THE REVELATION

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CALL TO STUDY THE REVELATION

Promised Blessing. "When the books of Daniel and the Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart. The Lord will bless all who will seek Him humbly and meekly to understand that which is revealed in the Revelation. This book contains so much that is large with immortality and full of glory that all who read and search it earnestly receive the blessing. . . . One thing will certainly be understood from the study of the Revelation,--that the connection between God and His people is close and decided."--T.M. 114.

Instruction Needed Now. "To John the Lord opened the subjects that He saw would be needed by His people in the last days. The instruction that He gave is found in the book of Revelation. Those who would be co-workers with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will show a deep interest in the truths found in this book. With pen and voice they will strive to make plain the wonderful things that Christ came from heaven to reveal."--Vol. 8:301

Demands Our Study. "As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study. The last book of the New Testament Scriptures is full of truths that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many, so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study."--T.M. 116; C.O.L. 133.

"The book of Revelation especially demands our study. Let every God-fearing teacher consider how most clearly to comprehend and to present the gospel that our Saviour came in person to make known to His servant John."--Education, p. 19.

Diligent Study. "The closing scenes of this world's history are near at hand. The unfulfilled predictions of the book of Revelation are soon to be fulfilled. This prophecy is now to be studied with diligence by the people of God, and should be clearly understood. It does not conceal the truth; it clearly forewarns, telling us what will be in the future."--B-210-1903, Group D, p.24.

"Time is short. The perils of the last days are upon us, and we should watch and pray, and study and heed the lessons that are given us in the books of Daniel and the Revelation. . . This is the education that is to be patiently given. Let our lessons be appropriate for the day in which we live, and let our religious instruction be given in accordance with the messages God sends... Those who accept positions as educators should prize more and more the revealed will of God so plainly and strikingly presented in Daniel and the Revelation." --Vol. 6:128-131.

Occupy First Place. "The solemn messages that have been given in their order in the Revelation are to occupy the first place in the minds of God's people. Nothing else is to be allowed to engross our attention."--Vol.8:302. We must confess with shame that we as a people have not given the book of Revelation the first place in our study and preaching. Even with Seventh-day Adventists, who study the Revelation more than any other people, it is "the neglected book." We have too often left the study and interpretation of the Revelation to others and havefailed to devote to it the deep and personal study that it deserves and demands. "In the Revelation are portrayed the deep things of God."--A.A. 584. Perhaps this explains why this book has been so neglected. Most people do not like deep things or even to hear deep studies. It takes too much effort. The glories of this book will never be discovered by the surface reader or revealed to the indolent student. "In your study of the word of God, penetrate deeper and still deeper beneath the surface."--Vol. 9:151

The Secret. The real secret of the woeful neglect of the study of the Revelation is given in the following statement: "The study of the Revelation directs the mind to the prophecies of Daniel, and both present most important instruction, given of God to men, concerning events to take place at the close of this world's history. To John were opened scenes of deep and thrilling interest in the experience of the church. He saw the position, dangers, conflicts, and final deliverance of the people of God. He records the closing messages which are to ripen the harvest of the earth, either as sheaves for the heavenly garner or as fagots for the fires of destruction. Subjects of vast importance were revealed to him, especially for the last church, that those who should turn from error to truth might be instructed concerning the perils and conflicts before them. None need be in darkness in regard to what is coming upon the earth.

Why, then, this wide-spread ignorance concerning an important part of Holy Writ? Why this general reluctance to investigate its teachings? It is the result of a studied effort of the prince of darkness to conceal from men that which reveals his deceptions. For this reason, Christ the Revelator, foreseeing the warfare that would be waged against the study of the Revelation, pronounced a blessing upon all who should read, hear, and observe the words of the prophecy."--G.C. 341, 342.

Results of Study. "When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival."--T.M. 113. "Dwell on the Revelation. Read, explain, and enforce its teachings....If our people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the Revelation, a reformation would be wrought in our churches and many more would believe the message."--Vol. 6:61,62. It is in the Revelation that we find the Laodicean message the acceptance of which brings the latter rain and loud cry. It is declared to be "the solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs."--E.W. 270.

No Inspired Commentary. One of the chief means by which Satan has kept God's remnant people from a further study of the book of Revelation is the false idea that Uriah Smith was divinely inspired when he wrote "Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation." It is claimed that Sister White said that an angel stood by his side as he wrote this book although the statement cannot now be found. While his book was the finest commentary on these two prophecies ever written, it is not infallible and the author made no claim to prophetic inspiration. If he were living today he would be the first to make a complete revision of his book and bring it up to date. He would also refute any idea of his being inspired any more than other godly men by whose side stand angels of light as they preach and write. Sister White was asked the following question: "Do you not think that these men who have brought out the truth in the past were inspired of God?" She answered: "I dare not say they were not led of God, for Christ leads into all truth; but when it comes to inspiration in the fullest sense of the word, I answer, No."--R.H., March 25, 1890. No divinely inspired commentary has ever been written on the Revelation and it is still open to study with the promise of floods of light to the diligent seeker after truth. Many of the calls for a further study of the Revelation were written after Uriah Smith had completed and published his book.

Ever Increasing Light. Prov. 4:18. "A dawning light."--R.V. It is impossible to fully fathom the depths of divine revelation or to exhaust its light. "It is impossible for any human mind to exhaust even one truth or promise of the Bible. One catches the glory from one point of view, another from another point; yet we can discern only gleamings. The full radiance is beyond our vision. As we contemplate the great things of God's word, we look into a fountain that broadens and deepens beneath our gaze. Its breadth and depth pass our knowledge. As we gaze the vision widens; stretched out before us we behold a boundless, shoreless sea."--Education, p. 171.

Warning Against Stagnation. "And no church can advance in holiness unless its members are earnestly seeking for truth as for hid treasure."--G.D. 522. "We cannot hold that a position once taken, an idea once advocated, is not, under any circumstances, to be relinquished." "Advance new principles, and crowd in clear-cut truth."--T.M. 105,118. "But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word, and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures....When God's people are at ease and satisfied with their present enlightenment, we may be sure that He will not favor them. It is His will that they should be ever moving forward to receive the increasing and ever-increasing light which is shining for them. The present attitude of the church is not pleasing to God. There has come a self-confidence that has led them to feel no necessity for more truth and greater light....God wills that a voice be heard arousing His people to action."--Vol. 5:706-709. These are samples of scores of other statements in the Spirit of prophecy calling for more study for greater light in Scriptural truth.

New Visions of Christ. "To the apostle John on the isle of Patmos were revealed the things which God desired him to give to the people. Study these revelations. Here are themes worthy of our contemplation, large and comprehensive lessons which all the angelic host are seeking to communicate. Behold the life and character of Christ, and study His mediatorial work. Here is infinite wisdom, infinite love, infinite justice, infinite mercy. Here are depths and heights, lengths and breadths, for our consideration. Numberless pens have been employed in presenting to the world the life, the character, and the mediatorial work of Christ, and yet every mind through which the Holy Spirit has worked, has presented these themes in a light that is fresh and new."--Vol. 6:59.

Most Sublime Truths. "This work (writing the Bible) continued during the long period of sixteen hundred years--from Moses the historian of creation and the law to John, the recorder of the most sublime truths of the gospel."--G.C. 5, Introduction.

FOREWORD

This mimeographed work on the book of Revelation begins with chapter four because my published book, The Seven Epistles of Christ, covering the first three chapters, is available through our Book and Bible Houses. This book of 254 pages contains my latest notes on the first vision of the Apocalypse.

THE VISION OF THE THRONE OF GOD

1

The Second Vision. The first scene or episode in the great prophetic drama closed with chapter three. With chapter four begins a new vision which constitutes the second grand division of the Apocalypse. (The second act in the prophetic pageant embraces chapters four to seven and includes the first verse of chapter eight.) Chapters four and five present the heavenly setting for the vision of the seven seals. All of the visions of the Apocalypse are two-fold. The first part pictures a scene in heaven to reveal what is taking place in the heavenly sanctuary at the same time the predicted events are transpiring on the earth. In the former vision Christ is pictured as our ministering high Priest in heaven during the entire period covered by the seven churches while He ministers among them through His Representative the Holy Spirit. In this second vision Christ is presented as the slain Lamb or atoning sacrifice whose blood He ministers in behalf of His people during the entire period covered by the seven seals. As no other book of the Bible the Revelation shows that "the connection between God and His people is close and decided."

A New Vision. Rev. 4:1. "After these things" (R.V.). This opening statement of the chapter indicates that what follows is a new and separate vision from that of the seven churches. It is "successive as presented to the Seer, though not successive in the truths it depicts" (The Devotional Commentary). "After this I looked," shows clearly that the prophet is speaking of the order of the vision rather than to the order of events. The curtain is being lifted on a new scene constituting another series of events reaching from the first to the second advents of Christ. Many modern commentators are making a fatal mistake in attempting to make the events portrayed in the various visions of the Apocalypse successive instead of parallel and contemporaneous. Such a position necessitates the crowding of the entire book from chapter four to the close into a brief space following the Laodicean period of three and a half literal years. "Commentators from Victorinus to Alford have held that the different series of visions were successive only in appearance, and that the events signified were not successive but parallel" (Cambridge Bible). While the visions of Daniel were successive, the events portrayed in them were parallel or contemporaneous, or at least they overlapped.

A Recent Writer. Several modern writers are refuting the unsound position of the school of interpreters that would crowd most of the visions of the Apocalypse into the three and a half year period borrowed from Daniel's vision of the last of the seventy weeks. Philip Mauro declares that in the various divisions of the Apocalypse "the events symbolized are grouped with reference to their character, rather than with reference to time--that is to say, topically rather than chronologically."--Of Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass, p. 44. Speaking of the opening sentence of this second vision, the same writer says: "Those words also pre-suppose that, between the preceding vision and the present one, there was an interval during which John was in his natural state. And it is important to note this: for it is not possible to advance in the understanding of this Book until it is clearly apprehended that it does not give a regularly progressive disclosure of the future, but is divided into a number of

groups, each formally complete in itself, and each beginning, not where the next preceding left off, but at some starting point (it may be in the distant past) best suited to the special topic of that vision or group."(Id. pp. 141,142).

The Present Vision. Speaking of the vision now under consideration, the same author says: "There is, to my mind, no room for any doubt whatever that the group of visions beginning with Chapters IV and V and embracing the entire program of the seals, has for its historical starting point the ascension of our risen Lord into heaven and His occupation of the place of which He alone is worthy at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; and that this group of visions has to do with events which began to happen from that transcendently glorious occasion. And this is the conclusion of a large majority, including, I think, far the ablest, of those who have sought to expound the contents of this Book." (Id. p. 144). Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau, who wrote near the end of the third century, said: "We must not regard the order of what is said, because frequently the Holy Spirit, when He has traversed even to the end of the last times, returns again to the same times, and fills up what He had (before) failed to say. Nor must we look for order in the Apocalypse; but we must follow the meaning of those things which are prophesied." (Quoted in Clark's Auten. Libr. Tertullian, Vol. III, p. 414). These arguments are safe and sound and in harmony with the recognized rules of prophetic interpretation.

The Open Door. This open door was not the opening of the heavens as seen by Stephen at his martyrdom, or through which the dovelike Spirit descended on Christ at His baptism, or through which Christ will descend at His second advent. See Acts 7:56; Matt. 3:16; Rev. 6:14. In this vision it was not a door "into heaven" but a door "in heaven" that was standing open. John did not see the door opened; it was already open. "An open door in the heavens." (20th C.N.T.). "A door set open in the heavens." (Eng. R.V.) "I looked and saw a door in heaven standing open." (Weymouth) John did not witness the scenes of this episode from the earth as he did the former one, but was taken in vision to heaven. He was taken in the spirit through the open door and witnessed what transpired in the heavenly temple. (In physical being he remained on Patmos, but the journey and scenes of the vision were so real, that, like Paul, he probably could not tell whether he was "in the body or out of the body." (See 2 Cor. 12:1-4.)

What Door? The door here mentioned is doubtless the one referred to in Rev. 3:8 which Christ alone can open and close. It is the door into the heavenly sanctuary and its services; the door into the place of Christ's priestly ministrations which was opened by Him on the day of Pentecost as the result of His Calvary victory, and will be closed by Him when His mediatorial work is finished and probation closes. This is the key that unlocks the temple or throne-room of David. It is the priestly service of Christ that makes possible His kingship. Christ had to become a sacrificial Lamb before He could become a Priest, and He had to become a Priest before He could become a King on the throne of David. The scene within the open door includes the ministry of Christ and His assistants in both apartments, or both phases of His Mediatorial work in the heavenly sanctuary. This is evident from the scenes described and also from the fact

that the earthly events portrayed in the seven seals embrace the entire Christian era including the antitypical day of atonement reaching to the close of probation and the coming of Christ. This was also true of the former vision. In all of these visions the scene in heaven and the events to take place on earth cover the same period,--the Christian dispensation.

Future Events. "The first voice" has the meaning of "former voice;" that is, the voice of Jesus who spoke to Him in the former vision. "The voice that I had previously heard, which resembled the blast of a trumpet, again spake to me and said" (Weymouth). See Rev. 1:10,11. The purpose of this vision is the same as the former vision and of the entire book. "I will show you things which are to happen in the future." (Weymouth) These events are portrayed in symbols. We must not forget that the last book of the Bible is "God's picture book" in which the whole message of the Scriptures is summarized and dramatized. The figures and symbols of the Apocalypse are drawn largely from the Old Testament. It has been said that of the 404 verses in the Revelation, 265 contain expressions drawn from the Old Testament, and that there are at least 550 references made to Old Testament passages. (The other books of the Bible appeal mostly to the ear, while the Apocalypse makes its appeal mostly through the eye.) "Things seen are mightier than things heard," said Tennyson. God's final appeal to His people is therefore the mightiest of them all.

The Correct Viewpoint. No correct view of earthly things is possible except from the viewpoint of the heavenly sanctuary and its services. The prophet is bidden to come up to the throne-room of God and see the future from the vista of heaven. The first requisite of a correct understanding of human history is to behold the Creator and Governor of all things; to know that God rules in the kingdoms of men; that His throne is the center of the universe and that all events are by His order or permission. Human historians are all biased and prejudiced because they are restricted in their vision. No two persons can see the same event in the same light, and this is especially true if they are divided by race and national and geographical boundaries. Therefore, the only accurate and dependable history is that which has been written under inspiration of God. The cross and its sacrificial Lamb constitute the center from which all light and truth radiates both ways into the two eternities. Nothing in sacred or profane history can be rightly understood and appreciated except in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. And from this viewpoint only can we grasp the meaning of the heavenly and earthly events portrayed in the Apocalypse. It is for this reason that the breaking of the seven seals is preceded by the introductory vision of the throne of God.

The Throne. Verses 2,3. "Set" as used here has the meaning of "situated," "located," or "established." The prophet did not see the throne placed, but he saw it already fixed or in place. (While on earth the thrones of earthly kings are falling and human governments are drifting toward anarchy and chaos, it is comforting to know that in heaven the throne and kingdom of the Eternal are stable and secure. The reason for the stability of the throne and kingdom of Jehovah is expressed in Heb. 1:8: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." On this throne at the right hand of the Father, Jesus took His place when He ascended and began His priestly ministration on the day of Pentecost and there He will remain till His mediatorial work is finished. ?

See Mark 16:19; Heb. 8:1,2; Rev. 3:21. Rev. 11:14-19 proves conclusively that the scene of this vision embraces Christ's work in both apartments of the heavenly sanctuary. The central object of the entire scene is the throne and with reference to it every other being and symbol embraced in the vision takes its place. [The book of Romans has been called the "court room" of the Bible because in it so many legal questions are raised.] The book of Revelation could properly be called the "throne room" for in it the word throne appears 37 times, 17 of which are found in chapters four and five.

The Eternal. The occupant of the throne is the unnamable and indescribable God. No attempt is made to describe the person of the Eternal, but only the effulgent glory that surrounds Him and His throne. While the Scriptures make it clear that the Eternal Father is a Person, His personal appearance is never described. But the Son in His glorified state is described, and we are told that He is "the express Image" of His Father's "person." In this vision the Eternal is described as being clothed or surrounded by a brilliant light of the mingled colors of jasper and sardine stones. In 1 Tim. 6:16 we are told that God is "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see." "Dwelling in unapproachable light." (Weymouth) The Psalmist said: "O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment." Ps. 104:1,2. In Rev. 21:11 jasper is used to symbolize the light and glory of God. Jasper and sardine are said to be the same as the ruby and sapphire used in Lam. 4:7 to represent the ruddy complexion and beauty of perfect health. Jasper is noted for its purity and brilliancy and is thought by some to be the modern diamond. It is called "a stone most precious" and has a crystalline clearness with a purple hue. The sardius is also exceedingly precious and beautiful and is of a bright red or carnation color.

Significance of Colors. The jasper was the first and the sardius the last of the twelve stones on the breastplate of the high priest which represented the characters of the twelve tribes. See Ex. 28:17-21. These two colors doubtless symbolize the fact that the Occupant of the throne is "the God of Israel" or of the "overcomer." He is "the First and the Last," the "Alpha and the Omega." His character contains all the noble characteristics that can be found in all of the twelve tribes of Israel, literal and spiritual. His is the supreme character. Some also believe that the jasper or diamond with its watery crystalline brightness represents the holiness of God, and the fiery red sardius His justice in executing His wrath. These colors are elsewhere ~~said~~ to be like "amber" and "fiery flame." See Eze. 1:4; 8:2; Dan. 7:9. In Rev. 21:11, the light of the celestial city is said to be "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Orpheus speaks of the "blood-colored sardius" and Epiphanius says, "It is of a fiery red appearance and blood-like." Tucker declares that "precious stones in Scripture are often used as emblematic of various excellencies of character and perfections."

The Encircling Bow. "And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." "Encircling the throne was a rainbow, in appearance like an emerald." (Weymouth) The encircling bow is unbroken by an horizon and is a complete circle as are rainbows when seen from airships high above the earth. A complete circle has always been the

emblem of divinity, eternity and perfection. The bow was doubtless sort of a halo formed by the various colored lights reflecting the glory of God. See Eze. 1:28. This text may indicate that the bow refers to the shape or form of the halo rather than to the seven-hued rainbow colors. The statement that the bow was "in sight like unto an emerald" would seem to indicate that it was the light, soft green color of an emerald. The emerald was at least the predominating color of the bow. Green is the most refreshing of all colors to look upon. "The ancients felt very strongly the relief given to the eye by looking at it." (Cambridge Bible). Speaking of the bow another writer says: "Its various colors, which combined form one pure solar ray, symbolize the varied aspects of God's providential dealings uniting in one harmonious whole." (Critical and Explanatory Commentary on the Whole Bible).

Bow of Promise. The rainbow is the symbol of grace returning after wrath. It was hung in the heavens after the deluge as an evidence of God's love and grace, and was a promise that there would never be another flood of waters. See Gen. 9:12-17. The first bow was a promise of deliverance from a deluge of waters; the second bow is a promise of deliverance from a deluge of fire. See 2 Peter 3:3-14. As the earth after the flood of waters was restored to Noah and his family, so the earth after the flood of fire will be restored to Abraham and his family. The rainbow is an evidence to those who see it that the storm is over. "This rainbow that encircles the throne of God is visible to those, and only to those, who stand under the shelter of the cross of Christ...We need, indeed, to be reminded constantly of the awful majesty and intense holiness of God; but we are not to forget His grace and forbearance toward all who, though deserving the consuming fire of His wrath, have been brought to trust in His mercy and pardoning love." (Mauro). The bow indicates that though the world has been shipwrecked through sin, there will follow a new heavens and a new earth where calmness and sunshine will prevail.

The Character of God. The encircling bow like the jasper and sardius colors, represent the character of God. "The rainbow of promise encircling the throne on high" (White), indicates that the occupant of the throne that governs the universe is a covenant-keeping God who will fulfill all His promises. The complete circle of the seven-hued bow constitutes a promise of complete and perfect fulfilment of all covenants. God's word is dependable. The bow is an assurance that God is true and that the honor of His throne is staked for the fulfilment of His word to His people. "The rainbow is the divinely constituted sign of covenant mercy founded on accepted sacrifice (Gen. 8). In the rainbow the three primitive colors are blended and harmonized, beginning with the blue and ending with the red, with the yellow in the center, and in their beauteous combinations completing the perfect seven. So in God's covenant-keeping goodness every Divine perfection is harmonized and displayed." (Thomas Newberry).

The Royal Color. The emerald stone in the breastplate of the high priest represented Judah of the royal line. The emerald green is therefore the royal color. The One encircled by the emerald bow is the King and Ruler of the universe. He rules in both justice and mercy. In Him "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Ps. 85:10). While the flashing glory of the jasper and sardius may represent the justice of God, over and above His throne is the soft beaming emerald bow of promise and hope; of mercy remembered in wrath; of

salvation over-spanning and encircling the appearance of consuming fire. Just as the bow in the cloud is formed by the union of sunlight and shower, so the bow encircling God's throne represents the combination of mercy and justice. With no justice or penalty there could be no stability to the government of God. It is the mingling of justice and mercy that makes salvation full and complete. Christ came into the world "to magnify the law and make it honorable," and it is in Him that justice and mercy meet. He is our mercy-seat between the wrath of God and the broken law. "He it is whom God put forward as a Mercy-Seat,rendered efficacious through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness--because of the passing over, in God's forbearance, of the sins previously committed--with a view to demonstrating, at the present time, His righteousness, that He may be shown to be righteous Himself, and the giver of righteousness to those who believe in Jesus." Rom. 3:25,26. Weymouth. While beneath God's throne is His law and standard of righteousness which it is impossible for sinful man to reach, above His throne is the bow of promise representing the righteousness of Christ which may be obtained by faith in His promise. The justice of God represented by the law that upholds His throne, and the mercy of God represented by the emerald bow encircling His throne, meet and mingle in the righteous character of the Ruler of the universe who occupies the Mercy-Seat covered throne.

The Encircling Thrones. Verse 4. "Circling the throne were twenty-four thrones" (Emphatic Diaglott). "Surrounding the throne were 24 other thrones" (Weymouth). "Thrones" and not "seats" is the proper rendering. The throne of God doubtless occupies the center of the throne-room of the heavenly temple, and the twenty-four smaller and lower thrones form a complete circle around it. These are doubtless the same thrones referred to in Dan. 7:9,10, which were "cast down" or "placed" (R.V.) around the central throne of the "Ancient of Days" or the Eternal Father. Different translations refer to the occupants of the twenty-four thrones as "elders," "senators," councilors, and "ancients," all of which were names applied to the members of the Great Sanhedrin. "Ancients" is the term used in Isa. 24:23. The heads or representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel were called "elders." The term is used more than 100 times in the Old Testament and always an elder is a representative of a family, city, tribe, or nation. In the New Testament an "elder" is a church official serving in a representative capacity. It has been suggested that they may also be called "elders" because they are the first of the saints to be admitted into heaven, the first-fruits of the redeemed, the first-born of God's family.

Twenty-four Courses. King David divided the typical priesthood into 24 courses, and this order was still in vogue at the time of Christ. See Luke 1:5,8,9. Each of these 24 courses was under the direction of a "prince," "elder" or "governor." These 24 elders were chosen from the descendants of Aaron through his two sons, 16 of the house of Eleazar, and 8 of the house of Ithamar. "Thus they were divided by lot, one sort with another: for the governors of the sanctuary, and governors of the house of God." See 1 Chron. 24:1-5. It also seems that 24,000 Levites were appointed to serve as assistants to the priests in these 24 courses, 1000 to a course. See 1 Chron. 23-25. The earthly sanctuary and its priesthood and services were typical of the heavenly. The author of the book of Hebrews declares that the typical were "the figures of the true" and "the patterns of the things in the heavens." (Heb. 9:9,23,24). The

twenty-four elders seated on thrones encircling the throne of God in the heavenly temple, are therefore doubtless princes in charge of the 24 courses of the heavenly service. They doubtless each have many assistants as in the typical service.

Assistant Priests. That the twenty-four elders are not angels or unfallen beings is evident from the fact that they are "clothed in white raiment" and "have on their heads crowns of gold." They have passed through a conflict and have gotten the victory. "With victor's wreaths of gold upon their heads." (Weymouth). They also declare that they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. (Rev. 5:8-10). The white linen garment was the daily dress of the priests. (Ex. 28:42; Lev. 6:10; 16:4). Just as the high priest of the typical service had twenty-four chief assistants with their thousands of helpers, so Christ, the High Priest of the heavenly sanctuary service, has the assistance of twenty-four elders with their thousands of assistants. Rev. 5:8 shows that the twenty-four elders perform a priestly service before the throne in the offering of incense which represents "the prayers of saints." The high priest of the typical service wore a crown of pure gold on which was engraved, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." (Ex. 39:30). The priests and elders occupied positions next to the king during the dedication of the temple. (1 Kings 8:1-3). Under David and his sons they were important under-rulers in the kingdom of Israel. So in the apocalyptic vision the twenty-four elders are about the throne of God and their robes and crowns indicate the dignity of their positions and the purity of their lives.

Their Qualifications. Christ was not qualified to become priest or judge until He had been incarnated in sinful flesh and was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." See Heb. 2:17,18. Christ could not therefore be a priest in the full sense of the term before His earthly visit and death, when He was sacrificed as the Victim whose blood alone can cleanse from sin. For this same reason angels or unfallen beings could not act as Christ's assistants in mediatorial and priestly service. Therefore only redeemed beings who had been tempted and tried and who had gained the victory over sin through Christ, could assist Him in the heavenly sanctuary service. The qualification of Christ as a priest did not consist wholly in His incarnation in human flesh, but also because of His complete victory over sin. See also Heb. 4:14-16. This too is given as one of the qualifications of the twenty-four elders. But how did these redeemed beings reach heaven? There are only two ways for human beings to reach heaven--through a resurrection or translation. Only two men, as far as the Biblical record goes, have ever reached heaven through the gateway of translation. Enoch and Elijah entered heaven without ever having experienced death. Moses was resurrected and taken to heaven soon after his burial, and the disciples saw him with Elijah talking with Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration. See Jude 9; Mark 9:2-4. The twenty-four elders and their assistants were doubtless among those who were resurrected with Christ and ascended with Him as the first-fruits of His Calvary victory. See Matt. 27:50-53; Eph. 4:8. Margin.

Type and Antitype. "The Levitical priesthood was divided into twenty-four courses. Each course had its chief or governor of the sanctuary. This continued down to the time of Christ. When the Saviour ascended to heaven, He led a multitude of captives; and when John in vision was shown the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary...he saw four and twenty elders

seated upon four and twenty seats...In this we see the antitype of the twenty-four courses of priests. The chiefs or elders of each course have seats of honor, and they are kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek. The remainder of the multitude Christ took into heaven are not mentioned, but it is reasonable to suppose that they constitute the courses of which the four and twenty elders are the chiefs."--The Cross and Its Shadow, S. N. Haskell, p. 80.

Justice Assured. One of the greatest safeguards of justice on earth is the jury system which gives a man the right to demand trial before his fellow peers whose environments, temptations and experiences are similar to his own. The twenty-four elders and their assistants are redeemed human beings who have "in all points" been tempted "like as we are." They are our brethren and they therefore know how to sympathize and judge justly. Not only do these fellow-citizens of ours assist Christ, our Elder Brother, in His priestly mediation and ministration in our behalf, but they also doubtless form a sort of Jury in the work of the Investigative Judgment before the Supreme Court of the Universe, which is now in session. For this same reason the final judgment of the wicked world and fallen angels will be given to the redeemed of earth during the millennium. See Dan. 7:21; 1 Cor. 6:2,3; Rev. 20:4-6. With such a Judge and Advocate and jury, we need not fear the possibility of a miscarriage of justice, especially when encircling the throne of the Eternal is the emerald bow of promised mercy in the administration of justice.

The Judgment Throne. Verse 5. "Out from the throne came flashes of lightning, and voices and peals of thunder." (Weymouth) Thunderings and lightning flashes seem to express God's threatened judgments against transgressors, and therefore indicate that He is on the throne of judgment and that mercy will be followed by wrath. See Ps. 77:16-19;Rev.11:19;16:18,19 "The thunder, lightning and voices, guarantee the vengeance upon the enemies; and the rainbow the mercy upon His people and the remembrance of His covenant." (Tucker) The throne of judgment is encircled with the bow of promise indicating that God "in wrath remembers mercy." (Hab. 3:2) In Dan. 7:9,10 the same scene is presented. "His throne was fiery flames and the wheels thereof burning fire." (R.V.) "His throne was a blaze of flames and its wheels were burning fire." (Moffatt) Daniel declared this scene to be "the judgment." This is further proof that the vision of John includes the work of Christ and His assistants in both phases of the sanctuary service, reaching to the close of probation. What a scene of supernal glory and dazzling splendor! In comparison how trifling and insignificant the pomp and pride of earthly monarchs; how pale the flickering torch of human glory!

The Seven Lamps. These seven lamps are declared to symbolize "the seven Spirits of God." In Rev. 1:4 they are called "the seven Spirits which are before His throne." In Rev. 5:6, the Lamb which symbolizes Christ is said to have "seven eyes," which are interpreted as meaning "the Seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." That these are all the same is evident. They symbolize the Holy Spirit in the fulness and perfection of His operations and power. It is through the Holy Spirit and His angels of "ministering spirits" that Christ sees all that takes place in the earth. (These seven blazing lamps "before the throne" must not be confused with the seven lamps or candlesticks, which are said to represent "the seven churches.") The Holy Spirit is the light and life dispenser,

and it is from the seven torches before the throne that the candlesticks are lighted, so that the church becomes "the light of the world." This is also the holy fire that burns out the dross and cleanses the church from sin and uncleanness. From these torches the apostolic church received the holy fire of Pentecostal power for witnessing. A rebaptism of this spiritual fire from the blazing lamps is the modern church's greatest need, and for such an experience every Christian should earnestly and fervently pray. That such a baptism will ripen and garner the final gospel harvest is evident from Bible prophecy. See Joel 2:28-32; Rev. 18: 1-5.

THE SEA OF GLASS AND THE SONG OF CREATION

2

The Crystal Sea. Rev. 4:6. Other translations show that the sea before the throne had only the appearance of glass. "As it were a sea of glass." (R.V., Vulgate, Coptic, Syriac). "There seemed to be a sea of glass, resembling crystal." (Weymouth) This harmonizes with Rev. 15:2: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire." Glass was first made in Egypt 4,000 years ago. The ancient glass was opaque and cloudy, but that described here is clear like crystal. Crystal is any substance that is both clear and concrete like glass or ice. It is evident that the crystal sea represents the pavement of the throne room of the heavenly temple. When Nadab and Abihu and the seventy elders of Israel went up into Mount Sinai with Moses, "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." (Ex. 24:10). When Lucifer was the first of the anointed covering cherubs occupying the highest position in the government of God next to the members of the Godhead, he "walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire." (Eze. 28:14). The glittering gems that compose the mosaic tile-work of the floor of the celestial court are well described as "stones of fire" or "glass mingled with fire."

Commentators. "Between the door through which the prophet gazes and the throne on which the Creator is seated stretches this gleaming pavement, which flashes back the light as sunbeams are reflected from the summer sea." (Erdman) "The pavement of this royal court of glory and judgment is a fitting symbol of the absolute clarity and righteousness of the Almighty as King and Judge." (Stevens) What a contrast between the solid crystal foundation on which the throne of God is located and the "many" turbulent "waters" on which the harlot Babylon is seated. See Rev. 17: 1-5,15,18. This crystal sea in the heavenly temple is doubtless the antitype of the "laver" or "molten sea" or "brazen sea" in the Mosaic Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple, which was made of highly polished copper mirrors. See Ex. 38:8; 1 Kings 7:23; 2 Chron. 4:2-5. The laver and water were a constant reminder to the priests and people of the need of cleansing. "It is suggestive of the Word of God in its double office of first revealing (as a mirror) the defilement of the person, and then (as by water) removing it." (Mauro) Only those who have been cleansed from all sin and baptized of water and the Spirit can stand before the throne of God. See John 3:3-5. "The sky" in Job 37:18, is said to be "as a molten looking glass." This was also the appearance of the pavement of the royal court. "The sea of glass" has both depth and transparency but not the instability of the natural sea. It is solid, calm and clear.

Indescribable Glory. The glory of this scene is too wonderful for human language to describe. We can only faintly imagine the brilliance of the illumination caused by the ruby-red sardius and the brilliant jasper lights from the Occupant of the throne, and the emerald green light from the encircling bow, mingled with the white and red lights from the flashes of lightning and blazing torches, all reflected in the glittering pavement of the sapphire-like stones of fire. Besides this scene the "Tower of Jewels" only faintly glimmered in the searchlight by night and the sunlight by day. The aurora borealis, with its ribbon-like streams of many colored lights, 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,--the unsurpassed and indescribable magnificence of this earthly phenomenon of nature pales into insignificance in comparison with the celestial glory of the throne and throne room of the King of Glory. The regal splendor and glory of earthly monarchs give but faint conceptions of the radiant splendor of Him "who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." (1 Tim. 6:16).

The Living Creatures. "And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind." Wycliffe first used the term "beasts" and it is one of the most unfortunate translations in the King James Version. The proper rendering is "living creatures" (R.V.), or "living ones" (Emphatic Diaglott). Who are the four "living ones" on the four sides of the throne of God? What or whom do they symbolize? These are the only occupants of the throne room whose identity is at all uncertain. Apocalyptic students are somewhat divided as to the meaning of these symbols. The position of the four living creatures as related to the throne should help us in identifying them. "Within the space before the throne and round the throne are four creatures." (20th C.N.T.) "And midway between the throne and the Elders, and surrounding the throne, were four living creatures." (Weymouth) They are closer to the throne than the elders and next to the "seven Spirits of God," or the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead. They stand and minister in the very presence of God and hold official positions in the kingdom next to the members of the Trinity.

Symbols Employed. Verses 7,8. Since the Apocalypse is highly figurative and symbolic, it is evident that symbols are employed here. In Rev. 5:6, Christ is symbolized as a Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes. No one would think for a moment of considering this a picture of His bodily appearance. It is rather descriptive of His character and redeeming mission. The same must be true of the four living creatures. The description is of their position, character, and service, rather than their personal appearance. The Bible is its own interpreter, and these same living creatures are referred to thirty-eight times in the Scriptures and the symbols are divinely interpreted. No person can read Isa. 6:1-8; Eze. 1:1-14; 10:1-20, without recognizing the same symbols and realizing that they represent the same celestial beings. In these Old Testament prophecies they are called "cherubim" and "seraphim" which represent the highest orders of the angelic host who minister next to the throne of God. It is not strange that the symbols should be somewhat different, for this is true of all the symbolic prophecies, even when the symbols represent the same events, persons, or organizations. The symbols in the Apocalypse combine the features of the cherubim and the seraphim of the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel. "Ezekiel saw the four faces of each as a composite being. John seems to have seen the face of each as if they were separate creatures." (Morris).

Divine Interpretation. The prophet Ezekiel declares over and over again that the living creatures around the throne of God are the "cherub" or "cherubim." "And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river Chebar."

(Eze. 10:14,15). That the living creatures of the Apocalypse are the same is the conclusion of many Bible students. "The living creatures are the cherubim. The curtain and veil which formed the sides of the Most Holy Place were wrought with cherubim in cunning work, so that one entering that sacred spot was surrounded by them." (The Expositor's Bible). While there were only two "anointed covering cherubim," that there were many more is evident from the fact that pictures of them were woven into the curtains of the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle and Temple. We know that Lucifer before his fall was one of the anointed covering cherubims, and it is evident that Gabriel now occupies that position. To Zecharias, Gabriel said: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God." (Luke 1:19). Gabriel now stands before the throne of God "in the midst of the stones of fire," where Lucifer once stood and ministered as the special messenger of Jehovah. If the "living creatures" of the apocalyptic vision are not the cherubim, then Gabriel and the mighty angels who assist him are left out of the picture. This would be unreasonable when all the other occupants of the throne room are described.

The Celestial Chariot. The four living creatures symbolize the fiery chariot of Jehovah; they are His special messengers and attendants. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, and the holy place." "And He rode upon the cherub, and did fly: He did fly upon the wings of the wind." Ps. 67:17; 18:10. In Eze. 1 and 10, and in Dan. 7:9,10, the chariot of God is said to have living wheels "like the fiery flame" or "burning fire." These living creatures go and return with the appearance and rapidity "of a flash of lightning." One writer describes this "chariot of fire" as follows: "On each side of the cloudy chariot are wings, and beneath it are living wheels; and as the chariot rolls upward, the wheels cry, 'Holy,' and the wings, as they move, cry, 'Holy,' and the retinue of angels cry, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.'"--The Great Controversy, p.645. A Christian hymn of the eighth century contains the lines: "Cherubim and Seraphim, the many-eyed, sing the thrice holy hymn: Holy, holy, holy art thou! Thou who art seated upon the right hand of the Father."--The New Archeological Discoveries, Cobern, p.304. With all this evidence before us is it any wonder that the majority of the students of the Apocalypse conclude that the four living creatures are the cherubim. "These are the cherubim of Ezekiel" (Pieters). "These four represent the Cherubim and Seraphim, who continually cry, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,'"(Cambridge Bible). "The crowning glory of Christ's attributes is His holiness. The angels bow before Him in adoration, exclaiming, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty."--Counsels to Teachers, p. 402.

Not Redeemed Beings. Those who teach that the four living creatures represent redeemed beings as do the twenty-four elders, base their belief principally on Rev. 5:8-10. This argument would be very good if this were the correct translation. Some of the best Greek scholars declare that the original indicates that the new song is sung only by the twenty-four elders. The best explanation, however, is given in the best of the modern translations. The American Revised Version follows: "And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom of priests; and they reign upon the earth." The best of modern scholars agree that this is the proper translation.

Even angels can sing such a song regarding the redemptive power of Christ. "'Us' should be omitted. The elders probably represent the whole multitude of the redeemed, but they are not here said to belong to their number, and the living creatures certainly do not. The true reading is, 'Thou wast slain, and hast purchased to God by Thy blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made them unto our God a kingdom and priests, and they (shall) reign upon the earth.'" (Cambridge Bible). In the scene before us the redeemed are represented by the twenty-four elders, and surely no redeemed beings would be nearer the throne than the princes of the twenty-four antitypical priestly courses. It is unnecessary that the redeemed be represented by two different groups before the throne.

Eyes and Wings. The many eyes "before and behind" and "within" would indicate perfection of wisdom and vision, unlimited intelligence and ceaseless vigilance. Lucifer when one of the anointed covering cherubim was "full of wisdom." Of him the Lord said: "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee." (Eze. 28:3,12). It seems that the wings of the cherubim were "full of eyes" "all around and within." (Alford) The cherubim messengers of the Lord fly swiftly to every place and see everything. In Rev. 5:7 "the seven Spirits of God" are symbolized by the "seven eyes" of the Lamb which are "sent forth into all the earth." Tennyson wrote of "Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes." Even the poet recognizes the four living creatures as angels. The seraphims of Isaiah's vision used two wings to cover their faces when in the presence of God, two wings to cover their feet, and two wings for flight. It is a picture of reverence, humility, and obedience. One writer speaks of the heavenly temple "where seraphim, its shining guardians, veil their faces in adoration." (White)

Guards of Throne. It is believed that the functions of the cherubim are to "keep" and "guard." The first time they are mentioned is in Gen. 3:24 where they are commissioned to "keep the way of the tree of life." ("Israel marched through the wilderness under the four banners of the lion, young ox, the man, and the flying eagle. These were their ensigns, their guards, their coverings, the symbols of powers by which they were protected and guided)...To cover and guard, is thought to be the proper signification of the word cherub...A vision of the cherubim, then, is a vision of them that cover, protect, guard and keep."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 1, pp. 256,257. The four living creatures representing the cherubim are therefore the guardians, keepers, protectors, and coverings of the throne of God. Two of them are called "the anointed" covering cherubim.

God's Secret Service. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, these cherubim ministering spirits constitute "the eyes of the Lord" that "run two and fro throughout the whole earth," and which see and record everything. "These symbolic forms...represent those seraphic beings of the immediate heavenly divine court, which stand in worship before their Almighty Sovereign and in readiness for detective and executive service at His will. Their arrangement of worship is here emphasized, while their detective and executive engagements are especially revealed and emphasized in Ezekiel 1, and in other places in the Old Testament...These four beings represent in their cooperation the combination of unconquerable courage, indomitable patience, human understanding and appreciation, and lofty vision. Especially pronounced is their inescapable detective scrutiny.

Their special correlation with human saints is confirmed by the fact that their figures were emblazoned upon the four standards of the four quarters of the camp of Israel."--Revelation, the Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy, Stevens, pp, 111,112. "Four" is the symbolic number representing world wide extension to "the four quarters of the earth." See Dan. 7:2,3; Rev. 7:1.

Highly Symbolic. To the prophet in the vision the four living creatures had the appearance of a lion, a calf or ox, the face of a man, and a flying eagle. This is almost identical with the description given by Ezekiel of the same creatures which he identifies as the cherubim. That this language is highly symbolic must be evident to any reader. The man, ox, lion, and eagle represent the four most conspicuous forms of animal life. They rule in the realms of intellect, the field, the forest and the air. "The four forms represent whatever is noblest, strongest, wisest, and swiftest in nature." (Swete) The cherubim messengers of Jehovah have the courage, boldness and majesty of the lion; the patience, perseverance, strength and endurance of the ox; the intelligence, sympathy and reasoning power of man; and the keen sight, far vision, swiftness, and untiring flight of the eagle. In Zech. 6:1-5 these same "four spirits of the heavens" are represented as four chariots, "which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth."

Jewish Position. Rabbi Abin wrote regarding the four living creatures of Ezekiel's vision: "These four which have principality in this world; among intellectual creatures, man; among birds, the eagle; among cattle (domestic animals), the ox; and among wild beasts, the lion; each of these has a kingdom, and a certain magnificence; and they are placed under the throne of glory; Eze. 1:10, to show that no creature is to exalt itself in this world; and that the kingdom of God is above all."--Shemoth Rabba, Sec. 23. fol. 122.4. In Num. 2:1-5 we are told that the twelve tribes camped around the Tabernacle in four divisions each "by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house." Jewish writers tell us that the group on the east had the lion as their standard, those on the west had the calf or ox as their standard, those on the south the face of a man as their standard, and those on the north had a flying eagle as their emblem. Thus the twelve tribes in four groups covered, guarded and protected the Tabernacle in which was the typical throne of God. Jesus being of the tribe of Judah is called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." It is because of this Jewish tradition regarding the four emblems or standards that some attempt to prove that the four living creatures of the apocalyptic vision are symbolic of redeemed beings. But such a conclusion is unwarranted. The church is represented by the twenty-four elders and two representations would not only be unnecessary but unreasonable and contrary to the usual order of interpreting a vision.

Ceaseless Praise. "And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." To "rest not day and night" in the giving of thanks and praise, is a far different experience from that of the wicked who in their punishment "have no rest day nor night" until they are consumed and brought to ashes. See Rev. 14:11; Mal. 4:1-3. The seraphims of the vision of Isaiah sing: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." Isa. 6:1-3. This is further evidence that the two visions are identical. See also Ps. 99:3,5,9. Pirkey Eliezer, a Jewish writer declared that

"four troops of ministering angels praise the holy blessed God." It is generally believed that the cherubim host, under the leadership of the first of the anointed covering cherubs, are the leaders in the praise services of the heavenly court. Lucifer was once the leader of this angelic choir, and Gabriel doubtless holds that position now. Swete declared that the vision of John indicates the fact that "the ceaseless activity of nature under the hand of God is a ceaseless tribute of praise."

Lead Praise Service. Verses 9-11. Here is further evidence that the living creatures are the cherubim who lead out in the praise services of all creation when "glory and honour and thanks" are ascribed to the Creator. "Created life adores the Uncreated." (Swete) Overcome by the glory of the scene, the twenty-four elders, representing the church militant, arise in reverence from their thrones and cast their crowns of victory before the throne of the Creator in humble acknowledgement that all the honour and glory and merits are due to Him who caused them to triumph and gave them their crowns. In an attitude of adoration and submission the twenty-four princes prostrate themselves before the King of kings, just as do petty kings and princes of earth before a great ruler and conqueror. Tacitus tells us that Tiridates, king of Parthia, laid his crown at the feet of the image of Nero as a token of homage and submission to the Roman Empire over which he ruled. (Annal XV, xxix. 3,6). Queen Victoria once expressed a desire to be living when Christ returns so that she would have the privilege of laying the crown of England at the feet of "the King of kings and Lord of lords."

Oratorio of Creation. This song is known as the song or Oratorio of Creation. It precedes the song of redemption pictured in the next chapter and is the first of a series presented in this vision. The twenty-four elders with their assistants join the cherubim choir in worshiping the Eternal because He is the Creator. This is the true motive of worship and that which distinguishes it from false worship or idolatry. Idolatry is worshiping or serving the creature rather than the Creator. See Rom. 1:25. Creation is the most fundamental fact of all history and is the foundation of all God's acts of power, wisdom and love. It is therefore the first reason for worship, praise and thanksgiving. "They were not, and were created" is the rendering in one of the oldest manuscripts. They were created out of nothing as is plainly indicated in Heb. 11:3: "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." There are no evolutionary modernists among the worshipers before the throne of God. While many on earth are giving the glory of creation to chance and natural law, around the throne of God in heaven the glory and honor of creation is ascribed to the Creator of all things. See Ps. 33:1-9.

THE VISION OF THE LAMB

3

The Sealed Scroll. Rev. 5:1. "And I saw" indicates that this is not a new vision, but a new incident in the vision of the previous chapter. The praise service ended, the prophet's attention is again called to the Occupant of the throne, and he is privileged to behold one of the most sublime scenes ever witnessed in prophetic vision. The right hand of the Eternal seemed to have been extended through the veil of glory that enveloped His person, and in it was a book, or scroll. The books of the time of the vision were in the form of scrolls. "On the right hand" is said to be the literal rendering. The right hand was open and the scroll lay on the open palm waiting for someone to take it. It was really a scroll of scrolls, or seven scrolls in one. The Bible is one Book and yet it is composed of many books. It is "The Book of books." Each of the seven scrolls was firmly sealed. "A will in Roman law bore the seven seals of the seven witnesses," (Charles).

Writing Concealed. It is evident that the writing of the scroll was completely concealed and could not be read till the seals were broken. To conform to the description in the vision and the custom of the time, the comma should follow the word "within" rather than the word "backside." The scroll was "written within, and on the backside sealed with seven seals." This is the conclusion of some of the best Greek students. Grotius and Zahn both render it: "Written within, and sealed on the back with seven seals." Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott renders it: "Written within and on the outside firmly sealed with seven seals." (If any of the writing had been on the outside it could have been read without the breaking of the seals.) The fact that the seals had to be broken before any of the contents could be known is evidence that only the seals were visible on the outside of the scroll.

The Challenge. Verses 2,3. "A mighty angel" (Weymouth). This strong and mighty angel was doubtless Gabriel, the first of the covering cherubs, and the angel of prophecy, whom Christ called "His angel" in the first verse of the Apocalypse. The "loud voice" was that of an angel in high official authority "whose call could reach the farthest limits of the universe" (Beckwith). This chief angel of outstanding rank steps forward and heralds a challenge to the universe. His voice seems to penetrate all creation. The seals of the scroll must be loosed or broken before the contents could be revealed. Every created being "in heaven" and "in earth" heard the challenging question, "Who is worthy to open the book and break its seals?" (Weymouth) "Worthy" has to do with both character and rank. The qualifications for the task of breaking the seals were such that no created being could meet the requirements. On the part of God there was no withholding of His purposes, for the scroll was not grasped in His hand, but lying in His open palm waiting for any to take it who was "worthy."

The Answer. The only answer to the challenge that rings through all creation is profound silence. The universe of created beings declines the challenge. "And no one" (R.V.) among the angels and unfallen beings in heaven, or human beings on earth, or even among the fallen angels was either "able" or "worthy" to "open the scroll or look within it," (Emphatic Diaglott). "To open the book or look into it," (Weymouth).

All present could "look thereon." Even John said he saw the scroll and its seven seals. None could look into the book till it was opened, and none could open it till it was unsealed. "Neither angels, men or devils." (Adam Clarke) The Jews used the expression, "heaven, earth and the underworld" to embrace the whole universe. See Ex. 20:4; Phil. 2:10. Neither angels nor men know the secret purposes of God. Also to answer the challenge must involve the commission to bring to pass the contents of the scroll. The cherubim, seraphim, elders, and the angelic host cease their singing and silently wait for some one of their number to step forward and take the scroll out of the hand of the Eternal and break its seven seals.

The Prophet Weeps. Verse 4. To the prophet the suspense and disappointment are too great and he breaks under the strain. Different translations read: "I wept much," "I wept long," "I wept bitterly," "So I began to weep bitterly," and "I burst into tears and continued weeping." The language indicates that John's grief was excessive and continuous and his weeping was probably aloud. "It would seem that the progress of the divine program was arrested at this point and that nothing further could be done until one could be found who could rightfully open the book. Therefore heaven waits in breathless expectancy, while John 'wept much because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book.'"--Of Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass, Philip Mauro, Preface, p. 7. John knew that the sealed scroll contained revelations of great importance to him and to the churches. He had been promised a revelation of "things which shall be hereafter" and that "must shortly be done," and he weeps because it seems that the purpose of his visit to heaven in vision and of the revelation itself were about to fail.

Tears Brought Results. Verse 5. The tears and anxiety of the prophet were not in vain. "The book of Revelation was not written without tears, neither without tears can it be understood." (Bengel). John is a worthy example for all eager and teachable students of the Apocalypse to imitate. Many tears have been shed in an effort to understand the word of God. This has been especially true of the Revelation. Tears have always preceded the unsealing and revealing of God's secrets. The floods of light now shining from the sacred pages have not come forth without penitential tears and diligent searchings by men who loved God and His word. John's weeping ceased when He beheld Christ. In our seasons of bitter disappointment the same sweet message comes to us to "weep not" but "behold the Lamb of God." Such a vision made all wrongs right and John's highest expectations were realized and his tears wiped away. "Looking unto Jesus" will do the same for us. This is still the only process by which the hidden secrets of God's Book are unsealed and revealed to man.

Future Events. John knew that the purpose of the entire book, and especially of this vision, was to reveal "things which must shortly come to pass," or "things which must be hereafter." (Rev. 1:1; 4:1) "I will show you things which are to happen in the future." (Weymouth) We must not forget that this is the very purpose of the vision of the seven sealed scroll, and we must therefore regulate our interpretation accordingly. We must not allow ourselves to be influenced by the many fanciful theories that make the contents of the scroll other than future events. The sealed book doubtless also contained the events revealed in the remainder of the Apocalypse. "Many post-Reformation commentators, both Romanist and

Protestant, have supposed the Book to be the Apocalypse itself." (Cambridge Bible). "The content is complete. Nothing more can be written. It contains all the decrees of God, an outline of all events to the very end of the age. What these contents are the following chapters will disclose." (Erdman) "It is the book in which the purposes of God with reference to a sinful world are written." (Pieters) This is the only logical conclusion regarding the contents of the sealed book. John wept because he knew that the purpose of the entire Apocalypse would fail if no one could be found who could break the seven seals.

The Prophetic Scroll. Garfield said that "History is but the unrolled scroll of prophecy." Prophecy could therefore be called the rolled scroll of history, and such was the rolled and sealed scroll in the right hand of the Eternal. No created being is able to penetrate the future without the aid of divine revelation. Until revealed, the future is rolled up and sealed to all except members of the Godhead. The challenge was: "Who is able to break the seals and unlock the future?" or "Who is able to unroll the scroll of future events?" The profound silence revealed the fact that "no one was able." (R.V.) Samuel Gompers once said that "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." Ridpath declared that "the tallest son of the morning can not tell a day before they take place the events that occur." Not even Gabriel, the angel of prophecy, who was the instrument through whom Daniel and John and perhaps all the other prophets received their wonderful prophetic visions, was able to answer his own challenge. Angels must get their revelations from a higher source. The book of the future was in the right hand of the Father. See Rev. 1:1; Amos 3:7. Since seven is the symbol of perfection, the sevenfold scroll would indicate the completeness of the truths concealed, and the seven seals show that the contents of the scrolls were securely and completely hidden from man; that the future is unknown and unknowable without a divine revelation.

Challenge Accepted. Verses 5,6. The prophet was told to cease weeping because one had been found who was able and worthy to answer the challenge. "Do not weep. 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) "The Lion conquered...and can therefore open the book with its seven seals." (20th C.N.T.) It was very appropriate that one of the redeemed elders should make the announcement to the weeping prophet that One had been found who could break the seals and reveal the contents of the book. The elder had been in heaven since the ascension of Christ and knew better than John the power of the Lamb and the purposes of God. The ability and worthiness of Christ to do what no one else could do was due to His earthly descent from the royal tribe of Judah through the lineage of David, and to His sufferings and crucifixion.

The Supreme Qualification. The ability of Christ to break the seals and open the book depended upon His worthiness, and His worthiness upon His having prevailed. The word "prevailed" is translated from the same word translated "overcome" in 3:21. Christ was not able or worthy to break the seals till after His Calvary victory. "The Lion hath conquered, Who openeth the book," is one translation. "Hath prevailed" was "the first great historical fact of the victory of Christ." (Swete) It was the merits of His incarnation, victorious life, passion and death that qualified

Christ to take the book and break its seals. The power to create makes Christ worthy "to receive glory and honour and power" from every created being, but it does not qualify Him to open the sealed book. The secret of His power to redeem and rule is the fact of His crucifixion. See Hab. 3:3,4. Calvary is the greatest event of human history. It is the meeting place of the two eternities. There the past and the future meet and climax. Without the cross, human history is meaningless. For this reason it is made the center in this vision of future events.

The Lion King. Jacob declared that Judah was "a lion's whelp" and that "the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." See Gen. 49:8-10. Another prophet said that when Nebuchadnezzar removed the crown from the last of the kings of Judah, the throne and kingdom "shall be no more, until He come whose right it is: and I will give it Him." See Eze. 21:25-27. It has been said that the lion was the emblem embroidered on the standard of the tribe of Judah as they marched through the wilderness. Christ "sprang out of Judah" and because He is "the Son of David" He will occupy the long vacant throne of David and reign forever. The plan of redemption, made possible by the cross of Calvary, will eventually place Christ on the throne of this world as King of kings. His Calvary victory gave Him the authority to unlock the house of David. See Isa. 22:22; Rev. 3:7. Therefore He alone can break the seals of the scroll of the events that lead to the kingship of the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah." The kingdom of Israel under David was the type and figure of the restored kingdom under Shiloh.

Son of David. Prophecy declared that the Messiah would be of the "root of Jesse" and the seed of David. He would be "the Branch" from the root of the father of David. See Isa. 11:1,10. As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the multitude in fulfilment of prophecy hailed Him as "the Son of David." (Matt. 21:9) In Rev. 22:16, Jesus declares Himself to be "the root and offspring of David." W. C. Stevens says of Jesus: "He was in preexistent deity the dynastic progenitor of the house of Judah; and His being introduced just here as such implies that this 'book' must relate to the fulfilment of Jacob's prophecy concerning Judah, and that it is in the capacity of the divine founder of the throne of Judah that He was found worthy and able to take the book, to loose the seven seals thereof, and to read its contents into execution."--Revelation, the Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy, p. 117.

Vision of the Lamb. Verse 6,7. John was told to behold the Lion and when he looked he saw a Lamb. Christ is here symbolized by a Lamb that "had been slain." Twenty-nine times in twelve chapters of the Revelation Christ is represented as a lamb. He is thus both the sacrifice and the Priest of the heavenly sanctuary. The Lamb is the very center of attraction in the entire vision. To reveal Christ as the Saviour of men is the very purpose of the Apocalypse. His location in the royal court is given as "in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures." (R.V.) This would place Him at the right hand of the Father or next to Him in position and power in the heavenly government. "Midway between the throne and the four living creatures." (Weymouth) "Within the space between the throne and the four creatures." (20th C.N.T.) This places Him in the midst of the company surrounding the throne and next to the throne as the second Person of the Godhead. "In the midst of the heavenly glory,

Christ crucified is still the prominent object." (Critical and Explanatory Commentary on the Whole Bible). He is between the throne and the elders and therefore the "one Mediator between God and man." (1 Tim. 2:5) Since His incarnation, ascension and glorification, Christ has been restored to His place at the very center of the divine administration, sharing with the Father His power, authority, and eternal purposes. Because of His Calvary victory He has been exalted to even greater heights of honor and glory. See Eph. 1:20,21; Phil. 2:8-11.

The Crucified One. Christ is both the Priest and the Sacrifice. As our Mediator and High Priest before the throne of the Eternal He ministers His own blood as an atonement for sin. The prophet sees Christ standing before the throne as "a Lamb as it had been slain." "A Lamb standing as if killed." (Emphatic Diaglott) "Seemed to have been sacrificed." (20th C.N.T.) "He looked as if He had been offered in sacrifice." (Weymouth) Standing is the position of a living lamb, as if waiting to be sacrified. The picture seems to be that of a lamb standing before the altar of burnt offerings as if in the act of being sacrificed. And yet in this picture the sacrifice had already been made. The lamb's throat had already been cut, and yet it is not lying dead, but still standing. The symbol is that of Christ as "the Lamb of God" after His crucifixion and resurrection. In the previous vision Jesus said to John: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." (Rev. 1:18) As Christ ministers before the throne of God He bears the marks of His crucifixion. The scars give evidence of His sacrifice and constitute an eloquent appeal in behalf of those for whom He died. He is indeed "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The scene indicates that all succeeding generations of sinners are fully provided for in the sacrificed Lamb before the throne of God.

Vision of Calvary. Since the purpose of this vision is to reveal "things which must be hereafter," this scene of the slain Lamb must also indicate that the crucifixion has an important bearing on all future history so that its events can be rightly understood only when studied in the light of Calvary. One writer has truthfully said that "in the sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary."--G.W. 315. This is also true of the events of history. How important therefore that before the scroll of future events is unsealed and unrolled, the Revelator be given a view of the Lamb who had been offered in sacrifice. It was the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb that made Him the Lion of the tribe of Judah with the right and authority to rule over the nations of the saved.

The Omnipotent. The Lamb has "seven horns." Seven is the symbol of fulness and completeness, and horns are symbolic of power and strength. See Deut. 33:17; Ps. 89:17,24; Zech. 1:18,19. In the eighth chapter of Daniel, Rome, in both its pagan and papal forms is symbolized by a horn that "waxed exceeding great," and in other symbolic prophecies the greatest of earthly powers are represented by beasts with ten horns. Horns are also used to represent kingly authority and rulership. Christ has "all power" both "in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:19) Because He is omnipotent in power He is the supreme Ruler, the "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." He is "the Prince over the kings of the earth." He has the fulness of power, strength, authority and conquering might. He goes forth "conquering and to conquer."

The Omniscient. The Lamb also has "seven eyes," indicating that He is not only omnipotent in power; He is also omniscient in wisdom. See also Zech. 3:8,9. Eyes are symbolic of wisdom, discernment and foresight. As the seven horns indicate the fulness of imperial power, so the seven eyes represent the fulness of intellectual and spiritual vision. The Lamb of God is all-wise and nothing escapes His vision. His eyes are like "lamps of fire," which light up the darkest places so that He can see everything. His all-power is executed with all-scrutiny in all the earth. The fulness of the power and vision of the Lamb of God is an important part of His mediatorial and priestly ministration in the heavenly sanctuary. See Heb. 4:12-16. The salvation of man requires the plentitude of both power and wisdom and these supreme qualifications are found only in Christ.

The Seven Spirits. The seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb are divinely interpreted as symbols of "the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." These had been previously symbolized in the same vision by "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne," (4:5), and in the previous vision "the seven Spirits which are before the throne" are identified as the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead (1:4). This must be true because of His location before the throne. The seven lamps of fire or the seven Spirits of God occupy a place in this scene between the Lamb and the four living creatures. If the seven Spirits are not symbolic of the Holy Spirit, then the third Person of the Godhead is left out of the picture, a thing inconceivable. In Isa. 11:1-3 we are told that when the Holy Spirit would rest upon Christ He would be given, (1) "the spirit of wisdom," and (2) of "understanding," and (3) of "counsel," and (4) of "might" and (5) of "knowledge," and (6) of "fear," and (7) of "quick understanding," and discernment. As the Representative and Vicegerent of the Son of God, the Holy Spirit has the fulness of power and wisdom for ministry in behalf of man.

Into All the Earth. Christ manifests His power and wisdom in the earth through the Holy Spirit and the angelic host of "ministering spirits" under the command of the third Person of the Godhead. By this means He sees everything. The prophet Zechariah was given a vision of seven golden lamps whose oil was furnished by "the two anointed ones," or "sons of oil" (Margin), "that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." He was told that "those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." To encourage Zerubbabel in his work, the message was given him: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." See Zech. 4. In 2 Chron. 16:9 the "eyes of the Lord" are said to "run to and fro throughout the whole earth." Through the Holy Spirit, Christ's Representative in the earth, and the hosts of angelic "ministering spirits," Christ not only sees everything that happens everywhere in the earth, but through these agencies He also carries on the earthly phase of His ministry and furnishes the power for victory over sin, showing "Himself strong in behalf of them whose hearts are perfect toward Him." (2 Chron. 16:9) In Zech. 1:10,11, angels are said to be "they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth." See also Zech. 6.

Detective System. The angelic host under the direction of the Holy Spirit is God's detective system in this rebel world. For this purpose they stand mobilized before the throne of God for instant and effective action. See Ps. 103:19,20; Matt. 26:53. These "spirits of God" are also "sent

forth" by divine commission into "all the earth" to minister to the spiritual needs of all mankind, especially those who accept the gospel. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14) It is Christ, the Lamb of God and Mediator between God and man, who sends the Holy Spirit and ministering spirits forth into all the earth. See John 14:26; 16:7,8,13. As His representatives they go forth to make effectual the sacrifice of the Lamb and the plan of redemption.

The Gospel Message. On the day of Pentecost when Christ was inaugurated as the Priest of the heavenly sanctuary, the Holy Spirit was sent forth with His ministering spirits to do a mighty work in and through the apostolic church. Christians were illuminated with light and filled with wisdom and power for spiritual ministry. The gospel began in a blaze of glory under the early rain, and will end in like manner under the latter rain. Once again the Holy Spirit and ministering spirits will go forth into all the earth and through the remnant of the church make a final mighty appeal to all mankind. See Rev. 14:6-14; 18:1-5. It was the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb that makes possible the sending forth of the Holy Spirit. Without Calvary there could have been no Pentecost. It is the seven blazing lamps before the throne of God that furnish the light and power that makes the church "the light of the world" so that the whole earth is lighted with the glory of the gospel. One writer has declared that "strength, grace, and glory have been provided through Christ, to be brought by ministering angels to the heirs of salvation." The same author again said: "The angels of God are ever passing from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth. The miracles of Christ for the afflicted and suffering were wrought by the power of God through the ministration of angels. And it is through Christ, by the ministration of His heavenly messengers, that every blessing comes from God to us."--The Desire of Ages, p. 143. Thus it is through the Holy Spirit and His ministering spirits that Christ furnishes the light and power by which His people complete the gospel commission and usher in the kingdom of glory.

5 Songs

1. [illegible] — Song of [illegible] — [illegible]
2. [illegible] — Song of [illegible] — [illegible]
3. [illegible] — New Song, [illegible] — [illegible]
4. [illegible] — Angelic [illegible] — angels
5. [illegible] — Song of all [illegible] — all creation

Lesson from [illegible]

1. [illegible]
2. [illegible]
3. [illegible]
4. [illegible]
5. [illegible]

THE ORATORIOS OF CALVARY

4

Song of Redemption. Rev. 5:7-9. The supernal glory and majesty of the Eternal on His throne brings forth the song of "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," from the cherubim, and the Oratorio of Creation from the twenty-four elders. The vision of the slain Lamb before the throne, with His ability and worthiness to break the seven seals of the scroll and reveal the events that lead to His final triumph and sovereignty, produce three more oratorios of praise and gladness. In a threefold doxology the occupants of the throne room, and the whole created universe, celebrate the Calvary victory and priestly ministration of the Lamb. "A threefold acclamation interrupts the work of revelation" (The Devotional Commentary). The songs of creation and redemption come in the order in which creation and re-creation take place, and their being sung together indicates that the same power is required in both. Redemption is a new creation.

Signal for Worship. Verses 7,8. The book or scroll which the Lion-Lamb took from the right hand of the Eternal, was doubtless "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass," as revealed in Rev. 1:1. Here we are given a dramatic representation of the source and purpose of the Apocalypse. The scroll remained on the open palm of the Father till One was found who was able and worthy to take and open it. The taking of the scroll was the signal for another praise service on the part of the four living creatures and twenty-four elders. They are joined by the innumerable angelic host and later by all creation. "The four beasts and twenty-four elders lead off in the oratorio, singing to the Lamb the praise for what He has done and is about to do for a vast company other than themselves." (Stevens) All praise begins with the cherubim before the throne who doubtless in a special sense compose the celestial choir. The cherubim and elders fall down before the Lamb who shares with the Father the throne and also the praise and worship of all created beings. Thus all creatures acknowledge that Christ alone is able and worthy to unfold and execute the eternal purposes of God.

The Incense Bowls. "Golden bowls full of incense," (R.V.). Gold is symbolic of the spiritual riches of faith, love, and truth. The incense comes out of the bowls and is said to symbolize "the prayers of saints." "Represent the prayers of God's people." (Weymouth) In Rev. 8:3,4, we are told that the smoke of the incense ascended with the prayers of saints, or that the incense was offered with, or added to, the prayers of all saints. The incense used in the sanctuary service was compounded by divine prescription. See Ex. 30:24-26. "Its four ingredients typify severally and collectively the merits and virtues of Christ." (Mauro) The incense symbolizes the merits and perfections of Christ. It represents His righteousness which is placed to the sinner's account and is accepted in place of his failures. "The incense, ascending with the prayers of Israel, represents the merits and intercessions of Christ, His perfect righteousness which through faith is imputed to His people and which can alone make the worship of sinful beings acceptable to God."--Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 353.

Acceptable Prayers. The prayers that reach the throne of God and are acceptable to the Father, must ascend from hearts that are as pure as gold

and are filled with faith, love and truth. In other words, the prayers that please God are impelled by love, regulated by truth, and carried heavenward by faith. The incense must be placed in the bowls before it can ascend to the throne of God in acceptable fragrance, which doubtless indicates the imparted righteousness of Christ. The character and merits of Christ must be imparted to us before our characters and service are acceptable to God. Incense was always associated with prayer in the typical sanctuary service. The "altar of incense" was located in the holy place near the door into the holy of holies, and typified the throne of grace. The offering of incense night and morning was a call to prayer and worship. It is comforting to know that sincere prayers ascend to God as sweet incense. See Ps. 141:1,2. A Jewish writer said: "The odor of the prayers of Israelites is equal to myrrh and frankincense; but on the Sabbath it is preferred to the scent of all kinds of perfume." (Synopsis Sohar, p. 44, N. 37). There is no sanction here for the praying to saints as intercessors. The twenty-four elders, as the representatives of the church on earth, are acting as assistant priests. That we must pray alone to God is evident from Rev. 19:10; 22:8,9.

The Golden Harps. "Harp" here comes from the old word for "lyre" or "zithern" which was the ancient "psaltery," an "instrument of ten strings," (Ps. 33:2). The harp was the symbol of praise, and the incense of prayer. Prayer should always be offered mingled with praise. This is the only kind that is presented to God by the assistant priests of the heavenly sanctuary. The cherubim and elders both serve and praise, and praise while they serve. Their service is not a monotonous round of formal ceremonies. Music and praise have always been an important part of true worship. The sincere prayers of God's people ascend to Him amid a cloud of sweet incense and the strains of beautiful harp music, indicating that they are very delightful to the Lord. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is His delight." Prov. 15:8. A knowledge of this should inspire us to pray more fervently and unceasingly.

A Priestly Service. There are some who believe that only the twenty-four elders had "harps and vials." But while only redeemed beings can enter fully into the service of assistant priests in the heavenly sanctuary, angels, and especially the cherubim, can doubtless assist in the presentation of the prayers of saints before the throne accompanied by harp music. In Heb. 1:14 the angels are called "ministering spirits" who "minister" for the heirs of salvation. A part of this ministry is doubtless in heaven. Jesus declared of the saints that "their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven," (Matt. 18:10). That the angels are an important part of the link that connects heaven and earth is also illustrated by the ladder of Jacob's dream. The angels that "desire to look into" those things which we can know by experience, gladly cooperate with the redeemed elders in the service of the heavenly temple.

The Song of Calvary. Verses 9,10. Several Greek scholars believe that the word "they" applies only to the elders. "This song is sung exclusively by the elders, who play on their harps to the accompaniment of their songs," (Charles D. Litt). The best explanation, however, is in the fact that the most reliable manuscripts and translations use "them" or "men" instead of "us" as the recipients of redemptive power. "Thou art worthy

to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and dost buy for our God by thy blood men out of every tribe and language and peopl and nation, and makest of them a kingdom and a priesthood for our God, and they will be reigning on the earth," (Concordant). See the R.V. and most all modern translations. The song as thus interpreted can be sung by angels as well as by redeemed beings. That this is the correct rendering is also evident from the fact that the twenty-four elders were not "of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," but were mostly if not entirely from one nation. The record of their resurrection and ascension indicates that they were all or mostly of the Hebrew race. It seems that they were resurrected at or near Jerusalem and ascended from there with Christ. See Matt. 27:50-53; Eph. 4:8, Margin. "Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song."--D.A. 20.

Song of the Lamb. "The song of the Lamb" referred to in Rev. 15:3, is doubtless the same song mentioned here. It is the song that praises the Lamb for His atoning sacrifice. "And it is patent, that the presence of the blood-bought saints surrounding and acclaiming the Lamb of the ages supplies a feature of this unique occasion which could not be spared. Redeeming blood is Christ's supreme credential as He stands the central figure of the celestial convention. The whole staging of the concourse on the divine side had been to the end of delivering that book into the only worthy and competent hands to be found. It is the pierced hands that are extended by Him, and it is only pierced hands, even of the eternal Son, which are counted worthy and able. It is to the song of redeeming love and blood that the harps of the beasts and elders are tuned. The orchestra of musicians expressly intimates by brimming incense-bowls, that the theme to be presented is one of answered prayers and blood-washed saints."--Revelation, the Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy, Stevens, p.121.

The New Song. The oratorio of redemption is called "a new song." This is doubtless true for several reasons. It is the song of a new creation, in contrast to the previous song of the old creation which is recorded in Rev. 4:10,11. The first of the oratorios of this vision celebrates the original creation, and the second the new creation. "God's two mighty works, Creation and Redemption, are contrasted in these two anthems. Every creature in heaven and earth who has learned the first principles of the oracles of God can sing, with the spirit and with the understanding also, both those ascriptions of praise to God, and say: 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, as Creator of all things to receive glory, and honor and power;' and 'Thou art worthy, as the Redeemer of the world, to take the book and open the seals thereof.'"--Of Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass, Philip Mauro, p. 8, "Foreword." Christ can redeem because He can create. In each of the songs He is declared worthy to "receive" something. The "receive" in the first, and the "take" in the second are translated from the same word.

Other Reasons. The theme of redemption is always new. Every time we contemplate the sacrifice of Christ there are brought to mind new and fresh reasons for praise and worship. The song was also new because it had never been heard in heaven till Christ ascended after His Calvary victory and began His priestly ministry as the "Lamb that had been slain." It was the song of a new experience by which sinners become "new creatures in Christ Jesus." The recognition that salvation and righteousness are

obtained only through faith in the atoning blood of the Lamb puts a new song in our mouths and hearts. See Ps. 144:9,10, Isa. 42:10. It is also a new song because it can never grow old and become out-of-date. The height and depth and breadth of the message of love it contains can never be fully measured or comprehended. Repetition only makes it sweeter and more melodious and meaningful. The more the redeemed behold of the glories of the eternal world and realize the cost of their redemption, the more the song of Calvary will mean to them. Unlike most of the songs of earth, the song of the Lamb will always be new and never become old.

The Song of Songs. Of all the great oratorios composed to commemorate important events in the history of the world and universe, the song of the Lamb will be the most popular and thrilling, and interest in it will increase with the passing millenniums of time. The desire of the inhabitants of unfallen worlds to hear of Christ's redeeming love by those who have experienced its power and virtue, will result in a tour of the universe by Christ and a special company out of the last generation who can sing the song of the Lamb as none others can sing it because of an experience that none others ever had. See Rev. 14:1-5. This company passes triumphantly through the final crisis of human history and comes out of great tribulation with character robes washed and made white "in the blood of the Lamb." See Rev. 7. The new song is a song of experience and therefore its beauty and meaning will be in proportion to the depth of the spiritual experience of the singers in faith and victory through Christ and His atoning blood.

Kings and Priests. Verse 10. This is not a promise of the future, but is said to be an accomplished fact. See also Rev. 1:6. All genuine Christians are "ambassadors for Christ," and are engaged in a priestly service when "in Christ's stead" they plead with men to be "reconciled to God," (2 Cor. 5:19,20). To them has been given "the ministry of reconciliation." Of them the prophet said: "But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God," (Isa. 61:6). In Ex. 19:6 God's people are called "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation," and in 2 Peter 2:9, they are declared to be, "a royal priesthood, an holy nation." Not only are all earthly citizens of the heavenly kingdom now serving in a priestly capacity as they give the gospel of reconciliation to the world, but when the conflict is over they will "reign on the earth." Even the twenty-four elders who now serve amid the unspeakable glory of the celestial court, are looking forward to the time when the redeemed shall inherit the earth. The earth is their home and they are fellow-citizens with the earthly pilgrims in whose behalf they minister.

A Royal Priesthood. Because Christians are "kings and priests" now, they are called "a royal priesthood." In this sense their reign has already begun. Their qualification for priestly service also qualifies them for rulership. "Thou...didst make them a Kingdom of Priests in the service of God, and they are reigning upon the earth," (20th C.N.T.). Even now during the reign of sin the saints are rulers over their own spirits, which is declared to be the evidence of true greatness: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city," (Prov. 16:32). To the overcomer Paul said: "For sin shall not have dominion over you," (Rom. 6:14). The conquerors of sin are kings in the true sense of the word. According to Dean Alford, the church, in Christ her Head, is even now reigning: "All things are

being put under her feet, as under His; her kingly office and rank are asserted, even in the midst of persecution." While the reign is now spiritual, the statement is doubtless prophetic of the time when the promise of Rev. 3:21 is fulfilled and the overcomers sit with Christ "in His throne." Christians are now princes or kings in the making and therefore "heirs of the kingdom." "All true believers are kings, incognito" (Pieters). The new song is a song of redemption through the blood of the Lamb, of a priesthood of Christian service, and of power to reign as kings,--now over sin and all evil, and eventually as joint-rulers with Christ in the kingdom of glory.

The Angelic Oratorio. Verses 11,12. The second part of the threefold doxology is sung by the innumerable angelic host surrounding the throne. "Countless thousands of angels on every side of the throne," (Weymouth). "Myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands....in a circle of the throne," (20th C.N.T.). The angelic host are still farther from the throne than the cherubim and the twenty-four elders. Through the service of these "ministering spirits" the redeemed elders have been brought "into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know," (White). While angels cannot share in the redemption "through the blood of the Lamb," they are interested spectators in this great celestial convocation. They stand and gaze with intense devotion and adoration at this crowning manifestation of the love, wisdom and power of God and the Lamb. They "desire to look into" what the saints know by experience. Paul declares that in "the heavenly Jerusalem" there is "an innumerable company of angels," (Heb. 12:22). In this scene John declared the angelic host to be impossible of numeration. "There were hundreds of millions massed together, and if you count those in the mass, the number you will leave over would be millions still," (Cambridge Bible).

The Throne Room. This gives us some faint idea of the size of the throne room of the heavenly temple. Solomon's temple, which was designed by God Himself (1 Chron. 28:11-19), and was typical of the heavenly temple, was the most magnificent building the world has ever known. Modern architects estimate that it would cost $87,000,000,000 to reproduce it in the twentieth century. How immense and indescribably glorious must be its antitype in the heavens. Of the comparison one writer has said: "The abiding place of the King of kings, where thousand thousands minister unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before Him; that temple filled with the glory of the eternal throne, where seraphim, its shining guardians, veil their faces in adoration, could find in the most magnificent structure ever reared by human hands but a faint reflection of its vastness and glory."--The Great Controversy, p. 414. The divine arrangement of the occupants of the throne room as described by the Revelator is in harmony with the other Scriptures. In the center is the throne of the Father, just as the ark of the testimony was in the center of the holy of holies in the typical temple. Next to Him is Christ, the Lamb, the second Person of the Godhead. Then come the seven blazing lamps, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead. Next to the Holy Trinity are the cherubim including the two anointed covering cherubs, surrounded by the twenty-four redeemed elders, and their assistants, and last are the innumerable company of angelic ministering spirits. See also Dan. 7:9,10.

The Angel Chorus. Verse 12. The mighty host of angels sing their oratorio with "a loud voice," or "a great voice." "Voice" instead of "voices"

indicates the perfect unison with which the angelic chorus sings. There is not a discordant note as they proclaim the worthiness of the Lamb, their beloved Commander. It is a complete and perfect song of praise because it ascribes to Christ the seven species of praise. See also Rev. 7:12. The "power" is indicative of His omnipotence; "riches" of His beneficence; "wisdom" of His omniscience; "strength" of His power in exercise; "honor" of the highest reputation for what is done; "glory" is the praise due Him for such actions; and "blessing" is the thankful acknowledgment of the whole creation. See Dr. Adam Clarke. Because of His atoning sacrifice, the Lamb is worthy to receive all praise because He has all power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing. Because He is "all and in all" to us, He should receive all from us,--all our power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing. All should be devoted to Him and expended in His service and to His glory. "Those hosts of angels, surrounding in vast circles the throne of God, lift up their ascription of worth to the Lamb in sevenfold refrain...These noble beings have ever been most diligent students and enthusiastic abettors of the eternal divine purpose concerning the church of Jesus Christ," (Stevens).

The Grand Chorus. Verse 13. "Every creature" means "every created thing," or "all His works in all places of His dominion," (Ps. 103:22). The oratorios of praise reach their grand climax in the grand anthem of the universe, or the universal chorus of creation. John "heard" this grand chorus, but did not see all the singers. "The Seer does not himself see creation rising in its innumerable forms of life to offer its doxology; this is no part of the vision which comes to him through the open door. But he hears the roar of the great acclamation as it rises to heaven," (Swete). This, of course, cannot meet its complete fulfilment till after redemption is complete and the kingdom of glory fully established. It is the oratorio of all creation that has been affected by the reign of sin, which includes the universe. Beginning with the cherubim and elders before the throne, and joined in by the angelic host whose untiring ministry has helped bring about the fruition of the gospel purpose, the threefold doxology of Calvary finally bursts out beyond the circles of the celestial temple to all creation.

Universal Praise. The language of the text indicates that in this grand chorus no created being is left out. All of the four fields of life enumerated probably embrace every living thing, for when the restoration takes place even the floods will "clap their hands" and the hills will "be joyful together," "The mountains and the hills shall break forth" with "singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands," (Ps. 98:8; Isa. 55:12). It may be that the expression "under the earth" refers to the resurrected righteous dead who had been in their graves waiting for this glad day. In Rev. 6:9 the martyrs are said to be "under the altar" waiting for the day of vengeance. The earth is the altar on which their blood was offered in sacrifice. "Finally all creation affected by the fall and embraced in the provisions of redemptive restoration reverberates with loyal praises to God and His Lamb, offering up unto them in thankful voice from all those spheres all 'Blessing, and honor, and glory and power.' We can well understand the thrill of rapturous anticipation that will at this time animate all the waiting creation when we read a passage like Rom. 8:18-21."--Revelation, the Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy, Stevens, p. 126.

Paradise Restored. Before the breaking of the seven seals which would reveal the terrible events of the future which would bring more tears to the prophet, for his encouragement he is carried forward in vision to a sinless universe, to Paradise restored. He witnesses the condition mentioned by Paul when he declared that "when the perfect state of things is come, all that is imperfect will be brought to an end," (1 Cor. 13:10, Weymouth). The grand oratorio of the apocalyptic vision leaves no room in the universe for an ever burning hell in which the wicked suffer on in endless torment. There are no groans or screams to break the joyful harmony of the praise service. The rebellion is over and the former love and unity have been restored "as if man had never fallen." The restoration is so complete that "affliction shall not rise up the second time," (Nahum 1:9). The praise that will never end will be to both "Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." The love of the Father who devised the plan of salvation is as great as the love of the Son who carried it into execution, and both will share equally in the praise and adoration of the universe "for ever and ever." It was this scene that inspired the poet to write:

"The whole creation joins in one,
To bless the sacred Name,
Of Him who sits upon the throne,
And to adore the Lamb."

The Finale. Verse 14. "Amen" indicates the end. It is also an expression of approval on what has been said or heard. It also indicates that all the praise ascribed to the Father and Son is due them. After the curtain falls on this matchless scene of restored unity and glory, the cherubim host cry out, "Amen," or "So be it," and the twenty-four elders again arise from their thrones and cast their crowns before the Eternal and then fall down in a posture of reverence, worship and adoration. The Eastern method of adoration and worship is to first fall on the knees, and then bow with the face to the ground touching the earth with the forehead. "The heart of the church is, for the moment, too full to speak," (Milligan). "As the representatives of animate creation, they thus conclude the song of all creation. So the ever widening circle of adoration and praise has swept back to the center where it first broke forth, and the last cadence is uttered by the same lips which opened and led that great Service of Praise," (The Devotional Commentary). Is it any wonder that the Oratorio of Calvary will never grow old, and never, never die?

THE SYMBOLIC HORSEMEN

5

First Seal Broken, Rev. 6:1,2. The vision of the throne and throne room of chapters four and five was preliminary to the breaking of the seven seals. Its purpose is to picture what is taking place in heaven while the events of the seven seals are transpiring on the earth. The vision of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse is one of gripping interest. The scenes and language are so highly dramatic that the word-picture has been dramatized and thrown on the screen, giving it great popularity. The seven-sealed scroll contained a record of future events for that was the very purpose of the vision. (4:1). With what interest the twenty-four elders, the cherubim, and the angelic host, and especially the prophet, must have awaited the breaking of the seven seals and the revealing of the contents of the scroll. John had wept much because of the inability and unworthiness of any of the assembled host to break the seals and open the scroll. Now his hopes are to be realized.

The Seven Seals. The seven seals do not present a new period of history from that of the seven letters, but again covers the Christian dispensation from another viewpoint. These symbols reveal a series of religious events between the first and second advents of Christ giving the changing conditions of the church. The letters make their special appeal to the ear, while the seals with their symbols make their impressions through the eye. These are the two best methods of imparting instruction. The four symbolic horses with their riders represent the church from its triumphant beginning, through the Dark Ages, and to the Reformation. The great apostasy or "falling away" in the church is especially emphasized. The remaining seals present the revival and reformation for the restoration of the primitive faith through the testimony of the Two Witnesses, the sealing message, the second advent of Christ, and the glorious triumph of the church militant. The horse is symbolic of the church, its color represents her spiritual condition, and the rider her responsible leadership. As a rider guides and controls his horse, so the movements of the church are determined by the leading officials.

Appropriate Symbol. Horses and horsemen are used in a symbolic sense all through the Scriptures and are an appropriate representation of the church in the militant phase of her career. See Job 39:19-25; Zech. 1:8; 6:1-3,5. A woe is pronounced on those who trust "in horsemen because they are very strong," (Isa. 31:1), and it is said of the king of Babylon that "his horses are swifter than eagles," (Jer. 4:15). Jeremiah asked rebellious Judah the question, "How canst thou contend with horses?" (Jer. 12:5). The psalmist spoke of the "great strength" of the horse. (Ps. 33:17). "Viewing the subject broadly in the light of Scripture, it will be seen that the horse is first of all the symbol of strength, might, or force of a certain kind; not strength for labor, like the ox, or for the mastery of enemies, like the lion; but of might for conquest, and progress. Characterized as he is by strength combined with speed and fearlessness, the horse fitly symbolizes that form of spiritual vitality and power that sustains, energizes, and carries forward, despite all that opposes, a great spiritual movement, whether good or evil. Especially does it typify strength and courage for conflict."--Of Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass, Philip Mauro, p. 183.

Call of Cherubim. There were seven scrolls in one, and each was so completely sealed that the breaking of each seal revealed only the contents of the one broken. As the first of the four seals was broken by the Lamb, one of the four living creatures with a voice like thunder cried, "COME." (The "and see" does not belong in the text and is omitted in most of the ancient manuscripts and modern translations.) It was not the prophet who was asked to "come and see," for he was already there and was watching with intense interest. The command or call is for the contents or concealed events of the scroll to come forth in symbols before the prophet. Zahn translates the word "go" instead of "come," as if the command were for the four horsemen to go forth on their mission. "And I heard one of the four living creatures say, as if in a voice of thunder, 'Come,'" (Weymouth). It has been presumed that this first living creature was the first of the four which "was like a lion," (4:7), "the noise of thunder" being akin to a lion's roar. That the cherubim under the direction of Gabriel, the first of the anointed covering cherubs, should present these future events before the prophet is in harmony with God's plan of prophetic revelation. See Rev. 1:1. In the giving of the Apocalypse, Christ, the Lamb, "sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John." Signify means to communicate by signs and symbols. In the breaking of the seals this work of dramatizing or symbolizing future events is done by the four living creatures. This is further evidence that they are the cherubim and not redeemed beings.

The White Horse. Verse 2. As each seal was broken and its events were released from the sealed scroll, they were acted out before the prophet and the other occupants of the throne room as on a great stage. "With the opening of each successive seal a part of the contents of the book-roll is disclosed in prophetic symbolism," (Charles). At the authoritative command of the cherubim, the symbolic horses with their riders seem to gallop forth out of the unsealed scrolls. Of the white horse we read: "And he came forth, conquering and to conquer," (R.V). "And he came out conquering, and that he might conquer," (Emphatic Diaglott). Among the Romans the white horse was symbolic of victory. On the day of a Roman triumph the honored general and his staff rode on white horses or in chariots drawn by white horses. (The fleetest and most effective part of the armies of that age was the cavalry composed of mounted archers or bowmen. "Homer pictures the horses of Rhesus as whiter than snow, and swift as the wind," (Vincent).)

Apostolic Period. The symbols of the first seal present an appropriate picture of the triumphs of Christianity during the days of the apostles under the early rain of spiritual power. "There is but one event or epoch in the world's history that fits accurately into the scene we are now viewing. And that is, the going forth of the gospel of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Nothing else in the past, and nothing that has been revealed concerning the future, can be made to harmonize with this scene, or with these symbols. But the sending forth of the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, perfectly fits the scene, and perfectly explains the symbols...Nor is there any possibility of failure here; for the white horse rider went forth winning victories everywhere at the beginning, and with the certainty also of a complete triumph at the end--'conquering, and to conquer,'"(Mauro, pp. 190,191). White represents the purity of the apostolic church, and the horse the swiftness with which Christianity went forth to the conquest of the world.

Church's Weapon. "And I looked and a white horse appeared, and its rider carried a bow," (Weymouth). The mention of the bow implies the use of arrows without which the bow would be useless. It is the bow that sends the arrows forth on their mission. The bow, like the two-edged sword, represents the word of God by which the arrows of conviction are sent forth by the Holy Spirit to pierce the guilty conscience of the sinner. The Scriptures speak of "the arrow of the Lord's deliverance," and "the arrows of the Almighty," (2 Kings 13:17; Job 6:4). See also Deut. 32:23, 42; Ps. 18:14; 45:4; 77:17; Lam. 2:4. "The bow is a symbol of that which discharges the messages of God toward the mark they are intended to reach. In other words, it symbolizes the preaching of the gospel in general, and the individual gospel preacher in particular," (Mauro, p. 195). Milligan declares that the bow implies that "the Conqueror sees and strikes down His enemies from afar." The rider, representing the responsible leadership of the church militant, is symbolic of Christ, "the Captain of the Lord's host," who, through His Representative the Holy Spirit, wields the spiritual weapons by which the church carries on her conquests. It is the Holy Spirit who makes the Word effectual by sending the arrows of conviction to prick the sinner's heart. The apostles and the apostolic church were under the direct control of the Holy Spirit whom Christ "sent down to direct the battle on earth."

Symbols of Prophecy. This apocalyptic symbolism is not new, but is borrowed from the Old Testament. The prophet Habakkuk described the triumps of the gospel in symbols no less striking: "Thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation. Thy bow was made quite naked...even thy word...The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the waters passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear. Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation for thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked," Hab. 3:8-13. In Ps. 45:2-7 Christ is pictured as a mounted archer whose messages pierce the hearts of His enemies like sharp arrows: "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee forever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The Septuagint of verse four reads: "And in Thy majesty ride, and bend Thy bow, and prosper and reign, because of truth." "Success to you as you ride forth...Sharp are your arrows; nations shall fall before you, and the king's foes lose heart," (Moffatt). In this passage the arrows imply the use of a bow, just as the bow in the apocalyptic vision indicates the use of arrows. The two are inseparable. That Christ is the royal Warrior of this prophecy is beyond the possibility of dispute. (These Old Testament symbols interpret the meaning of the symbols of the first seal so that we can safely discard the many fanciful but unscriptural views that are extant.)

The Victor's Crown. "And a victor's wreath was given to him; and he went out conquering and in order to conquer," (Weymouth). The crown as used here comes from a Greek word meaning "victory" rather than "royalty" as used elsewhere. The picture is of a conquering Hero riding a victorious horse and leading a triumphant movement to certain success. The bow and arrows, like the two-edged sword, are also symbolic of the final destruction of the rejectors of the gospel. The same weapon that first convicts to save, will eventually strike to slay. "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, He will whet His sword; He hath bent His bow, and made it ready. He hath also spread for him the instruments of death; He ordaineth His arrows against the persecutors," Ps. 7:11-13. With the same weapon by which Christ convicts of sin, He will eventually "smite the nations," (Rev. 19:15,21). All who refuse to yield to the prickings of the Spirit's sword now, will be slain by the same weapon when Christ returns.

The Final Charge. While the breaking of the first seal pictures the gospel in the beginnings of its triumphs, it must also include the final charge of the church militant against the forces of evil as described in Rev. 19:11-16. Beginning under the symbol of a single horse and horseman going forth "conquering and to conquer," the gospel message will close in glorious triumph under the symbols of many horses and horsemen, or a whole troop of white horses with their riders, the Leader of whom is the same great Conqueror of satanic forces, crowned with "many crowns" indicating victory in many battles and the conquest of many nations or kingdoms. These two pictures represent the first and last campaigns of the church militant under Divine leadership, ending with the coming of Christ. The gospel that had such a glorious beginning will end in even greater triumph. The latter rain will be "more abundant" in both power and results than the former rain. The rider of the white horse of the first seal carries the bow of grace with which He sends to the heart the darts of love, while the Rider of the white brigade carries a sharp two-edged sword with which He "smites the nations." The going "forth conquering" represents the success of the apostolic period, and the "and to conquer" indicates the future and final triumph after the great apostasy pictured by the succeeding symbolic horses and horsemen. The Reformation, though long delayed, will finally end in complete triumph; in permanent victory.

Purity of Church. The color of the first horse fitly represents the unsullied purity of the apostolic church as the disciples of Christ began the conquest of the world. Merivale speaks of the early Christians as "a sect so unobtrusive as well as innocent" that they presented "to surrounding paganism the first and purest of zeal beautified by character."--History of the Romans, Vol. 6, chap. 54. H. G. Wells, in his book The Outline of History, Vol. 1, p. 590, says: "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....Everywhere they seemed to have carried much of the spirit of Jesus; and though everywhere they aroused bitter enmity and active counter-propoganda, the very charges made against them witness to the general goodness of their lives." This is the picture given everywhere in the New Testament, and it is the secret of their phenomenal success.

A Conquering Power. "Conquering" is indicative of a continuous and increasing success in a movement that would spread more and more over the earth. The achievements of the gospel were unparalleled in the exploits of divine

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grace as the early Spirit-filled disciples marched forward under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel against the virtually insurmountable obstacles of intrenched and fortified heathenism. The zeal and enthusiasm that brought success to the early church is testified to by many historians. "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...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."--History of the Romans, Merivale, Vol. 6, p. 460. "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 largely in fact."--General History, Myers, p.282.

Phenomenal Success. At the end of the first century, Pliny, the governor of Pontus and Bithynia, wrote to the Emperor Trajan lamenting the magnitude of the "evil of Christianity." He declared 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 spread throughout the country. In Gibbon's Roman Empire, chapter 15, the author declares that "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 membership the same writer says that the Christian congregation of the city of Rome numbered 50,000 and that of Antioch, 100,000, or one fifth of the population. Gibbon estimated the Christian population of the entire empire at 5,000,000, not counting those outside its limits.

Further Testimony. "The whole population of the Roman Empire which then represented the civilized world, was nominally Christian...It may be fairly asserted that about the end of the third century the name of Christ was known, revered, and persecuted in every province and every city of the empire. In the absence of statistics, the number of Christians must be purely a matter of conjecture. In all probability it amounted at the close of the third and the beginning of the fourth century to nearly one tenth or one twelfth of the subjects of Rome; that is, about ten millions of souls."--History of the Christian Church, Philip Schaff, Vol. 2, pp. 20-22. Surely there is no room to question the application of the first seal to the gospel under the power of the Holy Spirit as it started out for the moral and spiritual conquest of this rebel world. But its work was hindered and finally brought to a virtual standstill by the "falling away" that ended in the great apostasy of the Middle Ages as pictured in the three succeeding seals.

SECOND SEAL

The Second Horseman. Verses 3,4. (The horse again represents the church, the color its spiritual state, and the rider the responsible leadership.) The second horse is "fiery red" (Weymouth), or "flame-colored, blood-red," (Robertson). In the period of church history represented by the red horse, the church has drifted away from the former state of purity of character and the affection that constrained the soldiers of the cross to go forth with the holy zeal that conquers. The church begins to adopt false doctrines and is corrupted by worldly influences. Red or scarlet is symbolic of sin, just as white is the symbol of righteousness. "Though your sins

be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. 1:18. The color of the second horse shows its relation to the "red dragon," the "scarlet colored beast," and the woman "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour," called "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." See Rev. 12: 3; 17:1-5. These symbolic representations are satanic in character and work. History attests that the predictions of Paul concerning an apostasy in the church were strikingly fulfilled during the period represented by the red horse. See Acts 20:28-30; 2 Thess. 2:3-7.

The Church Paganized. The red horse represents the period of transition from pagan to papal Rome, during which time the church was transformed into "baptized paganism," (Wylie). Concerning this compromise between Christianity and paganism, we read from The Magdeburg Centuries, chap. 1, p. 2: "The apostles had hardly died ere the spirit of deception thought it could easily break into the churches as into an empty house left without a guard. ....It may be conceived that in this second century originated nearly all the heresies which afterwards raged in the church." Robinson, in his Ecclesiastical Researches, chap. 5, p. 51, edition 1792, said: "Toward the latter end of the second century, most of the churches assumed a new form, the first simplicity disappeared; and insensibly, as the old disciples retired to their graves, their children, along with new converts, both Jews and Gentiles, came forward and new-modeled the cause."

Further Testimony. Killen, in his Ancient Church says of this transition period: "The code of heathen morality supplied a ready apology for falsehood, and its accommodating principle soon found too much encouragement within the pale of the church. Hence the pious frauds which were now perpetrated. Various works made their appearance, with some apostolic name appended to them, their fabricators thus hoping to give currency to opinions or to practices which might otherwise have encountered much opposition. At the same time many evinced a disposition to supplement the silence of the written word by the aid of tradition."--Section 2, chap. 5, par. 7. The same writer sums up the paganizing process of this period in the "Preface" to the original edition of his book, pp. xv, xvi: "In the interval between the days of the apostles and the conversion of Constantine, the Christian commonwealth changed its aspect. The Bishop of Rome--a personage unknown to the writers of the New Testament--meanwhile rose into prominence, and at length took precedence of all other churchmen. Rites and ceremonies, of which neither Paul nor Peter ever heard, crept silently into use, and then claimed the rank of divine institutions."

Peace Destroyed. When the Prince of Peace departed He said to His disciples: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you," (John 14:27). But this peace was promised and was to continue on condition of obedience. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Ps. 119:165. See also Isa. 26:3; 48:18. There is absolutely no peace for the wicked or transgressors. See Isa. 48:22; 57:20,21. When the church departed from Christ, and its leadership fell into the hands of unscrupulous religio-politicians, the peace of the Prince of peace departed, and strife and confusion took its place. The professed followers of Christ even began to "kill one another," and the church became the world's greatest persecutor until it was "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," (Rev. 17:6). Of this bloody warfare within the church, the historian

says: "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 pagan populations of the empire...A persecution broke out, in which one body of Christians became the persecutors of the other. The bloody bitterness of paganism was paralleled by the intolerance born of fanaticism among the believers."--History of the World, Ridpath, Vol. 3, p. 329. In Gibbon's Roman Empire, Chap. 47, we are told that this bloody struggle continued for 250 years. Thus the peace which the conquests of the previous rider had left as the fruit of victory, was taken "from the earth."

The Great Sword. "And there was given unto him a great sword." The weapon of the previous horseman was "a bow" which represented "the sword of the Spirit." These are the "mighty" "weapons of warfare" described in 2 Cor. 10:3-5. The purpose of this mighty sword is to save and not destroy. But the "great sword" given to the rider of the red horse was to be used to "take peace from the earth" and to "kill one another." It is evident that this is not the sword of the Spirit, but rather the sword of Caesar, or of the state. Regarding the significance of Constantine's using the cross as his standard, the historian Myers says: "This act of Constantine 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, non-military spirit had up to this time characterized the new sect. ...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 Melvian 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."--General History, pp. 300,301.

