

**SYMBOLS OF  
REVELATION:**

**THEIR INTERPRETATION**



**OLD PATHS PUBLICATIONS**

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THEIR INTERPRETATION

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*“He sent and signified it by his angel unto his  
servant John.”* (Rev. 1., 1.)

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## PREFACE

This book does not claim to be an exposition or a commentary on the book of Revelation. It is designed as a guide to the correct interpretation of the *symbols* contained in the book.

As the book of Revelation is unusually rich in symbols and signs, it is clear that they provide the key to the meaning of the vision, and this is specially true of chapter 17.

There are many schools of thought in relation to the book of Revelation and, indeed, to all sections of the Divine Word, but there can be but one, and one only, correct view. This does not mean that full light is now due on every detail of the book (e.g., the meaning of 666 in Rev. 13., 18), but every endeavour should be made to approach as nearly as possible to the truth when the due time arrives. Full light awaits the coming of clearer day.

At the same time, much has been revealed in the last three decades, and the publishers pray that the following pages will be of material assistance to the consecrated for whom the Holy Scriptures were written.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

*“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it (in signs and symbols) by his angel unto his servant John.”* (Rev. 1., 1.)

*“I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.”* (Hosea 12., 10.)

The book of Revelation describes, in highly symbolic terms, the sufferings and afflictions of the Church of Christ, throughout the Gospel Age, at the hands of the world and the nominal Christian Church. At the same time, it outlines in unmistakable terms the destiny of the human family in general, as well as the final triumph of good over evil and of God over Satan—the arch-enemy of God and oppressor of the human race.

It is in some respects the most important prophecy contained in Holy Scripture. (Rev. 22., 10.) The prophecy, however, was not given for the benefit of the world or worldly-minded followers of the Lord. On the contrary, as stated in the opening words of the prophecy, it was sent and signified (in symbolic signs) by His angel unto His servant John, in order to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass. (Rev. 1., 1.)

The fact that the prophecy was enshrouded in symbols and figurative terms should, of itself, be sufficient evidence that it was not intended for the careless or indifferent amongst the Lord's people. His servants, for whose benefit it was given, embrace only those who, like John, are prepared to suffer tribulation and ostracism for their faithful adherence to the Word of God and

testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev. 1., 9.) This mainly explains why to the great majority of professing Christians the Revelation has in the past been considered a sealed book, and why only the very few amongst the Lord's followers, even in our own day, are enabled to partake of the "strong meat" provided in this very important storehouse of prophetic truth.

Another reason why the Revelation has been to the majority a sealed book is because many would-be interpreters of its visions have attempted to read them too literally, overlooking the fact that the literal is used only where symbols would not readily convey the mind of the Spirit. The result has been that owing to the unreasonable and at times fantastic views claimed for many of the symbolic terms employed, earnest truth-seekers have been hindered and often discouraged in their efforts to understand the significance of the many symbolic visions. The present purpose in attempting to interpret in a simple but clear and orderly manner the symbols of this Book, is to encourage sincere truth-seekers amongst the Lord's people to study its pages carefully and feed upon the "strong meat" hidden until the due time in many of these symbolic visions.

It would be a mistaken idea to attempt an interpretation at random of any of the symbols used by the Revelator, without due consideration of the background from which the symbols are drawn. For example, there are various sets of symbols used not only in this last prophecy, but also throughout the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures. These, mainly drawn from daily observation of the literal heavens and earth, are used to illustrate, in a higher and symbolic sense, circumstances amongst the human family and the Lord's people which concern the outworking of the Divine Plan. There are sets of symbols embracing such physical objects as mountains, hills, rivers, seas, islands, trees, and grass. All these, as seen in the natural sphere, stand in a certain relationship to each other, and when rightly interpreted in the higher and symbolic sense, the same relationship holds good.

Again, in the heavenly sphere there are the luminaries which divide the night from the day—the sun and moon—and also the stars. These, in their symbolic significance, must in like manner bear the same relationship to one other and to light and darkness as they do in the literal sphere.

From this standpoint, it should be obvious that to place an arbitrary or private interpretation upon any of the symbols of Revelation would be wrong and likely to be misleading. Stated in other words, it means that prophetic symbols should be interpreted along reasonable lines and not by isolated guesses out of harmony with their setting in the literal sphere from which they are taken.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OPENING VISION

(Revelation Chapter 1)

**The Seven Churches which are in Asia** (Ver. 4). Seven, throughout the Scriptures, symbolises the thought of completeness, or the whole of anything to which it stands related in the context.

There were, in the days of the Revelator, seven literal churches in Asia as mentioned in the context. These, with their varying degrees of spiritual health and faithfulness to the Lord, are understood to symbolise similar stages in the entire church of Christ throughout the present Gospel Age.

**The Seven Spirits before His throne** (Ver. 4). The Spirit of God represents His holy influence, or power, as manifested in the out-working of the Divine Plan. The seven spirits, ready to act in obedience to the Father's will, imply that God is wholly capable of carrying out every feature of His Plan, and that in so doing no circumstance could arise with which He could not effectively deal.

**I am Alpha and Omega . . . the Almighty** (Ver. 8). It should be noted that this is a *declaration of the Almighty concerning Himself*. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord (Jehovah), . . . the Almighty."

The declaration is a quotation from Isa. 41., 4 which reads—"who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord (Jehovah), the first, and with the last; I am he." A similar declaration is made in Isa. 48., 12 and it relates also to the Almighty, as quoted by the Revelator in the prologue to his prophecy.

Alpha and Omega are the names of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The expression occurs twice in the Book of Revelation. Once, in the case now under consideration, it is used in reference to the Heavenly Father. The other occurrence is in Rev. 22., 13, where it is applied to the Son of God. In our King James's version of the Bible there is still another occurrence as will be seen in chap. 1., 11 but most modern translators are agreed that the words—"I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" found in this verse are additions to the original text and should be omitted. The Emphatic Diaglott also omits these words.

It has been suggested that the expression Alpha and Omega applies exclusively to the Son, in the sense that He is the first and last direct creation of God. No one versed in the truth concerning the Divine Plan would, it is thought, gainsay the fact that our Lord was the first and only direct creation of God, and that He, as the Father's agent, was the creator of every other being in the Universe. (Col. 1., 16.)

While fully agreeing with this suggestion regarding our Lord's position in creation, this would not explain the declaration quoted by the Revelator which he states was made by the Almighty

*concerning Himself.* In Isa. 48., 11, we read—"I will not give my glory unto another" and then follow the words of verse 12—"Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last."

The quotation is understood to be a declaration concerning the glory and majesty of the Creator—I am the sum total of everything that human speech or language (the complete alphabet from Alpha to Omega) can express. A similar expression is sometimes heard with reference to our English alphabet. It has often been remarked concerning one who is very proficient at his particular craft that he knows it from A to Z which means to say that his knowledge concerning it is so profound that it precludes the thought of further instruction.

There are 24 letters in the Greek alphabet—Alpha is No. 1 and Omega No. 24. If the two letters mentioned were isolated and treated literally as regards their position in the alphabet, it would mean, if used concerning the position of our Lord in creation, that He was the first and also the twenty-fourth.\* However, as already seen, the declaration quoted was not made concerning the Son, but concerning the glory and greatness of the Creator Himself.

The same declaration would nevertheless be true concerning the Son, for what human tongue, or pen, or language could define the glory and majesty of the One of whom it is written, He is "the express image of his (the Father's) person" and that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (Deity) bodily." (Heb. 1., 3; Col. 2., 9.)

**Seven Golden Candlesticks** (Ver. 12). The seven golden candlesticks, or, more correctly, the seven golden lampstands, symbolise the seven churches in their literal as well as their dispensational settings. They are described as golden because the inception of the church, or ecclesia, was by Divine Authority. No organisation other than the ecclesia *has ever been* authorised amongst the Lord's people. Experience goes to show that attempts at any additional organisations, whatever the pretext might be, are unwise, and in the end invariably result in some form of bondage, with serious consequences to those concerned.

Many professed churches of Christ in our day are far from being *golden* lampstands in the Lord's sight. A golden lampstand (or pedestal) is one upon which the lamp of Divine truth—the Holy Scriptures—is placed, so that it may give light to the ecclesia. The lamp of truth will only yield its light for the enlightenment and comfort of the assembly if it is placed upon the lampstand. This means that the ecclesia must recognise and adhere to the teachings and instructions of the Word concerning the headship of Christ in relation to every individual ecclesia and the liberty of the truth, as set forth in the Scriptures.

Instead of being golden lampstands upholding both the letter and spirit of the Word, many ecclesias to-day are that only in

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\* Such a literal interpretation would naturally make no sense at all.



name. The "faith once delivered" is neither earnestly nor, indeed, at all contended for in their midst. The lamp of truth has been removed from its pedestal and the doctrines of the faith relegated to the background, lest the penetrating rays of light from the lamp shining in the darkness should be a source of trouble. Such ecclesias are little different from those termed by the Revelator "synagogues of Satan"—assemblies where error and false doctrine flourish and hold sway, while truth and the liberty which is in Christ find no conditions conducive to healthy growth and development. (Rev. 2., 9.)

**Seven Stars in His right hand** (Ver. 16). The seven stars, we are informed are the angels of the seven churches. (Rev. 1., 20.) Viewing these churches locally, in their literal setting, it is probable that the angels represent certain individuals elected by the ecclesias to act for them in a somewhat similar capacity in modern assemblies to a secretary, or correspondent. In those days when the gifts of the Spirit were prevalent amongst the Lord's followers and the churches had to depend mainly for their guidance and instruction upon the writings and exhortations of the Apostles, the need for such an office with a gifted reader and instructor was very evident. Moreover, the office must have called for certain gifts, or qualifications, to ensure that the person concerned was capable of interpreting accurately, and of making clear to the assembly, the contents of the Apostolic epistles.

In the wider and dispensational sense, when the miraculous gifts of the Spirit ceased, it seems that God from time to time raised up teachers, qualified with a deep insight into spiritual things, to be special guides to the church at large. Church history records the names of various such teachers who, throughout the Age, have in the providences of God been raised up for the comfort and guidance of His people. Amongst these are Arius, Waldo, Wycliffe, Luther and, in our own day, our late Brother Russell.

Holding them in His right hand would not mean that their teachings or their interpretations of the Scriptures were inspired or infallible. It would mean that, in their day, the Lord used such faithful servants as His right hand instruments in building up the faith and hopes of His followers. Neither would it be correct to conclude that seven only of such faithful stewards would serve in this capacity throughout the entire Age. Seven, as already seen, signifies completion, or the whole of anything, hence the seven stars would embrace all such servants privileged to minister in this capacity during the entire period of the church in the flesh.

Attempts have been made to isolate the names of seven only of such teachers during the Age, but such an arbitrary interpretation of the seven stars would not seem either reasonable or in accordance with facts. Indeed, in the records of the early church one could find quite a few names who, during that period of the church's history, were used mightily of the Lord in the building up of the faith of His church.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES

(Revelation Chapters 2 and 3)

#### CHAPTER 2

**The deeds of the Nicolaitans** (Ver. 6). The deeds, or practices of the Nicolaitans, mentioned by our Lord in His message to the church at Ephesus, seem to refer to the attempts of some in the church to establish human headships, instead of recognising that the true and only legitimate Head of every individual assembly of the Lord's followers is Christ. (Eph. 5., 23.)

Records show, however, that it was not long after the Apostles fell asleep that strife arose between prominent leaders in the churches as to whom should be greatest among them. The idea, although only in its incipient phase in the Ephesus stage of the church, had later during the Pergamus stage developed into a doctrine, or teaching, and this, in turn, led to the division of the Lord's followers into two classes—clergy and laity.

**The tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God** (Ver. 7). This promise to the overcomers of the Ephesus stage of the church is a symbolic expression based upon the records concerning the literal paradise in Eden. When Eden was prepared for the habitation of our first parents, we read that out of the ground the Lord God had made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2., 9.)

The terms "tree of life" and "tree of knowledge of good and evil" are not understood to refer only to individual trees, but to species of trees. Similar expressions are used to-day in order to indicate certain kinds or species of trees, such as the apple tree or the oak tree.

All the fruit-bearing trees of the Garden were apparently trees of life or life-sustaining, as was also the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the Garden. In the eyes of Mother Eve, this species of tree was not only good for food but attractive to look upon, as well as desirable to make one wise. (Gen. 3., 6.) The fruit of this particular tree, however, was prohibited for the use of our first parents, as a test of their loyalty and love for the Creator.

The point to be noted is that while the tree of knowledge, which was so desirable to make one wise, was prohibited to the occupants of the earthly paradise, there will be no such restrictions upon the acquisition of knowledge for the overcomers of this Age who gain an entrance into the paradise of God—the Heavenly Kingdom.

It would be very unwise for those of the Lord's followers of this Age, who have consecrated their all of time and talents to His

service, to use their consecrated time and talents in the pursuit of even the legitimate things of this life, such as the knowledge of the various sciences. However desirable these things may be to the natural mind, such a double-minded attitude towards the Kingdom hope would surely end in failure and disappointment to the child of God. The acquiring of such knowledge can wait until the victor's crown is won—when, in the paradise of God, we shall know as we are known. (1. Cor. 13., 12.)

**Ruling with a rod of iron** (Ver. 27). The rod of iron rule implies the thought of strict and unbending justice. This symbolic expression concerning the reign of Christ over the earth was given originally in Psalm 2., 9. It also occurs three times in the Book of Revelation, to be referred to later. In each occurrence, the reference is to the overthrow and destruction of the kingdoms of this world, through the instrumentality of the Kingdom of Christ, during the present Harvest-time.

Many have wrongly interpreted this symbolic expression to mean something very different from what is stated in the context. It has been suggested that ruling the nations with a rod of iron means shepherding them, in the sense of *preserving* them. This is just the opposite thought to what is given in the context of the various occurrences and, strangely enough, in every instance with the exception of the one in Rev. 12., 5, an interpretation of the symbol is given in the context, as may be seen from the following quotations.

**Psalm 2., 9**—“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt *dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*”

**Rev. 2., 26-27**—“He that overcometh . . . will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; *as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.*”

**Rev. 19., 15**—“Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should *smite the nations*; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he *treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*”

**Rev. 12., 5**—In this occurrence the reference is to the symbolic Man Child (Christ—Head and Body) and it is revealed that He was the one to whom the original prophecy in Psa. 2., 9 applies. The other occurrences in Revelation concerning Christ and the overcomers of the present Age are merely quotations from the original promise found in the second Psalm.

### CHAPTER 3

**Hour of temptation** (Ver. 10). The Harvest of the Gospel Age is termed the hour of temptation. It commenced at the time of the Second Advent, and is the result of the overthrow of Satan's power in the heavens by the Kingdom of Christ. All mankind are

to-day involved in this trouble and it is particularly a time of testing upon the faith and endurance of the Lord's followers.

The Revelator made reference to this same time of distress and perplexity, when he declared—"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." (Rev. 12., 12.)

**The temple of my God** (Ver. 12). The *temple* of God, in its completed sense, is the glorified Christ—Head and Body-members. The "*city* of my God," the Revelator informs us, is the New Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from God.

In the earthly Jerusalem, the typical temple was the only place where God could be worshipped by the people of Israel. Israel's High Priest alone, who was a figure of Christ and His members, had permission to enter into the presence of God—the typical Most Holy—on behalf of the people. The same principle applies, in antitype, to Christ's Kingdom—the Heavenly Jerusalem. A clear distinction, therefore, must be recognised between the *temple class* who, as heirs of the Kingdom, sit upon its throne, and the *Kingdom itself* which is comprised of myriads of angelic beings of the highest ranks. (Dan. 7., 9-10.)

To become a pillar in the temple of God, either in the present life or in the fullest sense in the Kingdom, means to occupy a position of much responsibility and high honour in the sight of God amongst His followers.

**My new name** (Ver. 12). The new name which Jesus received when glorified in His Kingdom, at the head of all principalities, was the official title of "Lord." The Apostle, in his letter to the Romans, declared that, "to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be *Lord* both of the dead and living." (Rom. 14., 9.)

Peter, addressing the people of Israel on the day of Pentecost, declared "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and Christ." (Acts 2., 36.)

The Apostle, writing to the Philippians concerning the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus, declared "wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a *name which is above every name*; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things (beings) in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth (awaiting their resurrection); and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2., 9-11.)

## CHAPTER IV

### THE THRONE VISION AND SEALED BOOK

(Revelation Chapters 4 and 5)

#### CHAPTER 4

**Door opened in heaven** (Ver. 1). This is a reference to the high calling of the Gospel Age which began to be spoken by our Lord and which came to His followers at Pentecost. (Heb. 2., 3.) An open door indicates the privilege of entry.

**Four and twenty elders** (Ver. 4). The title "elder" carries with it the thought of age and maturity. The elders of this vision seem to refer to the Old Testament *prophecies* which were foretold by holy men of old concerning the various stages and developments of the Divine Plan. As these prophecies are seen to be fulfilled in the outworking of the Divine programme, they reveal the foreknowledge and wisdom of God and, in a figurative sense, are said to fall down and worship the One who sits upon the throne.

**Sea of glass like unto Crystal** (Ver. 6). "Sea of glass" would be more correctly rendered "glassy sea," as in the Emphatic Diaglott. The glassy, or undisturbed sea, before the throne, upon which the Creator sits, is a fitting symbol of the calm and unperturbed mind of the One who rules the Universe. Conscious of His almighty power and foreknowledge, He is capable of meeting every emergency which can arise. Nothing can therefore disturb the serenity of His Kingdom, except by Divine permission.

**The four living Creatures** (Ver. 7). The four living creatures are understood to represent the four chief attributes of the Creator's character and the underlying principles of His Kingdom.

**The first** which was like a *lion* is a fitting symbol of the almighty *power* of the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. Our Lord is described as the *Lion* of the tribe of Judah because, aided by Divine power and grace, He has prevailed to open the book of the Divine Plan.

**The second** living creature was like a *calves* (or young ox). This symbol, a fitting representation of the attribute of Divine *justice*, is doubtless drawn from the sacrificial ceremonies of the people of Israel. The calf (or ox) figured largely in the tabernacle or temple sacrifices of the typical people. It was the blood of calves and goats that was taken by Israel's High Priest into the Most Holy, on the typical Day of Atonement, in order to make satisfaction to justice upon the Mercy Seat.

**The third** living creature had a face as a man. This is surely an apt symbol of Divine wisdom. Man, to whom God gave the dominion of earth, was endowed with the faculties of wisdom and

intelligence. He failed to exercise aright these gifts of the Creator and lost the Divine favour. After experiencing the bitter fruits of sin and evil for over six millenniums, he will have attained a degree of wisdom that will enable him never again to depart from the ways of righteousness and truth.

**The fourth** living creature was like a flying eagle. An eagle, in flight, is regarded as a symbol of the Divine attribute of mercy and loving-kindness. An eagle, in flight, is noted for the strength and power of its wings and its swiftness. It also displays remarkable care for its young while in the nest, and in teaching them to fly. It thus illustrates well the loving care and tender mercies of God towards all His creatures.

It is recorded concerning God's merciful deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage and His care over them under the leadership of Moses—"ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on *eagles' wings*, and brought you unto myself." (Ex. 19., 4.) The sum of all four attributes of the Creator may be expressed in one word *love*, for God is love. (1. John 4., 8.)

## CHAPTER 5

**A book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals** (Ver. 1). A more correct rendering of the description of this book, or scroll, would be—"written within, and sealed on the outside with seven seals."

The sealed book of this vision is understood to symbolise the Divine Plan for the redemption of the human family. This Plan was formulated by the Creator before the foundation of the world, but remained a sealed book until the First Advent of our Lord.

Seven implies completeness and whoever would unseal, or put into operation the Divine Plan, must be able in the first place to make satisfaction to justice on behalf of the sinful world.

**Strong Angel** (Ver. 2). The strong angel heard proclaiming with a loud voice—"Who is worthy to open the book?" represents the justice aspect of the Divine character as represented in the Law Covenant given to Israel. It was the Law Covenant which brought sin to light, as declared the Apostle—"I had not known sin, but by the law . . . I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (Rom. 7., 7-9.)

The Law indicated the full measure of a perfect man's ability and proved a test to every Israelite, revealing that not one out of the entire nation could respond to the invitation to open the sealed book.

**The Lion of Judah hath prevailed** (Ver. 5). The Lion, or strong one, of the tribe of Judah is Christ. He alone, of all who were born under the Law, was able to keep its terms, proving thereby that He was perfect and therefore able to give a ransom to justice

on behalf of the sinful race. Moreover, He alone was able to take the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne and to loose the seals thereof.

**The four living creatures said, Amen** (Ver. 14). This feature of the vision carries the mind forward to the time when the Divine Plan will have accomplished its purpose for mankind. Then, God's true character, as symbolised in the four living creatures, will have been fully manifested. These living creatures, or Divine attributes—justice, wisdom, mercy and power—will say "Amen" to the marvellous accomplishments of God's Plan when it is completed, for it will be seen that each of these attributes, in turn, has played its part in the scheme of redemption, and in the eradication of evil from the Universe.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SEVEN SEALS

(Revelation Chapters 6 and 7)

#### CHAPTER 6

**A white horse and he that sat on him had a bow** (Ver. 2). The seven seals synchronise in a general way with the seven churches and also with the seven kingdom parables as recorded in Matthew, chapter 13.

The seals cover the entire period of the Gospel Age, the first six of which bring us to the time of the Lord's Second Advent, while the seventh synchronises with the Harvest period of the Age.

The opening, or breaking, of each seal represents stages in the experiences of the professed church of Christ generally, as well as increasing light upon the pathway of the faithful footstep followers of the Master throughout the Age. The four horses, of varied colours from white to pale, which accompany the opening of the first four seals, seem to represent the gradual departure from the true faith and practice of the Apostolic church down to the commencement of the Reformation period.

Horses which were used extensively in the past as agencies of aggressive warfare seem to represent organised efforts in the promulgation of doctrines or ideologies of any kind. The white horse of the first seal would fittingly symbolise the purity of the faith proclaimed in the early church, through the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom. It would probably synchronise with the Ephesus stage of the church before the tares of the evil one had become deeply rooted in the wheat field.

The marked changes in the colour of the three succeeding horses serve to emphasise and confirm the records of church history concerning the falling away from the faith which took place after the Apostles fell asleep. The falling away eventually culminated in the counterfeit system of the Papacy.

**Souls under the altar** (Ver. 9). The altar, as a figure, denotes suffering and sacrifice. This symbolic picture depicts the severe afflictions and sufferings of the Lord's consecrated followers at the commencement of the Reformation period. The white robes given to them symbolise the standing before God of those who are justified by faith. The doctrine of justification by faith was, at this darkest stage of the church's history, recovered from the Papal errors by Martin Luther. The understanding that the grace of God was not dependent upon subservience to any human system, or on works of the flesh, but freely given of God on the basis of faith, afforded much comfort and assurance to the suffering saints of God at that time and ever since.



**A Great Earthquake** (Ver. 12). The great earthquake of the sixth seal brings us to the French Revolution. A literal earthquake arises from pent up forces or displacements underneath the earth's crust, resulting in upheavals and displacement of the surface. A symbolic earthquake refers to the upheaval or disruption of the social order which takes place when revolutionary ideas take control of the minds of the people of any country.

**Sun and Moon** (Ver. 12). The sun is a symbol of the Gospel light, while the moon fittingly represents the reflected light of the types and figures of the Law. The Papal system was a counterfeit of the true sun and moon, and claimed to be the only source of light and truth for the human family. These false claims were repudiated by the people of France at the time of the French Revolution and, for the time being at least, Papacy ceased to be regarded as the channel of light and truth.

**Dens and rocks of the mountains** (Ver. 15). The spread of liberty and knowledge amongst the nations of Europe generally, which resulted from the French Revolution, shook the social structure of all these countries to such an extent that they became fearful that a similar fate might overtake them.

The French Revolution, though limited in its effects to the so-called nations of Christendom, was a good illustration of what the Scriptures indicate may be expected on a world-wide scale at the close of the present Harvest-time. These judgments upon the Papacy and her supporters which coincided with the beginning of the "Time of the End" were only of a partial nature, and, in symbolic terms, are described as but a third part. (Rev. 8., 7.) The final and complete judgments upon that system, when it returns to power as the eighth Head of Gentile rule at the close of the Harvest-time, will bring to an end the present evil world. To those living at the time of the French Revolution, it seemed that the end of the present world order was at hand, hence the efforts of the people then and since to entrench themselves for protection in the symbolic dens and caves of the mountains—kingdoms of earth.

## CHAPTER 7

**Four Angels standing on the four corners of the earth** (Ver. 1). Civilization, so-called, as it exists to-day, only began to be built up as a result of the French Revolution. Prior to that time, the people in general had no rights or liberties which they could claim on their own account. They were merely the chattels of the Popes and rulers of Christendom. Gradually, however, the present structure of civilization, or symbolic earth, has been built up on its four basic pillars—social, financial, political and ecclesiastical.

These four agencies, or angels, so long as they remain stable and are allowed to function, hold back the winds of trouble and

afford a measure of protection from the lawlessness and anarchy that would immediately result from the breakdown, or removal, of any one of them.

The financial pillar has been badly shaken during the last few years, with the result that what is termed a "financial blizzard" has swept the entire civilized world. The end of the present civilization will come when all four pillars fall, for the result will be a whirlwind of anarchy, such as never before has been witnessed. Before that takes place, all the servants of God still in the flesh will have been sealed intellectually concerning the meaning of developments, and will eventually be gathered beyond the veil.

**The seal of the living God** (Ver. 2.) The seal of the living God is but another name for the seventh seal. Its opening, or commencement, synchronises in point of time with the sounding of the trump of God which is also but another name for the seventh, or last trump.

The seal of the *living* God is a particularly appropriate term for this last seal because it reveals, to those servants of God who are spiritually illuminated by that seal, what is undoubtedly the greatest event of human history or possibly of the entire history of the Universe. That event is the *active intervention of God*, through Christ, at the Second Advent to overthrow the kingdom of Satan and put an end to evil and all incorrigible evildoers. Briefly stated, the seal of the living God is the knowledge of Present Truth which reveals that the time has come when God will no longer permit evil, but has already commenced its elimination and complete destruction.

**The hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones** (Ver. 4). This number is understood to be literal and includes all the overcoming sealed ones under the entire seven seals, from the beginning of the Age. The hundred and forty-four thousand, according to the vision, were sealed from *all* the tribes of the children of Israel.

The twelve tribes of Israel after the flesh were merely figures, or shadows, of the true Israel of God of the present Age. It is probable that the names of the tribes have some significance in respect to the characteristics of spiritual Israel of this Age.

**A great multitude which no man could number** (Ver. 9). This unnumbered multitude could not refer to the elect overcomers who, as stated in the vision, are a definitely numbered class. Moreover, the elect Bride class are said to be seated in the throne (ruling authority) of Christ's Kingdom, as His joint-heirs, while this unnumbered multitude are before the throne as servants of the royal Bride and Bridegroom.

**Clothed with white robes** (Ver. 9). The great multitude of unnumbered ones could not refer to those who will be upon the human plane of life because the world, as such, neither in this Age

nor even in the coming Age, receive white robes. White robes are symbolic of justification by faith—a righteous standing in the sight of God imputed to believers of the past and present Ages. In the next Age, justification will not be reckoned to any on the basis of faith. All will require faith, but justification will be the result of physical as well as mental and moral regeneration.

The fact that the great multitude are servants in God's temple beyond the veil is sufficient proof, in itself, that they are no longer on the human plane of life. All of this class were *begotten of the Spirit and accepted as members of Christ's Body*, but for one reason or another failed to overcome and were therefore rejected as heirs of the Kingdom.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SIX TRUMPETS

(Revelation Chapters 8 and 9)

#### CHAPTER 8

**When He had opened the seventh seal** (Ver. 1). The opening verse of this chapter, when rightly applied, really belongs to and forms part of the seal vision of chapter 7. The expression "when he had opened" is equivalent to the thought of "having opened." The opening of each seal should not be understood as a momentary act, but as covering a certain period of time. The opening of the seventh seal, otherwise termed the seal of the living God, commenced at the Second Advent, or the beginning of the Harvest-time. It will only be fully opened and all its contents laid bare at the close of the Harvest-time, when all the members of Christ have passed into the Kingdom beyond the veil.

**Silence in heaven about the space of half an hour** (Ver. 1). The half hour's silence after the seventh seal is completely opened corresponds to the brief waiting period at the close of the typical Day of Atonement, between the going beyond the second veil of Israel's High Priest, with the blood of the Lord's Goat to make atonement for the people, and his coming out again. During that brief period, there was no message for the people of Israel, or any evidence of God's acceptance of the Priest's sacrifice on their behalf, until he had reappeared. If the blood of the sacrifice had not been acceptable to Divine Justice, the Priest would not have come out alive.

The evidence of God's acceptance of the sacrifice of the anti-typical Lord's Goat class, on behalf of the world, will be the pouring out of His Spirit upon all flesh—as soon as they are in an attitude to receive the Lord's blessing.

The period which elapses between the passing beyond the veil of the last member of the world's High Priest and the pouring out of His Spirit indicating acceptance of the sacrifice, is understood to be the half hour's silence. During that period and until the Holy Spirit is given, there is *no message or offer of restitution* blessings for the human family.

**Seven angels to whom were given seven trumpets** (Ver. 2). The seven trumpets vision began to have its fulfilment at the Reformation period. The sounding of a trumpet, as a call to battle, was a common experience in Israel. The Apostle also used the figure of a trumpet in this sense, when he wrote—"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1. Cor. 14., 8.)

**The angel at the altar** (Ver. 3). The altar of the Tabernacle where incense was offered stood in the Holy, within the first veil. The Holy represented the spirit-begotten condition of the members of Christ in the flesh.

On the typical Day of Atonement, the only one who had access to the Holy was Israel's High Priest. Our Lord was in the antitypical Holy during the three and a half years of His earthly ministry. The antitypical Priest, Christ, is *still offering incense in the Holy, in the person of His Body-members* in the flesh.

The particular angel (member of Christ) at the altar who cast fire from the altar into the earth is understood to be Martin Luther. He it was who began the Reformation proper, when he challenged the Pope by nailing upon the door of the church at Wittenberg his 95 theses, criticising the teaching of the Papal Church. This started the offensive against the errors of the Papacy, the effects of which are here described as voices, lightnings, and thunderings. The climax was reached in the symbolic earthquake of the French Revolution.

**Smoke of the incense** (Ver. 4). The perfume or odour of the incense is incorrectly rendered in this verse as "smoke." The odour of the incense offered by the High Priest on the incense altar in the Holy of the Tabernacle penetrated beyond the veil into the Divine Presence in the Most Holy. It denoted faithfulness and patient endurance on the part of the sacrificing Priest, in the midst of the fiery experiences indicated by the fire from the brazen altar. It was necessary that this incense odour should precede the High Priest's entry beyond the veil because, if not, his presence would have been unacceptable and would have resulted in his death.

**Hail and fire mingled with blood were cast upon the earth** (Ver. 7). Luther's valiant stand against the errors of the Papacy shook the symbolic earth (Papal empire) to its foundations. The effect upon the well-organised system of Papacy of the truths and human rights unearthed by the reformers, is likened to a disastrous hail storm upon the earth, spreading havoc in its wake.

Fire is a destructive element and symbolises severe judgments and sufferings. Blood indicates extreme sufferings and death, either symbolic or literal. There was plenty of both as a result of the Reformation movement.

**The third part of the trees burnt up** (Ver. 7). It has already been mentioned that the judgments upon Papacy as the fifth "Head" of Gentile rule were merely partial, as symbolised by the "third part." The judgments upon the restored Papal power as the eighth "Head" will be final and complete. (Rev. 17., 11.)

Trees represent men in prominent places. In this case, the reference is to prominent upholders of the Papal empire.

Grass represents the Papal subjects, or common people in general—"all flesh is grass". (Isa. 40., 6.) When the Reformation began, the bulk of the people comprising the Papal empire were in

their ignorance and superstition loyal subjects of the Papacy. Green grass symbolises the loyal and active supporters of Papacy amongst her subjects. The effects of the hail and fire upon the *green* grass element of Papacy's supporters was that its vitality and greenness vanished in the fiery judgments upon the system. It eventually withered and was burnt up.

**As it were a great mountain burning with fire** (Ver. 8). A mountain symbolises a kingdom, or empire. The *great* mountain of this vision is understood to symbolise the Papal empire, the fifth of the great leading empires or "Heads" of Gentile power.

**Cast into the sea** (Ver. 8). The sea symbolises a restless and disturbed condition amongst men. The sea condition, in this instance, fittingly symbolises the disturbing and restless effects of the Reformation judgments upon the subjects of the Papal empire who, prior to Luther's day, were regarded as reliable and stable like the earth. In the symbolic sense, the loyalty of the sea element could no longer be depended upon. Because of the increased light and liberty received, many (a third part) of the empire's subjects lost faith in the system and became lawless and discontented opponents of its oppressive laws and claims of Divine authority.

**The third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died** (Ver. 9). The Papal system had its well-organised and active tentacles in every phase of the life of its subjects. The judgments upon the system weakened much of these activities and many of them ceased to be any longer possible, through lack of support from the sea element.

**The third part of the ships were destroyed** (Ver. 9). Literal trading ships upon the sea are a source of profitable income and revenue to their owners. Many symbolic ships, or profitable schemes for raising revenue for the Church, such as the sale of indulgences, Peter's pence, and prayers for the dead, were launched by the Papacy upon her subjects. The increased light and liberty amongst the sea element of the Papal empire, consequent upon the Reformation movement, put an end to the trading of some of these ships and greatly affected the revenue of all of them.

These judgments were merely partial—a third part. The final and complete destruction of all such ships when Papacy, as the eighth "Head," goes into perdition is recorded in a later chapter—Rev. 18., 17.

**There fell a great star from heaven** (Ver. 10). The heaven, or ruling power, of the present evil world in the days to which this vision of the Revelator applied was the Papal system. Conditions upon the physical earth are mainly dependent upon the literal heavens. This is so also with regard to the symbolic earth.

The stars of the Papal heaven were brilliant and prominent advocates and supporters of that counterfeit system and its

teachings. The particular star here referred to and described as a "great star" would seem to have been an important teacher of Papal dogmas of more than ordinary brilliance. The fact that this star fell from heaven would suggest a radical change of outlook respecting the claims and teachings of that "heaven" system from which its light had previously shone forth. Apparently, this symbolic star was someone of prominence who had become so affected by the Reformation spirit as to necessitate a complete separation from the Papal system.

Just who this star of brilliance in the Papal heaven may have been might be open to question and to determine this with certainty would require a close scrutiny of early Reformation history. Our thought would be that it refers to John Calvin who later played a more than ordinary part as a political as well as religious reformer.

**The rivers and fountains of waters** (Ver. 10). Rivers symbolise the channels through which flow the waters of truth, either pure or contaminated. Fountains represent the seminaries or institutions from whence these truth waters flow.

**The name of the star is called Wormwood** (Ver. 11). Wormwood symbolises bitterness, and this title surely is fitting to the one whose teachings concerning the doctrine of election have caused more agony and bitterness of soul in the minds of searchers after truth than any other doctrine promulgated in the name of the One who is the fountain and source of all truth.

**The waters were made bitter** (Ver. 11).<sup>\*</sup> The doctrine of election, as taught by John Calvin, misrepresented the true character of God and made Him appear a monster, rather than a God of love and mercy. Through misinterpretation of the Scriptures, the spiritual food contained therein was rendered bitter and distasteful to the truth-hungry followers of the Lord, instead of being palatable and sweet to the taste.

**The third part of the sun, moon, and stars was smitten** (Ver. 12). The increased light and liberty in the minds of the Papal adherents greatly affected the stability and influence of Papal authority, but, as yet, the smiting was only partial—a third part.

**The day shone not for (by) a third part and the night likewise** (Ver. 12). The thought here suggested seems to be that as a result of the smiting of the luminaries of day and night in the Papal heaven, the light shining therefrom was lessened by a third part.

The counterfeit sun, moon, and stars of the Papal heaven were the source of light to the Papal earth. In the changed conditions resulting from the criticism and opposition of the reformers, every phase of Papal teaching and her claims to be the light of the world were affected.

**I beheld and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven** (Ver. 13). John, who beheld the vision, seems to symbolise those

of the Lord's consecrated followers who are walking in the light and are prepared to suffer for their testimony of Jesus Christ. This class alone, like John, are enabled to appreciate the increased light upon the pathway at the due time for it to be revealed to the Lord's followers.

The midst of heaven, or mid-heaven, seems to symbolise the spirit-begotten conditions prefigured by the Holy of the Tabernacle into which the Lord's followers have been privileged to enter. These, having entered into the Holy and been accepted as members of the High Priest, are illuminated by the Holy Spirit prefigured in the Golden Candlestick. It is to this class alone that the promise was given—"When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . and he will *shew you things to come.*" (John 16., 13.)

At the time indicated in the vision, the increasing trouble and unrest in the political as well as in the religious world, resulting from the Reformation movement, apparently enabled the John class of that day to discern in some measure the prophetic outline of greater troubles still to come. As here indicated, the three last trumpet blasts of liberty and enlightenment will witness woe upon woe to the inhabitants of the earth, for they will usher in a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation upon the earth.

#### CHAPTER 9

**I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth** (Ver. 1). Other translations give a different rendering of this verse and indicate that what follows refers to the same star mentioned in the previous chapter.

*The Emphatic Diaglott* translates the verse—"I saw a star *having fallen* from heaven to the earth."

*Weymouth* renders the verse—"I saw a star *which had fallen* from heaven to the earth." This translator adds the following foot-note upon the tense of the verb—"Had fallen (means) and was now lying on the earth. Here, as elsewhere, the Greek perfect tense indicates the continuing result of the act of falling. In 14., 8; Luke 10., 18, the act itself is denoted by the use of the aorist (tense of the verb)."

The historic school of interpreters asserts that the star denotes Mohammed and the smoke of Mohammedanism. Whilst agreeing with the principle of interpretation here stated, it seems to us that the application of the symbol to Mohammed is wrong, for it is a heathen religion. The suggested identification of this star as John Calvin appears to meet all the circumstances of the case and appeals to us as likely to be the correct one. The continuing results of the act of falling as will be seen later more fittingly describe the after-effects, or "smoke," of Calvinism.

**The key of the bottomless pit** (Ver. 1). Bottomless pit is a symbolic term which seems to imply a state or condition of powerlessness



and restraint which may result from various causes. The Papal beast, as a result of its loss of temporal power at the time of the French Revolution, went into the bottomless pit condition which means to say that it no longer possessed the power, or ability, to carry out its evil designs against the Lord's people, or to hold in subjection the nations of Europe. Later, as the eighth "Head" of Gentile rule, it will ascend out of the bottomless pit condition, and, after fulfilling the part outlined in prophecy, go into perdition. This will be the end of all Gentile rule. (Rev. 11., 7; 17., 8.)

Satan, when fully bound and bereft of ability to deceive the nations during the thousand years, is described as being in the bottomless pit. (Rev. 20., 1-3.)

The state of ignorance and helplessness of the people generally, and of the Papal world, in particular, during the time which historians describe as the "Dark Ages" is fittingly symbolised as the bottomless pit condition. Knowledge is power, but ignorance and superstition mean weakness, servility, and lack of initiative. This was the condition of the nations ruled over by the counterfeit kingdom of Christ—the Papal hierarchy.

The key which opened this bottomless pit condition and tore asunder the pall of ignorance which enshrouded the minds of the people, under the false claims of Antichrist, was the knowledge of their rights and liberties which had been gradually filched from them by the blasphemous claims of Papal Rome.

John Calvin, by his exposure of the claims of the Papacy, was largely instrumental in breaking the spell of superstition under which the nations of Europe had for centuries lain stupefied and helpless. Calvin's teachings, although in the main erroneous and in some respects scarcely less blasphemous than the system which as a reformer he had repudiated, stirred up the minds of the people and caused them to think for themselves. In so doing, he inserted the key which unlocked the door of mental apathy and unloosed a torrent of speculation concerning the political as well as the religious rights and aspirations of the human family.

**The smoke of a great furnace** (Ver. 2). The Reformation spirit stimulated the faith and hopes of the few spiritually-minded followers of the Lord, and enabled them to discern more clearly the providential care and leadings of the Heavenly Father. The same spirit of liberty had, however, a very different effect upon the minds of the people in general, emerging as they were from a state of mental bondage, in which fear and superstition had for centuries held them.

The confusion and speculation which resulted from this clash of ideas, here likened unto the smoke arising from a great furnace, beclouded the light of the counterfeit sun. At the same time, it proved a bewildering maze to the seeker after the true light from the Sun of Righteousness, soon to arise with healing in its beams for the blessing of all mankind.

**There came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth** (Ver. 3). Locusts are very destructive creatures and devour every green thing in their path. In this connection they seem to symbolise the numerous aggressive sects which, about this stage of the Reformation period, emerged from the confusion of religious ideas which had taken hold upon the minds of the newly-awakened subjects of the Papacy.

**The seal of God in their foreheads** (Ver. 4). There has been a sealing work going on amongst the Lord's followers since the beginning of the Age. It has already been noted that the seven seals cover the entire Age. The first six cover the period from Pentecost to the Second Advent, while the seventh coincides with the Harvest-time.

During the opening period of each seal the increased light concerning the Divine will and plan provides an armour, or protection, for the faith and hopes of those who are in the light, and who are rightly exercised by the experiences of life. At each stage upon the pathway of the Christian Church, there have been oppositions and wiles of the Adversary to overcome, but at the same time the providences of God in the sealing work have enabled the truly consecrated followers of the Lord to overcome them.

**Tormented five months** (Ver. 5). Five months, in prophetic calculation, would cover a period of 150 years counting a day for a year. (Ezek. 4., 6.) The torment is symbolic and doubtless related to the unsettled mental outlook of many occasioned by the various conflicting theories and beliefs then promulgated amongst the professed followers of the Lord in that day.

**In those days shall men seek death and shall not find it** (Ver. 6). The eternal torment doctrine, invented in the early Reformation days and so ruthlessly presented in the Calvinistic and other creeds, not only tormented truth seekers during their natural lives but it denied them even the prospects of its cessation in the tomb where, in the words of the inspired Book, "the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest." (Job 3., 17.)

**The shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle** (Ver. 7). Horses are frequently used in the Scriptures to symbolise doctrines of the truth, or propaganda of any kind. The prophet Jeremiah had a vision of the judgments of God about to come upon the natural house of Israel because of their waywardness and disobedience to His command. In the words of the prophet—"Thou (God) art near in their mouth (profession), and far from their reins (innermost thoughts of the heart)."

All this, of course, has its fullest application to spiritual Israel in the judgment upon the House of God during the present Harvest-time. (1. Pet. 4., 17-18.) "If (declared the prophet) thou hast run with the footmen (the slower pace and less severe tests of this Judgment Day in its earlier stages), and they have wearied

thee, then how canst thou contend with horses (the strife of tongues and doctrinal contentions which everywhere prevail to-day)? and if in the land of peace (the comparative quiet of past years, permitted of the Lord as a time for putting on the armour against the evil day ahead), wherein thou trustedst (that it would always be so), they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do (stand) in the swelling of Jordan (when the enemy comes in like a flood)?"

**On their heads were as it were crowns like gold** (Ver. 7). Gold is a symbol of that which is Divine, or which claims Divine authority or approval. Every deluded teacher of error claims, of course, that his doctrines have crowns of gold, or Divine approval. The test of all teachings is the inspired word of the Holy Scriptures. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8., 20.)

**Their faces were as the faces of men** (Ver. 7). The face of a man symbolises wisdom. The highest wisdom of fallen man is foolishness with God, but the wisdom that cometh from above is first pure, then peaceable. (James 3., 17.)

**They had hair as the hair of women** (Ver. 8). A woman's hair, declared the Apostle, is a glory to her. (1. Cor. 11., 15.) Is it not true that every false doctrine promulgated in the name of Christ is presented by its advocates as being in every way superior in wisdom and therefore calculated to bring greater glory to the Creator than any doctrine which it claims to supersede?

**Their teeth were as the teeth of lions** (Ver. 8). The lion, as the King of beasts, is the embodiment of power or strength. Its iron-like teeth are capable of dealing with anything possessing food value. Sectarian errors always claim numbers and mighty works as an evidence of Divine approval. Human might and power invariably appeal to the sectarian mind more than the power of the Spirit of truth. Moreover, the sectarian spirit is a harsh and persecuting spirit.

**They had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron** (Ver. 9). The breastplate of the Christian's armour is righteousness. (Eph. 6., 11) Good works and an upright and honest life are regarded by worldly-minded followers of the Lord as calculated to be a sufficient protection amidst the tests and trials of the present life as well as a guarantee of the life to come. Self-righteousness from the Scriptural point of view is, however, nothing more than filthy rags in the sight of God. (Isa. 64., 6.)

Good works, of themselves, could never give one a standing in Christ as a new creature. Nothing less than a living faith in God through Christ and the begetting again of the Holy Spirit can establish one as a member of Christ in this life and provide an earnest of the promised inheritance of joint-heirship in Christ's Kingdom beyond the veil. (Gal. 6., 15.)

**The sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle** (Ver. 9). The naturally-minded follower of the Lord always wants to see unmistakable results from his present warfare in the Master's name. Instead of being guided by the Lord's Word respecting the Divine purpose during the present Age, the efforts of the worldly-minded Church all down the Age have been to accomplish something spectacular and thus bring the world to Christ now. The very same spirit, but in a more extenuated form under the guise of public witness, is evident even to-day amongst many who profess to be in Present Truth. Neither the Spirit of Truth nor the example of our Lord suggest any such rustling of wings or rush to battle as are here described. It is "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" that the work of God will be accomplished and the victory won. (Zech. 4., 6.)

**They had tails like unto scorpions** (Ver. 10). Every unauthorised system or organisation set up amongst the Lord's people will be found, sooner or later, to have a scorpion tail—"the prophet that teacheth lies (as respects God's character and plan) he is the tail". (Isa. 9., 15.) All human organisations amongst God's people, in order to prosper as regards numbers and outward appearances, must provide plenty of scope for active service and work of some kind. Without these activities as a welding force to bind them together, such movements would gradually dwindle and fall to pieces. The assemblies of the Lord's true followers, however, require no such worldly-wise methods, for they are bound together by the one Spirit—the Spirit of the one Lord and Head. (Eph. 4., 4.)

The last three of the seven trumpets, as already noted, are termed by the Revelator "woe" trumpets. The thought seems to be that these three trumpet blasts of light and liberty, coming into the minds of men, result in greatly increased troubles and judgments upon the Papal system, which as the special agency and mouthpiece of the great Adversary has for so long held the masses of mankind in bondage and darkness. Indeed, these woes appear to mark the climax of important developments, or stages, in the preparation for the final overthrow and destruction of the present evil world and of Satan's kingdom.

The first of these woes apparently results from the opening of the bottomless pit condition of general ignorance and superstition. The Papal subjects were for many centuries enshrouded by such ignorance and superstition, and it hindered all progress towards individual freedom of thought. The breaking of this spell of ignorance very quickly led to an avalanche of speculative ideas, with which (in the words of the Revelator) the sun and the air were darkened (verse 2).

Amongst the many symbolic locust ideas which came out of the smoke from the pit, Calvinism, with its eternal torment theory for all the non-elect, seems to have out-topped all others in its

devilish ingenuity and misrepresentation of the Creator. It would seem to be this blasphemous teaching of eternal torment that is referred to as the first of the three woes to come upon the inhabitants of the earth. As a result, it is recorded that for five symbolic months "shall men seek death . . . and death shall flee from them" (verse 6). Concluding the description of the outcome of the opening of the bottomless pit, the Revelator adds—"One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter" (verse 12).

The second woe resulting from the sounding of the sixth trumpet culminates in the French Revolution. This may be gathered from the statement of Rev. 11., 13-14. It should be noted, however, that the whole of chapter 10 and also chapter 11 down to verse 14 are in parenthesis, thereby breaking the continuity of the trumpet vision between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets—the last two woe trumpets.

The key to the location of the second woe is found in chapter 11., 13-14. Verse 12 concludes the parenthetical portion just mentioned in which the revival of God's two witnesses (testimony of Old and New Testament Scriptures) is described. Under Papal domination these witnesses had been compelled to prophesy for 1260 days clothed in sackcloth—539 to 1799 A.D.—but the sackcloth days of prophesying ended at the French Revolution. It was at that stage that the Revelator adds (verse 13) "the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." This description undoubtedly refers to the French Revolution in which France—hitherto the most active supporter and one of the ten horns of the Papal Beast—fell. With this clear location of the time link of events, the Revelator immediately adds—"the second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly" (verse 14). It is very clear from this that the second woe upon the inhabitants of the earth, and, in particular, upon the supporters of the Papal system, was the great cataclysm of the French Revolution, and its subsequent effects upon the rulers of the nations in general.

The trumpet itself, however, must not be confused with the woe-trouble which takes place during the period of its sounding. While the French Revolution would seem to fulfil the "woe" aspect of the sixth trumpet, yet this trumpet itself continues to sound subsequently for a matter of 70 odd years, until the sounding of the seventh trumpet is due. The same principle applies to the sounding of the seventh trumpet which began at the Second Advent. (1. Thess. 4., 16.) The seventh is the jubilee trumpet, and it will continue to sound throughout the thousand years of the Times of Restitution. The "woe" feature of the seventh trumpet is the great day of trouble which will result from the smiting of the nations, already begun. It will result in "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor

ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." (Matt. 24., 21-22.)

**A voice from the (four horns of the) golden altar which is before God** (Ver. 13). The golden altar stood in the Holy of the Tabernacle. The Holy symbolised the Spirit-begotten condition of the Lord's consecrated followers throughout the Gospel Age. The voice signifies in this case a message, or movement of truth, emanating from the spiritually-minded followers of the Lord offering incense at the golden altar.

It was during the sounding of the sixth trumpet that great efforts were made by the Lord's true followers to evangelise the nations. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was formed in the year 1698 A.D., and the same year witnessed the beginning of an era of evangelical zeal for the spread of the Gospel. The Society for the Promotion of the Gospel in foreign parts was formed in 1701, and, as is well known, various Bible Societies for the printing and distribution of the Bible were established shortly after the Revolution came to an end. Coinciding with these efforts to evangelise the nations, there was the great outbreak of infidelity which began in 1755 and affected various continental countries. In France, this wave of infidelity, aided by the writings of Voltaire, was largely responsible for the Revolution which commenced in the year 1789, the ebb and flow of which lasted for a matter of ten years.

**The four angels bound in the great river Euphrates** (Ver. 14). These four angels would seem to be the same as those mentioned in the opening verse of the seventh chapter. When dealing previously with the significance of these symbolic angels, it was suggested that the four angels which held back the winds of trouble until the servants of God were sealed, represent the four pillars which uphold the present world civilization. These symbolic supports of the present world order are the financial, the political, the social and ecclesiastical pillars. If one of these pillars should from any cause be disturbed, trouble immediately follows. When, eventually, all four pillars are overthrown and broken down, world-wide trouble and complete destruction of civilization will be the result.

It is a mistaken idea to suppose that organised civilization, as known to-day, has always existed amongst men, or that it has come down to us from the remote past. On the contrary, the growth of modern civilization, based upon the four symbolic pillars of human rights and liberties, may be said to have taken place within the last couple of centuries. Prior to that time, the masses of mankind in general were little more than the helpless chattels of their overlords and rulers. Through the great increase of knowledge during the past few centuries and particularly during the period of the sixth trumpet, this spell of ignorance respecting human rights has in large measure been broken. The result has been that earth's rulers and kings have been compelled to grant

to their down-trodden subjects the degree of liberty and security which they now enjoy.

**Bound in the great river Euphrates** (Ver. 14). Literal Babylon was built upon the river Euphrates and was a figure of symbolic Babylon-Christendom. The symbolic Euphrates upon which modern Babylon is built represents the "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" who in their ignorance have for centuries willingly given of their wealth and influence in its support. (Rev. 17., 15.)

The four angels bound in the great river Euphrates refer to the latent and suppressed principles of human rights, of which the masses of the peoples of the world in their ignorance and helpless conditions were so long deprived by their rulers. The loosing of these angels from their bound condition in the Euphrates has come about by inserting the key of knowledge in the door of their prison house of ignorance. "The entrance of thy words (declared the Psalmist) giveth light." (Psa. 119., 130.) In like manner, the entrance of the key of knowledge into the darkness of the human mind has in large measure freed mankind from the chains of darkness and ignorance in which they have for so long been held.

**Prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men** (Ver. 15). The slaying mentioned in this connection, like every other feature of the context, must be regarded as symbolic. It is true, however, that literal slaying also to some extent took place, in addition to the more general symbolic fulfilment. It was a slaying of titles, ranks and honours, then so common and highly valued in the ecclesiastical as well as in the social spheres of men, rather than the men themselves, that are said to have been slain. During the great upheaval of the French Revolution—the "woe" of the sixth trumpet—there was a slaughter on a very large scale, in both the symbolic and literal senses, but it affected mainly the tenth part of the great city of Babylon—France. (Rev. 11., 13.) Throughout the sounding of the second woe trumpet, which, as already noted, began prior to the French Revolution and continued until the Second Advent, the slaying process has continued in Christendom, but in a smaller and less harsh fashion. It has been more in accordance with the will of the peoples, freely expressed through their elected representatives.

Viewed in this light, it will be seen that the loosing of the four angels from the great river Euphrates is the result of the rapid increase of light and knowledge amongst the hitherto ignorant masses of mankind. This, in turn, has enabled them to build up for their mutual protection the four pillars of social freedom, commonly known as civilization.

The loosing of the angels, through the greatly-increased knowledge of human rights, was in no small measure due to the widely-scattered copies of the Bible not only before, but particularly after, the French Revolution. It has been truly said that the

“Bible is the torch of civilization.” Wherever it is freely admitted, liberty and freedom always follow in its wake.

The coming into prominence and spreading abroad of this torch of civilization was not the result of any sudden development in the chain of events, devoid of all preparatory steps. On the contrary, it was the outcome of a lengthy chain of events spread over a period of some centuries, all of which had doubtless been overruled in harmony with the Divine will and Plan. In the words of the Revelator, the preparation for the loosing of these angels was “for (during) an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.” Interpreting these symbolic figures as a day for a year, the result is roughly one year plus thirty years plus three hundred and sixty years, which when added together make 391 years. (Ezek. 4., 6.)

What important event, it may be asked, took place amongst men about 390 years prior to the loosing of the four angel-pillars of the present world civilization? Civilization, as it is known to-day and based upon the four freedoms already mentioned, may be said to have arisen concurrently with the rise to leadership amongst the nations of the Beast which John beheld coming up out of the earth, and which had horns like a lamb. (Rev. 13., 11.) This Beast is understood to be the British Empire, or Sixth Head of Gentile rule, which, after the overthrow of Napoleon—another claimant for leadership—began to rise out of the earth, or more stable condition of the nations, about thirty years after the French Revolution.

Looking back 391 years over the course of history, prior to the loosing of the four angels, we arrive at a very outstanding and important event, namely, the discovery of the art of printing in the year 1438 A.D. This discovery may be regarded by some as of little importance, in itself, yet in its far-reaching effects it is believed that it has influenced the course of human history to a greater degree than any other discovery of the human mind, either before or since that date. It would be difficult to imagine how the course of human history over the past five hundred years would have been affected if there had been no printing press. It is fairly certain that without it the production and dissemination of the Scriptures by the Bible Societies, shortly after the French Revolution, would have been an impossibility. It would probably also be true to say that without this discovery the four angel-pillars bound in the Euphrates would still remain unloosed, even unto the present day.

A very significant point to note in this connection is that by adding the 391 years already mentioned to the date 1438, when the printing press was discovered, brings us to the year 1829 A.D. This, in all probability, marks the exact year indicated by the Revelator when the loosing of the four angels took place, and ordered civilization, as known to-day, began to take shape. Moreover, it is most likely that this date also marks the point when the Revelator “beheld another beast coming up out of the



earth; and he had horns like a lamb." (Rev. 13., 11.) The sea condition of tumult amongst the nations, which led up to the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, had just given place to the more ordered and stable condition of the nations from which the Sixth Head rose to prominence amongst the nations. But the year 1829 is also an important date because it marks the end of a period referred to by the prophet Daniel—"from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." (Dan. 12., 11.) The abomination was set up 539 A.D. and a thousand two hundred and ninety years later brings us to the year 1829 A.D. More significant still is the fact that the year 1829 marked the beginning of the Miller Movement which later led to the right understanding of the momentous truth concerning the Lord's Second Presence.

This portion of chapter 9 which concerns the woe trumpets has been dealt with more at length than usual because, without a proper understanding of these outstanding features, it is impossible to harmonise the various visions contained in the chapters which follow. The remaining verses of chapter 9 deal with the propaganda and activities of the numerous sectarian splinters, which, through the greater freedom and liberty of the Reformation Movement, led to extremes of unsound teachings and wild speculation by irresponsible leaders.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE LITTLE BOOK AND SEVENTH TRUMPET

(Revelation Chapter 10)

**I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven** (Ver. 1). The mighty angel, described in this vision, refers to our Lord at the Second Advent. There is no other recorded event, since the First Advent when our Lord was made flesh and appeared in human form, that could reasonably be interpreted as the fulfilment of this symbolic vision.

