thus while Satan may no longer be permitted to send forth a further stream of evil to corrupt the nations, that which has issued and been absorbed by humanity must be removed. This removal constitutes the work of Christ and his Church in the coming age; and it is surely encouraging to know that the source of this evil has been cut off, thus making the task of eradicating evil in the human heart much simpler than if the 'fountain' continued its supply. What evil has been absorbed by humanity, still abiding in the hearts of transgressors, must be annihilated and replaced by righteousness."

The Divine reason given for Satan's being bound is stated to be, "that he might deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be ended." A very important matter to decide in order to a correct interpretation of this thousand-year period as it is related to God's great Plan of the Ages is, Who or what is represented by the nations that are to benefit by this complete restraint of Satan and evil? In reply to this we will notice first that the destruction portrayed in connection with the great Armageddon battle is not the destruction of the nations or peoples, but rather the destruction of the great ruling powers. Governments may fall, and armies may be defeated, but the nations or peoples over which these governments rule may still continue to exist. To illustrate this matter, we may properly say that the defeat of Germany and the overthrow of the Hohenzollern Dynasty did not destroy the German people or the German nationality. The conquerors of Germany might have followed up the victory and given to the Germans entirely new laws and institutions and organized them under a new rule or government for an entirely new life. In such an event the conquerors would have done to and for the German peoples or nation something of a similar character to what is implied will be done to all the nations of the earth in the Millennium. They will all be placed under a new government. It will at first be an iron rule.

"The nations will be ruled by force, irresistible force, until righteous order is established by a general submission — every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess Divine power and glory, and outward obedience will be compulsory."

As another has described it: "The battle of the great day of God Almighty is one thing; the shepherdizing with the rod is another. The two are closely connected. They are both judgment administrations. The one is the sequel to the other. But they are wholly different in their immediate subjects, character, and results. The one is temporary, the other is continuous. The sword comes first, and strikes down the enemy in the field; and then follows the shepherdizing with the rod of discipline and new rule over the peoples whose kings and armies are no more. The two together fulfill what is stated in Psalms 2:5-12, Isaiah 11, and Matthew 25:31-46, where the same rod power and shepherdizing are further described. The Shepherdizer is the same who conquers in the battle with the beast and his confederate kings. He is the All-Ruler, and it is his power and dominion which are thus enforced with justice and with judgment. But his army of glorified saints accompanies him. They follow him in his victorious treading down of his armed enemies. ... And particularly in this shepherding with the rod of iron, the Scriptures everywhere assign to them a conspicuous share" (Joseph Seiss).

It will be to the point to say in this connection that while this writer as well as many others of those who are termed Pre-millennialists saw quite clearly the shepherdizing judgment features of these Millennial times, they failed to see that it would have any relation to the vast multitudes of the human family who lived and were deceived and blinded by the "god of this world," and died without experiencing the enlightening influences of the great Shepherdizer. This is a matter that is described in another vision in this same chapter, the consideration of which will be taken up in due order. It is the vision of the judgment of the "Great White Throne."

Chapter Forty-Six

Messiah's Glorious Reign

(Revelation 20:4)

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

A sober and careful examination of the several visions recorded in the last three chapters of the Revelation we believe will bring the settled .conviction that they do not meet their fulfillment in consecutive order as recorded; but rather that each one is designed to give a different aspect or picture of the thousand years during which Satan is bound. We shall endeavor to show that the details of these general pictures of this period constitute a large portion of the writings of the holy Prophets of Israel. St. Peter informs us that all the ancient Prophets spoke of a period in the future from their day in connection with the unfolding of the Divine Plan — a period which he calls, "the times of restitution" (Acts 3:19- 21). It seems quite evident that the thousand years during which Satan and evil will be divinely restrained is identical with the period described by these Prophets of old. While most all expositors see this in a measure, they quite generally make the mistake of placing the judgment of the "great white throne" (Revelation 20:11-15), and the "new heavens and new earth" (Revelation 21:1), at the end of the thousand years, instead of discerning that they are symbolic visions covering the entire period.

Various Portraits of the World to Come

A careful review and comparison of the words of our Lord, the Apostles, and the Prophets, with these visions of St. John, reveals the perfect harmony and beauty of the Divine Program, and makes clearly manifest the fact that the fulfillment of these two visions — the new heaven and new earth, and the judgment scene, covers the entire period of the thousand years, and that they are designed to portray in brief symbolic statements certain developments looking toward the removal of sin and death and the curse from the earth — developments to be effected by that new arrangement or order of things purposed for this earth under the administration of the Son of God and his Joint-heirs. The most vital and essential features of that thousand-year judgment period will be the awakening of all the dead and the giving to each member of our race an individual judgment

or trial purchased by the Redeemer; the results being eternal life to some and eternal death to others (Acts 3:21-23, Matthew 25:34,41,46, John 3:16).

Mr. Russell evidently grasped the true thought concerning this matter as early as 1882, and his latest utterances show scarcely any changes as to details. His words elucidate very much and describe what we believe forms a basis for a correct interpretation of these most striking visions of the Revelator:

"This repetition of the same things from different standpoints, and with other details, is a principle which applies especially to this last book of the Bible. A failure to recognize this, is, we think, one of the reasons why so many of those who study this book fail to get sense from it.

"The portion of Scripture we are about to consider [Revelation 20, 21 and 22], is frequently read as though it were one connected narrative, instead of several repetitions of the first statement. Because of failure to rightly divide, some get the thought that the 'great white throne' [Revelation 20:11-15] is to be established after the Millennial Age, and after Satan is destroyed; consequently, are at a loss to know why the dead are raised at that time, or how they could have a probation after the Millennial Age, and are much confused generally.

"To better illustrate the distinctness and harmony of these portraits, we have diagrammed them as follows:

"(1) Satan bound for a thousand years — evil and vice under thorough restraint. Satan (evil) loosed a little season, after the one thousand years" (verses 1-3).

"(2) Earthly thrones cast down, and the overcomers reign with Christ a thousand years (verse 4).

"(3) The holy and blessed of the First Resurrection, live and reign a thousand years with Christ. Satan loosed. The evilly disposed deceived and destroyed (verses 6-10).

"(4) The great white throne. Heaven and earth flee. The dead judged from opened books. Second Death (verses 11-15).

"(5) New heaven and earth. The Holy City (government). Its blessing to mankind — pain, sorrow, and death abolished. Second Death of the unbelieving and abominable (Revelation 21:1- 8).

"(6) The Bride — The Holy City — The Kingdom of God — come to earth. The light of the world. The good may enter the Kingdom (Revelation 21:10-27).

"(7) The water of life flows freely. The world's troubles healed. The curse (sin and its result, death) destroyed (Revelation 22:1-3)."

As we have pursued our study of these wonderful visions in the light of the foregoing statements, our convictions have become thoroughly settled that this writer's expositions of this matter are correct. To summarize further, we believe these three chapters to portray the different features or aspects of what are termed by St. Peter, "the times of restitution," and by St. Paul, the world's great Judgment Day (Acts 3:19, 17:31, Psalms 98:8,9). This matter will be taken up in its order in connection with the interpretation of the vision of the great white throne.

In our exposition of the verse which is the special subject of this chapter, we will consider first who are represented as seated on the thrones. "And I saw thrones, (and they sat on them, and judgment was given them)." It will be noticed that the Diaglott rendering, which we are using, places the words, "and they sat on them, and judgment was given them," in a parenthesis. This arrangement of the text plainly teaches that those who are seated on the thrones are those described as the overcomers of the beast, etc., and are the same ones that are represented in the last clause of the verse as reigning with Christ during the thousand years, and are also identical with those referred to in verse 6, as the kings and priests of God and of Christ. This interpretation seems to be the correct one for several reasons. A vision of the enthronement of the saints is what we should most naturally suppose would follow the events described in the visions immediately preceding. These visions portrayed the dethronement of the earthly rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, by the King of kings and Lord of lords and his armies then that which followed most naturally — the dethronement and imprisonment of Satan, the unseen ruler, for a thousand years. We could not expect that the saints would become enthroned to reign for the purpose of judging and blessing the people of the nations until the final conquest of evil was an accomplished fact, and Satan was shorn of his power to deceive.

The expression, "judgment was given them," would mean in this connection the act or power of judging, which would comprehend the power to decide matters as judges and to execute judgment in harmony with these decisions. Alford, a most learned Greek scholar and translator, has remarked that the Greek word translated judgment in this verse signifies, "they were constituted judges." Moses Stuart has thus referred to this word as used in this verse: "The word *krima* in this clause may be interpreted as applying to the supervision or making of statutes, ordinances, arrangements, etc., by those who are in a superior station. This seems to many to be the most easy and natural construction." This judgment power is further expressed in the last clause of the verse, where it is said "they reigned with him." The possession of judgment power is in the Scriptures intimately associated with sovereignty or ruling. We read that "David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people" (2 Samuel 8:15).

It would therefore seem that both the text and context teach that these personages that St. John saw sitting upon thrones, were none other than the risen and glorified saints of God, the overcomers. This conclusion is in perfect harmony with the many Scriptures that describe the greatest feature connected with the future occupation of the "overcomers," as well as the reward promised them. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Revelation 3:21), are Christ's own words; and again we hear him say, "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19:28); and the inspired Apostle Paul has said, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Corinthians 6:2). Furthermore, this interpretation of

these words is in full harmony with the Prophet Daniel's description of the same events. Referring to the "little horn," or Papacy, making war with the saints, the Prophet's words serve to further confirm this interpretation: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom" (Daniel 7:21,22).

It will be found upon careful examination and comparison of this vision of Daniel and that of the Revelator that the two visions are identical and that they describe the same event. We place together the corresponding statements contained in the two visions:

(1) Daniel "beheld till thrones were placed"[1] (Daniel 7:9). St. John "saw thrones" (Revelation 20:4).

(2) Daniel "beheld ... the judgment seat" (Daniel 7:10). St. John "saw ... they sat on them" (Revelation 20:4).

(3) Daniel says," judgment was given to the saints" (Daniel 7:22). St. John says, "judgment was given to them" (Revelation 20:4).

(4) Daniel beheld "the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom" (Daniel 7:22).

St. John saw that "they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4).

Referring to this text as describing the judgment power to be given to the saints, a noted writer has thus both truthfully and eloquently expressed:

"Once it was the fate of believers to be judged by the ungodly world-powers. Jesus told his followers that they should be brought before councils, governors, and kings, and that a time would come when men would think it a holy thing to adjudge them worthy of stripes, imprisonments, and death. So Paul stood before the courts of earth, saying, 'I stand and am judged.' But man's day has a limit, and then comes another order, when as Mary sung, God 'shall put down the mighty from their seats,' and 'exalt them of low degree' — when the Pauls shall be the royal judges and the Felixes and Festuses and Agrippas and Caesars then in place, shall be obliged to accept the sentences of heavenly justice from God's immortal potentates, who once stood helpless at earth's tribunals; for so it is written, 'the saints shall judge the world' (1 Corinthians 6:2), and 'shall take the Kingdom and possess the Kingdom forever, even forever and ever' (Daniel 7:18); and Christ the victorious All- Ruler, according to his promise, will 'give them authority over the nations to shepherdize them with a rod of iron' (Revelation 2:26,27), invincibly and effectually."

As St. John no doubt recognized these enthroned ones as identical with those he had seen in other visions enduring suffering and bearing testimony for Christ under most trying and difficult circumstances and conditions — in

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(1) The Common Version translation "cast down" is admitted by all modern translators to be incorrect.

many instances even to the extent of laying down their lives, would he not be most forcibly reminded of the words of St. Paul, "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him" (2 Timothy 2:12); "and I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us"! — Romans 8:18.

It should be kept in mind when considering the various evils and evil systems that these enthroned ones have had to combat and become victors over, namely the beast and his image and mark, that not only are these to be understood as symbols, as we have hitherto shown, but that the beheading for the testimony of Jesus and the Word of God is likewise a symbol; in other words, the beheading is a symbolic beheading. It is quite true that in the earlier centuries some of God's saints were literally beheaded, because in those times that was a way by which capital punishment was inflicted, but some suffered death in many other ways. It would be giving special honor to the particular manner by which the Lord's people died for the Truth's sake to understand these words literally. One has written quite extensively on this expression, interpreting it symbolically:

"All constituting the Kingdom class are here referred to as beheaded — every member of the glorified Church must, eventually, have this experience, whatever it signifies. But we reflect that our Lord was not beheaded and, so far as history shows, few, if any, of the Apostles were literally beheaded; indeed, very few, if any, of the Lord's saints, from Pentecost to the present time, have died by decapitation. We are to remember, however, that this statement is from the symbolical book, and is therefore a figure of speech, a word picture, and its meaning must be sought for accordingly.

"The Apostle gives us the key, saying, 'The head of every man is Christ; the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.' (1 Corinthians 11:3). As a woman who becomes a wife accepts her husband as the head of the family, so the Church accepts Christ as its head, and each member of the Church thus comes into relationship with the Lord as a member of his Body — not the Head: and all of these, to be acceptable as members of the figurative Body of Christ, must be will-less, headless; their own wills must be surrendered, so that, like their Lord, they can say, 'Not my will, but Thine, be done.' They must be headless in the sense of ignoring their own wills, being dead to self and actuated henceforth by the will of the Head of the Body, Christ Jesus. ... It is this self-surrender to Christ on the part of his Church that is represented in the symbolism of the text before us."

The symbolic significance of the beast, the image, and the mark, etc., have been previously explained. Considering all that is represented in these various symbols, it will be seen that all the overcoming class of the entire Gospel Age are represented in this symbolism which portrays those who will be privileged to reign with Christ the thousand years.

A Thousand Years Earth's Coming Glory

It is said by some (Adventists chiefly) that this vision of St. John is the only place in the Scriptures where a period of a thousand years is mentioned. These

are not able to make it harmonize with their narrow, erroneous theories of God's great Plan of Salvation. While it is true that the exact words that Christ and the saints are to reign a thousand years is not found anywhere else in the Scriptures, yet it is true that the Scriptures explicitly speak of the Judgment Day, which is the same period as that of the reign of Christ and the saints. And St. Peter tells us that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day, thus clearly identifying the Divine standpoint of counting time. It is also true that all the peculiar and striking conditions that of necessity would prevail in connection with man's life here on the earth if Satan and evil were restrained and Christ were ministering in the affairs of earth's peoples, are portrayed in the Old Testament prophecies as well as in many New Testament statements. All these prophecies associate these grand and glorious scenes with the reign of Jehovah over the earth in the person of his Son. Indeed, this period of a thousand years, when Satan's power is restrained, and Christ and the saints are represented as reigning over the nations, is the chief theme of all God's Prophets of old.

These Millennial times, as already noted, are called by St. Peter, "times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy Prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). These Prophets describe a period when a knowledge of the true God shall fill the whole earth (Isaiah 11:9, Habakkuk 2:14); when the proud and haughty shall be humbled (Isaiah 2:11-17); when the evil influence and power of riches shall cease (Isaiah 2:20); when the humble and poor and meek shall be exalted (Isaiah 11:4, Psalms 37:11); when evildoers shall be cut off (Psalms 37:9, Acts 3:23); when the inhabitants of the earth, on account of God's judgments will learn righteousness (Isaiah 26:9); when "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" (Isaiah 33:24); when death shall be rare, and only willful sinners having full knowledge shall die (Isaiah 65:20, Leeser; Acts 3:23); when no one shall have any excuse for not learning obedience to God (Isaiah 35:8, Jeremiah 31:29,30); when nations shall have ceased warring forever (Micah 4:3, Psalms 46:9); when there shall be a general seeking on the part of humanity to learn God's ways and to walk in His paths (Micah 4:2); when the multitudes of the "sea" class shall be converted unto God (Isaiah 60:5); when men shall no longer hurt or destroy (Isaiah 11:9); when righteousness shall be rewarded and sin receive chastisement (Isaiah 11:4); when the Great Ruler (and his associates) being endowed with such Divine, supernatural power as that he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears (Isaiah 11:3); when the desert places of earth shall bloom and the wilderness places rejoice (Isaiah 35:1,2). In fact, it will be a time when the Lord will make bare His Holy Arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God (Isaiah 52:10) — a salvation that will mean freedom from sin and all its effects, when sickness and pain, sorrow, crying, and death shall flee away and finally cease forever (Isaiah 35:10, Revelation 21:4). It is unquestionably a fact then that the reign of Christ and his saints during this thousand years has as its object the consummation of the great purpose of God — the restoring of all the willing and obedient of Adam's race to mental, moral, and physical perfection, together with the complete restoration of paradise forever.

Humanity's Final Trial for Life

That this Millennial period is the one foretold and described by the Prophets of Israel can hardly be questioned; that it is what is so frequently referred to in the Scriptures as the great Judgment Day, and represents one of those transcendent truths made known in a special vision given to St. Paul, concerning which he said that it was not lawful for him at that time to make known (2 Corinthians 12:1-4), seems also evident. The great truths that he was especially called to proclaim were those then due to be preached, namely the call, enlightenment, and trial of those who would be joint-heirs with Christ in his Kingdom. This special feature of God's Plan is called the mystery (secret) hid from other ages. St. Paul distinctly declared that those associated with Christ in the glory and honor of the Divine nature, would be the judges of the world (1 Corinthians 6:2). This Millennial reign of Christ and his saints over the nations could therefore be for no other purpose than that of giving a probation or trial to the world. The following well describes in a general way this Millennial Kingdom:

"Messiah's Kingdom repeatedly referred to throughout the Old Testament was the center of all Jewish hopes. But the fact that it will last a thousand years was not mentioned: it was merely Messiah's Day. The holy Spirit by St. Peter first declared, 'a day with the Lord is as a thousand years.' St. Paul did not mention the thousand years, but merely proclaimed Messiah's Kingdom, and that he would reign victoriously until he shall have put down all opposition to God's will (1 Corinthians 15:25). It is in the book of Revelation that we have the clear statements that Messiah will reign for a thousand years; that his faithful Bride will reign with him, a 'Royal Priesthood,' that during that thousand years Satan will be bound and the whole world will be granted a judgment or trial, whose result will be life-eternal or death-eternal. ...

"While the Jews, according to their light, looked forward to Messiah's Kingdom as an earthly one, in which every man would 'sit under his own vine and fig tree,' and 'the wilderness would blossom as the rose,' and God's footstool be made glorious — the Church, on the contrary, was given a different, a spiritual conception, of the Kingdom. We see the propriety of this: Messiah's Kingdom is to be of two parts, the spiritual, which will be invisible to men, but all-powerful; and the earthly, which will be visible to men. Christ and his faithful followers, his Bride, will constitute the spiritual Kingdom; while Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the faithful of the Prophets down to John the Baptist will be the earthly rulers (Matthew 11:11)" (C. T. Russell).

A measure of light began to come concerning the earthly conditions of Millennial times when the claims made by Papacy that it was reigning in place of Christ were seen by many to be vain and empty. Clear light concerning the Millennium, however, did not come in until the days of the "presence of the Son of Man" began to become known. The comparatively small company of believers called "Pre-millennialists," of the Nineteenth Century, had a considerable measure of light. While they came to believe that the thousand year period of Satan's restraint was a probationary period, they seemingly failed to see that it would be

a day of trial, probation for the vast numbers of the human family who had died without a knowledge of Christ, as well as for those who would be living at that time. They believed that the probation was for those only who would live to pass over into that age of trial. One of these writers, however — one whom we have frequently quoted in these expositions of the Revelation, seems to have grasped or at least to have been approaching the Truth. Cautiously writing concerning this matter in one of his several very remarkable volumes, he said:

"We need to remember that if we could perfectly understand and map out the whole procedure of the ages to come, the scheme would be clearly human and not Divine. Let us pause where Revelation pauses, nor seek to be wise above what is written; but let us search the Scriptures to see what they do reveal as to the future of humanity, and let our faith rest not on the traditions of men, but on the Word of God. It is important for many reasons that our views as to the future of our race should be as clear and definite as Scripture warrants.

"Whether we accept this view as to successive generations of mankind in the new earth or not, we cannot in any case escape the conclusion that ... Scripture distinguishes between . . . the future portion of the Church of Christ, that of the Jewish people, and that of the nations of the earth. Too many in their thoughts of the future leave out this last — the destiny of the Church of this dispensation figures so largely in their anticipations that they seem almost to forget that 'the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world,' and to lose sight of the blessed prospect that not only is the present Church to be saved out of the ruined world, to become the Eve of the Second Adam, but the ruined earth itself is yet to be renewed, and to become the happy home of saved nations who participate in the results of redemption.

"The narrowness which sees nothing but the salvation of the Church of this dispensation is born of human selfishness and not of Divine love; it is founded not on the teaching of Scripture, but on tradition and prejudice. The Bible in this, its last revelation on the subject, plainly teaches that while the peculiar glories of the Church are hers, and hers alone, that while the special privileges of the natural seed of Abraham belong to Israel, and to Israel only, that there is also a blessed future awaiting mankind under the gracious government of Immanuel; that one of the effects of the completed work of Christ will be to place the saved nations of the eternal kingdom in a restored paradise, completely delivered from the Tempter, and so established in righteousness that the Holy One can take up His abode among them forever. 'He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.'

"The salvation of the Church of this dispensation is not the whole result of the death of Christ. There is to be in addition the establishment forever of a Kingdom of God in which His will shall be as fully done by men on earth as it is now done by angels in heaven. The consummation for which we daily pray is

destined to come at last; and holy and happy service, without a flaw and without an interruption is yet to be rendered to God, not merely by the glorified saints of the New Jerusalem, but by redeemed nations on the earth, who walk forever in the light of the Celestial City.

"Such is the sublime vista of the future of our race, and of our earth in the eternal ages with which Scripture closes" (H. G. Guinness).

And we may add, the Scriptures plainly teach that the accomplishment of this grand and glorious state of affairs in this earth is assigned to God's dear Son; and associated with him will be his glorified Bride. For the completion of this grand and noble work, these thousand years were set apart in the Divine counsels from before the foundation of the world; and all this is comprehended in the words, "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4).

Living in the Millennial Dawn

In consideration of all the array of testimony and evidence regarding the character and object of the reign of Christ and the saints — that it is for the purpose of removing the curse of death from the earth and granting life everlasting to all the willing and obedient of mankind — the question of the *time* of this thousand-year reign becomes of paramount importance. In the study of the visions of the Revelation thus far the careful student cannot have failed to be impressed with the accumulating evidence showing unmistakably that we are now living in the extreme end of this age; that the epoch or dispensation of evil is fast drawing to a close; that we are approaching nigh unto the glorious reign of prophecy — the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

In addition to all the evidence heretofore noted bearing upon the commencement of the Millennial reign, the fact that the six thousand years (or the six great thousand-year days, from the beginning of human history) are now completed, is considered a very important testimony. While there is no positive statement in the Scriptures declaring that the ending of these years marks the Second Advent, yet there is strong evidence to this effect. Six great thousand-year days of human history represent man's work-week, during which, under the unfavorable conditions of the curse, he has been laboring and toiling in the sweat of face, to earn his living and prolong life. They have indeed been six days of labor, travail and pain. And just as Israel of old in the typical arrangement was given the instruction that they were to rest and do no work on the Sabbath day, so this would be a strong hint that the seventh great thousand-year day of man's history is to be a period of rest, of cessation from the labor, the toil, and the anguish of the past six thousand years. Thus the period termed "the day of Christ," the day of his appearing and Kingdom, when he shall reign, is designated as one of these great epochal days — one thousand years (Revelation 20:4,6); presumably, therefore, the seventh thousand years of human history, which will be man's great Sabbath day of rest from sin and death. In that day the curse will be rolled away, which will mean that all in their graves shall come forth (John 5:28), and all the willing and obedient will be ushered into everlasting life. Mr. Russell and many other writers are in agreement with this:

"And though the Bible contains no direct statement that the seventh thousand [years] will be the epoch of Christ's reign, the great Sabbath day of restitution to the world, yet the venerable tradition is not without a reasonable foundation."

Dr. Seiss, writing in 1856, quotes Mr. Johnston, a distinguished writer on the prophecies, whose thought was the same on this point:

" 'Through the whole Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, there is a striking typical representation of some great and important Sabbath, as a great septenary that has not yet taken place, and which evidently appears to be the Millenarian septenary, as the great Sabbath of the whole earth. God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it. In the Decalogue this peculiar distinguishment of the seventh day or weekly Sabbath, was most solemnly renewed. Every seventh year was appointed a Sabbatical year. And the commencement of the year of Jubilee, which was every fiftieth year, was to be fixed by the running of the septenary of the Sabbatical years. 'Thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.' The number seven, because used in Scripture to complete all the sacred divisions of time, was regarded by the Jews as the symbol of perfection, and is used in this sense in the Scriptures. The question then arises, Is it to be supposed that all these events, which are interwoven in the Mosaic dispensation, which was itself symbolical or typical, and which are introduced into the New Testament, and abound so much in the book of Revelation, have no antitype to correspond to them? — no great Sabbatical septenary to which they all point, and in which they all shall be accomplished? Is it not highly probable that they are all typical of the seventh millenary of the earth, which is the great Sabbath?' "

Dr. Seiss remarks on these words:

"When we go back into antiquity, whether Jewish, heathen, or Christian, we find a general and deep- seated belief that the world shall endure six thousand years in its secular and toiling state ... and then will follow a thousand years of holy rest, peace, and joy — the Millennial Sabbath or golden period of the world. ... It was held and inculcated as a branch of Christian faith or truth by Barnabas [a companion of St. Paul], Justin Martyr, Papias Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and all orthodox Christians for the first three centuries of the Christian era. Luther entertained it. Melancthon wrote it on the fly-leaf of the Bible, as a matter not to be disputed. 'I have shown,' this writer further says, 'that Christ will come before the Millennium, not after it.' "

As we examine these writers' conclusions, we find that in calculating the six thousand years, all of them reckon from Adam's creation, but make the six thousand years refer to the toiling state of man under the curse. As the chronology of the Bible includes the Edenic period, and as we have no positive way of determining its length, it becomes impossible to fix the exact date when the Millennium or seventh thousand years from Adam's banishment from Eden is ushered in. However, all chronologists, with the exception of Usher and a very few others who follow his conclusions, are agreed that the six thousand years from Adam's

creation ran out at least thirty years ago; and, as it is perfectly reasonable to conclude that the sojourn of Adam in Eden was very brief — but a very few years at most — then the six thousand years of man's history from the fall is past, and thus we have another inference in addition to those cited above, that we are now in the period of Christ's *parousia* or presence.