Given By State. The great sword was therefore given to the leaders of the church in the days of Constantine when church and state were united. This was the Pergamos period when the church was exalted to kingly power and authority through its marriage with the empire of Rome. This marriage made the two organizations one, and the empire of Rome was continued in the papacy who continued to wield the imperial sword. "In Rome the episcopal throne was occupied in the fifth century by men who understood the signs of the times and utilized them to the full. The Roman Church in this way privily pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-empire, of which it is the actual continuation; the empire has not perished, but has only undergone a transformation."--What is Christianity?, Harnack, p. 216. In a letter to the emperor Anastasius, Bishop Gelasius emphasized the superiority of the spiritual power over the temporal: "The world is mainly governed by the holy authority of the bishops and the power of the kings. The former is the weightier of the two, for it must render an account to God for the deeds of the kings themselves. Though the king rules mankind by his dignity,

he is yet duty bound to submit to his bishops," (Mansi). When the church compromised with paganism and united with the world she lost the sword of the Spirit with which she had gone forth "conquering and to conquer," and to supply this lack of power and authority she asked for and obtained the sword of Caesar with which to enforce her decrees and propagate her dogmas. The Dark Ages of papal oppression and persecution quickly followed.

The Third Seal. Rev. 6:5,6. As the Lion of the tribe of Judah broke the third seal, the third apocalyptic rider and his horse came forth out of the scroll to perform their part in the dramatization of future events. Black is the very opposite of white. It is "the color of mourning and famine," (Vincent). Black is the symbol of evil, error, sorrow, defeat, and moral and spiritual darkness. See Jer. 4:28; 8:21; Rev. 11:2,3. These symbols fitly represent the semi-pagan religion of the Middle Ages covering the same period as the Thyatirian letter of the previous vision. It was during this time that God's two witnesses had to do their testifying or teaching "clothed in sackcloth." See Rev. 11:2,3. The smothering of the gospel light as the result of the "falling away" or great apostasy ushered in what is known to historians as "The Dark Ages," or "The midnight of the world." During this period the "Sun of Righteousness" went into an eclipse because of the dark intervening body of paganistic Catholicism.

Historian's Picture. "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." "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." "In the beginning of the eighth century....the more timorous Greeks were awakened by an apprehension that under the mask of Christianity, they had restored the religion of their fathers."--Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 4, chap. 49. The religion of the Middle Ages was more than an apostasy from the true faith; it became "baptized paganism" which was the very opposite of the gospel in its primitive state.

The Amalgamation. The amalgamation between Christianity and paganism was a gradual process which began before the death of the apostles and reached its zenith between the fourth and sixth centuries. Cardinal Wiseman, while a professor in the University of Rome, declared that "the alliance between Christianity and heathenism existed three hundred years after Christ," (From a letter to John Poyden, Esq.). Of this amalgamizing process H. G. Wells wrote: "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-Isus-Horus. From the former it would seem the Christians adopted Sun-day as their chief day of worship instead of the Jewish Sabbath, and the abundant use of candles in religious ceremonies....The contribution of the Alexandrian cult to Christian thought and practices were even more considerable."--The Outline of History, Vol. 1, pp. 590,591.

Change of Sabbath. H. G. Wells declares that Sunday was brought into the Christian church from heathenism, and this is abundantly proven by many writers. The Sabbath of Creation and of Christ and the apostles was observed long after the beginning of the Christian dispensation. Prof. Edward Brerewood, of Greshem College, London, said: "It is certain that the ancient Sabbath did remain and was observed by the Christians of the East Church, above three hundred years after our Saviour's death."--A Learned Treatise of the Sabbath, p. 77. William Prynne wrote: "It is certain that Christ Himself, His apostles, and the primitive Christians, for some good space of time, did constantly observe the seventh-day Sabbath....it being still solemnized by many Christians, after the apostles' time, even till the Council of Laodicea," (A.D.364).

--Dissertation on the Lord's Day Sabbath, p. 33. The church historian, Lyman Coleman, declared that "down even to the fifth century the observance of the Jewish Sabbath was continued in the Christian church, but with a rigor and solemnity gradually diminishing until it was wholly discontinued."--Ancient Christianity Exemplified, chap. 26, sec. 2. In the seventh century Pope Gregory I declared in an epistle to the citizens of Rome that those who were observing the Sabbath and teaching others to do so were "preachers of Anti-christ," (Book xiii, Epistle 1). Sunday was adopted in place of the Sabbath because from time immemorial it had been the chief festival day of the heathen, being dedicated to the sun and its worship.

Papal Acknowledgments. "It is permitted the church to use for purposes of piety, the ceremonies which the pagans used for purposes of impiety in a superstitious religion, after having first expiated them by consecrations, to the end that the devil might receive a greater affront from employing in honor of Jesus Christ that which His enemy had destined for his own service."--Cardinal Baronius in Ecclesiastical Annals, chap. 36. Cardinal Newman wrote of "the power of Christianity to resist the infection of evil and to transmute the very instruments and appendages of demon worship to an evangelical use." He further declared 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." After enumerating a large number of heathen ceremonies and customs, the Catholic prelate declares that they "are all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the church."--Development of Christian Doctrine, pp. 372, 373. Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, in his "Letters to John Poynder upon his Work Entitled, 'Popery in Alliance with Heathenism,'" made the following acknowledgment: "I will, for the moment, grant you the full extent of your assumptions and premises; I will concede that all the facts you have brought forward are true, and all the parallels you have established between our rites and those of paganism correct; and I will join issue with you on your conclusions."

Further Testimony. "And indeed all writers who are acquainted with antiquity--be they lay or clerical, Protestant or papal, Italian or foreign--agree as to the pagan origin of Rome's present usages and ceremonies."--Italy, Forsyth, p. 31. "In England Romanists are usually indignant when it is said that their ceremonies were originally heathen. In Italy, on the other hand, that origin is regarded as proof of the wisdom of the Church which has converted a heathen people and their heathen customs into a Christian people and Christian ceremonies."--Pilgrimage to Rome, Hobert Seymour, p. 228. "Or take again the swarm of heresies that soon invaded almost every province of the early church. Abandoning, as they did, the more essential of the supernatural truths of revelation, they were virtually and in effect revivals of paganism, and family likenesses may accordingly be traced among the older speculations current in the schools of heathen philosophy."--Christ and Other Masters, Charles Hardwick, part 2, p. 183. "Romanism is simply the old Roman paganism revived under Christian names. Romanism and paganism bear to each other the most exact and extraordinary resemblance."--Romanism and the Reformation, Guiness, p. 198.

Pair of Balances. The rider of the black horse, representing the responsible leadership of the church, holds in his hand a pair of balances. This has always been, and still is, the emblem of judgment. It represents the authority to weigh evidence and make decisions. Ancient pagan religions recognized a god of scales who weighed the deeds of the dead to determine their reward.

"Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting," was the message of doom written by the unseen hand on the palace wall of Belshazzar, king of Babylon. A hand holding a pair of balances is still the emblem of justice and judgment and is often engraved on the front of buildings devoted to the administering of justice.

Bishops Became Judges. The symbol indicates that the leaders of the church during this period would become judges of civil as well as religious matters. The union of church and state placed the church in politics and the bishops became the virtual rulers and judges. The church officials rather than the Scriptures became the sole and supreme judges of religious faith and practice. It was during this time that the chief bishop, or supreme pontiff of the church, sat in "the temple of God, setting himself forth as God," (2 Thess. 2:4, R.V.). The bishop of Rome became the supreme judge and ruler of the world and from his decisions even kings had no appeal. The controversy between Henry IV of Germany, and Pope Gregory VII, which resulted in the humiliation and subjection of the king, is a notable illustration of the judicial power and authority of the church leaders of this period. In the latter part of the thirteenth century, Pope Boniface clothed himself in a cuirass, and with a helmet on his head and a sword in his right hand held aloft, cried out: "Am I not the sovereign pontiff? Is not this the chair of St. Peter? Cannot I protect the rights of the empire? I am a Caesar, I am the emperor," (Giesler, in Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 3, p. 140.).

The Universal Judge. Cardinal Manning quoted one of the popes as saying: "I claim to be the supreme judge and director of the consciences of men--of the peasant that tills the fields, and the prince that sits on the throne; of the household that sits in the shade of privacy, and the legislature that makes laws for kingdoms. I am the sole and last supreme judge of what is right and wrong."--Vide Quirinus, (Appendix 1, p. 832). Quoted in a sermon, "In the Pope's Name," preached in Kensington, England, in 1869. From a Latin copy of the writings of Augustinus in the British Museum is the following: "The decision of the Pope and the decision of God constitute one decision... Therefore no one can appeal from the Pope to God."--Agustinus de Ancona, On an Appeal from a Decision of a Pope. This power to rule and judge was exercised to the full during the Middle Ages.

Wheat and Barley. Verse 6. The "voice in the midst of the four beasts" is doubtless that of Christ, for He is thus located in the preliminary vision. (5:6). Since the wheat and barley are sold by measure instead of weight, the balances have nothing to do with the selling of the symbolic grain in this prophecy. "Wheat and barley, oil and wine, were the staple foods in Palestine and Asia Minor," (Robertson). A "measure" was about a pint and a half, and a "penny" was the equivalent of about eighteen cents in our money. A penny was the ordinary wage of soldiers and workmen. See Matt. 20:2. A measure of wheat was the portion allowed to one man for a day's scanty subsistence. Under ordinary conditions a penny would buy eight measures of wheat and twenty-four of barley. The price is therefore increased eight times above normal and indicates a famine. The note in the R.V. says that the language indicates "great scarcity." The daily wages would barely buy the daily bread. See Eze. 4:16,17.

A Spiritual Famine. The language of this text indicates a great spiritual famine. Such a famine is described in Amos 8:11,12. This Scripture was literally fulfilled during the Middle Ages when the bread of life constituting

the spiritual food of the church was taken from the people or greatly restricted. In apostolic days the gospel message freely dispensed the bread of life to all who desired it "without money and without price," (Isa. 55: 1,2). But during the period represented by the black horse the prime spiritual necessities of life are sold to rich and poor in small quantities at fixed prices. What little spiritual food the starving people received was measured out to them by the church leaders in small measures and sold at fixed prices. "Wheat" in the Bible is used to symbolize "the word of God" and also "the children of the kingdom." Because the Word was so sparingly sown during this dark period, the true children of the kingdom were few, for it is the seed that produces the harvest. How starved for spiritual food was Luther when he found a copy of the Scriptures chained in a monastery. His hungry soul feasted without restriction upon the heavenly manna and his cravings were satisfied.

Traditions and Rituals. Barley is a cheaper grade of food than wheat. According to the Mishna, barley was the food of horses and asses. It was also the food of the poorest in the land especially in the time of famine. During this period of spiritual darkness and famine a cheap grade of spiritual food would be more plentiful than the small amount of the bread of life which was measured out to the people. The barley probably represents the traditions of the fathers and the rituals of the church which contained some Scripture and therefore had a little food value, but scarcely enough to keep the people alive. A great deal of the preaching and ritualism of modern Christianity are almost devoid of the gospel and yet many Christians have no better food and therefore they manage to subsist on it although they are spiritually weak and emaciated.

Religion Commercialized. Some students believe that the symbols of this prophecy also represent the spirit of commercialism that entered and dominated the church during the Middle Ages. During this period the church, or "temple of God" became a "house of merchandise" where enormous profits were made from the sale of religious rites and services. Relics were bought and sold and fixed prices were placed on the administering of church ordinances, prayers for the dead, burials, marriages, and every other function and service of the priests. The church became a great commercial institution which grew rich through her unholy traffic. "The ministry of the Word of God has been commercialized, and that with a view not merely to the profit and advancement of men who, professing to be Christ's ministers and ambassadors in an evil and hostile world, really make themselves the mouthpieces of the world, and preach a 'gospel' that is thoroughly conformed to its principles, but with a view also to the adulteration of the bread of life, to make it both unpalatable and innutritious. Such a state of things has come into existence throughout Christendom, and now has developed to full maturity," (Mauro, p. 223).

Oil and Wine. Oil and wine are also made scarce by a famine. See Joel 1:10-12. Many scriptures speak of "the oil of gladness." See Ps. 45:7; Isa. 61:3; Heb. 1:9. Oil was used for annointing and represents the Holy Spirit and His gifts. Wine is also symbolic of spiritual blessings. See Isa. 25:6; 55:1. It was used by Christ to represent His blood, and in the communion service it symbolizes the blood of the new covenant. It therefore represents the doctrine of the atonement. The Good Samaritan bound up the wounds of the victim of robbers, "pouring in oil and wine" which represents the consoling and healing influence of the gospel. The command to "hurt not the oil

and the wine" means that "the power for harm allowed to the rider on the black horse was restricted, even as God set strict limits to Satan's power to afflict Job. The black horse rider was not to be permitted in any part of his career to 'hurt the oil and the wine.' There is great comfort in this assurance for those who are truly the people of God. It tells them that even in the days of spiritual dearth, when the giving forth of the bread of life was to be as by measure and price, the 'oil' of God's Spirit and the 'wine' of His joy were not to be injured; so that even to the very end of things down here, His people can always have a heart gladdened by the wine of God, and a face shining with the oil of God," (Mauro, p. 224). See Ps. 104:15.

The Fourth Seal. Verses 7,8. "Pale" is translated from the Greek word "chloros," from which the gas known as "chlorine" is named. It was used by the Greeks to describe the color of persons afflicted with plague. It is a death pallor and is sometimes translated "greenish-white." "Sallow-greenish horse," (Concordant). It is the livid pallor of a corpse or putrefying flesh, or the color of withered grass. It is the death-green leprous color mentioned in Lev. 13:49; 14:37. "It is of sickly green, a livid, corpse-like color," (Mauro). The rider's name was "Death" and "Hades came close behind him," (Weymouth). "The Lord of the place of Death rode behind him," (20th C.N.T.). Hades is the grave as is also "the place of death," and "the Lord of the place of Death" is Satan. See Heb. 2:14. It is "a symbol of death and terror," (Robertson). "The rider is 'Death,' and his mission is to 'kill'; and 'Hades' is pictured as following with him, to gather in, as it were, the victims....Death must here represent some destructive spiritual influence that has been especially active in the gospel era," (Mauro, p. 227). "Hades is the abode of the dead, the keys of which Christ holds. Hades kept step with death, whether on the same horse or on another by his side or on foot John does not say," (Robertson). Death cuts men down and the grave gathers them in.

World Dominion. Barnes in his General History, p. 321, declared that for centuries the papacy kept gaining strength until finally "A new Rome rose from the ashes of the old, far mightier than the vanquished empire, for it claimed dominion over the spirits of men." Dr. John Lord said: "What an august power is this Catholic empire, equally great as an institution and as a religion....It has proved to be the most wonderful fabric of what we call worldly wisdom that our world has seen,--controlling kings, dictating laws to ancient monarchies, and binding the souls of millions with a more perfect despotism than Oriental emperors ever sought or dreamed. And what a marvelous vitality it seems to have."--Beacon Lights of History, Vol. 3, pp. 95,96. H. G. Wells, in his Outline of History, says that the papacy was an attempt at world dominion through religion, to do what Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Charles V, and others attempted by civil and military power, and failed. During the Middle Ages this great ecclesiastical kingdom dominated all nations in "the fourth part of the earth." Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia, over which the papacy ruled, constitutes about one fourth of the land area of the Old World.

Period of Persecution. The language indicates that the leaders of the paganized church had so far departed from the gospel that made men the ministers of life, that they became the ministers of death under the control and leadership of Satan. "Power was given" to the church authorities by Satan to slay "the fourth part of the earth...with sword, and with hunger,

and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." That this is the same period of persecution described in other prophecies is evident. See Dan. 7:21,25; 8:24; 11:33; Matt. 24:21,22; Rev. 13:7; 17:6. It has been suggested that "the beasts of the earth" might represent the nations used by the papal power to execute her decrees against "heretics." During this terrible persecution between 50 and 150 millions of martyrs died for their faith so that the religio-political church of the Middle Ages was "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

Testimony of History. "That the Church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history. The memorials, indeed, of many of her persecutions are now so scanty that it is impossible to form a complete conception of the multitude of her victims, and it is quite certain that no powers of imagination can adequately realize their sufferings."--History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, Lecky, Vol. 2, p. 32. Speaking of the papal persecutions in southern France, Draper says: "Then followed such scenes of horror as the sun had never looked on before. The army was officered by Roman and French prelates; bishops were its generals, an archdeacon its engineer. It was the Abbott Arnold, the legate of the pope, who, at the capture of Beziers, was inquired by a soldier, more merciful or more weary of murder than himself, how he should distinguish and save the Catholic from the heretic. 'Kill them all,' he exclaimed; 'God will know His own.'...Language has no power to express the atrocities that took place at the capture of the different towns. Ecclesiastical vengeance rioted in luxury. The soil was steeped in the blood of men, the air polluted by their burning. From the reek of murdered women, mutilated children, and ruined cities, the Inquisition, that infernal institution, arose. Its projectors intended it not only to put an end to public teaching, but even to private thought."--History of the Intellectual Development of Europe, Vol. 2, p. 62.

Claim the Right. Catholics not only claim the right to punish "heretics" with death, but they actually glory in their intolerance. "Her avowed doctrine is 'that heretics ought to be visited by the secular powers with temporal punishment, and even with death itself.'"--H. Grattan Guinness, in his Key to the Apocalypse, p. 90. In a standard Catholic work published in 1911, it is boldly claimed that the church has the divine right to "confiscate the property of heretics, imprison their persons, and condemn them to the flames...In our age the right to inflict the severest penalties, even death, belongs to the church....Since experience teaches us that there is no other remedy....the last recourse is the death penalty....There is no graver offense than heresy....and therefore it must be rooted out with fire and sword. It is a Catholic tenet which must be faithfully held, that the extreme penalty not only may, but must be inflicted on obstinate heretics."--Institutes of Public Ecclesiastical Law. Surely no one can question the application of the fourth apocalyptic horse and its rider to the paganized and persecuting church of the Middle Ages.

The Fifth Seal. Verses 9-11. The cries of the four living creatures that brought forth the four symbolic horses and their riders, now gives place to the cry of the blood of the millions of martyrs slain during the cruel papal persecutions. We must not forget that the seven seals picture events

that are to transpire on earth and that symbols are employed and figurative language used. It is evident that the altar of the fifth seal must represent the earth on which the victims were slain and under which they are buried. (In the typical temple there were two altars: the altar of incense in the holy place, and the altar of burnt offerings in the court where the victims were slain and the sacrifices offered. The blood of the sacrificial victims was poured out at the foot of the altar on which they were offered. See Lev. 4:7. Under the altar of burnt offerings in Solomon's temple was a deep excavation in the solid rock into which the blood of the thousands of victims ran or was poured and from which it emptied into the Kedron. This is now in the middle of the Mosque of Omar and is covered with a marble slab. The Moslems call it "The Well of Spirits.")

Altar of Sacrifice. Paul at his martyrdom was "offered" on the altar of sacrifice. See 2 Tim. 4:6. Christ was offered in sacrifice on the altar of Calvary. He was slain "without the gate" in the court of the heavenly sanctuary which is in this earth (Rev. 11:1,2), and for three days He remained in the tomb "under the altar," where His blood constituted a cry for vengeance upon His enemies. Likewise the millions of martyrs of the Middle Ages were slain on the altar of sacrifice and martyrdom, and John sees them "at the foot of the altar" (Weymouth), or "under the altar" in their graves where their shed blood constitutes a continual cry for vengeance upon their persecutors. The Lord said to Cain, the first murderer and persecutor, regarding Abel, the first martyr, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground," (Gen. 4:10). That voice was a cry for vengeance. It is not the martyrs themselves, but their blood that is crying for vengeance and justice to Him who says: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord," (Rom. 12:19).

Only Reasonable Interpretation. There is nothing in this text to prove that the martyred dead are in heaven crying for vengeance. In the first place such a spirit would be entirely contrary to that of Christ and all Christian martyrs at the time of their death. In the second place the Scriptures teach that the dead are in their graves awaiting the call of the Life-giver on the resurrection morning. The following are a few of the comments of apocalyptic students: "And they cry with a loud voice--that is, their blood, like that of Abel, cried for vengeance. We sometimes say, Blood cries for blood; for that is the order of divine justice," (Dr. Adam Clarke). "Here is a figurative description of the martyrs 'slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held'; crying 'with a loud voice' from 'under the altar' where they lay," --The Biblical View of the Soul. "Strictly speaking, in fact, they do not themselves cry. It is their blood that cries; it is the wrong done them that demands reparation," (The Expositor's Bible).

Other Authorities. "They are the lives of the slain: their being under the altar is well illustrated by the ceremonial outpouring of the blood, and their cry for vengeance by that of the blood of Abel," (Cambridge Bible). "The word here translated 'soul' describes the physical rather than the spiritual life; the idea is taken from Lev. 4:7, the martyrs being the sacrifices on God's altar (See 2 Tim. 4:6), and their blood personified being seen here....The idea being the same as that of Abel's blood crying to God (Gen. 4:10)," (The Devotional Commentary). "The sacrificial altar was not in the sanctuary, but outside; so Christ's literal sacrifice, and

the figurative sacrifice of the martyrs took place, not in the heavenly sanctuary, but outside, here on earth...The blood of the martyrs cries from the earth under Christ's cross, whereupon they may be considered virtually to have been sacrificed," (Critical and Explanatory Commentary on the Whole Bible).

Cry for Vengeance. The blood of martyrs has been making an impersonal and insistent appeal to "the Judge of all the earth" for justice, and that cry is being heard and will be answered with speedy vengeance in the day of retribution. This is illustrated by the parable of the unjust judge recorded in Luke 18:1-8. "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." This cry for vengeance on the part of the blood of the martyred dead was joined in by the living who were suffering persecution. Leonard Schoener, beheaded in Rottenberg, Bavaria, Jan. 14, 1528, wrote the following prayer which was found among his papers in the prison: "We are scattered like sheep having no shepherd. We have been compelled to forsake house and home. We are as night ravens, which abide in the rocks. Our chambers are in holes and crags....Not only men but likewise women and maidens have borne witness to the truth that Jesus Christ is the truth, the only way to eternal life. The world still rolls and rests not: it revels as if mad. They invent lies against us. They cease not their fires and murders. O Lord, how long wilt thou be silent? How long wilt thou not judge the blood of thy saints? Let it come up before thy throne, how precious in thine eyes is the blood of thy holy ones. Therefore have we comfort in all our need, a refuge in thee alone, and in none besides; but neither comfort, nor rest, nor peace on this earth. But he who hopeth in thee shall never be confounded. O Lord, there is no sorrow so great, that can separate us from thee."--Quoted in The Review and Herald, Feb. 4, 1909, Art. "Cry of Souls Under the Altar," by W. A. Spicer.

PRAYER

The Reformation. When Europe was awakened to the real nature of the papacy as the result of the Reformation, a cry for vengeance was the logical result of the change of attitude toward those who died as "heretics" but were now being venerated as "saints" and "martyrs." Milton, the blind poet, while prime minister to Cromwell, expressed in verse the cry for justice from both the blood of martyrs and the lips of the living who were at last free from the spiritual bondage that had enslaved the souls of millions 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 ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that rolled
Mothers with infants 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 hundred fold, who, having learned Thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

White Robes. Verse 11. The white robes are symbolic of the righteousness of Christ which is imputed and imparted to all who accept it by faith. It was faith in Christ and His righteousness that enabled the martyrs to die for Him. They were actually given these robes during life before their death, just as Paul's "crown of righteousness" was his on the day of his martyrdom. See 2 Tim. 4:6-8. The "robe of righteousness" and the "crown of righteousness" are virtually synonymous terms. The putting on of this white robe will constitute the essential preparation of the remnant of the church for the coming of the Bridegroom. See Rev. 19:7,8. "The white robe is, in this book, the vestment of adknowledged and glorified righteousness: it was rather assured than actually bestowed," (Dr. Adam Clarke). This text also predicts another short period of persecution and martyrdom just before the day of vengeance, and the martyrs of the former persecutions are bidden to "rest yet a little season" till the roll of martyrdom was completed in the final test and trial just before the end. This final period of persecution is described in several Bible prophecies. See Dan. 11:35; 12:9,10; Rev. 7:13,14; 12:17; 13:15-17.

THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH SEALS

7

Climax of History. Rev. 6:12-17; 8:1. The sixth and seventh seals are inseparable and will be considered together. They bring us again to the climax of human history and the focal point of divine revelation. The seven seals, like the seven letters, cover the Christian era and end in the second advent of Christ. The last two seals picture great phenomenal events in the natural world which announce the arrival of the last days of human history and describe the effects of the day of God's wrath and indignation upon the wicked inhabitants of earth and the sinless inhabitants of heaven. The wailing cries of the former find their answer in the profound silence of the latter. A parallel prophecy to that of the seven seals is found in Christ's great prophetic sermon recorded in Matt. 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, which was given in answer to the question of His disciples, "What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" In this sermon Jesus declared that "great earthquakes shall be in divers places," 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." He said that the sun shall "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," (Luke 21:11,25; Matt. 24:29,30). Is it any wonder that this sermon of Christ is sometimes called "The Little Apocalypse"?

Literal Language. That figurative and symbolic language is not employed in describing the sixth and seventh seals is evident. In the first place they picture events that cannot be symbolized. In the second place the same events are foretold in several other literal prophecies of the Bible, including Christ's great prophecy referred to above. In the third place symbols are used to explain these predicted events, and symbols are never used to explain symbols. The sun was as dark "as sackcloth of hair," and the moon "became as blood" and the stars fell to the earth "even as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." The "sackcloth of hair" and the "blood" and the "fig tree" are illustrations to describe the appearance of these literal heavenly bodies during these phenomenal events. All Scripture is to be taken literally unless the language used indicates clearly that symbols are employed, or when the same objects or events are figuratively described and interpreted in other Scriptures. We also know that these events are literal because the predictions have been literally fulfilled and at the time specified. These last two seals describe the signs that precede and the events in connection with the great day of God's wrath and vengeance for which the blood of the millions of martyrs had been calling.

A Great Earthquake. Verse 12. "A great earthquake" would mark the date of the opening of the sixth seal. Christ declared that "great earthquakes" in "divers places" would herald His return. The first of these great modern earthquake disasters was the Lisbon earthquake which occurred November 1, 1755, which up to that time was the most gigantic recorded by man. It doubtless shook the entire globe, as it was felt even in America. Lisbon was almost totally destroyed by the quake and the tidal wave that followed, the estimated loss of life being 90,000. "The effects

of the earthquake of the first of November, 1755, were distributed over nearly four milliions of square English miles of the earth's surface; a most astonishing space! and greatly surpassing anything of this kind ever recorded in history!"--History and Philosophy of Earthquakes, Nourse, p. 334.

Other Authorities. "Among the earth movements which in historic times have affected the kingdom of Portugal, that of November 1, 1755, takes first rank; as it does also, in some respects among all recorded earthquakes. The first shocks of this earthquake came without other warning than a deep sound of rumbling thunder, which appeared to proceed from beneath the ground, and it was immediately followed by a quaking which threw down almost the entire city."--Earthquakes, William Herbert Hobbs, pp. 142,143.

"At twenty minutes to ten that morning, Lisbon was firm and magnificent, on one of the most picturesque and commanding sites in the world,--a city of superb approach, placed precisely where every circimstance had concurred to say to the founders, Build here! In six minutes the city was in ruins....Half the world felt the convulsion...For many weeks, as we see in the memoirs of that time, people in distant parts of Europe went to bed in alarm, relieved in the morning to find that they had escaped the fate of Lisbon one night more."--Parton's Life of Voltaire, pp. 208,209.

In Divers Places. Very complete earthquake statistics have been made possible by the invention of the seismograph, and they reveal an alarming increase during recent years. The average recorded earthquakes per year have increased from 64 between 1850 and 1868, to 2,600 between 1868 and 1908, and to more than 5,000 from 1908 to 1938. There were 9,000 quakes during 1932, one hundred and twenty of which did damage and nineteen were of major severity. A recent dispatch from Washington said: "Frequent earthquakes in North and South America and Europe during the last few months have puzzled government scientists...They have no particular reason to suggest for the frequency of the recent earth disturbances.... Geologists recognize that the earth's surface is in a continual state of unrest." In the Literary Digest of Feb. 9, 1935, a geologist is quoted as saying that "The 'solid' earth actually is in a continual state of tremor." Edgar W. Woolard, in the American Review of Reviews of October, 1923, said: "Fearful indeed is the plight of man when the solid earth itself trembles beneath his feet, and his faith in terra firma is shattered...Our globe is trembling somewhere nearly all the time."

Great Earthquakes. Jesus not only predicted the increase of earthquakes just before His second advent, but He said that "great earthquakes shall be in divers places." Within the period of six years three of the greatest earthquakes of all history took their terrible toll of life and property. In December, 1920, there was an earthquake that centered in central China which literally shook the globe. It was said to be "the most destructive in the history of the world." The estimates of the loss of life ranged between 200,000 and 1,000,000. Mountains were literally moved as far as a mile covering up cities and villages. "Mountains walked in the night," said a writer in the National Geographic Magazine. The Japanese earthquake of September, 1923, left between 200,000 and

300,000 dead and 2,500,000 homeless. One writer said that "the unfortunate Japanese were attacked by earthquake, fire, tidal waves, new volcanoes bursting out, torrential rains, typhoons, and, worst of all, by dreadful FEAR, affecting millions." In November, 1926, there was an earthquake in Armenia of the ninth magnitude in the scale of ten. Entire towns and villages were swallowed up. These great earthquake disasters will continue to increase till they reach a climax in the final terrible convulsions of this sin-laden earth when Christ returns. See Jer. 4:23-28; Rev. 16:17-20. Every earthly structure will go down in this great crash, and only Christian character-buildings will remain. See Heb. 12:27,28.

Sun and Moon Darkened. Verse 12. The darkness was so great that "the sun became black as sackcloth of hair." The blackest cloth known was made from the hair of the black goat. This event took place May 19, 1780, and is known in history as "The Dark Day." The night following, the moon had the appearance of blood. History records the fact that the moon had fulled the day before and this is in accord with the divine prediction: "The whole moon," (R.V.). "The entire moon," (Emphatic Diaglott). "The whole disc of the moon," (Weymouth). "The full moon turned like blood," (Moffatt). "And the moon, which was at its full, like blood," (20th C.N.T.). This event took place in North America, centering in the New England states. It doubtless occurred there because that was to be the chief starting place of the second advent message which would herald the return of Christ.

Why NA?

Cause Unknown. Webster's Dictionary, in the edition of 1869, under its "Explanatory and Pronouncing Vocabulary," says of this event: "The Dark Day, May 19, 1780--so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England. In some places, persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barnyard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places....The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known." The great astronomer, Herschel, is reported to have said that "philosophy is at a loss to explain" this "wonderful phenomena of nature." Its cause has ever been a puzzle to scientists.

Not Natural Causes. Efforts have been made to account for this event on the basis of natural causes, but this is denied by authorities we cannot question. Einstein is reported to have said that it was impossible for the sun to have been darkened from natural causes because it was completely and suddenly darkened about 9 A.M., and the moon suddenly appeared at 3 P.M. and looked like a ball of blood. He said that science cannot explain this event. Noah Webster said of this event: "That the smoke of burning forests cannot be the cause (of the darkness) may be rendered very certain...Had the woods from the 40th degree of latitude in America to the 50th been all consumed in a day, the smoke would not have been sufficient to cloud the sun over the territory covered by the darkness of the 19th of May (1780). Any person can judge of this who has seen large tracts of forest fire. That thirty or forty miles of burning forest should cover five hundred miles with impenetrable darkness, is too absurd to deserve a serious refutation."--A Brief History of Epidemic and Pestilential Diseases; With the Principal Phenomena of the Physical World, Which Precede and Accompany Them, Vol. II, pp. 91-93.

Further Testimony. "On the 19th of May, 1780, a wonderful dark day was experienced throughout the northeastern portion of this country. The witnesses of it have described it as supernatural and unaccountable. It was not an ordinary eclipse, for the moon was nearly at its full. It was not owing to a clouded condition of the atmosphere, for the stars were visible. Yet it was so dark from nine o'clock in the morning throughout the usual hours of sunshine, that work had to be suspended, houses had to be lit with candles, and beasts and fowls went to their rest as in the night-time. And although the sun was visible, it had the appearance of being shorn of its power of illumination."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 1, p. 383. See Source Book for Bible Students, pages 134-143 for more than twenty other historical references showing that this event meets the specifications of the prophecy.

The Falling Stars. Verse 13. This prophecy was strikingly fulfilled in the shower of shooting stars or meteors which occurred on the night of Nov. 13, 1833, and was the greatest known in history. The meteors looked as if they came out of the constellation of Leo and from that point in the heavens were thrown in all directions just as a fig tree would throw its unripe figs when "shaken of a mighty wind." "Untimely figs" are those that are formed too late in the season to mature and so hang on the tree through the winter and drop off when the sap begins to rise in the spring, or are shaken off by storms. Robertson declares that "unripe" is translated from an old word used for "figs that grow in the winter and fall off in the spring without getting ripe....Jesus used the fig tree (Mark 13:28) as a sign of the 'end of the world's long winter.'" Soon after the falling of the "untimely figs" the fig tree "putteth forth leaves" as evidence by which we may "know that summer is nigh," (Matt. 24:32). Again we see the relation between the seals and Christ's great prophecy recorded in the Gospels.

Exact Fulfillment. "The stars fell 'even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.' Here is the exactness of the prophet. The falling stars did not come as if from several trees shaken, but from one....They fell, not as the ripe fruit falls, far from it; but they flew, they were cast, like the unripe fig, which at first refuses to leave the branch; and when it does break its hold, flies swiftly, straight off, descending; and in the multitude falling, some cross the track of others, as they are thrown with more or less force."--New York Journal of Commerce, Nov. 14, 1833.

"A more exact picture of a fig tree casting its figs when blown by a mighty wind, it was not possible to behold....These emblems of stars did not fall perpendicularly, but rushed out from the bush,--the circle,--and coursed down the vaulted sides of the firmament like streams of liquid. gold, silver, brass, copper,...pea green, and cerulean: anon lighting up our earthly chambers with strange fires...while the whole firmament, like a course prepared for the steeds, opposed no intervening clouds to mar the heavenly race."--The Old Countryman, Nov. 30, 1833.

Extent of Shower. "On the night of November 12-13, 1833, a tempest of falling stars broke over the earth. North America bore the brunt of the pelting. From the Gulf of Mexico to Halifax, until daylight with some difficulty put an end to the display, the sky was scored in every direction with shining tracks and illuminated with majestic fireballs."--History of Astronomy in the Nineteenth Century, Agnes M. Clarke, p. 328.

"The morning of November 13, 1833, was rendered memorable by an exhibition of the phenomenon called shooting stars, which was probably more extensive and magnificent than any other similar one hitherto recorded...Probably no celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with so much admiration and delight by one class of spectators, or with so much astonishment and fear by another class. For some time after the occurrence the 'meteoric phenomenon' was the principal topic of conversation in every circle."--Prof. Olmsted of Yale, in The American Journal of Science and Arts, Vol. 25 (1834), pp. 363,364.

Testimony of Witnesses. The following expressions were used by eye-witnesses in describing the scene: "It rained fire," "It was like a shower of fire." "I found the entire atmosphere at four o'clock filled with flakes of fire." "They fell like flakes of snow." "It was like the large flakes of falling snow before the coming storm, or like drops of rain before a shower." Prof. W. E. Aiken of Saint Mary's College, Maryland, wrote: "It would be difficult for one who had not witnessed the grand exhibition to conceive the effect of the uninterrupted succession of innumerable meteors, proceeding from a point so nearly vertical toward the whole circumference of the horizon, and this too during the stillness of the night, and with an atmosphere perfectly transparent. It could only be compared to one grand and continued discharge of fireworks, occupying the whole visible heavens."--Reported in the American Journal of Science, Vol. 25, p. 372.

Another Witness. An observer at Bowling Green, Missouri, said: "This place, situated on an elevated point of an extensive prairie, presents an unbroken view of the horizon, and afforded an excellent opportunity of beholding this phenomenon in all its various aspects and impressive sublimity. The most perfect master of language would fail of conveying to others a full picture of this extraordinary and uncommon appearance, and vain would be his attempt to express the sensation of the beholders. Above all, around the firmament, thicker than the stars themselves, which were uncommonly bright, large, and beautiful, we beheld innumerable fire balls of a whitish pallid color, rushing down and, to appearance, across the sky, drawing after them long, luminous traces, which clothed the whole heavens in awful majesty, and gave to the air and earth a pale and deathlike appearance."--Reported in The American Journal of Science, Vol. 25, p. 382.

Further Testimony. "A most marvelous meteoric shower of this class was witnessed on the night of the 13th of November, 1833. It is perhaps remembered by many now present. During the three hours of its continuance, hundreds and thousands of people, of all classes, were thrown into the utmost consternation, and filled with the belief that the very scene described in this text, was actually transpiring. Fiery balls, as luminous and as numerous as the stars, came darting after each other from the sky, with vivid streaks of light trailing in the track of each other. They were of various sizes and degrees of splendor; flashing as they fell, so bright as to awaken people from their sleep. It seemed as if every star in the firmament had suddenly shot from its sphere, and was falling to the earth, and all who saw it will bear witness that it was a most terrific spectacle."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 1, pp. 387,388. (1865).

The Event Recognized. Those who saw this remarkable spectacle recognized it as the fulfilment of the event foretold in the Apocalypse. "The whole heavens seemed in motion, and little need have been borrowed from a morbid sensibility to imagine that the opening of the sixth seal was indeed at hand, when 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. Never before has it fallen to our lot to observe a phenomenon so magnificent and sublime."--American Daily Advertiser, Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1833.

"We pronounce the raining fire which we saw on Wednesday morning last, an awful type, a sure forerunner, a merciful sign of that great and dreadful day, which the inhabitants of the earth will witness when the sixth seal shall be opened."--The Old Countryman of New York, as quoted in the Portland Advertiser, Nov. 26, 1833. See Source Book for Bible Students, pp. 162-168 for more than twenty other references.

Other Prophecies. That this prophecy is of a literal and not a figurative and symbolic event is abundantly proven not only in the fact that it was literally fulfilled, but also because it was foretold in many other prophecies of Scripture. See Isa. 13:9,10; Eze. 32:7,8; Joel 2:30,31; 3:13-16; Luke 21:25-32. Still more definitely is the time located in Matt. 24:29, and Mark 13:24-26. It was to happen "immediately after the tribulation of those days," or "in those days after the tribulation." The days of persecution are identified in Matt. 24:21,22, as the persecutions of the Dark Ages described under the fourth and fifth seals. There are seven prophecies in Daniel and the Revelation giving the period of papal supremacy and persecution as 1260 years, from 538 to 1798. But Jesus promised that "for the elect's sake" the persecution would be cut short. This was accomplished by the Reformation and other forces which brought about the wounding of the papal head of the "beast." See Rev. 13:1-3. Persecution had virtually ceased by the middle of the 18th century. The signs in sun, moon and stars took place exactly at the time predicted. Jesus followed the prediction of these events with the parable of the fig tree to illustrate the nearness of His coming. See Matt. 24:29-34. He forbids the setting of the day or hour but He Himself set the generation that would witness the culmination of earthly events. The "last generation" and the "time of the end" are synonymous terms and they doubtless begin and end with the proclamation of the last message to the world.

Unfilfulled Events. Verses 14-17. "The sky was swept aside like a scroll folded up," (Moffatt). Following the predictions of the signs during the sixth seal, the prophet describes the opening of the atmospheric heavens for the descent of the Son of God in power and great glory. "We are thus brought to the very threshold itself of the great day of the Lord's coming," (Alford). In connection with this event there will take place a scene of the utmost confusion among the unprepared. Those who have worshiped nature instead of the Creator seek shelter in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. The very ones who had persecuted the saints and compelled them to flee to the mountains to hide in the caverns of earth, now do the same for fear of "the wrath of the Lamb." Swete calls this expression "grave irony," but "the Lamb is the Lion again in the terribleness of His wrath," (Robertson). The wicked cry out in anguish to be hidden from the face of Him whose message of love and mercy they have spurned. Their very cry condemns them as it indicates that they had heard

the warning and recognize the event. "What sinners dread most is not death, but the revealed presence of God," (Swete).

The Frightened Sinners. "The kings of the earth" would include all rulers of nations. The "chief captains" are doubtless the military leaders. The military tribunes of the Roman army were commanders of thousands and were recognized as "chief captains." The "great" and "rich" men of the earth are included among the lost. "Not merely those in civil and military authority will be terror-stricken, but the self-satisfied and complacent rich," (Robertson). See James 5:1-5. "The mighty men" are those who usually scoff at fear. The "bondman" and "free man" are the two opposites of society. Slavery still exists and will doubtless continue till Christ returns. "The number of slaves still exceeds 5,000,000. It is greater than the combined number set free by Lincoln (4,000,000) and Wilberforce (700,000). In the 20th century the slaves held as chattels are as many as the soldiers enrolled as conscripts."--The Literary Digest, Jan. 20, 1934. Of what are these various classes afraid? They are afraid of "the face of the Lamb" and "the wrath of the Lamb."

Other Prophecies. There are many other prophecies of the terrible effect the coming of Christ and the day of God's wrath will have upon the wicked. See Isa. 2:12,19-21; 13:6-11; Zeph. 1:14-18; Luke 23:30. The tears of the "mighty men" will be too late, for probation is forever closed. When the Lord wept over and prayed for them they spurned His entreaties. Now He refuses to hear their cries. See Zech. 7:11-13. But their tears are not tears of repentance because of a godly sorrow and hatred for sin, but because of their fear of punishment and the loss resulting from sin. If pardoned and given another chance they would quickly return to their former course as would most of the criminals now being punished for their crimes. Another opportunity would not change their course as their characters have been fixed beyond all change. Seven classes who are unprepared are named by the Author of the Apocalypse and they doubtless represent all classes of the wicked. In this great event the question of the blood of the martyrs under the fifth seal is fully answered and their blood avenged. See verse 10.

(World Unconverted.) In these and many other Scriptures is abundance of evidence that the world will not be converted when Christ returns, as some contend. "But not greater is the dissolution of physical nature than that of all social classes. Ashen-faced fugitives, shaking like aspen leaves at every joint,--from thrones, from halls of state, from military great headquarters, from palatial mansions, from lordly castles, from slave-pens and smiling homes--huddle promiscuously in caverns and rocky recesses of the mountains. Yet there they have no sigh of relief, for the terrors of the hour are to them but omens of more terrifying overhanging doom, from which they would have the mountains and rocks of their immediate refuge collapsing overhead entomb them."--Revelation, the Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy, Stevens, p. 137. The question, "Who shall be able to stand?" is similar to the one in Mal. 3:1,2, which pictures the same event and the necessary preparation. The question is answered in chapter seven of the Apocalypse. See also Luke 21:36. Only those whose lives have been hidden in Christ will be hidden in a refuge of safety during the day of His wrath.

The Seventh Seal. Rev. 8:1. Chapter seven is an interruption in the vision of the seven seals covering the Christian era, in order to answer the

question as to "Who shall be able to stand?" It pictures the safety of the Church Militant during the day of God's indignation, and the glory of the Church Triumphant in the heavenly kingdom. When the first four seals were broken, the voices of the four living creatures pealed forth like thunder. The breaking of the fifth seal brought to the prophet's ears the cry for vengeance from the blood of the millions of martyrs. The sixth seal pictures the convulsions of nature as signs of the second advent and the cries of the unredeemed world for the rocks and mountains to crush them and hide them from the face of the Lamb. In contrast to this noise and confusion on earth, the breaking of the seventh seal brings a profound silence in heaven. This silence is also in marked contrast with the rejoicing in heaven at the beginning of this vision. It is like a great calm after a terrific storm. The "silence" is indicative of intense interest and awful expectancy.

Reasons for Silence. The silence indicates that it is the great day of judgment and wrath when all heaven stands in breathless silence awaiting the sound of the last trump. "But the Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him." (Hab. 2:20). "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God; for the day of the Lord is at hand," (Zeph. 1:7). "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord; for He is raised up out of His holy habitation," (Zech. 2:13). This raising up is for the purpose of judgment. See Dan. 12:1. All heaven is silent as the Lord is about to go forth to execute His final judgments. "When He is about to issue forth for His final judgments upon the world, in the great day of His wrath, nothing could be more fitting than that all heaven should stand in breathless silence, awaiting the peal of the last trump," (Mauro). "A sublime metaphor; 'silence', being suggestive of the deep and solemn expectation of the stupendous things about to take place, which the opening of this seal had produced," (Clarke).

Rejoicing Ceases. There can be no joy in heaven during the awful day of God's vengeance when He executes His righteous judgments. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked," (Eze. 33:11). All heaven is filled with sorrow when the sentence of eternal death must be executed. Angels cease their singing and silently weep as vengeance takes the place of mercy. "In the hearts of the celestial orders, which render them as silent as the grave, all heaven becomes mute and breathless. Saints and angels hush their songs to look and wait for the results....Hence, a motionless stillness, more awful, and fuller of thrilling import, than that overwhelming wave of adoration which went over the universe of holy beings when the Lamb first took the book," (Seiss, Vol. 2, p. 18). Doubtless another reason for silence is that all the angelic host accompany Christ as He returns to earth to gather the saints and destroy the wicked. See Matt. 25:31. Doubtless the twenty-four elders and their thousands of redeemed assistants will also come to earth to welcome their fellow saints who are resurrected and translated. "Half an hour" of prophetic time is seven and a half days, probably the time required to descend to earth and return. It at least indicates a very brief space of time. Then the "silence" will be broken by the songs and shouts of triumph as the redeemed of earth reach glory-land to receive a tumultuous welcome by the unfallen universe. The rejoicings of the reunited family of God will never be broken by another "silence," but the vaults of heaven will ring with singing throughout the eternal ages.

THE SEALING MESSAGE

8

Parenthetical Prophecy. The chronology of Revelation 7 is established by its location between the sixth and seventh seals. It is a parenthetical prophecy comprised of two visions of events to take place in connection with both seals but which is not a part of either. The first vision or episode is revealed in verses 1-8, and begins with the statement, "After these things I saw." This indicates that it is not a part of the sixth seal but describes events to take place in connection with it and before the seventh seal is broken. The purpose is to give the secret of the safety of the remnant of the church during the time of God's indignation. The second vision or episode of this chapter is described in verses 9-17, and reveals events which will take place chiefly in connection with the seventh seal. It begins with the statement, "After this I beheld," and deals with the final triumph of the redeemed who pass through the final crisis. "Chapter VII can only come in as an episode between chapters VI.17 and VIII.1" (Hengstenberg). "Instead of the seventh seal being opened, two other episodes or preliminary visions occupy chapter 7," (Robertson).

Answer to Question. In the description of the day of God's wrath and judgments given in the last verses of the previous chapter, the recognition of the event by the wicked is evident from their cry, "For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" The purpose of the vision of chapter seven is to answer that question. Only those who receive "the seal of the living God" will be shielded from the divinely visited judgments. All others will seek shelter in the dens and caves of the mountains and perhaps the man-made bomb-proof places of refuge. They cannot look upon "the face of Him that sitteth on the throne," or endure "the wrath of the Lamb." Between the signs in the sun, moon and stars, and upon the earth, which herald the nearness of the second advent of Christ, and the advent itself, a final heaven-sent message is to be given to all men completing the gospel commission. An important part of the preparation for the second advent of Christ is the sealing of the 144,000 for a special mission. (In the place where we would naturally expect the seventh seal to be opened, another kind of seal is brought to view.)

Symbols Employed. Rev. 7:1-3. It is evident that symbols are employed here. The four angels are stationed "at the four corners of the earth," (R.V.). This of course means the four points of the compass, or the four principal directions. See Jer. 49:36. "Winds" in the Scriptures are symbolic of strife, political turmoil and armed conflict. "Four winds" represent universal or world war. See Isa. 17:12-14; Jer. 25:31-33; Dan. 7:2,3,16,17. "Sea" and "waters" are used in the Bible as symbols of the great sea of humanity. See Dan. 7:2,3,17; Rev. 13:1,11; 17:1,18. In these Scriptures both the "sea" and the "earth" are used to represent the nations of the world.

Restraining Influence. The earth, sea, and trees, or land, water and vegetation, represent everything earthly which is affected by war. These are the things of nature most influenced by windstorms. Some believe that the "earth" in this prophecy symbolizes governments, the "sea" the mass of humanity, and "trees" the rulers or great ones of earth such as are described in verse 15 of the previous chapter. Soldiers are represented by

trees in Isa. 10:19, and may therefore be used to symbolize armies in this prophecy. The picture is that of a divine restraining influence in the affairs of men and nations until the sealing work is finished and the final gospel harvest garnered. Not until then can the complete destruction of sinners and all earthly things take place. The quieting and controlling influence of the angels of God in earthly affairs is beautifully illustrated in Zech. 6:1-8.

Also Angels of Wrath. The same angels who are commissioned to hold the winds so that they "hurt not" till God's servants are sealed, are the angels "to whom it was given to hurt" or destroy when the sealing work is completed. The angels of mercy are also the angels of wrath. When they release their control of world affairs, the fierce winds of war and human passion will break forth in their fury in the final war of Armageddon, when the nations of earth will be swept with the besom of destruction. The same angels who protected and passed over the homes of the Israelites with the sprinkled blood on the doorposts, slew the first-born of the unprotected Egyptians who were without the mark or seal of divine protection from the wrath of an offended God. One of the guardian angels of Judah visited the camp of the Assyrian army and slew 185,000 of the chief men of war. Angels have ever been heaven's messengers of both mercy and judgments.

Unseen Forces. While the angels of God are doing their work as messengers of peace, evil angels are busy stirring up strife and unrest. They are the demons of war and the war-gods of Armageddon. See Rev. 16:13-16. Satanic agencies are responsible for all the winds of war and human passion which have devastated the earth since the fall of man. They are ever busy sowing the seeds of hate and envy in all the councils of men and nations. They brought on the two bloody world wars, and have broken up scores of peace conferences or made their decisions null and void. The world is still seething with hatred, suspicion and haunting fear, unaware that a universal apocalyptic peril is suspended over the world. "The spirit of anarchy is permeating all nations, and the outbreaks that from time to time excite the horror of the world are but indications of the pent-up fires of passion and lawlessness that, having once escaped control, will fill the earth with woe and desolation."--Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 102.

Held in Check. The command of the sealing angel to the four messengers of peace to restrain the winds of war until his work is done, may indicate that they had begun to let go their hold on human affairs, or that it seemed so. This may explain the two world wars. The only reason that these world wars did not end in Armageddon is that the sealing work was not finished. Angels deserve more credit than men and nations for the end of both wars. In recent years the nations have many times been on the very brink of war when unexpectedly the danger temporarily passes. Blind indeed must be the person who fails to recognize supernatural agencies in the prevention of war. The statement of Lloyd George following the first world war is even more applicable now: "Europe today is a caldron of suspicions and hatreds....There is a suppressed savagery which is but ill concealed, and there are new hatreds which, if they have not been brought into existence during the war, have at any rate come to the surface."--Is It Peace?, pp. 137,138.

Purpose of Restraint. The divine restraint is for but one purpose, and it continues only until heavenly messengers cooperating with human agencies have "sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." The sealing takes place during a time of suspended wrath. The judgments of God on the wicked cities of the plain were held back till Lot and his family were safe. To them the message was given: "Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou come thither," (Gen. 19:22). The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha is given as an example of the final destruction of the wicked. See Jude 7. The final judgments on Egypt were restrained till the Hebrews were sealed with the blood of the slain lamb, symbolic of the Lamb of God. Angels have ever restrained the discordant elements of this rebel world so that the messages of the Prince of Peace might accomplish their mission. Their last work of this kind will be their greatest.

The Sealing Angel. Since the angels are the messengers or "ministering spirits" of God, they are appropriate symbols of heaven-sent messages and are so used in the book of Revelation. See Rev. 7:1-3; 10:1-7; 14:6-14; 18:1-5. The message-angel of the vision under consideration ascends from the East, the source of light. "From the sun rising," (R.V.). As the sun circles the earth from East to West, so has the gospel belted the world, ever traveling westward. The sealing message will be as world-embracing as the light of the sun which reaches every creature. The holding is to continue till "we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." "We" and "our" indicate that the four angels restrain the winds in cooperation with the sealing angel and thus assist him in his mission. There is perfect organization and harmony in the angelic host as they cooperate with the church in the work of salvation.

Security and Ownership. Ezekiel 9 should be studied in connection with Revelation 7. The seal or mark secures the receivers from the weapons of the slaughter angels and thus preserves them from the wrath of God. The seal of God "is a sign of ownership, a mark of possession, a badge of service, a token of redemption," (Pulpit Commentary). "This sealing secures the safety of the sealed ones as the judgment of the great day goes over the nations."--The Apocalypse, Joseph Seiss, Vol. 1, p. 424. Jesus was sealed for His mission as the Messiah at His baptism. "For Him hath God the Father sealed," (John 6:27). The Father's love was expressed in the message. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The requirements of the seal of God are given in 2 Tim. 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Only those who depart from all evil so that the Lord is well pleased with them and claims them as His own, are sealed or secured for the kingdom and from the divine wrath which visits the ungodly. "This action of sealing with the seal or signet of God, is equivalent to a declaration, that they who are sealed appertain to God, and are distinguished as such from others who do not thus belong to Him, and are assured by Him of His protection against evil," (Wordsworth).

Signifies Character. The seal of God and the character of God are inseparable. In Rev. 14:1 the sealed company are said to have the "Father's name written in their foreheads." Seal, sign, mark, and name are synonymous terms. God signs, marks or seals with His name, and name signifies character. The

sealing is done because of victory over sin and the restoration of the image or character of God in the hearts, minds, or foreheads of His people. The forehead was the place where the high priest wore the golden plate with the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." The seal is the sign of a holy character. It is placed in the forehead where all can see it. The sealing is accomplished through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. See Eph. 4:30. "This seal is the holy character which the Holy Spirit creates in and impresses upon man," (Pulpit Commentary). The seal of God's approval can be placed only upon those who have His character which they receive through the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ on the basis of faith.

Law Sealed in Heart. A seal is defined as "that which authenticates, confirms, makes stable; that which effectually secures." (Webster). A seal is used in connection with laws or legal documents. It is the law of God that is sealed or made effectual and authentic in the hearts, minds, or lives of God's people. See Isa. 8:16,17,20. Writing the law in the heart is the work of the Holy Spirit and is that which brings us under the new covenant relationship with God. See 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10-12. In this experience God's people "know the Lord" and their sins are cancelled. Jesus was sealed because the law was written in His heart and He delighted to do God's will. See Ps. 40:7,8. Only those who have the law written in the heart can "know righteousness," and thus have the character of God. See Isa. 51:7. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince and convict of sin which is law-breaking. See John 16:7,8; 1 John 3:4. As the Vicegerant of the Son of God, the mission of the Holy Spirit is to bring transgressors into harmony with the law of God, which is the summary of all truth, the standard of God's righteousness, the transcript of His character, the rule of His judgment.

The Sabbath. In this sealing work the Sabbath of the Decalogue plays an important part. The seventh-day Sabbath is clearly declared to be the seal, sign or mark of holiness, or of the character of God. See Exodus 31:15-17; Eze. 20:12,20. It is the outward sign of separation from all evil. See Isa. 56:2. The fourth is the only command of the ten that names the Lawgiver and identifies Him as the Creator. The Sabbath is thus the memorial of creation and the sign of creative power. Since only creative power can redeem, the Sabbath is also the memorial of redemption or re-creation. It is declared to be the sign of sanctification. The Sabbath command is the only positive injunction in the Decalogue which tells us to do something that the world can see as evidence that we worship the Creator. The others are chiefly negative or prohibitory, and obedience to them attracts no special attention. Sabbath keeping is recognized by all, and if it is not a sign of the character of God it becomes a false sign. That Sabbath observance is an important part of the sealing message is evident from Rev. 14:6-14. Those who obey God and possess His seal or mark, also warn against a false or counterfeit sign or mark which is the outward sign of disobedience and rebellion. The world is called upon to worship the Creator because "the hour of His judgment is come." Those sealed while the winds of human passion are restrained and God's wrath and judgments suspended, will have holy or Godlike characters, the outward evidence of which will be the observance of the Sabbath of creation.

The Sealed Number. Rev. 7:4-9. "I heard the number of them which were sealed with the mark," (Swedish). John saw the 144,000 in twelve groups,

and then heard the number. He did not count the number but only heard the report of the enumeration. It is evident that a definite and numerable company is here brought to view. The number sealed from each of the twelve tribes is definite and tallies with the sum of the whole which is also exact. There is nothing to indicate that the number 144,000 is symbolic or representative of a larger and indefinite number. Such a view would make the number meaningless with no means of interpretation. When the Bible speaks of a definite number as representative of a larger number, it is clearly stated so that the reader is not left to conjecture as to what is meant. See Ex. 12:27; Judges 20:15,17,25,35,46; 1 Chron. 21:5; Matt. 14:21; 15:38. The mention of the 12,000 or the 144,000 has no such qualifying statement. Revelation 7 pictures two different companies, one definite and numerable, and the other indefinite and innumerable. The very fact that "no man could number" or count the "great multitude" is evidence that the previous company could be counted or numbered, which would be impossible if the number were symbolic.

Spiritual Israel. The sealing work here described takes place just before the second advent of Christ and therefore many years after the dispersion of literal Israel. For many generations the literal tribes have been practically indistinguishable. Captivity in foreign lands and intermarriage with the heathen and within the tribes have long since obliterated tribal distinctions. Even before the first advent of Christ the ten tribes had practically disappeared through amalgamation with the nations among which they were sent into captivity by the Assyrians. It is evident that the twelve tribes of our text are spiritual, and not historic Israelites. While no human being has the discernment to divide Christians into twelve groups according to their dominant characteristics, Christ, the Head of the church, can. He knows to which nation each belongs and doubtless their names are enrolled in the Book of Life according to their tribal characteristics. That these divisions now exist is evident from the fact that the apostle James addressed his epistle "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." His was a last day message to the church universal and not to Jewish converts only.

Commentaries. That those sealed are spiritual rather than literal Israelites is the position of many of the best apocalyptic students. "The 144,000 belong not to the literal but to the spiritual Israel, and are composed of all peoples and nations and languages," (Charles). "There are two opposite views here, one taking the sealed as referring to the Jews, the other including the Gentiles as well as Jewish Christians; that is, the true Israel as in 2:9; 3:9, and like Paul in Galatians and Romans. This is the more probable view and it takes the twelve tribes in a spiritual sense."--Word Pictures in the New Testament, Robertson. "Although the company is said to be 'of all the tribes of the children of Israel,' yet in the list that follows, the tribes of Dan and Ephraim are omitted altogether....This peculiarity is enough in itself to indicate clearly that we have here a symbolical and not a historical 'Israel.'" --Of the Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass, Philip Mauro, p. 250. This is the only reasonable position that can be taken. Those sealed are called "the servants of our God," which is a general term for Christians.

The Overcomers. The term "Israel" had its origin the night Jacob wrestled with the angel. See Gen. 32:24-28. The new name was given to describe his new character. It means an overcomer, a victor, a prince or son of God. All true Christians are Israelites and all true Israelites are

Christians. See Rom. 2:28,29; 9:6. We become Israelites when we accept Christ and become Christians. See Gal. 3:29. All who become "new creatures in Christ Jesus" are of "the Israel of God." See Gal. 6:15,16. In Rom. 11:17-26, Israel is symbolized by a good olive tree, many of whose branches were broken out because of unbelief, and the Gentiles as branches of a wild olive tree are grafted in their places and thus partake "of the root and fatness of the olive tree." This is said to be "contrary to nature." The conclusion is, "And so all Israel shall be saved." See also Eph. 2:11-13. It is for this reason that the redeemed will be divided into twelve nations and will enter the New Jerusalem through twelve gates over which are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes. The city also has twelve foundations on which are the names of the twelve apostle-kings who will rule over the twelve nations of the saved. See Rev. 21:12,14-26; Matt. 19:27,28; Heb. 11:10-13.

Two Tribes Omitted. The tribes of Ephraim and Dan are omitted from this list. The reasons for this are unknown unless it is that they were both leaders in idolatry and apostasy. The Ephraimites were proud, haughty and domineering. They were the leaders in the revolt and apostasy of the ten tribes led by Jeroboam, "who made Israel sin." Under divine inspiration, Jacob declared that Dan was "a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels so that the rider shall fall backwards," (Gen. 49:17). Dan was a backbiter. The omission of these two tribes from the redeemed may indicate that no idolators or backbiters will be numbered with the 144,000.

A Special Company. It seems evident that the 144,000 are a special company chosen and sealed for a special purpose and mission. Because of their victory over the Laodicean condition, and the experiences through which they pass during the closing crisis, they are especially honored with spiritual power for ministry during the latter rain, and with high positions in the kingdom. This is indicated by the fact that they are invited to sit with Christ "in" His throne to share with Him positions of rulership. They also serve "in His temple" and are "before the throne of God." They stand with Christ "on Mount Zion" and "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Their position is "on the sea of glass" which is in the throne room of the heavenly temple indicating that they serve at the very headquarters of the Kingdom. See Rev. 3:21; 7:15; 14:1-5; 15:2,3. Surely these texts indicate special positions and privileges. "Every thing shows that they are a class of the saved, separate and distinct from all others," (Seiss). Another writer says that they are "the most exalted of the redeemed host that stand before the throne of God and the Lamb," (White).

A Selected Company. The fact that exactly twelve thousand are sealed from each of the twelve spiritual tribes indicates an arbitrary selection of a special and numerable company for a special purpose. When Christ came to this earth to organize His church He selected just twelve men from among the millions of Israel to compose its charter membership and form the nucleus of His work. It was an arbitrary selection of a definite number. The number was not made up of "about twelve men" or of "twelve men besides women and children." Nor was the number twelve symbolic of a much larger and indefinite number. (So important was the exactness of the number that when Judas fell out, another was selected to take his place in order to keep the number intact.) Peter declared that Judas "was

numbered with us" but because he failed "his bishoprick let another take." Matthias was chosen to take the place "from which Judas by transgression fell...and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." See Acts 1:15-26. It seems evident from John 13:10,11,18 that Jesus did not really choose Judas.

Sealed For Mission. The twelve apostles were selected and trained by Christ for a special service. They were "sifted as wheat" and during the upper room experience they got the victory over every known sin and were sealed for their apostolic mission. See Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:20,21. "Christ's visible presence was to be withdrawn from the disciples, but a new endowment of power was to be theirs. The Holy Spirit was to be given them in its fulness, sealing them for their work."--Acts of the Apostles, White, p. 30. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the outward evidence of their acceptance and sealing. It was the sign that they were to "tarry" no longer but were commissioned by heaven to "go" to the ends of the earth with the gospel message. It was also the evidence that they had departed from all iniquity and that God accepted and acknowledged them as His own. "This miraculous gift was a strong evidence to the world that their commission bore the signet (seal) of heaven."--Id. p. 40.

Positions of Leadership. Rev. 12:1 pictures the gospel church as a woman clothed with the sun and wearing a crown of twelve stars. The crown of stars represents the leadership of the twelve apostles over the twelve tribes of spiritual Israel which compose the church. They were the leading lights of Christendom. "The disciples were to go forth as Christ's witnesses, to declare to the world what they had seen and heard of Him. Their office was the most important to which human beings had ever been called, second only to that of Christ Himself....As in the Old Testament the twelve patriarchs stood as representatives of Israel, so the twelve apostles stand as representatives of the gospel church."--Id. p. 19. See Matt. 19:27,28; Luke 22:28-30. Regarding the selection of the twelve disciples during the early days of Christ's ministry, the same writer declares that "they were the firstfruits of His ministry, and there was joy in the heart of the divine Teacher as these souls responded to His grace." --The Desire of Ages, p. 138. Of the selection of the twelve disciples another writer says that "Jesus gathered the firstfruits of His kingdom" and to them "delivered the commission."--Life of Christ, Giekie, p. 219.

The Early Rain. As soon as the twelve apostles were purified and "sealed for their work" they received the early rain of the Holy Spirit which was the "firstfruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23). Then the Holy Spirit was poured out upon all flesh to ripen the gospel grain for the harvest. Under the leadership of the apostles a great harvest was gathered during the first century numbering millions of souls. Of this bountiful harvest the twelve apostles constituted only the first-fruits sheaf. The first to accept the gospel in any country are called the first-fruits of Christianity in that country. See Rom. 11:15,16; 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:15. The early harvest as the result of the early rain or Pentecostal showers was truly "great" (Luke 10:2). Does the position of the twelve apostles in the early church as the "first-fruits" of the early gospel harvest suggest anything regarding the identity and mission of the twelve groups composing the 144,000 and their relation to the great gospel harvest under the latter rain?

THE INNUMERABLE MULTITUDE
9

The Two Harvests. There were two principal harvests in Palestine. The first came in the spring of the year between the Passover and Pentecost. These seven weeks were known as "the weeks of harvest." This harvest was composed chiefly of barley and wheat which had been sown the previous fall. It began with the waving of the first-fruit sheaf on the day following the Passover. Pentecost was a thanksgiving celebration because of the ingathering of this early harvest. The second and great harvest of the year came in the fall and ended with the Feast of Tabernacles which was also called "the Feast of Ingathering." It was in a special sense a harvest ingathering celebration. In this harvest also the first-fruits had to be first reserved. See Ex. 34:22. "In the seventh month came the Feast of Tabernacles, or of Ingathering. This feast acknowledged God's bounty in the products of the orchard, the olive grove, and the vineyard. It was the crowning festal gathering of the year. The land had yielded its increase, the harvests had been gathered into the granaries, the fruits, the oil, and the wine had been stored, the first-fruits had been reserved, and now the people came with their tributes of thanksgiving to God, who had thus richly blessed them."--Patriarchs and Prophets, White, p. 540.

Two Gospel Harvests. The two natural harvests of Palestine were typical of the two great gospel harvests at the beginning and close of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Likewise the reservation of the first-fruits at the beginning of the two natural harvests was typical of a spiritual first-fruits to precede the two great ingatherings of souls. The final gospel harvest under the latter rain will be far greater than the early harvest of souls under the former rain. After the selection and sealing of the twelve apostles as the first-fruit sheaf of the first great gospel harvest under the early rain of spiritual power, a great ingathering of millions of souls took place. "The outpouring of the Spirit in apostolic days was the 'former rain,' and glorious was the result. But the 'latter rain' will be more abundant."--The Desire of Ages, p. 827. Not only will the latter rain be "much more abundant," (C.O.L. 163), but the results in souls will likewise be much more abundant. Under the early rain the sealing of the numerable first-fruits sheaf was followed by the ingathering of an innumerable harvest. No man has ever been able to number the souls that composed the early gospel harvest.

First-Fruits of Final Harvest. Rev. 14:1-5. The first-fruits sheaf of the early harvest was twelve men whom Jesus selected and sealed. But because of the world-wide scope and proportions of the final gospel harvest under the more abundant latter rain, the Lord chooses twelve groups of 12,000 each to constitute the first-fruits sheaf. The 144,000 are divinely declared to be the first-fruits of the gospel harvest gathered out of the last generation by the threefold message of Rev. 14. They will be the leading lights of the last great evangelical movement culminating in the latter rain when the whole earth will be lightened with the glory of God. Just as the twelve patriarchs were "representatives of Israel," and the twelve apostles of "the gospel church," so the twelve groups making up the 144,000 are the first-fruits and representatives of the great and innumerable multitude gathered out of the last generation. "This is a selection of representatives, and it shows that in the selection the

twelve tribes were given equal consideration." "They are sealed to be lights and guides amidst the darkness and confusion."--Revelation, the Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy, Stevens, pp. 141,143.

The Innumerable Harvest. Rev. 7:9. Here is pictured the main gospel harvest of the last generation of which the 144,000 are the first-fruits sheaf only. The 144,000 are selected and sealed to receive the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit under the latter rain as were the twelve apostles under the former rain. While the Spirit will again be poured out "on all flesh" in a final mighty appeal, the 144,000, like the twelve apostles, will receive a special and extraordinary impartation of power for ministry and leadership in calling the multitudes of God's people out of modern spiritual Babylon. Upon them the Spirit will "come with no modified energy, but in the fulness of divine power," (White). It is evident that the Holy Spirit will not be poured out on all flesh with pentecostal power till after the first-fruits have been sealed and have received their baptism of power. This is the order given in the second chapter of Joel. The "afterwards" in verse 28 indicates that the world-wide visitation of spiritual power does not take place till after the church receives and accepts the Laodicean alarm message which brings to them the early and the latter rains. The latter rain, like the former rain, will begin with the church and not with the mission fields of heathen lands.

Last Day Prophecy. We must not forget that the seventh chapter of the Revelation is a parenthetical prophecy between the sixth and seventh seals and that it pictures what will take place in connection with the sixth seal and before the seventh seal is broken. It is one of several of the apocalyptic descriptions of the final gospel message to the world and its abundant fruitage. It pictures the result of the threefold message of Rev. 14:6-14 in a gospel harvest that "no man can number" which is gathered out of the last generation while the four angels are holding in restraint the winds of war and human passion. They are "a polyglott cosmopolitan crowd" (Swete) gathered out "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," an expression which definitely identifies the great and innumerable multitude as the fruitage of the final gospel message rather than the redeemed of all past ages. See Rev. 14:6. "After this I looked, and a vast host appeared which it was impossible for any one to count, gathered out of every nation and from all tribes and peoples and languages," (Weymouth). Only in the last generation of human history is such an extensive message proclaimed that it embraces every nation, tribe and language of the earth. It is a world-embracing movement with incomputable results. The work of God in this rebel world will close in glorious triumph.

Two Distinct Companies. It is evident that Rev. 7 describes two distinct companies. The first is numerable and the second innumerable; the first is related to the second in the same way that the first-fruits are related to the main harvest. It would be contrary to the chronological order of the seven seals and their records of successive events embracing the Christian era to apply this innumerable multitude to the redeemed of all ages. Those who have been saved down through the ages of the reign of sin and who are in their graves awaiting the resurrection are an innumerable host and are described in Heb. 11:12-14. Those resurrected and taken to heaven with Christ following His first advent constituted the first-fruits of the innumerable resurrected gospel harvest. "Those who came

forth from the grave at Christ's resurrection, were raised to everlasting life. They ascended with Him as trophies of His victory over death and the grave. These, said Christ, are no longer captives of Satan, I have redeemed them. I have brought them from the grave as the first-fruits of My power, to be with Me wiere I am, never more to see death or experience sorrow."--The Desire of Ages, p. 786. The 144,000 constitute the first-fruits of the living and translated harvest. The entire harvest of redeemed souls is made up of two parts, the resurrected dead and the translated living, and of each there is a first-fruits sheaf. There could not be two first-fruits sheaves of the same harvest.

The Multitude Identified. Verse 13. Of what white robed saints is the elder asking? The only previous mention of white robes is in verse 9 in describing the innumerable multitude. We must therefore conclude that the purpose of the elder is to give John further information regarding them. The 144,000 are doubtless also arrayed in the white robes of victory, and they are so described in Rev. 19:7,8, and elsewhere, but the question here is clearly in regard to the great multitude. The prophet was doubtless satisfied in regard to the description and identification of the 144,000. The answer of the redeemed elder to his own question for John's benefit proves conclusively that the great multitude are not the redeemed of all ages but are gathered out of the last generation by the final message during the time of divine restraint and suspended wrath. In asking the question the elder answered the thoughts or question that would naturally arise in John's mind because of what he had just seen and heard.

The Answer. Verses 14-17. "My lord, thou knowest." (R.V.) "Lord" as used here is not a title of divinity but of respect toward a superior. "An address of reverence to a heavenly being," (Vincent). "Thou knowest" is "at once a confession of ignorance, and an appeal for information," (Swete). Those here described "have just passed through the great distress," (Weymouth) or "the great tribulation," (R.V.). This final tribulation has an important part to play in the cleansing of God's remnant people whose character-robes were not always white. It is evident that the great tribulation here described is still future and comes just before the final deliverance of the church militant. It cannot refer to the tribulation of the Dark Ages described in Matt. 24:21,22. The martyrs of that period are described in connection with the fifth seal. The persecuted of the Middle Ages did not "come out of great tribulation" and "wash their robes" but they "were slain" and "white robes were given" them. See Rev. 6:9-11. The tribulation of our text is without doubt "the time of Jacob's trouble" which culminates in the seven last plagues. See Dan. 12:1,2; Rev. 12:17; 13:15-17; 16. This is also indicated by the fact that "heat" comes from a word meaning "to burn" or "painful and burning heat" and is used only here and in Rev. 16:9 in the New Testament. It is therefore the burning heat of the fourth vial from which they are saved because the Lord "shall spread His tabernacle over them," (R.V.) See Isa. 4:3-6. The very language shows that they belong to the Advent movement which is the antitype of the Exodus movement when ancient Israel suffered hunger, thirst and heat, and were led like a flock by the great Shepherd. The innumerable company, like the 144,000, live through the seven last plagues and experience hunger, thirst, heat, and weeping. They will doubtless be translated as there is no evidence that the blessing of translation will be confined to the 144,000. The teaching that they all die before translation day is unscriptural, unwarranted and unreasonable.

Definitely Located. "When He (Christ) leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth....Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old."--The Great Controversy, p. 614. On page 649 the author identifies this time of trouble with our text: "'These are they which came out of great tribulation:' they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; they have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God's judgments....They have seen the earth wasted with famine and pestilence, the sun having power to scorch men with great heat, and they themselves have endured suffering, hunger, and thirst. But 'they hunger no more, neither thirst any more.'"

Not the Gleanings. If the 144,000 were the very last of the gospel harvest they would have been called "the gleanings" instead of "the first-fruits." Webster defines "first-fruits" as "the fruit or product first matured and collected in any season. The first profits of anything. The first or earliest effect of anything. The first gatherings of a season's produce." The first-fruits are always, as the word implies, the first and never the last of a harvest. The last is called the "leavings" or "gleanings." See Ruth 2:2,3; Isa. 24:13. The 144,000 constitute the first-fruits and not the gleanings of the innumerable harvest. If the great multitude are the redeemed of all ages the 144,000 could not be called the first-fruits. The term would be meaningless. The expression always indicates a greater harvest to follow.

The Chief Fruits. The first-fruits were the first in quality as well as time. In the margin of Eze. 44:30 they are called the "chief" fruits, and in Num. 18:12 the "best." They were the first and the best to mature and had to be "without blemish." When the grapes, figs, or pomegranates began to ripen, the owner went into his vineyard or orchard and selected the best and largest of that which was maturing early and marked it by tying a fiber around it, saying as he did so, "This shall be among the first fruits." When a basketful of each kind had matured and been marked or sealed, the owner gathered and dedicated them to the priests. Thus the first-fruits in ancient Israel were the first to mature which were carefully selected and marked and dedicated to a special and sacred purpose. In Micah 7:1 we are told that the Lord desires the first-fruits rather than the gleanings. They could not be sold or exchanged. See Eze. 48:14.

Dedicated to God. Before the Hebrew farmers could reap their grain and gather their other harvests, they must first select the first-fruits and present them to the priests to be dedicated to a holy use. They were deposited "before the altar of the Lord." See Ex. 23:19; Lev. 23:10. In Deut. 26:1-11 we are given a picture of the ceremony of dedication. The people came by districts with their baskets of first-fruits and they usually marched in processions to the sound of music and singing till they were met at the door of the temple by the singing Levites where the ceremony of dedication took place. "For more than a thousand years this symbolic ceremony had been performed. From the harvest fields the first heads of ripened grain were gathered, and when the people went up to

Jerusalem to the Passover, the sheaf of first-fruits was waved as a thank-offering before the Lord. Not until this was presented could the sickle be put to the grain, and it be gathered into sheaves. The sheaf dedicated to God represented the harvest."--The Desire of Ages, p. 786.

A Definite Amount. The first-fruits were always a definite and numerable amount as a sheaf or basket full, compared with the indefinite and innumerable amount of the entire harvest. The first-fruits always constituted only a small part of the whole. See Lev. 23:10. "Handfull" is the marginal reading. It was a single sheaf compared with the entire field, a hand-full compared with a barn-full. See Prov. 3:9,10. The first-fruits were gathered just before the general harvest and were the "first of the ripe fruits," (Ex. 22:29). No green or immature fruit could be used for this sacred purpose. The fruit must have come to perfection. The Scriptures mention many kinds of first-fruits. The first-born sons were the first-fruits of the marriage and were given a double inheritance and the special privileges of the birthright. The first born of the cattle, sheep, goats, and other animals were called first-fruits and dedicated to a sacred purpose. Also the first fleece of wool, the first portion of the oil, wine, wheat, honey, dough, the first product of labor, the first increase of the land, and the tithe, were all reckoned as first-fruits and were dedicated to the Lord. See Ex. 22:29,30; 23:16,19; Deut. 18:3,4; 26:12-26; Neh. 10:35-37; 2 Chron. 31:4-6. Of course the main harvest when matured reaches the same standard of quality and perfection as the first-fruits.

Spiritual First-Fruits. The twelve patriarchs were the first-fruits of the twelve tribes or nations of Israel. Later the tribe of Levi became the first fruits of the nation and ministered "before the altar of the Lord." Israel as a whole was declared to be the first-born or first-fruits of all the nations of the earth. See Ex. 4:22,23. The Lord called Israel "the first-fruits of His increase," indicating that He intended that they should give the gospel to all other nations. See Jer. 2:3. The Lord placed Israel in the center of the earth on the cross-roads between the three great continents of the Old World that they might dispense the light of the gospel to all nations. Christ is called the "chief born from the dead" and the "first-fruits" of the resurrection. See Rev. 1:5; 1 Cor. 15:20-23. Christ was really the first-fruits of all the first-fruits of the gospel harvest. The twelve apostles were the first-fruits of the early gospel harvest under the early rain, and the 144,000 of the final harvest under the latter rain. In every case where the Scriptures mention the first-fruits they always come first in both time and character and they constitute only a small and definite part of the whole. There is no exception to this rule.

Types and Antitypes. In connection with the spring and fall harvests in Palestine there were two groups of typical events. Inseparably connected with "the weeks of harvest" were the Passover, the waving of the first-fruits sheaf, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost. These were followed by a long period of drought when there was but little fruitage. With the late harvest came the festival of the Blowing of Trumpets, the ten days of repentance, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles of Ingathering. These were typical of two groups of events in the plan of redemption which come at the beginning and close of Christ's priestly ministry in connection with the two great gospel harvests. The first

group was composed of Calvary, the resurrection of Christ together with the great company which constituted the first-fruits of the resurrected dead, the dedication of the twelve apostles as the first-fruits of the early harvest, and the pentecostal outpouring with its great ingathering of souls. Then came the "falling away" and the long spiritual drought during the Dark Ages. Just before Christ's work is finished in the heavenly sanctuary the gospel trumpet will be sounded throughout the world in a final warning message, the Laodicean message will be given to the church as a loud call to repentance, the 144,000 will be selected and sealed as the first-fruits of the final harvest, and then the great gospel harvest will be gathered under the refreshing showers of the latter rain. When this work is accomplished probation will close, Christ will come to gather the fruits of His sacrifice and then will take place the great antitypical Feast of Ingathering.

Call Out of Babylon. Just as the apostles under the early rain called God's people out of Judaism and heathenism, so the 144,000 during the latter rain will call the remainder of God's people out of modern spiritual Babylon. See Rev. 18:1-5. The majority of God's people will still be in Babylon when the latter rain and loud cry begins. "Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion....Revelation 18 points to the time when....the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion....Then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call, 'Come out of her, My people.'"--The Great Controversy, p. 390.

A Bountiful Harvest. In Micah 2:12 we are told that the "remnant of Israel" will be "a multitude of men." In Zech. 2:7,10,11, we are told that when the Lord delivers His people from Babylon and dwells in the midst of Zion, "many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day." After the "spiritual revival and reformation" purifies the Laodicean church, we are told that "then a multitude not of their faith, seeing that God is with His people, will unite with them in serving the Redeemer."--Review and Herald, Feb. 25, 1902. We are also told that "the good seed is being sown. God will watch over it, causing it to spring up and bring forth an abundant harvest," (Vol. 7:242). The same author in describing the three angels messages of Rev. 14 when the earth is lightened with their glory so that it commands "the attention of the world," said: "In the issue of the contest, all Christendom will be divided into two great classes,--those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark."--The Great Controversy, p. 450. This could not be said if one class numbered only 144,000.

Firmament in Reserve. "Among earth's inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and South America, in China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine

out amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law....The darker the night, the more brilliantly will they shine. What strange work Elijah would have done in numbering Israel at the time when God's judgments were falling upon the backsliding people! He could only count one on the Lord's side....The word of the Lord surprised him, 'Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal.'"--Prophets and Kings, pp. 188,189.

A Timely Warning. Then follows a timely warning to those in modern Israel who are inclined to restrict God's work in regard to numbers. "Then let no man attempt to number Israel today, but let every one have a heart of flesh, a heart of tender sympathy, a heart that, like the heart of Christ reaches out for the salvation of a lost world." Those who declare that 144,000 constitute all who will be saved out of this last generation are surely numbering Israel. Such a position would constitute a mistake similar to that made by Elijah when he tried to enumerate the faithful of ancient Israel. Such a belief would naturally result in a lack of the sympathy that controls Christ who places no numerical restrictions on the power of the gospel but yearns for the salvation of "whosoever will." "All that the apostles did, every church member today is to do. And we are to work with as much more fervor, to be accompanied by the Holy Spirit in as much greater measure, as the increase of wickedness demands a more decided call to repentance....A work similar to that which the Lord did through His delegated messengers after the day of Pentecost He is waiting to do today. At this time, when the end of all things is at hand, should not the zeal of the church exceed that of the early church?....Should not the power of God be even more mightily revealed today than in the time of the apostles?" (Vol. 7:32,33).

Include Many of Heathen. Zech. 13:6. Those described in this text learn of the crucifixion for the first time after they reach the kingdom, and yet they have been saved through the name or character of Christ as revealed to them through His created works and the operation of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts. See Rom. 1:18-20; 2:14-16; Ps. 19:1-5. "Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God."--The Desire of Ages, p. 638. "Among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, He sees men and women who are praying for light and knowledge....They are honest in heart, and desire to learn a better way. Although in the depth of heathenism, with no knowledge of the written law of God nor of His Son Jesus, they have revealed in manifold ways the working of a divine power on mind and character.... The Holy Spirit is implanting the grace of Christ in the heart of many a noble seeker after truth, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his former education. The 'Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,' is shining in his soul; and this Light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God....Heaven's plan of salvation is broad enough to embrace the whole world."--Prophets and Kings, pp. 376,377, Chapter, "Hope for the Heathen."

Celebrate Victory. Verses 9-12. The palm branch, like the white robe, has always been the emblem of both victory and joy. This was especially true among the Greeks, Romans and Hebrews. The waving of palm branches was one of the chief features of the Feast of Tabernacles. See Lev. 23:39-43. This festival was first inaugurated to celebrate the end of the wilderness wanderings of ancient Israel when the remnant of that great Exodus movement entered in triumph the promised land. For this reason this festival was also known as the Feast of Homecoming. Because of this Dr. Seiss believes that the innumerable company of Rev. 7:9 are translated saints who have lived through the closing scenes to the very end of modern Israel's journey through the wilderness of sin and who pass triumphantly into the kingdom without tasting of death. Stevens declares that "they are evidently a throng" who have arrived in heaven "out of special times and experiences." (p.147).

Festival of Rejoicing. Because of God's love and mercy in preserving them through their wilderness sojourn and in forgiving their sins on the day of Atonement which had just passed, the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering was the most joyful festival of the year. It was also a thanksgiving celebration because of the bountiful harvest that had just been gathered. For this reason the innumerable company who are gathered by the last message out of the last generation and who constitute the last great gospel harvest, are seen by the Revelator with palms in their hands celebrating the antitypical Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering or Homecoming. They also sing the song of Moses and the Lamb because they have gone through a similar experience to that of ancient Israel at the Red Sea. See Rev. 15:2-4.

Commemorative and Typical. "The feast of tabernacles was not only commemorative, but typical. It not only pointed back to the wilderness sojourn, but, as the feast of harvest, it celebrated the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and pointed forward to the great day of final ingathering, when the Lord of the harvest shall send forth His reapers and gather the wheat into His garner....And every voice in the whole universe shall unite in joyful praise to God. The people of Israel praised God at the feast of tabernacles as they called to mind His mercy in their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt and His tender care for them during their pilgrim life in the wilderness. They rejoiced also in the consciousness of pardon and acceptance, through the service of the day of atonement, just ended. But when the ransomed of the Lord shall have been safely gathered into the heavenly Canaan,--forever delivered from the bondage of the curse.... they will rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ's great work of atonement for men will have been completed, and their sins will have been forever blotted out."--Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 541,542. This is doubtless the scene pictured in Rev. 7:9-12.

Meaning of Names. In the light of the chapter under consideration, it is interesting to study the meaning of the names as applied to the sons of Jacob at their birth and again at the death of Jacob when he spoke in prophetic vision. (1) Judah or Jew means "praise," or to celebrate or praise the Lord. At his birth Leah said, "Now will I praise the Lord," and Jacob said, "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise." (2) Reuben, the second in the list, means "Behold a son," indicating that all this company are sons of God. (3) Gad means a troop or great company. There will be many sons brought to glory (Heb. 2:10). (4) Asher signifies

Happy, or Blessed. "Happy am I for the daughters will call me blessed," said his mother at his birth. This group of 12,000 will be "blessed" ones. (5) Napthalim means "wrestlings" or one who wrestles and prevails. "With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister and have prevailed," (Gen. 30:8). It signifies that this group are prevailers or overcomers. (6) Manasses means "forgetting" or forgetfulness. "God hath made me forget all my toil," said Joseph. (Gen. 41:51). The 144,000 will forget their earthly pilgrimage. (7) Simeon means "hearing." "The Lord hath heard that I was hated," (Gen. 29:33). We are told that "faith cometh by hearing," and the name signifies that "the Lord hath heard" their prayers. (8) Levi means "joined", or a joining or cleaving to. They are "joined unto the Lord," (1 Cor. 6:17). (9) Issachar signifies "a hire," and indicates that a price was paid, that they were bought with a price. See 1 Cor. 6:19,20. (10) Zebulon means "dwelling" or a dwelling place. "Now will my husband dwell with me," (Gen. 30:20). The church becomes the dwelling place of God. See Eph. 2:20; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3. (11) Joseph means "adding" or addition. "Joseph is a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall," (Gen. 49:22). (12) Benjamin means the "son of the right hand," (Gen. 35:18,margin). It indicates exaltation to positions of rulership.

The Message. The 144,000 shall sit with Christ in His throne and with Him wield the scepter forever. Their royal robes shall be washed in the blood of the Lamb. They will be the first-born or first-fruits of the final harvest, the beginning of might, strength, excellency, dignity and power. A troop of enemies shall press against them but they shall finally prevail. They are the Lord's royal dainties, the best of the royal harvest. They quickly give to the world a goodly message and are in beauty and stability as an oak with lovely boughs. They forget their toil and hardships because the Lord hath heard their prayers. While divided as the sons of Jacob they cleave to the Lord and are joined together in love and unity. After bearing the burdens of the day they shall enjoy the glorious rest of the pleasant land. The haven of the celestial sea shall be their dwelling place. They shall be sealed and separated from their brethren for a special work in which the Almighty shall bless them and strengthen their hands. They shall defeat all their enemies and divide their spoil among the meek and Christ shall make them sons at His own right hand. See Gen. 49 in the light of Rev. 7.

See chapter 14 for a further discussion of this subject.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

10

Spiritual Setting. The vision of the seven trumpets is the most difficult part of the Revelation, if not of the entire Bible, to place in a spiritual setting and to make a spiritual application. And yet it is a part of the "all Scripture" that is "written by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Tim. 3:16). Jesus said that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and this portion of the Scriptures is a part of the word of God. The vision of the seven trumpets constitutes a part of the negative phase of the gospel which shows the terrible consequences of increasing wickedness which takes peace from the earth and involves its inhabitants in bloody conflict.

The Seven Angels. Rev. 8:2,6. In Esther 1:14 we read of "the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom." It was anciently believed that there are seven presence angels before the throne of God. These are named in the apocryphal book of Enoch, chapter 20. They are also referred to in the apocryphal book of Tobit 12:15: "I am Raphel, one of the seven holy angels which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." The book of Revelation is the book of sevens. It describes the seven Spirits before the throne, the seven trumpet angels, the seven plague angels, and the seven message angels. (Whether these are the same or different sevens, we are not told.)

The Seven Trumpets. In ancient times trumpets were used to awaken the people to impending danger or to announce an important event. It was the means by which alarms were sounded that the people might bestir themselves in preparation for physical or spiritual conflict. See Eze. 33:1-9; Isa. 58:1; Joel 2: 1,15. The trumpet was especially used as an alarm of war and is therefore an appropriate symbol of war. See Num. 10:9; Jer. 4:19; 42:14. "The trumpets, the usual emblem of war and bloodshed, are chosen as emblems of the series of judgments now to be inflicted," (Moses Stuart). The seven trumpets picture great war scourges or military invasions and revolutions which would visit the earth and overturn and destroy the nations that reject the gospel of peace. War is the inevitable consequence of a failure to accept the overtures of the Prince of Peace. See Isa. 57:20,21.

Impending Judgments. The seven trumpets are symbolic of threatened and impending judgments upon a world that rejects the gospel. These judgments would therefore naturally fall upon the Roman Empire and the kingdoms that arose out of her ruins which constitute the nations of the modern world. The fall of Jericho was heralded by the blowing of trumpets. The trumpet blasts of Gideon and his 300 men announced the destruction of the hosts of Midian. The solemn day of Atonement or Judgment was announced to ancient Israel by the blowing of trumpets. "The trump of God" will announce the advent of Christ to save His people and destroy His enemies. Trumpets therefore constitute appropriate symbols of war-judgments upon wicked nations. The purpose of these judgments is to produce repentance and righteousness. See Rev. 9:20,21; Isa. 26:9,10.

The Christian Era. The vision of the seven trumpets is the third apocalyptic view of world history affecting the Christian era and covering the same period as the seven letters and the seven seals. The letters and seals deal chiefly with religious events and conditions, while the trumpets picture political and military movements among the nations. All three visions terminate in the coming of Christ and the victory of the church militant. They are all similar in that all three have introductory visions of Christ and His priestly ministrations in the heavenly sanctuary while the predicted events are taking place on the earth. The latter two are similar in that between the sixth and seventh are parenthetical prophecies of God's final gospel message that prepares a people for the second advent of Christ. This proves that the trumpets must be parallel with the seals and therefore cannot follow them. Because of their striking similarity, there are those who attempt to confound the trumpets with the seven last plagues. (This very similarity in itself forbids their being identical. Both the trumpets and plagues are still more similar to the plagues of Egypt, but this does not prove them to be the same.) All of God's judgments have been similar, and all have been typical of the last. Types and antitypes are always similar but never identical.

General Application. The seven trumpets have called forth a great variety of interpretations. There are, however, two main schools of thought. The first applies them to the wars of the Roman emperors, and the second to the barbaric invasions which destroyed Western and Eastern Rome, and to the final war of Armageddon which brings to an end the nations of the modern world. The most general and reasonable interpretation of the first six trumpets is expressed by S. Conway in Pulpit Commentary as follows: "The wars which led to the fall of the empire find their foreshadowing here. The historic expositors affirm that these alone are what John meant, and that the successive invasions under Alaric, Genseric, Attila, and Odoacer, and, after them, of the Saracens and Turks, are what is portrayed." A recent well-known commentary gives the following general meaning of the seven trumpets: "By the seven trumpets the world-kingdoms are overturned to make way for Christ's universal kingdom." -- Commentary on the Whole Bible by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown.

A Twofold Vision. This vision, like the two that precede it, is twofold. Before describing the events to transpire on earth, a view is given of Christ's mediatorial work in the heavenly sanctuary. The heavenly and earthly events run parallel and cover the Christian era. While God's judgments are being visited upon the nations of earth, Christ is on duty at the throne of grace where He ministers the sweet incense of His own righteousness in behalf of repentant sinners and praying saints. Here is the secret of peace in the midst of a world of strife. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." Matt. 10:34. He also said, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace." John 16:33. Accepting Christ brings peace; rejecting Him brings the sword.

The Incense Angel. Verses 3,4. The golden altar of incense in the Mosaic Tabernacle was one cubit square and two in height. This altar represented the mediatorial and intercessory office of Christ. Regarding the identity of the incense angel of this vision there are two views. Some believe that he is an ordinary angel, and others (continued on next page)

believe He is Christ, the Archangel or Jehovah-Angel, who is the High Priest and Mediator of the heavenly sanctuary. The weight of argument seems to be in favor of the latter view, which makes it harmonize with the two previous visions. This is the belief of many of the best of the early and modern interpreters. "The angel here is our Lord, by whom all our prayers have access to God and therefore the apostle says, through Him we offer sacrifices of praise to God continually; and St. John says He is our Advocate with the Father," (Primasius). Because He prevailed in prayer while on earth, Jesus is fully qualified to present our prayers to the Father with the request that they be answered.

Ministration of Christ. "It was the work of the priest in the daily ministration to present before God the blood of the sin-offering, also the incense which ascended with the prayers of Israel. So did Christ plead His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners, and present before Him also, with the precious fragrance of His own righteousness, the prayers of penitent believers."--The Great Controversy, pp. 420,421. "As yet the disciples were unacquainted with the Saviour's unlimited resources and power. He said to them, 'Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name.' He explained that the secret of their success would be in asking for strength and grace in His name. He would be present before the Father to make request for them. The prayer of the humble suppliant He presents as His own desire in that soul's behalf. Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. It may not be fluently expressed; but if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary where Jesus ministers, and He will present it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His own perfection."--The Desire of Ages, p. 667.

A Complete Intercession. "By His spotless life, His obedience, His death on the cross of Calvary, Christ interceded for the lost race. And now, not as a mere petitioner does the Captain of our salvation intercede for us, but as a Conqueror claiming His victory. His offering is complete, and as our Intercessor He executes His self-appointed work, holding before God the censer containing His own spotless merits and the prayers, confessions, and thanksgiving of His people. Perfumed with the fragrance of His righteousness, these ascend to God as sweet savor. The offering is wholly acceptable, and pardon covers all transgressions."--Christ's Object Lessons, p. 156.

The Incense. The incense for the typical sanctuary service was compounded by divine prescription. See Ex. 30:34-36. This divinely prescribed incense was not to be used for a common purpose but was "holy unto the Lord." Indeed it was "most holy." Any person who presumed to use or even imitate it was to be "cut off" from his people. "Its four ingredients typify severally and collectively the merits and virtues of Christ," (Mauro). The incense symbolized the righteousness of Christ which is placed to the sinner's account and accepted instead of his failures. "The incense ascending with the prayers of Israel, represents the merits and intercession of Christ, His perfect righteousness which through faith is imputed to His people, and which can alone make the worship of sinful beings acceptable to God." "The cloud of incense ascending with the prayers of Israel represents His righteousness that alone can make the sinner's prayers acceptable to God."--Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 353,367.

Incense and Prayer. In the typical service the offering of incense was a call to prayer. "Much incense" was used in connection with the morning

and evening sacrifices when all Israel bowed in prayer. It was used in connection with many of the typical services and especially on the day of Atonement when the incense-cloud completely enveloped the high priest as he ministered in the holy of holies. When incense ceased to be offered it was evidence that probation had closed in type and prayers were no longer of any avail. Our text declares that the "much incense" was offered "with," or was added to (margin) "the prayers of all saints." It is the incense that makes the prayers effectual. As the saints of God offer their prayers on earth, the incense of Christ's righteousness is offered in heaven and thus added to them as they ascend to the Father. The fact that the prayers ascend with "the smoke of the incense" shows that they are acceptable to God. All prayers do not ascend to God. Only those prayers that are mingled with faith and made fragrant with the merits of Christ reach the throne of God. All others fall lifeless at the feet of the petitioner.

The Throne of Grace. The golden altar and the offering of incense in the typical sanctuary symbolized the throne of grace and the intercessory office of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. The offering of the incense with the prayers of "all saints" indicates that the service pictured in this vision includes the whole mediatorial work of Christ from the day of Pentecost to the close of probation. It covers both phases of His heavenly ministration as typified by the services in both the holy and most holy apartments of the earthly sanctuary. This is true of the preliminary scenes in the visions of the seven churches, the seven seals, and the seven trumpets. In the vision of the seven churches, Jesus is revealed as the High Priest of the heavenly sanctuary from whence through the Holy Spirit and His earthly ministers He ministers His word to His people so that they may be the light of the world. In the opening of the vision of the seven seals, Christ is pictured as a Lamb who had been slain. He thus ministers His own blood before the throne of God in behalf of His people. In the vision now under consideration, Jesus is presented as the Mediator between God and man ministering the merits of His own righteousness in answer to the prayers of saints. The services in all three visions must of necessity cover the entire priestly ministration of Christ and thus the same period embraced by the seven churches, the seven seals, and the seven trumpets. It is a serious mistake to attempt to confine either of these preliminary visions to but one phase of Christ's priestly service.

Incense and Fire. In the typical service, fire was daily placed on the altar of incense from the altar of sacrifice. Thus was shown the close relation between the services of the court and the holy place which together constituted "the daily ministration." There is an inseparable relation between the death of Christ on the altar of Calvary and His priestly ministration in the heavenly sanctuary. This was also symbolized by the fact that the blood of the sacrificial victim was sprinkled before and applied to the horns of the golden altar. The ministry of blood and the ministry of incense were inseparable. The blood cleanses from sin and the incense imputes and imparts the character of Christ to the repentant sinner. Both are essential in the work of redemption. "Before the veil of the most holy place was an altar of perpetual intercession; before the holy, an altar of continual atonement."--Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 353. The incense was placed on the fire and by this means only could the cloud of fragrance ascend to God. It was the fire that drew from the incense its fragrance and carried it upward in a cloud of ascending smoke so that it filled both apartments of the sanctuary and reaching the camp of Israel

called God's people to prayer. This may also represent the fact that out of fiery trials ascend to God the most fragrant and effectual prayers. Whenever the church has been crushed by bitter persecution the lives of Christians have shed the most fragrant influence in the world.

