

SIGNS *of the* TIMES

AMERICA'S PROPHETIC WEEKLY



John, on the island of Patmos, being shown the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, by God's revealing angel

The Great Prophetic Drama

THE Revelation is the last book of the Book of books. It is the final installment of God's love letter to man. It applies more specifically to the last generation than to any other period of the world's history, and yet, it is the most neglected book of the Bible. Its wonderful revelations are seldom expounded from the pulpit, and are but dimly comprehended and lightly esteemed by the modern Christian world.

The Revelation is written in a different style from that of any other book of the Bible. The language is more highly figurative than that employed by other sacred writers, requiring great care in the interpretation of its symbols. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation," declared Peter. The Bible is its own interpreter, explaining its own symbols. A knowledge of the other scriptures and of profane history are essential to success in digging out the priceless gems from this great mine of truth. The language is also highly dramatic, written in the style of a play, or drama, as if its various scenes were acted out before the prophet on a stage or were thrown on the screen in a great moving

*The first of a series of
articles on
The Book of Revelation*

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

picture. We will explain its various symbols and scenes as a series of acts in a drama.

"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." Revelation 1:9. The prophecy was written on Patmos, a rocky island eight miles long, one mile wide, and eighteen miles in circumference, located in the Ægean Sea. It has a population of between four and five thousand.

John had been banished during the cruel persecutions of the Christians by the Emperor Domitian, the second of the ten bloody persecutions by the pagan Roman emperors to defend decaying paganism against the advancing and conquering Christian religion.

Christianity was outlawed as a form of treason against Rome. For preaching this new religion, John was sent to Rome, tried, condemned, and banished in the year A. D. 94.

It is the fate of prophets and preachers of truth to suffer persecution and martyrdom. Christ, after rebuking the leaders of Israel for their rejection of Heaven's messengers, foretold the fate of His disciples: "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city." Matthew 23:34. How accurately this prediction was fulfilled during the first century! Stephen, the first martyr, was stoned, James was beheaded, Philip was scourged, imprisoned, and crucified. Matthew was killed with a halberd, James the Less was stoned and his brains were dashed out with a fuller's club. Matthias was stoned, Andrew was crucified, Mark was dragged to pieces in Alexandria, Peter was crucified, Paul was beheaded, Jude was crucified, and Thomas was thrust through with a spear. Luke was hanged, Simon,

READ "The Meaning of the Eucharistic Congress," Pages 8 and 9.

Zelotes was crucified, and John was thrown into a caldron of burning oil and later banished to Patmos. He was the only one who died a natural death.

Tertullian wrote: "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church." The first gospel seed was sown in the blood of martyrs, and bountiful was the harvest.

Patmos was a Roman penitentiary, or place of banishment, where criminals were banished to end their days in hard labor or confinement. Roman prisoners were given two degrees of punishment, according to their rank in society. Political prisoners and those who were distinguished or wealthy were given an allowance. They could work for hire, were not compelled to labor, and were given the liberty of the island. The second degree of punishment was given the common criminals, and was very severe. It was either death or banishment to hard labor for life. The food was scanty and poor; the criminals were clothed in rags, and compelled to sleep on the bare floor. But few liberties were accorded them; and, under the strain, they soon died or sank to the level of the beasts. Their condition was one of hopeless despair.

Such was the fate of the persecuted Christians who were treated as common criminals, and it is evident that John was not favored above his companions in tribulation. The apostle, however, rose above the surrounding conditions, and was more concerned over the welfare of the churches under his care than over his own comfort. He was banished for life, with no apparent hope of ever seeing again the objects of his love and labors; and the Revelation was, as it were, his "last testament." But a kind Providence was ruling affairs in the earth, and the sudden assassination of Domitian released his prisoners, including John, who again had the joy of visiting the churches in Asia.

JOHN'S ENVIRONMENT

The prophet's only companions were criminals, many of them of the worst type, hardened in every form of vice and sin. They were thieves, murderers, and traitors. John was a saint among the blackest criminals of a world empire. Yet he was not discouraged. He was separated from his friends and brethren in Christian fellowship, but not from his God. He wrote: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet." He did not neglect to follow his lifelong custom and the example of his Lord to observe the Sabbath. He was deprived of the privilege of meeting with those of like precious faith, and so he found a secluded spot on the rock-rimmed shore where he could commune with God. What an earnest prayer he must have offered!

While praying, he was startled by the sound of a loud voice behind him. Who was speaking? He was not long in doubt, for the speaker introduced Himself as Jesus, his bosom friend and elder brother, who had come to spend the Sabbath with him on that lonely shore!

During that visit Jesus lifted the curtain that veiled the future, and showed His servant the most wonderful moving picture ever beheld by man, the drama of life and death. No prophet before or since has ever witnessed such scenes of earthly conflict and heavenly glory. He witnessed, as in a panoramic view, the struggles of the church militant with its defeats and victories, and he heard from the sea of glass in glory

land the triumphant shouts of the redeemed of earth, singing the grand hallelujah chorus of salvation. The vision ended with a view of Paradise restored, and the celestial city with its streets of gold, walls of jasper, and gates of pearl, and his own name emblazoned with gems on its jeweled foundations.

The very title of the book indicates that it was intended to be understood. Its name is not "The Mystery," "The Sealed Book," or "The Book of Hidden Secrets." It is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The word revelation is defined: "Act of revealing; disclosure of what was before unknown; also, that which is revealed." The contents

(Continued on page 5)



With Your

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BIBLE

Christ's Gospel and God's Law

1. What is the gospel of Christ?

"It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Romans 1:16, A. R. V.

2. From what can the power of God save us?

"Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21.

3. But what is sin?

"Sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4, A. V.

4. Then what is the purpose of the gospel of Christ?

"What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the requirement [margin] of the law might be fulfilled in us." Romans 8:3, 4.

5. Can the disobedient be saved?

"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured." Isaiah 1:19, 20.

6. Who only, then, will enter the holy city?

"Blessed are they that wash their robes ["do His commandments," A. V.] that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14.

7. What will the faith of Jesus enable the believer to do?

"Here is the patience of the saints, they

that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.

8. Will hearers, or mere admitters, of the truth be saved?

"Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified ["accounted righteous," margin]. Romans 2:13.

9. To whom only does Christ become the end, or object, of the law unto righteousness?

"Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth." Romans 10:4.

10. Is the obedient child of divine grace under the condemnation of the law?

"Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace." Romans 6:14.

11. Does the gospel of Christ make void the perfect law of Jehovah?

"Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law." Romans 3:31. (Since God writes His law in the hearts of believers whom He gives eternal life, the gospel thus establishes the law of God.)

12. In what three famous texts, dealing with circumcision and uncircumcision, does Paul emphasize the fundamental purpose of the gospel of Christ?

"A new creature" (Galatians 6:15) with "faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6) will love "the keeping of the commandments of God." 1 Corinthians 7:19.

look back over a widening gulf of years since I heard his last good-by spoken in a little railway station in Iowa, my heart overflows for that treasured companionship that has helped me in so many ways to understand more fully my heavenly Father.

Although there are many things that the Christian can not understand in the wonderful plan of salvation, *he knows* that the One whom he has believed is able to care for him, and nothing can thrust him into the gloomy darkness of doubt. Day by day close association with heaven through prayer and study brings new revelations. He studies the pages of sacred and profane history and sees with what divine exactness each prophecy has met its fulfillment in due time; and as he gazes at the beautiful life of the Saviour of men through the great historical telescope, every doubt of His divinity is crowded out of the beholder's heart. Day by day through sweet communion with heaven, Jesus becomes not only a real Christ who lived back in Judea, but also a very present Saviour with whom he can visit as with a friend. Yes, Jesus becomes the Christian's all and in all, and enables him to discern Satan's camouflaged trademark on the false isms afloat.

Day by day as I look into the plan of salvation,—a plan far too wonderful for me to comprehend fully,—I am constrained to exclaim with John: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." As the years go by, I see more clearly the solid foundation upon which rest God's wonderful promises to men. Truly, as the psalmist says, "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." So I am quite content to wait for fuller explanation of the plan of salvation until that happy day when the faithful shall meet in the great reception hall in heaven.

(Continued next week)

THE GREAT PROPHETIC DRAMA

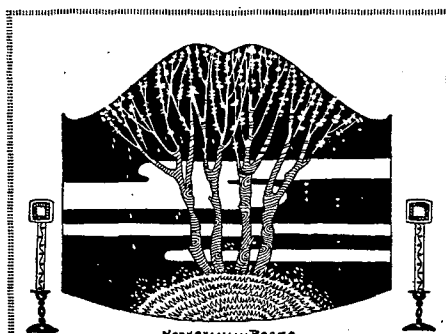
(Continued from page 2)

of the book are not concealed; they are revealed. Otherwise, what would be the purpose of the book? The author of the Bible places in it no nonessentials. Every word is pregnant with meaning, and every sentence contains a message to the human family.

All prophecy is a revelation. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants the prophets." "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever." Amos 3: 7; Deuteronomy 29: 29. "Forever" reaches our own day and includes the book of Revelation. Prophecy is a revelation to man of the secrets of the Almighty. How curious many are to learn the secrets of their neighbors! Governments in time of war pay an enormous price to learn the secrets of

the enemy; and yet, how feeble the efforts to learn the priceless secrets of Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"! Colossians 2: 3.

There are many who declare that the Revelation is a sealed book filled with unexplainable mysteries never intended to be understood. Such sentiments come from the pulpit as well as from the pew. Thus the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled: "The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I can not; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned." Isaiah 29: 11, 12:



A Christ for Every Man

MELVIN E. LEDERER

What think you of Christ? Who say you that He is? This Christ challenges the attention of the world by His many-sidedness. He meets the need of all classes and conditions of men. As deep answers unto deep, so does He respond to the movings of each soul of mankind. If we were to call the roll of the world's workers this morning and ask them, "What think ye of Christ?" their answers would be something like this; and they would amaze us by their revelation of His many-sidedness:

To the artist He is the One Altogether Lovely.

To the architect He is the Chief Corner Stone.

To the baker He is the Living Bread.

To the banker He is the Hidden Treasure.

To the biologist He is the Life.

To the builder He is the Sure Foundation.

To the carpenter He is the Door.

To the doctor He is the Great Physician.

To the educator He is the Great Teacher.

To the engineer He is the New and Living Way.

To the farmer He is the Sower and the Lord of the Harvest.

To the florist He is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley.

To the geologist He is the Rock of Ages (and it is more important to know the Rock of Ages than the age of rocks).

To the horticulturist He is the True Vine.

To the judge He is the Righteous Judge, the Judge of all men.

To the juror He is the Faithful and True Witness.

To the jeweler He is the Pearl of Great Price.

To the lawyer He is the Counselor, the Lawgiver, the Advocate.

To the newspaper man He is the Good Tidings of Great Joy.

To the philanthropist He is the Unspeakable Gift.

To the philosopher He is the Wisdom of God.

To the preacher He is the Word of God.

To the sculptor He is the Living Stone.

To the servant He is the Good Master.

To the statesman He is the Desire of all nations.

To the student He is the Incarnate Truth.

To the theologian He is the Author and Finisher of our faith.

To the toiler He is the Giver of rest.

To the sinner He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

To the Christian He is the Son of the Living God, the Saviour, the Redeemer, and Lord.

A portion of the book of Daniel was the only part of the Bible ever sealed, and that only till "the time of the end" (Daniel 12: 4). It has long since been unsealed and given to the world. The angel of prophecy, before closing the Revelation, said to John: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand;" or as rendered by another version: "Make no secret of the meaning of the predictions contained in this book; for the time of their fulfillment is now close at hand." Revelation 22: 10, Weymouth's translation. We must conclude that John followed the instruction of Gabriel, and did not seal the scroll.

The Bible would be incomplete without this final revelation which crowns all Scripture with a crown of glory and seals all inspiration with the seal of the living God. In this book, heaven is opened and light from the glory land shines through to lighten the pathway of earth's weary pilgrims journeying toward the celestial city.

(Continued next week)

CHRIST INDORSES DANIEL

(Continued from page 3)

contemplation; but He approved the solicitude about so vital a matter. He did not wave Peter, John, and James aside with the information that His second coming was not a doctrine of importance and should not engage the time and concern of the Shepherd of the flock; to the contrary, He embraced the opportunity of pressing home to their hearts the theme of themes, that of their Lord's return. This transcendent event, and not a temporal millennium, was to be their consolation and the fruition of their hopes.

With expectant hearts, the Galileans listened to the unfolding of the future. In the prophecies they were to find their answer. It would have sufficed had Christ alone taken the responsibility of pushing aside the curtain of the centuries; but He would have them grasp the eternal truth that the words of Heaven's messengers, Moses and the prophets, are inspired of the eternal One and are absolutely dependable. It was to press home this lesson as well as to answer their question that He cited the book of Daniel. Reduced to other terms, His answer is: "Do you inquire of My return and the end of the world? If so, read the prophecies of Daniel, and find your answer there. This prophetic book has My full indorsement. *It is a book that can be understood; it is dependable.*"

The language of the text is most striking, and as we enter the sacred pages of this prophetic masterpiece, let us keep in mind that the book of Daniel has Heaven's approval. Our next study will pursue these prophecies in quest of that theme of themes which concerns the present a thousand times more vitally than it did the church two thousand years ago.

(Continued next week)

The Unveiling of Christ

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF
REVELATION, NUMBER TWO

TAYLOR G BUNCH

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

These verses contain the introduction of the Apocalypse. Books usually contain an introduction or a preface to the main work, giving some preliminary information regarding the writer, the book, and the purpose of its publication. This introduction contains the title of the book, its divine origin, the mediums of its revelations, the name of its author, the manner by which it is revealed, the purpose of its publication, and the blessing pronounced on those who read, hear, and obey. We will consider these in the order given.

A REVELATION OF CHRIST

The title. The translators have named it "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," which is a contradiction of the opening sentence of the introduction. The inspired title is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Jesus, and not John, is the author, the seer of Patmos acting only as His secretary to write what was revealed. Prophets are merely God's mediums of communication. "God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." "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 Ghost." Acts 3: 21; 2 Peter 1: 21.

But the book is more than a prophecy given by Christ; it is a revelation of Him. A new translation known as the Concordant gives the title as, "The Unveiling of Jesus Christ," and in the footnote says, "This is the unveiling of a person,—Jesus Christ,—not merely a prediction revealed through Him." To reveal or unveil Jesus to man is the purpose of all prophecy, and, in fact, all Scripture and the whole Bible could appropriately be entitled the revelation, or the unveiling, of Jesus Christ. That is the whole purpose of the gospel. The lamb offered by Abel, the test of Abraham on Mount Moriah, and the entire sacrificial system of the Mosaic tabernacle had no other purpose than to reveal the Lamb of God. "Search the Scriptures," said Christ, for "they are they which testify of Me." "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets,

He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24: 27. It was the revelation of Christ in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost that won three thousand souls, and in Paul's before King Agrippa that caused him to confess, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Christ was the theme of every Bible writer. More than one thousand times the name Jesus appears in the New Testament, and that of Christ five hundred times.

Some one has so written the Emancipation Proclamation that as it is being read the face of its author, Abraham Lincoln, becomes visible. The Bible is so written that every page of Scripture reveals to the careful reader the image of the divine Author.

THE GOSPELS INCOMPLETE

The Gospels and Epistles reveal Christ in His earthly life, His work, teachings, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension, and the early triumphs of His church. But the story is incomplete without the final revelation of the closing book. Here Jesus is pictured in glory at the right hand of God, as High Priest of the heavenly sanctu-



John the beloved disciple

ary, as supreme Judge before whom all nations gather, and as King of kings and Lord of lords, reigning over His saints in Paradise restored. The revealer performs the final unveiling ceremonies without which mankind can but partially behold the Son of God.

Forty-nine times the name of Jesus, or equivalent pronouns, is found in the first chapter, thirty-nine times in the second, and forty-nine times in the

third, making a total of one hundred and thirty-seven times in the first three chapters. Twenty-six times in the book is Jesus referred to as "the Lamb," or more than in all other scriptures combined.

The world's greatest need to-day is an unveiled vision of the Man of Calvary. Like the Greeks of old, thousands are saying, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." Mankind is getting tired of seeing the miserable imitations in the faulty lives of His professed followers, and they need a vision of the genuine. It is only by seeing Jesus as He is that we can be like Him. By beholding we are "transformed into the same likeness, from one degree of radiant holiness to another" until we arrive at "mature manhood and the stature of full-grown men in Christ."

Divine origin. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him" indicates that Jehovah, the Father, is the source of all revelation, Christ's position in the Godhead being that of spokesman, or the Word. Jesus being "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person" is called Emmanuel, or "God with us." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," Jesus said to Thomas, therefore the revelation of Jesus Christ is also the revelation of God the Father.

Verses one and four enumerate in their natural order God's mediums of communication with men. Originating with the Source of all light and truth, the revelation is given to the Son, who, through the Holy Spirit, delivers it to His angel, to give in vision to His holy prophet, and from thence through the church to the world.

Name of author. The writer terms himself "John," and was doubtless the beloved disciple and writer of the fourth Gospel and the three Epistles bearing the same name. The Revelation was written during the reign of the Emperor Domitian in the year 94 or 95 A. D.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

Manner of revelation. The statement, "And He sent and signified it," indicates the method employed in the revelations of the last book. To signify is to make a sign or token. The events are to be portrayed in the form of signs and symbols. Its prophecies are to be symbolic. Many wonder why the Lord chooses to reveal truths to man through figurative language. Doubtless for the same reason that Christ taught in parables, that the truth might be hid from the willingly ignorant and revealed to those who hunger for truth and righteousness. Said Gabriel to Daniel: "And none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Perhaps here is the reason for the present-day ignorance of the glorious revelations of this book. He who enters the Apocalypse laden with iniquity will have a slow and laborious journey, and will be none the wiser when he reaches his destination.

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SIGNS of the TIMES

AMERICA'S PROPHETIC WEEKLY

Advocating a return to the simple
gospel of Christ, and a preparation
for His imminent second appearing

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... can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" His heart was right for the indwelling Saviour, which made him a mighty man among men.

In the life of Moses there is another beautiful lesson for present-day Christians. In his youth he whole-heartedly chose to please God and to do His bidding. His was a life of faith, but with that faith was a love that led him to place all at God's disposal. He that sent him was with him, because it was in his heart to do His will. God does great things for and through men, but never in a greater measure than man's surrender to Him.

FOR OUR ADMONITION

The experiences of such men are recorded that we may know the way of God and the working out of the gospel plan. While knowing that it requires God's love, wisdom, and power in the infinite gift of Christ to save a man, we must know also that man's salvation can be no more complete than is his willingness to go God's way.

Daniel's trust in God was no more complete than his surrender to God. He was deeply concerned about doing the things that pleased God. Surrounded as he was by adverse and unholy influences and heathen practices, he was fully "purposed in his heart" to do his Maker's will. He was not depending upon his works for righteousness or salvation, but with his faith there was a measure of love that led him to do the things that would please God. God was with him. He used him mightily in the great kingdom over which he had charge. His administration was without "error" or "fault." No power or threatened punishment could turn him from loving obedience and devoted service to his Master, who was made supreme in his life. He was little concerned about the approval of men, but great was his desire to please

God. He was approved of Heaven, and through an angel was conveyed to him twice God's message that he was "greatly beloved."

THE UNVEILING OF CHRIST

(Continued from page 7)

The purpose of the prophecy is "to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass," to reveal future events. It is a revelation of Christ in His relation to future history. Members of the Godhead alone can see the future. "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." Isaiah 46: 9, 10. Garfield said: "History is but the unrolled scroll of prophecy." The prophecy of our study is the rolled scroll of future history. Prophecy is God's challenge to all other gods as well as to modern scholastic infidelity. Skeptics can not answer the challenge of prophecy. See Isaiah 41: 21-23; 48: 3-6.

The apostle Peter warns the Christian church to take heed to the sure word of prophecy "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your hearts." Herein lies the only safety of the ship "Zion" amid the rocks and shoals surrounding the entrance to the final haven. The prophetic searchlight is needed as never before to warn of hidden dangers and guide to a safe anchorage. To neglect to heed the beacon signals of prophecy is to court certain disaster. From this viewpoint alone the Revelation deserves most careful and prayerful study.

The promised blessing. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." A similar blessing is pronounced in the closing chapter, "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." No other book of the Scriptures opens and closes with such a promised blessing. It is threefold, and will never be given in its fullness until all conditions are fulfilled. We must read, hear, and obey. Not the hearers of the word only, but the doers

will be blessed and justified. It was the man who both heard and obeyed His word that Christ likened unto a wise man who built his house on a rock, enabling it to withstand the test of storm. A storm is approaching, relentless in its fury, that will test the foundation and workmanship of every character building. Therefore we must avoid the sand bed, dig deep for a solid foundation, and build for eternity. Without a willingness to obey its solemn warnings and admonitions, the study of the Revelation will be in vain.

While the book opens with a promised blessing, it closes with a threatened curse on those who add to or take from it. "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." Revelation 22: 18, 19.

The book is perfect and complete. Nothing needful has been left out, and it contains no superfluities. Some would gladly eliminate certain portions that condemn their present course and warn of a fearful doom, and they virtually do so by disregarding the instructions given. Such can not escape the malediction threatened to those who dare tamper with divine revelation. The promised blessing is within the reach of all who comply with the conditions; and shall we sell it, like foolish Esau, for a mess of this world's pottage?

(Continued two weeks hence)

"ANGELS are ever present where they are most needed, with those who have the hardest battles with self to fight, and whose surroundings are the most discouraging. Weak and trembling souls who have many objectionable traits of character, are their special charge. That which selfish hearts would regard as humiliating service, ministering to those who are wretched and in every way inferior in character, is the work of the pure, sinless beings from the courts above."

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"Behold, He Cometh"

Studies in the Book of Revelation—No. 3



WE shall designate verses four to six of the first chapter, the Dedication. All books are dedicated to some person, organization, institution, or to the general public. The Revelation is dedicated

to the seven churches in the Roman Province of Asia; namely, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamós, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. But why is it dedicated to but seven when there were churches also at Troas, Assos, Miletus, Colosse, and in many other cities and villages in the province? This is explained by the fact that seven is the sacred number, signifying completeness and perfection. Sir William Ramsay gives the following exposition: "There were seven groups of churches in Asia, each group represented by one outstanding and conspicuous number; these representatives are seven churches. These seven representative churches stand for the church of the province, and the church of the province in its turn, stands for the entire church of Christ."

OF UNIVERSAL APPLICATION

A careful study of the map of the province, as well as the contents of the letters, convinces us of the plausibility of this argument. The messages are for the Christian church in all its phases, conditions, and future history until the church militant becomes the church triumphant. There is no more valid reason for localizing these seven epistles of Christ than those of Paul addressed to the individual churches at Ephesus, Corinth, Colosse, or Rome, which, all agree, are universal in their application, and are just as suitable for the churches of the twentieth century as for those of the first.

The Revelation is dedicated to the church, not to the world. Its purpose is to "show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." Only the children of the Most High can grasp the glories of this book, for to them it is dedicated. If we walk and talk much with God, we shall be able to understand His messages, and, like Daniel in the banquet hall of Belshazzar, will recognize His handwriting, and be able to read the language of the heavenly Canaan. Jesus said, speaking of a true shepherd, "The sheep hear his voice," and they "follow him: for they know his voice." To all others his voice is that of a stranger, and they do not hear or understand.

The blessing, grace, peace, and revelation are declared to come "from Him

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

which is, and which was, and which is to come," or from God the Father, the Eternal; "and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne," representing the Holy Spirit in the fullness and diversity of His operations, "and from Jesus Christ." The entire God-head work together in perfect harmony, and are united in blessing those who read, hear, and obey the prophecy.

A REVELATION OF CHRIST

True to the title of the book, the Dedication is given over to a revelation of the character, love, and work of the Lord Jesus. He is declared to be the "faithful witness," or "truthful witness."—*Weymouth*. A witness is one who testifies, bears testimony. The book of Revelation is the testimony of Jesus, the truthful Witness. His testimony is dependable, He always tells



The book of Revelation is a revelation of Jesus Christ,—a portrait of His character and His redemptive work.

the truth; it is "impossible for God to lie." What a contrast to the witnesses of this age of "trucebreakers" who take oath to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and who tell everything except the truth! The crime of perjury is almost universal.

Christ is also designated as "the first-begotten of the dead," or "the first of the dead to be born to life."—*Weymouth*. Other scriptures speak of Him as "the first fruits of them that slept," "the first-born of every creature" and "the chief born from the dead." It can not mean that Christ was the first to be resurrected. Moses was raised to life fifteen centuries before. Elisha had resurrected the son of the Shunammite, and Christ had called Lazarus and the widow's son from the dead. He was first in point of quality, not time,—the "choice fruits" and "chief born from the dead."

He is also "the prince of the kings of the earth." Because of His triumphant death and resurrection, Christ

has been exalted "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Ephesians 1:21. This is the hardest lesson kings and those in authority have to learn. The ten plagues on Egypt failed to teach Pharaoh; and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had to be driven from his throne to dwell with the beasts of the field for seven years before he knew that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." Belshazzar learned the lesson too late when the sentences of doom were emblazoned by an unseen writer on the palace wall, and Napoleon learned it after his banishment to Saint Helena. When Christ returns, He comes as King of kings and Lord of lords.

URNS SCARLET INTO WHITE

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." Love is worthless unless demonstrated. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Yet Christ's love was greater, for He died for His enemies. Calvary is the demonstration of a love unexcelled. The cross alone measures the height and depth and breadth of a love that passes understanding.

Sin is a blot on human character that only the blood of Christ can wash away. There is but one fountain for sin and uncleanness. Scarlet, or turkey-red, is the only color that science has never been able to remove without destroying the fiber of the cloth. The blood of Christ is a sin remover that extracts even the scarlet and leaves the character as white as snow. (Isaiah 1:18.) The world today is filled with patent sin remedies and quack sin doctors, but the remedy of the great Sin Specialist will never fail the sin-sick soul who follows directions. An enormous price was paid for our redemption,—too much from our viewpoint; but the purchaser assures us that He will be satisfied with His bargain when He presents the fruitage of His sacrifice to His Father with "exceeding joy."

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God," or as rendered in the Twentieth Century New Testament, "a kingdom of priests in the service of God." The apostle Peter speaks of the redeemed as the "royal priesthood," indicating that they are members of the royal family. The overcomer is called an Israelite, meaning "a prince of God." The revelator declares that those who have part in the first resurrection will be "priests of God and of

Christ, and shall reign with Him" and also that they will be "before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple." Revelation 20:6; 7:15. Christ's promise to the victor is that he shall sit with Him in His throne and help rule the universe. By our sharing with Him His cross, He will share with us His throne. The redeemed of earth will enjoy a closer relationship to God and His throne than angels and unfallen beings can ever know. No wonder the victors of earth are given possession of the royal city, the New Jerusalem, the capital of the universe, into which, as kings and priests, they bring the glory and honor of the nations of the saved.

"To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." All who long to be citizens of a kingdom with such a ruler on the throne should join the exiled prophet with a hearty "Amen." No earthly ruler remains in power long without becoming haughty and arrogant, and his administration filled with graft and political corruption. It is not so with the reign of King Jesus. When the government of this world is placed upon the shoulders of the Prince of Peace, "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever." Isaiah 9:6, 7.

The prophet Daniel pictures the time when the God of heaven shall "set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed," when "the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." Daniel 2:44; 7:18. The revelator describes the same glorious time thus: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever." Then is given the glad response of the redeemed host: "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." Revelation 11:15, 17.

EVERY EYE SEES HIM

"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." How fitting that before the curtain is lifted revealing the terrible conflicts of the church with the dragon, the angel of prophecy should pass over two millenniums and give the prophet a glimpse of the final triumph of Christ's kingdom! The prophet is so enraptured with the thought that he cries out, "Behold, He cometh." Who cometh? The One he has just described, who is to take the scepter and reign forever. The One he had personally known and loved and whose return he awaited with glad anticipation. The thought thrilled him with joy. The parting scenes on Olivet were still fresh in his memory. He

could never forget that memorable day when, after giving them His parting instruction, Jesus ascended out of their midst into the cloudy chariot of angels waiting to escort Him to Paradise.

Luke had described the parting scene as follows: "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:9-11.

John also recalled his own record of Christ's first announcement of His departure, which almost broke the hearts of the disciples and brought from His lips the comforting promise, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3.

The fulfillment of this promise has been the hope of the church in all ages since Adam surrendered the dominion of the earth to the great usurper. Enoch prophesied of the coming of Christ, and Job was comforted in his affliction with the hope of beholding his Redeemer stand on the earth in the latter day. David said he would be satisfied when he awoke with His likeness on the resurrection morning, and Daniel climaxed his great prophecies with the second advent, and died with

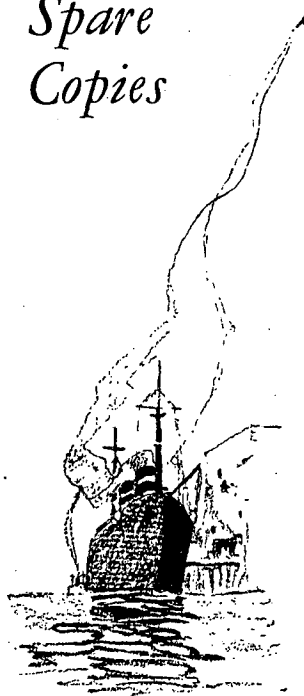
the hope of reward in that great day. Peter declared it to be the theme of "all His holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:21. Paul was so thrilled with the expectation that it was the chief topic in his sermons and epistles. It was the hope that carried him through such persecutions as few men have endured. When the decree of Nero sent him to his martyrdom, his eyes were fixed on the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give at that day unto all that love His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8.)

The present pleasure-mad and sin-laden generation should be sobered by the thought that soon every eye will see Him, and all who pierce Him through sin will join in that bitter wail of the lost. But how the thought of His coming should quicken the pace and thrill the hearts of those who love Him and are waiting for His return!

AND he departed from our eyes, that we should return to our own hearts and find Him there. For He departed, and lo, He is here. He would not tarry long with us, yet did He never leave us. For He went back to the heaven He had never quitted, because the world was made by Him, and He was in this world, and came into this world to save sinners.—*Augustine.*

IN spite of seeming discouragements, we are never to grow faint in praying. An honest, persevering faith, a faith that works for the very object that it is praying for, a faith that holds on in spite of rebuffs, is the faith that conquers.—*Theodore L. Cuyler.*

Eager for Spare Copies



"We are glad when we can spare a few copies to be distributed among the sailors at the docks here in the city," writes the secretary of the Buenos Aires Correspondence Band. "We could use a large number among the English-speaking sailors, who are eager for reading matter in their own language."

Far and wide over the plains and mountains of the Argentine Republic this little band is faithfully mailing the SIGNS. Some few copies go to neighboring countries and to the islands along the tip of South America.

From Medan, Sumatra, where our workers opened a series of tent meetings this spring, come words of thanks for the aid the papers have given in helping to secure a large and attentive audience.

While expressing keen regret that his club had been cut to only twenty-two, the principal of our West Indian Training School, Jamaica, thanks us most heartily for the papers sent, and assures us that every one is being most carefully used. His parting word is, "We are glad for the SIGNS, and wish we could have more." He could use at least one hundred to advantage.

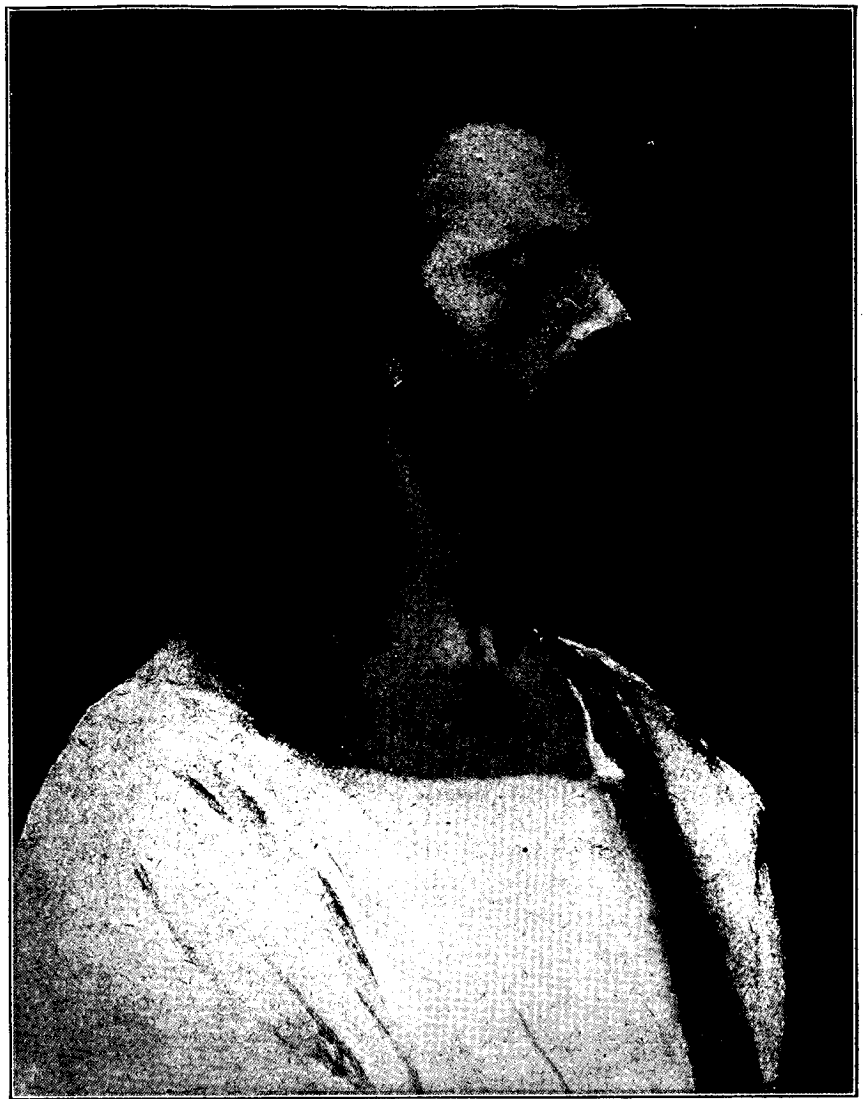
To the cities of Burma with their towering pagodas, among the teeming millions of the plains and cities of India, into the Himalayan foothills where the Tibetan lama and holy man of India's plains unite in repeating the sacred Buddhist formula—in these and in many others of the world's darkest corners, the SIGNS is shedding its rays of light. But ever, with the words of appreciation, comes the story of greater needs. Wouldn't you like to help? Fifty SIGNS a year to any foreign land you may choose, only \$75.00; twenty-five copies, \$37.50; ten copies, \$15.00; five copies, \$7.50. Address, Cooperation Corner, SIGNS OF THE TIMES, Mountain View, California.

The Revelator's Photograph of CHRIST

STUDIES IN
THE BOOK OF
REVELATION
NUMBER FOUR

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

The pictures we have of
Jesus may not bear the
slightest resemblance to
His likeness.



WHAT would the Christian world give for a genuine photograph or painting of the Christ! It would far exceed in value the masterpieces of the world's greatest artists. But we have no such picture produced by an eyewitness. The four Gospels are silent regarding His physical appearance, and Isaiah's only reference to it in his graphic description of the sufferings of Christ is, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." No picture could be painted from this brief description. After veiling His divinity in humanity, there was nothing strikingly attractive about His physical being. Men must be drawn to Him, not because of His commanding physical appearance, but because of His matchless character and saving message.