The writer just quoted, as well as about all students of chronology, reject Usher's findings, which concludes four thousand and four years at the birth of Christ. That reckoning places the Millennium one hundred years future. Dr. Seiss gives the conclusions of many eminent students of Bible chronology; and an examination of them shows that they are all agreed that the ending of the six thousand years from the creation of Adam is in the past, and is now a matter of history. In this connection, he says: "Sylvester Bliss, author of a very valuable *Analysis of Sacred Chronology*, computes the age of the world at Christ's birth at four thousand one hundred and twenty years," which makes the six thousand years end in 1880. "The Revelation R. C. Shimeall, in his *Age of the World*, reckons twelve years from the present [1856] as completing the six thousand years," which would be 1868. "The Revelation C. Bowen, whose estimates and tables were adopted by Dr. Elliott and affixed to his exposition of the Apocalypse, computes the age of the world at the Savior's birth at four thousand one hundred and twenty-eight years." This would make the years run out in 1872. "Fynes Clinton, according to Bickersteth ... one of the ablest chronologers of the present time, whom Bowen mainly follows, and whose researches are deemed very valuable, computes the world's age at four thousand one hundred and thirty-eight years when Christ was born," making the ending of the six thousand years to be 1862. Others make 1866 to be the end. Dr. Seiss then sums up his own conclusions as follows:

"If, then, we be allowed to correct Usher and Jarvis, by [these] more recent investigations, we have the concurrent testimony of these half-dozen learned and received chronologists, that the six thousand years from Adam shall be fulfilled within the present [nineteenth] century — in less than fifty years [from 1856]."

Corroborative Signs of the Day at Hand

Though we may not be able to determine the exact year when the six thousand-year period ended, owing to some uncertainties as to the exact length of some of the Old Testament periods, the evidence is sufficiently strong to warrant the conclusion that six thousand years of human history ended at least thirty years ago,[1] and that we are already living in the beginning of the seventh great thousand-year day, the early part of which, all prophetic testimony clearly shows, is devoted to the work of preparing for and establishing the new order of things.

Just before his death, in 1916, commenting on the beautiful hymn, "Beyond the Century's Swinging Portal," Mr. Russell most grandly portrayed and expressed

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(1) For a complete examination of the chronological periods and other data bearing upon the times and seasons, address the publishers of this volume.

his faith in the ushering in of this glad Millennial Day, near at hand:

"The portals of this wonderful Twentieth Century have been swinging but sixteen years; but more and more the glorious light of the New Dispensation is discernible. The Kingdom is coming, its glory is at the gates of the world! The political, social, and financial rulers of earth recognize not the King's presence. Nevertheless, true to our Lord's own prophecy, in this very time he is taking to himself his great power, and is about to glorify his Church and begin his reign of righteousness. The nations are angry, and are bringing upon themselves the Divine wrath, which has planned their utter destruction (Revelation 11:15-19).

"How forcefully the poet pictures the present great war, which is leading on to the Armageddon of revolution and anarchy! How almost prophetic are the words:

" 'And while the earth with strife is riven, And envious factions Truth do hide, Lo! he, the Lord of earth and heaven, Stands at the door and claims his Bride.'

"But Messiah's Kingdom cannot take full control of the earth, nor the Sun of Righteousness scatter the ignorance and superstition, until God's Elect Church shall have passed beyond the veil to be forever with the Lord, partakers of his glory, honor, and immortality (Romans 2:7).

"The object of the present great war for the commercial supremacy of earth, for national enrichment, may be hidden from the people for a time under various pretexts — called uplift, culture, and civilization. But soon the weakening of all these nations, predicted in the Bible, will be accomplished. Soon the people will see the folly of such waste of human life and the entailment of financial burdens upon coming generations. Then they will be angry, and the Bible declares, will dash their governments to destruction (Psalms 2:9, Revelation 2:26,27).

"This is the Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty. It is man's part! Then God's part will come. He will smite the people with the Sword of his mouth, the Message of Truth, of love. The knowledge of God's goodness and love will cut them to the heart and lead them to repentance. Ultimately, the world will rejoice in God's Kingdom. It will be 'the desire of all nations,' as God has declared (Revelation 16:14, 1:16, Haggai 2:7)."

Again in a discourse delivered shortly before his decease, the same writer made the following interesting observations:

"Admitting that those who interpret the prophecies to teach that we are now living in the time of the Second Advent of Christ are not infallible in their interpretation, we must, nevertheless, concede that there are signs all about us today which closely tally with what the Bible tells us respecting the condition of things which will obtain at Christ's Second Coming. Let us note some of these: St. Paul told of the end of the age (also St. Peter), that it would be marked by a form of godliness but lack of power; that it would be marked by disobedience to parents, by headiness, by high-mindedness, by love of pleasure, by unreliability (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Surely we see on every hand what answers well to these Apostolic prophecies of the closing time of this age and the dawning of the new age.

"On the other hand, we have prophecies which tell us of glorious blessings due to come to the world in conjunction with Messiah's Second Advent. Hearken to the Lord's Word in the prophecy of Daniel. We read that in the Time of the End (of the present order of things — in the time of the dawning of the new order of things) (1) 'Many shall run to and fro'; (2) 'Knowledge shall be increased'; (3) 'The wise shall understand'; (4) 'There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.'

"Are we not at the time when the whole world is on the move as never before in the past? Steamboats, steam and electric railways, etc., are only a century old and are only reaching their climax of efficiency. It would seem as though God had prospered human intelligence along these lines just at the opportune moment to bring in the running to and fro at the appropriate time — in the end of this age.

"How about the increase of knowledge? Is it not true that greater increase has been made in knowledge within the past fifty years than ever before? Not only is this knowledge exemplified in tunnels, bridges, buildings, machinery, electric lighting and power, and in every conceivable device for human comfort, but it is especially marked in human education. Within the past thirty years free schools, yea, compulsory education, have seemingly been forced upon the people of every land, as though to fulfill this prophecy, 'Knowledge shall be increased.'

"What about the statement that the wise shall understand? Many are perplexed by these things and wonderingly are deserting the Bible and flocking to evolution theories, only to find them unwise. The wise are those who hold fast to the Word of God, and in its increasing light see new beauties. The only satisfactory explanation of the times in which we are living is that these are the days of the Son of Man.

"Do not these things give the people of God a ground for faith that we are now in the closing of this Age and in the dawning of the Messianic Age, when the world is to be blessed by God's Kingdom? Many, of course, may scoff at the thought; but many others, God's saintly ones, are lifting up their heads and rejoicing, 'knowing that their redemption draweth nigh.' "

Chapter Forty-Seven

Satan Loosed Out of His Prison

(Revelation 20:5-10)

"But the rest of the dead did not live till the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has a portion in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they shall be priests of God and of the Anointed, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years may be completed, the Adversary will be loosed out of his prison, and will go forth to deceive those nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to assemble them together for war; whose number is as the sand of the sea" (Revelation 20:5-8).

Concerning the first clause of verse 5, "the rest of the dead did not live till the thousand years were ended," there seems to be good reasons for believing that the words do not belong to the original Greek text. It is a well known and an incontrovertible fact that there are a number of spurious passages in the Bible, some of which are found in the book of Revelation — texts that were probably inserted into the more modern manuscripts by copyists of the original. Amongst these, this passage is listed.[1] Mr. Russell, using as an authority Prof. C. Tischendorf's Notes on the readings of the two oldest Greek manuscripts — the Sinaitic and the Vatican No. 1209 — has thus remarked: "In this verse the words 'But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished,' are spurious. They are not found in the oldest and most reliable Greek manuscripts, the Sinaitic, Vatican Nos. 1209 and 1160, nor the Syriac manuscript. [He further calls attention to the fact that] many passages found in the modern copies are additions which do not properly belong to the Bible. Since commanded not to add to the Word of God, it is our duty to repudiate such additions as soon as their spurious character is established. The words indicated probably crept into the text by accident, in the Fifth Century; for no manuscript of earlier date (either Greek or Syriac) contains this clause."

As further bearing on this matter it will be noticed that the very location of the words, coming as they do between the two passages: "and they lived and reigned with Christ the thousand years," and "This is the First Resurrection," seems almost in itself to be convincing evidence that that part of the text is spurious, as it is not only confusing to the sense but meaningless. Considering these words as an interpolation, we find the text is in perfect harmony with all other

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(1) A list of these will be found in the Berean Bible Teachers' Manual.

Scriptures that plainly teach the priority of the resurrection of the overcomers of the Gospel Age. That this may be clearly seen we quote the words with the spurious passage eliminated: "And the persons of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus, and because of the Word of God, even those who did not worship the beast, nor his image, and did not receive the mark on their forehead, and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with the Anointed one the thousand years. This is the First Resurrection." Furthermore, its omission makes the whole passage harmonize with the many Scriptures describing the thousand years as the great Judgment Day during the progress of which the awakening, trial, and resurrection of the world will be going on. It would seem, therefore, that there are the very best of reasons for concluding that the clause is spurious.

Humanity Lives at Close of Millennium

However, by way of assisting any of the Lord's people who may not feel sure about the text being spurious — who may have such a regard for the King James text as to decry any attempt to do away with any portion of it, we call attention to the clear and convincing argument offered by Mr. Russell, as showing that even though the words, "But the rest of the dead did not live till the thousand years were ended," were genuine, they do not at all conflict with other Scriptures which teach that the awakening and raising up (resurrection) of the world of mankind will take place throughout the thousand years of Christ's reign and not after that reign is over:

"The repudiation of this clause is not essential to the 'Plan' as herein set forth; for the rest of the dead — the world at large — will not *live* again in the full sense, in the perfect sense that Adam *lived* before he sinned and came under the sentence '*dying* thou shalt die' [until the thousand years are ended]. Perfect life without weakness or dying is the only sense in which God recognizes the word *life*. From His standpoint all the world has already lost life, is dying, and might now be more properly [and are] described as *dead* than as *alive* (2 Corinthians 5:14, Matthew 8:22).

"The word *resurrection* (Greek: *anastasis*) signifies *raising up*. As related to man, it signifies *raising up* man to that condition from which he fell, to full perfection of manhood — the thing lost through Adam. The perfection *from which* our race fell is the perfection *to which* they will gradually rise, during the Millennial Age of restitution or resurrection (raising up). The Millennial Age is not only the age of trial, but also the age of blessing, and through resurrection or restitution to *life* all that *was lost* is to be restored to all who, when they know and have opportunity, gladly obey. The process of resurrection will be a gradual one, requiring the entire age for its full accomplishment; though the mere awakening to a measure of life and consciousness, as at present enjoyed, will of course be a momentary work. Consequently it will not be until the thousand years are finished that the race will have fully attained the complete measure of life lost in Adam. And since anything short of perfect life is a condition of partial death, it follows that, although the above words are no part of the inspired record, it

would be strictly true to say that the rest of *the dead will not live* again (will not regain the fullness of life lost) until the thousand years of restitution and blessing are complete."

"Blessed and holy is he who has a portion in the First Resurrection; over these the Second Death has no authority, but they shall be priests of God and of the Anointed, and shall reign with him a thousand years." These words scarcely require any comment. They "show the holiness as well as blessedness of all that reigning company. Another thought is suggested by the fact that these shall be priests to teach, as well as kings to reign. They will not only see to the execution of God's laws, but will give instruction and assistance to mankind, such as will enable them to render obedience."

"The call of spiritual Israelites to joint-heirship with Jesus in his spiritual Kingdom belongs to this Gospel Age only. The Church's change of nature from human to Divine begins with the begetting of the holy Spirit and will be completed in the resurrection change. St. Paul explains this and declares, 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.' (1 Corinthians 15:50). He also tells us that the earthly rulers of the future cannot be perfected until after the Church's resurrection (Hebrews 11:38-40). So also Jesus declared that the least one in the [spiritual] Kingdom would be greater than John the Baptist, the greatest of the Prophets (Matthew 11:11)" (C. T. Russell).

Those who have come to see that the subjects of the First or Chief Resurrection comprise the overcomers of the Gospel Age, who with Christ are called the Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16,29) through whom all others of mankind are to be blessed, have no difficulty in understanding the fact that their resurrection and exaltation to power must precede all others. All this is implied in the statement of St. John: "They shall be priests of God and of the Anointed, and shall reign with him a thousand years." As the above writer has said: "Theirs is the First Resurrection (Revelation 20:5). The great work before this glorious anointed company — the Christ — necessitates their exaltation to the Divine nature; no other than Divine power could accomplish it. Theirs is a work pertaining not only to this world, but to all things in heaven and in earth — among spiritual as well as among human beings (Matthew 28:18, Colossians 1:20, Ephesians 1:10, Philippians 2:10, 1 Corinthians 6:3)."

The simple statements of this Scripture in themselves teach that the subjects of this "First" Resurrection have a very exalted place and occupation during the thousand years. St. John calls them kings and priests. In other Scriptures they are called judges. These are not empty titles, but are full of solemn significance and mean that those to whom they are given, share with Christ in the administration of the government of the coming world. As kings they are to rule, as judges they are to judge and to administer and execute justice (Isaiah 32:1). As kingly priests they are to be entrusted with the cares and responsibilities of a Royal Priesthood. The Scriptures clearly teach that when the present dispensation is fully ended, Christ will enter upon a new and particular administration of human affairs. Our infinite God has ordained that he shall judge the world in

righteousness (Acts 17:31). "When he shall sit on the throne of his glory," then before him, during those thousand years, shall be gathered all the nations, and the great work of separating the "sheep" from the "goats" shall progress until the end of the thousand years, when the work will be finished — the "sheep" class rewarded, and the "goat" class punished. Engaged with him in this work will be the overcomers, the sharers with him of his own, the First, the Chief Resurrection. This work is that of ruling or shepherdizing the nations with a rod of iron — the following up of the victory of the "great day of God Almighty" — enforcing the rule of righteousness and justice in place of the iniquitous rule of the "dragon." Not only will the survivors of the awful time that introduces the Millennial Day be dealt with, but the residue of men who lived and died during past generations will be awakened from the sleep of death, become enlightened concerning God's purpose for them, and be dealt with in justice and mercy; and we have the Divine statement to the effect that "when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

Coming now to the consideration of verse 7, regarding the loosing of Satan, we note in connection with the vision of the thousand-year reign of Christ and his saints (Revelation 20:4- 6) that there is not the slightest reference to the earthly character of that reign, except that contained in the expression that Satan was bound that he should no longer deceive the nations until the thousand years were ended. This, of course, would imply that Christ's reign was over the nations of the earth. The reason why the various characteristics and details of this reign are not portrayed in the vision would seem to be that the book of Revelation being the closing book of prophecy, the Christian student is supposed to be familiar with the peculiar characteristics of the earthly phase of this reign which had already been portrayed in the writings of the Prophets of Israel, as well as frequently referred to by Christ and his Apostles. In the Old Testament prophecies the heavenly character of this reign is implied in the wonderful changes that are described to take place in the earth and its peoples as contrasted with present conditions. As an illustration of this, let the reader note the wonderful prophetic picture: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). It will be seen in this quotation that the heavenly aspect of this remarkable period is veiled in strong figurative language; the "mountain" referred to being a symbol of the Kingdom of God. Another illustration of this will be found in the words of the Prophet which read: "And in this mountain [heavenly phase of the Kingdom] shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people [of earth] a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces" (Isaiah 25:6-8). We quote one more prophecy to illustrate and establish this point — a Scripture that describes this Millennial reign as being the great Judgment Day: "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten

Him the victory. The Lord hath made known His salvation: His righteousness hath He openly shewed in the sight of the heathen [nations]. ... Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with His truth" (Psalms 98:1,2,8,9).

Humanity's Last Temptation

We observe, therefore, in considering this vision of the release of Satan, that the earthly features of the reign of Christ and his saints will need to be kept in mind; in other words, that the thousand-year reign of Christ and his saints is nothing more or less than the great individual judgment or trial day of the world. With these thoughts before us it seems most apparent that the loosing of Satan and the permission of a second attempt to defile the earth is for the express purpose of testing the myriads of humanity — all mankind who will have been living on the earth and enjoying the blessed privileges of this Judgment Day — the testing being for the purpose of deciding which ones of humanity have not used these privileges to develop a character of heart loyalty and obedience to God.

Three classes are brought to our attention as closely related and living during these thousand years: first, there will be the immortal ones, Christ and his glorified Joint-heirs, the heavenly Kings, Priests, and Judges, who will be invisible to earth's dwellers; second, the Old Testament saints, who will have been resurrected to perfect human conditions in the beginning of the thousand years, and who will constitute the visible intermediaries acting under the heavenly Kings, etc.; and third, the world of mankind, who will be on trial or probation for life or death everlasting. Seen from this standpoint the vision of the release of Satan and his permitted temporary activity in opposition to God amongst humanity, is, like all the visions of chapters 20, 21, and 22, designed simply to portray one aspect or picture of the final testing and results of this Millennial reign of Christ and his saints.

Consulting the writings of the commentators who have endeavored to explain this vision of the restraint and release of Satan, we find that nearly all, if not quite all of them, with the one exception of Mr. Russell, interpret it as referring to peoples who live through the judgment scenes that mark the overthrow of the present order. It was not until the ushering in of the period of Christ's personal presence that clear light began to shine on that feature of the Divine Plan that relates to this Millennial reign and the resurrection of the dead. It is not only interesting but profitable to read, as confirming the truthfulness of progressive interpretation, some of the comments on this vision. Mr. Guinness, referring to this period, says:

"Now we have never known and consequently cannot conceive a world free from Satanic deceptions; but who does not feel at once that it would be a marvelously different world? . . . When Satan is exiled from the earth for a time, it is evident that man will have a probation of a character different from any that he

has as yet experienced; it will be a probation of man free from the Tempter, and though Scripture does not lead us to expect that sin will be altogether absent from among the Gentile nations of the earth during the course of this probation, it does undoubtedly intimate that its existence will be reduced to a minimum. The Lord Jesus Christ began to overthrow the power of the Devil when he resisted his temptation in the wilderness; he obtained a further and magnificent victory when he broke open the prison house of death, and leading captivity captive, ascended up on high. This binding of Satan is a further stage of his triumph over the great foe, and the final one comes at the close of the Millennium when the Devil is cast into the lake of fire."

Mr. Lord, while regarding Satan as a real person, believed that his restraint and his release again were intended to portray very much wider effects than would be represented in his personal influence and operations. On these points he says that Satan, in the vision of his binding, includes the whole body of the fallen angels; and his emergence from prison denotes their release universally, and their return to the seduction of men on the earth. Another has said:

"It seems a great pity after the world has rested for a thousand years that this arch-enemy of its peace should again be let loose upon it. But there seems to be some sort of necessity for it. The statement to John was that 'he must be loosed a little while' (verse 3). Some interest of righteousness and moral government renders it proper that he should be allowed this last limited freedom."

Referring to the particular matter of deception practiced by Satan, the same writer goes on to say: "Satan succeeds in rendering them [the ones deceived] dissatisfied with the holy rule of God's glorified saints and induces them to believe that they can successfully throw it off and crush it out. ... How he does this we are not told; but under him they come forth in swarming myriads, enter the same holy land [as others (Ezekiel 38, 39) did a thousand years before], and compass about the citadel of the saints and the beloved city in the vain hope of wresting the dominion from its immortal possessors. ... The insane war, however, is quickly terminated. One brief sentence tells the fearful story: 'There came down fire out of heaven and devoured them.' When Israel was encamped in the wilderness, a guard of Levites was set about the tabernacle and the command to them was, 'The stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.' (Numbers 1:51). So a guard of immortal king- priests keeps the ways to the Throne and Temple of Jehovah in that day, and the presumptuous dupes of Satan's last deception who dare to approach with hostile intent are instantly hurled to a fiery destruction. Not a man of them escapes" (Joseph Seiss).

Concerning who are represented by these who seek to wrest the earthly rulership from the divinely appointed ones, none of the earlier commentators it seems had a clear conception. In the increased light of the days of the presence of the Son of Man, this matter as well as others bearing on the same is better understood. Of all expositors, Mr. Russell is the only one who has given a clear unfolding of this vision of the loosing of Satan. Concerning the Divine purpose to be accomplished in this release of Satan we have the following from his pen:

"At the close of the Millennium, when men shall have been made perfect, the world of mankind will be subjected to a final test, not as to their perfection of human nature, but as to their loyalty to God. The test upon Mother Eve was of this character. She was not deceived in the sense of not knowing the meaning of loyalty to God or what constituted disobedience. God had forewarned her. She knew what was right. But she was deceived so far as the consequences were concerned. So with Satan. He was deceived as to the outcome of his course, in thinking he would be able to carry out his plans despite the Lord.

"So, we believe, it will be at the end of the Millennial Age. Some of mankind will be deceived as to the result of the course they will take. All who are entirely loyal to the Divine Law will perceive the error of the wicked. During the Millennial Age Christ, as the Mediator, will stand between mankind and the full requirements of Justice; and mankind will be, as it were, in a household of protection. When all evil influences are restrained, mankind will have a very favorable opportunity for coming to a full knowledge of the Divine requirements. After they shall have enjoyed the blessings of restitution to the full, then it will be appropriate that a test shall come, to see whether their adherence to righteousness is merely a matter of policy or whether they have reached such a condition of heart-loyalty to God and righteousness as not to be removed from righteousness by any influence.

"At the end of the Millennial Age, then, after they shall have been turned over to the Father, he will thus test mankind to see whether or not they have learned full obedience. Evil influences will be let loose for a season. If they have not learned thoroughly the lesson of obedience they will be unworthy of everlasting life and will demonstrate that theirs has been merely a policy service. It will be because they have not come into fullness of heart harmony with God that they will be peculiarly susceptible, in this trial respecting their loyalty.

"Satan was tested as to his loyalty to God. Adam and Eve were tested as to their loyalty to God. In the time of Noah the angels were similarly tested — not as to whether they preferred right to wrong, but as to their entire loyalty. Jesus himself was tested as to his loyalty to the Father. So mankind, at the end of the Millennial Age, will be tested as respects their heart harmony with God."

Concerning what is represented in this Post-millennial vision by the "beloved city" and the "camp of the saints," we will find it interesting to compare the views of some of the expositors. Mr. Lord comments on these matters, saying: "The beloved city is the New Jerusalem, which is the symbol, as will be shown in the exposition of the next chapter of the glorified saints in their relations to unglorified men, of priests and kings, as great Babylon is the symbol of the priests and rulers [governmental powers] of the apostate hierarchies." Concerning who or what is represented by the "camp of the saints," he says: "They probably represent the subordinate, unglorified rulers of the obedient nations."

Mr. Russell's interpretation is very much the same as the above. His comment is that "the 'beloved city' is the New Jerusalem, the Church in glory, not the Church in the flesh." His thought with regard to the "camp of the saints," is

somewhat similar to Mr. Lord's, only more clear and definite because of his clearer apprehension of that feature of the Divine Plan concerning the earthly phase of the Millennial Kingdom or Judgment Day.

"At the end of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed, that he may go forward to test the people that are on the earth, to manifest to what extent their hearts are loyal to God and to the principles of righteousness. The result of this test will be that some will fall away (Revelation 20:7-10).

"We read, 'And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.' (Revelation 20:9). The 'beloved city' is the New Jerusalem, the Church in glory, not the Church in the flesh. The rebellion incited by Satan will be not only against the earthly princes, but also against The Christ.

"By that time having reached perfection of organism and powers, the people will assert themselves in thus going up to encompass the camp of the saints. That the Church cannot be meant is evident from the fact that human beings could not attack an unseen force of spirit beings, as the Church will then be."

"We do not expect that the communication between the spiritual rulers [the glorified Church] and their earthly subjects will be after this manner [as in Old Testament times] during the Millennium; for we find that God has made provision that a certain class of humanity, already tried (during the period before the Gospel Age) and found worthy of perfection and everlasting life, shall throughout the. Millennial Age serve as the intermediaries between the spiritual Kingdom, the saints, and their subjects, mankind.

"These intermediaries, while not the Kingdom in the proper sense of the word, will be so fully the representatives of it amongst men that they will be recognized as the Kingdom by men; they will represent the Kingdom before men and be the only visible representatives of it. Hence we have termed these 'the earthly phase of the Kingdom,' visible among men (Luke 13:28).

"'These, 'Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets' and Ancient Worthies referred to by our Lord and by the Apostles (Matthew 8:11, Hebrews 11:4-40), having passed their trial, will be awakened from death perfect — fully restored to human perfection; and will not require a 'resurrection by judgment' a thousand years long, as will the residue of mankind."