Close of Probation. Verse 5. Out of the very altar of incense comes the fires of wrath. The same fire that carries the prayers of the saints into the presence of God, also kindles the fires of His wrath. The same censer used for intercessory purposes during probationary time, is later filled with the fires of divine judgment upon the transgressors. The same two-edged sword that now cuts to save, will some day cut to destroy. The filling of the censer with fire and casting it to the earth indicates the completion of the work of Christ's priestly ministration and the close of probation. This can take place only after Christ's mediatorial work has been finished and when the fragrance of His righteousness is no longer mingled with the prayers of saints. "Throughout the Bible fire is the symbol of the consuming wrath of God," (Mauro). See Lev. 10:1,2; 16:12,13; Num. 16:45-48; Deut. 32:22. The close of probation is also identified by the "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." See Rev. 11:15,19; 16:17,18. This also proves that the service of the incense angel embraces the entire mediatorial work of Christ in both phases of its heavenly ministration. The chief lesson to be learned from this introductory vision is that during the terrible scenes pictured by the seven trumpets, grace is abundantly available to the saints of God. It emphasizes the fact that "where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound." Where much iniquity prevails, much mercy and righteousness is available to the people of God.

The First Trumpet. Verses 6,7. Trumpeters prepare to blow their trumphets by putting them to their lips. Let us remember that trumpets are the symbols of war, and that the seven trumpets represent the great war-scourges that were to visit the nations that reject the gospel during the Christian era. Rome in both its imperial and papal phases and including its western and eastern divisions, together with the nations of divided Rome, or the modern nations, must of necessity be the nations symbolically described in this prophecy. There are no others. It was only natural that the first trumpets should apply to the Roman Empire which ruled the world when Christ was born and Christianity had its beginning. It was a Roman governor acting as the personal representative of the emperor who nailed Christ to the cross. It was to the Roman Empire that the soldiers of the cross first proclaimed the gospel following its rejection by the Jews. Following the judgments of God upon Jerusalem and the Jews it is only natural that they should next fall upon Imperial Rome. (The seven trumpets fitly symbolize the judgments of God upon nations that forget Him and persecute His people.) "By no enumeration could the Seer have given symbolic expression to all the variety of ways in which the world has suffered because of its warfare with God and oppression of His people," (Milligan).

Commentators. Concerning the first four trumpets, the annotations to "The New Testament" issued by the American Tract Society gives the most popular of the historical interpretations in the following statement: "The commentators in their exegesis of the first four trumpets generally point to the four main invasions of Western Rome by the barbarians; i.e., of the Goths under Alaric, of the Vandals under Genseric, of the Huns under Attila,

and of the Heruli under Odoacer."--Translated from the German edition, page 853. Of these first four trumpets the great commentator, Albert Barnes, says: "The first was the invasion of Alaric, king of the Goths, A.D. 410; a second was the invasion of Attila, king of the Huns, 'scourge of God,' A.D. 447; a third was the sack of Rome by Genseric, king of the Vandals, A.D. 455; and the fourth, resulting in the final conquest of Rome, was that of Odoacer, king of the Heruli, who assumed the title of King of Italy, A.D. 476."--Barnes' Commentary, p. 224.

Symbols Employed. Verse 7. There can be no question but this is symbolic language. But in the Scriptures the things of nature are often employed to represent and illustrate spiritual truths. Jesus was a master in the use of this parabolic method. Hail and fire mingled with blood are not unknown to man. Hail and fire were mingled in one of the plagues of Egypt. See Ex. 9:22-24. "The stones of hail and the balls of fire fell in a shower of blood, just as hail and fire commonly fall in a shower of rain," (Alford). Another writer says: "Blood-red rains and blood-red snows are not unknown to the world. We occasionally hear of them. On the 17th of August, 1819, Captain Ross saw the mountains of Baffin's Bay covered for eight miles with blood-red snow, many feet in depth. Saussare found it on Mount St. Bernard in 1778. Ramond found it on the Pyrenees, and Summerfield in Norway, and others have told of it in other places. So blood-rain has more than once fallen. It is recorded by Cicero, that word was brought to the Roman Senate, on one occasion, that it had rained blood; also that the river Atratus had flowed with a bloody stream. Slight falls of this kind have occurred in the Cape Verde Islands, at Lyons, at Genoa, and in the southwest of our own country, to the great alarm of the people of the vicinity."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 2, p. 44. On January 13, 1932, pink hued snow fell in Durango, Colorado, after white flakes had fallen for an hour, as reported by International News Service, and printed in the Los Angeles Illustrated Daily News.

Blood-rain

The Gothic Invasion. The first trumpet is prophetic of the first successful invasion of Rome by the Gothic barbarians from the north under the leadership of Alaric. The "hail" fitly represents the northern origin of the invaders who came from the shores of the Baltic, and the "fire mingled with blood," indicates the awful slaughter and destruction inflicted by them. They overran Greece, Asia Minor, Italy, Spain, Southern France, and in A.D. 410 captured and sacked the city of Rome. Jerome declares that as the result of this invasion, "nothing was left except the sky and the earth." Dr. Adam Clarke declares that the falling of the hail and fire mingled with blood upon the earth represents the laying waste of the land, and the burning up of a third part of the trees, the destruction of the chief men of the nation, and the green grass the slaying and carrying into captivity of the common people.

Attacks in Winter. The northern barbarians usually made their onslaughts in the dead of winter, when the fur-clad warriors crossed the Roman boundary rivers on the ice. Gibbon declares that Decius had scarcely 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."--Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 1, p. 518. The same historian further says: "The public devotion of the age was impatient to exalt the saints and martyrs of the Catholic

church on the altars of Diana and Hercules. The union of the 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 victorious reign over the fairest provinces of Europe and Africa."--Id., Vol. 3, p. 517. Here is indicated the cause of this war-scourge or judgment. The church was being paganized under the influence of the papacy.

The Terrible Slaughter. The hail and fire mingled with blood indicates terrible slaughter. The same writer says further in regard to this invasion: "He (Theodosius) died in the month of January (395); and before the end of the winter of the same year, the Gothic nations were in arms....Their countrymen...deserted their farms at the first sound of the trumpet... The barriers of the Danube were thrown open; the savage warriors of Scythia issued from their forests; and the uncommon severity of winter allowed the poet to remark, 'that they rolled their ponderous wagons over the broad and icy back of the indignant river.' The Goths....were now directed by the bold and artful genius of Alaric....The fertile fields of Phocis and Boeotia were instantly covered by a deluge of barbarians; who massacred the males of an age to bear arms, and drove away the beautiful females, with the spoil and cattle of the flaming villages. The travelers who visited Greece several years afterward, could easily discover the deep and bloody traces of the march of the Goths."--Id. Vol. 2, chap. 30.

A Crushing Blow. Another historian says of the result of the Gothic invasion of Rome: "The hour of doom had struck. It was August of A.D. 410, just 800 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 men 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." "At last the seals were loosed, and the barbaric tornado was poured out of the north. Through the Alpine passes came rushing cohorts of warriors, each with the rage of Scythia in his stomach and the icicles of the Baltic in his beard. The great hulk of Rome tottered, fell, and lay dead on the earth, like the stump of Dagon."--History of the World, Ridpath, Vol. 3, pp. 340, 29. Another writer says: "The fountains of the frozen North were opened, the waters prevailed, but the ark of Christianity floated upon the flood. As the deluge assuaged, the earth had returned to chaos, the last pagan empire had been washed out of existence, but the faltering infancy of Christian Europe had begun."--The Rise of the Dutch Republic, Motley, Vol. 1, p. 20.

The Third Part. "And the third of the earth was burnt up." (Syriac and Vulgate). "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." (R.V.) This doubtless represents general destruction like that inflicted by a similar plague in Egypt. See Ex. 9:23-25. When the Goths established their kingdom in Spain and southern France, we are told that "they took for their own one third of the land."--Sheldon's General History, p. 233. When the Ostrogoths settled in Italy they also "took one third of the land, and apportioned it among themselves."--History of the World, Ridpath, Vol. 4, p. 408. This seemed to be the policy of these barbarians wherever they settled, and may be what is referred to in the prophecy. This may also be interpreted in the light of the fact that the Gothic invasions and conquests were confined mostly to Europe which was one of the three continents or land divisions of the old world.

DIVINE JUDGMENTS ON WESTERN ROME

11

Divine Judgments. The trumpets symbolize the judgments of God upon the corrupted Roman Empire and the paganized Roman church. The war-trumpets did not begin to sound till the gospel was perverted and the world demoralized. The judgments fell upon a world that had rejected God and a church that had lost its power. The first six trumpet-judgments fell upon a world that had rejected the gospel in its beginning under the early rain, and the seventh upon the modern nations that reject the gospel at its close under the latter rain. "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, He will whet His sword; He hath bent His bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; He ordaineth His arrows against the persecutors." Ps. 7:11-13. See also Isa. 24:4-6; Zeph. 1:14-18.

Corruption of Rome. The moral degeneration of Rome had become indescribable. Seneca, the Roman historian, said: "Vice no longer hides itself; it stalks abroad before all eyes; innocence is no longer rare, it has ceased to exist." A Roman poet said: "Ye who desire to live a godly life, depart from Rome; for, although all things are lawful there, yet to be godly is unlawful." Philip Schaff, a modern historian, says of the moral relapse of the world and the purpose of the events symbolized by the trumpets: "The uncontrollable progress of avarice, prodigality, extravagance, voluptousness, theatregoing, intemperance, lewdness; in short, all the heathen vices which Christianity has come to eradicate, still carried the Roman Empire and the people with rapid strides toward dissolution, and gave it at last into the hands of the rude but simple and morally vigorous barbarians." "Nothing but the Divine judgment of destruction upon this nominally Christian but essentially heathen world could open the way for the moral regeneration of society. There must be new, fresh nations, if Christian civilization, prepared in the old Roman Empire, was to take firm root and bear ripe fruit."--History of the Christian Church, Vol. 3, sec. 23, par. 2, and sec. 24, par. 2.

To Save Christianity. The barbarian tribes from the north not only saved civilization but also Christianity, in the opinion of Dr. John Lord: "Christianity was sent, not to save a decayed and demoralized empire, but the world itself. Not until the Germanic barbarians, with their nobler elements of character, had taken possession of the seats of the old civilization, were the real triumphs of Christianity seen. Had the Roman Empire continued longer, Christianity might have become still more corrupt; in prevailing degeneracy it certainly could not save what was not worth preserving....The empire of the Caesars was doomed. Retributive justice must march on its majestic course. The empire had accomplished its mission and the time came for it to die."--Beacon Lights of History, Vol. 2, pp. 385, 386.

Served a Double Purpose. Another historian in speaking of the paganizing of the church when it was elevated to imperial power and given the sword of the state, declared that the barbarians came down not only to punish Rome but also to receive the gospel that the church had neglected to take to them: "The Christian church, who ought to have regenerated the empire and sent the gospel to the barbarians, had failed to accomplish either. By receiving unchanged into her fold that old, gangrened, imperial society,

the church had rendered herself unable to save it. It must therefore perish. And the neglected barbarians must needs come down themselves and find the gospel, while at the same time they punish and destroy a world which, henceforth, no remedy could cure."--History of the Middle Ages, Vulleit, p. 10.

The Second Trumpet. Rev. 8:8,9. "What seemed to be a great mountain ablaze with fire," (Weymouth). "What looked like a huge mountain on fire was hurled into the sea," (Moffatt). "As it were" shows that the mountain was not literal but symbolic. Again the Lord turns to the realm of nature to illustrate prophetic truths. A mountain is the natural symbol of power and strength. See Dan. 2:35; Zech. 4:7. A burning mountain is one that destroys all it comes in contact with and is a fit symbol of a conquering kingdom that destroys other kingdoms. (In Jer. 51:25 Babylon is called a "destroying mountain" that would eventually become a "burnt mountain.") In Ps. 46:1,2, the moving and destroying of great kingdoms through invasions and warfare is symbolized by mountains being cast into the sea. The sea represents "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Rev. 17:15. Mount Sinai became a burning mountain under the feet of the great Lawgiver. See Ex. 19:18; Deut. 4:11.) The symbol may be that of a great volcano belching forth its fiery streams of lava and columns of smoke so that the mountain looks as if it were on fire. Or it may have had the appearance of an enormous blazing meteor flashing through the sky and then plunging into the Mediterranean. The destruction that followed seems to include a third of the commerce of the sea and so much life that the waters were dyed with blood. In this respect the second trumpet was similar in its effects to the first plague of Egypt and the second of the seven last plagues. See Ex. 7:20,21; Rev. 16:3.

The Vandals. The scene of the second trumpet changes from the shores of the Baltic to the coasts and waters of the Mediterranean. "Medius" means "middle," and "terra" means land or earth. Mediterranean therefore means "the middle of the earth." This great sea was the center of the Roman world and of the commerce and life of many of the ancient nations. The burning mountain is an appropriate symbol of the second barbaric invasion that scourged imperial Rome, humbled her pride, and broke her power. The Vandals under the leadership of "the terrible Genseric" was one of the fiercest and most destructive of the barbarian nations that deluged Rome with a rain of fire and blood during the fourth and fifth centuries.

"Cast Into the Sea." As the hail and fire mingled with blood were cast upon the earth, the burning mountain was cast into the sea. This indicates that another power had done the casting or was responsible for the invasions of Rome. Neither the Goths nor the Vandals came voluntarily upon Roman territory but were driven out of their own countries by the Huns and literally thrust upon the empire. When the Huns burst into Europe from the east, the Goths were pushed across the Danube into Roman territory while the Vandals fled in a southwesterly direction traversing the entire length of Germany. When the legions of Rome who were guarding the Rhine were called home to defend Rome against the Goths, the Vandals entered France, or Gaul, unopposed. They marched through France into Spain leaving devastation and ruin in their wake. The historian says: "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, different tribes poured south and west with the 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."--General History, Barnes, pp. 266, 267.

Became a Naval Power. In A. D. 431 the Vandals crossed the straits of Gibraltar in vessels furnished by the Spaniards who were glad to see them depart. They took possession of Carthage and the Roman province of Africa which furnished much wealth and food for the cities of Italy. The mountain "was cast into the sea," and the Vandals became a maritime power and were called "the pirates of the sea." Gibbon says: "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 new mode of warfare which would render every maritime country accessible to his arms; the Moors and Africans were allured by hopes of plunder; and, after an interval of six centuries, the fleets that issued from the ports of Carthage again claimed the empire of the Mediterranean."--Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 3, Chap. 36.

The Bloody Sea. The Romans and Spaniards who could escape the ravages of the Vandals fled to the Islands of the Mediterranean for refuge. These hosts of refugees added to the native population aggregated several millions. The raising of livestock, especially cattle, was their chief industry. These islands, occupying the western third of the Mediterranean Sea, were overrun by the barbarians. The cattle were destroyed for food and the people slaughterèd or taken captive. The prophet described the awful carnage in the language: "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."

Historian's Description. A Spanish historian describes the fate of the unfortunate inhabitants of these islands and of the coasts of the Mediterranean during the Vandal attacks: "The irruption of these nations was followed by the most dreadful calamities, as the barbarians exercised their indiscriminate cruelty on the unfortunate Romans and Spaniards, and ravaged with equal fury the cities and the open country. The progress of famine reduced the miserable inhabitants who fed 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 portion of the people were 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 with the contagious evils which they themselves had introduced, fixed their permanent seats in the depopulated country."--Quoted in Gibbon's Roman Empire.

Capture of Rome. "A Vandal fleet anchored at the mouth of the Tiber. Rome was captured 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 the Mediterranean. The coasts of all the countries from Gibraltar to Egypt were assailed by the piratical craft of Genseric."--History of the World, Ridpath, Vol. 3, pp. 429,430. Among the spoils carried to Carthage was the seven-branched candlestick which Titus had brought from Jerusalem to Rome to grace his triumph. The ships of Genseric carried soldiers and horses and everywhere the ships touched the shores of the Mediterranean the country far inland was overrun by the cavalry. Houses and villages and captured ships were usually burned and the plunder carried to Carthage.

Great Naval Disasters. In 457 A.D., Marjoran, the Western Emperor, assembled a fleet of 300 war vessels besides transports and smaller vessels accompanied by 75,000 marines. The great armada sailed to the western end of the Mediterranean for the purpose of sweeping Genseric from the sea. While anchored in the harbor of Carthagena, Spain, Genseric during the darkness of the night and aided by a favorable wind, completely surprised and burned the entire fleet. In 468, Leo, the Emperor of Eastern Rome, sent a fleet of 1,113 ships from Constantinople to destroy Genseric and his ships. An army of 100,000 men accompanied the fleet. The army was landed on the coast of Africa forty miles east of Carthage from whence they marched on the city to cooperate with the ships in capturing the Vandal stronghold. The fleet sailed into the outer harbor of Carthage to await a favorable time to attack. The Vandal capital was at the mercy of the Romans. Genseric asked for and obtained by bribery a five days truce that he might prepare his terms of surrender. Consent to this truce by Basiliscus, the commander of the Roman fleet, proved fatal.

Great Vandal Victory. "During the short interval, the wind became favorable to the designs of Genseric. He manned his largest ships of war with the bravest of the Moors and Vandals; and they towed after them many large barks, filled with combustible materials. In the obscurity of the night these destructive vessels were impelled against the unguarded and unsuspecting fleet of the Romans, who were awakened by the sense of their instant danger. The close and crowded order assisted the progress of the fire, and it was communicated with rapid and irresistible violence; the noise of the wind, the crackling of the flames, the dissonant cries of the soldiers and marines, who could neither command nor obey, increased the horror of the nocturnal tumult. Whilst they labored to extricate themselves from the fire-ships, and to save at least a part of the navy, the galleys of Genseric assaulted them with temperate and disciplined valor; and many of the Romans, who escaped the fury of the flames, were destroyed or taken by the victorious Vandals."--Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 3, Chap. 36, pp. 243,244.

Prophecy Fulfilled. As the result of the burning mountain being cast into the sea, the prophecy declares that "the third part of the ships were destroyed." The inference is that they would be destroyed by fire. The destruction of these two great navies of Rome together with many smaller fleets and single vessels, with fire as the principal weapon, furnishes evidence of a striking fulfillment of the prophetic forecast of the second trumpet. The fleet of Western Rome was a total loss and only a third of the navy of Eastern Rome escaped. Basiliscus, who was farthest removed

from danger, disgracefully fled at the beginning of the battle taking with him a little more than a third of the fleet and sailed for Constantinople where he was relieved of his command. The victorious operations of Genseric were confined mostly to the western third of the Mediterranean, between Gibraltar and the southern part of Italy. Thus a third part of the ships were destroyed and a third part of the creatures in the sea died, so that a third part of the sea was figuratively turned to blood. In the first plague of Egypt and the second of the seven last plagues, "every creature" or "living soul" died, but in the second trumpet only one third were destroyed.

Judgments on Rome. We must not forget that the invasions of these mysterious barbarian tribes constituted divine judgments upon a nation that had defied God and rejected His gospel and persecuted His people. Imperial Rome felt so secure that their capital was called, "The Eternal City." The Romans believed that their empire would stand forever. Another historian tells of her destruction by the barbarians: "Rome, who, upon her frontiers, discovers only solitudes, thinks she has nothing to fear; yet it is in these empty camps that the Almighty is gathering the army of nations. More than four hundred years will be necessary to gather this great throng, although the barbarians are rushing forward like the waves of the sea. A miraculous instinct leads them....They have heard a voice from above calling them from the north and the south, from the west and the east. Who are they? God alone knows their true names. As unknown as the deserts from which they emerge, they ignore whence they come, but they know whither they are going; they are marching to the capital, summoned there, as they claim, for the destruction of the Roman Empire, as to a banquet."--Etudes Historiques, pp. 80,81. This was especially true of the third trumpet.

The Third Trumpet. Verses 10,11. "Burning as a torch," (R.V.). "A huge star blazing like a torch dropped out of the sky," (Moffatt). This is clearly the description of a meteor which appeared suddenly, had a short and brilliant career, and then disappeared as suddenly and unexpectedly as it came. "A star is a natural emblem of a prince, of a ruler, of one distinguished by rank, or by talent....In all languages also, probably, a meteor flaming through the sky has been an emblem of some splendid genius causing or threatening desolation and ruin; of a warrior who has moved along in a brilliant but destructive path over the world; and who has been regarded as sent to execute the vengeance of heaven....To fulfill this prophecy it is necessary that there should be some chieftain or warrior who might be compared to 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 this 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."--Albert Barnes' Notes on Revelation.

The Hun Invasion. The third barbarian horde that scourged Rome, and especially the empire of the West, was the Huns under the leadership of Attila. It is significant that Attila termed himself "The Scourge of God." He

claimed that he was divinely directed to scourge the Roman Empire. The symbolic meteor representing the Huns "fell" and was not "cast" upon the empire, as were the Goths and Vandals. The Huns were not driven by another foe but came voluntarily except as they claimed supernatural guidance. The Huns were of Mongolian stock and were Asiatics rather then Europeans. They conquered China in 200 B.C. They began their movement westward from North China in the first century of the Christian era. They were a shepherd people whose movements were controlled largely by the abundance or scarcity of pasture. In the beginning of the fourth century they occupied the vast plains north of the Caspian Sea and came into contact with the outposts of the Ostrogoths. In the latter part of the fourth century they again marched westward driving the Teutonic tribes before them, literally pushing or casting them upon the empire of the Romans. Early in the fifth century Attila established his seat of government on the plains east of the Danube, one of the boundary rivers of the empire, and forced the Goths across the river into Roman territory.

Description of Huns. Barnes gives the following description of the Huns: "They were short, thickset, with flat noses, deep-sunk eyes, and a yellow complexion. Their faces were hideously scarred with slashes to prevent the growth of 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."--General History, p. 265. Footnote. Gibbon declared that their "figures were scarcely human." Their food consisted almost wholly of milk and raw meat. They were in no way related to the Teutonic tribes of northern Europe.

Third Part of Rivers. This symbolic meteor "fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters." Because the commerce of the empire centered in the Mediterranean, the Romans termed it "Our Own Sea," and "A Vast Roman Lake." Of still greater importance to the existence of the empire were the three great boundary rivers by which the legions of Rome kept back the barbarian hordes for centuries. These rivers were the Rhine and the Danube in the north, and the Euphrates in the east. The Huns occupied the valley of the Danube with all its tributaries. Gibbon says, "The Huns were masters of the great river." Thus the meteor fell upon one third of the rivers, or one of the three rivers upon which the life of the empire depended. Attila and the Huns carried on all of their military operations inland from the sea and in that part of Europe that abounds in streams and rivers.

Campaigns of Attila. Attila's first invasion was to the very walls of Constantinople. Gibbon says that he destroyed seventy cities in his progress and forced upon the emperor of the East an oppressive peace. In 451 he declared war on the Western Empire and with 500,000 men swept through Germany pillaging as he went. He invaded Gaul and sacked and burned most of the cities of France as far south as Orleans. On the battlefield of Chalons on the Marne, the combined armies of the Romans and Visigoths met him in one of the bloodiest and most decisive battles of history. A million men were engaged in battle, 500,000 on each side. At the close of the day 160,000 men lay dead on the field. One historian placed the number killed as high as 300,000. When darkness came, both armies retired from the field of battle utterly exhausted, neither knowing who was the victor.

During the darkness of the night the Huns retreated unobserved. They then invaded Italy and destroyed the cities of northern Italy and reduced the country to the condition of a desert. Attila claimed that the grass never again grew where his horse's feet had trod.

The Bitter Results. Verse 11. The New Standard Bible Dictionary says that wormwood means a curse. Wormwood is a plant of bitter taste that grows in several varieties in Palestine and is used in the Scriptures as a type of bitter sorrow. See Jer. 9:15; 23:15; Lam. 3:19. The falling meteor would cause bitter sorrow and death. "Many men died from drinking it." (20th C.N.T.) "Vast numbers of people died from drinking the water," (Weymouth). On March 21, 1823, there was a great earthquake explosion in one of the Aleutian Islands which resulted in the waters of the river being turned to the color of beer and becoming extremely bitter so that it was for a time unfit for use. Each of these trumpet-scourges is worse than the one that precedes it. The first affected vegetation, the second animal life, and the third the human race.

Sudden Disappearance. Like a shooting star the Huns disappeared as suddenly as they came. In 453 Attila returned to the banks of the Danube where he suddenly died from the bursting of an artery. The Huns then rapidly dispersed and mysteriously disappeared. H. G. Wells said: "Hereafter the Huns, as far as that name goes in Europe, the Huns of Attila, disappeared out of history." Another writer says: "The Huns rapidly dispersed. The main body seems to have returned to the region about the River Ural."--Standard Encycolpedia. What could better symbolize the spectacular career of Attila and the Huns than a flashing meteor?

The Fourth Trumpet. Verse 12. Here is another symbol in nature representing great calamities. The final blow that completed the destruction of Western Rome was struck by the Heruli and other northern Teutonic tribes under the leadership of Odoacer, king of the Heruli. Ridpath says: "Out of the north came Odoacer, king of the Heruli, a nation of Germans--joined as he was by many other tribes....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 Brittium. The ghost of Caesar's victims rose from the earth, and hovered in dense clouds along the north. Then the apparition became real."--History of the World, Vol. 3, p. 349. The historian then describes the successes of Odoacer and his followers in defeating the Roman armies and crushing the last vestige of Roman power.

The Ghost of Rome. Ridpath then describes the gigantic spectre of the Rome that was: "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 Jupiter Capitolinus. The god did not resent it."--Id. p. 350. (The invasions or military movements that destroyed the empire of the West were confined mostly to the fifth century.)

The Dark Ages. The invasions of the barbarians not only marked the end of the Roman Empire of the West, but it also introduced that long period of demoralization in Europe, known as "The Dark Ages." Speaking of conditions

during these ages, H. G. Wells says: "The daily life of the 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 lapsed into barbarism; but that does not explain the reality of the case. It is more correct to say that the civilization of the Roman Empire had passed into a phase of extreme demoralization....The state of Europe beneath its political fragmentation was a social disorder. Its morale.... was that of the slum."--Outline of History, pp. 527,528. It seems more reasonable to apply verse 12 to the "Dark Ages" than to the destruction of the official and lawmaking bodies of the imperial government. Of this dark period another historian says: "But no one 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 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."--General History, Barnes, p. 337, Note. Every effort of men and nations to lead the world out of the darkness into the light were futile.

The Third Part. "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, for a third of the day, and also of the night, there was no light," (Weymouth). Europe, Asia, and Africa, were the three great divisions of land that constituted the geographical knowledge of the time. They made up the then known world. One of these, Europe, passed through that long period when "the Sun of Righteousness" was eclipsed and driven into partial obscurity, and God's "Two Witnesses" had to do their prophesying clothed in sackcloth. In Revelation 12 the sun is symbolic of the righteousness of Christ which makes His church "the light of the world." The moon represents the word of God which is the foundation on which the church stands. The twelve stars are symbolic of the apostolic ministry and leadership in the church. In Rev. 1:20 the ministers or leaders of the seven churches are called stars. The gospel day covers approximately 2000 years, a third of which constitutes the period of the densest darkness. The eclipse was only partial for only "the third of them were eclipsed," (20th C.N.T.). This is similar to the ninth plague of Egypt. See Ex. 10:21. See also Micah 3:5-7; 2 Cor. 4:4.

Darkness Confined to Europe. Barnes says: "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 entire 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."--General History, p. 331, Note. Only one of the three land divisions of the old world was darkened by the eclipse. The final destruction of the Western Roman Empire and the subsequent Dark Ages constitute a striking fulfillment of the symbolisms of the fourth trumpet. All came as the natural consequence of the rejection of the Prince of Peace. Strife and darkness are the fate of nations and peoples who refuse to walk in the gospel light. See John 12:35,36.

THE TORMENTING SYMBOLIC LOCUSTS
12

Woe Trumpets. Rev. 8:13. "Eagle" (R.V.) This is the correct translation as all agree. It may be the one of the four cherubim symbolized in the fourth chapter as a flying eagle to represent swiftness and far vision. The eagle is the strongest of birds and is used in Scripture as the symbol of vengeance and judgment. See Deut. 28:49; Hab. 1:6-8. The attacks of the Babylonians would be "as the eagle that hasteth to eat," and the Romans would come upon the nation of the Jews "as swift as the eagle that flieth." The eagle was the emblem of the Romans and was on all their standards. (It is an appropriate symbol of judgments descending suddenly and unexpectedly from on high.) An eagle's scream is loud and startling and an announcement of woe to its victim as the king of birds pounces upon its prey. "This eagle is flying so all can see, and crying so all can hear," (Robertson). The announcement of the flying eagle indicates that the fearful events of the first four trumpets were small compared with the desolating scourges of the three yet to come. Because of their severity they are distinguished from the others by being designated as "woe" trumpets. These war-scourges symbolize the judgments that would lay Eastern Rome in the dust and wreak vengeance upon the modern nations in the awful Armageddon cataclysm.

The Fifth Trumpet. Rev. 9:1-3. When the fifth trumpet was due at the beginning of the seventh century, Western Asia was controlled by two implacable rivals, Persia and the Eastern Roman Empire. Chosroes was the king of Persia. In a desperate effort to gain supremacy over the East, he led his armies against his Roman rival. The death grapple between these two empires over the rule of Western Asia resulted in the death of Chosroes and the dissolution of his empire. While this war was in progress another power looked on with secret pleasure as one nation was being destroyed and the other greatly weakened. Rising out of apparent obscurity, the Saracenic Empire under the leadership of Mohammed and the Caliphs was destined to fulfill the specifications of the first woe trumpet.

The Fallen Star. "A star from heaven fallen unto the earth," (R.V.) "A star which had fallen to earth," (Weymouth). The Greek original indicates that the star had already fallen when seen by the prophet, and it is thus translated in most all manuscripts and versions. It was a fallen star that opened the bottomless pit and released the smoke and swarms of locusts. In verse 11 this fallen star is called "the angel of the bottomless pit," and is designated as Abaddon and Apollyon, that is the great destroyer, Satan. In the Scriptures angels are symbolized by stars, and Satan and his angels as fallen stars. See Isa. 14:12; Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:4,9. That the star of this prophecy is primarily Satan is the belief of most commentators. "It seems almost certain that the star is an angel," (Cambridge Bible). "That this star represents a mighty spirit-being is clear. None but a mighty spirit could 'open the bottomless pit'" (Philip Mauro). "It seems that Satan himself is referred to in this symbol," (Pulpit Commentary). "The fallen star is Satan," (Davis). "Putting together St. Luke 10:18 and Rev. 12:9 (See also Isa. 14:12), there can be no doubt that it is Satan who is represented here," (The Devotional Commentary).

The Human Instrument. Satan always does his work on earth through human agents, and therefore secondarily, this star represents Mohammed and his caliph successors. The baneful influence of the great religious revolution of Mohammedism, with its sensual moral standards and the fanatical

enthusiasm and zeal with which it was propogated, calls for more than mere human wisdom, power and direction. It was Satan's master mind that invented and loosed upon the world the false religion that has so long cursed the human family and still holds in its iron grip more than 200,000,000 enslaved human souls.

The Bottomless Pit. "The pit of the abyss," (R.V.). (The earth in its chaotic and desolate condition in the beginning and again during the millennium, is called the abyss or bottomless pit.) This term appropriately represents the abode of Satan and also the desert wastes of Arabia out of which came the Saracen hordes like swarms of locusts to spread ruin and desolation over the fairest portions of Asia and Europe. Speaking of the country of Arabia, 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 rays of a tropical sun. Instead of refreshing breezes, the winds, particularly from the southwest, diffuse a noxious and even deadly vapor; the hillocks of sand which alternately rise 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 Roman Empire, Vol. 3, pp. 492, 493.

The Key. The key "was given" to Mohammed and by it he opened the abyss and released the smoke and symbolic locusts. Mohammed claimed that he received the Koran from the angel Gabriel by revelation. He had come in contact with the Christians and Jews and had carefully studied their religions. Since he claimed that the Koran was given him by inspiration, it was doubtless the "key" of the prophecy. Through this pretended revelation Mohammed claimed to be the prophet of God, and it was because of this pretended divine leadership that he was able to unite the roving and unorganized bands of Saracens and pour them in an irresistible torrent upon the tottering civilization of Eastern Rome. (It is a well-known fact that the Koran or religion which Mohammed pretended to have received by divine revelation, was the secret of his power over the Saracens.) The key is the symbol of power and authority. Speaking of the Saracenic movement Meyers said: "We shall not be wrong in making religious feeling its chief moving principle."--Medieval and Modern History, p. 51. Note.

Satanic Inspiration. But the key was not given to Mohammed by the angel Gabriel, but rather by the fallen angel, Satan. Philip Mauro quotes a writer as saying: "Mohammedanism has a superman and a book. It is a satanic imitation of Christianity. It has spread over a great part of the Christianized world. At this time it embraces in its curse 200 millions of souls. Its founder was, without doubt, devil-inspired. Mohammed, the fallen star, opened the pit and let loose the darkening power of Satan; and he flooded the eastern part of the Christianized earth, and considerable portions of the western also, with doctrines which can justly be termed hellish in their measure and effects." Those parts of Asia and Europe which had been most brilliantly illuminated by the heavenly gospel light were clouded by a darkness more dense than paganism. The sting of the symbolic locusts was like that of scorpions. Poison is the symbol of error and false doctrine. See Isa. 9:15,16. Mohammed was a false prophet whose teaching has poisoned millions.

The Marvel of History. "Islam is a mystery of the darkest character. It defies explanation on any natural basis. Its origin is so utterly unlike that of all the other empires as to leave no alternative but the view that

it originated supernaturally; and its career is just as difficult to explain upon natural grounds as its origin. It is manifestly a designed counterpart of Christianity; for its visible source was in a personal leader, who claims to be the sole representative and prophet of God, and in a book, that is venerated by its adherents as the word of God. It has, moreover, the supernatural power to inspire multitudes, even of stern, fierce and bloodthirsty men, with a most extraordinary degree of religious fanaticism, rising at times to the pitch of frenzy. In this particular it is without any parallel in the history of mankind."--Of Things Which Must Soon Come to Pass, Philip Mauro, pp. 313,314.

The Symbolic Smoke. "Smoke poured out of the pit like the smoke of a huge furnace," (Moffatt). The smoke darkened the light of the sun. The sun is symbolic of the gospel light, and the black smoke of the furnace that obscured it fitly represents the false religion of Mohammed. "There arose a smoke--false doctrine, obscuring the true light of heaven," (Clarke). For centuries the Sun of Righteousness was partially eclipsed wherever the dark cloud of Mohammedanism drifted. Darkness still prevails wherever this false religion predominates. Speaking of the first conquests of the Saracens in Persia, Ridpath 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."--History of the World, Vol. 4, p. 476.

The Symbolic Locusts. Verse 3. "They are loosed by one who has fallen from heaven, who has been given the key of the pit, who seems to be none other than Satan himself," (Erdman). Arabia is the chief home of locusts and from that country they swarm into the surrounding countries and destroy vegetation. (The terrible locust-plague of Egypt was brought by a wind from the east, and doubtless came from Arabia.) Dr. Adam Clarke declares that the locusts of the fifth trumpet represent "vast hordes of military troops," and that the description fits the Saracens better than any other people. Ridpath unconsciously uses the very symbol of the prophecy in describing the Saracenic invasion: "Now it was (in 672) that the Saracens, frenzied with religious zeal, blown up like a cloud of locusts from the south, settled before Constantinople."--History of the World, Vol. 3, p.361. A traveler in that country thus describes the effects of a swarm of literal locusts: "It is difficult to express the effect produced on us by the sight of the whole atmosphere filled on all sides and to a great height by an innumerable quantity of these insects, whose flight was slow and uniform, and whose noise resembled that of rain; the sky was darkened, and the light of the sun considerably weakened. In a moment the terraces of the houses, the streets, and all the fields were covered with the insects." --Voyage dans l'Empire Ottoman, Ollivier, Vol. 2, p. 424.

Sevenfold Description. Verses 7-10 give a sevenfold description of these symbolic locusts that identifies them as Saracen cavalrymen. They are "like horses equipt for battle," (20th C.N.T.). A desolating scourge of locusts constitutes a splendid symbol of an invading army and is so used elsewhere in the Scriptures. See Joel 2:2-11. In describing the Saracens Sir Wm. Muir said: "Like swarms from the hive, or flights of locusts darkening the land, tribe after tribe issued forth."--The Caliphate, p. 44. The Arabs were the most expert horsemen in the world and they lived and fought so much on their horses that the horse and the rider were almost inseparable. With the swiftness of flying locusts they rode on their

famous Arabian horses into battle. "It is plain that the locusts are conquering armies, sweeping over the earth in dense ranks," (Mauro). Innumerable hosts of armed men are symbolized by swarms of locusts. In Judges 6:5 we read of the Midianites, Amalekites, and the children of the east, coming up against Israel "as locusts for multitude" because they "were without number," (R.V.). In Jer. 46:23 the armies that were to overrun Egypt are said to be "more than the locusts, and are innumerable." (R.V.) Vincent said: "The likeness of a locust to a horse, especially a horse equipped with armour, is so striking that the insect is named in German heupferd (hay-horse), and in Italian cavalett, "a little horse."

Horsemen Described. "On their heads were what appeared to be crowns that shown like gold," (20th C.N.T.). "Wreaths that looked like gold," (Weymouth). They were not actually crowns, but looked like crowns of gold in the vision. It is believed that this refers to the turbans worn by the Saracens which were of a greenish golden color. See Barnes' General History, p. 327, and Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 5, p. 286. The Saracen warriors were beards of which they were very proud and sensitive. See Gibbon, Vol. 3, p. 500. Thus "their faces were as the faces of men." Beards were once the distinguishing marks of men, and by this sign the prophet in vision recognized them as such. But while their faces were masculine, their hair was feminine, for "they had hair as the hair of women." History also records the fact that the Saracen men, like the women, wore long hair. An Arabic proverb compares the antlers of locusts to the hair of girls. (Long hair and unshaven beards have always been a sign of a savage and barbarous people.) The prophecy may also refer to the fact that the women constituted an important part of the fighting force of the Saracens. H. G. Wells declares that during battles, "after the ancient Arab fashion, the shrill voices of the women in the rear encouraged the men."--Outline of History, Vol. 2, p. 19. Gibbon declares that three times during the battle of Tiberias when the weight of the Roman cavalry compelled the Saracens to retreat, each time they were "driven back to the charge by the reproaches and blows of the women."

Savage Fighters. The courage and savagery of the Saracen fighting men is indicated by the statement that "their teeth were as the teeth of lions." See Joel 1:6,7. This may have reference to the sharp knives which they carried and used effectively. (It was a maxim among them that when a sword was once unsheathed it must draw blood before being returned to its scabbard.) The patriarch of Alexandria observed that the Saracens fought with the courage and savagery of lions. To die in battle for the faith of Islam was an assurance of a place in Paradise, while any exhibition of cowardice or treason meant punishment in the fires of hell. As the Saracen soldiers entered the great battle of Tiberias their general addressed them as follows: "Victory or Paradise is before you: the devil and hell-fire behind you. Charge." The greatest courage known is that born of and inspired by religious conviction of duty or fear of torment. The Saracens were controlled by religious frenzy and fanaticism. The Romans lacked this impelling force.

Uniforms and Breastplates. The breastplates were "as it were breastplates of iron." "They had scales like iron coats of mail," (Moffatt). "Seemed to be made of steel," (Weymouth). It is a fact that the scaly backs and flanks of locusts resemble coats of mail. "As it were" indicates that the breastplates only resembled iron. Most of the cavalrymen of that period

including the Saracens wore a leather cuirass or breastplate which crossed the breast and sometimes the back. The symbolic locusts made a deafening noise as they moved swiftly into battle. "The noise of their wings was like the noise of chariots drawn by many horses, galloping into battle," (20th C.N.T.) See Joel 2:4,5. Chariots constituted an important part of the fighting equipment of the Romans at the time of this vision. To the prophet the noise of the symbolic locusts resembled the clatter of the hoofs of many horses combined with the rumble of chariot wheels. The sight was awe-inspiring and the noise was deafening. "Their hanging weapons and military trappings, with the clang of their shields and swords when they make their fierce onsets." (Clarke)

The Weapons of War. The Saracenic weapons consisted of a sword, lance, and bow and arrows. With these they fought as skillfully while retreating as while charging. (They fought something like the American Indians on the plains of the middle west. With unerring aim and deadly results the Saracen archers discharged their arrows backward over the horses' tails.) Neibuhr's description of a locust is interesting in the light of this prophetic picture of the Saracen cavalry: "In head like the horse, in breast like the lion, in feet like the camel, in body like the serpent, in tail like the scorpion, in antennae like a virgin's hair." Arabia is the home of the scorpion as well as the locust. They are very plentiful in numbers and large in size. The Arabian scorpion are not slow and sluggish as they are in many parts of the world, but are speedy and vigorous, striking unexpectedly. The sting is not always fatal but is very painful. Poisoned arrows used in warfare were sometimes called scorpions. Seneca described the torment of the poisoned arrows used in his time. Of them Isidore said: "The scorpion is a poisoned arrow shot from a bow or other instrument; which, when it wounds a man, deposits the poison, with which it is covered, in the wound; whence it has the name of scorpion."

Commissioned to Torment. Verses 10,5. "Their mission was not to kill, but to cause awful agony for five months," (Weymouth). The Saracens were not to destroy Eastern Rome, but only "hurt" or "torment" for five prophetic months. The killing or destroying would be accomplished during the sixth trumpet or second woe. During all the attacks and conquests of the Saracens, the empire of Eastern Rome was maintained and the capital city, Constantinople, was able to resist every onslaught. No less than ten times the Moslems attempted to capture Constantinople but without avail. "To Constantinople belongs the honor of having been the first and strongest bridle of the Saracens."--The Standard Encyclopedia, Article "Caliph." The ambitions of the Saracens was to make Islam the religion of the world. After the conquest of Western Asia and Northern Africa, the plan was to overrun Europe, but Constantinople stood in their way. The failure to capture this strategic stronghold compelled them to change their plan and enter Europe by way of the Strait of Gibraltar. They intended to complete their circuit of the Mediterranean, but were brought to a standstill in the famous and decisive battle of Tours in 732 A.D. when Charles Martel defeated them in a seven days' battle.

Extent of Torment. The "hurt" or "torment" would be so terrible that death would be preferable to life. Verse 6. See also Job 3:20-22; Jer. 8:3. Under some conditions death is far better than life. This is the opinion of the thousands who commit suicide each year and the millions of others who long for death but whose consciences will not permit self-destruction.

An ancient Roman writer said: "For death is not subject to the will of man. To die is sweet to the wretched; but wished for death flees away. Yet when it is not desired, it comes with hastieth strides."--Maximus, Fleg. 1, V., 111. The Saracens offered their victims the choice between the sword, the Koran, or heavy tribute. There were millions whose real choice was death, but such wholesale slaughter was unthinkable even to the Moslems, so they condemned all captives to perpetual slavery which was often worse than death. History tells us that they took 180,000 prisoners from Northern Africa alone and sold them as slaves.

Time of Torment. Verses 5,10. The locust lives about five months and attacks vegetation from birth to death. "The actual locust is born in the spring, and dies at the end of summer (about five months)" (Robertson). These five months are from April to September. The time of course cannot be exact, but only approximately five months. For five prophetic months the Saracens were commissioned to "hurt" or "torment" the Eastern Roman Empire and mankind in general. In symbolic prophecy a day represents a year. See Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6. "God showeth Ezekiel the rule of prophecy" is the statement of the translators at the top of the page of the latter text. Dr. Alexander Campbell declared that regarding the "day-for-a-year" theory "there is no controversy among Catholics or Protestants." Speaking of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9, Henry Cooke says: "That each of the weeks mentioned denotes seven years, each day for a year, Eze. 4:6: and that the whole of the numbers is intended to point out the time of our Saviour's appearance, is also agreed."--New Self-Interpreting Bible Library, Vol. 3. Of the prophetic time periods Thomas Newton said: "The days, without doubt, are to be taken, agreeably to the style of Daniel in other places, not for natural, but for prophetic days or years."--Dissertations on the Prophecies, pp. 290,291. This method of reckoning time was used by the Jews and other ancient nations. "It was the custom in some republics not to oblige a man to go to the wars after the sixth week; i.e., after forty and two years of age."--Macrobius, Som. Scip. lib. 1. C.VI.

Century and a Half. Since the time of the attacks of literal locusts on vegetation is only approximately five months, it would seem logical that the century and a half in the antitype would also be approximate rather than exact. History fully corroborates the prophecy that the Saracenic career as an independent, tormenting power covers five prophetic months or 150 years. A century and a half spans the crest of the movement described in the fifth trumpet. While there were attacks and minor conquests before and after that period, they were those of the unorganized tribes of Arabia, or the defeated and disorganized forces of the fast declining empire of the Saracens, before they merged into the Turkish power that succeeded them.

Time Located. Verses 2-5. It must be evident that the 150 years begins with the time when the symbolic locusts are released from the pit by the angel with the key and "given power" as "the scorpions of the earth" to "hurt" and "torment" for five prophetic months. It is also evident that this tormenting would begin with the "command" on the part of their leader to torment. The tormenting covers a century and a half and begins with the time the Saracens are commanded to hurt some and not to hurt others. It seems that no other conclusion is possible. The predicted command was given by Abu-Bekr at the beginning of the invasion of Syria in the year 632 A.D. Mohammed died in the year 632 and Abu-Bekr succeeded him. No sooner had he taken command of the government than he dispatched a letter

to the Arabian tribes calling upon them to rally to the standard of the dead prophet and by the sword make Islam the religion of the world. No sooner had the messengers returned than Saracen warriors began to flock to Medina for the conquest of Syria and the world.

The Command. Fortunately historians have recorded the very command mentioned in the prophecy. Before beginning the invasion of Syria in 632, Abu-Bekr thus addressed his generals: "This is to inform you that I intend to send an army of the faithful into Syria to deliver that country from the infidels, and I remind you that to fight for the true faith is to obey God. Treat your soldiers with kindness and consideration. Be just in all your dealings with them, and consult their feelings and opinions. Fight valiantly, and never turn your back upon the foe. When victorious, harm not the aged and protect women and children. Destroy not the palm tree or fruit trees of any kind. Waste not the corn fields with fire; nor kill any cattle except for food. Stand faithfully to every covenant and promise; respect all religious persons who live in hermitages or convents, and spare their edifices. But should you meet with a class of unbelievers of a different kind, who go about with shaven crowns and belong to the synagogue of Satan, be sure you cleave their skulls unless they embrace the true faith or render tribute."--History of the World, Ridpath, Vol. 4, p. 462. (The very things that literal locusts hurt or devour, the symbolic locusts are commanded not to hurt. This is conclusive proof that symbols are employed.)

The Seal of God. Those who "have not the seal of God in their foreheads" doubtless included, in a broad sense, all who were not Moslems. (The followers of Mohammed claimed that all Moslems had the seal of God.) Since the command came from the Moslem leader, those marked for the tormenting doubtless included all except believers in the religion of the false prophet. (Neither Mohammed nor Abu-Bekr knew the true requirements of the seal of God.) Since Satan was the real inspiration of the Saracenic movement, we could hardly expect him to spare those against whom he has always waged his fiercest warfare. (It is a fact, however, that the Abyssinians, who were Sabbath keepers, were providentially preserved from destruction by the Moslems. In the seventh and eighth centuries the apostasy of the church was at its height and the counterfeit Sabbath had supplanted the true. The Christian church had largely lost the seal of God, and therefore the command could apply to most of the inhabitants of the world and especially the subjects of Eastern Rome who were mostly Catholics. Of the apostate state of the church of this period Philip Mauro quotes Isaac Taylor as saying: "What Mahomet and his caliphs found in all directions whither their scimitars cut a path for them, was a superstition so abject, an idolatry so gross and shameless, church doctrines so arrogant, church practices so dissolute and puerile, that the strong-minded Arabians felt themselves inspired as God's messengers to reprove the errors of the world, and authorized as God's avengers to punish apostate Christendom.

Monks With Shaven Crowns. To whom did Abu-Bekr refer when he commanded vengeance upon the class of unbelievers with "shaven crowns"? At the time of the Saracenic invasion of Syria, there were thousands of recluses or hermits throughout the deserts who thought they were serving God by denying themselves even the comforts and often the necessities of life. These were divided into three classes called Hermits, Anchorites, and Monks. The last named caused most of the bitter religious controversies of the east.

They shaved their heads so as to leave a circle of hair in the form of a crown as a reminder of the crown of thorns worn by Christ. Speaking of the origin of the worship of saints and relics, Gibbon says of these monks: "The monks (a race of filthy animals, to whom Eunapious is tempted to refuse the name of men) are the authors of the new worship."--Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 2, p. 210. These monks were universally despised and they certainly did not have the seal of God. Many of the monks of Italy and other strong Roman and Greek Catholic countries still cut their hair in the form of a crown called the tonsure.

Proof of Time Period. Historians are quite unanimous in placing the date of the beginning of Saracenic conquests under Abu-Bekr in the year 632 A.D. "The Persian war ended in 628. Five years later the cloud of Saracenic invasion rolled northward from the Arabian desert."--A Short History of the Near East, Davis, p. 32. This writer places the approximate date in 633. The movement, however, had its real beginning in the latter part of 632. "Syria was practically lost in 639 with the capture of Jerusalem by the Moslems. Egypt was invaded in 639, and Alexandria, the great stronghold of Grecio-Roman power succumbed later in 641."--Id. p. 33. Speaking of the rapidity of the conquest of Syria, Hogarth, in his History of Arabia , p. 59, says that "so swift an Arab conquest of so great a province from the first potentate of the age has amazed posterity."

The Date Established. "The Caliph Omar led his conquering armies of Saracens into Syria in 632; the Roman armies were annihilated; and in 637 Jerusalem was captured."--Of Things Which Must Soon Come to Pass, Philip Mauro, p. 315. "The Golden Age of the Saracens was the twelve years, A.D. 632-644, comprised of the reigns of Abu-Bekr and Omar. This was a period of uninterrupted internal harmony and external conquest."--History and Conquest of the Saracens, Freeman, p. 66. "In 632, the year of the Prophet's death, commenced the decisive invasion of both empires."--Id. p. 81. The two empires mentioned are the Persian and Roman, both of which had been weakened by the war between them which ended in 628.

Success of Saracens. "Across the borders of the barren peninsula lay two old famous states, Persia and the Roman Empire. On these the Arab leaders, fanaticized by their faith, threw themselves with sudden and irresistible fervor. Persia, already exhausted by blood-letting, succumbed in a very few years leaving the whole territory in the hands of the victors (641). Compared with Persia, the Roman Empire exhibited a far greater strength of resistance, but it was put to a terrible test by the vigor of the Arab assault. In 634 the Romans suffered a crushing defeat in Southern Syria." --The History of the Balkan Peninsula, Ferdinand Schevill, p. 80. For 100 years the almost uninterrupted progress of the Saracens continued. After overrunning most of Western Asia and all of Northern Africa, they crossed into Spain and all Europe trembled as they continued their victorious conquests through Spain and into France. "Abu-Bekr, and Omar, between 632 and 641, conquered Syria, Palestine, Persia, and Egypt. By 709 the Saracens had extended their sway over northern Africa to beyond the Strait of Gibraltar. They then passed over into Spain (711), nearly the whole of which was subjugated. From Spain they poured into Gaul, where their progress was arrested by Charles Martel, near Poitiers in 732."--New International Encyclopedia, Vol. 20. p. 464.

Extent of Empire. Of the extent of the Saracenic Empire, Grattan Guinness said: "Mohammedanism is one of those great movements which have impressed a new and lasting character upon a vast number of the nations of the world. No power known to history has ever wielded the scepter over a wider sphere than this has done." Of the successors of Mohammed, Gibbon wrote: "They reigned by right of conquest over the nations of the East, to whom the name of liberty was unknown, and who were accustomed to applaud in their tyrants the acts of violence and severity that were performed at their own expense. Under the last of the Ommiades the Arabian empire extended two hundred days' journey from east to west, from the confines of Tartary and India, to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean." It seemed as though the Saracens would conquer the whole world when they suffered the crushing defeat in the seven days' battle near Tours and Poitiers in France. This is reckoned as one of the decisive battles of history. Gibbon declared it to be a battle "which would change the face of the world." The hero of this battle was Charles Martel, known as "Martel the Hammer," because he kept hammering away until the tide of battle was turned against the invaders.

Crest of Movement. According to the prophecy the crest of the Saracenic movement would cover approximately 150 years . The empire reached its zenith at the end of the first century of advance. "At the end of the first century of the Hegira (722) the caliphs were the most potent and absolute monarchs of the globe."--Rise and Fall of the Saracen Empire, Gibbon, p. 113. The word Hegira means "flight." The flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina took place on Friday, July 16, 622, and this marks the beginning of time with the Moslems. "Exactly a century had now elapsed since the death of Mohammed, and the Saracen rule reached from the Indus to the Pyrenees. No empire of antiquity had reached such an extent. Only Greek fire on the East and German valor on the West had prevented the Moslem power from girdling the Mediterranean."--Barnes' General History, p.339. Another writer says: "In the hundred years following the Hegira (622) a Saracen empire was established which extended from Turkestan to the shores of the Atlantic. Mohammed made himself master of Mecca in 629, and the first caliphs, Abu-Bekr and Omar, between 632 and 641, conquered Syria, Palestine, Persia, and Egypt. By 709 the Saracens had extended their sway over northern Africa to beyond the Strait of Gibraltar. They then crossed over to Spain (711), nearly the whole of which was subjugated. From Spain they poured into Gaul, where their progress was arrested by Charles Martel, near Poitiers, in 732....The disruption of the Saracen realm begun about the middle of the eighth century."--New Standard Encyclopedia.

Tormenting Continued. While the defeat by Martel checked the progress of the Saracens, they were by no means crushed nor was their power broken. They continued their tormenting mission for another half century. "This victory (Tours) saved Western Europe from conquest by the Mohammedans, though they were still able to annoy, they were no longer dangerous."--History of the Ancient World, Botsford, p. 553. "A bickering war went on year by year in Asia Minor in which neither Byzantium nor Bagdad made any permanent gains, though once or twice the Moslems raided as far as the Bosporus."--Outline of History, Wells, p. 599. "The Saracens continually harassed the frontiers of the Empire from Egypt to the Euphrates."--New Americanized Encyclopedia Britannica, Art. "Saracen."

Close of Period. By 759 the Saracens were driven south of the Pyrenees, but they still carried on a "bickering" war to "annoy" and "harass" the empire. The time period allotted to the Saracens for their tormenting was approximately 150 years. By beginning the period in 632 it would end in 782. Dr. Elliott in his Horae Apocalytticae gives the dates of the period from 612 to 679 as the time of the greatest Saracen conquests. The former date is the time when Mohammed made the first public announcement of his mission as the prophet of God. 632 is a better date for the beginning of the period although exact dates are no more important than the exact beginning of the five months period of the devastations of the literal locusts. With the founding of Baghdad in 762, the Saracen Empire entered into a new phase of history. Says the historian: "With the rise of the Abbassides, the aspects of Western Asia alters. The seat of government is removed from Syria to Irak (to Baghdad, founded 762 A.D.), the Syrians lose the monopoly of influence and power they had hitherto possessed; and the tide of power is diverted from the West to the East. But the unity of the Caliphate was gone forever...'The reign of the first Abbassides,' says a distinguished French scholar and historian, 'was the era of the greatest splendor of the Eastern Saracens. The age of conquest had passed; that of civilization had commenced."--History of the Saracens, Ameer Ali, p. 208.

Further Evidence. Of the new capital, Gibbon says: "In this city of peace, amidst the riches of the East, the Abbassides soon disdained the abstinence and frugality of the first caliphs, and aspired to emulate the magnificence of the Persian kings." "The luxury of the caliphs, so useless to their private happiness, relaxed the nerves and terminated the progress of the Arabian empire....War was no longer the passion of the Saracens."--Gibbon's Roman Empire, chapter 52, pp. 11,12. By the close of the 150 years the caliphate had largely lost its power and authority, and early in the ninth century completely surrendered to the Turkish guards. "Soon the civil and military administration were in their hands, and the califs held the power of life and death by grace of the Turks."--Standard Encyclopedia, Art. "Calif." While the Caliphs retained their religious leadership for a while after 782, their civil and military authority was permanently lost. (It should be emphasized again that the exact date for the close of the period is not essential. It is enough to know that 150 years covered the crest of the movement of the Saracens as a tormenting power dangerous to the Roman Empire.)

A King Over Them. Verse 11. Here the king of the Saracens is definitely identified with the star or angel of the bottomless pit. "A decided majority of orthodox commentators understand this vision as foretelling the Mohometan conquests--some taking the fallen star of v. 1 as Mohomet himself," (Cambridge Bible). The symbolic locusts would have a king over them during the five months of their tormenting career. A king is "the chief magistrate or sovereign of a nation; a man vested with supreme authority over a nation, tribe or country; a monarch, usually inheriting his title and authority." (Webster). Mohammed and his successors met these specifications. Mohammed assumed the state of a sovereign in 628, and is spoken of in history as "the uncrowned king of Arabia." Abu-Bekr is said to be "the first Calif of the Saracenic Empire." The first four caliphs were elected, but beginning with the fifth the throne became hereditary, passing from father to son as with other monarchs. Gibbon in chapters 50 and 51 of his history repeatedly speaks of the Caliph as "prince", "monarch," and "king," Meyer in his General History calls Mohammed a "legislator,

judge and king," and in speaking of the Caliphs in his Medieval and Modern History, he says: "Their government was an absolute monarchy, such as has been the favorite form among Oriental peoples." Gibbon called the Caliphs "the most potent and absolute monarchs of the globe." In the light of these statements and the well-known facts of history how can any person say that the Saracens did not have a king over them?

Identifies Period. Since the successors of Mohammed were kings, and their reign as independent monarchs with the power to inflict torment on the Roman Empire began with Abu-Bekr in 632, and continued for a century and a half, there is added another proof that our deductions are correct regarding the time-period of the fifth trumpet. Doubtless it is stated that these symbolic locusts "had a king over them" because literal locusts "have no king." See Prov. 30:27. It is therefore a mistake to claim that the Saracens had no kings and therefore the 150 years must begin with Othman in Turkish history. The Caliphs were kings as verily as were Othman and his successors. The Saracen Caliphs also fully met the prophetic designation of "a Destroyer." "Whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek Apollyon; in Latin Exterminians (that is, 'Destroyer') (Douay). "Apollyon (i.e. Satan)" (Strong's Bible Dictionary). Satan is the great destroyer. See Isa. 14:12-17. Primarily he is "the son of perdition" or "destruction." 2 Thess. 2:3,4. The Caliphs as Satan's agents in propagating the false and desolating Moslem religion fully met the specifications of this prophecy.

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN SYMBOLIC PROPHECY

13

The Sixth Trumpet. Rev. 9:12-15. The fact should be emphasized that the first woe is past when the second woe begins. They are therefore no more related than the first and second trumpets. Their time periods cannot be united for they represent the crest of two separate political and military movements with more than five centuries between them. The sixth trumpet or second woe is symbolic of the Ottoman Turks who overthrew the Eastern Roman Empire and plagued the nations of Europe for almost four centuries. The Saracens only "hurt" or "tormented"; the Turks were to "slay." While the Turks accepted the Moslem religion, they were a different people and formed a different empire. The Saracens of course became absorbed into the Ottoman Empire just as all conquered peoples become a part of the nation of the victors. The defeated Egyptians became a part of the Assyrian Empire, the Assyrians the Babylonian, the Babylonians the Medo-Persian, the Medes and Persians the Grecian, the Greeks the Roman, and the Romans the modern nations of Europe. They often adopted the same religion and language. Because England and the United States speak the same language and have virtually the same religion is no evidence that they are the same nation. The same logical argument applies to the Saracens and the Turks, and any attempt to unite them through the time periods of the fifth and sixth trumpets is unreasonable, unscriptural and unhistorical.

The Golden Altar. "The golden altar" is the altar of incense mentioned at the beginning of this vision (8:2,3). In the typical sanctuary it stood before the vail or entrance into the holy of holies which represented the presence of God. See Ex. 30:1-6. The altar of incense was the place where the priests ministered the blood of the victims slain at the altar of burnt offering in the court. The horns of the golden altar received the blood that atoned for the sins of Israel. This was a part of the "daily" service. The golden altar was symbolic of the mediatorial work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. The voice from the golden altar is therefore the voice of Christ. This is the only one of the seven trumpet-angels given specific instruction by Christ. It proves that His priestly ministry was still in progress during the sounding of the trumpets and that they therefore cannot be identified with the seven last plagues. It also shows that during the first six trumpets the "daily" ministration of Christ was in progress and that He had not yet entered upon the last phase of His ministry represented by the yearly service in the most holy place. It was the failure of the church to recognize the priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary that brought the trumpet-woes upon the professed Christian world. The heavenly service was trampled under foot by Papal Rome through the institution of an earthly and counterfeit system, therefore the Turks were loosed against them.

The Four Angels. Verses 14,15. "At the great river Euphrates" (R.V.). "Liberate the four angels who are held captive beside the great river Euphrates" (Fenton). "Set at liberty the four angels who are prisoners near the great river Euphrates" (Weymouth). The language indicates that these four messengers of destruction had been restrained from their work of slaying while the Saracens were "tormenting" Rome. History reveals the fact that when the Saracenic Empire declined it was broken up into four divisions. "The unity of the Arabian Empire was dissolved, but the independent fragments were equal to populous and powerful kingdoms."--

Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 4, p. 69. H. G. Wells in his Outline of History, p. 634, gives a map showing just four of these fragments or kingdoms in the vicinity of the Euphrates. These four were the Sultanies of Aleppo, Iconium, Damascus, and Bagdad. A voice from the place of mediatorial ministry told the sixth angel to liberate or release these four agencies for their work of slaughter. The word "angel" means "messenger" or "minister." Since the leader of the Saracens who released them to torment Rome is called "the angel of the bottomless pit," it is appropriate that the sultans of the four divisions of the empire be also called "angels."

The Ottoman Turks. The Turks had their origin in a small tribe living on the southern banks of the River Oxus in Scythia, now a part of Russia. The great Tartar migrations carried them south and west where they were joined by the Seljukes and fragments of other tribes and were organized into a nation by Othman and his son Orchan in the early part of the 14th century. From the name of Othman, its founder and first ruler, the nation became known as the Ottoman Empire. The Turks assumed the leadership over what remained of the empire of the Saracens. While the Saracens merged into the Ottoman Empire, the Turks in turn adopted the religion of Mohammed. It was the Turks who broke the bonds that had long held in check the powers of Islam, and loosed them against Eastern Rome and the Papacy. The lofty Taurus Mountains and the table lands of Armenia had helped to make it possible for the Romans to hold back the Saracens. While they broke through occasionally to "torment," they made no permanent conquests.

Historical Reference. "The Ottoman Turks came originally from the region of the Altai mountains in Central Asia....In the thirteenth century they appeared as the allies of the Seljukian Turks against the Mongols, and for their aid received a grant of lands from the sultan of Iconium, in Asia Minor. Their leader, Othman, became the most powerful Emir in Western Asia. In the year 1300 he proclaimed himself Sultan. Thus was founded the Empire of the Osman or Ottoman Turks in Asia. Osman's successors, princes of great courage and enterprise, who were animated moreover by religious fanaticism, and a passion for military glory, raised it to the rank of the first military power in both Europe and Asia (1300-1566). In the reign of Soliman II, the Magnificent, 1519-1566, the Ottoman Empire reached the highest pitch of power and splendor. From this time the race of Osman degenerated, and the power of the Porte declined."--The Standard Dictionary of Facts.

Powers of Islam Loosed. Regarding the loosing of the powers of Islam against Rome, H. G. Wells wrote: "The Seljuk now swept down upon and conquered the Shiite rulers and upstarts and established themselves as the protectors of the Bagdad Calif, taking over the temporal powers of the Mayor of the palace. Very early they conquered Armenia from the Greeks, and then breaking the bonds that had restrained the powers of Islam for four centuries, they swept on to the conquest of Asia Minor, almost to the gates of Constantinople. The mountain barriers that had held the Moslems so long had been turned by the conquest of Armenia from the north-east. The Turks utterly smashed the Byzantine army at the battle of Melasgird and established themselves at Iconium in Anatolia."--Outline Of History, p. 636. Speaking of the change from transient and temporary inroads to lasting conquests, Gibbon said: "Since the decline of the empire (Saracen), the peninsula of Asia Minor had been exposed to the transient, though destructive inroads of the Persians and Saracens, but the fruits of lasting conquest were reserved for the Turkish Sultans...Since the first conquests of

the califs the establishment of the Turks in Anatolia or Asia Minor was the first deplorable loss which the church and empire had sustained."--Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 4, pp. 169,170. The italics in both references are mine. No one would accuse either Wells or Gibbon of purposely using terms that would help prove the authority of the Scriptures. This they have done wholly unconsciously. The Saracens by their temporary inroads had "tormented", but the Turks took permanent possession of the conquered territory. They loosed the powers of Islam in a campaign of destruction.

Number of Horsemen. Verse 16. "Twice 10,000 times 10,000" (R.V.). "200,000,000" (Weymouth). The sixth trumpet introduced a gigantic struggle in which armies of cavalry aggregating 200,000,000 horsemen were to engage, and in which a third of the population affected would be destroyed. The second woe cannot be confined to the activities of a single nation, but is rather a picture of the combined struggles of a period, during which all the nations of the old world were engaged. Several mighty military movements out of Asia contributed to the downfall of the Eastern Empire and the general slaughter, but in it all the Turks played the leading role. It is for this reason that the prophecy describes them and their career of domination in the affairs of Asia and Europe for almost four hundred years.

Age of Cavalry. The Jews had no cavalry and therefore war-horses seemed especially to terrify them. But the period of the sixth trumpet was the world's greatest cavalry age. "Between the age of Charlemagne and that of the Crusaders a revolution had taken place in all the nations of Europe. The infantry service was degraded and the cavalry formed the strength of the armies."--Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 4, p. 191. The armies of Africa and Asia were composed almost if not exclusively of cavalry. During the tenth century the vast plains extending from China to the Danube were covered with shepherd peoples known in history as Mongols, Moguls, Tartars, Turks, and Scythians. This whole area became agitated by war, and tribes numbering millions began moving south and west toward Europe and Western Asia. During the period of the sixth trumpet the Hungarians overran Germany and France, the Slavonians desolated northeastern Europe, and the Normans conquered England, Northern France, Cicily, and Southern Italy, and became the most renowned mounted troops of Europe. They attacked the Eastern Empire from the west, at the same time the Turks were attacking it from the south and east.

Other Military Movements. The Crusades began at the close of the 11th century and for 200 years Europe simply hurled itself against Western Asia, and history fails to enumerate the millions who were slain in those religious wars to deliver the Holy Land from Moslem rule. The sum total would be staggering. During the period of the second woe took place also the bloody campaigns of Zingis Kahn who conquered and desolated China as far south as Peking; of Octai and Baton who led immense armies of Moguls and Tartars westward through Asia and into Europe, leaving death and desolation in their wake; and of the celebrated Timour, the grandson of Zingis Kahn, who led millions of Moguls and Tartars out of central Asia and completely submerged India, Russia, Persia, Syria, and Egypt, crushing whole nations and sacking a thousand cities. A careful reading of the history of the war of this period is enough to convince anyone that the prophet's picture of the number of horsemen and the slain is not overdrawn. The principal part of the bloody drama that completed the destruction of Eastern Rome

and deluged the earth with ruin and death, was enacted by the Ottoman Turks. They captured Constantinople and made it the capital of a new empire destined to control the destinies of the nations for four centuries.

Uniforms and Weapons. Verses 17-19. "Their riders had fiery breastplates, and purple and yellow," (Fenton). "The body-armour of the riders was red, blue and yellow" (Weymouth). The Cambridge Bible declares that the uniforms were "fiery red, smoky blue and sulphurous yellow." It is a well-known fact that these were the prominent colors in the uniforms of the Turkish soldiers of that period. The prophet also saw the use of different weapons than those used by the Saracens. "Fire, smoke, and sulphur, leaped from their mouths." (Fenton) To the prophet in vision it looked as if the fire, smoke and brimstone came out of the mouths of the charging horses. It is a fact that the use of firearms in warfare had its origin during the wars of this period, and that the Turks were the first to use them. "The use of gunpowder in cannon and bombs appears as a familiar practice."--Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 4, p. 370. Hand grenades and small firearms were also used. The use of heavy cannon was an important factor in the capture of Constantinople. Where the Saracens had failed with the sword, lance and arrows, the Turks succeeded with gunpowder and cannons.

Invention of Gunpowder. Of the invention and use of gunpowder in warfare, Gibbon says: "The chemists of China or Europe had found, by casual or elaborate experiments, that a mixture of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal produces with a spark of fire a tremendous explosion. It was soon observed that if the expansive force were compressed in a strong tube a ball of stone or iron might be expelled with irresistible and destructive velocity....It was disclosed to the Turks by the treachery of apostates and the selfish policy of rivals; and the sultans had sense to adopt, and wealth to reward the talents of a Christian engineer. The Genoese, who transported Amurath into Europe must be accused as his protectors; and it was probably by their hands that his cannon was cast and directed at the siege of Constantinople." "The incessant volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound, and the fire of their musketry and cannon. Their small arms discharged at the same time either five, or even ten balls of lead of the size of a walnut; and, according to the closeness of the ranks and the force of the powder, several breastplates and bodies were transpierced by the same shot....The great cannon of Mahomet has been separately noticed; an important and visible object in the history of the times; but that enormous engine was flanked by two fellows almost of equal magnitude; the long order of the Turkish artillery was pointed against the walls; fourteen batteries thundered at once on the most accessible places; and of one of these it is ambiguously expressed that it was mounted with one hundred and thirty guns, or that it discharged one hundred and thirty bullets."--Id. pp. 237-238, 427-428.

The Time Period. Verse 15. "Prepared for the hour, and day, and month, and year." (Fenton) Some believe that this only indicates a definite time appointed of God for the trumpet-judgment to begin. But such accuracy would not be necessary for the beginning of a military movement, and it is far more reasonable to conclude that it marks the period of its duration as a potent and destructive power. The sum of 360 days, 30 days, and one day is 391 prophetic days or literal years. An hour is one twenty-fourth of a year, or fifteen days. Three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days was the time allotted for Turkish aggression and conquest as an independent power. We must not forget that the first woe was past before the

second woe begins so that the time periods of the fifth and sixth trumpets cannot be connected. They cover the crests of two separate political and military movements. If the two time periods belong together they would have been given as a single period of 541 years and 15 days. This could not be done because the two movements were almost six centuries apart. Dismissing from mind all known positions regarding this remarkable time period, the writer sought to locate from the records of history the true beginning and end of Turkish history as an aggressive power dangerous to the peace of the world. This was done with the belief that well-established dates would be found exactly 391 years and 15 days apart.

Beginning of Period. Much research revealed the fact that Turkish history had its real beginning with the capture of Brusa, Prusa, or Broussa, in the year 1326 A.D. The city was captured by Orchan and became the first capital of the Ottoman Empire with its captor as the first Sultan. Gibbon says: "The annals of the 27 years of his (Othman's) reign would exhibit a repetition of the same inroads, and his hereditary troops were multiplied in each campaign by the accession of captives and volunteers. But it was not till Othman was oppressed by age and infirmities that he received the welcome news of the conquest of Prusa, which had been surrendered by famine or treachery to the arms of his son Orchan. From the conquest of Prusa we may date the true era of the Ottoman Empire....The city by the labors of Orchan assumed the aspects of a Mohametan capital."--Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 4, pp. 379,380. Brusa was the capital of Bithynia in northern Asia Minor. The siege was begun by Othman and lasted eight years. Its capture was a very important event to the Turks.

Further Evidence. "The conquest of Prusa or Brusa, by Orchan, the son of Othman, laid the foundation of the Ottoman Empire."--History of Turkey, Clarke, p. 70. "Osman, or Orchan his son, emir of the Sultan of Iconium, whose followers were called Osmanlia, founded the Ottoman Empire at Prusa, Bithynia, by policy and conquest."--Heyden's Dictionary of Dates, Art. "Turkey." "1288-1326 Othman lays the foundation of the Turkish Empire of Asia Minor."--Chronological Table of Universal History, Heilprin. "In the latter part of 1326 Prusa, or Broussa, surrendered to the sultan's son, Orkhan."--Ottoman Dynasty, A. W. Hidden, Edition of 1912. Historians agree that Brusa was captured in the year 1326 and that the event marked the true beginning of the Ottoman Empire.

End of Period. The high tide of Turkish aggression and conquest was reached during the latter half of the 17th century when a large part of Europe was in their possession and all nations trembled before their conquering arms. From a human viewpoint it seemed that nothing could prevent further military successes leading to the conquest of all of Europe. But divine revelation had foretold a limit of Turkish dominion and the time was about to expire. In a succession of crushing defeats between 1683 and 1717 the Turkish hordes were turned back toward Asia from whence they came. The slow retreat finally ended in their expulsion from Europe.

First Great Defeat. "Once more the tide of Moslem invasion rolled up to the gates of Vienna. Kara Mustapha advanced with a vast army and laid siege to the Hapsburg capital. For a moment the fate of central Europe hung in the balance, but after the siege had lasted two months, the chivalry of Poland, led by King John Sobieski and a German army, came to the relief of the city, and on Sept. 12 (1683), the Turkish army was put

to flight in a great battle before its walls. The blow was a crushing one and ended the role of Turkey as a formidable aggressive power. Austria, Poland and Venice now made a great onslaught upon the Ottoman Empire."--New Americanized Encyclopedia , Vol. 22, p. 574. The Turkish army in the battle before the walls of Vienna numbered 275,000 men who were flushed with victory. Their defeat by less than 70,000 men was no less than miraculous. Sobieski became the hero of Christendom. Before the battle he addressed his soldiers thus: "Not Vienna alone, but Christendom looks to you today. Not for an earthly sovereign do you fight. You are soldiers of the King of kings."

Beginning of End. This great defeat did not mark the end of Turkish dominion in Europe, but it was the beginning of the end. "One thing is sure, that when they met their first really vigorous and well-organized western foe under John Sobieski, their advance was checked; the tide of their victories at once began to ebb."--The Balkans, William M. Shoane, p. 5.

"Vienna's siege of 1683 marks emphatically a turning point....From 1683 on our attention will be directed to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and to the distribution of its spoils among the Christian powers. The Christian aggression began promptly on the morrow of the victory of Vienna....Austria, Poland, and Venice now began a war which marks the first phase in the long story of Ottoman agony."--History of the Balkan Peninsula, Schevill, pp. 259, 260. "The war which Austria, Poland, and Venice began in 1684 lasted till 1698, and revealed to an astonished world a decrepit Ottoman empire almost entirely shorn of the strength with which it had once imposed itself on Europe."--Id. p. 261.

Approaching Downfall. "Since Sobieski's great victory the power of the Turks has steadily waned rather than increased. They have been slowly pushed to the eastward until there is now little of value left to them in Europe but Constantinople."--Famous Men of Modern Times, p. 222. "The great destruction of the Turks before Vienna was rapturously hailed throughout Christendom as the announcement of the approaching downfall of the Mohametan Empire in Europe."--History of the Ottoman Turks, Prof. Creasy, Vol. 2, p. 60. "The defeat and immense destruction of the Turks before Vienna was rapturously hailed throughout Christendom as presaging the approaching downfall of the Mohammedan Empire in Europe."--Turkey Past and Present, p. 117. These historians declare that the great battle before the walls of Vienna in 1683 was only "the announcement of the approaching downfall" of Turkey in Europe. It was not the downfall itself. After several other defeats the fatal blow was struck by Prince Eugene at the famous battle of Belgrade on August 16, 1717.

Battle of Belgrade. Of the Battle of Belgrade, Ridpath says: "The Cresent remained in the ascendancy until 1717, when the veteran Prince Eugene led an imperial army across the Danube and began a siege of Belgrade. The Sultan perceiving the peril of the situation, sent a tremendous army to break the investment. Eugene was pressed against the city by the foe without, but turned against his assailants, defeated them with prodigious slaughter, and compelled Belgrade to capitulate. This broke the power of the Turks."--History of the World, Vol. 6, pp. 522, 523. Prince Eugene had about 75,000 men and the Turks 200,000. The Austrians were hemmed in between the walls of the city and the vast Ottoman army. This victory, like that of Vienna, seemed miraculous.

Turkish Power Broken. "Never was a bolder course attempted by a general, and never was there a more brilliant success. With greatly inferior force the Austrians stormed the Turkish lines. 20,000 of them were killed or wounded....The Turks retreated in disorder...This war with Austria which resulted in the treaty of Passarowitz did more than free Hungary from Ottoman rule. It accomplished the destruction of the prestige of the Turkish armies which had so long weighed on the mind of Europe. The Ottomans seem to have been completely cowed by the succession of defeats. Henceforth they were always on the defensive and never willingly acted the part of aggressors. It became the settled conviction of Europe not only that there was no longer any reason to fear invasion from the Turks, but that it was only a question of time when they would be driven back into Asia."--History of the Turkish Empire, Lord Eversly, pp.199-202. We must remember that the time period of the prophecy must end with the end of the Ottoman Empire as an aggressive, destructive power.

Results of Battle. "The result at length was the treaty signed at Karowitz on the Danube. This pact marked the advent of anew era in the Near East....From this time forth all serious dread of the military power of Turkey ceased in Europe. The prolonged but unhalted dissolution of the Ottoman Empire was in full prospect."--A Short History of the Near East, Davis, p.271. In his book, The Ottoman Empire, page 1, Miller declares this defeat to be"The first dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire," and in the Tabular Views of Universal Knowledge the battle of Belgrade is the last date given by the author, Putman, under the caption, "The Ottoman Empire." Of the results of the battle of Belgrade anotherhistorian says: "The Austrian forces were led by Prince Eugene, now at the zenith of his fame and skill, and in two battles, of which one was fought at Peterwardein (Aug. 13, 1716), and the other before the walls of Belgrade (Aug. 16, 1717), his troops literally annihilated the opposing Turks. The defeat suffered by the Turks was even more decisive than in the earlier war and was duly registered in the peace that followed at Passarowitz." This peace treaty was signed on July 21, 1718.

Another Writer. "The Ottoman Power was organized in the 14th century by Orchan....Under Suleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566) the Ottoman Empire attained the height of its power....The combined fleets of Venice, Spain, and the Pope under Don John of Austria utterly defeated the Turks at Lepanto, Oct. 7, 1571. The decline of the Ottoman Empire had begun... Maladministration and internal disorders hastened the decadence of the Empire, and, when Kara Mustafa was routed before Vienna in 1682 by Duke Charles of Lorraine and John Sobiesky, King of Poland, the blow was a crushing one and ended the role of Turkey as a formal aggressive power. Buda was captured by the Austrians in 1686, John Sobieski overran Moldavia, and the Venetians invaded the Morea. The treaties of Carlovitz (1699) and Passarovitz (1718) marked the end of Turkish rule in Hungary, Transylvania and Podolia, bringing the frontier to approximately the line occupied before the treaty of Berlin in 1878."--New Standard Encyclopedia.

The Prophetic Period. The capture of Brusa by Orchan in 1326 and the battle of Belgrade on August 16, 1717, are exactly 391 years apart. Unfortunately the exact date of the capture of Brousa cannot as yet be ascertained. "Just when and how Brusa fell cannot be stated with precision."--Foundation of the Ottoman Empire, H. A. Gibbons, p.47. Counting back 391 years and fifteen days from the battle of Belgrade on August 16, 1717, brings us to

the date July 21, 1326. In this reckoning the ten days that were dropped from the calendar during this period are added. That this was approximately the date of the capture of Brusa is evident. We are told by Von Hammer and other historians that after capturing Brusa, Orchan brought the glad news to his father Othman just before his death. Othman was overjoyed by the tidings, and after requesting that he be buried in the captured city, he soon expired. After burying Othman in the new capital, Orchan proclaimed himself Sultan. The following statement indicates the approximate date of the fall of Brusa: "By the consent of all Turkish chronologers, Orchan, son and successor of Othman, took Prusa the metropolis of Bithynia, in the year of the Hegira 726, and was then sent for by his dying father. That same year, on the 10th of Ramazan, Othman dying, Orchan succeeded him to the throne....Now the 10th of Ramazan fell that year on the 8th of August."--History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire, Demetrious Cantemir, London, A. Millar, 1756, 2v. in 1. pref. pp. 5, 6.

The Conclusion. Since Othman died on the 8th of August, and after capturing the city of Brusa Orchan had time to visit his dying father and tell him the glad news, it is evident that the city was captured sometime in July. The prophetic time period of 391 years and 15 days would locate the time of its beginning on July 21, 1326, and investigation will doubtless some day reveal the fact that Brousa was captured on that very date. Even with this historical fact still missing, the amazing certainty and mathematical exactitude of this time prophecy inspires confidence in its divine origin and authorship. The prophecy, written twelve centuries before, declared that Turkey would remain an independent, aggressive, destructive power for 391 years and 15 days, and history fully corroborates the prediction. Turkey was not a dangerous and destructive power before 1326 or after 1717. The four messengers of destruction were loosed and prepared "for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men."

Purpose of Judgments. Verses 20,21. "Plagues" as used here has the meaning of "strokes" or "judgments" and furnishes no proof that they are identical or even closely related to the seven last plagues. The very fact that there was still opportunity for repentance shows that probation had not yet closed during the sixth trumpet. With the majority of mankind including the members of the apostate church the judgments of God failed in their mission. "For the people turneth not unto Him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts." Isa. 9:13. Only the righteous "learn righteousness" when the judgments of God are in the land. Isa. 26: 9,10. Idolatry in both the Old and New Testaments is identified with devil or demon worship. See Deut. 32:17; Ps. 96:5; 106:37; 1 Cor. 10:31. The final effort to bring repentance to mankind would be in the heralding of a final world message which is pictured in the parenthetical prophecy between the sixth and seventh trumpets. Before the last and most terrible of the seven war scourges visits the nations of earth, a last and mighty appeal will be made through the gospel under the latter rain of spiritual power.

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THE ANGEL WITH THE LITTLE BOOK

14

Parenthetical Prophecy. Revelation 10 and 11:1-13 constitute a parenthetical prophecy between the sixth and seventh trumpets. It is closely related to the parenthetical prophecy between the sixth and seventh seals. This is further proof that the seals and trumpets are parallel and not successive. This episode or interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets is a break in the line of thought presented in chapters eight and nine and concluded in the latter part of chapter eleven. Its purpose is to give another picture of God's last measage to the world before probation closes and His wrath is poured out in the seven last plagues. The seventh angel is restrained from blowing his trumpet while the sealing mesaage is fulfilling its mission as the angels of God are holding back the winds of war and human passion. See Rev. 7:1-3. The seventh trumpet cannot sound till the people of God are sealed for the kingdom.

The Mighty Angel. Rev. 10:1. An angel is a minister or messenger of God and is a very appropriate symbol of a heaven-sent message and is so employed six times in the Apocalypse. One writer has said that the angel of this vision is "a symbol to represent the people of God who are working in harmony with the universe of heaven." The description of the message-angel of this prophecy is similar to that of Christ in chapter one. For this reason many believe that Christ is here pictured. He is the Archangel and the Messenger of the Covenant and therefore the very center of the gospel. All light and truth have their source in Him. He is the "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Others contend that the picture is that of a created angel who comes to earth as the representative of Christ. Since the angel of the vision is symbolic of a heaven-sent message, the difference of opinion is not important. The gospel is called "the gospel of Christ" because He is its center and substance, but it is ministered to man through the agency of the Holy Spirit and the angels who are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Heb. 1:14.

Messenger of Light. The face of the symbolic angel shone like the sun, the source of light and the symbol of righteousness and truth. Like the light of the sun, the brightness of the angel's countenance was so glorious that it was blinding to look upon. As the message is given, the church reflects the glory of Christ. In chapter 12 the church of Christ is symbolized by a woman "clothed with the sun," which represents the righteousness of Christ. "The Sun of Righteousness" and "The Lord Our Righteousness" are two of the titles of Christ. When Jesus was transfigured "His face did shine as the sun." Matt. 17:2. The message depicted in this prophecy is one of divine truth and heavenly light. The pillar of fire in the wilderness signified the presence of Christ, the Divine Leader of Israel. Feet are the symbols of travel and progress, and being "as pillars of fire" would not only indicate continual advancement and progress till the message covered land and sea, but that Christ is the Leader of the Advent message and the source of its light.

The Rainbow. "And a rainbow encircled his head" (Fenton). The bow like that above the throne of God forms a complete circle. See Rev. 4:3. It is the emblem of divinity and eternity. It indicates that the message comes directly from the throne of God and is therefore of divine origin. It

also shows that it is a message of grace and mercy in the midst of wra' manifested in judgments. Coming between the second and third woe trumpets, the message symbolized by the angel is one of love and mercy in the midst of political turmoil and social dissolution. It is the call to repentance that makes it possible for "the inhabitants of the world" to "learn righteousness" through the war-scourges that plague the nations. The bow is the token of the mercy of God toward repentant sinners. It is the bow of promise and indicates that the message comes to earth in fulfillment of a divine promise. The message is a fulfillment of prophecy and is given when it is due. The covenant-keeping God "is not slack concerning His promise." The bow signifies "the faithful witness of covenant mercy and protection to His own." (Mauro) It also represents the righteousness of Christ which He pleads in behalf of the repentant sinner. Righteousness by faith, therefore, forms an important part of the heaven-sent message here symbolized.

The Cloud Investment. The symbolic angel is "clothed with a cloud," or "invested with a cloud." (Emphatic Diaglott). Members of the Godhead must veil their glory when they appear to men. While leading ancient Israel through the wilderness Christ veiled His presence in a pillar of cloud by day. In a cloud He came down on Mount Sinai to proclaim His law, and in a cloud the Lord visited the holy of holies in the tabernacle. "Who maketh the clouds His chariot." Ps. 104:3. Since this is the only one of the six angel-messengers of the Revelation who is described as being clothed with a cloud, it may indicate that something in regard to this phase of the last message was covered and obscured from view and therefore not at first understood. A study of the entire chapter and the events that fulfilled it shows that this was indeed true. The angel from heaven representing the final phase of God's last message has no covering cloud and its unrestricted light fills the whole earth with glory. See Rev. 18:1.

A World Message, Verses 2-6. The position of the angel signifies the world-wide scope of the message. Its progress continues till it is world-embracing. It goes forth conquering and to conquer until it gains possession of land and sea and claims the whole earth for the God of heaven to whom it rightfully belongs. The earth is to be redeemed and "given to the saints of the most high," for an everlasting possession. The conquered earth will be the home of the conquerors. The power and authority of Christ must increase until the rebel earth and all the enemies of the kingdom of heaven are under His feet. See 1 Cor. 15:24-28. All of the other apocalyptic symbols of the Advent message indicate that it will be world-embracing. See Rev. 7:1-3; 14:6-14; 18:1-5. The message is heralded with "a loud voice" because its importance demands that all must hear it. It involves the eternal destiny of all mankind. The lion's voice is the loudest and most far-reaching of all the beasts of the forest and field. The symbolic angel cries with a voice "resembling the roaring of a lion." (Fenton) Christ is "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah" and He always speaks His messages with power.

The Seven Thunders. The seven thunders did not utter their voices or proclaim their messages till after the angel had finished his testimony in all the earth. Then "each of the seven peals of thunder uttered its own message." (Weymouth) That the seven thunders were seven messages is indicated by the fact that the prophet started to write down what they said. John doubtless thought that they revealed another series of events

similar to the messages to the seven churches, the breaking of the seven seals, and the sounding of the seven trumpets. It is evident that the seven thunders are the same as the "thunderings and voices" revealed elsewhere in the Apocalypse. See Rev. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:17,18. If they are identical it furnishes further proof that the thundering voices sound forth at or after the close of probation when the message of the angel has completed its mission. This would indicate that the messages of the seven thunders will not be needed till after the close of probation when they will be given and understood.

Sealed Messages. "Keep secret what the seven peals of thunder said, and do not write it down." (20th C.N.T.) The fact that John started to write and was commanded not to record the messages of the seven thunders is conclusive proof that John understood what was said and considered it a part of the Revelation needed by the church. Since there is no record of what the voices from the throne of God said, or the seven thunders uttered, and as far as we know the prophet strictly obeyed the divine instruction to secrecy, any conjecture on our part would be worse than futile. Those things which are not revealed do not belong to us. See Deut. 29:29. This may have been the same message Paul heard when he was carried to heaven in vision and heard words "which no human being is permitted to repeat." 2 Cor. 12:4, Weymouth. Till after the close of probation when these messages are due, let us confine our study to the things which are revealed. After the voices of mercy have completed their message, then "voices, mysterious and awful, declare the doom of the wicked."--The Great Controversy, p. 638. Dean Alford suggests that the messages of the seven thunders are concealed to produce "godly fear" and to show "that the arrows of God's quiver are not exhausted." Another writer had the same idea in mind when he said: "Besides the terrors foretold, there are others unutterable and more horrifying lying in the background."--Commentary on the Whole Bible, by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown.

The Little Book. "A very small open book." (Fenton) "A small scroll unrolled." (Weymouth) The language indicates that the little book had not always been open. It had previously been closed and sealed. It was the message of this angel that opened and unsealed the little book whose contents were necessary to prepare the church for the terrible scenes of the third woe. The only part of the Scriptures that were ever sealed was the book of Daniel or that part of it which pertained to the last days or "the time of the end." The prophecy of Daniel was to be closed and sealed only till "the time of the end" when many would search it through and find knowledge in its revelations. See Dan. 12:4,9. It is evident that the book of Daniel would play an important part in the message that would herald the second advent of Christ and prepare a people to meet Him. The book of Daniel was closed and sealed by order of the angel Gabriel. It is unsealed and opened by a mighty angel from heaven at "the time of the end" when its revelations would be needed by the church. The book of Daniel would therefore be opened by a message and not merely by the ending of a prophetic period.

The Unsealing Message. The message that was based on the 2300 year time prophecy of Daniel and which therefore climaxed in 1844, was the key that unlocked the sealed book so that it was understood for the first time. That event therefore also marked the beginning of the time of the end or the last generation. "The prophecies present a succession of events

leading down to the opening of the judgment. This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal 'to the time of the end.' Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfillment of these prophecies. But at the time of the end, says the prophet, 'many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.'"--The Great Controversy, p.356. The same writer also declared that "it was the Lion of the tribe of Judah who unsealed the book, and gave to John the revelation of what should be in the last days....Daniel stood in his lot to bear his testimony which was sealed until the time of the end, when the first angel's message should be proclaimed to the world. The book of Daniel is unsealed in the revelation to John." (T.M. 115).

Message of the Angel. Verses 5-7. "Lifted up his right hand to heaven," (R.V.). The little book out of which the message was preached was therefore held in the left hand. The picture is in harmony with the method of modern preachers and teachers of the Word. This was the ancient method of taking an oath. See Gen. 14:22,23; Deut. 32:40. The solemn appeal is to the Eternal. The message is given by the authority of the Creator and is based on the fact of creation. The recognition of the Creator and the power of creation is an essential part of all heaven-sent messages. The power to create is always coupled with the power to save or re-create. See Rev. 14:6,7. Only the Creator can redeem or re-create. The message from the opened book of Daniel was regarding time. It is based on the greatest time prophecy in the Bible recorded in Dan. 8:13-19; 9:24-27. The 2300 prophetic days or literal years would reach to the cleansing of the sanctuary. In Dan. 7: 9,10 this event is called the judgment. Before the mathematical exactness and clock-like precision of this great time prophecy and its fulfillment, skeptics stand silenced and Christians amazed. It points out the very year of the baptism of Jesus, His crucifixion, the time the probation of the Jewish nation would close and the gospel be given to the Gentiles, the beginning of the time of the end, and the beginning of the Investigative Judgment.

Jews Forbidden to Study. The 2300 year time prophecy is the most convincing evidence that Jesus was indeed the promised and looked-for Messiah. John the Baptist may have understood the part relating to the time of the appearance of the Messiah and called the attention of the people to it as he heralded the message of the first advent of the Christ. It is evident that Jesus understood it and had reference to it when He said, "The time is at hand," and "the hour is come," and other similar statements. The Jews must have had some understanding of this prophecy as they were "in expectation" when John gave his message. This time prophecy has been the means of converting many Jews to Christianity and will doubtless convince many more. In at least one case the rabbis forbade the Jews to study it: "In 1656, a dispute occurred in Poland between some distinguished Jewish Rabbins and the Catholics, respecting the 70 weeks. The Rabbins were so hard pushed by the argument that proved Jesus to be the Messiah, the time of His sufferings being at the end of the seventy weeks, that they broke up the discussion. The Rabbins then held a meeting and pronounced a curse upon any Jew who should attempt to ascertain the chronology of the prophetic period. Their anathema was this: 'May his bones and his memory rot who shall attempt to number the 70 weeks.'"--The Midnight Cry, August 10, 1843.

Last Day Message. Verses 6,7. That this prophecy is a picture of the last gospel message is evident from the fact that when it has completed its mission the gospel work will be finished. "He solemnly declared, 'There shall be no further delay; but in the days when the seventh angel blows his trumpet--when he begins to do so--then the secret purposes of God are realized, in accordance with the good news which He gave to His servants the Prophets.'" (Weymouth). The purpose of God in the plan of salvation will already have been realized when the seventh angel blows his war-trumpet. This is indicated by the fact that when the seventh angel begins to sound, the mystery of God is already finished. The mystery of God is not finished while the seventh trumpet is being sounded. "The mystery of God" or "godliness" is the gospel. See 1 Tim. 3:16; Col. 1:27. The seventh trumpet is the war of Armageddon which comes after the close of probation. The four angels hold in check the winds of war and strife and do not permit the Armageddon war-trumpet to sound till after the servants of God are sealed for the kingdom. See Rev. 7:1-3.

The Seventh Trumpet. That the message symbolized by this prophecy has completed its work and that probation has closed before the last and most terrible war-trumpet sounds to gather the nations to the war of Armageddon, is evident from Rev. 11: 14,15. It is also proven by the wording of almost all of the different translations of which the following are samples: "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets," (R.V.). "When he is about to sound, then is the mystery of God finished." (American Baptist Improved). "When he is about to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God also shall be completed," (Darby). "When he is ready to proclaim, then the secret of God will be completed." (Fenton) "When he is about to blow his trumpet, then shall there be finished the mystery of God," (Centenary). "As soon as he is about to blow his trumpet, then shall have been completed the sacred secret of God." (Rotherham) "When he is ready to blow his blast, then the secret purposes of God are at once fulfilled," (20th C.N.T.) Biblical scholars agree that "is about to sound," and "has been finished," are the only meanings possible in the Greek original.

Delay No Longer. "That there should be delay no longer," (R.V.), or "no further delay," (Weymouth), indicates that there had been a long delay in the finishing of the purposes of God through the gospel. It is evident from the reading of the New Testament Scriptures that it was God's purpose that the gospel should be quickly given to the world. This seems to have been the belief of the early Christians. In correcting the impression that the second advent of Christ was near at hand, Paul foretold the "falling away" when a great apostasy would cause a long delay in the fulfillment of the purposes of God. See 2 Thess. 2:2,3. The study of the prophecies and especially those of the book of Daniel, convinced Bible students in the early part of the 19th century that the long delay was about over and that Christ would soon return. This conviction was greatly strengthened by the study of the 2300 year time prophecy. In fact it was this prophecy that furnished much of the zeal and inspiration for the giving of the message foretold in Revelation 10.

The Time Set. "That there should be time no longer," indicates the setting of a definite time when probation would close and God's work would be finished. The great foreign missions movement which began with William

Carey in the closing years of the 18th century, culminated in the great second advent movement in the early part of the 19th century. Beginning in about the year 1818, devout men in all denominations and in all parts of the world began to study the prophecies relating to the second advent of Christ. This study centered on the books of Daniel and the Revelation in connection with the great prophecy of Christ recorded in Matt. 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Almost at the same time they all came to the conclusion that the return of Christ was at hand. The leader of this movement in America was William Miller, a Baptist. Associated with him were Josiah Litch, Charles Fitch, Joshua V. Himes, and many others. Charles Irving and Joseph Wolfe were two of the most prominent leaders of the advent movement in the Old World. It is estimated that more than 300 ministers of the Church of England and 3,000 of all denominations began to preach that Christ would return at the end of the 2300 years. They at first thought that the time prophecy would end in 1833.[7] Later they discovered their mistake and set the time where it belongs in 1844. This message was heralded to the entire Christian world and all who heard it were told "that there shall be time no longer." The prophecy was literally fulfilled.

The Mistake. But Christ did not return in 1844 as so many had confidently expected. A mistake had been made, not in regard to the time, but in regard to the event. That the 2300 years ended in 1844 none can successfully gainsay. The angel Gabriel had declared to Daniel that at the end of the 2300 prophetic days, "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Those who studied these prophecies in the early part of the 19th century were ignorant of the heavenly sanctuary and its services. Or if they knew anything about it, they could not conceive of anything in heaven needing cleansing. They were not yet aware of the fact that the Papal abomination with its false priestly mediatorial system had polluted the heavenly sanctuary and its services. Through this counterfeit system the Papacy trampled underfoot and polluted "the sanctuary of strength," and took away the daily or continual ministration of Christ. Also these men did not seem to know that the books of record must be cleansed by an investigative judgment before Christ could return. See Dan. 8:10-17; 11:31. The only place in the universe that they knew of that needed cleansing was this sin-cursed earth which is to be cleansed by fire. They therefore came to the conclusion that Christ would return in 1844 and cleanse the earth by fire. The message was given with great power and brought the greatest revival since Pentecost.

The Disappointment. When the time passed and Christ did not return, the advent believers experienced a disappointment akin to that of the disciples when Christ was crucified and their hopes were blasted. But this very disappointment is foretold in this prophecy, and during the bitter experience the forecast was discovered and proved to be a great source of encouragement. Rev. 10:8-10. The study of the prophecy of Daniel with its message that Christ would soon return in fulfillment of His purpose and His promises through all the prophets, brought great joy to those who heard and believed the message and made preparation for translation into the heavenly kingdom. The message was very sweet to genuine Christians everywhere. But when the time passed and their hopes were not realized, the joy was turned into sorrow and that which was at first sweet became bitter.

The Book Eaten. The little book had to be eaten before its contents could be proclaimed to the world. Eating a book means to study its contents carefully and to digest and fully comprehend its meaning. See Eze. 2: 8-3; 3. A book thus eaten and digested becomes a part of the reader just as eaten and digested food becomes a part of the body. God's word has always been as "sweet as honey" to the taste of His people. See Ps. 19: 10; 119:103; Jer. 15:16. But with some people honey in the mouth turns to bile in the stomach. It sometimes produces torture. "My stomach was in torture." (Fenton) While the disappointment resulting from the mistake was very bitter, it led to the discovery of one of the greatest truths of the Bible which was covered up and hidden from the church by the Papal apostasy. The disappointment was His appointment and therefore a blessing in disguise.