A WORD PHOTOGRAPH

The pictures we have of Jesus are of doubtful origin and may not bear the slightest resemblance to His likeness. The revelator gives the most complete pen picture of Christ in all Scripture, but one which no artist can reproduce on canvas. Even words are powerless to describe Him. How those who love Him should study and treasure this beautiful word photograph!

John was engaged in earnest prayer when Jesus appeared and spoke to him, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw 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. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." Revelation 1: 11-17.

This glorious vision was given to the exiled prophet while he was praying. Only a man of prayer could be given such an experience. "Prayer is the power that moves the arm that moves the world." Praying men and women have left the deepest and most lasting impressions on this sin-cursed earth, and to them alone have been given visions of heavenly splendor and the privilege of conversing with cele-

tial beings. Abraham was a man of prayer, and angels visited his habitation. Jacob was in prayer when a messenger from heaven transformed his character and softened the heart of his angry brother. Elijah's prayers closed and opened the heavens, and called down the fiery royal chariot to escort him to the glory land. Daniel was on his knees when Gabriel arrived from the throne of God to tell him he was greatly beloved in heaven, and to give him visions of future events. Christ was praying when He was transfigured and visited by Moses and Elijah sent from heaven to strengthen Him for the coming trials. Paul and Silas were praying at midnight when an angel visitor opened the doors of the Philippian jail, and Stephen, the first Christian martyr, died on his knees with a vision of the throne of God with Christ at the right hand of power. The Revelation was given to John by his royal Visitor while he was in the Spirit on the rock-rimmed shore of his island prison. God has not changed; heavenly beings have lost none of their interest in humanity; and prayer has lost none of its power. The Revelation was not given without prayer, neither will it be understood or appreciated without prayer.

Jesus introduces Himself as Alpha

and Oméga, meaning the first and the last, being the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. He is the A and Z and all between of divine revelation. He is introduced as the Creator in the opening verse of Genesis, and is the coming Redeemer of the closing verse of Malachi, and is the chief theme and central figure of all the Old Testament scriptures between. The first verses of the gospel narratives present Him as the Creator and Messiah, and the last verses contain the final promise of His return. He is the "all and in all" of the New Testament. In a special sense He is the Alpha and Omega of the last book, for it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

AGREES WITH DANIEL

The revelator's description of Jesus is very similar to that of the prophet Daniel, who also saw Him in His supernal splendor: "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain Man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and His face as the appearance of lightning, and His eyes as lamps of fire, and His arms and His feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of His words like the voice of a multitude." Daniel 10: 5, 6. The scene had the same effect on both prophets. Blinded by the refulgent glory, they fell to the ground overcome by the vision. Can anyone read these descriptions and doubt that Christ is a personal being?

John describes Jesus as "one like unto the Son of man" and Daniel, as "a certain man." He became "the seed of Abraham," clothing His divinity with human flesh that man might be able to look and live. He became one with us in our earthly battles that we might become one with Him in His heavenly triumph. He became the Son of man and heir with us that we might become sons of God and heirs with Him. He shared our poverty that we might share His wealth, suffered our death that we might live His life, and became our Elder Brother that we might call Jehovah our Father. Jesus termed Himself the Son of man, ascended as the Son of man, and will return in glory as the "same Jesus," to remain forever a member of the human family. For this reason His throne is transferred to earth, and the redeemed as members of the royal family share in the kingly honors.

"His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow." Daniel, in describing God the Father, said His "garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool." Daniel 7: 9, 13. The Father and Son look alike, Christ being "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person." When the image of God is fully restored in the redeemed, who by beholding have been "changed into the same image from glory to glory," they will be like their Father and Elder Brother, who are both personal beings. What is more beautiful than snowy-

white hair on a venerable man or woman?

"His eyes were as a flame of fire," or "as lamps of fire" in Daniel's description. This doubtless means that they are piercing, and nothing is hidden from His sight. His gaze penetrates to the darkest corner of the heart and lights up sin's most secret hiding places. "For His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." Job 34: 21, 22. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4: 13.

If the workers of iniquity could only realize this, how different would be their actions! We wonder how the Lord, seeing all, can endure so much. Only His matchless love and patient long-suffering have stayed off His righteous judgments until all hear the gospel invitation and decide their eter-

nal destiny. But the searching glance of Christ does not always reveal a sin-polluted heart. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." 2 Chronicles 16: 9. What a welcome sight to the Lord is a pure heart, like an oasis in the desert to the weary, thirsty traveler!

"And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace," or "like silver-bronze, when it is white-hot in a furnace."—*Weymouth*. Mirrors were anciently made of brass and copper highly polished. Perhaps this appearance is caused by the reflection from the jeweled pavement of the throne room as it sparkles in the brilliant light from the throne. Here Lucifer's feet once shone as he "walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" (Ezekiel 28: 14); and when the seventy elders of Israel saw the Lord, "there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as

(Continued on page 15)

God's INTRODUCTIONS

LETHA M. THURBER

DURING convalescence from a severe illness, a young mother sat down at the piano one day and began to play with trembling fingers some comforting hymns. Her heart was sore with the loss of her first-born; her nerves were unsteady from her own recent illness; she sang in a quivering voice, and paused now and then to wipe away the tears. Presently she came to the hymn, "We may sleep, but not forever," and the title was so comforting that she sang the first stanza. But the second was harder to sing, for it said:

"When we see a precious blossom
That we tended with such care
Rudely taken from our bosom,
How our aching hearts despair."

But the chorus brought its words of comfort:

"We may sleep, but not forever,
There will be a glorious dawn;
We shall meet to part, no, never,
On the resurrection morn."

Gathering fresh courage from the words, she began the third stanza:

"We may sleep, but not forever,
In the lone and silent grave;"

but her lips refused to form the next lines, for they said,

"Blessed be the Lord that taketh,
Blessed be the Lord that gave."

Sob after sob shook her body as in agony of entreaty she cried to the Lord to subdue her rebellion against His will. Even as she prayed, there stole into her heart an appreciation of the faith, the hope, the resignation, on the part of Job when he could say on the death of his ten children, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." God was introducing Job to her.

Several years later an incurable sickness fastened upon her. The physicians knew no help, and she was too wise to spend her

money and strength on quacks and nostrums. The Lord was her only source of help, and in her extremity she pleaded for God to hear her cry and heal her. But the days lengthened into weeks, and the weeks into months, and ever the Lord's word was, "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." The waiting was a sore trial. If only there was something to do while she waited! If she could but reach up and touch God, she knew she would be well. But where was God? Job's words came to her, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! . . . I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I can not perceive Him." In her darkness and fear, in her helplessness and inactivity, she felt as if entombed. Job had said, "If I wait, the grave is mine house," and as he had prayed, she entreated, "That it would please God to destroy me."

Though she longed for death, yet God seemed unjust, and she found it hard to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." There had to be days of greater darkness until, in soul agony that knew no guiding hand of reason, she said, "Lord, I trust You with this life of mine whether I can understand Your dealings or not. I'll bear life, or death, or lingering illness." Then God turned her captivity. He could not work for her as long as her will was unsundered.

And if it should chance that, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, her seat should be next to Job, she will not feel as a stranger, for she and Job have had similar experiences. Might it not be that, in His kindness, God is now acquainting you by means of life's experiences with the apostles and prophets, so that you will not be lonely and friendless when He takes you to your heavenly home? God would translate into your life the psalms of David so that you can sing with him in heaven. Let us not shrink from God's introductions, but find in them the voices and faces of loved ones we shall later greet in the new earth.

carrying on his conquests with swiftness and indefatigable enterprise, and standing without a peer among the monarchs of the East, is most fittingly symbolized by the lion, the monarch of the forest. Later, under the indolent and dissolute Belshazzar, the wings were plucked, and the timorous heart of a man is indicated. Again, take the bear as a symbol of Medo-Persia. Here we have a cruel and bloodthirsty nation, which, though it devoured much flesh, was never celebrated for rapid conquests. The bear had no wings. And if wings denote rapidity of conquest, four wings would indicate great celerity of movement. This was certainly true of Grecia under Alexander, who conquered the world in eight short years.

Our present object, however, is not to go deeply into the details of these symbols and their counterparts in history, but just sufficiently to challenge profoundest thoughts of God and the future. As you have witnessed the unerring response of history to the voice of prophecy, has it not spoken to you in thundering tones that the Bible is divine? How could the prophet know years in advance that history would furnish just four, and only four, universal kingdoms? How did the prophet know that Babylon would be followed by Medo-Persia, and that Medo-Persia would be followed by Grecia, and that Grecia would be followed by Rome? The only answer to such a question is that God is the Author of such prophecies, and that the Book is divine. Evidently the blue print of prophecy has been penned by none other than the great Master Architect of the universe.

THE REVELATOR'S PHOTOGRAPH OF CHRIST

(Continued from page 11)

it were the body of heaven in his clearness." Exodus 24: 10. The revelator describes it "as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire." No wonder Christ's feet shone like burnished brass as He ministered before the throne.

"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!" Isaiah 52: 7. The feet are here declared beautiful because they carry the messengers of the good news of salvation. Christ was God's messenger to earth, bringing to lost man the good news of redemption. How beautiful, therefore, are the feet that carry Him from church to church with messages of hope and cheer!

"And His voice as the sound of many waters." Have you ever listened to the harmonious music of a number of streams dashing down the mountain side, their voices blending in a grand hallelujah chorus? There are no discords in the voices of nature. Daniel said, "And the voice of His words like the voice of a multitude." Like a multitude speaking in concert, singing in

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chorus, or playing in a band or orchestra, so well trained that it sounds like a single voice. This text was illustrated at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, where the writer heard six thousand students say grace in concert. It was the voice of a multitude. Jesus is the spokesman, not alone of the Godhead, but of the unnumbered multitudes of the heavenly hosts. The harmony of heaven is so great in the work of salvation that the voice of Jesus expresses the sentiments of all, and His voice to man is the voice of a multitude.

"Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." This is doubtless the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4: 12, A. R. V. It was this mighty weapon in the hand of the Holy Spirit while Peter was preaching on the day of Pentecost that pricked the hearts of the multitude so that they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" That same sword will one day be used to smite the nations and destroy those who refuse to listen to His voice in the day of grace and salvation.

"And His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." Daniel describes it "as the appearance of lightning," and the Twentieth Century New Testament renders it "as the sun in the fullness of his power." No better earthly comparison could be found than the blinding brightness of the noon-day sun, and yet the analogy is feeble, for no man can see the face of God and live. No wonder John fell at His feet

as dead, and Daniel "retained no strength," fell to the ground and, when finally bidden to arise, "stood trembling." Among those with him there was a "great quaking . . . so that they fled to hide themselves." Moses had a similar experience when he saw the glory of God, and Isaiah cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone." Paul was struck to the ground and blinded by the vision of Christ; and the appearance of an angel before the tomb caused the Roman guard to fall as dead men to the ground. The wicked in the great day of the Lord will cry for the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them "from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne," and they will be consumed with the spirit of His mouth and destroyed with the brightness of His coming. See Revelation 6: 13-17; 2 Thessalonians 2: 8. Only those who become accustomed to beholding the glory of His character now can look upon His face then. It is far better to fall as dead men because of a vision of the Christ now, than to be struck dead then. If we do not kill sin, it will kill us. If we let sin reign in our bodies, there is but one decree for us, because sin and all its dominions must be destroyed and Christ crowned Lord of all.

WHO MADE THE SABBATH, AND WHY?

(Continued from page 4)

as they were in the beginning; and the seventh day being the Sabbath because of these facts, it is therefore as true to-day as it was in the beginning that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord. And it will continue to be the Sabbath as long as the above statements remain facts.

In our article next week we will note what the Scriptures have to say regarding the first day of the week.

"SIGNS" QUESTION CORNER

(Continued from page 5)

well says: "Has it been commanded by Christ or the apostles? I fear we would have a hard time proving that. No, it is nowhere commanded." Farther on, Mr. Luft writes: "Our Lutheran Catechism says in Question 32: 'Why, then, do we celebrate Sunday and other feasts?' Answer: 'Not by divine command, but in order to have time and opportunity for public worship.'"

Can we be blamed, then, for holding to the seventh-day Sabbath? Nay, does not God charge us solemnly to do so? If our friends prefer to observe Sunday simply "in order to have time and opportunity for public worship," we prefer to observe the seventh day, Saturday, in harmony with the "divine command."

In the economy of God, no effort, however small, put forth for the right cause, fails of its effect.—Whittier.

Jesus

In the Midst of the Golden Candlesticks

STUDIES IN THE BOOK
OF REVELATION—NO. FIVE

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

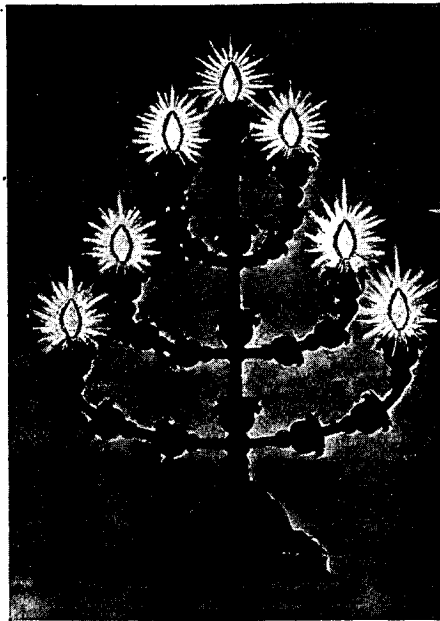
JOHN was so overcome by the glorious vision of Jesus that he fell at His feet as dead. Placing His right hand on the frightened apostle, the Lord bade him arise, saying: "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Revelation 1:18.

What an encouraging message to the exiled prophet! He was growing old, and under the cruel treatment accorded such prisoners he must soon die, perhaps a martyr's death. Jesus reminded him that He had traveled the road of persecution before him and had suffered martyrdom at the hands of the same cruel power, but that all the authority of the iron monarchy of Rome, with its Roman seal and centurion guard, could not keep Him in the prison house of death. He had not only broken the bands of death, but had brought with Him the keys of death and the grave. If the prophet should even suffer a martyr's death, the tomb could not hold him forever, for the keys were in the hands of a Friend. While the author of sin and death claims as his prisoners the billions who have died, the keys are in the keeping of the Author of life, and on the resurrection morning "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29.

A MESSAGE IN SYMBOLS

Thus encouraged, the prophet was ready for further instruction. "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 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."

Thus is explained the vision of the Son of man, dressed in a long, flowing robe with a golden girdle, holding the seven stars in His right hand, and walking about in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. The sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of His mouth indicates that He is speaking. The garments worn by Christ are not described to satisfy idle curiosity. Every statement of Scripture is fertile with meaning. His dress is clearly the sacerdotal attire of a priest. Jesus is seen officiating in a priestly office.



A full appreciation of the meaning of this scene necessitates a brief study of the Mosaic tabernacle, its furniture, services, and priesthood.

The Mosaic tabernacle, or tent, was eighteen by fifty-four feet, surrounded by an inclosure, or court. There were two compartments, known as the holy place and the most holy place. The court contained the altar of burnt offerings; and, the holy place, the table of shewbread, the seven candlesticks, or lamp stands, and the altar of incense. In the holy of holies was the ark of the covenant containing the Ten Commandments. Its covering, known as the mercy seat, was overshadowed by the two covering cherubs with outstretched wings. Into the wall curtains was skillfully woven the likeness of myriads of angels.

THREE PARTS TO SERVICES

The services were composed of three parts, the first being in the court where the confessions for sin were made and the sacrificial victims slain. The second was in the holy place, and was known as the daily, or continual, service because the priests were always on duty, ministering for the people. The third and final service was held in the holy of holies on the tenth day of the seventh month, which concluded the yearly round of service. This was known as the Day of Atonement, or the cleansing of the sanctuary. This sol-

emn event was announced throughout the camp of Israel by the blowing of trumpets for ten days. All whose sins were not confessed and forgiven on or before the Day of Atonement were forever cut off from Israel.

In the year's services there were also three events of outstanding importance, namely, the Passover, Pentecost, and the Day of Atonement. These came always in their order and on definite dates known to all Israel.

The Mosaic tabernacle, with its furniture, services, and priesthood, was all symbolic and typical of the heavenly sanctuary and the priestly ministration of Christ. The tabernacle was symbolic of the royal palace; the holy of holies, of the throne room; and the ark, of the throne of Jehovah, upheld by His constitutional law, the Decalogue. The mercy seat symbolized Christ; the cherubims, Gabriel and other mighty angels who stand next to the Lord; and the angels woven into the curtains represented the angelic host surrounding His throne. The shewbread was typical of Christ, the bread of life; the incense, the prayers of His saints; the candlesticks, the churches under His care; the court, this earth; the altar of burnt offerings, Calvary; and the sacrificial victim, the Lamb of God.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

Each yearly round of service pictured to Israel the entire plan of salvation and was God's means of preaching to them the gospel. It was typical of the complete work of Christ in behalf of fallen man, His atonement on Calvary, His priestly ministry in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, and the great day of judgment which closes His ministry before the throne of the Eternal. See Hebrews 8 and 9. The mediatorial work of our great High Priest, like that of the typical priest, is composed of three parts. The first, to meet the type, must take place in the court of the heavenly sanctuary, which, according to Revelation 11:1, 2, is this earth. Here the sinner confesses his sins, and here the antitypical Lamb suffered "without the gate" and was offered on Calvary's altar, and here, too, Christ's priestly service began.

After His ascension Jesus entered the holy place, where the revelator sees Him as priest ministering His own blood, and officiating as the only Mediator between God and man. Here for more than eighteen centuries our faithful High Priest carried on His daily, or continual, service, in the

(Continued on page 18)

His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**" Jeremiah 23: 5, 6.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9: 6.

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks." Daniel 9: 25.

How can language be more clear, verbage more erudite, words more simple, than these expressed in the foregoing scriptures? The common people can comprehend them, and the learned must find them charming to apprehend.

Among the Hebrew people, the depositaries of the sacred oracles, for centuries there was maintained the belief that Messiah is foretold in the Bible. Every pious, devout son of Abraham will pray often and with fervency for His coming. What leads him to do this? Why has he prayed, sung, hoped for it, for centuries sighed for the time? He knows that this teaching has been bequeathed to the Hebrew posterity as a sacred legacy.

A SIGNIFICANT SATURDAY-NIGHT SERVICE

At the close of the Sabbath, on Saturday evening, every pious orthodox Jewish home conducts a beautiful family service. The father of the house will pronounce a blessing over a glass of sweet wine, part of which blessing contains verses two and three of Isaiah 12. We here give a literal translation of the Hebrew text:

"Behold, God my Saviour, I will trust and not fear; for my strength and song is Jehovah the Lord; and to me has become to a Saviour. And ye shall draw water in joy from the wells of salvation."

It is deeply significant that the words "Saviour" and "salvation" in these two verses are derived from the identical word "Jesus." The Hebrew word *Ya-shu-a* literally means Jesus. Thus the pious Jew located in every part of the world repeats the word, "Jesus" each Saturday evening three times, at this service which divides the Sabbath from the week. How can a child of Abraham believe in evolution? What relationship can possibly exist between evolution and such definite, concrete, divine instruction with regard to a personal Messiah as given to the Jewish people through the prophets?

The Bible offers such indubitable proof by the life of Jesus on earth as forever to preclude the theory of evolution having anything in common with creation. Dr. Abraham M. Rihbany, an Evolutionist, expresses himself thus with regard to Christ:

"We do not call Him *the* Saviour, because we are certain that humanity has had as many saviors as it has had truly good men and women."

Is this statement true? Is it substantiated in the experience of human history? Since the scholars and scientists are dependent for their information concerning Christ on the New Testament, let us turn and ascertain if that book will harmonize with such a view.

Here is the testimony of a blind man whose eyes Christ opened. He said:

"Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind?" John 9: 32.

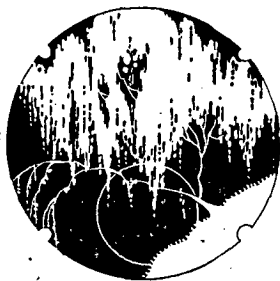
No man ever did what Christ performed when here on earth. One purpose of His coming to earth was to re-create men.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Corinthians 5: 17.

INSTANTANEOUS EFFECT

How did Christ perform these wonders? Did He operate by a long-drawn-out process? Were the beneficiaries of His divine philanthropy obliged to wait days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries, millenniums, before they obtained relief? Had these sick, blind, lame, maimed, halt, to pass through a series of slow, endless processes before they were made whole? Such is not the record of the New Testament.

"Immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Matthew 8: 3.



The Brighter Way

ROBERT HARE

There is a sweet, sweet thought in my soul to-day,

It rings in my heart bright and clear, And it whispers, "However the shadows may fall,

When the sun shines they all disappear."

Oh, then let the beautiful sunshine in,

As it comes to brighten life's way;

Oh, yes, let the beautiful sunshine in,

God's gift for every day.

There is a sweet, sweet song that my heart would sing,

By day or darkened night,—

"My Father knows, my Father cares,

And He will make all bright."

Sing on, weary heart, sing on and be glad,

However the shadows fall;

The love that would meet your every need,

Is Master and Lord of all.

There's a sweet, sweet peace fills my soul to-day,

Deep as the flowing sea;

And o'er it the starlights rise and set,

While dawns kiss the lea.

But chance of time can never change,

However lights may dim,

That peace abides, like the peace of God,

Sweet as love's morning hymn.

"When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits *with His word*, and healed all that were sick." Verse 16.

"And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, *Talitha cumi*; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And *straightway* the damsel arose, and walked. . . . And they were astonished with a great astonishment." Verses 41, 42.

ALWAYS IMMEDIATELY

These are but few of many testimonies borne by eyewitnesses when Christ healed the sick, raised the dead, and performed multitudes of miracles and wonders. Repeatedly the New Testament states He *healed immediately, instantly, at once, straightway, the same hour*. There was no evolution about the work of Christ. He gave men evidence of the method God employed at creation. Jesus did *on earth* while here what He did *for earth* before He clothed His divinity with a garb of humanity. God was manifest in human flesh. He used the same methods in His redemptive work that He put forth in His creative work. God, in Christ on earth, worked as He through Christ, did in the beginning. Jesus gave to the race abundance of evidence that the mighty power of God was manifest through direct creation rather than by a process of evolution.

Creation, as the Bible teaches, declares a personal God, a loving divine Saviour, a direct individual salvation. It encourages and assures men that there is help for the needy and tried and tempted soul in the gift which God gave through the Lord Jesus.

Evolution denies a living God, a loving Saviour, a Friend in a time of need. It sends men to cold rocks, to barren hills, to desolate tombs, to decayed fungi for comfort and consolation. It has no rainbow of promise around a glorious high throne, and it offers neither cheer nor grace for the poor, afflicted, storm-tossed soul struggling in the midst of a surging sea of human sorrow. It offers no pardon for sin; it pictures no sinless redeemed heavens and earth. The Creator and Redeemer has assured every trusting, trembling, confiding soul who accepts the testimony of the Bible that for such there is a blessed and a wonderful future which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man devised. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." Psalm 87: 3.

JESUS IN THE MIDST OF THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS

(Continued from page 10)

midst of the seven golden candlesticks, symbolic of His churches.

The third and final ministration of Christ is in the holy of holies, before the throne of Jehovah, where is carried on the solemn work of judgment. The prophet Daniel describes this awe-inspiring scene: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the An-

SIGNS of the TIMES

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cient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14.

Chapters eight and nine of Daniel's prophecy again picture the judgment scene and designate it the cleansing of the sanctuary. They also definitely locate the time when Christ would pass from the first to the second apartment of the heavenly temple to begin the antitypical day of atonement. At the close of the investigative judgment, the announcement goes forth, "It is done." Our High Priest lays aside His priestly robes, puts on His kingly crown; and human probation has forever ended. All who have refused the offered salvation are forever cut off from the heavenly kingdom. With no longer a Mediator between an offended God and His broken law, His wrath, unmixed with mercy, is visited upon the wicked in the seven last plagues.

The three great events antitypical of the Passover, Pentecost, and the Day of Atonement are: the crucifixion, when the true Pascal Lamb was slain; Pentecost, when Christ began His ministration in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary; and the day of judgment, when the books of record are ex-

amined and cleansed, and the work of redemption is completed. These events must also take place in the order given, with the dates definitely known to the church. Daniel's great twenty-three-hundred-day time prophecy not only definitely locates these dates, but they were also announced by heaven-sent messengers blowing the gospel trumpet. John the Baptist heralded the message of the first advent, and pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God. The apostles on the day of Pentecost, with a mighty demonstration, witnessed to the beginning of Christ's heavenly ministration. The day of judgment was heralded with trumpet tones by the great religious movement between 1833 and 1844 A. D. The judgment-hour message that completes the gospel work is pictured in Revelation 14:6-14.

How appropriate the symbols employed in the vision given the seer of Patmos! A candlestick, or lamp stand, as a light bearer, beautifully represents the church as the light of the world given to hold aloft the torchlight of truth. Christ is walking about in the midst of His churches, furnishing the oil that keeps the lights burning. He is giving them His word, represented by the sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of His mouth. In His right hand He holds the seven stars called the angels of the seven churches. The Emphatic Diaglot renders it "messengers," and the Weymouth Translation, "ministers." They are the pastors, elders, or ministers, of the churches, represented as angels who are God's messengers sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. The priest was declared to be "the messenger of the Lord of hosts," and church officials are represented as stars.

As Christ visits among the churches, He upholds His ministers, or ambassadors, who preach His word; and the word preached is represented as proceeding out of His mouth. What a revelation of Christ's love and watch-care over the church, the purchase of His blood! The figure illustrates His eternal vigilance. He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. He walks from church to church, from congregation to congregation, from heart to heart. His presence is the source of our light and life and joy.

TRYING TO BLUE-LAW ENGLAND

(Continued from page 3)

ries that it needs no further proof. We strongly believe that every human being should enjoy a weekly Sabbath; and we are in entire sympathy with all the beautiful expressions used by the A. D. S. concerning this principle.

Where we differ fundamentally with the Alliance is in the day that they seek to defend. The fact is that Sunday has no place whatever in the divine program. It is a papal institution, passed on to the modern churches, with other errors, at the time of the Reformation.

The only Sabbath known in Bible times was the seventh-day Sabbath, now commonly called Saturday; and it was that day that was observed by Christ and the apostles, and indeed by all the people of God from the days of creation onward. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," says the fourth commandment. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11.

The Puritan Sunday having now become hopelessly a back number, may we not well ask if the time has not come for a return to the real Sabbath of God's commandment?

It seems to us that one of the main troubles with the A. D. S. is that its letters are in the wrong order. The energies of this alliance are being misdirected. Instead of launching a forlorn hope in defense of Sunday, it should join the Society for the Defense of the Sabbath. Then its supporters would find themselves on the side of God, and, using God's methods, might rightly expect His blessing.

When we get back to defending God's Sabbath instead of endeavoring to bolster up an institution that He has never authorized or sanctified, we may expect the divine approval to rest upon our endeavors.

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Unto the Church at Ephesus

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION NUMBER SIX

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

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; 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. 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. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit

together, make up His whole outward and visible character."—*Sir William Ramsay.*

A comparison of the prophet's previous vision of Christ with the introductions of the seven epistles proves true the above statement. Each of the seven letters is also divided into seven parts; namely, (1) the name of the recipient, (2) the name of the sender, or author, (3) commendation, (4) condemnation or reproof, (5) exhortation, (6) appeal, and (7) promise of reward. The only variation to this order is that in the

beautiful harbor on the coast, protected by a high hill and a narrow channel, Ephesus was the leading trading city of the province of Asia. There the ships of all nations found a peaceful haven. By imperial edict, Ephesus was made the gateway to the province of Asia for the Roman officials.

The city was adorned with beautiful temples built by Nero, Hadrian, and Servius, besides the great "Diana of the Ephesians." This magnificent temple, dedicated to the goddess Diana, one of the chief deities of the province, was 342 feet long and 164 feet wide, and has been designated one of the wonders of the ancient world. Its fame was described by Demetrius in his passionate defense of his trade being ruined by the preaching of Paul. "So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipeth." Acts 19: 27.

THE "CITY OF CHANGE"

But the city of Ephesus underwent a sad change. The harbor gradually filled with sediment, carried from the mountains by the stream flowing into it, and the city was compelled to move several times to follow the receding waters. To-day the site of the once proud Ephesus is six miles inland, and the entrance to the harbor a shallow sandy beach unapproachable by ships. The once beautiful harbor is now a pestilential morass covered with mud and rushes. The harbor was abandoned during the fourth and fifth centuries A. D., and the city suffered a similar fate, and is now a part of the desert waste. It was indeed the "city of change."

2. The history of the local church. The Ephesian church was organized by the apostle Paul in A. D. 56 with twelve charter members, who, after being baptized, received the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues. As the result of Paul's preaching, the whole city was stirred. The people were under such conviction that they brought out their books of magic, dealing with sorcery, and burned them in the public square. The value of the writings was estimated at more than \$28,000. So many of the citizens forsook their idols that the silversmiths were alarmed, and Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen caused a riot that made it necessary for Paul to leave the city. The apostle's letter to the church of Ephesus indicates a large and flourishing congregation in that city. The members were noted for their love, unity, liberality, and missionary zeal.

THE CHANGE IN THE CHURCH

But there came a change. Their love waxed cold, their zeal diminished, and strife and dissension took the place of unity and brotherly love. False doctrines and teachers multiplied regardless of the warnings and entreaties of Paul. When the apostle called the elders of the Ephesian church to meet him at Miletus, he solemnly warned them of the sure results of such a course. See Acts 20: 29-31. In an epistle sent later, he urged them to "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Ephesians 4: 14.

The church gradually decreased in membership, was finally disbanded, and disappeared with the city.

(Continued on page 10)



Underwood

In the pool are the remains of Diana's temple at Ephesus, as it looks to-day. On the horizon line at the extreme left is an old Roman fort.

saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Revelation 2: 1-7.

MORE THAN LOCAL

Let us not forget that the seven churches named are representatives of the entire gospel church between the first and second advents. Each of the letters to the seven churches has a threefold application, giving a prophetic history of the city, local church, and a certain period of the history of the church universal. The seven letters picture the history of the Christian church from the days of the apostles to the second advent of Christ, in seven periods.

"Corresponding to this sevenfold division of the church, the outward appearance of the divine Author of the seven letters is divided into seven groups of attributes; and one group of attributes is assumed by Him in addressing each of the seven churches, so that the openings of the seven letters, put

first three letters the appeal precedes the reward, and in the last four it follows.

The speaker introduces Himself as the One who walks about among the churches, keeping the lights burning and upholding His ministers, symbolized by the seven stars in His right hand.

The letter is for the church of Ephesus, and is sent to the angel, or minister, of the church, who, as shepherd of the flock, is the proper person to receive the message and deliver it to the congregation.

The word Ephesus has two meanings: first, "desirable," and second, "city of change," indicating that time would bring a change from that which in the beginning was desirable. These definitions accurately describe: 1. The history of the city of Ephesus. Built long before Christ, the city enjoyed several centuries of prosperity, and was a very desirable dwelling place. Stamped on coins found in her ruins was the honorable title, "The first and greatest metropolis of Asia." Being a seaport with the most

UNTO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

(Continued from page 7)

3. The history of the first century of the universal Christian church. How strikingly similar to the history of the local church! Organized with twelve charter members, filled with the Holy Spirit as a result of the upper-room experience, the apostolic church went forth conquering and to conquer. The gift of tongues helped them reach the multitudes with their mighty message on the day of Pentecost, and three thousand new members were added. Jerusalem was filled with their doctrine, and the authorities with rage. Their prestige and income being threatened, they began a relentless persecution that watered with the blood of martyrs the seeds of gospel truth. The church, however, greatly prospered, and was characterized by love, unity, a pure faith, and an unflagging missionary zeal.

But toward the end of the century this desirable condition changed. Love, zeal, and power waned, and false teachers and doctrines multiplied. Paul, writing to the Thessalonian church in A. D. 54, declared, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." At that early date the great apostasy had set in.

Christ first commends the church for its works, labor, patience, hatred of evildoers, and its ability to test false apostles. He said, "I know your doings."—*Weymouth*. He had been an unseen guest in their assemblies and at their firesides. He was acquainted with the spiritual condition of every member. Nothing is hidden from Him, whose eyes are "as lamps of fire." He hears and sees all. He appreciated their patient endurance during the cruel persecutions of Nero and Domitian. False apostles, arrayed in sheep's clothing, were increasing; but the church had become expert in weighing them in the balances of Scripture, and finding them wanting. The same commendation applies to the church to-day that imitates their example.

LEFT FIRST LOVE

After praising them for their virtues, like a true friend and faithful shepherd, Jesus reproves them for their faults. How tactfully He says: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love," or "that you no longer love Me as you did at first."—*Weymouth*. Their love had not become extinguished; it had diminished and become lukewarm. They had lost their first-love experience. Christ's love was unchanged; the coldness was on the part of the church. Jesus and the church are represented in the Bible as husband and wife, because they are bound together by the same love ties. Christ exhorts His bride to remember their first happy love experience, repent of her relaxed affections, and return to that blissful experience from which she had fallen. He calls for a speedy return to the love-works that characterized the love-state. "Repent, and live the life you lived before" is the rendering of the Twentieth Century New Testament; and "Repent at once, and act as you did at first" is the *Weymouth* translation. There can be no love-works without love, and love can not be produced by works. If the church would renew her acquaintance with Christ and fall in love with Him again, the works of love would naturally follow.

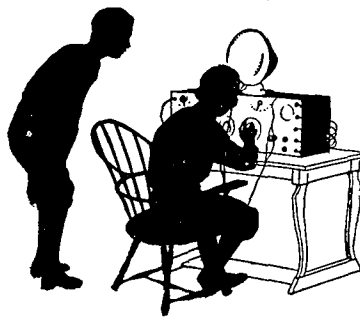
The situation is so grave that He threatens to remove the candlestick unless there is a reformation. The church would be deprived of the privilege of being the light of the world. He would take from her His message and intrust it to another. This

threat was literally carried out, and the early church, losing its torchlight, plunged the world into the Dark Ages.

The Master appeals to all who have ears, to take heed to His message. To reject it is to spurn the pleadings of that mighty agency of salvation, the Holy Spirit; a danger that will surely lead to the unpardonable sin. The epistle closes with the offer of a rich reward to all who take the message to heart and reform. To the overcomer, or conqueror, is promised the fruit of the tree of life "in the midst of the Paradise of God." Victory never comes without a struggle; and the harder the contest, the more glori-

ous the reward. Later in the book the revealer locates the Paradise of God as being around His throne. Man lost his right to the tree of life in the Eden paradise because of disobedience and defeat. He will regain his lost heritage by obedience and victory.

What an eloquent appeal for the church of Ephesus to repent! but it fell on deaf ears. The candlestick had to be removed. This plaintive appeal and fearful warning applies with equal force to the modern church. She, too, has lost that first love experience with its love-works, and neither loves nor acts as she did at first. Shall we permit history to repeat itself?



Will You Be Elected?

S. H. CARNAHAN

ORDINARILY when one speaks of "the election" we think of some local, state, or national office to be filled.