In regard to Satan's operations to deceive the nations, Gog and Magog, Mr. Lord's interpretation, which is very much the same as that of Mr. Russell, is: "Satan's enticing Gog and Magog to gather together to battle, denotes ... his enticing them to resist and endeavor to subvert the rule, both of the glorified and unglorified saints and to elevate themselves into their place. That it is by his influence that they are to be incited to war, indicates that they had before been universally [outwardly] obedient.

"'This prophecy, then, foreshows that after the risen saints have reigned with Christ ... Satan and his legions are to be allowed again to return to earth and tempt men; that seduced by them, remote nations are to revolt from the sway of

the saints which Christ has established over them, and attempt to exalt themselves to supreme authority; and that they are to be destroyed by a direct interposition of the eternal Word, and the tempting angels thereafter to be consigned to perpetual imprisonment in hell [Gehenna]."

Loyalty to God the Last Test

Mr. Russell enlarging and defining more particularly the nature or character of the test to be applied to mankind at the end of the thousand years has thus written:

"Possibly the temptation that will come to mankind at that time will be the desire to take possession of the government of earth before it is fully turned over to them. If this be true, since they will know that it is God's intention to turn the earth over to mankind when the end of the thousand years shall come, they will be anticipating the immediate transfer of everything from the Ancient Worthies, who shall have been ruling as 'princes in all the earth.' (Psalms 45:16). When the time shall be fully come, they will be disappointed. 'And they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city' (Revelation 20:9).

"This shows the condition of many of the world at that time. Many of them will become restless. They will say, 'These Ancient Worthies are holding back the government from us. We do not need to have anything to stand between us and the government of the world.' This attitude will be disloyalty to God. Knowing that all things are of Divine arrangement, they should say, 'The thousand years, seemingly, are over. We thought this Government would be turned over to us. But we will leave matters entirely in God's hands. If He sees best to give us the Government, well and good. But if He sees best to hold it back after the time is up, we shall be satisfied.' Such would be the attitude of loyalty."

Another instructive comment on this vision, showing that it occurs after the work of the glorified, immortal saints, and the princely intermediaries, the Ancient Worthies, is completed, is as follows:

"The great Mediator will indeed 'destroy from amongst the people' all who will not obey him, throughout the Millennial Age; so that at the transfer of his Kingdom and the vacating of his Mediatorship, the world of mankind will be perfect. The Mediator will step from between God and man, and Divine tests will be applied, to prove, to demonstrate, the heart-faithful. The sentence upon the disloyal is: 'There will come fire from God out of heaven and destroy them.' This indicates a testing and punishing by Divine Justice. This would not be possible so long as the Mediatorial Kingdom held sway. However, we understand that our Lord will be the Father's Representative in connection with that exhibition of Divine Justice which will follow his Mediatorship, just as he was the Father's Representative and Agent before he came into the world to be our Redeemer.

"The trial will follow the thousand years of Christ's reign, at the conclusion of which he will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father. Hence the loosing of Satan and the testing of the perfected race will be the result of their being

turned over into the hands of absolute Justice, and in contradistinction to their having been in the hands of Mercy through the Mediator for a thousand years. That judgment, or test, therefore, will be of the Father, of Justice — a similar test to that which originally came upon Father Adam.

"However, it is written that all things are *of* the Father and *by* the Son. We are to understand that the glorious Son of God will be the Father's active Agent in respect to that Judgment as well as in all matters. But it will be the Father's Judgment, or the judgment of Justice, for the Son's Mediatorial Kingdom will have ended.

"We cannot doubt then that in the close of the Millennial Age, God will again for a 'little season' permit evil to triumph, in order thereby to test His creatures (who will by that time have become thoroughly acquainted with both good and evil, and the consequence of each, and will have had His justice and love fully demonstrated to them), that those who finally prefer and choose evil may be cut off — destroyed. Thus God will for all eternity remove all who do not love righteousness and hate iniquity.

"The grand outcome of that trial will be a clean universe. As the Revelator expresses it, 'Every creature which is in heaven and on the earth ... heard I saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever. But this result will be accomplished in harmony with all God's dealings past and present, which have always recognized man's freedom of will to choose good or evil, life or death."

Revelator Reads Second Death Sentence of Satan

"And that enemy who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and sulphur, where both the beast and false prophet [were cast] and they will be tormented day and night for the ages of the ages" (verse 10).

By comparing this verse with verse 3 a difference will be noted between the symbols employed to denote Satan's imprisonment and his final punishment — the one is that of the "abyss," the other is the "lake of fire." The lake of fire is a symbol which we found used once before in the Revelation visions. It will be recalled, as is mentioned in this text, that the beast and the false prophet, representing systems or organizations, were cast into a lake of fire at the beginning of the thousand years. There, the symbol very evidently denotes destruction, that is, the destruction of the systems and not necessarily that of the individuals. In a succeeding vision to the one under consideration, we have the statement that death and hades were cast into the lake of fire, which very evidently denotes the destruction of death, that is, that Adamic death and the state of death will cease. In the same way we understand it is used in the verse we are considering.

If it were not for the last clause of this verse, we might consider this a sufficient explanation, and here rest the matter. In the passage under consideration, however, it is declared that the Devil is not only cast into the lake of fire (destruction), but is to be tormented forever. One has said:

"In the interpretation of the Scriptures we can afford to throw nothing out simply because it may conflict with any former views advanced. Scriptures seemingly 'contradictory' must be 'harmonized,' not cast aside. Still it stands as a matter of reason and logical common sense that in order to interpret any particular passage, the general harmony found in the testimony of other passages must not be destroyed, neither should one passage be arrayed against another in seeming conflict with it; nor should one conclude that a 'majority of texts' favor a certain construction, and array them against a minority, seemingly out of harmony.

"In our humble opinion there can be no question but that the 'general tenor' of the Word opposes the teaching of a 'life in torment,' as the end of a career. So far as the 'beast and the false prophet' are concerned, being purely symbolic, they could not as systems be tormented in any case. But we believe the 'Devil' to be a being, a personality, an entity whom it might be possible to 'torment forever and ever,' were such condition the decree of the Almighty.

"However, we do not believe the Almighty has any such intention. We read, 'But all the wicked shall He destroy.' (Psalms 145:20). ... Speaking of our Lord [in Hebrews 2:14], we read, 'that through death [through the death penalty], he [Christ] might destroy him that had the power of death that is the Devil.' This declares that Satan shall be destroyed by 'death,' and it would be impossible to inflict conscious torment upon that which is 'destroyed.' "

It is certainly most reasonable to suppose that as Satan is to be finally destroyed, the "torment" referred to in this text will end in death. Therefore, the whole matter rests upon the meaning of the words, "forever and ever." In this connection we note that the phrase forever and ever does not always convey the thought of never ceasing. It will be admitted, however, that in many cases in the Scriptures it has that meaning. The phrase "to a completion" is very often its meaning. Mr. Russell has thus explained this text in connection with utterances of the same character found in the context:

"Revelation 20:9 tells of the destruction of those individuals who join with Satan in the last rebellion; and verse 15 tells of that same destruction in other words, using the symbol 'lake of fire.' They are devoured or consumed in fire. This being the case, the torment of verse 10 cannot refer to these human beings who are consumed, destroyed. Hence the question narrows down to this, Will Satan and a false prophet and a beast be tortured forever? and does this verse so teach?

"We answer in God's own words, 'All the wicked will He destroy.' Concerning Satan, the arch-enemy of God and man, God expressly advises us that he will be destroyed, and not preserved in any sense or condition (Hebrews 2:14).

"The beast and false prophet systems, which during the Gospel Age have deceived and led astray, will be cast into a great, consuming trouble in the close of this Gospel Age. The torment of those systems will be *aionian*, i.e., lasting. It will continue as long as they last, until they are utterly consumed. So also the system of error, which will suddenly manifest itself at the end of the Millennial

Age and lead the 'goats' to destruction, will be consumed (Revelation 20:7-10). That deceiving system (not specified as to kind, but merely called Satan [Adversary] after its instigator) will be cast into the same sort of trouble and destruction, in the end of the Millennial Age, as the beast and false prophet systems are now being cast into it, in the end of the Gospel Age."

Chapter Forty-Eight

The Judgment of the Great White Throne

(Revelation 20:11-15)

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" (Revelation 20:11).

That the vision here recorded portrays the world's great Judgment Day has never been questioned by any expositor of the Revelation. In the various interpretations that have been offered, however, the fact has been generally lost sight of that it is a symbolic vision of the Judgment Day, and that it will of necessity, no matter how it may be interpreted, cover a considerable period of time. The general and incorrect thought concerning it is that the momentous transactions described in the vision will occupy only a brief period, some holding that they will all be over in one literal twenty- four hour day. This conception of the matter we cannot regard as either reasonable or Scriptural.

"The view generally entertained [respecting the Judgment Day] is that Christ will come to earth, seated upon a great white throne, and that he will summon saint and sinner in rank and file before him to be judged, amidst great convulsions of nature — earthquakes, opening graves, rending rocks, and falling mountains; that the trembling sinners will be brought from the depths of everlasting woe to hear their sins rehearsed, only to be again returned to an eternal and merciless doom; and that the saints will be brought from heaven to witness the misery and despair of the condemned, to hear again the decision in their own cases, and to return. According to the prevailing theory, all receive their sentence and reward at death; and this, which by way of distinction is commonly called the general judgment, is merely a repetition of that first judgment, but for no conceivable purpose, since they claim that a decision which is final and unalterable is rendered at death.

"The entire time supposed to be assigned to this stupendous work of judging billions is a twenty-four hour day. ... This is a very crude conception, and is entirely out of harmony with the inspired Word."

The failure to properly understand this vision of the Judgment Day we believe comes from a misunderstanding of what the Scriptures teach on this subject, namely that all mankind have been under the condemnation to death ever

since the beginning of the execution of the sentence, "dying thou shalt die," on the occasion of the fall and the banishment of our first parents from the life-sustaining trees of Eden (Genesis 3). That sentence was not only to die, but to continue dead forever unless the great Creator would make some arrangement to lift the penalty, and at some time exercise His Almighty power — release from death, and awaken and restore man to life again. The Scriptures plainly teach that He has made such an arrangement. It was in connection with the carrying out of such a purpose or plan of release, of salvation, that the Son of God took upon himself the form of a servant and was made flesh, a human being, and gave himself, his flesh, his humanity, for the life of the world. This is all very briefly, yet pointedly stated in the words of St. Paul: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels [a perfect human being, like Adam] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor [of perfect manhood]; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

The only ones up to the present time released from that sentence are the Church class who have heard, understood, and exercised faith in the Son of God as both their Savior (Deliverer) and Lord. These have in the present life their trial, probation, judgment day, and will not enter into judgment with the world (John 5:24, RV). The successful overcomers of this class will be associated with Christ in his divinely appointed work of judging the world. Concerning this class, the joint-heirs with him, Christ thus speaks: "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the [beginning of the] last day [the Millennial Day of Judgment]." This will be the First Resurrection (Revelation 20:6). The Savior in the same discourse further informs his hearers that during that period, the rest of mankind will be raised: "Marvel not at this for the hour [season] is coming, when all who are in the grave [death condition] shall hear his voice and come forth ... they that have done evil unto the resurrection of [by] judgment" (John 5:29, RV). "[This passage which contains] a precious promise for the world of a coming judgment trial for life everlasting is, by a mistranslation, turned into a fearful imprecation. According to the Greek, they that have done evil — that have failed of Divine approval — will come forth unto resurrection (raising up to perfection) by judgments, 'stripes,' disciplines (see the Revised Version)."

Not seeing the nature of this "great white throne" Judgment Day, most all expositors have located it at the end of the thousand years. It is evidently the teaching of the Scriptures that this vision is to meet its fulfillment during the thousand years in connection with the reign of Christ and his saints over the world. This is seen in the fact that the very first events that are described as occurring in connection with the placing of the great white throne, is the passing away of the present symbolic heaven and earth. Bearing in mind that the heaven and earth mentioned in the vision as passing away are not the literal but the symbolic heaven and earth, enables us to locate the vision as beginning its fulfillment at the commencement of the thousand years.

The Present Heavens and Earth to Pass Away

Practically all of the Pre-millennial expositors are agreed in regard to the heaven and earth being symbolical. One of these has thus expressed himself on this matter:

"*Aeons* [ages] end, times change, the fashion of the world passeth away, but there is no instance in all the Book of God which assigns an absolute termination of the existence of the earth as one of the planets or any other of the great sisterhood of material orbs.

"So in those passages which speak of the passing away of the earth and heavens (see Matthew 5:18, 24:34,35, Mark 13:30,31, Luke 16:17, 21:33, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 21:1), the original word is never one which signifies termination of existence, but a word which is a verb of very wide and general meaning, such as to go or come to a person, place, or point; to pass as a man through a bath, or a ship through the sea; to pass from one place or condition to another, to arrive at, to go through. ... That it implies great changes when applied to the earth and heavens is very evident; but that it ever means annihilation or the passing of things out of being, there is no clear instance in the Scriptures or in classic Greek to prove. The main idea is transition not extinction.

"Some texts, particularly as they appear in our English Bible, express this change very strongly, as where the earth and heavens are spoken of as *perishing*, being dissolved, flying away (Isaiah 34:4, 54:10, Revelation 6:14, 20:11); but the connections show that the meaning is not cessation of being, but simply the termination or dissolution of the present condition of them, to give place to a new and better condition. At least one such perishing of the earth has already occurred. Peter, speaking of the earth and heavens in Noah's time, says: 'The world that then was being overflowed with water perished.' (2 Peter 3:5,6). But what was it that perished? Not the earth as a planet, certainly, but simply the mass of the people, and the condition of things which then existed, whilst the earth and race continued, and have continued till now. ... The dissolving of which Peter is made to speak, is really a deliverance rather than a destruction. The word he uses is the same which the Savior employs where he says of the colt, 'Loose him'; and of Lazarus when he came forth with his death- wrappings, 'Loose him, and let him go'; and of the four angels bound at Euphrates, 'loose them'; and of the Devil, 'He must be loosed a little season.' It is the same word which John the Baptist used when he spoke of his unworthiness to unloose the Savior's shoestrings, and which Paul used when he spoke of being 'loosed from a wife.' It is simply absurd to attempt to build a doctrine of annihilation on a word which admits of such applications. The teaching of the Scriptures is that the creation is at present in a state of captivity, tied down, bound, 'not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected the same in hope'; and the dissolving of all these things, of which Peter speaks, is not the destruction of them, but the breaking of their bonds, the loosing of them, the setting of them free again, to become what they were originally meant to be, their deliverance (Compare Romans 8:19- 23). And as to the flying or passing away, of which John [in the text under consider-

ation] speaks, a total disappearance of all the material worlds from the universe is not at all the idea; for he tells us that he afterwards saw 'the sea' giving up its dead, the New Jerusalem coming down 'out of the heaven,' the Tabernacle of God established among men, and 'nations' still living and being healed by the leaves of the Tree of Life" (Joseph Seiss).

We submit other comments on this text that we consider clear and forceful so far as the significance of the heaven and earth are concerned:

"The fleeing away of heaven and earth described in Revelation 20, is described in Peter as their consumption by [symbolic] fire. Both descriptions include the passing away of the present corruptible state, and change to a state glorious and incorruptible" (Alford).

"That this is the case is clear from a careful study of the passage in the Second Epistle of Peter. The Apostle speaks here of three worlds. First, 'The heavens were made of old by the Word of God, and the earth also, which standeth out of the water and in the water; which things being so, the world that then was being overflowed with water was destroyed.' What was destroyed? Not the globe or the sidereal heavens, but the world that then was, the wicked anti-deluvian *society;* the then existing state of things passed away, but the globe, the solar system, and the sidereal heavens remained of course as they were. Secondly, to 'the world that then was,' he compares 'the heavens and earth which are now,' or as Alford renders it, the new heavens and earth; that is the post- deluvian visible world; and of these he says that at the appearing [apocalypse] of the day of God, the thousand years of the Millennium, which is as one day with God, it is destined to be similarly purified, not with water, but with [symbolic] fire; and he adds thirdly, that we according to God's promise (alluding evidently to Isaiah 65:17) look for a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (H. G. Guinness).

None of these writers it seems to us have explained fully or clearly the outcome of the passing away of the present heaven and earth and the ushering in of the new. Dr. Seiss locates this great change as beginning at the close of the thousand years, instead of at their beginning. Mr. Guinness makes the new heaven and the new earth state to refer to both the one thousand-year period and the eternal state which follows, but erroneously, we believe, applies the vision of Revelation 21:1 after its close.

Mr. Russell's explanation, however, is clear and harmonious with all Scriptures. Concerning the symbolical use of "earth," "heaven," "mountains," "seas," and "fire," he says:

"Throughout the Scriptures, earth when used symbolically represents society; mountains represent kingdoms; heavens, the powers of spiritual control; seas, the restless, turbulent, dissatisfied masses of the world. Fire represents the destruction of whatever is burned — tares, dross, earth (social organization), or whatever it may be. And when brimstone is added to fire in the symbol, it intensifies the thought of destruction; for nothing is more deadly to all forms of life than the fumes of sulphur.

"With this thought in mind, if we turn to Peter's symbolic prophecy of the Day of Wrath, we find it in perfect accord with the above testimony of the Prophets. He says: 'The world that was, being overflowed with water, perished. [Not the literal earth and literal heavens ceased there, but that dispensation or arrangement of things, existing before the flood, passed away.] But the heavens and the earth which are now [the present dispensation] by the same word [of Divine authority] are kept in store, reserved unto fire.' The fact that the water was literal leads some to believe that the fire also must be literal, but this by no means follows. The temple of God once was of literal stones, but that does not set aside the fact that the Church, which is the true temple, is built up a spiritual building, a holy temple, not of earthly material. Noah's ark was literal, too, but it typified Christ and the power in him which will replenish and reorganize society.

" 'The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night [unobservedly], in the which the heavens [present powers of the air, of which Satan is the chief or prince] shall pass away with a great [hissing] noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth [social organization] also, and the works that are therein [pride, rank, aristocracy, royalty], shall be burned up. The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens [the new spiritual power — Christ's Kingdom] and a new earth' [earthly society organized on a new basis — on the basis of love and justice, rather than of might and oppression] (2 Peter 3:6,7,10-13)."

In referring to the vision under consideration in a special way, he makes this explanation:

"Call to mind the definitions of the symbols, earth, heaven, and sea ... ; you will find them of service here: heaven — spiritual control; earth — organized society; sea — the turbulent masses without religious restraint. From before, or at the presence of, this enthroned Christ, all forms of evil, oppression and injustice must flee — no place is found for them, indicating that they will be driven from one place after another, but can remain nowhere.

"Earth — society — as at present organized, is a series of layers, or strata, or classes, each holding its position by oppressing those below it. (This class oppression is less in degree in this land than in any other; yet even here, social caste is easily discernible.) The 'lower classes' and 'upper crust' are recognizable in the entire social fabric; both in the nominal Church, and in the world. The upper classes are usually proud and haughty — the meek are oftenest found in the under strata, among the oppressed. The present system of society will pass away — not be permitted anywhere, when the Throne of Justice is established in the earth; and a new earth (system of society) will take its place; viz.: the recognition of merit, not of pride and power. Then, love to God and mankind will be the ruling principle. This change of (earthly) society begins immediately on the commencement of the dominion of Christ's Kingdom [over the world].

"But, not only does the present ('earth') society pass away, but also the present 'heavens' or spiritual powers of control. Satan is declared to be 'the

prince of the power of the air' (heavens) who 'now worketh [operates or rules] in the children of disobedience' (Ephesians 2:2). This one called at present, 'the prince of this world' (John 14:30), we have seen is to be bound; consequently his control, or spiritual power, now exercised in favor of evil doing, etc., will cease, or pass away.

"The fact that the present 'earth' and 'heaven' are to be succeeded by, or give place to, a 'new earth' (society), and a 'new heaven' (new spiritual power of control also unseen, good and not evil — of Christ and not of Satan), is not here mentioned, but is afterward" (See Revelation 21:1).

Concerning the "throne" and its occupant, Mr. Barnes says: "The throne here is the same who is referred to in Matthew 25:31, and called there the 'throne of his glory.' " The occupant of the throne he understands is "the Lord Jesus Christ, the final Judge of mankind." Some commentators hold that it is God, the Father. Mr. Russell has thus expressed the matter: "The Throne or Kingdom of Christ will be a pure — a righteous one, here symbolized by white, the symbol of peace and purity. ... The one who sat in the throne represents The Christ — primarily Jesus, the Head, but also the overcomers who sit with him or share his glory and power (Revelation 3:21) — yet all one."

Not a few Old Testament prophecies describe in strong symbolic language this passing away of the present arrangement or order, social, political, and religious. In Isaiah 24:1-3 we read, "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof" — and that this does not refer to the literal earth will be seen from the words that follow: "And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word."

This symbolic statement of the Prophet is in full harmony with the one of St. John; the turning of the earth upside down evidently referring to the fact that a great revolution in the present order will take place, in which the proud and haughty will be debased, and the meek and humble will be lifted up. Another prophecy to the same effect is found in Isaiah 40:4, in which is stated that "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked [perverse] shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." This strong figurative language is only another way of describing the fact that society (earth) is to undergo a great change, be reconstructed on a basis in which equality of classes shall exist, and in which "individual merit will be recognized, blended with humility and benevolence."

In Isaiah 24:17-20 we read of this same great revolution of the present order. The language is strongly figurative, and reads: "Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high

are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. ... The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again."

The earth in this prophecy means the present old social structure or order. It will be removed as one would move a building to make way for the new building of God, the new earth, wherein righteousness and justice shall be the order. The 46th Psalm is another prophecy describing the same fleeing away of the present, old corrupt order. The new order will be the reign of Christ, the appointed Judge of mankind, who will judge the world in righteousness and the people with his truth. The vision of St. John presents a brief symbolical description of the various features of that Judgment Day, the most stupendous one of all being that of the awakening of all who have gone down into death under the sentence imposed upon Father Adam.

"I Saw the Dead Stand Before the Throne"

St. John's next words are: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [hades] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (verses 12,13).

As introductory to an examination of these words, we would again remind the reader that in order to a full comprehension of their significance we must appreciate what may be properly termed one of the great fundamental truths of the Bible, namely that all down the stream of time mankind have had resting upon them the sentence imposed upon our first parents, "dying thou shalt die"; the only exception being that of consecrated believers since the Advent of Christ — their condemnation having been lifted they are justified freely from all things. In other words, the human race originally had a representative trial for life in Adam, and have already been judged as unworthy of life; and as previously stated, had Christ not intervened, had they not been rescued from this condition, there would never have been an awakening from death. However, when we consider the plain and convincing statements of Scripture that teach of the ransom sacrifice of Christ, that it is to fully offset the effects of the disobedience of Adam, this vision of the judgment or trial day of the world is seen to be a most wonderful blessing instead of a curse — a blessing purchased for all: "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Romans 14:9).

Let us note a few of the many Scriptures that have reference to what the sacrifice of Christ secured for every man, as well as those Scriptures which assure us that a time has been appointed in the Divine Plan when all will be permitted to benefit by that sacrifice: "As through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world (in whom all sinned), and through sin, death; so also, death passed upon all men" (Romans 5:12). This Scripture teaches very plainly that the cause

of sin in the world is Adam's disobedience, and that this one sin of Adam brought the sentence of death to all men. Another Scripture that teaches the same, but in addition shows God's grace or favor to all through the Man Christ Jesus, reads:

"But not as the fall, so is the gracious gift. For if by the fall of the one, the many died, much more the favor of God, even that gracious gift by the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to the many. And not as through one having sinned, is the free gift. For indeed the sentence was from one to condemnation; but the gracious gift is from many offenses to righteousness. ... Therefore, indeed, as through one offense, sentence came on all men to condemnation; so also, through one righteous act, sentence came on all men to justification of life. For as through the disobedience of one man, the many were constituted sinners, so even through the obedience of the one, the many will be constituted righteous" (Romans 5:15-19).

These Scriptures very clearly teach that the ransom sacrifice of the Man Jesus fully offsets what the disobedience of Adam brought upon all men. The elect Church, the called out ones, receive the full benefit of that sacrifice in the present life, as by faith they receive Christ as their Savior and yield their wills to follow in his footsteps unto death. That all mankind are at some time to receive the benefit of that sacrifice is taught in some Scriptures, and is in full agreement with the entire testimony of the Bible. St. Paul declared: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels ["made flesh," a man] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor [of perfect manhood]; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). And again we read that "He gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time" (1 Timothy 2:6). If we would inquire, When is the due time for all who have not in the present life had this testimony? we answer in the language of the Apostle Paul: "For God hath appointed a day [1000 years in length], in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

In the light therefore of the united testimony of the Scriptures all the various features mentioned in this great white throne judgment are readily comprehended. In other words, an understanding of God's dealing in the ages that precede the reign of Christ becomes the means by which we are permitted to unlock the secrets of the Divine Plan respecting this thousand years, and makes the words of St. Peter that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," shine out in clearness (2 Peter 3:8). To such as have grasped this knowledge of the far reaching effects of the ransom sacrifice of the Man Christ Jesus, the expositions of this vision offered by many of the commentators are entirely unreasonable and inadequate, and come far short of the Scriptural ideal. These explanations ignore entirely the plain Scripture statements that Christ's sacrifice secured for all a release from Adamic condemnation. The great masses of mankind, who have never even heard of Christ, have according to these expositors no part or benefit in his sacrifice. One of these commentators has thus explained the vision:

"The earth and heaven are here said to flee from the face of the Judge; the locality, therefore, appears to be some point in space apart from our globe. ... All subjects of this judgment are raised from the dead for this purpose. ... The sea, death, hades, deliver up their dead, thus defining the fact of the body, though mortal and corrupt, having in it the seed of the resurrection body, and the spirit, though separate for a time, re-united to the body of shame and death."