A Bitter-Sweet Book. The entire Bible is in some respecta a bitter-sweet Book. It contains much that is bitter and distressing. Its revelations often produce bitterness of soul and anguish of spirit. This must be the effect on the sinner who is placed under conviction by its revelations. But its messages are always sweet to the saints of God. "Every revelation of God's purposes, even though a mere fragment, is 'bitter-sweet,' disclosing judgment as well as mercy." (Swete) "What is here said to the prophet is in substance applicable to all believers, and especially to those who teach the Word. Their place in the kingdom of God will be measured by their fidelity in complying with this admonition. We too must eat and even swallow it; not some choice portion of it, but the whole; not that alone which is agreeable to ourselves, like those who separate the gospel from the law, but that also which may occasion us the deepest pain." (Hengstenberg).

"I thank Thee, Lord, that all our joy
Is touched with pain;
That shadows fall on brightest hours,
That thorns remain;
So that earth's bliss may be our guide,
And not our chain."

--A. A. Proctor.

MEASURING THE TEMPLE OF GOD

15

A Great Discovery. The mistake in the interpretation of the 2300 year time prophecy resulted in the unsealing of the book of Daniel. The disappointment of 1844 led to the discovery of one of the greatest and most vital truths of the plan of salvation: one that had been hidden under the rubbish of papal superstition since the "falling away" near apostolic times. The true meaning of this great time prophecy was providentially covered up in order to more effectually call the world's attention to it and the time when it would end. Because of the power of God attending the proclamation of the message symbolized by the mighty angel with the little book, which culminated in 1844, its divine origin could not be questioned. Not since apostolic days had there been such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Testimony of a Witness. "Of all the great religious movements since the days of the apostles, none have been more free from human imperfections and the wiles of Satan than was that of the autumn of 1844. Even now, after the lapse of many years, all who shared in that movement and who have stood firm upon the platform of truth, still feel the holy influence of that blessed work, and bear witness that it was of God....The work did not stand in the wisdom and learning of men, but in the power of God...There went with it an impelling power that moved the soul. There was no doubt, no questioning...Like showers of rain upon the thirsty earth, the Spirit of grace descended upon the earnest seekers. Those who expected soon to stand face to face with their Redeemer, felt a solemn joy that was unutterable. The softening, subduing power of the Holy Spirit melted the heart, as His blessing was bestowed in rich measure upon the faithful, believing ones." --The Great Controversy, pp. 401-403.

Blessing in Disguise. The bitter disappointment that came to the apostles when Christ was crucified was a blessing in disguise. It was the most effectual way of erasing from their clouded minds a false idea regarding the purpose of the first advent, and preparing them to receive the floods of pentecostal light. Just before His death, Jesus said to His disciples: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." John 16:12,20. The very depths of the sorrow and disappointment that came to the disciples because of their mistaken ideas regarding the mission of the Messiah, raised their joy to greater heights than would otherwise have been possible. To Christ's true followers "disappointments are His appointments." The advent believers in 1844 passed through an experience similar to that of the disciples of Jesus. As soon as the time passed and Christ did not return, their disappointment and sorrow were great. The world began to scoff and has scoffed at their mistake ever since. But all such are still in darkness regarding one of the grandest truths of the gospel. The heavenly sanctuary, with its High Priest and His mediatorial ministration, is largely hidden from them. The sweet tidings of Christ's soon return was turned into bitterness by the disappointment, but the bitter became sweet again because of the glorious discovery made. The discovered light on the heavenly sanctuary and its services became the basis of another message for the world.

A New Commission. Rev. 10:11. "You must prophesy yet further" (Weymouth). To the disappointed church, chagrined by apparent failure and puzzled as to the cause of their mistake and disappointment, another commission was given. Their work was not yet finished. The previous world message had accomplished its purpose, but was not final. It had unlocked the sealed book of Daniel and brought to light a great hidden truth that is necessary to prepare a people to stand in the day of judgment and to live through the time of God's wrath and indignation. The discovered light must now be heralded to the world in another message. The new commission indicates that the previous message was incomplete and must again be given to all the world in the setting of the added light that corrected the mistake and removed the obscuring cloud. The repetition of the message with the additional light shed upon it, must involve a further eating of the little book. Those who preach must eat and those who eat must preach. "He who has not received and eaten the little book cannot prophesy, but he who has received and eaten it must do so," (Bengel). When light comes it is "woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

Key To Discovery. Rev. 11:1. "Then a reed was given me to serve as a measuring rod; and a voice said, 'Rise, and measure God's Sanctuary--and the altar--and count the worshippers who are in it," (Weymouth). The disappointed church could not prophesy again without first measuring or studying the sanctuary, its furniture and services. The light resulting from this study would furnish the inspiration for the giving of the new message. The command to "rise" indicates that the advent people were cast down with sorrow and disappointment; that active missionary work had ceased because they thought their work was done. The disappointment brought great confusion for a time. For several years the belief obtained that probation had closed in 1844 and therefore further preaching was useless. Because the mistake was made in regard to the meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary, the divine command was given to discover their mistake by the study of the sanctuary question. They were to measure, study, investigate and critically examine the subject, their ignorance of which had caused their mistake and disappointment.

The Measuring Rod. The studying was to be done by "a reed like unto a measuring rod," (Fenton). Tall reeds grew in immense brakes in the Jordan valley. A measure is "any standard of comparison or judgment." The only standard of comparison by which the heavenly sanctuary and its services can be measured or judged is the earthly sanctuary and its services. The earthly was typical of the heavenly and types always throw floods of light on their antitypes. When Moses built the tabernacle and established its services he was cautioned to carefully follow the pattern of heavenly things. See Ex. 25:8,9,40. The earthly and typical was a miniature picture of the heavenly and antitypical, and is therefore the measuring rod by which it can be measured or studied. Most of our knowledge regarding the heavenly sanctuary and the priestly ministry of Christ has been gained through the study of the types. While types and their antitypes are never identical, they are always similar and therefore throw light upon each other.

Count the Worshipers. The commission was not alone to measure the sanctuary and the altar or furniture, but also to count and study those who took part in its services. Everything connected with the typical sanctuary and its services was figurative of some phase of the plan of redemption. The high

priest had many assistants. According to 1 Chron. 23 and 24, there were 24,000 priests who served in twenty-four courses. At the head of each thousand was a prince or elder. Thus in the heavenly sanctuary service, Christ has many assistants who seem to be divided into twenty-four divisions under the leadership of twenty-four elders. See Rev. 4:5. Each year in the typical service the whole plan of salvation was pictured to ancient Israel. Between the Passover and the day of Atonement the entire mediatorial work of Christ was prefigured from His death on the cross to the close of probation when His priestly ministration is finished and He becomes King. See Heb. 8:1-5; 9:1-12,24.

The Court Omitted. Verses 2,3. "But omit the outer court of the sanctuary," (Fenton). "But as for the court which is outside the Sanctuary, pass it over. Do not measure it; for it has been given to the Gentiles, and for forty-two months they will trample the holy city under foot," (Weymouth). "And the city will be under their heel for two and forty months," (Moffatt). The court of the heavenly sanctuary was not to be measured because it was disconnected with the sanctuary proper, and would be under the control of the enemies of God for 42 months, 1260 prophetic days or literal years. This period is always applied to the reign of the papacy. See Dan. 7:25,26; 8:10-14; Rev. 13:5-7. What was given into the hands of the papacy for 1260 years, and what was trampled under foot by them during that time? Of the papal horn of the Roman beast, Daniel said: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." In answer to Daniel's questions regarding the work of this persecuting power, the angel Gabriel said: "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." Dan. 7:21,25. It was the saints of God or the church that was given into the hands of the papacy and persecuted and trampled under foot for 1260 years. We must not forget that the Revelation is a divine commentary on the book of Daniel.

Further Evidence. When Daniel was given another vision of the work of the papacy he saw this anti-christian power casting "the host of heaven" to the ground and stamping upon them. He beheld it magnifying itself against "the Prince of the host, and by him the daily ministration was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down." He then heard the question asked: "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily ministration, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot?" The answer was: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Dan. 8:10-14. It is evident that Daniel and the Revelator were speaking of the same events. It was the church, or "saints of the most High" or "the host of heaven," that was given into the hands of and trampled under foot by the papacy during the 1260 years. The Revelator speaks of it as "the court" and "the holy city." There is therefore no other possible conclusion than that the church and not the world is the court of the heavenly sanctuary. This was the part of the temple of God that the "man of sin" and "son of perdition" entered and controlled during the Middle Ages, and in which the false and counterfeit priestly system of the papacy supplanted the true. See 2 Thess. 2:3,4.

A Sanctuary in Heaven. A study of the sanctuary question soon revealed to the disappointed advent believers that there is a sanctuary in heaven of which the earthly was typical. Daniel's prophecy must therefore have

reference to the heavenly sanctuary since there is no longer a sanctuary on earth. "After the settlement of the Hebrews in Canaan, the tabernacle was replaced by the temple of Solomon, which though a permanent structure and upon a larger scale, observed the same proportions, and was similarly furnished. In this form the sanctuary existed--except while it lay in ruins in Daniel's time--until its destruction by the Romans, in A.D. 70. This is the only sanctuary that ever existed on the earth, of which the Bible gives any information."--The Great Controversy, p. 412. Since this is true, Pagan Rome could not possibly have been the sanctuary polluted and taken away by the papacy as some contend. The disappointed church learned that the sanctuary to be cleansed at the close of the 2300 years was in heaven and that only the court is on earth. The cleansing of course must eventually include the court which was so long to be dominated by the papal apostasy.

Entire Sanctuary Holy. The word sanctuary comes from the Latin "sanctus" meaning "sacred," or "sanctum" or "sanctuarium" meaning "a sacred place." This term can properly apply only to a holy or sacred place. The entire sanctuary included all three parts--the court, the holy place, and the most holy place--and all three were sacred. The least sacred of the three was the court and the most sacred was "the holy of holies" or "the most holy place." The sacredness of any thing, person or place, depends on its nearness to or distance from God; on its relation to the divine presence. Into the "holy of holies" the high priest went alone once a year. In the "holy place" the other priests ministered day by day and for this reason it was part of the daily ministration. The only part of the sanctuary that the people could enter was the court where they came to meet their priests at the altar of sacrifice. Solomon's Temple, which was also made according to divine instructions (1 Chron. 28:11-19), had several courts with varying degrees of sacredness. These were all considered a part of the temple and were holy. See Acts 21:26-28.

Service in Court. In the typical sanctuary the court was not only the most holy but also the only holy place the children of Israel could enter. In it was located the altar where the convicted sinner met the priest, confessed his sins, offered his substitutionary sacrifice, and by faith received the forgiveness of his transgressions. From the altar, the priest, as the sinner's representative and mediator, entered the holy place to minister in his behalf. The priest was the connecting link between the altar of sacrifice and the altar of incense; between God's wrath against sin and His mercy toward sinners. It was in the court where the Israelites enjoyed the privileges of the plan of redemption. They came out of the camp and of the world and into the court of the sanctuary to meet and worship God. Therefore the world as a whole cannot be the court of the heavenly sanctuary for it is not in any sense a sacred place.

The Temple-Court. The church of God is not only the most holy, but the only holy place on this earth. It must therefore be the court of the heavenly temple or sanctuary. Our text proves this conclusively. It declares that the court is "the holy city" which the papacy trampled under foot for 1260 years, during which time God's two witnesses had to do their teaching clothed in sackcloth. Because the church is the only part of the heavenly temple that is on earth, it is often spoken of as "an holy temple" and "the temple of God." See 1 Cor. 3:16,17; 6:19,20; Eph. 2:19-22; 2 Thess. 2:3,4. This church temple has been built "for a habitation of God through the Spirit." All through the Scriptures the church is spoken of as the temple or sanctuary of God, because it is a part of it.

Also Called Court. In many Scriptures the church is spoken of as "My courts," "His Courts," "The courts of the lord," "The courts of our God," "The courts of the Lord's house," and "The courts of the house of our God." See Ps. 65:4; 84:1,2; 93:13; 96:8; 100:4; 116:19; 135:2; Isa. 1:12; Zech. 3:7. The plural is used in all of these texts doubtless because Solomon's temple and those which succeeded it had several courts which represented the church as a whole. "Christ is spoken of as walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Thus is symbolized His relation to the churches. ...He is the high priest and mediator in the sanctuary above, yet He is represented as walking up and down in the midst of His churches on earth. ...He is the true watchman of the Lord's house, the true warden of the temple courts."--The Acts of the Apostles, p. 586. It was in the court or courts of the typical temple that the people by faith received the benefit of the plan of redemption. Likewise it is in the church of God on earth that His people today receive the blessings of His grace. The repentant sinner comes out of the world into the church or court of the Lord's temple to get the benefits of Calvary and the plan of salvation. Those who deliberately remain out of the church or permit themselves to be severed from it, have placed themselves out of the reach of the gospel.

Clear Statements: "God's church is the court of holy life, filled with varied gifts, and endowed with the Holy Spirit."--A.A. 12. "The church of God below is one with the church of God above. Believers on the earth and the beings in heaven who have never fallen constitute one church. Every heavenly intelligence is interested in the assemblies of the saints who on earth meet to worship God. In the inner court of heaven they listen to the testimony of of the witnesses for Christ in the outer court on earth, and the praise and thanksgiving from the worshipers below is taken up in the heavenly anthem, and praise and rejoicing sound through the heavenly courts because Christ has not died in vain for the fallen sons of Adam."--Vol. 6:366.

Polluted by Papacy. It was the church or the court of the temple of God that "the man of sin" entered and polluted during the 1260 years by taking away the daily ministration of Christ and putting in its place a human and counterfeit system of sacrifice and mediation. Prophecy says: "And they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily ministration, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." Dan. 11:31. In the typical service the ministration in the court and holy place was known as the "continual" or "daily" ministration. Any interference with the service in the court would interrupt the entire sanctuary service. When the papacy got control of the church or court of God's temple and supplanted the true with the false mediatorial system, the mediatorial ministration of Christ was not only taken away but the entire sanctuary and its priesthood were trampled under foot just as truly as willful and defiant sins tread "under foot the Son of God." See Heb. 10: 26-29. That the court cannot be the entire world is evident from the fact that the Gentiles or the wicked nations have trampled the world under foot ever since the entrance of sin. Their rule of the world could not possibly be confined to 42 months or 1260 years.

Further Evidence. In the typical service one sacrifice was offered each year "without the camp" to indicate that Christ would not die for the Hebrews alone, but for all mankind. He would be "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." This "red heifer" like all the other sacrificial victims had to be approved by the high priest or his assistants before

it could be offered. The judging took place in the court but the heifer was slain "without the camp." See Num. 19:1-10. Jerusalem was symbolic of the church or court of the heavenly temple, and to pay the redemption price for the whole world, Jesus "suffered without the gate." The chief priests of the temple pronounced Jesus worthy of death within the city and then led him "without the gate" to die on the altar of Calvary outside the city walls. This is further proof that the court of the heavenly sanctuary is not the world as some have taught, but rather the church of God in the world. This view harmonizes the entire picture.

The Sanctuary Services. The typical service in behalf of sinners was threefold and took place in the three enclosures of the sanctuary in the following order: (1) In the court where the sinner brought the sacrifice and met the priest at the altar. There could be no atonement for his sins or any priestly service in his behalf till the substitutionary lamb was slain. (2) In the holy place where the sinner could not go except through his representative and mediator, the priest. There could be no service in the first apartment till after the victim had been slain in the court for "without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. 9:22. The services in these two places were known as the "daily ministration" because they continued daily throughout the year. See P.P. 352,354. (3) In the holy of holies where the high priest went once a year to cleanse the sanctuary. This was not a daily but a yearly service. This divine order could not be altered and the service begin in either the holy or most holy place. It must begin in the court.

In The Antitype. The same order must be observed in the antitypical service of Christ. Since He was to be both the victim and the priest He must come to earth and be condemned in the court and die "without the gate" on the altar of Calvary so that His blood could be ministered for the repentant sinners who come into the court and confess. Jesus cannot minister without His blood. See Heb. 9:12-24. The priestly service of Christ began in the court as did the typical. Jesus as our priest and mediator or representative entered upon the second phase of His priestly ministration in the heavenly sanctuary on the day of Pentecost. His continual or daily ministration continued till the close of the 2300 years when He began the final phase of His work; that of cleansing the temple of its record of sin, and its court of the papal abominations that had so long polluted it with its false mediatorial system. The cleansing must include the final cleansing of the church, the earthly part of the temple of God. The purifying of the church or court will be simultaneous to and an important part of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. To claim that Jesus ministered in the holy place before He came to earth to shed His blood and minister in the court and then ascended to begin in the holy of holies, is unscriptural and contrary to the divine order.

Three Typical Events. Also there were three great events or festivals in the typical service which came in exact order and were symbolic of similar events in the heavenly service. (1) The typical service of the year began with the Passover when the offering of the paschal lamb ushered in the daily or continual service of the year. (2) Fifty days later came Pentecost which was a thanksgiving celebration of the ingathering of the early harvest and probably the memorial of the giving of the law. (3) On the last day of the typical service for sin came the day of Atonement which completed the ministration that pictured to Israel the whole plan of

redemption. The feast of Tabernacles was a celebration of the blotting out of sins on the day of Atonement and also of the ingathering of the fall harvest.

The Antitype. The Passover was typical of Calvary when the true paschal Lamb was slain and Christ began His priestly service. Pentecost met its antitype in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to "convince of sin," the transgression of the law; "of righteousness," obedience to the law; and "of judgment," when the world will be measured by the law. In the type there was a long period before the final event, the day of Atonement or Judgment. So in the antitype there is a long period between Pentecost and the solemn work of investigative judgment which began at the close of the 2300 years in 1844, and will end with the close of probation. These events must also follow the order of the typical.

Two Groups of Events. The typical events were in two groups at the beginning and close of the typical yearly service. They also came in connection with the spring and fall harvests of Palestine which were typical of the two great gospel harvests at the beginning and close of Christ's ministry. Between the two groups of events and the two harvests was a long period of drought with but little fruitage. The most important events in Christ's ministry also come in two groups at the beginning and close of His ministration. After the Pentecostal outpouring and its attendant harvest of souls there came a "falling away" which was the beginning of a long spiritual drought when there was but little gospel fruitage. Just before the close of probation there will be another great gospel harvest produced by the "latter rain" or final outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It was this great sanctuary truth that the church of the 1844 disappointment was commissioned to give to the world.

Difficult Scripture. The interlude or parenthetical prophecy between the sixth and seventh trumpets is considered by commentators as the most difficult part of the Revelation to understand and interpret. This is especially true of the Two Witnesses. There are many explanations but none of them are satisfactory in every detail. "Modern scholars do not know how to interpret this interlude," (Robertson). The principal interpretations are that the Two Witnesses are Moses and Elijah who will return to the earth just before the second advent of Christ, or two other ancient prophets or modern beings who do a work similar to that of Moses and Elijah, or that they represent the two Testaments of Scripture. The attempt to make any of these positions meet all of the specifications of the prophecy presents difficulties that seem almost insurmountable. (If dogmatism were ever justifiable, it is entirely out of place on this subject.)

Restricted Light. Rev. 11:2,3. "For those 1260 days they will continue teaching, clothed in sackcloth," (20th C.N.T.). During the long, dark period of the Middle Ages when papal Rome ruled the world and persecuted the church, the work of the gospel was greatly restricted. The Sun of Righteousness was eclipsed by a dark cloud of pagan dogmas and papal superstitions. Wylie declared that "the noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world." During apostolic days the church was indeed "the light of the world." During the early rain of spiritual power the gospel light blazed out in unrestricted power and glory. Then came the "falling away" when the "mystery of iniquity" entered the temple-church of God or "the holy city" and trampled it under foot for 42 prophetic months or 1260 years. During this period a false and counterfeit system of priestly mediation supplanted the true in the temple-court of the sanctuary of God and thus polluted it.

Clothed in Sackcloth. Sackcloth was a coarse black cloth worn by prophets to depict the solemnity of their message as they called the people to repentance. It was worn by both Elijah and John the Baptist who were both reformers and were typical of those who complete the great reformation from apostasy under the second advent message. Sackcloth is also the emblem of distress and mourning. In Rev. 6:12 it is used as the symbol of the obscuration of light. "And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair." During the 1260 years of papal supremacy, the church, which should have been the light of the world, was compelled to flee to the wilderness and hide in the caves and among the mountains. See Rev. 12:6,14. Also during this period the Scriptures were proscribed, and a cloud of pagan superstitions spread over the church like a cloak of sackcloth obscuring its light. Beckwith says that the statement, "I will give power unto My two witnesses" etc., is made by the Father, and our study will prove this to be true.

Historian's Picture. Of this obscuring process, a skeptical historian with no reference to this prophecy says: "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...The Christians of the seventh century had insensibly relapsed into a semblance of paganism; their public 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."--Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 4, chap. 49. Gibbon had no trouble comprehending the possibility of a false system in the church on earth effecting the temple of God in heaven and even the eternal throne. It seems strange that the visibility of some church leaders in this respect is so obscured by preconceived ideas. During the dark ages the church of Christ was not "clothed with the sun" as pictured in Rev. 12:1, but was "cast down to the ground and stamped upon" by the same apostate power that "cast down the truth to the ground" and "practiced, and prospered." See Dan. 8:10-13. Is it any wonder that the work of Christ in the temple in heaven, and of the Holy Spirit in the court on earth, was greatly restricted and interrupted during the 1260 years?

The Two Witnesses. Verses 3,4. The Two Witnesses are said to be represented or symbolized by "the two olive trees" and "the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." The definite article "the" indicates something already well known because previously explained. We find this revelation and explanation in Zech. 4. Here the two olive trees are called "the two anointed ones" or "sons of oil" (margin), "that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." There can be no question but the writer of the Apocalypse is referring to the vision of Zechariah. The golden oil is pictured as flowing out of the two olive trees and through golden pines into the golden bowls of the seven lamps, by which means their lights were kept continually burning. If we can find the source of the symbolic oil that makes the church "the light of the world" we will know who the Two Witnesses are. Olive oil was used in the bowls of the seven lamps in the typical sanctuary.

Symbols Explained. The seven-branched candlestick, or seven lamps of gold, are divinely explained to be the church of Christ in all its branches or divisions. See Rev. 1:12,13,20. Seven is the divine symbol of fulness and perfection. In speaking of the vision of Zechariah, one writer said: "When the anointed ones empty themselves through the golden pipes, the golden oil flows out of themselves into the golden bowls, to flow forth into the lamps, the churches." "The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate light and power to God's people....Thus it is that the holy lamps are fed, and the church becomes the light-bearer in the world...From the two olive trees the golden oil flowing through the golden pipes has been communicated to us."--Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 337,510,511. The olive trees and candlesticks used to symbolize the Two Witnesses indicate that their mission through the church is that of "fruit-bearing and light-giving." (Milligan).

Angel's Explanation. When the prophet Zechariah acknowledged that he did not understand the meaning of the symbolic candlesticks and olive trees, the angel gave a partial explanation which must be further interpreted by other Scriptures. What the angel did say of the two candlesticks and olive trees related to the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. He said: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." The angel further said that "those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." In Rev. 5:6, the "seven eyes" of the symbolic lamb representing Christ, are said to be "the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." These seven spirits represent the Holy Spirit in the perfection of His power and service through the angelic ministering spirits.

Other Scriptures. The Bible is its own interpreter and we must therefore refer to other Scriptures in identifying the Two Witnesses who furnish the light and power which make the church the light of the world. Primarily "the Lord of the whole earth" must represent the Father, and the two that stand by or before Him and witness for Him are the second and third persons of the Godhead, or Christ and the Holy Spirit. See 1 John 5:6,7. While the Lord has many witnesses, Christ and the Holy Spirit have been His two principal witnesses in this earth since its creation and fall. Christ is the great Witness before His Father in behalf of His people on earth, and the Holy Spirit is the great Witness who testifies in behalf of the Godhead before man. All three members of the Godhead are mentioned in Rev. 1:4,5, and Christ is called "the faithful witness." The seven letters to the seven churches are written by Christ, but at the close of each letter is the statement: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The testimony is therefore that of both Christ and the Holy Spirit. They are the two Witnesses who minister to the seven churches and keep their lights burning. They are the "two anointed ones" or "sons of oil."

Called Witnesses. The Scriptures declare that the Father gave Christ to the world as "a witness to the people." See Isa. 55:4. Jesus told Pilate that He came into the world "to bear witness to the truth." John 18:37. In the Apocalypse Jesus is spoken of as "the faithful witness" and "the faithful and true witness." See Rev. 1:5; 3:14. Jesus often declared that He came into this world from the Father to bear witness or give testimony. See John 3:31-35. Jesus also spoke of the Holy Spirit as the other witness. To Nicodemus He said: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak what we do know, and testify that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." John 3:6,11. "We" and "our" must refer to Himself and the Holy Spirit whom He had just mentioned as the agency of the new birth. Jesus also spoke of the Holy Spirit as "another Comforter," and another "Teacher" who would continue the work He had begun. See John 14:16,26; 16:7-13. In Acts 5:32, the Holy Spirit is said to be a witness, and in Heb. 10:14,15, the writer, after describing Christ and His work, says: "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness for us." Here the author of the Hebrew letter recognizes Christ and the Holy Spirit as the two great witnesses for God.

Many Other Witnesses. The Two Witnesses do their testifying through many other witnesses. Each text of Scripture is a witness for God and there are thousands of them. See John 5:39. The prophets are also said to be witnesses. See Acts 10:43. The Lord says of His people, "Ye are My witnesses." See Isa. 43:10,12; 44:8; Acts 1:8. Throughout the history of the church there have been many millions of these personal witnesses. Every conscience also testifies for God in favor of righteousness and against wrong-doing. See Rom. 2:15,16. The unnumbered millions of heavenly bodies together with every created thing bear testimony to the wisdom, power and love of the Creator. See Ps. 19:1-3; Rom. 1:19-21. Yet all these millions of witnesses can testify only as the Two Witnesses speak through them. Without the presence and power of Christ and the Holy Spirit the testimony of a Christian is powerless, nature has no message, and the Bible is a dead book. We can witness for the truth only "in Christ," and our consciences bear testimony only "in the Holy Ghost." See Rom. 9:1.

The Two Testaments. Primasius, Bede, Bishop Andrews, Melchoir, Affelman, Croly, Wordsworth, Uriah Smith, and others declared that the two witnesses are the two Testaments from which the Christian church proclaims the gospel message. The Old and New Testaments are the two witnesses only in the sense that they constitute the written testimony of the Two Witnesses. They are therefore the two witnesses only in a secondary sense. Christ and the Holy Spirit are the joint-authors of the Scriptures. The Bible, however, is one Book and should never have been separated into two divisions. The division is wholly arbitrary. From Genesis to the Revelation the Scriptures give a united testimony. A witness and his testimony are in many respects inseparable. When a written testimony is read in court it is reckoned as if the writer were speaking or bearing testimony in person. Since Christ and the Holy Spirit do their speaking or testifying through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, it is within the realm of truth to speak of the two Testaments as the Two Witnesses themselves. They are in a secondary sense.

Testimony of Witnesses. That the Old and New Testaments constitute the two volumes of the written testimony of the Two Witnesses is evident from many texts. In 2 Tim. 1:8, the Scriptures are called "the testimony of our Lord." According to 1 Cor. 2:1-4 the "testimony of God" in order to be effectual must be given through Jesus Christ and "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." The writings of all the prophets are declared to be "the testimony of Jesus" in Rev. 1:9; 6:9; 12:17; 19:10. This expression applies to the writings of any true prophet at any time in the history of the church including our own. The seven letters to the seven churches are dictated by Christ but in each of them the admonition is given to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." These letters to the church universal are the testimony of the Two Witnesses, and the same can be said of the entire Bible.

Testify Through Prophets. Christ and the Holy Spirit have always done their testifying to man through the holy prophets. In 1 Peter 1:10,11 we are told that "the Spirit of Christ" was in all the prophets and "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." One writer declares that "it is the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament. 'The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.'"--Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 367. But the chief instrument of Christ in this communication is the Holy Spirit. See 2 Peter 1:21. For this reason the Two Witnesses are also called "the two prophets" in Rev. 11:10. Christ was the Prophet of all prophets. See Deut. 18:15-18; Matt. 13:54-58; Acts 3:19-23. The Holy Spirit is also a prophet. See John 16:13; Acts 20:23; 21:11. Christ and the Holy Spirit are the two anointed Ones, the two Sons of oil, the two Comforters, the two Advocates, the two Teachers, the two Prophets, and the two Witnesses. (These terms can apply to other persons and things only in a secondary sense.) The writings of the most modern of all the prophets are often spoken of as "The testimonies of Jesus," "The Voice of the True Witness," "The testimony of His Spirit," "The testimonies of the Spirit of God," etc.

Further Evidence. In many different comments on the meaning of the two olive trees of the vision of Zechariah, Mrs. E. G. White always identifies them as personal beings and never as the Old and New Testaments. The following are samples of many references that might be given: "All have a lamp, and that lamp filled with the golden oil emptied from the heavenly witnesses that stand before the throne of God, will shed the most precious, strong,

pure, clear rays of light on the sinner's pathway."--Manuscript, "Group D," p. 16. "Those who present the eternal principles of truth need the holy oil emptied from the two olive branches into the heart...Then the Lord Jesus by His Spirit will supply the force and power. That is their work."--Testimonies, Vol. 6, p. 123. "The inner lamp must be supplied with the Oil that flows from the messengers of heaven through the golden tubes into the golden bowl. The Lord's communication never comes to man in vain."--Id. Vol. 7, p. 249. "From the two olive trees the golden oil was emptied through the golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick, and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So from the holy ones that stand in God's presence His Spirit is imparted to the human instrumentalities who are consecrated to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate to God's people the heavenly grace which alone can make His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.'"--Christ's Object Lessons, p. 408. See also Vol. 6:11,12; P.K. 594; T.M. 338,510. The Word of God or the Scriptures constitute the light that is held aloft by the candlesticks or churches. See Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23.

Divine Retribution. Rev. 11:5. The fire does not literally come out of the mouths of the Two Witnesses, but as they speak their inspired predictions of judgments are fulfilled. War against the saints, the Scriptures, or any of God's witnesses, is war against Christ and the Holy Spirit. Jesus said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matt. 25:40. Christ is persecuted in the person of His saints. The same is true in the destruction of the Scriptures, the written testimony of the Two Witnesses. During the middle ages millions of martyrs died at the stake, and the Scriptures were consigned to the flames. By the same weapon will vengeance be visited upon the enemies of the Two Witnesses. The same weapons used to persecute will eventually be used to destroy. See Rev. 13:10. The papal weapons of persecution were the sword, flame, captivity, and spoil." See Dan. 11:33. These very weapons will be turned upon their own heads. The sword of Armageddon and the fires of perdition will eventually destroy all of the enemies of the Two Witnesses.

Power of the Word. Verse 5 had a striking fulfillment during the great Protestant Reformation. It will meet a still more complete fulfillment during the latter rain when the reformation is completed. The weapon of the Two Witnesses is their Word. "The Word of God" is declared to be "the sword of the Spirit." This mighty two-edged sword is also the weapon or sword of Christ. See Rev. 1:16; 2:12,16; 19:15. This is the mightiest and most powerful of all weapons. See 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Heb. 4:12. This was the chief weapon used in the wounding of the papacy during the Reformation. "Where the oil is, there also is fire. It is the strength of one and the same Spirit, which manifests itself in the testimony of salvation for those who will have it, and in vengeance on the wicked. The Lord has put His word in their mouth, which is like a fire, and like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces." (Hengstenberg).

Examples of Their Power. Verse 6. "What Moses and Elijah had done separately is said to be done by the Two Witnesses at once," (Bengel). But our text indicates that it was the Two Witnesses who exercised their miraculous powers through Moses and Elijah. During the great apostasy of Israel under the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, the Two Witnesses through their prophet

Elijah closed the heavens against rain for three and a half years. Years before through the agency of Moses the Two Witnesses turned the waters of Egypt into blood and smote the enemies of God's people with ten terrible plagues. When the Two Witnesses exercised their miraculous powers through Moses and Elijah, the New Testament was not yet in existence and only a small portion of the Old had been written. During the plagues of Egypt only the books of Genesis and Job were in existence. It is certain then that in the primary sense the Old and New Testaments cannot be the Two Witnesses. By the word and power of the same Two Witnesses the seven last plagues will be visited upon the modern rebel world because it has rejected their testimony.

Sackcloth Removed. The prediction that the Two Witnesses would testify for 1260 years clothed in sackcloth indicates that at the close of that period the restriction would be removed and the church would again be robed in the light of Christ's righteousness and be "the light of the world." A great reformation would bring the church back to the faith and practice of apostolic times, and the Scriptures would be freed from the dark semi-pagan superstitions which had so long clouded their meaning. The whole earth is to be lightened with the glory and power of God in a final world message heralding the unrestricted testimony of the Two Witnesses. During the proclamation of this message the true sanctuary and its services are to be restored to their proper place in the plan of salvation, and the court of the temple of God is to be cleansed of the papal "abomination of desolation." See Rev. 14:6-14; 18:1-5.

Testimony Finished. Verse 7. There is nothing to indicate that the finishing of the testimony of the Two Witnesses here mentioned has any reference to the completion of their work while clothed in sackcloth during the 1260 years. The verses that follow show rather that it refers to the close of probation when their mission on earth is finished. Further testimony will then be useless and the only thing that remains is their triumph following a brief period of bitter wrath and persecution on the part of their enemies. "According to the symbolic language of this Book, we are to understand that the testimony of God's witnesses will be suppressed by governmental authority, which then will be fully in the hands of Satan; but that will not be permitted 'until they have finished their testimony.'" (Mauro). It is after probation closes that the wild beast of the bottomless pit has his day. During the testifying of the Two Witnesses Satan and his forces have been held in check and restricted in their work. When probation closes they are turned loose for a brief period to do almost as they please. "The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit" identifies the chief enemy of the Two Witnesses as being primarily Satan, and secondarily the principal agency through whom he works especially in the last days. This power is often pictured in the books of Daniel and the Revelation. The ascending out of the bottomless pit does not take place till later. See Rev. 17:8. "The wild beast which is to arise out of the bottomless pit," (Weymouth).

Spiritual Babylon. Verse 8. The Lord declared that apostate Israel was "as Sodom." See Isa. 1:9; Eze. 14:46,55; 16:48. In the Scriptures Sodom is the symbol of moral corruption, and Egypt of oppression and spiritual darkness. In ancient Babylon was combined the corruption of Sodom and the darkness of Egypt. Eight times in the Revelation the "great city" refers to spiritual Babylon, and it would be unreasonable to take any other

position regarding the identification of "the great city" of this text. ? See G...
Modern Babylon is a combination of the apostasy of ancient Babylon, the corruption of Sodom, and the darkness and tyranny of Egypt. "Babylon" and "the great city" are identified as the same apostate and persecuting power in Rev. 17. The union of the false church and the civil governments of earth always result in persecution. In Rev. 18:24 we are told that in Babylon, "that great city," "was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." This must include the martyrdom of Christ, the greatest prophet and saint of all ages. Christ died at the hands of a false and backslidden church allied with the ruling government of the earth. He is still crucified in the same unholy union. "The words 'Where also our Lord was crucified,' signify that the guilt of His crucifixion is to be laid upon those in the whole world who have rejected the mercy that flows from the cross," (Mauro). Jesus was literally crucified in spiritual Babylon, and is still being crucified afresh in the same great apostate and persecuting symbolic city.

Apparent Triumph of Enemies. Verses 9,10. The three days and a half of ? GC 287
prophetic time may represent the time between the close of probation and the second coming of Christ. There is no evidence that this period will be only a year. The same prophecy which says that the plagues will come "in one day," also says they will come "in one hour." The three and a half prophetic days is in contrast to the three and a half prophetic years during which time the Two Witnesses would have to do their prophesying clothed in sackcloth. Refusal of burial was anciently the fate of criminals and was considered the sum of cruelty and indignity. "In a country where burial regularly took place on the day of death, the time of exposure and indignity would be regarded as long," (Beckwith). The testimony of the Two Witnesses through other witnesses had been a torment to the wicked and when the testimony ceases they are happy. Their guilty consciences are no longer pricked and they express their joy in the sending of gifts. This has always been an expression of gratitude. See Esther 9:19,22; Neh. 8:10,11. "Such a sense of relief is perhaps not seldom felt today by bad men when a preacher of righteousness or a signal example of goodness is removed," (Swete).

The Tormenting Word. The Word of God or the sword of the Spirit has always been a torment to sinners. This will especially be true during the latter rain when the Two Witnesses make a final mighty appeal to every sinner to repent. The prickings of the sharp and powerful two-edged sword cause torment of conscience and produce bitter wrath and persecution on the part of those who reject the appeal. They are therefore greatly relieved when the conscience-prickings cease at the close of probation. "For notwithstanding that the servants of Christ are but a feeble few; notwithstanding that they are of lowly station, and have no other weapon than the word of their testimony; yet that word is the truth of God, and the hearts and consciences of men bear witness to this even while they scoff at it." (Mauro). Of the tormenting power of the gospel another writer says: "The Word of God, which His witnesses proclaim, stings the heart and conscience: it has been truly said of those who speak for God to men, 'he who torments not also blesses not,'" (The Devotional Commentary).

The Resurrection and Ascension. Verses 11,12. Here is clearly a picture of the first resurrection when the sleeping saints or witnesses of God of all past ages are resurrected and taken to heaven "in a cloud." The resurrection scene is similar to the descriptions given in 2 Kings 13:21;Eze.37:

1-14. In all three texts, after the spirit or breath of life enters the "dead bodies" with their "dry bones" those restored to life stand "upon their feet." After His resurrection Jesus was "caught up unto God and to His throne," and at the resurrection of the just the saints are "caught up to meet the Lord in the air." See Rev. 12:5; 1 Thess. 4:16-18. The time of the triumph and exaltation of God's witnesses is the hour of the world's greatest dismay and confusion. "The spectators were panic-stricken." (Swete). "The cloud" in which the witnesses ascend must be the same cloud in which the redeemed ascend to heaven at the second coming of Christ. It is the cloud of angels that compose the fiery chariot of God.

The Great Earthquake. Verse 13. This must be the great earthquake elsewhere described as taking place in connection with the second advent of Christ. See Jer. 4:24-27; Eze. 38:18-23; Rev. 8:5; 11:19; 16:17-20. The destruction of only "the tenth part of the city" and the slaying of "seven thousand names of men" indicates that the judgment is not yet complete. The judgments of God that slay the wicked at the second coming of Christ are only partial. The final judgments which complete the wrath of God upon transgressors will take place at the close of the millennium when the wicked hosts "ascend out of the bottomless pit" in the second resurrection and "go into perdition," or the lake of fire.

Other Applications. Since history repeats itself, Rev. 11:7-13 may be given another application besides the one specifically intended. The same principles apply to the message of Noah and the destruction of the antediluvian world; of Lot and the close of the probation of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; of the Exodus movement and the judgments of God upon Egypt; of the messages of John the Baptist, Christ and the apostles and the triumphs of Christianity and the fall of Jerusalem and Judaism; and to other examples of the past. The French Revolution and its related events present such a striking parallel that many believe it to be the fulfillment of the Apocalyptic predictions. But whatever other applications may be given to this prophecy it seems that the one presented in this study is the most reasonable and therefore the chief application. While this prpphecy is still enveloped in considerable obscurity so that no position thus far advanced is free from difficulties and objections, diligent study combined with spiritual illumination will doubtless make it altogether clear when its truths are most needed by God's remnant people. Until then let us follow the fundamental rule of Scriptural study and interpretation: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

See Ch. 15, GC.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

17

The Third Woe. Rev. 11:14. "The third woe will soon be here," (Weymouth). The language indicates a brief space between the sixth and seventh trumpets during which time the parenthetical prophecy meets its fulfillment. The message of the mighty angel unseals and explains the prophecies and time periods of the book of Daniel; it measures the heavenly sanctuary and its services and heralds its glorious message to the world; it describes the finishing of the gospel commission during the unrestricted testimony of the Two Witnesses which lightens the whole earth with glory. This must all take place before the seventh trumpet can sound; before the last and most terrible war-scourge can fill the earth with desolation and woe.

Wars of a Period. Each trumpet represents the wars of a period, the nation playing the leading role being especially described. It is rather difficult to locate the two World Wars in their relation to the trumpets. They were probably preludes to the war of Armageddon and were brought to a stop because of the plea of the angel with the sealing message. See Rev. 7:1-3. Clemenceau of France declared that the peace that followed the signing of the Armistice was "only a lull in the storm." Men and nations have cried, "Peace, peace," but there has been no peace. It has been only a time of seeming peace, a lull before a greater and more terrible military hurricane. This lull or period of seeming peace is the result of the divine commission for the angels of peace to hold in check the winds of war till the servants of God are sealed for the kingdom. (No human power or effort can account for the restraining influences that have so often kept the nations of the world from plunging into war during the last few months and years.) All the nations of the modern world will be involved in the third woe or seventh trumpet.

The Coming Crisis. "The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place,--that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis. Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, that they may not blow until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth, and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture."--Education, pp. 179,180. No statesman, military leader or political ruler of this day has any doubt regarding the coming soon of a world cataclysm that will make previous wars sink into insignificance in comparison. Day and night the nations are preparing with feverish haste for the event that can not much longer be postponed.

Close of Probation. Verse 15. The opening of the seventh seal was followed by "silence in heaven." The first blast of the seventh trumpet is accompanied by "great voices in heaven." The voices precede the silence. The predicted woe has to do only with the inhabitants of the earth. In heaven the same event brings great rejoicing. Only from the viewpoint of the throne of God can the events of earth be seen in their proper light. The

announcement of the great voices in heaven indicates the close of human probation and the end of satanic sovereignty. At the close of probation Satan's career as "the prince of this world" virtually comes to an end. It is at that time that Christ ceases His priestly ministration and becomes King. He won the right to rule the world when He died a victor on the cross of Calvary, but He does not assume the sovereignty over the dominion lost by the first Adam until He has finished the work of redemption and made up the catalogue of saints whose citizenship gives them the right to inherit the earth. This same event is graphically described in Dan. 12:1,2.

Change of Rulership. "As soon as the seventh angel sounds, the kingdom of the world becomes the Lord's and His Christ's forever. It is only in heaven, however, that this takes place so immediately; and in heaven alone it is celebrated with joy; for dreadful things are still to intervene on earth." (Bengel). "This is the certain and glorious outcome of the age-long struggle against Satan, who wields the kingdom of the world which he offered to Christ on the mountain for one act of worship. But Jesus scorned partnership with Satan in the rule of the world, and chose war, war up to the hilt and to the end. Now the climax has come with Christ as Conqueror of the kingdom of this world for His Father. This is the crowning lesson of the Apocalypse."--Word Pictures in the New Testament, Robertson. This text pictures the event to which prophets and saints of all ages have looked as the fruition of their hopes. It is the first great step in the possession of the purchased inheritance.

The Kingdom. The earth is often spoken of in the Scriptures as "the kingdom" or "dominion." See Dan. 2:44; 7:18,22,26,27. While the earth has often been divided into political states or nations, it is really but one kingdom. This kingdom was first given to Adam, its first king or ruler. Through sin Adam forfeited his right to the dominion and surrendered it to Satan who claims it as his own and is divinely designated "the prince of this world." See Luke 4:6. The lost dominion of the first Adam was won back by the second Adam who, after its complete restoration to the Edenic state will return it to Adam and his redeemed descendants. See Micah 4:8; Dan. 7:13,14,27; Matt. 25:34. Thus the loud voices in heaven say, as Christ finishes His mediatorial office and becomes King, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ," (R.V.). "The rule of the world has passed to our Lord and His Christ," (Moffatt). "The sovereignty of the world now belongs to our Lord and His Christ," (Weymouth).

Gospel Work Finished. The Two Witnesses must "finish," "complete," or "fully deliver" their testimony before God will permit the seventh and most terrible war-scourge to desolate the earth. While the Two Witnesses are finishing their testimony in a final world message, angels of God are holding in check the winds of war and human passion. Not until the four angels cease to restrain, can the seventh angel sound. They let go only when the sealing angel has completed his task. This is indicated by the statement in Rev. 10:7: "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which He declared to His servants the prophets," (R.V.). The seventh trumpet does not sound till the gospel has completed its work. One writer says: "As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of of earth shall marshal their forces for the last great battle."(Vol.6:14).

Great Celebration. Verses 16,17. The occupants of the throne room of the Eternal give thanks because the prayers of the saints and martyrs are at last answered. See Rev. 6:9-11. The reason for the celebration of thanksgiving is the fact that probation has closed and Christ has become King. "Because Thou hast exerted Thy power, Thy great power, and hast become King," (Weymouth). "Thou hast assumed Thy great power and begun to reign," (Moffatt). As Michael lays aside His priestly robes and stands up to reign, the 24 elders who have assisted Him in the mediatorial ministration of the heavenly sanctuary, arise from their seats or thrones and bow in humility and adoration before the throne of God and offer thanks that at last the work of redemption has been finished and the reign of Satan has come to an end. While the close of probation brings rejoicing to the saints and angels in heaven, to the wicked inhabitants of the earth it ushers in a time of trouble and confusion such as man has never experienced. The spirits of demons, no longer held in restraint, are turned loose for a rampage through the earth. For the first time since the fall of man they have full control. It is the last and most disastrous demonstration of the inability of Satan and his angels to rule the earth.

War of Armageddon. Verse 18. "The nations were enraged, but thine anger has come," (Moffatt). "The nations grew angry, and Thine anger has come," (Weymouth). The pent-up wrath of the nations and the wrath of God come at the same time. This is another evidence that the seventh trumpet does not sound till probation closes. Till the gospel work is finished the wrath of the nations will be restrained by the angels, and the wrath of God constrained against the rejecters of His grace. This is doubtless the same event pictured in Ps. 99:1: "The Lord is become King; let the people become angry," (Septuagint). God's wrath comes as the result of the rejection of His last warning message, and begins when probation closes and the seven last plagues begin to fall. See Dan. 12:1,2; Rev. 14:6-14; 15:1. It is evident that the accumulated and pent-up wrath of an offended God against sin, and the restrained fury of the wicked nations will break forth at the same time.

A Time of Wrath. Speaking of the close of probation and the scenes that follow, Mrs. E. G. White says: "When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended...The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old."--The Great Controversy, p. 614. During this time of trouble the saints of God will be divinely protected from Satanic power. See Ps. 91.

Includes Gog and Magog. The third woe or seventh trumpet will doubtless include the war or battle of Gog and Magog at the close of the millennium. See Rev. 20:7-15. The great battle of Armageddon is suddenly terminated by the coming of Christ when the millions of fighting men are stricken down by the power and glory of the event. At the close of the one thousand

years these warriors come up out of their graves with the same fighting instincts. A millennium in death makes no change in their characters. It does not take Satan and his angels long to organize and lead them against the New Jerusalem just as they had led them against the Old Jerusalem before the millennium. It will be the same battlefield, for the New Jerusalem will occupy the same position as the Old. Gog and Magog is really a continuation of the war of Armageddon after a thousand year lull while the warriors are dead. The last and most terrible war scourge must include the last and greatest war.

The Dead Judged. "Judged" as here used has the meaning of the rendering of justice. Justice to the righteous dead must include their resurrection, the meting out of their rewards, and the vengeance of God upon their enemies. It is for this time that the blood of the martyred dead has long been crying. See Rev. 6:9-11. The righteous have been pilgrims and strangers in this rebel world under Satan's rulership. They have all been unjustly persecuted and for them judgment is often "turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." See Isa. 59:14. At last the great tribunal of heaven renders justice and from its decisions there is no appeal. This judging of the dead must include the work of the Investigative Judgment in examining the books of record and deciding the cases of all who have lived on the earth from Adam down, most of whom are dead and in their graves when probation closes. Now they are given justice. See Rev. 20: 12-15; Dan. 12:1-3.

Saints Rewarded. The rendering of justice to the saints, both resurrected and translated, must include their final rewards. When does the time come when the prophets and saints are to be rewarded for their loyalty? Rev. 22:12,14; Isa. 40:9,10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:8. It was at the second coming of Christ that Daniel was promised his reward. See Dan. 12:1-3,13. "And thou shalt rest and arise to thy glory at the end of the days," (Septuagint). "Go and wait for the end; you shall rest in the grave and then rise to enjoy your share at the end of the days." (Moffatt). The rewards of the righteous are not given at death. They are bestowed when Christ returns and calls them from their graves. It is after God's wrath is poured out in the seven last plagues that the righteous dead are resurrected and rewarded. See Job 14:13; Isa. 26:19-21. God's prophets have always received the brunt of Satanic wrath and all of them have been persecuted and most of them suffered martyrdom. It is for this reason they are mentioned first. But all genuine saints have suffered persecution. See 2 Tim. 3:12.

The Rewarding Time. "This side the grave, full justice is never done; and up to the great day, no one receives entirely all his deserts. That is reserved for the period of the resurrection....Only the resurrection life is full retribution life. Incomplete and unequal are all the administrations here....The wicked go unpunished, are even honored in their crimes... Beyond is the theatre on which final settlement is to be made, and there is the invincible throne of inexorable justice. There shall all earth's wrongs be righted, all present inequalities adjusted, and the administrations of God forever vindicated. The prophets all were persecuted and injured men, who lived martyr lives if they did not come to martyr deaths. For all these ages, the children of God have been children of affliction and sorrow...But no Christian looks for his compensation in this present world."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 2, pp. 265-267.

Destroyers Destroyed. "Destroy them which corrupt the earth," (Margin). In Rev. 9:11, Satan is called "Apollyon" the "Destroyer." The same term applies also to his agents or followers. The destruction of the earth is charged to Satan in Isa. 14:16,17. Satan is responsible for the curse of sin under which the earth has been corrupted and defiled. See Gen. 6:11-13; Isa. 24:5. In the book of Daniel the papal power is designated "the desolator" and "the abomination of desolation." God's sentence against the wicked is destruction or annihilation and not eternal conscious torment. God will utterly destroy the destroyers and corrupters of the earth. This destruction will include those who defile their own bodies. See 1 Cor. 3: 16,17.

The Sanctuary Opened. Verse 19. "Then the doors of God's Sanctuary in Heaven were opened, and the Ark, in which His Covenant was, was seen in His Sanctuary," (Weymouth). This, of course, cannot be the earthly sanctuary, for after the Babylonian captivity the most holy place was empty. Speaking of the Temple of Herod, Edersheim says: "A large stone, on which the high-priest sprinkled the blood on the Day of Atonement, occupied the place where the ark with the mercy-seat stood." Our text is clearly a view into the throne room of the heavenly sanctuary where the solemn work of Investigative Judgment had been in progress. Here the dead had been judged and their rewards determined. The door into the holy place of the typical sanctuary was opened whenever a priest entered from the court with the blood of the sacrificial victim to minister at the golden altar in behalf of the repentant sinner. The door into the most holy place was opened twice a year, both times on the day of atonement. The door was opened for the entrance of the high priest and closed behind him. It was opened again when his atoning work before the ark of the covenant was completed and he passed out of the holy of holies. The second opening marked the close of the typical service and represented the close of probation.

Sanctuary Service Ended. The heavenly sanctuary was opened for the beginning of Christ's mediatorial service on the day of Pentecost. The most holy place was opened for the last phase of Christ's priestly ministration at the close of the 2300 years in 1844. It will be opened again when His work is complete and probation closes, and this is the opening described in our text. It is the opening when Christ "leaves the sanctuary," and "darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth." With the solemn announcement, "It is done," Christ concludes His work as Priest. He leaves the heavenly temple to place the sins of the forgiven saints upon the head of the antitypical scapegoat, Satan, who must bear his share of the responsibility for them. This is the same event pictured in Rev. 8:5 at the beginning of the vision of the seven trumpets. That both of these texts describe the close of probation is evident from the fact that they are both followed by the same results. "And there came flashes of lightning, and voices, and peals of thunder, and an earthquake, and heavy hail," (Weymouth). Rev. 16:17-21 locates these events in connection with the seven last plagues.

The Seven Trumpets. Like the seven churches and the seven seals, the seven trumpets reach down to the close of Christ's mediatorial work in heaven and His gospel work on earth. (The seals and trumpets both embrace the day of God's indignation and the triumph of the church militant.) When the seventh seal is broken there will be silence in heaven. When the seventh trumpet sounds there will be anger among the nations of earth and the utmost confusion as the spirits of demons gain full control for a short time before they meet their doom. Then the saints of the most High will enter upon their endless inheritance, the first thousand years being in heaven and the remainder of eternity on this earth restored to its primitive Edenic condition.

THE SYMBOLIC WOMAN AND RED DRAGON

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Panoramic View. Rev. 12 is one of if not the most comprehensive and important chapters in the Bible. It presents a panoramic view of the long controversy between Christ and Satan over the supremacy of this world and the allegiance of its inhabitants. This introductory vision of the fourth vision of the Apocalypse reaches back to the very beginning of the conflict in order to give the setting or background for the new vision that especially describes the closing phase of the struggle between good and evil. From here to the close of the book there is a continued story with no more parallel prophecies covering the Christian era such as the seven churches, the seven seals, and the seven trumpets. "There is evidently another interruption and the beginning of another group of visions at this point. It is a group that has its culmination in the era of the seventh trumpet, and its design is to give a panoramic view of the chief events in the history of the conflict that reaches its climax and end in the days of the seventh trumpet....The symbols of sun, moon and stars show that what is in controversy in the stupendous conflict here to be pictured, is the supreme dominion of the world; and the Devil is shown as the great adversary who dares to resist God's purpose in regard thereto."--Of the Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass, Philip Mauro, pp. 360,361.

Great Skeleton Prophecy. In this chapter we have the greatest skeleton prophecy of the Bible spanning more than six thousand years from the very inception of sin and the revolt of Lucifer to the final attack of Satan on the remnant of Christ's church. In 500 words Calvin Coolidge covered the history of the United States for 150 years. The prophet Daniel wrote a 213 word prophecy of the world's history from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the second advent of Christ, a period of 2,500 years. But the Revelator in one brief chapter pens a combined history and prophecy that embraces in its scope approximately six millenniums of time covering the tragedy of sin and the struggles of the church militant. This outline of history sketches Satan's varied activities against the government of God; it presents a panorama of the long war between Michael and Lucifer; it lifts the curtain on the great drama of life and death in one great act.

Phases of Conflict. This chapter pictures the war between Christ and Satan in five of its six phases. (1) The war in heaven where the controversy began. (2) The struggle between the church and the serpent from the gates of Eden to the first advent of Christ while both were waiting for His birth. (3) The conflict between Christ and Satan during the former's earthly visit. (4) Satan's attacks against and persecutions of the church during the apostolic church period and down through the middle ages. (5) His war on the remnant reaching to the second advent. The remainder of the Apocalypse completes the panorama, giving in detail the struggles between Satan and the church militant, especially in its remnant phase; the final triumph of the church and the defeat and punishment of Satan and his followers in the lake of fire; and the reward of the forces of righteousness in the earth restored to its primitive glory. The sixth and last phase of the long conflict will take place after the millennium and is not presented in the introductory vision.

The Symbolic Woman. Rev. 12:1,2. "A great sign," (Margin and R.V.). This indicates that symbols are being employed. All efforts to make this woman

represent the virgin Mary fail in the light of the fact that the same woman continues the object of Satan's wrath till the second advent of Christ. "Certainly she is not the Virgin Mary as verse 17 makes clear," (Robertson). All through the Scriptures the church is represented as a woman who is the bride and wife of Christ who is called both "Bridegroom" and "Husband." See Jer. 6:2; Isa. 54:5,6; Hosea 2:19,20; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-9. Just as a pure woman or virgin is symbolic of the church of Christ, so an impure or fallen woman is used in the Scriptures to represent Satan's false and counterfeit system of religion known as "the synagogue of Satan," and "Babylon the Great." See Rev. 2:9; 17:1-5; Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:1,8; Eze. 16:23. The Revelation pictures two symbolic women. One is the church, bride or wife of Christ, and the other is the church, bride or wife of Satan.

Beautiful Symbol. Marriage represents the closest and most blessed union known to humanity and is therefore a beautiful symbol of the relation between Christ and His people. What could be a more beautiful and appropriate symbol of the church than a comely and virtuous woman. As Eve, the first woman and mother of the human race, was made from the rib of the first Adam while he was in a deep sleep and the two became "one flesh," so the church is the wife of the second Adam and came into being as the result of His death-sleep and resurrection so that "we are members of His body, and of His flesh, and of His bones." Eph. 5:30. In speaking of a woman being used as the church of God, Albertus Pieters said: "This meaning is more generally agreed upon than the meaning of almost any other of the chief figures of the book of Revelation."--The Lamb, the Woman and the Dragon, p. 162. Eve is used as the symbol of the church in the first gospel promise recorded in Gen. 3:15.

The Bride of Christ. "Christ honored the marriage relation by making it also a symbol of the union between Him and His redeemed ones. He Himself is the Bridegroom; the bride is the church, of which, as His chosen one, He says, 'Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee."--Ministry of Healing, p. 356.

"In both the Old and New Testament, the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people. To the mind of Jesus the gladness of the wedding festivities pointed forward to the rejoicing of that day when He shall bring home His bride to the Father's house, and the redeemed with the Redeemer shall sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb. He says, 'As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.' 'Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken;....but thou shalt be called My Delight; ....for the Lord delighteth in thee.' 'He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing."--The Desire of Ages, p. 151.

Symbol of the Church. "In Revelation 17 Babylon is represented by a woman,--a figure which is used in the Bible as the symbol of a church, a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a vile woman an apostate church. In the Bible the sacred and enduring character of the relation that exists between Christ and His church is represented by the union of marriage. The Lord has joined His people to Himself by a solemn covenant, He promising to be their God, and they pledging themselves to be His, and His alone. He declares, 'I will betroth thee unto Me forever; yea, I will betroth thee

unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies.' And again, 'I am married unto you.' And Paul employs the same figure in the New Testament when he says, 'I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.'

"The unfaithfulness of the church to Christ in permitting her confidence and affection to be turned from Him, and allowing the love of worldly things to occupy the soul, is likened to the violation of the marriage vow...'As a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord;' 'as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband."--The Great Controversy, p. 381.

The Church Universal. The church is also called the "body" of Christ and He can have but one. See Eph. 1:22,23; 4:4. Ancient Israel was not merely "a church" but "the church," (Acts 7:38). There has only been one true church in all ages of which all of God's people have been members. "All of God's people upon the earth are one body, from the beginning to the end of time. They have one Head that directs and governs the body," (Vol. 1:283). From the fall of man there has been but one plan of salvation, one standard of righteousness, one Saviour, and one body of believers. The term "remnant church" is not Scriptural and gives the impression that there have been more than one. It is "the remnant of her seed" or children, meaning the last part of the church of the ages which is the object of Satan's wrath in the end of the ages. See Rev. 12:17.

Commentators. "We regard the woman as the symbol of God's religious system on earth from the beginning of His testimony until the consummation."--The Vision of Patmos, Davis, p. 178. "It must, then, be the church; the church not simply as Jewish, but in a more generic and theocratic sense,--the people of God."--Commentary on the Apocalypse, Moses Stuart, Vol. II, p. 252. "The Woman is the Old and New Testament Church of God in undivided unity."--The Revelation of John, Lange, p. 245. "She is the heavenly representative of the people of God....represented alike by the people of the old and new covenants....With our writer there is only one true Israel, embracing alike the Jewish and the Christian church."--The Apocalypse of St. John, Beckwith, p. 621.

"Doubtless the Church of the Old Testament was the Mother of whom Christ came after the flesh. But here, as everywhere in the book, no sharp dividing line is drawn between the Church of the Old Testament and the Christian Society; the latter is viewed as the Jewish church come to its maturity. Thus the woman who gave birth to the Christ is identical with her who after His departure suffered for her faith in Him, and who is the mother of believers."--The Apocalypse of St. John, H. B. Swete, p. 146. The woman was in existence before the birth of Christ so she cannot represent the apostolic church alone.

The Queen of Christ. "There has really been but one church on earth, existing through all times and under all economies. And so we have here this one glorious woman, in whom all its highest excellences and chief characteristics are summed up from the beginning even unto the great consummation....It is wonderful also what a profound and complete view of the Church, in all its deepest peculiarities, excellencies, office, and prospects, is here given in one single picture, at once as simple as it is

sublime....The Church is the woman, in her creation from the second Adam, in her naming after Christ, and in her receptivity, love, maternity, trusting dependence, beauty, and willing obedience. She is the betrothed of the Lord, His Bride, His Queen, partaker of His inmost love, and all His estate and kingdom, having her joy in Him and His in her. Nor is there another image known to man which more richly and truly sets forth that mystic body, which we recognize and identify in every age as the Church or people of God."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 2, pp. 277-279.

Sign in Heaven. Some are puzzled over the fact that the symbolic woman representing the church is seen "in heaven." In the first place the church is of heavenly origin and even while in this earth, in rebellion against God, she lives "in heavenly places," dwelling in the atmosphere of heaven. Christians have already been "delivered from the power of darkness," and "translated into the kingdom" of God. See Eph. 2:6; Col. 1:13. In the second place the church or family of God includes in its broad sense all His children in the universe. All are one family and together they constitute the universal church of God. See Eph. 3:14,15; Heb. 12:22,23. "The general assembly and church of the firstborn" are said to include the "innumerable company of angels" and all whose names are "written in heaven." "The church of God below is one with the church of God above. Believers on earth and the beings in heaven who have never fallen constitute one church," (Vol. 6:366). Not only did the attack of Satan against the church begin in heaven, but the conflict of the church is still "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Eph. 6:12. "Wicked spirits" in "heavenly places" is the marginal reading.

Clothed With the Sun. "Arrayed with the sun," (R.V.). "Whose robe was the sun," (20th C.N.T.). The sun is the source of light and is therefore the symbol of Christ "the Sun of Righteousness" and "the light of the world," (Mal. 4:2; John 8:12; 9:5). In Luke 1:78 Jesus is called "the dayspring from on high." "Sunrising" is the marginal reading for "dayspring." In Ps. 104:2 it is said of the Lord: "Who coverest Thyself with light, as with a garment." What is the robe or garment of the church or bride of Christ? Christians "put on the armour of light" when they put on "the Lord Jesus Christ." See Rom. 13:12,14; Gal. 3:27. To put on Christ is to be clothed with His character or righteousness which is the wedding garment of the church or bride of Christ. See Isa. 52:1; 61:10; Rev. 19:7,8. Only when the church is clothed with the righteousness of Christ is it "the light of the world." When the remnant of the church are "illuminated" by the glory of God in the latter rain so that the members are all "the children of light" then will the church of Christ appear "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

Foundation of Church. Since the woman represents the church of God through all the ages, the moon must symbolize the foundation on which she stands. In Ps. 89:35-37 the moon is given as the symbol of permanency. It never represents something transitory that passes away, but rather something enduring and eternal. The church of all ages stands on the permanent foundation of Christ, the Rock of Ages, the Living Word, as revealed through the writings of the prophets and apostles. See Isa. 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:10,11; Eph. 2:20-22. As the moon shines only because of a borrowed light from the sun, so the Scriptures shine because illuminated by Christ, the Living Word, and "the Sun of Righteousness." Christ told Peter that upon the

The OT Scriptures "testify" of Christ, thus upholding the church.

knowledge and confession that He was "the Christ, the Son of the living God" He would build His church, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." See Matt. 16:16-18. The moon in the vision is not necessarily being trampled underfoot. It rather upholds the church.

Crown of Twelve Stars. Since the woman represents the church of all ages, the twelve stars doubtless symbolize the patriarchal and apostolic leadership of both dispensations. The twelve apostles are certainly the twelve leading lights of the New Testament church. (The church is still divided into twelve divisions according to the twelve most prominent characteristics of the saints. See James 1:1; Rev. 7:2-8.) The church triumphant will continue this division as there will be twelve nations of the redeemed ruled over by twelve apostle-kings. See Matt. 27:28; Luke 22:28-30. A crown is the symbol of rulership and kingly authority, and "the crown of twelve stars" doubtless represents the spiritual leadership of the apostles in the church militant and their rulership in the church triumphant.

The Man Child. Verses 2-5. "She cried out" (R.V.). "She was crying out in the pains and agony of child birth," (Weymouth). "Nothing is omitted that might set forth the greatness and severity of the woman's conflict in the most lively colors. She is in the pains of labor seized with the most violent pangs of child-birth, and in this state appears to be supported only by the hope of the male offspring she had so greatly desired. But she sees a frightful dragon, ready to devour her child so soon as it should be born," (Vitringa). There can be no reasonable question but this Son or male Child, expected by the church and born of the church, is Jesus Christ. At the time of His crucifixion and even after His ascension, Jesus was still called "Thy holy child Jesus," (Acts 4:27,30). Seven texts tell us that when Christ ascended He took His place on the throne at the right hand of the Father. See Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 8:1; Rev. 3:21. Christ also is to shepherd or "rule all nations with a rod of iron." See Ps. 2: 7-9; Rev. 2:26,27; 19:15,16. "Who is to shepherd all nations," (Moffatt). Prophecy declared that out of Bethlehem "shall come forth a governor, who shall be shepherd of My people Israel." Matt. 2:6. R.V.

Fulfillment of Prophecy. The statement, "And she was delivered of a son, a man child," (R.V.), was a fulfillment of Isa. 66:7: "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child." Verse 8 shows that "she" has reference to "Zion" or the church. "All Scripture analogy, and that of this book itself, requires that these words should be understood of our incarnate Lord, and of no other. Any system seems to me convicted of error, which is compelled to interpret the words otherwise," (Dean Alfred). In this picture the earthly life and death of Jesus are passed over and only His birth and ascension are portrayed as these are all that are required to meet the purpose of the vision. It shows that the dragon's long vigilance was futile. "The Messiah, so far from being destroyed, is caught up to a share in God's throne," (Beckwith). He triumphs over the dragon and is given a position of supreme power and authority far above his reach.

The Expectant Mother. How long had the church been expecting and waiting for the birth of the Messiah before He was born? In its broadest sense ever since the first gospel promise was made at the very gates of Eden as soon as man fell and needed a Saviour. See Gen. 3:15. This text has been called the "Mother Promise" because it carries in its womb all other gospel

promises. It reveals the methods of warfare to be employed by the two great antagonists. Satan would treacherously make his attacks from the rear and bruise the heel of the Messiah. Christ would face His great fo and eventually crush his head. The attacks of Satan would produce only a temporary wound, while the warfare of the Christ would prove fatal to His antagonist. The first gospel promise gave Adam and Eve the hope that their first son would be the promised deliverer, and when Cain was born the hopeful and expectant mother cried out, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." She evidently thought or at least hoped that he was the promised male child who would crush the head of the serpent, deliver them from the bondage of sin, and restore them to their lost dominion.

The Waiting Church. From the gates of Eden down through the ages the church of God waited and hoped and prayed for the coming of the promised Seed and Deliverer. Every godly mother who gave birth to a male child hoped and prayed that he might be the expected Messiah. This was the principal reason why male children were preferred to female and were given special privileges among the Jews. Every true saint, like Simeon, "was waiting for the consolation of Israel," (Luke 2:25). We are told that when John the Baptist appeared with his message "the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not," (Luke 3:15). While the expectation of the birth of the Messiah was the strongest at the time of His birth, the people of God had been waiting for the birth of the "Seed" or "man child" for 4000 years.

The Red Dragon. Verses 3,4. "Huge dragon" (Moffatt). "Fiery-red dragon," (Weymouth). The original word here translated "red" is used only here and in Rev. 6:4 where it is applied to "the red horse." Red is the color of blood. In Isa. 1:18 it is used as the symbol of sin. To this day, red is used as the symbol of anarchy and rebellion; of revolt against law and order. In the Apocalypse it is used to represent apostasy and the religion and government of Satan. His church or bride is clothed in scarlet. Rev. 17:1-6. The color indicates a fierce and bloody nature like that of Satan who has been a "liar" and "a murderer from the beginning," (John 8:44). Dragons are used in the Scriptures as symbols of desolating, persecuting, and tyrannizing powers. Crocodiles and serpents are called dragons in the Bible and doubtless the dinosaur was also so designated by the ancients. A lizard-like dragon twelve feet in length still exists. An ancient poet described the dragon as being "huge in size, coiled like a snake, blood-red in color, or shot with changing tints."

Dragon Standards. Dr. Alexander Hislop quotes an ancient writer as saying: "The dragon figured among the military ensigns of the Assyrians, Cyrus caused it to be adopted by the Persians and Medes. Under the Roman emperors, and under the emperors of Byzantium, each cohort or centuria bore for an ensign a dragon," (Des Sciences Occultes, Appen., Note a, p. 486.--Quoted in The Two Babylons, p. 319, Appendix. The dragon standards of the Romans were red. Ammanus Marcellinus wrote of "the purple standard of the dragon."--Lib. XVI, C. 12. Vegetius said: "The first standard of the whole legion is the eagle, which the aquilifer carries. Dragons are also borne to battle by the draconarri."--Lib. II, C. 13 (386 A.D.). The word dragoon, applied to a class of cavalrymen in the British army, is derived from the word dragon. They are the same as the dragonades of the Roman army. The dragon is a most appropriate symbol of a destroying and persecuting power under Satanic leadership.

The Seven-Headed Dragon. Robertson in his Word Pictures in the New Testament declares that "the Babylonians feared a seven-headed hydra and Typhon was the Egyptian dragon who persecuted Osiris." In the Old Testament a great serpent or dragon is reckoned as the chief enemy of God and His people and is described under various titles such as "Rahab" (Isa. 51:9; Ps. 89:10), "Behemoth" (Job 40:15-24), "Leviathan the serpent" (Isa. 27:1), and "the dragon" (Eze. 29:2,3). In Ps. 74:13,14, we are told that the Lord will break "the heads of the dragons in the waters" and will break "the heads of leviathan in pieces." Notice that "heads" is the word used indicating more than one. Recent excavations in the ancient city of Ras Shamra in Northern Syria uncovered evidence that the ancients dreaded a seven-headed dragon or serpent. "Baal himself decides to fight the seven-headed serpent which human beings particularly feared."-"Secrets from the Syrian Hills," by Claude F. A. Schaeffer in The National Geographic Magazine, July, 1933. (Seven-headed dragons may have been known to the ancients.)

The Dragon Power. What is symbolized by the dragon? The Bible is its own interpreter. See Verses 7-9. In a primary sense, therefore, the dragon is the devil and Satan. But it is evident that the great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns does not describe Satan in person, for Satan is described elsewhere in the Bible as the former Lucifer, a mighty and beautiful angel. It is evident that this Scripture must have both a primary and secondary application. In a secondary sense the great red dragon must represent the kingdom of Satan over which he rules and through which he makes war on and persecutes the church of God. Satan is designated as "the prince of this world" and therefore in its broad sense the dragon must include the angels, human beings, nations and organizations that partake of the dragon spirit and are under his control. Just as all persons and organizations who are controlled by Christ are Christian in spirit, so all who are dominated by Satan are dragon in spirit. The dragon therefore includes every power used by Satan in making war on the "Child" or "Seed" and the "woman" or on Christ and His church.

The Universal Dragon. The dragon is as world-embracing and universal as the woman or church. The dragon power cannot be confined to any one nation for it was the dragon that fought with Michael in heaven before there was a nation on this earth. It was the dragon who caused the downfall of a third of the angelic host. It was the same dragon that waited for 4,000 years for the birth of the man child or Christ. After the ascension of Christ the same dragon pursues the church into the wilderness and makes war on her for 1260 years. It is the same dragon that makes war on the remnant of the church in the last days. The dragon therefore must symbolize the government or kingdom of Satan in all its history and phases. "But most significant are the seven heads, expressive of the completeness of his dominion, the ten horns, symbolizing the world-wide character of his rule, and the seven crowns, telling of the fulness of royalty," (Mauro).

Includes All Kingdoms. Seven is the symbol of completeness and therefore represents all. In Rev. 17:12 we are told that both the heads and horns represent earthly kingdoms. "The 'seven heads and ten horns' of the Dragon represent the consummation of his efforts, through his control of the governments of this world to persecute the true worshipers of God, and to secure for himself that worship which belongs to God alone; 'seven' being the number of this book to denote dispensational fulness and completeness." --Outline Studies in the Book of Revelation, Turner, p. 68.

"The seven heads may fitly represent the multiplied worldly powers which the evil one brings against Christ and His Church...The whole scene is expressive of the great powers which from the beginning wage war with the Lamb."--The Pulpit Commentary.

"Here Satan is depicted as a great red monster having seven heads and ten horns and upon his heads crowns. This and other similar presentations are surely given just to indicate the universality of Satanic power in the world...The heads and horns and crowns simply express various phases of his earthly power."--Studies in the Book of Revelation, Lamb, pp. 220,221.

Satanic Rulership. "The head is the governing power, and implies rule. When crowned it implies political rulership. These seven heads of the dragon are all crowned heads...The number of these crowned heads is seven, which is the number of dispensational fulness, the earthly complete number. Hence we have in these heads the symbol of the entire imperial government of this world from beginning to end, the universal secular dominion of the earth in all periods...(We need not bother ourselves then about the seven hillocks on which the city of Rome was built; nor about the seven administrations, or forms of dominion, or dynasties, which are said to have marked the history of the Roman Empire)...The number is the symbol of full completeness, which takes in all of its kind in the whole world period. It is nothing more nor less than earth's political sovereignty, however and wherever put forth, from beginning to the day of judgment, that is embraced in these crowned heads."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 2, pp. 302-304.

Seven Universal Powers. The seven heads are declared to be "seven mountains" in Rev. 17:9,10. Of the seven mountains it says, "and these are seven kings," (R.V.). In the Bible mountains are symbolic of governments or kingdoms. It is interesting to note that there have been just seven universal powers that have ruled over all the earth and made war on the people of God. These are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome Pagan and Rome Papal. The last five are given in their order in the prophecies of Daniel, and the first two are named in their order in Isa. 52:4; Jer. 50:17; Eze. 23:3-17. This is the order in which the seven heads are named in the Present Truth Extra, No. 84, of April, 1929, and has become the denominational view.

The First Head. Egypt was the first universal power and the first organized nation to persecute God's people as a church or nation. Egypt under the rule of the Pharaohs is called "the great dragon" in Eze. 29:2,3. Egypt was the dragon under the first of the seven heads and as the great dragon persecuted and held captive the church of God for four centuries. See Ex. 1:13,14. The rule of Egypt as a universal power was from 1780 to 1492 B.C. "Egypt became by her victories the arbitress of the whole civilized world."--Manuel of the Ancient History of the East, Book 3, chap. 3, Sec. 2, par. 3. Homer said of Thebes, the Egyptian capital: "The world's greatest empress on the Egyptian plain; that spread her conquests over a thousand states."--Iliad, Book 9, Pope's Translation.

"There is some uncertainty as to the extent of her conquests; but no reasonable doubt can be entertained that for a space of 300 years Egypt was the most powerful and most aggressive state that the world contained, and held a dominion that has as much right to be called an empire as the Assyrian, the Babylonian, or Persian. While Babylonia, ruled by Arab

conquerors, declined in strength, and Assyria proper was merely struggling for independence, Egypt put forth her arms and grasped the fairest regions of the earth's surface."--Ancient Egypt, Rawlinson, Chap. 10, par. 6.

The Other Heads. Assyria was the second world empire to rule and to persecute the people of God. They led captive the ten tribes of Israel who as a result have disappeared from history. See 2 Kings 15:29; 17:6; 18:13; Isa. 36, and 37. The universal rulership of Assyria was from 1120 to 620 B.C. Assyria is also called the "dragon" and "serpent" in Ps. 74:13,14; 89:10; Isa. 27:1; 51:9. Assyria was the dragon power under the second head. The third head was Babylon whose universal dominion was between 606 and 538 B.C. Babylon also persecuted Israel and led the tribes of Judah and Benjamin captive. In Jer. 51:34-37 Babylon is said to be "like a dragon" in its persecutions of God's people. The fourth head was Medo-Persia; the fifth Grecia; the sixth Pagan Rome; and the seventh Papal Rome. Seven prophecies give the absolute rule of the papacy over "all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," as 1260 years, the longest of any of the seven. The ten horns represent the kingdoms of divided Rome or the lesser than universal civil powers during the reign of the religio-political seventh head.

Denominational Position. In the Sabbath School Lessons of the last quarter of 1949, the following question and note appeared:

What is further stated regarding the seven heads? Rev. 17:9,10, first part.

Note.--The term "mountain" is used in the Scripture to symbolize a nation. Jer. 51:25. In order that there may be no misunderstanding, however, the prophet gives also the literal meaning; they are "seven kings," or kingdoms, or powers that throughout history oppose and oppress the people of God. These may be listed as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome--both pagan and papal. In the days of the prophet John the first five of these had fallen. The sixth, or the Roman Empire, then ruled the world.

Parallel With the Woman. Both the woman and the dragon are therefore world-embracing and universal. They represent two rival and antagonistic systems that cover all human history. Since the woman is the symbol of the church and represents God's spiritual kingdom in the world, the dragon is the symbol of Satan's counterfeit kingdom. Both are universal and embrace the history of the world. "As the sun-clad woman denotes the Church in its entirety with reference to the final termination, so this dragon denotes the devil in his entirety with reference to the same." "The Church and the Devil, the kingdom of heaven and the powers of darkness, have ever been the two great antagonistic forces on the earth. The one is the spirit of mercy, embodied in the work of man's deliverance; the other the spirit of malignity, going about to crush and kill every tendency, power, or prospect of man's salvation."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 2, pp. 296, 311.

The Waiting Dragon. Verse 4. "The dragon stood" or "was standing" (Weymouth), "before the woman," indicating a waiting posture, an expectant attitude. How long did the dragon wait in anxious expectation for the birth of Christ? Just as long as the woman or church waited. The statement of Gen. 3:15 was spoken to Satan, and he as well as the woman began

to wait for the promise to be fulfilled. Satan may also have thought that Cain was the promised "Seed" and Deliverer. He made a special effort to lead him into sin and succeeded to the extent that Cain became the head of a race of rebels who brought on the terrible antediluvian wickedness that culminated in the flood. He may have wondered if Abel was the promised male-child and for that reason inspired Cain to kill him. He may have thought that the promised and miraculously given son of Abraham would be the promised Messiah. After the prophecy through Abraham that deliverance would come to Israel in Egypt at the close of the 400 years of bondage, Satan probably inspired Pharaoh to destroy the male children of the Hebrews in order to get the "man child." See Ex. 1:15,16. Satan's only knowledge of the time when the Messiah would be born was the revelations of the prophets, and he was a very diligent student. Later prophecies revealed to both the church and to Satan the time, and when it drew near he was also "in expectation" thinking that at last his time had come to overcome Him in His earthly state whom he had failed to defeat before His incarnation.

Pagan Rome. When the Messiah was born Pagan Rome ruled the world and was therefore in a special sense the government of Satan and therefore the dragon. Rome was the great red dragon under the sixth head. The effort of Herod the Great as a Roman ruler to put Christ to death soon after His birth was inspired by the devil who had waited for 4000 years for the opportunity to destroy his great rival while a helpless babe in human flesh. Satan had overcome the first Adam with but little difficulty, and felt that when Michael was incarnated in the weakness of human flesh he could also overcome Him. He began his attacks as soon as Jesus was born and continued them until Jesus was nailed to the cross. Jesus was compelled to battle His way from the manger to the cross. His was a blood-stained pathway which ended in bloody-sweat and death. But His death was not a defeat but rather a glorious triumph. He was slain but not destroyed. His death on the cross was a crushing defeat to the dragon which sounded the death-knell of his kingdom. The Messiah came forth triumphantly from the tomb and ascended to the throne of God to await His return to take permanent possession of the dominion of the earth. His death made Him the "Prince of this world" and its rightful Ruler. See John 12:31,32.

WAR BETWEEN MICHAEL AND LUCIFER

Dragon in Heaven. Rev. 12:3,4, 7-9. The symbol of the great red dragon, like that of the woman, is seen "in heaven." This is true, first of all, because the war between the two began in heaven. Primarily the dragon is the devil and Satan who was once in heaven. The first part of the struggle between Michael and the once mighty Lucifer took place in heaven around the throne of God. Because the war between the two great antagonists began in heaven, the symbol first appears to the prophet as being in heaven. In the second place since the struggle was transferred to this earth it has continued to be a warfare "in high places" or "heavenly places," (Eph. 6: 11-13). Even though this earth is the battlefield, the struggle is being waged over the possession and rulership of the world which, though fallen, is still a part of God's kingdom. Then also for 4,000 years before Calvary, Satan carried on his warfare against Christ and His church on earth from his position before the throne of God where he accused the saints "day and night." The devil does not hesitate to enter the most sacred place to fight his battles. "The man of sin" and "son of perdition" enters and sits in "the temple of God" where he claims to be God. See 2 Thess. 2:3,4.

Third of Stars. "His tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and flung them to the earth," (Moffatt). Alfred declares that "the magnitude and fury of the Dragon are graphically given by the fact of its tail, in its lashing backwards and forwards in fury, sweeping down the stars of heaven." Angels are called stars throughout the Scriptures. See Job 38:7; Isa. 14: 13; Rev. 1:20. We are also told that many of the angels sinned and "kept not their first estate" and "left their own habitation." See 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6. That the stars of our text represent the angels who joined Lucifer in his revolt and warfare against Michael and were cast out of heaven with him is evident from verses 7-9. "The dragon fought and so did his angels; but they were defeated, and there was no longer any room found for them in Heaven. The great Dragon, the ancient serpent, he who is called 'the Devil' and 'the Adversary' and leads the whole world astray, was hurled down; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him," (Weymouth). It was the tail of the dragon that drew a third part of the stars or angels from heaven and cast them to this earth. In Isa. 9:15 we read that "the prophet that speaketh lies, he is the tail." The devil is said to be "a liar, and the father of it," that is, of the first lie. It was through a lie or falsehood that the angels were deceived by Satan into joining him in revolt against the authority and throne of God. It was also through a lie that he seduced Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit. It is through lies that he "deceiveth the whole world." His tail is still casting down those deceived by his falsehoods.

Origin of Sin. Verses 7-9 carry us back to the origin of sin and of its intrusion into the universe. It began with the attempt of a mighty angel and his deceived fellow-angels to disrupt the harmony of heaven and seize the reins of sovereignty. It was the ambition of prince Lucifer to seize equality with God and thus elevate himself to a higher position. Selfish ambition led to the first sin and caused the first war ever fought. Both sin and war had their origin in heaven and not on this earth. Satan is the great war-lord of all time. He was responsible for the first battle and war ever fought and for every one since. This earth has been deluged in blood because a bloodthirsty war lord is "the god" and "the prince of

this world." When Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven because they broke its peace and harmony, they came to this earth and mankind has never known peace since they arrived. Men may "cry Peace, peace, but there is no peace."

The Leading Actors. The leading actors in this great "heavenly warfare" are Michael and Lucifer. Michael means "Like unto God," and Christ alone is in "the image of the invisible God," and is declared to be "the express image of His person." See Heb. 1:3. "The effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance," (R.V.). In Dan. 10:13,21; 12:1, Michael is said to be "the first prince" in the kingdom of God, and "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people," who will eventually "stand up" to reign as the King of this world. In 1 Thess. 4:13 Michael is identified as the Archangel whose voice will raise the dead, and in Jude 9 as the great antagonist of Satan. It was the voice of Christ that raised Moses from the dead and that will call forth all the sleeping dead on the resurrection morning. See John 5:25-29. The angels of Michael are those who remained loyal to Him during the great crisis. Chief among these was Gabriel which means "Hero of God." Because of his heroism during the revolt of Lucifer and his angels, Gabriel was exalted to take the position of the first of the anointed covering cherubs left vacant by the fall of Lucifer. To Mary, Gabriel said: "I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of God." To Daniel he said, "There is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your Prince."

The Great Rebel. Michael's antagonist is called "the dragon" and "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan." Devil is the Greek for "accuser" and "slanderer," and Satan is the Hebrew for "adversary." His original name was "Lucifer" which means "Light-bearer" and "Son of the morning." See Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:11-17. It is evident from these texts that Prince Lucifer held a position in the government of God next to Michael, "the first Prince." Lucifer was the first of the anointed covering cherubs who were the guardians of the throne. He ministered in the throne-room where he "walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" that composed the glittering pavement of the celestial temple. His beauty, wisdom, glory, and power were unsurpassed by any except the members of the Godhead. He was the chief messenger of God. It seems also that he was a skilled musician and the leader of the angelic choir and orchestra.

Cause of Fall. The cause of Lucifer's fall is given in the statement: Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Lucifer became proud and haughty and began to covet the position and glory of Michael who was his superior. He said in his heart, "I will be like the most High," and Michael alone was like the most High. He was jealous because of the creative power of the Son of God and because He was worshipped by all the heavenly host. Lucifer craved the worship and adoration that could not be given to a created being. In attempting to seize equality with God, Lucifer lost his own position and glory and was deposed from his high estate. The heroism of Michael is contrasted with the ambition of Lucifer in Phil. 2:5-11. See Weymouth. In the attitude of Michael and Lucifer is illustrated the statement of Jesus: "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Victory of Michael. In this first great battle in heaven, Michael and His angels were victorious over their adversaries. Being cast out of their

positions in the government of God, Lucifer and his angels came to the newly created world where they succeeded in deceiving Adam and Eve and usurping their dominion. Lucifer thus took the place of Adam as "the prince of this world." On the mount of temptation Satan offered Christ the kingdom of this world in exchange for a single act of worship in which Christ would recognize the superiority of Satan and thus take a secondary place. This was what Lucifer wanted during the first conflict in heaven. Our text calls Satan "the deceiver of the whole world," (R.V.). As the ruler over the dominion of Adam, Satan took Adam's position as the representative of this world in the councils of heaven and for 4,000 years he was the only official representative this world had before the throne of God. There he spent his time "day and night" as "the accuser of the brethren," or those on earth who refused to recognize his sovereignty. See Job 1:6 to 2:10. After hearing the promise of Gen. 3:15, Satan knew that his opportunity would come when Michael was stripped of His glory during His incarnation in sinful human flesh. He had been no match for the Son of God during the first contest in heaven, but he felt that he could defeat Him while in human form.

Student of Prophecy. Satan's knowledge of the time of the coming of the Messiah was gained through the revelations of the prophets and the study of the types of the typical services. "When God's written word was given through the Hebrew prophets, Satan studied with diligence the messages concerning the Messiah. Carefully he traced the words that outlined with unmistakable clearness Christ's work among men as a suffering sacrifice and as a conquering king."--Prophets and Kings, p. 686. Satan's first definite knowledge as to the time was revealed in the 2300 year time prophecy of Daniel. The seventy prophetic weeks pointed out the very year of His baptism and annointing as the Messiah. See Dan. 9:25-27. As the 483 years drew to a close the dragon stood before the woman or church with even more expectancy than was manifested by God's own professed people. It was his long looked for opportunity and he expected to make the most of it.

Identity of Messiah. It seems evident that Satan entertained doubts regarding the identity of Jesus as the looked for Messiah just as did the people of God. He may have shared some of the mistaken ideas of the Jews. It did not seem possible that the meek and lowly Nazarene could be the former mighty Michael. Satan was assured that Christ was indeed his former antagonist when the voice of the Father on the banks of the Jordan was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." His belief was further confirmed during the battle in the wilderness of temptation when Christ asserted His divine authority and commanded him to get behind Him. "Satan had questioned whether Jesus was the Son of God. In his summary dismissal he had proof that he could not gainsay. Divinity flashed through suffering humanity. Satan had no power to resist the command. Writhing with humiliation and rage, he was forced to withdraw from the presence of the world's Redeemer. Christ's victory was as complete as had been the failure ot Adam."--The Desire of Ages, p. 130. Satan then actuated the Jewish leaders with the dragon spirit and they hounded Christ's footsteps night and day in an effort to destroy Him. They finally succeeded in actually putting Him to death. But in killing Him they did not destroy Him. His death on the cross was not the kind of destruction Satan had planned. Christ's death was a glorious victory for Him and an ignominious defeat for Satan which sounded the death-knell of his kingdom.

Double Application. Verses 7-13 are clearly an interruption in the narrative of the warfare of the dragon against the Child and the woman. The purpose of this parenthetical narrative is to give the background of the long controversy and the reason for the relentless hostility of the dragon toward Christ and His church. While verses 7-9 apply primarily to the origin of the controversy in heaven, it applies secondarily to the great struggle between Christ and Satan during the former's earthly visit as "the man child." Verses 10-13 relate to Christ's Calvary victory and its results in heaven and on earth. This was the decisive battle in the long war between the two princes. The cross means more than the mere defeat of Satan. It reconciled the whole universe to God and drew all to Him. See John 12:31,32; Col. 1:20. The murder of Michael uprooted Satan from the sympathy of the angels and unfallen beings. It broke the last link of sympathy between him and the heavenly host. From that time forward his work was to be greatly restricted until it would end in utter failure and ruin.

Result of Victory. Verse 10. "Now has begun the day of salvation," (20th C.N.T.). The death of Christ on the cross sealed the new covenant and thus made sure the plan of redemption. It deposed Satan from his last position in the government of God, that of the prince and representative of this world which gave him the right to go before the throne of God as "the accuser of the brethren" where "day after day and night after night" he "was wont to accuse them in the presence of God," (Weymouth). All heaven was glad and relieved when Satan could no longer enter the throne-room of God and accuse the saints of earth. A celebration was held when Christ, the second Adam, supplanted Satan as the prince of this world and its representative in the councils of heaven. They cry out of "the salvation by which the saints were delivered, the power by which the enemy was overthrown, the kingdom which displays God's majesty," (Bengel). See Rom. 8:31-39.

Great Celebration. The death of Christ was the signal for the beginning of a great celebration in heaven. "As Christ in His expiring agony upon the cross cried out, 'It is finished,' a shout of triumph rang through every world, and through heaven itself. The great contest that had been so long in progress in this world was now decided, and Christ was conqueror...Satan had revealed his true character as a liar and a murderer. It was seen that the very same spirit with which he had ruled the children of men who were under his power, he would have manifested if permitted to control the intelligences of heaven. With one voice the loyal universe united in extolling the divine administration."--Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 70. The members of the church of God in heaven rejoiced because Satan could no longer taunt them with accusations against their fellow-believers on earth whom they speak of as "brethren." "This vision of final victory over Satan is given by Jesus in Luke 10:18; John 12:31," (Robertson).

Secret of Victory. Verse 11. "Their victory was due to the blood of the Lamb and the Message to which they bore testimony," (20th C.N.T.). This is still a part of the triumphant shout of the unfallen universe. "They" has reference to the "brethren" whom Satan had been accusing before the throne of God since the fall of man. Since the offering of the first typical sacrifice at the gates of Paradise, all who have demonstrated their faith in the plan of salvation gained the victory over Satan through the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony as to its merits. Their loyalty even

to martyrdom is commended. "They held their lives cheap and did not shrink even from death," (Weymouth). The true spirit of martyrdom was manifested even by those who did not die a martyr's death. In the great honor roll of faith in Hebrews 11, many of these victors are mentioned by name and others referred to as having remained loyal "even unto death." During the pagan Roman persecutions of the second and third centuries and again during the Dark Ages, millions of others triumphed through the same mighty weapons,--the blood of Christ and their courageous testimony. Both the science of salvation and the song of redeeming love have their source and inspiration in the cross of Calvary. Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." He has therefore been the source and secret of victory since the foundation of the world.

Rejoicing in Heaven. Verse 12. "For this reason be glad, O Heaven," (Weymouth). "Therefore" means "for this reason." For what reason? Because the Calvary victory of Christ was decisive and complete, and it sounded the death-knell of Satan's revolt. This is still the message of the "loud voice" in heaven. The triumphant death of Christ was the signal for a great celebration among the angelic host, and the inhabitants of unfallen worlds. As angel messengers heralded the glad tidings from world to world there were shouts of triumph and universal rejoicing. As Jesus approached the final battle He foretold the consequence of His victory. See John 12: 31,32. "When the last steps of Christ's humiliation were to be taken, when the deepest sorrow was closing about His soul, He said to His disciples, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.' 'The prince of this world is judged.' Now shall he be cast out. With prophetic eye Christ traced the scenes to take place in His last great conflict. He knew that when He should exclaim, 'It is finished,' all heaven would triumph. His ear caught the distant music and the shouts of victory in the heavenly courts. He knew that the knell of Satan's empire would be sounded, and the name of Christ would be heralded from world to world throughout the universe."--The Desire of Ages, p. 679. See Eph. 3:9-11.

Woe to the Earth. The event that brought final victory and rejoicing throughout the universe meant increasing sorrow and woe to the earth and its inhabitants. This is still a part of what the celebrating inhabitants of heaven are saying. Amid their great rejoicing they do not forget their earthly "brethren" who are not yet delivered from the wrath of the dragon. What is the cause of the greater woes to mankind and especially to the church militant? Why did Christ's Calvary victory produce such a change? "Because the devil is gone down unto you having great wrath," (R.V.). "Has descended to you in fierce anger," (Moffatt). "Has gone down to you in great fury," (20th C.N.T.). This indicates that as the result of the cross, Satan was "cast out" of his position as "the prince of this world" that gave him the right to go in before the throne of God and accuse the brethren on earth. He therefore moved his headquarters, as it were, from heaven to earth. For 4,000 years Satan had made himself a pest and a nuisance in the heavenly courts, and the angelic host were happy to get rid of him. But what was their eternal gain would be the temporary loss of the church on earth. The inhabitants of heaven were happy and relieved because they would no longer have to listen to Satan's accusations and insinuations against the saints on earth and the divine administration in heaven. Defeated in every battle with Christ, there was nothing left for Satan except to make war on Christ's people on earth, and to them he comes down in great wrath.

Cause of Wrath. "Because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." "Full of fierce anger, because he knows that his appointed time is short," (Weymouth). Satan never knew till after his defeat by Christ on the cross that his revolt was a failure and that it was only a question of time till he must meet his deserved doom. Up until that time he entertained hopes that he would succeed. He felt certain that he could overcome the Son of God during His incarnation in weak, sinful human flesh. He had defeated the first Adam before he had sinful flesh and had led his descendants captive almost at his will. Surely he could lead Christ to commit at least one sin which would have been sufficient to ruin the plan of redemption and bring success to his own evil designs. In his rage and disappointment over his defeat, Satan determined to do his successful rival all the damage possible before the end. He could do nothing more among the unfallen angels or the inhabitants of unfallen worlds because the death of Christ robbed him of the last vestige of their sympathy. He would no longer be welcomed or even tolerated anywhere in the universe except in this rebel world. This was the only battleground left and here he makes his last desperate stand. Against the saints of God he gives vent to his wrath with ever increasing fury as the end draws near.

Defeat Realized. Verse 13. "And when the devil found himself thrown down to earth," (Weymouth). When Christ died triumphantly, Satan "saw" or realized that he was defeated and that his activities in the future were at an end except in this earth. "Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The arch-apostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion." "Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe....The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken."--The Desire of Ages, pp. 758,761. It was the realization of what had happened and its final and eternal consequences that made Satan so angry and inspired him to make his last desperate stand in this world and fight to the bitter end even though he knows that he is fighting a losing battle. It is the war of desperation. No longer able to attack Christ in person he wreaks his vengeance on His church.

Puzzling Questions. There are some puzzling questions regarding the origin and continuance of sin that cannot be fully answered in this life. However, revelation and reason make it possible to understand far more than is generally known among Christians. The question is sometimes asked, "Why did God create the devil?" The Lord created Lucifer, a beautiful and glorious angel and exalted him to the highest position possible for a created being, and through sin he turned himself into a devil. The Lord was not responsible for the change. Another question is, "Why did not the Lord destroy Lucifer as soon as sin entered his heart and before he had time to speak to other angels and lead them to join him in a revolt?" Suppose He had, what would have been the result? Lucifer was the best known, most prominent, and best loved angel in the courts of the heavenly kingdom. It could have been only a short time till every other angel would have been asking the question, "Where is Lucifer?" It would have been necessary for God to make an explanation. No explanation could have been satisfactory because the angels had seen nothing wrong in him as they can not read the thoughts and intents of the heart unaided by divine power. There would have remained in their minds a question regarding the justice

of God that eternity never could have fully erased. With such an unanswered question smoldering in their minds, perfect love and loyalty would have been impossible.

Free Moral Agency. One of the eternal and unchangeable moral principles that upholds the government of God is free moral agency, or the right to choose between right and wrong. The power of choice is indispensable to the stability of any government, human or divine. The Lord will never permit this foundation principle to be interfered with, and therefore the only thing possible was to permit the defection of sin to ripen into a harvest that would manifest the character of Lucifer to others so that they would understand God's dealings with him. His destruction without their personal and perfect knowledge of the reasons would have resulted in their serving God in the future through fear rather than love. The Lord does not accept such service and therefore the foundations of His moral government would have been undermined.

Other Questions. But you ask, "Why did not the Lord destroy Satan and his angels after they had joined in an open revolt?" Because sin was a mystery which even the loyal angels did not understand. Sin had never before been known, and its terrible results could not be understood until time was given for its awful nature to be demonstrated. The loyal angels and the inhabitants of unfallen worlds were puzzled as to what it was all about. They had many unanswered questions in their minds as to the meaning of things and the justice of God. These questions could be removed only by time. The truth or falsity of Satan's accusations against God and His government would be verified by time. The same is true regarding strife in families, churches, communities, and among the nations. Time is a great teacher and healer. The questions in the minds of the loyal angels and the inhabitants of unfallen worlds were never fully erased till Jesus died on the cross. It was this event that drew all to Christ and reconciled the universe to God. See John 12:31,32; Col. 1:20. To have destroyed Satan and his angels before Calvary would have been a fatal mistake that would have jeopardized the peace and harmony of the government of God throughout all eternity. The death of Christ opened the way for the execution of the sentence of death against Satan. See Heb. 2:14,15.