There are appointed times in which individuals are chosen by their fellow beings to places of trust and service in the county, state, or nation, or in some society or church work. For these positions there may be many candidates; but all can not be elected: as, says the apostle, "they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize." 1 Corinthians 9: 24.

"Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown," or temporal honors. But there is another election which is of far greater importance—one of which the crown is "an incorruptible" one, a position to which we are chosen, not by our fellow beings, but by our Creator and Redeemer for eternity.

Now to what are we chosen? We are chosen a purchased or "peculiar people," "an holy nation," and "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2: 9), chosen "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2: 13).

"Many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22: 14. All are called to be candidates to be elected or chosen. However, our election does not depend upon our friends who may vote for us; but rather upon our own choice in the matter.

Jesus, speaking to Martha of her sister Mary, said: "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her," the "one thing . . . needful." Luke 10: 42. Joshua, that faithful spy in ancient Israel, said to his people: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve: . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24: 15.

We are called by the gospel—that is, by the good news of salvation. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16. The part we have to do

in being chosen, or in choosing, is to believe and submit. (Compare Acts 16: 30, 31; 2: 37, 38; Hebrews 11: 6; James 4: 7, 8.)

Those who are chosen and predestinated, or elected, are chosen in Christ Jesus, and have redemption through His blood. (Ephesians 1: 4, 5, 7; 1 Peter 1: 18, 19.) And there is "none other name" or means whereby we can be saved. (Acts 4: 12.)

The Lord has such care for His elect that during the great periods of persecution He cut the days short lest His chosen people perish. And also in the last days of perilous times, when Satan, knowing his time is short, will work with greater energy and lying wonders to deceive, if possible, the elect, God will work especially for them, and at last send His angels to gather His elect from the uttermost parts of the earth. (Mark 13: 20, 22, 27; 2 Thessalonians 2: 7-10; 1 Peter 5: 8.)

The Lord, through His apostles, admonishes His people to "give diligence" to make their "calling and election sure;" and to develop the various Christian virtues in their experiences. (2 Peter 1: 10, 5-8.) For "as He which called you is holy, so be ye holy." 1 Peter 1: 15. And every person that hath this hope will purify himself, even as God is pure; for whosoever transgresseth God's law committeth sin. (1 John 3: 3, 4.)

The only way we can accomplish this and be among God's elect is by obeying the truth. (1 Peter 2: 22.) God's word and law are the truth. (Read John 17: 17; Psalm 119: 142, 151; 19: 9, 10.) "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." 1 Corinthians 9: 25.

"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Romans 11: 5. And this remnant of the seed of the church are they which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony and faith of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12: 17; 14: 12.)

Shall you and I have a part in this election?

Smyrna as it looks to-day. In this city survives the only one of the seven churches to which John wrote.



Underwood

The Message to SMYRNA

AND unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Revelation 2:8-11.

WHY IN THIS ORDER?

Why were the seven letters sent in the order named? Every detail of Scripture has a meaning. Inspiration does not throw things together in a haphazard manner. There is a reason for sending the messages in the order given. A study of the map of the province will show that the seven cities were located in a sort of circle, and they were named in the order in which a messenger sent from Patmos would deliver the messages.

Methods of transmitting mail then were far different from our modern postal system. There were three means of sending messages. (1) By private messenger. Most of Paul's epistles were carried to the churches in that way; and when the council at Jerusa-

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lem had made important decisions affecting the gentile converts, the letter was sent to them by Paul and Barnabas. (2) By messengers employed by commercial organizations. These agents could be hired to carry private letters to places along their route. (3) Letters could also be sent by imperial and provincial postmen. The Roman officials were continually sending messengers to all parts of the world. This was doubtless the method employed by John, as it is unlikely that he could hire a private messenger while in a Roman penitentiary, or that commercial firms would be carrying on trade with barren Patmos.

Ephesus was about fifty miles north-east of Patmos, and, being the nearest, received the first epistle. Ephesus was also the imperial gateway of the province. Running north up the coast was the great Roman highway, built between 133 and 130 B. C., passing through Smyrna and Pergamos. From Pergamos had been built an imperial post road eastward through Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, where it joined another road direct from Ephesus, thus forming a circle. This was a recognized circuit for com-

mercial and imperial postmen, and without doubt John had often taken it in visiting the churches of the province. Doubtless this is one reason only seven letters were sent, as the other churches were off the post road.

The message to Smyrna contained a prophetic history of the city, the local church, and the Smyrna period of the universal Christian church. The name Smyrna has two meanings. (1) Myrrh, a small shrub that grew in Arabia used as a healing balm, having a bitter taste but a very fragrant odor. The more it was bruised and crushed, the more fragrant it became. Smyrna means "more fragrant by being crushed." (2) "The city of life." It was to be crushed, but not killed; persecuted almost to death, but still live. The promise is, "I will give thee a crown of life."

"THE CITY OF LIFE"

The writer introduces Himself as the One who "was dead, and is alive," or "He who died and has returned to life," Weymouth's translation. He promises that those who would be faithful unto death would be given a crown of life. The very introduction of the Smyrna letter is full of meaning. It indicates a death and a renewed life, or a resurrection. And such was the history of the city of Smyrna. The city had a feature which was a cause of special pride to all its citizens. In its midst was a round hill called Pagus. Encircling this hill was the principal street of the city, with its garland of

splendid buildings. Because of its splendor, it was called the "Street of Gold" or the "Crown of Gold." The citizens often referred to it as "the crown of Smyrna." When Apollonius visited the city, he advised the proud citizens to prefer a crown of splendid men rather than a crown of magnificent buildings. The promise "I will give thee a crown of life" had a peculiar meaning to the members of the Smyrna church.

"Which was dead, and is alive," or "is restored to life," Twentieth Century New Testament. Smyrna was a very ancient city, with an unknown origin but an eventful history. It was captured and destroyed by the Lydians in the year 600 B. C. Then it lay in ruins 400 years. It was dead. The city, however, was rebuilt by the Greeks, and soon became a flourishing center. Under Roman rule, it was one of the finest cities of Asia, containing a large and prosperous Christian church. Smyrna was destroyed by earthquake in the year 178 A. D., eighty years after receiving this letter. It was again crushed to death, but was not destined to remain dead, for it was the "city of life." It was rebuilt by the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, and "restored to life" with even more than its former splendor. The city later suffered severely from earthquakes, fires, and besieging armies. It was several times captured; but although often crushed and twice killed, Smyrna always rose from the ruins and bruises with increasing life and glory. It now has a population estimated at 350,000, with an increasing prosperity. It is the only one of the seven cities still in existence. It has lived through passing centuries and the changing kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Lydia, Grecia, Rome, and Turkey. It is the "city of life."

PERSECUTED EVEN TO THIS DAY

The local church in Smyrna has repeatedly been crushed by bitter persecution and several times destroyed, but it has always been restored to life. It felt the full force of the cruel persecutions by the pagan Roman emperors. When the city was captured by the Turks, its Christian citizens were massacred. The recent capture of Smyrna by the Young Turks, and the massacres and deportations that followed, are still fresh in our memories. But the Christian church in Smyrna still lives, and will doubtless continue until Christ returns.

The Smyrna period of the universal church was from the death of the apostles to the professed conversion of Constantine in A. D. 323, covering a period of about two hundred years. "I know thy works," is found in the introduction of five of the seven letters. To the Smyrna church He writes, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty." It was during this period that Rome endeavored to save paganism by destroying Christianity. Chris-

tians had their property confiscated; they were banished and otherwise cruelly persecuted. Christ was acquainted with all their tribulations, and saw every indignity heaped upon them. "But thou art rich." This sounds like a contradiction. How is it possible to be poverty-stricken and rich at the same time? There is more than one kind of poverty, and more than one kind of riches. Some of this world's richest men, in earthly goods, are the poorest in heavenly treasures, and some of the poorest here below are reckoned the most wealthy in heaven above. (James 2:5.)

The church during this period would be troubled with false disciples, "which



Map showing the island of Patmos, from which John wrote his letters, and the seven churches to which they were sent.

say they are Jews, and are not." This is one of the three scriptures where the name Jew is used to represent the true Christian. (See Revelation 3:9; Romans 2:28, 29.) The term Israel, however, is more appropriate, and is often used in both the Old and the New Testament to designate the church of God. The name had its origin the night Jacob wrestled with the Angel. His character being changed, God changed his name from Jacob, a deceiver and supplanter, to Israel, an overcomer and prince of God. All true Christians must be overcomers and sons of God, or Israelites.

The spurious brethren were declared to be of the synagogue, or church, of Satan. Satan has a church, divinely termed, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." Revelation 17:5. All who are not members of the church of Christ, the Israel of God, are of the synagogue of Satan. The church of the great adversary preaches a counterfeit gospel of false doctrines, has its false christs, apostles, prophets, and teachers. There is a counterfeit for every truth of the gospel of Christ, and the more like the genuine, the more dangerous the counterfeit.

The Smyrna message pictures a terrible period of persecution. The Roman emperor was "Pontifex Maximus," or high priest and guardian of the pagan religion. He was the "protector of the Roman gods." The spread of Christianity endangered the religion of Rome, and was considered high treason against the government. Beginning with Nero, Domitian, and Trajan, ten emperors attempted to stem the progress of the new religion. The last and most bloody of the persecutions was by Diocletian, which was to continue for ten prophetic days or literal years. (See Ezekiel 4:6.) This bitter attack began in 302 A. D. and ended in 312. It was the last desperate attempt of Satan to check the spread of Christianity by persecutions. Christ places the full responsibility of this persecution on the devil.

NO REPROOF

No reproof is given the Smyrna church. It was a trying period, and they needed encouragement. It was wise to overlook faults during such severe trials and help them through by saying, "Be of good courage." Then, too, their faults were few. The church was purified by the fires of persecution, and brought back to its first love and works, lost during the close of the Ephesus period. The church was "more fragrant by being crushed." The crushings were blessings in disguise, for the more the church was persecuted, the more fragrant was its influence. Like the Israelites, "the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." Exodus 1:12.

It is fiery trials that makes golden Christians. It takes the fire to burn out the dross and make pure gold. Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel, John, and the greatest characters of earth were developed into the likeness of Christ in the dark room of adversity. It is persecution that purifies the remnant of the church for the second coming of Christ, bringing it back to its first love, faith, and works. It is to go through great tribulation and be made white in the blood of the Lamb, so that it is without "spot, or wrinkle."

Prosperity has always been the church's greatest foe, and persecution its greatest friend, even though coming in disguise.

The reward offered to the overcomer during this period of persecution and death was a crown of eternal life and exemption from the second death. The first death comes to all, but is temporary. It is ended by the resurrection. Those who are faithful unto the first death will escape the second death, which is eternal. It is the death of the wicked in the lake of fire, and from it there will be no awakening.

The rewards of the righteous and the wicked are just opposite,—eternal life and eternal death. As free moral agents, we must choose between the crown of life and the second death. Our decision settles our own destiny.



Underwood Photo

AND to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 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. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of My mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; 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: 12-17.

The word Pergamos has the meaning of (1) height, elevation, or exaltation, and (2) the royal city, the city of authority, a citadel. The name would suggest a change from the Smyrna condition to a spirit of pride, haughtiness, and self-exaltation. The church is no longer downtrodden by its enemies and crushed by persecution, but is exalted to a position of authority and kingly power.

Pergamos was a capital city, the seat of kingly power for more than five hundred years, beginning 282 B. C. It was first the royal city of the Attalid kings; and later of the kingdom of Pergamum. For two hundred fifty years it was the official residence of the Roman governor of the province of Asia, as well as the members of his staff. From Pergamos the decrees of the Cæsars were executed for the province.

The ancient city was built on an immense rock rising hundreds of feet out of the plain, with perpendicular walls, except one narrow passage which was strongly fortified and guarded. It was a natural fortification, a citadel practically impregnable to the attacks of an enemy. The only way the city was ever captured was by stratagem. From its height, or elevation, Pergamos derived its name.

PRIDE IN THE CHURCH

The local church of Pergamos was affected by the spirit of the city. Being the residence of the procurator of the province and visited by the officials of the empire, pomp and display were everywhere manifest. Its citizens felt themselves above those of other cities, and the church members were contaminated by the same spirit. Pride entered, the church became exalted, and compromised with the world. Pergamos being the headquarters of the pagan religion for the province, the church yielded to pagan influences and became the abode of false doctrines and apostasies.

The Pergamos period of Christian

The EPISTLE of CHRIST to Pergamos

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NUMBER EIGHT

TAYLOR G. BUNCH



The old Byzantine church at Pergamos, with "Satan's seat" beyond

history was from the professed conversion of Constantine in 323 A. D. to the year 538, or from the close of the pagan persecutions, because of the increasing popularity of Christianity, to the final elevation of the Christian religion to supersede paganism as the official religion of the state. It became the royal religion of the Roman world. The period is that of the transition from pagan Rome to papal Rome. The cruel persecutions of the church have ceased, Christianity becomes popular and the legal religion of the empire. The *Pontifex Maximus* of paganism becomes the defender of the Christian faith, the officers of state become nominal professors, and church officials are magnified in their office. The church crushed and persecuted during the Smyrna period is now exalted to the height of royal authority. It is the royal city "which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Revelation 17: 18.

GRIEVOUS WOLVES

It was during this time that "grievous wolves" entered "not sparing the flock," and men arose in the church "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20: 29, 30. The exaltation of man power in the church was also prophesied of by Paul: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thessalonians 2: 3, 4. During the Pergamos period Christianity was so changed by heathen influences that it virtually became "baptized paganism."

"In the course of the fourth century two movements or developments spread over the face of Christendom, with a rapidity characteristic of the church; the one ascetic, the other ritual, or ceremonial. We are told in various ways by Eusebius, that Constantine, in order to recommend the new religion to the heathen, transferred into it the outward ornaments to which they had been accustomed in their own."—"De-

(Continued on page 10)

THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST TO PERGAMOS

(Continued from page 5)

velopment of Christian Doctrine,"
p. 373, by Cardinal John Henry New-
man (Roman Catholic).

The author of the Pergamos letter introduces Himself as "He which hath the sharp sword with two edges." This is clearly a description of the sharp-pointed, double-bladed Roman sword, known as the "cut-and-thrust sword." It was the symbol of the highest official authority. The power of life and death it symbolized was vested in the proconsul of the province, and his headquarters were in Pergamos. Pergamos was the city that wielded the sword of Rome.

"SATAN'S SEAT"

"Where Satan's seat is," or "where the throne of Satan stands," is the rendering of the Twentieth Century New Testament. He recognized that they were living in a hard place, and assured them that He took these circumstances into consideration. The psalmist tells us that the Lord, in His dealing with us, considers our birth, environment, dwelling place, and opportunities, and judges accordingly. See Psalm 87:4-6.

Satan is the god, prince, and ruler of this world. He usurped the dominion of Adam, and claims the earth as his principality. He has ruled the earth through the human governments under his control. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome did his bidding, and their capitals became his earthly seat. Rome, the royal city of the Roman Empire, was Satan's earthly capital, and the same could be said of the seat of authority in each province. Since church and state were united, and the emperor of Rome was the *Pontifex Maximus*, of the state religion, the seat of civil authority was also the headquarters of ecclesiastical power. The proconsul of the province of Asia, as the personal representative of Cæsar, was the head and defender of the Roman legal religion. Three great temples were erected in Pergamos in honor of pagan imperial deities, the most celebrated being the temple of the "serpent god." This was a god in the form of a serpent entwined around a pole, pictures of which have been found on ancient coins. It is worthy of note that Satan is termed "that old serpent."

THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

Satan's earthly headquarters are in his church, "the synagogue of Satan," with its false doctrines, apostles, and prophets, and its counterfeit gospel. Being characterized by pride, confusion, and exaltation; and having originated in ancient Babylon, it is called "Babylon the Great."

The earthly dwelling place, or headquarters, of Christ is in His spiritual temple, the church. See Ephesians 2:19-22. Here the Holy Spirit, as the vicergerent of the Son of God, has His

seat, or earthly throne. In another sense He dwells in every individual "of a contrite and humble spirit." The heart of such becomes His throne. Christ rules the humble; Satan rules the proud. Christ's church is characterized by humility and meekness; Satan's is characterized by pride and exaltation.

In the epistle mention is made of Antipas, who was martyred where Satan dwells. Christianity was a crime against the state during the Smyrna period. Christian prisoners were taken to Pergamos from all over the province for trial and execution. It may be that John was tried and sentenced here. Paul was sent to Rome only because he exercised his right as a Roman citizen, and appealed to Cæsar. Some believe that Antipas refers to all Christians who were martyred because they opposed the exaltation of man in the church. But because of the period and the cause of the persecutions, it is more reasonable to suppose that Antipas means antipagan, as the martyrdoms of the Smyrna period were the result of Christianity's opposition to the pagan religion.

The church is reprovèd because some of its members were holding to the doctrines of Balaam. Balaam was a prophet of God who turned traitor to secure worldly gain and honor. He led Israel to commit fornication with the daughters of Moab, and to sacrifice and bow down to their gods, and to partake of food offered to their idols. He led Israel in an apostasy that kindled the anger of the Lord, and He sent a plague that destroyed twenty-four thousand Israelites.

The church in Ephesus was sound in faith, but deficient in love and love-works; Smyrna was still true with the lost love and works restored by persecution. The Pergamos church was the first to depart from the pure faith, and to accept false heathen doctrines in a compromise with the world to gain honor and prestige with Constantine, a more modern Balak.

THE NICOLAITANES

The Nicolaitanes are again mentioned. The Ephesian church was commended for hating their deeds, and the Pergamos church reprovèd for accepting their doctrines. The church is drifting worldward. Christ has not changed. He still hates their deeds and doctrines. Time never makes wrong right, nor evil good. The Nicolaitanes were the followers of one Nicolas. They practiced and taught polygamy, and made no distinction between meats offered to idols and other food. They advocated compromise, and the adoption of more liberal views. They were the liberals or modernists of the early church. It is thought by some that the word is derived from the Greek word "*Nikalaos*," meaning, "those who conquer the people." The forces had begun to work which finally conquered the church and turned it

into a semipagan institution—"Babylon the Great."

The warning calls for a quick repentance and reformation, or the consequence of a fight with the wielder of the two-edged sword. Israel faced the same alternative, scorned the warning, and perished by the same sword. Her history should have sounded a fearful warning to the Pergamos church of the consequences of trifling with God. It is obedience and loyalty, and not apostolic succession, that counts with God.

The terrible threat is followed by a glorious reward. The "hidden manna," or angels' food, with which God mysteriously and miraculously fed Israel during the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, was to be restored to the overcomer. The "angels' food" that has been hidden for more than thirty centuries will be restored to the redeemed at the second advent. There is a Jewish legend that the manna laid up before the testimony in the ark was hidden in a cave in Mt. Sinai, and would be revealed at the advent of the Messiah. The promise also doubtless applies to the hidden manna of God's truth, hidden "from the wise and prudent" but revealed "unto babes."

THE WHITE STONE

The promise of a white stone with a new name had a special appeal because of a prevailing Roman custom. White stones of marble or ivory in the shape of a cube, square, or rectangle were used as tickets to theaters and as tokens for other purposes. They were called "tessera." Such a stone, with a secret name or initial on one or all sides, was used as a pass that granted its possessor special privileges. Such a stone was given the successful gladiator as a token of victory. On it was carved "S. P.," meaning tried and proved. It was also an ancient custom to carve on such stones the secret name of the devotee's god. When initiated into the mysteries of the god, he learned for the first time the meaning of the name. The name was to be kept secret under pain of death. This is doubtless the origin of the secret sign of modern fraternal orders.

The victor in the Christian warfare is promised a new name. Name stands for character. When Jacob's character was changed, he had to be re-named. God only can give the proper name to fit the individual character. Since the redeemed are all re-made, they must also be re-named. None but the receiver knows the meaning of his name, because the experiences which produced his individual character were different from all others, and he will himself ever be different; for in all God's vast creation there are not two objects or creatures exactly alike.

The promise to the church of Pergamos is also *our* promise. Passing centuries have only added to its force. It should constitute a mighty appeal to modern Christendom to repent, reform, and return to God and His word.



During the Thyatira period the true church suffered its greatest tribulation at the hand of the false church.

The FATE of MODERN Jezebel

As revealed in the Thyatira Letter

Studies in the Book of
Revelation, Number 9

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

THE message to Thyatira is the longest of the seven letters, and it covers the longest of the seven periods of church history. Thyatira means: (1) sweet savor of labor, (2) sacrifice of contrition, and (3) weakness made strong.

The city of Thyatira was founded by Seleucus I about 300 B. C. It was a garrison city on the frontier of the province, built on the plain with no natural fortifications. It was captured, destroyed, and rebuilt many times. The city was noted for the art of dyeing. Lydia, of Philippi, was a seller of purple from Thyatira. (Acts 16: 14.) A small village near the ruins of the ancient city still ships large quantities of scarlet cloth to Smyrna. Thyatira was a manufacturing city, not only of cloth, but of instruments of brass, bronze, and other metals. Its population was mostly of the laboring class,—poor, humble, and just the opposite of the Pergamenians. Made contrite by sacrifices, their lives became fragrant by the blessings of labor. The earth was cursed for man's sake that he might be saved from the curse of idleness, for the "idle brain is the devil's workshop."

The speaker introduces Himself as the "Son of God" with eyes like a "flame of fire" and feet "like fine brass." This language was very familiar to the Thyatirans who labored in foundries with flaming furnaces, where they manufactured articles of fine brass and other metals.

A PERIOD OF PERSECUTION

The introduction indicates that during the Thyatira period Christ traveled everywhere and saw everything, and there was a great deal to see. Nothing escaped His piercing, penetrating gaze. He saw every humble, self-sacrificing Christian who stood firmly and bravely for truth against the greatest persecuting power the world has ever known. The period was from 538 A. D. to the great Protestant Reformation, from the elevation of the papacy to kingly authority until that power was broken by the mighty movement that swept Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This period of persecution and spiritual darkness is known in history as the Dark Ages.

When Christianity became the religion of the state, it soon ceased to be Christianity; and when the church was vested with royal authority and began to persecute those who dared to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, it ceased to be the Christian church and became "Babylon the Great," the church of Satan, and his instrument of persecution. In chapter seventeen the revelator pictures the apostate, backslidden church of this period as being drunken with false doctrines and the blood of saints and martyrs.

God's true church is now the persecuted, and is compelled to flee to the mountains to find refuge during this long and dreary period. (Revelation 12: 6, 14.) Christ foretold this terrible persecution in His answer to His disciples as He sat on the Mount of Olives. (Matthew 24: 21, 22.) The prophet Daniel in vision saw this semi-pagan church "make war with the saints and prevail against them," and "wear out the saints of the Most High." Daniel 7: 21, 25. It is estimated that a hundred million martyrs sealed their faith with their blood during this period.

THE CHURCH COMMENDED

The Son of God commends the Thyatira church for its works, charity, service, faith, and patience, and especially for the improvement toward the close of the period that finally brought the great Reformation. "I know . . . that of late you have toiled harder than you did at first," Weymouth Translation. "I know that your life of late has been better than it was at first," Twentieth Century New Testament. Persecution is always a blessing in disguise, improving the spiritual condition of the church. The sword, flame, captivity, and spoil were instruments in God's hands "to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end." Daniel 11: 35. Weakness was made strong, and those who knew their God were made strong and did "exploits." (Daniel 11: 32-35.) Made humble and contrite by sacrifice and persecution, theirs was a sweet "savor of labor."

The Thyatira church is severely rebuked for permitting spiritual Jezebel to seduce its members with false teach-

ings and fornications. Jezebel was the notorious daughter of the king of Sidon. She became the wife of Ahab, and queen of Israel. She was a Baal-worshipping pagan, and through her efforts all Israel was led into a great apostasy. The eight hundred fifty prophets of Baal, imported and entertained by the queen, had supplanted the prophets of God, who were persecuted and slain. These true prophets hid in the caves and in the mountains, and found refuge in the wilderness from the cruel persecutions. Elijah, the Martin Luther of ancient Israel, who finally brought about a reformation, was compelled to run for his life after delivering his messages. Like others who were loyal to God, he was hunted like a wild beast, and a price was put on his head. As a result of this period of apostasy and trial, all but seven thousand of the millions of Israel were bowing their knees to Baal. The church was mixed with pagan doctrines that were never rooted out until the organization of the apostolic church. The period of apostasy, darkness, spiritual drought, and persecution continued three and one-half years. Then came the reformation by Elijah, Elisha, Jehu, and others, but which was not completed until apostolic times, when its purity brought the showers of Pentecost, the early rain.

Spiritual Jezebel was also to reign for 1260 days, forty-two months, or three and one-half years. (Daniel 7: 25; Revelation 12: 6, 14; 11: 3.) This, however, is prophetic time. The papacy was to rule and the Dark Ages were to continue for 1260 years, or from 538 to 1798 A. D. It was a period of spiritual darkness and drought, when the paganized church persecuted those who were loyal to God and drove them into the wilderness for refuge, where they hid in the caves and the mountains, and were hunted like wild beasts. Then came the great Reformation that broke the power of spiritual Jezebel, and brought to the parched church the showers of God's Holy Spirit. The Reformation, however, will not be completed till the remnant of the church is without spot or wrinkle, and the windows of heaven are opened for the showers of the latter rain.

As a pure and modestly attired woman is the symbol of the church or bride of Christ (Jeremiah 6:2; Revelation 12:1; 19:7), so an impure, fallen, immodest woman is symbolic of a backslidden, apostate church (Revelation 17:1-7). The union of church and state is called spiritual fornication. Jezebel is a fit symbol of the apostate church of the Middle Ages. Christ threatens to "kill her children with death," according to their works. This is the second death.

HAD NOT YIELDED

"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." Revelation 2:24. This refers to the Waldenses, Albigenses, Huguenots, and others who refused to yield to the established creed and had "not learned the secrets of Satan" by accepting the doctrines of the "mystery of iniquity." On them would be placed "none other burden" or responsibility. Their faith was not pure, but they were innocent in their error. The Bible was denied them, and they were honest in their partial blindness. No new light with its added responsibility was to be given them to add to their persecution. Additional light would be reserved for the next period. During the Thyatira period, the two witnesses must do their teaching clothed in sackcloth. (Revelation 11:2, 3.)

"Only that which you already possess, cling to until I come," Weymouth Translation. Hold the light you have, and do not lose it, and more will be added later. Truth not obeyed or put into practice is gradually lost, and leaks out of the heart as water from a leaking vessel. (Hebrews 2:1.) The admonition indicates that pressure would be brought to bear to compel them to let go the truth, and also that Christ's coming was approaching, and the church should begin to prepare for that event. Although Bibles were few and expensive and must be studied in secret, various scriptures were transcribed, committed to memory, and repeated, and the fires were kept burning until the dawn of a better day.

"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." Revelation 2:26, 27. "He who conquers and is careful to live My life to the end," Twentieth Century New Testament; or, "obeys My commands to the very end," Weymouth Translation. The promise is to those who get the victory and maintain that victory till the end. To conquer is not enough, we must live the victorious life.

Power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron and break them in

pieces has been the dream and ambition of almost every earthly kingdom. It was the policy and practice of the iron monarchy of Rome and its ecclesiastical successor. To the church of Thyatira these were familiar expressions. If they became conquerors of sin, they would some day, as members of the royal family, inherit and possess the earth, and share with Christ His throne, power, and authority. (Revelation 3:21.)

"And I will give him the morning star." Jesus said to John, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star." Revelation 22:16. Peter warned the

church to take heed to the sure word of prophecy "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19.

Wycliffe in the fourteenth century, Savonarola in the fifteenth, and other early Reformers were morning stars, or beacon lights, heralding the approaching day of gospel truth, gleams of the golden dawn when the morning star would give place to the day-star and the day-star to the Sun of Righteousness that would usher in the perfect day. The promise is to all whose dark hearts are illuminated by the Morning Star.



SPIRIT FRUITS

NELS P. NEILSEN

WHEREBY are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." 2 Peter 1:4.

By nature we are sinners. We are undone and lost. We have no goodness of our own. We get vexed. We become impatient. We are jealous. Hatred and envy, yea, even murder, may be lurking in our hearts. Could we carefully examine our own unregenerated hearts, we would find loathsome, cankerous sores of sin and wickedness. We would see selfishness and pride hidden within the recesses of the heart, until, with shamefulness and remorse, we would be compelled to abhor our own condition. We would be forced to cry out with the great apostle, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." Romans 7:18. Such is the natural heart. Such is the unregenerated mind. Through the prophet Isaiah, the great Heart Searcher has graphically described our pitiful condition: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." Isaiah 1:5, 6.

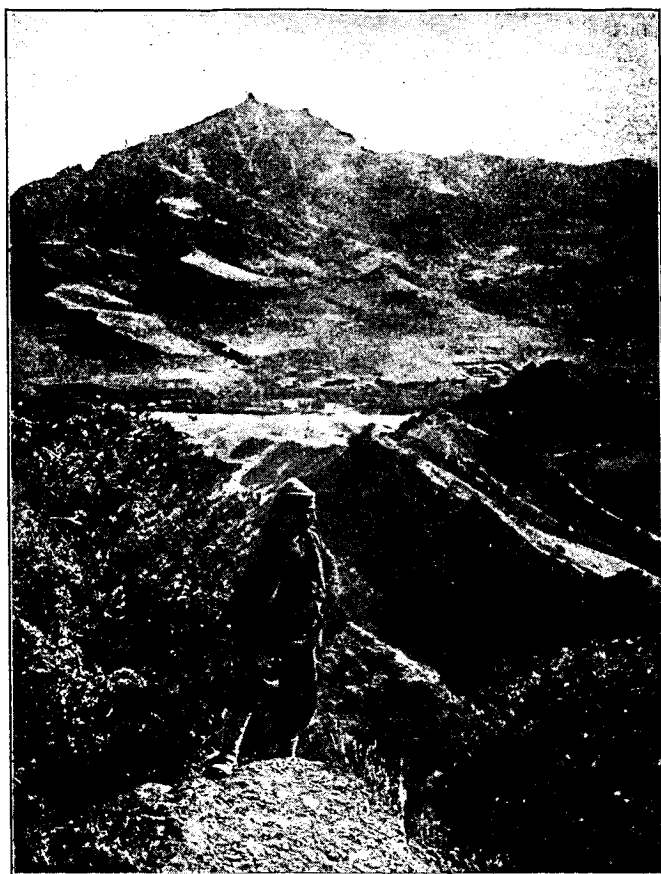
We are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2:3), and as such, we can not do that which is good, in our own strength. According to the laws of nature, each plant will bring forth after its own kind, unless its nature becomes changed. "Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs?" James 3:21. No, thrice no, is the only answer that can be given. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Matthew 7:16, 17. This is the law of nature, and our only hope as sinners is to have our nature changed. Says the inspired Word, "We are all as an unclean thing, and

all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isaiah 64:6.

But, thank God, there is a way of escape for us. Our natures may be changed. We may become "partakers of the divine nature." Through the power of God this can be done. He can change our nature so that it becomes like His own divine nature. Then we will bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

Luther Burbank was called the "plant wizard." He produced the Burbank potato; he changed the hard-shelled walnut into a soft-shelled walnut, and improved the quality of the wood. From the dewberry and raspberry he produced a new and superior berry. He even took the spines from the cactus, and made this thorny fruit a valuable food for stock. In like manner, our God can take the bitter, thorny, sin-polluted lives of men, and transform them by His grace into lives of holiness, fruitfulness, and usefulness. By becoming partakers of the divine nature, we shall bring forth the fruits of righteousness, meet for His kingdom.

But what are the characteristics of the divine nature? Ah, one of them is love, for "God is love." Others are "joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." A wonderful array of fruitage—just the opposite of the fruits of the flesh! Instead of hatred, our lives are filled with love; instead of envy and jealousy, our lives are filled with sympathy and kindness for others; instead of the dark forebodings, our souls are filled with the blessed hope of the life to come; yea, instead of dwelling in the arctic regions of cold selfishness and frozen inactivity, we have had a change of climate, and are now dwelling in the warm sunshine of God's presence, where the sweet fragrance of His Spirit fills the air. We are "partakers of the divine nature," and dwell in the atmosphere of heaven while still upon earth.



Underwood Photo

AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; 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. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. 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. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; 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. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Revelation 3:1-6.

A GREAT CITY OF ANTIQUITY

Sardis means (1) song of joy, (2) that which remains, and (3) the city of death. It indicates a good start but a bad finish, a change for the worse. The condition is just the opposite from that of Smyrna, which was "the city of life;" and in addressing it, Christ declares Himself to be the One who "was dead and is alive." Sardis was "the city of death," having "a name that thou livest and art dead." The church was to begin with a glorious history and end in a heap of ruins.

The city of Sardis was founded in the year 1200 B. C. It was the princely

capital of the province of Lydia, and later the capital of the kingdom of Lydia. It was built on a hill, or plateau, of crumbling rock rising 1,500 feet above the plain like a great watch-tower. The walls were perpendicular and the city inaccessible except by one passage on the south side, which was steep, hard to climb, and strongly fortified. It was, like Pergamos, a natural fortress.

Sardis was one of the greatest cities of primitive history, and in the estimation of the Greeks was long the greatest. But in the days of Rome its importance was waning, and it was more like a city of the past living on its ancient prestige and glory. At the time of the epistle it lived only in name and was hastening to its final doom.

OVERCONFIDENCE

The very rock on which the city was built gave the impression of instability, untrustworthiness, and deterioration. Every rain and frost hastened the crumbling process, until to-day it has the appearance of a heap of ruins.

The natural defense of the city of Sardis made its citizens and guards overconfident. They were often surprised by thieves and bandits because the walls were carelessly guarded. Because the overconfident guards were careless, Cyrus captured the city by stratagem. One dark night, one of his soldiers scaled the bluff by means of a crack in the rock. By the use of a rope, a small army reached the heights above and were within the city before its sleeping inhabitants were aware of danger. Three hundred fifty years later the city was again captured

A Live Message to a DEAD CITY

CHRIST'S
LETTER
TO SARDIS

Studies in the Book of
Revelation—Number 10

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

in the same way by Antiochus the Great. The failure of the guards to keep watch caused the downfall of the city. It is now a heap of ruins with no sign of life, "the city of death."

How full of meaning to the church was the admonition, "Be watchful"! "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."

A church usually imbibes the spirit of its city. The church of Sardis was characterized by overconfidence. Its members were not constantly on guard against the deceptions of the enemy. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:12. The spirit of overconfidence is a dangerous condition, and modern Christendom may well take warning. The Jews said, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man" (John 8:33), but they crucified their own Messiah and separated themselves from the God of Abraham. Their pharisaical pride proved their ruin.

The Sardis period is the church of the Reformation during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. It is "that which remains." The Thyatira period was one of great persecution when the church of Satan would make war with the saints and overcome them (Revelation 13:7), and "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matthew 24:22). Although a hundred million martyrs were slain, the days of persecution were shortened, and a remnant remained.

The Reformation brought great joy to every child of God. As the church in its wilderness retreat saw the progress of the cause of reform and the waning power of its persecutor; as they beheld mighty men of God doing exploits, princes espousing their cause, the Bible printed and circulated, darkness scattered before advancing light, the church was indeed Sardis, "a song of joy."

But that happy condition was not

destined to continue. The Reformation became popular and the church prosperous. Their success gave them the feeling of overconfidence. The various reform churches hid behind man-made creeds; they felt satisfied and secure without further light and truth as a defense against an ever-vigilant foe. Their zeal waned, their love diminished, and spiritual life gave place to spiritual stagnation. The uncompleted Reformation was arrested by petty strife and divisions.