The description "clothed with a cloud" harmonises fully with various other prophetic Scriptures which clearly indicate that the Second Advent would take place at a time when clouds of trouble would become very apparent amongst the nations, prior to their overthrow and complete destruction. (Rev. 1., 7.)

**He had in his hand a little book open** (Ver. 2). A book, as a symbol, implies the thought of knowledge and enlightenment to any who are privileged to read it. This "little" book, in contrast with the sealed book mentioned in chapter 5., 1, is said to be open. The sealed book is understood to symbolise the Divine Plan of Salvation, which, until the First Advent, was sealed to all except the Heavenly Father Himself. The seals of the Divine Plan, as recorded in the earlier chapters of Revelation, have been opened between the First and Second Advents of Christ.

The fact that the little book is said to be *open*, implies that the information contained in it was *immediately available* when the mighty angel came down from heaven. Moreover, since the angel *brought this little book with him* in his hand, the implication is that *no access to its contents* was possible until that important event had taken place. The obvious conclusion is that the contents of the open book relate to the Present Truth—the truths which arise out of, and concern, the Lord's Presence and work of Harvest. This soul-stirring truth concerning our Lord's Presence is referred to under various figures. It is likened, for example, to a sickle because, when it is proclaimed amongst the Lord's followers, the result is a separation of the true wheat class from the merely nominal tare element. Again, it is likened by our Lord to the "carcase", or food, around which earnest truth-seekers, like the quick-discerning eagle, gather together, in order to partake of the meat in due season. (Matt. 24., 28.)

**Seven thunders uttered their voices** (Ver. 4). Seven represents completion, or the whole of anything. Thunders seem to describe the clamours of the masses of mankind for their rights and liberties. In this day of increased knowledge, they perceive that they have hitherto been deprived of such rights and liberties by those in authority.

**Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not** (Ver. 4). According to chapter 1., 11, John was instructed to write the visions of prophetic truth which he received from the Lord, and to send them to the Seven Churches. The truths contained in these visions were for their instruction and edification in spiritual things. The seven thunders had to do with *earthly matters only*, and John was therefore instructed *not* to write to the Seven Churches what the thunder-voices uttered. The lesson in this for the Lord's people would seem to be that they *should not consider world uplift or social reform as their mission during the present Age*. This has been a temptation and stumbling stone over which the Church at large has stumbled all down the Age, and it is true even to-day amongst many who profess to have eaten the little book of Present Truth. Witnessing to the public during the present Harvest-time when our Lord's instructions to His followers are—"Gather the wheat into my barn" is *nothing more than a mistaken endeavour to do something for the world ahead of the Divine programme*.

**There should be time no longer** (Ver. 6). Modern versions render this verse somewhat differently, the sense being that the time should be no longer delayed—the time for the finishing of the "mystery of God", the elect Body-members of Christ. The time when the last member of these will have been gathered beyond the veil is during the sounding of the seventh trumpet. This trumpet began to sound at the Second Advent and will continue throughout the thousand years of Christ's reign. It is the great jubilee trumpet which heralds the restoration to mankind of their long-lost Paradise home. The presence of Christ in the power and glory of His mighty Kingdom is ample assurance to His followers that the gathering and taking home of His elect to the Kingdom will be no longer delayed.

**Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings** (Ver. 11). Emphasis in this statement is upon the word "again" which implies a second prophesying, or witness, to be given by the Lord's followers after they have eaten the little book of Harvest truth. This second prophesying, in which they will be required to bear witness to the hope that is within them, is understood to refer to the time when Papacy, as the leader of the nations, comes back to power as the Eighth Head.

The *first* prophesying, or witness, is recorded in chapter 11., 3, and relates to the 1260 years of Papal domination and persecution, as the Fifth Head, against the true Elijah class, many of whom sealed their testimony with their blood. The Revelator, in chapter 17, gives us a prophetic foreview of this *second* persecution of the Elijah class, in which Jezebel is described as being "drunken with the blood of the saints." (Rev. 17., 6.)

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE APPROACHING END OF THE AGE

(Revelation Chapter 11)

**A reed like unto a rod** (Ver. 1). The reed given to John is a measuring rod, and seems to prefigure the understanding of the chronological and dispensational aspects of the Divine Plan. Without some understanding of Bible chronology and the dispensational divisions of the Divine Plan, it would be impossible to grasp the Scriptural teaching concerning the High Calling of the Church during the present Age, or the blessings in store for the world under the Kingdom.

**Measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein** (Ver. 1). The temple of God is the Church of the present Age. Only with the aid of the measuring rod is it possible to determine when "the acceptable time" for the call to membership of the Church began, and when it will end. Without a knowledge of the times and seasons of the Divine Plan, the Lord's people could have no understanding of the Covenant hopes which belong to the various Ages.

The altar seems clearly to be the incense altar which stood in the Holy of the Temple. The Holy is a figure of the spiritual condition into which all the truly consecrated followers of Christ are privileged to enter, while still in the flesh. The worshippers at the incense altar, therefore, represent a spiritual class, and must be included as part of the temple class.

**The Court . . . is given unto the Gentiles** (Ver. 2). The Court of the Temple, or Tabernacle, represented the **reckoned righteous condition** of justification by faith, enjoyed by the Lord's followers of the present Age. It represented also the condition of human perfection into which all the willing and obedient mankind may enter during the Times of Restitution, under the Kingdom. (Acts 3., 21.) Those who have access to the Court alone are therefore purely human and must not be included as any part of the temple class.

**The holy city shall they (the Gentiles) tread under foot forty and two months** (Ver. 2j). The holy city is one of the many names used in the Scriptures to describe the prospective heirs of the Kingdom during the present Age. The term, of course, also applies to them in the fullest sense beyond the veil. (Rev. 21., 2.)

Forty and two prophetic months are equivalent to 1260 literal years. (Ezek. 4., 6.) The treading under foot refers to the oppression and persecution of the true followers of Christ by the counterfeit Papal kingdom from 539 to 1799 A.D.—1260 years.

**My two witnesses** (Ver. 3). The Old and New Testament Scriptures.

**Prophecy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth** (Ver. 3). Prophecy is here used in the sense of bearing witness, or testimony, to the truth contained in the Scriptures. The thousand two hundred and threescore prophetic days are equivalent to 1260 years, and refer to the same period of Papal persecution mentioned in verse 2. During that long time of severe persecution against those who witnessed for the truths of the Scriptures, they were considerably handicapped by the fact that through all these centuries the Bible was enshrouded in the sackcloth of a dead language—Latin.

**The two olive trees and the two candlesticks** (Ver. 4). These are also symbolic terms used to describe what are generally known as the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

**If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth** (Ver. 5). All attempts to suppress or destroy the Word of God have ended in failure, and must either now or in the future bring retribution upon those who make the attempt. The degree of retribution will be in proportion to the enlightenment of those concerned.

**Power to shut heaven in the days of their prophecy** (Ver. 6). The explanation of this statement may be seen in the figure of Elijah, who, during the persecution of Jezebel, stopped the rain from heaven coming upon the land of Israel. During the three and a half years while Elijah was in the wilderness, there was a drought throughout the land of Israel because no refreshing rain from heaven fell upon the land. This was a figure of the lack of refreshing truth upon spiritual Israel during the 1260 years of Papal domination.

**When they shall have finished their testimony** (Ver. 7). An alternative rendering reads—"when they shall be *about finishing* their testimony"—Newton. Their testimony and their prophesying in sackcloth refer to one and the same thing, as well as to the same period of time—539 to 1799 A.D. To bear testimony or witness for the truth contained in the Scriptures, during the days of Papal domination, was a most difficult matter, and many sacrificed their lives in the attempt to do so.

The bitterest and most severe persecutions took place when the witnesses were nearing the finish of their testimony prior to 1799 A.D. History records that, for a period of three and a half literal years, symbolised in the context as three and a half days—May, 1514 to October, 1517—the Papacy boasted that she had so completely silenced every heretic that not a single voice of criticism was capable of being raised against her. The Papal Beast had at last after a sackcloth testimony by the two witnesses of nearly a thousand years succeeded in killing them—at least, for the time being. The Great City Babylon had then plumbed its lowest depth of wickedness and had truly worn out the saints of the Most High. (Dan. 7., 25.)

For the lack of any term capable of adequately describing the depths of Satan's working, through that vile anti-christian system, the Revelator recalls three of the worst examples of human degeneracy on record—Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem at the time of the crucifixion. No single one of these examples of wickedness alone could fully describe the devilishness of the Papal system at this time, in its wild endeavours to stamp out every trace of truth and righteousness from the earth.

The boasting and rejoicing by the Papacy over the death of the two witnesses was, however, short lived, for exactly at the end of the three and a half years—October, 1517—Martin Luther launched the great Reformation Movement by nailing his famous 95 theses upon the door of the church at Wittenburg.

**After three (symbolic) days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them (Ver. 11).** Martin Luther's act in challenging the claims of the Papacy was the starting point for what is described in the context as the Spirit of life from God entering the two witnesses, and once more their testimony was heard throughout the Papal Empire.

**And the same hour was there a great earthquake (Ver. 13).** The hour which marked the end of the 1260 years of Papal domination and persecution of God's two witnesses was the great earthquake of the French Revolution. This reign of terror, as it has been described, was the most terrible of its kind ever recorded in human history.

**In the earthquake were slain of (the names of men—Diaglott) men seven thousand (Ver. 13).** There was both a literal and a symbolic slaughter in this great earthquake upheaval and many actual lives were lost in the uprising. The context is understood to refer not to actual men, but to titles, ranks, and such like, both social and ecclesiastical. Such distinctions, previously highly valued and greatly abused, had at one stroke been swept away and abolished by the enraged people of France.

**The remnant were affrighted and gave glory to God (Ver. 13).** The remnant would seem to refer to the other nations of Europe, every one of which felt the shock of the symbolic earthquake. These nations and their rulers, observing the terrible retribution that had overtaken the Papal System through the Revolution and subsequently, at the hand of Napoleon, were no longer disposed to accept, without question the blasphemous claims of the Papal Hierarchy. In a general way, it became evident to thinking people that the terrible retribution which they had witnessed was the act of a power higher than that of any human being. Indeed, it was nothing less than the hand of the Almighty.

**The third woe cometh quickly (Ver. 14).** The third "woe" takes place under the seventh, or last trumpet, which the Apostle designates the "trump of God." (1. Thess. 4., 16.) The "woe"

feature of this trumpet refers to the Great Armageddon trouble which will be precipitated upon the world at the overthrow of the eighth "Head" of Gentile rule. Then, as declared by the Revelator, a "great earthquake (revolution) such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great" will take place. (Rev. 16., 18.)

**The seventh angel sounded** (Ver. 15). The seventh trumpet, as already noted, commenced to sound at the Second Advent of our Lord, about 75 years ago. It will continue to sound until the thousand-year reign of Christ over the earth has ended and the human family have received back the dominion of earth lost by the Fall. (Gen. 1., 26-28.)

**There were great voices in heaven** (Ver. 15). Voices, as a symbolic term, generally refer to movements of truth amongst the Lord's people. Heaven would not refer to the far-off heaven of God's throne. The term is applied in the Scriptures to the heavenly, or spiritually-minded condition of the Lord's followers who are begotten of the Spirit, and, as in the figure of the Tabernacle, they are said to dwell in the Holy place.

The Revelator, in another vision, uses the expression "midst of heaven" or mid-heaven in order to describe, from another standpoint, precisely the same circumstances amongst the Lord's people. (Rev. 14., 6.) The voices here mentioned relate to the proclamation of Present Truth that went forth amongst the spiritually-minded of the Lord's followers at the commencement of the Harvest-time.

**Saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord (Jehovah), and of his Christ** (Ver. 15). Three alternative translations of this very important portion of Scripture are given as follows:—

*Weymouth.* "The seventh angel blew his trumpet; and there followed loud voices in heaven which said, 'The sovereignty of the world *now* belongs to our Lord and His Christ'."

*Twentieth Century.* "Then the seventh angel blew; and loud voices were heard in Heaven saying—'The Kingdom of the world *has become* the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever'."

*Moffatt.* "Then the seventh angel blew; and loud voices followed in heaven, crying, 'The rule of the world *has passed to* our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever'."

It should be carefully noted that, according to the rendering of all the above translations, the sounding of the seventh trumpet marks *the time of transfer* of the sovereignty, or dominion, of this world from the usurper, Satan, into the control of Christ. It synchronises with what is elsewhere described by the Revelator as "war in heaven", when Satan's spiritual kingdom in the heavens

was broken into by the mighty Kingdom of Christ and the Adversary cast down to the sphere of the earth. (Rev. 12., 7-10.)

The dominion, or sovereignty, of earth was given to father Adam, as head of the race, but was lost through the Fall. Our Lord, by the exercise of His mighty power (Rev. 11., 17), has now taken control in the heavenly sphere of earth and has commenced His thousand-year reign over the earth, in accordance with the Father's will and plan. Salvation, or deliverance from the Adversary's control, has already come to the heavens, for he has been cast down to the earth. (Rev. 12., 7-10.)

In due time, his power to deceive those upon the earthly plane will also be bound, so that he will not be able to deceive the nations any more until the thousand years of Christ's reign have ended. (Rev. 20., 1-3.) Many brethren confuse the sovereignty, or kingdom of earth which the "sheep" class of the Millennial Age will receive back at the end of the thousand years, with the spiritual and invisible Kingdom of Christ which is the inheritance of our Lord and the members of His Body. (Matt. 25., 34; 1. Pet. 2., 5.)

By reason of this confusion, many brethren to-day speak of Christ's Kingdom as "soon to be set up" or as "being set up", not realising that what will be shortly set up upon the earth is *man's earthly dominion*, as above mentioned. Our Lord received His Kingdom, the New Jerusalem, at His ascension into heaven, subsequent to the First Advent. He was then glorified in it, as the Head of all principality and power, and at the Second Advent returned in it with power and great glory. (Matt. 25., 31; Rev. 21., 10.) The sleeping saints are already in the Kingdom with Him, and the blessed *from henceforth* are joining them, one by one, as they are immediately changed at the moment of death. (Rev. 14., 13.)

**Thy wrath is come** (Ver. 18). God's wrath upon the present evil world and the Adversary's kingdom commenced at the Second Advent. It will be completed, or filled up, when the *seven last* plagues have been poured out and the present evil order completely destroyed. (Rev. 16., 17-20.)

**The temple of God was opened in heaven** (Ver. 19). The earthly Jerusalem had its material temple in which God, through the medium of His Priest, made atonement for, and blessed the people of Israel. The New Jerusalem, Christ's Kingdom, which will rule over the earth for a thousand years, likewise has its spiritual temple. This temple class is the glorified Church with their Lord and Head. The Melchisedec Priest—Christ, Head and Body—will from the temple of the New Jerusalem dispense to the world the blessings of life and perfection purchased for them through the atonement work of the present Age.

The opening of the temple in heaven took place when the temple class, represented by the dead in Christ, were raised at the



Second Advent. All the living stones of the heavenly temple are not yet in position. The few remaining ones will soon be fully chiselled and polished and added to the building, but in the meantime God *counts* the temple as complete, in the sense mentioned by the Apostle in his letter to the Romans—God “who quickeneth the dead, and *calleth those things which be not as though they were*”. (Rom. 4., 17.) Actually, the temple class will not be complete until the last member of Christ has passed into the Kingdom. Then and then only will it be possible for man to enter into the heavenly temple, in the sense of receiving blessings from it under the operation of the New Covenant. (Rev. 15., 8.)

**The ark of his testament** (Ver. 19). The New Testament, or New Covenant, of which Christ—Head and Body-members—are the testator, can come into force only after the death of the testator. This means that so long as any member of Christ is still in the flesh, the New Covenant cannot go into operation. (Heb. 9., 16-17.)

The ark seems to be a figure of God’s foreknowledge and wisdom. Noah’s ark (and the same Greek word is here used as in the reference to Noah’s ark in Matt. 24., 38) was provided in accordance with God’s instructions, based upon His foreknowledge of the approaching flood. Aaron’s rod that budded and the golden pot of manna were deposited in the ark of Israel’s Tabernacle. The budding and blossoming of Aaron’s rod alone, out of the twelve rods of Israel’s princes, denoted God’s foreknowledge and election of the house of Aaron as His Priests. (Numbers 17.) The golden pot of manna laid up in the ark would seem to suggest, in a similar manner, the Divine wisdom and foreknowledge revealed in the exaltation of the antitypical Priesthood to the Divine nature and immortal life. (Heb. 9., 4.)

In harmony with the same viewpoint, the New Covenant blessings for the world are seen to have been foreknown and planned in God’s temple. It was not until the sounding of the seventh trumpet, however, that the spiritually-minded class (pre-figured by the Revelator) clearly discerned that God’s blessing for the world in general would come from the temple of the New Jerusalem. (Rev. 11., 19.) Does not this explain why it was that the New Covenant feature of the Divine Plan was not clearly recognised by the Lord’s followers until the temple class were raised from the tomb and glorified in the Kingdom during the present Harvest-time?

## CHAPTER IX

### THE MAN CHILD VISION

(Revelation Chapter 12)

The symbols of this chapter are fully dealt with in "Gleanings in the Revelation" booklet Part II copies of which are still available free of charge for those who are interested.

**A woman clothed with the sun** (Ver. 1). The woman is understood to symbolise the Gospel Church as it became established in Apostolic days. The sun is a symbol of the light of the Gospel, while the moon represents the Mosaic Law. The twelve stars fittingly prefigure the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.

**She being with child** (Ver. 2). The Apostle likens his labours on behalf of the Lord's followers to travail in birth pangs in bringing forth spiritual children. (Gal. 4., 19.)

According to the vision of the Revelator, the travail of the woman (Church) began immediately it came into being. She *being* with child the moment John saw her in the vision implies that the travail of the narrow way commenced when the Church was first established.

**Another wonder in heaven** (Ver. 3). Simultaneously with the coming into being of the Church of Christ, there began the Adversary's fierce persecution, through the temporal powers, with the object of destroying it.

**A great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads** (Ver. 3). The great red dragon is one of the various names applied in the Scriptures to the Adversary himself. The term is also applied to that fierce and cruel system through which he carried out his wicked designs against the Lord's followers, namely, the Imperial Roman Empire.

In this symbolic description of the Roman Empire, in which it is depicted as a separate section of Gentile rule complete in itself, the seven heads refer to the line of Emperors—seven implying the whole, or completion. The ten horns symbolise the various lesser powers which by conquest lost their individual sovereignty and became absorbed into the Roman Empire. They afterwards served as horns of defence, or offence, for the Empire. The crowns upon its "heads" indicated that upon the Emperors alone devolved the authority to rule over the affairs of the Empire. They were in large measure dictators and ruled according to their own desires.

**His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven** (Ver. 4). "The prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail." (Isa. 9., 15.) The tail of the dragon would seem to be the school of Pagan philosophy

which became instrumental in misleading and influencing many Christian teachers, thus lowering their standard of Christianity to an earthly-minded viewpoint.

**She brought forth a man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron** (Ver. 5). The only one to whom the promise of ruling all nations with a rod of iron was given was Christ with His Body-members. (Psa. 2., 6-9; Rev. 2., 26-27.) The man child, therefore, according to the Scriptures refers to Christ, Head and Body-members. Verses 3-5, like verses 1 and 2, extend throughout the Gospel Age.

**The woman fled into the wilderness . . . for a thousand two hundred and threescore days** (Ver. 6). This is clearly a reference to the Papal persecution of the Christian Church from 539 to 1799 A.D. This period was prefigured in the experience of Elijah when he was driven into the wilderness for three and a half years under the persecution of Jezebel.

**There was war in heaven** (Ver. 7). The heaven of this verse is not the heaven of God's throne, but the heavenly sphere of our planet whence Satan has ruled over mankind.

The cause of the war was the Second Advent of our Lord in His Kingdom, when He broke into the strong man's (Satan's) house and cast him out into the sphere of the earth. (Ver. 9.)

**Michael and his angels fought** (Ver. 7). Christ and all the holy angels which comprise His Kingdom. (Matt. 25., 31.)

**The dragon fought and his angels** (Ver. 7). Satan with his mighty host of fallen angelic spirits.

**Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ** (Ver. 10). The salvation and strength are consequent upon the overthrow of Satan's kingdom in the heavens. It was only when the due time for putting an end to evil came that the power of Christ was exerted against Satan and all those in league with him.

**Accuser of our brethren** (Ver. 10). The accuser is the great Adversary, and the brethren who loved not their lives unto death refer to the faithful followers of the Lord during the present Age. All who are in full harmony with God on any plane of life are termed brethren. Our Lord calls the sheep class of the Millennial Age His brethren, and yet they are on the earthly plane of life. (Matt. 25., 40.)

**Overcame him by the blood of the Lamb** (Ver. 11). The sacrifice of our Lord's perfect human life, in order to meet the claims of Divine Justice against the race, is the basis of all the blessings that, in the outworking of the Divine Plan, will result from the overthrow of evil and all evil-doers.

**Woe to the inhabitants of the earth** (Ver. 12). Satan has already lost control in the heavens, but he will do everything possible to consolidate his control of the human family upon the earth. The result of the war between Christ's Kingdom and the remnants of Satan's kingdom on earth will be the wreck of the present evil world order and a time of trouble such as never was since the beginning of the world. (Matt. 24., 21.)

**Persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child** (Ver. 13). God "who calleth those things which be not (actually accomplished) as though they were" counts the man child as born when the sleeping saints were raised at the commencement of the Harvest-time. The full number of the 144,000 elect had then been called out from the world and it only remained for the living members during our Lord's Presence to be gathered during the present Harvest period. (1. Thess. 4., 16-17.)

**Two wings of a great eagle** (Ver. 14). These are the two prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation, specially provided by God for the assistance of His true followers during the present evil time.

**Into her (former) place where she is (was) nourished for a time, and times, and half a time** (Ver. 14). The second wilderness experience of the Church, through the persecution of Jezebel, will be when Papacy is returned to power as the eighth Head. (Rev. 17., 11.) It will be an experience similar to the first flight referred to in verse 6. Instead of the present tense "is nourished" as given in the Authorised Version of the Bible, the tense should really be past—"was nourished"—as rendered in certain modern translations.

**Water as a flood** (Ver. 15). Water, in the form of refreshing rain, symbolises the refreshing power of the truth. A flood of water represents an overwhelming calamity or evil. Apparently, the Papacy as head of the nations (her horns) will through the temporal powers whip up an extensive propaganda against the remaining members of Christ, with the object of completely destroying them. (Rev. 17., 6.)

**The earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood** (Ver. 16). The civil powers will for a time acquiesce in the persecution of the saints, and do the bidding of the woman Jezebel. Later, they will get their eyes opened to her true character, and, in the words of the Revelator, "shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." (Rev. 17., 16.)

**The remnant of her seed** (Ver. 17). This is possibly a reference to the class generally described as the "Great Company" who lose their crowns and consequently pass into the great tribulation for the destruction of the flesh that the spiritual life might be saved from complete destruction. (Rev. 7., 14-15.)

## CHAPTER X

### THE VISION OF THE HEADS

(Revelation Chapter 13)

**A beast rising up out of the sea** (Ver. 1). The Papal beast, or fifth Head of Gentile rule. Papacy climbed to power as a mighty empire through war and conquest.

**Seven heads and ten horns** (Ver. 1). In this local description of the Papal empire as an individual power, the seven heads stand for the line of Popes, while the ten horns represent the lesser kingdoms which supported the Papacy and were permitted to retain their crowns, or regal authority, on condition of their allegiance to the Popes, the real rulers of the empire.

It will be noted that, in this description of the Papal empire, the crowns of regal and temporal power are *upon the horns* of the beast. These horns, or kingdoms which supported the Papacy, were on that account permitted to retain their crowns so long as they agreed to defend the Papal authority.

In the case of the previous beast—Pagan Rome—the crowns of regal authority were *upon the heads* of the beast, namely, the emperors. The horns of Imperial Rome had no regal rights on their own account. Their crowns were lost when, through conquest, they became part of the Roman empire. It is thus seen that there is no relationship whatever between the ten horns of the Papal beast and the horns of the previous beast—Pagan Rome.

It is, moreover, an obviously mistaken idea to suppose, as many do, that the ten horns upon these beasts refer to ten kingdoms, or division of European powers, which exist even in our day, long after these beastly powers have ceased to exist as Head powers. The horns of a natural beast *never survive* the beast itself, and, rightly interpreted, neither do the horns of a symbolic beast. Were it otherwise, the symbol would be meaningless and misleading.

**Upon his heads the name of blasphemy** (Ver. 1). As already noted, the heads of the Papal empire were the Popes who controlled its entire policy. These heads, in claiming for themselves the prerogative and powers of the Creator, were from God's standpoint blaspheming His name. It will be noted that it was the heads of the beast only, and not the horns or supporting powers, which are described as having the name of blasphemy.

**The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority** (Ver. 2). The dragon, as already seen, symbolises Imperial, or Pagan Rome. The name is also applied by the Revelator to Satan himself, as the author and instigator of the cruelty and wickedness of that terrible beastly power.

The break-up and downfall of Imperial Rome provided the opportunity for the Papacy to rise to power upon its ruins. (2. Thess. 2., 6-7.) Papacy, in its incipient stages, was the "little horn" of the Imperial Roman beast referred to in Dan. 7., 8. So long as Imperial Rome lasted, the "mystery of iniquity" remained only a horn power of the fourth beast. When the fourth beast fell and was taken out of the way, Papacy herself climbed to the position of the fifth Head over the nations.

**One of his heads wounded to death** (Ver. 3). This seems to have been fulfilled about the year 1799 A.D., when Napoleon, at the close of the French Revolution, broke the spell of Papal superstition and carried away the ruling Pope a prisoner to France, where he died.

**There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies** (Ver. 5). Blasphemy is used in the Scriptures in the sense of attributing to God characteristics which are contrary to His nature. In this sense, the Popes, in claiming to be God's representative and the Vicar of Christ upon earth, were blasphemers of the name and character of the Creator.

History records that with great swelling words the Popes claimed to fill every office that belonged to the true Head of the Church and applied to themselves the title and attributes that belong to God alone.

**Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months** (Ver. 5). Forty and two prophetic months equal twelve hundred and sixty literal years. This was the period of Papal supremacy over the nations, as the fifth Head of Gentile rule, which began 539 A.D. and ended at the French Revolution, 1799 A.D. Power was given unto him in the sense of Divine permission. God did not interfere with the natural trend of events which enabled the Popes to realise the fulfilment of their demon-inspired aspirations.

**All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world** (Ver. 8). This was surely true of the influence and power exercised by the Papacy during the years of her ascendancy over the nations as the fifth Head.

It would seem, however, also to have a future fulfilment when, as the eighth Head, she returns to power as leader of the nations. Concerning that time we read—"They that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that *was* (previously the fifth Head), and *is not* (a Head power at present), and *yet is* (shall)" again be a Head, namely, the eighth. (Rev. 17., 8.)

When He referred to the coming great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, our Lord declared that—

"If it were possible, they (the great signs and wonders) shall deceive the very elect." (Matt. 24., 24.)

**I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had (two—omit, Diaglott) horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon** (Ver. 11). This is the sixth of a line of symbolic beasts brought to our attention in the prophetic records of Daniel and the Revelator. Daniel gives us a description of the first four, while it was left to the Revelator to call attention to the last three Gentile beasts which, with the addition of an eighth (which will be one of the seven), fill up the complete interim of Gentile rule. (Rev. 17., 11.)

Many brethren seem to have very vague ideas regarding the interpretation of this symbolic beast. Notwithstanding the definite statement of the Revelator that this is *another* beast, some will have it that it is the *same* beast as the one previously mentioned, or, at least, a "phase" of it—whatever that might mean. Both suggestions are quite wrong and contrary to what is stated in the verse itself. The dictionary meaning of the word "another" is "*not the same*" and the introduction of the term "phase" into the context is merely a roundabout way of saying that it *is* the same beast, while avoiding the actual use of the word.

There has been much speculation regarding the horns of this beast. Some insist, contrary to the opinion of the translator of the Diaglott, that the numeral "two" in reference to the horns should be retained. They fail to see that it is *not the number*, but the *disposition, or kind* of horns that is here emphasised. Normal lambs never have more nor less than two horns anyway, so why should it be considered necessary here to call attention to what is an obvious truism respecting the horns of lambs in general?

When this beast which rose from the earth is correctly interpreted—in harmony with the context—as the British Empire, later renamed the Commonwealth and sixth head of Gentile rule, all the difficulties regarding the number of horns and their symbolic significance immediately vanish. A symbolic beast is an empire, or ruling power, and its horns are lesser powers which have become subservient to its control and leadership. These horns, like those of a natural beast, are used by it as a means of defence, or offence, as circumstances may require. The colonies of the British Empire, viewed in this light, are its horns, and the lamb-like disposition of these horns, compared with the aggressive and warlike spirit of the horns upon all the previous beasts, must surely be very obvious.

The records tell us that the five previous beasts all came up from the *sea* which symbolises upheaval and conquest. All of them rose to power as "heads", or leaders, by means of war and conquest, whereas, by contrast, the sixth beast came up from the *earth* which symbolises a stable and orderly condition of society. The British Empire, as all know, rose to influence amongst the nations mainly through commercial enterprise, and on this account it has been described as the workshop of the world.

**He spake as a dragon** (Ver. 11). When faced with danger or crisis Britain, like all other kingdoms of this world, has displayed much of the fierce and warlike dragon spirit.

**He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men** (Ver. 13). This has been measurably true of British records in the past, but it would seem to have particular reference to the rôle which she will fill amongst the nations in the years yet future.

Making fire come down from heaven upon the earth is a reference to the record of how Elijah demonstrated to the people of Israel that he was the true prophet of God. In answer to Elijah's prayer, God sent fire down from heaven which consumed not only his sacrifice but the wood and stones of the altar, and licked up the water in the trench that surrounded them. (1. Kings 18., 30-38.) Britain's part in the drama of the closing years of Gentile rule, like that of Elijah, would seem from the standpoint of the nations generally to be Divinely favoured. Later, however, it will become manifest that she was not a prophet of God but a prophet such as described by the Revelator, whose fate will be similar to that of the (Papal) beast before which she wrought the miracles. (Rev. 19., 20.)

**And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast** (Ver. 14). The beast, in whose sight and with whose sympathy and co-operation Britain has the power to do the miracles in question, is the Papal beast. This is evident from what is stated in the latter part of the verse. It is the beast which had the wound by the sword and did live. (Rev. 13., 3.)

**Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live** (Ver. 14). The speedy recovery of Britain to-day from her hopeless outlook through the ravages of the second world war is, in the eyes of the world in general, little short of a miracle. Her progress in economic and social recovery, as well as in other directions, has astonished the world and has become the envy of all the European nations. Britain, however, recognises that despite her apparent miraculous progress towards recovery, neither she nor any other nation can any longer stand alone. She recognises that she can no longer fill the rôle as head or leader amongst the nations, as she has done for approximately the last one and a half centuries. Consequently, she is to-day and has been for some years saying to the peoples of the nations that they should make an Image to the beast which had the deadly wound and was healed. The object in the making of the Image is that, by directing and unifying the policy and affairs of the nations, it might save the world from disaster and ruin.

This brings us to the question of the Image itself, an understanding of which and of the part that in future it will play



(particularly in relation to the Lord's people) provide a very important part of the "armour of light" essential for this evil day.

Much has been written in bygone years and many attempts have been made to find a satisfactory solution of this important symbolic figure. Even to-day, there is much speculation amongst the Lord's followers regarding what the term might signify. When, however, all these views are considered in the light of the context and the Scriptures generally, it has to be admitted that none of them seems to meet the requirements of the case.

One view widely held by those in Present Truth in earlier years was that the Image represented the "Evangelical Alliance" which was formed in the year 1846 A.D. The part played, however, by this Alliance since its formation even until our own day—over 100 years later—would seem clearly to indicate that this interpretation falls short of meeting any of the requirements specified in the context regarding the Image. It is only proper to say that at the time the interpretation mentioned was suggested, and prior to the later developments amongst the nations arising out of the two recent world wars, the due time for the understanding of this prophetic symbol had not arrived. As a result of these wars, the world to-day is in some respects very different from what it was 40 or 50 years ago, and the prophetic shape of things to come is now much more evident.

Another matter which affects the understanding of the Image as well as of other symbolic beasts mentioned by the Revelator is the fact that Gentile rule from the Divine standpoint is regarded as a single unit—one beastly attempt of the nations to rule the world, in the course of which seven "Heads" or leading powers arise amongst the nations. (Rev. 17., 9.) Four of these, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Imperial Rome are described by the prophet Daniel, while it remained for the Revelator to call attention to the latter three, namely, Papal Rome, British Empire, and the Image of the Beast. (Rev. 13., 1-15.) The Revelator, *taking the standpoint of the time when the seven last plagues are about to be poured out*—the present Harvest-time—in a few brief words summarises the entire course of Gentile rule as follows—"The seven heads are seven hills, on which the woman is seated; also, they are seven kings (kingdoms), of whom five have fallen, one is living, and the other has not arrived yet—and when he does arrive, he can only stay a little while. As for the Beast which was and is not, he is an eighth head: he belongs to the seven, and to perdition he shall go." (Rev. 17., 9-11—Moffatt.) Without some understanding of this key portion of the Revelation, it seems quite impossible to interpret aright or clearly to locate the part played by this seventh "Head" of Gentile rule—the Image of the Beast.

### WHAT AN IMAGE OF THE BEAST IMPLIES

The term "image" of the beast implies a likeness in some respects to the beast itself—the Papal Empire—during the days of

its supremacy over the nations. Papacy, as the fifth "Head" of Gentile rule, claimed to be the Kingdom of Christ ruling upon the earth—hence the title Christendom. Moreover, it claimed to exercise authority as a super-kingdom over all the other nations of Christendom, who, in a symbolic sense, are described by the Revelator as its horns or means of defence. (Rev. 13., 1.)

Furthermore, it exercised both temporal and spiritual control over its subjects, with power to open or shut the gates of heaven to all who came within the orbit of its control.

To make an image of the Papal beast implies, therefore, that the nations must by their united efforts create a power which will in some respects, and for a time at least, exercise similar authority over the nations and peoples of Christendom. It should be particularly noted in this connection that, unlike all the previous Gentile "Head" powers, this seventh one termed the Image of the beast is an *artificial creation*, in the sense that it is not the outcome of national aspirations on the part of any particular nation but is the creation of the united efforts of the nations in general.

The question which now emerges is—Has any such super-power claiming to exercise authority similar to that just described yet arisen amongst the nations? The answer, we think, must be that no such "Head" power since the days of Papal supremacy has filled the rôle attributed by the Revelator to the Image of the beast. On the other hand, it would seem that, to those who have discernment and are able to receive it, there is abundant evidence that the nations of Christendom are to-day eagerly engaged in forging just such an instrument. This organisation, when fully equipped with authority to speak, will meet all the circumstances of the case.

### THE IMAGE NOW IN THE MAKING

About 20 years ago, "Old Paths" publications called attention to the fact that in accordance with the prophetic visions of Daniel and Revelation such a power was *bound to arise* and, indeed, had then begun to take shape in the counsels of the nations. It was then pointed out that the bringing into being of the League of Nations, at the conclusion of the first world war, about 30 years ago, was the commencement of what is implied in the Revelator's prophetic vision. In vision, he foresaw that they "that dwell on the earth (the nations and peoples of Christendom whose hopes for the future rest entirely upon the wisdom of earth's rulers, in contrast with the heavenly wisdom of the spiritually-minded followers of the Lord) should *make* an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live", namely, the Papal beast. (Rev. 13., 14.)

It is true, of course, that there was then little evidence sufficient to convince those of the Lord's followers accustomed to walking by sight rather than by the leadings of the Spirit of Truth received through the prophetic Word. (John 16., 13.) In the light

of the prophetic Scriptures it seemed evident, however, to those with discernment that in the League of Nations the roots of worldly wisdom, which in time would develop into the full growth of the image, had then been planted in the soil of earthly hopes, well prepared by the aftermath of the first world war.

If it is urged that the League eventually came to nothing and therefore the vision failed to materialise, the answer is that while the plant outwardly seemed to wither and lose vitality, yet its roots still *remained alive* in the soil of earthly wisdom arising from the dire necessity of the nations of earth. Nor did the withering stage last very long, for it only required the stirring up of the soil of human hopes and fears through a second world war in order to revive and quicken its growth.

To-day, the rulers of Christendom and they "that dwell on the earth" realise as never before the urgent need for the speeding up and full development of the same ideal amongst the nations as gave rise to the League of Nations in earlier years. It is, of course, true that the organization is still in the stage of rising to power, yet all of the present-day efforts to unify the nations undoubtedly sprang from the roots of the original plant—the League of Nations. These roots are now deeply and firmly entrenched in the fertile soil of the hopes and fears of the nations concerned and it only requires a few more loosening of this soil, through the smiting power of the unseen Kingdom of Christ, now set up in the heavenly sphere of earth, in order to hasten the complete fulfilment of the Revelator's vision.

Again, it might be asked, if the organisation just mentioned is eventually to fulfil the vision of the Revelator as the seventh "Head" of Gentile rule, why should it take so many years in coming into control? The answer is that all the other "Head" powers also took a considerable number of years in rising to leadership amongst the nations. In every case their growth in power and influence was gradual and involved various setbacks which had to be overcome. Thus, it should not be expected that either the seventh or the eighth "Heads" would be any different in this respect.

**And he (the sixth "Head") had power to give life unto the image of the beast** (Ver. 15). The giving of life unto the image, enabling it to fulfil the functions amongst the nations anticipated by its makers, is evidently a future stage of its development. Certain leaders amongst the Lord's followers have in recent days been proclaiming the view that the Armageddon revolution has *already begun* and that the complete overthrow of the kingdoms of earth is, so to speak, just around the corner. That view is believed to be quite out of harmony with the prophetic outline of the Scriptures.

In order to understand aright *where we are* to-day in relation to the end of Gentile rule, it should be clearly understood that the closing events of the present evil world cannot come to pass

until the vision concerning the seventh and eighth "Heads" of Gentile rule has first of all been fulfilled.

A similar case of confusion, regarding the times and seasons of the Divine Plan, is described by the Apostle in his second letter to the church at Thessalonica. It appears that certain of the leaders amongst those brethren were then advocating the view that the Second Presence of the Lord was already an accomplished fact. It is important to note the simple yet convincing line of argument which the Apostle adopted in order to disprove the erroneous idea which was then troubling and unsettling the minds of many of those brethren.

Instead of entering into a disputation with these leaders regarding their evidence of His Presence, the Apostle simply pointed to the prophecy of Daniel which clearly indicated that before the Second Advent could take place, the man of sin (Anti-christ) must be revealed and play the part allotted to him in the prophetic Word. (2. Thess. 2., 1-8.) The falling away from the faith had not then taken place and the man of sin had not appeared in the Apostle's day, hence it was a mistaken idea to suggest that the Second Presence was then an accomplished fact.

The position to-day with regard to the final overthrow of the kingdoms of this world at the end of the Harvest-time is on a parallel to the case just mentioned. The great earthquake of world-wide revolution resulting in the fleeing away of every "island" organization and the disappearance of the mountains or kingdoms of earth cannot take place until both the seventh and eighth "Heads" of the nations have arisen and played their parts, as foretold by the Revelator. (Rev. 17., 9-11.) It seems certain, however, that as the end draws nearer and the smiting of the nations by the unseen Kingdom of Zion becomes more severe, the momentum of events leading to the final collapse must be greatly hastened. It is both foolish and misleading, then, to talk of the "great earthquake" having *already commenced* while the two important events foretold by the Revelator have not yet come to pass.

**That the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed** (Ver. 15). The speaking stage of the image has not yet arrived, but when it does it will undoubtedly speak with authority. When that stage has been reached, it will mean very trying and fiery experiences for any who refuse to worship, that is, lend their influence in its support. The killing mentioned will doubtless be both literal and symbolic. It will mean ostracism and boycotting, so that it will be very difficult for such even to earn their daily bread. It seems clear from the Scriptures that only the spiritually-minded whose hopes are centred in the unseen spiritual Kingdom of Christ, already set up in the heavens of our planet, will be able to overcome this subtle snare of the evil one. All the earthly-minded followers of the Lord, described by the Revelator

as "they that dwell upon the earth," will be deceived by the claims and professions of the image to be God's Kingdom ruling amongst men. To all such it will, indeed, be the only alternative to the disastrous end of the present so-called world civilization.

**And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads** (Ver. 16). Once the image has received life and has power to speak and issue its decrees, everyone within its sphere of control will be expected to yield his quota of support in both word and deed. The right hand indicates the medium of one's activities and thus, where possible, active support of the image will be required. The forehead indicates the seat of the intellect and this implies the willing and intelligent support of everyone capable of rendering it.

**That no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark (or the name of the beast—omit, Diaglott), or the number of his name** (Ver. 17). The buying or selling would seem to apply to both the material and spiritual things of life. It would not surprise us, if, at a later stage, one religious faith only were tolerated. It is not difficult to visualise what that would mean not only to the Lord's truly consecrated followers but also to the many others who for various reasons might not be prepared to submit to such coercive regulations. The importance of preserving the present world order will, however, from the standpoint of worldly wisdom outweigh every other consideration.

**Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six** (Ver. 18). Whenever the Revelator prefaces a feature of truth which he is about to reveal with such cautionary remarks as are found in this verse, it may be taken for granted that some deeper understanding lies hidden in the context than what to the natural mind might appear to be the surface meaning. It will be recalled that verses 9 to 11 of Revelation Chapter 17, which give us a summary of the "Heads" of Gentile rule and supply the key to the general layout of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, are prefaced by similar words of caution—"here is the mind which hath wisdom." The implication is that in each case the real meaning is not the one which lies upon the surface and which is likely to be acceptable to the mind lacking in heavenly wisdom.

It is common knowledge that, in both instances, interpretations of the Revelator's visions have been advanced which have appealed to and been accepted as satisfactory by most Bible Students. The fact, however, that these interpretations place the fulfilment of both the visions in question centuries in the past, whereas it has already been seen that their fulfilment belongs to the immediate future and onward, should be sufficient to indicate that such interpretations do not express the mind of the Spirit.

Take, for example, the verse now under consideration which deals with the number of the beast. This has been interpreted to mean that the beast referred to is the Papacy and that the sum total of the figures 666 indicated by the three Latin words *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which appear on the Pope's crown, is the obvious solution of the matter. It does not appeal to us, however, that the wisdom hidden in the Revelator's words is so simple as that just mentioned. First of all, it would seem that the fulfilment of this feature of the vision is still a future event. Secondly, it would appear from the words of the Revelator found in chapter 15 ver. 2 that the mark and number of the beast and its image will prove to be *serious tests of the Adversary* permitted of God to come upon the Lord's true followers, which those alone who can "play skilfully" upon the Harp will be able to overcome. Most brethren will agree that the antitypical plagues here referred to and which, in the figure, Moses brought upon Egypt, apply to the present Harvest-time, subsequent to the coming of the Greater than Moses for the deliverance of mankind from the antitypical Pharaoh—Satan. There were ten plagues altogether, the first three of which in the antitype cover the earlier years of the Harvest-time, while the seven last, generally termed the judgment plagues, commence when the image has received life and begins to speak. (Rev. 16., 2.)

It would seem that, at this stage, it is not the due time to understand which beast is here referred to or what the number of his name signifies. If these matters were simple and obvious to every professed follower of the Lord beforehand, wherein would lie the *test to be overcome* referred to in the vision of Revelation 15., 2?

Gentile rule as a whole was represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream under the image of a man comprised of various metals. (Dan. 2., 31-33.) It will not surprise us, therefore, if, in due time, it will be seen that the "number of a man", here referred to by the Revelator, which the watchers amongst the Lord's people *must overcome*, will arise out of developments connected with the image of the beast—the seventh "Head" of Gentile rule.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE LAMB ON MOUNT ZION

(Revelation Chapter 14)

The vision of this chapter concerns the Second Advent of our Lord and the work of Harvest which follows, consequent upon His Presence. The chapter is made up of three small but distinct visions, each one of which covers the entire Harvest period, revealing different aspects of the Harvest work. The first of these Harvest visions embraces the first five verses of the chapter. The second commences with verse six and extends to verse thirteen, while the third begins with verse fourteen and continues to the end of the chapter.

**And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion** (Ver. 1). The Lamb, seen by John on Mount Zion, represents our highly exalted and glorified Lord when He returned to earth at the Second Advent. Typical Zion was a stronghold, or fortress, on the top of Mount Zion at Jerusalem. After being captured from the Jebusites by David's army, it became the seat of authority from which the kings of Israel ruled over the nation. (2. Sam. 7., 12.) Spiritual Zion, on which the Lamb is here seen to stand, is described by the Psalmist as being "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." (Psa. 48., 2.)

Stated briefly, mount Zion is a symbolic figure of the seat of power, or ruling centre, from which the unseen spiritual Kingdom of Christ, set up in the heavenly sphere of earth at the Second Advent, will for a thousand years rule and deliver the human family from sin and death. The expression "sides of the north" used by the Psalmist respecting the stronghold of Zion is very significant. Satan, we are informed, aspired to sit upon the "sides of the north" and apparently was permitted by God to realise his ambition in that direction. (Isa. 14., 12-13.) It would seem that it was from that seat of power—the place of Satan's throne—that as "prince of the power of the air" he has ruled over and held mankind in subjection during the many past centuries since the fall. We now learn that, at the Second Advent, Satan and his associate fallen spirits were cast out of that place of control and that Christ's Kingdom since then has occupied the place described by the Psalmist as "Beautiful for situation (soon to be) the joy of the whole earth, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." (Rev. 12., 7-12.)

**With him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads** (Ver. 1). It appears from this Scripture that a sufficient number to make up the required 144,000 elect members of Christ had been called out from the world at the time of the Second Advent. That, naturally, accounts

for the fact that the remainder of the chapter following is taken up with the work and circumstances connected with the Harvest-time.

All of these called ones, still in the flesh at the time of our Lord's return, had, of course, still to be tested as to their degree of faith and their willingness to "follow the Lamb (out of Babylon and) whithersoever he goeth" (verse 4). All the crowns lost during the Harvest testings are taken by others whom the Lord admits as more worthy of sharing in the glory of His Kingdom. (Rev. 3., 11.)

"Having his Father's name written in their foreheads" would indicate close fellowship with God to the extent of manifesting in their lives the fruits and characteristics of His Spirit.

**I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder** (Ver. 2). The John class of heavenly-minded watchers amongst the Lord's followers soon recognised something of the increased light of prophetic truth which followed the Second Advent. The Apostle Paul describes this increased light which followed the Second Advent as the "voice of the archangel and the trump of God." (1. Thess. 4., 16.)

**I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps** (Ver. 2). The fact that some of the 144,000 are harping with their harps clearly indicates that there was still a remnant of the elect this side of the veil when the work of Harvest began about 75 years ago.

**And they sung as it were a new song before the throne** (Ver. 3). Whenever we read of a new song being sung, it implies a *change of dispensation* with fresh unfolding of truth resulting therefrom. The self-same new song is described by the prophet as a song concerning a "strong city." It is the song of Present Truth concerning the Presence of Christ in the glory and splendour of His heavenly Kingdom—the New Jerusalem. (Rev. 3., 12.)

**No man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth** (Ver. 3). Christ's Kingdom is a *spiritual* organization comprised of heavenly angelic beings (Matt. 25., 31), hence none but those who are spiritual (new creatures in Christ), for whom alone the redemption price has been paid, can comprehend such spiritual things. (1. Cor. 2., 14.)

**These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins** (Ver. 4). Sectarian Church organizations are symbolised as women. The true Church of Christ, wholly comprised of overcomers, is described as a virgin—pure and separate in spirit from the earthly-minded sects of Babylon. (2. Cor. 11., 2.) This is the class who having heard the call—"come out of her"—immediately recognise the voice of truth and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

**These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb** (Ver. 4). The redemption price was pre-figured by the blood of the Bullock taken into the Most Holy of



the Tabernacle by Israel's High Priest, at the commencement of the typical Day of Atonement. The blood of the typical Bullock was offered on behalf of the *Priest's house alone*—Aaron's sons. (Lev. 16., 6.) The blood of Christ—the antitypical Bullock—was offered to Justice similarly on behalf of the house of sons alone, when He appeared in the presence of God (the antitypical Most Holy) *for us* His members. (Heb. 9., 24.)

**In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault (before the throne of God—omit, Diaglott) (Ver. 5).** The Greek word rendered *guile* simply means *deceit* or a *lie*. Dr. Moffatt renders it by the latter word. It means to say that those alone of the consecrated followers of the Lord who *fulfil* their covenant vow of sacrifice, even unto death, will comprise the little flock of overcomers. All who “turn aside to lies” and do not perform their vow of consecration unto the Lord will fail to gain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. (Psa. 40., 4.) Those, on the other hand, who pay their vows unto the Lord are faultless. They walk with Him in white and are continually covered with the spotless robe of righteousness. (Rev. 3., 4.)

**And I saw (another—omit, Diaglott) an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people (Ver. 6).** This verse commences the second Harvest vision of the chapter. Three angels are seen by John to follow each other in mid-heaven. Mid-heaven describes what was, in Israel's Tabernacle, recognised as the Holy, or first apartment of the Tabernacle proper. The Holy represented the spirit-begotten condition of the new creature in Christ. It is a condition which may be described as neither wholly earthly nor yet entirely spiritual, but midway between them—the spiritual mind in a natural body. (2. Cor. 4., 7.)

The three angels mentioned represent three aspects of the Harvest message which went forth amongst the Lord's people (the mid-heaven class) in the earlier years of the present Harvest. These messages have been instrumental in separating the wheat class from the tares and in calling the true followers of the Lord out of Babylon. For fuller explanation of the messages of these three angels, see “Gleanings in the Revelation,” Part II—chapters 5, 6 and 7.

The everlasting gospel, restored to the Lord's followers by the message of this angel, was, according to the Apostle, embraced in the Abrahamic Promise—“In thee shall all nations be blessed.” (Gal. 3., 8.) Its outworking has required various Ages for its accomplishment. Following the Patriarchal Age, came the Jewish Age, during which time the Law given to the nation acted as a schoolmaster in preparing a people for the coming Messiah. (Gal. 3., 24.) Next, came the Gospel Age, during which the true seed of Abraham (Christ, Head and Body-members) is brought forth.

(Gal. 3., 16; 29.) And lastly, the Millennial Age when the actual blessing through the glorified seed of Abraham will be brought to all the willing and obedient of mankind.

It was both proper and necessary that the Lord's people in this evil day, when faith is being tested to the utmost, should obtain an harmonious understanding of this "Plan of the Ages," for their protection against the wiles of the evil one. (Eph. 6., 13.) Prior to the day of the Lord's Second Presence and the going forth to the mid-heaven class of the angel with the everlasting Gospel, the knowledge of the Divine Plan containing a hope for all mankind in due course was not available to the truth seeker. It was lost to sight during the great falling away from the Apostolic faith and lay buried under the false claims and teachings of the Papal System and its sectarian offshoots.

Without this knowledge of the various Ages involved in the Divine Plan which was brought to light through the recovery of the everlasting Gospel, the "armour of light" for this evil day would be incomplete. It is well to note here that while the first angel is said to *have* the everlasting Gospel, yet during the present Harvest-time it is carried only to the mid-heaven class. In due time, it will be preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue.

**Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him ; for the hour of his judgment is come** (Ver. 7). The great thousand-year judgment day commenced at the Second Advent. Prior to this day of increased light from the Lord's Presence, and while the Lord's true followers were still in Babylon, it was to the prelates and dignitaries of the various sections of Babylon that glory and worship were mainly directed, rather than to the Creator Himself. The light of Harvest truth to-day has, however, dispelled much of the superstitious reverence that enshrouded the minds of most of the Lord's people in earlier days.

**There followed (in mid-heaven) another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen** (Ver. 8). The second angel, or movement of Harvest truth for the benefit of the mid-heaven class, followed quickly the first Harvest movement. The true Gospel embracing a hope for all mankind, according to a Plan of the Ages, reacted as a plague upon the various creeds of Christendom. Thus, the still clearer light of the second angel, making manifest the glory and greatness of the Author of the Divine Plan, revealed still further the confusion and shortcomings of Babylon's creeds. In thus making manifest her rejection as any longer the mouthpiece of God, it revealed to the sincere followers of the Lord the need for "coming out of her" in order to escape her coming plagues.

**The third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice. If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God** (Vers. 9-10). The third angel's message to the

heavenly-minded of the Lord's people conveys a still further aspect of Harvest truth. It contains a *warning to the Lord's followers* against worshipping or supporting the beast and his image. Respecting these three aspects of Harvest truth, it should not be imagined that when the second became manifest the first aspect of truth ended, or that the second ended with the going forth of the third. On the contrary, each development of Harvest truth merged into and became part of the fuller volume of truth that was to follow. Thus, although we are already in the day of the third angel's warning, it is still essential to have a clear understanding of the everlasting Gospel, and it is equally necessary in our day if we should find ourselves once again involved in the confusion and worldly-mindedness of any section of Babylon, large or small, to come out.

**Poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation** (Ver. 10). The image of the beast and the beast itself—the seventh and eighth “Heads” of Gentile rule—are the two chief agencies of the Adversary of which he will make use in his endeavour to maintain control of the nations of the earth. All who worship, that is, give them their support, thereby identify themselves with them and consequently will receive of the plagues coming upon them.

As already mentioned, the ten plagues upon Egypt which resulted from the coming of Moses to deliver the people of Israel from Pharaoh, prefigured ten antitypical plagues that come upon Babylon subsequent to the coming of the Greater than Moses, during the present Harvest-time. The first three plagues in the type were common to both Israelites and Egyptians. In like manner, the first three antitypical plagues upon Babylon are common to both wheat and tares so long as they are in any way associated with any section of Babylon. The seven last plagues upon Egypt came upon the Egyptians alone because, at that stage, God had made a clear distinction between the land of Goshen where the Israelites dwelt and that of Egypt in general. As in the figure, the Lord's true followers, during the present Harvest-time, will escape the seven last judgment plagues upon Babylon. In obedience to the call—“come out of her, my people”—they gladly separate themselves from every section of Babylonish confusion, large or small, and are resolved to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. (Rev. 14., 4.)

The seven last antitypical plagues begin with the rise to power of the image of the beast, or seventh “Head,” hence the warning that anyone identifying himself with it shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture (undiluted) into the cup of His indignation. This may be gathered from Rev. 16., 2 where it is stated that the effect of the pouring out of the first of these seven last plague-vials comes upon those who have the mark of the beast and those who worship his image.

In the previous chapter, the Image of the Beast and the warning to the Lord's followers (in the third angel's message) against worshipping the Image were studied. It was seen that the Image is at present in the making stage by the nations and that it will be equipped later with power to "speak" with authority as the seventh "Head", or leader amongst the nations. (Rev. 13., 14-17.)

The intimation from the Revelator's vision is that this super-power will in due time demand both moral and material support, as God's Kingdom, from all who come within its sphere of control. Very trying experiences such as ostracism and boycotting will be the result for all of the Lord's people who, in this respect, refuse to render the worship (support) demanded by the Image.

It appears that there will be serious danger of many of the Lord's followers being deceived by the claims of the Image to be the Kingdom of God ruling amongst men, hence the warning of the third angel's message.

Verse 10 contains part of the warning as well as the consequences that would result if any of the Lord's followers should worship or give their support to the Image. The third angel's message is an important aspect of Present Truth which arises from an understanding, through the prophetic Word, of "things to come." (John 16., 13.) Naturally, if we believed, as some do, that the Image of the Beast belonged to the past, this warning of the third angel's message would be meaningless and would fall upon deaf ears.

The proof that the worshipping of the Image belongs to a time not far ahead of us is clear from the wording of the verse under consideration. The Revelator's words are—"he (the worshipper) shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the *presence of the holy angels*, and in the *presence of the Lamb*". These holy angels, whose *presence* coincides with the presence of the Lamb, are the mighty angels which comprise the Kingdom of Christ in which He returned to earth at the Second Advent. Their association with the Lord is referred to by the Apostle as follows—"the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven *with his mighty angels*, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2. Thess. 1., 7-8.)

The prophet Daniel was given a vision of the Second Advent in which "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands (of angelic beings) ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the (thousand-year) judgment was set (begun), and the books were opened." (Daniel 7., 10.)

Jude, calling attention to the same great event, quotes the prophecy of Enoch in which he foretold the coming of the Lord "with ten thousands of his saints"—holy ones, angels. (Jude 14.) Our Lord Himself foretold the *coming and presence* of these angels

at His Second Advent, and declared "When the Son of man shall come in his glory (glorified in His Kingdom), and all the *holy angels with him*, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." (Matt. 25., 31.) Since the Revelator assures us that the worshippers, or supporters, of the Image would be tormented *in the presence of the angels and the presence of the Lamb*, it should be clear to any unprejudiced mind that the rise to power of the Image belongs to the Harvest Period, and is *subsequent to the Second Advent* of our Lord.