Why Continued Delay? Since the death of Christ made possible the destruction of Satan and his angels, "Why has he not been destroyed?" "Why has he been permitted to harass and persecute the church for another 2000 years?" As far as the angels and unfallen beings are concerned, Satan and his rebel followers could have been destroyed as soon as Christ died on the cross. But this is not true regarding the inhabitants of this earth, most of whom serve and worship Satan as their prince and god. The gospel must be carried to "every creature" in every nation so that they can make an intelligent decision as to whom they will give their allegiance. It is necessary that every question be erased from our minds as to the justice of God and the superiority of His government over that of Satan before sinners can be destroyed and sin eradicated from the universe. When this question is fully decided by the whole world under the final world message backed by the compelling power of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain, then all sinners can be destroyed with the approval of the universe including the saints of earth. Even the sinners themselves including Satan and his angels will acknowledge the justice of God just before the death sentence is executed against them in the lake of fire that will turn them to ashes and leave the dominion of this earth to "the saints of the most High" as their everlasting home.

WAR BETWEEN THE DRAGON AND THE CHURCH MILITANT

20

Satan's Revenge. Rev. 12:13. When the dragon realized that he had failed in his effort to overcome Michael during His earthly visit as Emmanuel, he sought to take revenge by attacking His church, who as His bride and wife is "the apple of His eye," "the supreme object of His regard." Knowing that his kingdom was lost and that he could no longer attack Christ in person, the dragon "persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." "He went in pursuit of the woman," (Weymouth). His attacks against the woman are on account of his bitter enmity against the child whom he failed to destroy. Where did the dragon pursue the woman? Verses 6,14. With verse 14 the narrative of verses 1-6 continues after the interlude which gives the background of the controversy and the results of Christ's Calvary victory on the revolt of Lucifer and his angels.

New Phase of Conflict. Defeated in his attempt to overthrow Michael in heaven, and again in his war against the "man child" on earth, Satan now directs his attacks against the woman who symbolized the church militant. (Before Calvary the dragon power carried on his activities throughout the entire universe. Satan spent most of his time before the throne of God accusing the saints on earth and casting out lying insinuations against the divine administration among the angels and the inhabitants of unfallen worlds. His hopes and ambitions included other worlds, and he was not so much concerned about this little world with its few saints. It was for this reason that Satan offered to give this world to Christ in exchange for a single act of worship. If Jesus had yielded, other worlds doubtless would have joined the great rebel. Christ would have been the prince of this world, but with the great rebel as His master and superior. But Jesus spurned the offer of partnership with Satan and went on to Calvary to conquer by love what had been offered Him as a bribe. After the triumphant death of Christ on the cross all was changed. Stripped of all sympathy throughout the universe, Satan was compelled to draw in his forces and concentrate them against the citizens of Christ's kingdom here on earth, the only ones left within his reach. It is a fact that most of the bloody persecutions against the church of God have taken place since Calvary.

The Wilderness Refuge. Verse 6. The Christian church fled from before the angry dragon just as did Israel from Pharaoh, Elijah from Jezebel, and Mary from Herod. The dragon's first attack was through pagan Rome during the second and third centuries when unnumbered millions died for their faith. Every means of torture that the devil and his angels could invent were used against the saints. The greatest period of persecution, however, came during the Middle Ages when Papal Rome ruled the world. The 1260 prophetic days or literal years always refer to the period of papal domination and are set forth seven times in Daniel and the Revelation. Christ had foretold the flight of the church into the mountains to escape the wrath of the dragon. See Matt. 24:15, 16, 20-22; Mark 13:14,19,20. "The abomination of desolation" is the papacy, and during the Middle Ages this apostate antichristian power entered "the temple of God," and "polluted the sanctuary of strength" and trampled under foot "the holy city" and persecuted unto death "the saints of the most High." See 2 Thess. 2:3,4; Dan. 11:31; 8:10-12; 7:25. During this time the saints had to find refuge in the wilderness and mountain fastnesses of the Alps, the Pyrenees, and other mountain retreats.

Asylum Prepared. The wilderness refuge of the church was "a place prepared of God." "A place which God had prepared for her," (Weymouth). The world contains no more natural fortifications and hiding places than those in which the Waldenses and Albigenses found refuge from the papal power. The passageways into some of the retired valleys in which they lived were easily blocked and defended. This retreat was doubtless prepared for them at the time of the Deluge when the surface of the earth was broken up. Not only did these rocky fortresses provide an asylum for the persecuted saints, but the retired valleys among the mountains provided food for them. "That they should feed her there," or "that they should nourish her there," (R.V.). "They" probably has reference to the prepared places or mountains. The forces of nature that provided refuge also provided food. The food that sustained the church during this long period of darkness may have special reference to spiritual food, "the bread of life." These Christian pilgrims preserved the Scriptures in much of their original purity and also retained much of the faith and practices of the early church. Many of them were observers of the true Sabbath, for the preservation of which Christ had asked His people to pray. They sowed the first seeds of truth that made possible the great Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. The same divine hand that protected and fed ancient Israel during their wilderness sojourn, and Elijah while a refugee from the wrath of Ahab and Jezebel, and Joseph and Mary while exiles in Egypt from the cruel Herod, preserved, defended and nourished the church during the long and bloody persecutions of the Dark Ages when the papal church dominated the nations and made war on the saints.

Wings of an Eagle. Verse 14. The experience of the church of the Middle Ages is paralleled with that of ancient Israel, called "the church in the wilderness," (Acts 7:38), when she fled into the wilderness from the face of the dragon power of Egypt. In Eze. 29:3 Pharaoh is called "the dragon." We are told that the Lord carried His people out of Egypt as "on eagle's wings" to a place of safety in the desert. See Ex. 19:4. The task of the Lord in getting His people to leave Egypt is illustrated by the method of the mother eagle in teaching her young to fly. See Deut. 32:10-13. After stirring up the nest, the mother pushes the eaglet out of the nest and then before it reaches the earth swoops under it and bears it back to a place of refuge on her mighty wings. The Lord used this illustration from nature to represent the flight and divine protection of ancient Israel from the dragon under the first of the seven heads, and again of the Christian church as she fled into the mountains from the wrath of the same dragon under the seventh head. The symbolic meaning of the two wings of the eagle has been given various interpretations, such as the Old and New Testaments, Christ and the Holy Spirit, etc. If they have a spiritual meaning there seems to be no method of making an application that is clear and definite. All interpretations thus far have been within the realm of conjecture.

The Relentless Dragon. Satan has carried on his earthly rule and persecutions through many different political and religious organizations, but it has always been the same dragon power that had its origin in heaven. "Nor was it essentially different after Paganism was dethroned, and the cross appeared upon the imperial banners. The tactics changed, but it was still the Dragon that wrought. Outward oppression was broken, but then came inward assaults, corruption, and decay. The sword of state for a while was sheathed, but then was drawn the more killing weapon of domineering heresy. Soon also the tiara became the imperial crown, the wearer of it the world's

dictator, and kings and governments the slaves and menials of another Rome, robed in Christian symbols indeed, but at heart the Dragon still, with fagot, and bloody inquisition, and bans of terrible damnation, striving to enforce its blasphemous assumptions and soul-destroying lies."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 2, p. 314. Since practically all agree that Pagan Rome was the dragon under the sixth head, and the Papal persecutions of the Middle Ages are said to be carried on by the dragon, there is no other conclusion but that the Papacy is the dragon power under the seventh head as pictured in the next chapter. The great dragon cannot exist without a head and that head must be a universal power and can never apply to one that is local in its power and authority.

The Great Destroyer. In Rev. 9:11 Satan is called "A destroyer." The great dragon has always been a persecutor and destroyer of prophets and saints. A writer gives the following graphic description of his activities down through the ages: "The same wickedness had been practiced by him in ancient times. The life of Moses, on whom the hopes of the people of God hung during the fearful oppression exercised over them by the enemy, was brought into extreme peril by him at the very first. At the coming of Christ, whose appearance threatened far greater danger to his dominion upon earth, who was to withdraw from him not only the people of God but the heathen also, who should attack him in his own territory, he set his instruments anew in motion, as is recorded in Matthew 2:1-12, to which allusion is here manifestly made. Herod, the servant of the dragon, as soon as he heard of the birth of Christ, takes measures to have the new born child slain, and kills all the children in Bethlehem under two years old, that he might make sure of destroying the one hated child. He has been manifesting the same wickedness also since, as often as Christ is born anew in the Spirit." (Hengstenberg). F. B. Meyer declared that "that which happened historically must take place experimentally. In each of us Christ must be born through the direct action of the Holy Spirit." Isaiah said that "when Zion travailed she brought forth children." The dragon still stands before the woman or church to destroy those who are born again, or in whom Christ is reborn through a spiritual reincarnation.

Another Effort to Destroy. Verse 15. "Water as a river," (R.V.). "To sweep her away with a flood," (Moffatt). Water, especially in the form of a river flooding its banks and sweeping all before it, is used in the Bible to symbolize an invading and conquering army. See Isa. 8:7,8; Jer. 46:7,8; 47:2,3. A rushing flood of waters is also symbolic of an overwhelming destruction of any kind. See Ps. 90:5; 124:4,5; Dan. 11:22. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood" is an expression in Isa. 59:19 describing the attacks of Satan against the people of God individually or collectively. Toward the close of the Dark Ages, especially during the great Reformation, organized forces were sent against the church in the wilderness in a final effort to destroy the so-called "heretics." "When the holy Reformers began again to shake the torch of evangelic truth to light the nations to their salvation, the Vatican thundered with its bulls, armies rallied for the onslaught, and massacres and butcheries filled many lands with the blood of God's confessors, or lighted them with flames to consume the bodies of the saints."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 2, p. 314.

The Church Helped. Verse 16. "Swallowed up" means literally "drank down." Herodotus tells of the River Lycus disappearing underground at Colossae. The waters of the Deluge returned into the earth again after the flood.

The River of Damascus comes from the slopes of Lebanon and in times of rain is a mighty rushing torrent, but the waters are all swallowed up in the sands of the Arabian desert. This may have been the illustration that inspired the language of our text. Speaking of the papal persecutions of Reformation days the historian says: "Even in the Albigensian war the success was indeed complete; heresy was crushed, but by means of which Innocent disapproved in his heart. He had let loose a terrible force, which he could neither arrest nor control. The Pope can do everything but show mercy or moderation....Heresy was quenched in blood; but the earth sooner or later gives out the terrible cry of blood for vengeance against murderers and oppressors."--Historian's History of the World, Vol. 8, p. 614. Had it not been for divine intervention and assistance the entire church would have been annihilated as were the Huguenots of Paris on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572.

Two Sources of Help. The help that came to the woman at the time of her greatest need came from two sources. In the first place the great Reformation shortened the days of tribulation "for the elect's sake," (Matt. 24:20,21). Princes and nations welcomed the prospect of deliverance from papal tyranny and espoused the cause of the reformers and defended them from their foes. The earth thus "helped the woman" through earthly powers. In the second place the discovery of America came simultaneously with the Reformation and attracted the attention of many of the most bitter persecutors who turned from their attacks on the saints to the adventurous task of discovery, exploration and conquest in the New World. America not only swallowed up many of the enemies of the church, but also provided a place of refuge for the persecuted saints. In the New World they could escape the tyranny and oppression of the Old World and worship God and educate their children according to the dictates of conscience.

Another Application. Let us suggest another application. Verses 15 and 16 may find their fulfillment between the close of the 1260 years of papal domination and the attack of the dragon on the remnant. The effort of the dragon to destroy Protestantism through persecution failed. He now tries to accomplish his purpose through other means. The flood of waters coming out of the mouth of the dragon may not represent so much physical persecution as the enunciation of a flood of false doctrines for the purpose of engulfing and destroying the church that grew out of the Reformation. Christ is the source of all truth and thus truth comes out of His mouth "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Col. 2:3. See also Matt. 5:2; Heb. 1:1; Rev. 1:16. Jesus declared that out of those who believe on Him "shall flow rivers of living water," (John 7:38). The gospel message therefore comes out of the mouth of Christ, the Spokesman of the Godhead, and of Zion His church. On the other hand all error has its origin and source in Satan and comes out of the mouth of the dragon and Babylon, the church of Satan. See John 8:44; Rev. 16:13,14; 18:2,3. From this source comes a flood of lies or false teachings including all the "abominations of the earth," (Rev. 17:5). Luther declared that "the world must be replenished with horrible darkness and errors, before the latter days."--Commentary on Galatians, p. 402.

Flood of Modernism. Is not this a good description of the flood of false teachings centering in the modernistic and paganistic philosophy founded on the evolutionary hypothesis, that has well nigh engulfed the Protestant world? But the prophecy predicts that this effort also will eventually fail

and the flood will be swallowed up by the earth and disappear. The most dangerous method yet attempted by the dragon will come to naught because "the earth helped the woman" by taking care of the flood of waters. It is a fact that is becoming more apparent every passing year that the truth that is killing skepticism and bringing the evolutionary theory to naught is coming not only from the Bible, but from the earth or book of nature. The prophecy that "truth shall spring out of the earth," (Ps. 85:11) is being literally fulfilled in the discoveries of modern science in the fields of archeology, geology and paleontology. The further prophecy that "righteousness shall look down from heaven" may have special reference to the wonderful discoveries of modern astronomy that are corroborating the Biblical record and thus silencing the arguments of skepticism. This accounts for the ever increasing drift away from modernism. The evolutionary hypothesis is neither science nor scientific. It is "science falsely so-called" and therefore must retreat before the advancements of true science which "is based on indisputable facts, or accepted principles."

The Final Attack. Verse 17. "This made the dragon furiously angry," (Weymouth). What makes the dragon furiously angry with God's remnant people? Because they have not been affected by his flood of false teachings but have stood steadfastly and consistently for the truths of the Bible in the face of ridicule and persecution. Not only so but they also are heralding a message to the whole world exposing the fallacy of the evolutionary theory using as their arguments not only the Scriptures but also the truth that is springing out of the earth from the discoveries of true science. Satan's plan is thus defeated by the remnant of the church and the secret of their success is in the fact that they "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." The commandments of God include the Sabbath and the Sabbath is an impregnable bulwark against evolution and modernism. It involves a belief in creation and the Genesis record of the beginning of things. Through the influence of modernism the great fundamentals of the gospel were either forsaken by the great evangelical churches or they were divided into warring factions so that the force of the gospel has been greatly mitigated. But one church stood unitedly and uncompromisingly in the breach and not only refused to retreat before the flood of false doctrines, but assumed a militant attitude in exposing the errors while teaching the truth as revealed in the Scriptures and corroborated by the discoveries of true science. No wonder the dragon centers his last attack on this small "remnant" which represents the last of God's children who live in the last days of earth's history and are ready to meet their returning Lord. "The remnant of her seed" are "the comparatively few individual believers who are left to bear testimony to the truth in the last days," (Mauro).

A New Battlefield. "And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed," (R.V.). "Went elsewhere," (Weymouth). "Went off to make war on the rest of her offspring," (Moffatt). "And the dragon was angered with the woman and came away to do battle with the rest of her seed," (Concordant). These different translations give evidence that a new battlefield with a new foe is described. It indicates that after the dragon's defeat in Europe, there would be a transfer of the seat and center of conflict to a new battlefield. The first battlefield was in heaven around the throne of God where the dragon and his angels were defeated by Michael and His angels and driven from heaven. The second battlefield was in Palestine in Asia during the earthly visit of the "man

child" in which the dragon was again defeated. The center of the conflict during the third phase was in Europe during the Middle Ages while the church was in her wilderness retreat. Not only was the dragon again thwarted in his efforts to destroy true Christianity, but the Reformation gave to him a crushing defeat and brought triumph to the church of Christ. Then follows another struggle in which the chief weapon of the dragon is a flood of false doctrines by which he hopes to break the power of Protestantism and silence her protests. In this plan he largely succeeds for a time until the remnant with the weapons of the Word of God and the discoveries of true science bring the attacks of the dragon to naught.

The Last War. In the last phase of the struggle before the close of probation the dragon centers his attacks on the remnant who are so successfully meeting his false theories and defeating his purpose. He "went away" or "went elsewhere" to make this attack which doubtless indicates a new battlefield the center of which will be in another part of the earth. The last struggle over the possession of this earth will center in the New World or Protestant America. The first reason is that America became a new place of refuge for the pursued and persecuted woman or church and many thousands of the most godly of the Old World came to the new land of promise where they could "establish a church without a pope and a state without a king"; where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. Satan went in pursuit of the woman to her new place of refuge and there the battle is renewed with greater fury than ever. It is the war unto the death because the dragon knows that his time is very short.

A New Nation. Another reason for the enmity of Satan and the transferrence of the seat of war is that the refugees from the oppressive nations of Europe established in the New World the first truly Protestant and Republican government with a complete separation between the church and the state. "Westward the course of empire takes it way," and "time's noblest offspring is the last." The new nation founded on new principles of government enunciated by Christ Himself became an asylum for the oppressed of all nations. To these shores came the most rugged, virtuous, pioneering, and liberty-loving men and women of the Old World. A nation founded on truly Christian principles and granting civil and religious freedom to all its citizens would naturally stir up the intense wrath of the dragon. All seven of his universal kingdoms through which he ruled the world and persecuted the church have been absolute monarchies in which the church was the dominant power. Worst of all, as far as the dragon is concerned, the nations of the Old World began to follow the example of the United States and grant more liberty to its citizens. The establishment of this new nation was a great blow to the plans of the dragon and it therefore becomes the chief object of his wrath and attacks. If the dragon can cause the new republic to repudiate its Republican and Protestant principles he well knows that the other nations will again follow her example and he can lead the world back under his absolute dominion. Against the American Republic the papacy has concentrated its forces as the wounded head is being healed.

Birthplace of Final Message. Another reason for the wrath of the dragon and the new center of attack is that the final gospel message of the "remnant" that defeats the plans of the dragon to engulf the church with his false doctrines, and that brings God's people back to the faith and practice of apostolic times with a repetition of Pentecostal power, had its origin in America and from this headquarters carries on its world-wide missionary

program. In the New World began the movement which restores true Protestantism and completes the arrested work of the Reformation. The message of the remnant is belting the globe and revealing the long hidden truth of the heavenly sanctuary and the mediatorial services of Christ, and at the same time exposing the false and counterfeit system with a human priesthood and sacrifice, and Sabbath and Saviour. During the Dark Ages of papal oppression the Two Witnesses had to do their teaching clothed in sackcloth. It is the message of the three angels of Rev. 14 that completely removes this dark cloak of error and superstition and again lightens the earth with the glory of gospel light.

A Crushing Defeat. Satan's first defeat was at the hands of the mighty Michael. His second downfall was caused by the "man child" who is also "the Lamb." After being thwarted in his attempts to destroy "the woman," he suffers one of his most ignominious defeats at the hands of "the children" or remnant of the woman. The mighty dragon, the very symbol of strength, power, and cruelty, is overcome by the symbols of physical weakness and timidity. The only weapon used by Christ is love, and the weapon of the church is "the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony." Love and hatred meet in conflict and love conquers. "A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," come out of Satan's false system, Babylon, and transfer their citizenship and allegiance to the kingdom of God. There will yet be "a firmament of chosen ones" who will "shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to" the law of God. (P.K. 189). No wonder that Satan is "furiously angry" with such a people.

The Remnant Identified. Verse 17. Two prominent characteristics identify the remnant of the church and tell why Satan is especially angry with them. The first is their obedience to the law or commandments of God. Obedience has always distinguished God's true people in this rebel world. (Satan's followers are called "the children of disobedience," (Eph. 2:1).) Obedience is always the sign of citizenship. Thus the three Hebrew worthies in Babylon showed their allegiance to God by entering the fiery furnace rather than break the precepts of the Decalogue. Their course was approved of heaven, as was also Daniel's during a similar test later. See Dan. 2 and 6. Jesus made obedience the test of discipleship. See John 14:15,21. The disciples declared obedience to be the evidence of love and acquaintance with God. Rom. 13:8-10; 1 John 2:3,4; 3:4,5; 5:2,3. Obedience to the entire law of God will especially distinguish those who will be ready to meet Christ when He returns. See James 2:8-12; Rev. 3:10; 14:6,7,12; 22:14. "From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven, it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his rebellion against the Creator; and though cast down, he has continued the same warfare upon the church...The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God."--The Great Controversy, p. 582. The law abiding remnant not only expose Satan before the world, but they also call multitudes of his subjects out of Babylon into conformity to the law of the kingdom of heaven.

The Testimony of Jesus. In Rev. 19:10 "the testimony of Jesus" is defined as "the spirit of prophecy." The spirit or gift of prophecy is one of the gifts of the Spirit that was placed in the church to bring about its

perfection and assist in its mission. See 1 Cor. 12:1,4-28; Eph. 8:8, 11-14. The entire Bible was written through the Spirit or gift of prophecy and is called "the testimony of Jesus" and "the Spirit of prophecy." The writings of the prophets and apostles constitute the written testimony of the Two Witnesses, Christ and the Holy Spirit. To "have" the "spirit of prophecy" means more than merely to possess the Scriptures for even the wicked have or may have them in their possession. It indicates the essence of the gift itself in their midst, for this alone could make the devil angry.

Remnant Will Possess Gift. See 1 Cor. 1:6-8; Eph. 4:8,11-14; 1 Thess. 5: 20-23. These texts refer clearly to the church that is waiting for the second advent of Christ. Satan has always been angry with God's prophets and most of them suffered persecution if not martyrdom. He has also been angry with the people who followed their instructions. Through this gift the Lord has communicated His will to His people and also exposed the purpose and plans of the enemy for their destruction. See Matt. 5:12; Acts 7:51,52; 2 Kings 6:8-17. It naturally makes Satan angry to have his traps laid bare and his deceptions exposed to the church. Through this gift the Lord also brings prosperity to His church and leads and preserves it in its earthly mission. See 2 Chron. 20:20; Hosea 12:13. The Exodus movement was typical of the second advent movement. See 1 Cor. 10:1-11. By the same gift the remnant of the church will be led in their work and preserved from the wrath of the dragon. Is it any wonder that he hates the gift of prophecy above all others and is angry with those who have and appreciate it? All of the attacks made on the remnant and their message center either on the law of God, and especially the Sabbath, or on the Spirit of prophecy, or both. But this last attack will also fail, for while it is in progress Christ returns to deliver His people and take them to "a better country, that is, an heavenly" where they will be forever free from the onslaughts of the dragon. Then the church militant will become the church triumphant.

THE BEAST WITH WORLD DOMINION

21

The Neglected Chapter. There is no part of the Revelation or the Bible that has been so universally neglected and ignored by the professed Christian world than chapter 13. (This neglect is included in the malediction of Rev. 22:19 on those who "take away from the words of the book of this prophecy.") The chief explanation for the evasion of this prophecy is that its revelations are not agreeable to either Catholics or Protestants. The only reasonable and possible explanation places both groups in a very embarrassing position. "There are few chapters in the Bible which have been entirely passed over by Christian preachers as containing nothing that would edify and instruct men living in circumstances like our own. But this chapter seems to have been so dealt with....But this chapter has a meaning, and a momentous one, for the men of today," (Pulpit Commentary).

Purpose of Vision. "The main design of the vision of Chapter XII is seemingly to conduct us rapidly to the very last stage of the great conflict, which is presented by the vision of the two wild beasts of Chapter XIII, supplemented as to important details by subsequent visions. For whereas each scene in Chapter XII is described with greatest brevity, and long eras of time are compressed into a few sentences, when we come to Chapter XIII, the description becomes detailed and specific. This shows that what went before was simply leading up to this scene, and was given in order that this picture of the last phase of satanic opposition to God's purpose with respect to the kingdoms of this world might be set before us in its true relation to all the great events of human history from the very beginning of time." "Let it be remembered that what is now to be shown us are the various phases of the last stage of the conflict between God and Satan...It is clear that the visions of the two beasts, as pictured in the visions of the Apocalypse, extends to the nineteenth chapter; and that at the end of that chapter is given the picture of the very last struggle in the long conflict, whereof the issue was announced by the great voices in heaven."--Of the Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass, Philip Mauro, pp. 388-391.

Chapter Synopsis. Rev. 13:1-3. These verses give a brief prologue or summary of the entire chapter. The following verses present a detailed description of the activities of the beast and his allied powers against the church of Christ throughout the Christian era, culminating in the war on the remnant. "And he stood upon the sand of the sea," (R.V.). This refers to the dragon and doubtless should have been included in the previous chapter. "Then I saw a Wild Beast coming up out of the sea," (Weymouth). It was not a domestic animal but a wild and savage beast of the jungle, representing brute force. Man in his sinful state is "earthly, sensual, devilish," (James 3:15) and earthly nations partake of the same carnal and brutish nature and are always so represented by the Lord in His prophetic symbols of earthly powers under satanic control. The nations that seek human instead of divine glory are beastly in their savagery and selfishness. When Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took to himself the glory that belonged alone to God, he was deprived of his reason and driven from his throne and deprived of his kingdom and associations with his fellows and was compelled to dwell with the beasts of the field for seven years "till" he knew "that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." See Dan. 4. When he assumed the glory that belonged to God he partook of the beast nature, and this is likewise true of all men and nations.

Relation to Dragon. No person can carefully study the characteristics of the dragon and the beast without concluding that they are closely related if not identical. Both have seven heads and ten horns and are persecutors of the saints of God especially during the period of 42 months or 1260 years. Both exist during the entire period of the reign of sin as the enemy of God and His church, and both are represented as making war on the remnant of the church living in the last days. It would be impossible for two such universal satanic powers to exist at the same time, and therefore we must conclude that the beast represents another apocalyptic view of the kingdom of Satan under a new phase of its existence. While the dragon in its broadest sense includes the kingdom of Satan in all its history and embraces all the powers of earth under satanic control, it especially describes the dragon power under the dominion of the sixth of the seven heads,--Pagan Rome. This is because the chief emphasis of chapter 12 is on the effort of the dragon to destroy Christ at the time of His birth and during His earthly visit, at which time Imperial Rome ruled the world and was the principal agent of Satan. While the beast also embraces all included in the dragon, the chief purpose of the vision of chapter 13 is to describe the earthly government of Satan under the seventh and last phase of its existence when the ten kingdoms of divided Rome would be dominated by the religio-political power of Papal Rome. The "beast" is mentioned thirty-two times in the Apocalypse and always as the great enemy of Christ and His church. Of course, primarily the beast is Satan himself just as is the dragon. First of all, the "dragon," the "beast," the "man of sin," the "son of perdition," and the great "antichrist" is the devil himself, and in the secondary sense these terms apply to those under satanic control through whom he carries on his work of deception and persecution.

Universal Dominion. In symbolic prophecy, beasts that rise out of the great sea of humanity represent world or universal powers. Seven is the symbol of completeness and therefore the seven heads represent universal dominion in all its phases. Ten is also symbolic of a complete whole and the ten horns include all the lesser than universal powers since the fall of Imperial Rome. Thus the beast embraces the combination of all earthly kingdoms under satanic sovereignty. "The beast represents, not the Roman Empire merely, but the aggregate of the empires of this world as opposed to Christ and His kingdom."--Dean Alfred in Speakers' Commentary. "We here have a symbolic representation of the political sovereignty of this world. The Beast has horns, and horns are the representatives of power. On these horns are diadems, and diadems are the badges of regal dominion. . . .He is a monstrous Beast, including in his composition the four beasts of Daniel. He comes out of the same agitated sea, and behaves as they behaved. . . The identification thus becomes complete and unmistakable, that this monstrous Beast is meant to set before us the image of earthly sovereignty and dominion."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 2, p. 391.

Combination Beast. Verse 2 shows a definite relation between this beast and the four beasts of Daniel 7. "Daniel's beasts were successive empires, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Graeco-Macedonian, and the Roman. But the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the nameless ten-horned monster, each distinct there, are all united in one here. This Beast is therefore the consummation and embodiment of the whole world-power or political dominion from the beginning. . .There is no political sovereignty on earth during its administration but that embraced in its horns and heads. It is therefore the whole sum of it as then existing."--Id. p. 392.

"The beast in the passage before us is a compound of the several beasts of Daniel. If by these the more prominent phases of the ungodly power of the world are represented, the Beast here can be nothing else than that power in its entireness," (Hengstenberg). "We are presented first (Chap. 13:1,2) with a full delineation of the enemy in which his past, present and future history are brought together precisely as in the case of the first enemy (the dragon). The prophet sees a beast with seven heads and ten horns rise out of the sea, to which the dragon gives his strength, and his throne, and great power. Under this symbol is represented the God-opposing power of this world in its seven phases, the seven being again subdivided." (Hengstenberg).

Another Author. "The first beast seen by John is a composite symbol, for it combines in the one creature the features of the four beasts which came successively into view in Daniel's vision. This quite plainly indicates that it symbolizes the ungodly governmental power of the world in general. It presents in one figure a summary view of the whole of beast government in its main stages, from the beginning of Gentile history down to the end of time." "The heads represent the successive phases assumed by the Gentile world-government from the beginning of history to the end. . .The succession of world empires, one following and displacing another, could not be shown by a succession of beasts in this vision, for Gentile world government as a whole is here pictured by a single beast of composite character."--Of the Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass, Philip Mauro, pp. 392, 397.

"The seven heads of the beast represent the consummation of the age-duration of Satan's activity through the seven great world empires of history and prophecy, to destroy the testimony of the true worshipers of Jehovah, and obtain that worship for himself."--Outline Studies in the Book of Revelation, Turner, p. 74. "The seven heads may constitute in the vision a sevenfold succession of the world-empires of history each subject in its day to the suzerainty of the dragon."--Revelation, the Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy, Stevens, p. 227.

The Heads Named. Philip Mauro identifies the seven heads as follows: "Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome; leaving but one more, the seventh, to make that history of oppression and subjection full and complete."--Page 400. Mauro hesitates to name the seventh head as do most commentators. Another well known interpreter of the Apocalypse says: "In this beast we have an emblem of that power of the world which, under the guidance of 'the prince of this world,' opposes and persecutes the church of Christ. . . The seven heads seem most fittingly to represent seven powers of the world by which the children of God had been persecuted in the past or were to be persecuted in the future. . .The seven heads appear to represent the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman powers, together with that power wider even than Rome, which St. John saw was about to reign in the 'last time.'"--The Expositor's Bible, by Wm. Milligan, Professor of Biblical Criticism in the University of Aberdeen.

7 Heads named +

Other Authorities. "The seven heads denote the multiplication and succession of hostile powers arrayed against the church of God. Egypt and Assyria, Babylon and Persia, Greece and Rome, and by-and-by the final antichrist,--these may be the seven heads. But they are all successive heads of the same God-defying world. . .Under all its forms it has hated the people of

God. From Pharaoh even to the last of the persecutors it has been the same. And in modern days, though in different ways, it has continued unchanged in spirit and aim." (Pulpit Commentary). It is interesting to note that the same list is given in the footnote of the Douay or Catholic Bible: "The seven heads are seven kings; that is, seven principal kingdoms or empires, which have exercised or shall exercise, tyrannical power over the people of God: of these, five were then fallen, viz.:--the Egyptian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, and Grecian monarchies: one was present, viz., the empire of Rome; and the seventh and chiefest was to come, viz., the great Antichrist and his empire. The ten horns may be understood of ten lesser persecutors."

The Seventh Identified. Seventh-day Adventists do not hesitate definitely to identify the seventh head as Papal Rome, the power that for more than twelve centuries dominated the kingdoms of divided Pagan Rome. It is evident that the ten horns were all on the seventh head of the beast because the other six were single universal rulerships. Prof. W. W. Prescott says of the seven heads: "The seven heads through which this beast has successively revealed himself represent the seven powers which have been brought into close connection with the people of God since the flood, and through which Satan has operated most successfully to oppose the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. They are: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Pagan Rome, and Papal Rome."--The Present Truth Extra, No. 84, April, 1929. This is the conclusion to which all careful students of the Apocalypse must eventually come. Only a power as dominant and universal as Papal Rome could be represented by the seventh head of the beast. None of the local kingdoms represented by the ten horns can qualify as the seventh head under which Satan dominates the earth and persecutes the saints. It should be noticed that with the dragon the crowns were on the heads indicating that they represented kingdoms or imperial powers. But with the beast the crowns are on the ten horns, indicating that under the seventh head phase of the dragon power the civil authority is chiefly in the ten kingdoms and that the ruling head is not strictly a kingdom or civil power. It is different from the other six because it rules over and dominates and works through a number of independent civil kingdoms rather than a single universal empire.

Blasphemous Titles. Verses 1,6. "Names of blasphemy," (Margin). "Names full of blasphemy," (Weymouth). "Blasphemous titles on his heads," (Moffatt). Webster defines blasphemy as follows: "An indignity offered to God in words or writing: reproachful, contemptuous; anything which derogates from the prerogatives of God." Blackstone says that blasphemy is "an offense against God and religion, either by impiously denying the Almighty, His existence or providence, or by reproaches of Jesus Christ; or by profanely scoffing at Holy Scripture, or exposing it to contempt or ridicule." It should be noticed that the names of blasphemy are on the seven heads and not the ten horns. Each of the seven world empires represented by the seven heads was a combination of ecclesiastical and civil powers. The ruler was a priest-king. His authority was not only supreme in civil affairs, but he was also the high priest of the state religion and was known as the Pontifex Maximus or supreme pontiff. Pontiff comes from the word pons or pontis, meaning bridge. Pontoon comes from the same root word. The pontiff was the chief keeper of the bridge between earth and heaven. He held the key that locked and unlocked heaven to men. He claimed to be the vicar or vicegerent of the gods, and especially of the great God, the

Creator. All of these religio-political rulers assumed titles that belong alone to God. Divine honors were given them including worship. "The Roman emperors blasphemously assumed divine names in public documents," (Robertson). Emperor worship was one of the chief issues that brought persecution to the early church. In most of these ancient empires dynastic names identified the kings with their gods. Pharaoh is from the Hebrew "par-o" meaning "the sun." The sun was the chief god of the Egyptians. In Babylon the sun-god was "Bel," which means the same as "Baal." Bel became the prefix to many of the kingly titles, such as Bel-merodac, Bel-shazzar, etc. Every name by which the creature usurps the place of the Creator is a name of blasphemy. All seven of these universal powers were dominated by the great false and counterfeit system of religion divinely designated "Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." Rev. 17:5.

Source of World Dominion. Verse 2. Primarily the dragon is "the Devil and Satan," (Rev. 12:9). As "the prince of this world" he is the source of world empire. He told Christ that the kingdom of this world had been "delivered" unto him and he could give it to whomsoever he willed. See Luke 4:4-7. He therefore offered the rulership of this world to Christ in return for one act of worship. Christ could have been the head of the seventh world empire and ruled the earth under Satan. He was offered the throne of the Caesars and the Jews wanted Him to take it, for that was their idea of the reign of their Messiah. The disciples were also sharers in this false hope. It was because Jesus indignantly refused the offer of Satan that the devil gave the throne of the Caesars to the chief pontiffs or popes of Papal Rome. The chief purpose of the beast of Rev. 13 is to describe the kingdom of Satan under the dominion of the seventh head, which is the Papacy. It is a well known fact that the papal religion is a combination of the religious systems of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. For this reason the beast is a combination of the four beasts of Daniel 7 which symbolizes those four powers. The papal government is also patterned after these four world empires, all of which were absolute monarchies as is the papacy. So Satan gives to the rulers of ecclesiastical Rome what he offered to take from the Caesars and give to Christ. The only condition was that He acknowledge and worship him as "the god of this world" as the rulers and nations of the past had done.

Satan's Throne. Rev. 2:13. "Satan's throne is there," (Weymouth). Satan's throne is the throne occupied by the ruler of the world empire that rules the earth in his stead or as his agent. It is the throne of this world that Adam surrendered to him when he failed to stand the test of obedience. "Where God's throne should have been, Satan has placed his throne. The world laid its homage, as a willing offering, at the feet of the enemy." (Vol. 6:236). Seven times has Satan exercised his usurped right to give the throne of world-dominion to others, and only once was his offer refused. Jesus refused to compromise with the arch-rebel because He knew that the only way to redeem Adam's failure and restore the lost dominion to its original state and to redeemed humanity was to go to the cross. "Christ says: 'Where Satan has set his throne, there shall stand My cross. Satan shall be cast out, and I will be lifted up to draw all unto Me. I will become the center of the redeemed world,'" (Vol. 6:237). The governments of this world under the dominion of Satan have been weak and transitory. Seven times the throne has been given into new hands with the same tragic results. There will be no stability of government until the throne of

world dominion is occupied by Christ. Then "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." See Isa. 9:6,7; Dan. 2:44,45; 7:27. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Heb. 1:8.

Throne Accepted by Popes. The throne rejected by Christ was accepted by the pope who claims to be His representative and vicegerent on earth. Where did the papal beast get its throne and authority to rule the world? "And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." "And it was to the dragon that he owed his power, and his throne, and his wide dominion," (Weymouth). "To him the dragon gave his own power and his own throne and great authority." (Moffatt). Then the throne of the beast or papacy is the throne of Satan, the dragon. It was the throne also of the Caesars. In the fifth century Pope Leo the Great declared in a sermon that the "former Rome was but the promise of the latter Rome; that the glories of the former were to be reproduced in Catholic Rome; that Romulus and Remus were but the forerunners of Paul and Peter; and that as the former Rome had ruled the world, so the latter Rome, by the see of the holy blessed Peter as head of the church, would dominate the earth." Pope Boniface VIII presented himself in the sight of the multitude, clothed in a cuirass, with a helmet on his head, and a sword in his hand, held aloft, and proclaimed: "There is no other Caesar, nor king, nor emperor than I, the Sovereign Pontiff and Successor of the Apostles."--See The Consecrated Way, Jones, pp. 90,92. The pope claims to be the "King of kings and Lord of lords," and the "ruler of the world."

Modern Catholic Writer. "Long ages ago, when Rome through the neglect of the Western emperors was left to the mercy of the barbarous hordes, the Romans turned to one figure for aid and protection, and asked him to rule them; and thus, in this simple manner, the best title of all to kingly right, commenced the temporal sovereignty of the popes. And meekly stepping to the throne of Caesar, the vicar of Christ took up the scepter to which the emperors and kings of Europe were to bow in reverence through so many ages."--James P. Conroy, in American Catholic Quarterly Review, April,1911. Cardinal Manning quoted one of the popes as saying: "I claim to be the supreme judge and director of the consciences of men--of the peasant who tills the fields, and the prince that sits on the throne; of the household that sits in the shade of privacy, and the legislature that makes laws for kingdoms. I am the sole and last judge of what is right and wrong."--Vide Quirinus (Appendix 1, p. 832). Quoted in a sermon "In the Pope's Name," preached in Kensington, England, in 1869.

Another World Empire. Barnes in his General History, p. 321, declared that for centuries the papacy kept gaining strength until finally "a new Rome rose from the ashes of the old, far mightier than the vanquished empire, for it claimed dominion over the spirits of men." Dr. John Lord wrote: "What an august power is this Catholic empire, equally great as an institution and as a religion. . .It has proved to be the most wonderful fabric of what we call worldly wisdom that our world has seen--controlling kings, dictating laws to ancient monarchies, and binding the souls of millions with a more perfect despotism than Oriental emperors ever sought or dreamed. And what a marvelous vitality it seems to have."--Beacon Lights of History, Vol. 3, pp. 95,96. H. G. Wells declares in his Outline of History that the papacy was an attempt at world dominion through religion, to do what Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Charles V, and others attempted by civil and military power, and failed.

Successors of the Caesars. "What was left of what was Rome took refuge in the Roman church. . . .The Barbarian chiefs, however, did not venture to set themselves up as Roman Emperors and enter the vacant shrine of the imperium. They founded empires of their own in the provinces. In these circumstances the Bishop of Rome appeared as the guardian of the past and the shield of the future. In Rome the episcopal throne was occupied in the fifth century by men who understood the signs of the times and utilized them to the full. The Roman Church in this way privily pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-Empire, of which it is the actual continuation; the empire has not perished but has only undergone a transformation. If we assert, and mean the assertion to hold good even to the present time, that the Roman church is the old Roman Empire consecrated by the Gospel, that is no mere 'clever remark,' but the recognition of the true state of the matter historically, and the most appropriate and fruitful way of describing the character of this church. It still governs the nations; its Popes rule like Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. . .This is no church like the evangelical communities, or the national Churches of the East; it is a political creation, and as imposing as a World-Empire, because the continuation of the Roman Empire. The Pope, who calls himself 'King,' and 'Pontifex Maximus,' is Caesar's successor."--What is Christianity?, Adolf Harnack, pp. 251-253. Translated by Thomas B. Saunders, 1901 edition.

The Beast Identified. Verse 18. "The number indicates a man's name," (20th C.N.T.). "It indicates a certain man, and his number is 666," (Weymouth). "The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number," (Douay, Footnote). The statement, "for it is the number of a man," indicates that a man stands at the head of the beast power whose official title is descriptive of his claims and character, and that enfolded in that name is the specified number. The language indicates clearly that the number is to be computed by well-known human methods that are ordinary and understandable. Dean Alfred said: "The terms of the challenge serve at once to show that the feat proposed is possible." We can, therefore, rest assured that someone will correctly number the name of the beast. The very language shows that this is not only possible, but that God intends that it shall be done by those who explain the prophecy. In fact, the counsel to count the number of the beast is virtually in the form of a command. It follows therefore that those who properly explain the Apocalypse in the generation for which it was especially written, will be able to arrive at the proper conclusion. To ignore this part of the prophecy brings upon those who are guilty the malediction recorded in Rev. 22:19.

Ancient Custom. The evidence is abundant that it was the ancient custom among Greeks and Romans, and especially the latter, to compute the number of their names by adding together the numeral value of the letters. Both soldiers and slaves were thus numbered as well as named. Adam Clarke said of this ancient practice: "The method. . .of representing numbers by letters of the alphabet gave rise to a practice among the ancients of representing names also by numbers. Examples of this kind abound in the writings of heathens, Jews, and Christians." Thomas Newton, in his Dissertation of the Prophecies, commenting on Rev. 13:18, declared that not only was this practice common among the ancients as far as the names of men were concerned, but it was also applied to the heathen gods, as, for example, "the name of Thouth or the Egyptian Mercury was signified by the number 1218."

Further Testimony. Colonel J. Garnier, in his The Worship of the Dead, or The Origin and Nature of Pagan Idolatry, p. 220, says in regard to the numbering of the chief gods of paganism: "The Sun was also connected with the number 666, which was a sacred number in Egypt; and Higgins, in his Anacalypsis, states that every heathen god was the name of 666, and that this number 'was the name, or I ought to say, the designation of every one of the planetary bodies.' This, of course, could only be the case of representing each by some mystic surname." Since the beast, like the dragon, is primarily Satan, and in a secondary sense represents his government in all its manifestations of earthly sovereignty, further research may identify this number with not only the chief gods of paganism, but with the devil himself. In a primary sense Satan is the "man" at the head of the beast power. He is "that man of sin," or lawlessness, and "the son of perdition." These terms also apply to any of his human agents who do his bidding and act in his stead. Further wisdom and research will doubtless further enlarge our vision on this subject, but our knowledge is now sufficient to identify the number with the dynastic title of the seventh-head phase of the beast power.

Name of the Beast. "The number of the beast" is identified by "the name of the beast," which is the name of a man, the numeral letters of whose official title make up the number 666. This "man" is "the man of sin" described in 2 Thess. 2:3-12, and is identical with the "little horn" of Daniel's vision. This is acknowledged by both Protestant and Catholic writers. Since the beast power under the seventh head continues for 1260 years, the name can never apply to any personal or family name, but must rather be found in the official or dynastic title which applies to all who occupy the position as head or ruler of the institution or organization described in the prophecy. (This should serve to eliminate the many conjectures which attempt to fasten the number 666 to a single individual, regardless of his character or career.) If our premise is correct, we shall find this number in the numeral letters of the official name or title by which the head of the Roman hierarchy claims to be the successor and representative of Christ as head of the church on earth. It must also be a title that is blasphemous, for it is the "name of blasphemy," and the person described "opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name." Claims by and on behalf of the pope identify him as the "man" of the prophecy.

Titles of the Pope. In Ferraris' Ecclesiastical Dictionary, a Roman Catholic work, in the article, "The Pope," we read: "The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God." This writer says further: "The Pope is as it were God on earth, sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief king of kings, having plenitude of power, to whom has been entrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom." Cardinal Bellarmine said: "All names which in the Scriptures are applied to Christ, by virtue of which it is established that He is over the church, all the same names are applied to the Pope."--On the Authority of Councils, 1619 ed., vol. 2, p. 266. It is also stated that "Christ entrusted His office to the chief Pontiff; . . . but all power in heaven and in earth had been given to Christ; . . . therefore the chief Pontiff, who is His vicar, will have this power."--Roman Canon Law, 1556 ed., Extravagantes Communes, col. 29, b. 1, ch. 1.

Further Evidence. The pope claims all the names and titles which are applied to Christ, because he claims to be the vicar or vicegerent of Christ on earth. "The Pope is the vicar of Christ, the successor of St. Peter, and the visible head of the church."--John Joseph McVey, Manual of Christian Doctrine, p. 123. (Published in Philadelphia in 1914). "Blessed Peter seems to have been appointed the vicar of the Son of God on earth."--Decretum of Gratian, p. 1, div. 96. "The title Pope, once used with far greater latitude, is at present employed solely to denote the Bishop of Rome, who, in virtue of his position as successor of St. Peter, is the chief pastor of the whole Church, the Vicar of Christ upon earth."--The Catholic Encyclopedia, article "Pope."

Latin Title. Since we are dealing with a Roman power whose official language is Latin, the number would naturally be computed from the numeral letters of the Latin title of the popes, and the Latin for vicar or vicegerent of the Son of God is VICARIUS FILII DEI. (This title appeared as early as the eighth century in a document known as the Donation of Constantine. While it has since been proved that Constantine was not the author, it was used as valid by at least nine popes, covering a period of seven centuries, to establish the spiritual and temporal sovereignty of the bishops of Rome.)

"The document employing the title was confirmed by a church council, says Binius, a high Roman Catholic dignitary of Cologne, quoted by Labbe and Cossart. It was incorporated in Roman Catholic canon law by Gratian, and when this last-named work was revised and published, with endorsement by Pope Gregory XIII, the title was retained. When Lucius Ferraris wrote his elaborate theological work about 1755, he gave under the article 'Papa' the title Vicarius Filii Dei, and cited the revised canon law as his authority. Again when Ferraris' work was revised and enlarged, and published in Rome in 1890, the document and title were still retained."--Daniel and the Revelation, Uriah Smith, p. 622.

The Number. The sum of the Roman numerals of the Latin title of the popes, using V in the place of U, as was the former custom, is 666. V is 5; I,1; C, 100; I, 1; U or V, 5; I,1; L, 50; I,1; I,1; D,500; and I,1. About a century ago two or three persons declared that they saw this Latin title on the triple tiara, or crown, of the pope, the letters being made of jewels, which were clearly visible as the pope passed along the street in a procession. To date, evidence to substantiate this from Catholic sources is confined to two statements which appeared in the popular Catholic paper, Our Sunday Visitor, of Nov. 15, 1914, and April 18, 1915. The latter statement is as follows:

"What are the letters supposed to be in the Pope's crown, and what do they signify, if anything? The letters inscribed in the Pope's mitre are these: Vicarius Filii Dei, which is the Latin for Vicar of the Son of God. Catholics hold that the church which is a visible society must have a visible head. Christ, before His ascension into heaven, appointed St. Peter to act as His representative. Upon the death of Peter the man who succeeded to the office of Peter as Bishop of Rome was recognized as the head of the Church. Hence, to the Bishop of Rome, as head of the Church, was given the title 'Vicar of Christ.'" The writer has a photostatic copy of this page of Our Sunday Visitor.

Further Proof Lacking. Some Catholic authorities now challenge Protestants to produce proof that this Latin title is or was ever on the pope's miter. However, it is not at all necessary, in the interpretation of this prophecy, to produce this proof from other Catholic writings. The prophecy is as completely fulfilled by the fact that the popes down through the ages have claimed to be the VICARIUS FILII DEI, or the Vicegerent of the Son of God. (It may have been on one of the earlier triple crowns and then removed or a new crown made without it because of the attention being called to it by Protestants.) In the light of the claims, character, and history of the long succession of papal rulers, who can question the application made in the identification of "the number of the beast"? What other application even approaches it in reasonableness, in view of the testimony of history?

THE HEALING OF THE DEADLY WOUND

22

Power of the Beast. Rev. 13:2-8. We must not forget that verses 1-3 are a summary of the entire chapter and therefore a brief description of the beast power under the seventh or papal head. Verses 4-8 are sort of parenthetical and describe more in detail the source and extent of the authority of the beast. The beast receives its power from and is controlled by the spirit of the dragon or Satan. Obeying one is obedience to the other, and obedience is worship. See Rom. 6:16. "They worshiped the dragon because he gave his power to the beast," (R.V.). "And they offered worship to the dragon because it was to him that the Wild Beast owed his dominion," (Weymouth). The real ruler of this world is Satan. He is "the prince of this world" and his spirit controls all of "the children of disobedience." Obedience to any person or power antagonistic to God is in reality obedience to Satan and is therefore the worship of Satan "the god of this world."

A Delegated Power. The statement that "there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given him to continue forty and two months," indicates that the authority was delegated and empowered by another. What was the source of the power and authority of the beast? "And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." The prophet Daniel said: "And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power," (Dan. 8:24). While Satan furnished the power, the permission had to be given by the Lord who is "the Prince over the kings of the earth." "Liberty of action was granted him for 42 months," (Weymouth). "He was allowed to utter loud and blasphemous vaunts and allowed to exercise authority for forty and two months," (Moffatt). "Permission was given him to make war upon God's people and conquer them," (Weymouth). See also Dan. 7:25. Satan can only act by permission of Him "who rules in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will." Satan is restricted by a higher power. The 42 months, 1260 days, or the time, times and the dividing of time, represent the 1260 years of papal supremacy between 538 and 1798 A.D.

Blasphemous Power. Verses 1,5,6. See also Dan. 7:8,20,25; 8:11,12; 11:31,36; 2 Thess. 2:3,4. The papacy blasphemes the name of God by attributing to the pope "all the names which are attributed to Christ in Scripture." Pope Boniface VIII said: "The Pope is of so great dignity and power that he constitutes one and the same tribunal with Christ, so that whatsoever the Pope does seems to proceed from the mouth of God. . . The Pope is as God on earth."--Quoted by Guinness in Romanism and the Reformation. The beast also blasphemes God's "tabernacle" or "dwelling place," (Weymouth), and "those who dwell in His tabernacle in heaven," (20th C.N.T.). See Dan. 8:10-14. The papacy took away the priesthood of Christ and His assistants in the heavenly sanctuary and instituted in its place a false mediatorial system divinely designated "the abomination of desolation." Thus they polluted God's sanctuary and cast it to the ground and assumed prerogatives that belong alone to Christ. In the church-court of God's sanctuary was set up a false Christ, a false sacrifice, confessional, priesthood, mediatorial system, Sabbath, and a completely counterfeit gospel. "I never invite an angel down from heaven to hear mass here. This is not the place for angels. The only person in heaven I ever ask to come down here is Jesus Christ, and Him I command to come down. He has to come when I bid

Him. I took bread in my fingers this morning and said: 'This is the body and blood of Jesus Christ,' and He had to come down. This is one of the things He must do. He must come down every time I say mass at my bidding. . . .I do it in obedience, reverence, homage, and adoration; but I do it, and when I do it, Christ must obey."--Western Watchman, June 10, 1915. Report of a sermon by the editor, Father D. S. Phelan.

Universal Worship. Verse 8. "And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain," (R.V.). This rendering is in harmony with Rev. 17:8. All the wicked from the beginning of the reign of sin, or "since the disruption of the world," (Concordant), have worshipped the beast. This is further proof that primarily the beast is Satan and secondarily it is his kingdom in all its history and phases. In its entirety the beast like the dragon embraces all human history. In the controversy between Christ and Satan there is no middle ground. All who do not worship and obey the Creator and are citizens of His kingdom, must be embraced in the kingdom of the beast whom they worship. The Lamb's book of life contains the names of those who are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. They make up the membership of "the church of the first-born" whose names "are written in heaven," (Heb. 12:22,23). They were all chosen "in Christ" from the beginning and doubtless their character-names inscribed in the honor-roll of saints. See Eph. 1:4-6. God's original plan for the earth and man will be carried out through the new creation. He foresaw the fall and ordained a remedy. Jesus was the "Lamb who has been offered in sacrifice ever since the creation of the world," (Weymouth).

The Deadly Wound. Verses 3,10. The wound was not mortal or fatal but only seemed to be. "As though it had been smitten unto death," (R.V.). "Looked as if it had been slain and killed," (Moffatt). "I saw that one of his heads seemed to have been mortally wounded," (Weymouth). The wound was so serious that for a time it looked to the prophet in vision as though the wound were fatal and the beast were dead. Hunters often have this experience with wild animals. As the prophet watched the wounded beast he soon realized that the wound was not mortal. The beast began to recover and was later completely healed. While verse 3 speaks of only one of the heads of the beast being wounded, verses 12 and 14 declare that the beast itself was thereby wounded. The beast could not exist apart from one of its seven heads and it had only one of them at a time. The beast under its seventh head was wounded when its head received a deadly wound. The head is the most vulnerable place in which to inflict a wound and when thus wounded it could be said that the beast itself was wounded.

Time of Wounding. The wounding of the papal head of the beast takes place after the beast has exercised the power and authority described in verses 4-8. Prophecy indicates a curbing power of the papacy at the close of the 1260 years. See Dan. 7:25; 8:24,25. He would continue to dominate the earth and the saints "until" the close of the prophetic period allotted to him. The curbing of the power of the papacy would come through a severe wound followed by a period of captivity. The cruel power that had so long persecuted the saints and punished the nations with the sword, was to be punished by the same weapon. "If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goes," (R.V.). The person or power that uses the sword "will eventually be killed with the sword," (20th C.N.T.). The papal weapons are described

in Dan. 11:33 as the sword, flame, captivity and spoil. The same persecutor that led millions into captivity during the Dark Ages must go into captivity; the spoiler must be despoiled; the desolator must be made desolate; the dispenser of fire must be burned with fire; the wielder of the bloody sword must receive the stroke of the same weapon. See Rev. 11:1-5. The killer will eventually be killed. The beast will eventually go into captivity and be killed with the mighty two-edged sword. See Dan. 8:25; 9:27; 11:36; Rev. 20:1-3; 19:15-21.

Eternal Justice. Divine retribution is the Golden Rule in the reverse. Jesus said to Peter, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." This is the principle of eternal justice. Its truthfulness is demonstrated in the history of man and nations. It is often stated in the Scriptures. See Matt. 7:1,2; Rom. 2:1. What we mete out to others will eventually come back upon our own heads and often in this life. The treatment we give others will sooner or later come back to us with interest. "Reward her as she hath rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double," is the decree of heaven regarding the papacy. See Rev. 18:6. This reward according to her works was partially meted out as the result of the great Reformation, but its completion will not come until the day of God's wrath and indignation.

Papacy Identified. That the papacy is the beast under the seventh head is not only indicated by the number 666, but also by the fact that the papacy alone of the seven heads has been wounded and healed. None of the other six powers ever staged a comeback after being wounded by the sword of a stronger power. In each case the sword stroke of the nation that supplanted it was fatal and the overthrow permanent. Milligan declares that the beast is a world power "which grows into this form only in the seventh head and ten horn manifestation." (The Expositors Bible). Mauro says: "We are not to think of the beast as having seven heads all at the same time; for while they are seen all at once, even as the several parts of Nebuchadnezzar's image were all seen at once, the kingdoms which they severally represent succeeded each other in history. It follows that the ten horns all appertain to the last head; for they do all exist at the same time, as appears from Chapter 17:12,16."--Of the Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass, Philip Mauro, p. 398. "As we approach the last crisis, it is of vital moment that harmony and unity exist among the Lord's instrumentalities. The world is filled with storm and war and variance. Yet under one head, the papal power,--the people will unite to oppose God in the person of His witnesses." (Vol. 7:182).

Absolute Papal Dominion. Speaking of the papacy the author of The Great Controversy says: "This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of the 'man of sin' foretold in prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false relition is a masterpiece of Satan's power,--a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will."--p. 50. The papacy represents Satan's seventh and last effort to rule the earth through a universal government. Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand) addressed a letter to William I of England (William the Conqueror), in which he said: "Like two great luminaries fixed by the Creator in the firmament of the heaven to give light to His creatures, so also hath He ordained two great powers on earth, by which all are to be governed and preserved from error. Those two powers are the pontifical and the royal; but the former

is the greater, the latter the lesser light. Yet under both, the religion of Christ is so ordered that, by God's assistance, the apostolic power shall govern the royal; and Scripture teacheth that the apostolical and pontifical dignity is ordained to be responsible for all Christian Kings, nay for all men, before the divine tribunal. And on these grounds the Pontiff demanded of King William "upon the peril of his soul," to render to him "unconditional obedience."--Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages, Henderson. Bohn's edition, 1896.

Wields Two Swords. Regarding Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303), one writer says: "At his inauguration two kings held his stirrups. He proclaimed a Jubilee for the year 1300. . .It is credibly reported that in the course of the proceedings, he appeared before the multitude on one day in his pontificals on another with sword, crown and scepter, exclaiming, 'I am Caesar! I am Emperor!' This same Boniface issued a famous Bull (Unam Sanctam) in which with marvelous exegesis he quoted the words of the disciples regarding the 'two swords' (Luke 22:38), saying: 'Both swords, the spiritual and the temporal, are in the power of the church.' That Bull further explicitly declared that 'there is one only catholic and apostolic Church, outside of which there is no salvation or remission of sins. We declare, announce and define, that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff."--Handbook of Church History, Greene, p. 468.

Claim Right to Use Sword. Catholics have always defended the right for the church to use the sword of the state to advance her aims and punish "heretics." Augustine advocated the death penalty for heretics, as did also Thomas Aquinas. Pope Pius IV in 1562 promised a reward of 300 pounds to anyone killing a Protestant refugee. The Pope sent the Duke of Alva a jeweled hat and sword for executing 18,000 heretics. In the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572, Pope Pius V wrote Count Santifiore: "Take no Huguenot prisoner, kill every one that falls into your hands." In a standard Catholic work published in 1901, we read that the church may by divine right "confiscate the property of heretics, imprison their persons, and condemn them to the flames. . . In our age the right to inflict the severest penalties, even death, belongs to the church. . .since experience teaches us that there is no other remedy. . .The last recourse is the death penalty. . .There is no graver offense than heresy, and therefore it must be rooted out with fire and sword. It is a Catholic tenet which must be faithfully held, that the extreme penalty not only may, but must, be inflicted on obstinate heretics."--Institutes of Public Ecclesiastical Law, Vol. 2, p. 142.

The Dragon Spirit. Another Catholic writer said: "Our heroes are the Duke of Alva and Catherine de Medici. They knew the Huguenots, and they drove them off the continent. You cannot excite any pity in our souls by whining accounts of Catholic atrocities in the 17th century. We have never written a line in extenuation or palliation of the Inquisition. We never thought it needed a defense."--The Western Watchman, Nov. 21, 1912. An editorial. "Protestantism--we would draw and quarter it. We would impale it and hang it up for the crows to eat. We would tear it with pincers, and fire it with hot irons. We would fill it with molten lead, and sink it in a hundred fathoms of hell fire."--Id. Dec. 24, 1908.

The Tables Turned. Rev. 18:6,7. "The example of persecution which the clergy of France had exhibited for so many ages, was now retorted upon them with signal vigor. The scaffolds ran red with the blood of priests. The galleys and the prisons, once crowded with Huguenots, were now filled with their persecutors. Chained to the bench and toiling at the oar, the Roman Catholic clergy experienced all those woes which their church had so freely inflicted on the gentle heretics."--The Great Controversy, p. 283. See also The Papal Drama, book 10, and The Church and the French Revolution, book 3, chap. 1.

Chief Weapon Against Rome. Only the Lord was able to wound the beast or dragon power. See Ps. 89:10; Isa. 51:9-11. While the sword of the state played an important part in the infliction of the deadly wound to the papal head of the beast, the chief weapon was the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. Luther said, "I set the word of God to running to and fro in the earth, and kingdoms fell and thrones trembled." During the 16th and 17th centuries the Scriptures were placed in the hands of the people and this is what really broke the power of the papacy and made possible civil and religious liberty. The translation of the Bible into English by Wycliffe in the 14th century prepared the way for the Reformation. "He lived to place in the hands of his countrymen the most powerful of all weapons against Rome,--to give them the Bible, the heaven-appointed agent to liberate, enlighten, and evangelize the people. . .In giving the Bible to his countrymen he had done more to break the fetters of ignorance and vice, more to liberate and elevate his country, than was ever achieved by the most brilliant victories on fields of battle."--The Great Controversy, p. 88. Spiritual weapons are far mightier than carnal weapons. See 2 Cor. 10:3-5. The same mighty two-edged sword of the Word will finally slay the beast and all the wicked. See Rev. 19:15,16. The beast that led millions into captivity and burned them at the stake will finally go into captivity and the lake of fire. Rev. 19:20. "And the beast was captured," (Weymouth).

Final Sword Stroke. The final stroke of the sword of the state, which was made possible by the Reformation, was wielded by Napoleon through General Berthier in 1798 when the pope was taken prisoner and deprived of his throne and dominion. This important event marked the close of the 1260 years. All the world thought the papacy was dead and its career ended. Speaking of this event, George Trevor, canon of York, said: "The papacy was extinct; not a vestige of its existence remained; and among all the Roman Catholic powers not a finger was stirred in its defense. The Eternal City had no longer prince or pontiff; its bishop was a dying captive in foreign lands; and the decree was already announced that no successor would be allowed in his place."--Rome and Its Papal Rulers, p. 440. Napoleon had decreed that in case of the pope's death no successor should be elected to fill the office. Is it any wonder that the prophet also thought that the wound was fatal? The beast "seemed to have been mortally wounded," (Weymouth), and "looked as if it had been slain and killed," (Moffatt).

Further Evidence. Speaking of the captivity and death of the pope, Joseph Rickaby, a Roman Catholic writer, said: "When, in 1797, Pope Pius VI fell grievously ill, Napoleon gave orders that in the event of his death no successor should be elected to his office, and that the papacy should be discontinued. But the Pope recovered. The peace was soon broken: Berthier entered Rome on the tenth of February, 1798, and proclaimed a republic. The aged Pontiff refused to violate his oath by recognizing it, and was hurried

from prison to prison in France. Broken with fatigue and sorrows, he died on the 17th of August, 1799, in the French fortress of Valence, aged 82 years. No wonder that half of Europe thought Napoleon's veto would be obeyed, and that with the Pope the Papacy was dead."--The Modern Papacy, p. 1. (Published in London by the Catholic Truth Society).

An Amazing Recovery. The divine prediction is, "But his mortal wound was healed, and the whole world was amazed and followed him," (Weymouth). James Russell Lowell, while ambassador to England between 1880 and 1885, wrote the following while traveling in Italy: "But I am more and more persuaded every day that, as far as the popular mind is concerned, Romanism is a dead thing in Italy. It survives only because there is nothing else to replace it with. . .It is literally a superstition--a something left to stand over till the great commercial spirit of the nineteenth century balances his accounts again, and then it will be banished to the limbo of profits and loss. The papacy lies dead in the Vatican, but the secret is kept for the present, and government is carried on in its name." Several years ago Arthur Brisbane, columnist for the Hearst papers, quoted Lowell's statement and added: "Doubtless many reading James Russell Lowell's essays in the last century believed that, when they read it. But it's the nineteenth century that is dead and buried. The papacy is more active and powerful than ever it was in Lowell's day. It isn't safe to prophesy unless you are inspired."

The Healing Wound. As in the case of all wounds, the healing process began immediately after the wound was inflicted. In the year 1800 the edict of Napoleon was ignored in the election of a new pope. Since then the papacy has been gradually but surely recovering at ever-increasing speed. Though the infliction of a wound may be sudden, healing is always gradual, but when finished the restoration is usually complete. The restoring of papal prestige and power has been especially great since the two world wars. In 1914 fourteen nations had accredited representatives at the Vatican. Today practically every important nation, except Russia and the United States, is officially represented. England and France sent ambassadors to the Vatican during the first world conflict for "the duration of the war" because the Vatican was "the best listening post in Europe." But they have never been withdrawn. Myron C. Taylor was sent to Rome during the second world war as "the personal representative" of President Roosevelt to the pope and retired many years after the war ended. The noted Catholic writer Jean Carrere declared a few years ago, "The church at this moment is stronger than she has ever been." Her membership is much larger than during the Middle Ages.

Catholic Growth. In 1790 less than one per cent of the population of the United States was Roman Catholic, while today the proportion is nearly 25 per cent. Catholics report about 30,000,000 members in this country, but one bishop said that the true figure is "nearer 35,000,000." The avowed ambition of the papacy is to "make America dominantly Catholic," and this seems about to be realized. This church, though numerically in the minority, largely dominates the press as well as the political machinery of the municipal, state, and Federal governments. The percentage of appointees to political office has gradually increased until it has reached fully 75 per cent, which is altogether out of proportion in the light of Catholic membership. While the population of the United States has increased 35 times, the membership of the Catholic church has increased 800 times.

Important Event. The most important single date in the healing of the deadly wound and the restoration of the papacy is Feb. 11,1929. On that day the Lateran Pact was signed by representatives of the Vatican and the Italian government, ending a virtual war which had existed between them since 1870, during which time the pope termed himself "the prisoner of the Vatican." The signing of the treaty restored to the pope the temporal sovereignty which had been taken away by Napoleon in 1798, and again by Italy in 1870. Once more he became king of a state as well as supreme pontiff of the church. The morning after the signing of the Lateran Pact, the pope appeared on the balcony of St. Peter's church, and thousands of Catholics led by the priests, cried out: "Long live the pope-king." A dispatch from Rome, in telling of the signing of the agreement, said, "In affixing the autograph to the memorable document, healing the wound which has festered since 1870, extreme cordiality was displayed on both sides."--Reported in the Los Angeles Times, Feb. 12, 1929. Pope Pius declared that the concordat assured him of "real, proper, and absolute sovereignty, which was evidently due to him who, for divine reasons and by divine mandate, cannot be the subject of any earthly power." In this pact the Italian government made a cash settlement of $144,750,000 and issued bonds for another $193,000,000, bearing 5 per cent interest.

A World Power. The Vatican state claims jurisdiction over all Catholics in all parts of the world. When two Catholic priests were kidnapped and killed by bandits in China in 1930, the Italian government made the usual protests to the Nanking government, but was informed by the Vatican that it had no right to interfere in the matter. Commenting on the incident, Hiram Motherwell wrote in World's Work of Sept. 1, 1930: "If the Vatican's foreign policy continues to develop as at present, we shall soon see a new Holy Roman Empire, transcending race, language, and political boundaries--a commonwealth independently ruled from the Tiber. It will be a state above states, dealing as an equal with virtually every government in the world." Recent events indicate the purpose of the papacy to refuse to recognize any civil power as being superior to its own.

The Papacy Unchanged. This is naturally the modern policy and purpose of the papal hierarchy since it boasts of being unchangeable. Cardinal Gibbons wrote: "Amid the continual changes in human institutions she is the one Institution that never changes. Amid the universal ruin of earthly monuments she is the one monument that stands proudly preeminent. Not a stone in this building falls to the ground. Amid the general destruction of kingdoms her kingdom is never destroyed. Ever ancient and ever new, time writes no wrinkles on her divine brow. The Church has seen the birth of every government of Europe, and it is not at all improbable that she shall also witness the death of them all and chant their requiem."--Faith of Our Fathers, 76th ed., pp. 60,61.

Ever Victorious. The question is asked in the prophecy, "Who is able to make war with him?" Cardinal Gibbons unconsciously answers: "I would now ask this question of all that are hostile to the Catholic Church and that are plotting her destruction: How can you hope to overturn an institution which for more than eighteen centuries has successfully resisted all the combined assaults of the world, of men, and of the powers of darkness? What means will you employ to encompass her ruin? Is it the power of Kings, and Emperors, and Prime Ministers? They have tried in vain to crush her, from the days of the Roman Caesars to those of the former Chancellor

of Germany. . .Can the immense resources and organized power of rival religious bodies succeed in absorbing her and bringing her to naught? I am not disposed to undervalue their power. Against any human force it would be irresistible. But if the colossal strength and incomparable machinery of the Roman Empire could not prevent the establishment of the Church; if Arianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism could not check her development, how can modern organizations stop her progress now, when in the fulness of her strength?"--Id. pp. 56,57.

A Modern Challenge. "During the two thousand years the Church has been on this earth, she has warred with nearly every government in the world. Where are they today? You can read about them in history. The world is full of their ruins. Their thrones have toppled over and fallen, their dynasties have come to dust. And the governments of the world today will meet the same fate if they challenge the hostility of the Church of God. She remains; she is today what she was two thousand years ago; she is today what she was in the days of Justinian the Great; she is today what she was in the days of Barbarossa; she is today what she was during the Middle Ages; she is today what she was during the times of Protestant persecution, during and since the sixteenth century; she is the same invincible Church of God. God help the state that attacks her; God help the king that provokes her hostility."--From a sermon preached on Sunday, Dec. 12, 1909, by Rev. D. S. Phelan, and printed in the Western Watchman, Dec. 16, 1909.

Lincoln's Prophecy. "I do not pretend to be a prophet. But though not a prophet, I see a very dark cloud on our horizon and that cloud is coming from Rome. It is filled with tears of blood. It will rise and increase, till its flanks will be torn by a flash of lightning followed by a fearful peal of thunder. Then a cyclone such as the world has never seen will pass over this country, spreading ruin and desolation from North to South. After it is over there will be long days of peace and prosperity; for popery, with its Jesuits and merciless Inquisition, will have been forever swept away from our country. Neither I, nor you, but our children will see those things."--Quoted in Fifty Years in the Church of Rome, by Father Chiniquy, p. 715. Published in 1886. Father Chiniquy often visited with Lincoln while he was President. (This prediction must be based on the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation which Lincoln doubtless studied.)

The Divine Sentence. Rev. 18:7,8. How could the proud boastings of papal leaders be more accurately foretold? But the Supreme Court of Heaven has already rendered sentence against the papal abomination and that sentence will be fully executed. See Dan. 7:11,25,26; 8:25; 9:27; 11:36,45. There is one power that is able to make war with the beast and prevail. It was the power of the Almighty that wounded the papacy during the Protestant Reformation. The same omnipotent power will finally capture the beast and cast it alive into the lake of fire to be utterly consumed. See Rev. 19:20.

THE FALSE PROPHET WITH THE DRAGON'S VOICE

23

Another Beast. Rev. 13:11-17. The second beast of this prophecy is similar in character to the first and therefore does a similar work. After the second beast comes into being the two exist at the same time and continue together till the end when they are both cast alive into the lake of fire and destroyed together. See Rev. 19:20. The second beast performs miracles in the presence of the first beast by which the whole world is deceived into making an image to the beast whose deadly wound was healed and compelling the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first beast. The second beast plays a subordinate part. It is the first beast that is the chief object of worship to the very end. See Verses 8,12. It is evident, therefore, that the two-horned beast cannot be the seventh head of the seven-headed and ten-horned beast representing Satan's kingdom. The dragon is the controlling power of both beasts, giving his spirit, power and authority to both. At heart the second is a savage beast like the first and they work together in persecuting those whose names are in the Lamb's book of life.

The False Prophet. The Bible is its own best interpreter. This is especially true of the Revelation. The various satanic powers portrayed in the Apocalypse are mentioned more than once and a study of all the texts will help us in arriving at the correct interpretation of these symbols. The dragon and the two beasts of Revelation 13 are the most prominent of all the enemies of God and His people. This satanic trio represents the trinity of evil arrayed against the church of Christ, especially in the remnant phase of its existence and warfare. It is the counterfeit of the Divine Trinity that supplies grace and power to the church militant. In the Scripture under consideration the two-horned beast is given no name. It is described only as having the two horns of a lamb and the voice of a dragon. A name is given, however, in later Scriptures. See Rev. 16:13,14; 19:20; 20:10. In all three of these texts the two-horned beast is designated "the false prophet." There can be no question regarding the identity of the false prophet as the miracle-working two-horned beast. The same statements are made regarding both.

Marks of Identity. In Rev. 19:20 the false prophet is identified as the power "that wrought miracles before" the beast, by which "he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image." "Who performed the marvels before the eyes of the beast, with which he deceived those who had the mark of the beast," (20th C.N.T.). Compare this statement with Rev. 13:12-14. "And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight," (R.V.). "In consequence of the marvels which it was allowed to perform under the eyes of the beast, it is able to deceive all that are living on the earth," (20th C.N.T.). Just as a true prophet performs miracles before God to convince men of the genuineness of his claim to the prophetic gift and the truthfulness of his message, so this false prophet performs counterfeit miracles before the great antichrist to deceive the inhabitants of the earth. The two-horned beast is designated a "prophet" because its activities are chiefly religious. There are no diadems either on its head or horns indicating that its sovereignty is not chiefly political.

Further Evidence. After quoting verse 14, Uriah Smith says: "This identifies the two-horned beast with the false prophet of Rev. 19:20; for this false

prophet is the power that works miracles before the beast, 'with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image,'--the identical work of the two-horned beast. We can now ascertain by what means the miracles in question are wrought; for Rev. 16:13,14 speaks of spirits of devils working miracles. . .and these miracle-working spirits go forth out of the mouth of certain powers, one of which is this very false prophet, or two-horned beast."--Daniel and the Revelation, p. 584. Commenting on Rev. 19:20 the same author says: "The false prophet is the one that works miracles before the beast. This proves him to be identical with the two-horned beast of chapter 13, to whom the same work, for the same purpose, is here attributed."--Id. p. 730. All quotations from this book are from the 1912 edition.

Apostate Protestantism. Seventh-day Adventists have always taught that the beast under the dominion of the head that was wounded and healed is Roman Catholicism, and that the false prophet, which we have always identified as the two-horned beast, is symbolic of false, backslidden and apostate Protestantism. Commenting on Rev. 16:13, S. N. Haskell declared that "Paganism (the dragon), the papacy (the beast), and fallen Protestantism (the false prophet), join hands."--The Story of the Seer of Patmos, p. 283. Regarding the same Scripture Uriah Smith wrote: "The sources from which these spirits issue denote that they will work among the three great religious divisions of mankind, represented by the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, or Paganism, Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism."--Daniel and the Revelation, p. 694. The great red dragon of chapter 12 represents in a special sense the kingdom of Satan at the time of the birth of Christ when it was dominated by Pagan Rome. The dragon under the first six heads was essentially pagan in religion. The dragon is therefore an appropriate symbol of paganism. The beast represents Satan's kingdom during another phase of its existence and dominion when Catholicism was the chief religion. The beast, therefore, fitly represents the semi-pagan religion of Papal Rome. The two-horned beast or false prophet would logically symbolize the religious system that broke the papal power in the great Reformation and later apostatized and became false to her entrusted mission. It is, therefore, most appropriately designated as "the false prophet." These three embrace all the religions of the world under satanic control.

False Religious System. A prophet is a religious leader and occupies a religious and not a civil office. A true prophet is God's spokesman to His church and would therefore be an appropriate symbol of Christianity. A false prophet on the other hand is Satan's mouthpiece and appropriately represents a false and counterfeit system of religion. It carries the idea of a prophet who was once true and had turned traitor as did Balaam. The term "false prophet" could not in a primary sense represent a civil power. This could be true only in a secondary sense after the false religion gets control of and speaks and works through a civil government. When church and state are united, like a husband and wife, they assume a common name and may be designated by the same term. The working of miracles has always been one of the chief characteristics of prophets, both true and false. Miracles to deceive have never been performed by civil governments as such. They have always been the product of false religions and their leaders. The miracles performed by the two-horned beast, or the false prophet, identify it primarily as a religious rather than a civil power. There is an abundance of evidence that the false miracles by which

the world will be deceived in the last days will be performed by false prophets and teachers and not by civil governments or their officials. See Matt. 24:24; 7:21-23; 2 Thess. 2:9-13. That these are the same miracles pictured in Rev. 13:13,14 is evident.

Primarily Protestantism. That the two-horned beast or false prophet is primarily apostate Protestantism is also evident from the following statements: "Religious powers, allied to heaven by profession, and claiming to have the characteristics of a lamb, will show by their acts that they have the heart of a dragon, and that they are instigated and controlled by Satan," (Vol. 9:229). "The churches, represented by Babylon, are represented as having fallen from their spiritual state to become a persecuting power against those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. . .This persecuting power is represented as having two horns like a lamb, but as speaking as a dragon," (T.M. 117). "Prophecy represents Protestantism as having lamb-like horns, but as speaking like a dragon. Already we are beginning to hear the voice of the dragon. . .The National Reform movement. . .will manifest the same oppression, haughtiness, arrogance, and intolerance which have prevailed in past ages. The powers of human councils then assumed the prerogatives of Deity, crushing under their despotic will liberty of conscience and the right of individual responsibility; and imprisonment, exile, and death followed for all who opposed their dictates," (R.H. Jan. 1, 1889).

A Persecuting Power. The two-horned beast is also identified as primarily a religious system dominating the state because it persecutes the people of God. "Who or what is it that persecutes the true church?--It is a false or apostate church. What is it that is ever warring against true religion?--It is a false and counterfeit religion. Who ever heard of the civil power, merely, of any nation, persecuting the people of God? Governments may war against other governments, to avenge some wrong, real or imaginary, or to acquire territory and extend their power, as nations have often warred against the Jews; but governments do not persecute (mark the word--do not persecute) people on account of their religion, unless under the control of some opposite and hostile system of religion. But the powers introduced in this prophecy,--the dragon, the leopard beast, and the two-horned beast,--are all persecuting powers. They are actuated by rage and enmity against the people and church of God. And this fact is of itself sufficiently conclusive evidence that in each of these powers the ecclesiastical or religious element is the controlling power."--Daniel and the Revelation, Uriah Smith, p. 560. This is a very clear setting forth of the fact that in the primary sense the false prophet or two-horned beast is false Protestantism which does its persecuting through the civil power.

Relation of United States. Just as Protestantism ripened into its most noble fruitage in the United States, the most truly Protestant nation on earth, just so the apostasy of Protestantism also reaches its height in America. "America is the home of Protestantism," (Haskell). True Protestantism and the United States are inseparable and therefore in a secondary sense the symbol of the two-horned beast may be applied to the United States especially after church and state are united. Under this union they become one so that what can be said of one applies to the other. The primal factor, however, must be the religious rather than the civil element. "When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with Spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union,

our country shall repudiate every principle of its constitution as a Protestant and Republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan, and that the end is near," (Vol. 5:451).

Further Statements. "When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image to the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably follow." "The enforcement of Sunday-keeping on the part of Protestant churches is an enforcement of the worship of the papacy--of the beast. . . In the very act of enforcing a religious duty by secular power, the church would itself form an image to the beast; hence, the enforcement of Sunday-keeping in the United States would be an enforcement of the worship of the beast and his image." "The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of Spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience. --The Great Controversy, pp. 445,448,449,588.

Pressure From Church. Verse 14 indicates that the demand for a union between the church and state comes from the two-horned beast or false prophet. Such a demand has never originated with the state and never will. The pressure for such a union has always come from the church, or the religious element in the nation. "All religious despotism commences by combination and influence; and when that influence begins to operate upon the political institutions of a country, the civil power soon bends under it; and the catastrophe of other nations furnishes an awful warning of the consequences."--United States Sunday Mail Report, communicated to the Senate Jan. 19, 1829. "Let the principle once be established in the United States, that the church may employ or control the power of the state; that religious observances may be enforced by secular laws; in short, that the authority of the church and state is to dominate the conscience, and the triumph of Rome in this country is assured."--The Great Controversy, p.581.

The Two Beasts. The two symbolic beasts of chapter 13 represent the two forms of apostate Christianity that dominate the Old and the New Worlds and their civil powers. "Romanism in the Old World, and apostate Protestantism in the New, will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts. The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble."--Id. 616. Union with civil government is a chief characteristic of false religion. "The dragon, pagan Rome, and the leopard beast, papal Rome, present before us great organizations standing as the representatives of two great systems of false religion. Analogy would seem to require that the remaining symbol, the two-horned beast, have a similar application, and find its fulfillment in some nationality which is the representative of still another great system of religion. But the only remaining system which is exercising a controlling influence in the world today is Protestantism."--Daniel and the Revelation, Uriah Smith, p. 565.

Out of the Earth. While in Dan. 7:3,17, the "sea" and "earth" are used to represent the same thing, in this case the "earth" doubtless has special reference to the New World since the first beast came up out of the "sea." This would indicate a difference in the place of their origin and operations. The papacy arose among the nations of the Old World and then dominated them. Protestantism in its purest state arose in the New World to which the persecuted saints of the Old World fled for refuge. Here they founded a church without a pope and a state without a king. The United States was founded by Protestants and became the first truly Protestant and Republican government in the world. Protestantism was the power in the hand of God that wounded the papal head of the beast through the mighty weapon of the sword of the Spirit,--the Word of God. The Reformation prepared the way for the final stroke of the sword of the state in 1798. But according to prophecy, Protestantism is destined to gain control of and persecute through the very nation that protected and fostered it. At the very time the papal beast was being wounded and led into captivity, the Protestant beast was seen coming into power. See verses 10,11.

The Lamb-Like Horns. The lamb is used in Scripture as a symbol of Christ. It represents purity, meekness and innocence. It is a beautiful symbol of Protestantism in its original state. It was lamb-like or Christ-like in its controlling principles. The two lamb-like horns fitly symbolize civil and religious liberty, or Protestantism and Republicanism, the two outstanding features of the United States and the godly principles fostered by the Christian religion. The ten horns of the first beast represent ten nations. If the same principle of interpretation is applied to the two horns of the second beast, they may symbolize England and the United States, the two leading Protestant and Republican nations, especially of the New World. (Canada?)

The Dragon's Voice. The false prophet had the two horns of a lamb, but the voice of a dragon. His profession was Christian but his character was satanic. Jesus warned of the "false prophets, which come unto you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Matt. 7:15. Protestantism, which was the mouthpiece of God during the Reformation, becomes the spokesman of the dragon and is dominated by the same dragon spirit that controls the first beast. "The same spirit which actuated papists in ages past, will lead Protestants to pursue a similar course toward those who will maintain their loyalty to God," (Vol. 5:449). Satan has always ruled the nations of earth and persecuted the people of God through false religions. It is through his counterfeit church that the god of this world speaks to mankind and demands allegiance and worship.

A World Movement. The language of verse 12 shows that the two-horned beast is world-wide in its activities and influence. Its compelling power cannot be confined to a single nation. The false prophet speaks with authority to all men and nations as did the papal power before receiving the deadly wound. The second beast is as universal as the first beast. Prophecy positively forbids that any civil power since the fall of Imperial Rome shall ever again dictate to the whole world. Protestantism is as world-wide in its activities as is the papacy with whom it unites to destroy God's remnant people in the closing crisis. Under the pressure of these two apostate forms of Christianity the governments under their control will eventually withdraw their protection from those who keep the commandments of God so that "there will be in different lands, a simultaneous movement

for their destruction," (G.C. 635). The prophetic description of the two-horned beast cannot be fulfilled by a mere world-wide influence through persuasion or the power of example. "Causeth" indicates physical force which can never be exercised by any civil nation including the United States. "And he causes the earth and its inhabitants to worship the first Wild Beast," (Weymouth). "And it makes the earth and all who are living on it worship the first Beast," (20th C.N.T.).

A World Message. The warning against the worship of the beast, his image, and his mark, is a world message. See Rev. 14:6-14. It must be applicable to every country in the world and this is possible only on the basis of the universality of these satanic agencies. The only viewpoint from which this warning can be proclaimed to every nation and people of earth is that the two-horned beast or false prophet is primarily apostate Protestantism, and only secondarily the governments under its control and through whom it persecutes. (The position that the two-horned beast is primarily the United States and secondarily apostate Protestantism is resented and rejected in almost every country outside of the United States. This is especially true in the larger nations whose citizens refuse to accept any position that indicates that the United States will dictate to the whole world. On the other hand the position that the two-horned beast or false prophet is primarily apostate Protestantism and only secondarily the United States and other nations under its control is acceptable and applicable everywhere in the world.)

Deceived By Miracles. Dean Stanley in his book, Sinai and Palestine, pp. 464-470, describes the fake miracle of calling fire down from heaven each year at Easter time by the Greek Catholic patriarch at Jerusalem. By this supposed sacred fire the Greek churches and shrines are lighted for the year. In past ages the calling of fire from heaven was a sign of divine power and therefore of the true God. This was especially true in the days of Elijah when the test was made between Jehovah and Baal. See Lev. 9:24; Judges 13:19,20; 1 Kings 18. The false prophet of the Apocalypse imitates the miracle-working power of Elijah, the true prophet. To prove his claim the false prophet does the same thing that the true prophet did to prove the divine origin of his mission. Satan cannot perform genuine miracles which require supernatural power. His are "lying wonders" for the purpose of deception. See 2 Thess. 2:9-12. They are doubtless performed within the realm of science or natural law. Satan "studied the secrets of the laboratories of nature, and he uses all his power to control the elements as far as God allows," (G.C. 589). He is a great scientist and can perform wonders beyond the comprehension of man.

Scientific Marvels. Archdeacon Lee believes that this prophecy will be largely fulfilled by the wonders of science which so often lead men away from God to the worship and exaltation of self. The creature is thus worshiped in place of the Creator. The United States is the leading nation in the discoveries and inventions of modern science. Edison and other scientists have actually called fire down out of the atmosphere through scientific methods. The wonders of science virtually made him a skeptic as was also true of Burbank and others. The modern world is rejecting the Creator and His word and in this great apostasy science and "science falsely so-called" are playing an important role. "And while those devoted to these sciences

laud them to the heavens because of the great and good works wrought by them, they are cherishing and glorifying Satan himself, who steps in and works with all power and signs and lying wonders--with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. . .This entering in of Satan through the sciences is well devised by his Satanic majesty, and will eventually root out of the minds of thousands true faith in Christ's being the Messiah, the Son of God."--Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 4, part 2,p. 81. Doubtless the majority of the lying wonders that deceive the world just before the second advent of Christ will be performed by "false christs and false prophets" rather than scientists.

THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST

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World Embracing. Rev. 13:11-17. It must be evident to the most casual reader of these verses that both the two-horned beast and the image of the beast represent world-embracing movements. They cannot meet their complete fulfillment in a local nation or the religious system that dominates it. The false prophet proclaims a world message "to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and did live." This is not mere advice or counsel, it is virtually a command. "Telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast," (Emphatic Diaglott). "He bids the dwellers on the earth," (Moffatt). An image is a "copy, semblance, or likeness" of the original. A son is sometimes said to be "the very image of his father." Jesus is declared to be "the image of the invisible God" and "the express image of His person." (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). The image of the beast is mentioned ten times in the Apocalypse, and always as a movement world-wide in its influence and authority.

Formation of Papacy. The papal beast came into existence as the result of the "falling away" or great apostasy in the early church. The church lost her first love and united with the world and adopted its customs and practices. Through a long slow process the bishops were exalted above the elders and other officials of the church until they became virtual princes. There was a strife among the bishops of the leading churches as to who should be the chief, until finally the bishop of Rome became "the bishop of bishops." A series of church councils united Christendom under one head which resulted at length in a union with the state. Virtually the same steps are being taken in Protestantism in the formation of the image of the beast. "To learn what the image is like, and how it is to be formed, we must study the characteristics of the beast itself,--the papacy. When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel and accepted heathen rites and customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God; and in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state, and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of 'heresy.'"--The Great Controversy, p. 443.

Formation of Image. The image of the beast will come into existence through a long, slow process similar to that which created the papacy, the primal factor being apostasy from the faith once delivered to the saints by Christ and the apostles, and partially restored by the Reformation. This great movement will begin and flourish in America from whence it will spread to the whole world. "When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result. . . .The image to the beast represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas."--Id. p. 445. The image to the beast is the last phase of apostate Protestantism after it has united with the state. When the false prophet, which is apostate Protestantism, succeeds in being united with the state through religious

legislation, the image of the beast is fully formed and the two become identical. It is for this reason that the image of the beast and the false prophet are used interchangeably in the following chapters of the Revelation.

Union of Churches. The demands for a union of the churches of the United States for political as well as religious ends is growing more insistent as the years go by and the apostasy increases. To bring about this union the "National Reform Association," "The Lord's Day Alliance," "The Federal Council of Churches in America," and other national and international organizations have been formed. Charles Beecher, speaking years ago of the trend of Protestantism toward Rome, said: "Was not this the way things went with Rome? Are we not living her life over again? And what do we see just ahead? Another general council! A world's convention! Evangelical alliance, and universal creed!"--Sermon preached at Fort Wayne, Indiana, Feb. 22, 1846, on "The Bible a Sufficient Creed." Since then tremendous strides have been made toward the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the false prophet and the image to the beast. The union of the Protestant churches of America is today practically an assured fact. As soon as the state yields to the pressure and begins to advance the interests of the Protestant church trust, then the image of the beast will become a living, active, persecuting reality. There is a tremendous parallel between Protestantism in its relations with the United States today, and the Christian church in its relations with the Roman Empire in the days of Constantine which resulted in their illicit marriage and the consequent corruption of both. The ultimate result was the paganizing of the church, the downfall of the empire, and the long Dark Ages for the world.

Purpose of Alliance. The chief purpose of the federation of the Protestant churches of America has often been stated by the leaders of the various organizations which are attempting to bring about an alliance. When the "Interchurch World Movement" was flourishing, one of its state secretaries said: "The spirit of cooperation is in the air, and that sectarianism and the accompanying bigotry which it engenders will not be tolerated." Dr. R. H. Martin, one of the leaders of the "National Reform Association," declared that their "program will bring the nation to accept the will of Christ in all that it does" so that "the ideals of Christ can be written down in the law of the land and a national confession of faith made." The Christian Statesman of Jan. 13, 1887, reported the District Secretary of the "National Reform Association," Rev. M. A. Gault, as saying: "Our remedy for all these malefic influences is to have the government simply set up the moral law, and recognize God's authority behind it, and lay its hand on any religion that does not conform to it." Dr. Harry L. Bolby, secretary of "The Lord's Day Alliance," said a few years ago that "only the Roman Catholics, the Unitarians, the Seventh-day Adventists, and the Jews are outside this movement. And to be perfectly frank with you, they will have to conform to the laws if we succeed."

Enters Politics. The Literary Digest of March 8, 1924, reported Bishop Charles H. Brent as advocating before the Episcopalian Synod for the provinces of New York and New Jersey that the church advocate religious legislation from the pulpit, by letter and by lobbying. He said: "The large majority of church members and leaders favor influencing legislatures to obtain necessary laws. No methods have been formally approved, but the purpose is clear. The Church and State are working toward a common goal

and, to my mind, can not be separated. There should be a common movement, a blending of effort." This purpose was also expressed by Rev. S. V. Leech in an address in Denver, Colorado, when he said: "Give us good Sunday laws, well enforced by men in local authority, and our churches will be full of worshipers, and our young men and women will be attracted to the divine service. A mighty combination of the churches of the United States could win from Congress, the state legislatures, and municipal councils all legislation essential to this splendid result."--Reported in the Homiletic Review, Nov., 1892. A few years ago Dr. Scudder of the Jersey City Tabernacle, said: "The church is going into politics, and it is going there to stay. Furthermore, the church is to become a powerful political factor, and will act as a unit on all great moral questions. I do not take it that the churches are to form a separate political party; on the contrary, they will stand outside all parties, but they will cooperate, and as one prodigious organization, make their demands upon existing parties, and have their wishes fulfilled." These are samples of scores of other statements that might be given revealing the avowed purpose of these organizations working for church union.

Decline of Protestantism. This movement to secure the aid of the state is one of the greatest evidences of the loss of spiritual power in Protestantism. The demand for the use of the sword of the state is always proof of the loss of the sword of the Spirit. Some one has said that "Jesus Christ never spent any time in the lobby of the Caesars." He had all the power He needed for His work and this mighty power of the Spirit He promised to the church as being all-sufficient for the propagation of their work in giving the gospel to the world. Rev. Davies, one of the authors of the Pulpit Commentary, truthfully said: "If religion can only be propagated by the lash of the sword, it is not worth propagating at all. If the great God cannot maintain His own authority and rule without the aid of human violence, surely it is best to believe there is no God." In his letter to Dr. Price, Benjamin Franklin said: "When a religion is good it will take care of itself; when it is not able to take care of itself, and God does not see fit to take care of it, it is evidence to my mind that its cause is a bad one."

Romeward Bound. Our prophecy indicates a growing friendliness between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism and a cooperation between them in influencing the state to pass religious legislation to enforce religious observances of Catholic origin but which are held to and practiced by them in common. In doing this, obedience to the papacy is enforced and its worship therefore enjoined. Protestantism received its name as the result of the protest of Luther and his colleagues on April 25, 1529, against the decree of Charles V and the decision of the Diet of Spires. Because of this protest they were called Protestants, a name that was later applied to all who espoused the cause of the Reformation and protested against many of the doctrines and practices of the church of Rome. But most Protestants have long since ceased to protest and every passing year they are getting on friendlier terms with Rome. Mr. G. K. Chesterton, the famous British essayest, speaking at a Catholic congress at Birmington, England, in 1923, said: "The non-Roman Catholic churches are extinct and defunct. The Established Church is a lie. . .The Reformation is wiped out. . .If the quarrel between the Pope and Luther were to take place today, the whole of the modern world would be on the side of the Pope."

Healing the Wound. Protestantism, the chief agency used by the Lord in the wounding of the papal head of the beast, is likewise the chief agency in the hands of the dragon in healing that wound and in bridging the gulf made by the Reformation. In 1930, Pope Pius XI issued a communique in which he rejoiced over the "decline" of Protestantism, describing it as becoming "more and more exhausted" until "its very sterility is inspiring many souls with nostalgia for Catholicism." On Dec. 26, 1931, the Pope issued a 7,500 word encyclical urging all churches of the world to unite under papal leadership. He said: "We are confident that they, becoming convinced by history, life's teacher, will be able to feel at least a longing for one fold under one shepherd and for a return to that true faith which is jealousy conserved, ever secure, and inviolate in the Roman church. We recall to those who govern flocks separated from us that the faith which their ancestors solemnly professed at the Council of Ephesus, is conserved unchanged and is strenuously defended, at present as in the past, by this supreme cathedral of truth."

Welcome Assured. A few years ago a delegation of Protestant clergymen visited the pope to discuss grounds of reunion. They were given a cordial reception but were assured that the papacy could make no concessions or compromises, but if Protestants would return to the fold of Catholicism they would be "received with open arms." All changes and concession must, however, be made by Protestants, because Rome never changes. Cardinal Gibbons said that "amid the continual changes in human institutions she (the papacy) is the one Institution that never changes."--Faith of Our Fathers, p. 60. In speaking of the return of Protestants to the Catholic fold the Cardinal said: "In coming to the Church, you are not entering a strange place, but you are returning to your Father's home. The house and furniture may look odd to you, but it is just the same as your forefathers left it three hundred years ago. In coming back to the Church, you worship where your fathers worshiped before you. . .You come back like the Prodigal Son to the home of your father and mother. . .One hearty embrace of your tender Mother will compensate you for all the sacrifices you have made."--Id. pp. 15,16.

Bridging the Gulf. The Reformation of the sixteenth century made a gulf between Catholics and Protestants that was seemingly impassable. But with the healing of the deadly wound the gulf is being bridged. Protestantism is actually stretching her hand across the gulf and is clasping the hand of Romanism and the two are working together to accomplish a common end. In 1927, a group of 500 representatives of the various churches of Christendom met at Lausanne, Switzerland, for "a conference on faith and order" to attempt to answer the question, "Can the churches unite?" The Roman Catholics refused to participate. They expressed a desire for organic unity, but made it clear that from their point of view there can be only one road to union; namely, submission to the papacy. Commenting on this conference and the position of the papacy, Herbert H.Gowen, of the University of Washington, said: "There will still remain real gulfs between the Protestant and Catholic conceptions of the church. In time these too will be bridged. For the present the gulfs cannot be good-naturedly ignored."--Reported in the Portland Oregonian of June, 1927. There is nothing in the prophecy to indicate that Catholicism and Protestantism will become one fold. They will simply clasp hands for the purpose of cooperation to bring about the fulfillment of a mutual purpose.

Religious Legislation. One of the greatest evidences of the Romeward drift of Protestantism is the ever increasing demand on the part of the Protestant churches for religious legislation enforcing the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath. The use of the state to enforce the doctrines and practices of the church and to protect religious institutions has ever been a cardinal principle of Catholicism. "Kings and subjects are alike subjects of the church; and the highest duty and glory of the state is to act as the handmaid of the church. . .The state has power from God; but it is a moral power, and the church has the right to say how it shall be exercised. The church's laws must be respected by individuals and nations."--The Western Watchman, (Catholic) April 2, 1914. In the demands for state laws to enforce religious observances, the Protestant churches are following in the footsteps of the mother church of Rome.

Papal Institution. And strange as it may seem, the religious institution that Protestants are attempting to cause the state to protect and enforce is of Catholic and not divine origin. The observance of Sunday as a holy day has no foundation whatever in the Scriptures, but rests wholly upon the authority of the Catholic church. "The Catholic church of its own infallible authority created Sunday a holy day to take the place of the Sabbath of the old law."--Kansas City Catholic, Feb. 9, 1893. "The Catholic church over 1000 years before the existence of a Protestant; by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday....The Christian Sabbath is, therefore, to this day the acknowledged offspring of the Catholic Church, without a word of remonstrance from the Protestant world. . . .Reason and common sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these alternatives; either Protestantism and the keeping of Saturday, or Catholicity and the keeping of Sunday."--Catholic Mirror, Dec. 23, 1893.

Mark of Paganism. "There is no Scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week. . .Of course, I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history as a religious day, as we learn from the Christian Fathers and other sources. But what a pity that it comes branded with the mark of paganism, and christened with the name of the sun-god, when adopted and sanctioned by the papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism. There was and is a commandment to 'keep holy the Sabbath day,' but that Sabbath was not Sunday."--Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, author of the Baptist Manual. From a paper on the "Transference of the Sabbath," read before a conference of Baptist ministers in New York City, and reported in the Examiner of Nov. 16, 1893.