"I have not found thy works perfect before God," or "fully performed before God" (Emphatic Diaglott). It was a reformation in part only. It was not carried far enough, and the church was losing even what they had gained. Refusing to accept more light, the light they had became darkness. Dr. Philip Schaff, in his history, "The German Reformation," says: "The Reformation of the sixteenth century is not a finale; but a movement still in progress."—*Vol. 1: 7-8*. Sir Robert Peel, while prime minister of England in 1840, said, "The day is not distant, and it may be very near, when we shall all have to fight the battle of the Reformation over again."

There can be no finished Reformation until every noxious weed has been rooted out of God's garden and the church is fully reformed and brought back to the purity of the faith once delivered to the saints.

"You are supposed to be alive, but in reality you are dead" (Weymouth Translation). What a terrible condition; dead, and didn't know it! A walking corpse, making every pretense of life! How could deception be greater than to be spiritually dead, like Samson, who "wist not that the Lord was departed from him"? This is Christ's picture of the modern church with its big professions and little deeds, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," living a life of pretense and show while destitute of spiritual life and power. May we open the heart's door and let the Lifegiver come in with His quickening, cleansing, resurrection power.

JUDGMENT ABOUT TO BEGIN

The church is admonished to "remember" under what circumstances they had heard and received the light, to "hold fast" and not lose what they had obtained, and to "reform" (Emphatic Diaglott), or carry the Reformation to its conclusion. If they refused to watch, He threatened to come on them as a thief in the hour least expected. Comparing this warning with Matthew 24: 42-46, Luke 21: 34-36, 1 Thessalonians 5: 3-5, and other scriptures, it is evident that the Sardis period brought the church to the watching time. The "falling away" had taken place, the Reformation had begun, and it was time to make preparation for the return of Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2: 3-8.)

"You will certainly not know the hour at which I shall come to judge you" (Weymouth Translation), indicates that the investigative judgment is about to begin. Christ promised that the few in Sardis who "had not soiled their garments" (Emphatic Diaglott) would walk with Him in white. It is sin that defiles and soils the robe of righteousness. In a few lives in Sardis the Reformation had been carried on to perfection, and they died with the hope of the victor's reward.

White is symbolic of purity and victory. At the command of God the angel removed the filthy garments from Joshua, the high priest, and clothed him with the beautiful garments of salvation, and placed on his head a miter symbolic of his victory over Satan. (Zechariah 3: 1-5.)

The revelator saw the multitude of the redeemed before the throne of God "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," having "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." He declared that the Lamb's wife, the church, "hath made herself ready" for the marriage by being "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (Revelation 7: 9-17; 19: 7-9.) Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, and the angelic host following Him are pictured as a great, conquering army, arrayed in white and riding on white horses, making the final victorious charge against the powers of evil. (Revelation 19: 11-21.)

In Rome the white toga was a symbol of triumph and joy, and the dark toga was worn by mourners and prisoners,

and was symbolic of defeat, sorrow, or disgrace. White robes were worn by illustrious persons and candidates for high office and by tribunes and consuls when marching before the eagles of the legions into battle. The white toga was the exclusive privilege of a Roman citizen, and was worn so universally on the occasion of a Roman triumph that the metropolis of the world was on that day called "The White City."

The poet Juvenal wrote:

"And now the Imperial Eagle, raised on high,
With golden beak, the march of majesty.
Trumpets before and on the left and right,
A cavalcade of nobles, all in white."

The promise that the conquerors in the warfare with "the forces that control and govern this dark world, the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us" would be given a great triumph in the celestial city of gold and walk with Him in white, had a real meaning to the Sardis church, familiar with Roman customs.

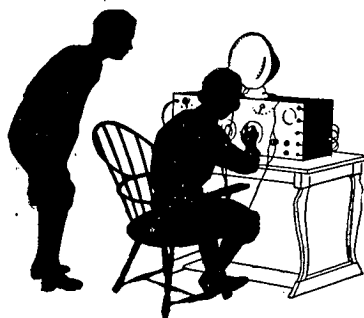
RECORDED IN A BOOK

The victor was also assured that his name would not be blotted out of "the book of life." In Greek and Roman cities the names of all citizens were recorded in a book. New names were added, and unworthy ones expunged. To be a citizen of Rome was a great privilege, and to lose that citizenship by unbecoming conduct was a calamity. The book of life contains the names of the citizens of the heavenly kingdom. It is the family record containing the names of those who, through faith in Christ, have conquered. All who sin and fall from grace will have their names blotted out of the book of life, and all whose names are not found written there when probation closes will be cast into the lake of fire and suffer the second, or eternal, death. See Exodus 32: 32, 33; Revelation 20: 12, 15. Either our sins will be blotted out of the books of record or our names out of the book of life.

"And I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Christ as our great Advocate will confess or deny us before the heavenly tribunal as we have confessed or denied Him before men. To one class He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," and to the other, "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 25: 34; 7: 23.

By faith in His atoning sacrifice on Calvary, we may have our sins erased and our names inscribed in the book of life, with the right to a conqueror's robe and the privilege of walking with Him in white in the triumphal procession of the redeemed of earth.

THOSE that hope little can not grow much. To them the very glory of God must be a small thing, for their hope of it is so small as not to be worth rejoicing in.—George Macdonald.



Chance or Courage

ROBERT HARE

Chance has no portion, if life holds its aim,
Decked in its best 'tis only a name;
Miracles lie in your reach day by day,
Just over the mountains that border the way.

Dream not of fortune, fools prate of chance,
Walk with the Master, and dare to advance;
He rules the tempest, and He plans the tide;
Secure in His guidance faith can abide.

Courage scales mountains, with spirit to dare,
Fearless to act its part and to share
In the fierce struggle that wins out the race
When ease would turn back, in confusion of face.

Fear not the frown that fortune might cast;
Hold 'to your purpose, be true to the last;
After the conflict, faith wears the crown,
And chance holds no part in heaven's renown.

The CRUCIBLE TEST of the Modern Church

THE EPISTLE TO
PHILADELPHIA

Studies in the Book of Revelation
NUMBER ELEVEN

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

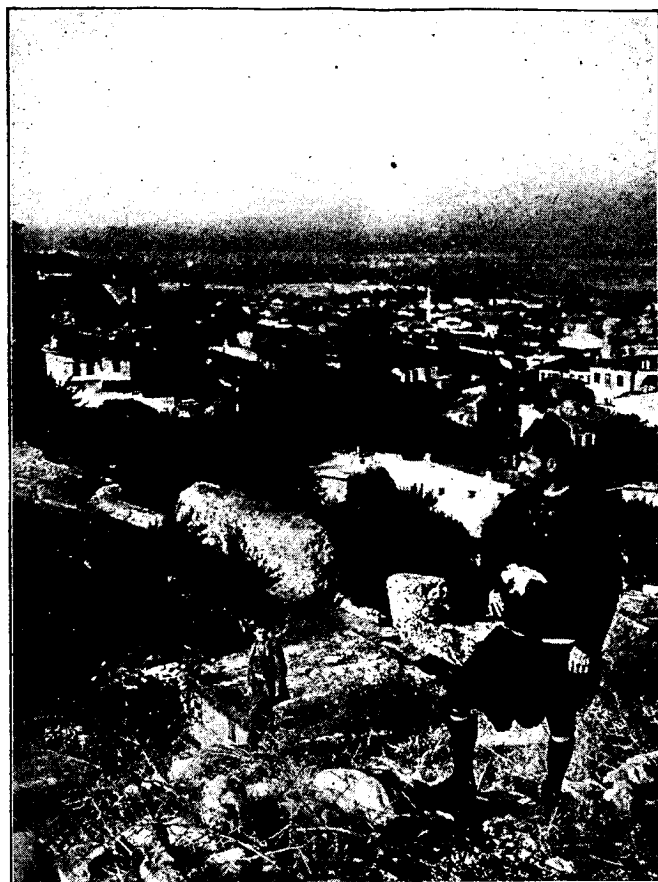
TO THE angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name. 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. 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. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 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. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Revelation 3:7-13.

The meaning of Philadelphia is (1) brotherly love, and (2) the missionary city, indicating a change for the better from the Sardis (city of death) condition, a resurrection from spiritual death, a renewal of life, love, and missionary activity.

NEAR A MOUNTAIN PASS

The city of Philadelphia was built by Attalus Philadelphus, from whom it took its name. It was located on the imperial post road and was the keeper of the gateway to the great plateau, or

The city of Philadelphia in Asia Minor as it looks to-day



Underwood Photo

eastern highlands. The city was located near a pass in the mountains to which it held the key, with power to open and shut. Thus the language of the introduction had a peculiar meaning to the Philadelphians. Christ reminded them of another door to which He holds the key, with power to open and shut.

Philadelphia was visited by frequent earthquakes and, with eleven other cities, was destroyed in the year 17 A. D. It was often attacked and besieged, and its citizens lived in constant fear of disaster or "the day of trial." During earthquakes the inhabitants fled from the city and camped outside, sometimes for weeks. Thus the promise, "He shall go no more out," was especially precious. They were reminded of another city, the New Jerusalem, in which the Christian victors will dwell safely, with no fear of siege or earthquake.

FIRST HALF OF NINETEENTH CENTURY

Philadelphia held out against the Turks long after the other cities of the province had fallen. During the fourteenth century it stood practically alone against the Ottoman power, a self-governing Christian city. It was besieged by great Turkish armies, and, although reduced to the verge of starvation, it held out for eleven years before it finally yielded to the besiegers in 1390 A. D. Their story of heroism and endurance in holding up the banner of

the cross long after the other cities had yielded to the Mohammedan crescent aroused even the skeptic historian Gibbon to admiration.

The Philadelphian period of the Christian church was during the nineteenth century, especially during the first half. It is impossible to confine it to any definite time limits, as several statements indicate that it reaches to the second advent of Christ.

The Sardis period left spirituality at a low ebb. It was the "city of death." There must be an awakening, a resurrection, a new reformation. Jesus in His great prophecy had definitely located certain events as signs of His second coming. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:29, 30. The predicted events took place exactly on time. May 19, 1780, the sun and moon were supernaturally darkened, and November 13, 1833, the greatest shower of falling meteors ever known occurred. These events made a mighty stir, and called the attention of the Christian world to the study of the

prophecies, especially to those relating to the second coming of Christ. The books of Daniel and the Revelation were studied and explained. Three thousand ministers of all denominations, in all parts of the world, began to proclaim the message of a soon-coming Saviour. The power of God attended the message, and there took place the greatest revival since Pentecost. The result of this message was such brotherly love and missionary zeal as had not been known since apostolic days. Every believer became a missionary to carry the glad tidings to others.

THE KEY OF DAVID

The speaker introduces Himself as "He that hath the key of David." The key is used as a symbol of power and authority. The prophet Isaiah had declared of Christ: "The key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder; so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open." Isaiah 22: 22. The angel Gabriel, in his announcement to Mary of the birth of Jesus, said: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1: 32, 33.

Since the year 606 B. C., when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, captured Jerusalem from Jehoiakim and removed the diadem and overturned the throne, the house of David has remained locked up, and his throne unoccupied, and will continue so "until He come whose right it is." Ezekiel 21: 25-27. Christ is the rightful occupant of the throne of David, which He will take at His second coming. (Matthew 25: 31-35.) The message indicates that the time is nearing when Christ will open the long-closed door, and take the throne as king.

A key gives the possessor the right to lock and to unlock, to open and to shut. There are at least four doors that Jesus alone can open and shut. He has the keys of death and the grave. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1: 21. Christ alone can give and take away life. No man or even Satan can open the prison house of death. The time is near when the Life-giver will use His key and set the captives of death free. (Revelation 1: 18.)

The doors into both apartments in the heavenly sanctuary are also opened and closed by the great High Priest alone. On the day of Pentecost Jesus opened the door into the holy place and began His ministration there. The revelator in vision witnessed the opening of the door into the holy of holies at the beginning of the investigative judgment. "The temple of God was opened in heaven." Revelation 11: 19.

Daniel's great 2300-year time prophecy sets the date at 1844 A. D. This

door was opened during the Philadelphian period, and is to remain open until the earth is lightened with the glory of God. It was also during the same time that the doors of missionary opportunity were thrown open and the evangelizing of the world was definitely undertaken. Japan, China, India, Africa, and the isles of the sea, closed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, were opened to the gospel messengers. It was a divine providence that opened these doors, and no human or satanic agencies can close them until the announcement goes forth from the sanctuary above, "It is done." Then the door of probation will be forever closed. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are." Luke 13: 24, 25.

The statement, "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie," denotes an era when many would profess to be Christians, who were, in

reality, hypocrites. A life of hypocrisy is a lie, and calls down the most terrible of heaven's maledictions. The time will come when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Christ is Lord. (Philippians 2: 10, 11.)

"Because in spite of suffering you have guarded My word, I in turn will guard you from that hour of trial which is soon coming upon the whole world, to put to the test the inhabitants of the earth." (Weymouth Translation.) The church and the world are rapidly approaching the crucible test of the ages, brought on by an international concerted movement among the nations. Before Christ comes, the church must be put to the acid test in order to separate the chaff from the wheat and to make clear the distinction between the church and the world. Like a silversmith sitting before the furnace watching the metal until the dross disappears and he can see his own image in the purified silver, Jesus uses the furnace of affliction and trial as a final means of purifying His church, and anxiously watches the process until the dross all disappears, and He can see His own image reflected in the golden characters of His people.

(Continued on page 14)



Christians of To-day

THEO. G. WEIS

"They shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."—The prophet Isaiah.

THE world of Olympic sports reveals achievements of human skill and endurance that almost baffle the imagination. The shores of southern Italy, the plains of ancient Greece, the Alps of Switzerland, the woods of Finland, and the open freshness of America,—all have trained and given the world its victors and its heroes of sport. It was the laureled victor of Mount Olympus that inspired Paul to call upon Christians to run that they might obtain the prize. (1 Corinthians 9: 24.)

Similar feats of strength and endurance inspired the prophet Isaiah to look beyond the success of the foot messenger and warrior of his day, and speak of a time when "they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40: 31.

The path of the Christian, as Bunyan pictured it in "Pilgrim's Progress," was by no means smooth. There were "ups" and

"downs;" there were places where he walked, and places where he ran. He fought, but he never retreated; he erred, but his courage never failed. Apply this to the life we daily live.

They come to all of us,—these "ups" and "downs." At times we're making rapid progress in the Christian way. The sky is fair, the storm clouds have blown, and the snowdrifts are few. We're "trim," and running a mighty pace. Then comes a change; the clouds hang heavy, and the road is slippery. Every one ahead of us is gaining; only we are "lagging" behind. Our goal seems a long way off. We lose faith and confidence in our ability. We hit a steadier pace; we walk; and, more, we sound a sorrowful retreat. Let him who played his "taps" again sound "reveille," and, with the morning freshness, remember: Only those pilgrims of whose progress it may be prophesied, "they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" can God count as the true *Christians of To-day*.

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THE CRUCIBLE TEST OF THE MODERN CHURCH

(Continued from page 8)

Those who patiently keep, or guard, His word have the promise of Christ's keeping power during the fiery trials that will test men's souls. Of them it is said, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.

Modern scholastic reasoning may attempt to discredit the Scriptures, but God will have defenders of the faith, who will earnestly contend for and guard His word.

The assurance, "Behold, I come quickly," is an encouragement to "hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." During the last great apostasy many will depart from the faith and lose their crowns of righteousness and their hope of eternal life. What an incentive to hold fast is the

expectation of a soon-coming Deliverer! How it fills the heart with cheer and courage! Paul was beheaded by Nero, but he died in triumph, with this assurance: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Timothy 4:8.

The conqueror is assured of a position as a pillar in the spiritual temple of the Lord. The church, built on the rock foundation with Christ as the chief corner stone, is the only earthly institution that will stand the test of the coming storm, and exist throughout eternity. A pillar is the most important part of a building, next to the foundation and the chief corner stone, and it is symbolic of strength and stability.

Since the first century there has been standing over the ruins of the city of

Philadelphia a single high pillar, reminding travelers of the message to the Philadelphian church.

Two names are to be divinely written on the victors,—Christ's new name for them, to comply with their transformed characters; and His own name, because they have reached the divine standard. Later the revelator sees the redeemed with the Lamb on Mount Zion, "having His Father's name written in their foreheads." Revelation 14:1. The name, or character, of God can never be received by human effort; it is imputed to us by faith, and is received as a gift. God only can write His law in our minds and hearts.

Christ also promises to write on the overcomers the name of His city, the New Jerusalem, the capital of the universe. With both His name and His address on them, "the gates of hell shall not prevail" to keep His saints from reaching their destination.

Christ's Picture of the Modern

AND unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; 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 or hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. 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: 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." Revelation 3: 14-18.

THE REMNANT CHURCH

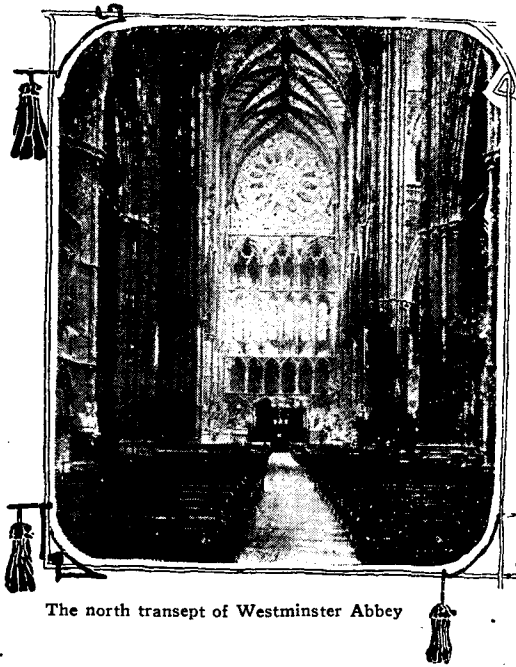
Being the last of the seven, the Laodicean message applies especially to the last period, or stage, of the Christian church, to the "remnant of her seed" in the last generation. It is indeed a sad comment on twentieth-century Christianity. It is a terrible revelation, but one hundred per cent true, because given by the "faithful and true Witness," who never misrepresents or exaggerates.

Laodicea has the meaning of "judging of the people," and is "the city of compromise." The Laodicean message is due in the time of the judgment. The door into the holy of holies was opened during the Philadelphian period, and remains open until the judgment has finished its solemn work in heaven and the church has carried the judgment-hour message to the ends of the earth. See Daniel 7: 9-13; Rev. 14: 6-14.

Living in such a solemn time, the Laodicean church should present a far different picture. During the typical day of atonement all Israel were on their knees around the sanctuary in prayer and confession; but Laodicea, with full knowledge of the solemnity of the hour, has compromised with the world. The remnant loses its pioneer spirit of sacrifice, brotherly love, and missionary zeal, and, like ancient Israel and the Pergamos church, is enfeebled and deceived by compromises with worldly influences.

HOT, COLD, AND LUKEWARM SPRINGS

The city of Laodicea was founded by Antiochus II. It was located on the great highway from Ephesus to Syria, which entered through the "Ephesus Gate" on the west and left the city through the "Syrian Gate" on the east. The post road from Pergamos joined the imperial highway at Laodicea. The city was located near a pass in the mountains, known as the "Gate of Phrygia," and acted as the guard or



The north transept of Westminster Abbey

doorkeeper of the pass. In the pass were a number of famous hot, cold, and lukewarm springs, whose waters were supposed to have healing properties. The city became famous as a health resort, and the sick came from all parts of the Greek and Roman worlds to be benefited by these mineral springs and mud baths.

Laodicea was also a manufacturing center. In the valley was produced a valuable wool, soft in texture, and glossy black in color, highly esteemed because used to make black garments of various kinds. It was also a commercial city with large markets controlled mostly by Jews, of whom there were 7,500 men, besides women and children. A school of medicine was also located in this health resort, where ointments were made especially for the eyes and ears. A sort of tabloid, or powder, and also a salve for the eyes were manufactured and exported to all parts of the Greek and Roman worlds, giving the city a world fame.

A PROUD CITY

Laodicea was characteristic of any prosperous commercial city,—self-satisfied, proud, and boastful. The citizens were proud of its wealth, prosperity, and fame. The local church partook of the spirit of the city. The language employed by Christ in His letter to the Laodiceans was far from meaningless. Those addressed were very familiar with all the terms employed.

"These things saith the Amen." Revelation 3: 14. Amen indicates the end, as of a prayer or sermon. It is the last message and final warning to the last church before probation closes. It is an appropriate introduction to the last of the seven messages. Amen also means "So be it," or "It is true." All

The LAODICEAN MESSAGE

*Studies in
the book of
Revelation,*

NUMBER
TWELVE

TAYLOR G.
BUNCH

He had said to the other churches and was about to say to the Laodicean church was true, for it was spoken by "the faithful and true Witness."

"These are the words of the Unchanging One."—Twentieth Century New Testament. He is the "same yesterday, and to-day, and forever" (Hebrews 13: 8), and with Him there "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1: 17). The church may change, but Christ, never. The Laodicean church has compromised with the world, but Jesus looks upon it with the same antipathy as in Ephesus, Pergamos, and Sardis. He still loves righteousness and hates iniquity.

The Laodicean message is a fearful indictment, picturing a deplorable condition, but it is the testimony of "the faithful and true Witness." He doesn't gloss over or whitewash conditions to make them appear better than they really are. His testimony is dependable. Truthful witnesses are so scarce in this generation of false accusers that the ninth commandment is almost universally transgressed, but it is impossible for the true Witness to lie.

The Author of the letter further declares Himself to be "the Beginning of the creation of God" (Revelation 3: 14), or the "Beginning and Lord of God's creation."—Weymouth Translation. This can not mean that Christ was the first created being, for He is the "only-begotten of the Father." It rather signifies that all created things had their beginning with Christ, the agent of God's creation. That all things were created by Christ as the spokesman of the Godhead is abundantly proved by many Scriptures. See Hebrews 1: 1, 2; Ephesians 3: 9; John 1: 1-3; Colossians 1: 13-16.

What a splendid introduction to the last-day church living in a generation

Church

saturated with the evolutionary theory of the beginning of things! It is a rebuke to the modern scholastic philosophy that denies that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), and that the earth and man had their origin with a Creator instead of in a cloud of nebula and a polliwog evolved into their present state through the operation of natural laws. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Hebrews 11:3. Christ is not only the "Beginning and Lord of God's creation" (Revelation 3:14, Weymouth Translation), but He upholds "all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3).

No commendation is given the Lao-

dicean church. Sardis and Laodicea are the only two of the seven wholly condemned. Both make false pretensions, and are self-deceived. Sardis posed as being alive while dead, and Laodicea as being "rich, and increased with goods," and in "need of nothing," while being destitute of everything needful, "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17),—a religion of sham and hypocrisy. And, saddest of all, she knows not her true condition. It is significant that Sardis and Laodicea are the only two of the seven cities that are to-day absolutely deserted, without even a hut or neighboring village.

There is no complaint made of Laodicea's doctrines. Her great light and privileges and knowledge of the solemn judgment in session in heaven make her more responsible than the church in any other period, and the malediction is pronounced accordingly. See Matthew 11:20-24. "I know thy works." There seems to be no lack of

works. The church is busy planning, organizing, raising money, erecting great edifices, and establishing institutions. She is busy with programs, campaigns, conventions, and social functions. Like Israel of old and like modern spiritual Babylon, she is deceived by her many activities, and shouts victory and progress while spiritually retreating toward Egypt.

A LUKEWARM TASTE

Laodicea is lukewarm. Either cold or hot is declared preferable to this intermediate state. The person who is cold knows it and makes an effort to get warm. There is more hope for a cold sinner than for a lukewarm professing Christian. Lukewarmness is a condition of self-satisfaction and comfort. It is conducive to sleep, which is practically impossible when either cold or hot. Lukewarm water is also nauseating to the taste, hence the threat, "I will spue thee out of My mouth." Verse 16. "Before long I

(Continued on page 14)

THE MANNER of CHRIST'S COMING

CONCERNING the manner of Christ's coming, the Bible declares: "Unto them that look for Him *shall He appear* the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28. Christ, when He comes the second time, will come in an open, public manner; there will be nothing secret about it; there will be nothing hidden from the eyes of men. He will "appear," that is, He will be seen by the people dwelling on the earth. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13.

A WORLD-WIDE APPEARING

The second coming of Christ will be an *appearing*, not at all a secret, hidden coming at death, as many to-day preach; nor that spiritual, invisible coming, unrecognized by the world, that some expect. *Christ will appear*. His coming will be literal, personal, visible. It will be a real coming, not the coming of "a spirit being," an "invisible Lord," but of the very same Jesus who walked with His disciples on the hills of Galilee. The Bible emphasizes this thought that the Lord will appear when He comes. There is no need of any misunderstanding here.

"When Christ, who is our life, *shall appear*." Colossians 3:4.

"When the Chief Shepherd *shall appear*." 1 Peter 5:4.

"And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when *He shall appear*, we may have confidence." 1 John 2:28.

"We know that, *when He shall appear*, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him." 1 John 3:2.

"Be found unto praise and honor and glory at the *appearing* of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:7.

"Until the *appearing* of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Timothy 6:14.

"Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His *appearing* and His kingdom." 2 Timothy 4:1.

"*They shall see* the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30.

CARLYLE B. HAYNES

This appearing of Christ is a world-wide appearing. He will be seen and will appear to all the world, not merely to a certain class which may be expecting Him, not merely to the church, not merely to the righteous, but to every living soul on the earth. This is very clearly stated. "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and *they shall see* the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30.

It is "all the tribes of the earth" who shall see Christ when He comes. This truth that the coming of Christ will be witnessed by the entire world is repeated by John: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and *every eye shall see Him*, and they also which pierced Him." Revelation 1:7. The idea, then, that Christ will come secretly, taking one here and one there, and that this information will become known to the rest of mankind only by the absence of those who have been taken away, is untrue.

A DEMONSTRATION OF POWER AND GLORY

The coming of Christ will be accompanied by such a demonstration of power and glory that nothing in all the annals of history will compare with it. The Lord will not even come in silence, for we read: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God." 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

His coming will be visible: "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:27.

His coming will be overwhelming in glory and majesty: "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30.

"He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." Luke 9:26.

A description of the exact manner of the second coming of Christ was given by the angels who spoke to the disciples at the time of Christ's ascension. "While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:10, 11.

He went away visibly; He will return visibly; He went away personally; He will return personally, "this same Jesus." He went away literally; He will return literally. He went away with clouds, "a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9); "behold, He cometh with clouds" (Revelation 1:7), "and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 24:30).

HE WILL COME WITH WRATH

And when Christ comes the second time, He will come with wrath to destroy His adversaries. He will not come to reign as king over a world that has been converted, and which has laid down its arms. His wrath will blaze forth against unregenerate men, and they will be consumed by the brightness of His coming and overwhelmed by the glory of His presence. When wicked men shall see Him coming they will call for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. (Revelation 6:15-17.)

This is the great event which lies in the immediate future, in this very generation, and this is the manner of its occurrence. Let the reader yield his life to the Lord, that he may hide in this time of trouble, and may be prepared to meet the Lord in peace.

sion that the use of meat as an article of diet is contrary to nature, harmful, and indefensible. But many, while convinced that flesh foods are harmful, are fearful lest the omission of this class of food from their dietary might deprive the system of certain needful elements, and in the end prove disastrous. The experience of thousands of vegetarians proves that this fear is groundless. The testimony of the highest authorities in dietetics is that a well-balanced diet can be attained from strictly vegetarian sources.

During the World War the questions of diet and food supply were of paramount importance to the nations. The International Scientific Food Commission was called upon to decide upon a minimum meat ration consistent with public welfare. After due investigation, the Commission decided that it was unnecessary to fix a minimum meat ration, "in view of the fact that no absolute physiological need exists for meat, since the proteins of meat can be replaced by other proteins of animal origin, such as those contained in milk, cheese, and eggs, as well as by proteins of vegetable origin."

In a United States Department of Agriculture circular by C. F. Langworthy and Caroline L. Hunt, occurs the following statement: "It is of course possible to eat meat dishes less frequently [than once a day] or to omit meat from the diet altogether, for it has been determined that all the necessary protein and energy may be obtained from other materials, if one so desires, and the diet is so arranged that it remains well balanced."

In the light of all these facts, shall we allow appetite, formed by habit or the fancies of our palate, to dictate to us our menus? or shall we let reason sit on the throne, and we confine our diet to the articles of food provided by nature for man? "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10: 31.

CHRIST'S PICTURE OF THE MODERN CHURCH

(Continued from page 5)

will vomit you out of My mouth." —Weymouth Translation. To the Laodiceans, with their hot, warm, and cold springs, the illustration used by Christ was strikingly forceful.

The Laodicean church is asleep. She says, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6: 14), and by her words and actions says, "My Lord delayeth His coming" (Luke 12: 45). Jesus represented her present condition by the parable of the ten virgins. All "slumbered and slept" until awakened by the midnight cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." Matthew 25: 5, 6. The five who had made the necessary preparation went in to the wedding. An awakening call must come to Laodicea. Sad thought that many will

never heed the call and prepare for the coming Bridegroom. "I will spue thee out of My mouth" is not an idle threat. God's dealings with ancient Israel and with Pergamos should be a fearful warning to Laodicea. He will not always be trifled with; there is a limit to His forbearance.

THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY PHARISEES

Like Israel, Laodicea is satisfied with her condition. She feels that she has all the light and truth available, and is in "need of nothing." The Bible contains no picture of a greater deception, unless it be Christ's description of the Pharisee who prayed, "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as the rest of men." Luke 18: 11, A. R. V. The Laodiceans are the twentieth-century Pharisees. Laodicea is poor, and imagines she is rich; wretched, and feels perfectly satisfied; miserable, and thinks she is happy; blind, and boasts of her wisdom and vision; naked, and goes around as if on dress parade. Could self-deception be more complete? We can hardly imagine anyone unless insane or drunken being under such a delusion. The church is beguiled by a silly, blind, all-embracing optimism that refuses to recognize existing facts. Closing her eyes to her wretched state, Laodicea is proud, boastful, and self-conceited. Although spiritually sick and dying, she keeps the Great Physician outside the door. There is no hope of a change for the better until the



What Is Your Autograph?

GEORGE B. THOMPSON

IT is related of Moffat, the great missionary, that the night he was leaving England for his field of labor in Africa, a few of his friends met with him for the last time. During the evening, a pious young lady, wishing to have his autograph, presented her album, and asked him for his autograph. Taking the album, he wrote the following lines:

"My album is a savage breast,
Where darkness reigns and tempests wrest,
Without one ray of light.
To write the name of Jesus there
And point to worlds both bright and fair
And see the savage bow in prayer
Is my supreme delight."

Reader, is this your "supreme delight"? or are you absorbed in pleasure, in the political stew, in seeking after fame and worldly treasure,—things which in a few years at most will vanish? Nothing can be of greater importance than the making of such a life that, when the storms blow, when death sits by your bedside and begins to feel for your heartstrings, you can be sure that you are ready, that you have done your best, and that, with complacency, you can commit all into the hands of Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

SIGNS of the TIMES

AMERICA'S PROPHETIC WEEKLY

Advocating a return to the simple gospel of Christ, and a preparation for His imminent second appearing

EDITORS
A. O. TAIT · A. L. BAKER · F. D. NICHOL
CIRCULATION MANAGER
J. R. FERREN

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church accepts the Laodicean message, acknowledges the application, accepts the Great Physician's diagnosis, and applies the remedy.

Speaking of the Laodicean condition of the church, an English writer says: "There are no words hot enough or strong enough to expose the Laodicean folly, imagining she is rich and increased with goods and has need of nothing, when in God's sight she is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, lukewarm, and only fit to be spewed out of His mouth as an object of loathing. . . . We need a weeping prophet to-day. 'Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for . . . my people!' We need leaders and people who are capable of grasping the situation as it is in reality in God's sight, unaffected by the chloroform of unscriptural teaching and precepts of men, with which the church is kept in her blissful dream of self-satisfaction. . . . The many tears of such a man . . . caused by an enlightened understanding of spiritual realities and a superior knowledge of both God and man and things as they are in truth, are like the tears of Jesus over His beloved city, Jerusalem."

THE SURE REMEDY

The condition however, is not hopeless, because a complete remedy has been provided. When the church accepts the message, prays for the heavenly anointing that opens her eyes and restores her vision, and, realizing her spiritual poverty, weeps over her sins and accepts the remedy, then will come a reformation that will transform Laodicea into "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle" (Ephesians 5: 27), prepared for the latter rain of Pentecostal power that completes the gospel work.

The LAODICEAN REMEDY

Studies in the Book of Revelation

NUMBER THIRTEEN

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

THE Laodicean message is the Great Physician's diagnosis of His modern sin-sick church. The situation must be very grave to warrant such bold frankness on the part of the sin specialist. He makes no attempt to evade the truth or to conceal the facts. The crisis demands drastic measures and, in a final effort to arouse His sleeping and self-deceived people, He sends them the most startling message ever given. This condition of modern pharisaism is so nauseating to Christ that He threatens to vomit them out of His mouth unless there is a speedy reformation.

The Laodicean message is very similar to that sent to ancient Israel. (Isaiah 1:4-6, 11-16; Amos 5:21-23.) The very things God Himself had required of them had become so formal that He now despised their works. A religion of sham, hypocrisy, and cold, rigid legalism has ever been loathsome to Him who craves sincere, heartfelt devotion.

"IS THERE NO PHYSICIAN?"

The Great Physician offered Israel a remedy. "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black: astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" Jeremiah 8:21, 22. His plaintive plea was: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 1:16-20.

Refusing the remedy, the disease became incurable, and Israel was finally rejected. Sacred or profane history does not record a sadder lamentation than that of Jesus over His beloved city and nation. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Matthew 23:37, 38.

Modern Israel has reached a similar state and, alas, she knows it not. Luke-warm, wretched, miserable, poor, blind,

and naked, she boasts of riches, progress, and prosperity. The situation would be hopeless if there were no cure. The same Physician who gives the diagnosis provides a sure and complete remedy.

"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



"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."

thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Revelation 3:18. The success of a remedy depends on obedience to the physician's counsel. Christ's advice is "Buy of Me." There is no other place to purchase a genuine sin cure. There are a number of self-styled sin doctors and patent sin remedies. But these fake remedies contain narcotics that deaden the pain of sin conviction and deceive its victims by blinding their eyes to their true condition. They bring temporary relief while the disease is doing a permanent injury. Soothed and blinded by the inoculation of self-deception, the Laodicean church has lost its sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

While Christ urges us to "buy" of Him, the remedy is within reach of all. The invitation is, "Come, . . . he that hath no money" and buy "without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1. The remedy is for the Laodiceans, and who could possibly be more poverty-stricken than they? The only cost is a complete surrender to His will, a willingness to take His counsel, to confess and forsake sin, and to let Jesus have His way in the life.

The wealth promised is the gold of faith and truth "tried in the fire." "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." "The word of the Lord is refined." Psalm 12:6; 18:30, margin.

The word of God has stood the acid test of skeptical criticism and has gone through the fires of persecution. None are richer than the children of faith who believe the word of God. They are heirs of the kingdom with riches untold. The church, instead of boasting of its truth, should be seeking for more light with a living faith that leads to obedience.