The torment of the worshippers of the Image, mental rather than physical, lasts just as long as the worshipping continues. The hopes of men in general are, even now, *bound up with the success of the Image* and will yet be more so in the near future. Every setback experienced through the pouring out of the seven last plague-vials will mean disappointment and mental anguish to all whose hopes for the future are centred in the success of the Image, or seventh "Head" of Gentile rule.

**The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image** (Ver. 11). Smoke symbolises the outward and visible evidence of a fiery and trying experience. The expression "for ever and ever" does not mean throughout the eternal Ages. The simple meaning of this highly symbolic language is that the mental anguish and fearful forebodings of the worshippers will last just as long as the worshipping continues—they have no rest day nor night who (continue to) worship, or put their trust in, the Image.

**Here is the patience of the saints (here are they—omit, Diaglott) that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus** (Ver. 12). In the midst of the foretold persecutions and fiery experiences suffered by those who refuse to worship the Image or receive its mark or number, the patience and faith of the saints of God, as well as their loyalty to the truth, will be tested to the uttermost.

**And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth** (Ver. 13). The definite time feature—"from henceforth"—to which the special attention of John has here been called by the voice from heaven, has puzzled all the earlier expositors of the Revelation. It was only when the Harvest-time arrived, and the truth concerning the *Presence* of the Chief Reaper had become clear, that this hitherto obscure portion of the Scripture became understandable. The due time unlocked its secret and revealed to the spiritually-minded amongst the Lord's followers what will be conceded by all in Present Truth as the *strongest meat brought forth from the Divine Storehouse* during the present Harvest-time. Standing as this verse does in the midst of the Harvest chapter of Revelation, it is nothing less than an assurance that, since the time of the Second Advent, those who die in the Lord *no longer sleep in the tomb*,

but at the moment of death are changed like unto our Lord and enter into His Presence in Zion's Kingdom beyond the veil.

Those who died in the Lord throughout the Age were *raised first* and gathered unto Him, at the beginning of the Harvest period, while the living ones who remained and were not gathered then are "*from henceforth*" changed and made like Him at the moment of death. (1. Cor. 15., 51.)

In recent years, many who once believed in the Lord's Presence and rejoiced in the light revealed in this Scripture, have lost sight of this fundamental feature of Present Truth. They no longer accept the view that the Lord has returned, or that His reign over the earth in Kingdom power has already begun. This is, indeed, a pitiable condition into which they have come, for the darkness which results from the loss of Present Truth is more dense still than that from which such were previously delivered. (Matt. 6., 23.)

**And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle** (Ver. 14). This verse begins the third Harvest vision of which this chapter is composed. The vision continues to the end of the chapter and covers the entire Harvest period, but describes a different aspect of the Harvest work.

When John declared that he looked and beheld a white cloud, and that one like unto the Son of man sat upon it, it signified that, early in the present Harvest-time, a class which John prefigured recognised the meaning of the gathering clouds of trouble which then became apparent to the watchers. They recognised that it meant the beginning of the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy—"At that time shall Michael stand up . . . and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." (Dan. 12., 1.)

The fact that our Lord is here described as wearing a golden *crown* and that He has in His hand a sharp sickle, implies that, as Chief Reaper, He has returned to earth arrayed in *kingly* authority. The use of the term "crown" here implies the thought of a throne and Kingdom and this agrees with our Lord's own prophetic description of His Second Advent—"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, *then shall he sit upon the throne* of his glory (His glorious Kingdom); and before him shall be gathered all nations." (Matt. 25., 31-32.)

The sharp sickle symbolises the light of Present Truth which reveals to the Lord's followers the truth concerning *His Presence* and the separating work which it would accomplish in the gathering of the true wheat class. (Matt. 13., 30.)

**Another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap : for the time is come for thee to reap ; for the harvest of the earth is ripe** (Ver. 15). The temple mentioned in this verse would seem to

refer to the temple class still upon the earth. In contrast with this we read in verse 17 of the *temple class which is in heaven*. The latter doubtless refer to the temple class of the Lord's people gathered from the tomb at the Second Advent.

Why is it that the Lord's followers still in the flesh here appear to be directing the Chief Reaper sitting upon the cloud? The explanation is that this is not so. Instead, the language really expresses the true *heart sentiments* of all sincere followers of the Lord who have obtained an understanding of the Lord's Presence and the purpose for which He has returned, namely, the inauguration of the work of Harvest and the gathering of His elect unto Himself into the Kingdom beyond the veil. This *eager desire* on the part of the Lord's true followers to see the gathering work prosper in their midst is surely well-pleasing in His sight.

Our Lord sought to cultivate the same heart sentiments in His followers regarding the work of the Jewish Harvest. Concerning the work of that day our Lord declared—"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest*, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." (Matt. 9., 37-38.) This attitude towards the Harvest work and the accomplishment of the Divine purpose for this day is surely the hallmark of every true disciple of the Lord. Any other attitude towards the work of the present Harvest-time would indicate a *lack of love for the Lord and for His revealed will* concerning the work of this day. It would also indicate a lack of interest in the fulfilment of the Divine purpose for the gathering of His elect. (Matt. 24., 31.)

**And the earth was reaped** (Ver. 16). The work of gathering God's elect home into the Kingdom during the present Harvest-time involves two important things—(1) the reaping work of separating the wheat from the tares, and (2) the protection and care of the reaped wheat in the field before it is taken home to the safety of the barn.

The reaping work of the present Harvest began with the Presence of the Chief Reaper over 70 years ago, when the sickle of Present Truth concerning His Presence began to be thrust in amongst the professed followers of the Lord. It would appear that this aspect of Harvest work is now mainly, if not entirely, in the past. Reaping, however, does not by any means end the work of the Lord's Harvest, any more than it does the work of the natural Harvest. Indeed, far from it. The work of helping those already reaped to put on the "whole armour," essential for this evil day, is just as important (if not more so) as the initial reaping work. Thousands are falling from their steadfastness in the faith to-day and the important work of caring for the wheat in the field will be very necessary until all the members of the Body have passed safely within the veil. Then, and then only, will it be true that the work of Harvest, so far as the Lord's people are concerned, is ended.

**And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle** (Ver. 17). It has already been noted that the temple which is in heaven refers to the glorified temple class—Christ and His Body-members beyond the veil. This verse reveals the source from which emanate the judgments upon Christendom, the false vine of the earth described later in the chapter.

In harmony with this, we read in a later vision of the Revelator that the angels with the seven last plagues *come out* of the temple. (Rev. 15., 5-6.) The prophet Jeremiah likewise describes the vengeance of God upon Babylon as the vengeance of His temple. Jeremiah's words are—"The voice (witness) of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to *declare in Zion* the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of his temple." (Jer. 50., 28.)

**Another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire** (Ver. 18). The altar, upon which the sacrifices of Israel's priests were consumed, symbolizes the consecrated attitude of the Lord's true followers. The fire which consumed the sacrifices represented the sufferings and persecutions which come to the Lord's followers on account of their testimony for the truth.

The coming out of the angel from the altar would seem to indicate a movement of truth emanating from the altar class, revealing the *imminence of the predicted judgments* to fall upon the great system of Babylon.

**And cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth** (Ver. 18). The setting of this feature of the vision is at the closing stage of the Harvest-time. Like the typical nation at the close of the Jewish Age, upon whom came judgment for "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth," so at the close of the present Age, Justice calls for *wrath to the uttermost* upon that wicked and cruel system of Babylon for her persecution of the saints of God throughout the Gospel Age.

**The angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God** (Ver. 19). The gathering of the vine of the earth would seem to represent the gathering of the fruitage of Christendom's efforts as it operates in every phase of human life—commercial, political, social and religious. Selfishness is the underlying principle which activates every effort of the great Babylonish system of Christendom.

The bright shining of the *Epiphania stage of the Presence* of the Lord in His Kingdom will make manifest to men in general the true characteristics of that evil system. The result will be that fruitage of what she has sown will be reaped and she will be cast into the winepress of the wrath of God.



**The winepress was trodden without the city** (Ver. 20). Treading the winepress probably refers to the final stage of the great time of trouble. This last stage of the world-wide trouble would seem to be located in the holy land and therefore *without the great city* of Babylon. This final trouble will probably coincide with what the prophet describes as the time of Jacob's trouble. (Jer. 30., 7.)

**And blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs** (Ver. 20). Blood coming out of the winepress to a depth reaching to the horse bridles is a highly exaggerated form of expression common in eastern lands. It is intended to convey the thought of a great slaughter and loss of human life. The distance of sixteen hundred furlongs, to which the stream of blood to the depth of the horse bridles is said to come out of the winepress, is, of course, also an exaggerated form of speech intended to convey to the mind something of the immensity of the slaughter. This symbolic description of the closing aspect of the great day of trouble harmonises fully with our Lord's own words, in which He describes it as a time of great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (Matt. 24., 21.)

## THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB

(Revelation Chapter 15)

**I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God** (Ver. 1). The heaven, in which John saw the sign, or evidence, of the approaching judgments of the seven last plagues, would appear to be the ecclesiastical heaven. What John saw in vision, the watchers amongst the Lord's followers, whom he pre-figured, see at the appropriate time throughout the Age, by the light of truth. The John class see to-day, in the symbolic heaven, clear evidence of these approaching judgments upon Christendom. All of the ten antitypical plagues are due to come upon Christendom *during the Second Presence* of Christ—the Greater than Moses. The seven last, because of their severity, are said to fill up the wrath of God. This will mean the overthrow and complete destruction of the present evil order. (Rev. 16., 17-21.)

**And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire** (Ver. 2). "Sea of glass" is a poor translation and would be more correctly rendered, as in modern versions, "glassy sea." The thought implied by the term is that of a sea with a calm and unruffled surface. This symbol depicts the surging masses and restless sea of earth's subjects having been brought into subjection and control by the ruling powers of Christendom, through the enforcement of stern and repressive laws and regulations. On the surface, everything appears orderly and satisfactory, but underneath the apparent orderliness there is seen burning the mingled fire of revenge, ready at the first opportunity to burst into the active flame of revolution and anarchy.

When this condition amongst the people has been brought about and "they shall say, Peace and safety," probably under the eighth and last "Head" of Gentile rule, then will be fulfilled the words of the prophet spoken with reference to the typical people of God—"from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace: when there is no peace." (Jer. 6., 13-14.)

Those who are awake and watching to-day can clearly see that the present increasing clamour of the masses for fuller liberty and greater freedom from toil and labour will *not long be tolerated* by the modern taskmasters and rulers of the present order. The antitype of Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Pharaoh and his Egyptian taskmasters is already in process of fulfilment. The greater than Moses has arrived with the demand "let my people go" and the plagues are already coming upon Babylon. The seven

last have *yet to come* and fill up, or complete, the wrath of God. (Rev. 15., 1.) This time the deliverance will not affect merely one nation, it will be world-wide, for the entire creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Rom. 8., 21.)

In the figure, the cry for liberty by the Israelitish slaves resulted in greater repression. They were compelled not only to continue the making of their regular quantity of bricks but to gather as well the necessary straw for their making. Thus, in the figure, while a "glassy sea" condition of peace and subjection was for a time enforced upon the Israelites, yet underneath the surface calm the fire of revolt burnt all the more fiercely. What happened as a figure in Egypt will have its complete fulfilment, on a world-wide scale, during the present Harvest-time.

**And (I saw) them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and (over his mark—omit, Diaglott and others) over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God (Ver. 2).** Those who have gotten the victory over the beast and his image and over the number of his name are *the faithful remnant* of the Lord's true followers still in the flesh. Standing on, or rather *above*, the glassy sea condition would mean that while in the world they were not in it. Theirs is a life of faith which lifts them *above the outlook* of the present evil world. Having the harps of God implies that they are walking in the light and are guided by the will of God, revealed in the inspired Word of truth.

**And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb (Ver. 3).** The song of Moses, after the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and the destruction of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea, was a song of victory. It was a song of praise to God, attributing to Him their deliverance and victory over the enemy.

The song of the Lamb concerns a *much greater victory*, for it relates to the defeat and overthrow of a far more powerful enemy—the antitypical Pharaoh, the great Adversary of God and of the human family. Already, as a result of the "war in heaven," under the leadership of Michael, the great dragon, Satan, has been cast down from his place of control, and, in the words of the Revelator, he is now bringing "woe to the inhabitants of the earth." He knoweth that he hath but a short time. (Rev. 12., 7-12.) The victory is not yet complete and will not be until the seven last plagues have all been poured out and the wrath of God upon the present evil world filled up. (Rev. 15., 1.)

Few amongst the Lord's followers to-day know anything about the "war in heaven" or that salvation, through the coming of the "Kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ," has already liberated those who were bound in chains of darkness in the spiritual heavens of our planet. (Rev. 12., 10-12.) Traditions of

the past concerning the *interpretation* of some of the most vital aspects of prophetic truth relating to the present developments of the Divine Plan have *sealed up and made of none effect* these prophecies, to all but the very few. This is particularly the case as regards the symbols contained in the twelfth and seventeenth chapters of the Revelation.

### HE WILL SHEW YOU THINGS TO COME

To the spiritually-minded truth seekers who are to-day walking in the light of prophetic truth, complete victory is *already in sight*, and they are in prospect enabled by the Spirit of truth to sing the victors' song even before the "battle of that great day of God Almighty" is ended. (Rev. 16., 14.)

The victors' song of "Present Truth" sung by those who stand above the glassy sea, having the harps of God, combines both the justice and retributive elements of the Mosaic Law. It embraces also the mercy and grace of the Creator, purchased by the blood of the Lamb. Stated otherwise, it means that the full vision of the truth, as it shines upon the path of the Lord's true followers to-day, takes into full account the operations of all the attributes of the Creator's character manifested in the outworking of the Divine Plan, past, present, and future. The notes of the song, as recorded by the Revelator, follow.

**Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty** (Ver. 3). The works of God embrace the marvellous works of creation and redemption through the blood of the Lamb. They include as well the manifestation of His almighty power in the suppression of evil and the destruction of all wilful evildoers, including Satan himself, the author of all evil.

**Just and true are thy ways, thou King of the nations** (Diaglott) (Ver. 3). Only those who are in the light of prophetic truth and who are thus privileged to see *the end of the Lord's dealings* with the nations and with the human family in general, can sing this note of the song. Without some understanding of the fact that the Divine Plan *provided for a day of judgment* and retribution, when all of earth's wrongs would be righted, it would be impossible to sing with appreciation this note of the victors' song.

**Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy** (Ver. 4). During the past six thousand years, the character of the Creator has been maligned and misrepresented by the Adversary to such an extent that only a very few of the human family have been enabled to reverence, or appreciate, His holy and righteous character. The day is now dawning, however, when soon God's name shall go "up with a shout." (Psa. 47., 5.) Then all the willing and obedient of mankind will worship Him in the beauty of holiness and give glory to His name. (Psa. 29., 2.)

**For thy judgments are made manifest** (Ver. 4). While the thousand-year Day of Judgment has already begun and some of the anti-typical plagues have already been poured out upon Christendom, yet these judgments are manifest to, and understood by, only the very few. Few, indeed, realize that Christendom, instead of being Christ's Kingdom, as the name implies, is in reality Satan's kingdom and is still to a large extent under his control. To the world in general, as well as to the great majority of the professed followers of the Lord, these plagues of God's wrath upon the present world civilization mean nothing less than serious calamities, greatly to be deplored. The real object in these judgment plagues is *manifest* only to those having the harps of God and who are walking in the light of Present Truth.

**The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened** (Ver. 5). The opening words of this verse—"After that I looked" imply that there is a break in the sequence of what follows from what John has just been describing. His attention is now fixed upon another very striking matter, a matter which, while already *an accomplished fact*, has not previously demanded his attention, namely, that the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.

There is doubtless much significance in this, so far as the watchers of our day (whom John prefigured) are concerned. The event described took place at the time of the Second Advent, a matter of 75 years ago, when the sleeping saints were raised from the tomb. At that time, the *temple class* of the New Jerusalem, which had come "down out of heaven from God," began to assemble beyond the veil. (Rev. 3., 12-13.) From the standpoint, however, of "God, who . . . calleth those things which be not (actually completed) as though they were" the heavenly temple was then counted as complete and already opened. (Rom. 4., 17.) The significance of the matter is this. Although our Lord has been present in His unseen (spiritual) Kingdom during all these years and the general assembly of the temple class—the Church of the Firstborns—has been in progress, it is only within recent years that this great truth concerning the opened temple has become evident to the living members of the temple class still in the flesh.

The expression "temple of the tabernacle of the testimony" is a very unusual combination of terms and is doubtless also full of significance. Israel's tabernacle erected under the instruction of Moses according to the pattern shown him in the Mount, is referred to by Stephen in Acts 7., 44 as "the tabernacle of the testimony" (Diaglott). Israel's tabernacle, however, was merely a shadow or figure of the "*true*" tabernacle not made with (human) hands. (Heb. 8., 2.) Moreover, the same writer describes this true tabernacle as the "greater and more perfect tabernacle" in which the Royal Priesthood of this Age *now* serve. (Heb. 9., 11.)

The temple which Solomon built was likewise only a shadow. It was a shadow of the heavenly temple of the New Jerusalem,

referred to in the verse now under consideration. In due course, Israel's typical "tabernacle of the testimony" with its service *gave place to the typical temple* and its service. So, in like manner, will the antitypical greater and more perfect tabernacle of this Age with its service merge into and give place to that of the heavenly temple which in due time will be a house of prayer and blessing for all nations. (Isa. 56., 7.) It is this heavenly temple which, as already mentioned, was opened at the beginning of the Harvest-time, but into which, although already open, none of the human family can enter or obtain any of its blessings until the seven plagues are poured out and the last living stone has been placed in position. Then will the antitypical Atonement Day be finished, and not until then will the New Covenant, containing the world's portion, go into operation.

**The seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven (last) plagues** (Ver. 6). The angels with the seven last plagues are not understood as necessarily literal angelic beings only. God uses both animate and inanimate instrumentalities in the accomplishment of His purposes. We read that "thou makest winds thy messengers, fire and flame thy servants." (Psa. 104., 4—Moffatt.) And again, "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1., 14.)

The fact that these angels are said to come out of the temple indicates that the source from which the plagues come is Christ's Kingdom beyond the veil. This is confirmed by the words of the prophet who declared—"The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of his temple." (Jer. 50., 28.) The Psalmist also expressed the same view of the matter when he wrote—"the Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." (Psa. 110., 2.)

Since the first three plagues have already been poured out and the seven last are about to begin, it should be apparent to those having spiritual discernment that the heavenly temple mentioned in verse 5 of this chapter has already been opened. The seven last plagues which complete the wrath of God, symbolise judgments of a very severe kind upon every phase of organised Babylon, or Christendom. They will accomplish its overthrow and total destruction. (Rev. 16., 17-20.)

**Clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles** (Ver. 6). White linen symbolises righteousness and purity. This indicates that the mission of these angels is a just and righteous one and fully in harmony with the principles of truth and righteousness. Having golden girdles would imply that they are entirely subservient to the Divine direction and overruling providence.

**One of the four beasts (living creatures) gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God** (Ver. 7). It has already

been noted that the four living creatures represent the four chief attributes of the Creator's character, namely, justice, wisdom, mercy, and power. (Rev. 4., 6-7.) Power is always associated with the Second Advent of Christ, as God's agent in the execution of His vengeance upon Christendom. The golden vials would seem to represent the various means, or media, which Divine wisdom would see fit to use in the execution of His judgments.

**And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power** (Ver. 8). The temple of God is the glorified temple class, raised from the tomb at the Second Advent and glorified with their Lord and Head in the Kingdom beyond the veil. (1. Thess. 4., 16.) The prophet Isaiah was given a vision of the entrance of God into His temple, when Christ's Kingdom was set up in the heavenly sphere of earth, at the time of the Second Advent. His glory is said to have filled the temple on that occasion, and, in due time, as recorded in the vision, the whole earth will be full of His glory. (Isa. 6., 1-4.) It will be noted that the prophet uses the same symbolic expression—the house (temple) was filled with smoke—as is used in the Scripture under consideration.

Smoke, in this connection, does not seem to indicate darkness and confusion, as has sometimes been suggested. It suggests rather the thought of incense, from the presence and glory of God, permeating the temple of the heavenly Kingdom. A similar use is made of the term smoke in Rev. 8., 3-4. In this case, the Revelator is given a vision describing conditions leading up to the sounding of the seven trumpets at the beginning of the great Reformation. The smoke or odour of the incense from the golden altar, it is declared, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

**No man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled** (Ver. 8). God's temple, the "most holy" sanctuary of the heavenly Kingdom, will in due course be a house of prayer for all nations. It will be the meeting-place between God and the human family and the medium of Divine blessing through the instrumentality of the glorified Christ and His worthy Bride. This glorious temple of the New Jerusalem was opened when, as prefigured in Solomon's typical temple, its living stones were gathered from the human quarry and, unseen by natural sight, were placed in position at the beginning of the present Harvest period. The world in general know nothing whatever at present about God's spiritual temple, and, indeed, but few even of those who profess to be in the truth to-day have as yet had the eyes of their understanding sufficiently opened to discern it. When Solomon's temple was built, the record tells us that "there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." (1. Kings 6., 7.) What was literally true of the erection of Solomon's material temple is true also to-day of the spiritual temple, only on a much higher and grander scale.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

(Revelation Chapter 16)

**I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth** (Ver. 1). The setting of this vision of the pouring out of the vials of the wrath of God would seem to be in the very near future. This may be gathered from what is recorded in the following verse of this chapter, namely, that the effect of the first of these seven last plagues falls upon those "which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped (continued to worship) his image." The image of the Beast, or Seventh "Head," as our readers know, is at present rising to the position of the seventh leading power, or "Head", amongst the Gentile nations. Conditions in the world to-day are so precarious that human wisdom demands just such a controlling authority amongst the nations, if they are to survive. The making of the Image is an attempt on the part of earth's rulers to uphold and maintain the present world order, ignorant of the fact that the mighty power of God through Christ's unseen Kingdom is at present smiting the nations and breaking them to pieces, preparatory to their complete overthrow and destruction. (Rev. 16., 17-20.) Hence, it is the worshippers or supporters of the Image who receive the brunt of this first plague of God's wrath. It is the invisible power of Christ's Kingdom and its enlightening influence upon men's minds, calling to earth's rulers—"Let my people go"—(Exodus 5., 1) which brings these last plagues upon Christendom, but the visible means used are the human family themselves. The climax of their effects upon the nations will result in a "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." (Dan. 12., 1.)

**The first (angel) went, and poured out his vial (the first of the seven last) upon the earth** (Ver. 2). The Greek word rendered earth in this verse is the same as that which occurs in the previous verse. The difference is that in verse 1 it is used in a general sense, indicating the entire human family and the present world order as a whole, while in verse 2 its application is to a particular and limited section of humanity in contrast to the sea class upon which the second vial is poured out. The literal earth, as a symbol, indicates the stable and law-abiding portion of mankind, while the sea symbolises the restless and agitated mass of mankind ever striving for greater liberty and freedom.

Where is this "earth" section of the human family, upon whom the first of the seven last plagues is poured out? The answer is that it will mainly embrace those who uphold the Beast (Papal System) and who worship, or support, its Image—the seventh



“Head” of the nations. The object in making the Image is to consolidate and preserve the present world order but, declared the Revelator, it will continue but a “short space.” (Rev. 17., 10.)

**There fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image** (Ver. 2). The expression “noisome and grievous sore” conveys the thought of a very grievous ulcer. The equivalent Hebrew word for that rendered sore in this verse is used in Job 2., 7. The verse reads “So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.” In the case of Job, the boils were literal, but as used by the Revelator in the symbolic sense, they would very likely be descriptive of mental anguish and frustrations endured by the worshippers or supporters of the Beast and its Image, consequent upon various setbacks to their expectations concerning the objects of their worship.

In this connection, it is of importance to recall the warning given in the third angel’s message concerning the consequences of worshipping the Beast and his Image. (Rev. 14., 8-10.) This warning is given to the mid-heaven, or spiritually-minded, class of the Lord’s people. It is the third aspect of Harvest truth which, for a number of years, has been proclaimed by those who have been walking in the light of Present as well as of Prophetic Truth concerning things to come. It is for this reason that it is emphasised in “Old Paths” publications.

The Revelator’s warning reads, “If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture (undiluted) into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the *presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.*” (Rev. 14., 9-11.) The “noisome and grievous sore”, resulting from the pouring out of the first of the seven last plagues, is undoubtedly the fulfilment of the warning given in the third angel’s message just mentioned.

**The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea ; and it became as the blood of a dead man** (Ver. 3). The sea element of the present world order, as previously noted, corresponds to the restless and discontented masses of mankind. The effect of the second plague-vial upon the sea element of humanity is that it becomes as the blood of a dead man. A clear symbolic distinction is here made between the blood of a living man and that of a dead man.

The life force or vitality of every human being is in the blood, and so long as the blood pulses through the veins, death and corruption are not possible. The moment death comes, corruption which begins in the blood immediately sets in. In past years, the sea elements of the social structure have been preserved from corruption through the cautious and conservative counsels of their

various leaders. This has helped measurably to preserve the vitality of their various organizations and to restrain the more violent and extreme elements in their midst. Conditions amongst the symbolic sea class to-day are, however, rapidly undergoing change. Discontent with their present unequal share of the results of their toil and of the good things of life increases daily, with the result that repudiation of the sober advice and guidance of their own leaders is no uncommon occurrence. The economic blizzard resulting from the recent world-wide winds of war has affected every aspect of the social order and none more so than the sea element.

In whatever form this second plague-vial works out, it is evident that it will greatly increase the disruptive activities amongst the sea classes. The result will be a weakening of the vitality—and eventually death and corruption—of the collective means of preserving their rights and liberties. Thus, when the collective principle of power and bargaining has been disrupted and destroyed in the symbolic sea, its life-force will be gone, and, as in the case of a dead man, nothing but decay and corruption can follow.

**And every living soul died in the sea** (Ver. 3). When the advice and authority of the active leaders and guides which the sea class have chosen for the protection of their rights and liberties have been repudiated and rejected, active leadership is no longer possible and must, as a life element, cease to exist.

**The third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters ; and they became blood** (Ver. 4). The symbolic waters affected by this plague are the beliefs and teachings proclaimed as truths by the various sections of Christendom. Like the muddy waters of literal Babylon, these so-called truths, or confessions of faith, consist mainly of traditional errors and speculations of bygone days.

The fountains from which these waters arise are the seminaries and colleges of the various denominational sects. The river beds along which the symbolic waters flow are the various creeds and confessions of faith, all of which, although claiming Scriptural support, are largely contradictory. The thought of them being turned to blood and therefore repulsive and unpalatable, would seem to indicate that through the searching light from the "Epiphania" stage of the Lord's Presence, their erroneous teachings and traditions are seen to be nothing more than corruptions of the truth. (2. Cor. 2., 17.)

**And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus** (Ver. 5). The angel, or messenger of the dispensational and inspired waters of truth, would apparently be included amongst the seven stars, or angels of the seven churches, held in the right hand of the One walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. (Rev. 1., 16-20.) The reference here is to the seventh, or

Laodicean stage of the Gospel church. These angels of the churches (not literally seven individuals only) have from time to time throughout the Age been raised up by the Lord to interpret to His followers the truths then due respecting the conditions and experiences through which they were passing. (See "Old Paths" No. 210—The Seven Stars and the Seven Golden Candlesticks.) These stars, possessing in large measure the mind of the Spirit, are enabled to judge aright and recognise in this exposure of Babylon's creeds, with its consequent wave of unbelief and infidelity, the righteous judgments of God. To the earthly-minded amongst the Lord's followers, all this will seem nothing less than the direst calamity.

**They have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink ; for they are worthy** (Ver. 6). To shed one's blood means to take away one's life, for, without the blood, human life is impossible. The same Greek word is used here as in Rom. 3., 15 which reads—"Their feet are swift to shed blood." The life-giving properties of the inspired teachings of the saints and holy prophets of God are shed, or destroyed, by the introduction of the corrupting leaven of false teaching and traditions of men. Giving them blood to drink would probably mean giving them over to the darkness of their own foolish minds which can only end in disappointment and loss. (Rom. 1., 21.)

**And I heard another (angel) out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments** (Ver. 7). Weymouth's version reads—"And I heard a voice from the altar." The altar symbolises the condition of full consecration to the will of God. In this instance, it would seem to represent the consecrated followers of the Lord who fully appreciate the light that has come to them through the angel of the waters. They fully concur (as expressed in the words "Even so") with the increasing light upon the pathway respecting the righteousness of God's judgments upon the rivers and fountains of waters.

**And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun ; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire** (Ver. 8). The sun is used by the Revelator as a symbol of the source from which the true light of the Gospel emanates. Just as the natural sun, on rising, floods the earth with the natural light, so we are assured that the day cometh when the Sun of righteousness, Christ's Kingdom, in the hands of our glorified Lord and His Body-members, will arise with healing in his wings (beams) and flood the earth with the glory of God as the waters cover the deep. (Mal. 4., 2.) There is, however, a counterfeit sun (the Papal System) which also claims to be the light of the world. The fact that this vial of God's wrath is poured out upon the sun mentioned in this connection, clearly indicates that the reference is not to the true source of light but to the false counterfeit sun—the Papal System.

Without some understanding of the truth regarding the seventh and eighth "Heads" of the nations, it would be impossible to interpret aright the various symbols used by the Revelator in connection with the pouring out of these plagues of God's wrath. Very few amongst the Lord's followers to-day have sufficient faith and discernment of what is written in the inspired Word to recognise that the Image of the Beast, or seventh "Head", is at present fast rising to headship over the nations. Fewer still recognise from the same source of information that the Papal Beast is at present actively preparing to follow the seventh, and fill the rôle outlined for it in the prophetic Word as an eighth "Head", not many years hence. (Rev. 17., 11.)

**And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory** (Ver. 9). Whatever form the fourth judgment vial upon Papacy may take, it seems evident that its outcome will mean, for the time being at least, renewed encouragement and effort on its part in emphasising and enforcing its blasphemous claims, as God's Kingdom, to exercise rule over the human family. It is probably at this stage that the "great words which the horn spake", mentioned by the prophet, will be fulfilled. (Dan. 7., 10-11.) The setting is subsequent to the Second Advent and the inauguration of the thousand-year judgment day.

At this stage, men will not yet have had their eyes sufficiently opened to recognise that all such vaunting claims are blasphemous, and in acknowledging such claims and giving them their support they also are regarded as equally guilty of blaspheming the name of God. In their ignorance, they will, for a time, continue to give glory and support to this vile system of the Adversary, instead of to the God of heaven who alone is worthy of the glory and praise of all His creatures.

**And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain** (Ver. 10). The seat (throne) of the beast symbolises the basic claims, or dogmas, upon which the Papal system rests. The claims of Infallibility and Divine Authority, as the successor to Peter and the one and only Church founded by him, have been the most effective supports of Papal Authority over its credulous adherents. If either or both of these dogmas are weakened or destroyed, the entire edifice built upon them will soon begin to crumble and fall in ruins.

Darkness indicates confusion, and the gnawing of tongues, implies retraction, in some measure at least, of these long-vaunted and impressive claims. These conditions must surely result from the increasing light penetrating the darkness of mind not only of those in authority but also of the millions of blinded adherents.

**And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds** (Ver. 11). While badly

shaken and dismayed by the operation of the fifth plague, yet, like Pharaoh of old, the proud and haughty leaders and supporters of this vile system are not yet prepared to yield willingly to the pressing demand of the Greater than Moses—"Let my people go" (Exodus 5., 1.) Like Pharaoh also, two further plagues are necessary before the enforced surrender and destruction of the antitypical Pharaoh's first-born (the eighth "Head") and prospective heir to the dominion of earth are accomplished.

**The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared** (Ver. 12). Literal Babylon was built upon the river Euphrates. Most of its wealth and prosperity as a city depended upon the waters of this river. Symbolic Babylon is similarly described by the Revelator as sitting upon many waters. (Rev. 17., 1.) These waters are by the same authority interpreted as "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." (Rev. 17., 15.) The symbolic picture would thus teach that mystical Babylon, like the literal city, is dependent for its wealth and existence upon the moral and financial support of its multitude of world-wide adherents.

The drying up of the waters of the symbolic Euphrates would mean a general and gradual withdrawal of the financial as well as the moral support of the millions of those who had previously been her source of wealth. As a result of this drying up of financial and moral support, Babylon the great as well as her daughter systems, large and small, would be considerably weakened in ability to withstand the rising tide of criticism, both within and without, through the pouring out of the sixth vial.

The kings of the east who overthrew and plundered literal Babylon were the kings of the Medes and Persians with their armies. By the strategy of turning aside the waters of the Euphrates, they entered the city by the dried-up river bed and slew Belshazzar the king. The symbolic kings from the east who in the near future will overthrow symbolic Babylon are believed by many to be our glorified Lord and the members of His Body with Him beyond the veil. However, God's great army of the discontented and lawless elements of mankind whose eyes have been opened to see something of the vileness of this evil system will probably be the means used in His providence to capture and completely destroy Babylon.

**And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet** (Ver. 13). Three important symbols, dragon, beast, and false prophet, are here brought to our attention. These are not new additions to the list of symbols already recorded in the earlier chapters of the Revelator's visions. What is new about them is that, while in their earlier settings each of them is seen

pursuing an individual policy solely in its own interests, they are here seen joining hands in a propaganda effort for mutual strength and support towards one common objective. The objective, as will be seen later, is the consolidation of every phase of Christendom's ruling authority and wealth in order to strengthen and protect world civilization from threatened disaster and destruction at the hands of the desperate and discontented masses of the sea elements.

### THE SYMBOLIC DRAGON

The dragon, it will be recalled, figured largely in the visions of chapter twelve. It was the name which the Revelator used to describe Daniel's nameless fourth beast (Dan. 7., 7) and is one of the names applied to the great Adversary himself. (Rev. 12., 7-9.) Pagan, or Imperial Rome, the fourth "Head" of Gentile rule, is termed by the Revelator the "great red dragon" because of its fierce and cruel disposition as an instrument of Satan in the persecution of the Lord's followers.

The same dragon spirit has since been active in the persecution of the Lord's people through the medium of the succeeding "Head" powers that have arisen amongst the nations since the downfall of the Imperial Roman Empire. Papal Rome, the fifth "Head" power, in her days of ascendancy over the nations is described as having received her power from the dragon. (Rev. 13., 2.) Daniel refers to the Papacy as "wearing out" the saints of the Most High. (Dan. 7., 25.) The sixth "Head" amongst the nations (British Empire) which arose to power after the downfall of the Papal Empire is described by the Revelator as speaking "as a dragon". (Rev. 13., 11.) The seventh "Head" termed also an "Image of the Beast" is at present climbing to the position of authority amongst the nations outlined for it in Rev. 13., 17-18. It will in due course "speak" with authority and enforce its demands upon all who come within its sphere of operation. According to the Revelator, the Lord's people and, indeed, all freedom-loving people will experience very rough treatment at the hands of this "Head" power. It will continue in control as "Head" amongst the nations for only a "short space" and will then be forced by circumstances to give place to a more formidable "Head" power in order to cope with the desperate situation of lawlessness which will then threaten to engulf the entire fabric of civilization. (Rev. 17., 10.) It is this desperate situation which will apparently provide the opportunity for which the Papal power has for many years been making preparations, namely, her return to power once more as eighth "Head" of Christendom. (Rev. 17., 11.) According to the Revelator, when this eighth "Head" has played its part, it will go into perdition and that will mean the end of the present so-called world civilization which men call Christendom, but which the Scriptures term Satan's kingdom.

What has this to do with the identification of the dragon ?

There is a close connection, for the real dragon, Satan, has in a special sense made use of these "Head" powers of the Gentiles to keep the human family in darkness and in ignorance of the Divine character and Plan for their blessing. Since the First Advent when the promised seed, Christ—Head and Body, which was to bruise his head (Gen. 3., 15.), began to be developed, Satan has used them as his chief instruments to persecute and destroy if it were possible the child of Promise. (Gal. 3., 16, 29.) The seventh "Head" or Image of the Beast will when fully developed be a masterpiece in this respect, hence like Pagan Rome it is named after its creator the dragon. It is significant that from the time it loses its headship over the nations and gives place to the eighth "Head," it is not again referred to as the Image, while at the same time no mention is made at this stage of its destruction.

### THE SYMBOLIC BEAST

The "Beast" out of whose mouth one of these unclean spirits like frogs goes forth is the Papal system, after it has ascended out of the bottomless pit of obscurity and powerlessness as the eighth "Head". (Rev. 17., 8.) It is different from all the other Gentile beasts which preceded it, in that it is described as having *names* or titles of blasphemy. (Rev. 17., 3.) During its first appearance as the fifth Head, 539 A.D. to 1799 A.D., it is said to have the *name* of blasphemy on its *heads* only, whereas in its second appearance as the eighth "Head" the *entire beast* upon which the woman sits is described as being full of the names of blasphemy. Blasphemy, in the Scriptural sense, means claiming the titles and powers and such like that belong to the Creator alone.

### THE FALSE PROPHET IDENTIFIED

The false prophet is so termed because of the false prophecies which it utters concerning the urgent need for bringing the Image into full control and the blessings of peace and prosperity to be derived therefrom. The key to its identification is found in Rev. 19., 20, which reads "And the beast (Papal system) was taken, and with him the false prophet *that wrought miracles before him*, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image". The record regarding these miracles done in the sight of the beast and of the misleading prophecies regarding the blessings that would follow the making of an Image to the Beast is found in Rev. 13., 13-14. The Beast concerned is the one mentioned in Rev. 13., 11 which came up from the earth and had horns like a lamb. It is understood to be the British Empire, or sixth "Head" of the Gentile nations.

### THE EIGHTH HEAD COMES INTO BEING

The union of these three divisions of Christendom, with the Papacy as leader, is understood to be the bringing into existence of the eighth and last "Head" of Gentile rule. It is "the beast that

was, and is not, even he is the *eighth*, and is (one) of the seven (previous "Heads"), and goeth into perdition." (Rev. 17., 11.)

The three unclean spirits like frogs refer to lying propaganda by these three sections of Christendom urging the vital need for a united front if the present world order would be saved from total destruction, at the hands of the lawless masses of suffering humanity. This frog-like display of worldly wisdom (frogs have the appearance of large protruding eyes suggestive of far-seeing wisdom) will apparently accomplish its purpose and bring into being the eighth and last Head.

**They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world** (Ver. 14). Satan's demon spirits have been very active in their efforts against the true seed of Promise since the days of our Lord, the Head of the spiritual seed. When Satan's spiritual kingdom in the heavens was broken into at the Second Advent he, with his various ranks of evil angels (Rom. 8., 38—Moffatt.), was cast down to the earthly sphere. Since then the foretold "woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea" has been much in evidence. (Rev. 12., 12.) Greater deceptions still by these evil angels lie ahead not only of mankind in general but also of the remaining members of Christ still in the flesh.

For a time, this last "Head" power with its satellite horns will apparently rule with a more reactionary and heavy hand than even the Image which preceded it. This oppression of the masses of its subjects, like that of Pharaoh and his taskmasters in Egypt, can lead only to one end. That end will be Armageddon.

**Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame** (Ver. 15). The first thing to note in this verse is that it is parenthetical and has no immediate connection with the general context. It does not, as some have supposed, refer to our Lord's Second Advent. Apart from our Lord's descent from heaven in the glory of His Kingdom at the commencement of the Harvest period, the Scriptures tell us of various other comings to His followers throughout the entire Harvest-time. These comings refer to different tests or experiences that He permits to come to His followers in order to make manifest who are awake and watching and thus worthy of further light upon their pathway. These tests vary. Sometimes, they may be in the nature of *increased light* upon the path of the Lord's people as, for instance, the Covenants and Sin-offerings and similar tests of doctrine permitted in earlier years of the Harvest-time. Many were then found asleep and failed to meet these permitted tests. They were thus regarded as unworthy of continuing in the light that shines more and more upon the path of the just. All who profess to be watchers must undergo these tests and "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he (thus) cometh shall find watching . . . . And if he shall come in the second watch, or



come in the third watch, and find them so (still watching), blessed are those servants". (Luke 12., 37-38.)

To-day many, failing to watch, seem to be stumbling over the increased light of Present Truth concerning the reign of Christ in His unseen spiritual Kingdom now set up in the heavenly sphere of earth. (Dan. 2., 44.) Others, intoxicated with the partisan, or sectarian spirit, or it may be prejudice, are stumbling over the clearer unfolding of the Revelator's visions. Thus, in many ways the Lord, from time to time, comes to all who profess to be watchers in His Service, and blessed are they who learn the lessons of such experiences and keep awake.

A striking example of such comings to test who are worthy of the Lord's continued favours is found in Matt. 25., 10. This instance is located at the very end of the Harvest-time. It appears to be the final test upon the last members of Christ in the flesh in order to make manifest who are worthy to go in with the Bridegroom before the door is shut. The record is that while the foolish virgins went to buy the needed oil "the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut".

The coming to the watchers referred to in Rev. 16., 15, which is now being considered, is evidently also at the very end of the present order. It may, indeed, be the same experience as recorded in Matt. 25., 10, only differently worded. In any case, it is clearly a very severe test upon the faith and loyalty of the watchers, for it is indicated that failure to watch at that critical stage will mean the loss of one's garments of righteousness without which entry into the wedding chamber will be impossible.

**And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon** (Ver. 16). Some authorities render the opening words of this verse—"They gathered them together". They claim that the construction of the Greek text admits the connecting up of the singular verb translated "gathered" with the Greek neuter plural translated "spirits" in ver. 13. This explanation of the matter seems a likely one as in verse 14 it is stated that these spirits of devils go forth for that very purpose.

Armageddon is a word which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It appears to refer to the mountain of Megiddo, in the valley at the base of which various decisive battles were fought during the history of the typical nation.

As a symbol, it seems to indicate the final conflict between the rulers of the present world order, backed up by clerical influence and wealth, on the one side, and the Lord's great army of the discontented masses of every shade of social and political grievance on the other.

The conflict will be final, for it will mean the end of the present evil world. The symbolic Armageddon seems to describe

more a world-wide state of conflict rather than a particular locality upon the earth. It is just possible, however, that the last and severest phase of the battle described as "Jacob's trouble" may be located in the Holy Land. (Jer. 30., 7.)

**The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done** (Ver. 17). The seventh and last plague-vial completes the wrath of God upon every phase of Satan's kingdom. (Rev. 15., 1.) The air, into which it is said to be poured out, symbolises spiritual power or control. This seems clearly to indicate the last of Satan's control over the human family. Since the break-up of his kingdom in the heavens at the time of the Second Advent, when he was cast down to the regions of earth, Satan's efforts have been to strengthen and consolidate his control of the nations of the human family in general.

The pouring out of the previous six vials has seriously affected every aspect of Satan's earthly kingdom, yet there has undoubtedly been a lingering hope in the minds of earth's rulers, and most likely also in the mind of the Adversary himself, that the complete union of the three sections of Christendom (Dragon, Beast and False Prophet) as the eighth "Head" of the nations will ensure an indefinite control of the present evil world order. How else can one account for such expressions of confidence by the Papacy when she rises again to power as the eighth "Head", as are found in Daniel and the Revelation? Daniel, after giving a vivid description of the Second Advent of our Lord with the myriads of angelic beings which comprise His Kingdom, then announces that the judgment day (1,000 years) had commenced and that the books of knowledge and enlightenment were opened. Continuing the prophet declared, "I beheld *then* (after the events just described had taken place) because of the voice of the great words (boastful claims) which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame (anarchy)." (Dan. 7., 10-11.)

The Revelator appears to describe the same boastful claims. After detailing circumstances following the Second Advent, he traces events to the time when, as the eighth "Head", Papacy "saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no (longer a) widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire (anarchy)". (Rev. 18., 1-8.)

Carry the mind back now to the night when the last typical plague was poured out upon the Egyptians and Israel's firstborns were saved from death at the hand of the destroying angel. On that memorable night Pharaoh's firstborn and heir to the throne of Egypt, in whom were centred all his hopes, was slain. Have we not in this a fitting figure of the destruction of Satan's firstborn and heir apparent to the dominion of earth? The federation of Christendom as the eighth "Head" will surely be Satan's greatest

achievement of world organization. Can it be that Satan himself, like the harlot woman who sits upon this mighty confederacy of power and wealth, has high expectations that it will accomplish the complete and lasting control of earth's dominion, an end to which all the previous "Heads" aspired but failed?

**And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great** (Ver. 18). Voices are understood to symbolise the movements of truth. This is truth not only amongst the Lord's people concerning the latest developments of the Divine Plan, but truth and enlightenment on every aspect of human rights and liberties revealing to men in general the hollowness and falsity of the claims of the eighth "Head" to be God's Kingdom appointed to rule over and bless the human family.

Thunders seem to symbolise the clamourings of the down-trodden masses of mankind for their rights and liberties as human beings as well as their rightful share of the things of this life.

Lightnings always precede thunder and seem to indicate sudden precipitations of light in the minds of men which give rise to reckless endeavours on their part to obtain both real and imagined rights, of which they have been so long deprived.

The great earthquake represents the climax to which the symbolic voices, thunders, and lightnings naturally lead. It depicts a sudden and—from the viewpoint of the "powers that be"—an unexpected revolution and upheaval of the social structure, such as was never before experienced amongst men. Another earthquake recorded in Rev. 6., 12 refers to the French Revolution. It also is described as a great earthquake and was the climax of the gradually increasing light of the Reformation movement. While it was great as well as far-reaching in its effects, yet it mainly concerned the one nation of France only. The great earthquake at present being considered affects not one nation only but all the nations of Christendom, the results of which are described in the verses following.

**And the great city was divided into three parts.** (Ver. 19). The great city here mentioned seems clearly to refer to federated Christendom as the eighth "Head" under the leadership of the Papacy. This greatest and final federation of power is the result of the union of the three sections of Christendom described in verses 13 and 14 of the chapter as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

It is significant that as a result of the great earthquake the great city is divided into *three* parts. This seems to indicate that the first effect of the revolution is the failure and break-up of the confederacy as a super-ruling power, into its original parts as mentioned in verse 13.

**And the cities of the nations fell** (Ver. 19). A city symbolises a kingdom. The cities of the nations seem to refer to the kingdoms

of the world in general, which, as a result of the great earthquake, are engulfed in a world-wide revolution.

**And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath** (Ver. 19). Babylon the great is the name given to the Papal system, the original mother system of all the similar daughter systems, great and small, that have since inherited her Babylonish and sectarian spirit. The entire 17th chapter is taken up with a description of the judgment upon this system, hence there is no need to enlarge upon the matter at this stage.

**And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found** (Ver. 20). A literal island entirely surrounded by the sea seems to represent a democratic state in which the ruling power is largely influenced by the sea element of its subjects. As a result of the great earthquake, every such island-like state will quickly disappear and be swallowed up by the sea.

Mountains represent more autocratic and stable kingdoms of the world. Not one even of these will withstand the shock of the great earthquake. In the significant language of the Revelator, as a result of the earthquake they will “not (be) found”—not even a trace of them.

**And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent** (Ver. 21). Literal hail is destructive of everything that stands out prominently upon the path along which it travels. This is also true of symbolic hail. All who have by any means exalted themselves to positions of authority over their fellow men or misused their influence and powers to that end will be the worst sufferers during the days of the epiphania and apokalupsis stages of our Lord's Second Presence.

**And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail ; for the plague thereof was exceeding great** (Ver. 21). The refreshing results of rain falling upon the dry and parched earth is a fitting symbol of the stimulating effects of the truth upon the truth-hungry watchers amongst the Lord's followers. Hail which is congealed moisture in the atmosphere represents hard, biting truths which, declared the prophet, will sweep away the refuge of lies with which scheming men have so long cloaked themselves and deceived their fellow men in past days. The hail, consequent upon the unveiling stage of the Lord's Presence, will quickly sweep away every vestige of make-believe and misrepresentation of the truth concerning the Divine character and Plan.

It appears that even at this stage of Armageddon there will still be an element comprised of some who have not yet had their eyes fully opened to the true position of things. Such, having been long drilled in the idea that Christendom is Christ's Kingdom ruling by Divine right over mankind, will doubtless still cling to this blasphemy. They may even with sporadic efforts attempt to

revive the old order of civilization, but such efforts will not long resist the plague of hail which, declared the Revelator, is exceeding great. There would seem to be some suggestion of this thought in the figure of Pharaoh and his army pursuing the Israelites, after they had left Egypt on their journey towards the Promised Land. Their effort on that occasion failed and they were all drowned in the waters of the Red Sea. Any attempts to revive the old order at the end of this Age will likewise fail, for they will be completely swamped by the plague of hail.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THIS IS THE KEY

(Revelation Chapter 17)

The vision contained in this chapter, viewed from the standpoint of our day, is believed to be the most illuminating of all the Revelator's visions. For many years, it has been regarded as the key chapter of the Revelation. At the same time, it has been looked upon in earlier years and is still regarded even to-day by many brethren as the most difficult chapter to understand of the entire book of Revelation.

One of the chief hindrances to the obtaining of a satisfactory interpretation of this and other visions of the Revelation is the tradition held by many brethren that no clearer or fresh light upon the Scriptures, or on the Divine Plan generally, has been available or may be expected by the Lord's people since the death of Brother Russell. The result of this misleading outlook and sectarian spirit propagated amongst the brethren has been that the majority have gone to sleep as respects the increasing light of Harvest truth. The light has passed by these brethren and to-day they find themselves in darkness, wholly dependent for their understanding—or should we say misunderstanding—of Revelation upon interpretations of the past. The sad thing about such deluded brethren is that in adopting this attitude towards the increasing light upon the path of the Lord's followers, they imagine that they are manifesting loyalty to our late Brother Russell. The fact, however, is that such an attitude of mind is neither an evidence of loyalty to the teachings of our late Brother nor to the teachings of our Lord Himself, who is the true source of all light which shines upon the Christian's pathway. (John 14., 6.)

It is believed that if Brother Russell were in the flesh to-day he would be thoroughly ashamed of such professions of loyalty by these brethren, for they are contrary to both the letter and spirit of his teachings as may be seen by the following extract from his writings—"It is the privilege only of this (justified) class (declared our late brother) to walk in the pathway that shines more and more—to see not only the present unfoldings of God's Plan, but things to come. While it is true that the path of each individual believer is a shining one, yet the special application of this statement (Prov. 4., 18.) is to the just (justified) as a class. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles and saints of the past and present have walked in its increasing light; and the light will continue to increase beyond the present—unto the "perfect day". It is one continuous path, and the one continuous and increasing light is the Divine record, illuminating as it becomes due.

Therefore, "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous," expecting the fulfilment of this promise. Many have so little faith that they do not look for more light, and, because of their unfaithfulness and

unconcern, they are permitted to sit in darkness, when they might have been walking in the increasing light." (The Divine Plan of the Ages, pages 20-21.) Truly the Adversary's devices for the purpose of hindering the Lord's followers from putting on the whole "armour of light" provided for this evil day are varied and subtle. If, however, we walk in the light enjoying full fellowship with "God (who) is light, and in him is no darkness at all"—we shall neither be ignorant of, nor deceived by, the Adversary's devices (1. John 1., 5-7.)

**And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither ; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters** (Ver. 1). The first essential to the correct interpretation of this vision is to note *the time it is due to be understood* by the Lord's people. This is revealed in the verse under consideration, for John, who is understood to represent the faithful watchers amongst the Lord's followers, was given the explanation of the vision by one of the angels with the seven last plague-vials. The vision concerns the judgment (Greek, krima—sentence already passed and about to be executed) of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters. Later in the chapter it is stated that the scarlet-coloured beast upon which the woman is seen sitting is to "go into perdition". (Verse 8.) This is repeated in similar terms in verse 11, where again concerning the beast it is stated he "goeth into perdition". From this it should be obvious that the vision concerns the eighth and last "Head" of Gentile kingdoms.

Another equally important matter arising from this verse as regards the *due time* for the understanding of the vision by the John class, is the statement that John was shown the judgment upon this evil system by "one of the angels which had the seven (last) vials". The figure of these angels having the seven last plagues has already been dealt with in our consideration of verse 1 of chapters 15 and 16. It was there seen that all the ten antitypical plagues apply to the time of Harvest. They commenced at the Second Advent when the greater than Moses returned to earth in the power and glory of His Kingdom. (Matt. 25., 31.) They cover the entire Harvest period, the last of which, as in the figure, will witness the passing over of the antitypical firstborns preparatory to the deliverance of the entire human family from the power of the antitypical Pharaoh (Satan) in the following Millennial morning. (Exodus 12., 31, 33.)

It should therefore be clear to the watchers amongst the Lord's people that the *due time for the understanding* of the vision of this chapter must be when the seven last of the ten antitypical plagues are about to be poured out. The key could not be known earlier than this.

**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** (Ver. 2). Spiritual fornication is the union of

Church and State, or, as sometimes expressed, the union of temporal and spiritual power. The true Church is described as a chaste virgin betrothed to her Lord and Head. The harlot Church has forsaken her true Head and has entered into the illicit union with the temporal powers and rulers of the present evil world.

**So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness : and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns** (Ver. 3). The wilderness, into which John in spirit was carried, represents the *condition of complete separation* from the worldly and sectarian spirit of the nominal Christian. Present truth is the Harvest sickle. It will prove to be a separating factor in the experiences of all who are prepared to face the wilderness condition and to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth". (Rev. 14., 4.) Such only, like John, are in the right attitude of mind and spirit to receive, through the instrumentality provided by the Lord, the full light of Present Truth and to be shown through the prophetic Word the "things to come". (John 16., 13.)

The woman of this verse is understood to be the Papacy, while the scarlet-coloured beast upon which she is seen to sit represents the federated powers of Christendom. Sitting upon the beast implies the thought of leader or director of its policy. It is at this point that a great many brethren, for various reasons, fail to grasp the true import and lesson of this very illuminating vision. Prejudice against any fresh light upon the visions of the Revelator or any interpretation that is different from what has previously been taught or written in earlier years, hinders many from walking in the increased light now available to the Lord's faithful followers in this hour of their greatest need.

Those who are resolved to "stand fast" upon the pathway and who refuse to see anything additional to, or different from, what was due to be seen in Brother Russell's day, cannot possibly be guided by the spirit of truth into all truth now shining upon the path of the just. (John 16., 13.) The light from the Divine storehouse will not stop or cease to shine more and more because some have no desire to walk in it. On the contrary, it will pass such by and they will be left standing in darkness.

The view held by most brethren regarding the vision of this chapter in past years and still adhered to by a great many to-day, is that it is just another viewpoint of the same Papal beast described in Rev. 13., 1-10. Stated differently, they claim that most of the features of this vision have been fulfilled in the past and belong to the past.

This method of interpretation, it will be seen, rules out completely and entirely ignores the tersely-worded explanation of the vision given by the angel to John. The essence of this is that the beast which he saw "was" once a "Head" power or leader of the nations in the past—539 to 1799 A.D. It "is not" so at present, but it shall ascend out of the bottomless pit condition of



widowhood (bereft of temporal authority) and as the eighth and last "Head" of Gentile rule will go into perdition—complete destruction. (Verses 8 and 11.)

**And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication** (Ver. 4). The woman here described is the Papal Church. The garments of purple and scarlet, in which she is clothed, seem to symbolise her claims to royalty as the representative of God's Kingdom upon earth. The gold and precious stones and pearls, with which she is decked, seem designed to impress upon the minds of earth's rulers and of men generally the high honour and dignity with which she should be regarded as the mouthpiece of the Creator.

The golden cup in her hand seems fittingly to symbolise her claims to have the sole right and ability to interpret the Word of God. Instead, however, of giving forth the truth as contained in the Scriptures, she has by her false teaching succeeded in corrupting the inspired Word, and has thereby deceived and misled the nations and peoples of earth.

**And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the earth** (Ver. 5). The forehead would seem to indicate the place of prominence, easily recognised by all who have the spirit of discernment.

"Mystery" is truly an appropriate term to describe that system which elsewhere in the Scriptures is termed the "mystery of iniquity", in contrast with the Mystery of God and of Christ. (2. Thess. 2., 7.)

Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, is a fitting description of that organization which must be regarded as the greatest system of confusion and false teaching that the world has ever witnessed. Mother of Harlots implies that the Papal Church was the originator of what the Scriptures term harlotry, namely, the union of Church and State. The use of the term Mother, in this connection, implies the thought of offspring, and, truly, the Papacy has such an offspring in the form of daughter systems, both large and small. These daughter systems, while claiming the title protestant, that is, protesters against the Papal errors, have imbibed much of the spirit and characteristics of the Mother. They also acknowledge human headships and regard with favour an association with the temporal powers of earth.