Mark of Papal Power. "The church changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and all the world bows down and worships upon that day in silent obedience to the mandates of the Catholic Church. Is this not a living miracle--that those who hate us so bitterly, obey and acknowledge our power every week and do not know it?"--Report of a lecture by Father Enright, President of Redemptorist College of Kansas City, Missouri, and delivered in the opera house in Hartford, Kansas, and reported in the Hartford Weekly Call, Feb. 22,1884. In reply to a letter inquiring if the Catholic church changed the Sabbath and considers the change as a mark of her authority in religious matters, Cardinal Gibbons replied through his official organ, The Catholic Mirror, of Sept. 23, 1893: "Of course, the Catholic church claims that the change was her act. It could not have been otherwise, as none in those days would have dreamed of doing anything in matters spiritual and religious

without her, and the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." Statements from Catholic authorities can be multiplied to show that they point to the change of the Sabbath as the outstanding sign or mark of their power and authority.

Enforced by Image. Verses 15,16. It is the mark of the beast, or papal Rome, that is to be enforced by false Protestantism who also make it the sign and mark of their own religion. The mark of the dragon, or paganism, became the mark of the beast, or Catholicism, and also of the false prophet and the image of the beast. Sunday has been the sign of apostasy and the memorial of idolatry in all ages. "Sunday: so called because anciently dedicated to the sun and to its worship. The first day of the week," (Webster). The North British Review declared Sunday to be "the wild solar holiday of all pagan times."--Vol. 18, p. 409. The mark of paganism and Catholicism also becomes the mark of apostate Protestantism. The National Reform Association at its meeting in Saratoga Springs, New York in 1894, passed the following resolution which was introduced by Rev. Herrick Smith, moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly: "Resolved that the Sabbath (Sunday) is a sign between God and man, and its reverent obedience a mark of the nation whose God is Jehovah." Speaking of the early settlers of this country and their reverence for Sunday, Rev. J. G. Lorimer, writing in The Christian Treasury, said: "It is quite a prominent feature of their character--a sign between them and the heathen around them; and, to a large extent, it has continued to be a mark of American religion to the present day." While Sunday is the sign and mark of apostate Protestantism, it is not the sign and mark of Christianity. The evidence of God's power and authority is His power to create, and the seventh-day Sabbath is the memorial of creation. It is a sign that all who "observe it would show themselves to be worshipers of that God who made the world in six days and rested on the seventh."--Binney's Theological Compend, Improved. pp.169,170.

Enforce by Law. There is no other possible conclusion than that this prophecy forecasts a time when the observance of Sunday will be enforced by civil law. The purpose of the National Reform Association was stated in a letter by Rev. M. A. Gault, a district secretary, written June 3, 1889, in which he said: "We propose to incorporate in our national Constitution the moral and religious command, 'In it (Sunday) thou shalt do no work,' except the works of necessity, and by external force of sheriffs we propose to arrest all violators of this law." In 1919 a minister in Philadelphia said: "The blue laws are neither antiquated nor out of date. I pray to see the day when all people will be driven to the church to worship as they should on Sunday." Dr. David McAllister, one time President of the National Reform Association, said: "Those who oppose this work now, will discover when the religious amendment is made to the Constitution, that if they do not see fit to fall in with the majority, they must abide the consequences or seek some more congenial clime." This is what the persecuted saints of the Old World did when they fled to the wilderness, and later to America. In the last great crisis when this earth is no longer a safe place for His people, the Lord will deliver them and take them to heaven which will be a very congenial clime.

Universal Enforcement. Verses 12,16. Dr. David McAllister in a speech at Lakeside, Ohio, in July, 1887, said: "Let a man be what he may--Jew, Seventh-day observer of some other denomination, or those who do not believe in the Christian Sabbath--let the law apply to every one, that there

shall be no public desecrations of the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath, the day of rest for the nation. . .They may hold any other day as sacred, and observe it; but that day which is the one day in seven for the nation at large, let that not be publicly desecrated by any one; by officer of the government, or by private citizen, high or low, rich or poor." Sunday law advocates have made it plain that the law must be universally applied and that no exceptions will be made for those who observe the seventh day.

In Right Hand or Forehead. While the seal of God is placed only in the forehead (Rev. 7:1-3; 14:1), the mark of the beast is placed either in the right hand or the forehead. The right hand is the instrument of action and service, and the forehead is the symbol of decision and will-power. It indicates that the one so marked serves the beast with his consent and with his actions. The law of God is said to be for "a sign upon thine hand," and "as frontlets between thine eyes." See Deut. 6:6-8. The language of our prophecy therefore indicates willing and whole-hearted obedience and service on the part of the worshipers, and complete dominion on the part of the beast and his image. The conduct of the worshipers is in agreement with their convictions. Since they have consented to the worship of the beast and their worship is the result of knowledge of its nature and consequences, they are without excuse. "In the forehead by way of profession; in the hand with respect to work and service," (Augustine). Rev. W. F. Crafts, in a speech at Wichita, Kansas, Sept. 20, 1889, said: "We, the American Sabbath Union, the W.C.T.U., all the churches, and the Y.M.C.A., are laboring with all our might to carry the religious Sabbath with our right arm, and the civil Sabbath with our left. Hundreds of thousands will receive it as a religious institution, and all the rest will receive it as a civil institution, and thus we will sweep in the whole nation."

Use of Mark. The language regarding the mark is based on a very ancient custom. "Pagan devotees sometimes received such a brand, marking them as the property of their god."--The Cambridge Bible. "Animals and slaves were often branded with the owner's name. . .Ptolemy Philadelphus compelled some Alexandrian Jews to receive the mark of Dionysus as his devotees," (Robertson). "Such a brand as masters stamp on their slaves, and monarchs on their subjects. Soldiers voluntarily punctured their arms with marks of the general under whom they served. Votaries of idols branded themselves with the idol's cipher or symbol. Thus Antiochus Epiphanes branded the Jews with the ivy leaf, the symbol of Bacchus."--Commentary on the Whole Bible, by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown.

Religious Boycott. Verse 17. In enforcing the mark of the beast, Protestants will make use of the boycott used so effectively by the papacy. Dean Alfred in Speaker's Commentary says that this refers to the commercial and spiritual interdicts which both pagan and papal persecutors have used against non-conformists and is still imposed in various ways. This was one of the most powerful weapons used by the papacy during the middle ages. Dr. Bascom Robins, in a lecture on "The Decalogue," delivered in Burlington, Kansas, in January 1904, said: "There is a class of people in this country who will not keep the Christian Sabbath (Sunday) unless they are forced to do so; but that can be easily done. We have twenty millions of men, besides women and children, in this country, who want this country to keep the Christian Sabbath. If we would say we will not sell anything to them, we will not buy anything from them, we will not work for them or hire

them to work for us, the thing could be wiped out, and all the world would keep the Christian Sabbath." We do not know just how this predicted boycott will be applied, but the N.R.A. furnished an example of what can be done through governmental decree.

Name and Number. Verses 17,18. The mark, name, and number, of the beast seem to be inseparable according to these verses. The number seems to embrace and signify the name. It is called "the number of his name" in Rev. 15:2. "The name and number are one and the same. They could write the number in numerals, for numbers were given by letters" (Robertson). We are assured that this was the custom in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. "These ominous numbers describe primarily the character, and only subordinately the name, of the beast referred to. The words of the same verse, 'for it is the number of a man,' will then mean that, just as the name of a man is, or originally was, an expression of his character, and may be given in numbers which, when properly interpreted, afford the same expression of it, so the number of the beast will be found in due time to correspond to the name equally pregnant with the thought of wickedness and of woe to the saints of God."--The Revelation of St. John, Milligan, p. 124.

The Death Penalty. These religious laws enforcing Sunday observance will eventually become so drastic that they will carry the death sentence, just as Sunday laws did during the middle ages in Europe, and in colonial days in America. Rev. J. Boring Gold said: "It should be understood first and last that this is America and not Europe, and the laws say expressly that no work, save that of necessity and charity, shall be performed on the Sabbath (Sunday). The man who does not subscribe to the doctrine of Sabbath observance is a traitor to his country and should be treated as such." The penalty for treason has always been death. During a mass meeting held in the Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., Feb. 9, 1919, Dr. Harry L. Bolby, secretary of the Lord's Day Alliance, said: "Everybody knows what would happen to any man showing disrespect to the American flag, and we mean to put the American Christian Sabbath upon exactly the same basis as the American flag." Just as the American flag is the emblem and mark of civil power and authority, so the American Sabbath is the mark of religious power and authority. To disrespect either is an act of treason according to Mr. Bolby.

A Criminal Act. During a meeting of the National Reform Association held in New York City, Dec. 5-7, 1900, Rev. J. W. Foster said: "Even now we hang a man for murder,--for violating the sixth commandment,--and I believe that those who persist in violating God's Sabbath should be put to death." This statement was received with hearty approval, judging from the applause of the large audience. In an article in the January-February number of The Michigan Lord's Day Leader of 1928, entitled, "The Sabbath Problem," Rev. John Ferguson, secretary of the Lord's Day Alliance of New York, said: "A third thing necessary is an adequate, constructive and positive program for the Sabbath. This question can never be solved on the negative basis. We partially solved the problem of yellow fever by killing certain mosquitoes that carried poisonous germs, but we never solved it fully until the breeding places were wiped out. We may partially solve the Sabbath problem by killing some of the Sabbath desecrators, but only the pure sunlight of truth that shall purify the breeding places will bring about a proper solution of this mighty problem."

The Coming Crisis. The issue in the coming crisis is clear. The great question is, will we obey and thus worship the papacy and its Protestant image, or the Creator of the heavens and the earth? Will we bear the sign of allegiance to God, or the mark of apostasy and rebellion against God? The law of God and especially the Sabbath, the seal of the law and the mark of God's power and authority, will be the issue and battleground. Protection and deliverance is promised to those who hold fast their faith and maintain their loyalty even in the face of persecution and death. See Rev. 3:10-12. "Because in spite of suffering you have guarded My word, I in turn will guard you from the hour of trial which is soon coming upon the whole world, to put to the test the inhabitants of the earth. I am coming quickly: cling to that which you already possess, so that your wreath of victory be not taken away from you. He who overcomes--I will make him a pillar in the Sanctuary of My God, and he shall never go out from it again." (Weymouth).

Purpose of Chapter. Chapter 14 presents an interruption in the prophetic history of the two wild beasts and their warfare against the church of Christ. The prophetic history of their persecuting careers is resumed and finished in subsequent visions. The events of this vision are in striking contrast to those of the preceding chapter. Instead of a hideous and savage beast rising out of the sea to dominate the earth and persecute the saints, and another with the voice and spirit of the dragon coming up out of the earth to imitate and then cooperate with the first beast in enforcing false worship, the prophet beholds Christ and 144,000 victors over beast-worship standing on Mount Zion. The triumphant company of redeemed saints have the name of God in their foreheads in contrast to those in the previous vision who have the mark of the beast in their foreheads. The purpose of this interlude is to give hope and courage to those who are passing through this last crisis. The prophecy of their own triumph will cheer them on when the way seems dark and discouraging.

Messages and Harvests. This chapter also describes the threefold message by which the remnant of the church of Christ meets the great world crisis produced by the activities of the dragon-inspired beast and false prophet. A world message which swells to a loud cry under the latter rain of spiritual power warns the inhabitants of the earth against the worship of the beast and his image, and the receiving of his mark in the forehead or hand. The message produces a people who by faith patiently cling to God's word and maintain their loyalty to His government by keeping His commandments even in the face of persecution and threatened death. They receive the seal of heaven's approval because of their godly characters. They have refused to receive the character of the beast and the mark of that character. The threefold message of the church of Christ is to counteract the world message of the false prophet. There are two world messages being proclaimed at the same time and the inhabitants of the earth must decide between them. The chapter closes with a description of the two harvests, the wheat and the tares, the results of the seed-sowing of the two messages. One is gathered into the heavenly garner, and the other into the lake of fire. The results of accepting the two messages are as contrasting as the messages themselves. One ends in eternal life, and the other in eternal death.

THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THE FINAL HARVEST

Pyramids see back page 25

On Mount Zion. Rev. 14:1-5. According to Isa. 8:18 "the Lord of hosts" "dwelleth in Mount Zion." It is therefore the dwelling place of God. It is the place where God reigns and is therefore associated with the heavenly Jerusalem. See Isa. 24:23; Heb. 12:22. It is the headquarters of the government of God which rules the universe. It has no reference whatever to the earthly Mount Zion on which the Temple of Solomon was built. The fact that the 144,000 are with Christ at the very headquarters of His kingdom of glory indicates that they occupy high positions. This is also proven by the fact that they are said to be "before the throne of God" where they "stand on the sea of glass." See also Rev. 15:2,3. The sea of glass is the pavement of the throne room. This is in harmony with the promise of Christ recorded in Rev. 3:21. The 144,000 are said to be "the most exalted of the redeemed host that stand before the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Vol. 5:215).

Character of God. "Having His name and the name of His Father written in their foreheads." (R.V.) Name signifies character. "A good name" indicates a good character or reputation. "The Divine Name on the forehead suggests at once the imparting of a character which corresponds with the mind of God, and the consecration of life to His service, "(Swete). "The inscription declares that the person inscribed is God's own possession; it is at the same time evidence that His character is such as befits a servant of God," (Charles). See also Eph. 5:27; 1 Thess. 5:23; Jude 24. This perfection of character is possible only through the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ which is received by faith. The 144,000 have fully accepted the Laodicean message with its remedy, an important part of which is righteousness by faith. See Rev. 3:14-22.

Celebrate Victory. Verses 2,3. This is the same celebration of the redeemed out of the last generation as is pictured in Rev. 19:1-6. "And the music which I heard was like that of harpers playing upon their harps," (Weymouth). Harps formed an important part of the temple orchestra of the Hebrews and accompanied the songs of the Levitical choir. In the heavenly temple the 144,000 seem to form a special choir. They sing the song of Moses and the Lamb as none others of the redeemed can sing it, because it is a song of experience. "None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience,--an experience such as no other company have ever had," (G.C. 649). And yet a great multitude who are saved out of the last generation will also be able to sing the same song: "This is the theme, this is the song,--Christ all and in all,--in anthems of praise resounding through heaven from thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand and an innumerable company of the redeemed host. All unite in this song of Moses and of the Lamb. It is a new song, for it was never before sung in heaven," (T.M. 433). The song is also "new" because of the new experience through which those pass who live through the closing crisis and get the victory over "the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." See Rev. 15:2,3. Since the image of the beast is not yet fully formed, it is evident that only those who go through the final test can sing this song and they are described as being "an innumerable company" besides the 144,000.

A Special Company. It is evident that the 144,000 are a special company of the redeemed out of the last generation who go through a special experience and are sealed for a special mission on earth and positions in heaven. "The 144,000 are presented as a select and special class of God's servants, chosen, marked, and set apart as none else, sealed by an angel with the seal of the living God. . .There is a special and peculiar isolation from all other classes of the saved. . .They are so unique and separate in their history, experience, and reward, that no one is able to learn or sing the song which they sing." "None others will ever fulfill just such a mission, as none others are ever sealed with the seal of the living God in the same way in which they were sealed. None others ever have just such an experience, in such a world as that through which they come to glory."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, pp. 19,25. This seems to be the only reasonable basis on which to explain the prophetic description of the 144,000.

Attain Pure Characters. Verse 4. "They are as pure as virgins," (Weymouth). The true church of Christ is represented in Scripture as a "virgin" and the individual members as "virgins." See 2 Cor. 11:2; Matt. 25:1. Virginity is the symbol of both physical and spiritual purity in life and conduct. The 144,000 have the name of God in their foreheads indicating godly characters. They "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." We are told that those who "walk in the law of the Lord" are "undefiled," and that the disobedient defile themselves and others. See Ps. 119:1; Isa. 24:5; Titus 1:15. All through the Scriptures unfaithfulness to God is represented as spiritual fornication and adultery. See 2 Chron. 21:11; Jer. 3:8,9; Hosea 1:2; 2:2; Rev. 17:1-5. Moral uncleanness has always been a part of paganism. The 144,000 get complete victory over impurity of mind and body during the most licentious age of all history, comparable only to the days of Noah and Lot. They will pass triumphantly through the antitype of the Baal-Peor experience of ancient Israel just before they entered the promised land.

Spiritual Celibacy. "Virgins" as used here has reference to spiritual rather than literal celibacy. Marriage is never considered sinful and does not "defile." "What is here said is true of all the redeemed. It would be a most carnal interpretation of the passage to make it mean that only such as have led a celibate life on earth are among the 144,000. Even Roman Catholic expositors, with all their desire to exalt celibacy, do not so misread it. All believers are viewed as chaste virgins, and as having been presented to Christ as such."--Of the Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass, Mauro, p. 437. Another writer said: "Celibacy is not the subject or virtue in this description, but purity, freedom from contamination by the corruptions which prevail in their time. The reign of the Antichrist is the reign of harlotry, both literal and spiritual. . . 'They are virgins,' in that they lived chaste lives, both as to faithfulness to God in their religion, and as to their pureness from all bodily lewdness."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, p. 22. The 144,000 are among those called out of spiritual Babylon which is described under the symbol of a woman who is called "the great whore" and "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" with whom "the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." See Rev. 17:1-5. Is it any wonder that those called out of Babylon are called "virgins"? We are told that only "the pure in heart" will see God and that "the seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman," (Vol. 5:216). The 144,000 are complete victors over both literal and spiritual harlotry.

Without Blemish. "And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God." "Guile" has the meaning of craft, trickery and duplicity. The person with guile in his mouth is a liar and deceiver. The word also carries the meaning of "ferment" or "fermentation." It is a defiling and polluting influence. Purity of speech is closely related to pureness of heart and faith. The 144,000 have a pure religion, pure hearts, pure lives, and a pure language free from deceit, malicious gossip, and filthy stories. They are like Jesus of whom it is said: "Neither was any deceit in His mouth," (Isa. 53:9). Peter was doubtless quoting this text when he said of Jesus: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," (1 Peter 1:22). "After purity, truthfulness was perhaps the most distinctive mark of the followers of Christ, as contrasted with their heathen neighbors," (Swete). Many other Scriptures describe the character standard attained by those who are ready to meet their returning Lord. See Eph. 5:27; 1 Thess. 5:23.

Special Privileges. The 144,000 not only do a special work during the final crisis and will hold high positions in the kingdom, but they also "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." This is evidently a privilege not accorded all the redeemed. Christ will doubtless visit the unnumbered millions of unfallen worlds which He has created, and will take with Him this special temple choir and orchestra of harpists, who, because of their experience in redeeming love can sing the song of redemption as none others can sing it. This will help make possible the promise that "affliction shall not rise up the second time." In a special sense the 144,000 may represent the bride of Christ, whom He takes with Him on a wedding tour of the universe, a privilege granted them because they have gone through experiences more like that of Christ than any others, so that they are more like Him in character.

Will Be Translated. The statements "redeemed from the earth" and "redeemed from among men" doubtless indicate translation from the earth without experiencing death, which of course is another wonderful privilege. In 1 Thess. 4:15-17, "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" are contrasted with "the dead in Christ" who are resurrected. Those who remain alive are "caught up together" with the resurrected saints "to meet the Lord in the air." There are only two ways to reach heaven, by a translation or a resurrection. We are told that "by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death," (Heb. 11:5). This happened because "he pleased God." His nobility of character as he "walked with God" qualified him for translation. In all definitions of translation it is made clear that it means to be removed to heaven "without the intervening experience of death." No person who has ever died can experience translation.

Denominational Position. Many statements could be quoted to prove that Seventh-day Adventists have always believed that the statements under consideration refer to translation, of which the following is a sample: "They are 'redeemed from among men,' an expression that can be applicable only to those who are translated from among the living. Paul labored, if by any means he might attain to a resurrection from among the dead. This is the hope of those who sleep in Jesus,--a resurrection from the dead. A redemption from among men, from among the living, must mean a different thing, and that is translation. Hence the 144,000 are the living saints, who will be translated at the second coming of Christ." "So the 144,000, ripening up for the heavenly garner here on earth during the troublous scenes of

the last days, being translated to heaven without seeing death, and occupying a preeminent position."--Daniel and the Revelation, Uriah Smith, 1912 edition, pp. 629,631.

Spirit of Prophecy. Of the transfiguration we read: "Moses was present to represent those who will be raised from the dead at the second appearing of Jesus. And Elijah, who was translated without seeing death, represented those who will be changed to immortality at Christ's second coming, and will be translated to heaven without seeing death," (E.W. 164). "These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as 'the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.' 'These are they which came out of great tribulation;' they have passed through the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation; and have endured the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble; they have stood without an intercessor through the final outpouring of God's judgment," (G.C. 649). See also P.P. 89,478; P.K. 227; D.A. 421; Vol. 1:132; Vol. 8:331. Since the partial resurrection does not take place till the close of the plagues and just before the general resurrection of the righteous, it is evident that no resurrected saint can be numbered among the 144,000. They include only those who have lived through the final crisis as well as the seven last plagues.

The First Fruits. The 144,000 are declared to be "the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb," or, "the firstfruits to be reaped for God and the Lamb," (Moffatt). Here is the key to the understanding of the subject of the 144,000. It proves that this special company have been "selected" and "gathered" from "among" others, to be the firstfruits of the final gospel harvest. Wherever the firstfruits are mentioned in Scripture it always refers to a small part of the harvest which matures and is gathered first, and is followed by the gathering of the unnumerable harvest. That which comes at the close is called the "gleanings." "This seems to imply that the 144,000 do not represent the whole number of the Elect, but a specially sanctified number from among them," (The Cambridge Bible). "This seems to mean that the 144,000 represent not the whole, but only a portion of the great harvest to come, not only the first instalment, but those marked by high spiritual service to God and the Lamb," (Robertson). "The figure is drawn from the well-known offering of the 'firstfruits' under the Jewish law, in which the first portion of any harvest was dedicated to God, in token that the whole belonged to Him, and was recognized as His. Hence, it always implies that something of the same kind will follow it, and in this sense it is often used in the New Testament. If the 'firstfruit is holy, so is the lump.' . . .In like manner the mention of the 144,000 as 'firstfruits' suggests the thought of something to follow." (The Expositor's Bible).

Sifted and Anointed. The waving of the firstfruit sheaf of the early harvest took place on the sixteenth of Nisan, the day following the Passover Sabbath. The grain was threshed and thoroughly winnowed and the sifted-out chaff burned. The grain was then parched, ground into meal, and anointed with incense. Then the fragrant meal was waved toward the four points of the compass as the firstfruits of the spring harvest. This typical service met its antitype when Jesus, the Lord of the harvest, carefully selected the twelve apostles "from among men." They were the best He could find to train for their special mission. Their preparation included a threshing process and a thorough sifting out of all sin and sinners. Judas,

the traitor, was sifted out from among them. Their heart-searching experience during the trials and crucifixion of Jesus and in the upper room, completed the preparation for their special mission. They were anointed with the Holy Spirit and their lives made fragrant for Christ. The glorious results of Pentecost was the antitype of the waving of the firstfruit sheaf and thousands were converted including "devout men out of every nation under heaven." It was the beginning of a world harvest of souls under the early rain of spiritual power when the gospel was proclaimed to "every creature under heaven."

The Final Sifting. The 144,000 must pass through a sifting, shaking process to bring them to spiritual maturity so as to qualify them to be the firstfruits of the final harvest. See Eze. 20:35-38; Amos 9:9,10; Rev. 3:16. See the description of the shaking time in Vol. 5:80-82. In E. W. 270, 271 we are told that the shaking is produced by "the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans," and that "some will not bear this straight testimony" but will "rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people." We are told that "this is the solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs." It is then made clear that those who "truly receive it will obey it, and be purified," and will receive the latter rain and proclaim the message under the loud cry. Someone says, "Does not this shaking greatly reduce the remnant people of God to the number 144,000?" The shaking out of Judas from among the twelve did not reduce their number because his place was filled by another, and in the statement just referred to it is stated that the places of those shaken out "were immediately filled by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks." In Vol. 8:41, we are told that while "company after company from the Lord's army" will join the foe, "tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy" will "unite with the commandment keeping people of God." Tribes are larger than companies.

The Latter Rain. The 144,000 are the first of the final gospel harvest to be brought to spiritual maturity, for the firstfruits constitute "the fruit or product first matured and collected in any season," (Webster). Mature means "ripe, of full age, perfected by time or natural growth, brought to perfection, completed, prepared, ready," (Webster). In no uncertain language we are told that the seal cannot be received until God's people gain the victory over every sin and are without spot and blemish. Then they can be given the latter rain, the purpose of which is to call the innumerable company of God's people out of spiritual Babylon. See G.C. 390. Here we are told that "the great proportion" of them are still there when the loud cry begins.

The Results. Under the early rain "a great company of priests were obedient to the faith," (Acts 6:7). This will be repeated during the latter rain. "Among the Jews are some who, like Saul of Tarsus, are mighty in the Scriptures, and these will proclaim with wonderful power the immutability of the law of God. The God of Israel will bring this to pass in our day." (A.A. 381). "Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth, there will be, among the people of the Lord, such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His people. . .Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time, to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming." (G.C. 464).

Some of Rulers. "Many of the rulers are those whom Satan controls; but I saw that God has His agents, even among the rulers. And some of them will yet be converted to the truth. They are now acting the part that God would have them. . .At the loud cry of the third angel, these agents will have an opportunity to receive the truth, and some of them will be converted, and endure with the saints through the time of trouble." (Vol. 1: 203). In Gospel Workers, pp. 348,349, we are told that men of ability, influence and wealth will unite with the remnant and help give the message. "When God's people so fully separate themselves from evil that He can let the light of heaven rest upon them in rich measure, and shine forth from them to the world, then there shall be fulfilled, more fully than it has ever been fulfilled in the past, the prophecy of Isaiah, in which the servant of God declared of the remnant church in the last days: 'The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.'"--The Review and Herald, March 31, 1910.

Many Backsliders Return. "When the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd's voice. Self-denying efforts will be put forth to save the lost, and many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd. . .Then will the message of the third angel swell to the loud cry, and the whole earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord." (Vol. 6:401). This does not refer to those who are "purged" or "spued" out during the shaking time, but those who have drifted out because of discouragement and other causes during the wilderness wandering of modern Israel. Because of the prevailing Laodicean lukewarmness they failed to see the evidences they expected that God was with His remnant people. When the Lord "returns to Zion," in the latter rain visitation, they will no longer say, "Where is their God?" but will return to the fold and will doubtless be a part of the innumerable multitude saved during the latter rain.

Early Rain Exceeded. The latter rain is to be not only "more abundant," but "much more abundant" than the early rain. We are promised the Holy Spirit in "much greater measure" than was given the apostles. He is to be "even more mightily revealed today than in the time of the apostles," and therefore our zeal should "exceed that of the early church." See Vol. 8, pp. 19-23. Under the latter rain there will be "jets of light shining from cities and villages, and from the high places and the low places of the earth. God's word was obeyed, and as a result there were memorials for Him in every city and village. His truth was proclaimed throughout the world." (Vol. 9:28,29). See also page 126, and Great Controversy, pp. 611,612, for descriptions of the message during the latter rain and the abundant harvest which will be gathered in.

An Enlarged Vision. The time has come for an enlarged vision in regard to this subject. The evidence from the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy is too great to ignore. To neglect such glorious and timely light because portions of it have been borrowed by an offshoot movement and appropriated to their own use would be absurd. On this basis we would have to abandon

the light on the Sabbath and many other truths of the advent message. The gospel harvest under the early rain was very abundant,numbering many millions, but the final visitation of spiritual power under the latter rain will produce a "much more abundant" harvest, even "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," besides the numerable firstfruit sheaf. Such a vision would produce pulsations of new life and faith and courage which would cheer on the whole movement in its world-embracing mission. It would inspire God's remnant people to greater sacrificial giving and increased zeal in missionary activity. Knowing that "the plan of salvation is broad enough to embrace the whole world," we would no longer be restricted by an "attempt to number Israel" as was Elijah, but would "have a heart of flesh, a heart of tender sympathy, a heart that, like the heart of Christ reaches out for the salvation of a lost world."

THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES

26

Symbolic Angels. Rev. 14:6-12. "Angel" in both Hebrew and Greek signifies "messenger." Since the Lord always sends His messages to the world through His church, it is evident that angels are used here as symbols. "The three angels of Revelation 14 represent the people who accept the light of God's messages, and go forth as His agents to sound the warning throughout the length and breadth of the earth." "The three angels of Revelation 14 are represented as flying in the midst of heaven, symbolizing the work of those who proclaim the first, second, and third angel's messages."--Vol. 5:455,456; Vol. 6:17. Since angels are God's messengers, they constitute beautiful symbols of the human messengers of the gospel. In fact the elders or ministers of the seven churches are called angels. See Rev. 2,3. Six times in the Apocalypse God's last message is symbolized by an angel from heaven, each picturing a different phase of that message. It takes all six to give us the complete picture of the message that culminates in the loud cry when the whole earth is lightened with the glory of God. These six features must be found in the present truth for this generation and they definitely identify God's remnant people. This is the message that gathers both the firstfruits and the final gospel harvest from "every nation and kindred and tongue, and people."

The Everlasting Gospel. "The eternal good tidings," (R.V.). "The good news of the ages," (Weymouth). "The good news decreed from eternity," (20th C.N.T.). "Gospel" is a combination of the two words "good" and "spel." "Spel" means news or story. The gospel is good news, or a good story, or God's story. It is the glad tidings of salvation. Just as there has been but one true church in all ages, there has also been but one gospel, which is everlasting in both time and results. It is identical with "the everlasting covenant." There is but one gospel, one plan of salvation, one body or church, one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, and one name by which we can be saved. See Eph. 4:4-6. The positive phase of the gospel throughout all the ages has been justification and righteousness by faith in Christ. See Rom. 1:16,17. This is the good news phase of all of God's messages to men. It is the very center and core of the gospel around which all other truths cluster. The negative phase embraces the warnings against the prevailing apostasy of the age in which the message is being given. The negative phase therefore changes to meet the changing conditions. It warns against the agencies used by Satan to oppose the gospel. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, constitute the Satanic triumvir against which the final warning is given. Such a warning had never been given before because the same combination of evil had never before existed.

Eternal Consequences. Noah is called "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). While righteousness by faith was the center and positive phase of his preaching which saved from sin, the negative phase was the warning of the sure results of disobedience, the coming deluge. His message was present truth for that generation, and regardless of their creeds and forms of religion, the eternal destiny of the antediluvians depended on their attitude toward the everlasting gospel as it applied to their time and conditions. The same was true of the message of Lot to the cities of the plain; of Elijah to apostate Israel; of John the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles to the Jewish nation, and of the threefold message of Revelation 14

to the modern world. The latter is God's message of present truth for the present generation, and regardless of the profession of godliness and forms of religion and the benefits derived from them in the past, the eternal welfare of all mankind depends on their attitude toward this heaven-sent message for our day. To accept it means eternal life; to reject it brings the vengeance of an offended and longsuffering God. Because of its preeminent importance and momentous consequences to all judgment-bound creatures, it is given with "a loud voice" so that all can hear and prepare. The words of the ancient prophet are now appropriate: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." Jer. 22:29.

A World Message. Verses 6,7. The four-fold enumeration, "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," indicates that the message is world-embracing. This applies to all three messages as they are inseparable. In fact, all six of the prophetic pictures of the last message indicate that it is world-wide in extent. That the message here described is the last that will ever be given to the world is evident from the fact that it is followed by the "judgment" and the "harvest," which Jesus declared to be "the end of the world," (Matt. 13:39). By it the gospel commission is completed and the kingdom of glory ushered in. The symbolic angels "fly in the midst of heaven" and proclaim their messages "with a loud voice" so they can be seen and heard by all. It also indicates that the message is world-embracing and is carried swiftly to the world. "This represents the speed and directness with which the church is to prosecute her work," (M.M. 131). Birds that fly swiftly and travel long distances fly in mid-heaven.

The First Message. "Reverence God and give Him praise," (20th C.N.T.). The message of the first angel gives the reason for all three. The inhabitants of the earth are not giving praise and glory to the Creator. They are worshiping the creature which is idolatry. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are the objects of obedience and worship. The heaven-sent message is given to counteract the message of the false prophet which demands that the inhabitants of the earth worship the beast and his image instead of the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Both are world messages, one exalting the creature and the other the Creator. The worship of the Creator must include the observance of the Sabbath which is the memorial of creation. This is indicated by the fact that a part of the fourth commandment is quoted in the first angel's message. God's power to create is an evidence of His power to redeem, and for this reason reference to His creative power has been an important part of all heaven-sent messages.

The Sabbath. Because the Sabbath is both the memorial of creation and the sign of sanctification or redemption, Sabbath observance is an important part of the everlasting gospel in all ages. This is especially true of the final message that calls upon an apostate world to worship the Creator instead of the beast and his image. The Sabbath is the sign and mark of true worship, just as Sunday is the sign and mark of apostasy and idolatry, "the wild solar holiday of all pagan times." Regarding the institution of the Sabbath and its purpose in the plan of salvation, a leading Methodist writer said: "God's blessing and sanctifying the day meant that He separated it from a common to a religious use, to be a perpetual memorial or sign that all who thus observe it would show themselves to be worshipers of that God who made the world in six days and rested on the seventh."--Binney's Theological Compend Improved, pp. 169,170.

"He that observes the Sabbath aright holds the history of that which it celebrates to be authentic. He therefore believes in the creation of the first man; in the creation of a fair abode for man in the space of six days; in the primeval and absolute creation of the heavens and the earth, and as a necessary antecedent to all this, in the Creator, who at the close of His latest creative effort, rested on the seventh day. The Sabbath thus becomes a sign by which the believers in a historical revelation are distinguished from those who have allowed these great facts to fade from their remembrance."--James Murphy. Quoted in The Moody Institute Monthly, November, 1930. To worship God because He is the Creator is the true basis of worship in heaven and earth. See Rev. 4:10,11; Isa. 66: 22,23.

Reason for Message. The importance and urgency of the call to worship the Creator is emphasized by the fact that "the hour of His judgment is come," or "because the time of His judgment has come," (Weymouth). This is the very best reason why the Creator instead of the beast should be worshiped. The inhabitants of the earth should serve and obey God because the time has arrived when they must all appear before His judgment bar. "The most solemn and awful thought to me is, accountability," said Daniel Webster. The announcement of the coming judgment is an important part of the gospel message. See John 16:7,8,11. The judgment is referred to more than 700 times in the Bible. It is an ordeal that none can escape. As in earthly courts the Lord has a definite time for the judgment. See Eccl. 3:17; Acts 17:30,31. That the heavenly tribunal has not always been in session is evident from Acts 24:25, and 2 Peter 2:4,9. Justice demands that punishment be reserved till after the judgment. Because our influence lives on after death it is impossible to render justice in the meting out of rewards till the end of human history. Although righteous Abel has been dead about six millenniums, we are told that his example and influence "yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4). The same can be said of all the saints who are dead, and, therefore, full justice is impossible before the human race has fully run its course.

The Judgment Hour. Paul reasoned with Governor Felix of "judgment to come," and Peter declared that the unjust are "reserved" "unto the day of judgment to be punished." Luther is reported to have said that the judgment would take place in about three hundred years. But the announcement of this message is not of a judgment "to come" but of one that "is come." The prophet Daniel was given a vision of the judgment scene in heaven which was to take place after the work of the little horn during the 1260 years of papal supremacy. See Dan. 7:9,10,13. This would place the judgment between 1798 and the second advent of Christ. In Dan. 8:13,14,17; 9:24,25, the exact time of the judgment is located. It was to begin at the close of the 2300 prophetic days or literal years, or in 1844. Daniel was shown what would take place in heaven at the close of the 2300 years, and the Revelator what would take place on earth at the same time. A message would be heralded to all the world telling every judgment-bound creature that the supreme court of the universe has begun its solemn work in heaven. When earthly courts convene, a crier announces it with a loud voice. But before the time arrives a definite time is set for the judgment and it is published so that all having cases pending can make the necessary preparation. 2500 years ago the Lord published the time of the judgment which He had before "appointed." When the time arrives a world message gives the announcement "with a loud voice" so that none will have an excuse.

Typical Judgment. The judgment with which Christ's priestly ministry closes was prefigured in the typical sanctuary service by the day of Atonement which brought to a close the services of the year picturing the whole plan of salvation. This closing service was also called "the cleansing of the sanctuary," and was the most important and solemn day of the year. It was clearly a work of judgment resulting in the cutting off of the unfaithful and the blotting out of their names from the registry of Israel. A Hebrew poet says of the day of Atonement: "It is the judgment day of all the year." Dean Farrar, quoting from ancient Hebrew authors, shows that the Jews counted the day of Atonement as the day of judgment. He says: "So awful was the day of atonement that we are told in a Jewish book of ritual that the very angels run to and fro in fear and trembling saying, 'Lo! the day of judgment has come.'"..The Early Days of Christianity, p. 38. This is the very language of our text.

Investigative Judgment. The main judgment will take place during the millennium when "the saints shall judge the world" and "shall judge angels." At that time "judgment shall be given to the saints of the most High." See 1 Cor. 6:2,3; Dan. 7:22. Several texts indicate clearly that an investigation of the heavenly records must be made before Christ returns. See Dan. 12:1,2; Luke 20:35; Rev. 20:15. The first judgment is a sort of grand jury investigation to determine who shall be saved when Christ returns. This decision is likewise an indictment against all others who must be tried and sentenced during the general judgment. The function of a grand jury is to decide whether certain persons shall go to trial after a thorough investigation of their cases has been made. This is the work of the judgment now in session in heaven. "Investigative judgment" is not a Scriptural term but it correctly describes this phase of the judgment work.

Second Angel's Message. Verse 8. Babylon was the first great city built after the flood and it became the center of idolatry and moral corruption. It was here that Satan, through Nimrod and Semiramis, established or reestablished his counterfeit system of religion through which he has ruled the world and deceived mankind. Speaking of Nimrod, Alexander Hislop says: "He is said to have been the first that gathered mankind into communities, the first of mortals that reigned, and the first that offered idolatrous sacrifices. . .All tradition from the earliest times bears testimony to the apostasy of Nimrod, and to his success in leading men away from the patriarchal faith."--The Two Babylons, pp. 51,52. This is the first time that Babylon is mentioned in the Apocalypse and it is introduced as if it were a well known institution. It is designated "That great city" as though familiar to all.

Symbol of Apostasy. The city of Babylon was built in defiance of God soon after the flood. In it was established a religious system that has been the great counterfeit of the gospel down through the ages. Its foundation principle was salvation by human effort. An attempt was made to reach heaven by means of a mighty tower. The city that grew up around the tower was therefore called Babylon, "the gate of God." But because of the judgment of God resulting in the confusion of tongues, the city and tower became Babel, meaning "confusion." See Gen. 10:8-10. Satan's counterfeit system of religion has been divinely designated as "Babylon the Great" ever since. The chief agency of Satan in this great apostasy was Nimrod, the great grandson of Noah and the builder and first king of Babylon. He

is designated as "a mighty hunter before the Lord," but other translations give a better delineation of his true character and work. "Nimrod was a mighty rebel before the Lord" (Targum of Jonathan). "Nimrod was mighty in sin, lying in wait to catch and overthrow men and draw them away from the worship of the true God" (Jewish Targum). Babylon was built by Nimrod "the mighty rebel" and means "confusion." It is "the city of confusion" (Isa. 24:10). It is therefore a fit symbol of the church of Satan. On the other hand, Jerusalem was built by David, a man after God's own heart, and means "founded peaceful" and is declared to be "a city that is compact together" (Ps. 122:3). It is, therefore, the symbol of peace and unity and fitly represents the church of God in all ages. "Nothing is more marked than the contrast which is maintained between Babylon as a type of the world, and Jerusalem as the type of the church," (Pulpit Commentary).

Cause of Fall. The moral fall of Babylon is declared by the second angel's message to be "because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." "The wine of the anger provoked by her fornication," (Weymouth). "The maddening wine of her licentiousness," (20th C.N.T.). Idolatry in all of its forms is called fornication and licentiousness all through the Scriptures. Of ancient Babylon it is written: "The nations have druken of her wine; therefore, the nations are mad." Jer. 51:7. Just as sweet and unfermented wine is the symbol of truth and spiritual blessings (Isa. 25:6; 55:1; 1 Cor. 11:25-29; Rev. 6:6), so fermented and intoxicating wine is the symbol of error and false teachings. The poisonous wine of Babylon is maddening and intoxicating. It unbalances the mind and brings confusion in thought and conduct. The false doctrines of Babylon lead to fornication both literal and spiritual. Paganism at heart has always been corrupt, leading its devotees into moral degeneration. Spiritual fornication eventually leads to physical licentiousness. The moral corruption of the modern world is the direct result of Satanic rulership through false religion.

Obscene Nature Worship. The religious system of ancient Babylon was founded on nature worship, or the worship of the creature rather than the Creator. This is the basis of all idolatry. "The founders of the Cushite race, Cush or Belus, and his son Nimrod, were the original authors of an idolatry which consisted of an obscene nature worship, or the worship of the principle of natural life and generation, the chief manifestation of which was supposed to be the Sun. It was combined with the practice of magic, and the worship of, and intercourse with Spirits of Evil. This idolatry seems to have originated, in the first case, in antediluvian times, and to have been the immediate cause of the destruction of the world by the Deluge; and its resurrection after the Deluge, while the memory of that event was still fresh, led to its overthrow in Egypt and the violent death of its chief author, the Babylonian monarch."--Romanism and Spiritualism; Their Identity with Paganism, Garnier, p. 4. That the false religious system established in Babylon by Nimrod was the same system that existed before the flood and was founded by Cain, the first human rebel, is evident.

A Moral Fall. That ancient Babylon experienced a moral fall before the final overthrow by the victorious arms of the Medes and Persians, is evident from the testimony of both sacred and profane history. See Isa. 47:1-3; Jer. 51:37-39. The moral condition in the city of Babylon reached its terrible climax in the licentious feast of Belshazzar when the city and kingdom had filled to overflowing the cup of their iniquity and their doom

was decreed by the God of heaven whose sentence of death was written by an unseen hand on the palace wall before the terror-stricken gaze of the drunken revelers. The imagination refuses to follow the implications of history regarding what took place that tragic night when a thousand lords with their wives and concubines gave full rein to their appetites and passions. Of the corruption of Babylon one writer says: "Nothing could be more corrupt than its morals, nothing more fitted to excite and allure to immoderate pleasures. The rites of hospitality were polluted by the grossest and most shameful lusts. Money dissolved every tie, whether of kindred, respect, or esteem. The Babylonians were very greatly given to wine. . .Women were present at their convivialities, first with some degree of propriety, but, growing worse and worse by degrees, they ended by throwing off at once their modesty and their clothing."--Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia. According to Dan. 5:4, the feast of Belshazzar was a religious festival in honor of the Babylonian gods. The licentious festivals of Babylon were perpetuated in the Eleusinian festivals of Greece, and the Bacchanalian festivals of Rome that became so corrupt that they were finally forbidden by decree of the Roman Senate.

Modern Babylon. The same conditions prevail to a large extent in the modern world ruled by Babylon in its modern form. Is it any wonder that the second angel's message declares that the cause of the fall of Babylon is "the furious wine of her prostitution"? (Concordant). Why is the statement "is fallen" repeated? See also Rev. 18:2. Doubtless chiefly for the same reason that important statements and announcements are usually repeated, to give emphasis. (Of the reason why the same dream was twice given to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, we read: "And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass." Gen. 41:32.) This is the best of reasons for this repetition in the second angel's message. The subject of the nature and fall of Babylon is specifically dealt with in chapters 17 and 18. Rev. 18:1-5 indicates that the last phase of the threefold message that closes the gospel commission will deal with the nature and fall of Babylon the Great. The fact that the second angel's message is repeated and given greater emphasis just before the end is evidence that it will then be better understood because of the spiritual illumination produced by the latter rain, and the increased corruptions of Babylon.

The Modern World. Babylon is leading the whole modern world into idolatry and licentiousness. The spiritual and moral conditions of the world are similar to those which existed before the flood and again in ancient Babylon just before her destruction. The same conditions also prevailed in Sodom and Gomorrha just before their overthrow. Jesus declared that the same conditions would obtain again just prior to His second advent. Again the earth will be "corrupt before God" and "filled with violence," and "the wickedness of man" will be so "great" that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart" will be "evil continually." See Gen. 6: 5-12. These conditions are fast filling up the cup of the world's iniquity and leading the nations to their final doom. But before the final sentence of the Great Judge is written on the wall of modern Babylon, God's people must be called out, and this is the purpose of the last gospel message heralded to the world by the three symbolic angels. The announcement of the fall of Babylon and the call for God's people to come out of her so as to escape her sins and plagues, is not only a very important part of

the everlasting gospel for this generation, but will constitute the last phase of the message that lightens the earth with the glory of God. The church that does not include the fall of Babylon as a part of its message does not meet the specifications of God's remnant people, and the preacher who through ignorance or fear neglects to deal with this subject is not performing his full duty as an ambassador of the kingdom of God and must meet the consequences of his negligence, cowardice, or disloyalty. The sword of the destroying angel hangs threateningly over the heads of unfaithful watchmen who refuse to blow the trumpet of warning at the command of God. The blood of deceived and lost souls will be required of the hands of the spiritual sentinels who thus fail their Lord. See Eze. 33: 1-9.

THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

27

Terrible Warning. Rev. 14:9-12. This is "the most awful threatening the Bible contains," (Bengel). No other message ever threatened such terrible judgments upon the rejecters. The sin of rejecting the third angel's message is unpardonable. It is the sin against the Holy Spirit because the message finishes its mission under the latter rain of spiritual power during which time it swells into the loud cry. The whole earth is illuminated with the glory of God, and with compelling force the final plea is given for God's people to come out of spiritual Babylon with its prevailing iniquity and idolatry. To reject this heaven-sent message under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit is a sin that is unforgivable. Is it any wonder that it is followed by the unmingled wrath of an insulted and offended God?

Counter Proclamation. The third angel's message is a counter proclamation to that of the false prophet and the image of the beast. The counterfeit to the gospel message demands that the inhabitants of the earth obey and thus worship the beast under threat of the wrath of man and the penalty of death. The message of God warns against this creature or false worship and calls upon all men throughout the world to worship the Creator. The heaven-sent message of warning also threatens terrible judgments including the wrath of God and the sentence of eternal death. Those who receive the seal of heaven's approval and the mark of allegiance to the divine government, must face the threat of persecution and death from earthly nations under the domination of the beast and the false prophet. Those who receive the mark of apostasy and rebellion must face the vengeance and judgments of God which will be fully meted out to the rejecters of His love and mercy. None can escape the responsibility of making a decision between these two antagonistic world-messages. Upon that decision depends the eternal destiny of all mankind.

Warning Against Apostasy. Verses 9-11 are the negative phase of the third angel's message. The first angel's message calls upon the inhabitants of the earth to worship the Creator and give Him glory, because the glory and honor due Him are being given to another. The third angel identifies the object of creature-worship or idolatry and tells what the terrible consequences will be. In Rom. 1:25 idolatry is defined as exchanging the truth of God for a lie and worshiping and serving the creature rather than the Creator. See R.V. While the apostasy is world-embracing, involving "all that dwell upon the earth" "both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," the message of God nevertheless is an appeal to the individual. "If any man" places the responsibility where it belongs. Our responsibility to God is personal and no national law or international decree can relieve us of being free moral agents with the right and duty to choose for ourselves. We cannot escape the responsibility of deciding whom we will serve and worship, or excuse ourselves on the basis of the popularity and universality of false worship. The argument that we should obey the laws of the land and follow prevailing customs will not clear us in the judgment. "Follow not a multitude to do evil," is timely counsel for Christians.

The Objects of Worship. The warning of the third angel is against the worship of the beast and his image. We have already found that the beast under the dominion of the seventh head is the papacy. The image is apostate

Protestantism under the union of church and state. A warning against the beast under its successive heads has always been the negative phase of the gospel message, for the beast has been in existence ever since the revolt of Lucifer and the entrance of sin. In its broadest sense the beast represents the rulership of Satan in all ages and through all earthly powers. The image of the beast on the other hand is a last day organization and is not yet fully formed. The third angel's message was therefore never applicable before. It is meat in due season to those only who face the final crisis. The third angel's message cannot be fully understood or preached till the wounded head of the beast is fully restored and the image of the beast is fully formed. The same class worship both the beast and the image, for the same false and counterfeit religious institution is observed and enforced by both. The victors in this conflict are pictured in Rev. 15:2,3. Those who sing the song of triumph over this prevailing idolatry live through the entire crisis and are translated. They cannot therefore include any who died before the image was fully formed and the crisis reached. This false worship is not yet being enforced by law.

The Sign of False Worship. The beast has a mark or sign which constitutes the evidence of worship and allegiance. Receiving this mark in the forehead or hand is the outward sign of the counterfeit religion. This mark is the counterpart to the seal, sign or mark of God which those have who accept and proclaim His warning message. See Rev. 7:2,3; 14:1. The Sabbath is the seal of God and the emblem of true worship. It is the evidence that those who observe it are worshipers of the Creator. They demonstrate their allegiance by observing the memorial of creation. On the other hand the observance of the false Sabbath is the outward sign of false worship. It is the mark of allegiance to the beast and his image. One Sabbath is the flag of loyalty to the government of God, and the other is the flag of rebellion and apostasy.

Sign of Character. The Sabbath is not only the sign of true worship; it is also the sign of the character of God. It is the sign of sanctification or redemption. It is the outward evidence of a godly character, for those who have the seal of God have also the name of God. On the other hand in the last great crisis the observance of Sunday will be the outward sign of the character of the beast, or of Satan. There are just two outstanding characters in this world to pattern after, and all are being molded after the similitude of one or the other. None can really receive the mark of God till they have the character of God. Also no person can be said to have the mark of the beast till they have the character of the beast, for both marks are signs of character. The mark, name, and number of the beast are inseparable. See Rev. 13:17. "The character of the beast," (Douay). "The mark, even the name of the beast," (R.V.). "The mark--either the name of the Wild Beast or the number which his name represents" (Weymouth). In our text the mark of the beast is called "the mark of his name," and name stands for character. All therefore who worship the beast and his image "receive his character" (Douay). The judgments of God are visited upon ungodly characters rather than upon evil men. The sentence of eternal death is against sin, and those who refuse to separate from sin will have to suffer the consequences of their folly.

Name and Number. Victory over the beast includes victory over "the number of his name" (15:2). "The number which his name represents" (Weymouth). "The name and number are one and the same" (Robertson). In Rev. 13:18 the

number of the beast is declared to be 666 and is said to be "the number of a man." "The number indicates a man's name" (20th C.N.T.). The name of the beast or the man at the head of the beast power is represented by the number 666 and that name and number indicate his character. "These ominous numbers describe primarily the character, and only subordinately the name, of the beast referred to" (Milligan). Both the name, and the number which represents the name, indicate self-exaltation which is the chief characteristic of the satanic spirit. Satan, the great Antichrist, has ever sought to exalt himself to the place of God. See Isa. 14:12-14; 2 Thess. 2:3,4. Through the exaltation of any of his human agents to the place of God, Satan himself is thereby deified and worshiped. Against this satanic spirit of creature worship the final heaven-sent message gives its warning, and over it God's people must gain complete victory. All who accept the three angels' messages receive the character of God of which the Sabbath is the outward sign or mark. Those who reject this warning receive the character of Satan, of which Sunday observance is the outward sign or mark. When the two characters are fully developed, the significance of the two marks will be more fully comprehended. Then the third angel's message will be given with compelling power.

Marked Characters. Since both marks are indications of character, it is evident that neither can be impressed until the two types of character are fully developed. Character development is a gradual process. "Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold, and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth,--these are receiving the heavenly mold, and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth, and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity" (Vol. 5:216). Not until the character is fixed does a sinner receive the mark of the beast, or a righteous person the seal of God. We cannot, therefore, say that either mark or stamp is yet impressed. This is doubtless because the full spiritual significance of either the seal of God or the mark of the beast will not be fully understood until the crisis arrives and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain brings the perfect day of spiritual revelation. Then the Sabbath will be proclaimed "more fully" (E.W. 85), and "the unrolling of the scroll" of prophecy will give us a fuller knowledge of the mark of the beast. See Vol. 8:159.

Unmixed Wrath. Verses 10,11. "The wine of the wrath of God" has often been poured out in judgments upon men and nations throughout the history of the reign of sin, but in most cases it has been mingled with mercy in order that "the inhabitants of the world" might "learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9,10). But because the worshipers of the beast and his image have partaken of the poisonous and intoxicating wine of Babylon's spiritual fornication, they must drink to the bitter dregs "the cup of the wine of the fierceness of" "the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation." See Rev. 14:8-10; 16:19. "For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and He poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them." Ps. 75:8. "Shall drain and drink them" (Jewish Version). "He pours it out to all the wicked to drink and drain it to the dregs" (Moffatt). See also Jer. 25:15-17. Wine is usually diluted with water, but this is unmixed and of full strength.

It is the undiluted and concentrated wrath of an insulted God whose love and grace have been spurned and outraged. Jesus drank to its bitter dregs the cup of woe and sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary in order that guilty man could escape the cup of His wrath against sin in which there will be no element of mercy. Undiluted wrath in the Greek indicates "boiling indignation" with no drop of water to cool its heat.

No Eternal Torment. The Bible is its own interpreter and a careful examination of all the texts on the subject of the final doom of the impenitent proves conclusively that while the wicked will suffer eternal death and therefore eternal punishment, they will not live on in endless conscious torment in an ever-burning hell. Therefore, the text under consideration cannot teach this terrible doctrine which is an indictment on the character of God. The Scriptures do not contradict themselves. When the statements of the various prophets on any subject are put together and studied without the interference of preconceived opinions or man-made creeds, there will be seen a beautiful harmony. We are definitely told that after the wicked drink to the dregs the cup of God's wrath "they shall be as though they had not been." See Obadiah 15,16. "As you did then, so it is done to you: your deeds recoil on your own head. Yes, the day of the Eternal is at hand, with doom for all the nations. You on my sacred hill have drunk the cup, and so shall every nation drink it at My hand, drink it and stagger and vanish" (Moffatt). There can be no question but this is the same event described in our text. See also Ps. 37:9-11,20; Nah. 1:9,10; Mal. 4:1-3. The wicked will literally be brought to "ashes" and will become a part of the earth which the saints inherit and on which their feet shall tread throughout the unending ages of eternity. This will be the fate even of Satan "the root" of all evil. The divine decree is: "I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth....and never shalt thou be any more." See Eze. 28: 18,19. The strongest statements possible are used to make plain the complete annihilation of the wicked. God's original plan will be carried out, and eventually every creature in the universe will join in praising God without a discordant note. See Rev. 5:13.

A Timely Comment. In commenting on Rev. 14:10,11, Rev. Conway in Pulpit Commentary declares this text to be "the only passage that seems to teach everlasting suffering," but that "the conscience revolts against" such teaching, and that "insistence upon it has generated more unbelief and atheism than perhaps any other cause whatsoever." The margin of the R.V. says, "for ages of ages" instead of "for ever and ever," and this is the meaning in the Greek. Rev. Conway in Pulpit Commentary says of this text: "It does not affirm the absolute endlessness of the punishment. Since the word 'age' has a plural, it plainly is not necessarily infinite. For no such word could have a plural. Infinity cannot ever be doubled much less multiplied indefinitely. Further, no finite multiple of a finite term can possibly reach infinity. So to affirm the absolute unendingness of this punishment would be to go beyond the text." Those who use the term "for ever" in this text to mean eternity face the embarrassing situation of being compelled to teach that "for ever and ever" means two eternities which would be impossible. It is passing strange that the very persons who claim that the book of Revelation is too highly figurative and symbolic to be understood, attempt to use it to establish the unreasonable and unscriptural doctrine of eternal conscious torment.

Scriptural Meaning. The meaning of "forever" and kindred terms as used in the Scriptures shows clearly that their meaning must be determined by the duration of life. When applied to God and the future life of the redeemed, "forever" means eternity because with them life will never end. But with the wicked forever can only mean as long as they live, or until their lives are extinct in the lake of fire after they have received the punishment due them "according to their works." In Ex. 21:6 a servant is said to serve his master "for ever" which can only mean as long as he lives. Hannah declared that when the boy Samuel was weaned she would "bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever." After she had fulfilled this vow which she had made because Samuel had been given in answer to prayer, she said: "Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." See 1 Sam. 1:22,28. Jonah declared that he was in the belly of the fish "for ever" and yet the period of his submarine journey was only three days. See Jonah 2:6. In Jude 7 we are told that Sodom and Gomorrha suffered "the vengeance of eternal fire" and "are set forth for an example" of the final destruction of the wicked. We are told that the fire that destroyed these two wicked cities turned them "in ashes. . .making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly" (2 Peter 2:6). Thus the Bible interprets the meaning of its own language. How beautifully harmonious are its teachings when Scripture is compared with Scripture.

The Messengers. Verse 12. "Here is opportunity for endurance on the part of God's people who carefully keep His commandments and the faith of Jesus!" (Weymouth). It is evident that these are the same people described in Rev. 13:10 as having had to face captivity and the sword at the hands of the beast. "Steadfastness" is the marginal reading in the R.V. "Here is the endurance of the saints" (Concordant). The words "patience" "endurance" and "steadfastness" indicate that those who proclaim the threefold message will pass through a period of persecution that will test their patience and faith to the utmost. They will maintain their loyalty in the face of the roar of the dragon and the wrath of Satan. Their obedience to the commandments of God as the result of the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ makes them the special objects of satanic hatred and wrath. See Rev. 12:17. It is through the faith of Jesus that we obtain righteousness, and righteousness is obedience to the divine law when it is written in the heart. See Isa. 51:7; Rom. 1:16,17; 3:21,22; 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10-12. Webster defines righteousness as "purity of heart and rectitude of life; conformity of heart and life to divine law." This conformity to the character of God is possible only through the faith of Jesus. See Rom. 9:30-32; 10:2,3.

Core of Gospel. The imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ received by faith is the very essence and core of the "everlasting gospel" of all ages. It is the positive phase of the last message to mankind as pictured in Rev. 14 by the three symbolic angels. Justification and righteousness by faith "is the third angel's message in verity" (C.O.R. 80). The message of righteousness by faith is "the third angel's message, in clear, distinct lines. . . which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in large measure" (T.M. 91-98). Paul declared that the purpose of the gospel is to reveal the "righteousness of God" which is received by faith, and that God will "finish His work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon

the earth." See Rom. 1:16,17; 9:28. There can be no question but this last text refers to the finishing of the gospel work under the message of the three angels of Rev. 14, together with that of Rev. 18:1-5. "The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel." (Vol. 6:19). "The very foundation of Christianity is Christ our righteousness."--Vol. 5:725.

The Good News. Gospel means "good news" and there is no good news in a mere warning against apostasy and its terrible consequences. Such a message is not the gospel at all. The purpose of the gospel is to save from sin and to reproduce the character or image of God. Unless the positive phase of the everlasting gospel is given a prominent place in the third angel's message, it will utterly fail of its purpose. The negative phase cannot be neglected and the message be complete. The two must be properly balanced and when they are the earth will be lightened with the glory of God and every honest-hearted soul will respond to the call to come out of Babylon into the only ark of safety during the coming deluge of avenging fire. In this rebel world it has always required patience to obey God. Obedience is the sign of heavenly citizenship which arouses the enmity of Satan. He hates righteousness and those who possess it. Victory over sin or lawlessness makes Satan furiously angry. Sin is the infraction of divine law, while the punishment for sin is God's defense of law. To obey the beast instead of God is a terrible infraction of the law of God and hence the awful judgments to uphold and defend the divine administration. Those who reject the tender and loving appeals of the Lamb of God will some day cry out in anguish to the rocks and mountains, saying, "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?" Rev. 6:14-17. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." Prov. 18:10.

THE HARVESTS OF TRUE AND FALSE WORSHIP

28

The Blessed Dead. Rev. 14:13. The command to "write" is given twelve times in the Apocalypse and always just before an important announcement of special interest and value to the church. The voice from heaven is doubtless that of Christ, the Author of the book and the One whom it reveals. Through His own death and resurrection Christ made possible the resurrection and future life of His people. His death also was the means by which death itself will eventually be destroyed with the death of its author, Satan. See Heb. 2:14,15; 1 Cor. 15:26; 2 Tim. 1:10. The experience through which Jesus passed qualified Him to pronounce a blessing upon "the dead who die in the Lord" (R.V.), or "who die in union with the Lord" (20th C.N.T.). This divinely appointed blessing upon the righteous dead is "a new Beatitude which needed a voice from heaven to proclaim. (Swete).

Message of the Spirit. The reason for the divine blessing is given by the Holy Spirit who is the co-Author of the book. Christ speaks through His Representative and Vicegerent, the Holy Spirit, and the message of one is also the message of the other. This twofold announcement that brings such comfort in times of bereavement comes from the second and third members of the Godhead who are the Two Witnesses of the Father, and the Two Comforters of man. One reason for the blessing is that they will have part in the first resurrection. See 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:6. This privilege, of course, will be given to all the righteous dead of all ages. Those who die in faith during the closing crisis under the third angel's message will have the additional privilege of being called forth in the special resurrection which immediately precedes and is really a part of the first general resurrection. See Dan. 12:2. These blessed dead "rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Their reward of sweet "rest" is in contrast to those who "have no rest day nor night" because they have rejected God's last warning message and worshiped the beast and his image instead of the Creator. There is no peace or rest for the wicked. See Isa. 57:20,21. The promise of rest from labor indicates that those here described have been especially zealous in missionary activity during the campaigns of the church militant against the dragon, beast, and false prophet. Their warfare is over. They died triumphantly on the battlefield and peacefully rest in their graves awaiting the call of the Lifegiver on the resurrection morning. See Dan. 12:13.

Comfort to the Persecuted. This verse is a sort of parenthetical message thrown in at an appropriate time and place to console those who face the alternative of death or the worship of the beast and his image. It is a heaven-sent message to encourage faithfulness "even unto death." The promise doubtless applies especially from the time when the worship of the beast is enforced by law with the sentence of death as the penalty for disobedience. The language of our text may indicate that the blessed dead, or at least part of them, are martyrs to their faith in the closing crisis. They are included in the angelic description of the victors over the dragon as given in Rev. 12:11: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Their example of obedience and loyalty to God even in the face of persecution and death lives on after they are dead. Even though they are dead and their voices silenced, the influence of their godly lives, like that of Abel the first martyr, "yet speaketh" to those who live.

"The following of the works indicates that there is to be a reward." (Bengel). But this reward cannot be determined until they cease speaking or bearing testimony through the godly example they set while living.

Time of Blessing. The special blessing on the righteous dead applies at a definite time. It is "from henceforth," or "from this hour" (20th C.N.T.), or "from this time onward" (Weymouth). From what time or hour does the promise apply? Is it from "the hour of His judgment" mentioned in verse 7 when the threefold message began? If so it is doubtless because of the special resurrection in which those who die in faith during the time of the proclamation of the third angel's message have a part. See E.W. 285. Or does the promised blessing apply from the time of the beginning of the latter rain and the bitter persecution that begins at the same time? Then Satan will be "furiously angry" with the remnant and will wage a fierce warfare against them even attempting to have them put to death. Doubtless many will suffer martyrdom. "It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who will be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended" (Vol. 9:16). Are the dead in Christ blessed because they do not have to live through the time of trouble and wrath which God's prophets of past ages prayed to be delivered from by being hidden in the grave? See Job. 14:13; Isa. 26:19-21.

The Glorious Dead. The glorious dead in the estimation of the world are too often the great war heroes who achieved fame through bloodshed and slaughter. To their memory great monuments and memorials have been erected and dedicated. Even "the unknown soldier" has been glorified the world around. But the truly glorious dead are those who "die in the Lord" and who are called "the dead in Christ" even though they rest in unknown and unmarked graves. The most beautiful and expensive tombstones and monuments are not generally found over the graves of the saints. They do not need them. Their characters erected for them memorials far more beautiful and enduring. In the light of Scripture there is a great difference between those who die in the Lord and those who die in their sins. Death ends our probation and therefore fixes our characters and destiny for weal or woe; for eternal life or eternal death. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." Eccl. 11:3. The death of the righteous is not a calamity; it is a triumph. It brings to an end the warfare against sin and gives assurance of an eternal reward. Therefore, "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Ps. 116:15). The ambition to die the death of the righteous is a worthy goal. Said the ancient prophet, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Num. 23:10. But such a death can be experienced only by those who during life know the power of Christ's resurrection. See Phil. 3:10. Resurrection from spiritual death must precede resurrection from physical death in those who receive the benediction of the two Comforters.

The Royal Reaper. Verse 14. Christ is declared to be the "Sower" and "the Lord of the harvest" (Matt. 13:37; 9:38). Jesus said that "the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels" (Matt. 13:39). He said that in the end of the world the tares would be gathered "and burned in the fire." The harvest is the time of separation and rewarding. Christ came at the time of the first advent for the purpose of sowing the seeds of gospel truth. The second advent is the reaping time when He gathers the fruits of His labors into His garner. Long has the great Husbandman

waited "for the precious fruit of the earth" and at last the harvest time comes. The second advent of Christ immediately follows the proclamation of the threefold message symbolized by the three angels. This indicates that this message constitutes God's last appeal to the human family. No other message will follow it or take its place. It will eventually end in triumph and only those who maintain their loyalty to it will triumph with it. The golden crown gives evidence of both royalty and victory. Christ has defeated His foes and has become King. He is the King of kings; the Sovereign of the righteous He comes to gather into His kingdom. He is their King; they are His citizens. The bright or white cloud is "a familiar object in the Mediterranean lands" (Robertson). It is the cloud of shining angels that composes the celestial chariot. See Isa. 19:1; Ps. 104: 3,4; 68:17,18.

Two Phases of Harvest. There are two phases of the reaping of a harvest. The first is the gathering of the grain into bundles, and the second is the separation of the wheat from the straw or chaff so that the former can be garnered and the latter burned. Our text describes the latter phase of the gospel harvest which takes place after the close of probation. The gathering of the righteous into bundles or companies takes place before the close of probation and is accomplished by the gospel message. The threefold message described in this chapter, especially under the latter rain of spiritual power, will firmly unite and securely bind in bundles and seal for the kingdom of heaven all who accept and help proclaim it to the world. See E. W. 88,89,118. "The sharp sickle" in the hand of the great Reaper indicates that the harvest field is white in readiness for the reaping. The sickle is "sharp" in preparation for a quick work. This symbolic and prophetic picture describes chiefly the garnering of the living harvest which the three angels' messages had gathered into bundles and sealed for the kingdom, first the firstfruits, and then the "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," who have come "out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:9-14). The sitting posture of the Son of Man may indicate a work of judgment or separation. In the time of the harvest the final separation is made between the wheat and the tares, the righteous and the wicked. See Matt. 13:41-43; 25:31-34.

Growth in Righteousness Complete. Verses 15,16. When Christ comes to gather His people the harvest "is fully ripe" (R.V.). "Is over ripe" (Weymouth). "The harvest of the earth is ripe and ready" (Moffatt). The harvest has reached the limit of development. The saints have reached maturity in spiritual growth and character development. It indicates that both the early and the latter rains have fallen and accomplished their mission of bringing the spiritual harvest to perfection. It also indicates that the reaping is done at the last hour; that there had been a delay but that further delay would be impossible. Perfect ripeness calls for action. The time of harvest depends not so much upon a fixed date as upon the fulfillment of a fixed purpose,--the ripeness of the grain. "But when the harvest is ripe, immediately he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come." Mark 4:29. This same principle will determine the time of the final gospel harvest which has been long delayed because righteousness has been slow in reaching full maturity in God's remnant people. Our greatest need is the refreshing showers of the early and latter rain to bring the spiritual harvest to perfection. See T.M. 506-508. The great Reaper will gather no half-ripe or partially developed characters into His heavenly garner. All must have the imputed and imparted righteousness or character of Christ.

Another Harvest. Verses 17-19. See also Joel 3:13,14. This harvest is also "fully ripe." It is fully ripe for punishment and destruction. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on "all flesh" ripens both harvests. The same rain that causes the wheat to grow and mature to perfection for the sickle, also develops the tares for the devouring fire. The rejection of the threefold message under the power of the latter rain brings to maturity the harvest of sin and rebellion. Sin reaches its climax in the wicked at the same time that godliness develops to perfection in the saints. Then the line of demarcation between saints and sinners will be clear and distinct and Mal. 3:18 will be fulfilled. Swete calls this second reaper of the second harvest "the Angel of vengeance." He further declares that "there is a delicate beauty in the assignment of the Ingathering of the Vintage to an angel, while the Son of Man Himself reaps the wheat harvest." Instead of "tares," "wild grapes" are used in this symbolic parable to represent the wicked. See Isa. 5:1-7.

Results of Two World Messages. The two harvests are prepared for the reaping by the two world messages which gather the inhabitants of the earth into two groups. The message of God as symbolized by the three angels gathers the righteous into groups or bundles for the heavenly garner. The message of Satan through the beast and false prophet gathers the wicked into bundles for the lake of fire. The gathering of the wicked to the worship of the beast and his image is represented by the gathering of vultures to a carcass. See Matt. 24:24,28. "There will the vultures flock together" (Weymouth). "Wherever the corpse may be, there will the vultures be gathered" (Concordant). Very soon after a beast dies in the Orient between twenty and fifty vultures gather to the carcass which becomes their habitation until it is consumed. In the same way fallen Babylon "is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (18:2). Those who accept the threefold message are gathered to Christ, and those who accept the message of the beast and false prophet are gathered to the Antichrist. There will be only two classes when Christ returns.

The Altar Angel. Verse 18. The angel from the altar had power over fire, the symbol of judgment. This is doubtless the same angel described in Rev. 8:3-5. It is Christ who commands that the harvest of the wicked be gathered and "cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God." In the parable of the wheat and tares it is Christ who sends His angels to gather the tares for the furnace of fire. See Matt. 13:38-42. Satan sows the seeds of error and unbelief that produces the great harvest of tares and wild grapes, but divine agencies wield the sickle and gather and cast them into the fire and winepress of God's wrath and vengeance. This also is a "sharp sickle" that cuts clean and leaves no gleanings. When the harvest is over the field will be cleansed from every tare and wild grape. "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Ps. 37: 10,11.

The Winepress of Wrath. Verses 19,20. See also Rev. 16:19; Isa. 63:1-4. The image of treading the grapes in a winepress is a familiar one in Palestine. The grapes are placed in a vat and the juice is pressed out by men treading them with their feet. Often several men run about in the vat singing and shouting as they tread the grapes, the wine or blood of which stains their

garments. In Rev. 19:11-15 Christ is described at His second advent as being "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood" because "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Never before has such divine wrath and indignation followed a heaven-sent message. Under the rulership and worship of the beast, rebellion against heaven ripens into its fullest and most God-defying fruitage. "That day shall find wickedness and confederation in iniquity ripened to the full. The very prince of hell shall then have incorporated himself personally in the government of the world, speaking through its heads, dictating its religion and its laws, controlling its trade, enforcing the worship of himself as God, cutting off the heads of those who dissent, filling the world with the worst of blasphemies, and compelling all that would live to receive the mark of allegiance to him."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 2, p. 264.

Without the City. The winepress of God's wrath is trodden "without the city." What city is meant? Is it spiritual Babylon mentioned in verse 8 and called "that great city"? Or does it refer to the city of Jerusalem outside of which the great battle of Armageddon will be fought? See Zech. 14:3,4, 9,10. Speaking of the valley of Megiddo near Jerusalem, Dr. Seiss says: "That has ever been one of God's great battlegrounds for the judging of the armies of the wicked. There Jabin's hosts, with their 900 chariots of iron, were utterly overwhelmed by Jehovah's special interference. There the Midianites, and Amalekites, and children of the East were routed before Gideon's 300 men with pitchers and lamps. There Samson triumphed with his crude instruments over the might of the Philistines. There the ruddy son of Jesse met and slew the great Goliath, and opened a breach of destruction upon those who defied Israel's God. And it is but fitting that there should be the seat of the winepress for the final crushing out of the mightier Jabin and Goliath of the last evil days."--Id. Vol. 3, p. 50. Our text may also include the battle of Gog and Magog outside the New Jerusalem at the close of the millennium when the wicked of all ages are cast into the lake of fire to be destroyed. See Zech. 14:4,5,12,13; Rev. 20: 7-9. Of course, the literal winepresses were always located in the vineyards "without the city."

A Great Slaughter. "Bozrah" is named by Isaiah as the place where Christ treads the winepress alone and stains His garments with the blood of His foes. See Isa. 34:6-8; 63:1-4. Bozrah is on the southeast of the plains of Esdraelon, and Megiddo on the northwest. The distance between them is 1600 stadia, here translated "furlongs." A furlong is about an eighth of a mile. 1600 furlongs would be 200 miles. "For a distance of 200 miles" (Weymouth). This is about the length of Palestine from Dan to Beersheba. It is just 200 miles from Megiddo to Bozra in Edom with Jerusalem and the valley of Jehoshaphat about the middle. Jerusalem and its vicinity will be the center of the battlefield of Armageddon. Doubtless the entire area will be covered with armed men in deadly combat. In Isa. 34:1-3 is a description of this great slaughter when so many are slain that "the mountains shall be melted with their blood." In Gen. 49:11 wine is called "the blood of grapes." The winepress of the wrath of God produces a deluge of real blood that reaches "even unto the horse bridles." This may have reference to the horses described in Rev. 19:11-16 where Christ is pictured riding a white horse followed by the armies of heaven also mounted upon white horses. Christ, the leader of the heavenly cavalry, is said to be clothed with garments dipped in blood and He comes with His symbolic horses and horsemen to tread the winepress of the wrath of God. This identifies our text with the second advent of Christ.

Lakes of Blood. On many of the battlefields of the past there have been pools or lakes of blood of varying size and depth. Dr. Adam Clarke quotes the Jews as saying that "When Hadrian besieged the city called Bitter, he slew so many that the horses waded in blood up to their mouths." It is said that during the battle of Mukden between the Russians and Japanese there were pools of blood that reached to the knees of the fighting soldiers, and in which some of the wounded were drowned. Gibbon tells of the slaughter of 200,000 Christians by order of the patriarch of Alexandria when "the soldiers waded to their knees in blood." See Gibbon's Roman Empire, Vol. 4, chap. 47, p. 169. Dr. Seiss wrote in comment on our text: "When the Romans destroyed Jerusalem so great was the bloodshed that Josephus says the whole city ran down with blood to such a degree that the fires of many of the houses were quenched by it. When Sylla took Athens, Plutarch says the blood that was shed in the market-place alone covered all the ceramicus as far as Dipylus, and some testify that it ran through the gates and overflowed the suburbs."--The Apocalypse, Vol. 3, p. 56. Since the great battles of the past have been small in comparison with the bloody battle of Armageddon, perhaps the language of our text is not altogether figurative. It is estimated that Justinian sacrificed 20,000,000 men on the altar of Mars, the god of war, during his military campaigns, and the number slaughtered during the first World War was more than 40,000,000. The final world war will involve all nations and on the last great battlefield, the Waterloo of the Ages, the slaughter will be indescribable. At the second advent of Christ most of the two billions of people living on the earth will be slain, and the number destroyed in the lake of fire at the close of the millennium will probably reach forty or fifty billions. Their blood would produce a lake or deluge of large proportions. Whether literal or symbolic, the description is that of an awful slaughter. Is it any wonder that Christ is pictured emerging from the conflict with garments sprinkled with or dipped in blood? To eradicate sin requires a bloody operation but when it is over "affliction shall not rise up the second time."

THE VICTOR'S SONGS OF TRIUMPH

29

Introductory Vision. Chapter 15 is the shortest in the Apocalypse. It is an introductory vision giving a brief summary of a larger vision embracing chapters 16 to 20, in which is described the judgments of God upon a rebel world because of its allegiance to the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, the satanic triumvirate that dominates the earth and receives the worship of mankind. This chapter is the prologue to the most terrible scene of the apocalyptic drama. The visions of the book are about to close and the final picture is that of the wrath of God upon a world that has sinned away its day of grace, followed by a new heavens and a new earth which emerge from the ruins of the old. The long and dreadful night of sin is the darkest just before the dawn of eternal day. The world laden with iniquity dies in terrible convulsions that a new world may be born "wherein dwelleth righteousness." We should rejoice that,

> "The groans of nature in this nether world,
> Which heaven has heard for ages, have an end."

The Plague Angels. Rev. 15:1. This is said to be "another sign in heaven, great and marvelous," indicating that symbols are employed. Just as angels in the previous chapter symbolized heaven-sent messages carried to the world by the people of God, so angels are used to represent the series of divine judgments that are to be visited upon those who reject the everlasting gospel in its application to the last days and the final crisis. The angels of wrath follow the angels of love and mercy. Offered mercy before threatened judgments has always been the divine program. That was true in regard to the judgments of God upon the antediluvian world, Sodom and Gomorrha, and Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. The final judgments are called "the seven last plagues" because there are no others to follow. They fill up and finish the wrath of God against sin. There have been many before but these are the consummation. "The final cycle of such visitations; the last, because, as the Seer hastens to explain, they complete the physical manifestations of the Divine wrath." (Swete).

Completed Wrath. Seven is the symbol of completeness and perfection. The seven last plagues therefore include all the judgments of God that will be poured out after the close of probation. They must therefore include the final destruction of the wicked. In the seven last plagues "is filled up the wrath of God." The language indicates that these judgments bring an end to sin and the wrath of God against it. Other translations emphasize this thought: "Which are the last for in them is finished the wrath of God" (R.V.). "Because with them the wrath of God is ended" (20th C.N.T.). "Because by them the wrath of God was to be completed" (Emphatic Diaglott). "Seeing that in them God's fury is consummated" (Concordant). Since the wrath of God is not fully satisfied till sin and sinners are destroyed forever, the seven last plagues must include the doom of all the ungodly in the lake of fire at the close of the millennium. The day of vengeance and indignation reaches from the close of probation to the final destruction of the wicked. Then and not before will the wrath of God be finished. "The number seven seems particularly appropriate here for finality and completeness" (Robertson). See Isa. 26:20,21; Zeph. 3:8.

The Victors. Verses 2,3. Before proceeding to describe the seven last plagues, Christ, through the angel of prophecy, interjects a brief preliminary vision for the comfort and encouragement of the exiled prophet and especially for the Christian warriors who engage in the closing struggle. Before the terrible judgments are revealed and described, there comes another break in the apocalyptic gloom. The eyes of the prophet are uplifted to behold the final triumph of the church. The Bible contains many of these cheering vistas to brighten the hope of the soldiers of the cross. This is especially true of the last book of Scripture. "In the darkest days of her long conflict with evil, the church of God has been given revelations of the eternal purpose of Jehovah. His people have been permitted to look beyond the trials of the present to the triumphs of the future, when, the warfare having been accomplished, the redeemed will enter into possession of the Promised Land. These visions of future glory, scenes pictured by the hand of God, should be dear to His church today, when the controversy of the ages is rapidly closing, and the promised blessings are soon to be realized in all their fulness."--Prophets and Kings, p. 722. This was the secret of the victory of Christ as He passed through the experience of Gethsemane and Calvary. See Heb. 12:2. "What sustained the Son of God in His betrayal and trial?--He saw the travail of His soul, and was satisfied. He caught a view of the expanse of eternity, and saw the happiness of those who through His humiliation should receive pardon and everlasting life. . .His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb" (Vol. X 8:43,44). This is the very scene described in our text. The same vision will sustain the remnant during their final conflict with the powers of evil. Their victory is foretold and is therefore certain.

The Translated. Those who sing the songs of Moses and the Lamb must have gone entirely through the final conflict because they have gotten the victory over both the beast and his image, as well as the character of the beast, the sign of that character, and the number which represents his character. The image of the beast is not yet fully formed and will not be until near the close of probation. It cannot be said that victory is gained over the image of the beast till it exists and begins to enforce obedience by civil law, nor can victory over the mark of the beast be gained until the character of the beast is fully developed and the mark of the beast is stamped upon those who refuse to receive the seal of God. Only those who live through the closing crisis to the very end can possibly get complete victory over the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, and the mark and number of their satanic characters and counterfeit religions. Our text therefore pictures the living, translated gospel harvest, gathered from all nations as the result of the threefold message of the previous chapter. We have already learned that the "sea of glass" is the pavement of the temple of God on Mount Zion.

Triumph Expressed in Song. Music is the language of thoughts that are too deep for words. Mere words are not adequate to express the joyful animations of hearts thrilled with the joys of eternal victory and everlasting life. "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" are the mediums of expression when the heart makes melody unto the Lord. See Eph. 5:19; James 5:13. The song of Moses and the song of the Lamb are evidently two different songs but when sung together they blend into one. "The notes are distinct though they form a harmony" (Swete). "When the earthly warfare is accomplished, and the saints are all gathered home, our first theme will be the song of

Moses, the servant of God. The second theme will be the song of the Lamb, the song of grace and redemption. This song will be louder, loftier, and in more sublime strains, echoing and reechoing through the heavenly courts. . . .The church history upon the earth, and the church redeemed in heaven, all center around the cross of Calvary. This is the theme, this is the song,--Christ all and in all,--in anthems of praise resounding through heaven from thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand and an innumerable company of the redeemed host. All unite in this song of Moses and the Lamb. It is a new song for it was never before heard in heaven." (T.M. 433). The "innumerable company" must be the same as the "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" who "came out of great tribulation" and "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," as described in Rev. 7:9-14. It is a description of both the firstfruits and the general harvest gathered by the three angels' messages out of "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

Origin and Meaning. The song of Moses was composed by Moses and sung by ancient Israel on the shores of the Red Sea just following their glorious deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, the sentence of death, and the judgments of God upon their enemies. See Exodus 14,15. The song of deliverance is recorded in Ex. 15:1-12. Verses 13-18 are prophetic of the results of this victory on the wicked of other nations, and verses 19-22 are the sequel to the song. The victory of Israel over the dragon, working through the kingdom of Egypt, the first universal empire and the first of the seven heads of the dragon and beast, was complete and final. Those who sang the song of Moses had just passed through the plagues in which God poured out His wrath upon the Egyptians. They had escaped these awful judgments through their faith in the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the door posts, the sign of the cross of Calvary. They faced the sentence of death at the Red Sea and were delivered by faith. See Heb. 11:29. They also witnessed the execution of the divine sentence of death upon their enemies. In the song of Moses all glory is given "unto the Lord; for He hath triumphed gloriously." They took no glory to themselves whatever. It must be very evident that no person sang or could sing the song of Moses except those who passed through the experiences that it was composed and sung to commemorate.

Repeated by Remnant. It must also be evident that the experiences of ancient Israel in their deliverance from the dragon power of Egypt are very similar to those of God's remnant people who pass through the final crisis and are delivered from the dragon power of the beast and his image. That the exodus of ancient Israel from Egyptian bondage and their journey through the wilderness to the promised land of the earthly Canaan, is typical of and therefore parallel to the exodus of modern Israel from the darkness and bondage of spiritual Egypt and Babylon and their journey through the wilderness of sin to the promised heavenly Canaan, is evident to all careful Bible students. See 1 Cor. 10:1-11. Is it any wonder that God's remnant people who live through the closing crisis repeat the song of Moses on the sea of glass in the kingdom of glory? A careful study of the song of Moses will indicate its appropriateness to the last great deliverance. "That song does not belong to the Jewish people alone. It points forward to the destruction of all the foes of righteousness, and the final victory of the Israel of God."--Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 289. "Too little, far too little is the thought practically entertained, that there is to be

another exodus of triumphant Israelites from a darker Egypt, a mightier Pharaoh, a deeper Red Sea."--Revelation, the Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy, Stevens, p. 256.

Must Live Through Crisis. In order to repeat the song of Moses, God's remnant people must go all the way through the antitype of their deliverance. They must live through the seven last plagues and escape them. They must also face the sentence of death with no human possibility of escape when suddenly they are gloriously delivered by divine intervention. Then "standing on the sea of glass," or "standing by the sea of glass" (R.V.), and "having the harps of God," they celebrate their triumph by singing the song of Moses, which ancient Israel sang beside the Red Sea to the accompaniment of timbrel music. Again all glory is given to God for deliverance from the sentence of death and redemption through the blood of the Lamb. "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously" is the opening sentence of the song. With a few minor changes in names, place and method of punishment, the song of Moses will be just as appropriate for those who are delivered from the last great crisis. See Ex. 15:2,6,7,9-13.

Song of the Lamb. The song of the Lamb is the song of Calvary. It is sung to celebrate victory and deliverance through faith in the blood of Christ, "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." The song of Moses is one of triumph over outward foes, while the song of the Lamb celebrates victory over sin in the flesh; over inherited and cultivated tendencies to evil; over the sin-nature. This cleansing from sin was typified in the sprinkled blood of the lamb on the door posts of the Israelites in connection with their midnight deliverance in Egypt. The song of the Lamb was doubtless composed by Christ to celebrate His Calvary victory, and to be sung by those who obtain victory through His blood. It is probably called "the song of the Lamb," not so much because Christ is the Author, but because He is the theme. The Apocalypse is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," first of all because He is the chief subject of the book, and only secondarily because He is the Author. Only those who live through the final crisis and are divinely delivered from all inward sins and outward foes can sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb combined in one mighty and triumphant anthem of praise or oratorio of salvation. While all of the "great multitude" saved out of the last generation can sing this twofold anthem, none can sing it with the meaning and enthusiasm of the 144,000 because it is a song of experience, and none others of the redeemed pass through just such an experience as they pass through. Their experience qualifies them to sing the combined songs with an interpretation more meaningful than others can possibly give it.

All Glory to God. Verses 3,4. These words doubtless express the sentiment and substance of the two songs. All glory is ascribed to the "King of saints." See margin. "The King of Ages" (R.V.). "The King Eternal" (20th C.N.T.). "O King of Nations" (Weymouth). "Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations?" is a question asked in Jer. 10:7. These terms are all applicable to Christ as well as the Father. The celebrating singers acknowledge that all His ways are just and true, and that He alone is holy. They sing of the works and holiness of God rather than their own. They have gotten complete victory over the Laodicean attitude of boasting and self-glory. They take no credit whatever for their characters or accomplishments. "None but God can subdue the pride of man's heart. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot regenerate ourselves. In the heavenly courts there will be no song sung, To me that loved myself, and washed myself,

redeemed myself, unto me be glory and honor, blessing and praise. But this is the keynote of the song that is sung by many here in this world" (T.M. 456).

Justice Acknowledged. The singers not only acknowledge that God has been just and true in all His dealings with them, but they also predict that even the wicked nations will eventually bow before the Lord in acknowledgement of His supreme sovereignty over them, and the justice of His dealings with them. "Because the righteousness of all that thou hast done has been made manifest" (Weymouth). This will meet its most complete fulfillment at the close of the millennium as the wicked nations are gathered around the New Jerusalem. Just before the wicked suffer the second death in the lake of fire they will all acknowledge that their punishment is deserved and just. Then "every knee" will bow, and "every tongue" confess "that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:9-11. All doubts will then have been removed from every mind and all puzzling questions answered. The Lord's conduct in His dealings with sin and sinners through all the ages will be fully vindicated by both saints and sinners and the loyal universe approves and worships. At last God's "righteous acts have been made manifest" (R.V.) so that they are understood and appreciated. It takes time to vindicate a righteous cause but right always triumphs gloriously in the end, and those who stand for truth triumph with it.

The Temple Opened. Verses 5-7. This is the same opening of the temple pictured in Rev. 11:19. It takes place at the close of probation when the seven plague-angels are given their vials and commissioned to pour them out on the wicked world. The seven judgment angels are clothed in the garments of priests because they come out of the temple where the priestly ministration of Christ has so long been in progress and they pour out an oblation of wrath to the offended holiness and justice of God. These "seven golden vials" are not filled with "much incense" representing the "prayers of all saints" as pictured in Rev. 8:3,4. The censer is now "filled with fire" representing the judgments of God beginning with the close of probation. See Rev. 8:5. Thus the seven golden bowls are "full of the wrath of God." Seven is the symbol of completeness and therefore represents the full measure of the wrath divine. The seven plague angels are "arrayed with precious stones" (R.V.). "They were adorned with precious stones pure and bright" (20th C.N.T.). Thus was Lucifer arrayed when he ministered before the throne of God in his cherubim glory. See Eze. 28:13.

Intercession Ceases. Verse 8. Smoke is often used in Scripture as symbolic of the glory of God. See Ex. 19:16-18; 40:34,35; 1 Kings 8:10,11; Isa. 6:1-4. It is also used to represent His wrath and indignation. See Ps. 18:7,8. The smoke may be from the censer that has been filled with fire instead of incense when probation closes and the plagues begin to fall. None of the seven last plagues can be poured out till after the priestly mediation of Christ is finished. The glory and power of God represent His matchless character and boundless resources which constitute the two grounds for fear on the part of His enemies. "The gods of heathendom are dead or never were alive, and their wrath has no terrors for Christians; the Living God is to be feared indeed" (Swete). Our text indicates that the services of the temple of God cease while the wrath of God falls upon the despisers of His love and grace. There is no longer a mediator between God and man and the righteous living must live through the seven last plagues without an intercessor. They are able to do this because they have become victors over sin before the close of probation and have been fitted for the experience through the perfecting work of the latter rain.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

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The Angels of Wrath. Rev. 15:1; 16:1. The seven plague angels were commissioned to their work of destruction by "a great voice out of the temple," or "a loud voice from the Sanctuary" (Weymouth). This is doubtless the voice of Christ who had commissioned the angels to gather the two harvests; one for the garner of God, and the other for the winepress of His wrath. By royal decree the angels of wrath and death go forth from the heavenly temple to accomplish their terrible mission. The messengers of love and mercy are followed by the messengers of wrath and death. Thus it has ever been in the history of God's dealings with men. The rejection of the message of Noah by the antediluvians resulted in the Deluge. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha mocked Lot and spurned his warning and raining fire and brimstone was their reward.

The Jewish Nation. Because the Jews rejected their own Messiah and spurned His message and sent Him to the cross, they were cut off from being His chosen people. Christ told them that because they knew not the time of their visitation, their house would be left desolate. When Pilate attempted to wash his hands of the blood of Christ, the Jews assumed the responsibility of His death with the cry, "His blood be on us and on our children." Their prayer has been fully answered. When Titus surrounded Jerusalem at the time of the Passover in A.D. 70, the most terrible siege in all history took place, when, according to Josephus, women ate their own children in fulfillment of the prophecy of Deut. 28:48-68. Josephus estimates that there were 3,000,000 Jews in Jerusalem when the siege began, with a food supply sufficient for only a few days.

Awful Slaughter. The number of Jews killed by the sword and famine during this memorable siege has been placed at 1,100,000. Many thousands who attempted to escape from the city were captured and crucified until there was a forest of crosses around Jerusalem as a warning to its inhabitants. "They were scourged and tortured, and finally crucified, in full sight of the city. Sometimes as many as five hundred of these miserable beings were caught in a night and were seen in the morning writhing on crosses before the walls. The Roman soldiers, adding insult to cruelty, nailed the bodies in every variety of position to the wood. At length the number of victims was so great that space was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies. Unconsciously the Romans in their cruelty were the instruments of a dreadful retribution. The city which had crucified its Messiah was surrounded with the crucified bodies of its citizens."--From Exile to Overthrow, John W. Mears, pp. 434,435. The fate of Jerusalem is a type of the final destruction of the wicked world.

The Last Warning. God's last warning message to the world embraces the accumulated light of all previous ages. In proportion to the light revealed and rejected will be the divine retribution. Those who hear the threefold message described in Rev. 14:6-12 will be held more responsible than the people of any previous generation. Jesus declared that in the judgment it would be more tolerable for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha than for the generation that heard His message. Likewise it will be more tolerable for the Jews who rejected Christ than for those who reject His last message to mankind under the power of the Holy Spirit during the latter rain. The judgments on the city and nation of the Jews were mingled with mercy to the

individual, but those to be visited upon modern Babylon will have no element of mercy because the offer of mercy has been spurned and the messengers mocked and persecuted. Under this rejection foul sin ripens to its utmost vileness and must therefore meet its final and eternal doom.

Angry With Sin. God's anger is a righteous indignation against sin rather than the sinner. Sin must be destroyed utterly, but this cannot be done without destroying the sinners in whom sin abides and flourishes. Sin can exist only in creatures who are free moral agents responsible for their conduct, and together they must live and die. All who persist in maintaining their union with sin and its author must suffer the consequences of their folly. To reject God's final warning and deliberately worship the beast and his image is a sin of presumption and high-handed rebellion that cannot be lightly overlooked. Only a bloody operation can remove the cancer of sin and save the world from utter ruin. There is no other way.

The Seven Plagues. Plagues are not confined to disease epidemics, but include any great disaster more or less universal in its extent. Webster defines plagues as: "Calamities, severe troubles or vexations; embarrassments." Just as unfortunate circumstances cause persons to become plagued or embarrassed, so national or world calamities constitute plagues or embarrassments. Thus the calamities that befell the Egyptians because they refused to let Israel depart from bondage are called plagues. These events greatly vexed and embarrassed Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Appeals to their gods were fruitless in stopping the judgments or protecting themselves from them. All of God's judgments are similar as indicated by the apparent relation between the ten plagues of Egypt, the seven trumpets, and the seven last plagues. The trumpet-plagues were only tentative chastisements, while the seven last plagues are punitive and final. The Egyptian plagues were especially typical of the seven last. It is the belief of the rabbins that "whatsoever plagues God inflicted on the Egyptians in former times, He will inflict on the enemies of His people in later times."--Rabbi Tanchum in "Schoetgen." The one is typical of the other just as the exodus of literal Israel from Egypt is typical of the exodus of spiritual Israel from Babylon in the last days. It is for this reason that deliverance in both instances is celebrated by the singing of the song of Moses.

Seven Last Plagues. These plagues will be the "last" because there will be none to follow them. There have been many before but in these "is filled up the wrath of God." With them the indignation of a righteous God against sin and sinners is "completed" or "finished." The language also indicates that they will be preceded by other plagues or calamities that will be mixed with mercy so that "the inhabitants of the land will learn righteousness." There were ten plagues that fell in Egypt. The first three were universal including the land of Goshen, while the seven last fell on the Egyptians only. We are not told how many plagues will visit the world as judgments from God in the last days, but the seven last will fall upon the wicked only. To the righteous the promise is: "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." See Psalm 91. The two World Wars were plagues, as was also the influenza epidemic. War, pestilence, famine, and earthquake plagues are predicted as signs of the coming of Christ. See Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:10,11,25-28. That which distinguishes the seven last plagues from those that precede them is that they follow the close of probation when there is no longer a mediator before the mercy seat. They cannot fall till Christ ceases to be Priest and

becomes King. See Dan. 12:1,2. They follow the divine decree recorded in Rev. 22:11,12. Not until fire takes the place of incense in the golden censer in the hand of Christ do these terrible judgments fall upon those whose characters are stamped with the mark of rebellion.

The First Plague. Verse 2. "An evil and malignant ulcer" (Emphatic Diaglott). A malignant sore or ulcer is one that is dangerous to life; one that is virulent. "Loathsome and painful sores" (20th C.N.T.). "Noisome and painful ulcers" (Moffatt). These running sores produce great pain and are loathsome and nauseating to the sight and smell. They are similar to the sixth plague of Egypt which was "a boil breaking out with blains" or blisters. See Ex. 9:8-12. It was called "the botch of Egypt" and "a sore botch that cannot be healed." See Deut. 28:27,35. "Jehovah will smite thee with the boil of Egypt, and with emerods, and with the scurvy, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed." "Jehovah will smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore boil, whereof thou canst not be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the crown of thy head" (R.V.). Some believe this plague to have been on the order of elephantiasis, the black leprosy, or syphilis. Syphilis is already the most dreadful scourge of the modern immoral and licentious world, and it seems appropriate that the first plague of the seven last falls on those in modern harlot Babylon who are guilty of spiritual fornication should be the terrible disease that comes as the result of physical uncleanness. This loathsome and malignant sore will doubtless be syphilis in its most noisome and virulent form. ?

Blow at Idolatry. The plagues of Egypt were directed at idolatry or creature worship, and they revealed the Creator as the only true God. See Ex. 12:12. "The Lord would give the Egyptians an opportunity to see how vain was the wisdom of their mighty men, how feeble the power of their gods, when opposed to the commands of Jehovah. He would punish the people of Egypt for their idolatry, and silence their boasting of the blessings received from their senseless deities."--Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 263. Each plague was directed against one or more of the many gods of the Egyptians and was designed by the Lord to destroy their confidence in the power and protection of their deities, and to reveal to them the true God under whose power and control was even the creature-objects of their worship. See Num. 33:4. The seven last plagues are likewise directed against the idolatry of the last generation. Ours is an age of creature worship; of the boasted wisdom of mighty men who perform scientific marvels through the realm of modern science. It is the age of nature worship and the exaltation of the creature above the Creator. The seven last plagues demonstrate that the things men worship are false gods. The very first manifestation of the wrath of God falls upon the rejectors of the last message who defiantly continue to worship the beast and his image and have in their foreheads the sign of a satanic character. The worshipers of the beast and the false prophet receive the full force of the very first plague indicating that they are guilty of the most grievous sin of the last generation.

The Plagues of Blood. Verses 3,4. "Like the blood of a corpse" (20th C.N.T.). It is "the picture of a murdered man weltering in his blood" (Swete). These two plagues are similar to the first of the ten plagues of Egypt. See Ex. 7:19-25. The great river of Egypt was worshiped as "the Nile god" and was identified with Ammon. It was also known as "the Father of all the gods." The very life of the nation depended upon the Nile with its yearly

overflow. Even many of the creatures that lived in its waters were considered sacred and were worshiped as gods. The plagues demonstrated that all of the blessings brought by the Nile came from the Creator who was the God of the Israelites, and that He could withdraw them at His pleasure. The very life of the modern world depends on the seas, rivers, streams, and fountains of waters. In this commercial age of greed and selfishness men fail to recognize that the temporal blessings of life are gifts from the Creator to be continued on condition of obedience. See Deut. 11:13,14. In His love and mercy the Lord has not withheld the blessings of nature from the unjust and even His enemies. See Matt. 5:48. But when mercy has made her last plea and departed never to return, judgments without mercy will cut off the blessings by which life is sustained. There will be no further purpose in showing any favors to the wicked who have defied and insulted God and spurned every effort to help them.