Referring to the "books" that were opened, this writer says:

"A special carefulness is manifest in this scrutiny, the most solemn and awful ever witnessed in the universe. ... Such painstaking accuracy can never be questioned throughout eternity. Never will there be found a mistake in the books of God. The sentence marks this as a distinct and final judgment. There is no arraignment and no pleading. It is in fact an execution of the sentence before declared [at death] but now made public in presence of the whole universe. The confessions of the guilty by their speechlessness when confronted with all their misdeeds — not one forgotten — will be the most eloquent though silent vindication of the purity and holiness and eternal justice of God."

The punishment administered is stated to be to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, which the writer explains to be eternal torment. He further goes on to say that the reason for this is because they were not among those who were foreordained to be saved from before the foundation of the world. His words to this effect are: "The book of life containing the names of all given in covenant before the foundation of the world, and therefore called the 'Lamb's book of life,' is searched for the name of every one condemned by his works, to see if by any possibility that account can be found." He adds that none were found.

What a vast difference between this expositor's view and the Scriptural hope held out for all the dead, whose redemption has been arranged for in the death of the Son of God. Yet the interpretation presented foregoing is a sample of nearly all who have attempted to expound this vision. It is a most remarkable illustration of the effects that Satan's lie, "Thou shalt not surely die," has had upon the reasoning faculties of the human mind! A search through all the writings of commentators for twelve centuries will discover none that is wholly reasonable and Scriptural. Some from whom we have quoted in these expositions have evidently seen the unreasonableness of their conclusions, and not understanding clearly the Plan of the Ages, they have been compelled to remain silent, making no attempt at an interpretation.

In great contrast with others is the exposition of this vision, so clearly, logically, as well as Scripturally, presented by Mr. Russell. One of his most luminous statements is found in his early writings and is in perfect harmony with all written by him since. The quotation we now submit deals with the question as to who are meant by the "dead" referred to as standing before the "throne":

" 'The dead' includes all of the Adamic race who during this Gospel Age do not escape from the condemnation that is on the world — death — by becoming partakers of spiritual life through Jesus. 'By the offense of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation,' but there is 'now no condemnation to them

which are in Christ Jesus'; for the law of life in Christ made such free from the condemnation of death (Romans 5:18, 8:1,2).

"As during this age a little fragment of humanity escapes condemnation (death), by obtaining spiritual life offered on certain conditions, so we understand the world are to be privileged to escape from the death condemnation, by obedience to certain laws of natural life. Their right to this privilege of running [having a trial] for life comes as a consequence of Jesus having ransomed them." "He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Timothy 2:6).

We next inquire, Where will these awakened dead ones be standing? The Scriptural answer is, that there will be no literal standing in empty space before a literal throne as would be necessary if the literal earth and heaven had fled away: "This will not be a marshaling of mankind in ranks, and rows, before a literal judgment bench. ... We believe that the world of mankind, during their day (age) for trial of worthiness or unworthiness of perfect human life, will be tried in a similar way to that in which certain ones are now being tried and tested in this day (Gospel Age) to prove whether worthy or unworthy of the perfection of the Divine nature."

The enlightened ones, the Church class are now having their judgment-trial. They do not stand before a literal, visible throne of judgment; and it is a real judgment-trial, notwithstanding. Thus will it be with the world in its Judgment Day. Concerning the world's Judgment Day, the ancient prophet informs us that during its progress "they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat" (Isaiah 65:21,22).

"And the Books were Opened"

The books referred to in the vision are not literal books, containing a literal record of every evil or good thought, word, or deed, of each individual of the human race; nor are such books to be carefully inspected that each person may be judged according to the standard of perfection. If such were the program for judging the world, then of course none would be found perfect, all would be consigned to eternal punishment, which as most commentators have taught means endless torment in a vast torture-chamber. Surely such an interpretation of St. John's vision misrepresents both God's character and plan. What a dreadful punishment, if this were true, would come to these who thus misrepresent Him! We are glad to know for their sake, as well as for the sake of the whole of Adam's condemned race, that this is not true.

What then do we understand is represented by the "books"? How shall we know? We reply that Christ gives a hint at least concerning what is meant: "The words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last [thousand-year] day." These books then are God's Word, and all contained in it necessary for the world to know of God's great Plan will be opened to the understanding of all who will be there. Indeed a perfectly clear understanding of the great Plan of human salvation will then for the first time be given to all mankind. A sufficient

knowledge of the matters contained in the different books of the Bible has been throughout this Gospel Age in possession of the Church class to enable them to finish successfully their trial for a heavenly inheritance. Observe the following:

"The books opened, according to the rulings of which they [the world] will be tried, we understand to be the books of the Bible. The Church, now on trial, is being judged according to these same books — and none now are on trial, to whom those books are not to some degree opened (understood). This too, accords with Jesus' words: 'my words shall judge you in the last day' (period) — the Millennial Day (John 12:48). ...

"The words of Jesus will no longer be hidden under parables and dark sayings, that hearing the people might hear and not understand; but the secret things will be uncovered. 'The mystery of God' — the Church — being finished, the books will be opened, and the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth. For God 'will have all men to be saved [redeemed], and [then] to come unto the knowledge of the Truth' (1 Timothy 2:4)"

The words of the vision show that the dead of every generation, of every clime and country, no matter how or when they met their death, will be awakened before that thousand-year day is over. The Scriptures in referring to this awakening imply that they will come forth not all at the same time, but in companies or bands.

"The succeeding verse is in harmony, and says that 'the sea [masses of mankind not under religious restraint] delivered up the dead which were in it': i.e., mankind will be taken out of that condition, and brought under the restraints of the white throne. Consequently, when all are restrained there will be 'no more sea.' (See Jude 13, James 1:6). 'And death and the tomb delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works' (During that age or day)."

Concerning some of the features of the judgment assize, we have these words:

"The Greek word here rendered judged has the significance of tried or tested. Paul's use of the same word will prove this. We here give a quotation, in which he uses the same word (*krino*) three times. We italicize the words translated from this Greek word: 'Dare any of you, having a matter against another, (1) *go to law* before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints (2) *shall judge* the world? and if the world (3) *shall be judged* by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?' — 1 Corinthians 6:1,2.

"Here Paul refers to the coming trial of the world, when the overcomers of the present trial, shall be their judges — judges, who like their Head, Jesus, will not only be able to assist the world as their kings, but also to sympathize with them — having been themselves tempted in all points. ...

"This trial includes all the world (but not the saints — John 5:24), and is indeed the grand prospect held out before them. By means of that trial, the entire groaning creation may be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty (freedom from death) of the sons of God."

The Scriptures are clear with regard to how the present conduct, deeds, etc., evil or good, will affect the world in that trial day. The principles that will be in operation at that time are embodied in the words of Christ to those who dwelt in the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum: "Then he began to censure the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not reform. Woe to thee, Chorazin! woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if those miracles which are being performed in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long since have reformed in sackcloth and ashes. Therefore, I say to you, it will be more endurable for Tyre and Sidon, in a Day of Judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, thou which art being exalted to heaven [in privilege] wilt be brought down to hades; for if those miracles which are being performed in thee, had been done in Sodom, it had remained till this day. But I say to you, that it will be more endurable for the land [people] of Sodom, in a Day of Judgment, than for thee" (Matthew 11:20-24).

We learn from these words of our Savior that those who have opportunities now, and neglect them, will receive the severer chastenings in that thousand-year trial day. The punishments in that day will be in proportion to past guilt, but will be for correction. The following we believe is well stated:

"Every sin indulged in now, every evil propensity cultivated, hardens the heart, and will make the way back to purity and virtue at that time more difficult. On this account sins willfully indulged in now will require punishment in that trial day of the world; and the more deeply a person is dyed in willful sin now, the more severe will be the measures required on the part of the great Judge to correct them.

"These punishments, however, will be corrective and will be designed for their discipline, even as the chastenings of God to those now on trial to be His sons, are for their correction and development in holiness.

"God's punishments at that time will always be administered in justice, tempered with mercy and they will be relieved by His approval and reward to those who are exercised aright by them. And it will be only when punishments, instructions, and encouragements fail; in short when God's mercy and love have done all that His wisdom will approve (and who could ask more than this) that any in that great day will meet the final capital punishment that his case demands — the Second Death.

"The character of the Judge [Christ] who will superintend the judgment or trial of the world assures us of a just and righteous judgment."

A Throne of Grace and Justice

Mercy and Justice, two of God's great attributes, operated when He originally formed the Plan of Redemption, and they will continue to be exercised unto its completion. God's mercy is infinitely greater than man's conception of it, at his very best. Mercy is defined as "that benevolence, mildness or tenderness of heart which disposes a person to overlook injuries or to treat an offender better than he deserves. It is the disposition that tempers justice, and induces

an injured person to forgive trespasses and injuries, and to forbear punishment or to inflict less than the law or justice will warrant. Mercy is a distinguishing attribute of the Supreme Being."

Judgment is defined as "the final trial of the human race, when God will decide the fate of every individual, and award sentence according to justice." It is impossible to have a clear conception of God's mercy without viewing it in its association with His justice or judgments in connection with His great Plan. A clear recognition of these two attributes — justice and mercy — is of very great importance in all attempts to delineate the Divine character as revealed in the Divine Purpose. The Scribes and Pharisees, the religious teachers of our Lord's day, were very deficient in this respect, and received the rebuke of Christ, for their perversion and neglect of these in their teachings (see Matthew 23:23).

When considering any unfolding of the Divine Plan of salvation, we may detect its perverseness or defectiveness by its neglect or distortion of God's attributes. From this standpoint how clearly can it be seen that the human family (with but few exceptions) have not been dealt with by God with the object in view of their learning righteousness now, or with the object in view of the completion or establishment of character at death!

God's mercy is shown in the sentence upon Adam in permitting that sentence to be executed gradually. God's past judgments, where they have resulted in the destruction of human life, have been simply the execution of the one original sentence passed upon all in Eden. Where His judgments have been otherwise, they have had for their object the correction of man for His good; and these have had to do especially with His own people, as illustrated in the captivities in the days of the Judges, in the days of ancient Babylon, and in the present dispersion of Israel. God's mercy, as well as His justice, is seen in its deepest sense in providing a ransom price to release all from the death penalty, for the purpose of carrying out that feature of the Divine Plan of giving every creature of Adam's race a full, fair trial to obtain everlasting life; or in other words, His arrangement for a Judgment Day. This Judgment Day will afford an opportunity for human beings of every class, clime and condition, even those who have been given up as hopeless cases by present reformers and reform institutions, to become righteous and obtain life everlasting. All these will be especially dealt with by God, and His infinite wisdom and discernment will administer judgment and mercy through Christ for the development of righteous characters.

Concerning the book of life, which is said to be opened, we have this most reasonable explanation:

"Another book — of life, was opened. This suggests to us that as there is a book (record) of life, in which the names of all the Gospel Age overcomers are recorded, who are worthy of Divine life, so there will be a book or record kept in the next age of those worthy of perfect human life. The book of life now about finished will not be opened — the results or record will not be known until the full end of this age; then we will see those deemed worthy to be of the Bride, the Lamb's Wife; so too, the records of the next age will not be opened until the end

of that age, when those worthy of receiving back the dominion of earth, lost by Adam, will receive it.

"Another feature of difference between the world's judgment of that age and ours of this, is that though they will be required to have faith, yet their trial will be based on works — 'judged according to their works.' We, on the contrary, live in an age when perfect works are impossible, and our judgment depends largely on faith: According to thy faith be it unto thee, and works only according to our ability.

"In the end of that age of trial, death and the tomb, and all not found written in their book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire — already described as representing wrath and destruction. That the lake of fire is symbolic, is readily seen, because death and the tomb are represented as going into the same — the tomb will be no more, and the Adamic death will be no more (Isaiah 25:7,8). All men who are then judged unworthy of life, die; but it is the Second Death, and is attributable to willful sin on their own part, for the Adamic death and all its results will have been destroyed."

"O hail, happy day!" Is it any wonder that the Psalmist by inspiration calls upon all animate and inanimate nature to rejoice before the Lord, "for He cometh to judge the earth; for He will judge the world in righteousness and the people with His Truth" (Psalm 98).

Joy to the World

Joy to the world! the Lord is come!
Angels and men rejoice!
The jubilee will soon begin;
Praise God with heart and voice!

All nature's voices loud proclaim
The praises of our King!
Ye winds and floods and thunders loud,
Ye may your tributes bring.

And everything in which is breath
May lift a tuneful song;
The woods may clap their giant hands,
And roll His praise along.

Thus may the orchestral chorus ring
O'er mountain, hill, and plain,
And melodies of earth and heav'n
Join in the glad refrain.,

Joy to the world! the Lord is come!
Let praise all tongues employ;
In loftiest, sweetest harmony,
Express your heart-felt joy.

Chapter Forty-Nine

Death Swallowed Up in Victory

(Revelation 21:1-8)

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Revelation 21:1).

Entering upon the examination of the visions recorded in chapter 21, we discover that the terms and expressions used are most highly pictorial and symbolical. As we have seen in foregoing chapters, the new heaven and the new earth, as symbols, are forcefully descriptive of the new organization of things ordained of God to take the place of the old order after it has been swept away. The new heaven will consist of the new unseen spiritual ruling powers, composed of Christ and his glorified Church. These will take full control of earth's affairs and will introduce entirely new conditions, social, civil, and ecclesiastical. These new conditions amongst men are called in the text a "new earth." As the "new heaven" does not mean a new atmosphere containing new planetary systems or a new place for God's throne, or a new dwelling place for angels and other heavenly beings, but new heavenly powers in control, namely the rulership of Christ and his Church in glory over the earth, so the new earth does not refer to a new planet, but rather to new conditions on this present planet. All present institutions, civil, social, and ecclesiastical, as described in other visions, will pass away in the great time of trouble with which this age closes.

A critical study of the Scriptures that portray the new conditions which will prevail on this earth after the new order is introduced shows that the literal sea will still exist. Therefore, the sea in the text, as is usually the case in the Revelation visions, is a symbol. The stormy sea is a symbol of the masses of people in a restless, unstable, anarchistic condition. Such a condition amongst humanity will have ceased, when the new order of things is introduced at the beginning of the Millennial reign of Christ and his saints. The symbol therefore teaches that under this new government which will rule in equity and righteousness and for the benefit of all, the social order will be of such a character, and will soon after its introduction prove so satisfactory to mankind as a whole, that there will be no more dissatisfaction, discontent, and restlessness; every element of society will be contented under the control of that perfect law and order; and justice will be secured to all alike. There will be an utter obliteration of the difference between classes — caste, wealth, and poverty, etc., which now exist. Consequently there will be no more symbolic sea.

"And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (verse 2).

We have now come to the consideration of the last vision — that of the City of God, the Holy City itself. St. John in this vision catches a view of this celestial City, the New Jerusalem. He afterwards has a vision describing it particularly.

The conception that has prevailed to a very wide extent in the past, and still obtains at the present time even amongst expositors, is that this vision describes a literal city — literal even to its material and measurements and other details, and that it is to be, as a literal city, the eternal abode of the saints. Now as we have found that all the other visions throughout this wonderful book have described in symbol the earthly things with which we are familiar, how much more should we expect that the future heavenly, eternal things, of which no mortal eye hath seen, would be portrayed in terms of the very highest imagery. How little should we expect that the glimpse which is here given us into the unseen heavenly world would reveal to us the shape of buildings or the material used in the construction of them, the city's walls, its length, breadth, and height. All these things which are mentioned later in the vision are without doubt symbols.

"Come, I will show thee the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb" (verse 9), are the words of the revealing angel to St. John; and he was borne away in spirit to a great and high mountain and from there he was shown "the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." A city is always, in one way of looking at it, identified with its inhabitants, and so in this sense the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, stands for or represents the official organization of Christ and the saints in glory, constituting them the government or Kingdom of God. Thus a city in Revelation is a symbol of a government, and so this Holy City represents a literal government, even the spiritual heavenly government of the new order. However, it should be kept in mind that it is a heavenly, a spiritual, Divine government, and while in the very fullest sense real, it will be unseen to mortal eyes. It is what may properly be termed the capital city, or government of the new dispensation — the legislative order, by whose authority the laws are made and enforced. It is called in the writings of the Prophets, "*Zion*": "And the law shall go forth of Zion." (Micah 4:2). It is therefore a City to which the glorified joint-heirs with Christ belong, in the sense that they are organized, and the various parts of this organization are all united together. As to how these glorified saints and their Lord will look as individuals; as to how, what we might call their legislative halls will look; and as to how the other various features of this heavenly government will appear, mortal eye hath not seen, nor can see; neither would it be possible to reveal them to mortals; consequently they are described in the strongest, most glorious, and meaningful symbols.

St. John sees the city "coming down"; that is, he sees what to us would signify the powerful and blessed influences of this heavenly government of Christ and the saints gradually and effectively changing for the better everything that pertains to the well being of earth's inhabitants. The city or government, therefore, had not at the time when St. John first beheld it, come into that

close intimacy with mankind that he observed later, when describing it, he said, "There shall be no more death," for death was still in evidence when he first saw the city. These grand and glorious things are what this heavenly government is to finally accomplish or bring to earth's peoples.

The first four verses, therefore, cover in their fulfillment the whole period of the thousand years, describing in a general way the blessed and glorious influences of this government of God and what will be the final outcome of the judgment reign of Christ over the nations (peoples). Later on in the vision we have portrayed in symbol the means employed by this heavenly government to bring in the everlasting blessings. These are described under the symbols of "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb"; and "the tree of life," the leaves of which are said to be for "the healing of the nations." These will be considered later.

Millennial Glory Prefigured

The Holy City descends from heaven, "having the glory of God." The heavenly government, the New Jerusalem, is the divinely chosen agency to display the glory of God to the dwellers of earth. This great privilege is the reward of bearing the cross, and indirectly the fruit of Christ's redemptive work. While Pre-millennial expositors in general associate the New Jerusalem with the elect, glorified Kingdom class, who are gathered out in this present Gospel Age, they differ in locating the fulfillment of the vision; some placing it at the close of the age, others as covering the whole Millennial period. Mr. Elliott in the first edition of his exposition of the Revelation placed its fulfillment after the Millennial Age was over. In a later edition, however, he interpreted it as existing throughout the Millennial Age. His words to this effect are as follows: "I cannot but incline to think that the Apocalyptic New Jerusalem was intended to symbolize the Millennial glory of the risen saints; and its descent from heaven in vision to denote a public manifestation to the world of that glory at the very opening of the Millennium." He gives as his reasons for thus believing, the fact that there had been a Pre-millennial announcement that Christ's Kingdom had come (Revelation 11:15-18), and also that the Marriage of the Lamb had taken place (Revelation 19:7). He reasons, and his reasoning is logical and consistent, that as these two events were Pre-millennial, then this vision is therefore a symbolization designed to represent and synchronize with the setting of the kingly and priestly thrones of judgment, in the opening of the Millennium. He cites as further evidence the fact that the nations (peoples) living during the Millennium are in need of healing and that this healing power proceeds from the New Jerusalem. He says: "I see not how it is possible to interpret this statement except by supposing the vision of the New Jerusalem to be in its chronology, Millennial — unless indeed it be thought that the phrases men, nations of the saved, kings of the earth, signify saints in the resurrection state; an alternative which few probably will be inclined to embrace."

Mr. Lord's interpretation is the same. Of all the explanations of the older commentators none seem to us wholly satisfactory for the simple reason that

none of them saw that this Millennial reign of Christ and his saints is synchronous with the great Judgment Day of mankind. Indeed the "due time" for understanding fully these things did not come until the period of the "presence of the Son of Man," which was subsequent to their day. The first clear exposition of this Scripture came near the end of the last century, at which time God's great Plan of the Ages was more completely revealed than ever before. And it is in keeping with this better understanding of the Divine purpose that the following statement is made by one who had given the subject very careful consideration:

"In the symbolism of Scripture a city represents a government; as for instance, symbolic Babylon is denominated 'that great city [government] which ruleth over the kings of the earth.' The New Jerusalem, as a symbol, represents the new spiritual government of the Millennial Age. It is not earth-born, it is not reared by men, but, as here pictured, it descends from God out of heaven — it is spiritual in every sense of the word — of God and not of men. It is for this kingdom, this government, that our Lord taught us to pray, 'Thy Kingdom come — Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven' " (C. T. Russell).

Contrasting this invisible heavenly government with the earthly government, called in the Scriptures, Jerusalem, which is to be to humanity the visible representative of the New Jerusalem, the new heavenly government, the same writer goes on to say:

"It is well also to distinguish clearly between the New Jerusalem, the heavenly or spiritual city of which the Apostles [as symbolical stones] are the twelve foundations, and the old Jerusalem which is to be rebuilt upon her old heaps. The old Jerusalem's promised restoration implies not merely the reconstruction of the buildings, etc., but specially the reorganization of Israel's government; for a city in prophecy is always the symbol or representation of a government. Hence the promised reconstruction of Jerusalem upon her old foundations implies a national reorganization of Israel upon a basis similar to that which it formerly had, as a people over whom Jehovah's anointed held the authority. The New Jerusalem [however] represents the Gospel Church in glory and Kingdom power, spiritual, and invisible to men, yet all-powerful. Its descent to earth (Revelation 21:2) marks the fulfillment of that petition of our Lord's prayer which says, 'Thy Kingdom Come'; and its 'coming' will be gradual, and not sudden. It is already 'coming down,' coming into control, and as a result we see the preliminary steps leading to the re-establishment of the old Jerusalem; and ultimately the result mentioned in our Lord's prayer will be realized — God's will will be done on earth even as in heaven. The New Jerusalem and the new heavens are synonymous, signifying the new spiritual ruling power."

It is said by St. John that "the city is prepared as a Bride, adorned for her Husband." There is implied in these words that the heavenly Church, which constitutes this government, was caused to pass through trying experiences in her earthly state in order that she might be prepared, fitted to occupy such a grand exalted position as kings and priests with Christ. The adorning may also refer to the glory, grandeur, and perfection of this heavenly government in its

heavenly assemblies and legislative enactments that have for their purpose the uplifting of humanity. This aspect, however, could be seen only by the heavenly, spirit beings, as angels, principalities and powers in the heavenlies. The *effects* of these heavenly deliberations, manifested in the administration of affairs on earth amongst men, will be seen by men, and in this way the world will realize the glory represented in this, its adorning. It can hardly be otherwise than that the splendor that shall surround that heavenly court will surpass anything that angels or other heavenly beings have beheld before.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (verse 3).

In keeping with the picture furnished us in the ancient city of Jerusalem, the temple, the object and center of Divine worship, is brought to our attention in connection with the description of the symbolical New Jerusalem. And how appropriate that it should be! In the days of old God dealt with Israel, constituting that nation a pictorial or typical people, and furnished through them many beautiful pictures or lessons, revealing in miniature one or another of the various features of His Plan. Their Law Covenant was illustrative of the New and more successful Law Covenant to be instituted on behalf of all mankind by the greater Mediator than Moses (Hebrews 10:1). Their system of sacrifices was typical of the better sacrifices represented in Christ and the members of his Body (Hebrews 9:23). Their tabernacle and temple occupied a most important position also, being the official place where atonement for sin was made through the offering of sacrifices — where the mediatorial service was performed which constituted the basis for the forgiveness of Israel's sins. In other words, the temple was the place where God met Israel, and through the officiation of the priesthood, and the services of the mediator, peace and harmony were established between God and the nation of Israel.

Here, then, we observe earth's new government or Kingdom composed of Christ and the Church, veiled under the symbol of a city; and our view and vision enlarges as we associate therewith the lessons of the symbolical Tabernacle or Temple and recognize that herein we have another picture indeed of the Christ, Head and Body, which God in this Gospel Age has been preparing for its future mission. The members of this class are referred to as "living stones" (1 Peter 2:5), and as "pillars" (Revelation 3:12), designed for the Temple.

This Temple of the Apocalypse will be indeed the meeting place between God and all the world of mankind. Through this Temple class God will once more visit and speak to humanity, offering them pardon and peace based upon the better sacrifices, upon the higher and more effective mediation to be accomplished through the better Mediator than Moses. Thus as atonement was accomplished for Israel through the temple of old, so atonement on a higher and grander scale for the entire human race will be effected through the higher and greater Temple of the New Jerusalem.

It is undoubtedly, therefore, during the Millennial Kingdom, when Christ is reigning for the purpose of putting all enemies under his feet, that this vision of the Temple will be fulfilled. It will be in this Holy City that God will dwell. In another sense this Holy City will be His Temple, and at its gates mankind will be permitted to approach God in prayer and worship, just as Israel approached the typical tabernacle and the temple in their worship. It will be in this sense that God will dwell with men. "The Christ" will be His dwelling place — the place where He will meet with mankind. This great privilege will have been secured to the world through the ransom sacrifice of the man Christ Jesus. For, "He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). The Christ will be the great Mediator. The time then having come in God's Plan for the manifestation of His grace, all will then be treated as the Lord's people; none of them will be treated as strangers and aliens from God and His promises and blessings. At the close of the Millennial reign all estrangement and enmity between God and humanity will have been removed, and the figure of the temple, not being intended to picture any proceedings or doings between God and men throughout the ages of bliss to follow, will then come to an end.

The Millennial Kingdom will be not only the Kingdom of Christ and the Joint-heirs, but it will be the Kingdom of God as well, in that all that will be done in that age will be in harmony with God's foreordained purpose and thus be representing the Divine will. It will, however, be distinct and separate from God's rule in general so far as the rest of the great Divine Empire is concerned. This is according to the words of St. Paul: "For he [Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. ... And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him" (1 Corinthians 15:25-28). "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. [This will be at the close of the Millennial reign.]" (1 Corinthians 15:24).