**And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration (astonishment)** (Ver. 6). Moffatt's rendering of this verse is very significant. It reads "Then I saw the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses of Jesus; and as I looked at her I marvelled

greatly." Most students of the Revelation regard this description of Papal persecution of the Lord's people as having had its fulfilment in the past. Such a view is, however, quite out of harmony with the interpretation of the vision given by the angel to John. This will be very apparent when we come to deal with verse 7, in which the angel tells John the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her. In the meantime, let us remind ourselves that, according to verse 1, John is being shown the judgment (sentence about to be executed) on the great whore before she goes into perdition (verse 8). It was one of the angels with the seven last plagues who revealed the vision to John. These plagues relate to the very close of the Harvest period and are said to "fill up the wrath of God" upon Christendom. (Rev. 15., 1.)

The most astonishing thing brought to our attention in this verse is the fact that in this vision of the harlot woman's future activities, as the eighth "Head" of Gentile rule, John sees her drunk with the blood of the saints. Small wonder, then, that when he saw her he " marvelled greatly " (Moffatt) and was astonished. This surely expresses something of the feelings of wonder and astonishment which the John class of our day experience when first they come to realise that the vision here described by the angel refers *not to the past* but to the *future* activities of the Mother of Harlots.

Drunken with the blood of the saints implies the thought of a mental obsession and grim satisfaction on her part, in the destruction of the lives of those whom she regards as her chief enemies. Compare this future persecution of the Lord's true followers by the Mother of Harlots with Elijah's second flight into the wilderness in order to escape the threats of "that woman Jezebel" to take his life. (1. Kings 19., 1-3.)

Not many amongst the brethren to-day have the necessary faith in what is written or the discernment to see that this vision belongs to the future. Indeed, in verse 8 of this chapter the Revelator warns us that when this vision concerning the rise again to power of the Papacy as the eighth "Head" comes to pass, it will cause wonder and amazement to all amongst the Lord's followers that dwell on the earth. Dwelling "on the earth", so far as the Lord's people are concerned, implies earthly-mindedness on their part and lack of spiritual discernment.

**And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns (Ver. 7).** The woman, as already seen, symbolises the Church of Rome, and the beast upon which she is seen seated represents the federated kingdoms of Christendom which give their power to support her claims as the head of Christ's Kingdom.

**The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that**

**dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is (shall be present—Diaglott)** (Ver. 8). This verse should be a source of much enlightenment to all who are prepared to give due weight and significance to the explanation given by the angel to John. In the first place, it is clearly stated that the beast of this vision plays *three distinct parts* in the course of its existence.

This beast is described by the angel as “was”, when depicted from the standpoint of the time when the seven last plagues were about to be poured out, which means towards the end of the Harvest period. This means to say that its first appearance as a “Head” power was a matter of past history. The “was” period is recorded in Rev. 13., 1. It covered a matter of 1,260 years from 539 A.D. to 1799 A.D., when the Papal empire ruled the world as the fifth “Head” of Gentile rule.

The “is not” stage of the Papal power as a leader or “Head” began at the time of the French Revolution. It still continues in our day, while the third stage when it “shall ascend out of the bottomless pit” belongs to the future. However, only such will understand the matter who have faith to accept the explanation of the angel, as here recorded. Many of the Lord’s people to-day are not prepared to accept, at its face value, this explanation of the angel regarding the three stages of the Papal Beast. They prefer to walk by sight and accept interpretations from the past which cannot be harmonised with this simple but profound statement of the angel to John.

Small wonder, then, that these brethren have no faith in the view here expressed by the angel, namely, that the Papal Beast will in the future rise again to power over the nations as the eighth “Head” and go into perdition. (Ver. 11.) It is not surprising either that, according to the angel, when this third stage of the beast comes about and it is again present at the head of Christendom, it will be a source of wonder and amazement to all who through lack of spiritual discernment have refused to accept this important explanation of the angel.

Ascending out of the bottomless pit means rising to power and prominence amongst the nations, as in former years. The bottomless pit symbolises a condition of obscurity and powerlessness. Satan, when bound for the thousand years, is described as being in the bottomless pit.

**Here is the mind which hath wisdom** (Ver. 9). This expression, used by the angel as he proceeds to make known to John what undoubtedly is the *key point* of his explanation, is very similar to what the Revelator himself used when about to disclose the number of the beast. (Rev. 13., 18.) It is a word of caution to the John class. It means to say that the matter which the angel was about to disclose concerning the beast would contain something very much deeper than what could be comprehended by the mind

lacking in heavenly wisdom. Otherwise stated, it means that a mere surface interpretation, that would appeal to the natural mind, would fail to reveal the real depths of the hidden wisdom of what was about to be disclosed, because the mind of the Spirit expressed therein could be appreciated only by the spiritually-minded.

**The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is (one) of the seven, and goeth into perdition** (Vers. 9-11). In view of the importance attached by the angel to the context of this portion of Scripture and in order clearly to understand the hidden wisdom contained therein, we give below two other readings of the angel's words to John.

**Moffatt**—“*The seven heads are seven hills, on which the woman is seated; also, they (the heads) are seven kings, of whom five have fallen, one is living, and the other has not arrived yet—and when he does arrive, he can only stay a little while. As for the Beast which was and is not, he is an eighth head; he belongs to the seven, and to perdition he shall go.*”

**Twentieth Century**—“*The seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman is seated. They (the heads) are also seven kings; of whom five have fallen and one remains, while one is not yet come. When he comes, he must stay for a little while. So must the Beast that was, but is not. He counts for an eighth king, although he is one of the seven, and is on his way to destruction.*”

Careful consideration of these few verses by the earnest truth-seeker should quickly confirm the truth of the angel's words to John that only the “mind which hath wisdom” could fathom the depth of the truth concealed herein. For many years, students of the Revelation have held the view that this 17th chapter contained much that it had not been possible to understand in their day. It was also the view of our late Brother Russell that this chapter contained the key to the outline of the entire Book of Revelation. For this reason, in his latter years he declared that when he had received the key he would write the Seventh Volume.

It should not be imagined however, that the understanding of the hidden wisdom contained in this chapter depended solely upon the sincerity or piety of the earnest truth-seeker. On the contrary, like many other features of truth, the “due time” for its unfolding plays an all-important part. This is very evident from the fact that it was one of the angels having the seven last plagues who explained the vision to John. Moreover, the statement of the angel was that when he revealed to John the vision of this chapter, five of the “Head” powers of Gentile rule had already fallen, one was in power, while two only belonged to the future (Vers. 10-11). All this will, however, become more apparent as the various outstanding features of these two key verses are considered.

Confirmation of the foregoing is also seen in the fact that it is only within recent years that the key to this chapter, and, indeed, to the general lay-out of the entire book of Revelation has come to light.

One of the chief difficulties of many brethren in obtaining a proper understanding of this and other portions of Revelation is their failure to obtain a *correct definition* of the symbols which they contain. In verses 9, 10, and 11 of this chapter, there are, for example, no less than four distinct symbols used in reference to the various "Heads", or leading powers of Gentile rule. It would be foolishness on the part of anyone to imagine that these symbols could be rightly interpreted by some sudden brain-wave that might occur to them, irrespective of their use generally in the Scriptures. Stated otherwise, it should be understood that there is both *order and harmony* in the use of these inspired symbols, and they must be interpreted accordingly. Moreover, a definition or interpretation can be found somewhere in the Scriptures for every symbolical term used by these inspired writers.

The four symbolic terms here used to describe the leading empires of earth during the period of Gentile rule are, "heads", "mountains", "kings", and "beasts". According to the angel, these four distinctly different symbols all mean the same thing and they are used *interchangeably* in the context. His words are—"the seven heads are seven mountains . . . also they (the 'Heads') are seven kings. . . . As for the Beast which was (fifth 'Head', or Papal empire) and is not, he is an eighth head; he belongs to the seven ('Heads') and to perdition he shall go". It should be very evident, then, that these four symbols, "heads", "mountains", "kings", and "beasts" are all descriptive of mighty empires, or kingdoms, which would arise in succession as leaders amongst the nations throughout the entire period of Gentile rule, from 606 B.C. to the end of all Gentile kingdoms.

All would agree that mountains symbolise kingdoms and since we are informed by the angel that the seven "Heads" are mountains, it follows also that the "Heads" also mean kingdoms. Again, according to the angel, these "heads" are also "kings", while Daniel informs us that the four great beasts that he saw, in vision, were four "kings, which shall arise out of the earth". (Dan. 7., 17.) Thus, by allowing the Scriptures to interpret themselves, it becomes clear that the seven "Heads" represent *out-standing and powerful kingdoms that in succession would rise and fall during the long period of Gentile rule*. Daniel, in vision, saw the first four of these "Head" powers. They are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Imperial or Pagan Rome. The Revelator was given a vision of the rise to power of the remaining three—Papal Rome, British Empire, and Image of the Beast, while in the vision of Revelation 17, now under consideration, he was shewn an eighth "Head" which the angel declared was one of the seven already mentioned, namely, Papal Rome brought back again to the head-

ship of the nations. (Rev. 17., 11.)

It should be obvious, then, to students of the Revelation that these "Heads", beasts and the like are descriptive of outstanding political ruling powers. Many brethren have mistakenly taken these head powers and beasts as referring to Communism, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and such like "isms". This is quite wrong, however, for all such "isms" are merely political or religious *creeds* common to an unlimited number of Gentile kingdoms and therefore not descriptive of an individual ruling power.

**And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom (as yet—omit); but receive power as kings one hour with the beast (Ver. 12).** The horns of a literal beast are its means of protection against an enemy, or they may be used as a means of offence in obtaining its prey. Similarly, the horns of a symbolic beast are satellite powers which it uses in either offensive or defensive warfare. Ten seems to be a number which suggests completeness. The ten kings which have received no kingdom are understood to represent all the satellite powers under the control of the Papal power as the eighth "Head". These have no individual legal rights on their own account, for they have yielded them up in the interests and support of the beast. They are therefore merely skeleton kings, exercising delegated powers from the beast.

**These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful (Ver. 14).** This verse proves conclusively, if further proof were necessary, that *the time* when the vision is fulfilled is during the days of the Lord's Presence.

Making war with the Lamb implies active opposition to the purpose for which Christ's Kingdom has been established in the heavenly sphere of earth, namely, the overthrow and destruction of the present world order. (Dan. 2., 44.) On the contrary, the object of this final federation of Christendom under Papal control as the eighth "Head" will be to *uphold and maintain* the present order from threatened destruction, at the hands of the reckless army of the discontented masses of the people. In this it will for a time have the full support of its satellite kings, but their united efforts will completely fail, for the Lamb in His mighty Kingdom shall overcome them. A further and very important point to note in relation to *the time* when this war with the Lamb takes place is that the called, and chosen, and faithful followers of the Lord are *with Him* in the Kingdom. This, of course, would apply only since the time of the Lord's Second Advent when the dead in Christ were raised from the tomb and taken within the veil. (1. Thess. 4., 16.)

The ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled (Vers. 16-17). It would appear that, for a time, the federated powers of the eighth "Head" will agree, out of necessity, to support to the full the policy of the Papacy in her endeavours to exterminate and root out all whom she regards as her special enemies. These would undoubtedly include the remnant of the Elijah class still in the flesh. This throws some light upon the words of John, recorded in verse 6, in which he declared, "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus".

We recall, in this connection, that it was during the operation of the tenth plague upon Egypt that the firstborns of Israel were passed over and saved from death, when the destroying angel passed through the land. Would not this lend colour to the thought that it may be during the operation of the *last antitypical plague* upon the eighth "Head" (Papacy restored to power) that the last members of the Church of the firstborns will pass beyond the veil into the Kingdom?

It seems likely that this symbolic "great whore", in directing the policy of the eighth "Head", will go to such lengths in the slaughter of her enemies that the temporal powers, which execute her commands, will at last refuse to carry out her directions in that respect. With their eyes then opened to the true character of the beast, they will, in the words of the angel to John, "hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire". Surely, a forceful example of just retribution long deferred.

The words of God through the prophet Daniel, nearly twenty-five centuries ago, had foretold just such retribution as is here described by the angel to John. Daniel's words also clearly located the time when the final retribution upon the Papal system would come. It is *after* the thousand-year judgment day has begun. "The judgment (declared the prophet) was set, and the books were opened. I beheld **then** (after her restoration to power) because of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" —anarchy. (Dan. 7., 10-11.)

Papacy's iniquity had at least reached its full limit. The blood of her countless victims had for centuries cried out, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6., 10.) The seven last plagues bring the answer to this prayer "for in them is filled up the wrath of God". (Rev. 15., 1.)

## THE FALL OF BABYLON

(Revelation Chapter 18)

After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory (Ver. 1). "After these things" means that after the vision contained in chapter 17 was finished, John's attention was then directed to another one. The vision of this chapter takes us back to the time of the Second Advent, "when (declared our Lord) the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him." (Matt. 25., 31.) Our Lord's glorification took place when, after His ascension, He appeared in the presence of God for "us". (Heb. 9., 24.) It was not until then that He entered into His glorious Kingdom for which He, as the "nobleman" of the parable, went into the far country (heaven) to receive. (Luke 19., 12.) It will be recalled, too, that the Holy Spirit, denoting the acceptance of the Lord's consecrated followers as new creatures in Christ, was not given until after Jesus was glorified in His Kingdom. It was in the glory of this same Kingdom, comprised of myriads of mighty angels, that He returned to earth at the Second Advent. (Matt. 25., 31.)

**And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird** (Ver. 2). Various Scriptures describe our Lord's descent from heaven to earth at the Second Advent in almost similar terms, heralded by a "strong voice," as used in this verse. The same event is referred to in Rev. 10., 3 as with a "loud voice, as when a lion roareth." Again, in chapter 11., 15 (Weymouth's translation) His descent in the sounding of the seventh trumpet is said to be heralded by "loud voices in Heaven (amongst the heavenly-minded class) which said, The sovereignty of the world now belongs to our Lord (Jehovah) and His Christ."

The strong voice of this verse is undoubtedly the voice of truth and liberty emanating from Zion's Kingdom "set up" in the heavenly sphere of earth. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty (declared the Psalmist), God hath shined." As a consequence of earth's enlightenment, we read "a fire shall devour before him and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens (higher ruling powers) from above, and to the (rulers of) earth ("let my people go"), that he may judge his people." Then, to His own followers, the message goes forth "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Psa. 50., 1-5.)

But there is a still further aspect of Harvest light from Zion. It is a message for the Lord's people in Babylon, saying "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen"— cast off from Divine favour.



Babylon, up to this time, had enjoyed a measure of favour from God because of those of His followers held in bondage within her sectarian walls. Now that the Harvest work of gathering the elect from "one end of heaven to the other" has commenced, there is no object in any longer sparing that wicked system. (Matt. 24., 31.)

The remaining portion of this verse describes, in very vivid language, the Divine viewpoint of this great system which for many centuries has been regarded by men as Christ's Kingdom—Christendom. However, far from being in any sense the mouth-piece or representative of Christ on earth, it is from God's standpoint nothing less than a habitation of devils. Its doctrines are demon-inspired, and altogether it is the harbourer of the foulest spirits (teachings) and of the most hateful advocates of evil and wickedness that the human family has ever witnessed.

Great Babylon is, however, the mother of numerous daughter systems, both large and small. All of these, like the mother system, make loud professions of being intimately owned and recognised by Christ. Like the mother also, they held in bondage many of the Lord's people, and for that reason alone they are disowned by Him and will in due course suffer the same fate as the mother system.

**For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies** (Ver. 3). The wine of her fornication seems clearly to refer to her false teaching concerning the union of Church and State. All the nations of earth, large and small, have, in some measure, imbibed this unscriptural teaching, and consequently have become intoxicated with the view that they are Christian nations and that their kings are ruling by the grace of God.

**And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues** (Ver. 4). This further voice of heavenly wisdom which John heard clearly indicates the increasing light of Present Truth which came to the John Class of watchers, early in the Harvest-time. It was at this stage of Harvest that the Lord's people, realising that Babylon had been cast off from Divine favour, began to see that the Lord's will for them, as expressed by the prophet, was to "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence." (Jer. 51., 6.)

This test of obedience to the Lord's will came to His followers very early in the present Harvest period. It has, indeed, been a major test ever since amongst all who profess to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (leads), in whatever section of Babylon, large or small, Present Truth has found them.

Babylon means confusion—confusion of teaching respecting the light now shining upon the Christian's pathway—doctrinal, dispensational, and also the prophetic truth concerning things to come. (John 16., 13.) Early in the present Harvest-time, the mother and older daughter systems of Christendom were generally recognised as the Babylon of Revelation. Most of the wheat class were at that time found in one or other of these daughters of Babylon the Great.

Babylon to-day has, however, greatly extended its borders and includes the bulk of the various gatherings of those who profess to be walking in the light of Present Truth. Who, for example, would attempt to deny that, throughout the Harvest field to-day, confusion of doctrine and of the work of Harvest prevails on every hand? The fact is that in the great majority of the assemblies of brethren to-day clear expositions of the deeper aspects of the truth such as the Covenants, the Ransom and Sin-offerings, the prophetic and dispensational features of truth, would be regarded by their leaders with grave disfavour lest contentions and divisions should result. Where such confusion of doctrine concerning the truth does exist, would not the term Babylon still apply? And would not the voice from heaven still say to those amongst the systems but desirous of following "the Lamb whithersoever he goeth"—"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"?

**For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities** (Ver. 5). God, who sees not as man sees, judges not according to outward appearances of mere profession. He looks at the condition of the heart with its desire to know more fully His will and to obey it. To the natural mind, Babylon the Great has been the glory of earth's kingdoms and the gateway to God, but from the Divine standpoint she is the embodiment of iniquity and evil as well as the abomination of the earth.

**Reward her even as she rewarded you (others—Moffatt), and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled (for others) fill to her double** (Ver. 6). It is not the province of the Lord's people in the flesh to attempt to inflict retribution and vengeance upon Babylon—"Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord." (Heb. 10., 30.) Some have mistakenly thought that this verse of Scripture gives authority to the Lord's followers, still in the flesh, to execute vengeance upon Babylon and every other evil organization in the world. Such overlook the Apostle's injunction that the Christian warfare is defensive rather than aggressive. It is a fight to defend our faith and the principles of the truth and so to withstand the wiles and allurements of the evil one from deceiving and eventually destroying us as new creatures in Christ. Moreover, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, neither do we "war after the flesh." (2. Cor. 10., 3-4.)

Later in this chapter, we read that it is "the Lord God who judgeth her" (Ver. 8.) Later still, concerning the holy Apostles and prophets whose blood she shed, it is written, "God hath avenged you on her" (Ver. 20.)

**How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow** (Ver. 7). The union of the Papacy with the temporal powers, during the years described in Chapter 17., 8 as her "was" period of headship over the nations, was clearly prefigured by the union of that woman Jezebel (Rev. 2., 20.) and Ahab, king of Israel. (1. Kings 19., 1-2.) So long as the Papacy remained in control as the fifth Head of Gentile rule, supported by the temporal powers, in no sense could she be symbolically described as a widow. When she lost the leadership of the nations and their support, through the French Revolution (1799 A.D.) her marriage ties with the temporal powers were broken, and, symbolically, she became a widow.

The period of her widowhood, bereft of temporal power after the French Revolution, is aptly described in Rev. 17., 8 as the "is not" time of her existence.

The statement of the verse under consideration, that, once more she saith in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no (longer a) widow, and shall see no sorrow," refers neither to her "was" stage of the past nor to her present "is not" position amongst the nations. It refers to her future position as the eighth and last Head of Gentile rule, when she "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" of obscurity, before going into perdition. (Chap. 17., 8.)

We know that it could not refer to Papacy's past history because the next verse states that "in one day (suddenly and unexpectedly), death, and mourning, and famine" will cut short her boasting and "she shall be *utterly burned* with fire"—anarchy. Surely, no one would argue that she has yet suffered this extreme penalty of destruction.

The prophet Isaiah was given a vision of the downfall and destruction of the same "mother of harlots" system, in almost identical language. It reads, "Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children; But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood." (Isa. 47., 8-9.)

**And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning** (Ver. 9). The downfall and destruction of Babylon will be regarded as a great calamity, not only by literal kings of royal blood, but by all who by trading in her mystical wares have become rich in the honours and praises of men through their association with her. Babylon's

destruction, in the eyes of all whose interests are bound up in her preservation, will seem an unspeakable calamity. In due time, however, it will be recognised as the greatest blessing that could have befallen the children of men.

**Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come** (Ver. 10). The sudden upheaval of the social structure, through the madding rage of the great masses of down-trodden humanity, described elsewhere as a "great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great," will strike terror into the hearts of all who have been recipients of her favour.

Literal Babylon, with its walls of unbelievable height and thickness, was considered an impregnable city. Symbolic Babylon, supported by the federated powers of Christendom under the leadership of the harlot woman, will be the greatest combination of wealth and power that the world has ever seen. Like the literal city, it also will seem impregnable, but its weakness, as that of its prototype, will be the waters (peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues) which uphold her. The turning away of the good will and support of these symbolic waters, like that of the figure, will open the way for her sudden and complete destruction.

**And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more** (Ver. 11). Babylon's merchants are those who have enriched themselves by trading in her vaunting claims and pretensions to Divine authority, as God's representative and mouthpiece on earth. All who have shared in these riches of honour and the praises of men will, indeed, weep and mourn their loss.

Babylon's merchandise, as described in verses 12 to 14 of this chapter, represents her counterfeits of the various spiritual things that have to do with the call and development of the true saints of God during the present Age. Mystic Babylon has counterfeited all of these and turned them into merchandise which has proved to be a source of great wealth amongst her deluded adherents. Gold, for example, represents the Divine truths and means provided by God in connection with the call of the elect to the Divine nature during the present Age. Silver, precious stones, and pearls, indicate the doctrines and teachings of the Scriptures provided as a means whereby the Lord's people may be sanctified and conformed to the image of the Master. Linen represents the condition of righteousness which God imputes to those who exercise a living faith in the sacrifice of Christ. Purple, and silk, and scarlet imply that those who wear garments or embroideries of such are heirs to a throne and kingdom. Cinnamon, odours, ointments and frankincense, all had to do with the sacred oil used for the anointing of Israel's priests and kings. The anointing oil was a symbol of the Holy Spirit which came upon our Lord and Head at Jordan, and has

descended to the members of His Body throughout the Age. All the various aspects of Divine grace, described in the context of the verses mentioned, have been counterfeited by Babylon's magicians and turned into valuable merchandise for selfish gain.

**The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing** (Ver. 15). When the fires of human wrath and passion begin to encroach upon Babylon, her previous supporters who were made rich by their trading associations with her will become fearful of their own safety and will endeavour to dissociate themselves from her in order to escape a similar fate.

**For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off** (Ver. 17). One hour, a brief period of time, seems to indicate that once the true character of Babylon is recognised by her supporters, her doom will be both sudden and unexpected. Shipmasters and those who company in ships refer, apparently, to such as have been actively engaged in schemes for furthering the claims and hold of Babylon upon the sea element of humanity. These also begin to realise that their source of influence and wealth is gone, and their uppermost thought now is their own safety in avoiding a similar fate.

**The smoke of her burning** (Ver. 18). Smoke is an evidence of fire, and what a disillusionment it will be to Babylon's supporters, once the fire of angry passions begins to consume that mighty city.

**Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets ; for God hath avenged you on her** (Ver. 20). Babylon has been the Adversary's chief agent in persecuting and torturing the heirs of the heavenly Kingdom, throughout the centuries. Her iniquity having now come to the full, vengeance, although long deferred, has at last overtaken her.

**Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all** (Ver. 21). The figure of a great millstone cast into the sea expresses, in the absolute sense, the helpless and unavoidable end of this one time mistress of the world.

**And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee ; . . . and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee** (Ver. 22). The skilful harpers, musicians, and trumpeters of the inspired Word have for many years past been called out of, and delivered from, the various quarters of Babylon. Many, however, have since become weary of the long and difficult journey to Zion and have returned once more to the city of confusion. Every section, large or small, of greater Babylon of our day has its own particular brand of musicians. Their music is, however, anything but harmonious, and affords pleasure only to the sectarian ear.

To-day a considerable volume of sound is heard from Babylon's millstones engaged in the grinding of food for her millions of adherents. All these activities will, however, come to an end in the near future for, it is written, "in one hour (brief period of time) is she made desolate." (Ver. 19.)

**And the light of a candle (lamp) shall shine no more at all in thee ; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee ; for thy merchants were the great men of the earth ; for by thy sorceries (magic) were all nations deceived** (Ver. 23). Light from the lamp of Divine truth has long since ceased to shine brightly within the sectarian walls of Babylon, and since she was cut off from Divine favour, the members of the Bride class within have been gradually coming out, not only from the older sections but also from the more recently-established pens within. The only voice of the Bridegroom heard by those in Babylon to-day is the call, "come out of her, my people " lest her plagues come upon thee. (Rev. 18., 4.)

**And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth** (Ver. 24). Babylon's record of the destruction and persecution of the Lord's true followers over the centuries is, indeed, an appalling one. The cunning wickedness of her crimes and the depths of degradation reached in her evil designs against her victims might be said to represent the embodiment and sum total of every crime committed against God's people and humanity, from the very earliest days.

**And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen ; Alleluia** (Ver. 4). The amazingly swift climax which will bring to an end the present evil world, so fully outlined in the visions of the Old Testament Scriptures, will then be clearly understood in the light of passing events. This fulfilment of prophecy, coupled with the harmonious operation of the Divine attributes in the outworking of the Divine Plan, will bring additional glory and praise to the Creator's name throughout the entire universe.

**And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great** (Ver. 5). The throne of Christ's Kingdom, at the time indicated in the vision, will be occupied by both Bride and Bridegroom, for the marriage of the Lamb will then be in the past and the twain will then be one. One Kingdom glory, one Ruler, one throne, one voice, and one mind—to bring glory to the Creator, and blessing to every creature in heaven and in earth.

**And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth** (Ver. 6). This verse carries the mind forward to the time when the human family have had their eyes so fully opened as to recognise that the

Kingdom of Christ, as God's representative, has taken control of the affairs of this world. The New Covenant having been sealed, the Holy Spirit—indicating Divine acceptance of the sacrifice of the Body-members of Christ—will be poured out upon all flesh of the human family, as they yield obedience to the directions of earth's new ruler—Christ, Head and Body-members. (Joel 2., 28.)

**The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready** (Ver. 7). The Diaglott renders this verse—"The marriage of the Lamb *came*, and his wife prepared herself." This seems to be the correct thought because the marriage, or union of Christ and His members, was complete when the last one entered within the veil. The thought of a marriage, or wedding, is the union of the bride with the bridegroom. In the case of the Church and her Head, this occupies a period of time. It began with the raising of the sleeping saints from the tomb, and it has continued throughout the Harvest period, as the living members who remained have one by one been changed, at the moment of death, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air—the Kingdom, or place of spiritual control.

**And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints** (Ver. 8). Righteousness, in God's sight, denotes perfection and sinlessness, whether actual or reckoned. In our Lord's case, He was actually righteous but the Bride class, by nature, were all unrighteous and imperfect. However, God has, in accordance with the principle of Divine justice, devised a Plan whereby He can justify, or reckon them righteous, on the basis of their faith in the Atonement work of Christ. (Rom. 4., 3; 23-24.)

## CHAPTER XVI

### SATAN VANQUISHED

(Revelation Chapter 19)

**After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying Alleluia ; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God** (Ver. 1). The context, as indicated in the following verse, locates the fulfilment of this vision as subsequent to the downfall of Babylon and the judgment of the Great Whore. It could neither refer to any of Christ's members still in the flesh nor to the human family in general, for the reason that the "much people" mentioned are seen to be in heaven. The "little flock" of overcomers are included in the "voice from the throne" mentioned in verse 5. There seems to be but one class that would fit all the circumstances of the vision, namely, the "great multitude" referred to in Rev. 7., 14-15. The greater number of these, so it would seem, are at present asleep in the various sections of the truth brethren. Many others are doubtless held in bondage in the different creed systems of the larger groups of Christendom. Most of them are likely to remain so until her downfall has actually taken place. Deliverance will then be too late, for the door to their Kingdom expectations will be shut.

The tendency of every section of Babylon, including the numerous smaller ones at present developing amongst the so-called truth people, is to gravitate more and more towards an earthly-minded outlook. As the shaking of the present order increases, circumstances will force these smaller sections to seek the protection of great Babylon's great towers of wealth and power. The result will be that in the rising conflict between the might and wealth of Babylon on the one hand, and the down-trodden and discontented masses on the other, all of these smaller sections of Christendom will eventually come within the orbit of the final federation of the eighth Head.

No one will be able to stand apart from the conflict of that evil hour, except those who have taken to themselves the whole "armour of light" provided for the protection of their faith and who are dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. All others, including the "great multitude," will be deceived by antitypical Pharaoh's magicians, through their magic claims of Babylon's advocates and the loud swelling words of the Mother of Harlots. If it were a possibility, which it could not be, even the elect overcomers would also be deceived.

**And her smoke rose up for ever and ever** (Ver. 3). Smoke, as the visible evidence of a consuming fire, is a fitting symbol of the lasting impressions of the exceeding wickedness of Babylon's sins in the sight of God, and of her just retribution. It will be a lesson which will never need to be repeated.



**Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb** (Ver. 9). The marriage itself, and the marriage supper which followed, are separate and distinct events which should not be confused. Those who are called unto the marriage supper are understood to be the "great multitude" who will eventually be companions of the Bride class and servants in God's temple. (Psa. 45., 14; Rev. 7., 15.)

There has not been any direct call from the Heavenly Father to such a class throughout the Age, and their opportunity of obtaining life, in the circumstances involved, is purely a matter of Divine grace and compassion. When Babylon has fallen and the hopelessness of their position is fully realised, they will seemingly be led to see that there is this possibility of escape from the serious consequences of their foolish course and apparently they will eagerly lay hold upon it.

**The testimony of Jesus is the spirit (life) of prophecy** (Ver. 10). Jesus is the hub and centre of the Divine Plan. If His part be taken away, the life and vitality are taken out of all the prophetic teachings of the Scriptures.

**And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse ; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war** (Ver. 11). The vision of the white horse and rider takes us back to an earlier stage of the Harvest-time. What John saw in vision depicts what the members of Christ still in the flesh have been enabled to appreciate respecting the developments of the Divine Plan.

The opened heavens indicate increased light and understanding respecting the breaking to pieces and eventual removal of the present evil order. Horses symbolise the media through which liberty or truth are promulgated. The white horse of this vision would seem to represent the unseen myriads of angelic beings which comprise the mighty Kingdom of Christ, now established in the heavenly sphere of earth. (Dan. 2., 44; 7., 10.) It is here seen making war against the kingdoms of this world and the forces of evil which oppose the righteous demands of earth's new King.

He that sat upon him includes both our Lord and Head and also the members of the Body, already with Him beyond the veil. (Rev. 17., 14.) Many, who do not fully grasp the true unity of Christ — Head and Body-members — fail to interpret this vision aright. Because of this they imagine that the rider upon the white horse represents Jesus alone and that the armies of verse 14, which followed Him upon white horses, represent the members of His Body.

This separation of Head and Body-members will not do, for it is out of harmony with the prophetic figures of the Old Testament, as well as the Spirit's teachings of the New. Israel's anointed kings and priests, as well as their prophets, individually prefigured

the Christ of many members. So also did Melchisedec, the kingly priest of the Most High God. If it be asked how the descriptions and titles mentioned in the following verses of the vision could apply to Christ's members, the answer is that they are applied to them in various other Scriptures. (Rev. 2., 17; 2., 27; Phil. 2., 9-11.) Indeed, every title and office inherited by our Lord is shared with the members of the faithful Bride Class (Isa. 53., 12.)

**The armies in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean** (Ver. 14). It would be a very short-sighted view of the majesty and glory of the One who has been highly exalted **far above** all principality and power to imagine that His joint-heirs, who sit with Him in the throne of His mighty Kingdom, act as individual armies in the execution of His will. In the throne of that glorious Kingdom there will be but one Occupant, the Lamb and His wife who made herself ready. There will be but one glory and one mind—the mind of the Head, directed towards the glory of the Father and the blessing of every creature in the Universe.

The armies that follow Him upon white horses seem to represent the numerous angelic beings who carry out the will of the One who sits upon the throne, and who fill the various functions of that great and beautiful City of Zion. (Psa. 48., 1-2.)

**And I saw an angel standing in the sun ; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God** (Ver. 17). The angel standing in the sunlight seems to symbolise the few remaining members of Christ still in the flesh, just before the final collapse and downfall of Babylon. The light of prophecy, unfolding the meaning of events then transpiring in the world, will reveal to them clearly the imminence of the loosing of the four winds, which will mean the total destruction of the present evil order or world civilization.

The fowls, or vultures of heaven, actively engaged in undermining the present social structure, seem to be a fitting description of the various suppressed organised elements of society awaiting the hour when restraint by the "powers that be" will be no longer possible. That will be the opportunity they have so eagerly desired. Eating the flesh of the various ones mentioned will mean pillaging and devouring the substance, or wealth of the things regarded by them as of special value or importance. It will be the Battle of Armageddon on a world-wide scale—a battle between organised wealth and power, on the one hand, and the great mass of the downtrodden and angry elements of humanity on the other. There will be no way of escape from its consequences for mankind in general, and for the Lord's people it would be both futile and foolish to take sides with either party. The only place of safety for the Lord's people in such circumstances will be the "secret

place of the most High” or the “pavilion” in which He has promised to keep them from the strife of tongues. (Psa. 31., 20.)

**And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army** (Ver. 19). The beast of this verse is understood to symbolise the Eighth and last Head of Gentile rule. At this stage, the Papal power will have ascended out of the bottomless pit of restraint (Chap. 17., 8) and, at the request of the united rulers of Christendom, will have returned once more to the headship of the nations.

The Seventh Head, having failed to accomplish what was expected of it in controlling the restless masses, will give place to the more influential and conservative power of the Papacy. It will be the last effort of earth's rulers to stem the rising tide of lawlessness and anarchy, and thus to maintain present world civilization.

The kings of the earth would comprise every influential leader, whether crowned literally or otherwise. These will give their support and influence to the beast.

Making war against the horseman and his army means working in opposition to the purpose for which the mighty Kingdom of Zion, in the hands of the Christ of many members, has been set up in the spiritual realm of earth. (See comments on Chap. 17., 14.) The war will be between the great army of the down-trodden masses of discontented humanity on the one side, and the united elements of wealth and influence backed up by every shade of religious influence on the other.

**And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone** (Ver. 20). The taking of the beast signifies its loss of power and its overthrow at the hands of its enemy, the discontented masses of mankind. The false prophet is identified in Chap. 13., 11-14 as the beast which came up out of the earth with horns like a lamb, namely, the British empire. Taken *alive* implies that while outwardly they appear to be exercising effective control of the situation, sudden and unexpected revolution will break out resulting in their overthrow and complete destruction.

Cast into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone, is a symbolic expression which means that their destruction will be so complete that there will not be the slightest hope of any recovery of their power.

**And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh**

(Ver. 21). The remnant would apparently refer to any further organised efforts of men, like that of the beast and false prophet systems, to uphold the present evil order. All such efforts to fetter the minds of men respecting their God-given rights and liberties, will quickly be brushed aside and will vanish like the morning mists before the warming rays of the rising sun. The sword of the Spirit will cut through every imagination of the natural mind to stifle light and liberty, and will lay bare the terrible wrongs of the present evil order.

The terrible results of this awakening will provide the long-awaited hour of the vulture-like sections of down-trodden humanity to assuage their appetites, and avenge themselves upon the wealth and substance of their hitherto taskmasters.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE REIGN OF CHRIST

(Revelation Chapter 20)

**And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand** (Ver. 1). This chapter is a good example of the principle of interpretation which must be carefully observed, in order rightly to divide and interpret the many visions of this last and greatest prophecy of the Bible. The chapter consists of three distinct visions, each one of which covers the entire thousand years of the Millennial reign, but from entirely different standpoints. Vision No. 1 embraces verses 1 to 3 inclusive. No. 2 begins with verse 4 and ends with verse 10. No. 3 starts with verse 11 and continues to the end of the chapter.

The angel who is seen coming down from heaven clearly depicts the Second Advent of our Lord. The bottomless pit symbolises a condition of restraint, in which it is impossible to exercise one's mental desires. The Papacy, when shorn of its temporal power and headship over the nations about 150 years ago, is described as being in the bottomless pit. She will ascend out of the bottomless pit conditions in the near future, and, as the Eighth Head of Gentile rule, will again become leader of federated Christendom. (Rev. 17., 8.)

The key symbolises authority over, and ability to control, anything to which it applies. The great chain in our Lord's hand seems to be the vastly increased power and influence of the truth and liberty by reason of the presence of Christ's Kingdom, as it bursts the "chains of darkness" with which Satan has so long held in bondage the fallen angels and the human family. (2. Pet. 2., 4.)

**And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years** (Ver. 2). The binding of Satan takes place in the heavens, or spiritual realm of his kingdom, *first*, and, as a consequence, he has already been cast down from his place of control as "prince of the power of the air." No judgment or trial of the fallen angels, who have been held in bondage by the Adversary, was possible until our Lord returned in Kingdom power and glory, and cast down the Adversary, together with those angels who still possessed the spirit of their leader, to the realm of earth. (Rev. 12., 7-12.) Satan is now completely bound in the heavenly realm of his kingdom, and in due course he will also be similarly bound upon the earth, when the human family will be freed from his control.

The binding of Satan, from the Divine standpoint, counts from the time of the Lord's Second Advent, when He broke into the "strong man's house" and cast him down from his throne in the

heavens. (Mark 3., 27.) Satan's binding, so far, affects only the highest phase of his kingdom. God, however, "callesh those things which be not (completed) as though they were." (Rom. 4., 17.) Hence, since Satan can no longer occupy his former place of power and control in the heavens, the Scriptures in this verse describe his present condition as being already bound. (Rev. 12., 8; 20., 2.)

**And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season** (Ver. 3). The bottomless pit, as already noted, indicates a condition of restraint in which Satan will be held under the iron rule of the Mediatorial Kingdom. Under the operation of the New Covenant, so far as the human family are concerned, allowances will be made for the inherited imperfections and weaknesses through the original offence of our first parents in Eden. Every assistance will be given, by both precept and example, to enable them to overcome these imperfections.

Satan's position will, however, be very different. He is incorrigible and wholly given over to evil and opposition to the Creator. Nothing remains for him but final destruction in the Second Death, after being loosed for a little season at the end of the 1,000 years. The seal placed upon him would appear to be the righteous rule of the unseen Kingdom of Christ during the 1,000 years. Concerning that time it is written—"Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." (Isa. 28., 17.)

This enforced iron rule over the earth will be an exception to any other part of God's Kingdom throughout the Universe. In every other part of God's Kingdom, His will is done by all His creatures voluntarily, loyally, and lovingly. Eventually, it will be so also on earth, but during the 1,000 years, in which all evil will be suppressed and eventually eliminated, the royal law of love will be set aside, and the special rule of the Mediator, equivalent to what in earthly kingdoms is termed martial law, will be in operation.

As the binding of Satan is accomplished by the enforced rule of the Mediatorial Kingdom over the earth, his loosing will apparently be brought about by the removal of the Mediatorial Kingdom at the close of the 1,000 years. This freedom of choice will provide an opportunity for Satan once more to become active in an attempt to deceive all mankind. All who have not, at heart, learned to love righteousness and hate iniquity will be made manifest and suffer the penalty of everlasting destruction. (Matt. 25., 41-42.)

**And I saw thrones, and they (that) sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast,**

neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years (Ver. 4). This verse begins the second of the three visions which make up this chapter. Like the previous vision, it covers the entire thousand years' reign of Christ, describing events from a different standpoint.

The thrones and those who sat upon them are referred to by our Lord as "ye which have followed me" in this life. "In the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. 19., 28.) Daniel also refers to the same thrones, but owing to a faulty translation in the Common Version, the sense of the prophecy is obscured. (Dan. 7., 9.) A better rendering of this text reads "I continued looking until that thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days took his seat." (Rotherham.) The reference is to the beginning of the thousand-year Day of Judgment when the saints, under their Lord and Head, shall judge the world.

The John class, or watchers of our day who are walking in the light of Present Truth, recognise that we are already in the thousand-year Judgment Day. The angels who kept not their first estate, held in chains of darkness in the heavens of Satan's kingdom, have already been liberated and judged. Their judgment has been in accordance with their choice of good or evil, when Satan was cast out and bound in heavenly places. (Rev. 12., 10-12.) Soon, when Satan has been bound also upon earth, the judgment of the world, as individuals, will take place, by the saints in glory under the operation of the New Covenant. (1. Cor. 6., 2-3.)

The vision of the souls (persons) beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God has been interpreted, in a general sense, as referring to the consecration of the Lord's true followers to the one and only Head of the Body, and their severance thereby from every kind of human headship. While this is quite true, it would seem that there is something deeper still in this prophetic vision.

The overcoming of the Image of the beast, by refusal to worship it or to receive its mark in the forehead and hands, are matters which are *yet future* and could not affect those who lived before the coming into being of this system. The Image of the beast, or seventh "Head" of Gentile rule, has not reached the zenith of its power over the nations similar to that of the Papal beast of past years, whose Image it will be. We read that after it has come into power as the seventh Head it "must continue a short space" before giving way to the eighth and last Head of Gentile rule. (Rev. 17., 10-11.)

Loyalty and full support (worship) of the seventh and eighth Heads of the nations will, in due course, be required of everyone, as the shaking of the present order, through the uprisings of the down-trodden masses of the human family, increases. Standing apart, then, and refusal to worship (give support to) these systems will not only mean the sacrifice of material rights and advantages; it may

even also mean beheading, in the literal sense, by the loss of human life altogether.

In order to offset any possible influence upon the faith and hopes of the last members of the Body in the flesh, the comforting word is added—"and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." The thousand-year reign began with the return of our Lord in his Kingdom, over 75 years ago. The dead in Christ were then raised from the tomb and the Body-members started to take their seats with Him in His throne. (Rev. 3., 21.) It is thus seen that the thousand years in which Satan is bound and the thousand years during which the saints reign over the earth with Christ, synchronise exactly. Moreover, it should be noted that the thousand-year reign with Christ is not calculated on an *individual* basis, but as one Body comprised of many members. Actually, in the case of the last members to be glorified, their part in the thousand-year reign must necessarily begin at a later point than that of those previously glorified. The Divine mind, however, does not reckon the matter from the standpoint of the individual members, but as one collective Body reckoned from the time when the dead in Christ were raised.

**But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection** (Ver. 5). The opening portion of this verse—"the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished"—is not found in certain old manuscripts, and its teaching is out of harmony with other portions of the inspired Scriptures. The Apostle, for example, in his second letter to Timothy, declared that the Lord Jesus Christ "shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." (2. Tim. 4., 1.) If, however, the countless millions of the dead do not live till after the thousand years are finished, when the Day of Judgment is past, it must be obvious that they cannot be judged at His appearing and Kingdom. The only logical conclusion must be that the words in question are no part of the inspired Scriptures.

**Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years** (Ver. 6). Only the overcomers of the Age—the 144,000 members of Christ's Body—have part in the first resurrection. These blessed and holy ones, like their Lord and Head, become partakers of immortality and can die no more, neither hath the second death any power over them. The first resurrection and the thousand-year reign of Christ, in which His Body-members share, began at the Second Advent. (1. Thess. 4., 16.)

Many brethren hold the mistaken and unscriptural idea that the reign of Christ could not begin so long as there was active evil in the earth. The Apostle, on the contrary, tells us that the purpose of His reign is to *put down* all opposing rule, and authority, and



power, and that He will do so within the thousand-year period. (1. Cor. 15., 24-25.)

**And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison** (Ver. 7). The binding of Satan is accomplished, first in the heavenly sphere of earth, and later on in the earth itself, through the thousand-year iron rule or martial law of Christ's Kingdom. At the expiration of the thousand years, when martial law is withdrawn and gives place to the general law of God's Kingdom throughout the Universe—the law of love—there will be the opportunity for Satan again to become active in opposition to the Creator.

**And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea** (Ver. 8). The four quarters of the earth seem to prefigure the entire surface of the globe, which in its scope would embrace all the restored human family. Gog and Magog as symbols seem to convey a similar thought. Magog is thought to be a geographical rather than a national term. According to Dr. W. Smith (Smith's Bible Dictionary) it was applied by the Syrians of the Middle Ages to Asiatic Tartary and by the Arabians to the district between the Caspian and Euxine Seas. Hence, in those far-off days it was understood as referring to districts far from the centre of civilization—the Promised Land. Generally speaking, then, these terms Gog and Magog would seem to convey the idea that Satan's attempt to deceive the nations will be *world-wide* and final. None of the human family, however distant from Jerusalem and the Camp of the Saints, will be overlooked or escape this final and lasting judgment.

The symbol of the sand of the sea, as used in this connection, does not refer to the number whom Satan will succeed in deceiving, but to those whom he will endeavour to deceive, namely, the entire human family.

**And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them** (Ver. 9). This verse can be understood only in the light of other Scriptures. According to the Apostle James, *after* God, during the present Age, has taken out of the Gentiles a people for his name, our Lord, as the Father's representative, "will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and (I) will build again the ruins thereof, and (I) will set it up." (Acts 15., 13-16.)

The tabernacle of David stands for the dominion of earth, given to Father Adam and lost through the Fall. (Gen. 1., 26-28.) Our Lord referred to it as the Kingdom prepared for you (the human family) from the foundation of the world. (Matt. 25., 34.) The

rulership of the earthly kingdom will be given to the saints of earlier Ages, the Ancient Worthies, who will be made "princes in all the earth" (Psa. 45., 16), probably under the leadership of Abraham. Concerning Abraham we read, "the promise, that he should be the *heir* of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Rom. 4., 13.)

The Camp of the Saints would seem to be the seat of the earthly government in the "beloved city" of Jerusalem. While these earthly princes will be given full control of human affairs as the representatives and mouthpieces of the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ, yet the right to earth's dominion will not be relinquished by our Lord, or handed over to the earthly rulers, until the end of the thousand years, when they will have fully demonstrated their worthiness of the high honour as head of the human family throughout the eternal Ages. (1. Cor. 15., 24-25.)

The idea, held in some quarters, that after all the human family have reached perfection there will be no further organisation, either needed or desirable, seems to be a mistaken one, and contrary to the Scriptures. Order is heaven's first law, and surely this applies as well to the earth. This high honour of representing the human family, not only during the thousand years but throughout the eternal Ages to follow, will not be based upon human descent or relationships. It will be the reward of true faith and loyalty to the principles of truth and righteousness by men of past Ages. (Heb. 11., 7.) Daniel, referring to those earthly princes who, during the thousand years by both precept and example "turn many to righteousness," indicates that they shall shine before the human family "as the stars for ever and ever.." (Dan. 12., 3.)

The trouble at the close of the thousand years, when martial law is lifted, would seem to arise from some who, while yielding obedience to the requirements of the Mediator during the thousand years, have not allowed their hearts to be fully sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Satan will find such hearts fruitful ground for evil suggestions. Presumably, he will succeed in impressing them with the idea that they had stronger claims to positions of authority in the earthly kingdom than some who occupy that honourable position. The agitation will doubtless spread and result in a deputation in force going up to Jerusalem, to lay their grievance before the Camp of the Saints. It is not allowed to proceed further, for fire comes down from God out of heaven, and devours them.

**And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are (were), and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Ver. 10).** To understand aright the significance of this verse, it has to be remembered that expressions "lake of fire and brimstone," "beast" and "false prophet" are highly symbolic. The lake of fire and brimstone is interpreted in verse 14 as the second death—complete destruction from which there will be no

recovery. The beast and false prophet cast into the lake of fire, symbolise two organised systems amongst men that will be overthrown and completely destroyed at the close of the present evil order. The torment of these systems is just as symbolic as the systems themselves. The symbolic torment of these systems will last until their destruction is complete.

The term "devil," as here used, is understood also in a symbolic sense, and relates to an organised system amongst some of the restored human family, inspired by the unseen personal devil beyond the range of human sight. The use of the term "devil" as a symbol is not limited to this Scripture alone. This principle of calling an evil system, through which Satan operates, the devil, may be noted in other Scriptures. In Rev. 2., 10, for example, it is stated that "the devil shall cast some of you into prison." This message to the Church at Smyrna referred to the terrible persecutions of the Lord's people by the Imperial Roman empire, the agency through which Satan then operated. Again, Rev. 12., 3, is an instance in which the same Roman power, in its persecutions of the early Church, is described as a great "red dragon," another title of the Adversary who made use of the Roman power in his attempt to destroy the infant Church. Nothing in all this, however, precludes the destruction of the *personal* devil himself, after his last and fiercest opposition to the Creator has been so overruled as to work out to the glory and praise of the Divine Plan. (Heb. 2., 14.)

**And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them** (Ver. 11). This verse begins the third and last vision of the chapter, and, like the two previous ones, it covers the entire period from the Second Advent until the end of all evil and evil-doers, including the devil himself. The great white throne is descriptive of the mighty Kingdom in which our Lord returned to earth at His Second Advent. Christ's Kingdom, now set up in the heavens, of which the faithful Bride Class are joint-heirs, is not only the greatest and the most glorious mansion in the entire Universe; it is also "white," which signifies purity and righteousness. It is written concerning His reign over the earth that He shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth (Psa. 96., 13.)

The earth and the heavens which flee away, on account of His Presence, are the heavens of Satan's spiritual empire and the kingdoms and organisations of this world, through which he has ruled over, and held in bondage, the human family. Never again will anything evil disturb the serenity of God's Kingdom, for there shall be a clean Universe.

**And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God (the throne—Diaglott); and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were**

**written in the books, according to their works** (Ver. 12). The dead comprise not only those of mankind already in the tomb but those under condemnation as well, for all are dead in God's sight. All will be on trial for eternal life before the great white throne Kingdom of the Mediator during the thousand years of its reign over the earth.

The opened books symbolise the increased light and knowledge of the Divine Plan and Will which will then be available to every member of the race. Concerning that day it is written, "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." (Numb. 14., 21.) The symbolic book of life will embrace all who during the thousand-year judgment day loyally conform to the terms of the New Covenant and prove themselves worthy of eternal life. The judgment of that day will be in accordance with the principles revealed in the teachings of our Lord and His inspired Apostles, namely, loyalty and full consecration to the will of God. (John 12., 48.) It will be according to their works, not of bygone years of ignorance but as they shall be when brought to a knowledge of the truth. (Rev. 22., 14.)

**And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works** (Ver. 13). The sea which pictures the restless, discontented, and turbulent sections of humanity, will come to an end under the rule of the Mediator. There shall then be no more sea. (Rev. 21., 1.) The "dead" symbolise those of mankind under condemnation, but who will eventually be delivered from the sea-like condition. Death and hell (hades) symbolise two conditions which are descriptive of, and embrace, the entire human family. Death describes the state of those who while not having actually reached the tomb are nevertheless in the dying condition. Hell (hades) describes the unseen state of those already in the tomb. Both conditions will be abolished under the rule of the Mediatorial Kingdom.

**And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death** (Ver. 14). The lake of fire, as already mentioned, is here interpreted as the second death—total destruction, from which there will be no recovery. The casting of death and hell into the lake of fire implies that, never again, will any of the human family, who pass the final judgment test, be afflicted with either of these enemies.

**And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire** (Ver. 15). During the thousand years all mankind will be delivered from the death and hades conditions and will be brought to an accurate knowledge of the truth. Those who fail to pass the final test will be judged unworthy of eternal life and suffer the penalty of eternal death.

## NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH

(Revelation Chapter 21)

**And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea** (Ver. 1). The John Class of spiritually-minded watchers amongst the Lord's people are enabled, by the Holy Spirit through the prophetic Scriptures, to see the things to come. (John 16., 13.) The new heaven symbolises the unseen spiritual Kingdom of Christ, in which He returned to earth at His Second Advent. (Matt. 16., 28.) The new earth is a fitting symbol of the earthly kingdom or dominion lost in Eden, but which will be restored to the human family and set up on earth under the control of those "whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." (Psa. 45., 16; Matt. 25., 34.)

The heavens and earth of the present evil world will shortly vanish and pass away from the face of Him who sits upon His glorious throne established in the heavenly sphere. Under the new heaven and the new earth, the "sea" condition of discontentment and lawlessness will gradually disappear.

**And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband** (Ver. 2). The holy city and new Jerusalem, are two of various terms used in the Scriptures to describe the glorious Kingdom which our Lord, after His resurrection, "went into a far country" (heaven) to receive from the Father, as a reward for His faithfulness unto death. (Luke 19., 12.) It is not a material Kingdom in any sense whatsoever, but is comprised of glorious heavenly beings—angels. (2. Thess. 1., 7.)

Having received the promised Kingdom and been glorified in it, our Lord, at the appointed time, returned to earth in the glory of that Kingdom at the Second Advent. (Matt. 25., 31.) It is now set up on "the sides of the north," the place of power and control in the heavenly sphere of earth. (Psa. 48., 2.) The sleeping saints have already been gathered into it and soon the "alive and remain" members will, at the moment of death, be changed and likewise gathered unto Him beyond the veil. (1. Thess. 4., 16-17.)

Contrary to the generally-accepted opinion, the Church is *not* the Kingdom, but are *joint-heirs with their Lord in it*, and share His throne. (Rev. 3., 21.) This viewpoint was amply confirmed by our Lord's words to His disciples—"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to *give you the kingdom.*" (Luke 12., 32.) Moreover, various Scriptures assure us that, at the Second Advent, our Lord returned *in His Kingdom*, even before any of the dead in Christ had been raised from the tomb. (Matt. 25., 31;

16., 28.) Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband is an expression which surely indicates something of the amazing grandeur and glory of that beautiful city of God that will one day be the "joy of the whole earth." (Psa. 48., 2.)

**And I heard a great voice out of heaven (out of the throne—R.V.) saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God (Ver. 3).** When the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ has taken full control of human affairs through the "princes in all the earth," the voice of truth from the throne will proclaim world-wide God's purpose concerning the hope for the human family. God does not vacate His throne in heaven's Most Holy, but by His Spirit will, during the thousand years, dwell with men through the Mediator. When the Mediatorial Kingdom is withdrawn and all evil abolished, the human family will again be at one with the Creator, and by His Spirit He will in the fullest sense dwell with them throughout the eternal Ages.

**And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away (Ver. 4).** The wiping away of tears and the destruction of the last enemy, death, will be accomplished during the thousand years of Christ's reign. (1. Cor. 15., 25-26.) By the end of that period all enemies will have been put under His feet and every member of the human family, held in the grasp of death, will have been brought back from the tomb. Thus, when all who have died as a result of Adam's transgressions have been restored to life again, "the saying that is written" shall be brought to pass, "death (Adamic death) is swallowed up in victory," and completely destroyed. (1. Cor. 15., 54.)

Those who, after the thousand years, sin as a consequence of the loosing of Satan, will die, not on account of Adam's transgression, but for their own sin. Their condemnation will be the second death, from which there will be no recovery. The second death is *not an enemy* either of God or of the human family. It is the instrument of Divine Justice against incorrigible and wilful sinners. No one will be allowed to pass into the eternal Ages of Glory who would ever again, in any circumstances, be enticed by the allurements of sin to yield to an evil course. The permission of evil will then be an experience of the past.

It will, however, be an experience never to be forgotten by those who have passed through it, and doubtless also by every intelligent being in the Universe, for the drama of evil and its conquest by the Son of God will be the grandest theme of even the remotest creations throughout the eternal Ages.

**And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words**

**are true and faithful** (Ver. 5). He that sits upon the throne of the Universe is God Himself, the Creator and first Cause of all things. The all things which God will make anew do not include those evil things which have resulted from the entrance of sin into the world, with which the human family have defiled themselves. (Ecc. 7., 29.) God's original purpose for mankind still holds good, although for the past six thousand years He has ceased from every activity towards the execution of His Plan.

The things which He will create anew are the things lost through the Fall. These include the dominion, or rulership, of earth and all that appertains to it (Gen. 1., 26-28); also the God-likeness and perfection in which the head of the race was created, concerning which God declared that it was very good (Gen. 1., 31), and the Paradisaic home of the first pair, from which they were expelled when sin entered. Paradise will be restored, but its dimensions, instead of including a mere garden, will be world-wide. And as if to add assurance to what He has already spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began, John is instructed by Him to write for the benefit of the seven churches that these words are true and faithful. (Acts 3., 21.)

**And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely** (Ver. 6). Various alternative renderings are given for the words, "It is done." Moffatt's version reads, "All is over." Weymouth's translation reads, "They have now been fulfilled." The latter translator connects the words, "It is done," with the entire vision of the new heaven and the new earth, and, carrying the mind forward to its close, he sees the entire vision of the new Age accomplished, hence the words that follow, "they have now been fulfilled."

Alpha and Omega are the names of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, just as A and Z are the first and last letters of the English alphabet. The expression A to Z is often used concerning one who is well-versed in every aspect of his profession. It is equivalent to saying that his knowledge concerning it is beyond all that could be expressed by the English language. In this verse it is Jehovah, the One who sits upon the throne of the Universe, who declares, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Contrary to the generally-accepted view, the expression as here used does not refer to the Lord Jesus, but to the Almighty. The thought behind it is that the glory and power of the Creator are beyond the scope of the entire alphabet, from Alpha to Omega, to express. In plain language, it means that no mortal tongue or language is capable of adequately describing the glory of the Creator. This expression is also used concerning the Lord Jesus for "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (Deity) bodily." (Col. 2., 9.)