Terrible Judgments. Moffatt declares that the "coagulated blood" becomes "fatal to animal life." The death of the creatures of the sea with the stench of their decaying carcasses strewn along the shore will produce conditions that are indescribable. All of these plagues cannot be universal and none of them of long duration or they would destroy the entire wicked race. "These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have ever been known to mortals. All the judgments upon men, prior to the close of probation, have been mingled with mercy. But in the final judgments, wrath is poured out unmixed with mercy."--The Great Controversy, pp. 628,629. Since the idolatry of creature-worship is the sin of the last generation, it is upon the creatures that the judgments of the seven last plagues fall. They are divine visitations upon false gods in order to reveal the Creator as the only true and living God who merits obedience and worship.

Righteous Judgments. Verses 5-7. "Why the waters are turned to blood is explained by two voices which the Seer overhears" (Swete). We are inclined to think that these judgments are too severe and cruel, but it is because we cannot see them from heaven's viewpoint. The angels, whose ability to love is far greater than ours can possibly be, fully approve of them. They are in a far better position to judge than are we. Wisdom demands that we withhold judgment till we reach the kingdom and get a vision of sin and rebellion from the viewpoint of celestial beings. Then the redeemed will join the unfallen universe in unanimously approving of God's dealings with sin and sinners. See Rev. 15:3,4; 19:1,2. When the blackness of sin is fully realized, the righteousness of God's judgments will be manifest to all His creatures. Sin is the transgression of the divine law, and God's judgments against sin and sinners are just, "because of the righteous law which these judgments manifest" (Boyd Carpenter). The seven last plagues are a divine vindication of the law that defines sin and righteousness and by which the world will be judged.

Judgments Deserved. The Golden Rule is the Decalogue in action. It is the golden principle of righteousness in life and conduct, and is therefore eternal and unchangeable. But the same rule also applies in the converse. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," is the Golden Rule stated in the reverse, and this also is an eternal principle of righteousness. The history of men and nations demonstrates

the rigidity of this rule and the certainty with which it operates. Men may deny the existence of God and refuse allegiance to His government, but they cannot deny the operation of His self-acting laws of recompense "according to their works." Addressing God, the angel of the waters, who was doubtless the third plague-angel, declared, "Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they deserve it" (Concordant). It is said that when Tomyris, queen of the Scythians, vanquished her enemy, Cyrus, she cut off his head and threw it into a vessel of blood, saying: "Satisfy thyself with blood, for which thou hast thirsted; and for which thy desire has been insatiable."--Justin, History, lib. 1, C.8. The wicked upon whom these plagues are poured have thirsted for the blood of the righteous and decreed their death. Their thirst for blood will be fully satisfied when the very water that sustains their life is turned to blood. See Isa. 49:26. Then the cry of the blood of martyrs for vengeance will be fully answered. See Rev. 6:10.

The Fourth Plague. Verses 8,9. "Men were severely burned" according to Weymouth's translation. "Men were scorched with intense heat" (20th C.N.T.). The sun has been the chief object of worship throughout all pagan history because of the temporal blessings its light and heat bring to the world. Sun-worship is becoming more and more popular in modern times even in Christian lands as indicated by nudist and other cults and by Easter sunrise services which are almost an exact counterpart to the pagan services in ancient Babylon in honor of Easter or Astarte, the goddess of spring. It is doubtless the heat of the sun during the fourth plague that produces the terrible drought and famine pictured in Joel 1:15-20. This will be the climax of a series of droughts and famines of increasing severity that will constitute harbingers of the coming judgments. The cutting off of the water and food supply of the wicked will convince them that their boycott against the righteous has not only failed but that the tables have turned and they are being punished for their persecution of God's people. Under this fourth judgment the very source of the temporal blessings of life is transformed into an agency of fearful torture and destruction. But those who had refused to give glory to God before, continue their stubborn resistance even after the falsity of their own religious system has been revealed, "and they repented not to give Him glory." "In repentance the most essential thing is to give glory to God. Man must at once shut his mouth, and even lay his hand upon it; but God receives the glory. Where, however, man does not yield, but stands out in a spirit of proud and hardened defiance, there also God does not yield; and in such a conflict man must come far short; he must even be consumed" (Bengal).

Purpose of Message. The very purpose of the last gospel message is to persuade men to give glory to the Creator rather than the creature, with the threat of the judgments of God upon those who refuse to obey. See Rev. 14:6-12. Now the falling judgments demonstrate that heaven had exhausted its resources in attempting to save them and nothing more could be done. "The moral effect of this visitation was doubly disastrous; men blasphemed God as the cause of their sufferings, and they withheld from Him the tribute of penitence which He demanded" (Swete). During these plagues which destroy the water and food supply of the world, the righteous will be provided with both bread and water. See Isa. 33:14-16. They will also be protected from the scorching rays of the sun as were the children of Israel during their wilderness journey. See Isa. 4:5,6. That the righteous who

live through the time of the outpouring of God's wrath will experience some of the effects of these plagues is evident from Rev. 7:16,17. Many today are rejecting God's last warning message for fear that their means of making a living will be interfered with if they obey the law and observe the Sabbath that commemorates creation. During the plagues those who have obeyed the Lord regardless of the cost will make the best living. It is a poor living that leaves out eternal life. Those who consider it embarrassing now to be loyal to the Creator will find it very embarrassing then because they did not obey His message. Those who are far-sighted and broad-minded will choose some inconveniences now in order to be protected then.

The Fifth Plague. Verses 10,11. "The throne of the beast" (R.V.). The results of the previous plagues are mental anguish as well as physical suffering. These verses show that all of the plagues fall upon the worshipers of the beast and with special force upon the officials of the beast power. So great is their bodily and mental anguish that they gnaw "their tongues for pain." The throne of Satan's earthly kingdom under the seventh head is at the Vatican in Rome. The headquarters of the papal kingdom that had so long kept millions in spiritual darkness will be visited with a darkness so dense and terrible that it will be painfully felt, as was the darkness during one of the plagues of Egypt. The same power that caused unnumbered millions of martyrs to gnaw their tongues for pain on the rack and the stake, now receive the terrible penalty meted out by the eternal law of justice and retribution. They are judged as they judged. What they gave to others comes back upon their own heads. In this terrible punishment the sores of the first plague will play an important role. These noisome ulcers doubtless continue to prey upon the wicked till all the plagues are finished.

The Papal Kingdom. The tongues of the papal leaders have spoken blasphemies against God, His name, His sanctuary, and His truth, and now because of physical and mental anguish they punish their own tongues. They gnaw their tongues for pain and remorse. The fifth vial falls with telling force upon the ruling class of the papal power and especially on the pretended successor of the apostles who rules in royal splendor and extravagance in his kingly palace on the banks of the Tiber. Rome, the center of the world's intrigue, duplicity, pride, pretense, arrogance, craft, and hypocrisy, will have filled to her double the cup of suffering and sorrow she had filled for others to drink. The robber and despoiler of nations will be robbed of her glory and despoiled. The question, "Who is able to make war with him?" will then be fully answered. "And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." Those who worshiped the beast will find that the beast cannot protect them, for the very object of their worship is also smitten. We must not forget that the purpose of the seven last plagues, like those of Egypt, is to expose the sin of creature worship and to prove to all that the Creator is the true and only God. The plagues will cause every knee to bow and every tongue to confess the true God whom the persecuted saints have worshiped "even unto death."

The Sixth Plague. Rev. 16:12-16. Among the ancient nations, rivers were important barriers of defense against attack and invasion. The Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates, constituted the boundary lines of the Roman Empire and the barriers at which the legions of the Caesars held back their enemies for centuries. The Euphrates served as the boundary between peoples and nations for millenniums. In the purpose of God it was to be the eastern border and defense for the nation of Israel. See Gen. 15:18; Deut. 11:24; Josh. 1:4. The Euphrates River is one of the great rivers of earth. It is 1,800 miles long, between 200 and 500 yards wide, and from 10 to 30 feet deep. It is navigable for 1,200 miles and is fordable by camel in only a few places during low water. This great river constituted one of the greatest military problems of invading armies among the ancient nations. The drying up of its channel by artificial means was the secret of the success of Cyrus in his conquest of the city of Babylon. See Isa. 44:27,28; 45:1,2. The terrible drought produced by the scorching heat of the sun during the fourth plague will cause the streams and rivers to be dried up and even the mighty rivers including the Euphrates will be greatly diminished. Of this time we read in Joel 1:20: "For the rivers of waters are dried up." The River Euphrates will therefore be literally dried up, at least partially, just before the battle of Armageddon is fought. In view of the importance of this great river as a military barrier at the time the Apocalypse was written, it is not at all improbable that a literal application was intended. ?

Symbolic of Nation. Nations have ever been symbolized by the chief river on which their very existence depended. Egypt and the Nile, and Babylon and the Euphrates, were inseparable. "In 5,000 years of Mesopotamian history, nothing is so obvious as the dependence of the great ruling powers on their irrigation system. Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Turks stand or fall by their power to control the rivers, and the same problems beset the British mandate today."--The National Geographic Magazine, January, 1930. Since the 14th century the Ottoman Turks have controlled Asia Minor and the Euphrates valley until part of it was wrested from them during the World War. The upper Euphrates still drains a large section of modern Turkey. The river could very appropriately be used to symbolize the Turkish power, and better still the power of the Moslems, the most dominant force in Western Asia.

The Moslem Barrier. The Euphrates valley has been held by the Moslems since the Saracens took possession of it in the seventh century. They have constituted the chief barrier of the nations in their attempts to gain possession of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. The ten Crusades failed to break through this barrier and gain permanent possession of their coveted prize. Every effort failed till during the World War when the western nations gained a foothold in the form of mandates. Regardless of foreign mandates the Moslems are still the dominant power in the social, political and religious life of the country. The Moslems still consider it their own land with but a temporary lease to foreign powers. They plan some day to regain possession. But a small turn in the fortunes of the European mandatory nations would quickly alter the entire situation. Whatever the barrier is, whether it be literal or symbolic, it must be in the region of the River Euphrates and its tributaries. Otherwise, the language would be meaningless. Reference to this same river in Rev. 9:13,14 has to do with a nation ?

in the vicinity of the river. The attempt to make this river symbolize a world-wide power with no reference to location is contrary to the rules of Biblical interpretation unless it is clearly so intended as in the case of Babylon as the symbol of the counterfeit system of Satan's religion.

The Oriental Nations. The drying up of the literal river Euphrates, or the political, military, or religious barrier symbolized by it, prepares the way for the coming of "the kings of the east" to the battlefield of Armageddon. "The kings that come from the sunrising" (R.V.). These are doubtless the Oriental nations. Japan is known as the nation of "the sun rising" or of "the rising sun," and on her banner is the likeness of the rising sun. Here again location is an important factor. These nations are to the east of the Euphrates and the territory symbolized by it or the power it represents, and they must pass this barrier to reach the place of battle. The removal or diminishing of this barrier also prepares the way for the coming of "the kings of the earth and of the whole world" (Verse 14). Whether this barrier be Turkey, the Moslems, or even England or any other power that stands in the way of the gathering of the nations to the environs of Jerusalem where the battle of Armageddon is fought and human history reaches its climax and end, makes but little difference. The location is the important factor which must not be overlooked or ignored. Before its removal the barrier nation is doubtless in possession of the gathering place of the nations that assemble from the four quarters of the earth.

The Unclean Spirits. Verse 13. "The mystery of iniquity" is the counterfeit of "the mystery of godliness," and this blasphemous antitrinity of satanic powers is in mocking contrast to the Godhead, or Divine Trinity. Here is clearly a reference to one of the plagues of Egypt of which the seven last plagues are antitypical. In September of each year myriads of frogs come out of the Nile and the swamps of Egypt. They are known as the Rana Mosaica which indicates the belief that they had their origin with the plague of loathsome frogs in the days of Moses. They crawl instead of hop and are foul, loathsome creatures that croak constantly. This illustration is employed by the Revelator to symbolize the "unclean" or "foul spirits" (20th C.N.T.), that gather the nations to the war of Armageddon. The demons that Jesus cast out of their helpless victims are often spoken of as "unclean spirits." Any influence that leads to sin and spiritual bondage is foul and unclean. The purpose of the gospel is to deliver from the power of Satan and to cleanse from sin and unrighteousness. The spirits of evil are also noisy. They are said to "peep and mutter" (Isa. 8:19). They croak their messages of hate and strife until the wicked of the earth follow their leadership to Armageddon and destruction. Satan is the great destroyer; the "Abaddon" and "Apollyon" of Rev. 9:11; the "son of perdition" or "destruction" of 2 Thess. 2:3. His angels are the sons of destruction, the war-lords of human history.

Spirits Identified. Verse 14. These symbolic frogs are declared to be "the spirits of devils," or "the spirits of demons" (R.V.). They are evil angels "sent forth into activity by the Dragon Trinity; they are the elect agents to awaken the world to the attempt to abolish God from the earth; and they are frog-like in that they come forth out of the pestiferous quagmires of the universe, do their work amid the world's evening shadows, and creep, and croak, and defile, and fill the ears of the nations with their noisy demonstrations, till they set all the kings and armies of the

whole earth in enthusiastic commotion for the final crushing out of the Lamb and all His powers. As in chapter 5, the seven spirits of Christ went forth into all the earth to make up and gather together into one holy fellowship the great congregation of the sanctified; so these spirits of hell go forth upon the kings and potentates of the world, to make up and gather together the grand army of the Devil's worshipers."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, p. 89. "Christ expelled unclean spirits, but His enemies sent them forth" (Swete).

Their Dwelling Place. These evil spirits come out of the trinity of apostate powers called the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, representing the three great religious divisions of Babylon; namely, Paganism, Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism. In verse 19 we are told that Babylon "was divided into three parts." The final message of God announces "with a strong voice" that "Babylon the great is fallen is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Rev. 18:1,2. The call is then given, "Come out of her My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (verse 5). This call is given before the close of probation and the falling of the plagues. It is very evident that the dragon, beast and false prophet constitute Babylon out of which come the spirits of devils to deceive the nations. Just as the Egyptians were deceived by the false miracles of the magicians, so the nations are to be deceived and led to their slaughter by the "lying spirits" of evil angels. While these "miracles" are performed by demons, they use human agents as their mediums. See Rev. 13:13,14; Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9-12. As out of Zion the angels and human messengers of the Lord go forth to gather the saints, so out of Babylon go forth the evil spirits and their human spokesmen to gather the wicked to that false worship that ends in ruin. These unclean spirits come"out of the mouth" of each of the three divisions of and the spokesmen for Babylon. The mouth represents the center of influence and power. It sends forth the words and messages that bless or curse the world; that save or condemn mankind. See James 3:10-12; Rev. 1:16; 9:17; 11:5; 12:15; 19:15,21. Our text shows that false teaching and lying deceptions will be the means of gathering the nations to their doom.

Close of Probation. Verse 15. The coming of Christ as quietly and unexpectedly as the visit of a thief in the night represents the close of probation. This verse is thrown in parenthetically to show when the spirits of devils will begin gathering the nations to Armageddon. They are already at work everywhere among the nations when Christ finishes His mediatorial work in the heavenly sanctuary. Then the restraining angels will release the winds of war and strife and the seventh trumpet will sound. See Rev. 7:1-4; 11:15. The seventh trumpet is the war of Armageddon. The close of probation releases the spirits of demons so that they have full control of the earth. During the falling of the first five plagues the spirits of devils are gathering the nations and they reach the place of Armageddon under the sixth. "The sixth Bowl does not open the campaign, but merely marshals the forces and places them on the battlefield" (Swete). "As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle" (Vol. 6:14).

Timely Counsel. "Blessed is the man who keeps awake and guards his raiment" (Weymouth). "Who is on watch and keeps his clothing at hand" (20th C.N.T.).

What is the raiment of those who are watching and waiting for the return of Christ? Rev. 19:7,8. The Jews had an officer called an overseer or prefect who made his rounds during the watches of the night and if he found any of the Levites sleeping at his post of duty he had the authority to beat him and burn or take away his priestly garments. His returning home without this sacred vestment was a sign to all of his unfaithfulness. A thief in the night usually caught the householder unclothed and often stole his clothing. For this reason he kept his clothing near at hand if not under his head. A sleeping person or church is without the robe of Christ's righteousness. See Isa. 52:1. "Watch--garments: two parts of an admonition that belong together and go together. For when about to go to sleep one lays aside his garments; but when awake he keeps them. Now, if something suddenly happens, such as the arrival of the Lord, one who is asleep does not readily get himself clothed; but he who is in a wakeful attitude is safe also in respect to his clothing" (Bengel).

A World War. Verses 14,16. "To gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty" (R.V.). Armageddon is a world war rather than a single battle. It gets its name, however, from the location and results of the last battle. A world military movement such as is described here could not take place without a series of battles preceding the last and decisive struggle. From the four points of the compass the nations are gathered by satanic influences to the place of slaughter. From the East comes the kings and nations of the Orient; from the West the nations of the Occident; from the North will come Russia and her northern allies; and from the South the black nations of the torrid zone. "From east and west and north and south they come." This struggle is also called the war or battle "of the great day of God, the Almighty." This is doubtless because it ends in the second advent of Christ which is often called "the day of God," or "the great day of His wrath." It is while the battle is in progress that Eze. 38:18-23 is fulfilled.

Armies of Heaven. It is at this time that the Lord leads forth the armies of heaven as pictured in Rev. 19:11-21. "The battle of Armageddon is soon to be fought. He on whose vesture is written the name KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS, is soon to lead forth the armies of heaven" (T.M. 405). The gathering of the nations to the battle of Armageddon will be Satan's crowning work of deception and his last attack against God and His government. "The wrath of Satan increases as his time grows short, and his work of deceit and destruction will reach its culmination in the time of trouble. Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects alike will be deceived." (G.C. 623,624). Armageddon is therefore primarily the last great battle in the long controversy between Christ and Satan over the supremacy of the world. See Zech. 14.

The Location. Verse 16. "And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Mageddon" (R.V.). It is the spirits of devils and not Christ who does the gathering. The kings and nations are gathered to "a place" or "the place," which indicates a definite location and cannot properly be interpreted as a mere symbol with no geographical significance. There are several Biblical descriptions of this final world war but they

indicate that it will culminate in Palestine in the center of the earth. See Isa. 34:1-8; Jer. 4:19-28; 25:30-33; Joel 3:2,9-15; Zeph. 1:14-18; Zech. 12:1-4,9; 14:1-13; Eze. 38:18-23. There are two things evident in these descriptions of the war of Armageddon. First it is a world war in which nations fight against each other resulting in terrible bloodshed. In the second place the final battle is in a definite location referred to as "the land of Israel," "Edom," "Bozrah," "the land of Idumea," "the valley of Jezreel," "the valley of Jehoshaphat," "Judah," and "Jerusalem." "The Mount of Olives" is also mentioned. All of these places are in Palestine and the vicinity. The word Armageddon comes from Megiddo which was the name of a small valley, hill and village in the plains of Esdraelon about fifty miles north of Jerusalem. The name is said to mean "to cut off," "to slay," or "to slaughter." It is "the place of slaughter," or "the Hill of slaughter" (Jackson).

Great Battlefield. This great battlefield seems to include most of Judea from Megiddo in Galilee to Bozrah in Edom with Jerusalem as the center. No other area of the earth's surface has experienced so much fighting and bloodshed as this meeting place of the nations at the center and crossroads of the earth. The Encyclopedia Americana speaks of Armageddon as "the great battlefield where occurred the chief conflicts of the Israelites and their enemies." On this battlefield Barack and Deborah defeated and slew the Canaanites with their 900 chariots of iron under the leadership of Sisera. Here also Gideon with 300 men won his great victory over the Midianites. At this place Saul was defeated and slain by the Philistines. Elijah put to death the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel and saved Israel from a terrible apostasy. King Josiah was slain and his army defeated by Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, in this same "valley of decision." It was the place of cutting off, of decision, of judgment. The fate of nations was often decided on this field of blood and place of slaughter.

The Logical Place. Palestine is the logical place for the last great struggle between Christ and Satan over the throne and dominion of this world. In this vicinity was the original Garden of Eden and the throne of Adam, the world's first prince and ruler. Here took place the first battle on earth in which Adam was defeated and Satan became "the prince of this world." The Lord called Abraham to this land from Ur of the Chaldees and promised it to him as an eternal inheritance. It was the place of David's throne which is called "the throne of the Lord," in Jer. 3:17. Palestine is in the midst of the three great continents of the Old World and is therefore called "the crossroads of the earth." It is for this reason that the Lord located Israel there that they might give the gospel to the whole world. He said of Jerusalem: "I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her" (Eze. 5:5). "In the midst of the land" (Eze. 38:12; "navel," mar.). Palestine was, because of its location, the meeting place of the ancient nations where they settled their differences with the sword. Many of the battles between the Egyptians and the Assyrians and Babylonians were fought in "the land of Israel." "The vale of Kishon and the region of Megiddo were inevitable battlefields. Through all history they retained that qualification. There many of the great contests of southwestern Asia have been decided. . .It was regarded as a predestined place of blood and strife."--Egypt in Asia, George Cormack, p. 83. It is both reasonable and appropriate that the two last great battles, Armageddon and Gog and Magog, be fought in this place of decision and slaughter. That the nations are now preparing for the war of Armageddon no thinking person can doubt. The present rumblings of war are the rumblings of Armageddon.

The Seventh Plague. Verses 17-21. "Into the air" indicates that the seventh and last plague will be as universal and world-embracing as the atmosphere itself. At three different times the pronouncement, "It is done," goes forth from the throne of God. The first is when probation closes and the work of salvation is completed. The second is when the seventh plague is poured out which finishes or fills up the wrath of God against sin and sinners. The third and last is after the wicked have been destroyed and the earth renewed to its Edenic glory and God's eternal purpose for the earth and man is finally realized after the long delay caused by the reign of sin. See Rev. 21:5. Of course, the dying cry of Christ on the cross, "It is finished," was of paramount importance and significance as it announced the completion of the plan of redemption. The announcement, "It is done," in connection with the seventh plague is accompanied by "voices, and thunders, and lightnings." "Fierce lightnings leap from the heavens, enveloping the earth in a sheet of flames. Above the terrific roar of thunder, voices, mysterious and awful, declare the doom of the wicked" (G.C. 638). "The air" is "the workshop of lightning and thunder" (Bengel), as well as the sphere of Satan's activity as "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2).

The Great Earthquake. This great earthquake takes place in connection with the return of Christ as is described in many other Scriptures. See Isa. 2:19-21; Jer. 4:24-27; Eze. 38:19,20; Hag. 2:6,7. It will be the climax of a series of earthquake shocks of increasing severity that will be harbingers of the day of God. Jesus declared that "great earthquakes" in "divers places" would be signs of His second advent. See Matt. 24:3-7; Luke 21:10,11,25-28. This quake that shakes the earth from pole to pole as Christ approaches the earth with His angelic host, will leave the cities of the earth in ruins and the whole land desolate. Everything will be shaken that can be shaken. See Heb. 12:25-27. Only those character-buildings that are founded on the Rock of Ages will remain unshaken. "Great Babylon" will feel the full force of the wrath of God. Her proud edifices will crash to the earth in the general ruin. In the seventh plague will be wrung out to her the bitter dregs of the cup of the fierceness of the wrath of God.

Earth Made Desolate. The seventh plague will leave the entire surface of the earth in a desolate and chaotic state called "the abyss" or "bottomless pit." The great earthquake causes mountains to be shaken down and islands to disappear beneath the waves of the sea. Islands are the tops of mountains that emerge above the waters. "The mountains shake like a reed in the wind, and ragged rocks are scattered on every side. There is a roar as of a coming tempest. The sea is lashed into fury. There is heard the shriek of the hurricane, like the voice of demons upon a mission of destruction. The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way. Mountain chains are sinking. Inhabited islands disappear. The seaports that have become like Sodom for wickedness, are swallowed up by the angry waters. Babylon the Great has come in remembrance before God, 'to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.' Great hailstones, every one 'about the weight of a talent,' are doing their work of destruction. The proudest cities of the earth are laid low" (G.C. 637).

Great Hailstones. The Jewish silver talent weighed about 115 pounds. The Egyptian and Greek talents weighed 86 pounds, and one used at Antioch 390 pounds. The lightest was the Attic talent weighing 57 pounds. These

hailstones would be larger than the large cakes of ice carried in ice trucks. Josephus declared that the stones thrown by the Roman catapults weighed a talent. The hailstones would strike with still greater force than the stones thrown into cities by engines of war. Hailstones constituted one of the weapons used by the Lord against Egypt, and again in the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites. It will be an important part of the artillery of heaven in the last great battle. See Job 38:22,23; Eze. 13:10-15. Accompanying the hail will be an electric storm similar to that with the plague in Egypt and in connection with the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. See Ex. 9:23-25; Ps. 77:16-19; Isa. 30:30.

Hailstones of the Past. In 1914 two missionaries reported hailstones in China weighing ten pounds each. Hailstones 17 inches in circumference or "as large as grapefruits" fell at Potter, Nebraska, July 6, 1928. They were very destructive. A hailstorm took place at Theodore, Saskatchewan, in 1930, when stones the size of grapefruits and larger fell and did great damage. They went through roofs, killed and wounded many cattle and other animals, and wounded many persons. One stone fell and buried itself in the earth. When dug up and weighed it was found to weigh 120 pounds. In February, 1936, hailstones as large as coconuts brought death to 26 natives near Settlers in Transvaal, South Africa. Is it any wonder that the earth is left in a chaotic state by this terrific storm and earthquake? See Eze. 38:18-23.

Like Musket-balls. The following account of a hailstorm at Constantinople and vicinity in October, 1831, was written by an eye-witness: "After an uncommonly sultry night, threatening clouds arose about six in the morning, and a noise, between thunder and tempest, and yet not to be compared to either, increased every moment, and the inhabitants of the capital, roused from their sleep, awaited with anxious expectation the issue of this threatened phenomenon. Their uncertainty was not of long duration; lumps of ice as large as a man's foot, falling singly, and then like a thick shower of stones, which destroyed everything with which they came in contact. The oldest persons do not remember ever to have seen such hailstones. Some were picked up half an hour afterward which weighed above a pound. This dreadful storm passed over Constantinople and along the Bosporus, over Therapia, Bojukden, and Belgrade; and the fairest, nay, the only hope of this beautiful and fertile tract, the vintage, just commenced, was destroyed in a day. Animals of all kinds, and even some persons, were killed, an innumerable number were wounded, and the damage done to houses was incalculable. The force of the falling masses of ice was so great that they broke to atoms all tiles on the roofs, and, like musket-balls, shattered planks." This gives us but a faint idea of the nature and results of the apocalyptic hailstorm of the seventh plague.

Protection Promised. Isa. 4:5,6. Just as the Lord protected the Israelites from the seven last of the ten plagues of Egypt, so will He protect His people from the seven last plagues that punish the wicked and desolate the earth just before modern Israel is delivered and taken to the heavenly Canaan. Those who have made the Lord their refuge and strength and His truth their "shield and buckler," will be provided "a place of refuge" and a covering "from storm and from rain." See Ps. 91. This psalm will be very precious to God's people who live through the time of the seven last plagues. They will be protected then because before probation closed they dwelt "in the secret place of the Most High," and abode "under the shadow of the Almighty."

THE MYSTERY OF BABYLON THE GREAT

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Seventh Plague. Rev. 16:17-19; 17:1,2,5. It is under the seventh and last plague that "great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." It is evident that Babylon is the chief object of God's wrath and for this reason four chapters are devoted to a detailed description of her history and final reward. Because of the intimate relationship between Babylon and the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, their careers and doom are pictured together. Babylon the Great is represented by two symbols. The first is that of a harlot queen, who, through her fornication controls and reigns over "the kings of the earth" and through her false doctrines intoxicates "the inhabitants of the earth." The second symbol is that of a city. "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Rev. 17:18. See also Rev. 14:8; 16:19.

World-Embracing Symbols. The language of this chapter indicates clearly that both the woman and the beast on which she sits as queen are world-embracing symbols. They cover the history of the reign of sin embracing all of the kings of the earth and the inhabitants of the world. In Rev. 18:24 we are told that Babylon has been responsible for the persecution and martyrdom "of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." All who reject Christ and His gospel and give their allegiance to Satan, the god and prince of this world, are included in the apostate system of religion divinely called Babylon the Great. Satan's religion is also called "the mystery of iniquity" which is the counterfeit of the gospel or "the mystery of godliness." One is the secret of an evil and sinful life, and the other of a pure and godly character. "By a variety of images the Lord Jesus represented to John the wicked character and seductive influence of those who have been distinguished for their persecution of God's people. All need wisdom carefully to search out the mystery of iniquity that figures so largely in the winding up of this world's history" (T.M. 118). While all in this chapter is not clearly understood, we are "to search out" the significance of its symbols. Light will be revealed to the diligent searcher for truth as it is needed by the remnant of God's people.

Rival Religions. The Apocalypse reveals two symbolic women representing two rival and antagonistic system of religion. The sun-clad woman of chapter 12 is symbolic of the church of Christ in all ages, and that of chapter 17 the church of Satan in all ages. "The sun-clad Woman is God's great symbol of the visible Church,--the Lamb's Wife. . .She is not the church of any one period or dispensation, but the entire Universal Church of all time, as Victorinus, the earliest commentator on this Book, held and affirmed, saying: 'The Woman clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, is the Church of the Patriarchs, and of the Prophets, and of the holy Apostles,'-- that is, the Church from the days of Adam and Eve on to the last victory over the worship, name, and mark, of the final Antichrist. What then can this rival Woman be but the organized Antichurch, the pseudo-church, the Bride of Satan, the universal body and congregation of false-believers and false-worshipers? As Christ has had a visible Church in all time, embodying the wisdom and spirit of heaven, and maintaining the confession of His truth and worship, so has the Devil had a corresponding following in all time, embodying the sensual and devilish wisdom and spirit,

and maintaining the profession and teaching of Satan's lies."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, pp. 112,113. It is a well known fact that all through the Scriptures a virgin or pure woman is used as the symbol of the true church and a fallen and impure woman the apostate church.

Purpose of Vision. Verse 1. The purpose of this vision is announced by one of the plague-angels which was doubtless the seventh. In a special sense the seventh and last plague is a manifestation of the unmingled wrath of God upon Babylon the Great. As chapter 15 constitutes a prologue or synopsis of the seven last plagues, so Rev. 16:17-21 is only a brief summary of the seventh plague which "fills up" or "completes" the wrath of God, the detailed description of which is given in the next four chapters. Our success in understanding these chapters depends upon our keeping in mind the purpose of the vision as announced by the plague-angel: "Come with me and I will show you the doom of the great Harlot" (Weymouth). "Come here and I will show you the sentence passed upon the Great Harlot who is seated at the meeting of many waters, and with whom all the kings of the earth have had licentious intercourse; while all who live upon the earth have been made drunk by the wine of her licentiousness" (20th C.N. T.). God's judgments begin with the close of probation. Not until then does He execute His righteous sentence against Babylon. The purpose of chapters 15-20 is to picture the wrath of God upon Babylon in her three great divisions, represented by the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, or Paganism, Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism.

The Great Harlot. Just as a virgin is the symbol of the gospel or the church of Christ (Jer. 6:2; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-9), so a harlot is symbolic of an apostate religion or the church of Satan (Isa. 1:21; Jer. 3:1,3,6-9; Eze. 16:32). The figure is very appropriate because fornication is a form of false affection which prostitutes the body to alien purposes. Likewise the alienation of the heart's affections and allegiance from Christ is a violation of the most sacred ties that bind a Christian to Him. Since the union between the Christian and his Master is represented by marriage, the breaking of that tie through apostasy is appropriately called spiritual fornication. Idolatry and false worship have always been designated harlotry. It includes every form of idolatry or creature worship. Even friendship with the world is called adultery in James 4:4. "Whoever is bent on being friendly with the world makes himself an enemy to God" (Weymouth).

Commentaries. Babylon "is called the great Whore because she is of spiritual character and guilty of spiritual infidelity and prostitution. This abominable spiritual conduct consists in co-partnership with the godless self-determined political powers of this ungodly, Satan-ruled world."--Revelation, the Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy, Stevens, p. 285. "Harlotry is the standing symbol in the word of God of a debauched worship, idolatry, and false devotion. When people worship for God what is not God, and give their hearts to idols, or institute systems, doctrines, rites, or administrations, to take the place of what God has revealed and appointed, the Scriptures call it whoredom, adultery, fornication. The reason is obvious. The breaking down of the divine laws and ordinances necessarily carries with it the dishonor of the marriage institution, and hence all supports of godly chastity and pureness. Accordingly all false religions are ever attended with lewdness, even in connection with their most sacred rites."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, p. 113.

Family of Harlots. Verse 5. "The mother of harlots and all idolatrous abominations upon the earth" (20th C.N.T.). Babylon is a family name which must include all the forms of false worship with which Satan has enslaved the human family and through which he has ruled the world. "The record is that she is herself the great original of all harlotries and abominations of the earth, that many others have sprung from her, and that all the harlotries of time have her for their primal representative and mother. The imagery, therefore, goes back to the beginnings, out of which all false systems, and false worships, and abominations of the earth have come."--Id. p. 115. While Babylon has three principal divisions, there have been thousands of subdivisions representing the smaller religious systems that have grown out of and are related to the original mother system that has existed down through the ages and has produced in each generation a brood of harlot daughters.

Origin in Babylon. After the Deluge, idolatry had its origin with Nimrod, the founder of the city and kingdom of Babylon. Alexander Hislop says that Nimrod was "the first of mortals that reigned and the first that offered idolatrous sacrifices." See Gen. 10:8-10. "Nimrod was a mighty rebel before the Lord, the mightiest rebel before the Lord that ever was in the earth" (The Targum of Jonathan). "The Arab records tell us that he was the first king, and thus the beginner of all kingcraft and tyranny which have since so much oppressed the world. It is said of him that he professed to have seen a golden crown in the sky, and he had one made like it, and that he put it on his own head, and thus claimed to rule in the name and as the earthly impersonation of the powers of the sky, either of Orion or the Sun."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, p. 117.

A Counterfeit System. The same writer says further concerning Nimrod: "Every intimation concerning him shows that he is the Heaven-defying founder of a new system of rule and worship, instituting a government by brute force and earthly wisdom and polity, and a religion which quite abolished the true God, and set men to the adoration of the sun, moon, and stars, impersonated in himself, wife, relatives, and chief consociates, and represented in the idol standards of his kingdom. . .It is a mistake to suppose that idolatry was the gradual growth of well-disposed but unenlightened human thinking. Its rise was sudden. It was conceived in intentional rebellion. It was the invention of a proud and tyrannous ambition at war with Jehovah's commands. It was brought into being to counteract the will and worship of the true and known God. It is the creature and handmaid of power for the deification of 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,' in the place of the Creator. And it originated with old Babylon, and Babylon's first king, the great rebel Nimrod." --Id. p. 119.

The Mother System. "It is also a fact that all the Pagan mythologies and idolatrous devotions the world over, whatever their diversities, show a oneness of character, and an underlying likeness which proves that they are from one original source, and but modifications of but one and the same primal invention, traceable to old Babylon and the Nimrodic plan to defeat the purposes of the God of Noah. . .Whatever changes or additions came, it still was old Babylon, which ever abides, potent through all the ages, and known to the judgment angels as 'Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth.'"--Id. p. 120. It is evident to students of ancient and modern pagan and false religions that they are all

related and had a common origin in the ancient city and kingdom of Babylon. There is also evidence to prove that this counterfeit system existed before and was the cause of the Deluge.

Name in Forehead. "Roman harlots wore a label with their names on their brows" (Robertson). See Seneca, Rhet. 1,2,7; Juvenal VI. 122f. "Probably not branded on the flesh, but tied as a label, as Roman harlots actually did wear their names" (The Cambridge Bible). This is doubtless a parody of the inscription, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" worn on the mitre of the High Priest (Ex. 28:36). The false priesthood of Babylon imitates the true priesthood of Jerusalem. Name is synonymous with character which is always stamped upon the mind so that it controls the whole being. The name or character of God is written in the foreheads of those who get the victory over Babylon and false worship. See Rev. 14:1; 22:4. In the forehead of false worshipers is also written the name that signifies apostasy and rebellion. See Jer. 3:3; Eze. 3:7,8. "Let us make us a name" was the declared purpose of the builders of the city and tower of Babel (Gen. 11:3,4). They did make a name that has come down through all human history as the symbol of apostasy and disobedience.

Salvation by Works. The city and religion of Babylon was built and established in disobedience to God's word. It was a monument to human works and self-glorification. See Gen. 11:1-4; Dan. 4:29,30. Idolatry is the exaltation of the creature above the Creator. The basis of all false religion is the exaltation and glorification of man and his works. "The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion; it had now become the principle of the Jewish religion. Satan had implanted this principle. Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin."--The Desire of Ages, p. 36. Because this counterfeit system had its origin after the flood in Babylon, that city and kingdom became a type of the false system of apostate religion known as "the mystery of iniquity" and designated in the Apocalypse as "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

A Persecuting Power. Verse 6. "The witnesses of Jesus" (R.V.). The "saints" and "martyrs" include both Old and New Testament times. It includes all who have been martyred for their faith from Abel down to the close of human history. See Rev. 18:24. Satan first established his false system of religion through Cain, the murderer of Abel, who built the first city, defied God, and "stood at the head of that great class of men who worship the god of this world" (P.P. 81). This system was reestablished after the Deluge by Nimrod, the mighty rebel. The spirit of persecution is one of the chief marks that identify the papacy as mother Babylon in its modern form. Summing up her persecutions through the centuries, H. Grattan Guinness, in his Key to the Apocalypse, says: "Under these maxims Rome has always acted. What a long roll of bloody persecutions is her record! The extirpation of the Albigenses, the massacre of the Waldenses, the martyrdoms of the Lollards, the slaughter of the Bohemians, the burning of Huss, Jerome, Savonarola, Frith, Ridley, Hooper, Tyndale, Cranmer, Latimer, and thousands of others as godly and faithful as they, have been her acts; the demoniacal cruelties of the Inquisition were invented by her mind and inflicted by her hand--that Inquisition which was for centuries the mighty instrument of her warfare against devoted men and women whose crime was only this, that they 'kept the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.'

"The ferocious cruelties of the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands; the bloody martyrdoms of Queen Mary's reign; the extinction by fire and sword of the Reformation in Spain and Italy, in Portugal and Poland; the massacre of St. Bartholomew; the long and cruel persecutions of the Huguenots, and all the infamies and barbarities of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which flung its refugees on every shore of Europe, were perpetrated by papal Rome. Her victims have been innumerable. In Spain alone Llorente reckons as the sufferers of the Inquisition 31,912 burnt alive, and 291,450 so-called penitents forced into submission 'by water, weights, fire, pulleys, and screws,' and 'all the apparatus by which the sinews could be strained without cracking, and the bones bruised without breaking, and the body racked exquisitely without giving up the ghost.' A million perished in the massacre of the Albigenses.

"In the thirty years which followed the first institution of the Jesuits nine hundred thousand faithful Christians were slain. Thirty-six thousand were dispatched by the common executioner in the Netherlands, by the direction of the Duke of Alva, who boasted of the deed. Fifty thousand Flemings and Germans were hanged, burnt, or buried alive under Charles V. And when we have added to this the bloodshed of the Thirty Years' War in Germany, and long agony of other and repeated massacres of Protestants in England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands, we have to remember that for all this 'no word of censure ever issued from the Vatican, except in the brief interval when statesmen and soldiers grew weary of bloodshed and looked for means to admit the heretics to grace.'

"In the light of these facts we maintain that the fulfillment of the prophecy uttered of old in Patmos is plainly evident. The prediction of the apostle as to its leading features was this: that 'a domineering power was to be established in the city of Rome, to corrupt the faith, to spread that corruption, to be distinguished by the display of gaudy splendors, to persecute the professors of the Christian faith, to intoxicate itself in the blood of persecution, to be supported by subservient kings, and to requite them for their homage with larger drafts of her cup of abominations.' We are justified in maintaining that the history of the Church of Rome has fulfilled every detail of the prophecy."--Pages 91-94.

The Thirst for Blood. "But more than this, more than by any other mark, we recognize papal Rome by the last, the more marvelous characteristic which is given us in the sacred prediction--her strange and terrible inebriation with the blood of saints and martyrs! Old heathen Rome persecuted for a brief period the early church, but papal Rome through long centuries has held the preeminence as the persecutor of those faithful to the teachings of the gospel of Christ. She has been all along in her essential and unalterable character a persecuting church. Persecution has occupied a prominent place in her doctrines, decrees, canons, excommunications, tribunals, trials, condemnations, imprisonments, executions, and exterminating wars. Centuries of persecuting action witness against her. Her laws for the persecution and extermination of heretics have increased in malignity from their first rise down to modern times. Plainly and openly she has declared herself to be a persecuting church. She has gloried in her intolerance. Her avowed doctrine is 'that heretics ought to be visited by the secular powers with temporal punishments, and even with death itself.' --Id. pages 89,90.

Modern Babylon. Mother Babylon with her family of harlot daughters continues to the end of the reign of sin when she receives the judgments of God whom she has so long defied. Mother Babylon in its modern form is the papal system of religion which is an exact counterpart to the ancient Babylonian system. It is the same pagan religion in a new dress. The papacy is "baptized paganism." After giving fourteen marks of identification showing that the symbolic woman of this chapter is in its present phase the papacy, Rev. Clemance said: "In the church of Rome, all the evils of spiritual whoredom are at their utmost height. In no other church in the world is there so much pomp and yet so much carnality. Her wine intoxicates. It is the glamor, the glitter, the pomp, the prestige that attend a church in her connection with the state, that lead men away into a deceptive admiration and even intoxicates them with thoughts of her magnificence and power" (Pulpit Commentary). The modern family of Babylon must include the various branches of apostate Protestantism, or corrupt, backslidden Christianity in all its forms.

An Amazing Power. Verse 6. "I was filled with utter astonishment" (Weymouth). "I was amazed beyond measure" (20th C.N.T.). In their final exhibition the harlot woman and the beast on which she rides will astonish the whole world. See verse 8. The world today is becoming amazed at the rapid recovery of the papacy from its deadly wound. See Rev. 13:3. "And the whole world was amazed and followed him" (Weymouth). The career of the papal power has evoked the amazement and admiration of many historians. Dr. John Lord wrote of this religio-political kingdom: "It has proved to be the most wonderful fabric of what we call worldly wisdom that our world has seen,--controlling kings, dictating laws to ancient monarchies, and binding the souls of millions with a more perfect despotism than Oriental emperors ever sought or dreamed. And what a marvelous vitality it seems to have. . .It is too grand and venerable for sarcasm, ridicule, or mockery. It is too potent and respectable to be sneered at or lied about. . .I confess I gaze upon it as a peasant surveys a king, as a boy contemplates a queen of beauty. . .It is both lofty and degraded; simple, yet worldly wise; humble, yet scornful and proud; washing beggars' feet, yet imposing commands on the potentates of earth; benignant, yet severe on all who rebel; here clothed in rags, and there reveling in palaces; supported by charity, yet feasting the princes of the earth; assuming the title of 'servant of the servants of God,' yet arrogating the highest seat among worldly dignitaries. Was there ever such a contradiction?--type of the misery and greatness of man? Was there ever such a mystery, so occult are its arts, so subtle its policy, so plausible its pretensions, so certain its shafts? How imposing the words of paternal benediction! How grand the liturgy brought down from ages of faith!

"And yet what crimes and abominations have not been committed in the name of the Church? If we go back and accept the history of the dark ages, what wars has not this Church encouraged, what discords has she not incited, what superstitions has she not endorsed, what pride has she not arrogated, what cruelties has she not inflicted, what countries has she not robbed, what hardships has she not imposed, what deceptions has she not used, what avenues of thought has she not guarded with a flaming sword, what truth has she not perverted, what goodness has she not mocked and persecuted? Ah, interrogate the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the shades of Jerome of Prague, of Huss, of Savonarola, of Cranmer, of Coligny, of Galileo; interrogate the martyrs of the Thirty Years' War, and those who

were slain by the dragonnades of Louis XIV, those who fell by the hand of Alva and Charles IX; go to Smithfield, and Paris on Saint Bartholomew; think of gunpowder plots and inquisitions, and intrigues and tortures, all vigorously carried on under the cloak of religion--barbarities worse than those of savages, inflicted at the command of the ministers of the gospel of love!

"I am compelled to allude to these things; I do not dwell on them since they were the result of the intolerance of human nature as much as the bigotry of the Church,--faults of an age, more than of a religion; although, whether exaggerated or not, more disgraceful than the persecutions of Christians by Roman emperors. As for the supreme rulers of this contradictory Church, so benevolent and yet so cruel, so enlightened and yet so fanatical, so humble and yet so proud,--this institution of blended piety and fraud, equally renowned for saints, theologians, statesmen, drivelers, and fanatics; the joy and the reproach, the glory and the shame of earth,--there never were greater geniuses or greater fools; saints of almost preternatural sanctity, like the first Leo and Gregory, or hounds like Boniface VIII, or Alexander VI; an array of scholars and dunces, ascetics and gluttons, men who adorned and men who scandalized their lofty position. . .What can be expected of those who are raised above public opinion, and have no fetters on their wills,--men who are regarded as infallible and feel themselves supreme!"--Beacon Lights of History, Vol. 3, pp. 96-102.

BABYLON THE QUEEN OF NATIONS

33

A World Ruler. Rev. 17:18; 18:7. The harlot woman Babylon boasts of her supreme authority over the kings and nations of the world with no prospects of widowhood or sorrow. She is elsewhere called "the lady of kingdoms." See Isa. 47:5-10. Her final doom is here foretold. The Babylonian queen is guilty of unlawful relations with all the kings of the earth. Her proud boast is, "I sit a queen." Where does she sit enthroned so that she feels so secure that no sorrow shall overtake her? Rev. 17:1-3,15. The ancient city of Babylon was built on both sides of the river Euphrates which was the accumulation of "many waters" or streams. Through a network of canals the waters of the Euphrates watered the entire city and valley. "O thou that dwellest upon many waters," is the prophet's description of of the city and kingdom of ancient Babylon. See Jer. 51:13. In the symbolic apocalyptic description the waters are declared to be the great sea of humanity including all the peoples and nations of the world. Spiritual Babylon, like ancient Babylon, exercises world dominion.

On Satan's Throne. If the harlot woman is the queen, who is the king of the world? Satan is divinely designated "the prince of this world." Mother Babylon is therefore his wife and queen. It is through the lady of kingdoms that he has ruled the world. His capital and throne has also been hers. She "is seated at the meeting of many waters" (20th C.N.T.). Satan's false system of religion has always been seated or enthroned at the headquarters or capital of the nation through which he ruled the world. The capital of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, was also the headquarters of the national pagan religion with the ruler of the state as the Pontifex Maximus or supreme pontiff of the church. Satan has never founded a nation without seating his counterfeit system of religion at the capital as its queen. She "hath a kingdom over the kings of the earth" (Verse 18, Concordant). Since the papacy is mother Babylon in its modern form which rules over the beast under its seventh-head dominion, the Vatican in the city of Rome is her "seat" or "throne." The Vatican is certainly the meeting place of "many waters" or nations. With most of the modern nations represented diplomatically at the Vatican, it is fast becoming an important center of world diplomacy and arbitration.

Papal Claims. With but a very small territory in Vatican City, the pope claims superiority over all the kings and kingdoms of the world. He boasts of a universal spiritual dominion. At his coronation the triple crown is placed on the pope's head with the words: "Receive the tiara adorned with three crowns and know that thou are Father of princes and kings, Ruler of the world and Vicar of our Saviour Jesus Christ." A high Catholic official said of the universal authority of the pope: "The Pope is as it were God on earth, sole sovereign of the faithful in Christ, chief king of kings, having plentitude of power, to whom has been entrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly, but also of the heavenly kingdom. Hence it is not to be wondered at if to the Roman pontiff,. . . there have been granted, when just cause demands it, the most complete authority and power of transferring kingdoms, of dashing in pieces scepters, of taking away crowns, not only unsheathing the spiritual but also the material sword."--Ferraris' Prompta Bibliotheca, article, "The Pope." The papacy alone meets the specifications of the prophecy of mother Babylon by boasting of a kingdom that has dominion "over the kings of the earth."

No other power, secular or ecclesiastical, has ever made such a claim. The identification, therefore, is certain.

Dual Relationship. Verse 3. It is evident that the "many waters" and the "scarlet colored beast" represent the same thing. The position of the woman indicates a dual relationship with the seven world empires and all kings and nations. Babylon is not the state, but the state-church or religion which is upheld and supported by the state. She exercises a spiritual dominion over the nations and the "souls of men," but depends on the political power of the state for support and maintenance. She is wedded to world-empire, and this union is designated adultery and fornication in the Scriptures. "If any church allies itself with an ungodly world-power, leaning on it for support, and gathering its prestige from hence, it is, so far, committing spiritual fornication" (Pulpit Commentary). The most dangerous trend in modern Christendom is the increasing sentiment in favor of a union with the state. Such a marriage has always proven disastrous to both church and state.

On Seven Mountains. Verses 7,9,10. This language shows clearly that the language of this chapter is figurative and symbolic. The parables used have a mystical meaning that calls for "wisdom" in their interpretation. It puts to the test the spiritual discernment of the reader or student. It is evident that the "many waters" and the "scarlet colored beast" with its "seven heads and ten horns," and "the seven mountains" and the "seven kings," represent the same thing. It should be noted that it is "seven mountains" and not "seven hills" which would have been the rendering if it referred to the seven hills of Rome, the highest of which is only 275 feet high, and the lowest 150 feet. These could not truthfully be called "mountains." At the time the Apocalypse was written the city of Rome had grown in size to the extent that there were ten hills within the city limits. Mountains are used in the Scriptures as symbols of governments or kingdoms. See Ps. 30:7; Jer. 51:24,25; Dan. 2:35,44,45. These seven mountains are plainly interpreted to mean "seven kings" or kingdoms. "These are seven kings" (R.V.). A king is often used to represent the kingdom over which he rules. "The king is the state," was the declaration of one of the kings of France. To Nebuchadnezzar the prophet Daniel said, "Thou art this head of gold," and the head of gold in the image represented the kingdom of Babylon as a whole under all its kings.

The Seven Kingdoms. The seven-headed and ten-horned dragon of chapter 12, the seven-headed and ten-horned beast of chapter 13, and the scarlet colored beast with seven heads and ten horns of this chapter, represent the same power or combination of powers,--the government of Satan in all its history and phases. Each gives us a picture of satanic earthly control from a different viewpoint. In all three cases the ten horns are connected with the seventh head. Only under the papal dominion are there many civil nations. Of the first six of these seven heads or kingdoms the Cambridge Bible says: "They are the four kingdoms of Dan. 2 and 7, together with Egypt and Assyria that came before Babylon." Prof. Wm. Milligan wrote: "These 'seven mountains' or seven 'kings', therefore, are the manifestations of the beast in successive eras of oppression suffered by the people of God. Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and Greece, are the first five; and they are 'fallen'--fallen in the open ruin which they brought upon themselves by wickedness. Rome is the sixth and 'it is' in the apostle's days. . .In one sense he is the same beast as he was in Egypt, in Assyria,

in Babylonia, in Persia, in Greece, and in Rome. In another sense he is not the same for the wickedness of all these earlier stages has been concentrated into one."--The Expositor's Bible.

Rev. 17:9-11. The heads are mountains (or nations, Jer. 51:25), an interpretation which is clear when we think of the universal world powers that have helped in the oppression of God's people--Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, Rome (pagan and papal). "Five are fallen"--the first five in the above list. "One is"--Rome, pagan. "The other is not yet come"--Rome, papal. In John's day the papacy had not come. While Christianity was absorbing many of the elements of paganism and basking in popularity, fierce persecution ceased; but when it was later established as the dominating church, it joined the kings of earth and suppressed and persecuted.--Sabbath School Worker, Dec., 1949.

The Ruling Queen. Over all these kingdoms Satan has ruled as king, and Babylon as queen. Seated upon the beast representing world empire indicates a close alliance between the church and state with the religious element in control. Through his counterfeit system of religion Satan has held sway over the nations and kings of the earth throughout its history. He has controlled and guided the nations as a rider does his horse. The beast is both guided and managed by the Babylonian queen. "Religion in some form or other, is the most universal of institutions and has had the earliest and greatest influence on the condition and life of peoples--that is to say, on their civilization--in every period of the world."--Beacon Lights of History, Lord, Vol. 1, pp. 27,28

The Queenly Attire. Verse 4. "Brilliantly attired with gold and jewels and pearls" (Weymouth). "Glittering with gold ornaments" (20th C.N.T.). What a contrast to the symbolic woman representing the church of Christ as pictured in Rev. 12:1; 19:7,8; Isa. 52:1. The garments of Christ's bride are beautiful, attractive and becoming because they are simple and clean and white. The description of the harlot woman representing the church and bride of Satan is similar to that recorded in Jer. 4:28-30. The prophet said: "Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair." The picture is that of a street woman attempting to attract attention by outward adornment when she is conscious of no character attraction. It is a splendid picture of a fallen, backslidden, apostate church attempting to make up with outward ornamentation and ritual what is lacking in devotion and holiness. See Isa. 3:16-26. "The whole description is that of outward magnificence in contrast to impurity within; gorgeous ritual often marks the degenerate church" (The Devotional Commentary). The marginal reading for "decked" is "gilded" which means, "to overlay with any other substance for the purpose of giving the appearance of gold; to gloss over; to cover up something disagreeable or unpleasant by glossing it over." Babylon's "ostentatious magnificence (Swete) is for the purpose of deception. "Probably John is thinking of the finery of the temple prostitutes in Asia Minor" (Robertson). In the Temple of Diana there was a multitude of vestal virgins dedicated to prostitution.

Purple and Scarlet. Purple was at that time the royal color worn by kings and queens, and scarlet was until in recent years the identifying raiment of harlots. Scarlet is the Biblical symbol of sin and rebellion. See Isa. 1:18. It is therefore the color of the symbols of Satan's kingdom. See

Rev. 12:3; 17:3. It is appropriate that a scarlet robe be the wedding garment of Satan's wife or bride. It indicates her sinful character in contrast with the white robe of Christ's righteousness which clothes the bride of Christ. It is a significant fact that both purple and scarlet are the most prominent colors in the official robes and caps of the popes, cardinals, and other officials of the Roman Catholic Church. The pope's wardrobe is estimated to be worth $100,000,000. It contains the costumes of many of the popes. Among them are a few white garments but most of them are scarlet and purple representing a combination of royalty and harlotry. The shoes of the popes are decked with pearls. There is a collection of fourteen crowns for various occasions, the smallest being worth about $1,000,000. The triple crown is one of the most valuable ever made. It is literally "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls," of almost inestimable value.

The Golden Cup. The golden cup contains the wine of error by which all the nations have been made drunken. "The nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad" (Jer. 51:7). The golden cup with its poisonous wine represents a beautiful exterior or ritual with inward error and corruption. Gold is the symbol of truth but intoxicating wine is the symbol of falsehood. The pretense is Christian, but the character is satanic. "The cup held out is golden. To the sensual and carnal heart and imagination the world's religion and progress is something bright and glorious, the glittering fulness of good and blessing. But in that shining cup is only abomination and uncleanness--spiritual prostitution--nothing but spiritual prostitution."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, p. 122. Pope Leo XII, on the occasion of the Jubilee celebration in 1825, had a medal made with his own image on one side and on the other the church of Rome symbolized by a seated woman holding in her left hand a cross, and in her right hand a cup, with the inscription, "The whole world is her seat."

Viewpoint of Vision. Verse 3. "A great desert" (Swedish). "A lonely place" (20th C.N.T.). "Desert" and "wilderness" mean the same. They are translated from a Hebrew word meaning, "to be waste," or "desolate." It is during the millennium that the world, over which the beast and the woman had ruled for 6,000 years, becomes a desolate wilderness; a desert or lonely place. The previous chapter closed with a description of the second coming of Christ, the event that desolates the earth and ushers in the millennium. The prophet is taken in vision by the plague-angel to the desolate earth during the millennium from whence he looks both ways at the career of the beast and Babylon. He is shown the history and final doom of these apostate powers through which Satan has ruled the world and persecuted the saints. From this viewpoint only could the angel speak of the beast as "was, and is not, and yet is," or "is to come" (Weymouth). During the millennium it can be truly said that the beast "was" for 6,000 years, "is not" for 1,000 years, and "yet is," or "is to come" for a few years before going "into perdition," or the lake of fire.

Further Proof. Verse 8. "Is about to come out of the abyss and go into perdition" (R.V.). "Is destined to ascend, before long, out of the bottomless pit and go his way into perdition" (Weymouth). On two occasions only is the earth an abyss or bottomless pit. The first was in the beginning when "the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (Gen. 1:2). "Deep" is translated "abyss" in the Septuagint and is the same root word translated "abyss" and "bottomless pit" in our text. Void means "empty, vacant, without inhabitant." It is a

lonely desolate place or wilderness. The second and last time the earth will be in this condition is during the millennium. See Jer. 4:23-28; Rev. 20. From the wilderness place where the prophet was taken in vision the beast was "about to ascend out of the abyss." The beast, which includes all the wicked of all ages who are the subjects of Satan's kingdom, will ascend out of the abyss or bottomless pit when the wicked are resurrected and Satan is loosed from his prison at the close of the millennium. "Perdition" means "destruction" which is accomplished by the lake of fire into which all the wicked are cast at the close of the millennium. See 2 Peter 3:7; Rev. 19:20; 20:8-10,14,15. Satan and Judas are each called "the son of perdition," and all the wicked are the sons of perdition or destruction. They are "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

Includes Entire Career. Verses 8,11. The statement is three times repeated that the beast existed for a period of time, ceased to exist for another period, and then came into being again before going into perdition and being destroyed. The third period or phase of the beast's existence and career is described by the statements, "yet is," "yet is to come" (Weymouth), "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition," and "even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." These must all mean the same and refer to the same time. Satan's earthly kingdom, composed of seven great universal empires and all the smaller ones under his control including all the wicked inhabitants of the earth, "was" or existed and ruled from the fall of Adam to the second coming of Christ. During this time "the despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world" held dominion with scarcely a break or interruption. Satan has never yet ceased to exercise his authority as "the prince of this world." Looking backward from the millennium the beast "was" for about six thousand years.

The Second Period. At one time only can it be truthfully said that the beast with its seven heads and ten horns and its harlot rider, "is not," or does not exist. This period must come between the two stages of its existence, the latter being just before it goes into perdition or the lake of fire. During the millennium not a vestige of the beast power remains. Only Satan and his angels are alive and they are in prison. The wicked of earth's history which make up the beast power are all dead and the mighty kingdoms and organizations through which Satan and his "wicked spirits" have ruled the world and made war on the kingdom of heaven are no more. It is unreasonable to apply this period when the beast "is not" to the time when the papal head was wounded, for that wound was inflicted upon only one head of the beast and did not prove fatal. Its effects were only temporary. The body of the beast itself was not destroyed but remained unchanged. Satan continued to rule the world and carry on his work which was only briefly interfered with by the temporary removal of the human instrument at the head of the papal power. It cannot be said that a beast that is merely wounded "is not" or ceases to exist. While the wound seemed at the time to be mortal, the rapid recovery of the wounded beast amazed the world and showed that it was only a very temporary curbing of its power. The papacy did not cease to exist but continued to function throughout the world with but little effect on its membership or activities.

Fuller Explanation. Verses 9,10. It cannot be said that one head of the beast "is" or exists, while the beast itself "is not," for the head cannot continue to live separate from the body. Therefore, this must be said by way of explanation, not from the viewpoint of the millennium, but from that

of the time the prophet was given the vision on the island of Patmos. It is a sort of parenthetical explanation to clarify a matter not clear to the prophet. At the time the vision was given the first five of the seven heads were "fallen." They are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. Rome, the sixth, was then ruling the world. "Preceding Rome the world had but five great names or nationalities answering to imperial Rome, and these scarcely a schoolboy ought to miss. They are Greece, Persia, Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt; no more, and no less. And these all were imperial powers like Rome."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, p. 129.

The Seventh Head. The last of the seven heads, on which were the ten horns, represents the religio-political power of papal Rome. This power had not yet come into being when the vision was given. This is the last of the seven phases of the beast power during its career before the millennium. "Yet under one head--the papal power--the people will unite to oppose God in the person of His witnesses. This union is cemented by the great apostate" (Vol. 7:182). "That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power,--a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will" (G.C. 50). The divine prediction is that when the seventh head comes into existence "he must continue a short space." The word "continue" indicates an extended or prolonged existence beyond that of the other six. "He must remain a little while" (Emphatic Diaglott). "He must continue a little while" (R.V.). "He must stay for a little while" (20th C.N.T.). The other six did not "stay" or "remain" or "continue" very long. Their period of rulership was from 100 to 500 years each, while the rule of the papacy spans more than 1400 years. Seven prophecies declare that the absolute rulership of the papal power would be 1260 years before its wounding. This event, however, did not end its career as the seventh head.

The Eighth Phase. Verse 11. "He is an eighth head" (Moffatt). "He counts as an eighth king" (20th C.N.T.). The period of the beast's existence after he comes up out of the abyss and before he goes into perdition is spoken of as an eighth phase of its career, but is declared to be "of the seven." The beast power or Satan's kingdom will continue for a short time after the millennium between the resurrection and destruction of the wicked. This will be a different phase of its existence from any of the seven before the millennium, and yet it will be made up of the seven because it will be the first time in all the history of the beast when all the subjects of his kingdom will be alive at the same time. Satan will doubtless take personal control of the vast host of the resurrected wicked which made up all the kingdoms of the past. While this phase of his king- will be "of the seven," it will be different from any of them. See G.C. 624,663,664.

The Ten Kingdoms. Verses 12,13. "Who have not yet come to the throne" (Weymouth). "Who have not yet received their kingdom" (20th C.N.T.). This is true from either the viewpoint of the time the vision was given or during the millennium, but probably refers to the latter. It seems evident that Satan will divide the billions of earth's inhabitants after the millennium into ten great kingdoms with himself as the king of kings. The "one hour" doubtless refers to the short period of the beast's existence between the resurrection and destruction of the wicked, or during the eighth phase of its career. "One hour" is used in the Scriptures to designate a short but indefinite period. "For a period" (Swedish). "And the ten horns which you

saw are ten kings which have not yet received their kingdom, but they shall have authority with the beast as kings at the same time" (Alexander Campbell). The assumption that this period will be 100 years long rests on very uncertain evidence.

A United Purpose. Verse 13. "They have one common policy" (Weymouth). "They have one mind in surrendering their power and authority to the beast" (20th C.N.T.). Although in ten states or divisions, the beast power after the millennium will be one united kingdom with Satan as the supreme ruler. They have one common purpose,--to destroy the camp of the saints, capture the celestial city, and gain the supreme rulership of the world. That has always been Satan's purpose. At no other time has there ever been such an agreement between the ten kings. Only seven of the ten kings of divided Rome gave their power and authority to the papacy. The other three refused and were "plucked up" and destroyed. But at the time described here all ten unite with the beast in willing subservience. It is then that verse 8 is fulfilled when all the wicked of the earth in all ages are amazed at the beast as they view its entire career from the viewpoint of its eighth and most glorious phase. "And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, they whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world" (R.V.). "With the amazement of a horrible surprise, the world will wonder and admire" (Swedish). There had never been any kingdom in the past to compare with it in power or numbers. It will be hailed as the golden age of human history. The saints alone do not wonder for they understand.

Object of Attack. Verse 14. This is the same attack and defeat pictured in Rev. 19:19,20; 20:8-10. The fact that Christ is here called the "Lord of lords, and King of kings," and His people the "called, and chosen, and faithful," shows that this scene takes place after the close of probation. The war here described begins with the close of probation before the millennium, but has its final and complete fulfillment at the close of the one thousand years just before the wicked go into perdition. At that time all the faithful of all ages whose names have been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will be with Christ in "the camp of the saints" and "the beloved city" which descended with Christ and His people at the end of the millennial reign in heaven. "And they shall share in the victory" (Weymouth).

The Disillusionment. Verses 16,17. The agreement of the ten kingdoms to carry out a common purpose is only temporary. "For God has put it into their minds to carry out His purpose, in carrying out their common purpose and surrendering their kingdom to the beast, until God's decrees shall be executed" (20th C.N.T.). Their treaty or agreement continues to bind them to a common purpose to serve and obey Babylon and the beast until God's prophecies regarding the beast and Babylon are all fuifilled and His decrees for their destruction executed. It is while they surround the celestial city with every confidence of victory that an event takes place that disillusions them. Their eyes are opened to the delusion of Satan and his human agencies and hatred takes the place of love and unity. They give vent to their special hatred of Babylon, the mother of harlots, who had deceived and enslaved them down through the ages. See verse 18. Instead of advancing to the attack on the holy city, they bow their knees and acknowledge that Christ alone is Lord and that they have been deceived. Before their final doom they acknowledge that they have been justly dealt with by the divine administration.

The Tables Turn. In The Great Controversy, pages 662-673, is given a graphic description of the scene that is enacted before the New Jerusalem just before the fire descends from heaven and destroys the wicked and renovates the earth. The following are a few of the striking statements: "The whole wicked world stands arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them. . .Satan seems paralyzed as he beholds the glory and majesty of Christ. . .Notwithstanding that Satan has been constrained to acknowledge God's justice, and to bow to the supremacy of Christ, his character remains unchanged. The spirit of rebellion, like a mighty torrent, again bursts forth. Filled with frenzy, he determines not to yield the great controversy. The time has come for a last desperate struggle against the King of heaven. He rushes into the midst of his subjects, and endeavors to inspire them with his own fury, and arouse them to instant battle. But of all the countless millions whom he has allured into rebellion, there is none now to acknowledge his supremacy. His power is at an end. The wicked are filled with the same hatred of God that inspires Satan; but they see that their cause is hopeless, and they cannot prevail against Jehovah. Their rage is kindled against Satan and those who have been his agents in deception, and with the fury of demons they turn upon them." It is at this time that the nations and wicked inhabitants of the earth will "hate the whore and make her desolate and naked" and she is burned with fire.

THE FINAL CALL OUT OF BABYLON

34

The Last Message. The first part of chapter 18 pictures the last phase of the everlasting gospel that announces the fall of Babylon and calls God's people out before His unmingled wrath descends upon her in the seven last plagues. The purpose of this entire vision is to show the "doom" or "judgment" of mother Babylon and her harlot daughters. While the wrath of God against Babylon begins with the seven last plagues, the final sentence of death is not executed till after the millennium, for it is during the one thousand years that the great judgment is in session and determines the fate of the enemies of God and His people. During this time "the saints shall judge the world and judge angels," and therefore "the sentence passed upon the great Harlot" cannot be executed till afterward. The heaven-sent message that calls God's people out of Babylon is a parenthetical prophecy to show that none of the righteous will be engulfed in the doom of Babylon. This message announces God's sentence upon spiritual Babylon just as the message written in letters of fire on the wall of the palace of Belshazzar announced His sentence upon ancient Babylon.

World Message. Verse 1. The message described here is of divine origin. It is a message from the God of heaven. It was an angel from heaven who announced to the terror-stricken revelers the doom of ancient Babylon. The message is given with "great power" or "great authority" (R.V.). Its world-wide scope is indicated by the fact that the entire earth is lighted with its glory, or "illuminated with its splendor" (20th C.N.T.). "So recently has he come from the Presence that in passing he flings a broad belt of light across the dark earth" (Swete). Here is pictured the final phase of the threefold message described in chapter 14, when "the latter rain" of spiritual power furnishes the authority needed to finish its mission and bring the inhabitants of the earth to a final and irrevocable decision. Every honest-hearted soul will unhesitatingly obey the divine call.

The Loud Cry. Verse 2. Because the symbolic angel "cried mightily" with "a strong voice," or "with a mighty voice," this phase of God's last message to the world is called "the loud cry." The appeal is so strong that all must hear and decide for or against it. No longer can men and women continue to "halt between two opinions" or "go limping between two sides" (1 Kings 18:21, R.V.). Because it is proclaimed in a time of overwhelming apostasy similar to that of the days of Elijah, this last phase of the last message is called "the Elijah message." It is given "in the spirit and power of Elijah." See Mal. 4:5,6; Luke 1:13-17. The negative phase of this message is the announcement that Babylon is fallen with a description of the corruptions that caused her fall and the awful judgments that must be visited upon her as the consequence. This is all preliminary to the positive phase of the message that shows the way of escape; the way of salvation from her sins and plagues.

Message Repeated. "Is fallen" is repeated here as in Rev. 14:8. Repetition is for emphasis. See Gen. 41:32. The message itself is also repeated because of a further fall since the second angel's message was first given. "This scripture points forward to the time when the announcement of the fall of Babylon, made by the second angel of Revelation 14, is to be repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the various organizations that constitute Babylon, since the message

was first given. . .These announcements, uniting with the third angel's message, constitute the final warning to be given to the inhabitants of the earth" (G.C. 603,604). "Babylon the great" is the term used to designate ancient Babylon in Dan. 4:30. Just before Nebuchadnezzar was deposed from his kingly power and stripped of his glory and majesty because of his self-glory, he cried out as he viewed his capital city: "This is Babylon the Great, that I have built" (Septuagint). "There lies Babylon the Great, which I have built for a royal residence by my vast power and to my noble majesty" (Moffatt). Babylon was destroyed because it was built on human works and self-glory.

Habitation of Devils. "Now she is the haunt of demons, the den of all foul spirits, the cage of every foul and loathsome bird" (Moffatt). "Hold," "cage" and "prison" in this text and in 1 Peter 3:19 are translated from the same root word. Ancient Babylon after her fall became the dwelling-place of foul birds, doleful creatures, and demons. See Isa. 13:19-22; 34:11-15. "Demons shall dance there," is an old Greek translation. Before its capture by Cyrus the city of Babylon became so corrupt that it was beyond moral recovery. The inhabitants had sinned away their day of grace and the city was therefore destroyed never to be rebuilt. The spirits of demons or evil angels had complete control and under their leadership foulness reached its utmost height during the licentious feast of Belshazzar and his lords with their thousands of wives and concubines. Even so modern Babylon becomes the center of the moral corruptions of the last generation, and therefore the headquarters and abode of devils and evil men. Out of Babylon these foul spirits go forth to seduce and corrupt the world. Rev. 16:13,14. On the other hand Zion, or the church of Christ, is the headquarters and dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit and the hosts of "ministering spirits" and saints of God. Out of Zion they go forth to give the last message of mercy to mankind.

Cause of Fall. Verse 3. "For by the wine of the wrath of her fornication all nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness" (R.V.). It was by drinking of the wine of Babylon's false doctrines that the nations fell and the kings committed spiritual fornication and the merchants became rich. "For after drinking the maddening wine of her licentiousness all the nations have fallen" (20th C.N.T.). "All nations have fallen as a result of the furious wine of her fornication" (Concordant). The description is that of the most corrupt and repulsive moral, spiritual and social state imaginable. It is not an external and material fall so much as a moral fall as the result of spiritual harlotry. Together with Babylon all nations fall and are carried with her to an eternal ruin. Since there is no remedy there can be no recovery.

Includes Whole Family. "Babylon the great" includes both the mother and the family of daughters. The entire Babylonian system of false and apostate religion becomes corrupt and the corrupter of kings and nations, and the source of wealth for the merchant princes of the earth. "And the merchants of the earth are rich as a result of her ability to indulge" (Concordant). Satan is the husband of the mother and the father of the daughters. He is the author of all false systems of religion. The ancient Babylonian system of religion has come down through the ages and manifests itself in the modern papacy. The mysteries, temples, altars, pictures, images, holy water, shrines, and relics of the papacy are almost identical with those of

ancient Babylon. There is the same supreme pontiff, college of cardinals, celibacy of the priesthood, forty day lenten season, prayers for the dead, purgatory, madonna, mass, unbloody sacrifice, sign of the cross, pretended miracles, and Sunday Sabbath. "And indeed all writers who are acquainted with antiquity,--be they lay or clerical, Protestant or Papal, Italian or foreign,--agree as to the pagan origin of Rome's present usages and ceremonies."--Italy, Forsyth, p. 31.

Includes Apostate Protestantism. "Babylon embraces much more than Rome, and illustrations of what she is lie nearer our own door. Wherever professedly Christian men have thought the world's favor better than its reproach; wherever they have esteemed its honors a more desirable possession than its shame; wherever they have coveted ease rather than welcomed suffering; have loved self-indulgence rather than self-sacrifice. . .there the spirit of Babylon has been made manifest."--Prof. Milligan in "Baird Lectures on Revelation," Lecture 5. Babylon includes in its large family all forms of corrupt Christianity that are guilty of spiritual fornication because of a union with the world or political powers. "Until conventional Christianity is banished from the land, and the Christianity of the sermon on the Mount is restored, the moral condition of the human race will sink lower and lower into devildom and corruption" (Pulpit Commentary).

Modernism Hastening Fall. There has been a mighty change in modern Christendom since the second angel's message was first preached. Modernism has permeated Protestantism until even the great fundamentals of the Christian religion have been undermined and denied from the sacred desk. "Jesus has become a faint and wavering shadow," declared William Henry Spence in his book, A Modernist's Criticism of Modernism. J. Gresham Machen said in his book, Christianity and Liberalism: "The church today has been unfaithful to her Lord by admitting great companies of non-Christian persons, not only into her membership, but into her teaching agencies. . .The greatest menace to the Christian church today comes not from the enemies outside but from the enemies within. . .Whether or not liberals are Christians, it is at any rate perfectly clear that liberalism is not Christianity. . . If the liberal party, therefore, really obtains control of the church, evangelical Christianity must be prepared to withdraw no matter what it costs. Our Lord died for us and we must not deny Him for favor of men." --Pages 159-199. The very condition existing in apostate professed Christianity of this generation will make it easy for genuine Christians to heed the call, "Come out of her, My people."

The Heaven-sent Message. Verses 4,5. The "voice from heaven" is doubtless the voice of Christ, the author of truth and the Saviour of men. "The cry, Come forth, come forth, rings through Hebrew history" (Swete). The Lord cannot destroy Babylon till His people are in a place of safety. The Deluge was not permitted to destroy the antediluvian world till the people of God were safe in the ark. The Lord refused to destroy Sodom and Gomorrha till the message was given to Lot and his family: "Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither" (Gen. 19:22). Before the Lord poured out His wrath upon ancient Babylon He sent a message calling His people to separate from the doomed city. See Isa. 48:20; Jer. 51:6,7. The disciples of Jesus gave the same message of warning to the nation and city of the Jews before they were destroyed by the Roman army under Titus. The Reformers gave the same divine call in the days of the Reformation, and this is being repeated in the threefold message that closes the mission of the everlasting gospel in the earth.

Complete Separation Demanded. God demands a complete separation from the world and its prevailing iniquity. See 2 Cor. 6:14-18. There came a time when God's people could no longer serve Him and remain in Egypt. When Egypt's cup of iniquity was full the Lord separated His people from the prevailing idolatry and took them to a place where they could practice their religion. When evil reaches a certain stage, further fellowship with evil-doers can benefit neither the righteous nor the wicked, and separation becomes imperative. Rome reached this condition just before being overthrown by the barbarians from the north. A Roman poet said: "Ye who desire to live a godly life, depart from Rome; for, although all things are lawful there, yet to be godly is unlawful." Seneca, the Roman historian said: "Vice no longer hides itself, it stalks abroad before all eyes. Innocence is no longer rare, it has ceased to exist." This is fast becoming the condition of the modern world under the rulership of Babylon the Great. God's people are called out of Babylon so they can escape her sins, plagues and judgments. "For her sins are heaped up to the heavens" (20th C.N.T.), or "piled up to the sky" (Weymouth). "For high as heaven her sins are heaped and God calls her misdeeds to the reckoning" (Moffatt). Ancient Babylon piled up brick and mortar in order to build a tower to reach into heaven. This symbol of her pride and self-exaltation was a defiance of the God of heaven and the cause of His wrath. See Jer. 49:16; 51:53; Obadiah 3,4.

God's Own People. They are not heathen who are called out of Babylon, but God's own people. "Come out of her, My people," is the call. Seven times the Scriptures record the divine call for saints to separate from Babylon. (1) Isa. 48:20. (2) Isa. 52:11. (3) Jer. 50:8,9. (4) Jer. 51:6,7. (5) Zech. 2:6,7. (6) 2 Cor. 6:17,18. (7) Rev. 18:4-8. The seventh will be the last call and will never have to be repeated again. "Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ's true followers are still to be found in their communion. . .The time will come when those who love God supremely can no longer remain in connection with such as are 'lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.' Revelation 18 points to the time when. . . the church will have reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God. . .that remain in Babylon will heed the call, 'Come out of her, My people.'" (G.C. 390). "And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the Protestant faith" (G.C. 383). It is evident that the purpose of this last phase of the last message is to call God's people out of Babylon and that the majority are still there when the "latter rain" and "loud cry" begin.

Righteousness by Faith. Since righteousness by faith is "the third angel's message in verity," it must therefore constitute the positive phase of the message that calls God's people out of the religious system that is based on human works and self-glorification. "Clad in the armour of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict" (P.K. 725). "The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel" (Vol. 6:19). See Rom. 9:28. "The loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth" (C.O.R. 72). Those who carry this message are described as having the patience of saints, keeping the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Spiritual Devolution. The heaven-sent announcement that "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen," indicates that mother Babylon and her harlot daughters were at one time on a higher spiritual plain, and that they have experienced a moral and spiritual devolution. This has ever been the course of mankind during the reign of sin. Even the devil and his angels once abode in the truth. See John 8:44; Jude 6. Cain was once innocent and spiritual, and the descendants of Noah worshiped the true God before the great apostasy in the days of Nimrod. The Jews were once God's chosen and favored people, and the church that developed into the papacy and led the world into the Dark Ages was once pure in faith and practice. Apostate Protestantism was at one time the instrument in the hand of God in the wounding of the papal head of the beast. The history of the church has been marred by many great apostasies making it necessary for the Lord to call out the faithful before pouring out His judgments. There has ever been a fall from virtue to vice, truth to error, liberty to thraldom, from the divine nature to a satanic character. The most hardened criminals and the vilest of men and women were once innocent children, and the most profligate harlot was once chaste and virtuous. Babylon sinks to a depth of shame and degradation from which there is no recovery.

Rule of Eternal Justice. Rev. 18:6,7. This is similar to the divine decree against ancient Babylon. See Jer. 51:24,49. "Double" as used in our text has the meaning of an exact duplicate rather than twice as much or a double amount, which would not be justice and would be contrary to the other expressions used all through the Scriptures. It is "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." What we measure out to others will be measured to us again. What Babylon gave to others she will receive in the day of recompense. Her own persecutions of the saints of God are to be duplicated and returned upon her own head in retribution. "For her self-glorification and her luxury, give her now an equal measure of torture and misery" (20th C.N.T.). The Golden Rule was stated by Jesus in both its positive and negative forms. See Matt. 7:2,12. The prophet's message to wicked Jezebel was, "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine" (1 Kings 21:19). Those who condemn others pass sentence upon themselves, and the Lord declares that the sentence is just. Evil that is imparted to others always returns again. The time may be long delayed, but the retribution is certain in the end.

Boast of Security. Verse 7. While the true church or bride of Christ is patiently waiting for her returning Lord and husband, the apostate church unites in marriage with the kings and nations of the earth and revels in wanton luxury with no thought of widowhood or sorrow. Cardinal Gibbons said: "Children of the Church, fear nothing, happen what will to her. Christ is with her and therefore she cannot sink. . .Has she not gone steadily on her course amid storm and sunshine? The fulfillment of the past is the best security for the future."--Faith of Our Fathers, p. 60. A dispatch from Vatican City describing the picturesque ceremonies in connection with the coronation of Pope Pius XII said: "One of the curious tasks confronting the cardinals is the breaking of the fisherman's ring taken from Pope Pius' finger. The ring is a gold band with an engraving of St. Peter fishing from a boat. Records show it was used as a seal as far back as the 13th century. It will be given to the new pope in token of the end of the

'widowhood' of the church." Catholic officials considered the church a widow during the time she was deprived of her temporal dominion. Now she says, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."

Boasting Precedes Ruin. Verse 8. At the moment of her greatest triumph and glory, Babylon is on the brink of ruin. She does not recognize and glorify God and therefore the one element of permanency is lacking. The fate of Babylon comes suddenly and unexpectedly at the very time she is boasting of her success and security. While the words of boasting and self-glory were still on the lips of the proud king of ancient Babylon, the heavenly watcher pronounced the decree of the Most High, "The kingdom is departed from thee." The fall of ancient Babylon came suddenly to a proud and arrogant ruler and people who felt secure in what they considered an impregnable fortress. See Jer. 51:8. In Isa. 47:5-10 it was declared that the destruction of Babylon would come "in one day," and "in a moment in one day." Suddenly also comes the doom of modern Babylon. "Therefore, shall her plagues come in one day." "In one hour is thy judgment come," is three times repeated. See verses 10,17,19. This doubtless indicates a short but indefinite period like the statement, "The hour of His judgment is come." The death, mourning, famine, and fire, must include the judgments of God both before and after the millennium. She is "utterly burned with fire" when her final destruction is accomplished in the lake of fire when the wicked "go into perdition." "She thought she was strong; she forgot the strength of the Almighty. Her plagues were four-fold, as though from every quarter her trouble came. Death for her scorn of the prospect of widowhood; mourning for her inordinate reveling; famine for her abundance; and fire, the punishment for her fornication."--Dean Alford in Speaker's Commentary.

The Mourning Kings. Verses 9,10. This entire chapter is a prophecy and forms a part of the final message of God announcing the approaching doom of Babylon. The language is highly figurative, the symbol being that of the burning and destruction of a literal city that had long been the source of wealth and glory of kings and merchants. The kings that reveled with Babylon bewail her fall. They speak of her as "that great city, Babylon, that mighty city." Dean Alford declares that, "The whole passage points, not to any single city, at any one single period, but to the world-city, throughout all time" (Speaker's Commentary). Babylon is "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (17:18). Perhaps the chief reason for the mourning of kings when Babylon receives her punishment is that they are punished at the same time. See Rev. 2:21-23. Fornication always brings its retribution to all who share in its guilt.

The Queen of Nations. Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod, was the first queen of Babylon. After the tragic death of Nimrod she reigned supreme over the city and kingdom of ancient Babylon. She was as corrupt in morals as she was beautiful. She reveled with kings and princes. The symbolic queen and harlot of the Apocalypse is doubtless a likeness or duplicate of the woman who was more responsible than any other for the establishment of the counterfeit system of religion that has ever since ruled and cursed the world. Cleopatra, the profligate queen of Egypt, is also an appropriate symbol of Satan's bride or wife. She enticed and enslaved both Caesar and Mark Anthony, and lived luxuriously with them. Dr. John Lord selects her as "The Woman of Paganism," or the type of pagan womanhood. He calls her "a selfish, heartless, sorceress" with "no moral sense;" "a politician as

well as a luxurious beauty." See Beacon Lights of History, Vol. 2. Jezebel, the wife of Ahab and queen of Israel, who led the nation into the idolatry of Baal worship, is another appropriate symbol of the apostate church and is so used in Rev. 2:18-23. Babylon, "the lady of kingdoms" and "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" has enticed and enslaved the kings of the world by her sorcery, luxury, and licentiousness.

World of Commerce. Verses 11-14. Babylon is not only guilty of religious but also of commercial harlotry. Modern commerce is leading the world away from God to the worship of the creature and his works. To permit business to come between a man and his God is just as idolatrous as to allow a priest or false religion to intervene between the creature and the Creator. Some of the greatest temptations to sin lie in the business relations of life. "As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of stones, so doth sin stick close between buying and selling" (Sirach in Ecclesiasticus). The modern world is under the dominion of the rule of gold rather than the golden rule. Mammon is the chief god of this generation. "This is the only god that the many know and worship in our day; for a man's god is that to which he looks for meeting his needs, satisfying his desires, and overcoming his difficulties. Money, then, is the greatest of all the idols of the present day" (Philip Mauro). See Isa. 2:17-21. Babylon the great has not only ruled over kings and nations, but has also largely controlled world commerce. The church festivals have been so commercialized that they constitute one of the chief sources of revenue for the merchants of earth. In verse 3 we are told that "the merchants of the earth are rich as the result of her ability to indulge" (Concordant).

Reveling in Luxury. In these verses is pictured the dainties, personal adornments, expensive furniture, and the luxuries of the modern church and society. The inhabitants of the earth are the salves of both religion and business. Both the bodies and the souls of men are enslaved by the universal acceptance of modern business maxims and practices which involve a fearful trifling with the conscience. Present day industrial organizations and institutions are destroying civil liberty, and religious freedom cannot live under the rulership of church officials and systems that are more zealous in maintaining the traditions of the fathers than to know the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. The bodies and souls of men are slaves to the customs, fashions, creeds and organizations of modern Babylon.

Business Depression. Verses 15-17. The picture here is of a world-wide commercial depression or business panic which brings lamentation and weeping on the part of the merchant princes of the earth. The destruction of Babylon is symbolized by the destruction of a great and wealthy city whose extravagance and luxury made the merchants rich. The cutting off of their sources of revenue causes great consternation. This was the effect on the merchants when the wicked and luxurious cities of Sodom and Gomorrha were destroyed, and again when Nineveh, Tyre, and Babylon were reduced to ruins. When Rome, the metropolis of the world, was burned by Nero, and later captured, sacked and burned by the barbarians, there was a wailing among the commercial men of the earth who had become rich through her commerce. The sudden destruction of London, Paris, New York, or Chicago, would affect the income of every merchant prince of the world. James 5:1-6 is doubtless a picture of the same time. Those who have lived in pleasure and wanton luxury will "weep and howl" because of the miseries that come to them. Luxuries today are the chief source of wealth because of the universal

indulgence in them and the large percentage of profits they bring the manufacturers and sellers. It is estimated that two dollars out of every five in the United States are spent for luxuries which are defined as "articles not strictly necessary."

The Maritime World. Verses 17-19. The great financial panic here described will tie up the merchant marine fleets with their commerce on the high seas. Great ship companies will be forced to the wall and the captains and sailors will weep and wail because their liberal incomes "by reason of her costliness" will be cut off. Again it is stated that "in one hour" Babylon is made desolate. The great institution that has strengthened her strangle hold on the rulers and nations of men down through the centuries is brought to an end in a sudden crash. All who put their trust in Babylon and the world of commerce with which she is inseparably connected, instead of in the God of heaven, will be numbered among the mourners when the destruction comes. This experience is also described in Isa. 2:10-22; Rev. 6:14-17. There will be a far different scene among those who have come out of Babylon and are rich toward God.

Great Rejoicing. Verse 20. When ancient Babylon was captured and destroyed the Hebrew captives and the remnant of Israel in Palestine were jubilant. They knew from the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah that the destruction was a judgment from God. All the nations that had been oppressed by Babylon also rejoiced. See Jer. 51:48. Likewise there will be great rejoicing in heaven and on earth when modern Babylon that had so long ruled and oppressed the world is destroyed. The chief manifestation of joy will be with "ye saints, and ye apostles and ye prophets" (R.V.) The apostles and prophets are the most prominent leaders of the church in both Old and New Testament times, showing that Babylon is a world-embracing system. This rejoicing is further pictured in the next chapter which describes the greatest thanksgiving celebration ever held in the history of the universe. It is the antitypical feast of ingathering or home coming.

Goes Down Forever. Verse 21. The same illustration was used in foretelling the fate of ancient Babylon. See Jer. 51:63,64. The city was never to be rebuilt or inhabited again. See Isa. 26:2. Modern Babylon sinks to rise no more just as Pharaoh and his army "sank unto the bottom" of the Red Sea "as a stone" and "as lead in the mighty waters" (Ex. 15:4,5,10). The destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea was typical of the final destruction of Babylon. For that reason the song of Moses will be repeated by those who escape from Babylon and then witness her destruction. "In every form in which she has existed, and through all the ages, in all the world, she has been holding up the golden cup of her abominations wherewith she has intoxicated and demented the nations, and filled the whole earth with spiritual madness. Therefore, to her neck the stone is hanged, and into the depth she is cast."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, p. 175.

The Reign of Silence. Verses 22,23. This also is antitypical of what happened at the Red Sea and again after Babylon was destroyed. See Isa. 24:7-12; 47:5. "In the silence which follows the voice from heaven a single angel represents the fall of Babylon by a symbolical action" (Swete). "Be found no more at all" is repeated six times in three verses. It is "reiterated like the sound of a funeral knell." Dr. Seiss says of Babylon: "She was the very paradise of musicians, harp-singers, and flute-players, and trumpeters; for these are always a great feature and one of the chief glories

of a rich, gay, luxurious, and worldly city; but every note is silenced, and no voice of song, or dance, or opera, is ever heard there again. The finest artists and artisans of the world, of every order, had found there a very Golconda, but in one hour their glorious elysium is gone, and they and their works with it. It was the center of the grandest and most noted bridals, and the sublime resort of grand bridal tours, but with one stroke of heaven's judgment every sound of joy is hushed, 'and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride' ceases to be heard there any more."--The Apocalypse, Vol. 3, p. 177.

Deceived by Sorcery. Verse 23. Ancient Babylon was the birthplace of sorcery and magic. See Isa. 47:13-15. "That magic and idolatry were twin sisters, and came into the world together, we have abundant evidence."--The Two Babylons, Hislop, p. 67. "Medieval magic and witchcraft were, in large part, an unchanged inheritance from Chaldea."--Myers' General History, p. 46. Monsieur Jacolliot, Chief Judge of the French Colony of Crandenagur, India, conducted a series of experiments with the native fakirs, and then wrote a book describing the results. He said that the fakirs claimed that their phenomena was done by the spirits. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle said, "they claimed that these powers were handed down from time immemorial and traced back to the Chaldees."--The New Revelation, p. 29. Sorcery and magic in the form of modern spiritism has its headquarters in modern Babylon. See Rev. 16:13; 18:2.

The Place of Martyrdom. Verse 24. Here is further proof that Babylon is a symbolical and not a literal city. All the martyrs of all the ages have had their blood shed at the hands of Babylon. "All that have been slain upon the earth" (R.V.), or "all who have been put to death on the earth" (Weymouth), must include every martyred saint from Abel down to the end of the reign of sin. Here is further proof that Babylon embraces the entire history of the reign of sin. This explains the statement of Jesus recorded in Matt. 23:34-36. It has been the same cruel system and satanic spirit that has persecuted and slain the saints of God down through the ages. No wonder there will be a great celebration of rejoicing when Babylon meets her doom.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

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Victory Celebration. Rev. 19:1-3. The previous chapter pictured the awful doom of the Babylon family which includes the whole wicked world. The assurance was given that all of God's people will be called out of Babylon and will escape her plagues. In this chapter we are given a picture of those who escape from the wrath of God, celebrating their victory over their foes. "After this" doubtless refers to the events previously described. After the prophet was shown the defeat and destruction of Babylon, the church of Satan, he was given a view of the church triumphant on the sea of glass celebrating their triumph. Several times in the Apocalypse, after the darkest scenes, we are given visions of the final triumph of Zion over her rival, Babylon the Great. See Zeph. 3:13-17. To Zion the assurance is given, "He hath cast out thine enemy." The enemy and rival of Zion down through the ages has been Babylon. See Zech. 2:7.

A Great Multitude. In vision John "heard the far echoing voices of a great multitude" (Weymouth), or "the shout of a great host" (Moffatt), or "the great shout from a vast throng in heaven" (20th C.N.T.), singing a song of triumph over Babylon and of praise to Him who gave them the victory. This is doubtless another view of the same multitude pictured in Rev. 7:7-9, and 15:2-4. It represents those who have gone through the last great crisis and obeyed the call to come out of Babylon during the loud cry of the last message. It is, therefore, the translated living harvest of those who have lived through the time of trouble and entered the kingdom without tasting of death. "Voice" is in the singular indicating perfect unity and harmony on the part of those who celebrate. What a pleasing contrast to the confusing noises of the many voices of Babel. What a relief will be the unity and harmony prevailing in this celebration after the weeping, wailing and lamentations of the kings, merchants, and the wicked host, as pictured in the previous chapter. Revelation is indeed a book of contrasts.

The Hallelujah Chorus. "Alleluia" or "hallelujah" is an expression of great joy. It is the Hebrew for "Praise ye the Lord." See Ps. 106:1,48. (Margin, "Heb. Hallelujah"). In this chapter is the only place the word is used in the New Testament and here it is used four times. The term is borrowed from the Psalms, fifteen of which begin and end with "hallelujah." Psalms 104-109 were sung chiefly during the feasts of the Passover and Tabernacles and together were known as "The Great Hallel." Most of the hallelujah psalms have to do with the triumph of the Israelites over the Egyptians, or to the culmination of this earth's history when modern Israel triumphs over all her enemies. How beautiful and thrilling will be this great alleluia chorus after the woeful lamentations which immediately precede it. Here is where Handel received much of his inspiration when he produced the "Hallelujah Chorus" of his Oratorio, "The Messiah." He spent much time in meditation in an endeavor to reproduce in his mind the whole scene with the joy and gladness of the glorified as they sing of their triumph. He surely was given "a heavenly vision" which strengthens his claim of being divinely inspired. This great music production was completed in 1741 A.D. It is a fact that much of the finest, and most lofty, sublime, and inspiring sacred music was produced during the great Reformation period when the world and church were passing through great spiritual conflicts.

Songs of Experience. The songs of the Bible are more than mere melodies. They are also messages expressing profound thoughts and spiritual sentiments. They are born of experience and were composed to commemorate great events and victories in the history of the church militant. The creation of this world was celebrated and commemorated by a song first sung by the angels and unfallen beings. See Job 38:4-7. The victory of Israel at the Red Sea was celebrated by the composition and singing of the song of Moses. See Ex. 15. This song will be repeated by the Israel of God who triumph in the closing crisis. See Rev. 15:2,3. The Psalms of David and other sweet singers of ancient Israel were produced from the experiences of the authors and their people. The birth of Christ was celebrated by an appropriate song sung by the angelic chorus over the hills of Judea. The Calvary victory of Christ can never be forgotten or grow old because of its everlasting commemoration by the song of the Lamb. The songs sung during the antitypical Feast of Tabernacles or Home-coming will be meaningful and impressive because they grow out of the experiences of those who take part in them.

Heart Music. The songs of the redeemed will not come from the lips only as do so many of the songs of this earth. True music is the outward expression of an inward experience. The only songs and sermons worth hearing come out of the heart and are the results of a living experience. Other music may be beautiful in harmony and perfect in technique, but because there is no spiritual message or appeal to the heart it is "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Music is the language of the heart and unless the heart speaks there is no music worthy of the name. The skillfully played instruments of music and the melodious songs of the highly trained Levitical choir of the ancient Hebrews became an offense to God when the music became formal and mechanical. "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from Me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." Amos 5:21-23. In the ears of the Lord mechanical music that does not come out of a spiritual experience is a mere noise.

Purpose of Celebration. The great celebration here pictured is the response to the divine call recorded in Rev. 18:20. The praise breaks forth as soon as Babylon sinks to her doom and the righteous reach the sea of glass. The celebration over the fall and destruction of Babylon will be repeated after her final doom in the lake of fire. "And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever" (Verse 3). "Her destruction is not only fearful, but final" (Vaughn). When the redeemed get a view of Babylon from the viewpoint of heaven they are able to say, "True and righteous are His judgments." If God's threatened judgments against sinners seem cruel to us now, it is because of our limited vision of the character of sin. Some day we will see sin as it really is in the sight of God and then we will abhor it as He does.

Other Participants. Verses 4-6. Here is another "great multitude" who join in the celebration around the throne of God. This great host must represent the redeemed of all past ages; the resurrected gospel harvest. The "Amen" of the twenty-four elders indicates that the reign of sin is over and their mediatorial mission as assistant priests is finished. As the first-fruits of the unnumbered resurrected harvest they lead out in the

praise service, just as the 144,000, the first-fruits of the innumerable translated harvest, will doubtless lead out in the celebration by those who live through the final crisis as pictured in the first two verses. The voice from the throne is doubtless that of Christ who calls for universal thanksgiving on the part of all who fear God and who recognize the justice of His judgments upon the universal counterfeit system of Satan's religion. In the broad sense they too had gotten the victory over the beast and Babylon as both had existed down through the ages. All "glory, and honor, and power" will be given "unto the Lord our God." None of the participants in this great celebration will take any credit to themselves for victories gained or righteousness attained.

The Mighty Response. Verse 6. The hallelujah chorus of the redeemed swells to a fitting climax when every voice joins in a song of praise that rolls through the universe with the majesty and sound of "many waters" and of "mighty thunderings." The rendering of Handel's Messiah by a large chorus accompanied by a symphony orchestra, was described as follows: "After a brief death-like stillness the bass singers sang, 'For He shall reign for ever and ever.' Then the altos repeated it in a higher key. The tenors then lifted it as if to the skies and repeated it again. The sopranos as if inspired sang, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords.' In answer to the question, 'How long shall He reign?' with united voice came the response, 'For ever and ever, for ever and ever.' Then as if enraptured by the glory and inspiration of the occasion the entire chorus shouted, 'Hallelujah! Hallelujah!'" And yet such music can in no way compare with the reality itself when redemption is an accomplished fact and the saints unite in the rejoicings pictured in this apocalyptic vision.

Answered Prayer. The reason for the great rejoicing is given in the statement, "for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," or "for the Lord God has become King" (Weymouth). It is the final and complete answer to the prayers of God's people down through the ages, "Thy kingdom come." At last the family on earth is united with the family in heaven, and the weary pilgrims have reached their eternal home. The soldiers of the cross have finished their earthly warfare and are welcomed home to celebrate their triumph. Then the blood-washed throng will cast their glittering crowns at the feet of Christ and praise Him for His Calvary victory. In connection with this great antitypical Feast of Tabernacles will take place the impressive scene of the meeting of the two Adams, when the second Adam restores to the first Adam his long lost family and dominion. See G. C. 647,648.