No More Sorrow nor Crying

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (verse 4).

The wiping away of tears is symbolical of the removal of everything that during the present reign of sin and evil causes pain and sorrow and death. This drying of tears will be a gradual process, and is a way of describing one feature of the work of the Millennial reign. During this great judgment or trial of the world man will gradually be brought up to a condition of mental, moral, and physical perfection. Those who hear and seek to obey the laws of that Kingdom will eventually be lifted into this blessed state; those who refuse to obey, and make no progress in character development, will after a hundred years of trial, be cut off, destroyed (see Isaiah 65:20, Leeser). The complete results of the reign of Christ is summed up in the words: "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor

crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed way." One has effectively said:

"It is almost impossible for one to read this passage comprehendingly with dry eyes. Can it be possible that, after all the wicked rebellion and inexcusable wickedness of mankind, our Heavenly Father will be so good to us [mankind]? ... Throughout the passing millenniums, Jehovah has patiently waited, bearing the enmity and suspicion of the millions who knew Him not. Waiting, waiting, waiting, with infinite condescension and patience for the various phases in the development of His grand Plan. During this period, with longsuffering, has He borne with the errors and ignorance of the people of the earth; yet during all this interval has His 'sun risen upon the just and unjust.' His rains have fallen, and the seasons have pursued their ceaseless round, bringing forth His bounty to all, even though the recipients thereof were thankless; but now [at that time] His glorious Plan stands revealed to every eye, and all the earth unites in anthems of praise, in which the choirs of the angels gladly join, and the Kingdom of Peace stands forever. ... Never having known what true happiness and contentment are, because of the taint of sin, it is hard to realize what conditions must be like where all disobedience and rebellion has ceased, and mankind brought to a state of mind, where God 'will open the windows of heaven,' and deluge the earth with blessings."

Another writer has with true and proper eloquence expressed the fulfillment of this symbol of the drying away of tears and the cessation of death:

"He who dries them off is God Himself. Human hands are poor at drying tears. If they succeed in removing one set, others come which they cannot wipe away. Earthly power, however good and kind, cannot go far in the binding up of broken hearts. Only the Hand that made the spirit can reach the deep sources of its sorrows, or dry up the streams that issue from them. The springs of grief yield to no other potency. But then His loving Almightiness shall wipe every tear. 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted,' saith the Lord. 'Every tear,' for they may be many — tears of misfortune and poverty, such as Job and Lazarus wept; tears of bereaved affection, such as Mary and Martha and the widow of Nain shed; tears of sympathy and mercy, such as Jeremiah and Jesus wept over the sins and calamities of Jerusalem; tears of persecuted innocence, tears of contrition and penitence for faults and crimes against the goodness and majesty of heaven; tears of disappointment and neglect; tears of yearning for what cannot now be ours; these and whatever others ever course the cheeks of mortals shall then be dried forever.

"Death no longer exists. O the reign of death! Whom has it not touched! What circle has it not invaded! What home has it never entered!

> "There is no flock however watched and tended,
> But one dead lamb is there!
> There is no fireside howsoe'er defended,
> But hath one vacant chair.

"Around our churches lie our graveyards, and all the highways are lined with cemeteries and depositories of the dead. We can scarcely open our eyes without seeing the gloomy hearse, the funeral procession, the undertaker's warehouse, the shop full of mourning goods, or the stone cutter chiseling epitaphs. Every newspaper we pick up has its obituary lists, and every week brings forth its bills of mortality. On the right hand, on the left hand, before us, behind us, around us, beneath us, in all seasons, in all climes, everywhere, is death. We ourselves are only waiting, not knowing what day or hour we shall fall beneath its stroke. Physicians are sent forth by hundreds and thousands every year from our colleges and universities, and myriads of hands are ever busy collecting and preparing medicines for the sick; and yet there is no check, no restraint, to the career and reign of death! But, at length, an end to his fell dominion comes. The time will be when death itself shall die; not by the power of man, not by mortal skill or earthly medicines, but by the great redemption of God. When the sunlight of the New Genesis dawns upon this stricken world, the grand thanksgiving shall ring out over every zone, from the equator to the poles, that 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' Never another dying-bed shall then be seen again. Never another grave shall then be dug. For '*death shalt no longer be*' " (Joseph Seiss).

The poet who has derived his inspiration from pondering over and meditating upon the glorious prophecies that portray these scenes of joy and blessedness that follow the destruction of death, has grasped more clearly their significance than most theologians:

"Oh, scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplished bliss! which who can see,
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refreshed with foretastes of the joy!

"Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance; and the land once lean,
Or fertile in its own disgrace,
Exults to see its thistly curse repealed.
The various seasons woven into one,
And that one season, an eternal spring.
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
For there is none to covet, all are full.
The lion and the leopard and the bear,
Graze with the fearless flocks; or bask at noon
Together, or all gambol in the shade
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
Antipathies are none. No foe to man
Lurks in the serpent now; the mother sees,
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
Stretched forth to dally with the crested worm,

To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worship man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father.

"Error has no place;
That creeping pestilence is driven away,
The breath of heaven has chased it. In the heart
No passion touches a discordant string,
But all is harmony and love. Disease
Is not: the pure and uncontaminate blood
holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.
One song employs all nations, and all cry —
'Worthy the Lamb,' for he was slain for us!
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain tops,
From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
'Til, nation after nation taught the strain
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.

"Behold the measure of the promise filled;
See Salem built, the labor of a God!
Bright as the sun the sacred city shines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,
Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there;
The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
And Saba's spicy groves, pay tribute there.
Praise is in all her gates; upon her walls,
And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there,
Kneels with the natives of the farthest West;
And Ethiopia spreads abroad the hand
And worships. Her report has traveled forth
Into all lands. From every clime they come
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
O Zion! An assembly such as earth
Saw never, such as heaven stoops down to see!"
(Cowper, *The Task*, 1783).

"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (verses 5,6).

"The fifth verse ... comprehensively grasps the entire Millennial Age; our Lord Jesus, then in the throne of earth's dominion, declaring, 'Behold, I make all things new.' This expression does not relate merely to rocks and trees, etc., but to the great work which our Lord undertook; viz., the regeneration of humanity — of so many of Adam's race as would, under favorable conditions of knowledge, experience, and assistance, develop characters in full accord with the Divine will. The end of the Millennial Age will see the work completed — all the wicked destroyed, all who will not hear the voice of that Prophet, Teacher, Governor, cut off from amongst the people in the Second Death, and all the willing and obedient made new, brought to the complete perfection contemplated in the original Divine Plan.

"John was to write this matter, because the testimony is true, is faithful, as is the one who has promised. This asseveration of faithfulness and truthfulness implies what we [who understand God's Plan] see to be the case; viz., that present conditions seem so contrary to all this grand restitution outcome that it cannot be fully believed and trusted by any except those who have learned to walk with the Lord, and in their weakness to lean upon His might — to trust to His power to accomplish all the exceeding great and precious things which He has promised. To all others these things will appear untrue, and God will appear, unfaithful, and the matters which we are here discussing will seem 'idle tales,' as fables and golden fancies; but to us who believe, these promises are precious, and He from whom we receive them is precious correspondingly as we know Him and trust Him (1 Peter 2:7)."

The words, "They have been done," proceed from "the Christ," as will be seen from the words that follow: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." The works that in the Divine counsels had been committed to Christ, will at the time of this vision's fulfillment be completed: "It was the Father's good pleasure that the blessed one, the Only Begotten of the Father, should accomplish the entire program of redemption and restitution; and that incidentally, by his obedience in the things which he suffered, he should prove himself worthy to be forever the associate and representative of the Father, through whom and by whom all things should continue, as he was the one through whom all things were made that were made."

All the blessings that are associated with life everlasting in a perfect earth home, with no sin to mar its blessedness, is comprehended in the words, "the water from the fountain of life." The everlasting life, enjoyed by the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, will be like unto her Lord's — immortal, that is, life inherent, life not dependent. This life which will be the reward of the final overcomers of the Millennial times, while everlasting, will be a dependent life; it will need ever to be supplied and renewed by drinking of the life-giving fountain. However, we have the Divine assurance that when the restitution work of the Millennial Age will be completed there will be no more death.

The words of the Son of God that follow: "The conqueror shall inherit these things; and I will be to him a God, and he shall be to me a son," are not addressed

to the Church of the present time, for this class have the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as their Father. Christ is called in one of the Old Testament prophecies "The Everlasting Father" (life giver), and He is the one who bestows this life to the overcomers of the restitution times. All these, therefore, who receive the everlasting life in the Millennial Age, look to Him as the one who gave them this life. These are not invited to inherit the Heavenly Kingdom, prepared for the Joint-heirs. The promise to the Millennial overcomers is the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, the earthly paradise, which was lost through Adam. All who will have been restored at the close of restitution times will be those who have accepted Christ's gracious favors and have been regenerated by him, thus becoming sons (see Isaiah 9:6).

"The Wages of Sin is Death"

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (verse 8).

We have in this verse described the end of those who fail to profit by the instruction and corrective discipline of the great Judgment or Trial Day. These have permitted to develop in them the evil characteristics described in this verse. Their characters are fixed, settled; therefore, their cases are hopeless, so far as their ever changing is concerned. This is the last utterance of the Great Judge concerning their final punishment. What do these words teach? Some tell us they teach eternal torment; and those who so teach, believe that all the trial or probation that any living soul will have is that which he has in this present life. These also allege that this decision, this sentence, is when the sinner dies; and furthermore that this torment begins immediately at death, when what they call separation of the soul from the body takes place; that its severity is increased by the resuscitation of their bodies, and their souls taking up their abode again in the same; and that this torment will be endless and increase without hope of recovery. Who really believes it? Only those so believe who do not understand the Scriptures. Do the Scriptures teach such a blasphemy against the God of Love? We submit a brief exposition of this verse which we believe sets forth the truth:

"The true character of the goat class is portrayed. 'The fearful and unbelieving [who will not trust God], the abominable, murderers [brother haters], whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters [such as misappropriate and misuse Divine favors, who give to self or any other creature or thing that service and honor which belong to God], and all liars' — 'whosoever loveth and maketh a lie' (in a word, all who do not love the Truth and seek it, and at any cost defend and hold it) 'shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone [*Gehenna*, symbol of utter destruction], which is the Second Death.' Such company would be repulsive to any honest, upright being. It is hard to tolerate them now, when we can sympathize with them, knowing that such dispositions

are now in great measure the result of inherited weakness of the flesh. We are moved to a measure of sympathy by the remembrance that in our own cases, often, when we would do good, evil is present with us. But in the close of the Millennial judgment, when the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall have given every advantage and opportunity of knowledge and ability, this class will be an abhorrence and detestation to all who are in harmony with the King of Glory. And the righteous will be glad when, the trial being ended, the gift of life of which these shall have proved themselves unworthy, shall be taken from them, and when the corrupters of the earth, and all their work and influence, shall be destroyed. ...

"This destruction or death is called the Second Death in contradistinction to the first or Adamic death, and not to signify that everything which goes into it dies a second time. For instance, death (the first or Adamic death), and *hades*, the grave, are to be cast into it; this work will require the entire Millennium to accomplish it; and in no sense will they ever have been destroyed before. So also 'the devil,' the 'beast,' and the 'false prophet,' will never have been destroyed before.

"From the first, or Adamic death, a resurrection has been provided. All that are in their graves shall therefore come forth. The Revelator prophetically declares: 'The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell [*hades*, the grave] gave up the dead which were in them. ... And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened.' (Revelation 20:13,12). It was in view of God's Plan for redeeming the race from Adamic death that in both the Old and New Testaments it is called a '*sleep*.' In Israel's history of the good and the wicked it is repeatedly stated that they 'slept with their fathers.' The Apostles used the same symbol, and our Lord also. But no such symbol is used in reference to the Second Death. On the contrary, the strongest figures of total and utter destruction are used to symbolize it; viz., 'fire and brimstone'; because that will be a destruction from which there will be no recovery.

"Blessed thought! the Adamic death (which claimed the whole race for the sin of their progenitor) shall be forever swallowed up, and shall cease in this Second Death into which it is to be cast by the great Redeemer who bought the whole world with the sacrifice of himself" (C. T. Russell).

Chapter Fifty

The New Jerusalem

(Revelation 21:9-22:5)

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (Revelation 21:9-11).

We have in the above language and in that which follows in verses 12-27, 22:1-5, a continuation and more complete description in symbol of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. This New Jerusalem, as we have seen, is a symbol of the heavenly government of the Millennial Age. It is here called by the revealing angel, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, because of the close relationship that exists in this Divine government between Christ and his overcoming saints. Just as a bride shares all the dignities and honors of her husband, so does the Church in glory share with Christ the same. We have also portrayed in symbol in these verses the New Jerusalem government's relationship with the inhabitants of the new-earth order, and the powerful as well as helpful influence for eternal good that it will exert over them. The various characteristics of this relationship and blessed influence are portrayed in most glowing and striking symbols.

This vision of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, is evidently designed to be viewed in contrast with that of another — a wicked city, symbolical Babylon, which St. John had previously seen in vision reigning over the kingdoms of the earth. A striking similarity in the two visions is that St. John is invited in both instances by one of the same seven angels to behold the view: "Come, I will show thee the judgment of that great harlot [Babylon the Great] who sits on many waters" (Revelation 17:1); "Come, I will show thee the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb" (Revelation 21:9).

It is quite certain that the reasonable and Scriptural method of interpreting the first vision, that of Babylon the wicked city, will be the reasonable and Scriptural one of interpreting and understanding that of the New Jerusalem, the Holy City. It is our understanding that Babylon the Great is properly interpreted symbolically and that it represents the civil and religious hierarchy of the Papacy, which for long centuries has exercised a powerful, evil, and controlling influence over thousands of millions of earth's peoples. In contrast with this we are enabled to see from the description that the New Jerusalem must represent an all-powerful

religious government that will exercise a most blessed and lasting influence for good over earth's people of the new order when it comes into power. It is very evident that these two cities do not reign contemporaneously; to the contrary, the New Jerusalem's gracious and righteous rule is exercised after the symbolic Babylon has disappeared from view, after it has been destroyed, and like a great millstone has been cast into the symbolic sea of anarchy to be found no more forever (Revelation 18:21).

On the occasion of St. John's being given a view of the great city, symbolical Babylon, he was carried away in the spirit into the wilderness (Revelation 17:3); in the vision of the New Jerusalem, however, he is borne away in the spirit to "a great and high mountain." We may learn what is the symbolical significance of his being borne away in spirit to a great and high mountain by contrasting his experience with that of our Savior's when he was tempted by Satan. The Savior was, like St. John, borne away (doubtless in the spirit) to a great and high mountain and there shown all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. That mountain, it would seem, was a symbol of Satan's own dominion as the "god" or "prince" of this world. From this viewpoint Christ could see the vast extent of Satan's dominion; and the fact that he was offered this dominion if he would bow down and worship Satan enables us to see something of the nature of the temptation that was employed by Satan in his attempt to overthrow and cause the downfall of Christ. On the other hand, St. John was borne away in spirit to a great and high mountain, not to be tempted, but to be shown the New Jerusalem, all the power and authority, not of Satan, but of Jehovah, given into the hands of the Only-begotten Son and his Bride. The mountain, then, in this instance, would seem to represent the Divine authority, power, and dominion of Jehovah.

Pictorial of Earth's New Government

If it were possible for us to comprehend and apply the meaning of all the grand symbols employed in this vision we would find that whatever of types or shadows of the blessed relationship existing between Christ and his Bride, whatever of typical manifestations of any kind God has given to individuals, to mankind, and to Israel in particular, of His character, His attributes, His government over mankind, and His dwelling with them in the past — all meet their fulfillment in this vision of the New Jerusalem. The symbols associated with the description of this glorious Holy City we may, therefore, with the fullest confidence believe, picture or represent two glorious verities, and some think, a third: First, the grandeur and glorious relationship that will exist between Christ and his glorified Church; and second, the various aspects or characteristics of the heavenly, spiritual government of Jehovah over the new-world order; that government being centered in Christ and his Bride. The additional feature that some believe to be described in this symbol is that of the eternal home or dwelling place of Christ and his glorious Church, his Bride. However, to apply the various descriptive symbols employed in this vision of the New Jerusalem to the everlasting home of the Lamb and his Bride would seem to us to be out of order, for the reason that while it is true that the prospective Bride has some of

the inner experiences and foretastes of the coming joys of that eternal dwelling, they know absolutely nothing of what may be termed the visible realities of the heavenly state.

While there can be no doubt that the Bridegroom and the Bride as a company will have an eternal abode, a glorious dwelling place, "eternal in the heavens," it would seem to be utterly impossible to apply these symbols to the various features of that home for the reason that it would require a change of nature from human to Divine to see it; and if one who had experienced this change could come back to earth, it is absolutely certain that no eloquence, no form of human speech could possibly describe it. It seems to us, therefore, that the striking symbols used in the vision of this Holy City, namely the most valuable, precious, and beautiful of the material things of earth, are the most appropriate that could be employed to describe the realities and convey to the spiritual, heavenly mind in its present state, the glorious beauty and majesty of that future heavenly government over the world, the new order.

Understanding as we do that St. John, in his beholding the vision of this Holy City, the New Jerusalem, represents the Lord's saints of the present time viewing with the eye of faith the reality itself, let us accept the invitation of the angel, and with reverential humility endeavor to discern as much as possible of the occupation as well as the future exaltation to glory and honor of "the saints in light."

The symbolic angel says, "Come, and I will show thee the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb." Viewing the symbol in a general way, the significance of these words of the angel seem to be that this gracious invitation is designed to reveal to the Church on this side of the veil that the New Jerusalem is a symbol of the heavenly government and is the realized answer to the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come"; and that the future station of the Bride, the joint-heirs with Christ, is that of filling the various positions, offices, in connection with the administration of the affairs of that heavenly government over the peoples of the Millennium, the new-earth order. All of the chief elements that constituted a city of ancient times are employed as symbols in the vision to portray the various features that will make up that heavenly government. Like these cities, it has immense walls surrounding it, the materials of both walls and foundations being of such a character as to make them immovable and impregnable. These walls are pierced with beautiful gates for entrance, but unlike the ancient cities, are never closed. It has guards at the gates, whose duties in the cities of old were to prevent all those who had not the regularly provided passports from entering, and to welcome all who had. Unlike those cities, the New Jerusalem has but one street [broad-place].

The light of this City is one of its chief and important features. It is said that the "glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The light is described as most brilliant, yet soft and pleasant to the eye, most beautiful in its appearance, and beneficial in its effects; and unlike earthly cities, the light penetrates everywhere, so that there are no dark or obscure places. The whole

City appears to St. John as bathed in light. One striking peculiarity is that its light seems not so much for its own use, but it spreads far and wide, illuminating the new earth, and causing the nations and inhabitants to enjoy its brightness and beauty. The dimensions of the Holy City are in perfect harmony with the grandeur, beauty, and richness of the rare materials with which it is constructed. It is of pure gold, which represents it to be of Divine institution. Its one street or broad-way is of the same metal, which represents that its highway is of Divine appointment. Its walls are of jasper, the foundation of the walls are garnished with all manner of precious stones; and its gates are of beautiful pearls.

Now all these things and others in the vision of this Holy City are doubtless employed as symbols descriptive of the glorious individual qualities possessed by the Lamb and his company, and of the character, qualities, and elements of the Divine government of the Lamb and his Bride in its relationship to the Millennial reign over the inhabitants of the new-earth order.

The significance of the City in itself is a very suggestive symbol. It is a natural trait and tendency of men to congregate together. In an earthly city we have the suggestion of human need and the provision to supply that need. It is a fact that in the cities we find man's faculties develop more rapidly for both good and evil. This dwelling together, this intercourse of mind with mind and heart with heart, is calculated to awaken and develop the latent faculties. Then again, man feels the need of fellowship with his fellowmen; it is a part of his nature, and therefore a need of his being, his life on earth. It is a God-given trait. Because of inequality in the distribution of ability, etc., because of the diversified gifts in man, it is not good for man to dwell alone. In coming together a need of his social nature is thus met, and in this way those ties that bind men closer together are strengthened.

Therefore, in considering this vision from the standpoint of a city in itself, as it relates to the blessedness of the saints in glory, there is suggested that Christ and these glorified ones will enjoy the fullness of the blessing of fellowship and communion together. They will not only enjoy the blessedness of meeting those whom they have loved and with whom they have associated in the earthly state, to be separated no more, but also meet and become acquainted with all who have died in Christ throughout the generations of the Gospel Age — the Apostles, the martyrs, and all the faithful witnesses of Christ who have had a like precious faith and hope. One grand object in giving this vision of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, is that of picturing the coming together of all these, and the blessed heavenly fellowship, association, and cooperation in the grand and glorious work of blessing the world — yea, the glory of being "with him." This expresses more than anything else all that was desired and longed for; all for which these joint-heirs suffered in the trial state. All this blessing will then be realized — seeing him "as he is"; face to face. Tongue fails to express and imagination fails to picture, the manifold blessedness of the New Jerusalem joys, fellowships, and occupations.

Mr. Lord, of all the expositors before about 1874, seems to have grasped most clearly the significance of this New Jerusalem. He said:

"As the City is the symbol of the Lamb's Wife, the raised [resurrected] and glorified saints adopted as joint-heirs with Christ, exalted to thrones, and associated with him in his reign on [over] earth, its descent to the earth symbolizes their descent from heaven after their justification and investiture as Kings and Priests in his Empire."

Mr. Russell, in an unfolding of this vision in 1905, thus wrote:

"The City represents the Church in glory, this being indicated by the declaration that it was like unto a bride prepared for her husband, and the further demonstration is in the fact that the angel who called to John, saying, 'Come, I will show you the Bride, the Lamb's Wife,' showed him the New Jerusalem descending, etc. (Revelation 21:9,10).

"The words of the Apostle comparing the earthly Jerusalem with the heavenly corroborate the angel's testimony. [The expression *New* Jerusalem implies a comparison with the Old.] The entire Gospel Age has been the time for the preparation of this New Jerusalem. [This is implied in the words of the Master to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).] In one figure we [Christ's glorified members] are the City [government], in another we are the people of the City."

We read of this City that it "had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb" (verses 12-14).

The walls of ancient cities were built for the safety, and protection of its inhabitants. It was to this end that the wisdom and skill of the architect and builder was exercised in its planning, in selecting the right material, in properly preparing each stone and fitting it in place, and in cementing the different stones together so as to make the walls immovable, impregnable. The walls of this symbolic City, however, are built up by the use of living stones, "Ye also, as living stones are built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5), and the foundation "living stones" of that wall, have in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. The following is well said:

"The walls are living stones, such as the Apostle Peter describes; the foundation stones are the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. The City as a whole comprises all the saints from our Lord, the Head, down to and including the last member of the Church, which is his Body. Not until all these have been chosen and found faithful and fitted and prepared for their places, will this City descend to earth in power and come into the possession or control of the earth. The coming of that City to the earth is the symbolical representation of the establishment of God's Kingdom in the earth, for a city is a symbol representing government,

control. Thus Washington City represents the United States government ... Paris the French government, Rome the Italian, Berlin the German, London the British, etc."

The Gates of the City

The New Jerusalem, the Holy City, has its impregnable walls pierced with gates. As this New Jerusalem has (besides the Father, the God of all) but the one class, the hundred and forty-four thousand and one, represented in and by it, all the symbols must be explained as having their application to these and to no others. And in this way must we discover the symbolical significance of the "gates" of the City. In ancient cities, gates were employed as means of entrance to its privileges. As the Holy City, New Jerusalem, represents the Divine, heavenly government of Christ and the hundred and forty-four thousand whose benign influence is to be world-wide, and whose object in its establishment is for the grand purpose of bringing all the obedient of mankind into a willing and voluntary acknowledgment of its benevolent and righteous rule, the open gates may properly be said to represent the means by which the way to eternal life was secured — the sacrifice of Christ, the merit of which was appropriated for and passed through the hundred and forty-four thousand, and then was applied in behalf of the whole world. The words of the ancient Prophet seem to open the way to understand this symbol. He is referring to the earthly conditions of Millennial times, and says: "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in" (Isaiah 26:2). Understanding these New Jerusalem gates in the light of the Prophet's words, we believe they would represent the one way to come fully into and under the sway of the blessings of this heavenly Jerusalem government, and secure them in full. This one way is that of keeping the Truth, the Law. This privilege of a probation under the New Jerusalem government we learn from many Scriptures was secured through the ransom sacrifice of our Lord and Savior. A diligent and faithful use of the privileges thus purchased will enable the inhabitants of the new-earth order to both love and obey the Truth, the Law of God, and to enter through the gates of that Holy City, that is, to become the recipients of everlasting life on the plane of human perfection.

The prophecy recorded in Isaiah 26 applies to the Old Testament overcomers, the Ancient Worthies, who represent the earthly phase of this heavenly Jerusalem government. One has said: "From Revelation 21:12 we learn that the gates or entrances of the City, which are twelve in number, are inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. This is in harmony with what we have learned of the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God, that the Ancient Worthies from the various tribes of Israel, selected during the Jewish Age, will be the visible representatives of the Heavenly Kingdom in the earth, through whose instrumentality the nations may enter into the blessings of the Kingdom."

"And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof" (verse 15).