The giving of the water of life to the thirsty, truth-hungry

of the human family will be through the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ, at the hands of the rulers of the resurrected earthly princes.

**He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son** (Ver. 7). The sense of the verse is that the overcomer of that day will inherit all those things just mentioned as resulting from the new heaven and the new earth. Such will be sons of God upon the human plane. God will acknowledge them as such, and by His Spirit will dwell with them.

**But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death** (Ver. 8). During the thousand years' reign all will be fully enlightened as to the terms of life and death, under the New Covenant. If, after tasting of the pure river of water of life and having experienced the effects of the healing balm of restitution, they still fail to co-operate in the cleansing of their minds and hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit from every trace of the evil tendencies here described, there will remain nothing for them but the second death.

**And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife** (Ver. 9). This verse, which begins a new vision, carries the mind back to an earlier stage of the Harvest-time. There were ten typical plagues poured out upon the land of Egypt when Moses returned to deliver the people of Israel from bondage. The seven last and severest were confined to the Egyptians alone. The greater than Moses—Christ—has now returned to deliver the human family (God's people by right of creation) from the bondage of Satan's kingdom and the evil systems through which he operates.

In the figure, all the ten plagues were poured out *after* Moses had arrived. This is true also of Christ. All the ten antitypical plagues are poured out *subsequent* to the Second Advent, and, as in the figure, the seven last, the severest, are reserved for Babylon alone, *after* the Lord's true followers have been called out of her. They are "her plagues" and all "my people" who do not heed the call "Come out of her" will partake of them. (Rev. 18., 4.) The bride class comprises the overcomers of the Gospel Age. At this stage of Harvest, the bulk of the overcomers have been gathered beyond the vail and glorified with their Lord in His Kingdom.

**And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God** (Ver. 10). The presence of our Lord in His mighty Kingdom—the New Jerusalem



—can be appreciated only by those who are living in the Spirit and capable of spiritual discernment. Christ's Kingdom is spiritual and cannot be seen by the natural eye. He returned to earth at the Second Advent, seated upon its glorious throne. (Matt. 25., 31.) While He has been present in the power and glory of His Kingdom since the beginning of the Harvest-time, it is only in recent years that the truth concerning our Lord's return in Kingdom power has been fully grasped. The general view held has been, and, indeed, still is, that our Lord returned *alone* without any Kingdom and that entry into His Kingdom is still a future event.

The close association of the Bride Class with the New Jerusalem is here brought to our attention. There seems to be a deep spiritual truth underlying the matter. This is further emphasised by the same writer in chapter 3., 12, in which our Lord declared that He would write upon the overcoming Bride Class the name of the city of my God, which is the New Jerusalem. The coming down of the New Jerusalem out of heaven from God took place at the Second Advent, but it must be apparent that the writing of the name of the New Jerusalem upon the overcomers could not take place until they had entered into that great City during the Harvest period.

**Having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal** (Ver. 11). The glory of God is seen in the outworking and activities of His attributes—Justice, Wisdom, Mercy, and Power. The New Jerusalem—Christ's Kingdom—will be the centre from which every aspect of Divine glory will radiate.

The jasper stone is a fitting symbol of the incomparable holiness of the Creator's character. God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all (1. John 1., 5), dwelling in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see. (1. Tim. 6., 16.)

**And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel** (Ver. 12). From the symbolic description of the New Jerusalem given in this and the following verses, we are not to imagine that this city of the living God has material walls of tremendous height and width, with literal gates. In his description of "that great city," the angel brings before the minds of the John Class of watchers the picture of a material city, which far exceeds the range of the human mind to grasp. Its length, breadth, and height, for example—all said to be equal—are twelve thousand furlongs, equal to 1,500 miles. The width, or thickness, of its walls is stated to be 144 cubits, equal to 216 feet. (Verses 16-17.) Next, we read that the building (material) of the wall was of jasper; and the city was of pure gold, like unto clear glass. (Verse 18.)

It would be impossible for any human beings to visualise such a city as here described, or to grasp in any measure its beauty and wealth. Doubtless, the object in bringing before our minds this picture of an incomprehensible city is to convey to the minds of the Lord's followers how far short of the reality must be their highest conception of the glory and greatness of "that great city," the Heavenly Jerusalem, which has been prepared as the eternal dwelling place of our highly-exalted Lord and His worthy Bride. (John 14., 3.)

**And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it** (Ver. 22). In the Jewish Age, worship of God was confined to the material Tabernacle and Temple. In this Age, however, God is no longer worshipped in temples made with hands. It is the privilege of the new creature in Christ, either individually or collectively, to worship Him anywhere in spirit and in truth, through the medium of his fleshy temple or human body. (1. Cor. 3., 16-17.) The worship of God in the coming Age will be neither in a material temple, as in the days of natural Israel, nor in the fleshy temples of new creatures in Christ. The true temple will then be the glorified Christ, in Zion's Kingdom beyond the veil. (Rev. 15., 5.) The Lord God Almighty will be worshipped by the human family in that glorious temple, for it will be a "house of prayer for all people"—the meeting-place between God and mankind. (Isa. 56., 7.)

**And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof** (Ver. 23). The sun is a symbol of the Gospel light, and the moon is symbolical of the light of the Law. In that day, the hope of the Gospel, confirmed and supported by the types and shadows of the Law, will have been fully realised, when the complete number of the elect have been gathered into the Kingdom. God, the source of all light, will dwell in Zion, and the Lamb will not only illuminate Mount Zion but will also be the channel of light to enlighten every member of the human family. (Psa. 132., 13-14; 1. John 1., 5.)

**And the nations (of them which are saved—omit, R.V.) shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory (and honour—omit R.V.) into it** (Ver. 24). The nations, during the thousand years, will comprise all the restored human family upon the earth. They will live their lives by its light—Weymouth. The kings of the earth, or leaders of mankind upon the human plane—the Ancient Worthies—will direct the minds and worship of all the faithful of that day to the source of all their blessing—Mount Zion, the Heavenly Jerusalem. (Heb. 12., 22.)

**And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there** (Ver. 25). The gates of Zion,

or means of access to its blessings, will never be closed, for perfect day will then have arrived in which there will be no more night. Darkness and error will then be but memories of the past.

**And they (the kings of the earth) shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it (Ver. 26).** Our first parents, when created, were crowned with glory and honour of human perfection, and, according to the Psalmist, the restored human family will again be crowned with the same glory and honour of perfection at the close of the restitution Age. (Psa. 8., 5.)

The kings of the earth in that day would seem to be the earthly princes, or representatives of mankind. They will lead them into fullest harmony with, and to the keenest appreciation of, the source from which all their blessings have come.

**And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (Ver. 27).** The city referred to in this verse seems to be the one previously mentioned, namely, that Great City, the Holy Jerusalem—Christ's Kingdom. (Verse 10.) The context refers to the time when the nations shall walk in the light of the Kingdom and bring their glory into it, which means to say that they will acknowledge the heavenly temple class as the source of all blessings of restitution and human perfection which they have received.

This does not mean, however, that any member of the human family then upon the earth will literally enter into Christ's Kingdom, for it is comprised entirely of spirit beings invisible to the human eye. They will, however, in spirit enter into it and worship God therein. Any of the human family who in that day are still in sympathy with the downward tendencies of the fallen nature will fail to obtain admission to the heavenly temple, and, consequently, will not be counted worthy of eternal life.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED

(Revelation Chapter 22)

**And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb** (Ver. 1). "He" in this verse refers to one of the seven angels which had the seven last plagues. (Chap. 21., 9-10.) The pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, is a fitting symbol of the volume of light and truth that will flood the earth, once the Sun of righteousness has arisen upon mankind. The prophet Isaiah had a vision of that day and declared that "the hail (hard-hitting truth) shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters (of truth) shall overflow (and search out) the hiding place" of error and darkness. (Isa. 28., 17.)

Moffatt's rendering of verses 1 and 2 reads—"Then he showed me the river of the water of Life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the streets of the City; on both sides of the river grew the tree of Life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, each month having its own fruit; and the leaves served to heal the nations." What a marvellous picture is this of the refreshing volume of truth that will flow from the Heavenly Jerusalem to the parched and thirsty ground of the truth-hungry peoples of mankind.

As the waters increase and deepen, trees of life spring up on both sides of the river. The "tree" of life mentioned here does not refer to a single tree but to a species of tree, in the sense in which we speak of the apple tree in contrast with any other species. The trees of life might possibly describe the resurrected Ancient Worthies who will play such an important part in the restitution of the human family. Their twelve fruits borne monthly, would represent their continual example and assistance rendered, in aiding the sinful world to walk up the highway of holiness. (Isa. 35., 8.) Their leaves would fittingly represent their professions and instructions as the earthly representatives of the unseen Kingdom of Christ.

**And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him** (Ver. 3). This verse and the two which follow seem to carry the mind forward into the Ages of perfection, after the times of restitution. The last enemy—death—will then have been destroyed, and, instead of the cursed and unfruitful earth of bygone years, Paradise will have been restored world-wide.

The dominion—earthly kingdom—lost in Eden will once again be in the hands of the human family, who will be represented by their leaders, the princes in all the earth. Every throne, or dominion, in the Universe is God's throne, even as it is declared,

concerning the typical Kingdom of natural Israel, that David, its King, sat upon the throne of God. (I. Chron. 29., 23.) In the same sense, they also belong to the Lamb, for, in the days of His flesh, He could say that "All things that the Father hath are mine." (John 16., 15.) God's servants, the human family, restored to the glory and honour of perfect manhood, shall serve Him joyfully, willingly, and lovingly.

**And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads** (Ver. 4). God dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see. (I. Tim. 6., 16.) Seeing God's face means enjoying His favour. His name in their foreheads indicates that the Divine character and likeness will be prominently displayed in their every action, word, or thought.

**And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle (lamp), neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever** (Ver. 5). The dark night of sin and sorrow will then be but a memory of the past, never to be repeated. Neither the lamp of Divine truth nor the sunlight of the Gospel hope will any longer be necessary after perfect day has come. God, the source of all light and truth, will again be in full fellowship with the human family. They will reign, not over each other but over the restored kingdom of earth. This embraces all the works of God's hands, so far as the earth is concerned. All, declared the Psalmist, will be put under man's feet, "all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." When that has been brought to pass, God's name, declared the Psalmist, will be "excellent in all the earth!" (Psa. 8., 6-9.) And it will be an eternal state, for the earth hath He given to the sons of men. (Psa. 115., 16.) The earthly kingdom was prepared for man from the foundation of the world, and, at the close of the thousand years, our Lord will hand it back to them as the Father's representatives upon the earth. (Matt. 25., 34.)

**And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done** (Ver. 6). The angel gave to the John class of faithful watchers, as the end of the Harvest-time approached, ample assurance that his sayings (words) concerning things to come were faithful and true and would certainly come to pass. This assurance would doubtless result from the clearer unfolding in these latter days of the book of Revelation generally, and particularly of the events leading up to the overthrow of the present evil order. The spirit of the Lord God in the holy prophets moved them to foretell the things which must shortly come to pass, and this greatest of all prophecies is now, by the same Spirit, corroborating their testimony

for the comfort and assurance of those servants who would be living in this day of the Church's direst need.

**Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book** (Ver. 7). Nearly nineteen centuries have rolled by since this assurance, "Behold, I come quickly" was given by the angel to John on the Isle of Patmos. (Rev. 3., 11.) It is repeated in the verse now under consideration and again in verse 20 of this chapter. Its first occurrence is in our Lord's message to the Church at Philadelphia. Viewing these messages to the seven churches in the dispensational sense, it is significant that the Philadelphian stage was the sixth, and was immediately followed by the Laodicean, or last stage of the Church's experience in the flesh. The difference in the messages to these two Churches is also very significant. To the Laodicean, or Harvest stage, in which we are now living, instead of "Behold, I come quickly" the message is "Behold, I stand at the door (I have now come), and knock." In plain language, it means that while the presence of our Lord is now a blessed reality, yet the understanding of His knock through the prophetic Word and the recognition of His voice through the Present Truth can be appreciated only by the spiritually-minded new creatures in Christ. Keeping the sayings of the prophecy of this book is possible only for such as have obtained some understanding of the significance of its marvellous symbols and visions and are endeavouring to walk in the increasing light of Harvest truth.

**And I, John, saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things** (Ver. 8). An important principle lies behind these words. It is true that whatever instrumentality the Lord may see fit to use in bringing to us the knowledge of the truth, we should always remember that God Himself is the Author and source of all light and truth.

**Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellowservant, and (the fellowservant) of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book; worship God** (Ver. 9). In whatever capacity we may be privileged to serve the Lord's people, we should always do so with a single eye to the glory of God, the Author of the Divine Plan.

**And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand** (Ver. 10). While the book of Revelation has afforded a measure of comfort and enlightenment to the Lord's true followers all down the Age, yet the understanding of much of its vital truth was undoubtedly intended for this day of the Church's greatest need. Passing events in the world and amongst the Lord's people have been the key to unlock many

of its symbolic visions, hence the necessity for continual watchfulness and prayer if we would be enabled to walk in its ever-increasing light.

**He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still** (Ver. 11). The principle brought to light in this verse seems to be that if after one has been favoured with light and opportunity he still fails to make progress in cleansing his ways of the weaknesses and failings of the natural mind, a time will come when such characters will be crystallised. Any change, if at all possible, will then be a difficult matter. This principle has become very obvious during the present Harvest-time because of the greater light and opportunity enjoyed.

Thousands of the Lord's followers in our day have been privileged to receive much of the light of Present Truth, but because it has not been received into grateful hearts, they have failed to make progress in the increasing light. As a result, their views of the Divine Plan have become crystallised along various sectarian lines. Once this stage has been reached, little can be done to awaken such to a sense of their precarious condition and responsibility. Thus, he that is unjust will be unjust still, and he that is righteous will be righteous still.

**And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be** (Ver. 12). Almost nineteen centuries have elapsed since our Lord assured His disciples that He would come again to receive them unto Himself. From the human standpoint, it has seemed a long time, but not so from the standpoint of Him of whom the Psalmist declared, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." (Psa. 90., 4.)

The time of reward for the saints of the Gospel Age is the present Harvest-time—the day of our Lord's Second Presence. (Rev. 14., 13; 1. Thess. 4., 15-17.) On the other hand, the time of reward for the human family in the coming Age will be at the close of the Day of Judgment.

**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last** (Ver. 13). See comments on Rev. 1., 8; 21., 6.

**Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city** (Ver. 14). The privilege of eating of the symbolic tree of life, in the midst of the paradise of God, was the promise given to the overcomers of the Church at Ephesus—see comments on Rev. 2., 7. In the case of the human family in general, it relates to all who are counted worthy of eternal life

upon the earth, when the world's Judgment Day has come to an end. They alone will be permitted to enter into and enjoy the lasting blessings of the rebuilt earthly city of God, throughout the eternal Ages.

**For without (that city) are dogs, and sorcerers, and whore-mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie** (Ver. 15). All who aspire to entry into the heavenly City promised to the little flock of overcomers of this Age, as well as those who in the next Age will aspire to the restored earthly Kingdom, must have their hearts cleansed of every tendency towards the types of evil here detailed. Those who fail to make use of the grace of God to that end will be counted unworthy of, and excluded from, a share in either Kingdom.

**I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star** (Ver. 16). The testimony of what is written in this last and greatest prophecy of the Bible is of vital importance to all the Lord's followers of our day. Without some understanding of the "armour of light" provided in its testimony, it would seem impossible for anyone to withstand the delusions of the Adversary, which, declared our Lord, would if it were possible deceive even the elect. (Matt. 24., 24.)

Jesus, the perfect Man and Redeemer of mankind, is the root from which David's hope of life springs. At the same time, He is the offspring, or descendant, of David according to the flesh.

**And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come . . . And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely** (Ver. 17). The Apostle Peter tells us that Jesus was put to death flesh, and made alive Spirit. (1. Pet. 3., 18—Diaglott word for word rendering.) The glorified Jesus is now a Spirit being on the highest plane of life—the Divine. It is this highly-exalted Spirit being, joined by His faithful and glorified Bride Class, who will freely offer to the human family the water of life during the thousand years of their reign over the earth.

**For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book** (Ver. 18). Only such as have, in some measure, been enlightened by the Spirit of Truth can be said to have heard, or understood in any degree, the words (teachings) of this marvellous book of symbols. How very solemn is the warning here given to all who would attempt to expound its wonderful visions, lest they consciously, or unconsciously, add to their teachings anything out of the imaginations of their own hearts.



The plagues written in this book are the seven last, or judgment plagues. In a special sense, they are said to be Babylon's plagues—"her" plagues. (Rev. 18., 4.) This might suggest that erroneous interpretations of this last but most important testimony of the Lord's will for this evil day would most likely lead such teachers into the deeper confusion and speculations of Babylon. Hence "her" plagues will be added to them.

**And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Ver. 19).** Here again is another solemn warning. This time it is in the reverse direction, namely, that of taking away from the words (teachings) of the book of this prophecy. It seems obvious from the severity of the penalties specified in this verse that the reference must be to such as had once been enlightened concerning the hope of this Age and been accepted into membership of Christ. Any deliberate attempt on the part of such, for any reason, to detract from the teachings of this book must surely reveal a wrong attitude of heart and mean a disastrous step.

**He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus (Ver. 20).** The testimony of the past and present things written in this book has been amply confirmed to those who are walking in the light of this day. The hope of our Lord's coming has been a stimulus to the faith of the Lord's true followers throughout the Age. And now that He has come, the blessed hope of "our gathering unto him" should continue to give strength and encouragement to the remaining members of the Body still in the flesh to endure patiently the trials of the narrow way, even unto the end.

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

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# GLEANINGS IN THE REVELATION

(PART I)

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*“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear  
the words of this prophecy . . . for the time is at  
hand.”* (Rev. 1., 3.)

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# PREFACE

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The Book of Revelation has until recent years been measurably a sealed vision and the light which has been granted on this closing portion of the sacred Canon of Scripture since 1914 A.D. has played no small part in the confirmation of faith in Present Truth. From time to time, many of the visions contained in this Book have been dealt with in "Old Paths," but some of the issues greatly in demand are out of print and it has therefore been decided to reprint in the present booklet articles dealing with the following topics :—

- Chapter I. And I, John, Saw.
- Chapter II. The End of All Things.
- Chapter III. The New Order in Prophecy.
- Chapter IV. Let My People Go.
- Chapter V. Beheaded for the Witness of Jesus.
- Chapter VI. Let No Man Take Thy Crown.
- Chapter VII. He that is Unjust, let Him be Unjust Still.
- Chapter VIII. The First Three Plagues.
- Chapter IX. The Seven Last Plagues.
- Chapter X. The Reign of Christ : When it Began.

Beginning, therefore, with an introductory theme, the important features of Present Truth regarding the Gentile Times, with an outline of future developments under the seventh and eighth "Heads," are studied. Next, there is the command "Let my people go" and its implications in antitype, leading on to a consideration of the persecutions to which the Lord's people may be subjected ; also the need for vigilance that "no man take thy crown" with the fixity of purpose suggested in the words "he that is unjust, let him be unjust still." After that, detailed consideration of the antitypical plagues (which describe the trouble from another standpoint) is undertaken and, finally, the Reign of Christ in Kingdom power is clearly outlined.

Yours in His Service,

OLD PATHS PUBLISHERS

*September, 1944*



## CHAPTER I

# AND I, JOHN, SAW

*“ Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out : and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God.”* (Rev. 3., 12.)

*“ And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”* (Rev. 21., 2.)

The visions which the Revelator received from the Lord, at the hand of His angel, are symbolic descriptions of events which particularly concern the Lord's followers during the present Age and, in a lesser degree, the human family in the Age to come. In harmony with this thought, John was instructed by the angel to “write the things which thou *hast seen*, and the things which *are*, and the things which *shall be hereafter*.” (Rev. 1., 19.)

John describes himself as being “in the Spirit” when he received these visions and is understood to represent a *spiritually-minded* class amongst the Lord's professed followers during the present Age. The Revelator received these visions in what might be described as miraculous circumstances ; it appears that the symbolic visions were supernaturally impressed upon his mind when in a trance-like condition in the Isle of Patmos. (Compare 2. Cor. 12., 2 and Acts 10., 10.) There is no indication that John in any particular manner understood the meaning of the visions imparted to him by the angel. Indeed, looking back from our day, it seems clear that only a small portion of these visions had direct application to the period in which they were given. Moreover, while it was clearly indicated by the angel to John that the visions which he saw were in no sense to be regarded as a sealed book, yet, like most other prophecies of the Scriptures, the greater part of them is intended for the comfort and strengthening of the Lord's people *in this day* of the Church's greatest need. (Rev. 22., 10.)

## AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ARMOUR OF LIGHT

Without a knowledge, in some measure, of the important prophetic truths contained in the Book of Revelation and its complementary prophecy—the Book of Daniel—it would seem impossible for any of the Lord's people to be sufficiently equipped with the "armour of light" to enable them to withstand the many delusions of this evil day. It is thought that the two meals miraculously provided for Elijah in the wilderness, on the occasion of his second flight from Jezebel, were figurative of the spiritual food provided in these two prophecies for the Elijah class when nearing the end of their earthly experiences. The record informs us that, on the strength of these two meals, Elijah reached the Mount of God. (1. Kings 19., 8.)

It is understood that in the near future, as seen in vision by the Revelator, antitypical Jezebel will again be in control of world policy as the eighth "Head" of Gentile rule. (Rev. 17., 11.) When that time comes, it will mean a second wilderness flight for the remnant of the Elijah class still in the flesh and, like the experience of the prophet himself on that occasion, it will be the time of their direst need. Without the faith-sustaining spiritual food derived from the assimilation of the important truths contained in the two prophecies mentioned, the wilderness experience would be more than they could endure and, consequently, they would not have the strength necessary to reach the antitypical Mount of God—Heavenly Zion.

## A PROMISE TO THE READER AND HEARERS OF THE PROPHECY

For a considerable number of years the Lord's people have been encouraged to avoid any serious attempt to study the Book of Revelation. As a ground for this unwise advice, it was suggested that the Lord would in due time provide a full explanation of the matter which all would be enabled to understand. Moreover, by way of providing some reason for this attitude towards what must be regarded as the most profound of all Bible prophecies, special significance was attached to certain introductory words of the prophecy which read—"Blessed is *he* that readeth, and *they* that hear the words of this prophecy." (Rev. 1., 3.) It was suggested that the language implies that "they"—the Lord's people in general—should not attempt to read (interpret) the Revelation visions themselves, but should await the time when "he"—the one destined in the Divine programme to interpret the visions of the prophecy—would make them clear. In this way, "they that hear" would all get the correct interpretation of the visions contained in this Book. Such an attitude towards any of the prophetic writings, not to mention the most illuminating and sublime of all Bible prophecies, is thought to be not only entirely wrong in principle, but contrary even to the internal evidence of the Book itself. We read, for instance, the words of the angel to John—"Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time (of their fulfilment) is at hand." (Rev. 22., 10.) In harmony with this viewpoint, the

records of history show that the Book has provided an unfolding of Divine truth for the comfort and guidance of the Lord's followers since the commencement of the Age. It is admitted, however, that by far the greater portion of the Revelator's visions apply to the end, or Harvest period of the Age, and this is true also of all other visions of prophetic truth.

It is not questioned that, throughout the Age, the Lord has from time to time raised up special teachers for the instruction and guidance of His followers. At the same time, it must be recognised that only those who possess in some measure the Spirit of truth and are thus in an attitude of enquiry concerning the Lord's will, are enabled to discern and appreciate the clearer light when the opportunity occurs. Discernment of truth and error, like that of good and evil, comes solely through the constant exercise of one's spiritual faculties in pursuit of the truth. (Heb. 5., 14.)

The unfolding of the truth contained in the Book of Revelation has been a progressive development throughout the Age and while to-day most of the visions which it contains are unmistakably clear and convincing to those who are walking in the light, yet there are certain features which remain obscure, the significance of which will be revealed only in the light of passing events. The point to be remembered, however, is that the *seeker* will find and to the *knocker* will the door be opened. (Matt. 7., 8.)

The importance of an understanding of the visions of Revelation, as an "armour" of protection against the delusions of the Adversary in this evil day, cannot be over-estimated. From this viewpoint may be seen the serious consequences to the Lord's people where there is any lack of interest or desire on their part to feed upon this heaven-provided meal of spiritual food.

### **Explanation of Rev. 1., 3**

In explanation of the change from the singular to the plural number in the words "he that readeth" and "they that hear," it should be remembered that the visions which the Revelator received were sent by him to the seven Churches in Asia. In so doing, John addresses the angel, or appointed messenger of each of the Churches. Doubtless, these angels (messengers) were appointed by the Churches to serve them in the capacity of readers and interpreters of the various Apostolic letters sent for their instruction and edification. The office would probably correspond in some measure with the present-day one of Class Secretary, or Correspondent.

In the different circumstances of those days, however, greater responsibility would attach to the office as the one so appointed would require to interpret and make clear to the members of the Assembly (they that hear) the contents of the Apostolic epistles.

Taking the wider viewpoint of the seven Churches, as applying to the entire Age, there has doubtless also been a class (corresponding with these angels), whom the Lord has specially used to guide and instruct His Church throughout all its stages. The view sometimes suggested that seven specific individuals could be identified in this

respect during the Age, to the exclusion of all others, is thought to be not only unsatisfactory but contrary to records of Church history. Just as the Revelator himself would represent a class, and not merely one individual, so there would not seem to be any good reason why each angel of the Churches (in the wider sense) should be interpreted as identifying only one particular individual. In the Apostolic Church we have, for instance, not only the Apostle John himself who received the Revelation visions, but the other Apostles, while the names of the *entire twelve* correspond with the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem. (Rev. 21., 14.) It would hardly seem reasonable to suggest that any one of these—to the exclusion of the rest—could be identified as the messenger of the Church in Apostolic times. In the light of the foregoing, it is apparent that the inference of seven messengers drawn from the use of the pronouns “he” and “they” in Rev. 1., 3 is not warranted by the sense of the Scripture itself. Additionally, these misleading conclusions have apparently led to serious neglect on the part of many brethren as regards the study of the Revelation and, as a consequence, but few to-day have any clear understanding of its contents. This now brings us to the consideration of the things which John saw in the vision in question. Since John, as already seen, represents a spiritually-minded class amongst the Lord’s followers, it will be of special interest to study these things from the viewpoint of this class to-day.

### YE WHO ARE SPIRITUAL

Amongst the professed followers of the Lord, there are at least three distinct classes. The first of these is described by the Apostle in his letter to the Church at Galatia as the spiritual ones—“ye which are spiritual.” (Gal. 6., 1.) The same class of brethren is again referred to by this Apostle in 1. Cor. 2., 15, which reads—“he that is *spiritual* judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.”

The second class of brethren mentioned refers to those whom the Scriptures designate “babes” in Christ—“every one,” writes the Apostle, “that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness : for he is a babe.” (Heb. 5., 13.) Again, in 1. Cor. 3., 1, he writes—“I, brethren, *could not speak unto you as unto spiritual*, but as unto carnal, even as unto *babes* in Christ.”

Then there is also a third class which includes many who at one time professed to be in the light of Present Truth, but who now, for various reasons, no longer accept many of these important features of Harvest truth. While in a general way these three categories embrace most of the brethren to-day, there are, however, different shades of viewpoint seen by various individuals of each class, particularly by those of the second and third classes.

All of those embraced in the three classes would doubtless *profess* to be in the light and in full harmony with the Divine programme, yet it should be evident to all who are capable of judging such matters that these claims could not be justified. There is only *one faith*, the

faith "once delivered unto the saints," and *one Spirit* sent to guide the Lord's faithful followers into all truth. Moreover, there is but *one source* from which all truth springs—God Himself—and He is *not the Author of confusion*, or of contradictory views of His own Plan. Furthermore, as just seen, there is only one class amongst the Lord's followers competent of judging as to the soundness or otherwise of such claims, for he who is spiritual is alone able to judge spiritual things. (1. Cor. 2., 15.)

## WHAT THE DIFFERENT CLASSES SEE TO-DAY

Before considering what the spiritual class, whom John represented, now see, it will be appropriate to examine, by way of contrast, the visions of those embraced in the second and third categories.

### CATEGORY No. 2—WHAT THE "BABES" IN CHRIST SEE TO-DAY

The second class mentioned, namely, the "babes" in Christ, would seem to be more numerous than either of the other two. Their condition indicates an evident failure to make satisfactory progress in the knowledge of the truth, as well as in spiritual growth and development. The sectarian spirit is much in evidence amongst this class, the tendency being to rest in their leaders, or in the fact that they belong to a particular organisation or section of the brethren, or, it may be, to a certain ecclesia. In a word, there is an evident failure to rise above the sectarian outlook and, while ever learning, they are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (2. Tim. 3., 7.) As a consequence, instead of walking in the increasing light of truth, the tendency is in the opposite direction. In general, it would be true to say that such brethren were clearer as regards prophetic truth and the general doctrines of the Divine Plan when first illuminated by the Present Truth than they are at the present time.

**Failure to Walk in the Light** As a result of failure to comprehend clearly the dispensational outlook concerning the day in which we live, the vision of such concerning the Harvest and all that is implied in the way of change from sowing to reaping and gathering is either lacking or obscured. All would doubtless still profess belief in Present Truth as well as in every other important doctrine of the Divine Plan, but the vision of truth which they now see is *very different* from what was seen in earlier days of the Harvest-time, or what the John class see to-day.

Lack of faith in what is written and failure to accept the full implications and face value of the records of Scripture account for most of the obscurity and conflict of views amongst this class. Obvious examples of this tendency to place greater weight on what has been taught or written by certain leaders than upon the records of the Scriptures might be mentioned, as seen in the following instances of unsound doctrine.



**Justification by Faith.** The view held by the majority of this class concerning Justification is that it comes about by the imputation of the merit of Christ to the believer. No Scripture teaches this, but various Scriptures clearly state that it is the believer's faith which is *counted, or imputed to him* for righteousness. (Rom. 4., 3; 22.)

**The Covenants.** The vision concerning the Covenants as seen by this class is that the Abrahamic Covenant, or Promise, is all-comprehensive, embracing the Law and New Covenants, both of which, in turn, are added thereto. The Scriptures, on the contrary, teach that each of the three Great Covenants is identified with the hope of a particular Age and that they are entirely separate and distinct. Moreover, the Apostle declares that once a Covenant is ratified, *nothing can be added* thereto without annulling it. (Gal. 3., 15.)

**The Sin-offerings.** The vision concerning the Sin-offerings as seen by the brethren in this category is considerably varied and confused. The view is held that the Ransom price has not yet been paid to Justice for any of the human family, but has meantime been loaned on behalf of the members of Christ, to be paid over later to Justice for all when the last members of Christ have passed beyond the veil. Others, however, see a vision in which the Church has no part in making Atonement for sin. The Scriptures, on the other hand, clearly teach that the Ransom Price has been paid to Divine Justice on behalf of the Body-members of Christ, for, writes the Apostle, "ye are bought with a price"—the precious blood of Christ. (1. Cor. 6., 20; 1. Pet. 1., 18-19.) It is written, moreover, concerning the typical Day of Atonement that the blood of both Sin-offerings—Bullock and Lord's Goat—was taken into the sanctuary (Most Holy) by the High Priest for sin. In fulfilling the antitype of the Bullock, Jesus suffered without the Gate, so let us (the writer exhorts) go unto Him without the Camp, bearing His reproach. (Heb. 13., 10-13.)

**The Work of Harvest.** As regards the Harvest outlook, there is no clear vision concerning the work which the Lord is at present doing amongst His followers. There are, it is true, great activities on every hand, but if such efforts could be said to accomplish anything in harmony with the Divine programme, they are certainly not works of faith arising out of a knowledge of Present Truth. They would more fittingly agree with similar great efforts put forth in the name of God by the leaders of natural Israel in the Jewish Harvest, but which our Lord characterised as efforts to "compass sea and land to make one (more) proselyte." (Matt. 23., 15.)

The stone of stumbling amongst the Israelites in our Lord's day was the attitude of their leaders towards Himself and the Harvest message which He proclaimed. They would not themselves accept the truth concerning the purpose of the First Advent and neither would they let the people of Israel do so. The attitude of the leaders amongst

the brethren to-day in respect of the Present Truth concerning the purpose of the Second Advent indicates that we are running a parallel to what took place in this respect in our Lord's day.

### CATEGORY No. 3—THEIR OUTLOOK

A rather strange feature of the profession of those who come within this category is that (with a few exceptions) they do not concede that they ever accepted, or believed, the full vision of Present Truth, as understood by this expression in the earlier days of Harvest-time. From the standpoint of individual responsibility which accompanies the knowledge of the truth, one can hope that, in certain circumstances, there is some excuse in that direction. It appears nevertheless to be true that, through failure to walk in the light, it is possible to let the truth slip away so gradually that one is not conscious of its loss. (Heb. 2., 1.) This thought seems to be indicated in our Lord's message to the Laodicean Church which reads—"and *knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. 3., 17.)

The loss of spiritual sight, like that of natural sight, generally has a small and imperceptible beginning which, if not quickly remedied, will sooner or later lead to the outer darkness of the natural mind. Moreover, once the affliction has become deep-seated, there is little hope of a recovery from spiritual darkness. Our Lord indicated this when He declared to the people of Israel—"if therefore the light that is in thee be(come) darkness, how great is that darkness." (Matt. 6., 23.) In the same connection, our Lord explained the cause of the darkness—"the light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." (Matt. 6., 22-23.)

Another peculiarity regarding the outlook of this class is that with the loss of spiritual vision there is invariably a corresponding increase of profession and activity in harmony with what is claimed to be clearer light. This vision of so-called new light, however, always savours of earthly-mindedness, such as the claim that the New Covenant is now in operation; that the Church has no share in the Sin-offering; that Great Britain has the Divine blessing because her people are the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel; or, again, that God will eventually save every one, including even the Adversary himself.

The position of such, however, is that they have lost the Spirit of the truth and are *incapable of discerning* between truth and error; they are therefore at the mercy of the various delusions of the great Adversary. Whatever may be the *individual responsibility* of such in the sight of God, it is for Him alone to judge and no one else should attempt to usurp that prerogative. It is important, nevertheless, that all the Lord's faithful followers should *take note of the principles* involved in such circumstances so that, being fully aware of the consequences, they may make straight paths for their own feet.

## CATEGORY No. 1—WHAT THE SPIRITUAL NOW SEE

There are many aspects of what is generally termed Present Truth. This is confirmed by the various visions of the Revelator, many of which concern the work and witness of the Harvest-time. When it is realised that our Lord's descent from Heaven to earth, in the glory and power of His Kingdom, is an event which in its magnitude and import (as far as the Divine records reveal) has no parallel since the very dawn of creation, we begin to appreciate that we are indeed living in a grand but awful time. Every feature of Present Truth concerning the events of our day arises out of the fact of our Lord's Presence and in no other way is it possible to account for, or reconcile, world conditions as we see them to-day.

In vision, the Revelator saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. (This event, foretold by the same writer in Rev. 3., 12, is understood to have taken place at the commencement of the Harvest-time about the year 1874 A.D.) John saw the vision while in a trance-like condition in Patmos, but the John class have recognised it through the Spirit by the eyes of their faith and understanding of God's Word. All, of course, do not see the full vision of Present Truth at the same time, but the promise is that the Spirit of truth will guide the truly consecrated followers of the Lord into all truth and show them things to come. (John 16., 13.)

Few of the brethren to-day are prepared to accept the testimony of Rev. 21., 2 and similar Scriptures, as having reference to an *event of the past*, and fewer still see in such testimony any special ground for joy and gladness. To the John class, however, who are awake and walking in the light, the knowledge of the fact that the *Kingdom has already come* and that the "Lord hath founded Zion" is the realisation and fulfilment of their chiefest joy. (Isa. 14., 32.) The prophet Isaiah caught the spirit of the hour in his vision recorded in Isa. 52., 7, which reads—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet (members) of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion (still in the flesh), Thy God reigneth!"

Many to-day professing to be in the light of Present Truth regard the coming of the Kingdom as an event still in the future. Others view the Kingdom as mainly an earthly organisation through which Christ and His Body-members, unseen by the natural eye, will rule over the earth for 1,000 years. The John class, however, recognise that the Kingdom is entirely spiritual and of *Heavenly origin*, that it has already come down to earth, and that it is now engaged in the work of delivering the human family from the bondage of Satan's kingdom. Moreover, they recognise that, through the Ancient Worthies, it will rule over and control the human family for 1,000 years. This truth is very clear once we understand the "Heads" of Gentile Dominion as explained in the next Chapter.

## CHAPTER II

# THE END OF ALL THINGS

*“The angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.*

*The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition . . . and here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.*

*And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.*

*And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.”* (Rev. 17., 7-11.)

*“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”* (1. Pet. 4., 7.)

The expression “end of all things” is, of course, used in a relative or limited sense, for many things such as the earth (Eccl. 1., 4) and various orders of heavenly beings, will never come to an end, while even the human family is promised everlasting life. What the Apostle has in mind, however, is the end of all Gentile rule—Satan’s kingdom of sin, sickness, pain and death, and its termination is much nearer than when he wrote nearly 2,000 years ago.

## SEVEN TIMES MORE PUNISHMENT

By Divine permission, the Gentiles were given a right to rule over Israel and the world in general for “seven times” dating from 606 B.C., in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. This was but the out-working of the Law which Israel could not keep and consequently received its curses only. They were, time and again, taken captive by surrounding nations on account of sin, but as this failed to bring true repentance, the dreaded punishment of “seven times” was meted out—“And if ye will not yet for all this (the various minor captivities) hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more (or additionally) for your sins.” (Lev. 26., 18.) This is understood to mean that earth’s dominion was given to the Gentiles for 2,520 years, at the end of which time He whose right it is claims the Kingdom. (Ezek. 21., 25-27.)

**Dominion to be restored** Adam, to whom the dominion of earth was originally given, failed to keep his trust. The angels then attempted dominion, but similarly failed, their rule coming to an end at the Flood. After that time, God made a covenant with Abraham that his seed should bless the earth and this was fulfilled, in type, in the nation of Israel. They likewise failed, and the dominion was given to the Gentile powers for 2,520 years, until the true seed of Abraham should come to possess the Kingdom. (Micah. 4., 8.)

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S IMAGE OF WORLD DOMINION

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream in which Gentile dominion was seen under an Image of a man. The head of fine gold represented Babylon; the breast and arms of silver pictured Medo-Persia; the belly and thighs of brass referred to Greece; the legs of iron pointed to Rome; while the feet were of part iron and part clay. This Image shows the kingdoms as viewed by man to be truly great and glorious, while the deterioration of the metals indicates the gradual change from autocratic to democratic rule. In this sense, Babylon was the nearest approach to the principles to operate in God's Kingdom which will be a theocracy; none of its subjects will have any part in making or enforcing its laws.

**The Divine viewpoint** The four wild beasts of Daniel's vision, coming up out of the sea—the lion, bear, leopard, and dragon—represent the same kingdoms, but from the Divine viewpoint. In this sense, they are not great and dazzling exhibitions of prowess, but beastly and cruel as shown by their attitude towards their helpless subjects.

## GENTILE TIMES FULFILLED

As the Gentiles were given a fixed and definite lease of power of 2,520 years, it was not in order for God to smite the Image until this lease expired. By way of illustration, a landlord who lets a house on lease to a tenant for seven years cannot interfere with his quiet enjoyment of that lease throughout its term, but if the tenant refuses to go at the end and barricades himself in, the landlord may take some time forcibly to eject him. In like manner, God has not intervened during the 2,520 years, while all Gentile control did not immediately cease in 1914 A.D. because Satan, through the nations, refused to go, and it takes the Stone Kingdom some time *after* the end of the lease to smite and overthrow the Image.

**The Image being smitten** Bible Students generally must agree that the Image is *being smitten* to-day; the smiting has been in progress since 1914 A.D. This proves that the lease of power has expired and it is the only explanation of the present day world-wide trouble. The fact that the Image is not yet broken in pieces is no obstacle to faith, for the ruling powers are daily trying to strengthen their defences, like the tenant in the example

above. Again, the smiting being in progress proves that Messiah's Kingdom is *set up* and has been present as a mighty spiritual organization since the Second Advent of our Lord—in fact, since the First Resurrection when the Harvest-time began.

### THAT YE BE NOT SHAKEN IN MIND

There is nothing in prophecy to indicate the exact date when the smiting will be completed. Time prophecies have located the general position on the stream of time, identifying the Lord's Second Advent and the Gospel Harvest, but we believe that chronology is not given for speculation concerning future events. On the contrary, its purpose is to confirm those events once they are fulfilled. Moreover, as 1914 A.D. brings us to the end of Gentile Times when Christ begins to overthrow the nations of earth, there seems to be no need of further dates.

Nevertheless, in case the Lord's people should be shaken in mind by false speculations, the Lord has provided a veritable key to the closing events of Gentile Times in the last and greatest prophecy—the Revelation. An illustration of this use of prophecy to guide the Lord's people and correct false teaching is seen in 2. Thess. 2., 1-8, where, in the light of the prophecy of Daniel, the Apostle was able to prove that the Second Advent of Christ had not taken place (as taught by some) because the Man of Sin had not risen, flourished, and been consumed by the brightness of the Lord's Presence.

Daniel outlines four universal Empires, and although the metallic Image represents the full extent of Gentile rule, he gives but few details of the kingdoms which occupy the interim between Imperial (Pagan) Rome and the complete destruction of the Gentile Image by the Stone Kingdom. Without the additional visions of the Revelator, we would know very little of the "iron and clay" features of the Image, but the Lord has supplied our need by means of symbols ingeniously hidden in the Revelation.

### THE MIND WHICH HATH WISDOM

**Gentile dominion—  
a unit**— There is an important principle of interpretation, applicable alike to the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, which must be carefully observed and followed. This principle, in brief, is that each succeeding phase of Gentile rule embodies all the previous phases because Gentile rule is a unit. In consequence, the final aspect of that rule is the embodiment of the whole. Otherwise stated, each symbolic Beast in turn carries forward the 2,520 years of Gentile dominion and can be seen to be one of seven "Heads" upon a unity of Beasts—the Gentile Beast—whose first "Head" was Babylon and whose last will see the complete destruction of Gentile dominion. (Dan. 7., 1-14.)

This is amply confirmed by Daniel when he refers to the smiting of the Image *upon its feet*, while he declares "**then** was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces

together.” (Dan. 2., 34-35.) How these parts of the Gentile Image which represent kingdoms long since fallen could be broken together at the close of Gentile rule can be explained solely by the recognition of Gentile rule as a unit.

In like manner, the Revelator describes the final judgment upon the last “Head” of the Beast in Rev. 17., 1-11. John there sees a woman sitting on a scarlet-coloured Beast with seven “Heads,” yet he at once adds that five of the seven “Heads” on which she sits are already *fallen*. It is simple to understand, when it is realised that they are all “Heads” of the *one* Gentile Beast; the last “Head” embodies all its predecessors and goes into perdition. Similarly, when in Rev. 13., 1-2 the fifth “Head” (Papal Beast) is mentioned, it is seen to possess certain attributes like those of a leopard (Greece), a bear (Medo-Persia), a lion (Babylon), and a dragon (Imperial Rome). (Compare Dan. 7., 4-7 with Rev. 13., 2.)

### THOUGH IT TARRY, WAIT FOR IT

**The Key Chapter** It has long since been recognised by commentators, including Brother Russell, that the key to a correct understanding of the events leading up to the close of Gentile rule may be found in Revelation, Chapter 17. It was common knowledge that he intended to write a Seventh Volume on this Book, but the light was not sufficiently advanced in his day to make clear the key symbols of the Chapter in question. Events since his death, now over thirty years ago, have shed much light on the *apparent* failure of his expectations, for it is seen that 1914 A.D. *correctly* marked the end of Gentile Times, whereas the supposition that every vestige of Gentile rule would then immediately end was not warranted by the Scriptures.

Looking back, we can see how this apparent tarrying of the Bridegroom has affected the outlook of the Lord’s people. We also see that 1914 A.D. marked the end of Gentile Times, but only the beginning of the smiting work by the Stone Kingdom. Daniel tells us, in a general way, of the breaking of the Image, while the Revelator supplies the detail.

### THE ANGELS WITH THE PLAGUES

It is very important to understand from *what point of time*, during the Age, the angel is speaking when he describes the woman sitting upon the scarlet-coloured Beast (verses 7 and 8). It is at a time when the Beast so described does not actually exist as a “Head,” or leading power—“the beast that thou sawest (in the vision just shown to you) **was**, and **is not** (does not at present exist as a “Head” power), and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit.” At what time, then, is the “**is not**” stage to be located?

The guiding symbol is the plagues and as the seven last plagues are based upon the figure of Moses delivering the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh, so they surely refer to the deliverance of the human family by the Greater than Moses, even Christ, at the

close of the present Age. As Moses was sent to Pharaoh with a request to let the people go that they might worship God, so Christ returned at the end of this Age to deliver the human family from Satan and the Gentile powers which represent his kingdom among men. Just as the plagues were brought upon them when the request was refused—the seven last affecting the Egyptians only—so the seven last plagues, or vials of wrath, will complete the overthrow of the nations. (Rev. 15., 1; 16., 1-21.)

As the angel in question had the seven last plagues, so it is clear that the vision applies near the end of the Harvest-time. At this time, the Beast does not exist as a "Head," but it will later ascend and constitute the eighth "Head" upon the Gentile Beast, ere it goes into perdition. It is evident, then, that this Beast which existed in the past, is now in the bottomless pit, but will rise later to power, is none other than the Papal Beast. This Beast ruled the world for 1,260 years, as a ruling power; it does not exist now, but will later come into control as the eighth "Head," to form the last phase of Gentile rule. (Rev. 17., 11.)

### ASCENDING OUT OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

The bottomless pit, several times mentioned by the Revelator, represents a state of powerlessness and enforced inactivity. Satan, when bound, will be in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20., 1-3) and, in similar manner, the Papal Beast went into the bottomless pit condition when it was shorn of its temporal power. It has been in that condition for some time now, but it will, of course, have to ascend out of the pit, as prophesied, in order to become the eighth "Head."

From verse 8, it appears that this recovery will be unexpected—"They that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that *was*, and *is not*, and yet *is* (or shall be)." It will be the difficulties facing the nations that will lead them to the Papal system for help, for this last conflict will be the Lord's great army of the discontented masses on the one side, ranged against every conservative element of religious influence, wealth, and power, guided and controlled by the Papacy, on the other.

### THE BEAST WITH SEVEN HEADS

**The vision speaks** While Chapter 17 is rightly regarded as the key Chapter to the whole book, verses 10-11 are the key to the Chapter itself. These verses contain a condensed history of the 2,520 years of Gentile rule and also show us "things to come" in this connection, under symbols which have obscured the vision until the due time.

In his explanation of the seven "Heads" upon the Beast on which the woman sits, the angel makes it clear that, of these kingdoms, five are already fallen. It logically follows that the "Heads" do



not exist simultaneously, but are *successive* "Heads" from the kingdom of Babylon onwards.

It might be asked how the woman could be seated on a Beast with seven "Heads" when five were already fallen. The answer is found in the recognition, as already seen, that **Gentile rule is a unit**, each successive "Head" representing the whole. Likewise, the destruction of the last "Head" will involve the entire Beast. (Dan. 7., 11.) Just as Nebuchadnezzar saw but one Image, although composed of several metals, so the angel saw one Beast of similar significance, yet consisting of a succession of "Heads" which span Gentile Times.

### GOD IS HIS OWN INTERPRETER

From the foregoing, it must be evident that the vision can only be explained historically, for all efforts to localise the "Heads" to any one kingdom render it impossible to harmonise the records of Daniel and John. Indeed, the Papal dynasty as a whole was but one of the "Heads" and, as the eighth "Head", it is still to come. When viewed historically, the vision is easy to understand and becomes one of the most illuminating portions of Scripture, whereas any other interpretation is difficult and necessitates going outside the Scriptures for an attempted explanation.

**The First Head** Daniel furnishes a clear record of the first four "Heads" upon the scarlet-coloured Beast, described by him as four great Beasts and corresponding to the metals of which the Image was composed. Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold and with him began the "seven times," hence the first "Head" is identified as the kingdom of Babylon, corresponding to Daniel's first Beast—a lion.

**The Second Head** In similar manner, the Medo-Persian Empire that succeeded Babylon is the second of the four great Empires revealed in Daniel's dream under the figure of a bear; it corresponds to the silver portion of the Image and is the second "Head" upon the scarlet-coloured Beast of Rev. 17.

**The Third Head** Following upon Medo-Persia came Greece, and this kingdom, in turn, corresponds to the third Beast of Daniel's dream, likened unto a leopard. This, of course, refers to the brass portion of Nebuchadnezzar's Image, and from the wider viewpoint of the Revelation refers to the third successive "Head" upon the one Gentile Beast.

**The Fourth Head** Daniel can find no name for the fourth Beast, unlike the other three, and he merely states that it was "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth." Moreover, "it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns." (Dan. 7., 7.)

Daniel traces the Gentile powers down to the fourth Beast only, and while he briefly describes the end and destruction of Gentile rule, we should be in darkness regarding the events of the interim between the fall of the fourth Beast and the final end of Gentile rule, were it not for the Revelation. Where the symbolism of Daniel breaks off, there the thread is taken up by the Revelator.

It is generally agreed that the fourth Beast of Daniel refers to Pagan Rome; it corresponds to the iron portion of Nebuchadnezzar's Image and is the fourth "Head" upon the scarlet-coloured Beast.

## THE GREAT RED DRAGON

Daniel's fourth Beast brings us down to the First Advent and it was under one of the Emperors of Rome that our Lord was slain. The description given in Dan. 8., 24, seems clearly to fit the Jewish nation in those days when it was a tributary nation of Rome. The Prince of princes of the following verse evidently refers to our Lord who was crucified by Roman soldiers and it is important to note this because it enables us to identify, on our symbolic chart, the point where Daniel leaves off and where the Revelator takes up the thread of the narrative.

Daniel had no name for the fourth Beast, but John, when given a view of the same Beast as the persecutor of the Apostolic Church, names it a great red dragon. Both Daniel and John note the same peculiarity—the Beast had ten horns.

All will doubtless agree that the vision of the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head, refers to the early Gospel Church. The sun pictures the clear Gospel light contained in the "faith once delivered"; the twelve stars refer to the twelve Apostles; and the standing on the moon shows that the types of the Law strongly confirm the faith of the Lord's followers of this Age. It follows that the vision of the great red dragon, as the persecutor of the woman, would seem clearly to refer to the persecutions of the early Church which reached their height under the Roman Emperors Nero and Diocletian. Thus, the fourth Beast of Daniel is the same as the great red dragon of Rev. 12., 3 and is *one of the five* "Heads" already fallen upon the Gentile Beast at the time when the vision of Revelation 17 is made clear to the watchers, prefigured by John.

**The Fifth Head** In the following Chapter, Rev. 13., 1-10, we have a clear outline of the fifth "Head," or Papal Beast. This Beast ruled the world for 42 months (1,260 years) and exercised the same dominion as the previous four. It is remarkable that the Revelator specifically mentions that it embodied all the beastly qualities of its predecessors. (Rev. 13., 2.) Most Bible students agree that the Beast having upon "his heads the name of blasphemy" is none other than the Antichrist, or Man of Sin, of 2. Thess. 2., 3-8. This "Head" fell when its temporal power

was taken away in 1799 A.D. and it is the last "Head" described as fallen at the time when the understanding of Rev. 17 is given to the John class.

**The Sixth Head** The sixth "Head" had not fallen but was still exercising dominion when one of the angels with the seven plagues appeared to John—it is the one that "is." It is easy to identify this sixth "Head," as we notice that the Revelator proceeds to tell us of another Beast coming up out of the earth. (Rev. 13., 11.) The sea, from which the fifth Beast arose, refers to the restless and disturbed state of humanity in which the Papal Beast came to power, whereas the earth refers to law-abiding humanity from which the present world power—the British Empire—emerged. This Beast has "two horns," but "two" should be omitted, and this agrees with the context, for it is the *kind* rather than the number of horns wherein the difference is found. The horns which defended Papacy were cruel and tyrannical, but the dominion of the sixth "Head" is more lamb-like by profession and appearance. In reality, however, it is of the same dragon nature.

This "Head" claims to represent God's Kingdom among men and great signs and wonders have been performed by missionary enterprise with the extension of beneficent rule among heathen nations. Too often, however, selfish ambition and the dragon spirit of nationalism have been behind these efforts. The sixth "Head" is making desperate efforts to retain its hold over mankind, but on account of increasing distress and perplexity upon those in authority, it must shortly be superseded, voluntarily, by a further and totally different kind of "Head."

## THE OTHER IS NOT YET COME

**The Seventh Head** The seventh "Head" had "not yet come" when the angel appeared with the seven last plagues, but it is at that time that the Lord's people begin to get an understanding of the approaching plagues which will break in pieces the great Image of Gentile rule.

The seventh "Head" is mentioned in Rev. 13., 14 as an *Image* of "the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live"—the Papal, or fifth "Head." (Rev. 13., 3.) There has been much speculation regarding the Image of the Beast. The Evangelical Alliance was at one stage of the Harvest-time thought to fulfil the figure, but this has proved to be incorrect. The following points should be noted regarding this Image:—

1. As it is to be an image of the Papal Beast, it will need to exercise similar power, that is, both temporal and spiritual power over all rulers and subjects "for a short space." This is confirmed by the record which says that the Image of the Beast will "both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." (Rev. 13., 15.)

2. No kingdom since the days of the fifth "Head" has exercised such power. Indeed, the sixth "Head" realises the need for some power beyond national borders to control affairs, only to be accomplished by the creation of a central and international authority.

3. It is clear from the signs of the times that this Image of the Beast will be the seventh "Head" which will attempt to exercise world dominion—"One (the sixth "Head") is (still in power), and the other (seventh "Head") is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue (in control) a short space." (Rev. 17., 10.)

4. The Image is an *artificial* creation made at the suggestion of the sixth "Head"—"that they should make an image . . . and he had power to give life (active control) unto the image . . . that (it) should both speak (by issuing commands), and cause that as many as would not worship (or uphold the power and claims of) the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand (symbol of active support), or in their foreheads (indicating intellectual support); and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the number of his name." (Rev. 13., 14-17.) This clearly shows that world conditions will be so desperate when this Image comes into control that only stern measures will appear adequate to control the uprising masses of the people.

## THE IMAGE NOW IN THE MAKING

There is no such central authority in the earth to-day, although an attempt was made to create such a power after the first Great War. The same principles will be embodied in an even greater effort in the near future, when the Image will thus be given life and authority. It will be a short experiment to meet a critical situation, while its effects will be far-reaching so far as the world and also the Lord's people are concerned.

The efforts of the Image will soon prove inadequate, however, and will thus lead to a further and final attempt to control the masses in the shape of the revival of the Papal Beast. In this way, the final effort to oppose the Stone Kingdom, though unwittingly, will be an eighth "Head" of Gentile rule. (Rev. 17., 11.)

**The Eighth Head** The eighth "Head," we are told, will go into perdition, or destruction, and it is "of the seven." Some have suggested that this should read "of the seventh," but this is quite misleading. The text is clear and means that the eighth could be any one of the seven previous "Heads," and the angel's explanation is conclusive—"the beast that . . . was, and is not" (in power now) will be the eighth "Head" and will "ascend out of the bottomless pit" before going into perdition. (Rev. 17., 8.)

The Papal "beast that was," as already noted, had power for 1,260 years, but it lost that power over a century ago when it went into the symbolic bottomless pit. It will ascend from the abyss

when the Image, or seventh "Head," fails to accomplish its designed check upon the situation of lawlessness. Every conservative element will be at its extremity and this will give the Papacy its opportunity to regain a measure of power. The eighth "Head" is described as a woman seated upon a scarlet-coloured Beast which indicates that the ruling powers will give a large measure of control to the Papal Beast, in the hope that her influence will save them from anarchy and destruction.

### GIVEN TO THE BURNING FLAME

Daniel beheld until the Beast was slain and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame—anarchy. (Dan. 7., 11.) Similarly, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the Image was after the 2,520 years smitten upon its feet and it became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor which was carried away by the wind (overwhelming trouble) so that no place was found for it. (Dan. 2., 35.) The Revelator fully bears this out when he records that the eighth "Head" goeth into perdition. (Rev. 17., 11.)

This clearly shows that the view held by many brethren—at any rate until recently—to the effect that the trouble is all over must be definitely wrong. The restored Kingdom on earth will not be a reform by human efforts, but a Heavenly rule, only possible after the overthrow of every vestige of the kingdoms of this world.