WHITE RAIMENT

"White raiment" is also promised to cover the shameful nakedness of Laodicea. Oh that the church, boasting in its own works, could get the vision of the prophet of old! "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isaiah 64:6. Most of the citizens of Laodicea wore black garments made from the black wool produced in the valley, but they were familiar with the meaning of the white robe, or toga, worn by the proud Roman citizen as a symbol of victory.

The Laodicean church needs the change of raiment given Joshua the high priest by the angel at the com-

mand of God. (Zechariah 3:1-5.) The filthy rags of self-righteousness must be exchanged for the white robe of the righteousness of Christ. The church can never attend the marriage supper of the Lamb without making "herself ready" by being "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white." The white linen represents "the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:7, 8. This garment of righteousness, or right doing, is put on by meeting the requirements of God's great standard of righteousness, His law. (Psalm 119:172; Isaiah 51:7.)

Eyesalve is promised to the blind Laodiceans to restore their spiritual vision. The church is blind to its own condition and need. "They seeing see not, . . . neither do they understand." Matthew 13:13. The wise man declared, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Proverbs 29:18. This does not apply alone to prophetic vision; it has even a stronger application to spiritual vision. A church may have prophetic vision and at the same time be spiritually blind. Such was the condition of Israel even during the lives of her greatest prophets, and when the Great Prophet was among them He declared that the blind were leading the blind, and both were headed for the ditch. None are so blind as those who think they have all the light and who do not want to see their sins. Such is the condition of the Laodiceans.

The eyesalve is the anointing of the Holy Spirit, God's agency for opening blind eyes and convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. (Acts 10:38; 1 John 2:20, 21, 27; John 16:18.)

Such an anointing is the church's greatest need. It would change the situation very quickly. Such a vision completely transformed the character of Job from unparalleled egotism to a place in the dust where he abhorred himself. The proud, boastful Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, was changed to the humble Paul the apostle by a revelation that temporally blinded him physically but permanently opened his spiritual eyes. Oh that the Laodicean church might have such an experience!

A MESSAGE OF LOVE

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." Revelation 3:19. Notwithstanding its severity, the Laodicean message is one of love. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Hebrews 12:6. Defective as it is, the Laodicean church is still His chosen people, the object of His supreme regard. No other people are so dear to Him, and He pleads with them, "Be zealous therefore and reform" (Emphatic Diaglott). The only hope is a reformation. They must acknowledge their condition and repent, and to bring this about He will chasten or scourge them. As a last

resort, the Lord uses trials and persecutions as a purifying process. Trying days await Laodicea, an acid test is coming; a storm relentless in its fury will sift her like wheat. When the sifting, shaking time is over, those who emerge from the refining furnace are described as "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Ephesians 5:27.

"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 3:20. Here is the secret of Laodicea's failure. Christ, the Great Physician, has been kept outside the door. The church is so deceived, self-sufficient, and satisfied that her Lover and best Friend is refused admission. He is willing and anxious to enter and remedy the situation, but He will not force an entrance. He knocks, and entreats, but all in vain. Is there no one at home? Yes, inside is a wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked church, but so deceived that she knows not her condition. She is in need of everything He has to give. He brings great wealth, beautiful garments, and eyesalve to restore her vision, all "without money and without price." The Prince of Peace is not seeking entrance into the heart because He has no other place to lodge. The royal palaces of heaven are open to Him; worlds upon worlds would gladly welcome Him; the city of gold in the paradise of God opens its pearly gates to receive Him. But He craves the love and companionship of the church purchased by His own blood, the object of His supreme affection. He does not even expect the whole church to let Him in: "If any man hear My voice" makes it an individual matter. He goes from heart to heart seeking an entrance where He can abide and sup and enrich the host. He calls on the Laodicean church to "behold" Him standing at the door. A vision of the Lamb of God will completely transform the church.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with

SIGNS of the TIMES

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My Father in His throne." To the church in its worst state is promised the most glorious reward as an incentive to reform. The promise indicates that the time is near when Christ will cease to be priest and begin to reign as king. All who let Him in to sit on the throne of their hearts and at their tables to sup and abide with them, He will permit to enter His palace, sit with Him at the wedding feast, share with Him His throne, and help Him rule the universe.

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How often we look upon God as our last and feeblest resource! We go to Him because we have nowhere else to go. And then we learn that the storms of life have driven us, not upon the rocks, but into the desired haven.—George Macdonald.

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Heaven's Throne Room, The Supreme Court, and the Grand Jury

THE second scene in the great prophetic drama that completes the revelation, or unveiling, of Jesus Christ is pictured in chapters four, five, and six. The curtain is lifted on a new series of events that again carry us down to the final climax of earth's history.

"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 show 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.

"After this" doubtless refers to the previous scene, or the vision of Jesus among the seven golden candlesticks, and His letters to the seven churches. The voice heard through the open door, that rang out like the clear blast of a trumpet, was the same voice that first addressed the revelator at the beginning of his vision; the One who had just spoken to the seven churches, the author and central figure of the book, and of whom it is the revelation.

AN OPEN DOOR

The message, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter," reveals the purpose of the vision, which is also the purpose of the entire book, as revealed in the introduction. It is one of the most thrilling prophecies of future events in all the Bible.

"I looked and saw a door in heaven standing open."—*Weymouth's Translation*. It was as if the curtain was raised so the prophet could behold the scene. A door was opened, and he saw what transpired within,—a privilege accorded to but a favored few. He beheld the most sublime and awe-inspiring sight ever witnessed by mortal man. The door is identified by what John saw within. It is the door into the holy of holies in the heavenly temple. The prophet beholds the throne and throne room of Jehovah. The opening of this door was referred to in Christ's letter to the Philadelphia church. The prophet is later given another vision of the opening of this door at the time of the judgment: "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." Revelation 11: 19.

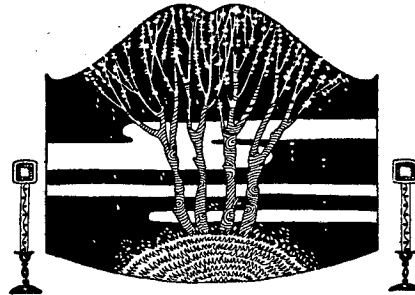
A study of the Mosaic sanctuary and its services, which were typical of the heavenly, identifies the room as the most holy place. The vision was not of events then transpiring, but of "things which must be hereafter." At the time the vision was given, Jesus was still in the holy place, as revealed in the previous scene.

COURT WEEK IN HEAVEN

"And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."

STUDIES IN THE
BOOK OF REVELATION,
Number Fourteen

TAYLOR G BUNCH



The scene here described is the investigative judgment, the session of the grand jury which precedes the general judgment of heaven's supreme court. It is a picture of court week in heaven. The prophet Daniel was given a vision of the same solemn scene: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7: 9, 10.

Both prophets speak of thrones being "set," "placed," or "cast down," referring doubtless to the Oriental custom of placing, or casting down, the movable royal mats, or thrones.

The Scriptures do not leave us in darkness regarding the time when the heavenly grand jury begins its work. When Paul stood before Felix, he reasoned of "judgment to come," and at the time the revelation was given to John, Jesus was still in the holy place, and his visions of the judgment were always of a future event. Martin Luther, in the sixteenth century, declared that the judgment would begin in about three hundred years. In the seventh chapter of Daniel, the judgment scene is located after the 1260 years of papal supremacy and before the second coming of Christ; and in his next vision and its explanation the date of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, or the investigative judgment, is definitely located. The time will be considered more fully in a future article.

IN THE THRONE ROOM

In a subsequent vision the revelator describes a world message just preceding the coming of Christ, calling upon the inhabitants of the earth to "fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come." (See Revelation 14: 6-14.) When the time comes for the judgment-hour message, the event will no longer be future. Such a warning message is now being heralded to all mankind.

It is considered a great privilege to visit the throne room of an earthly king, and be presented to his royal majesty. Especially was this true in Oriental countries in ancient times. The visit could be made by in-

itation only, and then not until the guest was especially dressed for the occasion and drilled in the etiquette of the court. Even the queen who entered into the presence of the king unbidden took her life into her own hands.

John had stood before the Roman governor of the province of Asia and perhaps before the Emperor Diocletian. He was condemned and sentenced by the highest earthly tribunal; and although a prisoner of Rome, he is granted the privilege of a visit in vision to the throne room and court of the supreme Judge and Ruler of the universe, before whom even Diocletian and all earthly judges and rulers must some day render an account of their conduct.

The seer of Patmos was not privileged to see the person of Jehovah because of the canopy of light and glory that veiled Him. Sardius and jasper were the first two of the twelve stones on the breastplate of the high priest, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. The occupant of the throne is still the God of Israel, or the Overcomer.

The rainbow round about the throne indicates that He is a covenant-keeping God, and that He is not slack concerning His promises, but will fulfill them to His people. (See Genesis 9: 12-17.) We live in a generation of "trucebreakers," when men are slack in fulfilling their promises; but God never forgets His word or disappoints His people. In the Weymouth Translation, the rainbow is described as "encircling the throne." It is not broken by a horizon, but makes a complete circle of the throne, and represents the unbroken circle of God's love for man. The color of the bow was "like unto an emerald." The emerald stone in the high priest's breastplate was symbolic of Judah of the kingly line; a royal color. The One encircled by the emerald bow is the King, or Ruler, of the universe.

TWENTY-FOUR THRONES

"And circling the throne were twenty-four thrones."—*Emphatic Diaglott*. Like the bow, the twenty-four thrones completely encircled the central throne. Different versions of the Bible speak of the occupants of these thrones as "elders," "senators," or "councilors." They are really the grand jurors, assisting in the work of investigative judgment. They are arrayed in white robes, symbolic of victory. They have been redeemed from the earth, having conquered sin and its author through the blood of the Lamb. (See Revelation 5: 8-10.) The crowns are also symbolic of victory and the right to rule. They are "clothed in white robes, with victors' wreaths of gold upon their heads."—*Weymouth's Translation*.

How did these redeemed men reach heaven since such a transition is impossible without a translation or a resurrection? Enoch and Elijah were translated and Moses was resurrected, making possible their appearance and visit with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, and also a place among the twenty-four judges in the heavenly court. The other elders were doubtless selected from those who were resurrected when Christ arose, and who ascended with Him as trophies of His victory and first fruits of the plan of redemption. (See Matthew 27: 50-53; Ephesians 4: 8, margin.) Matthew records their resurrection, Paul

their ascension, and John sees them in heaven assisting Christ in His priestly ministration.

In the Mosaic tabernacle service the high priest had many assistants; so our great High Priest is assisted in the work of atonement by a jury of our fellow men. One of the best safeguards of justice in the English law was the inauguration of the jury system, giving a man the right to demand a trial before his peers. Shall man be more just than God?

HE QUALIFIED FOR JUDGE

Jesus could not qualify to act as a just and merciful advocate and judge till He had placed Himself in man's fallen condition. (Hebrews 2: 16-18; 4: 15.) For this reason the final judgment of the wicked world and fallen angels will be given to the redeemed of earth. (Daniel 7: 22; 1 Corinthians 6: 2, 3; Revelation 20: 4-6.) Because angels have never been clothed in sinful flesh with its manifold temptations they can never qualify to do more in the judgment than to act as witnesses. No person is qualified to render just judgment against another unless he has endured the same or similar temptations, and come off victorious. Doubtless this is the reason we must pass through a great variety of temptations and experiences that we may be merciful and sympathetic toward others who are tempted and tried. Let us cease complaining under trials, knowing that the process is necessary to qualify us to help judge the world during the thousand-year general judgment when "the saints shall judge the world." As Christ refused to judge before the time, and before He had become fully qualified, let us postpone our sentences till the schooling is complete and judgment is "given to the saints of the Most High."

If I were to be tried in an earthly court, it would be without fear of injustice, if a judge, attorney, and jury could be found who at some time had been in the same situation and yet had gained the victory over the temptation. Let us rejoice that our cases before the supreme heavenly tribunal are in the hands of such a judge, advocate, and jury. With implicit confidence, we can approach the day of trial before such a court with full assurance of a just verdict, for, "justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne." Psalm 89: 14.

THE VICTORIOUS LIFE

(Continued from page 9)

for indulgence, but he need not yield. He may have victory through faith in Christ.

A man who used tobacco became a Christian and stopped its use; but year after year the appetite remained, and he hungered for the indulgence. Was he dead to that thing? Yes, as far as disobedience was concerned. The habit had no power to bring him into captivity as long as he reckoned himself dead to it.

Oftentimes the fleshly desire remains, and there is a continual warfare against some appetite or carnal desire; yet, if the Christian continually puts up a victorious fight, and never yields to the temptation, he is dead to that weakness as long as he refuses to yield to its demands.

Again, a complete victory comes to the Christian, so that he is never tempted to return to the evil from which he has been delivered, and never has to fight that battle over again. Two ministers of my acquaintance once related their experiences, which were directly opposed one to the other.

Brother A, who was a railroad man in a Southern state, was an inveterate user of tobacco. He wished to stop; and many times

he tried to stop; but as often as he tried, he became discouraged, and returned to his old habit, using tobacco more than before. Some one came to his home town, and preached the truth. He longed to obey, but that habit was in control, and he had no courage to try. His conviction of duty grew till he was in hopeless despair. One night a train was delayed, and he remained long at the office. During this time, being alone, he earnestly prayed that the Lord would take away his appetite for tobacco. About one o'clock, his faith laid hold on the promise of God, and full and complete victory came to him. He was baptized, became a worker, and has never had one desire for tobacco from that day till now.

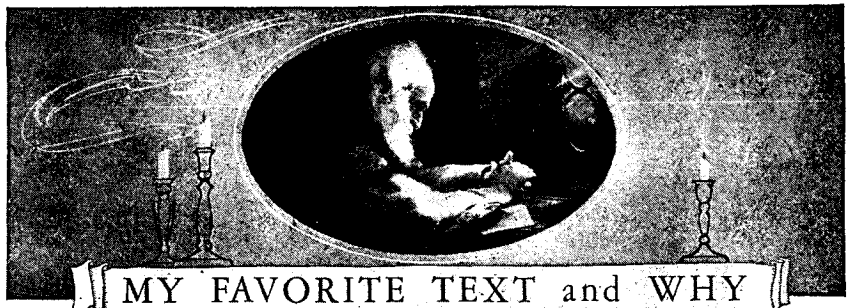
Brother B was a minister. He had preached some years, and was a very successful soul winner. In his testimony he said that from the day he joined the church, he had never had a conscious moment of leisure that the desire for tobacco did not haunt him. When alone, on the trains, day and night, he longed for tobacco. It had been eight years since he tasted it, still that appetite raged and demanded satisfaction. When asked if he had ever used it since quitting, he replied, "No, I have never yielded once!"

Both these men had victory. Both were dead to sin. Each had an equal right to rejoice in the Lord for His great salvation.

When one has experienced the new birth, it is natural for him to obey the law of God. That regeneration makes the Christian a new creature. That is the meaning of our Saviour's words when He said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3: 6. From this it is evident that Christ would have us understand that when a man is born again he is a spiritual being. It can not but be natural for a spiritual being to bear the fruits of the Spirit. "For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace." Romans 8: 5, 6.

"You must be good before you can do good. You can not exert an influence that will transform others until your own heart has been humbled and refined and made tender by the grace of Christ. When this change has been wrought in you, it will be as natural for you to live to bless others as it is for the rose bush to yield its fragrant bloom, or the vine its purple clusters."

Absolute perfection may not be attainable in the flesh; but certainly the Scriptures teach holiness, obedience, and freedom from known disobedience. The Christian has this slogan ever with him: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." Romans 6: 11.



"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." — 1 John 1: 9.

JOSEPH SCHNETZLER

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IF I were to choose one text of Scripture for the foundation of my hope of eternal life, I think my mind would turn to 1 John 1: 9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

There are many scriptures similar to this, conveying the same thought; but this promise is so plain, so concise, so positive, that there is no room for doubt. It reaches all the way from heaven to earth and back again. We not only have the thought of pardon in this text, but if we forsake our sins and cooperate with Christ in renouncing our defects of character as the Bible points them out, we are assured of a complete cleansing; the past is made just, and the future is made hopeful.

As long as Satan reigns, we shall have to subdue self. There is no point to which we can come and say we have fully attained. Therefore, we find this promise very helpful and needful every step of the way.

A great many Christians to-day are making the mistake of seeking for power instead of cleansing. Some are seeking power through the avenue of knowledge; some through the avenue of riches. It is

true these attainments will yield power, but the power is of no eternal value. A great many professed Christians are wobbling in and out of the narrow way because they fail to reach up with the hand of faith and make this promise real in their everyday experience.

There is another promise that is very helpful if one is tempted to reach after this world's riches. Peter at one time sought the glory of this world, but later he attained to an experience for which he could bless the Lord. He wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which . . . hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, . . . to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." 1 Peter 1: 3, 4.

The Lord is so good that He will forgive us and cleanse us and give us eternal life, and then prepare a place and a mansion for us that will never diminish in value. If a man will get a correct view of these facts, and grasp them through faith, how can he hesitate to join the company that are on the highway to eternal glory? He will surely break away from the crowd that is going the broad way that leads to destruction.

On "The Sea of Glass"

JOHN SEES MYRIADS OF BEINGS
WORSHIPING A CREATOR

Studies in the Book of Revelation
Number Fifteen

T A Y L O R G . B U N C H

OUT from the throne there came flashes of lightning, and voices, and peals of thunder, while in front of the throne seven blazing lamps were burning, which are the seven Spirits of God." Revelation 4: 5, Weymouth. What a scene of supernal beauty and dazzling splendor! In comparison how trifling and insignificant the pomp and pride of earthly monarchs! how pale the flickering torch of human glory!

While the revelator's vision could not penetrate the cloud of glory that veiled the Occupant of the throne, he was given sufficient evidence that he was in the audience chamber of the great Eternal and was actually listening to His voice. The seven blazing lamps before the throne are symbolic of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, in the fullness and completeness of His power and operations. The seven lamps of fire before the throne in the holy of holies must not be confused with the seven golden candlesticks in the holy place representing the seven churches. It is from the torches before the throne that the candlesticks are lighted, so that the church becomes the light of the world. From these torches also comes the fire that burns out the dross and purifies the soul from sin and uncleanness. From them also the apostolic church received the holy fire and Pentecostal power that lighted the earth with the glory of the gospel message. A rebaptism of Holy Spirit fire is the modern church's greatest need, for which every Christian should earnestly pray and prepare. Such a world Pentecost is promised for the final gospel proclamation. (See Joel 2: 28-32; Revelation 18: 1-4.)

THE SEA OF GLASS

"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Revelation 4: 6-8.

Other texts and versions make it clear that the sea before the throne had

only the appearance of glass. "As it were, a sea of glass like to crystal" is the Douay translation, and "seemed to be a sea of glass, 'resembling crystal,'" the Twentieth Century New Testament. Crystal is any substance that is clear and concrete like ice or glass. In a later vision the revelator describes the scene thus: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire." Revelation 15: 2. When Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel on Mount Sinai were given a view into the celestial throne room, the floor was described as follows: "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness." Exodus 24: 10. The prophet Ezekiel, in describing the office, position, and glory of Lucifer before his fall, said: "Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire." Ezekiel 28: 14.

The glory of the scene is too wonderful to describe, and the various prophets used the best illustrations this earth affords to convey to the mind and imagination a picture of the dazzling brightness of the pavement, or floor, of Jehovah's throne room. Try to imagine the effulgent glory of the illumination caused by the ruby-red sardius and the brilliant jasper light from the throne and the emerald light from the encircling bow of promise mingled with the white and red lights from the flashes of lightning and blazing torches, all reflected on the glittering pavement of precious stones. The "Tower of Jewels" at the San Francisco Exposition, glittering in the sun-

light by day and in the searchlight by night; the famous aurora borealis, or northern lights, with their ribbonlike streams of varied colors, radiating from the region of the north magnetic pole and extending to the zenith, forming into various shapes and flickering and dancing in the sky like fire-fairies of the night—these pale into insignificance before the celestial glory witnessed by the prophet in his vision.

The word "beasts" used in the Authorized Version is a very unfortunate translation, and conveys a false impression of the character and work of the four symbolic beings before the throne. Better translations are, "creatures," "living ones," and "living creatures." Their position before the throne will help us to identify them. They are "within the space before the throne and round the throne."—*Twentieth Century New Testament*. The Weymouth Translation locates their position still more definitely: "And midway between the throne and the elders, and surrounding the throne." The four living creatures are closer to the throne than the twenty-four elders, and next to the Holy Spirit in their relation to it.

EZEKIEL'S VISION

It is evident to the reader that the language describing the lionlike, calflike, manlike, and eaglelike creatures with six wings and many eyes, is symbolic. It signifies the strength, boldness, courage, perseverance, wisdom, judgment, and swiftness of the beings represented. The prophet Ezekiel was given a vision of the same scene, and describes it in language almost identical with that used by John. After describing them, he said: "The living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning." (See Ezekiel 1: 1-14.) Isaiah had the same vision, and plainly identifies these creatures before the throne as seraphims, or angels, who are God's special messengers and hold positions next to the members of the Godhead and are high in the councils of heaven. (Isaiah 6: 1-3.) Lucifer was once a covering cherub, and "walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" before the throne, and that is where John saw the "living creatures." Gabriel, who was "caused to fly swiftly" (Daniel 9: 21) to answer Daniel's prayer and explain his vision and who declared, "There is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince" (Daniel 10: 21), is doubtless the angel who took the place made vacant by Lucifer's fall and is one of the beings represented by the "living creatures." To Zacharias the angel said: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings." Luke 1: 19. He was no doubt the angel sent by Christ to signify the visions of the Revelation to the captive prophet. What else can the four living creatures represent? It is not reasonable to sup-



pose that in such a detailed description of the throne room and its occupants, the powerful cherubims and seraphims, who are so close to the throne and have such an important part in the plan of salvation, should be overlooked.

"And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." Revelation 4:9-11.

The prophet Ezekiel describes Lucifer before his fall as being a covering cherub "full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." (See Ezekiel 28.) The revelator also sees the seraphims as leaders of the praise service on the crystal sea. When they give glory, honor, and thanks to their sovereign ruler in a song of "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," it is the signal for the hosts of heaven to worship God and join in the mighty chorus that sounds His praises.

The twenty-four elders, redeemed from among men and victors over their enemies in the battles of earth, are overcome by the glory of the scene and a sense of their own unworthiness. Arising in reverence from their thrones, they remove their crowns and cast them before the throne of Jehovah, and, prostrating themselves in adoration and submission, ascribe glory and honor and power to the One whose love made possible their presence among the celestial beings of heaven. They declare that God is worthy of homage and praise because He is the Creator of all things. "At Thy bidding they came into being and were created."—*Twentieth Century New Testament*.

FUNDAMENTALIST JUDGES

The twenty-four redeemed judges are not modernists; they are not evolutionists. Their statement implies that if God did not create all things He was not worthy of their praise and worship, and that they were giving Him homage because He did create all things.

It is quite significant that at the very time the church on earth is being permeated with the evolutionary theory and men are giving the credit of creation to the lowest forms of animal cell life, up in heaven around the throne of Jehovah, seraphims and cherubims, the twenty-four elders, and the unnumbered millions of the angelic host are ascribing to Him the glory and honor of creation.

The apostle Paul gives a graphic description of those who honor the creature instead of the Creator: "God is angry: because what may be known about Him is plain to their, inmost

consciousness; for He Himself has made it plain to them. For, from the very creation of the world, His invisible perfections—namely His eternal power and divine nature—have been rendered intelligible and clearly visible by His works, so that these men are without excuse. For when they had come to know God, they did not give Him glory as God nor render Him thanks, but they became absorbed in useless discussions, and their senseless minds were darkened. While boasting of their wisdom they became utter fools, and, instead of worshipping the imperishable God, they worshiped images resembling perishable man or resembling birds or beasts or reptiles. For this reason, in accordance with their own depraved cravings, God gave them up to uncleanness, allowing them to dishonor their bodies among themselves with impurity. For they had bartered the reality of God for what is unreal, and had offered divine honors and religious service to created things, rather than to the Creator—He who is forever blessed. Amen." Romans 1:19-25, Weymouth Translation.

Evolutionists, whether they realize it or not, in giving the credit of their existence to "birds or beasts or reptiles" are offering "divine honors and religious service to created things, rather than to the Creator." How discordant are the notes in the evolutionary song with that sung around the throne of the Creator by the celestial choir! Boasting of their superior numbers, wisdom, and scholarship, the exponents of an hypothesis, falsely termed science, are a small minority out of harmony with the ripened scientific wisdom of the whole universe. Their evolution jazz song disturbs the melody of the hallelujah chorus of all creation.

How sweet in the ears of the Creator and the worshipers around His throne must sound the harmonious notes in the song of the saints of earth as they join in giving to Him the praise and honor due His holy name!

If a man is unhappy, remember that his unhappiness is his own fault, for God made all men to be happy.—*Epicurus*.



"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." Isaiah 41:10.

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THIS is my favorite text, and it has been for more than half a score of years, because these Gibraltar promises, pregnant with meaning, have brought comfort and joy to my heart when inborn fear and outward circumstances had driven peace out of my life. There can be no peace, no calm, no confiding trust, where fear rules the heart. Fear is an enemy of God and man. But the first three words of this text, "Fear thou not," bear a very personal message to me when the black clouds of discouragement hang low. These words are so human, yet so divine, that one can almost hear the "Peace, be still" in them.

Why am I not to fear when stout hearts all about me are deeply troubled and perplexed over the turmoil of nations; when the active working of revolution and anarchy threaten stable governments with disaster, and a thousand dangers appear on the morning horizon? "For I am with thee" is the basis for my trust in Him. My attention is arrested, my heart beats slower as I ponder this

promised companionship amid these troubled times. He answers my unasked question by adding, "Be not dismayed; for I am thy God." What condescension is this! The Creator and Sustainer of the vast universe promises to be with me and to be my God! I am unworthy of the least of His notice, for I am a sinner, and by nature an enemy of God; but He asks to journey with me, and I am happy with Him.

Not only does the Lord promise to go with me, not only does He promise to be my God, but He pledges Himself to a task, and that task is to "strengthen," to "help," and to "uphold" me. He voluntarily agrees to help me in crushing the uprisings of self. He promises strength in beating back the waves of sin that seek to engulf me. He will uphold me with divine power even though dangers seen and unseen are lurking near; and when I appropriate these blessed promises to myself I shall be able to show others the grandeur and the glory of a life resting in God; for He promises all these things by the right hand of His righteousness.



The BREAKING of the SEVEN SEALS

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

NUMBER SIXTEEN

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

AND I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon." Revelation 5:1-4.

The vision of the previous chapter is here continued. The praise service ended, the prophet's attention is again attracted to the occupant of the throne. He sees a book, or scroll, in the right hand of Jehovah, which reaches through the veil of glory that envelops Him. It was a scroll of scrolls, or seven scrolls in one, each of which was firmly sealed. To conform to the description in the vision and to the custom of the time in the sealing of papyrus scrolls, the comma must be moved so that it reads: "A book [scroll] written within, and on the backside sealed with seven seals." The writing was within, and the seals without. The scrolls were sealed so that the contents of but one were revealed with the breaking of each seal.

WHO IS ABLE?

The mighty angel who heralds the challenge to all present and to the whole universe is doubtless one of the cherubims before the throne, and is probably Gabriel. With a loud voice he cries: "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" The challenge is greeted with profound silence. There is not an angel or creature in heaven or in earth who is worthy or able "to open the scroll or look within it." Emphatic Diaglott. The cherubims, seraphims, twenty-four elders, and the angelic host cease their singing, and a dead silence reigns. None step forward to take the book from the right hand of the Eternal.

The prophet John, realizing that the scroll must contain information of vital interest to the church, is so overcome with disappointment that he begins to weep. According to different translations, he "wept much," "wept long," "wept bitterly." Benson declared that "the Book of Revelation was not written without tears, neither without tears can it be understood." A few generations ago the Bible was practically a sealed book. The marvelous light that now shines from its

sacred pages has not come forth without penitential tears and diligent searchings of the Scriptures by Luther, Calvin, Knox, the Whitefields, Wesleys, and others. The walls of their study rooms were stained with prayer breaths and the carpets with tears. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

WHAT SECRETS?

What secrets were wrapped up in those seven scrolls? At the beginning of the vision the voice through the open door said to John: "Come up here, and I will show you things which are to happen in the future." Weymouth's Translation. Since the purpose of the vision was to reveal the future, we must conclude that the sealed scrolls contained records of future events. Who is able to break the seals that lock the future? Who is able to read the record of events wrapped up in the closed scroll of prophecy? "History is but the rolled scroll of prophecy."—Garfield. Prophecy, therefore, is the rolled scroll of history. The prophet's heart is almost broken because "no man is able" to break the seals of the seven rolled scrolls of history that was of such vital importance to the church.

Mr. Samuel Gompers, writing in McClure's Magazine a few years ago, said: "The future lies in the lap of the gods, and into that lap not even the wisest men of earth have been able to look." No palmist, clairvoyant, astrologer, or fortune teller is able to see the future further than their ability to guess or to fulfill their own predictions. No human being can actually see beyond the veil that separates the present from the future. Nor can angels, unaided by a member of the Godhead, see future events. Not one in all the angelic host before the throne offered to break the seals and unroll the scrolls of prophecy. Even Gabriel, who gave to Daniel, a captive in Babylon, and to John, a prisoner on Patmos, their wonderful prophetic visions, now remains silent and helpless. He is able to reveal future events to the prophets only as they are revealed to him by members of the Godhead. Angels must get their

revelations of the future from a higher source.

While Lucifer, the fallen angel, can reveal anything in the past, and, because of his vast experience and knowledge of human nature, can make fairly accurate predictions of the future, and, as in the case of the death of Saul, has power to fulfill many of them, he can not actually read our thoughts or see the future. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. This promise will be kept by the bow-encircled, covenant-keeping God, and, since the seven scrolls contain important secrets for the church, their seals must be broken and their contents revealed.

"And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, 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. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne." Revelation 5:5-7.

IN THE THRONE ROOM

Christ's earthly victory gave Him the exclusive right to do what no other being in the universe could do. "The Lion which belongs to the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed, and will open the book and break its seven seals." Weymouth's Translation. The Twentieth Century New Testament renders it: "The Lion conquered . . . and can therefore open the book with its seven seals."

In the vision Jesus is symbolized by "a Lamb as it had been slain," or, as given in other translations, "standing as if killed," "seemed to have been sacrificed," "looked as if He had been sacrificed." He is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." He is the One typified by the offering of Abel and by every sacrificial lamb slain in the Mosaic sanctuary service. The symbol of the slain Lamb indicates that Christ's sacrificial atonement on Calvary has an important part in the work of investigative judgment.

The location of the Lamb in the throne room is more definitely located by the two previously quoted translations: "Midway between the throne



"The importance of Calvary will grow as the eternal ages roll on."

and the four living creatures," or, "Within the space between the throne and the four creatures." Being the second person of the Trinity, Christ is where He belongs, next to Jehovah. The symbolic Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes. Horns are symbolic of power, and seven would doubtless represent perfection or plenitude of power. The seven eyes symbolize perfection of wisdom and foresight. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He sees all. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." 2 Chronicles 16:9.

The seven eyes are said to represent the "seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." While the solemn work of judgment is going on in heaven, a message will be heralded to all nations under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. By the final mighty outpouring of His Spirit, God will "convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8, margin. This final world-wide message is described in Revelation 14:6-14.

"And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 5:8-10.

The twenty-four elders are not only our redeemed fellow men but are declared to be a kingdom of priests assisting Christ in His work as the great High Priest. They offer the incense which represents "the prayers of God's people." Weymouth's Translation. How beautiful this picture, and how comforting to know that when we pray, our prayers are made fragrant to Jehovah by incense from golden vials in the hands of our own fellow creatures who were redeemed as the first fruits of the plan of salvation, and are now ministering for us before the throne!

A NEW SONG

Because they are the first fruits of Christ's victory, their song of redemption through His blood was never sung before they reached the sea of glass, and is therefore a new song. It is also new in the sense that it will never grow old because of its depth of meaning and the message it carries. The more the redeemed behold of the glories of the eternal world and realize the cost of their redemption, the more meaning they will see in the song of Calvary. Almost all the songs of earth grow old and lose their popularity; but not so with the song of Christ's redeeming love. Repetition will only make it sweeter and more melodious. The desire of unfallen worlds to hear it sung will result in a tour of the universe by the redeemed, to sing for them the hallelujah chorus of salvation, for none can sing it except the victors from earth's conflict. (See Revelation 14:1-5).

To one who still believes in the fundamentals of Christianity it is encouraging to know that while men on earth, even in the sacred desk, are discrediting the sacrificial atonement of Christ, around the throne of God in heaven our own fellow beings are singing the praises of the Lamb because by

His blood they have been redeemed "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

Notwithstanding their position around the throne, the twenty-four counselors are looking forward with glad anticipation to the time when they will be reunited with their earthly comrades, and "reign on the earth."

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Revelation 5:11, 12.

COUNTLESS ANGELS

The revelator sees and hears the voices of "countless angels," or "myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands," "in a circle of the throne." Emphatic Diaglott. (See also Daniel 7:9, 10.) Let us summarize the entire scene in the throne room. In the center is the throne of the Eternal, and beside it the sacrificed Lamb, symbolic of Christ. Surrounding them in their order are the seven blazing lamps representing the Holy Spirit; the four living creatures, or the cherubims and seraphims; the twenty-four elders; and last the "innumerable company of angels." This gives some idea of the size and glory of the heavenly temple. This is the supreme tribunal before which we all have a case pending. None can escape justice there; the judges are not respecters of persons, can not be bought, and from the decision rendered there can be no appeal.

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that liveth forever and ever." Revelation 5:13, 14.

THE REBELLION ENDED

Before the breaking of the seals and the unrolling of the scrolls with their fearful record of future events that would doubtless bring more tears and sorrow to the prophet, the Lord carries him in vision past intervening years and events to a sinless universe and restored Paradise when all created beings in all His vast dominion with one voice and in perfect harmony ascribe blessing, honor, glory, and power to Jehovah on the throne and to Christ the Lamb. There is no place left for an ever-burning hell with its writhing victims and their cursings and discords. Not one created being is out of harmony, and there is not one discordant note.

The "Amen" indicates that the rebellion is ended, the cruel reign of sin has closed forever its sad career, and

peace and harmony are again restored. The very picture should inspire every Christian to join the living creatures in saying "Amen," meaning, "So be it." Hasten on, glad day! O time, speed swiftly by, and come, happy day, when the church militant can join the heavenly choir in singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing"!

The importance of Calvary will grow as the eternal ages roll on, and the mighty chorus will swell with greater and still greater momentum. It will be the science and song of the redeemed throughout the endless ages. With such a never-ending song reminding them of the cost of their redemption, it will be impossible for sin to reënter and again mar the harmony and destroy the peace of the universe. No being while singing such a song can crucify afresh the Son of God, nor will the saints on earth now who learn to sing the first notes of the song of redeeming love. It will bring victory over sin, and give us the final privilege of joining the celestial chorus in the song that will never die.

SHALL WE FORCE PEOPLE INTO CHURCH?

(Continued from page 3)

keep the law of God, these holy precepts being written upon the fleshly tables of the heart. And all this is made possible through the life, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. The power of that resurrection life of His enables us to walk in newness of life in Him who came to *live* the law of God and *not* to destroy it. And Sunday keeping had no part in that sinless life He lived, by the which we are to be sanctified, saved; but the keeping holy of the seventh day did form a part of His righteous life.