St. John, beholding the vision of the New Jerusalem, seems as in other places in the Revelation to represent or symbolize those in the Church while in the flesh having revealed to them the truth concerning the significance of the Holy City, in its relation to the new-earth order and its inhabitants. The "angel" would represent all who in the past have assisted in the unfolding of this vision. Nearly all the eminent Historical commentators have contributed to some extent to this end. Among these, however, none, so far as we have been able to discover in their writings, have interpreted clearly the full significance of this New Jerusalem government, as it will relate to the Church in glory, and to all mankind, until we reach the harvest period, when as Jesus promised, there would be a special dispensation of truth on this subject. The reed that St. John saw in the hand of the angel, for measuring the City, we believe represents the Divine standards, the principles of truth and righteousness, the revealed will of God, as seen in His Plan; the organization and conduct of the Holy City will therefore be according to the Divine standards, and will be in harmony with the strictest lines of justice and righteousness.

Mr. Lord's interpretation of some of the particular symbols is both interesting and instructive, and has doubtless assisted not a few in the past to obtain a considerable knowledge of the vision. Concerning his understanding of the significance of the City itself we have already noted. He defines the splendor of the elements of which it is built as denoting "the beauty of the persons of the glorified saints with Christ, and the perfection of their character."

The City's magnitude transcending the vastest extent over which the eye can discern the most brilliant objects on the surface of the earth, the regularity of its form, the harmony of its parts, he explains as describing "the symmetry of their [the glorified saints'] relation to each other, the unity of their spirit and the energy of their sway."

Concerning its gates, his explanation is very clear — that they symbolize "the access to the glorified which the nations enjoy." That they are distributed equally to the several sides, indicates that they are to be accessible alike to the nations wherever they may reside, and that an angel is stationed at each gate signifies that that access is to be "subject to conditions and regulated by an exalted order [symbolized by the twelve angels] assigned to that office." That there is to be no night there, he explains as representing that they are never to be without the visible (?) presence of God.

Concerning the "twelve tribes of the sons of Israel," he says they symbolize the completeness of the sealing of all the branches or families of pure worshipers, the election as described in Revelation 7. The inscription of the names of these tribes on the gates, he says, "denotes, accordingly, that all branches of the unglorified race are to have access to the glorified saints, but each with a part or division peculiarly appropriated to themselves; as in a walled city inhabited by different tribes, the inscription on separate gates of the names of the several tribes, would imply that each tribe was to pass through the gate distinguished by its name."

St. John continues the descriptions, and says: "And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God, the Omnipotent, is the temple of it, and the Lamb" (verse 22). The wall of this symbolic Holy City is built up by the use of "living stones," as the Apostle Peter describes: "Ye are living stones built up in him" (1 Peter 2:4,5). And the foundation "living stones" of that wall have in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. It would seem, therefore, that the reason there is no temple in this Holy City is because the City is itself a temple; and all the prefigurations we find throughout the Scriptures that have been employed to picture God's dwelling with men find their complete antitype fulfillment in this symbolic Holy City. The same thought is expressed in verse 3: "The tabernacle of God is with men." Indeed, the temple is only another figure employed to describe this Holy City. St. Paul uses this figure both as describing the preparation of its "living stones," and its final completion. Addressing the Ephesian saints, he says, "Ye are fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22). St. John in this vision of the Holy City beholds that which pictures all these living stones being brought together, each one in the place originally designed by the Great Divine Architect. And the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb will always be an inner Temple in this great City or Temple which God has provided for the world's blessing during restitution times. The Lord God Almighty is the Temple of it, because all who make up this City dwell in Him and it is itself the Temple of God, His dwelling, the place of meeting between Himself and man on earth. Mr. Seiss has eloquently commented on this peculiar aspect of the New Jerusalem:

" 'A temple,' says the seer, 'I saw not in it.' What a vacuum it would create in every earthly city if its temples were taken away! What would ancient Jerusalem have been without its temple? How much does the fame and glory of the most renowned of cities, ancient and modern, rest on their temples! Strip them of these and what would be their nakedness! But it is no privation to the New Jerusalem that there is no temple in it. Nay, it is one of its sublimest peculiarities. Not that worship is then to cease. Not that communion with the Eternal Spirit and Source of all things is no longer to exist. While God and holy beings live, their loving adoration of Him cannot cease, nor acts of worship be discontinued. But then and there the worship and communion will no longer be through symbols, veils, and intermediate ceremonials, which now are needed to help the soul to Divine fellowship. Deity will then have come forth from behind all veils, all mediating sacraments, all previous barriers and hidings because of the infirmity of the flesh, or the weaknesses of undeveloped spirituality. Himself will be the Temple thereof. The glorious worshipers there hold direct communion with His manifested glory which encompasses them and all their City alike. As consecrated High-Priests they will then have come into the Holiest of all, into the very cloud of God's overshadowing glory, which is at once their covering, their Temple, their God.

"When Jesus walked with his disciples on earth, wherever he was they had a temple. ... What need of Solomon's temple had they, when the embodied Shekinah himself, in ever approachable form was with them by day and by night, their Brother, their Master, their Everlasting Friend! And when the saints in immortal glory dwell within the enclosing light of the unveiled presence of God and the Lamb, as his Bride and Wife, what more need have they of temple or outward ceremonial, to commune with Deity, or to have fellowship with the Father and the Son! God and the Lamb are then themselves the Temple, and the intervention of any other temple would be a disability, a clog, and a going back from the sublime exaltation which the saints there reach and enjoy. Hence John saw no temple in that City, for the Lord God, the All-Ruler and the Lamb is its Temple. The worship there is immediate and direct."

The Holy City the Place of Mediation

While we are able to endorse much of the foregoing quotation as true and beautiful, we could not accept it as a whole. Evidently this writer's thought was that this picture of the Holy City with the Lord God and the Lamb as the Temple of it describes the eternal state beyond the reign of Christ. This portion of his interpretation we think is erroneous, for none of the visions given to St. John were intended to picture the details of the state of eternity beyond the final redemption of all the saved. Again we assert that this symbol of the Holy City, which in another sense will also be the great symbolic Temple, will be the meeting place — the place where mediation will be effected between God and fallen humanity; and the statement, "I saw no temple therein," merely signifies that in this new arrangement of the future there will be no reorganization or re-establishment of the old, typical temple with all of its forms and ceremonies, but a wholly new arrangement. The Lord God and the Lamb will be the Temple of the New Jerusalem or Kingdom institution in that these will be exalted before all peoples as the first great objects of worship and praise, and men will be taught through the ministration of the glorified Church, the true way of access to God whereby they may come back fully into His favor and be given eternal life. Thus while it will be true of those who will constitute the Holy City of the future that they will then need no intermediary, no one to intercede for them, but can commune with God direct, in His very presence, this will not be true of the world of mankind, for the latter will require the mediation of the Holy City, the Temple class, until restored to perfection. Then at the close of that mediatorial reign, the Kingdom will be turned over to God (1 Corinthians 15:24). All mankind may then worship God directly.

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it" (verses 23,24).

Mr. Russell observes that "nothing in this statement indicates that the world will not have and need both sunlight and moonlight during the Millennial Age,

and subsequently, 'as long as the sun and moon endure' (Psalms 72:5)." It will, however, be true that the glorified Church will not have need either of sun or moon. These luminaries are evidently used in this vision as symbols, the sun symbolizing the Gospel light and the moon the reflected light of the Law and the Prophets of the Jewish dispensation. The glorified Church "will have, instead of these, a much more excellent glory, to which the Apostle refers when he says, 'Now [with all the light, privileges, and opportunities which we enjoy, both as respects the representations of God through the Law and the Prophets, and through the instructions and leadings of the Spirit in the present] we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part; then we shall know even as we are known' (1 Corinthians 13:12)."

The glorified Christ and the Church will then be the Sun of Righteousness as foretold (Malachi 4:2, Matthew 13:43); and the nations (the words "of the saved" are not found in the old manuscripts) will then be given the clear light of truth, unadulterated with error; and as they walk in this light, they will progress upward and upward to the full measure of human perfection, restitution.

"The expressions 'nations' and 'kings' are not to be understood as signifying that the world of mankind during the Millennial Age will be divided into nationalities and kingdoms as at present; the word 'nations' here signifies peoples, and is intended to show that all peoples, and not merely the people of Israel, will be thus favored under God's Kingdom. The word 'kings' represents those princes or chief ones of the earth who, during the Millennial Age, will be the chief representatives [on earth] of the heavenly, spiritual, invisible Kingdom of Christ. These princes, as we have already seen, will be Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the faithful Prophets of the previous dispensation, who, loving God before the call to the Kingdom and to the Bride Class, cannot be of it, but because of their faithfulness will be the princes whom the Lord will establish in all the earth — first making them perfect individuals, and qualifying them for their office, as a reward for their faithfulness to God in the dark times in which they lived — their manifestation of love for righteousness and trust in the Omnipotent One.

"The bringing of their glory into the City, the Kingdom, signifies their acknowledgment of this heavenly Kingdom, their rendering of tribute of praise, thanks worship, and obedience to it as God's agency. And this rendering of glory to the Kingdom will continue throughout the entire Millennial Age, as the princes throughout the earth will make known to the people that not in their own names or authority do they rule and execute judgment and establish righteousness, but in the name and as the ministers and representatives of the glorified Christ. The result will be that all the people will ascribe honor and praise and majesty and glory to the Lord's Anointed, through whom their redemption and restitution was and is being accomplished; and this is indicated in verse 26."

Mr. Seiss very ably comments on the words: "The nations shall walk by the light of it":

"Illumination for the soul, as well as glorious light for the eyes — the light of truth and righteousness and the light of life for all wants, personal, social,

and national, in the redeemed family of man — shall go forth from that sublime City; and 'the nations' shall walk in that light. Their polity, their religion, and all that goes to make up for them an economy of Edenic blessedness, shall come forth from that sublime metropolis. Their kings, their judges, their priests, their loving guides, their Savior, their only Lord God, are there, visible to their eyes [of understanding] and ever present in their hearts and minds. What never has been upon this earth, a really holy nation, will then be found wherever man is found, and all people shall be the people of the Lord. Men talk of Christian nations; but in all this dwelling-place of man, from the beginning until now, there is nothing of the sort to answer to the phrase. There is no such thing, and there never will be, till the new earth appears and the New Jerusalem comes into the view of man. But then, all nations, as nations, shall be sanctified and holy; for they shall walk in the light of the Eternal City of the Eternal King. That City raised aloft, and filled with the spirit and glory of God and the Lamb, will be the illumination and the great glory of the world, the center of supremest interest, the joy of the waking thoughts and the sleeping dreams of all the children of men."

"And its gates shall not be shut by day; for there shall be no night there" (verse 25). The thought in these words is that access to the Kingdom and its blessings on the part of earth's peoples will continue throughout the entire period of the Millennial Age of restitution; that both the heavenly gates (the glorified saints with Christ), from which the blessings come, and the earthly gates (the Ancient Worthies, the earthly mediums of communication), through whom they flow, will always be open.

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (verse 27).

From the fact that the "book of life of the Lamb" is here mentioned it is evident that these words relate to the Church in the Gospel Age, and it is an entrance into the Church's inheritance that is referred to. The Lamb's Book of Life can have in it the names of only those who now successfully run for the prize of the Heavenly Calling, symbolized in the vision as the New Jerusalem, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

"In consideration of the fact that this book of symbols, while relating to the future, is addressed to God's consecrated elect Church in the present time, and in view of the fact that this message would be communicated to and more or less understood by those who would seek to make their calling and election sure to a part in the glorious City, the 27th verse is added, declaring that 'In no wise shall there enter into it anything common, or he that doeth abomination and falsehood — but only they who are written in the Lamb's book of life.' The Lamb's book of life we must understand to include those, and only those, who attain to position of joint-heirship with Christ, whose names are written in heaven during this age, and who are faithful to their covenant. What a glorious incentive we have here to faithfulness! What a warning against the slightest sympathy with anything unclean, untrue, or in anywise contrary to the Divine standard of holiness!

If we appreciate the glorious things of the Divine provision for the Church and for the world, these promises and offers will have their influence upon us, and under their influence we are expected to keep our garments unspotted from the world; to be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; to hate every contamination of the flesh upon our robe of righteousness; and to seek immediately in prayer for the removal of any spot or wrinkle or any such thing from our wedding garment — that thus we may abide in the Lord's love, and in the due time be 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.' "

The River of the Water of Life

"And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of its broad place, and of the river, on this side and on that, was a wood of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding for each month its own fruit; and the leaves of the wood were for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:1,2).

St. John in these words continues his description of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. It will have been noted that the description thus far has been more concerning its external than its internal appearance. This seems to signify that its presentation in the vision has had to do largely with those matters which relate to this Holy City or heavenly government's influence upon the dwellers of earth who come under its sway. Indeed, St. John saw very little of the inside of this Holy City. The reason for this would seem to be that it is hardly possible for the saints, the joint-heirs, whom St. John represents in their earthly state, to comprehend those features which relate to the various departments of the organization of this heavenly government, and to the various offices assigned to the saints in the administration of its affairs for the blessing of the inhabitants of the Millennial earth. Concerning these matters we now see them as through a glass dimly, but then face to face.

The opening words of St. John, "And he showed me a river of the water of life," are designed to point out more particularly the one inexhaustible fountain or source from which these great blessings flow. It is stated to be "from the throne of God and the Lamb." This teaches that the heavenly government over the Millennial-world order will have for its center of authority the Divine Law and the Divine Power, that is, every feature connected with the laws and the administration of the government over the new order will be according to the Divine will.

Some expositors have seen quite clearly the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly phases of this Millennial Kingdom; and it has thus been noted:

"We are of necessity reminded also of one of the closing visions of Ezekiel, while a comparison easily shows also the difference between the earthly and the heavenly in these pictures — the one being indeed the shadow, but no more than the shadow, of the other. John here sees 'a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.' And in Ezekiel, the life giving waters issue forth from the house of the Lord, and thus is specially

noted in connection with the fruit of the trees that are nourished by it: 'And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to its months, because their waters, they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.' How like the account in Revelation is to this, no one can fail to understand; even the language might seem to be taken from it: 'In the midst of the street of it, and on this side of the river and on that, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve [manner of] fruits, and yielded its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.'

"But in Ezekiel all is distinctly earthly, and the blessing is not [described by him as] yet full. The waters go down into the Salt Sea and heal it, so that a great multitude of fish are [enabled to thrive] in its waters; but there are miry places and marshes that are not healed, but given over to salt. With both the Old Testament Prophet and the New, we [thus] see that the earth is yet in the Millennial, not the eternal condition; for the leaves of the tree are for medicine in both alike; there is, in both, need of healing yet [during Millennial times].

"The waters are in both cases from the sanctuary, for that is the character of the whole City of God. In Revelation, they are specifically from the throne of God; for here the one blessedness is, as we have seen, that God reigns — God revealed in that perfect grace that is expressed in Christ — the throne of God being also that of the Lamb. Thus the water is the type, as always in its highest meaning, of the fullness of the spirit, the power of life and sanctification, indeed the power of God in all creation. The tree of life bears witness, as in the earthly paradise at first, of dependence upon another, of life in dependence" (F. W. Grant).

Another whom we regard as deeply spiritual, who lived and wrote many years ago, has ably commented on these words of St. John. It will be observed that he also saw clearly the distinction between the heavenly and earthly aspects of this New Jerusalem government. His suggestion is that this portion of St. John's vision "would naturally lead us to Ezekiel 47, where waters are seen issuing from the threshold of the temple in Jerusalem in the Millennium, only that is of the earth, while this is from the throne of God in heaven flowing down through the street of the City. As but one street is named here [verse 1, and in the former chapter 21:21] it would seem that it lay around the City, between it and the wall. No mention is made of inhabitants in this Millennial City, nor of 'walking the golden streets,' which we find sometimes in hymns, as there are neither streets nor walkers. But if the City be the [symbol of the] assembly [of saints] in glory, the street would be the channel through which the blessings of the City flow to others; and if it would be between the City and the wall, it would show how God will make amends to the Gentile world for all the failure of Israel to bless the world when first established and throughout their sad history on earth; the fountain of the ... blessings being the throne of God, and thence, through both the heavenly saints and [earthly] Israel, flowing out to all."

The exposition given by Mr. Russell of the various features of this glorious vision of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, seems to meet all the requirements:

"The throne of God and of the Lamb is represented as being in this City. That is to say, the Kingdom, the government that will then be established in the world, will have as its center of authority the Divine law and the Divine power — every feature of the government will be in accord with the Divine will. From the throne of God will proceed the river of the water of life, of crystalline purity, not muddy traditions with false doctrines. No impurity of any kind will be in it: it will be the pure message of the Lord, going forth from the Millennial Kingdom for the blessing, refreshment, rejuvenation and eternal life of the whole world of mankind or so many of them as will accept the blessed provisions. Not only will the message of peace and the offer of life thus go forth from the throne to the whole world, but, additionally, there will be trees of life on both sides of the river, bearing twelve manner of fruits and yielding their fruits every month, and the leaves of these shall be for the healing of the nations.

"The symbolic picture suggests nourishment and healing for the sin-sick, starving world, which then may partake freely of all the blessings and privileges thus symbolized. No longer will it be necessary to say to men, 'The weaknesses of your fallen flesh will be with you until death, for although the Lord has graciously covered your sins because of faith in the Redeemer and the desire to walk in His way, nevertheless there is no escape from the consequences of sin, there is nothing that will absolutely heal.' When the new dispensation, represented by this symbolical city and its river of the water of life and the trees of life with their leaves of healing, is made available to men, it will be the beginning of the times of restitution spoken by the Lord through the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began (Acts 3:19-21). The restitution will affect all the willing and obedient, not only physically but mentally and morally: the uplift will be individual and worldwide. This is the very object of providing the river of life, the trees of life, their fruits and their leaves."

A passage that has been quite generally misunderstood and misapplied, by professed Christian teachers, thus hindering to a considerable extent a proper understanding of this glorious vision of the future, is the one contained in verse 17 of this same chapter. The passage reads: "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (verse 17). The invitation here given is quite generally construed to have its application in the present time — the Gospel Age. This, however, is very manifestly incorrect.

The facts of history both past and present teach that there has never been, nor is there at the present time, such a gracious, universal opportunity to partake of the blessings purchased by the sacrifice of Christ, and symbolically pictured in this "water of life." It is only the few comparatively that have heard this gracious invitation — it has been only a small minority of this few that have understood it. Furthermore, the channel through which Truth has flowed has been for centuries defiled with error. The message of the angel, "Behold I bring you good

tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," has been little understood. Indeed, it was not necessary in order to accomplish the Divine purpose for this Gospel Age that it should be fully appreciated except by the few. The Scripture that applies to God's elective purpose for this present age is: "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." These are the words of Christ himself. The Gospel Age is the time when the Father: is drawing out from believers those whom He would prepare to become the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

The invitation of the verse under consideration will not be in order until the Bride hath made herself ready; in other words, until the Divine purpose is complete and the "Marriage of the Lamb" takes place. These called out ones in this age have been only prospectively the Bride. One by one these have been hearing the call, accepting it, and have been making their calling and election sure. These, until the Bridegroom should come, have fallen asleep in Christ. This class when complete in the end of this dispensation will share in the First Resurrection. Then will the Bride be complete, and then will this Message, "And the Spirit and the Bride say come," be due to be proclaimed. "As soon as the Marriage of the Lamb shall have taken place, as soon as the New Jerusalem, the Church in glory, shall have been established in the earth, the drawing of all the families of the earth will ensue."

I Will Draw All Men Unto Me

This is in harmony with Christ's own words: "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me" (John 12:32). "They will not be drawn, however, to the same things to which we [the Church] have been drawn; they will not be drawn to the heavenly things, to the joint-heirship with Christ in his Kingdom; they will not be invited to become members of his Bride, for that Bride class, that Kingdom class, will then be completely beyond the possibility of any further additions."

Concerning the symbol, "the river of the water of life," the following is a clear elucidation:

"This river of the water of life represents the blessed influence that will proceed to humanity from the glorified Christ, Head and Body — from the Kingdom of God's dear Son. When the blessed opportunities of that time are thoroughly open to the world, when the Sun of Righteousness shall have scattered all the darkness of ignorance and sin, when Satan shall have been bound, when the river of the water of life shall flow freely, then the invitation that will go forth will no longer be a call of the Elect, but an invitation to every creature, every member of the human race, to partake of the blessings and privileges which God has provided in Christ, that they may have the everlasting life and everlasting joy which is to be the portion of those who love righteousness and hate iniquity, and who avail themselves of the gracious provision in Christ. ... There will be a Bride then, but there is no Bride now. The Church is espoused, but the Marriage of the Lamb is still deferred, not yet accomplished. The last members of his Church must complete their course, must pass their examination and enter into glory with him before the Marriage be consummated."

As we have seen, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem itself, is symbolical, so must be the river of water of life, flowing from it, the trees on either side of the river, as also the fruit and the leaves of the trees. The river of water of life, as has been pointed out, suggests that Divine Message of Truth which will be the means of giving life to humanity as they accept it. The trees on the bank of the river are suggestive indeed of certain agencies or forces that will be in operation for the healing and nourishing of fallen humanity. Some have with good reason considered the trees as another picture of the offices and ministry of the glorified saints: "All the Lord's people need to remember that in proportion as they are ambassadors of the Lord, and His representatives, it will be their privilege not only by and by in the Kingdom to 'comfort all that mourn,' but to be Trees of Righteousness, whose leaves will be for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2)." In the Old Testament Scriptures, the saints, the righteous, are thus symbolically referred to as trees of righteousness (Jeremiah 17:8, Psalms 1:3).

The saints as trees of righteousness will give forth that which will bless and heal earth's sin-sick. The "leaves" may very properly represent those teachings, instructions, dealings, etc., that will be full of sympathy and encouragement for all those who show willingness and desire to come into harmony with God. Humanity, terribly fallen and helpless, will be in sore need of just such assistance. The "fruit" of the trees, may truly picture forth the fruitage of the lives of the saints, composing the "Little Flock" or Kingdom class. Their patience, mercy, longsuffering, gentleness, and love, "fruits of the spirit," will be such as to nourish, to assist, and to build up "the nations," the world of mankind, preparing them for the enjoyment of the ages of bliss to follow the Millennial reign.

We would not dispute that there may be grown in the earth, literal trees of life, such as existed in the Garden of Eden, to which our first parents had access (Genesis 2:9). The restitution of that which was lost would seem to imply this original condition of life-giving trees, and of course, the symbolical picture in Revelation is based upon the fact that there have been literal trees of life; and doubtless there will be such again in the future. A concluding word from Pastor Russell is of advantage here: "But after the Marriage there will be not only the Holy City, representing the Church in her official or governing capacity under Christ her Head, but there will be also the blessed work of the Church, the calling of the world's attention to the river of the water of life, to the leaves of healing, to the fruits of the Spirit; and the spirit, the power of God, will cooperate with the message that will then be promulgated, and the result undoubtedly will be that all the world shall hear, and that all who love righteousness and hate iniquity will return again to life eternal. It will require all the Millennial Age for the delivery of this message to every creature and for them to avail themselves of the privileges."

Chapter Fifty-One

The Epilogue of the Apocalypse

(Revelation 22:6-21)

"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy Prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done" (Revelation 22:6).

With the words of the revealing angel recorded in the preceding verse, "they shall reign forever and ever," the prophetic visions of the Revelation cease. Thus closed the series of wonderful, symbolic pictures or photographs representing the eventful history of the Church, spiritual, nominal, and apostate, throughout the Gospel Age. This included also the destruction of the nominal and apostate Babylonian systems; the union and exaltation of the true Church with her Divine Lord in glory; and the blessings to flow to humanity through the glorious Messianic reign, resulting in Paradise restored. The most marvelous drama of all time had passed before the enraptured vision of the beloved Apostle.

The time occupied by the revealing angel in giving these visions to St. John must have been very brief, at the most but an hour or so, on that memorable Lord's day. The matters represented as hidden in the symbolic seven-sealed scroll were then to be written by St. John and sent immediately to the seven Churches — the whole Church — to be understood by the Church as the events of history gradually unveiled their meaning. We who now live see clearly the fulfillment of these remarkable visions describing the experiences of the witnesses of Jesus as they came in contact with worldly powers, false professors, nominal and apostate Christian systems, in their endeavors to proclaim the Gospel. Thrice have the visions, including the messages to the seven Churches (Revelation 2 and 3), in their fulfillment traversed the whole Gospel Age, bringing the history down into the closing scenes, the great tribulation that ends the present-world order. Thrice also have the visions covered the events of the harvest period, the end of the age — which visions we have found constitute a large proportion of the book. After viewing these things the Apostle was next permitted to look beyond these present scenes and to behold the faithful followers of Christ exalted to glory and honor, united with their Divine Lord and Master, sharing with him in his heavenly glory, and associated as kingly judges and priests in the grand work foretold by all the holy Prophets of restoring the obedient of the race to mental, moral, and physical perfection, and of making the renewed earth, a never-ending paradise of beauty and blessedness.

It will be well to note at this point that history records the fact that St. John himself afterwards understood the meaning of certain features of the visions that he was permitted to see; and he made known the same to his disciple, Polycarp, who in turn communicated them to the saintly Irenaeus and others. Some of the visions were so like those seen by Daniel centuries before, which were familiar to St. John, that he immediately saw their application to the suffering saints of God in their trials, tribulations, and persecutions at the instigation of the rulers of the Roman Empire; thus proving the truthfulness of the Historical interpretation of the Revelation.