### WAR WITH THE LAMB

The Lamb is one of the titles of the risen Lord, merited because He gave Himself as a Ransom for man, for which reason God hath highly exalted Him. (Phil. 2., 9-11.) He is now the rightful Heir to earth's dominion and has returned in His Kingdom in order to claim it on man's behalf. The Times of the Gentiles ended in 1914 A.D. and, in consequence, all efforts to uphold the present order must be regarded as *fighting against* the new Kingdom—making war with the Lamb. (Rev. 17., 14.) Again, the fact that the called and faithful saints are said to be with the Lord at this time, proves conclusively that the "war with the Lamb" takes place after the sleeping saints have been raised, although the "alive and remain" class of the Parousia period need not all be beyond the veil before the war begins.

### THE LAMB SHALL OVERCOME THEM

"Given to the burning flame" (of anarchy) indicates the means to be used to overthrow Gentile power, for all human efforts must fail as in the figure of Pharaoh and Egypt.

It therefore behoves the Lord's people to *keep clear of both sides of the conflict*; otherwise, sooner or later, we shall find ourselves in opposition to God's Kingdom.

There are several striking contrasts between the Papal Beast as the fifth "Head" and its appearance later as the eighth "Head," after ascent out of the bottomless pit. For instance, in the past days

of its power, it is described as "making war with the saints" and prevailing against them, the saints being given into his hand for a time, times and the dividing of time. (Dan. 7., 21-25.) In the future, as the eighth "Head," however, the Lamb will overcome because He is now Head of the Stone Kingdom. (Rev. 17., 14.) Again, as the Beast that was, it had upon its "*Head*" the name of blasphemy, whereas in the future, as the woman seated on the scarlet-coloured Beast (the eighth "Head") it is described as *full* of the names of blasphemy. (Rev. 17., 3.) Blasphemy implies the thought of claiming the powers that belong to God and the Popes claimed practically every title of God when they deceived all the world during the Papal Millennium. In the last phase, the *entire* Beast is *full* of the names of blasphemy which means that Satan will deceive all but the elect to the effect that this is God's Kingdom. (2. Thess. 2., 11; Matt. 24., 24.)

There is every indication of the last two "Heads" shaping up to-day and that they will be regarded as the world's only hope—in fact, God's Kingdom. The various Church systems to-day envisage God's Kingdom as the present world order in peaceful and prosperous conditions. The ideal will become more and more the professed objective, while sentiment and fear will be the main factors in forcing upon the people the blasphemous claims of Divine authority.

### SATAN'S LAST AND GREATEST LIE

The Apostle, in 2. Thess. 2., refers to a strong delusion to come upon those who received not the truth in the love of it as a means to salvation. This does not refer to Satan's lie in Eden, but to the lie that the eighth "Head" is God's Kingdom to which all must render allegiance. Only the spiritually-minded who have on the armour of truth will be kept, because the delusion of signs and wonders will be so strong that, if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived. (Matt. 24., 24.)

The elect this side of the veil will overcome this delusion and, one by one, join the "called, and chosen, and faithful" who are already "with him" their Lord and Head. It is suggested, therefore, that the foregoing forms a very important part of the "armour" for the child of God and a touchstone to test the value of every suggested forecast regarding future events. There are no startling chronological dates to be found, for 1914 A.D. marked the end of Gentile Times, and the Lord has graciously provided this key to events between 1914 A.D. and the final collapse of Gentile rule.

## CHAPTER III

# THE NEW ORDER IN PROPHECY

*“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*

*And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads : and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark (omit—or the name of the beast—see Diaglott footnote), or the number of his name.” (Rev. 13., 15-17.)*

The question of a new world order for the betterment of conditions amongst the human family is to-day engaging the attention of men in all ranks of society. The majority of thinking people are in general agreement that the old order (more correctly termed disorder) no longer provides acceptable or satisfactory conditions to meet the requirements of either present or future generations of mankind. It may be true, of course, that the underlying motives which prompt these desires for a new world order are not in every case unselfish with the lasting benefit and well-being of mankind in general uppermost in mind. Some apparently advocate the change, for instance, with a view to advancing their own selfish aspirations for greater power and influence over their fellow-men, which they feel have been denied them under the old order of things. Yet others in positions of authority realise that the present order, like an outworn garment, is no longer appropriate to the needs and dignity of mankind in this more enlightened day ; they are therefore *forced* to do something in order to maintain their influence and reputation in a more desirable and satisfactory world arrangement. The majority of thoughtful men of good will, however, earnestly desire a more satisfactorily ordered condition than has existed either in the past or present, from the highest motives, namely, for the lasting good and well-being of the entire human family.

Why, it may be asked, after a lapse of over 6,000 years of human suffering and degradation, has this agitation for a new and better order become of such world-wide urgency in our day ? This question never seems seriously to engage the attention of leaders of thought in world affairs to-day, but the few who lay claim to more than an ordinary share of human wisdom (scientists, so-called) explain the phenomenon along the lines of human evolution. It is certainly true that the general increase in knowledge, the great inventions and discoveries with resultant enlightenment, have been the cause of this insistent desire for a better world, but scientists overlook the fact that all these things have

come to light within the last century or so. Science has no satisfactory answer, for if the evolution of human species were the law governing man's existence, why can no records of its operation be traced during the past 6,000 years of human history? Indeed, certain civilisations of the past were evidently more advanced than our own.

## THE MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY

There is only one satisfactory source of information which explains the circumstances in which mankind are involved to-day as well as the things to come, namely, the Word of God. (2. Pet. 1., 9.) Without the written revelation, it has been truly said that the human race would be like a river springing from an unknown source and flowing into an unknown sea. Nothing could be known of its remote history, very little of the present, and certainly nothing at all as regards the future.

**Toes of iron and clay** To-day, we have the spectacle of a world divided into two camps, each one of which has its own conception of the "new order" suitable for the needs of the human family. So convinced is each side that its particular conception of world order is the only satisfactory solution for the future peace and prosperity of mankind that each is determined to fight to the death in an effort successfully to maintain or establish the particular order which each upholds.

The prophet Daniel, in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, saw a vision of the very circumstances in which the world is to-day involved. Interpreting this dream of the great metallic Image, depicting the Times of the Gentiles, we read in reference to the close of Gentile rule—"As the toes of the feet (of the Image) were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom (Gentile rulership) shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men," that is, attempt to maintain or establish their particular order even to the extent of a world war. (Dan. 2., 42-43.) Since the principles involved in these panaceas for world order are directly opposed to each other—*iron* representing the totalitarian principle and *clay* the democratic, the prophet continues: "but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." The next verse of the Chapter informs us that it is *in the days* of these opposing toe rulers of iron and clay (our own day) that God's Kingdom, in the hands of Christ, is set up, and that it will eventually destroy the entire Image of Gentile dominion.

It seems fairly clear that the iron element of the Image represents the harsh and tyrannical principles of government evident in Satan's attempt to consolidate his power of control over the human family, through human agencies, in this day when the Greater than Moses has returned to liberate them from every form of Gentile rule and bondage. The clay element of the Image, while less harsh and tyrannical in its operations, also forms part of the metallic Image of



Gentile rule, and according to the prophet will together with the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold, be broken to pieces, making way for the real "new order" under Christ's Kingdom. (Dan. 2., 35.)

## THE SEVEN HEADS OF GENTILE RULE

It should not be supposed, as many do, that the present attempt on the part of the ruthless iron powers to enforce their new order of government upon mankind is something unheard of in the past. It is admitted, of course, that the world-wide increase of knowledge and liberty, together with the many great inventions of our day, must affect humanity on a scale never before possible. However, the records of Scripture (confirmed by history) reveal, as seen in the previous Chapter, that no less than six diverse orders of Gentile rule have already held sway over humanity. The first four of these world orders are depicted in Nebuchadnezzar's dream under different metals—gold, silver, brass, and iron—of which part of the Image is comprised. The same four world orders were seen in vision by Daniel, but while Daniel in his interpretation of the king's dream and of his own vision carries the mind forward to the end of all Gentile rule (symbolised by the destruction of the Image), he furnishes no details of the remaining "Head" powers seen in the feet and toes of the Image; he merely indicates that they would be a mixture of iron and clay.

This omission of detail in the book of Daniel has proved to be a stumbling-stone to many Bible expositors. It is, indeed, a serious test to-day amongst many brethren who prefer to interpret prophecy from the viewpoint of those who lived in the past, rather than to be guided by the clearer light now shining upon the pages of God's Word. In consequence, such adhere to the theory that the four great Empire world orders mentioned fill up the entire period of the Times of the Gentiles, while the fifth will be God's Kingdom. The historian, Gibbon, has nevertheless written at length on the *decline and fall* of the Roman Empire, hence it cannot be in existence to-day and the Revelator accordingly assures us that there are to be seven—not four—world orders. The Revelator, as previously seen, takes up the thread of the narrative where Daniel leaves off, while he brings to our attention yet a further feature, namely, that following the seventh there is to be an eighth world order or "Head" power; it will be one of the previous seven which is to rise a second time to the position of a leading power amongst the nations and then go into perdition. (Rev. 17., 10-11.)

**Other attempts at Headship** In addition to these seven world powers of Gentile rule, outlined in the Scriptures, there have from time to time been attempts on the part of other ruthless leaders to seize world dominion and introduce new orders on their own account. Examples of such may be seen in the case of Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, of Germany, and the Hitler régime of our own day. History reveals that neither of the former two succeeded in

the endeavour for world conquest and leadership, and it is clear from the prophetic outline of Scripture that there is no place for success in this direction on the part of the totalitarian powers now attempting to establish their new order upon the nations of the earth. According to the Scriptures already noted, seven "Head" powers only, followed by an eighth which will be one of the seven, complete the full period of Gentile rule and witness the end of all human government, whereupon the Kingdom of Christ will take full control of human affairs.

A question of special importance to all the Lord's people, at this stage, is where are we to-day in relation to the seven prophetic "Heads" or world orders? In order to facilitate enquiry, we repeat below the Scriptural record concerning these "Head" powers and the order in which they operate.

The four already identified in the prophecy of Daniel are as follows :—

1. **Babylon**—606 B.C.-536 B.C. This corresponded to the head of gold of the Image.
2. **Medo-Persia**—536 B.C.-336 B.C. This was seen in the breast and arms of silver.
3. **Greece**—336 B.C.-197 B.C. This was depicted in the belly and thighs of brass.
4. **Imperial, or Pagan, Rome**—197 B.C.-539 A.D. This was indicated in the legs of iron.

The three remaining "Heads" of Gentile rule seen in vision by the Revelator are :—

5. **Papal Rome**—539 A.D.-1799 A.D. The Holy Roman Empire, controlled by Papacy, lost its power in the days of Napoleon who actually took the Pope prisoner.
6. **British Empire**—1799 A.D. onwards.
7. **Image of the Beast**—the "new order in prophecy" and yet future.

Lastly, the eighth, which we are informed will be one of the seven, namely, the order of the Papal Empire returned to power a second time, the overthrow of which will forever end all Gentile rule over the human family.

## ONE IS AND THE OTHER IS NOT YET COME

In the light of history unveiling prophecy, it seems evident that since the overthrow of the Papal order, or fifth "Head" power, at the end of the eighteenth century, the sixth "Head," already mentioned, began to assume the place of leader amongst the nations. This leading power still occupies the predominant place, and although its far-flung Empire order (like its predecessors) has not directly controlled every section of mankind, yet it is manifest that its leadership has had world-wide influence upon the nations of the earth. It is described as coming up out of the earth and, unlike its predecessors, is said to have (omit "two"—Diaglott) horns like a lamb.

Its predecessors are said to come up from the sea (i.e., to establish their world order by conquest), but the sixth "Head" coming up from the earth thus rises to the position of leader chiefly through commercial enterprise and colonial development.

Another notable difference between this "Head" power and the five "fallen" ones which preceded it, is that while all the others had their leadership wrested from them by force of conquest, the sixth "Head," on the contrary, voluntarily relinquishes its position as "Head." It is chiefly instrumental in the introduction of its successor, the seventh "Head" power, with its new order for the human family. This new order of the seventh "Head" power is not yet come and when it does come it will occupy but a "short space" compared with its predecessors. (Rev. 17., 10.) The "Head" of this order is identified by the Revelator as the "Image of the Beast." (Rev. 13., 15., 17.) This brings us to where we are to-day in relation to the

### **Making an Image to the Beast**

Times of the Gentiles, and, rightly understood in the light of passing events, it provides the answer to the question as to which "Head" of Gentile rule holds the leading place amongst the nations of our day.

From the outline of the various world orders already examined and identified in prophecy, it seems evident that we have to-day reached the transition period when world leadership it about to pass from the sixth to the seventh "Head," styled by the Revelator the "Image of the Beast." (Rev. 13., 14.) It behoves every child of God, therefore, to ascertain as clearly and quickly as possible the kind of new world order about to be introduced and how, in the light of prophecy, it will affect the spiritual interests and outlook of the Lord's people.

The title "Image of the Beast" suggests that the next, or seventh "Head" power amongst the nations will, in its general characteristics and organisation, largely resemble that of a previous "Head" power described by the symbolic term "the Beast." The Beast referred to and of which the seventh world power will be an Image is understood to be the Papal Beast, described in Revelation 13., 1-8. It means, then, that the coming new order will be under the control of a "Head" power which combines both temporal and spiritual authority over its subjects.

A new and remarkable feature about this "Head" is that unlike all the previous "Heads" of world dominion, it does not arise to its position among the nations by the natural growth of power and influence on its own account. On the contrary, it is said to be "made" by the nations of the earth at the suggestion of its predecessor. From this and other related Scriptures, it is easy to see that this "Head" will be a confederacy of the nations to which will be given authority to rule over and regulate both the temporal and spiritual affairs of mankind. (Rev. 13., 16-17.)

## THE IMAGE WILL CLAIM DIVINE AUTHORITY

The fifth "Head," of which the coming "Head" will be an Image, claimed that the world order which it set up amongst the nations was God's Kingdom and that the Popes, in their succession, were the vicars of God upon earth. According to the prophetic outline which describes the seventh "Head," it is clear that as the instigator of the new order it will fall little short of its counterpart—the Beast. Concerning the making of the Image we read:—"And he (the sixth "Head") had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship (uphold) the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark (or the name of the beast—omit, Diaglott), or the number of his name." (Rev. 13., 15-17.)

In the Revelator's brief description of the Image of the Beast, three distinct stages of this world power are clearly outlined.

1. The first stage is that in which the Image is in the making. This stage is covered by the Scriptural expression in which the sixth "Head" suggests to "them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." (Rev. 13., 14.)
2. The second stage is reached when, as stated by the Revelator, "he (the sixth "Head") had power to give life unto the image of the beast." It is at this stage that the Image begins to speak and cause that everyone shall acknowledge its authority as the Divinely-appointed agent and mouthpiece of God. (Rev. 13., 15.)
3. The third stage which, according to the record, continues but "a short space" will be reached when it begins to enforce the new order upon all its subjects—small and great, rich and poor, free and bond. (Rev. 13., 16-17.)

It will be of special interest in this connection to note that it is during the third stage of the Image of the Beast that the seven last plagues begin to be poured out. Indeed, it is the understanding of this point which provides the key to the time feature connected with the pouring out of the seven last plague vials. The Scripture text reads—"And the first angel (first of the seven last) went and poured out his vial upon the earth (society organised under the new order of the Image); and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." (Rev. 16., 2.)

The understanding of this Scripture also corrects the mistaken view held by some that the "Image of the Beast" refers to some organisation of the past. In the figure of the plagues upon Egypt the whole of the ten plagues came upon the Egyptians *subsequent* to the arrival of Moses as God's agent for the deliverance of the Israelites.

In a similar manner, the pouring out of the ten antitypical plagues for the deliverance of the human family from the antitypical Pharaoh *must follow* the Second Advent of Him of whom Moses was but a type, or figure. Moreover, it is not until the first of the seven last of the antitypical plagues begins to be poured out that the Image of the Beast comes into the picture. (Rev. 16., 2.)

Leaders of every section of society, both secular and religious, are to-day actively engaged in propagating their ideas as to what form the new order to be introduced should take in earth's society. Moreover, indications from the same quarter make it clear that the organisation or ruling power which will be given authority to introduce the coming new order will be invested with both temporal and spiritual power. Is it not remarkable, then, that in the vision given to the Revelator nearly 2,000 years before its arrival is due, he accurately describes it as an Image of the Beast ?

### THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST IN FIGURE

In the prophecy of Daniel, we read of the setting up of a golden Image by Nebuchadnezzar in the plain of Dura. (Dan. 3., 1.) This golden Image must not be confused, however, with the Image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, comprised of various metals and referred to in an earlier Chapter of the prophecy. (Dan. 2., 31.) The setting up of the golden Image and the issuing of a decree by the king that all the people, and nations, and languages throughout the realm should fall down and worship it was evidently intended as a means of consolidating more surely the world-wide order of the Babylonish Empire.

#### Written for our admonition

It might seem strange to the ordinary mind that this particular act on the king's part of setting up an Image in his realm should be recorded in such detail in the prophetic Scriptures and what good purpose could it serve ? It is now suggested that the Scriptural record of the matter was divinely overruled in order to provide a fitting figure of a very important development shortly to be experienced when the new order is introduced under the Image of the Beast. The correspondencies between the figure and the reality would seem to be complete, a few of which it is now proposed to mention.

1. The Babylonish Empire, of which Nebuchadnezzar was king, was prefigured by the head of the great metallic Image which depicted the efforts of the nations to rule and benefit mankind during the period of the Times of the Gentiles. Nebuchadnezzar, therefore, fittingly represents the embodiment of Gentile rule as a whole. Viewed in this light, the strange act of the king of Babylon in setting up the golden Image would harmonise with the suggestion of the Revelator that the Image of the Beast is to be made and given life at the instigation of one of the preceding "Heads" (the sixth) of Gentile rule.

2. The Image was of gold, or overlaid with gold, which is full of significance. Gold represents anything of Divine origin or authority. The Image of the Beast, while not of Divine origin or authorised of God, will claim to be the Kingdom of God on earth, like its counterpart of which it will be an Image.
3. In the figure it was when the representatives of all the peoples of Nebuchadnezzar's vast domain had heard all kinds of music that they were required to fall down and worship the golden Image. The counterpart of this seems clearly to be the symbolic music of the various creeds of Christendom. All of them are different, like the music of the Babylonian order, but they are all in agreement about the one thing, namely, that every one, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, should acknowledge and support, as having Divine authority, the Image of the Beast shortly to be set up as the Kingdom of the Most High. (Rev. 13., 16-17.) Do we not already hear strains of the music before it is due time for the Image to be set up? All Christendom will in due course acclaim it as of Divine authority and the only hope of humanity.
4. The three Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, worshippers of the true God who refused to bow down and worship the Image, were cast bound into a fiery furnace. This surely depicts the fact that when the seventh "Head" is given control, the Lord's true followers who have put on the armour of light respecting the true Kingdom of God, and who refuse to receive either its mark or number, will in consequence be subjected to very bitter and fiery experiences.
5. In the case of the Hebrews, it was their knowledge of the God of Israel and their faith in His wisdom and ability to care for their interests come what might, that enabled them to withstand the king's decree and the fiery ordeal which followed upon their refusal to worship the golden Image. In the coming experience under the new order, it will be the knowledge of the Present Truth concerning this day, and faith in the promise of God that "no evil shall befall" those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High, which will give them strength to overcome. (Psa. 91., 1-10.) The coming new order, then, is not only depicted in figure in the writings of the Old Testament Scriptures, but clearly revealed in the visions given to the Revelator on the Isle of Patmos. Both aspects of the truth concerning the "things to come" are intended as part of the armour to shield and protect the faith of the Lord's people in the evil time now upon us.
6. The answer of the three Hebrews to the king's command, when called upon to worship the Image, was both polite and final. There was no room for further discussion on their part. This surely is intended as an example unto all true spiritual Israelites who may, in similar circumstances, be called upon in the near future to worship and support the Image of the Beast.

## WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT ?

In line with the subject of this Chapter, it may be of interest to our readers to learn that, with the object of world federation, a Federal Union with headquarters in London and branches in all free countries has been set up. A publishing house under the style of Federal Union, Ltd., is already in being; dozens of pamphlets and a monthly periodical are already in circulation.

The following extracts are taken from one of their recent publications entitled: "Federation: Target for To-morrow":—

### WHAT IS FEDERATION ?

"Federation is a way of linking up a number of different countries under a common government for certain purposes, the most important of these being the common control of foreign policy and of armed forces. At the same time, the separate national governments remain, but deal only with internal matters. The national governments are not subordinate to the common government nor is the common government subordinate to the national governments. These are merely set up by the peoples to do different jobs for the peoples.

The exact borderline between common affairs and internal affairs must be settled by the countries concerned, and must appear in the Federal Constitution, which will define the powers to be transferred to the Federal government.

The citizens of all the countries which federate will automatically be citizens of the Federation. They will elect the Federal parliament, and military service will be only in the Federal armed forces—national armed forces ceasing to exist.

Federation is not a new form of government. It has been tried, and it works, as a means of preventing war within the federated area. Among countries governed according to Federal constitutions are the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., Switzerland, Canada and Australia.

Here are main points from Federal Union's immediate policy:—

### 1. DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION WITHIN WORLD CONFEDERATION

(a) World Federation is the ultimate aim of Federal Union. But since we are unlikely to achieve world Federation in one stage, the first step is to form a nucleus Federation, open to all countries on equal terms (on the lines suggested in the present pamphlet). The countries most likely to join up in this way are among those already fighting the Axis—the United Kingdom, the countries of Europe, the Dominions and the U.S.A.

Federal Union wish to see as soon as possible a Federation including all or any of these. Federal Union also holds that until at least France, Britain, and Germany are within one Federation, the risk of war in Europe (where the major world wars have so far begun), will not be substantially reduced. And further, that unless America accepts responsibility from the start (which she seems likely to do this time) world co-operation will be thwarted.

(b) Until Federation is world-wide, there must be in addition to the nucleus Federation, some looser form of world *Confederation*, or League, incorporating whatever remains of value in the League of Nations, the I.L.O., and the Permanent Court of International Justice. (This form of organisation will not prevent war, but it will at any rate provide some machinery for co-operation in what will be the giant task of feeding, housing and clothing the peoples of the world.) As many states as possible should be in this Confederation from the start, whether or not they are democracies.

(c) This Peace Aim should be used now as a war weapon, and an Allied Political Warfare Board is advocated to co-ordinate Allied propaganda on this basis."

### SAY YE NOT, A CONFEDERACY

The prophet Isaiah was given a vision of the coming world federation termed by the Revelator the seventh "Head," or Image of the Beast. Under the Spirit's influence, he was prompted to utter a word of warning on behalf of the Lord's followers as contained in the following verses of Scripture:—

"Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces . . . Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.

"Say ye not, a confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread . . .

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8., 9-20.)



## CHAPTER IV

# LET MY PEOPLE GO

✓ *“And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters : for I know their sorrows.”* (Exo. 3., 7.)

*“Afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, LET MY PEOPLE GO, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.”* (Exo. 5., 1.)

The words quoted as the title to this Chapter were addressed by Moses to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, over three thousand years ago. This was the time when God sent Moses to Pharaoh to demand of him the release of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt.

1811 ← About the year 1830 B.C. Jacob, the progenitor of the nation of Israel, went down to Egypt to dwell there at the request of Joseph and the Egyptian king. His advent into Egypt was the result of that remarkable episode in the life of Joseph when he was sold by his brethren to a company of Ishmaelite traders, on their way to Egypt. The Lord's care was over Joseph, however, and after many varied experiences he became Prime Minister of Egypt under Pharaoh.

For a matter of 215 years the children of Jacob sojourned in Egypt, during which time they multiplied exceedingly in numbers and became a strong and powerful people. The time came, however, when a new king who knew not Joseph arose in Egypt and the Egyptians, becoming jealous of the Israelites' increasing might as well as fearful lest they should lose their services, placed over them taskmasters to bring them into bondage as slaves. They were forced to make bricks, to build cities for Pharaoh, and to labour in the fields. It was in these circumstances that God, through Moses, intervened on behalf of His people in order that He might deliver them from the cruel bondage of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The particulars of their deliverance from bondage were not recorded in the Scriptures merely as a matter of historical interest. On the contrary, they were preserved for the benefit of the true Israel of God of this Age, of whom natural Israel were but a figure. The Apostle indicated this thought in his letter to the Romans which reads—“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” (Rom. 15., 4.)

It may be asked in what way the record of Israel's bondage in Egypt and their subsequent deliverance, through Moses, could be a means of comfort and hope to the Lord's people of this day. The answer is that the story provides a Divinely-arranged figure of a far greater bondage and deliverance in which the Lord's people and all

mankind are involved. Valuable lessons of faith and hope for this day may be gathered by spiritual Israel as they note God's dealings with His typical people. This must surely be so, once it is realised that we have now reached the day when the counterpart of Israel's deliverance from bondage to Pharaoh has already commenced to have its fulfilment. In the figure, three principal actors are seen—

1. Pharaoh, king of Egypt.
2. The Israelitish slaves.
3. Moses, the servant of God.

In order to appreciate the lessons intended in this figure, it will be necessary to consider, in turn, each of the three actors and the significance of the part which each of them plays in the Divine programme.

### **ACTOR No. 1. PHARAOH, KING OF EGYPT**

The term, Pharaoh, was an official title which applied to all the rulers of Egypt who occupied the throne of that country. It has the same significance and is equivalent to our English term, King.

Some divergence of opinion exists as to the identity of the particular Pharaoh who occupied the throne at the time when Moses was sent of God to deliver the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage. There is but little revealed in the Scriptural record concerning him, but it is sufficient to indicate his outstanding characteristics. The most evident of these characteristics were pride, self-esteem, and stubbornness of will, interspersed with a changeable disposition. The Apostle, referring to his stubborn reaction to the demand of Moses for the freedom of the Israelites, writes—"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." (Rom. 9., 17.) It need not be inferred from this Scripture that God performed some evident miracle, or directly interfered with the will or aspirations of this ruler, in order to place him upon the throne of Egypt. The inference is clear, however, that God saw in his general character and disposition a subject suitable for the occasion and in His unseen providences permitted him to realise his ambition to become the ruler of Egypt.

It is, of course, only as we realise that Pharaoh was but a figure of a much higher and still more stubborn personality that we begin to appreciate the lesson of this Egyptian drama. The real opponent of God, indicated in the figure, is the great Adversary—Satan, identified in the Scriptures as the author of evil and father of lies. (John 8., 44.)

There is little revealed directly in the Scriptures regarding the history of this Adversary of the creator. There is sufficient, however, in the veiled figures of the Old, as well as in the more direct language of the New Testament, to enable the Lord's people to realise their danger from this wily enemy of God and of His people. The prophet Isaiah writes—"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son

of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north." (Isa. 14., 12-13.) Again, in the prophecy of Ezekiel we read concerning him—"Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God . . . thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." (Ezek. 28., 12-15.) Pride and ambition for power seems to have been the cause of his downfall and alienation from God. In pursuit of these ambitious designs, he deceived and captivated the human family through our first parents in Eden and, during the past 6,000 years he has held them in bondage and slavery, like Israel in the figure. Nevertheless, the Scriptures make it clear that God has set a time limit to Satan's activities through the rival Kingdom which he has set up and, meanwhile, the sphere of his operations has been limited to the vicinity of our planet.

Like Pharaoh in Egypt, God has permitted Satan to rise to a position of authority and to execute his will, within limits, for a season, in order that He might make known His power, not only in the earth, but throughout the entire Universe.

## **ACTOR No. 2. THE ISRAELITISH SLAVES**

The Israelites in Egypt were completely under the power and control of Pharaoh and his taskmasters. In their sufferings they longed and hoped for deliverance, but were unable of themselves to accomplish anything in that direction. God did not abandon them, however, for in due time He raised up a deliverer on their behalf. In this respect, the Israelites were a fitting picture of the human family who, during the past 6,000 years, have been in bondage to the antitypical Pharaoh—Satan. During these many centuries, the lot of the human family is briefly described in the words of the Apostle when he says "for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." (Rom. 8., 22.) The same writer assures us that their groanings and pains will one day cease, for the "earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8., 19.) Our God who heard the cry of His typical people in Egypt has not closed His ears to the groaning of humanity under the cruel and selfish power of the great Adversary and his taskmaster underlings. Our Lord Himself revealed that "God so loved the world (to the extent) that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3., 16.) If God's love for the world, even in their fallen state, was so great as to warrant the giving up of His only begotten Son on their behalf, as a Redeemer, we may be assured that He will not abandon them to the cruel and selfish power of the God of this world.

### ACTOR No. 3. MOSES, THE SERVANT OF GOD

The story of Moses is familiar to all of us. It tells how, as a babe, he escaped the destruction meted out by the cruel enactment of Pharaoh against all the male children of the Israelites. He was for a time hidden by his parents and later discovered in circumstances which eventually brought him within the household of Pharaoh himself. God's hand was clearly evident in the life and experiences of Moses and, in due course, he was fitted to be the Instrument in God's hands to deliver the Israelites from Egypt.

Moses, the servant of God and meekest man upon the earth, was but a figure of the far greater Deliverer. This Deliverer will not merely rescue a nation of oppressed slaves from the cruel bondage of an earthly ruler, but will deliver from the power and control of the great Adversary and his kingdom of darkness the *entire human family*, living and dead. (Acts 3., 19-21.) The Apostle Peter, describing this great Deliverer and quoting the words of Moses, says—"a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me ; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear (obey) that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3., 22-23.) Peter later informs us that this prophet, like unto Moses, is none other than the Son of God who has been glorified at the right hand of power. (Acts 3., 26.)

#### AND HE SHALL SEND JESUS CHRIST

The coming of Moses to liberate the Israelites from bondage to Pharaoh was a figure of our Lord coming down from heaven, at the Second Advent, to liberate the human family from the control of Satan's kingdom. To those of the Israelites who had faith to believe that the mission of Moses was really of God and would prosper, it must have been a day of gladness and rejoicing as they realised that the long years of oppression were drawing to an end.

If the advent of Moses into Egypt for the purpose of delivering the Israelites was a source of great rejoicing amongst God's typical people, what must be thought of the circumstances of our own day in which the good news of the presence of the Greater than Moses is now being proclaimed? It was then a test of faith for the people of Israel as to whether God was able to accomplish on behalf of the nation all that He had promised through Moses. A considerable time elapsed between the coming of Moses and the actual deliverance. Meantime, the lot of the Israelites under Pharaoh had become more irksome and unbearable. Indeed, so great was the disappointment of the Israelites regarding the effect of Moses' visit that many of them regarded his presence in Egypt as more of a calamity than a blessing, so far as their circumstances were concerned.

Viewing this figure in its widest sense, as it applies to the circumstances of the world of mankind and of the Lord's people since the time of the Second Advent, we can surely see a parallel in this day but on a much greater scale. The great majority of the Lord's

people of our day have lost the clear vision and high hopes of the earlier days of the Lord's Presence. Many have got second thoughts regarding much that they hoped for when first they were illuminated by the Present Truth. Others have lost faith in the presence of the antitypical Moses altogether and confess that their former zeal in proclaiming the fact of His Presence was an unfortunate delusion on their part. As to the world in general, they realise only too well that the circumstances of life are daily become more and more exacting, notwithstanding the great increase of light and knowledge now flooding the earth.

The groaning creation to-day, like the Israelites of old, look back with measurable regret to what are termed "the good old days" of measurable ignorance, as compared with the more exacting responsibilities of this day of general rush and turmoil. The watchers amongst the Lord's people, however, understand the meaning of it all and by faith and patience look forward with increasing anticipation to their own deliverance and also to the deliverance of the entire groaning creation.

### **THE ANTITYPICAL MOSES BRINGS THE PLAGUES**

It is recognised (as shown later in Chapter VIII) that all the antitypical plagues apply to the Harvest-time. Moses was instrumental, in God's hands, in bringing the plagues upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. In like manner, the Greater than Moses, is now in this day of His Presence fulfilling the counterpart of these plagues and we are at present in the time when the counterpart of the third plague is having its effect upon those concerned. The "seven last," otherwise known as the judgment plagues, commence when the great confederacy of the "Image" is set up and begins to exercise control. There is satisfactory and convincing evidence to show that the first three of the "seven last" plagues cover the "short space" of the seventh "Head," or Image of the Beast, while the last four commence when the Beast that was and is not, namely, Papacy, comes back to power again as the eighth "Head" amongst the nations. (Rev. 17., 10-11.)

A point of considerable interest to the Lord's people of this day is the fact that it was during the operation of the last, or tenth plague, that the firstborns of Israel were passed over and escaped death at the hands of the destroying angel who, during the same night, slew all the firstborns of the Egyptians.

### **THE ANTITYPICAL FIRSTBORNS**

In considering this feature of the firstborns, it will be necessary to view it as a type within a type, rather than as a part of the general picture. Each firstborn of the Israelites was a type of the Church of the Firstborns, while each firstborn of the Egyptians was a type of the world's firstborn. The Passover night, in which Israel's firstborns were saved and the firstborns of Egypt destroyed, represented the Gospel Age.

The inner type\* concerns the fact that it was during the passover night that the last of the plagues—the plague of death—came upon the firstborns of the Egyptians and it was the effect of this plague that brought about the deliverance of the Israelites the following morning. The fact that it was the operation of the tenth and last plague that affected the firstborns of the Israelites as well as of the Egyptians provides fruitful ground for careful consideration. The further fact that, in the figure, Israel's firstborns were not all passed over from death to life until the operation of the last plague would seem to indicate that some members of the Church of the Firstborns will still be in the flesh when the antitypical last plague-vial is being poured out upon Great Babylon. (Rev. 16., 19.) In this connection it will also be noted that the "great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth" follows immediately upon the pouring out of the last plague-vial. As a further consequence of this plague, we read that "the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." (Rev. 16., 19-20.) This also agrees with the thought expressed earlier in this Chapter to the effect that the four last plague-vials are poured out during the time when the eighth "Head" (Papacy) is again in control. It agrees, too, with the viewpoint that the second flight of Elijah from the persecutions of Jezebel takes place when the Papal power comes back into control as the eighth "Head."

### FIRSTBORN OF EGYPT AS A FIGURE

The Church of the Firstborns, together with their Head, are Heirs of God's Kingdom. In the individual sense, each firstborn in Israel was a figure of the Church of the Firstborns, and in a similar sense each firstborn of the Egyptians prefigured the sum of human wisdom and organisation in an endeavour to rule over and bless mankind. The acme of man's efforts in this direction will be reached when the eighth "Head" of Gentile rule comes into control amongst the nations. Israel's antitypical Firstborn is the Heir of God and the means which He will use for the deliverance and blessing of the human family. Egypt's antitypical firstborn will for a time be the centre of all human hopes and of their best endeavours to govern mankind by holding them in subjection to the rulers of the present evil world.

The formation of this "Head" power, under the guidance of the Papal system, is brought to our attention in Rev. 16., 13-16. With the advent of this "Head," Christendom will have reached its utmost limit of organisation and, as a counterfeit of God's Kingdom, will

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\*The setting of this inner type will be appreciated when it is remembered that the arrival of Moses marked the commencement of the Second Advent of our Lord (at the end of the Gospel Age) and the various plagues represent developments all located within the Harvest-time. This must be kept separate from the general type in which the Passover night represents the entire Gospel Age.

endeavour to establish and maintain its claim to be the rightful heir of the dominion of this world. Elijah's second flight into the wilderness is understood to synchronise with the operations of this "Head" and will mean a time of severe persecution against the Lord's people and all who refuse to acknowledge its boastful claims.

The vision of Isaiah, recorded in chapter 57., 1-2, would seem to have its fulfilment during this period of Papal ascendancy. Then will her proud boast be realised that "I sit a queen, and am no (longer) a widow, and shall see no sorrow." (Rev. 18., 7.) Papacy has been a widow since shorn of her temporal power, but when she comes back to power, as the eighth "Head," her widowhood will for a time at least have ended. The proud boast will, however, be cut short for, like Pharaoh's firstborn and claimant to the throne of Egypt, the antitypical firstborn and heir of world dominion will be destroyed in the operation of the last judgment plague.

Regarding the effect of this plague we read—"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake (revolution) and so great. And the great city (Babylon) was divided into three parts (Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet), and the cities (governments) of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away and the mountains were not found." (Rev. 16., 18-20.)

## THINGS TO COME

From the foregoing, it will be seen that we are already in the days of the antitypical plagues and that the passing beyond the veil of the last members of the Church of the Firstborns will shortly be accomplished. Consequent upon this will come the speedy deliverance of the human family under the control of the Mediatorial Kingdom.

A sequence of developments during the present Harvest-time which corresponds with the intervention of God, through Moses, on behalf of the people of Israel, may be seen in the opening verses of Psalm 50. The Psalm commences with the declaration that God, even the Lord, hath spoken. God has now spoken through the Greater than Moses and His Voice is heard in the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet. (Rev. 11., 15-17.) The medium of God's intervention is Zion, the unseen Kingdom of Christ now established in the heavens (verse 2). To the peoples of the earth (antitypical Israelites) God's Voice is a call to liberty and freedom from the bondage of Satan's kingdom. To the heavens (the antitypical Pharaoh and his taskmasters) He is proclaiming with the ever-increasing emphasis of the coming plagues—"Let my people go." Finally, to the saints still on earth He is giving instructions through the Present Truth concerning the purpose of this day, and how they may escape the things (plagues) coming upon the earth and thus be prepared to co-operate with their Lord and Head in the deliverance

of the human family. God has kept silent (verse 3) these past 6,000 years, in the sense that He has not attempted to overthrow the Adversary's kingdom, but the hour has now arrived when He will no longer keep silent, or permit the powers of evil any longer to enslave the human family.

According to the prophetic outlook, as seen in Chapters II. and III., there are yet two important milestones on the pathway of the Lord's people and each of these will in turn bring its peculiar and bitter experiences on the remaining members of the Elijah class. These two final efforts on the part of the antitypical Pharaoh and his taskmasters are outlined in the operations of the seventh and eighth "Heads" of Gentile dominion. The experiences of the Lord's followers in these circumstances still ahead will be exceptionally trying and will test to the uttermost the faith and endurance of the elect. "Armour" sufficient for each occasion and for every need has, however, been amply provided and grace promised to all who lay hold upon it. In the present favourable circumstances, therefore, it remains for each one to put on the necessary "armour" and to seek the means of grace provided in Christ, in order to be able to stand the approaching days of trial and difficulty.



## CHAPTER V

# BEHEADED FOR THE WITNESS OF JESUS

*“ And I saw thrones, and they (the overcomers who) sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls (persons) of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”*  
(Rev. 20., 4.)

The vision of the Revelator contained in the heading of this Chapter is of the highest importance to the Lord's followers of this day. It is vital because it constitutes one of the special features of the “ armour of light ” provided by our Lord for protection against the many delusions which the Scriptures assure us will come upon all the Lord's people at the close of the present Age. These deceptions, our Lord informs us, will be so subtle and searching that all, except the elect Heirs of the Kingdom, will be deceived. (Matt. 24., 24.)

The Scripture concerned forms part of the larger vision of Rev. 20., 4-10, which covers the entire period of the 1,000 years' reign of Christ over the human family, commencing at the Second Advent and ending at the close of the Millennium. Some vital aspects of Harvest truth are brought to our attention in this connection, such as the setting up of the Kingdom of Christ in the heavens; the judgment work of the saints; and binding and loosing of Satan, with his final effort to deceive mankind and thus hinder God's purpose for them in the Ages of Glory to follow. Our chief concern at present, however, relates to the class who are said to be beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God—those who had not worshipped the Beast, neither his Image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands.

Let us always remember that a principle of interpretation recognised by those who understand Present Truth reveals that what the Revelator saw in vision at Patmos, the Lord's people of this Age (living in the Spirit and walking in the light) now see by the eye of faith in the due time for its fulfilment. Dispensational truths are not as a rule recognised clearly until after their fulfilment, but the prophetic features of truth described by our Lord as “ things to come ” are nevertheless revealed to the watchers, by the Spirit of truth, in advance of their actual fulfilment. (John 16., 13.) Both aspects of truth are found in the vision now under consideration.

Those amongst the Lord's people to-day who are awake and watching see that the symbolic thrones (of verse 4) are already set up in the Heavenly sphere of our planet. This truth can be appreciated only by the spiritually-minded, for it concerns spiritual things and

such, the Apostle informs us, cannot be comprehended by those who are naturally-minded, or who have gone to sleep. (1. Cor. 2., 14.) The same spiritually-minded class have discerned, by the light of Present Truth, that the saints who have fallen asleep in death during the Age have already been awakened from the tomb and, since the Second Advent, have been seated with their Lord on thrones of regal authority as judges of both men and angels. (1. Cor. 6., 3.) This shows the general setting of the Scripture under consideration and we can now proceed with the consideration of what is meant by being beheaded for the witness of Jesus, for the Word of God, and on account of refusal to worship the Beast and his Image.

### STRAIT IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE WAY

It has been suggested that all the Lord's true followers, throughout the Age, come under the category of being beheaded, not literally, of course, but in a symbolic manner. In this sense, beheading is suggested to imply the cutting off of one's self from human headship, represented by the natural mind, and the acceptance instead of a new Head—the mind of Christ. In a word, it means the act of consecration, as indicated by the Apostle when he wrote to the Church at Rome—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." (Rom 12., 1.)

While it is fully recognised that the putting to death of the mind, or will of the flesh, is a truth which is clearly taught throughout the Scriptures and cannot be too strongly emphasised, it is thought that the expression "beheaded for the witness of Jesus," as used by the Revelator, is intended to convey something more than the application just mentioned. It will be readily seen that if the expression "beheaded for the witness of Jesus" referred merely to the act of consecration on the part of the individual and to the consequent change of mind from the natural to the spiritual outlook, the beheading would in that case be *self-inflicted* and would *take place before* the witness of Jesus and testimony concerning the Word of God could be given. This must surely be so, for it is not the naturally-minded man, but the Spirit-begotten new creature, who understands the deep things of God and is thus enabled to bear witness for Jesus. The sense of the Scripture, however, seems to be that the *beheading follows* the witness and is in the nature of a persecution on account of that witness, at the hands of the enemies of Jesus and His footstep followers. Moreover, as an encouragement towards faithfulness in these very trying circumstances, the promise to the overcomers of the Laodicean church is here seen to be their reward—"they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Again, the class mentioned are said to be beheaded because they had not worshipped the Beast, neither his Image, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands. This outline of the circumstances in which the beheading takes place clearly localises the experience (of at least some

of those concerned) to the close of the Harvest-time. Reference to an earlier vision of the Revelator reveals that the experience arising out of their refusal to worship the Image, or to receive its mark, is *still future*, for the Image of the Beast is the seventh "Head" of Gentile dominion. (Rev. 13., 14-17.)

## HOW SATAN USURPED THE HEADSHIP OF MANKIND

The rightful Head of all creation is God Himself, but, by reason of the Fall, mankind have lost their true Head, and Satan, aspiring to be like the Most High, has usurped the headship and control of the human race. In consequence, Satan is referred to by our Lord as the Prince of this world. (John 14., 30.) Again, he is described by the Apostle as the God of this world. (2. Cor. 4., 4.) It is true, however, that the success of Satan's control and headship over mankind has been largely dependent upon misrepresentation and deceit, backed up by the ignorance and superstition which he has succeeded in imposing upon them. The whole world, declared the Apostle John, lieth in wickedness—under the control of the wicked one. (1. John 5., 19.) The operations of the kingdom of darkness over the human family and their condition under the control of the Adversary are well depicted, in figure, by the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt.

The Headship of the Creator, throughout the Universe, operates by His representative agencies. The Apostle, when instructing the Church at Corinth respecting the proper relationship of men and women in the Church of God, wrote—"I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." (1. Cor. 11., 3.) In a similar manner, Satan has exercised the headship and control of humanity through earthly and representative heads.

Had it not been for the intervention of God in confounding the language of the people in the early days of human history, which later resulted in determining the bounds of the habitations of the nations of men upon earth, Satan would doubtless have succeeded in even more effectively consolidating his control and headship over the human family. This confounding of their language and the later establishment of God's typical Kingdom in Israel, proved to be insuperable barriers against the complete control and consolidation of Satanic power over the human race.

## SATAN'S EARTHLY HEAD POWERS

With the overthrow and removal of the typical Kingdom of God and the consequent introduction of the Times of the Gentiles, the Adversary has made various attempts to establish complete and universal control of mankind. This he has done through aspiring leaders and human governments, in this Scripture termed "Heads." (Rev. 17., 9-11.) Four of these "Head" powers, as already noticed, are brought to our attention in the prophecy of Daniel, under the figures of great Beasts coming up from the sea. (Dan. 7., 3.) In the vision concerned, an angel interpreted the four Beasts to mean

four kings, or kingdoms, which would arise out of the earth. (Dan. 7., 17., 23.) These kingdoms are sometimes referred to as *universal* Empires, although, in the absolute sense of the term, they were far from being universal. Each "Head," in turn, however, occupied the leading place amongst the nations and, in its day, there was no power capable of challenging the claim to leadership. In Revelation, Chapter seventeen, the writer takes his standpoint in the day when the seven last plagues are about to be poured out. He is accordingly informed by one of the angels with the plagues that, at that time (the Harvest period of the Age), five such leading "Heads" are fallen, one "is" then in control as leader amongst the nations, while another (the seventh) is yet to come. Moreover, the angel shows that the beast that was (once a "Head") and is not at present the leading power, will be restored to that position; it will be an eighth "Head" and go into perdition. (Rev. 17., 7-11.)

These Gentile "Head" powers have in a very special manner been the centre and channel of Satan's activities amongst the human family since the commencement of the Times of the Gentiles. The Revelator, in his message to the Church at Pergamos, referred to the fifth "Head" power (Papal Rome) as "Satan's seat" and also as the place "where Satan dwelleth." (Rev. 2., 12-13.) To the Church at Smyrna, in the days of Imperial Rome (the fourth "Head"), he refers to it as the Devil—"Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days." (Rev. 2., 10.)

### THE NARROW WAY OF LIFE

From the very commencement of the Christian Church, the Lord's followers have suffered, to a very special degree, at the hands of these great "Head" powers. Our Lord indicated the difficult position of His followers, in this respect, when He declared to the disciples—"The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world (subject to its head), even as I am not of the world." (John 17., 14.) The Adversary has, all along, used these "Head" powers in his endeavours to oppose and destroy the members of the true Church. The methods of opposition have, of course, varied in accordance with the circumstances and enlightenment of those concerned. The Revelator described the persecutor of the Apostolic church (the fourth "Head," or Imperial Rome) as a great Red Dragon. (Rev. 12., 1-4.) Again, in Rev. 13., 1-7, we are given a brief record of the activities of the fifth "Head" (Papacy) with its blasphemies against God and persecutions of the saints. Since the rise to power of the sixth "Head" (British Empire), and particularly during the last 100 years or so, the persecutions of the Lord's true followers, while no less real, have been less crude and thus of a more refined character. The great increase of light and knowledge, peculiar to this time, has largely accounted for the changed conditions which have prevailed during the days of this "Head." The Scriptures make it clear, however, that in the days of the next two "Heads"—the seventh and the

eighth—and particularly the eighth, the persecutions and trials of the Lord's consecrated followers will be of a specially severe and drastic character, as described later in this Chapter.

### NOW WE CALL THE PROUD HAPPY

There is no middle path between the friendship of the world and the service of God. Our Lord defined the position of His followers in the world when, in addressing His disciples on the Mount, He declared—"No man can serve two masters . . . ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6., 24.)

In harmony with our Lord's words, we have the statement of the Apostle James who says—"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4., 4.)

The Adversary's offer to our Lord, in the days of His flesh, to give Him the glory of all the kingdoms of the world, on condition that He would fall down and worship him, was no idle boast. (Matt. 4., 8-9.) The implication of the Adversary's offer is that he claimed the right to the rulership of this world as its head and sovereign, and it is significant that our Lord did not attempt to dispute the claim. Our Lord, however, in loyalty to the true Head and rightful Sovereign, promptly rejected the offer. In consequence, when by God's permission there later came the opportunity of the Prince of this world against our Lord, he accomplished His destruction at the hands of his deluded subjects. Our Lord's prompt rejection of the Adversary and all his works, coupled with His willingness to suffer the consequences, has set an example to all His followers throughout the Age. (1. Pet. 2., 21.) All who thus follow in His steps are bound to suffer, even as their Captain and Forerunner suffered.

Consecration to God in this Age with faithful adherence to His will can have but one ending, namely, rejection by the world and by all who possess the worldly spirit, including an ignominious death, just as every Atonement Day Sin-offering, in figure, had to be destroyed completely, part of it being burned outside the Camp. (Heb. 13., 10-13.) In the same way as the spirit of the Adversary in his deluded servants brought about the rejection and destruction of our Lord, so that spirit has throughout the Age accomplished the rejection and suffering of all who have followed in the Master's steps. Every one of the Lord's faithful followers has, in the symbolic sense, been beheaded—cut off from the favour of this world and been disowned and rejected by its head. This symbolic beheading generally takes the form of ostracism and boycotting at the hands of those possessed of the spirit of him to whom, by usurpation, belong the glory and headship of the world. (Rev. 13., 17.) While this has been the general experience of all who have walked in the Master's steps throughout the Age, yet it seems from the setting of the Scripture under consideration that reference is also made to certain particularly trying experiences in which the Lord's followers are forced to bear witness to their faith amid most difficult circumstances.

## THE CHURCH'S TWO WILDERNESS EXPERIENCES

It is generally recognised by those in Present Truth that the persecutions of the prophet Elijah, at the hands of Ahab and Jezebel, are figurative of the fiery experiences of the Church of God at the hands of the Papal system. It will be recalled that Elijah on two distinct occasions fled into the wilderness, in order to escape destruction by Ahab and Jezebel. King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, are usually regarded as figurative of the united temporal and spiritual power of the Papacy. Elijah's first flight into the wilderness is understood to be a figure of the experience of the Church during the days of Papal supremacy—539 to 1799 A.D. The second flight, at the end of which he reached the Mount of God, is believed to be figurative of the last stage of the Church's persecutions under the last "Head" of Gentile dominion—the Papacy restored again to power over the nations as the eighth "Head." (Rev. 17., 11.) These two intense experiences of persecution are also referred to by the Revelator as the two flights of the woman into the wilderness, described in Rev. 12., 6 and 14.

Again, in Rev. 11., 3, we read of the first of these wilderness experiences under the symbol of two "witnesses" prophesying (bearing witness) for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. During this long period of Papal domination, all who bore witness to the light then shining upon the pathway suffered severely at the hands of that wicked system and, often at the cost of their earthly lives, were called upon to give a reason for the hope that was in them.

The second "prophesying" experience, prefigured by Elijah fleeing from Jezebel, is still future, and is referred to in Rev. 10., 11, which reads—"Thou must prophesy *again* (a second time) before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." Prophesying, in this sense, implies a public witness, or testimony, and the instance in question seems to be the counterpart of Elijah's second flight into the wilderness. (1. Kings 19., 3.)

The setting in which this second "prophesying" experience is recorded, deserves careful consideration. The entire Chapter (Rev. 10) in which it occurs is a Harvest vision, describing the Second Advent and how it affects the Lord's people and the world in general. Under the figure of a "little book" open, which John receives from the hand of the angel and is told to eat, there is brought to our attention the message of Present Truth—sweet as honey in the mouth, but in the belly bitter (verse 10). In explanation of this peculiar and unlooked-for after-effect of eating the "little book," John is informed that he must prophesy (bear witness) *again* before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings (verse 11). The previous prophesying was in the days of the fifth "Head." The prophesying again (the second time) is understood to be due to take place when the eighth "Head" (Papacy) is again restored to the place of leadership amongst the nations.

## THEY WORSHIPPED NOT THE BEAST OR HIS IMAGE

While it is true, as already stated, that the Lord's true followers have been rejected and disowned in a general sense throughout the entire Age by the headships of this world, yet the beheading mentioned in this Scripture seems to have special reference to the two witness periods in question, namely, when the fifth and eighth "Heads" are in control.

During the present Harvest-time, many of the Lord's followers, like John, have been privileged to *eat* and greatly enjoy the honey-like sweetness of Present Truth. All have not, however, experienced the after-effects of bitterness described because they have *failed to assimilate* and digest completely the contents of the "little book." The faithful few alone who retain the letter and spirit of the truth and who continue to walk in the increasing light, would seem to be prefigured by John in this vision. All of this class, privileged to bear witness for Jesus in the days of the coming seventh "Head" (Image of the Beast) and who refuse to worship it, or to receive its mark, will undoubtedly have a very trying experience at its hands, as prefigured by the three Hebrews who refused to worship the Golden Image which Nebuchadnezzar set up. The most trying experience of all, however, will come when the eighth and last "Head" of Gentile rule (the Beast that was—Papacy) has again come into control amongst the nations. (Rev. 17., 11.)

## DRUNKEN WITH THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS

In Revelation, Chapter 17, John is given a vision of the eighth "Head" and its activities, prior to its final overthrow and destruction. Amongst the many striking things which John noted regarding this last "Head" was that the woman (Jezebel—mother of harlots) which directed its policy was "drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." (Rev. 17., 6.) This vision of the future activities of the Papacy in persecuting and destroying the saints of God astonished the Revelator. In the same way, it is an astonishment to many to-day, who (like John) claim to be in the Spirit, when their attention is directed to the Spirit's unfolding of things to come. (John 16., 13.)

This description of Papal persecution, brought to our attention in Revelation, Chapter 17, is generally taken as referring to an event of past history when Papal Rome ruled the world as the fifth "Head." It is not denied, of course, that she did in a most effective manner persecute and wear out the saints of the Most High during the 1,260 years of her past supremacy. It is clear, nevertheless, that the vision recorded in Revelation, Chapter 17, *does not refer to the past but to the future* activities of this beastly system, *after* it has "ascended out of the bottomless pit" of powerless inactivity, in which it has remained since stripped of its temporal power and ability to persecute, about the year 1799 A.D.

The proof that this description referred to is yet future may be seen from verse 8 of this Chapter which reads—"The beast that thou sawest was (once a "Head" power) and is not (at present) and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit (as the eighth "Head") and go into perdition."

From the further descriptive language of verses 16 and 17, it would appear that, for a time, the ten horns, or supporting powers of the eighth "Head" (Papacy), will fully acquiesce in, and back up with all their strength, the policy and activities of the eighth "Head." Later, however, these same powers which at first gave her full support will become so shocked and disgusted with her senseless persecution and slaughter of the Lord's people that they will get their eyes opened to the true nature of this blasphemous imposture claiming to be the Kingdom of God on earth. As a consequence, they will repudiate and reject her false claim of Divine authority. In the language of the revealing angel they "shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." (Rev. 17., 16.)

In the case of Elijah's second wilderness flight from Jezebel, it seems that he was taken somewhat by surprise, as if the trouble had been unexpected. The same will be true of its counterpart in the future when the eighth "Head" rises to power. Jezebel's opportunity for destroying the remnant of the Elijah class who slew the prophets of Baal will have come and the means used, as in the figure, will be the arm of temporal power represented in Ahab, the king.

Few of the brethren to-day have any clear understanding of the prophetic outline of the "things to come" provided by the Holy Spirit in the visions of Daniel and Revelation. Valuable time and opportunities are wasted in arranging gatherings and providing speakers who have no message from the Lord for this hour of the Church's direst need. As a result of this neglect of the "armour of light" few will be able to stand in the hour of testing which is surely coming upon all, in the not very distant future.

To-day, many brethren are anxious to give a witness to the world due to a faulty understanding of Present Truth and the consequent implications of the Harvest-time. In the light of the vision considered in this Chapter, it should be even more clearly appreciated that the work for the time present is among Zion—God's own people. The "witness" amid persecution, as indicated in the prophecy studied, will be of a very different character. In all these things, the realisation of the supreme importance of Present Truth cannot escape us, for it is a touchstone by which almost any teaching may be measured.

Summarising the matter, it seems clear that while the beheading referred to in the Scripture under consideration may in a general way apply to all the saints of God throughout the Age, yet in its most effective and violent fashion, it must be regarded as having a particular application to the days of Papal domination represented in the fifth and eighth "Heads" of Gentile rule.



## CHAPTER VI

# LET NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN

*“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

*Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” (Rev. 3., 11-12.)*

The exhortation, “let no man take thy crown,” addressed to the Church at Philadelphia, is of special import to the Lord’s followers in the day in which we are living. The implication is that acceptance into the race for the High Calling and the apportioning of a crown to each runner in the race is not, of itself, any guarantee of final award of joint-heirship in the Kingdom. The way is narrow and there are many obstacles to be overcome before the crown is won. Moreover, the day in which we live is a particularly evil time, during which none but those who have put on the “whole armour” (which embraces a knowledge and appreciation of the *Present Truth*) will be able to overcome the snares of the evil One. The hour of God’s judgment has already come and its first aspect particularly affects the House of God—the consecrated.

### BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY

The Philadelphian stage of the Church immediately preceded the time of the Second Advent and the commencement of the time of Harvest. The close of the Philadelphian period brings us to the end of the 6,000 years of man’s experience with evil and the commencement of the 1,000 year Judgment Day, in the course of which every intelligent creature involved in the permission of evil will receive judgment at the hands of the One to whom all judgment has been committed—Christ and His worthy Bride.