"God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. . . . For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, *we shall be saved by His life.*" Romans 5:8-10.

And God's word still stands:

"The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Exodus 20:10. "The Sabbath was made [in Eden, Genesis 2:1-3] for man [the entire race], and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2:27, 28.

To secure God's holy Sabbath as well as the other nine precepts of the law written upon the hearts of the people (and not upon civil statute books), therefore, is the legitimate work of the church. When preachers stick to their legitimate business of making Christians through appealing to the consciences of men, by preaching the word of God, as they are commanded to do, laying upon their hearts the burden of becoming followers of the meek and lowly Christ through

principle, and of their own free choice, by the converting power of that word and the influence of God's Holy Spirit, not only will there be no need for appeal to worldly law-making bodies to enact laws seeking to compel adherence to some religious regulation, but it will also be found that this will be the "new covenant" method of filling God's house with worshipers, despite business, baseball, newspapers, moving picture shows, automobiles, or radios.

THE REAL REASON

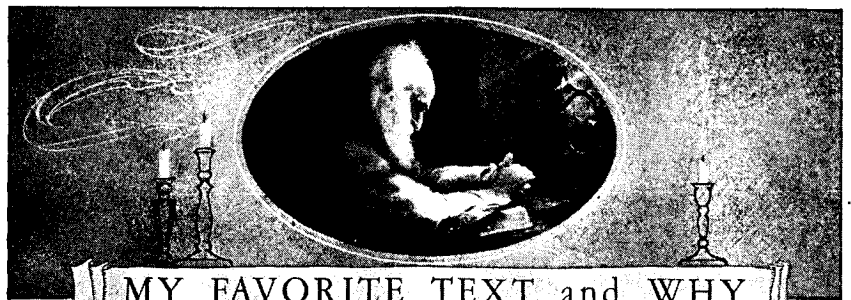
It is easy to lay nonattendance at church to amusements and outside attractions. The real reason, however, is that the word of God is not preached from the pulpit. In London recently a visiting minister from America, belonging to the denomination publishing this paper, the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, was hunting the place of a fellow preacher's meetings in North London. Alighting from a tram car near where he supposed the place to be, at first he thought himself mistaken as he saw a line of people for more than a block waiting to get into a large theater. Yet this proved to be the place. The preacher was using his Bible within that place of assemblage night after night, and that word (for which the multitude hungered) drew this large concourse of people. There were no empty seats in that assembly hall. In-

stead, all standing room was taken, with many turned away, unable to get in. And this instance of filling up places of worship through the preaching of the truths of God's word is not an isolated one, by any means.

"Preach the word," is God's instruction to ministers. This means that the word of God contains the gospel of salvation. What can not be found in the Bible has not salvation in it. If the Sunday Sabbath can not be found in the Scriptures, then it, too, acts no part in salvation. Yet "Preach the word" still stands, as also does that significant statement from Christ's own lips when He said, "In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matthew 15:9.

"MEN and women must be awakened to the duty of self-mastery, the need of purity, freedom from every depraving appetite and defiling habit. They need to be impressed with the fact that all their powers of mind and body are the gift of God, and are to be preserved in the best possible condition for His service."

Do not talk much, neither long at a time. Few can converse profitably above an hour. Keep at the utmost distance from pious chitchat, from religious gossiping.—John Wesley.



"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9, A. R. V.

FRED C. CLARK
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THERE are many helpful texts in the word of God; but the wonderful promises of forgiveness and cleansing found in 1 John 1:9 have made it my favorite. When I first sought my Saviour for the forgiveness of sin, I learned something of the meaning of the text, and ever since that happy hour it has been to me as a city of refuge. As soon as I realized I was a sinner and met the conditions specified, forgiveness and cleansing were mine; and as the blessed reality dawned on my darkened mind, joy unspeakable and full of glory filled my soul. It was then I knew I had passed from death unto life, and was a son of God. Being born again, I now desired to keep close to Jesus, my Elder Brother; so when He knocked at the door of my heart, I gladly let Him in.

Thus began our journey toward the heavenly city. He is so holy and I am so inclined to sin that I could not have gone very far with Him on this journey except for daily cleansing in His precious blood. All along the way He has never failed me; but every time I have needed and sought His cleansing, it has been granted; and thus we continue our walk together.

We have not yet reached the city; but when at last I have been made like Him, and He has presented me faultless with exceeding joy before the Father, the meaning of this beautiful text will be fully understood. For then I shall know as never before that it was only because my Redeemer was faithful and just to forgive my sins and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness that I was fitted to share in the overcomer's reward.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

STUDIES IN THE
BOOK OF REVELATION
NUMBER SEVENTEEN

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

THE revelator's vision of the four horsemen is one of gripping interest. In recent years it has been dramatized and put on the screen, and in this way has attracted public attention. It is a part of the great prophetic drama, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," and is one of the scenes in the greatest picture ever beheld by mortal man,—a scene filled with prophetic symbols of startling and momentous events.

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow: and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." Revelation 6: 1, 2.

OPENING THE FIRST SEAL

The breaking of the first seal revealed the future events contained in the first of the seven scrolls. As the seals were broken by Christ, the events recorded on each scroll were acted out. In Weymouth's Translation the horses and their riders are represented as appearing in answer to the call of the living creatures. "And I heard one of the four living creatures say, as if in a voice of thunder, Come. And I looked and a white horse appeared, and its rider carried a bow; and a victor's wreath was given to him; and he went out conquering and in order to conquer."

That the seven seals present symbols representing the changing conditions of the church from the time the apostles began their activities under the great gospel commission to the close of human probation is evidenced by a comparison of the wording of the first five seals with the history of the church covering those periods. The prophecy begins with the conquests of a pure, aggressive church, and closes with silence in heaven as the King of kings, accompanied by the angelic host, descends to gather the faithful of all the dark, intervening ages. While the letters to the seven churches cover the history of Christianity in a series of seven messages, the seven seals picture the same periods by use of symbols—one appealing to the ear and the other to the eye.

A WARRIOR VS. A CONQUERING ARMY

The reader must not confuse the unnamed horseman of the first seal with the rider of the nineteenth chapter. The first is a warrior going forth conquering and to conquer; the second pictures a triumphant conquering army. The first rider carries the bow of grace with which he sends to the heart darts of love that convict of sin; the weapon of the second is a mighty two-edged sword with which he smites and destroys the nations. The first rider with his victor's crown represents Christianity's first successful attack or charge against the forces of iniquity; while the horseman of the nineteenth chapter, crowned with many crowns, is leading the final "charge of the white brigade," which completes the conquest of the earth, and puts an end to rebellion.

The symbol used in the first seal is that of the fleetest and most effective fighting part of the armies of that age; namely, mounted archers, or bowmen. White, the symbol of purity and victory, represents the condition of the early church; and the

"wreath of victory," the success that crowned the efforts to conquer sin and possess its strongholds. It is a fitting and beautiful picture of the church in its purity and Pentecostal power, starting out to conquer the world.

Both sacred and profane history testify of the purity of the church and the rapid and triumphant success of Christianity during the apostolic period.

"Much of the history of the Christians in the first two centuries of the Christian era is very obscure. They spread far and wide throughout the world, but we know very little of their ideas or their ceremonies and



methods during that time. . . . But whatever their local differences, everywhere they seem to have carried much of the spirit of Jesus; and though everywhere they aroused bitter enmity and active counterpropaganda, the very charges made against them witness to the general goodness of their lives."—"The Outline of History," Wells, Vol. 1, page 590.

"Animated by an unparalleled missionary spirit, His [Christ's] followers traversed the length and breadth of the empire, preaching everywhere the 'glad tidings.' . . . In less than three centuries the pagan empire had become Christian not only in name, but also very largely in fact."—Myers, "General History," page 282.

Merivale's "History of the Romans" (chapter 54, Vol. 6) speaks of the early church as "a sect so unobtrusive as well as innocent," "presenting to surrounding paganism the first and purest of zeal beautified by character."

"The preachers of Christianity went forth from Judea for the moral conquest of the empire and the world. Much as we may admire the enthusiasm of the Jewish patriots, which does honor to our common humanity, still more freely may we sympathize with the inspiration of these soldiers of Christendom, who left fathers and mothers, home and country, and all the associations on which they had fed from infancy, for the glory of God and the love of a spiritual Redeemer."—Vol. 6, page 460.

From Volume 2, chapter 15, page 150, of Gibbon's "History of the Decline and Fall

of the Roman Empire," we glean the following facts as to the spread of Christianity and the probable number of its adherents by the close of the second century: "The progress of Christianity was not confined to the Roman Empire," but, "the new religion, within a century after the death of its divine Author, had already visited every part of the globe." As to numbers, the congregation at Rome had 50,000 members, and in Antioch, 100,000; or one fifth of its population were professed Christians. The historian thinks that a conservative estimate of the Christian population of the empire could safely be put at one twentieth of the total population, which would be about 5,000,000 in the empire alone.

That these estimates are very conservative is proved by the writings of Lucian and Pliny at the end of the first century. While governor of Pontus and Bithynia, Pliny wrote to the Emperor Trajan lamenting the magnitude of the "evil" of Christianity. He affirmed that the pagan temples were almost deserted, that the sacred victims scarcely found any purchasers, and that the "superstition" had not only infected the cities, but had even spread itself into the villages and open country of those two provinces.

Further, the fact that early in the fourth century Christianity became the religion of the empire shows the wonderful advancement it had made.

THE SECOND SEAL IS OPENED

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword." Revelation 6: 3, 4.

As in the first seal, the horse again symbolizes the condition of the church, and the rider its responsible leadership. Drifting away from the purity of the apostolic period, the church is rapidly taking on doctrines and practices characteristic of that rival of the church of Christ, symbolized in chapter seventeen, and designated "Babylon the Great."

The apostle Paul warned the churches under his care of the dangers then at hand (Acts 20: 28-30; 2 Thessalonians 2: 3-7), and history attests to the fact that his predictions were true and his warnings timely.

"During this indefinite time a considerable amount of a sort of *theocrasia* seems to have gone on between the Christian cult and the almost equally popular and widely diffused Mithraic cult, and the cult of Serapis-Isis-Horus. From the former it would seem the Christians adopted Sun-day as their chief day of worship instead of the Jewish Sabbath, the abundant use of candles in religious ceremonies. . . . The contributions of the Alexandrine cult to Christian thought and practices were even more considerable. In the personality of Horus, . . . it was natural for the Christians to find an illuminating analogue in their struggles with the Pauline mysteries. From that to the identification of Mary with Isis."—"The Outline of History," Wells, Vol. 1, pages 590, 591.

"The bottom questions which he [Constantine] had to confront were essentially

religious. His great principle of action looked to the union of one body of the Christian and the pagan populations of the empire. . . . A persecution broke out, in which one body of the Christians became the persecutors of the other. The bloody bitterness of paganism was paralleled by the intolerance born of fanaticism among the believers."—*Ridpath's "History of the World," Vol. 3, page 329.*

Gibbon, in Volume 4, chapter 47, of his "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," tells the story of these bloody struggles which lasted for 250 years.

The rider of the red horse took "peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another." The love, peace, and harmony of the apostolic period gave place to confusion, dissension, strife, bitter hatred, and persecution. They fought over the nature of Christ, the incarnation, the Trinity, as well as over positions in the church.

A NEW BATTLE STANDARD

Before closing our comments on the second seal, which certainly had its fulfillment by the close of the fourth century, let us briefly view the church of this period from the other angle mentioned in the prophecy. "And there was given unto him a great sword." What sword is here referred to—the mighty two-edged sword of the Spirit, or the sword of Cæsar? The following authentic historical comment on the period will suffice to answer the question: "This act of Constantine [using the Christian cross as his standard] constituted a turning point in the history of the Roman Empire, and especially in that of the Christian church. Christianity had come into the world as a religion of peace and good will. The Master had commanded His disciples to put up the sword, and had forbidden its use by them either in the spread or in the defense of the new faith. For three centuries now His followers had obeyed literally this injunction of the Founder of the church, so that a Quaker, nonmilitary spirit had up to this time characterized the new sect. By many of the early Christians the profession of arms had been declared to be incompatible with the Christian life. Now in a moment all this was changed. The most sacred emblem of the new faith was made a battle standard, and into the new religion was infused the military spirit of the imperial government that had made that emblem the ensign of the state. From the day of the battle of Milvian Bridge a martial spirit has animated the religion of the Prince of Peace. Since then Christian warriors have often made the cross their battle standard. This infusion into the church, of the military spirit of Rome was one of the most important consequences of the espousal of the Christian cause by the Emperor Constantine."—*Myers, "General History," pages 300, 301.*

The great sword in the hand of the rider of the red horse was the sword of the Roman Empire, delivered to the church in the days of Constantine when the church and state were united. It was the church of the apostolic period that was given the sword of the Spirit and Pentecostal power. When the church, because of her backslidings and apostasies, lost the sword and power of the Spirit, she sought for and obtained the sword of Cæsar and the power of civil authority. The first horse and rider symbolizes the church starting out from Pentecost in the conquest of the world, clothed with the armor of heaven and equipped with spiritual weapons by which men are persuaded to surrender. The second pictures the sad change that stripped the church of its Pentecostal power, and the

attempt to conquer the world by the power of carnal weapons.

Woe to the church and to the world when the sword of the state is substituted for the sword of the Spirit! The fearful consequences are graphically portrayed by the two remaining Apocalyptic horsemen, and should serve as a dreadful warning to modern Christendom.

THE STAGGERING NARCOTICS PROBLEM

(Continued from page 2)

dicts in the United States, just as every class has cancer.

There are those who state in vehement language that all we need to do to cure the nation of addiction is to restore liquor. The claim that Prohibition drove drinkers to drugs was recently investigated by several committees before which were called many doctors and jurists in large cities like Chicago and New York; and their unanimous report was that of the many thousands of addicts who came before them, not one in a hundred had used liquor in any form at any time. All evidence goes to show that those who use liquor do not care for drugs, and will not take drugs to supply its lack, but will endeavor to secure the drink in some way; and, on the other hand, addicts never take to liquor when unable to get the drug, but will commit any crime in order to secure the drug. The two habits may run parallel in the body politic, but do not cause each other.

The narcotics problem, then, is a highly complicated one, and can not be solved by a few jaunty phrases. True, if we could control the source of the poison supply, if the nations of the world would get together and agree to produce only the amount actually necessary for the scientific and medicinal needs of the world, the problem would be solved so far as creating new addicts is concerned. But we would still have the problem of the million victims in this country, and many millions in other countries,—all sick people, and all needing intelligent care.

How do we come to have a narcotics problem, anyway? This subject will be considered in succeeding articles.

SIGNS of the TIMES

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Advocating a return to the simple gospel of Christ, and a preparation for His imminent second appearing

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MEAT EATING AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

(Continued from page 9)

from vegetable sources, must be used very sparingly, among which are eggs, cheese of all kinds, nuts, beans and other legumes, macaroni, etc. Breads and other cereal products should be supplemented by very liberal amounts of fruit and green vegetables. Milk may be used freely. Those who desire to eat meat must admit that even the healthiest flesh food, as free as possible from infections, causes a loss of working efficiency; is the basic factor in premature old age, in degeneration of the vital organs,—especially the blood vessels and kidneys, producing high blood pressure, apoplexy, and Bright's disease; and is the occasion of many sudden deaths in persons apparently in good health. Meat eating does not usually produce external appearances of disease. It undermines the health by degeneration of the vital parts of the body, and this insidiously. It is therefore the more deceptive.

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The Black and the Pale Apocalyptic Horse

The warning voice from the martyred dead

AFTER the startling revelations of future events as pictured by the symbolic horsemen of the first two seals, with what breathless interest the prophet, the twenty-four elders, and the angelic host must have awaited the breaking of the third seal! As "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" broke the seal and unrolled the scroll, the authoritative "Come" of the third seraphim brought to view another apocalyptic horse and its rider.

"And when He had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." Revelation 6: 5, 6.

THE MIDNIGHT OF THE WORLD

Black is just the opposite of white, and is incapable of reflecting light. It is symbolic of evil, error, sorrow, defeat, and moral and spiritual darkness, and fitly represents the semipagan church of the Dark Ages. Pure, unadulterated Christianity, symbolized by the white horse, gives place to baptized paganism. The church's compromise with the world has become complete; the faith once delivered to the saints is corrupted; the sword of Cæsar has become her only weapon, and is bathed in the blood of martyrs. The smothering of the gospel light has ushered in the midnight of the world.

Note the following from Gibbon's "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire:" "The sublime and simple theology of the primitive Christians was gradually corrupted; and the monarchy of heaven, already clouded by metaphysical subtleties, was degraded by the introduction of a popular mythology, which tended to restore the reign of polytheism."

Following this statement, we are told that as early as the fifth century the church services were a duplicate of those held in the pagan temples. "The Christians of the seventh century had insensibly relapsed into a semblance of paganism; their public and private vows were addressed to the relics and images that disgraced the temples of the East; the throne of the Almighty was darkened by a cloud of martyrs, and saints, and angels, the objects of popular veneration."—*Id.*

At this early date the Virgin Mary was invested with "the name and honors of a goddess." "The worship of images had stolen into the church by insensible degrees, and each petty step was pleasing to the superstitious

Studies in the Book of Revelation

NUMBER EIGHTEEN

TAYLOR G. BUNCH



mind, as productive of comfort and innocent sin. But in the beginning of the eighth century, in the full magnitude of the abuse, the more timorous Greeks were awakened by an apprehension, that under the mask of Christianity, they had restored the religion of the fathers."—*Id.*

"A PAIR OF BALANCES IN HIS HAND"

The rider had "a pair of balances in his hand." This doubtless refers to the long contest between the civil rulers and the bishops, known in history as "The Investiture Contest," to determine whether the church or the state should dominate in the matters of government. This balancing between a "world king" and a "world priest," which finally was decided in favor of the latter, is very concisely told in Myers' "Medieval and Modern History," chapter II, beginning on page III.

Balances are also symbolic of judgment. "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" was the message of doom on the palace wall of Belshazzar. The balances in the hand of the rider of the black horse indicates that the church has entered politics and its bishops have become judges of civil as well as religious questions. The church instead of the Scriptures has become the sole and supreme judge of religious faith and practice. Her chief bishop "as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thessalonians 2:4. From his decisions even kings had no appeal.

THE "WHEAT" AND THE "BARLEY"

The voice that John heard came, not from the rider, but from the midst of the four living creatures, or from the throne. The price of two different grains was given, one being three times as valuable as the other. The note on the price of the wheat in the

American Standard Bible says that it implies "great scarcity." In the parable of the wheat and the tares Christ calls the wheat "the children of the kingdom." In harmony with this interpretation, during the period covered by the third seal, there must have been a "great scarcity" of true children of the kingdom. There was, however, a much cheaper grade of believers, who were more plentiful. The symbol might also represent the commercial spirit that had entered the church and dominated it during that period. The house of prayer, like the temple in Jerusalem at the time of Christ, had become a place of merchandise, of buying and selling. Enormous profits were made from the sale of relics of all sorts, the administering of the ordinances, burials, etc. The church had become a great commercial enterprise.

The command from the throne, "See thou hurt not the oil and the wine," indicates God's solicitude for the Spirit and the Word, which were in danger during that period. Notwithstanding the corruption in the church, the suppression of the Scriptures and the consequent Dark Ages in Europe, the Holy Spirit continued His work for mankind, and His fruits still witnessed to the world that the promise of Christ is sure and can not be abridged, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

THE OPENING OF THE FOURTH SEAL

"And when He had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." Revelation 6: 7, 8.

Pale is an unnatural color symbolic of sickness and death. The leaders of the church had so far departed from the gospel that made them the ministers of life that they became the ministers of death, with power to slay the fourth part of the earth. "His rider's name was Death, and the Lord of the Palace of Death rode behind him." Twentieth Century New Testament. This is a terrible but true picture of the fallen, backslidden, persecuting church of the Middle Ages, when she dominated the civil power and used it to advance her interests.

From Barnes' "General History," page 321, we learn that for centuries the papacy kept gaining strength until, finally, "a new Rome rose from the ashes of the old, far mightier than the

vanished empire, for it claimed dominion over the spirits of men."

In "The Outline of History" by H. G. Wells, we are told that the papacy was an attempt at world dominion through religion, to do what Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon, Charles V, and others attempted by civil and military power, but failed. With this policy in view, it would logically follow that dissenters would be suppressed. This world power, controlling every state and nation in the "fourth part of the earth"—Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia, besides influences far beyond that—killed, by the various means named in the text, dissenters approximating three fourths of the present population of the United States. The papacy called them "heretics," but God designated them "the saints of the Most High." Daniel 7: 25. This period of bloody persecution is given prominent mention in Bible prophecy. (See Revelation 12: 6, 13, 14; 13: 7; Daniel 7: 21, 25; 11: 33.)

This is indeed a dark picture, but no darker than the reality. It is the testimony of the "True Witness," corroborated by the response of history. Christ, speaking of this period to His disciples, said: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matthew 24: 21, 22.

We may be thankful that these terrible persecutions of the church are in the past; but her trials are not over. The fifth scroll foretells the death of other victims whose blood would join in the protest of all martyred saints against the use of the sword of Cæsar to enforce the dogmas of an ecclesiastical tyranny, and to punish dissenters.

THE FIFTH SEAL IS 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.

We must not lose sight of the fact that the seven seals present a history of the church, that the prophet is witnessing the unscrolling of future events on earth, and that the language used is highly figurative. That the altar is also symbolic is evident, for it would be impossible for millions of martyrs to be shut up under a literal altar. In the Mosaic tabernacle service there were two altars,—the altar of incense in the holy place, and the altar of burnt offerings in the court. The sacrificial

victims were all slain in the court at the foot of the altar of burnt offerings. "At the foot of the altar" is where John saw the martyred saints, according to Weymouth's Translation. There their blood had been spilled for the cause of Christ.

The Mosaic sanctuary and its services were typical of the heavenly. (Hebrews 8: 1-5). In the holy place of the heavenly temple is the altar of incense (Revelation 8: 3, 4), but the altar where Christ, the antitypical Lamb, was slain and His blood shed as an atonement for sin, was on this earth, which, according to Revelation 11: 1, 2, is the court of the heavenly sanctuary. Dr. Adam Clarke, commenting on our text, said: "The altar is upon earth, not in heaven." True to the type, Jesus, the Lamb of God, was slain "without the gate" in the court, and for three days remained in the tomb under the altar of sacrifice, His blood crying for vengeance.

This earth is the altar on which the martyrs gave their lives in sacrifice; and under the altar, in their graves, they were bidden to wait patiently till others were slain in future persecutions and the great judgment should take vengeance on the inhabitants of the earth for their blood.

A CRY FOR VENGEANCE

Many find it difficult to harmonize this cry for vengeance from the martyred saints with the spirit of Christ when He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," and of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, who with his dying breath prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their



Following

ROBERT HARE

I want to follow where my Saviour leads the way,
And, following, share His peace from day to day;
Catching the vision of that life divine,
His will will glorify this life of mine.

I want to follow where His footsteps mark the steep;
However thorny, He has pledged to keep
The trusting spirit till all tempests cease,
And heaven, at last, is reached in perfect peace.

I want to follow though my fellow man should fling
His bitterest curse across the way; my King
Points to the blood-marked prints, and in their view,
Pledges a confidence divinely true.

I want to follow, knowing well the way at last
Must lead, when every troubled dream is past,
To perfect rest beside the Victor's throne,
Where love will know as it is known!

charge." It is also out of harmony with the attitude of the prophets and saints of all ages toward their enemies.

This figurative language is plain in the light of the Lord's statement to Cain after he had killed Abel: "What hast, thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." Genesis 4: 10. In like manner the blood of a hundred million martyrs cries for justice to the One who says, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Rom. 12: 19.

The white robes were doubtless given them in the same sense that Paul's crown of righteousness was his on the day of his martyrdom, but was "laid up" in reserve until the appearing of Jesus and the redemption of his body. (See 2 Timothy 4: 6-8.) The white robes might also represent the change of sentiment toward those who thus gave their lives for their faith. Many who died heretics were later venerated as saints.

The fifth seal symbolizes the period of the Reformation, when the people and nations of Europe began to awake to the real nature of the papal power. The cry to God for vengeance would be the logical result of the dawning of knowledge that the waning influence of the papacy would release.

The blind poet, Milton, while prime minister to Cromwell, expressed in verse not only the cry for vengeance from the martyred dead, but from the awakening living who were being set free from the spiritual bondage which had enslaved the world during the Middle Ages:

"Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints,
whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains
cold;
Even them who kept Thy truth so pure
of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks
and stones,
Forget not: in Thy book record their
groans
Who were Thy sheep, and in their an-
cient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that
rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks.
Their moans
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
A hundredfold, who, having learned Thy
way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

THE Saviour identifies Himself with every child of humanity. That we might become members of the heavenly family, He became a member of the earthly family. He is the Son of man, and thus a brother to every son and daughter of Adam. His followers are not to feel themselves detached from the perishing world around them. They are a part of the great web of humanity, and heaven looks upon them as brothers to sinners as well as saints.

—Mrs. E. G. White.

The Breaking of the SIXTH and SEVENTH SEALS

THE sixth and seventh seals of the Apocalypse are inseparable, therefore they should be considered together. (See Revelation 6:12-17; 8:1.) It is evident from the language employed that no symbols are used in picturing the events of the last two seals. Their literal language describes and definitely locates events that can not be symbolized and that reach to the second advent of Christ. The sixth scroll contains a prophecy of great physical disturbances and astronomical wonders that would harbinger the approaching day of God's wrath, for which the blood of a hundred million martyrs has been calling.

THE LISBON EARTHQUAKE

"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." Revelation 6:12, 13.

In answer to the question of the disciples, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Jesus replied:

"Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:10, 11, 25-28.

The great earthquake that definitely marked the opening of the sixth seal occurred November 1, 1755, and is known as the Lisbon earthquake. This was the first of the great modern earthquake disasters, and until then the greatest recorded by man. It shook all of Europe and Africa, and was felt even in America. It doubtless shook the whole globe. Lisbon, with a population of 150,000, was almost completely destroyed. There were 90,000 deaths as a result of the quake and the tidal wave.

ALMOST ALWAYS TREMBLING

The Lisbon earthquake was the beginning of a series of earth disturbances that would harbinger the approaching day of God. According to the prophecy, they would occur "in divers places." A recent dispatch from Washington says: "Frequent earthquakes in North and South America and Europe during the last few months have puzzled government scientists. Geologists recognize that the earth's surface is in a state of continual unrest."

Earthquake statistics reveal an alarming increase during recent years. During the first half of the nineteenth century there were 3,240 recorded earthquakes, or an average of 64 a year. The next 18 years brought a record of 5,000, or 277 a year. From 1858 to 1908, 130,000 earthquakes

Followed by confusion on earth and silence in heaven

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION NUMBER NINETEEN

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

were recorded, or an average of 2,600 each year. During the year 1907 there were 5,000 earthquakes. A few years ago a geologist announced that since the San Francisco earthquake the seismograph has shown that not an hour has passed when the earth was not in a quiver. The present estimate, however, is an earth shock on an average of every half hour; and a geologist said recently, "Our globe is trembling somewhere nearly all the time."

The last six years has brought us the three greatest earthquakes known in history. In December, 1920, one occurred in Central China that literally shook the globe. The quake caused great landslides that wiped out whole villages and towns, engulfing under the falling hills numbers that will never be known. The Chinese official report announced a million deaths, and the most conservative foreign computation put it at 200,000, ranking it as "the most destructive in the history of the world." In September, 1923, the Japanese earthquake laid low the proud cities of Tokyo and Yokohama, and snuffed out more than 200,000 lives. An island with an 8,000-foot volcano disap-

peared in the Pacific Ocean, and a new one arose thirty miles in length and fifteen in width. The third of the big three was in November, 1926, in Armenia. A report declared: "The Armenian earthquake is unique in seismic history, because it continued for fifteen days, averaging five shocks daily, with five major shocks of the intensity of nine on the seismic scale of ten. The development of fissures of unknown depth and sulphur springs and a fifteen-foot recession of the foothills, Russian scientists say, indicate a disturbance of the greatest importance in the earth's crust."

These earth disturbances will increase until the climax is reached in the mighty apocalyptic quake at the second coming of Christ, when "the cities of the nations" fall, islands sink, mountains tremble and disappear, and "the whole land shall be desolate." (See Revelation 16:17-20; Jeremiah 4:23-28.) In that day when everything will be shaken that can be shaken, every earthly structure will go down in the crash except the storm-, fire-, and earthquake-proof character buildings erected on the solid rock of God's eternal word.

DARKENING OF THE SUN AND MOON

Soon after the Lisbon earthquake another event of world importance was to herald the advent of Christ. "The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood." This remarkable astronomical phenomenon occurred May 19, 1780, and is known in history as "The Dark Day." Of that event, Herschel, the great astronomer of that time, said: "The dark day in North America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which will always be read with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain."

Noah Webster's dictionary, edition 1869, says: "The Dark Day, May 19, 1780—so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England. . . . Birds sang their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost, cattle sought the barnyard; and candles were lighted in the houses. . . . The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known."

Dr. Adams, a witness, said: "Almost every one who happened to be out in the evening got lost in going home. The darkness was as uncommon in the night as it was in the day, as the moon had fullled the day before." In the light of the above statement notice the rendering of the text in other translations: "The moon, which was at its full, [became] like blood." Twentieth Century New Testament. "And the whole disk of the moon became like blood." Weymouth's translation. There were no forest fires or clouds, and it could not have been an eclipse. Those who saw it declared that the moon had the appearance of a great ball of blood. It has never been satisfactorily explained on a scientific basis.

The next event in the forecast was the falling of the stars, which took place November 13, 1833. It was the greatest shower of shooting meteors known in history, and emanating as they seemed to from one place in the heavens, they gave the appearance of a great umbrella or "as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."



"Islands sink, mountains tremble and disappear, and 'the whole land shall be desolate.'"

Note the following: "The scene was truly awful; for never did rain fall much thicker than the meteors fell towards the earth; east, west, north, and south, it was the same. In a word, the whole heavens seemed in motion." "Arago computes that not less than 240,000 meteors were at the same time visible above the horizon of Boston." And of the display at Niagara it is said that "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."—"Our First Century," page 330.

"The extent of the shower of 1833 was such as to cover no inconsiderable part of the earth's surface; from the middle of the Atlantic on the east to the Pacific on the west, and from the northern coast of South America to undefined regions among the British possessions on the north, the exhibition was visible, and everywhere presented nearly the same appearance."—Professor Olmstead of Yale College.

THESE SIGNS AND THEIR TIME FORETOLD

It is significant that the last generation should be announced and ushered in by three events that could not help attracting the attention of all mankind. The earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars—all that is known or visible to man—were used as signs to herald the greatest event of all the ages. So important are these events that they were forecast by several prophets in different generations. The prophet Joel more than two and a half millenniums ago wrote: "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." Joel 2: 30, 31.

Jesus in His sermon on the Mount of Olives definitely located the time for these signs in the heavens: "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." "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Matthew 24: 29; Mark 13: 24-26.

The days of papal supremacy, as given in seven Bible prophecies and corroborated in history, were 1260 years, or from 538 to 1798 A. D. Christ promised that "for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matthew 24: 22. The persecution ceased soon after the middle of the eighteenth century. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days," or "in those days, after that tribulation," the sun was to be darkened; and the event occurred on time with an almost startling precision.

Continuing, Jesus declared that as the budding fig tree was a sure evidence of approaching summer, the appearance of these signs in the sun, moon, and stars, and on the earth would be an indication to the church that His coming was "near, even at the doors;" and He added: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." (See Matthew 24: 29-34.) While Jesus warned the church against any attempt to set a definite date for His return, He Himself set the generation and definitely located its beginning with the time when the church, because of the study of prophecy, would see these

events as signs of His soon return and would begin to herald a warning message to the world.

EVENTS YET TO BE FULFILLED

"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: 14-17.

Following the signs in the heavens, the revelator pictures the great day of God's wrath and a scene of the utmost confusion among the inhabitants of the earth. The atmospheric heavens roll back as a scroll, and Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords descends with His angelic host. The unprepared world, who have made nature their god, now pray to the falling rocks and trembling mountains, caused by the mighty earthquake, to hide them from the face of the One whose warning message they have refused to heed. Their very cry of distress condemns them, for it indicates that they have heard the warning and recognize the event.

THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL

"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Revelation 8: 1. What a contrast to the noise and confusion revealed in the sixth scroll! It is like the calm that follows a terrific storm. Why the silence? At the time of the vision of the seven seals, John declared that the four living creatures "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." He also heard the songs of praise of the twenty-four elders and the innumerable angelic host around the throne, accompanied by the golden harps. The courts of glory now ring with music and songs of praise. Why does it suddenly cease? For two reasons. First, because there can be no joy even in heaven during the awful day of God's vengeance, the execution of His righteous judgment. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Ezekiel 33: 11. The day of recompense fills all the universe with sorrow. Angels cease their singing and weep as the righteous sentence against the rebel host is executed.

The second cause for silence is explained by the fact that all the angelic host accompany Christ as He descends to earth to

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

THE WORLD'S PROPHETIC WEEKLY

Advocating a return to the simple gospel of Christ, and a preparation for His imminent second appearing

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execute judgment and to deliver His people. The twenty-four elders, who were redeemed from the earth and have been assisting Christ in the work of judgment, doubtless come also to greet and welcome their fellow saints as they are resurrected or translated.

The silence continues one half hour of prophetic time, or seven and one half days, the time required to descend to earth and execute the sentence against the wicked. Then the silence will be forever broken by the shouts of victory and the grand hallelujah chorus of salvation that will reach through all creation and never die. Even nature can no longer hold its peace. "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Isaiah 55: 12.

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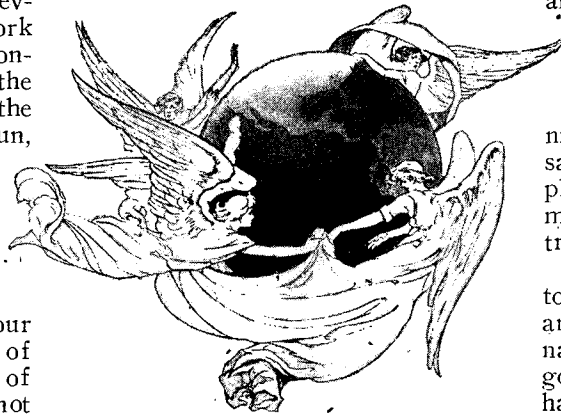
The Angels Holding the Demons of War

The Mighty Angel with a Sealing Message

*Studies in the Book
of Revelation*

NUMBER TWENTY

TAYLOR G. BUNCH



THE chronology of the events of the seventh chapter of Revelation is established beyond question. The previous chapter closes with the events of the sixth seal, and the seventh seal is brought to view in the first verse of the eighth chapter. Chapter seven, therefore, is thrown in parenthetically between the sixth and seventh seals, picturing as it does a work that must be done in the earth in connection with the sixth, and before the seventh seal is broken. Between the fulfillment of the signs in the sun, moon, stars, and earth and the coming of Christ, a final message is to go to all the world, finishing the gospel commission and sealing a people for God's future kingdom of glory.

"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the 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." Revelation 7: 1-3.