"Behold! I Come Speedily"

The words we now consider constitute what we may properly call the epilogue, the conclusion, of the book of Revelation. Having fulfilled his appointed commission of showing to St. John the visions, the revealing angel comes to him direct, and in the solemn asseveration of verse 6 assures him of the truthfulness of the visions — that they are Divine disclosures of the future, and that they would speedily begin to come to pass. Three different times is St. John told that these visions are true, that they are of Divine origin (Chapter 19:9, 21:5, 22:6). In the opening vision of the Revelation St. John is told that Christ had sent his angel to make known to his people things that must shortly come to pass; and now when St. John had beheld all the visions, we have the similar utterance, "And the Lord God of the holy Prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done." And doubtless as designed to show the importance of this statement and to give emphasis to it the Apostle a moment later hears the Divine Master himself testifying to the same fact, in the words: "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches" (verse 16).

After the angel had solemnly affirmed to St. John the truthfulness of the prophecies contained in the several visions, the Master himself is heard to speak, saying: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (verse 7). The words, "Behold, I come quickly," are designed to teach the importance that the Second Advent of the Lord should have in the instruction and experiences of his faithful followers. That most significant of all events must be held in the highest and most sacred regard, as the time when the long cherished hopes of the Church would be fully realized, and as the time of the culmination of the Lord's great purposes for the human race. In proportion as it has been kept before the minds of the Lord's followers throughout the centuries of the Gospel Age, has the Church preserved her primitive piety and purity of life and doctrine. One who wrote sixty years ago has truthfully and forcefully said concerning this:

"When men [of the Church] forget to think of the coming again of the Lord Jesus in his great Apocalypse, when they cease to look and long for that as the crown and goal of their faith and hope, when they make light of it, and treat it as a fable, and regard all concern about it as fanaticism, they show and prove that they do not belong to that elect body of God's saints which constitutes the Bride of the Lamb; for the deepest heart-voice of the Bride, with that of the Spirit

itself, is, 'Come Lord Jesus; come as Thou hast promised and foreshown; come quickly.' Taking all the precepts and inculcations of the sacred Scriptures with regard to Christ's return, it becomes a plain and evident impossibility for people to be true and obedient followers of the Gospel and not to look and watch and long and pray and make it a great point in all their religious activity and devotion to be ready for the glorious coming of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. The Apostles and early Christians were all alive to this subject, beyond everything else in Christianity. It was their life, their inspiration, the pole-star of their faith and hope. It was the thing which most marked them, set them apart from the world, and was their great distinguishing spirit as compared with other people. And if it is not so with Christians now, it is because they have sunk away from the original life of their religion, and lost their proper fellowship with the true and only Bride of the Lamb; for the voice of the Bride to her Lord continually is, 'Come.' Nor can she be in the spirit and life of a true bride, without having this feeling ever living in her soul, and permeating her whole being. Destined for Christ, and having her chief joy and salvation in him, and what he has ordained to accomplish for his people, she cannot but go out with all zeal and fervency for his revelation [manifestation], or she ceases in soul from her character as his Bride" (Joseph Seiss).

The words, "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book," also come from the Divine Master himself. We are reminded by these words of the seven-times repeated admonition uttered by him and recorded in chapters two and three, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." The language teaches very clearly that the Master saw beforehand the neglect, the prejudice, and the ill treatment these prophetic visions of the Revelation would encounter at the hands of the Church — not only the nominal, but also at the hands of many of his true followers. How much these exhortations were needed, history now informs us in no uncertain tones. Only the few have given heed to these encouraging messages and salutary admonitions. Many leaders of the Lord's people have by their example and teaching discouraged, instead of encouraged, the reading or hearing of this book read. Others have ridiculed those who have sought to heed these exhortations of their Divine Lord. It is said that James Robinson, who wrote on the Revelation in 1730, gave expression to the words: "Some are not ashamed directly to flout at, and spit contempt upon those that meddle with the exposition of this prophecy; which is an indirect battering of a great part of God's Word. Thus Dr. South, in one of his sermons, affirms that none but a madman will meddle with the Revelation; or, if he has wits at the beginning, before he has done, they will be cracked. And Davies, a Welsh bombastic barrister, has the impudence to insult a learned and reverend prelate, yet alive, because he consumed two full years and more on this prophecy." But as another has said, "We can afford to let men sneer when we have the sure benediction of God": "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy."

To keep the words of the prophecy of this book would necessitate at least a partial understanding of the prophetic utterances contained in the book. Those

who have in the past heeded the Master's exhortations and admonitions along these lines have been enabled to realize the importance of so doing by the assistance they have received in their service for the Master, and in keeping themselves free from the false systems referred to in the visions of the book. As history has gradually unveiled the meaning of the symbolic visions, not a few of God's people throughout the age now closing have been encouraged, cheered, and comforted in their hours of isolation and their days of trial, misrepresentation, and persecution, by understanding its visions, and thus being built up in the most holy faith. If this has been true in the past, how much more is it true today, when nearly all of the visions have met their fulfillment. By understanding these, such are enabled to forecast with measurable correctness the fulfillment of the few that yet remain, and thus come to a knowledge of the nearness of the Kingdom — the realization of the Church's hope, Israel's restoration to favor, and the divinely predicted restitution of all things. The time is now come for the Lord's people to understand all these wonderful visions and this is one of the many evidences that we are living in the days of the Second Presence of the Son of Man.

St. John Worships the Revealing Angel

St. John next informs us that when he had heard and seen these things, be was so overcome, so overawed, that he fell prostrate before the angel who had revealed them to him. The emotions of St. John at this moment are variously interpreted by expositors. One has thus expressed himself concerning this:

"So wonderful were the revelations, and so wonderful was the knowledge and understanding of the angel which communicated these things, that St. John was filled with the profoundest adoration. Twice he fell down before the feet of the angel to worship him. He meant no idolatry; but so wonderful in wisdom and intelligence was his heavenly guide, and so transcendent were the things shown, that he could not but think that it was God Himself. The presentations all along were such as to make it hard to distinguish whether it was God Himself speaking, or whether it was through a created messenger that He spoke. And in this instance particularly, it certainly was the Lord Jesus whom he heard say, 'Behold I come quickly'; and not distinguishing between him who spoke and the messenger through whom he spoke, John 'fell down before the feet of the angel.' This clearly shows that the holy Apostles held Christ to be a worshipful being. ... The only mistake was that he did not at the moment perceive that it was a created angel speaking for Christ, and not Christ himself in the form of an angel. Even the best and holiest of men may make mistakes from their human impulses, as Moses when he broke the tables of the Law, and Peter when he avoided the Gentile Christians at Antioch. But innocent mistakes and those which result from the truest and devoutest intentions may be very injurious and need to be promptly corrected. There was danger here of a double sin, one on the part of John in giving worship to the angel instead of Christ, and one on the part of the angel in accepting worship which belongs only to Deity. But John was in doubt, which the angel was not, and therefore it belonged to the angel, in

truth and fidelity to John, as well as to God Himself, to correct John's mistake on the spot. The Devil solicits adoration, but holy angels repel it as a detraction from Jehovah. Hence, when John fell down to worship before this holy angel's feet, promptly came the word, 'Take heed, no; I am a fellowservant of thee and of thy brethren the Prophets, and of those who keep the words of this Book. Worship God.'

"The incident shows that no saint or angel worship can have the approval of heaven. If it was wrong to worship this glorious heavenly messenger in and through whom came forth the very voice of Jesus, how can it be right to worship and pray to the Virgin Mary, to whom is assigned no dignity or office? The impulse and intention may be devout and good; but it is a great mistake, and we take the side of heaven and holy angels when we say to those who do it: 'See, no, no; you do greatly err; you are taking Christ's honor from him, and bestowing it upon his human mother or friends; worship God, for it is written, Him only shalt thou serve [worship].' "

Mr. Lord has similarly interpreted this action of St. John and the admonitory words of the angel. His thought was that the homage which the Apostle was about to pay to the angel was probably not of adoration, but of gratitude merely, for his condescension and benignity in showing him the visions, especially those that related to the reign of Christ and his glorified saints. This writer's comment on the admonition of the angel to St. John has always been timely, particularly is it so at the present time. The lesson he draws is that the angel exhibits in his reply the spirit of the true worshipers in contrast with the usurpers of the rights of God and their idolatrous followers. It was God who appointed him to that work, and in fulfilling his appointed work he was acting toward Him in the same capacity of a servant as was St. John himself in receiving it and giving it to the Church. And all who keep the words of the book are simply fulfilling their offices as witnesses for Christ.

Mr. Barnes' thought concerning this matter is that St. John probably entertained a suspicion that it was Christ himself who had manifested himself to him in this remarkable manner; and that the angel's words were simply designed to correct this misapprehension and to make known to him that he was like St. John and the other divinely chosen Prophets, and as they were not entitled to worship, no more was he. This interpretation appears to be most reasonable, for angels have nothing of their own to deliver but are simply messengers, "doing His commandments and hearkening unto the voice of His words," and so the utterances of all inspired men of old are His, and we simply hear His voice through them. Looking at the matter from this standpoint it rather speaks of the faithfulness of St. John to the Word of God; and it also brings forth the faithfulness of the angel, who at once announces himself as simply and only a fellowservant of St. John, and of his brethren the Prophets.

There is, however, a significant lesson taught in this incident. St. John here represented those favored members of the Church who live in this present time, and to whom are granted the privilege of understanding more and more of this

wonderful revelation. The understanding of these things, which for some years past have been unfolded by different messengers represented by the one angel, might result in some imbibing the spirit or disposition to give too much honor to those used of God in interpreting and applying these visions. Thus said Mr. Russell:

"The proprieties of the case are set forth to us in the conduct of the symbolical angel who talked to John and who represented some in the end of this age commissioned to present God's Truth to His people. He said, 'See thou do it not' — do not worship me, for I am not the author of this Plan. I am thy fellow-servant, a brother to all the Prophets and all those who keep the message of this revelation. God alone should be worshipped: He is the Author of the great Plan and will be the finisher of it. It is brought to our attention now by Him because it is now 'due time' for His people to come to an appreciation of His Plans."

Seal Not the Words of This Prophecy

The revealing angel's next words were, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand (verse 10).

St. John was not to seal them up, that is, not to conceal them, but to record them, to make them known, to publish them to the Churches. Not from any self-will or choice on his part, therefore, were these Apocalyptic records put before the Lord's people, but by direct command of our God and Savior. One has ably remarked: "And if he commanded the writing of them, I cannot see how men are to excuse themselves from the reading and studying of them, or put them from them as of no practical worth, and yet retain their holy faithfulness to the plain will and inculcations of our blessed Lord and Judge."

In a lecture discoursing on the words under consideration, over fifty years ago, this same man of God thus entreats his hearers: "O, my friends, let us beware how we neglect or despise a book upon which God Almighty has laid so much stress, urgency and importance. If John had sealed it up, or failed to lay it before us as it is, he would have forfeited his place and standing as an Apostle of Christ; how, then, can we think our duty discharged, or the provisions of our highest blessedness duly accepted and used, if we pass it by as a dead letter, or make it to us as if it had never been?"

Mr. Barnes, although in his expositions inclined toward the Post-millennial theory, thus very truthfully and forcefully expressed himself in 1851: "Isaiah (8:16, 30:8) and Daniel (8:26, 12:4,9) were commanded to seal up their prophecies. Their prophecies related to far-distant times, and the idea in their being commanded to seal them was that they should make the record sure and unchangeable; that they should finish it and lay it up for future ages; so that in far-distant times, the events might be compared with the prophecy, and it might be seen that there was an exact correspondence between the prophecy and the fulfillment. Their prophecies would not be immediately demanded for the use of persecuted saints, but would pertain to future ages.

"On the other hand, the events which John had predicted, though in their ultimate development they were to extend to the end of the world, and even into eternity, were about to begin to be fulfilled, and were to be of immediate use in consoling a persecuted Church. John, therefore, was directed not to seal up his predictions; not to lay them away to be opened as it were in distant ages, but to leave them open so that a persecuted Church might have access to them, and might in times of persecution and trial have the assurance that the principles of their religion would finally triumph."

The expression "For the time is at hand," implies that they would soon commence, not that they would soon be completed. The thought evidently is that as the scenes of persecution had already commenced in St. John's day, and would continue to increase in severity, it was very necessary that the saints should have these prophetic visions to comfort them, and as they looked forward to the final outcome, the triumph of the Church, they would be sustained and upheld in their trials.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 22:11).

Whatever may be the correct interpretation of this language it would appear that the words must be understood as closely associated with and related to the preceding statement: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." Commentators in general have admitted that they have met with special difficulty in the exposition of the language of verse 11. Most expositors separate these words from their connection and apply them to a future time when the destinies of mankind will be forever settled. Those who do this as a rule believe in the eternal, conscious existence of the wicked in misery and torment. We believe, however, that the Scriptures when rightly understood do not teach anything of this kind, and we therefore look further for the correct and consistent interpretation.

Mr. Lord's exposition of these words recognize their close connection with the angel's statement preceding, and in substance his explanation is that the injunction contained in verses 10 and 11 is addressed to St. John, doubtless as the representative of the witnesses of God, the followers of Christ throughout the Gospel Age, and its meaning is he says: "Thou must not withhold from the Church, nor misrepresent the revelation of this book, but proclaim it in its truth, representing those as unjust whom the prophecy exhibits as unjust, and those as defiled whom the prophecy represents as defiled, and those as righteous and holy to whom it ascribes that character. The Redeemer enforces this injunction by the annunciation of his Deity and title to implicit obedience, and the assurance that he is to come quickly, to recompense to every one as his work shall be" (verses 12,13). His coming will usher in the thousand-year Judgment Day, when the unjust, the filthy, and the unrighteous will have their trial.

Mr. Russell's explanation is much the same, and perfectly harmonious with the Divine Plan. He says that so far as these revelations are concerned they who

are righteous may be righteous still, they who are filthy may be filthy still, they who are holy may be holy still — the unrighteous and the filthy simply ignore this message and are not moved specially by it. During the Millennium, however, we may expect that the vigorous processes of the Kingdom will correct many of these filthy and unrighteous, and ultimately develop many of them into lovers of the Light, the Truth, and the Way, bringing many of them into full fellowship with the Lord, which will secure to them everlasting life. Thus we may properly gather the thought that as marvelous and meaningful as are the visions that St. John beheld they were not intended to especially affect degenerate humanity. The visions would have little or no effect upon the world in all its sin and depravity. Neither were the visions intended to change the true Church in the sense of adding to her numbers, for it would appear that when the time would come that the visions would be generally understood (as is the fact today), the Church would be about complete, and the visions of Revelation would not be intended to cause any additions to the Church — the holy would be "holy still" and the righteous, "righteous still."

Again the Savior announces, "Behold, I come quickly," as if to doubly impress upon the believing hearer the solemn importance of that event, and its close connection with the fulfillment of much that St. John had just seen and heard. "And my reward is with me, to give to each one as his work is," evidently applies to the great Judgment Day, at the beginning of which the Church will be rewarded and during which the world will have their trial, retribution and reward. For an explanation of verse 13 we refer the reader to page 38.

The correct reading of verse 14 is not "Blessed are they who do His commandments," etc., as rendered in the Common Version, but rather, "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that their right may be to the wood [grove] of the life, and they may enter by the gates into the City." It is evident that the words apply to the inhabitants of the earth during the Millennial Kingdom. This benediction, writes Mr. Lord, is a benediction upon those who are to live under the Lord's reign, after the establishment of the Kingdom of the glorified saints over the earth. This is manifest from the representation that they are to acquire by their obedience a title to the tree of life and an entrance through the gates into the City. They are to follow the descent of that City, therefore, not to precede it, and to be of those who enter and dwell within it (under its sway) not of those who constitute the City itself. They are to include the whole race, inasmuch as all others, the dogs, the sorcerers, the fornicators, the murderers, the idolaters, and whoever loves and practices falsehood (verse 15) are to be excluded, and (as the City is to open its gates to all nations) to be banished from the earth — destroyed.

That this is the correct interpretation is very evident. The question may arise, however, How shall we explain this in harmony with what is quite generally acknowledged to be the correct translation? How can it be applied to the world during the Millennium? What would the washing of their robes mean? This expression in its application to the world during the Millennium can hardly mean the same as applied to the Church during this Gospel Age. The members of the

Church, Christ's Body, are now reckoned, counted, by the Heavenly Father as perfect, because of their having Christ's righteousness imputed to them. This is called their robe of righteousness. This imputation, this being counted perfect as human beings, is to the end that they may consecrate themselves, their reckoned perfect humanity to death, as our Lord consecrated himself, his perfect humanity to death — thus following in his footsteps. The fulfillment of this vow of consecration secures to these the privilege of being of this Holy City, the Heavenly Kingdom, the Divine Government.

The application of the words, "wash their robes," to the world during the Millennium would mean to them their making use of the cleansing process of the Millennial River, the Word of God, then provided; thus being brought up gradually to human perfection — restitution. On account of the Redeemer's sacrifice applied by the Divine Christ to justice in behalf of all humanity, the world will be no longer considered as condemned in Adam — no longer treated as strangers and aliens from God and His promises and blessings, as it now is, but rather it will be treated as His people, because purchased by the sacrifice of His Son.

"The Root and Offspring of David"

The further expression: "I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning Star," are significant titles, pointing to certain characteristics of the nature and glory of Christ. Mr. Seiss, who was a believer in the dual nature of Christ, and also in what is termed the orthodox Trinitarian doctrine, uses this text to support these teachings. He says, "The duality of his nature as at once God and man, is here affirmed. As God, He is the root or origination of David — He who gave David being and place, and out of whom David was raised up, even David's Lord; and as a man, he is the offspring of David, David's son, one born of the house and lineage of David." He, like many others, failed to see that Christ was made "a little lower than angels," a man, for the suffering of death — that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man; in other words, that he gave himself, his humanity for the life of the world. Like many others who sincerely believed that the death of Christ was for the salvation of the world, he failed to discern that if Christ in any sense or degree is now human, it could be only by his taking back the price of human salvation.

The fact of the matter is that while it is true that the Logos, the Only Begotten Son, was the Heavenly Father's agent used in the creation of all others, it should be kept in mind that all God's creations through the Son were perfect. In the strict sense of the word "create," Adam was the only human being created. David, as all others of humanity, sprang from Adam after he had fallen, and in this sense, David was not "created" or even given life by God, or the Logos of God. We will, therefore, have to reject the interpretation of this writer.

Mr. Barnes also dissents from Mr. Seiss' interpretation of the expression, "the root of David," and to our mind grasped more nearly, although not wholly, its true significance. His interpretation is that Christ was "not the root in the sense that David sprang from him, as a tree does from a root, but in the sense

that he was the 'root-shoot' of David, or that he himself sprang from him [David], as a sprout starts up from a decayed and fallen tree — as of the oak, the willow, the chestnut," etc. The meaning then is not that he was the ancestor of David, or that David sprang from him, but that he was the offspring of David, according to the promise in the Scriptures that the Messiah should be descended from him. "No argument," he says, "then, can be derived from this passage in proof of the preexistence or the divinity of Christ," although Mr. Barnes was a firm believer in his prehuman existence.

It will be noted that Mr. Barnes makes no distinction between the two expressions, "root" and "offspring." We believe that his interpretation of the word "offspring" is the correct one, and is embodied in the statement of St. Paul: "He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3); but what is meant by the expression, "root of David"? Our reply is that it unquestionably applies to him after his glorification to the Divine nature. In other words, it applies to him as the Life-giver, the one who is to give eternal life, not only to David, but to all who will receive it under the conditions of the New Covenant, which will be inaugurated during the Millennial times of restitution. We now quote one whose interpretation harmonizes with all the Scriptures:

"We have seen how our Lord is the branch, or offspring, or son of David, and the line through which his genealogy is properly to be traced. ... According to the flesh, our Lord Jesus was, through his mother, the son, the branch, the offshoot, or offspring of David. It was by virtue of his sacrifice of his undefiled life that he became the 'root' of David as well as his Lord: for the thought suggested by the word 'root' differs somewhat from that furnished in the word 'Lord.' The 'root' of David signifies the origin, source of life, and development of David.

"The Scriptures declare that David was 'a stem out of Jesse': his [David's] father therefore was his root, according to natural generation. When and how did Christ become David's root or father? We answer, Not before he 'was made flesh' — it was when made flesh that, as the man Jesus, he became related to Adam's race through his mother (Hebrews 2:14-18). And in that relationship to the race and to David he was 'branch,' not 'root.' How and when did he become the 'root'? We answer, By the same means and at the same time that he became David's Lord: the means was his death, by which he purchased liferights of Adam and all his race, including David's; the time was when he was raised from the dead, Adam's Redeemer, the race's Redeemer, and hence David's Redeemer."

Christ, also, in the same connection, speaks of himself as the "bright morning Star." What is the significance of this name as applied to him? May it not be that he is referring to the prediction of the covetous prophet, Balaam, who, moved by the spirit contrary to his own wishes, gave utterance to the words: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel. ... Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion," etc. (Numbers 24:17-19). That Star, now that the morning has come, is seen by the eye of faith ushering in the dawning of the bright Millennial Day. One has truthfully said: "It is not uncommon to compare

a prince, a leader, a true teacher, with that bright and beautiful star, which at some seasons of the year precedes the rising of the sun, and leads on the day. The reference here is to that star as the harbinger of day, and the meaning of the Savior is, that he sustains a relation to a dark world similar to this beautiful star. At one time he is indeed compared with the sun itself in giving light to the world. Here he is compared with that morning star, rather with reference to its beauty than its light. May it not also have been one object in this comparison to lead us when we look on that star, to think of the Savior? It is perhaps the most beautiful object in nature; it succeeds the darkness of the night; it brings on the day — and as it mingles with the first rays of the morning, it seems to be so joyous, cheerful, exulting, bright, that nothing can be better adapted to remind us of him who came to lead on eternal day."

The next verse has already been considered as referring to the gracious invitation that will be extended to all mankind, both to those who will be living at the time of the inauguration of the New Jerusalem, the Heavenly government, and also to those who have died ignorant of the great salvation that is to be offered to all.

The Solemn Warning

We now come to the consideration of the words of warning and threatening addressed to every one who hears the words of this prophecy, that is, the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The words read:

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (verses 18,19).

The writer, St. John, does not say who is referred to by the pronoun "I." Some think it refers to the Lord Jesus, others think that it refers to the writer, St. John himself. The meaning in any event is that the writer makes the solemn affirmation contained in the words as a conclusion. The object of these threatening words is doubtless to guard the book against being corrupted by any interpolations or changes. The threat would, of course, have regard more especially to the manuscript as originally given by St. John to the seven Churches to whom he was instructed to deliver them. In rewriting, interpolations doubtless have crept into the different copies of the original, and possibly there have been some omissions. The former has been proved by a comparison with the oldest manuscripts now in existence, which were not used in the making up of the Common Version, the King James translation. To guard against this danger the words were given. "If any man shall add to it," would mean to add to it with a view to furnishing a more complete revelation than that given to St. John; or with a claim that new truth had been communicated by inspiration since St. John wrote it. The words of warning apply to the book of the Revelation only, although the same principle may properly apply to all the original Scriptures.

"If any one take away from the words of this prophecy," would mean, if he shall reject it altogether, or in copying from the original he designedly leave out any part of it.

"It is conceivable that from the remarkable nature of the communications made in this book, and the fact that they seemed to be unintelligible, John supposed there might be those who would be inclined to omit some portions as improbable, or that he apprehended that when the portions which describe Antichrist were [being] fulfilled in distant ages, those to whom those portions applied would be disposed to strike them from the sacred volume, or to corrupt [or misapply] them. ... The whole book was to be received — with all its fearful truths — as a revelation from God, and however obscure it might seem, in due time, it would be made plain; however faithfully it might depict a fearful apostasy, it was important both to show the truth of Divine inspiration, and so save the Church, that these disclosures should be in their native purity in the possession of the people of God. 'God shall take away his part out of the book of life.' Perhaps there is here an intimation that this would be most likely to be done by those who professed to be Christians, and who supposed that their names were in the book of life. In fact most of the corruptions of the sacred Scriptures have been attempted by those who have professed some form of Christianity. Infidels have but little interest in attempting such changes, and but little influence to make them received by the Church. It is most convenient for them, as it is most agreeable to their feelings, to reject the Bible altogether" (Albert Barnes).

Mr. Lord's explanation, though brief, is a most reasonable interpretation of these words. He says: "The terrific threat to those who add to the prophecy, or take from it, indicates that men are to be under violent temptation to reject or misrepresent it in order to evade the application of its predictions to themselves. And how needful to presumption, to party zeal, and to ambition, is the restraint it is suited to impose! With what a perverse and daring spirit have not a few, especially of the friends of the nationalized hierarchies, set aside the obvious meaning of its symbols, and forced on them constructions the most unauthorized and unnatural, in order to escape the demonstration that the great apostate powers which it foreshadows are those to which they belong!"

In addition to the foregoing on the Divine warning: "If any man shall add to," and "If any man shall take away from," etc., we believe this thought is also evidently intended: If any man shall by a wresting or twisting of the Revelator's statements add to their meaning some thought that is not there and was never intended, or if he shall by such unholy practice take away from, and thus pervert the force and significance of those messages. It is most evident that many so-called expositors have been guilty of such proceedings — of so misconstruing and misapplying the Apocalyptic messages as to vitiate to a considerable extent the beautiful truths therein set forth, and to draw inferences and conclusions altogether unwarranted.

The expression, "God will add unto him the plagues written in this book," seems to give force to this interpretation. In so far as they have been fulfilled up to the present time, the "seven last plagues" have fallen upon the systems

that have corrupted, neglected, or misapplied these prophecies; and the last plague of all, the great winepress feature of the time of trouble, as we have seen, will destroy them from the earth. The individuals who have been responsible for these neglects and misapplications, and for the persecutions of God's true saints, will meet their punishment, retribution, in the great individual Judgment Day, which will follow.