While the message to the Philadelphian Church would have a general lesson for, and application to, all the Lord’s followers throughout the Age, yet it seems evident that, in its particular application, there is conveyed a specific measure of *dispensational* truth for the consecrated *since the close of the General Call* and the time of the Second Advent.

**No additional crowns available** A crown implies ruling authority, and it is a fitting symbol of the Kingdom inheritance to which the overcoming Church of Firstborns have been called. The total number of crowns available corresponds

with the full number of elect members of Christ accepted into the High Calling throughout the Age. These, as indicated by the Revelator in the vision of the Seven Seals, number 144,000.

The Call to joint-heirship in the Kingdom began at the First Advent, and continued until the full number of crowns had been allocated, immediately before the Second Advent. At no time during the Age, however, could there have been more accepted into the race for the High Calling than the number of crowns available. Acceptance into the race, or the fact of one having had a crown allocated at any period of the Age, would nevertheless be no guarantee of final victory and entrance into the Kingdom. Failure on the part of anyone in the race to be faithful until the end of his course would mean that the crown allotted to him at the commencement of the race would be lost. It would go to another who would take his place and be found more worthy.

The indication of the Scriptures is that at the time of the Second Advent all the crowns had been taken up and that the General Call of the Age there ceased. Our Lord's seven parables of the Kingdom, recorded in Matthew 13, correspond with the periods indicated by the seven Churches. The sixth parable which describes the finding of the pearl of great price seems clearly to coincide with the Philadelphian stage of the Church, the pearl of great price referring to the priceless truth concerning the Second Advent hope, discovered by the Lord's true followers towards the close of the Philadelphian period. The Second Advent movement, it will be recalled, began with the close of the Millerite movement about the year 1844 A.D.—just 30 years prior to the actual time of the Lord's Second Advent.

The seventh and last parable, corresponding with the Laodicean (or Harvest) stage of the Church, likens the Kingdom hope of that day to the close of a fishing effort when the net, being full, is drawn to shore and the work of separating the good fish from the bad ones begins. All this, of course, harmonises with the fact that at the time of the Lord's Second Advent (1874 A.D.) the full number to make up the 144,000 members of the elect Church had been accepted into the hope of the High Calling and that all the crowns available had been allocated. As a consequence, the General Call through the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom hope (corresponding with the sowing work of the Age) ceased, and the work of harvesting the called ones began.

The indication of the Scriptures generally is that the tests of faith that would come upon the Lord's people during the Harvest period would be more searching and severe than at any previous period of the Age. In view of this, our Lord's message to the Church at Philadelphia is very appropriate. He warned them that, when He returned, it would be necessary for each one to take special care that the crown allocated might not, through failure, go to another more worthy, who would be admitted to take his place.

## **THE HARVEST IS AN EVIL TIME**

Since the Second Advent of our Lord and the proclamation of the Present Truth concerning this great event, many tests have come upon the faith of those who have accepted the Harvest truth. Experience would seem to indicate that many crowns must have been lost during the past sixty odd years, while the places of those who lost them have been taken by others in the consecrated attitude and eager to follow the leadings of the truth. Such testings, or Harvest siftings, will with even increased severity continue amongst the feet members of Christ still in the flesh until the full number of the 144,000 elect members of the Bride class have been tested and found worthy of the crowns allotted to them. When the last of these worthy ones have been gathered within the veil, then, and then only, will the work of Harvest be at an end ; then, and then only, will the " door " be shut.

## **MANY CALLED BUT FEW CHOSEN**

The fact that many thousands throughout the Age professed to be fully consecrated to the Lord and heirs of the Kingdom is no guarantee whatsoever that all these fully complied with the terms of consecration, or were accepted as new creatures into membership of Christ. Moreover, response to the General Call of the Age was no guarantee of acceptance by the Lord, or of the allotment of crowns. Only those who made a full consecration of their all to the will of God had crowns allotted to them, and, even then, entrance into the Kingdom depended upon the making of their election sure by being faithful to their consecration unto death. Many, indeed, have been called, or invited, into the Kingdom hope, but few out of those who responded have been chosen, or accepted by our Lord as His prospective joint-heirs. Furthermore, as already noted, many who had crowns allotted and were thus chosen to enter the race, failed to continue faithful, in order to make their election sure. This was, of course, true of the many professedly consecrated followers of the Lord when He returned at the Second Advent (1874 A.D.) to put into operation the Harvest work. Amongst the many thousands who at that time professed loyalty to the Lord must be included the balance of the 144,000 accepted into the race for the High Calling before the General Call ceased and the work of Harvest began. In the words of the parable, the net was then full, or to use the figure under consideration, all the crowns had then been apportioned.

Had all the called ones at this stage been already tested and had their election been sure, there would have been no purpose in their remaining any longer in the flesh, and the work of the Age would have been at an end. Divine Wisdom, however, had ordered matters differently, hence the " time of Harvest " and testing which followed.

## **WHO SHALL ABIDE THE DAY OF HIS COMING ?**

The change of work and witness amongst the people of Israel at the First Advent, brought about by the Harvest of the Jewish Age, proved to be a test of the severest kind upon the entire nation. The

results of that test revealed that but few amongst them possessed the true wheat qualities, while the bulk of the nation were merely chaff and useless for the purpose then in view.

A similar test, but of a more subtle character and on a much larger scale, has come to all the Lord's people through the *change of work and witness* consequent upon the Harvest of the present Age. In the Jewish Harvest, only the few recognised the change of dispensation and the time of their visitation, while the great mass of the nation, under their leaders, saw no need for any change of their proselytising efforts under the Law. Even amongst the comparatively few of that day who for a time accepted the Christian faith and became followers of the Lord, there were those who, later, lost the spiritual vision ; such returned to the dead and profitless works of the Law.

Has not this been true, on an even larger scale, during the present Harvest-time ? At the commencement of the present Harvest period, not many clearly recognised its full implication. Comparatively few then realised that the General Call to the Kingdom hope had come to an end and that the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom amongst the nations was *no longer in accordance with the Divine programme* because the full number of 144,000 required had been called and accepted and no further crowns were available. The understanding of this dispensational aspect of truth has been of vital importance to all the consecrated since the beginning of the Harvest-time. It is even more important to-day to those who are striving to hold fast to the things which they have heard, lest on account of failure to continue in the light others may be permitted to take their crowns. Our consecration is to do the will of God, and the will of God can be recognised solely through the knowledge of truth. If we fail, however, to *recognise and obey* the truth concerning the change of work and witness of the Harvest now in progress, how can we faithfully carry out God's will in this respect, or co-operate with Him in the work of this day ? Judging from the activities and efforts of service prevalent amongst the various organisations of the brethren to-day, there would seem to be a total lack of vision amongst them concerning the work and witness of the present Harvest-time. As a consequence, spiritual slumber and declension are on every hand evident. As foretold by the prophet, there is a veritable famine in the land—"not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing (having explained to them) the words of the Lord." (Amos 8., 11.)

### THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS

It is important to note that our Lord, in addressing the Laodicean, or Harvest stage of the Church, announces Himself as the *faithful and true* Witness. This is surely significant, in view of the many unfaithful and conflicting voices heard amongst His professed followers to-day. In calling attention to His own faithful witness, as God's mouthpiece in the Jewish Harvest, it is obviously intended by our Lord as a serious reminder to His professed followers of this day. Instead of bearing witness to the Harvest truth and to the fact that our Lord has returned in the glory of His Kingdom, such professors

are merely lulling the brethren to sleep with entertaining addresses which tickle the ears of their hearers and *bear no relationship at all to the message of Present Truth* for the day in which we live.

Lest this should be considered an exaggerated view of the Laodicean conditions prevalent amongst the brethren to-day, attention is invited to the following brief comparison of present conditions amongst the brethren with the prophetic description of our Lord concerning the Laodicean, or Harvest stage of the church.

**“I know thy works . . . thou art lukewarm.”** There never was a time since the beginning of the Harvest period when there was so much lukewarmness and indifference manifest amongst the brethren respecting the Harvest truth as at the present time. Only the few, amongst the many who to-day claim to be doing the will of God, have any clear conception of what the change of dispensation from sowing to reaping and gathering implies. Indeed, not many really know whether they are sowing or reaping. The majority seem to be so busy working for the Lord in their particular way that they have *no time to listen to the voice of truth* concerning His will for them in this day. “I know thy works”—yes, they are wonderful and mighty efforts in their various ways, but they are not works of faith based upon the truth concerning the time of Harvest. As regards zeal, there is plenty of a kind, but it is not in accordance with the knowledge of the Present Truth.

Lukewarmness concerning Present Truth and the work of the Lord for this day seems to arise from a lack of faith in the truth under consideration. In other words, since the commencement of the Harvest-time, no further crowns of admission into the Kingdom hope of this Age have been available, except to those the Lord sees fit to admit in order to fill the vacancies caused by any who, through unfaithfulness, have lost their crowns.

A profession of faith in the Lord's Presence and time of Harvest clearly implies that the sowing work (through the General Call of the Age) has ended, and that a totally different work, *solely in the interest of the called ones*, is the work now due. Moreover, a proper zeal in the interests of the truth and of the Lord's people will call for a *faithful witness* amongst Zion's feet members concerning the truth of the Harvest-time. Instead of such witness to-day, there is on every hand much activity, but not according to His will. From the standpoint of the Harvest truth, it can only be regarded as an aimless drift along the tide of lukewarmness and indifference.

The Lord does not judge of the value or importance of our works by the amount of effort put forth, or their apparent success in achieving the results desired. Our works are acceptable only if they are works of faith, springing from a sincere desire to co-operate with the Lord concerning His will and purpose for our day. The works of God to-day are not on behalf of the world of mankind or of nominal professing Christians, no matter what particular organisation or shade of belief to which they may lay claim. “I know thy works!” Happy

and blessed, then, are we if our works are works of faith and an evidence of zeal for the Lord's will, based upon a knowledge of the times and seasons of the Divine Plan.

**“Need of nothing and knowest not.”** Complacency and self-satisfaction regarding the true vision of the Harvest witness seem daily to eat more deeply into the spiritual health and appetites of most of the brethren to-day. “Need of nothing” is surely a fitting expression of the attitude of the majority, in this respect. Viewed, however, from the standpoint of the Divine Plan as it relates to the present Harvest-time, the work and witness of the various organisations of brethren to-day do not agree, or harmonise, with their profession of Present Truth. The Harvest truth testifies that when the Second Advent took place (1874 A.D.) and our Lord returned in Kingdom glory, the full number to make up the 144,000 of the elect had been called and accepted into the narrow way of the Kingdom hope. The voice of the Spirit, through the Harvest truth, likewise witnesses to the feet members of Zion that, since the Second Advent, the work of God amongst the brethren is in the interests of those who have already had crowns allotted to them. It testifies, moreover, to the importance of putting on the whole armour provided for this day, lest through walking in darkness concerning the changed work of the Harvest-time, they stumble over the Present Truth concerning Zion. If so, then others take their crowns, for a profession of faith without corresponding works in harmony therewith is dead and counts for nothing in God's sight. On the other hand, works—however wonderful or great they may be—unless based upon the will of God for our day are useless works; they can only end in disappointment and loss to those engaged therein. “Knowest not” is another apt suggestion in relation to both type and antitype. Concerning typical Israel our Lord declared: “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” (Luke 19., 42, 44.) Is it not, then, high time to awake, and to realise the importance of walking in the light as it shines more and more unto the perfect day?

**“Buy of me gold . . . and white raiment.”** Gold and white raiment, in the symbolic sense, are the results of a zealous love for the Lord and the truth. They represent the very opposite characteristics to those of the lukewarm and indifferent disposition. There never was a time when the pure unadulterated gold of Divine truth was more essential to overcoming than at the present moment. This cannot, however, be purchased by any works of the natural mind, however wonderful and prosperous they might appear to human sight. Pure gold of Divine truth is the reward of a faithful walk in obedience to the leading of the Spirit of truth, for, declared our Lord, when “he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . and he will show you things to come.” (John 16., 13.) White raiment, too, symbolising the robe of righteousness which covers the believer's personal imperfections, can only be bought from the same source of supply and at a similar cost. It is provided solely for those whose

faith, like that of Abraham, is attested by a zealous effort to walk in harmony with the Lord's will and word. (Rom. 4., 1-5.)

Truth springs like Harvest from the well-ploughed fields,  
Rewarding patient toil, and faith, and zeal.  
To those thus seeking her, she ever yields  
Her richest treasures for their lasting weal.

**“That the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.”** Only a living and obedient faith, based upon the knowledge of the Divine will and purpose for this day, can justify the child of God. Moreover, failure to walk in the increasing light (with its consequent darkening of vision concerning the Lord's will) can, if persisted in, only have one result as indicated in our Lord's message to the Church at Laodicea—a re-appearance of nakedness. It is not only a question of buying white raiment, but of *continuing* to buy it as well as keeping it clean by a continued faithful walk in the light and separation unto the Lord's will ; otherwise, as suggested by our Lord, the “shame of thy nakedness” will again become apparent.

This warning could only apply to those already justified in the sight of God, whose nakedness of personal sins and imperfections has been covered by the robe of righteousness. Unbelievers, or nominal Christians, never were anything else than naked in God's sight. Another very significant matter implied in our Lord's message to His professed followers of this day is the suggestion that those who lose their garments through lukewarmness and indifference will not be conscious of their loss, or of their consequent nakedness in the sight of God. “Thou sayest, I am rich (in Divine favour) and increased with goods (from great efforts of service) and have need of nothing ; and *knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” The indication surely is that the true position will be apparent to all who continue faithfully to walk in the light.

A similar suggestion is conveyed by the Revelator in Chap. 16., 15, in which he writes—“Blessed is he that watcheth and *keepeth his garments*, lest he walk naked and *they* see his shame.” Walking naked implies continuity of profession and doubtless great works of activity, too, but they would not be works of faith, in harmony with the Lord's will. As already noted, those so walking would not be conscious of their nakedness in God's sight. The only ones to whom their nakedness could be obvious would be those who continue to walk in the light and whose eyes have been anointed with the eye-salve of the Spirit of truth.

## FALSE PROPHETS AND FALSE TEACHERS

The Apostle Peter warns the Lord's followers that, as the typical people of Israel were misled by false prophets of their day, even so there would be false teachers amongst them. Concerning the false prophets of Israel, the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying—

“I have heard what the prophets say, who prophesy falsely in my name—‘I’ve had a dream,’ they cry, ‘I’ve had a dream.’ Will they never give over, these prophets of falsehood who utter *their own illusions*, and would make my folk forget my name, by the dreams they tell each other, as once their fathers forgot me for Baal ?

If a prophet has had a dream, then let him tell his dream ; but he who has a word of mine, then let him tell it faithfully . . . well then, the Eternal declares, I am against the prophets who pick up my words each from his fellow.

I am against the prophets who mouth the prophets’ formula about what ‘the Eternal says.’ I am against the prophets who recount lying dreams leading my people astray with their lies and their empty pretensions, though I never sent them, never commissioned them ; they are no help whatever to this people, says the Eternal.” (Jer. 23., 25-32—Moffatt.)



## CHAPTER VII

# HE THAT IS UNJUST, LET HIM BE UNJUST STILL

*“Every man’s work shall be made manifest : for the day (of His Presence) shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.”* (1. Cor. 3., 13.)

*“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still ; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still ; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”* (Rev. 22., 11.)

The above passages of Scripture seem to have special reference to the Lord’s people at the close of the present Age. From the point of view of the casual reader, Rev. 22., 11 presents great difficulty of interpretation and must take its place amongst the many dark sayings which, in the days of His flesh, fell from the lips of our Lord. It should be noted, however, that such hard sayings of our Lord were not intended by Him to be understood, or appreciated, by the careless and indifferent amongst His followers. This is very clearly the case, as may be gathered from our Lord’s answer to the question of the disciples when they enquired of Him why He spoke in parables to the people of Israel. On that occasion, our Lord answered—“Because it is *given unto you* (the disciples) to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them (the multitude) it is not given . . . therefore speak I to them in parables.” (Matt. 13., 10-13.) The greater part of the prophetic Scriptures—and the Book of Revelation, in particular—can even to-day be regarded by many who profess to be in the truth as merely parables and dark sayings. They are intended to be understood by one class only—“ye which are spiritual.” (Gal. 6., 1.)

## LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES

It might seem to some that our Lord’s attitude towards the multitude in Israel, as seen in His use of language which only the few could comprehend, was anything but kind and loving. When viewed, however, from the standpoint of the Divine Plan and of the heart condition of those concerned (as indicated in Matt. 13., 15), it is clear that it would have been no kindness on our Lord’s part to have enlightened them further concerning the Kingdom message which He was then proclaiming. Such enlightenment would only have added to their responsibility and condemnation, for it was evident to our Lord that they were not in the attitude either to receive, or appreciate, the blessing which He had to bestow. The same principle would apply in reference to the Scripture which forms the heading of this Chapter.

From the words of the Revelator found in Chapter 21., 9, we learn that the message imparted to him, as recorded in the verse under consideration, was conveyed by one of the angels having the seven last plagues. This Scripture, which has an important bearing upon the Harvest activities of the Lord's people in our day, brings to light a vital principle for their guidance. Broadly speaking, the principle is that under the increased light and privileges of the Harvest-time, the true characteristics of each individual heart are quickly made manifest. The Harvest-time is the developing and ripening time when fixity of character, for good or evil in relation to the hope of the Age, reaches its climax. The same principle governs the natural Harvest. Throughout the season, comparatively slow growth and development give promise of an eventual Harvest, but the true characteristics of the fruitage do not become evident until the ripening process of the Harvest period.

The parable of the wheat and tares provides a good illustration of this principle. Wheat and tares, while growing together during the season, cannot be easily distinguished from each other. Their outward appearances are similar, and in growth and development both give promise of results, in due course. With the arrival of Harvest, however, the true characteristics of both of them become manifest and outward appearances can no longer deceive the eyes of the husbandman. Therefore, said our Lord, "let both grow together until the harvest" and in the time of Harvest, when the individual characteristics of each become manifest, the work of separation may easily and with safety be accomplished.

### **THE DAY SHALL DECLARE IT**

In the realm of nature, the season of growth and development is much longer than the Harvest, or ripening period. Once the Harvest season arrives, conditions very quickly make manifest the kind of fruitage which may be expected. In the case of tares, to which reference has already been made, there is no substance of grain, or food value, to weigh down the stalks, and they therefore stand erect, even in the time of Harvest. The wheat stalks, on the other hand, burdened with the weight of maturing grain in the ears, quickly bend down with the advance of Harvest conditions. In consequence, little discernment is required in the time of Harvest to distinguish between the wheat and tare elements; the separation between them can thus be easily accomplished without any danger of mistaking wheat for tares.

As the parable of the tares in a very obvious fashion illustrates the laws of nature which govern the natural Harvest, so it was used by our Lord to reveal to His followers the truth concerning the spiritual Harvest of the present Age. In the spiritual realm, the first effect which became apparent to the reapers during the present Harvest-time was the very different nature of the wheat element from that of the tares. With the increased light and knowledge respecting the times and seasons of the Divine Plan, the truth became a separating factor which made manifest the distinction between the empty

profession of the tare element and the outlook of the true wheat class. The influence of the truth upon the tares was to bind them with the cords of error still closer in their creed bundles ready for the burning. On the other hand, the wheat class rejoiced in the truth as a means of fuller spiritual growth and development, resulting in increased humility and the weakening of all earthly ties.

### THE FIRE SHALL TRY EVERY MAN'S WORK

It is not sufficient for the Lord's people to have been reaped from the errors of bondage of Babylon by the sickle of Present Truth and then to rest satisfied in the knowledge that God has a gracious Plan which will embrace every one in due time. On the contrary, the Lord has purposely *permitted severe tests* of faith and endurance to come upon His people, in order to make manifest whether or not they are worthy of sharing with Him in His Kingdom. As a result of these tests during the present Harvest-time, it has become manifest that many who at one time professed to be walking in the light of Present Truth have subsequently grown weary of the journey, or have turned aside into by-paths of error and darkness.

The Apostle, in his first letter to the Corinthians, likens the Lord's followers at Corinth to workmen erecting a superstructure upon a foundation which he, as a wise master-builder, had laid in their midst. He points out that only one kind of structure would be satisfactory and have the approval of the great Architect of the Divine Plan. A day of fiery tests would come in the Harvest-time which would prove the quality of the workmanship of each builder.

Three distinct kinds of builders are next mentioned, with a brief description of their building operations. One class builds upon the foundation, gold, silver, and precious stones—descriptive of a life of sacrifice fully in line with the will and purpose of God in Christ. Against such a structure, the fiery experiences and tests of the Harvest-time can have no effect other than that of purifying and rendering it freer from dross. Builders of this description, whose *work will abide* in the day of fiery experiences, represent the over-coming class. These, the Apostle declares, will *receive a reward*, namely, joint-heirship with their Lord in His Kingdom.

Another class of builders mentioned are those who build upon the foundation, wood, hay, and stubble. Such materials are descriptive of a life of sacrifice and service not in line with the truth, or with the times and seasons of the Divine Plan. Structures of such materials will be found to be worthless in the fiery testings of the Harvest-time, for they will be consumed by the fire of this day. Builders with such materials, the Apostle declares, *suffer loss* and would seem to represent a large proportion of those engaged in the Lord's service to-day. While manifesting great zeal for the Lord in the performance of mighty works in His Name, they are *not sufficiently attentive to the instructions* contained in His Word. These builders fail to learn the lesson that "to obey is better than sacrifice," and thus will not receive

the overcomer's reward. In the day of opportunity and fiery experiences of tribulation, however, they will receive a lesser reward as servants in God's temple, if they learn the needed lesson. (Rev. 7., 15.)

Still another class amongst the builders mentioned by the Apostle are they who are said to defile the Temple of God. (1. Cor. 3., 17.) For a time, their building efforts may have been quite satisfactory, but, for some reason or other, they later refused to acknowledge the rightful authority of the Divine Architect, on account of indifference or self-will.

In this way, such demonstrate their unworthiness of the grace provided for them in Christ and there remains for them only the terrible consequences of complete destruction in the Second Death. If one has tasted of the heavenly gift and received the illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit, but later takes himself outside the scope of Divine mercy, this is rightly described by the Apostle as a "fearful thing" for to such our God is a "consuming fire." (Heb. 12., 29.)

### WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS WE SHOULD BE

In view of the many subtle devices of the Adversary permitted of the Lord to test the *loyalty and obedience* of the remaining feet members to His revealed will, it becomes all the more necessary for each child of God to examine carefully his workmanship as a builder together with God. (1. Cor. 3., 9.) An unbiased and complete examination is possible only when the mind is freed from all sectarian prejudice and influence. Other essentials are true humility of heart, coupled with a willingness to be of no reputation and to go outside the Camp of mere profession. Then, and then only, can we enjoy to the full that perfect liberty of sonship in Christ which is the heritage of the overcomers, even in the present life.

#### **Labour that is in vain**

It would be foolishness for labourers in the material world to proceed with the erection of any building without having first of all carefully *scrutinised the plans and specifications* of the architects. Every reasonable mind would acknowledge the wisdom and sound judgment of such a course of action. Nevertheless, how many of the Lord's followers, who claim to be workers together with God, make certain that their building efforts are fully in accord with the specifications of the Divine Architect? "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build" is an inspired statement of truth to which all the Lord's followers would do well to give their most earnest heed. (Psa. 127., 1.)

### SOME ESSENTIALS OF ACCEPTABLE WORKMANSHIP

There are three particular aspects of revealed truth which are in some measure essential to satisfactory service for the Lord during the present time.

#### **Sound doctrine**

The primary aspect of essential truth is an understanding of the *basic doctrines* of our salvation. Without a knowledge of the truth in this respect, it would be impossible either to know God, or to understand His true character

and attitude towards the human family. The Apostle indicated this thought when to the Church at Rome he wrote—"how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10., 14-15.)

The term, doctrine, simply means teachings, and the teachings which concern the child of God are the doctrines of "the faith once delivered." (Jude 3.) The understanding of doctrine, while vital to a proper faith, is not an end in itself. The doctrines of the faith reveal to us, not only the true character of God and His love for the human family, but also make clear to us the *hope set before the Lord's people* of this Age. Moreover, these same doctrines constitute the channel of the Holy Spirit whose sanctifying influence upon the life is only possible when the mind has been enlightened by the Spirit of truth.

To-day, many who profess to be workers together with God "cannot endure sound doctrine" and seem to avoid it as much as possible. As a consequence, while ever learning they are "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" and are easily tossed about with every wind of false doctrine. (2. Tim. 3., 7.)

**The Present Truth** Another essential to acceptable service, as labourers together with God, is the knowledge of Present Truth.

Besides the fixed and settled doctrines of the faith, there is the ever-increasing light of dispensational truth which the Apostle Peter terms Present Truth. (2. Pet. 1., 12.) The importance of this aspect of truth lies in the fact that unless we know the times and seasons of the Divine Plan, we may find that, instead of working together with God, we are *working in opposition* to His will for our day.

The Present Truth of this Harvest-time arises out of the fact that our highly-exalted Lord has returned to earth in the power and glory of His Kingdom, for the purpose of delivering the human family from the control of the great Adversary. Every aspect of truth concerning the work of deliverance—first His Body members and afterwards the world in general—is of vital interest to all who are seeking to know the Lord's will and to be co-workers with Him during the present Harvest-time. The importance of a clear understanding of the truth concerning this day will be appreciated once it is seen that, without this knowledge, it would be *impossible effectively to co-operate* with the Lord in the reaping and gathering work now in progress. (Matt. 13., 30.)

Present Truth reveals that the full number (144,000) to complete the elect members of Christ had already been called into membership in Christ when the Harvest-time began, over 60 years ago. Since that time, the work of God amongst the remaining members still alive in the flesh, has been their sealing on the forehead with the knowledge of Present Truth concerning the work and purpose of this day. Those who have been fully sealed in this respect understand that the Harvest

work of this day is on *behalf of the feet members* of Christ—gathering them into closer fellowship with the Lord through the increasing knowledge of the truth that they may be accounted worthy to pass into His Presence, in due time.

**Prophetic Truth** Still another aspect of truth vital to the well being and full co-operation of the Lord's people in the work and outlook of this day, is what might be termed Prophetic Truth, or the knowledge of "things to come." (John 16., 13.) The Scriptures refer to the Harvest-time as an evil time. It is a time when the Adversary is particularly active in laying snares for the Lord's people. The Adversary's snares—generally counterfeits of the truth—are so cunningly set by him that without the armour of Prophetic Truth it would seem impossible for any of the Lord's people to avoid the many besetments of this Harvest day. An outstanding example of the Adversary's snares just ahead of us, is the coming "new order" of the seventh "Head" of Gentile rule which will claim to be the realisation of the oft-repeated prayer—"Thy Kingdom come." The connection between the foregoing and the words of the recording angel to John "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still"—will become evident from what follows.

### THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH IS RIPE

In the natural order, the Harvest is the period during which the fruitage resulting from the previous sowing work is reaped and brought home to safety. All *sowing efforts cease* in the natural Harvest, for the obvious reason that it would be *labour in vain*. Even if the seed did grow and flourish for a period, there would be neither sufficient time nor the favourable conditions necessary for the full development. The natural Harvest is used by our Lord as an illustration of the Harvest of this Age and the principles which govern Seed-time and Harvest consequently apply. The Harvest of the present Age is the Harvest of the earth and it will affect, not only every individual, but every institution of men upon the earth. The most important feature of earth's Harvest, and the one which chiefly concerns the Lord's people, is the harvesting of the wheat class. This class grew and developed side by side with the tares, until the Harvest-time commenced.

In the natural Harvest, the ripening influences of sun and weather conditions are progressive and cumulative. In the early days of Harvest, the fruits and cereals of earth are still green and comparatively undeveloped, but under Harvest conditions they quickly manifest a marked change in texture and flavour. When the final stage of ripeness has been reached, each product of the earth manifests the full characteristics of its species, whether good or bad.

Prior to the Harvest-time, it would be impossible (as already noted) for the husbandman to determine, from appearances only, the real virtues and true values of his crops while still in the immature and undeveloped condition. The same principles likewise operate, in a higher and spiritual sense, in the harvesting of the wheat class of

this Age. Our Lord seemed to indicate the operation of this principle amongst the people of Israel in the Harvest of the Jewish Age. While on the way to be crucified at the hands of the nation's leaders, and in response to the wailings and lamentation of those who followed Him, He said—"If they do these things in a green tree (in the early stage of their Harvest), what shall be done in the dry (when the nation's wicked tendencies have reached their full fruitage)?" (Luke 23., 31.)

We have to-day reached an advanced stage in the Harvest of the present Age and the kind of fruitage that will later be gathered from every human institution of this world, as well as from *every individual of the wheat class*, is already becoming rapidly manifest. The climax of earth's Harvest is described in the striking symbolic language of Rev. 14., 18-20.

The harvesting of the Lord's professed followers has been in progress since the Advent of the Chief Reaper, at the commencement of the Harvest-time. During the earlier years of the Harvest-time, the profession of all who had come to a knowledge of Present Truth was yet in a green and undeveloped stage, with promise of a full Harvest in due course. In later years, however, great changes have taken place throughout the Harvest field. As indicated by the Apostle, every man's work (and profession as a follower of the Lord) is being made manifest of what kind it is, whether profitable or otherwise. Stated in another way, Harvest conditions tend to develop in each professed follower of the Lord fixity of character as respects spiritual growth and development, in one direction or another. Consciously, or unconsciously, the *real heart attitude* of each one towards the Lord and the Present Truth becomes more and more crystallised for good, or ill, with each daily experience. Like the fruitage of the natural Harvest, there must therefore come a time when the true characteristics and tendencies of each professed follower of the Lord become more and more *settled and unmoveable* for good or evil. It is concerning these developments amongst the Lord's people, towards the end of the present Harvest-time, that the angel's message—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still"—seems specially to apply. (Rev. 22., 11.) Perhaps the sense of the verse could be better expressed in the following paraphrase—"He that is unjust after experiencing the mercies of God and the blessings of the Present Truth, will be unjust still, despite what may be further done on his behalf."

The words of the angel to John which read—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still"—express a very important principle of Harvest truth to which all who would be co-workers with God should give special attention. They express the mind of the Spirit in regard to the work of Harvest amongst the Lord's followers in the end of the Age. The same principle has, of course, been in operation amongst the Lord's people throughout the Age but in a more limited degree as conditions during the sowing period are very different from the time of Harvest.

Experience amongst the brethren during the last 25 years, or so, reveals the fact that only the few, comparatively speaking, are walking

in the *path of light that shineth more and more* unto the perfect day. (Prov. 4., 18.) Many, unable to endure the light of Present Truth as now shining upon the pathway, have considerably retraced their steps backward over the path on which they previously travelled forward. Some of these profess to believe, amongst other things, that they are now receiving the blessings of the New Covenant and that, as sons of God, they can have fellowship with their Heavenly Father only through a Mediator. Moreover, they cannot endure the deep and sanctifying truth concerning the Church's share in sin-atonement, on behalf of the human family. Others attempt to *stand still* upon the pathway and refuse to advance beyond the stage they reached many years ago forgetting, withal, the wise counsel of our late Brother Russell who frequently warned the brethren against the too common mistake of following leaders and *refusing to see anything* more than they saw. Such a standstill attitude must, of necessity, lead to darkness because the light *which does not stop* quickly passes them by.

Still another class, much in evidence to-day, may be mentioned. This class is comprised of those who, in past years, have professed to be in the light of Present Truth, but who have now gone into darkness concerning its most important doctrine—the Presence of the Lord in Kingdom glory. Some of these have also lost sight of the hope set before the Lord's people in the present Age, as well as of the fundamental doctrine of the Ransom. In doing so, they prefer to have their ears tickled with such erroneous theories as British Israelism and Universalism, the latter being sometimes referred to as the "All in All" teaching.

The question is sometimes asked how such a falling away from the truth can be accounted for amongst those who once professed to be walking in the light. The answer is supplied in the Apostle's solemn warning to the Corinthians, already quoted—"Every man's work shall be made manifest : for the day (of Harvest) shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (1. Cor. 3., 13.)

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE

The pouring out of the seven last plagues, as explained in Chapter IX, is an experience still ahead of mankind. The fact that it was one of the angels having the seven last plagues who conveyed to John the message discussed in this Chapter, seems to indicate that its special injunction would apply, in the fullest sense, toward the end of the Harvest period. Moreover, John, who was in the Spirit and the recipient of the angel's message, was a fitting figure of the spiritual ones amongst the Lord's people, to whom the mind of the Spirit is particularly revealed.

There have never been at any previous period of the Harvest-time so many erroneous and conflicting views held by those professing to be in the truth as at the present day. At the same time, it is becoming



more than ever manifest that only the few have sufficient faith and spiritual discernment to walk in the increasing light of Present Truth. The "day" is surely declaring, even now, the true value of each one's workmanship in the Lord's service and will continue to do so, with ever-increasing precision, in the years still ahead of us.

## LET EVERY MAN TAKE HEED HOW HE BUILDETH

Many of the Lord's people are putting forth great efforts in the Harvest field to-day which, in the light of the Present Truth, would not seem to be in harmony with the work of God for this day and therefore can only be regarded as labour in vain. Instead of feeding the "spiritual" with the strong meat from the Divine storehouse of God's Word, great efforts are being made to attract numbers from the public by what is termed "public witness," radio lectures, and such like. These efforts surely indicate a lack of discernment concerning the work and purpose of the Harvest-time. As already mentioned, an understanding of the Present Truth concerning the days in which we live reveals that the full number to complete the 144,000 elect members of Christ had already been called into the narrow way when the Harvest-time commenced in 1874 A.D. Since then, the work of sealing the "alive and remain" members of the Body with an understanding of the Harvest truth and outlook has progressed. During the same time, many of this remnant class have proved themselves unworthy of the crowns allotted to them and others have been admitted to take their places.

Another work that many are to-day striving to accomplish is the regathering of those who in earlier days have been, as generally termed, in the truth. Most of these while still manifesting some interest in certain features of the truth in which they once rejoiced, have demonstrated their unworthiness, or unwillingness to walk in the full light of Harvest truth. In most cases, as already explained, they have stumbled over certain features of the truth and their characters have become crystallised and set along certain definite lines of conduct and belief. The angel's instruction to John regarding those whom he describes as unjust and filthy would seem to refer to such classes. These terms would not apply to the ignorant and unenlightened masses of mankind, but to some who, after being enlightened, manifest such characteristics in the sight of God as here described.

All efforts now being put forth to *regather and unite* such, irrespective of their belief or unbelief concerning Present Truth, are fruitless and out of harmony with the mind of the Spirit as expressed by the angel. All who have enjoyed the blessings of Present Truth and who later refuse to be led by the Spirit of truth along the pathway of ever-increasing light must, sooner or later, lapse into error and darkness. Whatever may be their individual responsibilities before God, experience shows that all efforts put forth to rekindle their interest and quicken their understanding of Present Truth find but little response. Failure to walk in the light must, in time, result in

the loss of one's standing in justification and the robe will become spotted and filthy. Only a *living* faith, accompanied by works of faith in line with it, can justify one in the sight of God.

The class here described have developed a fixity of character and viewpoint in relation to the truth which a mere restatement of doctrine can neither alter nor convince. The great efforts to-day being made amongst the brethren to regather and unite all such shades of belief in common fellowship can only succeed at the expense of Present Truth and sound doctrine. These efforts are not in accord with the mind of the Spirit which declares—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." On the other hand, it should be recognised by all who would be in harmony with the Spirit's leading that the work of God at this stage of the Harvest-time is chiefly to feed and succour the righteous and holy in God's sight, in order that they may be enabled faithfully to continue their walk upon the pathway of ever-increasing light, even unto the end of the way.

The case, however, of one who has merely made a slip, or who has been overtaken by a temporary coldness in the Lord's service—yet still retaining the Spirit of truth—is very different. In such circumstances, it is not only the privilege but the *duty* of every member of the Body, even at the expense of time and sacrifice, to render all possible assistance for the restoration of such an one to full spiritual health and vigour in the Lord's service.

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE FIRST THREE PLAGUES

*“And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.” (Rev. 16., 1.)*

*“And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.*

*And I will put a division between my people and thy people : to-morrow shall this sign be.” (Exod. 8., 22-23.)*

The symbolic plagues brought to our attention in the visions of the Revelator are based upon the record of the ten plagues which God, at the hand of Moses, brought upon Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. As in the figure, the first three are in a different category from the seven last plagues.

Moreover, all the typical plagues came upon the Egyptians *subsequent* to the arrival of Moses in Egypt for the purpose of delivering the Israelites from bondage. In the same way, all the antitypical plagues upon the “present evil world” must likewise *follow the arrival of the Greater than Moses*—Christ, when, at the Second Advent, He returns to earth for the deliverance of the human family.

The fact that the Revelator places the seven last of the ten plagues in a category by themselves would imply some particular reason for so doing. This is surely so, for the same distinction between the three first and the seven last is shown in the records of the typical plagues upon Egypt. (Exod. 8., 22-23.)

The primary significance of this division of the ten plagues is obvious—the first three were common to both Israelites and Egyptians, while the seven last were confined solely to the Egyptians. Moreover, the general character and severity of the seven last were different and they are in consequence generally referred to as the judgment plagues. It is true that all the ten plagues were in the nature of judgments but they were *progressive* in their *severity*. While the first three are not mentioned by name, as such, by the Revelator, yet it is thought that they can be easily identified amongst the many Harvest visions contained in the Book of Revelation.

## THAT YE RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES

The plagues described by the Revelator as "her plagues" are evidently the seven last. These will come upon Babylon after the Lord's people have been called out and separated from her. By obeying the call, they escape the judgment plagues which bring about the destruction of this great system.

Another matter of importance is that the first three antitypical plagues are the means used by the Lord to call His followers out of Babylon and save them from the consequences of the judgment plagues which follow. This will be evident when later they are examined individually.

The source of all these plagues is the unseen Kingdom of Christ—the New Jerusalem—which, at the Second Advent, "came down out of heaven from God" and is now "set up" in the spiritual realm of earth. The Psalmist, in vision, foretold the time when God would arise to judge the earth and to gather His saints together unto Him. He declares—"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come (in judgment), and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him." (Psa. 50., 2-3.) All the plagues, in their antitypical sense, represent the effects of light and liberty coming into contact with the errors and darkness of men's minds. Light and liberty have a disintegrating and destructive effect upon every form of darkness and organised error in the minds of those who uphold the various sections of the present evil world.

The first three plagues come upon Babylon while she is still mainly an ecclesiastical organisation and before the great confederacy of political and religious power described by the Revelator as the "Image of the Beast," or seventh "Head" of Gentile dominion, is set up. (Rev. 13., 14.) From this, it will be seen that these first plagues are mainly directed against the *erroneous claims and teachings* of the various religious sections of Babylon. By their exposure of the falsity of Babylon's claim to be the special mouthpiece of God and by laying bare the confusion of her doctrines, they afford an opportunity for Babylon to repent and to liberate the people of God from the bondage of error and superstition in which she has so long held them. But Babylon, the chief instrument of the antitypical Pharaoh, will not repent or repudiate her false claims and teachings, hence the effect of these three plagues upon the Lord's followers in Babylon is to *call them out and separate them* from Babylon, just as the Israelites, after the first three plagues upon Egypt, were separated from the Egyptians and *escaped the judgments* of the seven last plagues.

Prior to the return of the antitypical Moses and the commencement of the pouring out of these plagues, God did not attempt the destruction of Babylon, for the sake of His people who were in her. As a result of the exposure of Babylon's errors through the instrumentality of these plagues, however, her position since the beginning

of the Harvest-time is very different, and the message to the Lord's followers is—"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her (seven last) plagues." (Rev. 18., 4.) The seven last plagues will witness the complete destruction of Babylon, while all who do not separate themselves from her and repudiate her false teachings will be regarded as partakers of her sins and will therefore share with her the coming plagues.

The prophet Jeremiah had a vision of the coming of the plagues upon Babylon and warned the Lord's people to "flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul; be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance (plagues); he will render unto her a recompence." (Jer. 51., 6.)

### THE LORD'S VENGEANCE UPON BABYLON

The key to the time when the seven last plagues begin to be poured out and consequently the time when the Lord's faithful followers will have fully separated themselves from every quarter of Babylon is found in Rev. 16., 2. It will be observed that the first of these judgment plagues is poured out upon the symbolic earth and that it particularly affects the worshippers (upholders) of the Image of the Beast. This shows that the Image, or seventh "Head," *will have come into power* when the first of the seven last plagues is poured out. The earth, upon which it is poured out, represents the great confederacy of the nations which supports the Image. Since the seventh "Head," or Image of the Beast, is *at present only taking shape* in the councils of the nations and cannot be established until further time has elapsed, it is obvious that the pouring out of the seven last plagues is still in the future. It seems obvious, too, that the reason why these last plagues differ so much in character from the first three is because the Image of the Beast, when established, will represent a confederacy of *ecclesiastical as well as political power*. The avowed object in making the Image will be to bring to mankind an enduring peace and to establish a world-wide federation of the nations of the earth. From the viewpoint of its supporters, it will be the *establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven* upon earth, but from the Divine standpoint it is seen as an attempt on the part of the rulers of this world *securely to hold the human family in bondage* to the ruler of the darkness of this world—the antitypical Pharaoh, Satan. The Psalmist accordingly asked, speaking for Jehovah—"Why do the nations rage (margin—tumultuously assemble), and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and *the rulers take counsel together*, against the Lord, and against his anointed." (Psa. 2., 1-2.) God's Anointed, now enthroned on Zion's holy hill, has already begun the work of delivering the human family from Satan's kingdom and any attempt on the part of the rulers of this world to *maintain the present evil world* is regarded, from the Divine standpoint, as in opposition (unconsciously, of course) to the work of Christ's Kingdom. It means, then, that just as Pharaoh after each

figurative plague hardened his heart and would not let Israel go, so the rulers of this world, after each setback, will endeavour to control still more effectively the liberties and rights of their subjects. This will be done in an effort to uphold what is considered to be the *Kingdom of God* amongst men.

In the light of the foregoing, it will be seen that the operation of the first three plagues in antitype covers the earlier part of the Harvest-time. They are outpoured in the period during which the Lord's true followers, like the typical Israelites, are gradually separated from the various quarters of Babylon and thus escape the remaining seven plagues which follow.

### THE FIRST THREE PLAGUES IDENTIFIED

It will now be appropriate to examine in some detail what is understood to be an outline of the first three antitypical plagues brought to our attention in Rev. 14., 6-12.

Briefly stated, these plagues are believed to coincide with three aspects, or developments, of the Harvest truth. In the context, they are described under the figure of three angels going forth with messages which concern the interests of the Lord's people in their relationship to Babylon. The object is to separate them before the remaining plagues come upon that evil system. It is important, incidentally, to note carefully the setting in which they are brought to our attention.

Revelation, Chapter 14, is *entirely* a Harvest vision. The vision opens with the recognition of the fact that the Second Advent has *already taken place* and that God's Anointed is enthroned on Mount Zion, the New Jerusalem, which has come down out of heaven from God. (Rev. 3., 11-12.) In harmony with this John sees the sleeping saints already resurrected and with the Lamb on Mount Zion. The full number to make up the elect Bride class of 144,000 has already been called, and notwithstanding the fact that a remnant of these are still "alive and remain" in the flesh, they are *counted* as being already a part of Zion's Kingdom. Actually, of course, this remnant in the flesh have to be tested and proved worthy before being changed from human to spiritual conditions. This change is referred to later in the vision where John is instructed to write—"Blessed are the *dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.*" (Rev. 14., 13.)

### PLAGUE No. 1

The first of the three symbolic angels is brought to our attention in verse 6 of this Chapter. The angel is said to fly in mid-heaven and to carry a message to those who dwell therein. Probably, the allusion is to the middle compartment of Israel's Tabernacle, the Holy; it represented a condition which, while not *actually* heaven, was yet spiritual in character. It thus pictured the condition of the Lord's

spirit-begotten followers who had become spiritually-minded while still living in the flesh. The message was to them and for their special benefit *now*, although it concerned all mankind who would eventually come into harmony with God's Kingdom. This angel also announced that the hour of God's (1,000 year day of) judgment had commenced (verse 7).

In order to be able to appreciate how such a message amongst the spiritually-minded in Babylon could be considered as a plague upon that system, it will be necessary to recall something of the circumstances which prevailed amongst professing Christians at the commencement of the Harvest-time.

First of all, it would be true to say that at the time of the Second Advent, the "everlasting gospel," as now seen in the hope of the various Ages of the Divine Plan, had been almost entirely lost to view. The various creeds of Babylon's sects had no hope whatsoever for the human family in general. The only hope recognised by the Church systems of that day was that believers who confessed the Lord went to heaven at death, while all unbelievers went to a place of eternal suffering of some kind. The result of this symbolic angel's message amongst the heavenly-minded of the Lord's followers was the recovery of the full Gospel hope for both *Church and world*, as seen in the Divine Plan of the Ages. Its effect upon the erroneous doctrines of Babylon's creeds was to render them obnoxious and distasteful to thoughtful minds, hence the clearer light of truth acted as a plague upon all the contradictory creeds of Babylon. We read that, in the figure, this plague resulted in the turning of the waters of Egypt into blood, so that the Egyptians had to dig wells from which to drink. (Exod. 7., 24.)

It is only since the going forth of the first angel's message that the purpose of God in the Ages has been *recovered* from the errors of the past. Prior to the Harvest-time, it was understood by most followers of the Lord that all believers from the time of Abel onwards constituted the Church of God and that these alone would be saved and taken to heaven, while the unbelievers would be eternally lost. Since then, however, the recovery of the everlasting Gospel, embracing a hope for the world as well as for the elect, has revealed to the spiritually-minded something of the extent to which the teachings of Babylon have departed from the true faith. Is it any wonder that nominal Christians, like the figurative Egyptians, have as a result of the first plague been digging for wells of worldly-wisdom outside their discredited creeds (of which they are ashamed) in an attempt to find more refreshing streams suitable to the aspirations of the natural mind? Numerous wells, such as Christian Science, Evolution, Spiritism, British Israelism, and many others, have been discovered by these diggers. All such wells, while giving promise of refreshing draughts to those who drink therefrom, in the end prove to emanate from springs of a brackish and poisonous source. They provide no

lasting refreshment, and, sooner or later, bring disappointment and disillusionment to all who partake of their waters.

While the everlasting Gospel recovered by the Lord's true followers in the early days of the Harvest-time contains a hope for all the human family in due course, yet the due time for the world to hear and enter into their inheritance is not until the New Covenant has been sealed. Meantime, it is essential for the Lord's followers to have their faith strengthened with an understanding of the whole counsel of God concerning the Divine Plan, in order that they may appreciate the true condition of Babylon in God's sight and, at the same time, be able to withstand the delusions of the Adversary in this evil day.

## PLAGUE No. 2

The second angel with his message followed quickly after the first. This symbolic angel is understood to represent a further development of Harvest truth amongst the spiritually-minded of the Lord's people still in Babylon. As a consequence of the first angel's message revealing, as it did, the inconsistencies and confusion of the various creeds, many of the Lord's true followers began to realise that Babylon had fallen from Divine favour. Up to the beginning of the Harvest-time, God spared this system of confusion on account of His followers who were in it; both wheat and tares were permitted to grow together until the Harvest-time. (Matt. 13., 30.) With the arrival of the time of Harvest, it is revealed to the heavenly-minded, through the second angel's message, that Divine favour would no longer be extended to Babylon and that the hour of God's judgment had already come. (Rev. 14., 7.)

As a consequence of this increased light regarding the condition of Babylon's creeds, the Lord's true followers soon began to realise that they could no longer expect to hear the voice of the Bridegroom within that system of confusion. The Spirit of truth also witnessed to the effect that in order to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" and so escape the judgments coming upon Babylon, it was imperative that all the true Israel of God should come out of her and separate themselves from the city of confusion. To remain in any section of Babylon, large or small, after clearly discerning the Present Truth would mean being counted as partaking of her sins and likewise sharing her judgment plagues. (Rev. 18., 4.) The reaction of this further development of Harvest truth, revealed in the second angel's message, was in the nature of a plague upon the symbolic rivers and streams of Babylon. It affected all who were in any way associated with her conflicting creeds, while to the virgin class of that day it was a clarion call to take their lamps and *go forth from bondage and error* to meet (in fuller fellowship) the Bridegroom. (Matt. 25., 1.)

These plagues, in figure, only occupied a matter of days, but in their antitypical developments they cover a considerable number of



years and are *cumulative* in their effects. All the Lord's followers do not come to a knowledge of Babylon's true condition in the sight of God at the same time and even when the plagues of light and liberty have laid bare the confusion and darkness of her creeds, many *hesitate to take the step of obedience* to the Spirit's leading. Others never seem to reach the point of full obedience to the Divine command—"Come out of her, my people." (Rev. 18., 4.) Dealing with this aspect of the matter, Brother Russell wrote—"Though coming out of Babylon is one step and a long one in the direction of complete overcoming, it is by no means the last one; and we should be careful to guard against a disposition to rest after every advance step of the way." (Vol. 3., 188, par. 1.)

### PLAGUE No. 3

The third angel's message embraces still a further development of Harvest truth and constitutes a final warning of the consequences or being in any sense identified with any section of Babylon. It was after the third plague that a separation was made between the Israelites and Egyptians, in relation to the seven last plagues yet to come. The counterpart of this in our day would seem to be that, after the witness contained in the third angel's message has been heard in mid-heaven (amongst the heavenly-minded), it will have effected a complete separation from Babylon of all the Lord's *true* followers. Any who still lend their influence and support to any section of that great system and disregard the call—"Come out of her, my people"—can no longer be recognised as "my people" from the Divine standpoint. They will be counted as partaking of her sins and will receive of her plagues—the seven last. (Rev. 18., 4.)

The progressive hardening of Pharaoh's heart against the Lord's demand to let the people of Israel go, seems to indicate that, in so far as antitypical Israel are concerned, the Adversary will by force of circumstances and worldly wisdom endeavour to influence them *more and more to give their support* to the present evil order of things. Any disintegrating influence, therefore, which would tend to weaken or nullify efforts in this direction is bound to react as a symbolic plague upon all who identify themselves with Babylon's activities, or lend their influence thereto. From this viewpoint, it will be seen that it is not merely a question of coming out of Babylon, in the sense of taking the first step, but of *remaining out* and, all the way, following "the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

The third angel's message reveals the Divine viewpoint of Babylon's activities and is in the nature of a warning to all true Israelites to separate themselves from *every movement* which has for its object the consolidating and strengthening of the present world order. The next important development in that direction, as outlined by the Revelator, takes the form of a federation of ecclesiastical and political rulership. This "new order," destined to come into operation in

the near future, will be hailed by its sponsors as the coming of God's Kingdom upon earth. It will not succeed, however, in fulfilling the expectations promised by its advocates and, as foretold by the Revelator, will continue but a short space. (Rev. 17., 10.)

### IF POSSIBLE THE VERY ELECT WOULD BE DECEIVED

It would seem that our Lord's warning of Matt. 24., 24, concerning the rise of false (counterfeit) Christs, has special reference to this confederacy, elsewhere termed by the Revelator the Image of the Beast. (Rev. 13., 14.) Every effort of the Adversary, through the many seducing errors of doctrine which have already overthrown the faith of many of the Lord's followers, will be directed towards the one end of proclaiming the coming confederacy as the heaven-sent hope of humanity. Already, the antitypical magicians are preparing their signs and wonders which are calculated to convince all but the elect—British Israelism, Spiritism in its various forms, as well as the numerous false prophets who have arisen amongst the brethren, all to play their part in acclaiming the worship of the Image shortly to be set up. Already, the leaders of the various "isms" of deception are preparing the musical themes of their respective creeds which in due course will all blend into one grand chorus, as a prelude to the worship of the Image which the powers of control are about to set up. (Dan. 3., 1-7.)

The third angel's message is a warning in advance to all the true followers of the Lord respecting the danger which lies ahead and of the need for complete separation from everything that would tend to becloud their vision of the Kingdom of Christ which has already taken control in heavenly places. (Rev. 12., 10.)

It might be asked why such a warning should be thought necessary amongst the many thousands who, during past years, have already obeyed the call—"Come out of her, my people." The fact remains, however, that many who took the first step as regards the older sects of Babylon, have later settled down in smaller systems of error and confusion of doctrine. These systems which at their inception may have been swept and garnished, so far as the obviously crude errors of the older organisations are concerned, have later become the homes of many other spirits of error more wicked and deceptive than the first. (Luke 11., 23-26.) Many, indeed, after wasting much of the substance of light and truth with which they departed from Babylon have, like the prodigal son, *returned with apparent relief* to the very pens of bondage from which with songs of hope and gladness they, in earlier days, went forth.

The sense of this message clearly implies that, at this stage, the watchers amongst the Lord's people will have been granted a true perspective of the part which the Image of the Beast, the seventh "Head" of Gentile dominion, will play in respect of the future development of the Divine Plan. Moreover, it implies that they are

not ignorant of the devices of the Adversary in so influencing the minds of the rulers of this world that they might devote their energies to bringing into being the Image to which this angel refers. Furthermore, the *need for such a warning* denotes a sense of extreme danger in the pathway of all the Lord's true followers. It is only within recent years that this vision of the Revelator concerning the part about to be played by the Image of the Beast has become clear and, to-day, the *making of it clear to the Lord's people* forms a most important aspect of the Present Truth.

Like the message of the two previous angels, this one also reacts upon the outlook and activities of Babylon's supporters. It will prove to be an irritating plague upon the mental outlook and hopes of all such, while so far as the spiritually-minded of the Lord's followers are concerned, it will be the means of their *complete separation* from the Babylonish spirit before the Image receives life and the first of the seven last plagues is poured out upon its supporters. (Rev. 16., 2.)

The separation between the Israelites and the Egyptians during the seven last of the Egyptian plagues was physical and local. In the symbolic sense, it implies not only a complete severance from the interests and activities of Babylon, but a distinctly different outlook of the few who are walking in the light of Present Truth from that of the great majority who, through lack of faith and discernment, put their trust in the arm of flesh.

## CHAPTER IX

# THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

*“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.”* (Rev. 15., 1.)

*“And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.”* (Rev. 16., 1.)

*“The Lord hath brought forth our righteousness : come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God.”* (Jer. 51., 10.)

It is recognised by most Bible Students that the experiences which came to the nation of Israel, under their Covenant, were of a typical character. Moreover, even the nation itself and their sacrifices and ceremonial observances, were shadows of things to come in the Divine Plan. Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Pharaoh in Egypt is no exception to this rule. Indeed, it is generally recognised as a figure of the deliverance of the human family from the bondage and oppression of Satan's kingdom, at the end of the present Age.

It has already been seen that, in the figure, there were ten plagues in all. The first three were common to both Israelites and Egyptians, while the seven last were entirely confined to the Egyptians. Moreover, as the typical plagues were instrumental in bringing about the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, so the antitypical plagues will effect the deliverance of the human family from the great Adversary and his kingdom.

Our chief interest in the present consideration is the seven last plagues, to which attention is called in the Scriptures quoted at the heading of this Chapter. The Revelator has a good deal to say concerning the seven last plagues ; he designates them the plagues of God's wrath—“for in them is filled up (or completed) the wrath of God.” (Rev. 15., 1.)

Like most of the symbols of Revelation, the vision of the plagues is comparatively easy of interpretation, provided one has spiritual discernment in the light of Present Truth. The first essential thing to understand, in this connection, is that all the antitypical ten plagues must be poured out *subsequent to the time* of our Lord's Second Advent. This will be apparent from a consideration of the figure provided in the ten plagues upon Egypt as explained in the previous Chapter. The sending of Moses to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage prefigured the sending of Christ, at the commencement of the Harvest period, to deliver the human family from the power of Satan's kingdom. The plagues came upon Egypt because of Pharaoh's refusal to obey the request of Moses to let the people of Israel go free. In like manner, the Harvest plagues of this Age

come upon the antitypical Pharaoh and all associated with his kingdom because they refuse (by their actions) the request of the Greater than Moses to free the human family from the bondage of the powers of this world.

The records of Scripture confirm that the entire ten plagues, from the antitypical standpoint, fall *within the present Harvest period*, and also that the seven last are still future. The latter point will become more apparent when, later in this Chapter, the plagues are dealt with from the individual point of view.

### **ALL THE PLAGUES SUBSEQUENT TO SOUNDING OF SEVENTH TRUMPET**

The suggestion is sometimes made that the three last trumpets, generally termed the "woe" trumpets, correspond with the first three of the ten plagues. This view is understood to be not only wrong, but quite misleading. The fulfilment of all these plagues (including the first three) must, in the antitypical sense, follow the sounding of the last, or seventh trumpet, for it is the seventh trumpet that announces the Second Advent of our Lord and the commencement of His reign. (Rev. 11., 15-17.) From the fact that, in the figure, all the plagues *followed the coming of Moses* for the deliverance of the Israelites, it must be evident that all the antitypical plagues *follow the Second Advent* of Christ. Again, the fifth and sixth trumpets were due to sound a considerable time *before the Second Advent* took place in 1874 A.D. In no sense, then, could it be said that the three "woe" trumpets correspond to the first three plagues. The entire plague vision is, indeed, the introduction to the great day when God rises up to make an end of evil and all evil-doers.