The Marriage of the Lamb. Verse 7. Here is the chief reason for the vast gathering and the glorious celebration. The rejoicing partakes of the nature of wedding festivities. It is the occasion of the final and eternal union of Christ, the Bridegroom, and the church, His Bride. The fall of Babylon was an important preliminary event in preparation for heaven's great bridal day. The previous chapter pictures the doom of the daughter of Babylon with her marriage festivals accompanied by music and dancing. In this chapter is pictured the triumphant Lamb of God and His Bride with their marriage and wedding festivities. Christ had long loved and wooed His Bride and had often been separated from her. His rival sought her affections and allegiance and often seemed on the verge of success. But Christ finally wins her whole heart and devotion. Long and patiently had He waited and finally the wedding day arrives. He comes to earth to receive her unto Himself and takes her to the home He had prepared for her during

the time of their separation. See John 14:1-3. He presents her to His Father "with exceeding joy" and the Father accepts her and loves her "as He loves His Son." The wedding and wedding banquet and festivities follow.

What Constitutes a Marriage? The question is sometimes asked as to just when takes place the union between Christ and His people that is symbolized by marriage. A marriage is never completed in a single event or act. It is the result of a whole series of relationships that finally culminate in complete union. The public marriage and wedding festivities celebrate the end of a series of steps leading to the complete union when separations are no more, and when the bridegroom takes his bride to the home he has prepared. The same is true in our union with Christ. The uniting of our hearts with His in a covenant of love is a process composed of many steps and events either one of which could properly be symbolized by marriage. In an individual sense we are married to Christ at the time of our new birth or conversion. Baptism is sometimes called the marriage ceremony that unites us to Christ. Each successive step taken by Christ in His atoning and mediatorial work, bringing us into a closer relationship with Him, could be called a marriage. But there must be a final act which climaxes this process of at-one-ment when all separations are over and Christ and His church are united forever in their everlasting home. This is the event described in this verse and divinely called "the marriage of the Lamb."

Scriptural Symbol. Marriage is the closest union and most joyful relationship that can exist between human beings. It is therefore an appropriate symbol of the union between Christ and His people and is thus used throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Isa. 54:5,6; Mark 2:19,20; 2 Cor. 11:2, are samples of scores of texts that might be read. One entire book, the Song of Solomon, deals with the union between Christ and His people in this symbolical sense. "Christ honored the marriage relation by making it also the symbol of the union between Him and His redeemed ones. He Himself is the Bridegroom; the bride is the church, of which, as His chosen one, He says, 'Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.'" (M.H. 356). "In both the Old and New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people. To the mind of Jesus the gladness of the wedding festivities pointed forward to the rejoicing of that day when He shall bring home His bride to the Father's house, and the redeemed with the Redeemer shall sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb. . .When the vision of the heavenly things was granted to John the apostle, he wrote," (then is quoted Rev. 19:6-9).--The Desire of Ages, p. 151. See also Great Controversy, 381; M. B. 100.

The Holy City. In Rev. 21:9,10 "the bride, the Lamb's wife" is said to be "that great city, the new Jerusalem." Is this a contradiction of the many other texts which declare clearly that the church is the bride of Christ? All through the ages the church of God has been called "Zion" and "Jerusalem" because that city was so long the home and headquarters of God's people, and because the New Jerusalem will be the home and capital city of the church triumphant through all eternity. Because the church and her home are inseparable they are called by the same name. We often speak of the place of worship as "the church" when literally it is not the church at all but rather the home and meeting place of the church. The word church means "an assembly" of "the called" or "chosen." Likewise the

church of Satan is called "Babylon, that great city," because the counterfeit system of religion with which he has deceived the world had its origin after the flood in the city of Babylon and that city was long the headquarters of the false church. The two are inseparable. In speaking of the New Jerusalem as the bride of Christ, Dr. Seiss says: "It is called the Bride, because it embraces the Bride, and because it is the Bride's everlasting home and residence." "The ancient saints looked for a city whose maker and builder is God. That city John saw and describes in a subsequent chapter. That city was shown him as the Bride, the Lamb's wife, so called on account of those who inhabit and dwell in it."--The Apocalypse, Vol. 3, pp. 222,229. A city is not a city without both the inhabitants and the houses in which they live. Hence, the city and its inhabitants may be designated by the same name.

The Preparation. Our text declares that "His wife hath made herself ready," or "prepared herself" (Douay). This statement indicates that the church has a part to act in the preparation for the coming of the Bridegroom. "In Eph. 5:25 the preparation of the Bride is represented as the act of Christ. Here the complementary truth comes into sight: effort is demanded on the part of Christians" (Swete). "Prepare to meet thy God" is the call of the gospel message. The preparation necessary is described in verse 8. The wedding garment is provided by the Bridegroom, but the bride must put it on. That is the way in which she makes herself ready. The beautiful wedding robe symbolized by "fine linen, clean and white," is declared to be "the righteousness of saints," or "the justification of saints" (Douay). It is the acceptance of the Laodicean message which proclaims the glorious truth of righteousness by faith which clothes the church of Christ in the wedding garments that are "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." See Rev. 3:18; Eph. 5:25-27. The robe of Christ's righteousness is the wedding garment and it represents a life of perfect obedience to the law of God which under the new covenant is written in the heart and mind through the indwelling of Christ through the Spirit. See Deut. 6:25; Ps. 119:172; Isa. 51:7,8; Rom. 8:1-4; Heb. 8:10-12; 2 Cor. 3:2,3. See C.O.L. 310-312. "Righteousness is purity of heart and rectitude of life; it is conformity of both heart and life to divine law" (Webster).

Wedding Garment a Gift. "To her was granted" indicates that the bride makes herself ready by permitting Christ to make her ready. That the wedding garment is not made or prepared by the bride is also evident from the fact that she is to buy it of Christ "without money and without price." See Rev. 3:18. Without Christ the church could not make herself ready, and without her love and consent Christ could not make her ready. She works out her own salvation by permitting Christ to work in her "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12,13). A Christian can only work out in conduct what Christ has worked into the character. Adam and Eve attempted to make fig-leaf garments that would cover their nakedness, but the "girdles" or "aprons" were not sufficient to cover their sins in the presence of God. He then provided garments to cover them. "No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen-dress can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul....This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us."--Christ's Object Lessons, p. 311.

Beautiful Garments. In Isa. 52:1 the coverings of saints are called "beautiful garments." The wedding garment of the bride of Christ is symbolized in our text by a robe made of "fine linen, shining and spotless" (Weymouth), or "glittering and white" (Douay). The Jews and other ancient people used three kinds of linen. The first was the ordinary linen worn by the priests and Levites in their ordinary work. The "fine linen" was used in the curtains of the sanctuary and to make garments for the high priest for his daily duties. They were "garments of glory and beauty." But the choicest of all was the very fine linen which was glistening white and of dazzling appearance. This was worn by kings and high priests on important occasions. It was symbolic of great joy and triumph. It was worn by David when the ark was brought to Jerusalem; by the priests and Levites on the occasion of the dedication of the temple; and by Mordecai when he became prime minister. See 1 Chron. 15:27; 2 Chron. 5:12; Esther 8:15. See also Mark 9:3. Hebrew and Greek students tell us that this is the kind of linen indicated in our text.

The Marriage Banquet. Verse 9. "Marriage banquet" (Moffatt). As soon as Christ presents His bride to the Father and the request recorded in John 17:24 is granted, the marriage is consummated and the wedding supper or marriage banquet begins. See E.W. 19. The statement is made to the prophet, "Write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." "Blessed are those who receive an invitation" (Weymouth). The invitation to attend this marriage and banquet comes to all who hear the gospel message. "Many are called, but few are chosen" because only the few are willing to make the necessary preparation. See Matt. 22:1-14. In the broadest sense the guests make up the bride or church. "In her collective capacity the Church is the Bride; individually her members are the guests" (The Devotional Commentary). It may be that in a special sense the 144,000 make up the bride here pictured as they are to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. 14:4). This will not be true of the entire church. If this is true all others would be reckoned as guests. This symbolic wedding and wedding festivities will be the greatest celebration of rejoicing in the history of the universe and to it all are invited who will put on the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness. This celebration will immediately follow the second advent of Christ and His return to the New Jerusalem with His bride, the church, and will be repeated or continued after the lake of fire has destroyed the wicked and renovated the earth and it has been brought back to its original Edenic beauty to be the eternal home of the redeemed. The command to "Write" occurs twelve times in the Apocalypse and is always repeated just before or after some important announcement of vital interest to the church. It indicates a revelation that the church must not forget. How can this glorious scene be forgotten by those who read and study it. Surely this appeal should wring from our repentant hearts the answer, "O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

True Object of Worship. Rev. 19:10. John was so enraptured by the glory of the vision of the marriage and marriage banquet of the Lamb and the great thanksgiving celebration of the antitypical feast of tabernacles, that he fell prostrate at the feet of the angel of prophecy in an attitude of worship. Gabriel refused to receive worship because he himself was also a creature. He told the prophet to "worship God." Only members of the Godhead are worthy of worship, and all creature worship is idolatry. How different the spirit and attitude of the two angels, Lucifer and Gabriel. Lucifer craved worship to the extent that he offered Christ this world and all its glory and dominion for one act of worship. The answer of the Creator to the creature was: "Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." See Luke 4:5-8. Prophecy is the exclusive prerogative of God. All prophecy is therefore His testimony. As Jesus is the spokesman of the Godhead and therefore "the Word of God," the writings of all the prophets is "the testimony of Jesus" who is "the faithful and true Witness." The Holy Spirit, through Gabriel the angel of prophecy, revealed the visions of the Apocalypse to the prophet. Gabriel refused to take any credit to himself.

A New Scene. Verse 11. After describing the thanksgiving celebration of the redeemed before the throne of God, and the wedding festivities of the Lamb and His Bride, a new scene in the vision describes the event that must precede the triumphal rejoicings. The Bridegroom must return and complete His conquest of the rebel world and destroy the enemies of the church. It is for this reason that the advent of the Son of God is given a military aspect. On "a white horse" He rides forth "conquering and to conquer." The horse is symbolic of strength, swiftness, daring, and endurance. White is the symbol of victory. On the occasion of a Roman triumph the victorious general and his staff rode snow-white horses and wore the white toga. The imagery here may be borrowed from this well-known custom of the times. The picture is that of a victorious general leading a victorious army in a war of conquest. This is a striking contrast to Christ's entry into Jerusalem riding on the colt of an ass. The white horse and rider of the first seal represents the success of the church militant at the beginning of the Christian era as the soldiers of the cross went forth for the conquest of the world, while here is pictured the last charge of the forces of righteousness against the hosts of evil.

A Righteous War. White is also symbolic of purity, justice, and righteousness. The Rider is therefore the "Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war." Because His cause is just the conflict is a holy war conducted in harmony with the principles of justice and righteousness. These principles have been almost unknown in the wars between the nations of this world. Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, and the other great war-heroes and conquerors, were willing to sacrifice millions of lives on the altar of Mars, and to bankrupt and destroy nations in order to gain personal glory and self-aggrandizement. For the most part these men have been greedy, selfish, ambitious and cruel. But Christ fights in a just cause and with an unselfish motive; not for the glory of conquest, but to put down a revolt and to destroy the kingdom of a cruel and tyrannical despot. To His church Jesus is the minister of righteousness and salvation and is the Lamb of God and the Priest of the Sanctuary. He is both

the Victim of sacrifice and the Minister of reconciliation. But to the enemies of righteousness He is a mounted warrior, the minister of righteous retribution.

His Blazing Eyes. Verse 12. A clear vision is necessary to righteous judgment. The piercing, penetrating eyes of Christ see everything. His omniscient gaze searches all depths and looks through all masks and penetrates and understands all mysteries. Nothing escapes the vision of the all-wise Rider of the white horse as He leads His army to a righteous victory. His eyes not only see everything, but they blaze with righteous indignation against sin and those who refuse to separate from it. His eyes blaze with anger that is hot and an indignation that is consuming. The symbol is that of a broad and deep vision, a penetrating intelligence, a fervent love for righteousness, and a burning hatred of iniquity. He loves righteousness with a fervent devotion, and He hates iniquity with a consuming fire. Christ has "a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself." This is because He has a character that can never be fully known by others. Name is the designation of character. "Only the Son of God can understand the mystery of His own Being" (Swete). The same is said of the "new name" of every redeemed person. The promise is that each saint will be given "a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17).

The Many Crowns. "Many kingly crowns" (Weymouth). A crown is the symbol of royalty and sovereignty. Christ not only returns to earth as a conquering general but also as the "KING OF KINGS." The many crowns or diadems not only indicate complete sovereignty, but also victory in many battles and the conquest of many nations. It was the ancient custom for conquering kings to wear the diadems of their vanquished foes. When King David defeated the Ammonites and captured their king, he placed the Ammonite crown on his own head. See 2 Sam. 12:30. When Ptolemy entered Antioch he placed two crowns on his head, the crown of Egypt and the crown of Asia. See 1 Macc. 11:13. The Pope has fourteen crowns for various occasions and he claims to be the king of kings. At his coronation the triple crown is placed on his head to indicate his sovereignty over the spiritual, temporal, and infernal regions. "The Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as King of heaven, of earth, and of hell." He is, therefore, the "supreme Emperor and King of Kings"--See "Verbum Papa." The red dragon has seven diadems upon his seven heads, and the scarlet colored beast has ten crowned horns. The sovereignty of Christ over the conquered kingdom of Satan will be complete and eternal.

A Bloody Conflict. Verse 13. In the ancient mode of warfare the soldiers fought hand to hand and the victor often emerged from the battle covered with wounds and his garments sprinkled with his own and his enemy's blood. In Isa. 63:1-4, Christ is described as emerging victoriously from two bloody conflicts. In the conquest of sin at His first advent, Jesus had to tread "the winepress alone" and He came from the ordeal with garments dyed red with blood. The second battle is at "the day of vengeance" and the year of "recompense" at His second advent. The bloody sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane, the scourging and crown of thorns applied by the soldiers of Pilate, and the cruel nails of the crucifixion, stained with His own blood the garments of Jesus. Contrary to the earthly method, "Christ overcomes His enemies by shedding, not their blood, but His own" (Cambridge Bible). But in the final conflict when He tramples the wicked in His fury His raiment is dyed by the blood of His enemies. He says: "I

will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." Not only is Christ crowned with many crowns, but He also has many names. "And His name is called The Word of God." It is estimated that Christ is designated by more than 250 names and titles in the Scriptures. Three of these names are given in this vision besides the mention of the one that is known to Him alone.

The Conquering Army. Verse 14. The armies or "troops of heaven" (Moffatt), doubtless have special reference to the angelic host of whom Christ is the Captain. Swete suggests that those who follow Christ "upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean," must represent those who have had no personal experience in the conflict with sin and death. He says: "Whereas their Captain is arrayed in a cloak sprinkled with blood, they are clad in pure white. He only has had experience of mortal conflict; for them bloodshed and death are impossible." But it seems more reasonable to believe that the army of the Lord must include all who engage in the warfare with Babylon and the dragon and the beast and the false prophet, just as "the host of heaven" include "the saints of the most High" in Dan. 7:25; 8:10-12. In Eph. 6:10-17 all Christians are pictured as soldiers clothed in "the armour of God" and fighting against "wicked spirits in high places." The army of Christ must include all of "the called, and chosen, and faithful" who share in His conflicts and triumph. See Rev. 17:14. The "fine linen, white and clean" must be the same as "the fine linen, clean and white" with which the church or bride of Christ is arrayed at the marriage of the Lamb as pictured in verses 7 and 8. The cleanness and whiteness of the raiment is the result of "the blood of the Lamb." Rev. 7:13,14. The robe of Christ's righteousness is not only the wedding garment of the church; it is also the armour and uniform of the soldiers of the cross. "Clad in the armour of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict" (P.K. 725). The picture is that of a victorious king leading his conquering army. It is the charge of the light brigade. The scene doubtless includes the two advents of Christ at the beginning and close of the millennium. In the latter the saints come with Christ and assist in the execution of the judgment. See Ps. 149:5-9; Jude 14,15.

The Mighty Weapon. Verse 15. This is the same sharp two-edged sword mentioned in Rev. 1:16. It is the sharp, quick and powerful sword of the Spirit. See Hab. 4:12. The same weapon that pricks the heart and conscience and that cuts sin out of the character, will also slay those who refuse to confess and surrender. "It is written" was the weapon used by Christ in meeting the attacks of the enemy in the wilderness of temptation. In that mighty conflict Jesus unsheathed the sword of the Spirit and put to flight the prince of devils. By this same weapon the wicked will be slain at the second advent. See verse 21; Isa. 11:4; 2 Thess. 2:8.

Complete Sovereignty. "A rod of iron" is the symbol of the complete sovereignty, permanency, solidarity, and uncompromising authority of the Roman Empire that was then ruling the world. This symbol is also applied to the reign of Christ in Ps. 2:8,9; Rev. 2:27. The rule and sovereignty of Christ is not that of a dictator and tyrant. It is rather that of an Oriental shepherd over his sheep. "And He will Himself be their Shepherd" (Weymouth). "And He will shepherd them with an iron flail" (Moffatt). The rulership of the eastern shepherd over his sheep is even more absolute than was that of the Roman emperors. But it is the authority of love rather than physical

force. Love is far more powerful than tyranny. It is more permanent because it is based on love and kindness rather than fear and might. Such is the sovereignty of Christ over His people. Love will be the ruling principle of His kingdom. Napoleon declared that all of the kingdoms of this world have been temporary because they were founded upon physical force, but that the kingdom of Christ will be eternal because it was founded upon love. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Heb. 1:8. See also Isa. 9:6,7; 1 Cor. 15:24,25.

His Royal Title. Verse 16. "While He is known to Himself by a name hidden from all others, and to the churches as 'The Word of God,' He has a third name which all can read" (Swete). This is the title of royalty. It must therefore be universally known. It is, therefore, written where all can see and read it. The thigh is the place where the general carries his sword and Christ is thus described in Ps. 45:3-6. The name of Christ is doubtless written on the vesture that covers His thigh. It may have been on His girdle or belt. "Upon His cloak" (Concordant). Generals sometimes had their names written upon their outer garment or military cloak. The high priest carried his name on his vesture as did also many of the ancient kings. At His first advent Jesus came as the "Lamb of God," the sin-Bearer of the world. When He returns in power and great glory it will be as the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." It is for this reason that He wears "many crowns." The revolted world has been recaptured and the Conqueror, having trampled "all enemies under His feet" and "put down all rule and all authority and power," will "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father" (1 Cor. 15:24,25). The next verse declares that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." The death of the great rebel prince of this world in "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" or the lake of fire will bring an end to sin and death in the very place where it began. The death of the once mighty Lucifer will also bring sin and death to an eternal end. Sin dies with its author and death comes to an end with the death of him who brought it into the universe. How cheering is the promise that sin shall have "an utter end" and that "affliction shall not rise up the second time" (Nahum 1:9). Never again will any part of the universe be under the sway of cruel and despotic rulers.

The Great Supper. Verses 17,18. Babylon had gathered to herself the spirits of demons and the wicked inhabitants of the earth like vultures to a carcass. She was the home and dwelling-place of every foul and unclean and hateful spiritual bird. Now the literal vultures and birds of prey are summoned by the decree of the heavenly watcher to eat the flesh and drink the blood of her followers. The angel herald stands in the most public place known to man and makes his dreadful announcement where he can be seen and heard by all. The angel is "standing in the full light of the sun" (Weymouth) and he cries "with a loud voice." In the most conspicuous place in the heavens the angelic herald gives his terrible message to his vast audience. This is the same supper or banquet described in Eze. 39: 17-20.

The Two Banquets. This chapter pictures two great suppers or banquets. The first is called "the marriage supper of the Lamb," and the second, "the supper of the great God." Invitations are issued to each banquet and all must attend one or the other. All are invited to the first and those who

refuse the divine call to the marriage of the King's Son, must attend the supper of the great God where the guests will also be the victims. The accepting of the invitation to attend the wedding banquet of the Lamb and His bride is voluntary, but attendance at the banquet of the birds of prey is mandatory on all who refuse the invitation of mercy. In one sense the birds of prey are the invited guests, for they alone partake of the feast. To reject the invitation to attend the marriage of the King of kings is a very serious matter. It is worse still to accept the invitation and then neglect to put on the wedding garment provided by the royal host. See Matt. 22:1-14. The statement, "For many are called, but few are chosen," is a sad comment on the attitude of the human family toward the gospel. We have all been called, but will we be chosen? This is a life and death question that we alone can decide. Upon this decision rests our eternal destinies.

The Victims Identified. Verses 19-21. The kings that are under the dominion of the beast and that compose the government of Satan are described elsewhere. See Ps. 2:1-5; Rev. 16:13; 17:12-14. The beast and false prophet with the dragon are said to be the three great divisions of Babylon in Rev. 16:13,19. Mother Babylon with her family of harlot daughters and the kings of the earth with whom they have committed spiritual fornication are among the distinguished guests at the supper of the great God. They had long feasted and reveled in licentious pleasure and wanton luxury, and now they become the viands of the vulture festival. The gathering of the kings and nations of the earth "to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army," is accomplished through the agency of the spirits of demons and doubtless meets its fulfillment both before and after the millennium in the battles of Armageddon and Gog and Magog. They gather for the purpose of defeating the Son of God and His army of angels and saints and to overthrow His kingdom, but their anticipated victory is turned into a vulture carnival with themselves as the prey. We must not forget that the Apocalypse is a book of symbols and figurative language and that much of the language of this chapter is parabolic. This is especially true of the supper of the great God.

Enemies Captured. "And the Wild Beast was captured, and with him the false Prophet" (Weymouth). "Taken" or "captured" seems to indicate a frustrated effort to escape when all was lost. Long had they been at large among the inhabitants of the earth carrying on their work of deception and destruction. The criminals are at last captured and punished. The false prophet is here definitely identified with the two-horned beast of chapter 13, which deceived the world by false miracles and demanded that an image to the beast be made and worshiped. Catholicism and apostate Protestantism unite in an effort to compel the world to worship the beast and receive the mark of his character, and to oppose God's last warning message against apostasy and false worship and persecute the messengers. Now the tables turn and they receive their just rewards.

The Lake of Fire. It is at the close of the millennium that the beast and false prophet and all the enemies of God are cast into perdition or the lake of fire. See Rev. 17:8; 20:9,10,15. The statement that they "both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone," indicates that they continue to the end of the satanic reign as the agents of deception. It also proves conclusively that the same systems will exist again after the millennium. The prophet Daniel refers to the same event when he

said: "I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7:11). All prophetic descriptions of the day of God's wrath and indignation must include His judgments upon sin and sinners from the close of probation to and including the lake of fire. The great satanic powers that have led captive and burned at the stake millions of God's saints, will eventually be led captive and burned with fire. The penalty of the law of divine justice and retribution will be fully executed upon all transgressors.

Slaughter of the Remnant. Verse 21. At the second advent of Christ the wicked will be slain by the brightness of His coming. See 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2:8; Jer. 25:33. Our text seems to indicate that many of the inhabitants of the earth who lose eternal life were not directly connected with the beast and false prophet and have not taken part, therefore, in active warfare against God and His people and for this reason will not be held as responsible in the judgment. Does this mean that these will receive their full amount of punishment at the second advent of Christ and will therefore not be resurrected at the close of the millennium and then destroyed in the lake of fire? Obadiah 15,16 is thus interpreted in Early Writings, p. 276. Would not this satisfy the justice of God in regard to those who are but little above the animals in intelligence and opportunity? Or does our text refer to those scattered over the earth who do not come up to attack the celestial city and the camp of the saints? Are these the "remnant" who will be slain by the sword that proceeds out of the mouth of Christ rather than in the lake of fire?

Two Remnants. Not only are there two suppers or banquets, one of which we will attend, but there are also two remnants. One is described in Rev. 12:17 and the other in the verse under consideration. It will be an honor to be numbered with the first who will be honored guests at the marriage banquet of the Lamb. The other remnant will be slaughtered as food for the birds of prey at the supper of the great God. To which remnant will you belong when the two suppers are served? Will you be a part of the remnant of the saints of God who live in the last days and who go triumphantly through the final crisis, or will you be a part of the beast or false prophet who are cast alive into the lake of fire, or their remnant who will be slain with the sword of the KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS? That decision must be made now. It will be too late when the final summons are given to come to the feasts.

THE CAPTURE AND IMPRISONMENT OF SATAN

38

Satan Captured. Rev. 20:1-7. "And he overpowered the dragon" (Fenton). "And he seized the devil" (Emphatic Diaglott). Chapters 17 and 18 picture the judgment of God upon Babylon the Great, chapter 19 describes the capture and punishment of the beast and false prophet, and here is revealed the good news that Satan himself, "the prince of this world," and the great rebel against the government of heaven, is to be captured, imprisoned, and punished. Satan is to be securely bound with a great chain, thrust into a pit or dungeon, and the door closed, locked and sealed so that it cannot be tampered with or opened so that the prisoner can escape. Satan has been the controlling spirit of Babylon, the beast and the false prophet. They have been his agents in making war on God and His church. Four names are applied to the great rebel to describe his evil character. He is the "dragon" in his relation to earthly powers through which he has ruled the world and persecuted the church; he is "that old serpent" because of his subtlety and power to deceive and beguile the human race; he is "the Devil" because he is a malignant slanderer and liar, and the father of lies; and he is "Satan" because he is the adversary and accuser of saints. He was the first to sin, and he will be the last to die as the result of sin. As far as sinners or rebels are concerned, Satan is "the first and the last," the "beginning and the ending."

The Conqueror. The mighty angel who descends from heaven and arrests and imprisons Satan is doubtless Michael, the Archangel. See 1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:22-28. It was Michael who defeated Lucifer in the first battle around the throne of God in heaven. See Rev. 12:7-9. As Emmanuel, the "man child," Christ again defeated the great rebel during His earthly visit in the likeness of sinful flesh. It was Michael, the Archangel, who volunteered to redeem man and restore the dominion and sovereignty of this world to its rightful owner. It was through His humiliation and death that the destruction of the author of sin and death was made possible. See Heb. 2:14,15. He who began the task of wresting the lost dominion from the great rebel, and fallen man from his power, will complete the work and will not delegate its climaxing stages to a mere created being. Christ cannot deliver up the kingdom of this world to the Father, and put down and place under His feet all opposing rule and authority and power till Satan's career is brought to an end and the great arch-rebel punished. It was Christ Himself who enters "the strong man's house" to "bind the strong man" so that He can "spoil his house" and "his goods," as pictured in Matt. 12:25-29. Satan is said to be the "strong man" of this parable.

The Millennium. The thousand year period which is mentioned six times in the first seven verses of this chapter is known as "the millennium." The word millennium is derived from two Latin words, mille, meaning "a thousand," and annus or annum, meaning "years." Any period of a thousand years is a millennium, just as ten years are a "decade," and one hundred years are a "century." There have already been about six millenniums of the reign of sin, but the term is applied especially to the seventh thousand-year period during the time Satan is bound and imprisoned. For six millenniums the great arch-rebel and criminal has been at large leading men captive almost at his will and disrupting the peace and harmony of the universe. His arrest, imprisonment and punishment will take place in this world where he has done most of his mischief. This is in accordance with the rules of justice in regard to all criminals.

Binding of Satan. As the result of the binding of Satan he can "deceive the nations no more" for a thousand years. There are those who teach that this binding has already taken place and that we are now living, therefore, in the millennium. If what has been happening during recent years is a sample of the long expected millennial reign we should pray fervently to be delivered from what remains. For six millenniums Satan and his angels have been busy night and day causing sin, sickness, strife, warfare, and death. As a roaring lion Satan has been going to and fro in the earth seeking whom he may devour. His reign has filled the earth with sorrow and ruin. In Isa. 14:16,17, the questions are asked concerning the great rebel: "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?" These questions will be asked by the loyal universe when Satan is imprisoned and "brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Verse 15). When the career of this great trouble-maker is brought to a standstill by his capture and imprisonment, surely the event will be of such tremendous significance to the world that it will be universally known.

The Binding Chain. The millennium will be ushered in by a series of events of the greatest magnitude. These events will constitute a chain of circumstances which bind the great rebel so that his deceptive work ceases for a thousand years. The use of a chain in this symbolic sense is very familiar both in the Scriptures and in everyday life. In Jude 6 the evil angels are said to be "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." A similar expression is found in 1 Peter 2:4. And yet these angels are not bound with literal chains. They are bound over to the judgment which they cannot escape. A prisoner looking at the iron bars that shut him in, said: "These are not real; they are not the things that hold me here. My being here today is the result of a long chain of events which I alone have forged." If it had not been for the chain of events that led him deeper and deeper into crime the gates would have opened to him, or would never have closed behind him. We often speak of a business being "tied up" because of a chain of circumstances. This is the kind of chain that binds Satan in the pit or dungeon.

The First Event. The first link in the chain of events that ends Satan's deceiving career for a thousand years is the coming of the angel from heaven, which represents the coming of Christ, the Archangel. While Satan's work is restricted before the close of probation he has at no time been bound. Between the close of probation and the second coming of Christ he experiences his greatest freedom in the rulership of this world. The Holy Spirit will have finished His work and the angels will then cease to hold in check the winds of war and human passion. With the divine restraint removed Satan makes the final demonstration that satisfies the universe that as a ruler he is an utter failure. The period of unrestrained control ends with the second coming of Christ who alone has the right and power to arrest, chain, imprison, and destroy the great enemy. This right and power is the result of Christ's Calvary victory. It was through His incarnation and death that the end of sin and the death of its author has been made possible.

The Righteous Resurrected. The second event in the chain that binds Satan is the resurrection of the righteous dead which takes place at the second coming of Christ. See 1 Cor. 15:21-23; 1 Thess. 4:16-18. The Scriptures

teach clearly that there will be two resurrections, "both of the just and unjust," "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." See Acts 24:15; John 5:28,29. In 1 Thess. 4:16 we are told that when Christ returns "the dead in Christ shall rise first," or come up in the first resurrection. In Rev. 20:4-6, this is called "the first resurrection" and it is clearly stated that all who have a part in it will be "blessed and holy" because on them "the second death hath no power," and they will live and reign with Christ during the thousand years. It is also plainly stated that "the rest of the dead," which must be the wicked, are not raised till the end of the thousand years. This places the two resurrections a thousand years apart.

Removal of Righteous. The third event in the chain is the removal of the living and resurrected saints from the earth for one thousand years. At His second advent, Christ does not touch this earth but remains in the heavens above the earth while His angel reapers gather the elect who are "caught up to meet the Lord in the air." See Ps. 50:3-5; John 13:36--14:3; Matt. 24:30,31; 1 Thess. 4:16-18. The removal of the righteous from the earth places them beyond the reach of Satan and his temptations. The teaching that there will be a secret translation or "rapture" has no foundation whatever in the Scriptures. The second advent is the reunion time and then and not before will the righteous be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" where they will "ever be with the Lord," and with each other. The saints do not ascend to their eternal home one at a time when they die. They all go home together at the second advent of Christ. How comforting is the divine plan. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Destruction of Wicked. The fourth link in the chain of events that ends Satan's deceiving career for a millennium is the destruction of all the living wicked by the sword of Christ's mouth, or the glory and brightness of His coming. See Isa. 11:4; Luke 17:26-30; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2:8. The momentary flash of divinity through humanity in the Garden of Gethsemane caused the mob to fall backward to the ground. The approach of one angel to the tomb of Joseph the morning of Christ's resurrection caused the Roman guard to fall as dead men to the ground. When Christ returns in all His glory and with the glory of the Father and all the holy angels, the wicked cannot look upon the scene and live. They call for the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face and glory of the Lamb. The dazzling splendor attending the coming of the King of Glory will consume the wicked. Only those who become accustomed to beholding the glory of Christ's character now can look upon the glory of His person then.

The Earth Desolated. The fifth event of the series is the desolation of the earth which is the result of the coming of Christ and His judgments. See Isa. 13:6,9-13; Jer. 4:23-28. The language used by the prophet Jeremiah in describing the earth during the millennium is the same used in Gen. 1:2, indicating that the earth will be brought back to the same condition it was in when first created and before it was made into Eden. The word void means "empty, vacant, without inhabitant." "Desolate and empty" (Swedish). It is the great earthquake and hailstones in connection with the seventh plague and the coming of Christ that destroys the proud cities of earth and leaves the whole land desolate and empty. See Rev. 16:17-21. The promise is that the Lord will "not make a full end." His purpose will be carried out and the earth inhabited, but not during the millennium. See also Zeph. 1:2,3; 3:6.

The Prison. Verse 3. "The abyss" (R.V.). The word "abyss" means "a bottomless gulf, a mass of waters, a pit." The same word is used in the Septuagint for "deep" in Gen. 1:2. The earth in its original state was desolate and without inhabitants. It was the "abyss" or "bottomless pit." (In Rev. 9:1-3, the desolate wastes of Arabia are called the abyss or bottomless pit.) During the millennium the earth again will be brought back to a chaotic condition which will be the prison house of Satan for a thousand years. The world, cursed by his cruel reign and over which he had so long held dominion as its prince, god and ruler, now becomes his prison. With the wicked all dead, and the righteous in heaven out of his reach, Satan will be confined to the earth where he will "deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years are fulfilled." The earth in its desolate state will be a dreary and lonesome place in which Satan and his angels will be compelled to spend their long vacation. In it "there is no man" and "none inhabitant." The "cities are destroyed" and the streets lie waste and "none passeth by." The earth is covered with the skeletons of the wicked which are scattered over the earth where they were struck dead by the brightness of Christ's advent and were "neither gathered nor buried." See Jer. 25:33. The stillness and lonesomeness of a depopulated city is almost unbearable, as all who have ever visited a "ghost city" will bear testimony. When the Armistice was signed and the World War came suddenly to an end, the city of Dupont, Tennessee, was a thriving city with 40,000 inhabitants. The powder plant was immediately closed and the people all moved away. It gave those who visited this vacant city some idea of the condition of all the cities of the world during the millennium, except that they will then all be in ruins. The earth will then be a vast "no-man's-land."

There Will Be Peace. Many are looking forward to the millennium as a time when all wars will cease and peace will reign. There will be universal peace on earth, but it will be the peace of the cemetery. The cemetery is called "the acre of peace" in some parts of the world. During the millennium the earth will be one vast cemetery containing the bodies of all the wicked who have ever lived. "There is no peace saith my God to the wicked," but with the wicked all dead, the silence and peace of death will prevail. During the thousand years the earth will be removed out of its system and orbit into outer darkness where it will reel through space like a drunken man. See Isa. 13:13; 24:19,20.

Confined to the Earth. Up until the millennium, Satan and his angels are permitted to go almost anywhere they desire throughout the universe. But when Christ comes, the great rebel will be "shut up" on the earth which becomes his prison for a thousand years. With "the key of the bottomless pit," the great Conqueror locks Satan in the earthly prison so that he cannot leave it. A "seal" is placed upon the door of the dungeon so that the criminal cannot escape. In this desolate earth the devil and his angels are confined and secured until the great judgment passes sentence. "Here is to be the home of Satan with his evil angels for a thousand years. Limited to the earth, he will not have access to other worlds, to tempt and annoy those who have never fallen. It is in this sense that he is bound; there is none remaining, upon whom he can exercise his power. He is wholly cut off from his work of deception and ruin which for so many centuries has been his sole delight."--G.C. 659. It is very evident that before his incarceration in this prison, Satan was not confined to this earth but with his angels could visit other worlds and annoy their inhabitants.

The General Judgment. The general judgment of the wicked including Satan and his angels takes place during the millennium. See verse 4. "Who were allowed to judge" (Moffatt). "Authority was given them to act as judges" (20th C.N.T.). "They were constituted judges" (Alford). It is during this time that "the saints shall judge the world" and "shall judge angels." See 1 Cor. 6:2,3. The wicked will be judged by a jury of their fellowmen who know what sin is and can therefore render just decisions. It is during this time that the wicked are judged so that they can be rewarded "according to their works." See Rev. 22:12. The righteous will also assist in the execution of the judgment. See Ps. 149:7-9; Jude 14,15.

The Tables Turn. In this great heavenly tribunal those who have been unjustly judged in this world will sit in judgment on their former judges. Paul will be a judge and among those who are judged by him will be Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and Nero. Jesus will then be the Judge and Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod will receive sentence "according to their works." Satan and his angels must then receive sentence from those whom they had so long tempted, harassed and persecuted. Those who live through the closing crisis will be especially qualified to judge because of the experiences through which they pass. This whole picture of the general judgment of the wicked and evil angels is summed up in Isa. 24:1,3-5,19-23. "Found wanting" (Margin). "Suffer their punishment" (Swedish). The judgment takes place in the New Jerusalem while the earth is covered with darkness where Satan and his angels are confined in the "pit" or "dungeon" awaiting sentence. The remainder of the chapter pictures the execution of the sentence.

THE BATTLE OF GOG AND MAGOG

39

Satan Liberated. Rev. 20:1-3,7. "Set at liberty a short time" (Weymouth). Just as surely as Satan is imprisoned for a thousand years during which time his work of deception ceases, he is liberated again at the close of that period and again deceives the nations. Any theory of the millennium that does not teach that Satan is released for a short time after being bound is untrue because unscriptural. Most millennial doctrines are too theoretical and beautiful to admit of the liberating of the great arch-rebel after he is once bound. "After many days" Satan and his angels are "visited" and set at liberty "for a little season" before the sentence of eternal death is executed. During the thousand years they have been judged by the righteous and "found wanting." See Isa. 24:1-5, 19-23. [Basing their evidence on Isa. 65:20, some believe that the "little season" will be 100 years, but this is probably a misinterpretation of the text. There seems to be no logical reason why a whole century should be required in the preparations for the battle of Gog and Magog.]

Character Unchanged. Verses 8,9. Satan's long and lonesome vacation in the empty and vacant earth makes no change in his character. He does not forget his cunning and deceptive arts. At the close of the millennium he is still controlled by the same rebellious spirit that actuated him before his imprisonment. He is the same war-lord who led the nations of the whole world to the battle of Armageddon. He is given an opportunity to demonstrate that the long period of idle reflection on his past career has brought no change in his attitude toward the divine administration. The terrible results of sin produce no "godly sorrow that leadeth to repentance." He is the same bitter enemy of God and His people, and at the very first opportunity he resumes his work of deception. Satan was bound by a series or chain of events, and another series of events releases him to his work of deception again.

The Third Advent. At the close of the millennium Christ returns to the earth again. This is really the third advent. The redeemed who have been with Him in heaven assisting in the work of the general judgment during the thousand years will return with Him to help execute the judgment. This advent is described in Jude 14,15. See also Ps. 149:7-9. At this time Christ comes all the way to the earth and His feet touch the very spot from whence He ascended after His first advent. See Zech. 14:4,5. As His feet touch the summit of the Mount of Olives the mountain spreads out into a great plain or level highlands on which the holy city, the New Jerusalem, descends. See Rev. 21:2,10. The New Jerusalem will be located where the old Jerusalem now stands.

Most Sacred Spot. Jerusalem and its environments constitute the most sacred spot on earth. This was long the headquarters of the church of God, and the capital of His only earthly kingdom. The Garden of Eden was located in that vicinity and was therefore the center of Adam's dominion or kingdom. There Abraham had his test of faith on Mount Moriah; there Jacob had his dream of the symbolic ladder connecting earth with heaven; there Solomon's temple was erected after the divinely given pattern; and there David's throne was located, which was also called "the throne of the Lord." At this place also Christ was born, and here He passed through the agony leading to His death, burial and resurrection. From that sacred spot Jesus

ascended into heaven to begin His mediatorial work in the sanctuary above, and to that same place He will descend and bring with Him the celestial city which will be the capital of the restored kingdom or dominion of Adam throughout the ages of eternity. The original purpose of God will then be carried out "as if man had never fallen" and the redeemed will gather in this center of the earth to worship the Creator from one Sabbath to another and from month to month to eat of the fruit of the tree of life. See Isa. 66:22,23. Although Satan and rebellion have delayed, they cannot disannul God's eternal purpose.

Resurrection of Wicked. The third event in the series and the chief one that releases Satan to his work of deception, is the resurrection of the wicked pictured in verse 5. If the removal of the wicked through death bound Satan so that he could not deceive for a thousand years, their resurrection will unbind him so that he can deceive again. It is estimated that more than 140,000,000,000 people have lived on the earth and the majority of them will be numbered with the wicked. As they come to life at the call of the Lifegiver in the resurrection of "the unjust" and "to shame and everlasting contempt," their thoughts resume the same current that ruled them before they died. Millions of them died on the fields of battle, thirsting for the blood of their fellowmen. They will arise to life with the same fighting instinct. Satan will find them a ready prey to his deceptions. They will readily respond to his plan to capture the holy city which will be the only obstacle to his ambition for world dominion.

Gog and Magog. Magog was one of the descendants of Japheth, the son of Noah, who was the ancestor of the northern nations. Gog and Magog seem to be terms representing "the nations" of the world, especially as used in this text. "Gog bears the earmarks of Russia. The names of her provinces are suggestive. It is generally agreed that the name and titles of the northern king should be rendered, 'Gog of the land of Magog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal' (Eze. 38:2, R.V.), and are conceded by Russian etymologists to be roots of derivations of Russia, Tobolsk, and Muscovy."--The Vision of Patmos, Davis, p. 284. Some believe that the name Gog represents Satan, the prince of this world, and Magog the land of Gog or this earth. In the Rabbinical writings Gog and Magog are reckoned as the enemies of the Messiah. "The terms 'Gog and Magog' comprehend all the faithless upon earth" (Charles). The fact that "the camp of the saints" and "the beloved city" are described as being two different things is proof that the city is not the church as some contend. In that case they would be the same.

The Great War Lord. Satan is the great war lord who has marshalled the nations of earth to all the bloody wars of human history. He is the moving spirit that gathers the nations to the battlefield of Armageddon, and he will be the commander-in-chief of the mighty armies that take part in the battle of Gog and Magog. In the armies that surround the New Jerusalem will be the greatest generals and warriors of all history. Alexander, Julius Caesar, Pompey, Hannibal, and Napoleon will doubtless contribute their military skill to the campaign. This is the same gathering of the nations to "make war with the Lamb" and "they that are with Him" described in Rev. 17:12-14; 19:19,20. It will be the war that ends all war over the supremacy of this world. The world will then forever be made safe for the kingdom of God. "Affliction shall not rise up the second time." Then Ps. 46:8-10 will be fulfilled: "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the

earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

The Great White Throne. Verses 11-13. White is the symbol of perfect righteousness and justice. The great Judge of the Universe is about to execute the final sentence against sin and sinner. "The earth and the heavens fled away" because they were unworthy to stand before the infinite holiness of the Eternal. When the wicked hosts are ready to make their attack on the celestial city and the camp of the saints, they are suddenly paralyzed by a scene of indescribable glory. "Far above the city, upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this throne sits the Son of God, and around Him are the subjects of His kingdom. The power and majesty of Christ no language can describe, no pen portray. . .Above the throne is revealed the cross; and like a panoramic view appear the scenes of Adam's temptation and fall, and the successive steps in the great plan of redemption. . .The whole wicked world stands arraigned at the bar of God, on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. These unrighteous ones have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them. It is now evident to all that the wages of sin is not noble independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, and death. The wicked see what they have forfeited by their life of rebellion."--The Great Controversy, pp. 665-668.

Coronation of Christ. "In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and heaven the final coronation of the Son of God takes place. And now, invested with supreme majesty and power, the King of kings pronounces sentence upon the rebels against His government, and executes justice upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people." "As if entranced the wicked have looked upon the coronation of the Son of God. They see in His hands the tables of the divine law, the statutes which they have despised and transgressed. They witness the outburst of wonder, rapture, and adoration from the saved; and as the wave of melody sweeps over the multitudes without the city, all with one voice exclaim, 'Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints'; and falling prostrate, they worship the Prince of life.

"Satan seems paralyzed as he beholds the glory and majesty of Christ. He who was once a covering cherub remembers whence he has fallen. A shining seraph, 'son of the morning'; how changed, how degraded! From the council whence once he was honored, he is forever excluded. He sees another now standing near the Father, veiling His glory. He has seen the crown placed upon the head of Christ by an angel of lofty stature and majestic presence, and he knows that the exalted position of this angel might have been his." --Id. pp. 666,668,669.

Confession of Guilt. Before their execution the wicked acknowledge that the sentence is just. It is at this time that "every knee" will bow, and "every tongue" confess that "Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Even Satan himself will confess the justice of all God's dealings with him. "And now Satan bows down, and confesses the justice of his sentence."--Id. p. 670. This is followed by a scene of indescribable anguish and confusion. In their rage and disappointment the wicked turn upon their deceivers with hateful vengeance in fulfillment of Rev. 17:16. It is at this time also

that the following Scriptures will be fulfilled: Isa. 13:7,8; Zech. 14: 12,13; Luke 13:28. The anguish is caused by the knowledge of the eternal loss they have sustained because of their rejection of Christ. This is the sin of all sins. See John 16:7-11. The wicked will weep and wail with "gnashing of teeth" when they "shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets" and all the saints "inside the kingdom of God" and they themselves "thrust out."

Evidence of Guilt. The wicked are driven to confessions of guilt because of the fact that the evidence of their sins is all recorded in the books of record. "And the books were opened," and "the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." There can therefore be no possible mistake in the sentences pronounced against sinners. The judgment will be in accordance with the clearest and most definite evidence. The unimpeachable written evidence of the angelic records will be the testimony that will be the basis of the decisions of the great Judge and the jury of saints. Those judged and punished are called "the dead" because they were all dead during the millennium and they are resurrected only for the purpose of receiving their just punishment in the lake of fire. They are, of course, all "dead in trespasses and sins." Then, too, condemned criminals are reckoned as if they were already dead. The sentence of death is reckoned as death itself. "Death and Hades" are "an inseparable pair, representing the two aspects of Death, the physical fact and the spiritual consequences" (Swete). "The book of life is the roll of living citizens of the New Jerusalem" (Swete).

The Doom of Rebels. Verses 9,10,14,15. The wicked will be "devoured" or "consumed" (Weymouth) by the fire that descends from heaven upon them. These terms indicate complete annihilation. The fire that descends from heaven envelops the whole earth in a sheet of flames, turning it into a vast lake of fire. This fire not only destroys the wicked but also renovates the earth and cleanses it of all the traces of the curse of sin. See 2 Peter 3:7-11. Into this lake of "hell fire" will be cast and confined for punishment, Satan, the beast, and the false prophet, including all the wicked of all ages whose names were not found written in the book of life. In this destruction, "death and hell," or "Hades" (R.V.), will come to a permanent end. "The punishment of sin is thus inflicted on both, because both are offsprings of and bound up with sin" (Alford). "Death itself is swallowed up by a greater and final death" (Swete). The apostle Paul referred to the same event when he declared that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," at which time "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. 15:26, 54,55. "Hell" or "Hades" as used in our text means "the grave," or "the place of the dead."

Justice of Punishment. The absolute justice of the rewards of the wicked is proven by the following facts: (1) The justice of God's dealings with sin and sinners is testified to by Himself, the loyal angels, and the redeemed, and will be acknowledged by all the wicked including Satan and his angels. (2) The sentence of eternal death will be rendered and executed "according to their works." "They were judged one by one according to their actions" (20th C.N.T.). See Rom. 2:5,6; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12. This is absolutely essential to justice in an earthly court. Because there are degrees of guilt, there must of necessity be degrees of punishment. The seriousness

of a crime can always be judged by the punishment administered. A petty crime is punished with a light sentence and a major crime with a heavy sentence. The death sentence for sin indicates the awful nature of transgression against the divine law.

Accurate Records. (3) The third fact insuring justice is that the sentence is based on written records. Angel bookkeepers make a faithful record of every secret and open sin including "every idle word that men shall speak." These will all be brought to light in the day of judgment. See Eccl. 12:13,14; Matt. 12:36,37. The prophet Daniel was given a vision of the great judgment together with the Judge, the jury, and the witnesses. See Dan. 7:9,10. "The judgment was set, and the books were opened," indicates also the use of written records as the basis of righteous sentences. "Rabbi Jehuda said,'all the actions of men, whether good or bad, are written in a book; and of all they shall give an account.'"--Schar, Gen. fol. 79, col. 298. When the saints judge the world and judge angels, they will do so out of the written records, making mistakes impossible. All questions in regard to the justice of God in excluding any person from the kingdom of heaven will thus be forever erased from the minds of the redeemed. This is the chief reason for written records. The Lord could render justice without them, but He must fully satisfy the saints by removing the very possibility of questions in regard to the justice of His dealings with sinners. All whose sins have not been confessed and pardoned and covered by the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ so that they are blotted out of the books of record, must meet the sentence of eternal death.

Judged Before Punished. (4) Justice demands that there shall be no punishment till after a person is judged. To punish a person without a fair trial is mob rule and is contrary to the most fundamental principles of civilization. The wicked do not receive their punishment for sin till after the millennium when the tribunal that decides their cases will be in session. We are told that the fallen angels are "reserved unto judgment" and "the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." See 2 Peter 2:4,9; Jude 6. (5) Another fundamental rule of justice is that criminals shall receive their punishment in the place where they committed their crimes. The wicked have done their sinning on this earth and on this earth they receive their final rewards. See Prov. 11:31; Isa. 24:21; Rev. 20:9. (6) Justice also demands that the execution of a sentence be public and not secret. The righteous as well as the loyal universe will witness the fate of the wicked. See Ps. 37:34; 91:8.

Death Sentence. (7) Death or capital punishment is God's penalty for sin. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," is the decree of the Almighty. See Eze. 18:20; Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:14. There are two deaths, the first being temporary because of the resurrection. All through the Scriptures this death is called "sleep" because there is to be an awakening. The other death is called "the second death" and it will be eternal. From it there will be no resurrection. The first death is the result of Adam's transgression. It is the consequence of a racial sin and for this reason "death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Christ by His death atoned for this racial sin and for this reason all must be resurrected. See John 5:28. But the sins for which we will be punished are our own individual sins for which we alone will be held responsible. The rewards of the righteous and the wicked will be just the opposite: one

life, and the other death, and both will be eternal. The punishment of the wicked will be just as eternal and everlasting as the rewards of the righteous. But it will not be eternal conscious torment. Union with God is life, and separation from God is death. [See 1 John 5:11,12. This text would be untrue if the wicked also have eternal life, even though it were to be spent in torment.]

A Clean Universe. (8) The wicked are to be "devoured" or "consumed." They are to suffer "death" which means "cessation of life, total extinction." It cannot by any reasoning whatsoever mean endless life even in the fires of hell. The wicked will be utterly annihilated. See Ps. 37:9,10,20; Obadiah 15,16; Mal. 4:1,2; 2 Thess. 1:7-9. We are definitely told that Satan and all the wicked will be brought to "ashes on the earth" and will be trodden under the feet of the righteous as they roam the new earth. See Eze. 28:18,19; Mal. 4:3. There is to be a "perpetual end" of sin and sinners so that "affliction shall not rise up the second time." See Ps. 9:6; Nah. 1:9,10; Rev. 5:13. The songs of praise to God will be universal and unbroken by groans and screams of torment from an ever-burning hell. The fearful lesson will have been forever learned and sin will never enter the universe again. With the nail-prints in the hands of Christ and the song of the Lamb as constant reminders of the cost of redemption, the experiment of sin will never be repeated. God's original and eternal purpose will be carried out "as if man had never fallen."

THE CELESTIAL CITY
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The Closing Scene. Rev. 21:1. The curtain now rises on the closing scene of the great prophetic drama of the Apocalypse. The Revelation is the book of contrasts, and what a pleasing and happy contrast is this beautiful picture of Paradise restored in comparison with the terrible scenes which immediately precede it. The previous vision describes the awful doom of Satan and his followers in the lake of fire, where they suffer the second and eternal death, the death from which there will be no resurrection. Now the curtain is lifted on the most sublime and glorious act in the apocalyptic drama of life and death. Most dramas have a tragic ending, but in this one the closing scene is one of triumph. After witnessing the struggles of the church militant with the powers of darkness, how cheering is the vision of her triumphant state. "Everything is now prepared for the entrance of the last phase of the Kingdom of God; for the foundation of the new earth in which righteousness dwells; for the erection upon it of the Kingdom of glory; for the solemnization of the marriage of the Lamb, to the threshold of which we were brought by the song of praise in chapter 19:6-9. This sacred closing history is the subject of the present group of visions. A church which has such a hope will not faint under tribulations. She beholds the end and is comforted." (Hengstenberg).

Paradise Restored. "The ancient Jews believed that God would renew the heavens and the earth at the end of seven thousand years" (Dr. Adam Clarke). They believed that since the Lord divided time into cycles of sevens, there would be a cycle of seven millenniums covering the history of the reign of sin, the seventh being the Sabbatic millennium when the earth would lie idle and at rest. Then the lost Paradise would be restored to the faithful. The Bible begins and ends with a vision of Paradise. The first two chapters picture the paradise that was lost through the disobedience of the first Adam, and the last two chapters describe the paradise restored through the obedience of the second Adam. Without these two pictures the Biblical canon would be incomplete. The first book is the book of Genesis or beginnings. The last book is the book of consummations. Genesis records the first creation with the first Adam as the head of the old humanity. The Apocalypse records the new creation with the second Adam as the Head of redeemed humanity. The first book pictures the alienation caused by sin, the fall of man, his exclusion from the tree of life, and the cursing of the earth. The last book pictures the reconciliation through Christ, the restoration of man to the image of God, access to the tree of life, deliverance from the curse, and the return of man to his long lost home. The Bible covers the entire history of the reign of sin and shows that the recovery will be complete; that all that was lost through sin will be restored through Christ.

The Holy City. Verses 2,3. The New Jerusalem descends to the earth at the close of the millennium and before the earth is renewed to its Edenic glory. Since it is the first of heaven to come to earth we will give it our first consideration. As Noah's ark was the refuge of the faithful as it safely rode the surging waters of the mighty flood, so the holy city will be the refuge of the righteous when the earth is enveloped in a sheet of flame and becomes a vast lake or ocean of devouring fire. Then will be answered the question and fulfilled the promise of Isa. 33:14-17. Only the righteous who in this life have made God their "place of defense" will be

able to "dwell with the devouring fire" and "with everlasting burnings." As soon as the earth and its elements are melted "with fervent heat" and "the works that are therein shall be burned up," so that man's home is completely renovated from the curse of sin, and the "new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" become a reality, as pictured in 2 Peter 3:10-13, then the celestial city will become the capital of the restored kingdom of this world. "The New Earth must have a new metropolis, not another Babylon, but another and greater Jerusalem" (Swete).

A Literal City. The teaching that the New Jerusalem is only a symbol of the church makes meaningless and even absurd a large part of the apocalyptic description of it. "The beloved city" is just as literal and real as the "new heavens" and "new earth" and the "sea" mentioned in verse one. One of the strangest paradoxes of the modern church is the prevailing skepticism in regard to things being real or literal in the spiritual realm, while at the same time they revel in the grossest earthliness and materialism. Many of the most practical and reasonable persons in the affairs of this life become the most ethereal and mystic minded in their ideas of spiritual and heavenly things. Everything connected with the heavenly kingdom becomes so unreal to them that it is not at all strange that they make so little effort to prepare to enter the blest abode. The popular ideas of heaven make it so unattractive that reasonable men and women have no special desire to make it their eternal home. Everything worth while is spiritualized away until there is nothing left that appeals to sentiment or reason. That the New Jerusalem is a literal city is evident from the fact that it has been prepared for the church, and it cannot therefore be the church itself. The home of the bride of Christ cannot be the bride herself. See John 14:1-3; Heb. 11:10-16; 12:22,23; 13:14.

Home of Bride. Verses 9,10. Just as old Babylon was the home and headquarters of Satan's church or bride for so many centuries that his counterfeit system of religion has been designated by the name of the literal city ever since, so the church or bride of Christ is named after the city that was so long her earthly home and headquarters and the city that will be her eternal abiding place. See Ps. 48:1-3,12,13; Isa. 54:5,11,12. In Gal. 4:26, "the Jerusalem which is above" is called "the mother of us all." In Rev. 22:14, the obedient church of Christ is promised a triumphant entrance "through the gates into the city." The church or bride of Christ could not enter herself. Only in a secondary sense can the city itself be called the bride, because it is her eternal home. In Eze. 48:35, we are told that "the name of the city from that day shall be, 'The Lord is there'" or "Jehovah Therein." Both the Lord and His bride or church will dwell therein forever.

The Two Inseparable. "The heavenly city is Christ's Bride, not on account of what makes it a city, but on account of the sanctified and glorified ones who inhabit it. Without the saints, whose home and residence it is, it would not be the Lamb's wife. . .Mere edifices and avenues do not make a city; neither does a mere congregation or multitude of people make a city. You cannot have a living city without people to inhabit it; and you cannot have a city without the edifices and avenues arranged in some fixed shape for the accommodation of those who make up its population. It is the two together. . .which constitute a city. And whilst this holy Jerusalem is the Bride and Wife of Christ with reference to its holy occupants, it is still those occupants as disposed and arranged in that city. So that the

city, as a city, as well as its people as a people, even the whole taken together, is embraced in what the angel calls 'the Bride, the Lamb's Wife,' as she finally appears in her eternal form and completeness."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, pp. 402,403.

City's Illumination. Verse 11. "It shone with a radiance like that of a very precious stone such as a jasper bright and transparent" (Weymouth). The glory of the very Person and throne of the Eternal God envelops and adorns the entire city. See Rev. 4:2,3. The Oriental jasper is of a beautiful sea-green color and the finest quality is very clear like the diamond or rock-crystal. Green is the predominating color in nature. It is the most restful and agreeable color to the eyes and to which they are best adapted. Other colors often fatigue and sometimes injure the eyesight. The lighting system of the New Jerusalem is not that of the bright, glaring white light with which our modern cities are illuminated, but a soft and mellow-green light, which will harmonize with the peaceful and restful spirit of the city and its inhabitants. The promise is: "And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Isa. 32:18. How appealing this should be to the weary pilgrims of earth who "have no abiding city here" where life is filled with the stress and strain that must be expected in a world cursed by sin and in rebellion against God.

The Twelve Gates. Verses 12,13,21. "It had a wall, massive and high, with twelve large gates, and in charge of the gates were twelve angels. And overhead, above the gates, names were inscribed which were those of the twelve tribes of the descendants of Israel" (Weymouth). Angel sentinels or gate-keepers are stationed at the twelve gates, as were watchmen or sentinels at the gates of the ancient walled cities. The gates are in four rows, with three in each row, like the twelve stones in the breastplate of the high priest. See Ex. 28:15-21. The walls of the city are declared to be "great and high" indicating absolute security. Gates are for entrance, and walls are for safety and salvation. All who enter the celestial city will be safe and happy. They will enjoy a "peaceable habitation" in "sure dwellings" and "in quiet resting places." The ancient prophet described the same scene when he wrote: "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." Isa. 60:18,19.

Twelve Tribal Divisions. The church triumphant will be divided into twelve tribal or national divisions, just as the church militant has always been divided according to the twelve leading characteristics of her members. See. Rev. 7:4-8. The twelve nations of the redeemed will be ruled over by the twelve apostle-kings in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus. See Matt. 19:27,28; Luke 22:28-30. These are "the nations of them which are saved" and the "kings of the earth" which enter the city through the twelve gates as described in Rev. 21:24-26. The citizens of each nation will pass through the gate of the nation to which they belong as indicated by the name of the tribe inscribed on or above the various gates. "In the palace of the world to come there are twelve gates, each of which is inscribed with one of the twelve tribes: he, therefore, who is of one tribe is received into none of the twelve gates but his own; and so of the rest."--Synopsis Sohar, p. 115.

Twelve City Divisions. The capital city of the kingdom of glory, like the earth itself, will doubtless be divided into twelve divisions, otherwise there would be no significance to the twelve nations of the saved with their kings passing through twelve separate gates. Each tribe or nation must have allotted to it a section of the city adjacent to its gate of entrance. From north and south and east and west the nations of the redeemed will come and pass in and out of the Royal City through their respective gates. Of course, the twelve nations will together compose a central united kingdom ruled over by the second Adam who will be the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." The central throne will be "the throne of David" on which "the Son of David" will reign forever, and "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." See Isa. 9:6,7. Then will be fulfilled Isa. 26:1,2: "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

Size of City. Verses 15-17. A furlong is about one eighth of a mile. This would make the city 1500 miles in circumference. "Fifteen hundred miles" is the James Moffatt translation. The circumference is doubtless meant as it was the ancient custom to designate the size of cities by the distance around the walls. According to Diodorus Siculus, Nineveh was 400 stadia in circumference, and Herodotus declared that Babylon was 120 stadia on each side or 480 in circumference. The stadia and furlong were practically the same. The wall of Babylon was 50 royal cubits high, or between 75 and 100 feet. The walls of the New Jerusalem are 144 cubits high. The cubit was the distance from the elbow to the end of the middle finger which is about 18 inches. The cubit of an angel would doubtless be somewhat longer. The height of the walls of the celestial city is therefore about 250 feet. "Two hundred and eighty-eight feet" (20th C.N.T.). The height of the wall would prove that "equal" as here applied to the length and breadth and height of the city, has the meaning of uniform, symmetrical, or in proportion. It cannot be otherwise as a city 375 miles high would be out of all proportion and therefore impossible. The distance between each gate would be 1000 furlongs or about 125 miles. A city of that size would hold the population of the world many times over, and will easily accommodate the redeemed of earth. The city would be about the size of the state of Oregon.

Construction of City. Verse 18. "The solid fabric of the wall was jasper" (Weymouth). The Oriental japser is very hard and almost indestructible. Jasper pillars have been preserved for thousands of years with but little evidence of erosion. Although we are not told, this jasper is doubtless also transparent so that the walls will not hide the glory of the city. The city itself is constructed principally of gold far more pure and precious than the famed gold of Ophir. It is so pure that it is like "clear glass." In verse 21 we are told that "the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." Transparent gold would make a poor paving material unless there were something beautiful on which it rested and that could be seen through the pavement. The foundation material of our cement pavements is very unsightly, but is always invisible. But not so with the streets of the New Jerusalem. There is something very beautiful to look at beneath the golden pavements of the streets of the celestial city, and this is the reason for their transparency.

Twelve Foundations. Verses 14,19,20. According to Heb. 11:10, the foundations are beneath the entire city and not the walls only. On each foundation is

engraved the name of the apostle-king ruling over the tribe or nation to whom belongs that portion of the city adjacent to their gate. The crystal clearness of the golden streets makes it possible for the inhabitants of the city to see the precious stone foundations of the city and the names of the apostle-kings emblazoned on them, each one under the portion of the city belonging to the nation over which he rules. The twelve colors of the foundations probably represent the characteristics of the twelve nations and their rulers, the character distinctions being the reason for the twelve tribal divisions. (These twelve stones are almost identical with the twelve stones in the breastplate of the high priest which represented the twelve tribes of Israel.) See Ex. 28:17. This is further proof that these stones and their colors represent character. In verse 2 we are told that the city was "adorned," and in verse 19 that the foundations were "garnished" with all kinds of precious stones. The adornment is doubtless in the many kinds of metals and stones with which the city is constructed. The materials all indicate permanency as well as beauty and glory.

The Twelve Stones. (1) Jasper is sea-green in color and may represent the modern diamond. (2) Sapphire is a clear azure blue and very precious. (3) Chalcedony is a green carbonate of copper found in the mines of Chalcedon. (4) Emerald is a bright green. (5) Sardonyx or onyx is a dark, horny color of the agate variety resembling fingernails in color. (6) Sardius is a blood-red color. The stone was first found in Sardis. (7) Chrysolyte is of a dusky green with a cast of yellow. It is sometimes known as the "gold stone." (8) Beryl is a variety of emerald of a bluish-green color. (9) Topaz is a pale dead-green colored stone with a mixture of yellow. (10) Chrysoprasus is of a golden leek-green or yellowish pale-green hue. (11) Jacinth, a reddish-brown stone with a mixture of yellow. (12) Amethyst is of a purple or violent color composed of strong blue and deep red. Clement of Alexander argued that this variety illustrates the variety of gifts and graces in the twelve apostles. Foundations are for support, and since the church was "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" with Jesus Christ as "the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20-22), it is appropriate that the home of the church shall rest upon foundations on which are written "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

The Temple. Verse 22. Temples have been erected as places of worship during man's alienation from God. Before his fall man worshiped God face to face and therefore had no need of a temple. God was his temple and everywhere was a place of worship. While Jesus was with His disciples they needed no temple or synagogues. He was their temple and any place with Him was a place of worship. The redeemed will see and worship God face to face in the celestial city and no other temple for worship will be needed. The redeemed will not go into a literal temple and worship an unseen God as we must do during this reign of sin on earth. There will be a temple on Mount Zion in which is the throne and throne-room, but it will be the place of rulership rather than worship. It seems evident that Mount Zion with its temple is outside the city. See E.W. 18,19.

No Night in City. Verses 23-26. While the light of the sun and moon will not be needed in the city because of the glory of God which constantly illuminates it, there is no evidence that the sun and moon will cease to function as light-bearers. It simply says that "the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it," because it receives sufficient light from the Light-giver Himself. The world in general outside the city will

still need the light of the sun and moon which in God's eternal purpose were created to rule the day and night. See Gen. 1:16. The divine decree is that "while the earth remaineth. . .day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22). That the light of the days and nights will be more glorious in the new-earth state than during the reign of sin is evident from Isa. 30:26. The distinction between the days and nights would be relatively the same. In the new earth there will be no dark and dreary nights or stormy, cloudy days.

Those Excluded. Verse 27; 22:14,15. Only the obedient are permitted to enter the holy city; only those who "stand recorded in the Lamb's book of life" (Weymouth). The book of life is the family registry of heaven; the citizenship roll of the kingdom of God. It belongs to Christ, the Lamb, the Pastor and Shepherd of the flock, and it contains the membership roll of the Church Triumphant. The character of those who enter the city is also indicated by the character of those excluded. Three times it is repeated that all liars will be excluded from the heavenly city and kingdom. Lying is one of the prevailing sins of this generation. Gregory Nazianzen of the sixth century said that "a Christian that shall lie in anything is not a Christian," and a modern writer says of our generation: "The social atmosphere of our world teems with lies as with microbes. Lies in parliaments, in markets, in churches. The whole world teems with imposters" (Pulpit Commentary).

God Hates Lying. It is evident from many Scriptures that God especially hates lying. See Prov. 6:16-19. The telling of a lie was the first sin ever committed by him who is the father of lies. Lying was the chief cause of the fall of Lucifer and his angels and also man. Those who enter the kingdom of God will get complete victory over lying. See Zeph. 3:13; Rev. 14:5. "And no lie has ever been found upon their lips; they are faultless" (Weymouth). Especially will the last generation out of which this group are redeemed be an age of liars, false accusers, and scandal-mongers; an age of novel-writers and readers who "loveth and maketh a lie." "Falsities and treacheries confront us unblushingly at every point. People not only make falsehoods, speak falsehoods, print falsehoods, and believe falsehoods; but they eat them, and drink them, and wear them, and act them, and live them, and make them one of the great elements of their being. One-half, at least, of all that the eye can see, or the ear hear, or the hands touch, or the tongue taste, is bogus, counterfeit, pinchbeck, shoddy, or some hash or other of untruth. A man cannot move, or open his eyes, without encountering falsehood and lies. In business, in politics, in social life, in professions, and even in what passes for religion, such untruthfulness reigns that he who would be true scarcely knows any more whom to trust, what to believe, how to move, or by what means to keep his footing, amid the ever increasing flood of unreality and deception."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, pp. 285,286.

A Mighty Appeal. The description of the holy city as given in the Apocalypse constitutes a mighty appeal to loyalty and faithfulness on the part of Christians, for whom the city with its mansions were prepared. "Thus far the holy city Jerusalem! Would that we may enter therein! Would that we were even now therein! Now it is in our power to attain to a happy portion there, if we but turn our back on a lost world, and renounce the service of its prince. There is need for a good, instant resolution to act, under the impulse of grace. But whosoever hath steadfastly set his face to go toward this Jerusalem, shall abide in it and shall never err from the way of life" (Bengel).

THE KINGDOM OF GLORY

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Paradise Restored. Rev. 21:1. In its primitive glory the earth was called Eden, which means "a delightful region," and in Eden the Lord planted a garden or park which He called Paradise, which means "the garden of all delights." "As the earth came forth from the hand of its Maker, it was exceedingly beautiful. Its surface was diversified with mountains, hills, and plains, interspersed with noble rivers and lovely lakes. . .Graceful shrubs and delicate flowers greeted the eye at every turn. The heights were crowned with trees more majestic than any that now exist. The air, untainted by foul miasm, was clear and beautiful. The entire landscape outvied in beauty the decorated grounds of the proudest palace" (P.P.44). It was indeed "a perfect state of things."

Dominion of Adam. The earth in its Edenic glory was given to man as his dominion or kingdom. Adam was the prince or ruler of the world, but through transgression he surrendered his dominion to Satan who has claimed it ever since and is now designated "the prince of this world." See Luke 4:5-7; John 14:30. Michael, the Son of God, became Emmanuel and the second Adam, that He might redeem and restore man and his lost dominion. He came into this rebel world "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). This includes both man and his dominion. See Micah 4:8. The purpose of the plan of salvation and of the two advents of Christ is to restore the kingdom of this earth to Adam and his family. See Dan. 7:22,27; Matt. 25:31,34. The restoration of Eden and Paradise has been the hope and inspiration of God's people since man was driven from Paradise because of disobedience. The sons and daughters of Adam who have accepted the plan of redemption down through the ages have looked forward with glad anticipation to the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." See Acts. 3:21; 2 Peter 3:13,14. "Restitution" means to bring back to a former state or condition. It is "the act of replacing or restoring that which is lost or has been taken away. The recovery of a former state." That is also the meaning of the word "redemption."

A Re-Creation. Rev. 21:5. "I am recreating all things" (Weymouth). It is not to be a new earth so much as a renewed earth, just as the gospel renews or remakes us rather than making entirely new beings. A "new earth" does not necessarily mean another earth. It is new in the same sense that a redeemed man is "a new creature." Because only the surface of the earth has been marred by sin, we are told that the Creator will "renew the face of the earth" (Ps. 104:29,30). When the restoration is complete the earth will be "like Eden" and "her desert like the garden of the Lord" (Isa. 51:3). God's original and eternal purpose will be carried out "as if man had never fallen." What was in the beginning will be again, for the Lord will not permit a fallen angel, a mere created being, to ruin or alter His plan. Paul declared that "all that is imperfect will be brought to an end," and then "the perfect state of things" will come. See 1 Cor. 13:10, Weymouth. The prophets of God have given us many beautiful pictures of this redeemed and restored perfect state. See Isa. 35:1-10; 60:18-22; 65:17-25; 66:22,23. The glory of the new earth will exceed anything we can imagine. 1 Cor. 2:9.

The Capital City. Rev. 21:2,3; 22:1-3. These verses indicate that the New Jerusalem will not only be the capital of the renewed earthly kingdom, but

of the entire universe. "The throne of God and of the Lamb" indicates that both the Father and the Son will rule from this earth. The earth which has been the great battlefield of the ages will be exalted to become the headquarters of the government that rules the universe. The overthrow of Satan's kingdom will be so complete and final that the very battleground will become the eternal habitation of the victors and the location of the capital of the universal kingdom of glory. It is appropriate that this world of tragedy and destiny, which has so long been the center of the struggle that decides the rulership of the universe, should be exalted to the highest place among the worlds which compose the provinces of the kingdom of God.

The Joy of the Earth. Ps. 48:1-3. "It is a new city, one which never appeared before, one of which all other cities are but the poor preimitations, and one as compared with which all present cities sink out of mind and memory. It is new in its materials, in its size, in its location, in its style, in its permanence, in its moral purity, and in everything characteristic of it. It is heaven-built; jeweled in its foundations, walls and streets; perfected in everything that is charming and beautiful, 'as a bride adorned for her husband'; lighting the nations with its brilliancy, itself ever luminous with the glory of God and the Lamb; the true 'Eternal City';--the imperishable palace of the immortal kings of the ages."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, p. 384. No wonder Payson exclaimed as he studied these scenes of beauty: "Lord, withhold thy hand, and show us no more, or we shall be overpowered by the splendor of the vision."

The River of Life. Rev. 22:1,2. The throne of God is in the temple on Mount Zion which is doubtless outside the city. The river of life has its origin in Mount Zion beneath the temple and throne "of God and of the Lamb," just as the spring or fountain that filled the pool of Siloam in the old Jerusalem was in the vicinity of the temple and Mount Zion. The crystal clear waters of the river of life will flow through the city in the middle of the main street. "In the middle of the street of the city" (20th C.N.T.). "In the midst of the broad place" (Emphatic Diaglott). One of the most precious and gladdening scenes to the inhabitants of the dry and thirsty East is a living and refreshing stream of clear and pure water. In the original Paradise a river had its origin in the Garden of Eden and divided into four divisions (Gen. 2:10). The restored Paradise will not be complete without the restoration of the river of life, which will be just as literal as the one in the first creation.

Clear as Crystal. The waters of this celestial river are not muddy as are so many of those of the East. The water is clear, pure and sparkling. "Sparkling like rock crystal" (Swete). It seems that this river will have many streams or branches which will reach and water all parts of the great city to refresh and make glad its inhabitants. This is indicated in Ps. 46:4: "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High." It may be that there will be four main streams as was true of the river in the original Paradise. The crystal clearness of the waters will make clearly visible the glittering and precious stones and golden sands of the river bed. The lights of these stones of fire reflected through the clear water will produce a scene of indescribable beauty. Beside it a modern electric fountain with its many colors sinks into insignificance.

Symbol of Gospel. The river of life that will water the Paradise restored is a beautiful symbol of the gospel of salvation that sends its many refreshing streams of the water of life throughout this desert and dreary land under the withering curse of sin. This is the "living water" mentioned by Jesus in His conversation with the woman at the well of Samaria. See John 4:10-14. This living water quenches the thirst of the weary Christian pilgrims of earth with a satisfaction the world cannot know. See John 6:35; Matt. 5:6. "Shall be completely satisfied" (Weymouth). "When the Holy Spirit controls the minds of our church members" they "will be refreshed by the water of life" (Vol. 8:211). "Medical missionary work and the gospel ministry are the channels through which God seeks to pour a constant supply of His goodness. They are to be as a river of life for the irrigation of His church."--Bible Echo, Aug. 12, 1901. Quoted in Christian Service, pp. 133,134. This gives force to the appeal of Rev. 22:17: "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." See also Rev. 21:6.

The Tree of Life. Verse 2. "Twelve crops of fruit" (R.V., mar.). The tree of life is "on both sides of the river" (Douay). According to Eze. 47:12 the tree of life is a species of tree that fringes both sides of the river of life. There is probably a street or boulevard on each side of the river with rows of trees in the park strip next to the river. "On either side of the river, midway between it and the main street of the city, was the tree of life" (Weymouth). The tree of life may be like the Banyan tree that has many branches taking root on both sides of the river, being a tree of trees, just as the Bible is a Book of books. The purpose of the tree of life is "that the enjoyment of life shall be without interruption" (Hengstenburg). This tree produces its fruit twelve times as often as other trees and its fruit is always seasonable and abundant. Like the original tree of life this one is "in the midst of the garden" where its fruit supply is available to the inhabitants of the city. Trees add much to the beauty of a city and the pleasure of its inhabitants. The New Jerusalem will doubtless be filled with trees, shrubs and flowers of every kind. Some of the trees of the original Paradise are described in Eze. 31:3-9.

The Life Giver. The tree of life was so called because its fruit was the only kind that contained all the elements necessary to perpetuate life. "In the garden were trees of every variety, many of them laden with fragrant and delicious fruit. There were lovely vines, growing upright, yet presenting a most graceful appearance, with their branches drooping under their load of tempting fruit, of the richest and most varied hues....There were fragrant flowers of every hue in rich profusion. In the midst of the garden stood the tree of life, surpassing in glory all other trees. Its fruit appeared like apples of gold and silver, and had the power to perpetuate life" (P.P. 47). "The fruit of the tree of life in the garden of Eden possessed supernatural virtue. To eat of it was to live forever. Its fruit was the antidote of death" (Vol. 8:288). It was a beautiful symbol of Christ who is the tree of life to fallen man and without Him there is no life. See John 6:51-53; 1 John 5:11,12. "After the entrance of sin the heavenly Husbandman transplanted the tree of life to the Paradise above; but its branches hang over the wall to the lower world. Through the redemption purchased by the blood of Christ, we may still eat of its lifegiving fruit" (Id.288). The fruits of the Spirit might be enumerated as the twelve spiritual fruits of the tree of life. They are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, righteousness, truth, and obedience. See Gal. 5:22,23; Eph. 5:9; Rom. 8:4,7.

Leaves of Tree. "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations," or "Served as medicine for the nations" (Weymouth). It seems from this statement that the leaves as well as the fruit have life-giving properties. It may be that the leaves will play an important part in correcting the physical deformities caused by sin and helping the redeemed to "grow up as calves of the stall" as pictured in Mal. 4:2. In a symbolic sense the leaves represent the word and promises of God as revealed in His Word. "Then grasp His promises as leaves from the tree of life" (M.H.66). "So with the promises of God....They are leaves from that tree which is 'for the healing of the nations.' Received, assimilated, they are to be the strength of character, the inspiration and the sustenance of life. Nothing else can have such healing power. Nothing else can impart the courage and faith, which give vital energy to the whole being" (Id.122). "Open the Bible before the tempted, struggling one, and over and over again read to him the promises of God. These promises will be to him as leaves of the tree of life." (Id. 173). "His Word, the leaves of the tree of life" (Id. 199). See also Vol. 7:195; Vol. 6:393; Vol. 8:33,193.

No More Sea. "The sea is no more" (R.V.). This must refer to the sea as we know it today and as it has existed only since the flood. The seas now cover three-fourths of the earth's surface and are made dangerous by fierce storms. Before the flood it is estimated that water covered but one-fourth of the surface of the earth. To keep sinners from congregating, the continents were separated by large and, until more recently, impassable bodies of water. This will all be changed in the restoration. Just as "the first heaven and the first earth" will pass away and give place to "a new heaven and a new earth," so the first sea will be replaced by new bodies of water like those that beautified the earth in the beginning. John was confined to the island of Patmos and cut off from his home by the sea. A legend tells us that he daily climbed the hills of his island prison and wistfully looked across the sea toward his beloved Ephesus home, and also toward Palestine his homeland.

Things Eliminated. Rev. 21:4. It is impossible for human beings accustomed to the environments made by sin to comprehend the glories of the restored kingdom and celestial city. There are no means of comparison because we have never seen or experienced these heavenly realities. We cannot even imagine how wonderful the new earth state will be for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9). For this reason the conditions of the future life are described in negative terms. The enumeration of the things that annoy us here and that will not be in the restored state makes a greater appeal to us than an attempted description of things beyond our comprehension. Even this world would be a paradise if all evil were eliminated and the things that destroy our peace and happiness were removed.

No More Tears. Verse 4 is the favorite Scripture of the sick and suffering. It has been called "the hospital text" because it is so often read to the sick. Christian doctors, nurses and ministers use it to comfort the sick and console the dying and to alleviate the sorrow of the bereaved. Tears are the evidence of sorrow and pain. All who taste of sin know what it is to shed tears. For 6,000 years this earth has been "the vale of tears." The promise is indeed precious that in the redeemed state "the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isa. 60:20). The only effectual way to wipe away

tears is to remove the cause. It is in this way that God wipes away "all tears." He removes every cause of weeping so that in the celestial city "the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (Isa. 65:19). There is no promise that all tears will be removed till after the wicked have been destroyed in the lake of fire and the earth renewed to its Edenic beauty and sin and sinners are no more. Tears may be shed by the righteous during the millennium as they sit in judgment on the wicked, and again at the close of the 1,000 years when the sentences are executed in the lake of fire when the lost suffer the second and eternal death. Many tears will then be shed by the wicked as they meet their doom.

Many Kinds of Tears. There are tears of grief, of sympathy, of disappointment, of physical pain, of mental anguish, and of sorrow over sin and its results. Tears dried and wiped away by human hands are only temporarily removed as the cause has not been permanently taken away. Jesus became "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," so that our tears might be forever wiped away. Tears are the accompaniment of sorrow and crying which also will be no more. Heartaches and griefs of many varieties beset and torment the human family. Everywhere there are cries of distress because of blasted hopes brought by disappointment, suffering and death. But the voices of lamentation and woe will be silenced forever in the renewed earth.

No More Pain. It cannot be said that there will be no more pain till after the earth is restored and sin and sinner are no more. The greatest physical pain and mental anguish will be experienced by the wicked when they realize that they are forever lost and as they suffer the eternal death in the lake of fire. This text cannot be true if the doctrine of eternal torment is true, for then there would be more pain than ever before and it would never end. To deny the existence and reality of pain, as some religionists do, is to shut our eyes to the reality of one of the five senses, and to that which all human beings feel so keenly and so often. But the prophecy declares that some would become so deluded in the last days that they would "believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2:9-12), and what could be a greater lie than to deny the existence of sin, disease, pain, and death?

No More Death. It is estimated that more than 140,000,000,000 human beings have lived on this earth and all but a few of them have died and returned to the dust. Every day more than 100,000 deaths take place, and every year a nation of almost 40,000,000 persons enter the prison house of death. Xerxes wept at the thought that in one hundred years his vast army would all be in their graves. An ancient prophet said, "Death cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people" (Hab. 2:5).

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside howsoe'er defended,
But hath one vacant chair."

Christ's victory over sin and death has made possible the final destruction of death and its author. In 1 Cor. 15:26 we are told that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." In Rev. 20:14 we are told that "death and hell" (the grave) will be "cast into the lake of fire" and with the wicked will suffer the second and eternal death. Death will die when its author dies, for the first to sin will be the last to die. See Heb. 2:14, 15. The last funeral will be that of Satan and the end of Satan will also be the end of death, and the roaring of the flames of the lake of fire will

be his funeral dirge. His death will be followed by a deathless world and universe. Death was not in God's original plan and purpose, and will be no more when the plan of salvation has completed its mission.

No More Sinners. Rev. 21:7,8; 22:14,15. "Thy people also shall be all righteous" (Isa. 60:21). There will be no undesirable neighbors or citizens in the new earth. Those who kill happiness and make life disagreeable will not be there. The "fearful" or "the cowards" (Weymouth), will not be there. This word comes from an old word for the cowardly who recanted under persecution. They are afraid to do their duty. There are millions of spiritual and moral cowards who are not brave enough to follow their convictions. The "unbelieving" are the faithless and untrustworthy. They think that skepticism and doubting are an evidence of scholarship and independent thinking, but they also will be eliminated from the future life. They require perfect proof in religious matters and accept without question the theories and speculations of "science falsely so-called." There will be a large class in this group who will find themselves outside the kingdom of glory. Unbelief is one of the sins of the last days that is sweeping the world to destruction.

Other Classes. "The abominable" are the hateful, foul, and loathsome; those who have gone so deep into sin that they are odious to God and the righteous. They think and talk and do evil until they are filthy. They cannot be taken into the kingdom. If "murderers" include all who "hate" and become "angry without a cause," there will be a large class in this group who are outside the city. The "whoremongers" take in the large class who are guilty of immorality; those who are controlled by the lusts of the flesh. For them there is no room in the pure and holy atmosphere of heaven. The "sorcerers" are those who are deceived by spiritism through "the spirits of devils" or evil angels. The "idolaters" are those who adore, serve, or worship the creature rather than and even more than the Creator. "Dogs" represent the unconverted or the uncircumcised in heart. The Jews called all who were uncircumcised "dogs." "Who is a dog? He who is not circumcised" (Pirkey Elieser, Chap. 29). All of these classes suffer the second death in the lake of fire. "The doom of the impenitent is placed in sharp contrast with the heritage of the conquerors" (Swete).

No More Curse. Rev. 22:3,4. The earth was cursed for man's sake after the fall and that curse has never been removed. Also for six millenniums the earth has been under the withering curse of sin and rebellion. Places and countries that were at one time the gardens of the world are now barren deserts. Palestine was at one time the "land flowing with milk and honey" and was capable of supporting a nation of twenty or thirty million people. Their wealth was so great that they loaned to other nations and never borrowed. Under King David and Solomon, his son, Israel had no national debt. But the curse of sin has changed this fertile and favored land into a country so desolate that it can support but a few score thousand people. "This beautiful country has now become sad and gloomy through the ever-impoverishing influence of Islamism."--Life of Jesus, Renan, pp. 114,115. But the curse will be removed and again the earth will yield its hundredfold. No longer will man have to make his living "by the sweat of his face," for "there shall be no more the accursed one" (One translation). The curse will be removed when the cause of it is no more. Satan brought on the curse and when he dies the curse will die with him, "the accursed one," "the son

of perdition." "And they shall see His face," is a sign of kingly favor, (Esther 1:14), and an evidence that the alienation is ended and the atonement and reconciliation is complete. Man again sees God "face to face" and not only through the eye of faith.

Paradise Restored. "Think then, what its regeneration must bring!--an earth which no longer smarts and smokes under the curse of sin,--an earth which needs no more to be torn with hooks and irons to make it yield its fruits,--an earth where thorns and thistles no longer infest the ground, nor serpents hiss among the flowers, nor savage beasts lie in ambush to devour,--an earth whose sod is never cut with graves, whose soil is never moistened with tears or saturated with human blood, whose fields are never blasted with unpropitious seasons, whose atmosphere never gives wings to the seeds of plague and death, whose ways are never lined with funeral processions, or blocked up with armed men on their way to war,--an earth whose hills ever flow with salvation, and whose valleys know only the sweetness of Jehovah's smiles,--an earth from end to end, and from center to utmost verge, clothed with the eternal blessedness of Paradise Restored."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, p. 380. "In the final restitution, when there shall be a 'new heavens and a new earth,' it is to be restored more gloriously adorned than at the beginning" (P.P. 62).

THE DRAMA ENDED

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The Last Act. Rev. 21:6,7. "All is over" (Moffatt). This is the fourth and last time this decree goes forth. The first was when Jesus died on the cross of Calvary and the plan of salvation was finished. The second is when probation closes and the work of salvation is finished. The third is when the seventh and last plague is poured out in which is "filled up" or "finished" the wrath of God. The fourth and last "It is done" goes forth when every trace of sin is removed and the earth is restored to its original perfection. For seven millenniums this world had been "a theatre to the world, to angels, and to men." A series of terrible scenes had passed in vision before the Seer of Patmos in the great prophetic drama of the Apocalypse, picturing the defeats and triumphs of the church militant. The changing scenes are now over and the curtain rises on one of eternal victory and triumphant gladness that will never end.

The Controversy Ended. At last the long struggle over the dominion of the world and its inhabitants is over and the church militant has become the church triumphant. The everlasting gospel has completed its mission of saving man and his long lost home. The revolt of Satan has completely collapsed and he and his rebel hosts are no more. God's eternal purpose has been carried out "as if man had never fallen." "The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all flow life and light and gladness through the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love" (G.C. 678).

The Consummation. "I have become the A and Z, the Origin and the Consummation" (Concordant). The Bible begins with Christ as the Creator or Originator of all things, and ends with Him as the Finisher and Consummation. He is the Beginning and the End and all between. He is "the all and in all" of the Scriptures and of the plan of salvation. "Genesis is the book of beginnings, and Revelation is the book of endings of what was then begun; and the last laps back again upon the first, and welds the two ends of the history into the golden link of eternity. There was a time of innocence, and then came a long and dreary time of the absence of innocence; and here we are shown the time of innocence returned, to depart no more. Nor is it without the most cheering significance, that in the account of the final consummation we again come upon a group of objects answering to the most conspicuous and fondly remembered in all the bright story of the original opening of the world."--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, p. 422.

The World of Destiny. No other world in the vast universe of God has had such an eventful career of so vast importance to the kingdom of heaven as this little world of tragedy and destiny. "Our little world is the lesson-book of the universe" (D.A. 19). Here is being fought out and decided what principles shall forever rule in the government of all the worlds. "A wonderful world is this! True, it is but a spark amidst the suns of the universe, a tiny leaf in the mighty forest! Let the light be quenched and the leaf be destroyed, their absence would not be felt. Still it has a moral history the most momentous. Here Christ lived, labored, died. Here millions have been trained for heaven. What Marathon was to Greece, and

Waterloo to Europe, this little earth is to the creation. Here the great battles of the spiritual universe are fought. It is the Thermopylae of the Creation." (Pulpit Commentary). It is all promised to the overcomer or victor. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things," or "all these things" (Margin). There is no promise except to the victor over sin. All classes of sinners are eliminated from the kingdom of glory.

The Epilogue. Rev. 22:6-21 constitutes the epilogue, postscript, or "closing remarks" of the book of Revelation. "These sayings" include those of the entire book which are declared to be dependable and true. The benediction of heaven is pronounced upon those who obey the instructions of this book which should therefore not be sealed,"for the time is at hand." One cannot read verses 6,7,10 without being reminded of chapter one, verses one to three. It is virtually a repetition. The revelations of the book pertain to "things which must shortly be done." It is preeminently a last day book written specifically for the remnant of the church. Before the book is closed to await the "time of the end" when it would be studied and understood and its revelations appropriated to the use of those who await the return of their Lord, the seal of divine endorsement is again placed on the visions of the book. The promise, "Behold, I come quickly," is the special reason given for the divine blessing upon those who keep "the sayings of the prophecy of this book." The Revelation is in a special sense the book of the second advent of Christ. All of its prophecies and visions proclaim that great event that consummates human history.

Destinies Fixed. Verses 11,12. When probation closes and the "mystery of God" is finished "nothing more will be done by Him to lead men to change their state" (Milligan). The Devotional Commentary speaks of this text as "a bidding of the keenest irony," and Dean Alford says that it means, "Go on! sin on! for there is now no time to change!" He then adds the admonition, "Change now while there is time." The close of probation and the coming of Christ forever fixes human characters and destinies beyond all change. The opportunity is forever past for the unjust and filthy to become righteous and holy. This transformation is now possible through the power of the gospel and is taking place all over the earth. "It is a solemn thing to die, but a far more solemn thing to live. Every thought and word and deed of our lives will meet us again. What we make of ourselves in probationary time, that we must remain through all eternity. Death brings dissolution to the body, but makes no change in the character. The coming of Christ does not change our characters; it only fixes them forever beyond all change" (Vol. 5:466). The only change that takes place at the second advent of Christ is physical. See 1 Cor. 15:51-55; Phil. 3:21. The character change must take place during probationary time in this life. Christ does not come to save from sin but to reward those who have been saved. It is the great rewarding time for both the righteous and the wicked who are justly recompensed on the basis of their characters and works. No rewards will be meted out before the coming of Christ. Neither the righteous nor the wicked are rewarded at death, as many erroneously believe.

The Last Beatitude. Verse 14. The book of Revelation contains seven beatitudes and this is the last. Seven is the symbol of fulness and completeness and the seventh is the consummation of perfection in heavenly benediction. Obedience is the passport to the celestial city and the kingdom of glory. It was through disobedience that man lost access to the tree of life and the original Paradise. Obedience is one of the chief characteristics of the saints of God in all ages, and especially those who await the

return of the Bridegroom. See Rev. 12:17; 14:12. To "fear God and keep His commandments" is "the whole duty of man," or "the duty of all men" (R.V.). Eccl. 12:13,14. This is because the law of God is not only the standard of righteousness, but also the standard of the judgment. See Deut. 6:25; James 2:10-12. The Decalogue is the divine rule of life because it is the transcript of the character of the Lawgiver. The very purpose of the gospel is to bring men and women into conformity to the law of God. See Rom. 8:1-4. The new covenant writes the principles of this law in the mind and on "the fleshy tables of the heart," so that the Christian does "by nature the things contained in the law." See Heb. 8:10-12; 2 Cor. 3:2,3; Rom. 2:14,15.

Washed Robes. "Blessed are they that wash their robes" (R.V.). Our character robes need washing because through sin they have been defiled and polluted. They are compared to "filthy rags" because "we are all as an unclean thing" (Isa. 64:6). The Jews reckoned character as a beautiful robe that becomes soiled through sin. This illustration did not originate with them. White garments constitute the divine symbol of godly character in both the Old and New Testaments. "In the blood of the Lamb," characters that have become soiled and filthy through sin are made "clean and white" so that they are without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" but are "holy and without blemish." See Rev. 7:9,13,14; Eph. 5:26,27; Rev. 19:7,8; Isa. 1:16-20. Only the victor or overcomer will be "clothed in white raiment" and in the great triumphal procession into the celestial city will have the privilege of walking with Christ "in white" (Rev. 3:3-5).

The Tree of Life. Access to the tree of life was forfeited through disobedience. Only the victor over sin will be given the right to enter the city into the long lost Paradise home and eat of the fruit of the tree of life which "is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7; 22:1,2). All sinners will be forever excluded from the city and kingdom of glory and from the tree of life with its life-perpetuating fruit. See Rev. 21:7,8,27; 22:14,15. It was the telling of a lie that caused man to be driven from his original Paradise home, and to insure the redeemed of a permanent abode in the Paradise Restored they are assured that all liars will be forever excluded. Not even the father of lies will be permitted to enter that blessed abode to tempt and destroy as in the beginning. Only "the nations of the saved" can pass through the pearly gates and walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem. For them the command will be given to the angelic gatekeepers, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in" (Isa. 26:2).

Divine Author. Verse 16. Before the book is closed we are again assured that its revelations are of divine origin; that the entire Apocalypse is the revelation and testimony of Jesus Christ. It is a final announcement that He is indeed the predicted Messiah, "the bright and morning star" that was to arise out of Jacob and wield the scepter of Israel in fulfillment of prophecy (Num. 24:17-19). Jesus anounces Himself as the rightful heir to the throne of David which He is soon to occupy. "In His own Person Christ is at once the root, and the stem, and branches that spring from the root, and combines all the Messianic claims of the Davidic family" (Charles). The entire regal family culminates in Christ who as "the Son of David" will reign forever. This announcement contains also a promise of its imminent fulfillment. "The star shines most brilliantly just before the break of day. So the coming of Christ is the Hope of all nations. His return will bring the dawning of an age of radiant light" (Erdman).

Final Invitation. Verse 17. In the epilogue it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the speakers and know whether Jesus or John is speaking. But it makes but little difference as they were the joint-authors. John was the human agent who did the writing. This is the final invitation for all who hear the message to enter the kingdom and attend the marriage and marriage supper of the Lamb and to occupy the mansions in the celestial city. Both the Spirit and the bride emphasize and pass on the invitation of the Lamb. They are not two separate voices as the Holy Spirit speaks through the bride or church. "The Spirit says, 'Come!' when He teaches the Bride to say it" (Cambridge Bible). "The Bride is, of course, the church, through which the Spirit cries" (Devotional Commentary). To the church has been given the great gospel commission which is finished in the threefold message of chapter 14 under the power of the latter rain. The Holy Spirit will give the power to the message that will make it appealing and effectual. To make the gospel invitation more personal, every individual member of the church is asked to pass on the call. "The call is to be taken up and repeated by every hearer of the Book" (Swete). All who hear and accept the invitation will tell others that they too may share the promised blessings. All who thirst for the water of life are urged to come and partake "freely" or "without money and without price." It also means without restraint. The supply is abundant and never-failing. "This gracious and wide invitation is cheering after the gloomy picture of the doomed and the damned. The warnings against the dragon and the two beasts with all their dreadful consequences are meant to deter men from falling victims to all the devil's devices then and now. The door of mercy still stands wide open today, for the end has not yet come. The series of panoramas is over, with the consummation pictured as a reality" (Robertson).

The Final Warning. Verses 18,19. See also Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:5,6; Eccl. 3:14. This is one of the most terrible threats contained in the Scriptures. It not only emphasizes the importance of the Apocalypse, but also warns against perversions of its revealed truths. "This arresting warning must refer to any willful perversion and destruction of the great truths which The Revelation contains" (Erdman). The threatened curse includes those who willfully lessen the meaning, or curtail the sense, or explain away, or even neglect any of the revelations of the book. "In the estimate of God, he who adds to or takes from what it presents, disables all right conception of the system of redemption, and inflicts an injury so great that he who does it need never hope for salvation. How important, therefore, how precious in the eye of heaven, how necessary to the right instruction of God's people, how vital to the proper Christian faith and hope are the unmutilated and unchanged foreshowings which this Book was given to set forth!"--The Apocalypse, Seiss, Vol. 3, p. 485. Since the seven last plagues fall on those who reject the threefold message that closes the gospel mission in the earth, they are the special objects of this terrible malediction. The eternal destiny of all mankind depends on their attitude toward God's final warning message. There is no salvation for those who reject it, or who attempt to nullify or explain away the great truths on which it is based.

The Final Promise. Verse 20. It is evident that Jesus is here speaking, for the book is His testimony. It is "a last word in answer to the call of the church (verse 17)" (Swete). Two times in the epilogue Jesus had repeated the promise, "Behold, I come quickly." After reiterating this glorious promise which has been the hope of God's people in all ages, the prophet shouts an approving, "Amen," and then adds, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

This should be the response of every student of this book who truly loves Him. In all ages it has been "the wish and desire of the suffering church" (Clarke). The first recorded words of man after the fall, in answer to the Question of God, "Where art thou?" were, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and was afraid." The last recorded cry of Adam's descendants is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Between this cry of distress and expression of hope, is the reign of sin and the story of redemption. In the Lord's Prayer this age-long hope is expressed in the petition, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven." This prayer cannot be fully answered till the King comes to set up His kingdom of glory. In this prayer and the final plea of John, the prophets and saints of all ages make a united request for the Lord to come and bring an end to the reign of sin. For that great event all creation has long been waiting and longing. See Rom. 8:18-23. Weymouth.

Apostolic Benediction. Verse 21. "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints" (Eng. R.V.). This is "the closing salutation of the writer. No other book ends thus. For 'the saints' the Book was given; their lot and their history it contains; to them the parting salutation is addressed" (Devotional Commentary). This benediction indicates that the Revelation is of universal application and includes all the saints to the end of time. "Grace" is the unmerited favor of God. Many of the epistles of the New Testament begin and end with a benediction of grace upon the believer. Here is a final reminder that salvation is not granted on the basis of human works or merit, but as a gift of God received by faith. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8), is the sum and substance of the gospel in opposition to the counterfeit system of justification and salvation by works. For this reason the redeemed will forever ascribe all honor and praise and glory to God and the Lamb for their own redemption and for the restoration of their lost home.

The Perfect State. The return of Christ brings back the perfect state of things that existed before the fall. All that was lost through sin will be restored through Christ. "There are ever flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, find a home." "Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of the redeemed....With undimmed vision they will gaze upon the glory of creation,--suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity" (G.C. 675,677).