We have now come to the last, the concluding words of the book. The words are those of the Lord Jesus Himself, and read: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." Twice does the Savior utter these words, apparently, as already suggested, to give emphasis to the paramount importance of the Second Advent, toward which all the visions point, and into which they all finally merge. Next comes the response of St. John, as representing the true spirit and longing desire of the true Church: "Amen! Come! Lord Jesus." On this, the concluding statement of the Revelator, we cannot but submit the beautiful and forceful illustration which another has given:

"Fiction has painted the picture of a maiden whose lover left her for a voyage to the Holy Land, promising on his return to make her his beloved bride. Many told her that she would never see him again. But she believed his word, and evening by evening she went down to the lonely shore and kindled there a beacon-light in sight of the roaring waves, to hail and welcome the returning ship which was to bring again her betrothed. And by that watchfire she took her stand each night, praying to the winds to hasten on the sluggish sails, that he who was everything to her might come. Even so that blessed Lord, who has loved us unto death, has gone away to the mysterious Holy Land of Heaven, promising on his return to make us his happy and eternal Bride. Some say that he is gone forever, and that here we shall never see him more. But his last word was, 'Yea, I come quickly.' And on the dark and misty beach, sloping out into the eternal sea, each true believer stands by the love-lit fire, looking, and waiting, and praying, and hoping for the fulfillment of his word, in nothing gladder than in his pledge and promise, and calling even from the soul of sacred love, 'Amen! Come! Lord Jesus.' "

"Even So Come Lord Jesus."

We would call attention to the sequel to which this beautiful picture points: The long predicted, dark, stormy morning, that was to witness the return of him who gave the promise, is at last dawning; but before the blessed sunshine of his revealing, before the full dawn of the light, comes the darkest of the night. While a stricken world has been reeling to and fro with the shocks of war, revolution, and strife; and while the sea and waves of anarchy have been roaring and lashing the doomed ship of state of present institutions, and the pilots have been endeavoring vainly to weather the terrible storm; some of the Lord's saints who have preserved the true spirit of betrothal ("Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly") and have been watching and longing for the glorious Apocalypse of the Divine one, who said that his coming would be like a thief, have by the eye of faith through the sure word of prophecy, seen a form rising up through the stormy mists, growing more and more distinct, as once it was seen from Galilee's shore,

and have recognized it to be the one for whom they have been longing. Though these still find themselves in the midst of life's tempestuous sea, they have the assurance that soon they will once more hear their Divine Lord command the sea and the waves, saying, "Peace, be still!" In obedience to that voice, the storms and tempests of earth will cease and again there will be a great calm. Yea, verily, his presence will yet, soon we trust, bring in the Day long promised when all the mists, shadows and darkness of the night time will pass away and give place to the morning of light — the morning of the resurrection; the day of the prisoner's release; the day for which the whole creation for six thousand years has waited and travailed in pain; indeed, the day of the great consummation, the day that shouts the Harvest Home — the day that never dies!

St. John had heard the voice from Heaven saying, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4). The Prophet, too, declared this same day, saying, "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10).

Who indeed that has this vision of the Divine Program; this vision of the great Prince of Peace and of his victorious reign; this vision of him who will usher mankind into one grand eternal day of unbroken fellowship and of unspeakable joy — who indeed with such a vision would not from the depth of his soul cry out with the beloved John — "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" Ah, yes, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Chapter Fifty-Two

The Time is at Hand

(Conclusion)

In the foregoing pages an earnest effort has been made to avoid mere hypothesis and speculation; and the endeavor has been to the contrary, to build on the solid, Scriptural foundation of history unveiling prophecy. Those who have carefully considered this exposition cannot but have noted the fact that God has used many of His servants throughout the age to interpret the visions of the Revelation as history has gradually disclosed their fulfillment. Quotations from numerous writers throughout the entire age have proved this. There is made manifest the obvious error, one that has seriously interfered with the study of the Revelation, of supposing that God purposed at some time to choose some one individual to unfold and apply all its visions. This error has caused some of the Lord's people to refrain from even reading the book, much less studying and making use of the helps that God in His providence has provided for its understanding.

Moreover, to those who have given due consideration to the foregoing exposition, it will be apparent that the book of Revelation, the last of God's revelation to the Church, was not given for the last members of the Church only, but for the whole Church of Christ who have witnessed for him throughout the age. Of course it is perfectly reasonable to suppose that the last members of the Church class would be privileged above those who lived before, to obtain a better understanding of all its visions, because of the visions becoming matters of past history, and also on account of the many superior providential advantages to obtain a correct knowledge of the Divine Word of truth, which became corrupted by the defiling influences of the great Apostasy of the Dark Ages.

Furthermore, it will have been noted that the Divine Plan of Salvation, now clearly understood by some, is woven all through the symbolic visions; and particularly is this found to be true concerning the closing visions, describing the judgments now falling on Christendom and soon to result in its downfall. It will also be noted that the visions relating to the new heavens and new earth and the New Jerusalem have now become very clear to the understanding of those privileged to discern the Divine Plan for blessing all mankind in due time, the Millennium. How plain it should be to such privileged ones that the progressive unfolding of the Revelation visions, their gradual revealing, and the greatly increased light on the same, is according to a Divine arrangement. In order that this might be seen we have quoted profusely the writings of expositors who have

lived in the different generations of the Church's history from St. John's day down to the present time.

This exposition has proved, we believe, that this most wonderful book has to a greater or less extent been a source of Divine comfort and encouragement to thousands of God's people in different periods of the Church's history even from the beginning. This was especially so in the Dark Ages, as seen in the lives of Wycliffe, Huss, and the Waldenses. The visions of the Antichrist to a very considerable extent influenced the Reformers in their great work of bringing the Bible to its rightful place in the Church as the sole rule and guide of faith and practice; and it is beyond question that the work of these Reformers, which is a subject of one of the Revelation visions, opened a new era in the history of the world. The many promises of Christ recorded in the Revelation encouraged and sustained these Reformers in their divinely appointed work; and their conduct and example encouraged millions of humanity to break the chains of false religious superstition and become delivered from the bondage of the great Papal system.

In our study of the Revelation we have not hesitated to avail ourselves of all the aid, all the help to understand its visions that has been within our reach; and in many instances we have quoted from those with whom we have not in all points agreed. The fact has been recognized that the Church which Christ established is one "Body," and that Body embraces all the true people of God throughout the age. What St. Paul said about the distribution of gifts to different members of the "one Body," and that each member is dependent for help upon the other members has been borne in mind. It has been recognized, however, that no man or class of men since the Apostles' day have been infallible in their interpretations; indeed, that all have to a greater or less extent made errors, and that the Divine Word is, and always will be, the one and only test to be applied to all expositions. While believing most firmly that the Historical interpretation is the Divine one, we have not refrained from consulting and quoting some of the most notable Futurist writers and in some matters have found, especially in connection with the messages of Christ to the seven Churches of Revelation 2 and 3, that great help is derived through that source.

The questions most naturally arise in the mind of the devout student of God's Word, How near are we to the end of the present order? Do the Revelation visions enable us to answer this question? The reply is, We know of nothing in the visions that will enable any one to set an *exact* date for this ending. There are time prophecies in the Revelation that seem quite evidently designed more especially to reveal to watchful Christians that we are in the time when events are shaping themselves for the very last crisis, the various phases of which are more definitely, more particularly described in the closing Revelation visions, than in any other portion of the Bible. These time prophecies are associated with different organizations, political and religious, as the Papal system, the Gentile governments, and the Jewish nation. None of these are *directly* associated with the full end of the true Church's career; and they enable us to determine only approximately when her history will be completed. All the time prophe-

cies, however, together with the significant events transpiring today, which are the fulfillment of predictions made centuries ago, strongly indicate that we are in the days spoken of by Christ himself as the "days of the Presence of the Son of Man."

Summary of Important Events of the Age

A brief summary of the great events that have transpired since St. John was given the visions — the events of history that have been a result of both true and false Christianity's influence in the world, described in the mystical symbology of the Revelation visions — and the tracing of these events as they have slowly but surely developed and have finally reached the conditions existing today, will, we believe, be helpful to see our particular place in the Divine Plan and purpose, and enable us to realize our proximity to the greatest of all predicted events, the establishment of God's Kingdom over the earth. All the details connected with these great events have been considered quite fully. We briefly summarize these events:

(1) The cruel and dreadful persecutions of the true Church through the instigation of the Pagan rulers and priesthood in the second and third centuries, and in the early years of the fourth.

(2) The cessation of Pagan persecution about 313 AD through the elevation of Constantine the Great to the throne of the Roman Empire. He, unlike all other Roman emperors up to his day, professed friendliness to nominal Christianity and caused Pagan persecution to cease.

(3) The great increase of both true and nominal Christianity, resulting in the early part of the Fourth Century in the complete overthrow of the Pagan Roman religion and civilization.

(4) The establishment in its place of a professed Christian civilization in which the true teachings of Christ and the simple, pure Christian life became to a large extent shut out from view, indeed, looked upon and treated as heretical.

(5) The downfall of the imperial rule which held sway from the city of Rome, commonly mentioned in history as the overthrow of the Western Roman Empire, and considered by all historians to be the most stupendous event as affecting the human family and the Christian religion since the birth of Christ up to that time — 476 AD.

(6) The gradual rise into power of the bishops of Rome, until 539 when the Roman bishop became generally recognized as head of the Church, by an official decree of Justinian, the emperor.

(7) The rise of Mohammedanism, which was providentially used as a woe, a scourge on apostate Eastern Roman Christianity, causing in 1453 the downfall of the Eastern Roman Empire, even threatening the same of Western Rome, that is, the divided power of Western Rome, the ten kingdoms. This power began its ravages about 622 and continued into the Nineteenth Century, although with decreasing force.

(8) The Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, resulting in the division of Christendom into two parts, Roman Catholic and Protestant, effecting a deadly wound on Papacy's rule and influence in the world. This followed the downfall of Eastern Rome's capital.

(9) The French Revolution of 1793-1798, causing another weakening of Papacy's influence amongst earth's peoples; thus, in connection with the Sixteenth Century Reformation, opening the way for freedom in Bible study.

(10) The decline of the great Protestant sects, many of the great leaders introducing evolutionary theories, etc., and treating the Bible as unworthy of the claim to be a Divine revelation, marked the last half of the Nineteenth Century.

(11) The inauguration of another great reform movement amongst the true followers of Christ, resulting in a clear understanding of the Divine Plan of Salvation, which many believe has been under the direct supervision of the great Head of the Church; the days of the Second Presence of the Son of Man being reached.

All these events have been, with remarkable detail, described in the visions of the Revelation, and are now of course matters of history. It is our conviction that the visions of the Revelation describing the very last closing scenes of the age are now rapidly fulfilling. We believe that these visions more than anything else were designed to enable us to determine our nearness to the greatest of all events, the full establishment of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. The signs of the full end of the age are to be looked for in three special directions or sources. These are:

(1) Signs amongst the Jews.

(2) Signs amongst the Gentiles.

(3) Signs in the Christian Church, both the true and false.

In all these directions the signs of the complete end are described. The Apostle Paul gives what is probably the most significant sign, and evidently the final one to be looked for in the first direction above mentioned, as indicating the change of the Kingdom class. He says: "Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." (Romans 11:25). When it becomes apparent that the truly orthodox of the Jewish people get their eyes open to see that Jesus Christ is their Messiah, and come to an understanding of what is referred to in the Scriptures as the "hidden mystery," that of gathering out the joint-heirs of the heavenly Kingdom from amongst the Gentiles, which is clearly stated to be the special purpose of God for this age, during the period of Jewish blindness — then, and not until then will the age reach its full end. Those who will live to witness that may know that the Kingdom in all its power and glory will be ushered in immediately. We believe that some Christians may possibly witness some of the events and developments leading up to and in close proximity to that time.

Another significant sign that will be in evidence when the present order of the world is about to go down is that of the tension existing at the present

time reaching a stage where the civil governments of earth in connection with the great Christian religious systems will be compelled to form, or rather to complete a union already begun, to keep down the turbulent masses of the "sea" class. These things, particularly the last, are quite fully described in detail in the closing visions of the Revelation, if we have been correct in the exposition of these visions; and everything that has occurred in modern times has but confirmed the truthfulness of these interpretations. The exhortation of the Savior in view of all these things is, "When you see these events occurring, know that the Kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21:31, Diaglott). Again, he says, "When ye shall see all these things, know that he is nigh, even at the doors" (Matthew 24:33).

The position of the students of the prophetic Word in our day is precisely the same as that of those who lived in other terminal periods in the past. It is evident that the predictions both of Daniel and of the Revelation were divinely designed more than any other of the prophetic writings to impart the knowledge that God saw was best for his people to have on this important subject of times and seasons. A careful study of these two books cannot but result in the conclusion that both the chronological and non-chronological predictions prove conclusively that we are living in the very midst of the last great events that mark the end of this Christian Age.

Times of Gentiles Near End

According to the testimony of Daniel and St. John the end is near, although no one can say positively just how near. The same Almighty One who foretold the four hundred years' affliction of Abraham's seed, at the very beginning of their history, fulfilled his word of promise when that period had run its course, in delivering Israel from their bondage in Egypt, and punishing the nation that afflicted them. This same Almighty One foretold a much longer period during which the Gentile governments should rule over and afflict the descendants of ancient Israel, and he also foretold that when this period had run its course, he would deliver them and destroy the Gentile-government oppressors, and restore again the kingdom to Israel in the person of their Messiah. This period of affliction was to be 2520 years. The independent Jewish monarchy fell in 606 BC, when the king of Babylon made Jehoiakim his vassal. Since this event the nation of Israel has existed only in bondage to or dispersion among the Gentiles. In about ten years from the present time, the times of the Gentiles (2520 years) measured from the latest possible commencing date — the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in Zedekiah's day 587 BC — will have run its full course. The great image of Gentile monarchy — having legs of iron, and feet part of potter's clay and iron — into which all the visions of the Apocalypse fit, has but a few years longer to exist. The period of Gentile dominion is all but ended; the wonderful prophecy of the "seven times," therefore, very plainly teaches that we are near, very near the full end of the age.

Furthermore, those living at the present time can look back and see that the 1260 years of Papacy's eventful career, has, in two very marked events, namely

the deliverance of the saints out of his power in 1799 AD, and the fall of the temporal power of the popes in 1870, *fully* ended. Nothing more of a chronological character is mentioned concerning this evil system, either in Daniel or the Apocalypse. All we know about it is that the end of Gentile times will have witnessed its destruction. The period of time to elapse from Papacy's loss of temporal power in 1870 to its complete destruction is called a "short space." See Revelation 17:10. We have witnessed its temporal dominion taken away; we are now watching events which mark a revival of its influence in the world, for prophecy intimates that at the very hour of its destruction it will be sitting, as it were, as "a queen, who knoweth no sorrow." Is it not very apparent that the prophecy of the "time, times, and a half" has met its fulfillment, and that this plainly shows that we are close to the end of the age.

Calling attention to another prediction we note that the Holy land, the Holy City, and the site of the Temple, which have been so long trodden under foot of the Gentiles was to be delivered from Gentile oppression and authority when the times of the Gentiles should end, as our Savior foretold. We have been witnessing many significant events in the condition of Palestine, etc., events which plainly indicate that the time is near at hand when Israel's land will be theirs again. The Moslems in 1917 lost altogether their control there, and the time seems not far distant when "the nations of Europe, it may be merely by mutual distrust and political jealously, or it may be by higher motives, shall conspire to reinstate the Jews in the land of their forefathers; *then* the last warning bell will have rung; then the last of the unfulfilled predictions of Scripture as to events prior to the great crisis, will have received its accomplishment." Then the manifestation to Israel of the Second Advent will take place. Then the reign of Christ with his risen and glorified saints as King over all the earth will be close at hand. Then the mystery of God will be finished, and the *apokalupsis* of Christ be immediate; the rapture or change of the Church having taken place before.

When the 2520 years of Gentile *lease* of power ran its course in 1914, many of the Lord's people were sorely tried, because their long-cherished hope of deliverance did not come, and their expectations failed. Others, perhaps the more numerous class, have lost faith altogether in chronological prophecy. Very similar may have been the condition of ancient Israel during the closing of the four hundred years of their affliction. They may have thought that the proper time to begin to reckon was much earlier than it was, and thus met with disappointment. Note the following:

"Had Israel in Egypt, or Moses in Midian, endeavored to discover beforehand *the precise year* in which the 400 years of affliction and bondage predicted by God to Abram as to befall his seed, would terminate, they would have been sorely puzzled to select a commencing epoch. Was it to be dated from the call of Abram, or from the day the promise was given? or from the birth of Isaac, the promised seed? or from the descent into Egypt? or from the commencement of the cruel treatment of the children of Israel by the Egyptians, when there arose a king who knew not Joseph? There was a wide choice of possible commencing epochs, and it was easy to select a wrong one! The event proved that none of

these was the real starting point ... but from the time when Isaac was five years old; and to this day it is a matter of conjecture what the event was which marked that year, though there is little doubt that it was the casting out of the bond-woman and her son, on the occasion of the mocking of the heir of promise by the natural seed. This mocking, or 'persecuting' (Galatians 4:29) is the first *affliction* of Abraham's seed of which we have any record, and its result demonstrated that it was in Isaac the seed was to be called. The 430 years would thus start from the grant of the land to Abram's seed, and the 400 from the act showing *which* of the two seeds of Abram was to possess it. The important allegorical meaning attributed to this casting-out of Ishmael, confirms the impression that it was the starting point; but the fact cannot be proved, and all we know is that the Exodus (which took place on the self same day that the 430 years ran out — Exodus 12:40) was 405 years after the birth of Isaac, so that the 400 years dated from Isaac's fifth year. How could Israel in Egypt possibly have guessed that? Their prophetic students (if they had any) would most likely base their calculations on the supposition that the period started from the year the prediction was given — twenty or twenty-two years before the true point. And when the 400 years from that epoch expired, skeptics and objectors may have derided them, and they themselves may have had their faith in the Divine prediction and their long-cherished hope of deliverance sorely tried by the fact that the expectation failed! But God is not man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent; hath He said, and shall He not do it? When the appointed period ended, the promised deliverance came. Little as Pharaoh and all Egypt feared their degraded bond slaves, or the God they professed to serve; little as either tyrant or captives foresaw any impending crisis of judgment and deliverance, suddenly and unexpectedly it came. In the short space of a few weeks, or months, Egypt was covered with confusion and horror and death.

"A longer bondage is now drawing to a close, and a greater Exodus awaits both the natural and the spiritual seeds of Abraham; its date is similarly fixed in the purpose of God and similarly defined by chronologic prophecy, and though some students may mistake its exact era, and be discouraged by an apparent failure of their hope, and though the world may exult, and the mockers say, Where is the promise of his coming [*parousia*]? yet the vision is for an appointed time, at the end it shall speak and not lie or be found false; therefore we will wait for it, '*for it will surely come, it will not tarry*' " (H. G. Guinness).

The Long Journey Lies Behind

The writer just quoted has given a most striking illustration of the position that students of chronological prophecy occupy today. He says:

"We are in the position of travelers, approaching a large and to them unknown city, at the end of a long railway journey. They are aware of the distance to be traversed, of the stations to be passed on the way, and of the time required for the transit. The milestones have long shown them that they are rapidly nearing their goal; the time the journey was to occupy has elapsed, and they have observed that the station just passed was the last but one. Yet the terminus in the strange

city may have several distinct platforms, separated from each other by short distances; the train may draw up at one or two before it comes to a final stand at the last: they are ignorant of the exact localities in the great metropolis, and hardly know at which station they will be met by their expectant friends. Still they have no hesitation in making their preparations for leaving the carriage, and in congratulating each other with a glad 'here we are at last!' They would smile at the man who should dispute their conviction, though they may be unable to decide whether it will be five minutes or ten, or only two or three, before they actually reach their destination. It is a mere question of minutes and miles; if one platform is not the right one, the next one may be; at any rate, the long journey lies behind, the desired goal is all but reached. It is easy to be patient, and not difficult to bear a momentary disappointment, because the main result is certain, and the end in any case close at hand."

It should also be borne in mind that there are numerous predictions which are not especially chronological, that are equally, if not more convincing that we are living in the very closing days of this Gospel dispensation. An angel describes to the aged Prophet Daniel the particular characteristics of the days that will immediately precede the establishment of God's Kingdom over this world. He speaks of these days as "the time of the end": "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). These words, from whatever standpoint they may be considered, describe a condition that distinguishes in a most wonderful and marked manner the last century from all other periods of history since man has lived upon the earth. "Where one person traveled formerly, ten thousand travel now; universally, incessantly, and in every corner of the earth, the wheels of locomotion are annihilating distance, and facilitating the running to and fro of millions, making the inhabitants of the most distant quarters of the globe almost like next-door neighbors. And never before in the history of mankind has this or anything like it been the case."

Scarcely had the world time to recover from the wonder and astonishment at the application of steam to travel, when electricity brought a still greater marvel and surprise. And now in the more recent past comes the aircraft. On land and sea and in mid-air human beings are seen moving night and day incessantly. The telegraph, the telephone, the wireless, the radio — all have come into use within the lifetime of a single man.

"And knowledge shall be increased." The fulfillment of this prediction is closely associated with the other, and distinguishes these days in a most marked and special way from any other period of human history. Where one person could read and write a hundred years ago, hundreds of thousands are fairly educated now. Where one secret of nature was known to those living a century ago, a thousand are known now and turned to practical account by the men of our day. To the world this is significant only of man's wonderful ability and power; to the reverent believer in the Bible as a Divine revelation, it is the fulfillment of prophecy fraught with solemn significance, and points unmistakably to the fact that we are in the dawn of the "better day," so long foretold.

Scoffers in the Last Days

However, among the very many signs that indicate our nearness to the end, perhaps none is more significant and convincing than the confident conviction that seems universally to prevail in the great church systems, and in the world, that all things continue as they were and will so continue. The writer above quoted further says:

"Not only is there no expectation of impending judgment, there is a bold assumption that no change in the existing order of things is probable, or even possible.

"The very idea of a Divine interference in the affairs of this world is scouted as foolish and fanatical; the testimony of history to past interferences of the kind is superciliously explained away, or plainly pronounced to be myth, not real history, and any faith in the testimony of prophecy is regarded as antiquated folly. The reign of eternal law is proclaimed, while a Law-giver is ignored, the theory of progressive development is advocated, and the evidences of supernatural interruptions in the past, neglected. The state of popular opinion in Christendom at this hour on this point is foretold with marvelous exactness by the Apostle Peter, and the true antidote to it prescribed. 'There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying Where is the promise of his coming [presence]? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were, since the beginning of the creation. ... But the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the night.'

"This peculiar form of scoffing unbelief, foretold as to characterize the last days, and most conspicuously characterizing these days, has never before prevailed widely in Christendom. It is an offspring of advanced scientific knowledge, a result and accompaniment of Nineteenth Century attainments. The ignorance of other ages made men superstitious. Far from denying the existence of an invisible and immaterial world, far from questioning the possibility of the supernatural, they were slaves to credulity, and groundless apprehensions, and fell easy victims to the false miracles and lying wonders of a cunning and covetous priesthood. Apprehensions of an approaching end of the world, were from time to time widely prevalent in the Dark Ages. Bold infidelity, general skepticism as to all that is supernatural, gross materialism and positive philosophy, the foolhardy presumption that dares to assert 'all things continue as they were since the beginning of the creation' and to argue 'and will so continue forever' — these features are peculiar to the last 150 years, and were never before so marked as they are *now*.

"Were it otherwise, were men willing to heed the testimony of the Word of God, were they observant of the fast thickening signs of the end, were they generally expecting the final crisis, we might be perfectly certain, the end would not be near. Such is not to be the tone and temper of the last generation. 'In such an hour *as ye think not* the Son of Man cometh.' Never was there a day when men were so firmly convinced, that no supernatural event is to be expected, as they are now. But 'when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden

destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.' "

In our Lord's day the destruction of Jerusalem and the utter ruin of Palestine were close at hand. In those days our Savior forewarned his disciples against laying up treasures for themselves on earth. His counsel and advice to them was to lay up their treasures in heaven, and in the end they would find them there. The Lord's true saints of today occupy a similar position. The great symbolic burning day is near. Christendom is about to be destroyed. In this great symbolical conflagration the possessions of earth will be valueless. The opportunities for laying up treasures in heaven will soon be overpast. Let us therefore, beloved, heed the Master's words, dedicating our all of earthly life and fortune upon his altar, and seek to employ time, talent, and ability in the service of him who hath called us from darkness to light; of him who will at last welcome the faithful to the place that he has gone to prepare in the Father's House of many mansions; for there we shall find the heavenly treasures that can never fade, never tarnish, never rust, and the glory and luster of which will abide throughout all time. Amen.

"We Shall Be Like Him"

We shall be like him. O, how rich the promise!
What greater could our Father's love prepare?
Few are the words, and softly are they spoken,
But who shall tell the glories hidden there?

He bore our sickness, fainted with our weakness.
That he might give us perfect strength and health;
He walked with us in poverty and hunger,
To make us sharers of his boundless wealth.

We shall be like him, raised above all weakness,
Forever past all weariness and pain;
Even death itself shall have no power to touch us,
When like our risen Lord with him we reign.

O, what has earth our thirsting souls to offer,
Compared with that abundant life to come?
How poor its pleasures and how dim its splendor
Beside the glory of the promised throne!

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