THE FOUR ANGELS

That symbolic language is here employed is evident, even to the casual reader. The four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, representing the four points of the compass, indicates that their work is world-wide in its influence. "Wind," in symbolic prophecy, signifies war, political strife, and turmoil; and "sea" fitly represents the sea of humanity, or "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." (See Revelation 17: 1, 15.)

Daniel in vision saw the four great universal empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome arise into power symbolized by four great beasts coming up out of the sea, as the result of great storms on the waters. (See Daniel 7; also Jeremiah 51: 1, 2, 11; 25: 31-33.) It is not at all strange that the Lord should employ these symbols, for they are common also to man. We often speak of "the sea of humanity" and represent war as a storm. Lloyd George spoke of the World War as a "hurricane;" and another writer, in speaking of the signs of approaching war, said, "It is a dull ear indeed that can not hear the mutterings of the coming storm." Clemenceau declared that the peace that followed the Arm-

istice was only "a lull in the storm."

"The four winds" would indicate world war; that if it were not for the restraining influence of the heaven-sent messengers, war would break out in all quarters of the earth. When the four angels let go their hold and withdraw their restraining influence, there will be a world-war conflagration. The pent-up fury of demons and nations will break forth in the dreadful Armageddon conflict.

THE TWO UNSEEN INFLUENCES

Two mighty but unseen influences are at work in the world. Speaking of the demons of war, John wrote: "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. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Revelation 16: 13, 14, 16.

Demons, or evil angels, are the war lords of Armageddon. They are responsible for the winds of war and strife. They are busy preaching their messages of hate, envy, and jealousy, in all the councils of men. Satan, the prince of this world, is the great war lord, and since his rebellion in heaven his chief occupation has been to promote war, strife, and contention. In this he has been very successful.

Through the influence of these demons of war, twenty peace conferences have been broken up since the signing of the Armistice, and the world is seething with hate, suspicion, and jealousy. The great Italian historian, Ferrero, said recently: "Europe is to-day filled with hatreds and fears. Every people fears and hates its neighbor, but no people seems aware that a universal apocalyptic peril is suspended over the world."

Sir Edward Grey of England recognized the real cause of war when he said: "It is really as if, in the atmosphere of the world, there were some mischievous influence at work which troubles and excites every part of it."

The *Washington Post*, in an editorial during the mobilization of the armies for the Great War, said: "The nations hurry on toward an unknown goal, as if moved by a mighty unseen hand. Kaisers, czars, kings, and presidents are powerless to stop the march of destiny, and the efforts of legislators to check or divert the moving mass are pitifully impotent."

THE WINDS ARE HELD

But how often the nations have been on the very verge of war, with seemingly nothing to prevent it, when suddenly and unexpectedly the storm clouds passed away, and peace was restored. The sudden ending of the World War was because the angels of peace were fulfilling their commission and had again taken control of the winds of strife which, for a time, had broken loose. Woe to the world when these heavenly ambassadors of peace withdraw their constraining power and the demons of war are given full control! Then there will be such scenes of strife and confusion as no pen can picture; then will take place the gathering of the legions for the final fiery trial of the nations in the cyclonic war storm of Armageddon, from which human civilization shall not survive.

The prophet Jeremiah, when given a vision of this dreadful scene, cried out, "My anguish, my anguish! I am pained at my very heart; my heart is disquieted in me; I can not hold my peace; because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is laid waste: suddenly are my tents destroyed, and my curtains in a moment. How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?" Jeremiah 4: 19-21, A. R. V. Then follows a picture of the great day of the Lord.

Other prophets have attempted to describe conditions on earth during the fearful Armageddon war when the angels of mercy have departed, and all the imps of earth and hell are turned loose for a rampage through the world; but human language is impotent to picture scenes that beggar all description.

But why are the angels commissioned to hold in check the winds of war? In the vision of the revelator, it seems that the four angels are about to loose their hold on the winds of strife when another angel descends from heaven "having the seal of the living God" and with a voice of authority commands the four angels to continue their restraining work a little longer, "till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

A HEAVEN-SENT MESSAGE

That the angel with the seal of God is symbolic of a heaven-sent message just before the final Armageddon war scourge, there can be no question. In the book of Revelation an angel heralding a message to the world is always symbolic of a heaven-sent gospel message preached by the church of Christ. (See Revelation 10:1-7; 14:6-14; 18:1-5.) All these scriptures picture different phases of the same final warning message to the world just before the dogs of war are turned loose to accomplish their terrible work of destruction.

Before the seal of the seventh scroll is broken, the servants of God must be sealed for the kingdom. In the Douay Version the word "sign" is used instead of "seal;" and the Swedish Bible declares that they are "marked with a seal." In chapter fourteen and the first verse, the same company is pictured on Mount Zion with the Lamb, "having His Father's name written in their foreheads."

A glance at the definitions of these terms will show that the words "seal," "sign," "mark," and "name" are synonymous. God signs, marks, or seals, with His name. Name signifies character, therefore those who receive the seal of God have gotten the victory over every sin, and the image, or character, of God is written in their foreheads, or minds. They have the mind of Christ, "and in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:5.

What is the sign, or seal, of the living God that is placed only in the minds, or hearts, of those who have the name, or character, of God? "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Ephesians 4:30. The work of the Holy Spirit is to convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and to guide into all truth. (John 16:7-13.) Since sin is the transgression of divine law (1 John 3:4), the work of the Holy Spirit is to bring transgressors into complete harmony with God's law,—the sum-

mary of all truth, the standard of His righteousness, the rule of His judgment. God's law is the expression of His character, and those who reflect His image will have the law written in the heart and will obey it in the life. They will be victors over sin.

SEAL OF THE LAW

But every law, to be authentic, must have a seal, and that seal must contain the name of the lawgiver, the authority for enacting the law, and its jurisdiction. A study of the Decalogue will reveal the fact that the fourth commandment alone contains the essentials of a seal. Tear that commandment from the law, and you remove its seal, or mark of authority. It is the only one of the ten that identifies the lawgiver as Jehovah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. As Creator, He has the right to enact laws binding on all His creatures in His dominion,—the heavens and the earth. Without this seal, the whole law loses its authority, and may be claimed as the law of any false deity or human power.

Those who observe the Sabbath of the Decalogue as the memorial of a finished creation, indicate by so doing that they worship the Creator of the universe, and are obedient to all His commands. In unmistakable language the Lord declares that the Sabbath is His sign and seal. "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on

the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31:15-17. The Sabbath is here declared to be a part of the perpetual, or everlasting, covenant.

"Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." "And hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20:12, 20. The Sabbath is a sign of the true God, the Creator. Had it always been faithfully observed, idolatry never would have entered the world, and the false evolutionary philosophy would have been unknown. But the Sabbath is not only a memorial of the original creation but of the re-creation, or redemption. Sanctification, holiness, conversion, and redemption are inseparable.

A MESSAGE OF SABBATH REFORM

Because the Jews lost sight of the real meaning of the Sabbath and because many to-day do not understand the significance of Sabbath keeping, and hang out a false sign to the world, are not arguments against the Sabbath's being God's sign of sanctification, or a holy life. Only the person who "keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil" (Isaiah 56:2) is a true Sabbath observer, and has the seal, or character, of God. All Sabbath-keeping sinners are deceiving themselves, and are displaying a false sign to the world.

The sealing message of Revelation seven, therefore, is a message of Sabbath reform, and thus of life reform, bringing a people into complete harmony with God's law and character so that they can stand on Mount Zion before the throne of God "without fault." Their victory over sin is complete, and the sign of their holiness is their observance of the Sabbath, the sign, or seal, of the living God and His eternal, unchangeable rule of conduct.

The correctness of this interpretation is corroborated by a present world-message calling God's people back to "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," which embraces obedience to all the commandments of the law, including the Sabbath of creation.

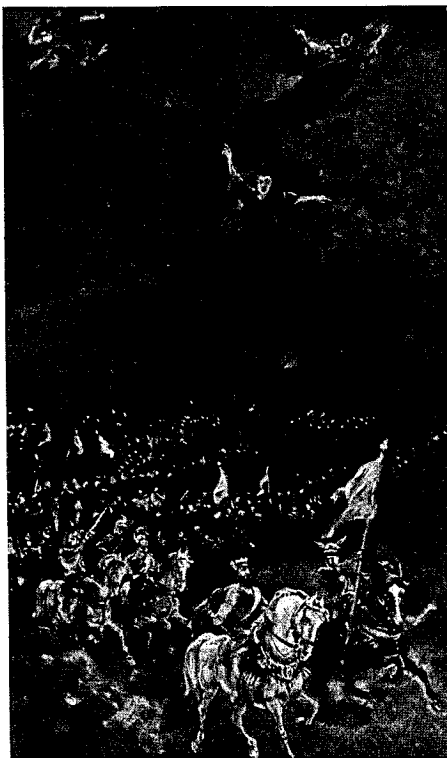
What will be your attitude toward this heaven-sent sealing message that closes the gospel harvest? Consider well before rejecting it.

CHRISTIANITY WITNESSES TO CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

(Continued from page 8)

boldly charge the Jewish leaders with the murder of the innocent Christ. Had there been any deception, had there been any question, some one of the soldiers, of their enemies, or of the five hundred witnesses would have arisen to refute and expose the fraud.

But no voice is heard in opposition; even the rulers are stunned and speech-



"Thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."

The 144,000 Their Triumphs and Reward

Studies in the Book of Revelation

NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

scendants of Abraham, were broken off because of unbelief, and branches from the wild olive tree were grafted into their place; these, partaking "of the root and fatness" of the Israel stock, yield the fruit of the tame olive, "contrary to nature." The conclusion of Paul's argument is, "and so all Israel shall be saved."

THE TWELVE TRIBES

In his letter to the Galatian church, Paul declared: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:29. He also stated that all who are new creatures in Christ Jesus are of "the Israel of God." Chapter 6:15, 16.

That the church of Christ, even in its militant state, is divided into twelve tribes, or nations, is evident from the opening statement of the epistle of James. "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." That the contents of this letter were intended for spiritual Israel

and not for the Jews is evident even to the casual reader. The fifth chapter is essentially a last-day prophecy, and shows that the epistle was written for the special benefit of the church of the last generation, which would witness the return of Christ to establish His kingdom of glory.

The evidence is also conclusive that the church triumphant will retain this twelve-tribe division. In answer to Peter's question, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" Jesus answered: "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matthew 19:27, 28.

The celestial city, the New Jerusalem, through whose pearly gates will pass the redeemed of all ages (Revelation 22:14) regardless of their earthly nationality, rests upon twelve foundations on which are emblazoned the names of the twelve apostles who will reign as judges, or kings, over the twelve nations of overcomers in earth's warfare. (See Revelation 21, 22.)

The saved of all ages are declared to be "so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable." Hebrews 11:12. On the other hand, the final sealing message gathers and seals 144,000, divided into twelve companies of 12,000 each. Who are they? and what is their relation to the twelve apostles and the twelve tribes?

OCCUPY HIGH POSITIONS

This special company became qualified to stand next to Christ because of the trying experiences through which they have passed in their warfare with the hosts of evil in the final desperate charge against the remnant of the church militant. (See Revelation 12:17.) In ruling themselves and in conquering sin, they have demonstrated their ability to rule. They have gotten the victory over every known sin, and are "without fault before the throne of God." But few saints in the world's history have ever reached such a high standard of perfection of character and knowledge of His truth. Their loyalty to the principles of God's government has been tested to the utmost, and is above question. They can now be intrusted with responsibilities in the kingdom of Christ and of the twelve nations of Israel.

The Christian church began its history under the leadership of twelve men, who, during the ten



In ancient times the farmer was required to bring the first sheaf of his crop to the sanctuary. This was called "the first fruits." The 144,000 are also called "the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb."

IN THE vision of the four angels holding in check the symbolic winds of the earth till the sealing message has done its work, the prophet hears a voice giving the number sealed. "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. The following verses describe the sealing of twelve thousand out of each of the twelve tribes.

We must not forget that the sealing message is located between the breaking of the sixth and seventh seals, or just before the second advent of Christ. The prophecy under consideration, therefore, meets its fulfillment many generations after the dispersion of Israel, when the identity of the twelve tribes has long since become impossible. Even at the beginning of the Christian era, the tribes had so completely lost their identity that they were indistinguishable because of generations of intermarriage, captivity, and persecution.

SPIRITUAL ISRAEL

The only conclusion possible is that our text applies to spiritual and not to literal Israel. While it is impossible for human beings to divide Christians into twelve divisions, according to their characteristics, Christ, the supreme Head of the church, knows where every member of His body belongs; and in the book of life, or the family record, they are doubtless enrolled under the tribe or nation to which they belong.

The term "Israel" had its origin the night Jacob wrestled with the angel, when, because his character was changed, God changed his name from Jacob, the deceiver and supplanter, to Israel, a prince of God and overcomer—one who prevails with God and man. (See Genesis 32:24-28.)

The terms "Israel" and "Christian" are therefore synonymous, for all true Israelites are Christians and all true Christians are Israelites, or sons of God. Of course, all who claim to be Christians are not Christians; likewise, all who claim to be Israelites are not princes of God, as Paul declared: "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel," and "he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly: . . . but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly." Romans 9:6; 2:28, 29.

In Romans 11:17-26, the true Israel of all ages is represented as a tame and fruitful olive tree, and the Gentiles as a wild olive tree. Some of the natural branches, or the de-

days of prayer, study, and confession of sin in the upper room, reached a standard of perfection in harmony with their perfection of faith. They had "the faith of Jesus." They were "of one accord" for the first time in their lives, and had gotten the victory over every known sin, so that they no longer grieved the Holy Spirit, who sealed them "unto the day of redemption." (See Ephesians 4:30.) Since they were sealed for the kingdom, the Holy Spirit was given to them without measure, and Pentecost was the result. The early rain followed the upper-room experience that brought to them the seal of God's approval.

THE GREAT OUTPOURING

The early rain was but a local shower compared with the latter rain which is poured out on all flesh to ripen the gospel grain for the final harvest. The reaping message is to go to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." (See Revelation 14:6-14.) As twelve men were sealed for leadership by the Spirit in the beginning of the gospel proclamation under the early rain, twelve groups of men, of 12,000 each, will be sealed by the Spirit for leadership in giving the loud cry during the latter rain. As the 144,000 reach the standard of perfection of character corresponding to their perfection of faith, "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," they are sealed for the kingdom, and go forth to give the loud cry that calls God's people out of spiritual Babylon and completes the gospel harvest. (See Revelation 18:1-5.)

The 144,000 are declared to be "the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb." Revelation 14:4. In ancient Israel each farmer was required to bring the first sheaf of his crop to the sanctuary, and present it to the priest. This was called the "first fruits" of the harvest, and was dedicated to the sanctuary and the service of the priests, and was deposited "before the altar of the Lord." He was then privileged to put in the sickle for the final harvest. The "first fruits" was only a small part of the entire crop. (See Exodus 23:19; Leviticus 23:10; Deuteronomy 26:1-11.)

All the services of the Mosaic sanctuary were typical of the plan of salvation and the priestly service of Christ. The offering of the first fruits must have an antitype in the reaping of the final gospel harvest. "The harvest is the end of the world," declared Jesus. Just before the world-harvest is gathered and when it is "white already to harvest," a "first-fruits" sheaf will be gathered and presented to the Priest of the heavenly sanctuary to be dedicated to His service. The "first fruits" of the antitypical harvest are plainly declared to be the 144,000; this will be the first sheaf only of the entire gospel crop. In the type, the "first fruits" was not only the first in point of time but also in quality. The best of the harvest must be selected, or "the

choice fruits." Thus the 144,000 are not only the first of the final harvest, but its choice fruits; for "they are without fault before the throne of God."

THE INNUMERABLE HOSTS

After describing the 144,000, the revelator continued: "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." Revelation 7:9, 10.

Here is described the remainder of the final harvest. Their knowledge, experience, and tests of loyalty are far less than the standard reached by the 144,000, who are qualified for a special work as "kings and priests" unto God and the Lamb.

Just before the reaping of the vast harvest of the earth, the 144,000, or the "first fruits," are presented to Christ, the great High Priest of the heavenly sanctuary, and dedicated to a special service before the throne of God. "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." Revelation 7:15.

This is in accord with the promise Christ makes to those who accept the

Laodicean message, and are purified by it. "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."

Surely the Lord holds out a glorious reward to those who accept the sealing message and reach the high standards required for enumeration in the special company who stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, go with Him "whithersoever He goeth," and assist Him in the administration of the kingdom of glory. Is any sacrifice too great for such a priceless privilege?

THE sense of sin has poisoned the springs of life. But Christ says, "I will take your sins; I will give you peace. I have bought you with My blood. You are Mine. My grace shall strengthen your weakened will; your remorse for sin I will remove." When temptations assail you, when care and perplexity surround you, when, depressed and discouraged, you are ready to yield to despair, look to Jesus, and the darkness that encompasses you will be dispelled by the bright shining of His presence.

When sin struggles for the mastery in your soul, and burdens the conscience, look to the Saviour. His grace is sufficient to subdue sin. Let your grateful heart, trembling with uncertainty, turn to Him.—E. G. White.



"Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14.

FREDERICK W. STRAY
Moncton, New Brunswick

THIS has been my favorite text for the following reasons: A Christian experience in my youth as a church member was followed by a falling away, resulting in deism between my twenty-first and twenty-ninth years, with no faith in the Bible, Christ, or the church. Then came a Seventh-day Adventist colporteur who visited my home every Saturday evening during the fall, winter, and spring of 1902 and 1903, giving to us a Bible study.

I was a bit interested in the reasons given for seventh-day observance, and considerably interested in the prophecies concerning the papacy, of which I had always been entirely ignorant, though I had been a diligent student of church history in my youth.

However, none of these things moved me until we came to the study of the

above text, which, of course, included an explanation of the eighth and ninth chapters of Daniel, proving conclusively the foretelling of the very year of the baptism and the crucifixion of Christ.

As I studied this subject, a tremendous conviction came upon me that the Bible was the inspired word of God, and Jesus of Nazareth the Saviour of the world. This conviction deepened with me for months, and some way always centered in the text quoted. The call to personal consecration, holiness, and preparation for our Lord's return is in the related text of ringing invitation, "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 14:7.



The capture of Rome by the Goths

The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets

*Studies in the Book
of Revelation*

NUMBER TWENTY-TWO

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

AND I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets." "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound." Revelation 8: 2, 6.

The vision of the seven trumpets is a part of the same scene in the great prophetic drama that began with the fourth chapter, and includes the vision of the throne of God, the breaking of the seven seals, and the sealing message. The purpose of the entire vision is to reveal future events, or to "show thee things which must be hereafter."

In the seven trumpets is presented the third view of world history as it affected the Christian era. The seven churches show the trials and victories of God's loyal people in seven periods of time, from the first century to the return of Christ to bring about their final deliverance. The seven seals give an entrancing view of so-called Christianity, organized at first to carry out "the great commission," then, slowly, imperceptibly, yielding to the seductive influence of pagan philosophy; until by the seventh century it had taken over and was observing all the forms of the pagan religion it had supplanted. The great Reformation then brings the church back to "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and prepares it for the coming of Christ.

The seven trumpets, symbolic of war (Jeremiah 4: 19), are prophetic pictures of great war scourges or military revolutions that were to visit the earth, and overturn, first, the Roman

Empire of the west; second, the Roman or Greek Empire of the east; and, third, the modern nations of earth, in a final world war which will terminate in Armageddon.

Before the prophet is given a revelation of the terrible political revolutions that were to visit the earth and sweep the nations with the besom of destruction, a scene before the throne of Jehovah is presented for the encouragement of God's people, to cheer them during the dark and dreary days to come.

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." Verses 3, 4.

In the Mosaic tabernacle service the offering of the incense was a call to prayer. The prayers of Israel ascended heavenward mingled with the fragrant incense from off the altar. Thus, before the seven angels blow their trumpets, the saints of earth are assured that their prayers will ascend to the throne

of God as sweet incense. The blasts of war trumpets and the din of battle will not prevent the heavenly Father from hearing their supplications.

"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." Verse 5. It is evident that the close of human probation is here pictured. When the golden censer is cast down, the ministrations of the heavenly sanctuary are over, and prayer will no longer prevail with God. When fire takes the place of incense in the golden censer, wrath will take the place of mercy in God's dealings with man. Then will His wrath be "poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation." (See Revelation 14: 10; 16: 17, 18.)

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. 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." Verses 6, 7.

ROME WAS PROSTRATED

It is evident that symbolic language is here employed. However, there is no part of the Revelation upon which Bible students so unanimously agree as in their interpretation of the seven trumpets. A series of desolating war scourges left the Western Empire of Rome prostrate in the dust, and visited Eastern Rome with the seeming vengeance of an offended God. The first

trumpet is a prophetic forecast of the first successful invasion of Rome by the Gothic barbarians from the north, under the leadership of Alaric. The "hail" is symbolic of the northern origin of the invaders, having come from the frozen region of the shores of the Baltic; and the "fire mingled with blood" depicts the awful slaughter and destruction inflicted by their invasion.

At the time this prophecy was given, the Roman Empire included all the civilized world. It extended from the Atlantic Ocean eastward to the Euphrates River, bounded on the south by the Sahara Desert in Africa, and on the north by the Rhine and Danube Rivers. This approximates an area of one thousand miles of latitude and two thousand miles of longitude. The fortifications along these northern and eastern boundaries were the limit of the experience of the military engineers of many centuries. One quotation from Gibbon's "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Vol. III, page 55, will indicate their strength and magnitude. "The banks of the Rhine, from its source to the straits of the ocean, were closely planted with strong castles and convenient towers." This statement will also apply to the defenses of the Danube. It is said that between these rivers a stone wall of considerable height, and strengthened by towers at convenient distances extended, covering a distance of nearly two hundred miles.

These defenses gave the inhabitants of the empire a feeling of security, which was strengthened by the fact that for 250 years they had successfully withstood every attack. The universal sentiment seemed to be that "the period of their empire would be that of the world itself."

IN DEAD OF WINTER

The northern barbarians usually made their invasions in the dead of winter, when the fur-clad warriors crossed the boundary rivers, with impunity, on the ice. Scarcely had Decius been saluted as emperor, "when he was summoned to the banks of the Danube by the invasion of the Goths. This is the first considerable occasion in which history mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, sacked the capital, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy."—*Id.*, Vol. I, page 518.

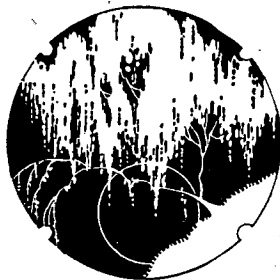
In a great battle south of the Danube, the emperor lost both his life and his army. This formidable invasion was not repulsed until the Goths had devastated the provinces on both sides of the Bosphorus,—on the west side to within sight of Italy. Athens and other cities of Greece were reduced to ashes. On the east, Ephesus, with its wonderful temple of Diana, and the populous cities of the surrounding plains suffered the fate of Greece. The slaughter of the unfortunate inhabitants was indiscriminate and appalling. The Goths, however, were driven back to their own territory again, and the

original boundaries of the empire were restored.

The next invasion by the Gothic nations was of a different character. Instead of a military campaign by armed men, it was the peaceful migration of whole nations into the heart of the Roman Empire. The Visigoths and Ostrogoths appeared in turn on the north bank of the Danube, and by every demonstration of fear implored the Romans to permit them to cross and take refuge in the empire, to escape the fury of the pursuing Huns. Permission was finally granted, and more than 4,000,000 barbarians, 600,000 of

whom were armed warriors, moved into Roman territory.

Tactfulness and prudence were wholly lacking in handling the situation that now confronted the Imperial councils. The Goths asked to be settled on the extensive vacant land in Thrace. The emperor gathered all his available troops. The Goths assembled in a fortified camp near the mouth of the Danube. The legions of Rome marched against them. The two armies met in the open plain, and a sanguinary battle raged from daylight till dark without a decision. The field was literally piled with the results of the con-



The FIRST LIE

MARSHALL B. VAN KIRK

waxed greater. Why should anyone be in darkness when the Bible is so plain on this point?

Going into detail, one Bible writer informs us that when a man dies he knows not anything; that he remembers no more, loves no more, hates no more, enjoys no more; in fact, no more a part in anything that shall be done under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 9: 5, 6, 10.) If a dead person has no more a part in anything done under the sun, he certainly is entirely cut off from visiting his friends who are still living. The psalmist says of a dead man that his thoughts perish. (Psalm 146: 2-4.)

BY THEIR FRUITS

"By their fruits ye shall know them." Read the catalogue of sins that go unchallenged to-day. Satan is their originator. Galatians 5: 17-21 catalogues a list of common sins, the personnel of which should lead every one who reads to despise all sin. Yet Satan is the author of all these and many variations of the same.

On the other hand, there is the fruit of the Spirit, which comes out in full bloom in the characters of those who allow Jesus to rule in their lives.

Since Satan is a liar, because he abode not in the truth, is it not far better to hold to the teachings of the Saviour of mankind? He is the truth and the life that abides in God, and He came to bring to us a far more abundant life than we now have or could have outside of Him.

When one gives himself to the service of Satan, God allows him to have his own way and even to believe a lie. He may be ever so sincere in his belief, but he will be lost; for we read in Revelation 21: 27 that no one who makes or loves a lie can enter into the kingdom of God.

Accepting God's statement as truth, anyone who believes in natural immortality is accepting and believing a lie, and is, just so far, giving place to the influence of the great deceiver of his life.

There will come a time when all who have accepted this lie will be undeceived; but that time will be after there is no further opportunity to change faith and practice.

Let us take God's word as the true counsel, and accept what He has made known to us as truth. Then, and only then, are we on safe ground. Satan can never destroy or lead to destruction one who abides in God. Let us so abide.

WHEN two mighty forces are pitted against each other, which shall be recognized as the depository of truth? The scripture says, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7: 20. Then to judge between God and Satan, we must take into account the fruit that is harvested from the work of each. Satan said, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof [the tree of knowledge of good and evil], then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3: 5.

A great many persons have this same vision, and many teach that each human being has in him a little god or a spark of god which will develop under proper conditions into a redeemer within.

God says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6: 23), and, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3: 4). The devil says there is no death. He is the author of the all-too-common belief that there is no death and that what we call death is simply a release of an immortal soul to enjoy a higher plane of existence. Were that true, then why mourn at death? let it come, and come soon; for it would be the greatest possible blessing.

GOD ONLY IMMORTAL

Speaking of immortality, the Bible says that God "only hath immortality" (1 Timothy 6: 16), and that no man, in his present state, can approach unto His condition. We are told to seek for immortality; and if we now have it, why seek for it? This, too, has been and still is a point in this controversy. God is trying to save individuals, and fit them for immortality, which He will render to those who seek for it (Romans 2: 7); and to them who patiently continue this seeking, He will grant eternal life. Would God be so utterly inconsistent as to tell us to seek diligently for something we now possess? God certainly is too wise to give that sort of instruction.

Because of the wide acceptance of that statement made by Satan in the Garden of Eden, many truly serious errors have come; and the controversy between "the mystery of iniquity" and "the mystery of godliness" has

flict. Another battle soon followed, in which the emperor and two thirds of his army were slain,—one of the greatest defeats in Roman history. Then followed one of the worst tragedies in history. The thousands of Gothic children received as hostages by the Romans when the Goths were permitted to cross the Danube and who had been distributed among the eastern provinces far removed from their parents, were gathered into the various capitals of the provinces, and deliberately slaughtered. When the news of this base perfidy reached the Gothic camp, words fail to describe the effect on those victorious barbarians. With no enemy to fear, they spread over the provinces of eastern Europe from the walls of Constantinople to the Julian Alps, and, in the language of St. Jerome, “nothing was left except the sky and the earth.”—*Id.*, Vol. 3, page 156.

During the reign of Theodosius the Great, wiser counsel prevailed, and a sort of armed truce was the result. This ended, however, with his reign. In the month of January, A. D. 395, Theodosius died, “and before the end of the winter of the same year the Gothic nation was in arms.”—*Id.*, Vol. 3, page 304. This time they were directed by the bold and artful Alaric. “Alaric disdained to trample any longer on the prostrate and ruined countries of Thrace and Dacia, and he resolved to seek a plentiful harvest of fame and riches in a province which had hitherto escaped the ravage of war.”—*Id.*, Vol. 3, page 306.

HIS EYES ON ITALY

Italy was his objective. Twice the genius of Stilicho, the uncle and guardian of the youthful Honorius, emperor of the Western Empire, drove back the Gothic hosts. The victory of the Romans, however, was very brief. Their inhuman slaughter of the Gothic wives and children held as hostages, angered the barbarians. Their troops “unanimously swore to pursue with just and implacable war the perfidious nation that had so basely violated the laws of hospitality.” Alaric again moved to the attack with but little opposition. Northern Italy was desolated.

Out of respect for the Eternal City, Alaric gave two opportunities to save it by ransom but without success. “The hour of doom had struck. It was August of A. D. 410, just eight hundred years from the date of the capture of Rome by the Gauls. An attempted defense by the people proved to be worse than futile. The city was taken. After twelve days of pillage, Alaric and his army left Rome and continued their course into southern Italy. Town after town was sacked until little remained to appease the vengeance or satisfy the greed of the invaders. The social system of Italy was completely broken up.”—*Ridpath's “History of the World,”* Vol. 3, page 340.

On the death of Alaric, Ataulph, his successor, left Italy and established a

strong Visigothic kingdom in northern Spain and southern France. “They took for their own one third of the land.”—*Sheldon's “General History,”* page 233. When the Ostrogoths finally settled in Italy, they also “took one third of the land, and apportioned it among themselves.”—*Ridpath's “History of the World,”* Vol. 4, page 408.

Thus the first war trumpet was sounded, and “the union of the Roman Empire was dissolved; its genius was humbled in the dust: and armies of unknown barbarians, issuing from the frozen regions of the North, had established their notorious reign over the fairest provinces of Europe and Africa.”—*Gibbon's “History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,”* Vol. 3, page 517.

In view of the foregoing brief historical outline, let us again notice the briefer symbolic prophecy. “And 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 the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.” Revelation 8: 7, A. R. V.

This deluge of humanity, dressed in furs, descended from the frozen north into those milder climates of the south of Europe. Wherever they marched, their presence was associated with fire and blood. Their enormous herds of cattle and horses ate up “all green

grass;” and then, when they finally permanently settled, they took “one third” of the land, which necessarily included a corresponding amount of the timber, or “trees.” The hail, fire, and blood are represented as being “cast upon the earth.” The Goths, in their final invasion of the empire, were literally cast, or forced, on Roman territory by the resistless impact of the Huns.

Thus was fulfilled with prophetic exactitude and certainty the sounding of the first of the seven war trumpets that punished Rome and scourged the nations.

ALL need to become acquainted with that most wonderful of all organisms, the human body. They should understand the functions of the various organs and the dependence of one upon another for the healthy action of all. They should study the influence of the mind upon the body, and of the body upon the mind, and the laws by which they are governed.—*E. G. White.*

“THE souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand beside the great Sin Bearer, in the light proceeding from the throne of God. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses ‘from all sin. 1 John 1:7.”



HAVANA, CUBA

HAVANA, which has nearly one million population, is calling for SIGNS. “Is there any way possible of getting a number for our missionary work here in Havana?” pleads our worker there. One hundred or more could be used to splendid advantage.

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“I would like a club of seven SIGNS, to assist in the work here,” writes one of our workers from a small island in the West Indies.

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Wherever the darkness is densest and the needs rise like a mountain before our workers, there the SIGNS can go as an aid and ally in the efforts of our self-sacrificing missionaries. Here is an opportunity for you to choose your field for missionary endeavor. There are dozens of other equally pressing calls,—hands outstretched from every continent of the world. Fifty SIGNS a year to any foreign land you may choose, only \$75; twenty-five copies, \$37.50; ten copies, \$15; five copies, \$7.50. Which field do you choose?

Address, Coöperation Corner, SIGNS OF THE TIMES, Mountain View, California.

The SECOND TRUMPET and the Burning Mountain

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.

The scene in the second trumpet changes from the shores of the Baltic to the coasts of the Mediterranean. Instead of hail, fire, and blood being cast upon the earth out of the frozen regions of the north, a great burning mountain, or volcano, is cast into the sea. Thus is symbolized the second barbarian invasion that scourged the decaying civilization of Rome and humbled the pride and broke the power of the "iron monarchy" that for centuries had been "a safe and dreary prison for its enemies."

The symbolic language of the second trumpet is very significant when compared with the history of the invasion of Western Rome by the Vandals under the leadership of "the terrible Genseric." The Vandals were one of the fiercest and most warlike of the German tribes that deluged the Roman Empire during the fourth and fifth centuries. A brief historical sketch of the exploits of these Vandals as the "pirates of the sea" will strengthen our confidence in Bible prophecy as "the rolled scroll of history."

"The fifth century is known as 'the Era of Great Migration.' During this period, Europe was turbulent with the movements of the restless Germans. Pressed by the Huns, the different tribes poured south and west with irresistible fury, arms in hand, seeking new honors in the crumbling Roman Empire. It was nearly two centuries before the turmoil subsided enough to note the changes which had taken place. Alaric, the Goth, Attila, the Hun, and Genseric, the Vandal, were conspicuous in the grand catastrophe."—*Barnes' General History*, pages 266, 267.

ACCURATELY FULFILLED

Since the first of the great barbarians mentioned by Barnes accurately fulfilled the predictions of the first trumpet, we may logically and reasonably expect the others of the great trio to have likewise come in review before the inspired vision of the prophet. To fulfill the second trumpet, the following specifications must be met: First, like the Goths, the Vandals must be "cast" out of their original home and into Roman territory. Second, after passing through a period of devastation they

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TAYLOR G. BUNCH

would finally be cast into the sea, still burning or destroying. It is a very interesting fact to the student of history and prophecy that the nation of the Vandals had just that experience, and that finally, under their great leader Genseric, they became a great naval power.

The Vandals were literally cast out of their original home in northeastern Germany. When the Huns burst into Europe from the East, the Vandals fled in a southwesterly direction, traversing almost the entire length of Germany. When the Goths invaded Italy, the legions guarding the Rhine were hastily recalled to the defense of Rome. The Vandals accordingly crossed into France, or Gaul, then a province of the empire, unopposed. They then marched south through France and into Spain, also a Roman province. Their march through these two enemy provinces was attended by frightful devastation and ruin. It seemed to have been their intention to settle permanently in southern Spain, since they gave that section the name of Vandalucia, and it is still known as Andalusia. But cir-

cumstances thwarted their evident plans. Oppressed on the west by the Suevi, and on the north by the Visigoths, who followed them into Spain they crossed the Strait of Gibraltar in vessels furnished by the Spaniards, who gladly saw them depart, and conquered the whole province of Africa. This Roman province consisted of a narrow strip of fertile land along the coast of the Mediterranean, extending from the Atlantic Ocean approximately two thirds of the distance across North Africa.

HIS EYES TOWARD THE SEA

"Their narrow limits were pressed and confined on either side, by the sandy desert and the Mediterranean. The discovery and conquest of the Black nations that might dwell beneath the torrid zone could not tempt the rational ambition of Genseric; but he cast his eyes toward the sea: he resolved to create a naval power, and his bold resolution was executed with steady and active perseverance. The woods of Mount Atlas afforded an inexhaustible nursery of timber. His new subjects were skilled in the arts of navigation and shipbuilding; he animated his daring Vandals to embrace a mode of warfare which would render every maritime country accessible to their arms; the Moors and Africans were allured by the hopes of plunder; and, after an interval of six centuries, the fleets that issued from the port of Carthage again claimed the empire of the Mediterranean."—*Gibbon, Vol. 3, pages 598, 599.*

A few statements relative to the assumed rights of the Teutonic, or German, nations, in their invasion of Western Rome, and their characteristic traits that apply to the fulfillment of the prophecy under consideration, follow: They claimed as a right of conquest one third of the land wherever they decided to settle. The only exception to this seemingly universal rule was in Gaul, where two successive migrations of the same people seized a third of the land for each migration, or two thirds of the territory occupied.

The original diet of these rough barbarians consisted largely of milk and the flesh of animals. When the warriors raided a country, they returned with a "long train of sheep, and of oxen, and of human captives." When they conquered and settled a country, "the patient herds became the property of their new masters; and the salutary comfort of food and labor was silently satisfied by their mutual necessities."

(Continued on page 14)



Genseric, in one of his surprise attacks on the Romans

Christ recognized the day of which He was Lord by virtue of His association with it in creation as a constant sign of His authority and Sonship. There could be no other memorial of His creative authority, no day that He could set apart, which would commemorate Him as Creator. Recognizing this, the Antichrist, the Lucifer of the heavenly choir, has set up a counterfeit Sabbath, and is now endeavoring to force men, through human authority, to observe it. What will you do about this?

THE SECOND TRUMPET AND THE BURNING MOUNTAIN

(Continued from page 4)

The following from a Spanish historian describes the fate of the unfortunate peoples who inhabited the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean during the attacks of the Vandals, the Suevi, and their allied nations: "The irruption of these nations was followed by the most dreadful calamities, as the barbarians exercised their indiscriminate cruelty on the fortunes of the Romans and the Spaniards, and ravaged with equal fury the cities and the open country. The progress of famine reduced the miserable inhabitants to feed on the flesh of their fellow creatures; and even the wild beasts, who multiplied without control in the desert, were exasperated by the taste of blood and the impatience of hunger, boldly to attack and devour their human prey. Pestilence soon appeared, the inseparable companion of famine; a large proportion of the people was swept away; and the groans of the dying excited only the envy of their surviving friends. At length the barbarians, satiated with carnage and rapine, and afflicted by the contagious evils which they themselves had introduced, fixed their permanent seats in the depopulated country."—*Id.*, pages 433, 434.

FLED TO THE ISLANDS

The people who could flee from this dreadful scourge took refuge in the large islands in the Mediterranean. One third of the area of the Mediterranean lies between the southern point of Italy and the Straits of Gibraltar. In this one third are situated practically all the large islands of that sea. Refugees from Spain and other oppressed countries fled to these islands to escape the rapacity of the barbarians. These hosts of refugees, added to the numerous native population, aggregated several millions. The raising of live stock, especially cattle, was a leading industry of the islanders. These islands were promptly overrun by the Vandal pirates. The mind can not grasp the terrible destruction attending these conquests. The prophet saw this one-third part of the sea turned to blood, and he also saw a third of their live stock swept away ("third part of the creatures").

"A Vandal fleet anchored at the mouth of the Tiber. Rome was cap-

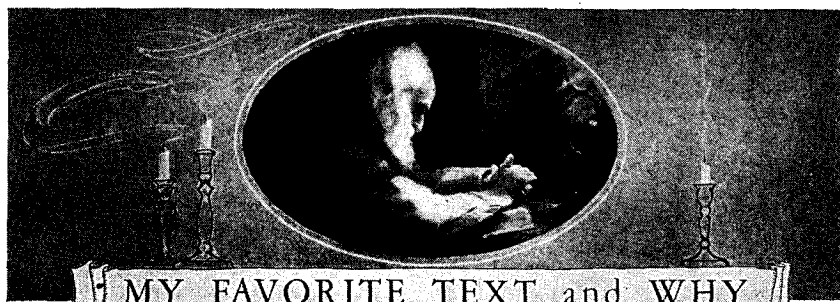
tured and for fourteen days and nights was given up to indiscriminate pillage. The treasures of the Eternal City were carried on board the Vandal ships; and wanton destruction, fire, and murder added to the horrors of the sack. She that had despoiled the nations was in her turn outraged and left lying in her own blood by the banks of the Tiber. From this time for a period of eight years, the Vandals became the terror of all the countries from Gibraltar to Egypt were assailed by the piratical craft of Genseric."—*Ridpath's "History of the World,"* pages 429, 430.

Genseric always carried in his ships a sufficient number of horses so that at every place he touched the shore the adjacent country was overrun by his light cavalry. Two major efforts were made by Rome to crush the power of "the pirates of the sea."

The Western emperor, Marjorian, assembled a fleet of three hundred war vessels, besides transports and smaller ships, and gathered an army of 75,000 soldiers. But Genseric surprised this fleet in the harbor of Carthage, Spain, and, aided by a favorable wind, burned it. This happened in the year 457 A. D. In the year 468, Leo, the Eastern emperor, sent a fleet of 1,113

ships from Constantinople, with an army of 100,000 men. The army was landed on the coast of Africa forty miles from Carthage. The fleet sailed into the harbor of Carthage (the Vandal capital) to await the favorable moment to attack in conjunction with the troops. In the obscurity of the night, aided by a favorable wind, Genseric manned his largest warships with his bravest men and towed large barks filled with inflammable material against the unguarded vessels of the Romans, and destroyed the entire fleet.

Besides the striking fulfillment of the prophecy of the second trumpet already referred to, the foregoing historical facts regarding the naval triumphs of Genseric are very significant in the light of the prophetic symbol of a volcano, or burning mountain, being cast into the sea so that "the third part of the ships were destroyed." Surely such startling fulfillment of Biblical forecasts, made more than 350 years before, should add to our confidence in the "sure word of prophecy." With what mathematical exactitude the events of history fit the prophetic mold and declare to all mankind the certainty of divine revelation, whose Author alone can read the future and write history in advance!



"For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work."
Mark 13: 34.

ETHEN A. MANRY

THE ambition of the Master while here upon this earth was to finish the work that God had given Him. In the prayer recorded in John 17, we read in the fourth verse, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." All the power of evil men and satanic hosts could not change the purpose of the One who came from heaven to make it possible for man to be saved.

He exemplified in His life the value of a soul, and the work given to each individual will result in furthering the triumphs of the cross. First of all, "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates." Zechariah 8: 16. Secondly, we are counseled in the third chapter of Ezekiel to warn the wicked of the solemn judgment hour when all flesh must stand at the judgment bar of God. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt

surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." Verses 17, 18.

No matter what our vocation, the principal thought of our lives is to be not only how to live the righteous life but to be constantly reaching out after souls. This is the special work that the Son of man gave to every one of His followers.

Soon He will come again, and we are living in the generation that is witnessing the signs showing that this coming is "even at the doors." "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over His household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing." Matthew 24: 33, 44-46.

The BLAZING METEOR

And the Dark Ages

As revealed in the third
and fourth apocalyptic
trumpets

*Studies in the Book
of Revelation*

NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

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.

Dr. Albert Barnes, in speaking of the third trumpet in his notes on Revelation eight, said that to fulfill this prophecy, it is necessary that there should "be some chieftain or warrior who might be compared with a blazing meteor; whose course would be singularly brilliant; who would appear suddenly like a blazing star, and then disappear like a star whose light was quenched in the waters. That the desolating course of that meteor would be mainly on those portions of the world that abounded with springs of water and running streams; that an effect would be produced as if those streams and fountains were made bitter; that is, that many persons would perish, and that wide desolations would be caused in the vicinity of those rivers and streams, as if a bitter and baleful star should fall into the waters, and death should spread over the lands adjacent to them, and watered by them."

ATTILA, THE HUN

In the symbolic star and its desolating career, the third of the great barbaric leaders, instrumental in the subversion of the Roman Empire, passes in review before the seer on the Isle of Patmos. Attila, the Hun, who designated himself, "The Scourge of God," unlike the two preceding leaders of savage inundations, "fell," and was not "cast," upon the empire. The Huns were of Mongolian stock who moved west from North China in the first century. Being shepherds, their movements were largely controlled by the abundance or the scarcity of pasture. At the beginning of the fourth century, history finds them established in the extensive plains north of the Caspian Sea and in contact with the outposts of the Ostrogoths. Let us get clearly fixed in our minds the historian's description of this remarkable people:

"They were short, thickset, with flat noses, deep-sunk eyes, and a yellow com-

The invasion of the
Huns



plexion. Their faces were hideously scarred with slashes to prevent the growth of the beard. A historian of the time compared them in their ugliness to the grinning heads clumsily carved on the posts of bridges. They built no cities or houses, and never came under a roof except in superstitious dread. They were clad in skins, which were never changed until they rotted off. They lived on horseback, carrying their families and all their possessions in large wagons."—Barnes' "General History," page 265—foot-note. Gibbon says that their "figures were scarcely human."

Their food consisted wholly of milk and raw meat. In their tents and surroundings cleanliness and elementary decency closely paralleled that of their herds. In the latter part of the fourth century this savage host of Huns marched west, driving the Teutons in terror before them. Let us observe that no enemy was driving them. They were the aggressors. Early in the fifth century Attila established his seat of government in the plains east of the Danube.

AN INVADING SCOURGE

"The Huns were masters of the great river."—Gibbon. This statement, by Gibbon, can not be taken too literally, for that entire river system was overrun and held by the Huns. Notice how accurately this fulfills the prophecy. The Romans called the Mediterranean "Our own sea." This was literally true, for the vast commerce of the empire centered in that sea. Of still more vital importance to the existence of the empire were the great boundary rivers, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates. These were fortified and defended by the best engineers and best legions of Rome. So long as these rivers remained under Roman control, the empire was secure from foreign invasion.

But in the fifth century comes a power "falling" from a country unknown to the

Romans, and takes over one of the three great rivers so important to the empire. Not only did they hold the Danube, but they controlled all its tributaries, the "fountains of waters."

Attila's first raid, from his new home, seems to have been for the purpose of relieving the pressure of the Roman arms against Genseric. "He raided southward to the very walls of Constantinople, completely destroying, says Gibbon, seventy cities in his progress, and forcing upon the emperor an onerous peace."—Wells. In 451 Attila declared war against the Western Empire. With an army of 500,000 men, he swept through Germany, pillaging and burning as he went. He invaded Gaul. He sacked most of the towns of France as far south as Orleans. Then the Romans under Aëtius and the Visigoths led by their king, Theodoric, son of Alaric the Great, united their forces to oppose him. On the vast plains of Chalons the opposing hosts, aggregating more than a million men, fought one of the great and decisive battles of history. At the close of the day, 150,000 (one historian says 300,000) men lay dead on the field. The next year Attila invaded Italy. The cities of northern Italy were destroyed, and the country reduced to the condition of a desert. In 453 he returned to his seat of government on the Danube, and "came to a mysterious end." "Hereafter the Huns, so far as that name goes in Europe, the Huns of Attila, disappeared out of history."—Wells. "The Huns rapidly dispersed. The main body seems to have returned to the region about the river Ural."—Standard Encyclopedia. Like a meteor, they vanished as suddenly and as mysteriously as they came.

"And the name of the star is called Wormwood," or "a curse" (?). (See New Standard Bible Dictionary.) They were indeed a bitter curse. All the Teutonic bar-

barians who overwhelmed the empire became settled, and, by mutual interests and intermarriage with the Romans and other residents, blended into a distinct people. Not so with the Huns. Although they appeared willing to such a fusion, this intimacy was unthinkable to the independent and more attractive Germans. The feeling against them was so bitter that the discordant nations united their forces, and expelled the Huns from Europe.

"Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet; and a curse fell upon a third part of the sun, a third part of the moon, and a third part of the stars, so that a third part of them were darkened, and for a third of the day, and also of the night, there was no light." Revelation 8: 12, Weymouth's Translation.

In introducing the fulfillment of this prophecy, we will quote from Ridpath's "History of the World," Vol. 3, pages 349, 350:

ODOACER

"Now out of the north came Odoacer, king of the Heruli, a nation of Germans—joined as he was by many other tribes—and demanded that his soldiers (for he had recently been in the service of the empire) should receive as their reward one third of the lands of Italy. Orestes refused compliance with this demand, and appealed to the emperor of the East. The latter could give no aid. The crisis was at hand. The great clock in the tower of fate sounded solemnly from the direction of the Alps, and was heard to the coast lines of Bruttium. The ghosts of Caesar's victims rose from the earth, and hovered in dense clouds along the north. Then the apparition became real. Orestes fled behind the walls of Pavia. The barbarians were already at the gates. In August, of A. D. 476, the place was taken by storm. Orestes was seized and put to death. Paulus, his brother, was also executed. The boy, Augustulus, too feeble a thing to excite even the anger of contempt, was spared; and he was led away to find a quiet retreat in the Villa of Lucullus, on the shore of Surrentum. He was followed by a gigantic specter, the skeleton of a shadow tall and gaunt, whose low-fallen jaw had once given out the word of command to the nations from the banks of the Tigris to the chalky cliffs of Britain, whose eye sockets had once shot lightning into the fierce visage of barbarism, and whose hanging right hand had once been laid for centuries with imperious pride upon the wealth and culture of the world. It was the ghost of the Western Empire of the Romans! The colossal fabric, planted of old time by the patrician fathers, strengthened and made great amid the bloody struggles of the republic, transformed by the genius of Julius Caesar, and disgraced, and degraded by the licentiousness of the later emperors, fell prostrate in the dust and expired. On the broken statue of Victory in the Forum, a Gothic soldier sat whetting his sword, and a Gaulish mercenary for the sport of his companions thrust a barbarous spearhead into the nostril of the statue of Jupiter Capitolinus. The god did not resent it."

THE DARK AGES

The date A. D. 476 not only marks the end of the Roman Empire of the West, but it also introduces that long period of demoralization in Europe, known as the "Dark Ages." Speaking of conditions during these centuries, Wells, in his "Outline of History" (pages 527, 528), says: "The daily life of that time was going on at a very low level indeed, physically, intellectually, and morally. It is frequently said that Europe, in the

sixth and seventh centuries, relapsed into barbarism; but that does not explain the reality of the case. It is far more correct to say that the civilization of the Roman Empire had passed into a phase of extreme demoralization. Barbarism is a social order of an elementary type, orderly within its limits; but the state of Europe beneath its political fragmentation was a social disorder. Its morale was not that of a kraal, but that of a slum. In a savage kraal a savage knows that he belongs to the community, and lives and acts accordingly; in a slum, the individual neither knows of nor acts in relation to any greater being."

Europe, Asia, and Africa were the three divisions of land that constituted the geographical knowledge of that time. One of these, Europe, passed through that long dark period of more than six centuries, and fully meets the symbolic specifications of the fourth trumpet. The historian last quoted says that physically, intellectually, and morally the morale of Europe was that of a slum. "The true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," the "Sun of Righteousness," "the everlasting gospel" was eclipsed and driven into obscurity. The "day star" or "bright and morning star"

ceased to shine. God's witnesses could testify only "clothed in sackcloth." The visible church lapsed into idolatry more intolerant than any of its pagan predecessors. Civil government practically ceased to exist. Feudalism, a synonym of anarchy, robbed the defenseless, and waged private war throughout Europe. The nobility defended themselves within strong castles, of which there were 10,000 in Germany alone, and the common people grouped themselves about these strongholds as clients or retainers of these overlords. Perhaps a quotation from the history of the ninth century will best illustrate the status, intellectually, of that age. After speaking of the efforts of Charlemagne to reestablish an empire on a solid basis and to revive learning by founding colleges and surrounding himself with scholars, the historian continues:

A PROFOUND NIGHT

"But no man can make a civilization. In vain did Charlemagne kindle the flame; it was only a passing torch in the midst of a profound night. In vain did he strive to create commerce and trace with his own hand the plan of a canal to connect the

(Continued on page 12)

RUNNING TO AND FRO

CARLYLE B. HAYNES

THE amount of travel which human beings engage in to-day is altogether unparalleled in history. Going back and forth over all the earth, from city to city, from country to country, from continent to continent, and back again, are countless multitudes of people. Transportation facilities have been developed rapidly, but not rapidly enough to supply the demand of those who travel. More and more railways are being surveyed and put into operation, but they can not catch up with the demand. Automobiles are increasing in number minute by minute, but not fast enough to supply the orders already placed. The streets and highways of the cities are crowded to the point of grave danger to life and limb. On the earth, under the earth, and over the earth the stream of traffic plies unceasingly day and night. The streets have become too narrow to accommodate the never-ending, and always-increasing traffic. Airplanes leap into the air with their passengers and freight; subways rumble beneath the streets, carrying their millions; great steamships plow the waters of the oceans, carrying multitudes. All of which points with divine accuracy and infallible precision to this day of ours as the long-foretold "time of the end," "the last time."

God said: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Daniel 12: 4.

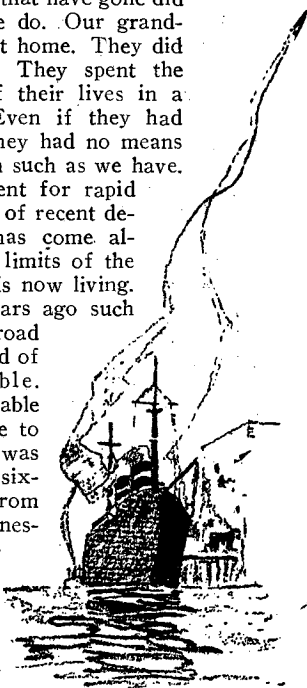
This is that "time of the end." To-day men are running "to and fro" as they have never done before. Take your stand in any great railway station or any great steamship terminus, and watch the thousands, the tens of thousands,—yes, the hundreds of thousands,—coming in, going out, moving here and there, endlessly and restlessly, night and day, hour after hour, through the weeks, and months, and years. The entire population of the globe seems to be in ceaseless motion, going from one place to another, crowding every conveyance, and always calling for greater speed and hurry.

Of no other age or time is this running to and fro so characteristic as the present. The generations that have gone did not travel as we do. Our grandparents stayed at home. They did not run about. They spent the whole period of their lives in a narrow area. Even if they had wanted to go, they had no means of transportation such as we have. All this equipment for rapid transportation is of recent development. It has come almost within the limits of the generation that is now living.

A hundred years ago such a thing as a railroad train was unheard of and unbelievable. The first practicable steam locomotive to run in America was operated on a sixteen-mile line from Carbonado to Honesdale Pennsylvania, in 1829. To-day railroads penetrate everywhere.

The first steamboat was operated on the Hudson River in 1807. To-day they traverse all the seven seas. It was not until the twentieth century had opened that men were able to fly. To-day regular mail, passenger, and freight routes link great cities by air travel. Three decades cover the history of the automobile. To-day their number and speed is so great as to constitute their regulation and control one of the greatest of civic problems.

And all this has come practically in our day. Never before in human history has there been anything like it. It is the special feature of this time; it marks this time as unique. And it has a tremendous meaning. It identifies our day with unfailing certainty as "the time of the end."



held the kingship, nor did the tribe of Judah become a kingdom for centuries after the giving of the prophecy. The 'scepter' was a rod of authority, of command, carried by the leaders of each tribe as badge of their authority. For this reason, the word 'scepter'—the Hebrew word *Shebet*,—was often used to represent the tribe. For instance, in 1 Samuel 10:20 are the words, 'When Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.' The tribal entity, the tribal authority, of Judah would not depart until the coming of Shiloh, was the prediction.

"A pseudo-Messiah could not establish his claims to divinity, for the identity of every tribe has been lost; the ancestry of every son of Israel is shrouded in obscurity. Who could proclaim himself the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Such a claim would be sheer mockery of common sense. But in the days of Jesus, the twelve tribes had maintained their identity. James addressed his epistle to the 'twelve tribes.' Anna the prophetess was 'of the tribe of Aser.' Luke 2:36. The mother of John the Baptist was a descendant of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi. (Luke 1:5.) Paul of Tarsus showed no hesitancy in declaring himself 'of the tribe of Benjamin.' Romans 11:1. Judah maintained its tribal entity until the coming of Jesus—the Shiloh of the prophecy.

"Like a thread of gold, the story of the Christ is woven into the fabric of every book of the Bible. Into one golden revelation of truth, sixty-six books are bound together in Him. A golden treasure house of wisdom they are, because the riches of heaven were given to the children of men in the person of the Son of God.

"Christ is the central theme of the Old Testament. The seers of Israel prophesied of Him. The priests of Israel symbolized Him in the daily ministrations in the temple. The people of Israel looked for Him and longed for Him as the fruition of their hopes. Intricate details were multiplied by successive Bible writers, foretelling the events connected with His life and His death. Thus a mighty chain of evidence was established by the Spirit of God to identify the coming Redeemer. From the days of Moses to the days of Malachi, a chain of several hundred links was in the making. Then came the long-looked-for Redeemer.

"To-night we are examining some of the links in that chain of evidence. The prophets foretold, and Jesus fulfilled. We merely examine the evidence. At the appointed time, five centuries after the vision was given to Daniel, Jesus came. One link in the chain is established, 'of the tribe of Judah.' And while Judah could still be identified as a tribe, Jesus came. A second link in the chain is established. A third link is found in Isaiah 11:1-5."

There was a moment of silence while the evangelist sought the word picture in the book of the prophet of hope. In that moment Naomi visualized the golden chain. Upward it seemed to reach—upward to the throne of God. It linked heaven to earth. It linked her heart to the One who sat upon the throne. A glimpse of heavenly glory—then she heard the evangelist reading the words of the prophet.

(Continued next week)

WHO CHANGED THE SABBATH?

(Continued from page 10)

accepts Christianity as the religion of the empire, and enforces on all by law the sacredness of its chief festival."—Smith and Cheetham, Vol. 2, page 1047.

Nothing could be plainer than this. We have previously pointed out that just as soon as the church received aid from the state she became the persecutor against pagans and heretics. In the same manner she began to use civil force in the enforcement of religious laws, especially concerning Sunday keeping. It will be noticed that these imperial laws call Sunday, *dies solis*, precisely as Constantine did when he issued his famous Sunday law in the year 321 A. D. in which he calls it *venerabili dies solis* (venerable day of the sun). The church legislated, the state executed, as we will show in our next article, which will deal with Western Rome, where the councils were held which gave further legislation to the keeping of the first day of the week as the Sabbath, for it must forever be remembered that the changing of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week required centuries before it was accomplished by the majority of Christendom.

(Continued next week)

THE BLAZING METEOR AND THE DARK AGES

(Continued from page 5)

Danube and the Rhine. The ages of commerce and industry were yet far distant. In vain did he unite Germany into one vast empire; even while he lived he felt it breaking in his hands. And this vast and wise organism, this revived civilization, all disappeared with him who called it forth."—Barnes' "General History," page 337, note.

Perhaps Europe's "intellectual darkness" can best be illustrated by the fact that "very few priests in Britain or Gaul could read the gospel or their service books."—Wells, page 534. For evidence that this darkness was confined to Europe, one of the three continents, the following is to the point: "Amid the ignorance which enveloped Europe during the Dark Ages, the Saracen Empire was dotted over with schools, to which students resorted from all parts of

the world. There were colleges in Mongolia, Tartary, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Morocco, Fez, and Spain. The vixies of a sultan consecrated 200,000 pieces of gold to found a college at Bagdad. A physician refused to go to Bokhara, at the invitation of the Sultan, on the plea that his private library would make four hundred camel loads. Great public libraries were collected, one at Cairo, being said to number 100,000 volumes, and the one of the Spanish caliphs, 600,000."—Barnes, page 331, note.

The final destruction of Western Rome and the subsequent Dark Ages constitute a striking fulfillment of the symbolism of the fourth trumpet.

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" Revelation 8:13.

The fearful events of the first four trumpets are small compared with the desolating scourges of the three woe trumpets yet to come, that would lay Eastern Rome in the dust, and wreck the modern nations in the final Armageddon cataclysm.

WAS CHRIST AGAINST THE LAW?

(Continued from page 3)

Christ, it is plainly seen that not only does Christ teach the keeping of the letter of the law but also that He would have it understood that He, as judge, will not vindicate the professedly righteous man unless his law keeping goes down into the very thoughts and intents of the heart.

Christ came, therefore, not only to bring power for righteousness to poor fallen human beings, but also to tear off the mask that sin had drawn over their understanding, so that they might see clearly what is sin and what it means to be like Christ, whose life was in harmony with God's great standard of the judgment.



With Your BIBLE

James Lamar
McElhany

The SECOND COMING of CHRIST

Question. Is the second coming of Christ a New Testament doctrine?

Answer. There are fifty references in the New Testament to the coming of Christ.

Ques. Did Christ Himself definitely promise to come again?

Ans. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3.

Ques. Do the Scriptures refer to this event as the second coming of Christ?

Ans. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.

Ques. At the time of His ascension, what encouraging assurance was given to the disciples of Jesus regarding His return?

Ans. "While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:10, 11.

Ques. Did the early church look for the second coming of Christ?

Ans. "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Philippians 3:20.

Ques. In writing of the coming of Christ, how did the apostle Paul refer to it?

Ans. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13.



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The Turks brought death and destruction everywhere as they swept across nation after nation.

The Blast of the

First Woe Trumpet

*Studies in the Book
of Revelation*

and the Saracenic Invasion

NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE

T A Y L O R G B U N C H

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. 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: 1-3.

The first four trumpets had sounded, and the Western Empire of the Cæsars was no more. The barbarians from the north had broken the power of the "iron monarchy of Rome" and were in possession of her cities, palaces, and territory.

Western Asia was controlled by two implacable rivals, Persia and the Eastern Empire. About the time the fifth angel was preparing to sound his woe trumpet, Chosroes, the king of Persia, attacked the Eastern Empire. During the death grapple between these two rivals for the supremacy of the East, which resulted in the death of Chosroes and the dissolution of his empire, another power was arising out of obscurity that was destined to fulfill the specifications of the first woe trumpet.

The Arabian desert became the center, during the seventh century, of a mighty movement under the leadership of Mohammed. This religio-political leader united the roving Saracen tribes with the bonds of religious fanaticism, and with the cry, "The sword is the key to heaven and to hell," poured them in an irresistible torrent upon

the tottering civilization of Eastern Rome.

"The Arabians up to the time of Mohammed, . . . were divided into small tribes, each having its leader, called sheik, or emir. In religion they were worshipers of fire or the stars."—*Anderson's General History*, page 224, Note.

Inspiration symbolizes the brilliant career of the Saracens under Mohammed and his successors, like that of Attila and the Huns, by a blazing star or meteor falling to the earth. The baneful influence of the great religious revolution of Mohammedanism, with the sensual moral standards on which it was based, and the fanatical enthusiasm and zeal with which it was propagated, calls for more than human power and direction. Lucifer, the "day star," who had long before fallen from heaven, was the master mind in the invention and propagation of the false religion that so long cursed humanity and still numbers as its adherents 220,000,000 souls.

THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

"The bottomless pit" appropriately represents the desert wastes out of which came the Saracen hordes, like swarms of locusts, to spread ruin and desolation to the fairest portions of Asia and Europe. Speaking of this desolate territory, Gibbon says: "But in the dreary waste of Arabia, a boundless level of sand is intersected by sharp and naked mountains; and the face of the desert, without shade or shelter, is scorched by the direct and intense rays of a tropical sun. Instead of refreshing breezes, the winds, particularly from the southwest, dif-

fuse a noxious and even deadly vapor; the hillocks of sand which they alternately raise and scatter are compared to the billows of the ocean, and whole caravans, whole armies, have been lost and buried in the whirlwind."—*Gibbon's "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,"* Vol. 3, pages 492, 493.

To the symbolic star was given the key by which he opened the bottomless pit and released the swarms of Saracen warriors. The result shows clearly that the key was the religion of Mohammed, by which he united the Saracen tribes and inspired them to undertake the conquest of the world. "We shall not be wrong in making religious feeling its chief moving principle."—*Myers Medieval and Modern History*, page 51, Note.

This key, or religion, was "given him," indicating that Mohammed was not its real author. Indeed, Mohammed never claimed to be the author of Mohammedanism. He declared that it was "given him" by revelation. He was a prophet. Since the smoke that arose from the unlocked and opened pit obscured the light of the sun, which is symbolic of the gospel light, we must conclude that Satan was the instigator of the new religion, appropriately represented as black smoke from a furnace. For centuries the Sun of Righteousness was eclipsed wherever the dark Moslem cloud drifted. Speaking of the first conquests of the Saracens of Persia (A. D. 632-637), Ridpath, in Vol. 4, page 476, says: "The cloud, apparently no larger than the hand of a man, rising from the shores of the Red Sea, had

spread out to the east until its shadow fell beyond the valley of the Euphrates and the lofty range of Zagros."

LIKE LOCUSTS

"And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth." Note the following: "Now [672] it was that the Saracens, frenzied with religious zeal, blown up like a *cloud of locusts* from the south, settled before Constantinople."—*Id.*, Vol. 3, page 361. The historian unconsciously uses the very symbol of the prophecy.

Let us next notice the revelator's description of the Saracen invaders under the symbol of a swarm of destroying locusts.

"And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men."

The armies of the Arabs were made up almost solely of cavalry. With the swiftness of flying locusts, the world's most skillful horsemen rode their famous Arabian horses into battle. The crowns "like gold" doubtless refer to the turbans worn by the Saracens. These turbans were green in color. (See Barnes General History, page 327; Gibbon's Rome, Vol. 5, page 286.) Two factions of Moslems later wore white and black turbans, but the green turban is still the emblem of the original Islam. The shade of green is given by inspiration; it "looked like gold." (Weymouth.) The Saracen warriors wore beards of which they were very sensitive. Thus "their faces were as the faces of men."

"And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions." While historians record the fact that the early Arabian men wore long hair, they also declare that the women constituted an important part of the fighting force. In battle, "after the ancient Arab fashion, the shrill voices of women in the rear encouraged their men."—"Outline of History," by Wells, Vol. 2, page 19.

In describing the Battle of Tiberias, Gibbon declares that the last line of the Saracen army was made up of women, accustomed to wield the bow and the lance, and when the right wing of the Arabs was broken by the weight of the Roman cavalry and thrice compelled to retreat in disorder, they were each time "driven back to the charge by the reproaches and blows of the women."

"THE TEETH OF LIONS"

But there was nothing effeminate about the warriors as far as courage and savagery were concerned, for "their teeth were as the teeth of lions." Before entering the Battle of Tiberias, the entire exhortation of the general to his troops was: "Victory or Paradise is before you! the devil and hell fire are behind you! Charge." The patriarch of Alexander observes that the Saracens "fought with the courage of lions."

"And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle." Nearly all the cavalry of that period wore the cuirass made of iron or steel. This crossed the breast and sometimes the back also.

"They had tails like those of scorpions, and also stings; and in their tails lay their power of injuring mankind for five months." Verse 10, Weymouth. The Saracen weapons consisted of the lance and the bow. The Arabs fought as skillfully while retreating as while charging. With unerring aim and deadly results the Saracen archers discharged their arrows backwards directly over the tails of their horses. To the prophet in vision it seemed that the power

to torment was in the tails of the locusts or horses.

They were to "hurt men five months." "And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man." A day in prophecy represents a year of literal time. (See Ezekiel 4:6.) "Of one day being given for a year, there is no controversy between Catholics or Protestants."—*Alexander Campbell*. Five Jewish months of thirty days each would be one hundred fifty prophetic days or literal years. For one hundred fifty years the Saracens were to continue a menace to the power and authority of Eastern Rome. They were given power to "hurt" or "torment" the empire, but not totally to destroy it. The killing was reserved for the Turks under the second woe trumpet. During all the Saracenic invasions and conquests the empire was maintained, and Constantinople, its capital, successfully resisted every attack of the besiegers. To crush all religions and make Mohammedanism the one religion of the world was the ambition of Mohammed, and his successors fully imbibed the same spirit. Christianity was their first objective. After the conquest of Western Asia and Northern Africa, the plan was to overrun Europe; but Constantinople stood in the way. The Moslems attacked that city no less than ten times, but without avail. The Standard Encyclopedia, article, "Caliph," says: "To Constantinople belongs the honor of having been the first and strongest bridle of the Saracens."

COULD NOT DESTROY

The failure to take this stronghold and the fact that the Greeks and Genoese controlled the sea compelled the Saracens to take the long and circuitous route through North Africa and across the Strait of

Gibraltar into Europe. They planned to encircle the Mediterranean, but their progress was arrested by Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours. Thus they were permitted to hurt only and not destroy the empire.

The torment of this period is described as the torment of a scorpion when he stings a man. Scorpions are numerous in Arabia, and some of them are twelve inches in length. They are not slow and sluggish like those of many countries, but are speedy and vigorous and strike unexpectedly. The sting is not always deadly, but is very painful, usually causing death after a lingering torment.

The torment of the Moslem invasions was so terrible that the divine forecast declares: "And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." The Saracens offered their enemies a choice between the sword, the Koran, or tribute. There were millions of the poor whose real choice was death, but such a wholesale slaughter was unthinkable even to the fanatical Arabs, so these unfortunates were condemned to perpetual slavery. History tells us that they took from North Africa alone 180,000 prisoners and sold them into a slavery from which the victims would have gladly escaped even by death if it were possible.

ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING

To be anxious for nothing (Philippians 4:6, A. R. V.) is not to say, "I don't care." The one who says, "I don't care," is sowing tares that will bring a terrible harvest. Anxious for nothing means that the peace of God has crowded out earthly care. What is the secret?—It is not found in the philosophy of the stoic who sets his teeth and determines to master the ills of life, but rather in letting "your requests be made known unto God."

Paul, a prisoner in Rome, awaiting his trial, looked steadfastly into the face of death. Everything in the future was absolutely dark and uncertain. Then it was he wrote to his brethren in Philippi and cheerfully bade them, "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

We are too often guilty of that evil habit,—worry. That pernicious habit should play no part in a believer's life. Worry mars and spoils. Worry is to be banished. Worry accomplishes nothing. Worry weakens and wears. Worry narrows the spiritual horizon, turns out the bright lights of God, and lets the horrible darkness in.

God has by no means or in any event promised to do everything for us. There are some things we must do for ourselves. He has promised never to leave nor forsake His own. He has promised that all things shall work together for good to them that love Him. The crosses we construct by worry are not heaven-sent crosses. We nowhere are asked to carry crosses, but to take up the cross and follow Jesus. On that cross worry was crucified.

Paul gives us his recipe for the cure of care,—prayer. Worries can not resist thanksgiving. Let us raise our spiritual temperature by prayer, and thus dispel life's care "in everything." Oh, beloved in Christ, take the antidote for anxiety,—pray!—*J. B. Smith*.

EMPLOY thy time well if thou meanest to gain leisure; and since thou art not sure of a moment, throw not away an hour.—*Franklin*.



Waiting

ROBERT HARE

I am waiting for the welcome
On that glad and happy day,
When the Lord shall come in splendor,
And the dark tomb shall surrender
All the treasures buried in its clay.

Only waiting for the vision
Of that long-expected Face,
Once its lonely vigil keeping,
With earth's weary children weeping,
Now adorned in all heaven's perfect grace.

I am waiting for the echoes
Of that sweet angelic song,
Ringing from the heights of glory,
Telling once again the story,
"Lo, He comes, the Saviour promised long!"

I am waiting for the sounding
Of that great and mighty voice,
That shall reach to every station,
Calling men from every nation,
In His glory ever to rejoice.

Wait, my heart, He cometh surely,
Never promise more complete.
'Round it flows the love of Heaven,
From a heart with sorrow riven,
And that promise lingers full and sweet.