### **THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PLAGUES**

It has been ascertained from the Scriptural records that the pouring out of these plague-vials takes place during the Harvest period, and it is necessary, of course, to remember their general character and operation in the antitypical sense. It should be noted, in the first place, that these plagues, in so far as they affect the human family, represent the penetrating influences of light and liberty upon the minds of men, as they lay bare the conditions of error and bondage of the present evil world. Satan, through the instrumentality of his spiritual forces in heavenly places, has measurably succeeded in blinding the whole world to the true principles of liberty and justice. Earth's institutions, regulations, and governments, operate along the lines of self-interest and the entire human family is under the influence and power of the wicked one, apart from the few followers of the Lord who have escaped from the kingdom of darkness by means of the power of the truth. (1. John 5., 19.)

The time for deliverance from these conditions has come and the Great Deliverer, Christ, in the power of His Kingdom, has already cast Satan down from his place of power, as the Prince of the power of the air. Satan, the incorrigible, as represented in the figure of

Pharaoh, will neither surrender nor acknowledge defeat. It is for this reason that the plagues, representing the active intervention and judgments of God, will come upon his kingdom with every institution under its influence, which holds the human family in bondage. These plagues of light and liberty come from Mount Zion, the City of the living God, for "out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." (Psa. 50., 2.)

## JUDGMENT BEGINS AT THE HOUSE OF GOD

A clear distinction has already been seen between the character of the first three and that of the seven last plagues. The Revelator does not identify the first three plagues, as in the case of the others, but their identification is easily traced as studied in the preceding Chapter.

The first three plagues differ from the seven last because, in the main, they represent judgments against religious organisations and systems of error, necessitating a separation of the true from the false. They represent increased light upon the pathway which results in testing of faith and loyalty to the truth in relation to all who are associated with these systems. The Apostle Peter indicates this thought, when he writes—"Judgment must *begin* at the house of God." (1. Pet. 4., 17.)

The seven last are, however, of a much severer type and will not merely affect religious systems and professors, but the very foundation of every organisation and kingdom. These last plagues complete the wrath of God upon Christendom.

The periods occupied by these plagues are not of equal length. From a certain point of view, all the plagues might be regarded as the cumulative effect of the increasing light shining from the unseen Kingdom of Zion. (Psa. 50., 2.) This increased light acts with plague-like effect upon every phase of darkness and opposition to the powerful influence of the new Kingdom. Eventually, when complete deliverance of humanity has been accomplished, the nations shall walk in the light of it and, instead of plaguing them, it will be the joy of the whole earth. (Rev. 21., 24.)

## THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES STILL FUTURE

It seems to be a principle common to all the Revelator's visions that, in the due time, a key to the understanding of them is to be found in the context of each vision. The vision of the seven last plagues is no exception to this rule. The key which unlocks the time feature concerning the pouring out of the seven last plagues is found in the two following Scriptures—Rev. 15., 2 and Rev. 16., 1-2. From a comparison of these Scriptures, it seems evident that these plagues, which are said to complete the wrath of God, will not commence to be poured out until the Image of the Beast has received life and begun to *function as the seventh "Head"* amongst the nations. The implication is clear from the context of these verses that, when the Image begins to speak with authority, the saints of

God will be called upon to endure and overcome severe trials and persecutions at its hand. Its control of the peoples will be so effective in bringing about their submission, that the condition of the great mass of its subjects is symbolically likened unto a glassy sea, mingled with fire. (Rev. 15., 2.) Outwardly, law and order will be ruthlessly enforced, but underneath this outward and placid appearance there will be much suppressed antagonism to these restrictions upon liberty and freedom. This symbolic fire of anger and hatred only awaits the opportunity to burst into an open flame of anarchy. From the statement contained in Rev. 16., 2, it is clear that when the first of the seven last plagues is poured out, the Image of the Beast will be receiving the worship and support of all its conservative and influential subjects.

It is upon these worshippers, symbolised in the context as the earth, or stable element of society, that the first of these plagues takes effect. Upon them there falls a noisome (painful) and grievous sore. This painful sore is not physical, but mental, and doubtless prefigures disappointment with their efforts to bring about the desired peace and safety conditions for which they strive.

The fact, then, that the first of these last plagues is poured out when the worship of the Image is in progress and that this Image (or seventh "Head" of Gentile rule) is *not yet come to power*, should make it clear that the pouring out of the first of these plagues is a still future event.

### **God's Judgments made manifest**

It has already been mentioned that the first three antitypical plagues of the Harvest period (which correspond with the messages of the three angels of Rev. 14., 6-12) are judgments affecting those of the house of God, at this stage mainly associated with the various sects of Babylon. These judgments make manifest the false doctrinal and spiritual claims of Christendom; they result in the separation of spiritual Israel by calling them out of Babylon. All who refuse to obey the call—"come out of her"—are regarded as partaking of her sins and will receive of her plagues—the seven last which are soon to follow and which will complete the wrath of God. (Rev. 18., 4.)

The judgments of the seven last plagues will be much more evident than those of the first three. To God's elect, still in the flesh but living in the Spirit above the glassy sea condition of enforced tranquility, the meaning of these judgments will be very manifest. With their harps well tuned, they, like the Israelites in figure, will be able to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb because of their victory over Babylon's errors and over the deceptions of the Beast and its Image. (Rev. 15., 3.)

The effect of these plagues upon human organisations, political and otherwise, will appear to those ignorant of their real cause as nothing less than serious calamities. To the Lord's true followers, however, their purpose will be evident, and they will be recognised as the true and righteous judgments of the Creator. (Rev. 15., 3-4)

## THE VIALS OF GOD'S WRATH

The seven last plagues are, in a special sense, exhibitions of God's wrath against the combined efforts of the kingdoms of this world to retain control of the human family. The Image of the Beast, prefigured by the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar set up in the plain of Dura, will be the first organised effort of earthly rulers to keep the restless masses in subjection. (Dan. 3., 1-18.) All who, like the three Hebrews, will not fall down and worship—give their support to the Image—will be called upon to endure very fiery experiences. (Rev. 13., 15-18.) The Psalmist seems to refer to this stage of organisation amongst the nations, when he writes—“the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed.” (Psa. 2., 2.)

This endeavour, on the part of earth's rulers, to curtail the liberties of their subjects and Pharaoh-like to hold them in bondage, will be regarded, from the Divine standpoint, as fighting against the unseen power of Christ's Kingdom, already set up in the heavens for their deliverance. It will be equivalent to a challenge to Divine power and will call for the judgment plagues of Divine wrath.

### Plague No. 1

The first of the seven last plague-vials is said to be poured out upon the earth. The earth, in figure, doubtless symbolises in this connection the conservative and law-abiding elements of society—those who whole-heartedly give their support to the Image of the Beast which, at that stage, will have received life to act as the seventh “Head” of Gentile rule. (Rev. 13., 15.)

The Image, made at the suggestion of the sixth “Head,” will be regarded by all whose hopes are centred upon the earth, as a Divinely sent instrument to save the world from disaster. It will be hailed as the coming of God's Kingdom upon earth and, as such, will command the fullest support and obedience (worship) of all who come within its sphere. Individual liberties will be sacrificed for the common good and in the interests of peace and security. While, for a time, it will appear effective in this direction, yet we are informed that it will continue only a short space, and will be followed by a much greater combination of ecclesiastical and political power—the eighth “Head.” (Rev. 17., 10-11.)

While it is clear from the Scriptures that the medium through which the power of God operates in pouring out these vials of his wrath upon the nations is Zion, the Heavenly Jerusalem, yet the method of their operation still remains hidden to those whose eyes are veiled by the flesh. (Psa. 110., 2; Dan. 2., 44.) The effect of this plague is felt by those who have the mark of the Beast and who worship (support) its Image. A noisome (malignant) and grievous (painful) sore comes upon these men. Their hopes and prospects, bound up with the system, receive a serious set-back which brings upon them much mental anguish and disappointment.



## **Plague No. 2**

The second plague, or vial, is poured out upon the sea. The sea is generally recognised as a symbol of the masses of the people. Restless and discontented, they feel that they are denied a fair share of the good things of life, and they are easily swayed by their leaders and agitators.

The reaction of this plague upon the sea class is that it becomes as the blood of a dead man. The figure seems to imply that, at this stage, the masses of humanity begin to realise that there is no hope of obtaining their legitimate rights by political or any other lawful means. They begin to view the future outlook in a spirit of hopeless despair. Their leaders who, up to this stage, had hoped to improve the lot of their followers, also begin to despair of bettering the conditions. They are symbolised as dying, or ceasing to strive further after legitimate reforms on their behalf. Such a state of social corruption leads to but one end—anarchy and ruin.

## **Plague No. 3**

The third of the seven last plague-vials is poured out upon the rivers and fountains of water. In this symbolic picture, the rivers seem to represent the creed channels of Christendom through which the so-called truth, embodied in their creeds, flows for the refreshment of the people. The fountains likewise represent the colleges, or seminaries, from which the teachings of the various creeds emanate. The reaction of this plague upon them is that their teachings (water of life) are no longer refreshing and palatable, but become obnoxious. Each plague, in turn, lays bare the errors and corruption of some phase of the great system of Babylon.

The angel of the waters, to whom the Revelator at this stage calls attention, would probably refer not so much to the Lord Himself or to any unseen messengers, but to the watchers amongst the Lord's people still in the flesh. To this class, continuing to bear witness to the increasing light upon the pathway, the judgments upon the spurious claims of Christendom's creeds would appear in their true light—as a righteous and just retribution. From the altar also, a figure of the truly consecrated followers of the Lord in general, came a voice acquiescing in the righteousness of God's judgments. To the naturally-minded, however, whose hopes are centred upon human efforts, these judgments will appear as irretrievable calamities.

## **Plague No. 4**

The fourth plague-vial was poured out upon the sea. Since these plagues indicate, in a general way, the effects of increasing light and liberty upon the systems concerned, the sun, which is in this instance affected, must refer to a counterfeit system claiming to be the light of the world.

In this connection, it is also well to remind ourselves that the period covered by the pouring out of the seven last plague-vials is the time occupied, in turn, by the seventh and eighth "Heads" of

Gentile rule. It is understood, then, that by the time this vial is poured out, the eighth "Head"—Papal power—will have come into control. This counterfeit sun will again, as in the past, lay claim to all the functions and attributes of the true Kingdom of the Sun of Righteousness.

The effect of this plague will be the enforcement of increased restrictions upon the rights and liberties of the people, in order to keep them in subjection. Even then, it will not be apparent to the long-suffering masses that this system, ruling in the name of God's Kingdom, is merely a counterfeit of the true Kingdom which, when once recognised, will be the desire of all nations. Meantime, still deceived by the claims of the eighth "Head" to be the true Kingdom, the people generally blaspheme the name of God by regarding Him as the cause of their sufferings and persecutions, at the hand of this system.

### **Plague No. 5**

The fifth plague-vial is poured out upon the seat (throne) of the Beast. The throne, or seat, would seem to represent the foundations upon which its claims rest. Apparently, at this stage, it will begin to dawn upon the minds of many that the claims of power and authority, made in the name of God, are without any real foundation. Much criticism will be directed against these claims, with the result that, not being able to substantiate them, confusion of face will be manifest. As a consequence, there will follow a gnawing of tongues which, in plain language, means that in the face of severe criticism those in authority will be compelled to withdraw many of their vaunted and extravagant claims to Divine authority. Even then, it would appear that the majority still regard this system as a mouth-piece of God and the world's only hope.

### **Plague No. 6**

The sixth plague-vial was poured out upon the great River Euphrates. The Euphrates, as explained in a later Chapter of the Revelation, represents the peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, which support the great system of Babylon. (Rev. 17., 15.)

The result of this plague is a further opening of the eyes of the great masses of Babylon's supporters to the falsity of her claims. Consequent upon this, there is a rapid deterioration in their support, resulting in its hold upon the people being considerably weakened.

The defence of literal Babylon was weakened by the turning away of the waters of the River Euphrates, upon which the city was built. The result was that a way was opened for the besieging army to enter and overthrow the city. Mystical Babylon likewise rests upon the support of the peoples of Christendom. When their goodwill and support are withdrawn, or turned aside, it will be the handwriting upon the wall foretelling the approaching doom of Babylon. The way of the kings of the east, prefigured by the armies of the Medes and Persians, will be made easy.

**Three unclean spirits** The weakening of Babylon's authority over the masses will call for a closer union of Christendom generally. The three unclean spirits would seem to represent a concerted propaganda going forth to urge a confederacy of the three great organisations then comprising the ruling authorities of Christendom (1) the Dragon, representing certain ruling powers not under Papal control; (2) the Beast which is then represented in the eighth "Head"; and (3) the False Prophet, which previously constituted the sixth "Head." ( Rev. 13., 13-14; 19., 20.)

The exigencies of the hour will apparently call for a united Christendom, in order to maintain control over the masses, and this union will be accomplished by the propaganda of these three great sections of Christendom.

It is concerning this effort of the Adversary to keep the people in subjection through human agencies, that many striking prophetic Scriptures would seem to apply.

Amongst these the following may be mentioned:—

**Psalms 2., 1-2.** "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed."

**When they say  
a Confederacy**

**Isaiah 8., 9.** "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces: and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces."

**Rev. 17., 13-14.** "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and *they that are with him* are called, and chosen, and faithful."

This confederacy of the ruling powers, organised with the object of controlling more effectively the restless masses, will only hasten the Armageddon conflict. Armageddon should not, however, be considered as a local conflict between the ruling powers of Christendom. On the contrary, it will be a world-wide conflict between the oppressed and discontented masses of mankind and the ruling powers in league with the eighth "Head."

### **Plague No. 7**

The seventh plague-vial is poured out into the air. The air seems to be used in Scripture as a figure of spiritual power, or control. Satan is said to be prince of the power of the air. (Eph. 2., 2.) The saints left over during the Parousia of the Lord are said to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. (1. Thess. 4., 17.) It would appear that when our Lord returned, in the power of His Kingdom, Satan's mighty empire was broken into. In the war in heaven which followed, Satan and his associates were cast down to

the regions of the earth. (Rev. 12., 7-9.) Satan is still determined, however, not to yield to the Conqueror, or to let the human family escape from his control. In a last stand against the mighty power of Christ's Kingdom, he is determined to organise a powerful dictatorship over the human family. Nevertheless, this effort, like that of his prototype (Pharaoh) in Egypt, will fail.

The seventh vial, like the last plague of Egypt, is final. It is poured out in the air, the remnant of organised spiritual control, by which Satan attempts to keep the human family in bondage. As a result of this plague, "a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne (is heard) saying, it is done"—the war in heaven is over, and the last vestige of Satan's kingdom is forever destroyed. Consequent upon this, comes the great earthquake (revolution) which breaks to pieces the confederacy of the nations and brings to an end every organisation of the present evil world.

## CHAPTER X

# THE REIGN OF CHRIST: WHEN IT BEGAN

*"They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."*  
(Rev. 20., 4.)

*"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."* (Heb. 1., 8.)

*"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom."* (Luke 22., 28-30.)

The question of our Lord's reign and its relationship to the past and present developments of the Divine Plan is a very important feature of Present Truth. Like most doctrines of the Scriptures, this matter has been considerably obscured in the minds of many by preconceived ideas which are not founded upon the teachings of the Word of God. Our present object, therefore, in dealing with the subject is to make clear as far as possible the harmony and Scriptural teaching on this very important aspect of truth.

According to our understanding, the whole tenor of Scriptural teaching bearing upon the subject falls within and fully bears out the following three points, namely—

- (1) Our Lord received His Kingdom and commenced to reign when He was glorified at the Father's right hand after His ascension. From that time, His reign, as the Father's Representative, has extended throughout every part of the Universe with the *one exception* of our planet, earth, where Satan's rival kingdom has been in operation.
- (2) The reign of Christ *over the earth* began at the Second Advent, having for its object the overthrow of Satan's kingdom and the putting of all enemies under His feet. At that time, our Lord returned to earth in the glory of His mighty Kingdom and set His throne in the heavens. As a result, the strong man's house (kingdom) has been broken into, while Satan himself has been dethroned and cast down to earth.
- (3) When the Second Advent took place and our Lord's reign over the earth commenced, the first work was to raise the saints who slept throughout the Age and begin the harvesting of the members of Christ who are "alive and remain."  
(1. Thess. 4., 16-17.)

It is our purpose in this Chapter to consider these three points in the light of the Scriptures alone, so that our "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1. Cor. 2., 5.)

## Point No. 1. WHEN OUR LORD'S REIGN BEGAN

In the consideration of the question as to when our Lord's reign began, it will be necessary to keep separate in our minds the two widely different aspects of the subject, namely (a) His reign as the Father's Representative throughout the Universe which commenced at His glorification when He entered into His Kingdom and was constituted Lord of all (b) His reign over the earth for the overthrow of Satan's kingdom which began at the Second Advent. Only by "rightly dividing" the Word of Truth concerning these matters can the harmony and beauty of the Divine Plan be clearly established.

Under (a) it is clear from the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets and from our Lord's own words that as a reward for His faithfulness in doing the Father's will, even unto death, He became the Heir to the throne of the Universe. This in no way either suggests or implies that in so exalting the Son, the Heavenly Father Himself has to any extent relinquished His rightful position as the King Eternal and Head of all creation. Isaiah defines this relationship of the Father and His highly exalted Son in the following terms—"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong." (Isa. 53., 12.) The "portion" which our Lord received at His ascension was the Kingdom promised by the Father and which He will in due course divide as "spoil" with the strong, His Body-members.

From this wider point of view there is but one Kingdom which embraces the whole family of God in heaven and on earth and, in the absolute sense, there is but one King—God, the Creator and First Cause. Viewed, however, from the standpoint of the many planes of created beings in the spiritual realms, there are, as indicated by our Lord, many "mansions" or kingdoms within the wide expanse of God's great House. (John 14., 2.) Little is revealed in the Scriptures concerning the glories of office and nature which belong to these higher orders of Spirit creations, but there is sufficient to indicate that they comprise mighty kingdoms, or organisations, of different grades of spirit beings within God's Kingdom of which the Creator Himself is King.

The Apostle, in his letter to the Ephesians, describes our Lord's exaltation to the right hand of God as "above all the angelic Rulers, Authorities, Powers, and Lords, above every Name that is to be named not only in this age but in the age to come." (Eph. 1., 21—Moffatt.) The terms here used by the Apostle can only refer to rulerships, or kingdoms, of varying grades of glory and honour organised under their respective Heads, but all in turn subservient to God, the supreme Ruler and Head of the Universe. Our Lord is here stated to have been raised *far above* all these kingdoms and, as the Father's Representative, now exercises all authority and power in heaven and in earth. Every one of these Rulers, or Heads of spirit creations, like Israel's typical kings and our exalted Lord, may be said to sit upon God's throne because each rules as the Creator's representative and

exercises the power and authority which have been delegated to each by Him. It is for this reason that our Lord is said to have sat down in God's throne. (Rev. 3., 21.) Sitting down with God in His throne clearly implies entering upon His Kingdom as the Father's Representative and Ruler of the Universe. Nor will He ever lay down His righteous sceptre and relinquish His position as King of kings and Lord of lords, upon which He entered at His glorification.

The writer to the Hebrews contrasts our Lord's present exalted position with that of the angels and concerning the Son declares—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Heb. 1., 8-9.)

In fulfilment of His own parable our Lord was at His ascension the "certain nobleman" who went into a far country to receive for Himself a Kingdom and to return. (Luke 19., 12.) The Kingdom which He received was the "place" prepared in God's own house of many mansions as the Head of "every angelic Ruler and Power." (Col. 2., 10—Moffatt.)

The fact, then, that our Lord, as has just been seen, did receive a Kingdom, that He sat down upon the throne of that Kingdom, and the further fact that He now wields a righteous sceptre as Head of every angelic Ruler and Power in the Universe, all combine to emphasise the point that, when glorified, He was made the supreme Lord and Ruler of creation, next to the Father Himself. Any suggestion to the effect that He has not been reigning in this Kingdom since the time of His exaltation would surely amount to a refusal to acknowledge the accepted meaning of the many terms used by the inspired writers to describe His present highly exalted position at God's right hand.

## **Point No. 2. OUR LORD'S REIGN OVER THE EARTH**

It has already been mentioned that with the exception of this earth and the sphere of Satan's kingdom (from which he exercises control of the human family) our Lord's reign as the Father's Representative prevails in every part of creation.

The record of Satan's rebellion against the Creator and his seizure of earth's dominion by the deception of our first parents in Eden is familiar to all of us. As a result of the Fall, Satan usurped the rulership of earth and established in the heavens a powerful kingdom comprised of fallen angelic beings whom he has influenced and brought under his control. In harmony with this viewpoint, the Scriptures refer to Satan as the "god of this world" and as the "prince of the power of the air." (Eph. 2., 2.) As a consequence of Satan's control of earth's dominion, the whole world has been deceived and, as stated by the Apostle John, "lieth in wickedness"—controlled by the wicked one. (1. John 5., 19.) This

accounts for the fact that God's will has not been done on earth during the past 6,000 years of human history. It explains, moreover, why our Lord instructed His followers to pray that God's Kingdom should come to earth as it now operates in every other sphere of creation. By overthrowing the power of the Adversary, God's will may then be done on earth as in all the heavenly mansions.

As the rulership of God's Kingdom was committed into the hands of our highly exalted Lord when glorified, the realisation of this oft-repeated prayer in relation to earth means nothing less than the "coming down out of heaven from God" of the "New Jerusalem"—Christ's Kingdom—and the consequent extension of His reign to earth. (Rev. 3., 12.) Eventually, it will take control of the entire human family and every knee will bow to earth's new King. Then, and only then, will God's will be done on earth as in heaven. (Luke 11., 2.)

**For He must reign** It should be clearly understood that in accordance with the great wisdom of God, as seen in His plan, the subjection of the human family and of the powers of evil to the complete control of Christ's Kingdom is not a matter of days, or of merely a few years. A thousand years have been set apart in the Divine programme for the full restitution of Edenic conditions upon earth, with the recovery and testing of all the willing and obedient of mankind, living and dead. (Rev. 20., 4-12.)

Some brethren believe that Christ's reign over the earth will begin *after* all opposition and evil have come to an end, but the reverse is the viewpoint expressed in the Scriptures. The Apostle, in his letter to the Corinthians, expressed this thought in no uncertain terms when he wrote—"*For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*" (1. Cor. 15., 25.)

## **THE THOUSAND-YEAR REIGN WILL BE DIFFERENT**

Once it is recognised that the thousand-year reign of Christ over the earth differs entirely in character from the rule of Christ in every other part of God's Kingdom, it is an easy matter clearly to grasp the kind of work which it will accomplish on behalf of the human family. The Kingdom of God in every sphere of creation operates on the basis of loyalty and love for the all-wise Creator and His highly exalted Son. His will is done joyfully and unstintingly by every one of His loyal subjects. The exercise of power or compulsion towards the occupants of any of the heavenly mansions is wholly unnecessary, for love is the impelling force which governs every action. On earth, however, it is very different, for the arch-enemy of God—Satan—is, if possible, determined at all costs to retain control of the human family and to oppose any attempt on the part of Christ to overthrow his well-entrenched kingdom in the heavenly sphere.

It is not without significance to note in this connection that the Scriptures refer to the setting up of Christ's throne in the heavens of



our planet as an event followed by the *exercise of His mighty power* against opposing enemies. Amongst the many Scriptures bearing upon the matter the following are worthy of note—

**Psa. 110., 2-6.** “*The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion : rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. . . The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.*”

The entire Psalm is descriptive of the coming of Christ's Kingdom to earth and its work in overthrowing the power of evil. Zion is the source from which the mighty power of earth's new Ruler emanates.

**Rev. 11., 15-18.** “*The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms (dominion) of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. . . . We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come.*”

This is surely a very pointed Scripture which clearly indicates that when our Lord, as the Father's Representative, begins the conquest of earth, it entails the exercise of might and power in order to overcome the opposition of the great Adversary and his organised control of the human family.

**Rev. 12., 7-10.** “*There was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not. . . . And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down.*”

The *heaven* to which Michael has brought salvation by the casting out of the dragon and his angels is not the heavens of God's throne, but the heavens of our planet. Earth's present and coming woes result from the fact that *the Devil has come down to earth* in order to organise the rulers of earth in a last stand in opposition to the new Kingdom.

The foregoing Scriptures (only a few of the many directly bearing upon the point) go to show that the extension of the rule of Christ's Kingdom to earth with the *beginning of His thousand-year reign* over the human family is anything but serene and peaceable. It entails the *use of force and the exercise of great power* in order to overthrow and remove the well organised kingdom of the Adversary in the heavenly sphere and it will result in the greatest upheaval of spiritual forces witnessed since the dawn of creation. On earth, it will mean the greatest time of trouble that has ever been since there was a nation. It will end in a mighty earthquake of revolution to be followed for a time with world-wide anarchy and chaos in which every man's hand

will be against his brother. (Rev. 16., 18.) Our Lord informs us that these days of extreme trouble will be cut short by the elect because, if allowed to continue, no flesh would be saved. (Matt. 24., 22.)

Following the overthrow of the enemy and of the present world system, Christ's Kingdom will bring order out of confusion and enforce upon all the human family, for their instruction in righteousness, an iron rule of strict justice tempered with mercy. This law of the New Covenant, while lifting up and assisting the down-trodden and oppressed, will demand from every one full obedience to the extent of ability. This New Covenant arrangement will last for a thousand years, but the exercise of force will only be necessary when any of the human family refuse to conform to the will and righteous rule of the Mediator. Under the terms of the New Covenant, every one of the human family will have the opportunity of proving whether or not he is worthy of everlasting life beyond the thousand-year period.

### THE THOUSAND-YEAR REIGN HAS ALREADY COMMENCED

It is now almost 70 years since our Lord, in Kingdom glory, returned to earth and commenced the thousand-year period during which "he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." (1. Cor. 15., 25.) Already, His reign has brought deliverance in the heavens where Satan's spiritual kingdom held complete sway. The Revelator, in vision, describes this work of deliverance, as a result of the war in heaven, in the following words—"I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and *strength, and the kingdom of our God*, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down." (Rev. 12., 10.) Incidentally, it might be of interest to note that this vision of Christ's conquest over Satan in the heavens could not refer to the heaven of heavens, or to any part of the Universe where God's will has always been done. It could apply only to earth's environs where evil has been in operation and Satan's kingdom in control.

This vision of the coming of salvation (deliverance) to the heavens and the casting down of Satan from his throne has had its fulfilment *since* the time of the Second Advent (1874 A.D.) when, by the exercise of His mighty power, our Lord broke into the strong man's house and spoiled his goods. (Mark 3., 27.) The world in general are, as yet, unaware of the mighty convulsions which have taken place in the heavens, as described in the Revelation. They know not that the "must reign" period of our Lord's reign over the earth has already begun, in the course of which every enemy of truth and righteousness will be vanquished. Even amongst the Lord's professed followers, few realise that the thousand-year reign over the earth has already begun. Only those who are *walking in the light* of Present Truth and have the spirit of discernment to interpret the

prophetic Word, in the light of passing events, are capable of appreciating the present developments of the Divine Plan.

### **SATAN BOUND DURING THE THOUSAND YEARS**

The binding of Satan in the heavens has already been accomplished and he can no longer oppose the reign of earth's new King in the heavenly sphere. Satan's power over the nations and his ability to deceive mankind will soon be broken into. Then, completely bound, he will be unable to deceive the nations any more until the thousand years are ended. It is important to note, however, that from the viewpoint of the Scriptures Satan's binding counts from the moment his kingdom has been broken into and Christ's reign over the earth has begun. From the same standpoint, the thousand years of Christ's reign over the earth count from the time when His Kingdom is set up in the heavens and the usurper of earth's dominion is cast down. In both cases, although the work is progressive and yet to be completed, God counts the things that be not as if already accomplished.

The breaking of the nations under the smiting power of Christ's Kingdom goes on apace in our day, but, in the light of prophecy, two major attempts of Satan to organise the nations so as to withstand the march of light and liberty amongst men still lie ahead. These are outlined in the prophetic Word as the seventh and eighth "Heads" of Gentile rule. (Rev. 17., 9-11.) These attempts on the part of the Adversary to regain his control of mankind will mean much suffering for the peoples of earth with severe trials and testings of faith for the Lord's true followers. These organisations of world power will be represented as the setting up of God's Kingdom amongst men and will so counterfeit the true Kingdom as to deceive all except the very elect. (Matt. 24., 24.) The elect will not be deceived by any material counterfeit of the Kingdom of Christ amongst men because they will be walking in the light of the Present Truth; they understand that Zion's Kingdom is spiritual and has been founded in the heavens. The poor (in spirit) will put their trust in it and not in the human arm of flesh. (Isa. 14., 32.)

### **STRONG MEAT IS FOR THE MATURE**

A great many of the Lord's followers to-day seem to fall into the category of those of whom the Apostle wrote when he declared—"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." (1. Cor. 3., 2.) The strong meat, essential to sustain faith and to build up the hopes and spiritual life of the Lord's people in this day, is derived largely from the unfolding of Present and Prophetic Truth. This increasing light concerning the present and future developments of the Divine Plan has been provided as a special armour to shield the faith of the elect amidst the many snares and delusions of this evil time. Many of these spiritual babes so seldom have any opportunity of testing the strong meat of the Prophetic Word that when such food does come

within their reach, their untrained palates are unable to judge as to whether it is wholesome or otherwise. Consequently, being fearful of the effects which might follow any indulgence in that direction, they prefer to feed upon the weak and oftentimes adulterated milk provided by their favourite leaders.

Summarising what has just been seen concerning the time when our Lord's reign began, it may be briefly stated as follows—

- (1) The Lord entered into His Kingdom and commenced His reign as the Head of all principality and power when glorified at God's right hand. Since then, as the Father's Representative, He has reigned over every part of God's far-flung empire, with the exception of this earth.
- (2) At the commencement of the present Harvest-time (1874 A.D.), our Lord returned to earth in the power and glory of His Kingdom in order to overthrow the kingdom of the Adversary, and cause God's will to be done on earth amongst men, as in heaven. His reign over the earth, commencing at the Second Advent, will eventually bring every enemy into subjection to His righteous rule. From this point of view, it will be seen that Christ has not ceased to reign since He was highly exalted to the throne of the Universe, neither did He vacate that throne or relinquish His authority at the right hand of power when He returned to earth at His Second Advent.

Our Lord's own testimony before Israel's High Priest was that—"Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man *sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*" (Matt. 26., 64.) Moreover, He declared that when He had come to rule over the earth He would still be sitting upon the same throne of power and glory, for we read—"When the Son of man *shall come in his glory*, and all the holy angels (comprising His Kingdom) with him, *then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory*; and before him shall be gathered all nations." (Matt. 25., 31-33.) What could be more convincing than this testimony from the lips of the Lord Himself to the effect that, prior to the Second Advent, He "sat upon the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens"; that at His Second Coming He *continues to sit upon the same throne* of glory while, after having come, He reigns over the earth for a thousand years and puts every enemy under His feet? (Heb. 1., 8.)

### SUPPOSED OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

After thus demonstrating from the Scriptures what is believed to be the Spirit's teaching concerning the reign of Christ, past, present, and future, it will now be a fitting conclusion to this Chapter briefly to examine some of the objections offered by certain brethren against the view that the reign of Christ has as yet begun.

**Objection No. 1** The suggestion is made that it would be altogether ludicrous to say that the reign of Christ has already commenced while, at the same time, sin is rampant everywhere and evil men continue to enforce their wills upon the majority of mankind.

**Answer.** This objection cannot be of the Lord's leading for, as demonstrated earlier in this Chapter, the view cannot be harmonised either with the teaching of our Lord Himself or with that of the Scriptures generally. Two Scriptures will be sufficient to show that the objection is unwarranted in the light of the Word of God.

**Matt. 25., 31-32.** "*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.*"

**1. Cor. 15., 25.** "For he must reign, *till* he hath put all enemies under his feet."

**Objection No. 2** It is said that it would be quite unreasonable to suppose that Christ could begin His reign while any of His members were still in the flesh, with the Body thus incomplete.

**Answer.** Quite apart from the question of whether it seems reasonable or otherwise, it has already been seen that the Scriptures clearly teach that our Lord entered His Kingdom when *glorified* and has not since ceased at any time to occupy its glorious throne. Concerning the Son, it is written—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." (Heb. 1., 8.) In contrast, it is written concerning the foundations of the (social) earth—"They shall perish; but thou remainest . . . thou art the same and thy years shall not fail." (Heb. 1., 11-12.)

There is nothing whatever unreasonable about the view that the Lord is reigning once the opened heavens of spiritual enlightenment have revealed something of the greatness and majesty of Christ's Kingdom. Every earthly monarch rules his kingdom through an inner cabinet and various officers of state to whom the king delegates his authority to carry out the royal decrees and laws for the benefit of his subjects. In comparison with the throne of the majesty of the heavens, however, all earthly illustrations pale into insignificance, for it has never "entered into the heart of man (to conceive), the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1. Cor. 2., 9.)

When an earthly king takes to himself a wife to share with him the royal throne and kingly honours, it could hardly be suggested that it makes any difference to his ability to occupy the throne of his kingdom. The kingdom belongs to the royal heir and it is surely a matter of favour on the king's part to share the royal throne with the partner of his choice. No one would suggest that our highly exalted Lord has been in any sense incapable of occupying the throne of the Universe as the Father's Representative since He entered into the

unsearchable riches of His glory. When in due time the marriage of the Lamb has been completed, why should it be imagined that this act of condescending grace adds in any degree to the King's right or ability to wield the righteous sceptre of His majestic rule? It is purely of grace and not of necessity that the royal Heir of all things in heaven and in earth invites the overcomers to sit with Him in His (already established) throne of glory. It is written concerning the members of the Bride class—"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." (Psa. 45., 10-11.)

**Objection** It has been suggested that since the saints are said to  
**No. 3** reign with Christ for a thousand years and all the saints are not yet in the Kingdom, *Christ's reign cannot commence* until the last member has passed beyond the veil.

**Answer.** The Scriptures are very definite on the point that Christ has received His Kingdom and that He comes to earth seated upon its highly exalted and glorious throne. The very expressions, "kingdom" and "throne" imply rulership. Just as a reigning sovereign must be in possession of a kingdom and occupy its throne, so, in like manner, One who sits upon the throne of His Kingdom must be a reigning King.

In all these matters it is very important to obtain the Divine viewpoint. Christ's reign of a thousand years over the earth, for instance, commenced to count when the Adversary's kingdom was broken into and he was cast down to earth. In the same way, the thousand-year period during which Satan is bound counts from the time he lost his throne in the heavens and was cast out. From the same viewpoint, the thousand-year reign of the saints with Christ is not reckoned from the time when any *individual member* is joined to the Body beyond the veil. If this were so, it would necessitate the calculation of many hundreds of thousand-year periods, each one commencing at a different point of time. The Divine reckoning is that all the overcomers are members of the one Body of Christ and while all the members were not gathered unto Him when the dead in Christ were raised, nevertheless the reign of the saints with Christ for the thousand-year period counts from the time when our Lord descended from heaven at the Second Advent. It will be seen, then, that in so far as the reign of Christ over the earth is concerned and also the binding of Satan and participation of the saints in Christ's reign, only one thousand-year period is involved. Over 70 years of that period are already in the past, but within that thousand-year limit of time all the aforementioned features of the Divine Plan will have been fulfilled.

In conclusion, it would seem from the standpoint of the Spirit's illumination—as revealed in the light of Present Truth—that there could be no reasonable objection to the viewpoint that Christ's

Kingdom is now ruling in the heavenly sphere of our planet. Moreover, the same righteous rule will in due course vanquish all enemies and cause God's will to be done on earth as it has always been done in every other part of God's Kingdom.

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## NOTICE TO OUR READERS

We would call the attention of our readers to booklet "Gleanings in the Revelation," Part II. Good supplies of these are still available and copies may be had, free of charge, on application or posted direct to addresses of consecrated brethren sent us. In view of the importance of its contents, no truth-seekers desirous of an understanding of the symbols of Revelation, should be without a copy.

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# GLEANINGS IN THE REVELATION

(PART II)

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*“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear  
the words of this prophecy . . . for the time is at  
hand.” (Rev. 1., 3.)*

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# PREFACE

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In the study of the Revelation or of any other section of the Holy Scriptures, there are two main methods possible of adoption.

One method is that used by commentators, namely, a verse by verse exposition. This, however, necessitates sequential study governed by the order of the original text and the giving of more or less equal space to each chapter. Moreover, the commentator is always tempted to try to find an explanation of every verse in order to present a complete work on the subject, whereas, even now, there are one or two minor sections of the Book of Revelation the meaning of which cannot be regarded as definitely settled.

The other method is to select important subjects found in the Word and to expound them in the light of the present developments of the Divine Plan and the consequent needs of the Lord's people. This is the plan adopted by the writers of the Scriptures themselves, for in no single Book of either the Old Testament or the New Testament is there to be found a code or ordered epitome of the faith. On the contrary, God spake unto the fathers by the prophets "at sundry times and in divers manners" during the old dispensation, while in the Gospels and the Epistles the procedure is identical. This is particularly true of the Revelation and, as is well known, the events portrayed in any one chapter are not necessarily consecutive in fulfilment.

It is for these reasons that no attempt has been made to present an exposition of the Revelation. Instead, most of the outstanding visions have been dealt with from time to time according to the leadings of the Spirit. Some of these themes formed Part I of Gleanings in the Revelation and the present Part II represents a digest of the remaining Revelation articles which have from time to time appeared in "Old Paths" publications.

It is believed that the Revelation contains many vital truths for the guidance of the Lord's followers to-day and this book is sent forth with the earnest prayer that it may be of assistance to the consecrated in the making of their election sure for the Kingdom.

Yours in His Service,

OLD PATHS PUBLISHERS.

May, 1948.

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## CHAPTER I

# SEALING AND GATHERING THE SERVANTS OF GOD

*“After these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.*

*And I saw another angel ascending from the east having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,*

*Saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” (Rev. 7., 1-3.)*

The seventh chapter of the Revelation contains much spiritual food for the guidance of the child of God to-day. The main features of the vision are:—

- (a) Four angels holding the four winds of the earth.
- (b) Another angel ascending from the east with the seal of the living God.
- (c) Restraint of the four winds until the completion of the sealing of a numbered company—twelve thousand from each of the tribes of Israel.
- (d) A larger and unnumbered company before the throne of God.

Each of these features must be considered, in turn, so that the meaning of the vision may be clear.

## THE FOUR ANGELS

The angels are not understood to refer to literal beings, either human or spiritual, and there are no actual corners of the earth on which they could literally stand. The whole picture is a symbolic one, and none of the symbols used can be interpreted literally.

The earth is understood to represent the present social structure which men have built up for their mutual protection and well-being. The prophet Isaiah likens it to a building, in which the human family dwells. (Isa. 24., 1-20.) True to the symbol of a literal building, it has pillars which support it and, so long as the pillars uphold the structure, it affords a measure of protection to the human family. The four symbolic pillars on which the present civilisation, or earth structure rests, may be designated the financial, social, ecclesiastical and political pillars. In the context, they are described as angels holding back the winds. The term angel is applied in Scripture to any agency, either animate or inanimate, which the Lord might use to carry out His purpose. (Heb. 1., 7.)

## EARTH'S FOUR PILLARS

The four pillars, or angels, in question are briefly examined below:—

### **The Financial Pillar**

All the affairs of the present world are sustained by finance. More and more, men are realising that finance is the world's greatest problem to-day. Since the first world war which began in 1914, this pillar of civilisation has become considerably weakened and, at times, men's hearts have almost failed them, lest it should collapse completely. They realise only too well that the downfall of the financial pillar would mean the collapse of the entire edifice, with the consequent chaos which would speedily follow. Even the shaking of this pillar has already caused much trouble and suffering, in various lands, but its total collapse will lead to a time of trouble such as has never before been experienced since the beginning of the world. (Matt. 24., 21.)

Great efforts are to-day being put forth in order to strengthen this pillar, both from a national and international point of view. It is known, however, from the statement in our text, that no efforts will be successful, beyond the point when, in the Lord's providence, the work of sealing the servants of God has been finished.

### **The Social Pillar**

Men and women are social beings and their relationships, both individually and collectively, are defined by certain laws and customs. In lands where such laws and regulations operate to the comfort and well-being of the general community, they are called civilised. Where no such laws are in force, or exist, and men are merely controlled by human instinct, or passion, they are regarded as uncivilised and heathen.

Civilisation, then, or what is symbolically termed the present earth, cannot exist if this pillar is broken down or removed. To remove the social regulations would mean a speedy reversion to the savage state, where only might would be considered right, and every man's hand would be against his neighbour. The social pillar is thus very important and its downfall would surely mean speedy disaster and ruin to the present earth structure. The removal of any one of these pillars would mean a corresponding *wind of trouble*, and when all four pillars fall, it will, of course, mean *four winds* all blowing together, as noted later.

### **The Ecclesiastical Pillar**

Man is by nature a worshipping being and although, through the fall, he has lost his true head and consequently the true worship as well, yet his instinct to engage in worship still persists and he must worship something. Religion, both true and false, therefore plays a very important part in the present world structure. The removal of the religious element from society, though it might be a false religion, would quickly lead to a condition of unrest and disintegration in which law and order would become impossible.

The great running to and fro and the general enlightenment of our day have greatly weakened this pillar of the symbolic earth; it is only a matter of time, until it is completely broken down and destroyed.

Religion, then, is one of the essential pillars, or agencies, playing an important part in upholding the present order of things, and in thus *holding back* the winds of trouble and passion of the vision.

### **The Political Pillar**

Politics have to do with the higher powers and ruling authorities. Without some kind of ruling authority, law and order would be impossible, and anarchy would quickly follow. It has been well said that any kind of government is better than no government at all. Society could not exist without some kind of authority or headship to regulate its laws and enforce obedience to them. The breaking down of the political pillar would mean disaster to the entire structure. The powers of the heavens have already been badly shaken and we can well believe that, in the Divine providence, it has been wisely overruled that the present earth conditions shall not completely collapse so as to unloose the winds of trouble, until the sealing work of this day has been completed.

The removal of these agencies of law and order from amongst the human family, will quickly result in a whirlwind of passion and trouble which will overwhelm every vestige of the present evil world.

## **THE FOUR WINDS**

The figure or symbol of *wind* is quite a common one in the Scriptures. Sometimes it conveys the thought of just an ordinary wind which moves and sways everything along its pathway. In this

sense, the Apostle likens its effect to that of doctrines, or teachings, which influence and sway the minds and faith of the Lord's people. (Eph. 4., 14.) Again, it is as a whirlwind, representing a devastating trouble, from which there is no protection, or escape.

The symbol of *four winds* seems to convey the thought of a whirlwind, and refers to the great and devastating forces that will bring about the downfall and destruction of the present social order. In other words, the whirlwind will occur when the four winds all blow together. All law and order will be overthrown, and there will be no protection for the human family against its own selfish and uncurbed passions.

Our Lord, referring to this time, tells us that unless these days were cut short, no flesh would be saved. (Matt. 24., 22.) Through the elect, however, who at this time will have passed beyond the veil, these days will be cut short and the raging storm of human passion will be stilled, as was the Sea of Galilee. (Matt. 8., 24-27.)

### THE WINDS HELD BACK

The breaking down, or overthrow of any one of the four agencies of order and stability will result in corresponding trouble and distress amongst men. When all four pillars give way before the rising passions of the great mass of discontented humanity, it will be like the judgment upon the lords of the Philistines, when the mighty Samson, in revenge for the loss of his two eyes, brought down upon them the entire building by the destruction of its main pillars. (Judges 16., 17, 30.) It will then be a night of darkness and distress, in which no man can work.

Before that night of trouble settles down, however, the sealing work will have been completed and this is without doubt the most important part of the vision. As is shown below, the angel from the east is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ in the glory and power of His Second Advent, while the sealing refers to the completion of the work of God, in so far as the hope of this Age is concerned, with the remaining members of the body taken beyond the veil. It would seem obvious, therefore, that God, in His providences, has so ordered matters that there should be this favourable opportunity, in the midst of the world's approaching troubles and alarms, in which His true followers may become fully equipped with the understanding of the truth *now* due.

### THE ANGEL FROM THE EAST

The rising sun, ascending from the east and shining unto the west, is used by our Lord as a fitting symbol of the increasing light consequent upon His Second Advent. (Matt. 24., 27.) Those who appreciate the truth due in this day have recognised the signs of the Lord's Presence and know that He has come to gather home all His faithful followers. Just as the first glimmer of light from the rising sun can be detected only by the few who may be awake and watching, so have been the experiences of the Lord's people in this respect, during the early days of His Second Presence.

## THE SEAL OF THE LIVING GOD

The Scroll, sealed with seven Seals, is understood to represent, in a general way, the Divine Plan of redemption as it relates to the entire human family. This Plan was not made known to anyone, not even to the Lord Himself, until after His resurrection to the Divine nature, consequent upon His faithfulness unto death. It was at Pentecost that the breaking of the Seals began and in harmony with this it is understood that the opening of the Scroll, by the loosing of its Seals, represents the unfolding of the truth, concerning the Divine Plan, to the Lord's people throughout the present Age.

The One used to break the Seals was none other than the Lord Jesus Himself, who was first of all given a knowledge of the Scroll, as mentioned above, whereupon He became the Executor of the Divine Plan, on man's behalf. The expressive language of the Revelator will doubtless be recalled in this connection—"I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the Scroll, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the Scroll, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the Scroll out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." (Rev. 5., 4-7.)

To the consecrated, the opening of each Seal provided a clearer understanding of the will of God and thus the Spirit of truth had its corresponding sealing effect upon their hearts and minds all down the Age, and it is doing a similar work, even to-day. To the worldly-minded Christian, however, greater light and knowledge merely provide fuller scope for the operation of the spirit of error and the works of the flesh. The sealing with the Spirit of truth, then, commenced with the opening of the first Seal at Pentecost.

The first six Seals are understood to cover the entire Gospel Age, down to the time of the Lord's Second Advent, while the seventh, or last—the most important of all—covers the entire Harvest period. This viewpoint, it is suggested, will become very evident when later it is hoped to show that the Seventh Seal and the Seal of the living God are one and the same Seal.

It is sometimes suggested that the six Seals embrace the period from our Lord's day until the end of the Harvest-time, while the seventh Seal similarly covers the entire Gospel Age. The true thought, however, is essentially one of sequence, and as seven ordinarily *follows* six, it is difficult to see how the seventh Seal could begin at the same moment of time as the first and also be co-terminous with the sixth. Moreover, it will be evident that the introduction into the context of what might, from a casual point of view, seem to be an additional and different kind of Seal, has served to hide the full significance of the vision, until the due time.

A similar example of this method of concealing events until the due time for revelation, may be seen in connection with the seventh Trumpet. This Trumpet, in certain Scriptures, is described as the "last trump" and also as the "trump of God". (1. Thess. 4., 16; 1. Cor. 15., 52.) Many Bible students cannot see that these are all one and the same Trumpet and they are therefore unable to harmonize the events described under them. It would seem that the reason why the seventh Trumpet has been designated the Trump of God, and the seventh Seal termed the Seal of the living God, is that during this day in which both apply, God is in a very special way taking control of human affairs, through the unseen Kingdom which is now in the hands of the risen saints and their Lord.

Incidentally, it might be of interest here to remark that the seven Seals, and the seven Churches, as well as the seven Parables of our Lord recorded in Matthew 13, all seem to cover the same periods of the Gospel Age, and thus generally to synchronise, as regards the time of their application. In connection with the seven Parables, it is worth noting that the first one describes the beginning of the sowing work of this Age, while the last one calls attention to the separating work, which our Lord Himself defines as the work of the Harvest-time, or end of the Age. (Matt. 13., 49.)

### SEALED FROM ALL THE TRIBES

The natural seed of Abraham, represented by the twelve tribes, were the heirs, according to the Apostle, of the Abrahamic Promise. (Rom. 9., 4.) Had the required number of "Israelites indeed" been found amongst the twelve tribes to make up the full number of the elect, there would have been no necessity for the Gospel call to have gone to the Gentiles.

Since many of the natural branches, however, had to be broken off and their places taken by the grafting in of wild olive branches, these became, in a figurative sense, part of the original olive tree—the seed of the Promise. Israel after the flesh was merely a figure of the true Israel of God—the elect spiritual Seed. The 144,000 to be sealed, according to the record, from *ALL* the tribes of Israel, would therefore signify that all that had been prefigured by the original twelve tribes, has its counterpart, or reality, in the elect Church of this Age. (Gal. 6., 15.)

Perhaps the expression Present Truth would fittingly describe, from a certain point of view, what is here symbolised by each stage in the opening of the Divine Scroll. The Apostle Peter speaks of the Present Truth of his day, and since that time, through the breaking of each Seal, the path of truth has been shining brighter and brighter, until the day in which we are now living. (Prov. 4., 18.)

The Present Truth of this day, resulting from the breaking of the *last* Seal, reveals the full contents of the unsealed Scroll. It opens to the spiritually-minded, not only the entire scope of the Divine Plan, but also the blessed and inspiring truth concerning the



fact of the Lord's Presence, and the Harvest work now in progress. The proclamation of this Harvest truth (symbolised by the Seal of the living God), amongst the Lord's people to-day, with their enlightenment regarding the privilege and opportunity of co-operation with the Lord in the gathering work, is what is here symbolised by the sealing of the servants of God, in this present time, in their foreheads. (Matt. 13., 30.)

### THE NUMBER OF THE SEALED

It is important to note that it is only with the opening of the seventh, or last, Seal, that John learns of the fact that the total number of the sealed ones throughout the Age is to be a definite and fixed number, namely, 144,000 sealed under *all* the Seals. This harmonizes with the experiences of the Lord's people during the present Harvest-time. Before being sealed and delivered from the errors of Babylon, through the Present Truth, or seventh Seal, we were unaware of the fact that God had even a definite Plan for the human race, far less that there was in progress the calling of an elect number to rulership in the Kingdom.

Nor should it be assumed, as some have suggested, that the sealing of the 144,000 is a work which takes place beyond the veil after all the members of the body have been gathered home into the Kingdom. On the contrary, the entire vision of the Seals has to do only with the earthly experiences of the Lord's people. The visions of Revelation generally were not given to show the Lord's people the things to transpire beyond the veil, but rather the "things which must shortly come to pass" in their experiences as followers of the Lord, during the present life.

It is evident, therefore, that the total company of the 144,000 sealed ones embraces not only those sealed under the seventh Seal, during the present Harvest period, but also those sealed under the previous six Seals.

### TILL WE HAVE SEALED

It is important also to note, in this connection, that while the Angel from the east who *brings with him* the Seal of the living God is singular in number and describes one individual only, yet when later reference is made to the sealing work, the plural form of the pronoun is used—"Till *WE* have sealed the servants of God". There is seen in this a very important aspect of truth concerning the co-operation of the members of the body this side the veil with their invisible Head, who, in a very special way, is directing the Harvest work. (Matt. 13., 39-41.)

Sealing in the forehead implies, in a symbolic sense, the impartation to the sealed ones of an *intelligent understanding* of the truth concerning this day—the Present Truth. It is just another way of describing what is elsewhere termed *reaping* in the Lord's Harvest. (John 4., 36-38.)

It will be further noted that the sealing work described in the context has to do *only* with the servants of God. The special light of this day, concerning the Lord's Presence and the work of God amongst His people, is neither intended for the world nor for worldly-minded Christians, but only for the elect.

In corroboration of the foregoing view of the four winds and the special work which must take place amongst the Lord's followers *before* they begin to blow, there is the Lord's own statement in Matt. 24., 31. According to this verse one of the signs of His Presence would be the sending of His Angels (messengers) with a great sound of a Trumpet (seventh Trumpet) in order to gather together (out of Babylon and eventually to a place beyond the veil) His elect *from* the four winds.

The point to be particularly noted is that the gathering of the elect, through the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, corresponds in this connection with the work of sealing the servants of God, during the opening of the seventh Seal. In both cases, the work is said to be accomplished *before* the four winds begin to blow, or at least before the whirlwind stage has hurt the earth or the sea.

In Matt. 24., 31, the point is somewhat obscured through a poor translation. The expression "from the four winds", when rightly understood, is equivalent to *out* from, or *away* from the four winds. The Greek word "ek" here translated "from" literally means "out from", or "away from". The same Greek word is used by the Apostle regarding our Lord's resurrection from the dead, in I. Cor. 15., 20. As the first fruits of them that slept, our Lord's resurrection is described as being out from (ek), or away from them that slept.

Prior to the Harvest-time, the work of God's people is described by our Lord as a witness to the nations—a sowing work. (Matt. 24., 14.) Since the Harvest-time began, however, the work has *changed*, under the Lord's directions, from sowing to that of reaping, or separating the true wheat from the mere professors, or tares, or again, as in the parable of the net, from fishing to that of sorting the fish already caught. (Matt. 13., 47-49.)

Many of the brethren to-day fail to appreciate the difference between what is termed the Present Truth, as distinct from the general doctrines of the faith. As a consequence, they are not in the attitude to hear the Voice of the Master as, through the Word, He invites them to co-operate in the *sealing work* of this day. Many are far too busy carrying out great schemes of their own, or those of someone else, to take time either to hear or enquire what the Lord has to say in this respect. It is nevertheless true that unless we are obedient to the instruction of our Head and are co-operating with Him, our work will be in vain, for the Lord says "He that gathereth not *with* me, scattereth abroad".

Let us, then, see to it that we are not of those condemned by the Lord as lawless and disobedient to the instruction of His Word. Rather, let us endeavour to be found amongst those described as

trembling at His Word—trembling lest they should miss its full import, or in any way fail to catch the full instructions of the Lord, concerning the work of this day. Then shall we be found among that blessed company of “the called, and chosen, and faithful”—those who have continued even to the end of the way, with that same zeal and love which prompted the making of a consecration unto death.

## I BEHELD A GREAT MULTITUDE

Following the announcement of the number of the sealed ones, and yet as a continuation of the *same* vision, John sees a “great multitude” which no man could number.

The information concerning this class is also provided, and John is not only informed whence they came, but, additionally, the part they will have to play eventually in the Divine Plan.

An important point arises, however, and that is why should the vision of the “great multitude” have its setting in conjunction with the opening of the seventh Seal? It is because it was not until the opening of the seventh Seal that the Lord’s people began to get a correct view of the relationship of these two classes in the Divine Plan. Prior to the Harvest-time and the unfolding of the Present Truth, the class described here as washing their robes in the great tribulation were not clearly recognised by any of the Lord’s followers at this end of the Age.

It is understood that this great multitude refers to the antitypical Scape Goat class—those who consecrated, but were slack in the payment of their vows. They are therefore *forced* to sacrifice what they *voluntarily* offered, by passing through the great tribulation. This class has existed all down the Age, but has not been dealt with *as a class* until the end of the Age.

## NOT AN EARTHLY CLASS

It is often suggested that the great multitude is an earthly class. There is nothing, however, in the entire description of the great multitude as recorded in the context of Rev. 7., 9-17 which could be reasonably interpreted to mean that the class referred to were merely justified human beings, dwelling upon the earth. To begin with, the scene described in this vision is *located in the heavenly Kingdom*. Those concerned *have passed through and come up out of the great tribulation*; they are described as servants of the Temple class—the Royal Priesthood. In no sense could the description be taken as referring to beings upon the earthly plane of life.

It is true that they are not said to wear wedding garments, but this does not mean that they are merely justified believers covered with the robe of righteousness and that they could not be a spiritual class. According to our understanding of the Scriptures, there are *not two distinctive garments* worn by those who are called to membership in the Bride Class. The robe of righteousness and wedding garment are both figurative expressions and refer to one and the

same thing, namely, to the righteous standing counted by God to the believer who exercises a living faith in His purpose through Christ. The Ancient Worthies and believers of the Jewish Age were clothed with the same symbolic robe. Concerning Abraham's faith in God, it is written—"Abraham believed God and it (his faith) was *counted* unto him for righteousness . . . now it was *not written for his sake* alone that it was imputed to him, but *for us also* to whom it (righteousness) *shall be imputed*, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." (Rom. 4., 3-24.)

The Apostle would have us understand from the foregoing that the principle of justification by faith, or, as termed above, of imputing the believer righteous on the basis of his faith, is the same to-day as it was in Abraham's time. The *basis* of faith to-day, it is true, has become enlarged and is much broader than in the Patriarchal and Jewish Ages. In Abraham's day, he exercised faith in the Promise of God concerning a Seed. In our day, faith rests upon the fact that the promised Seed has come and redeemed our souls from death by the sacrifice of Himself on our behalf.

While the robe of righteousness refers to the *righteous standing imputed* to the believer not only in the present but also in past Ages, it should be noted that the wedding garment belongs *only to consecrated believers* of this Age who recognise the hope of their calling to membership in the Bride class. This does not mean that the consecrated believer of this Age receives two garments. The fact is that justification, or imputed righteousness, is granted to believers of this Age for one purpose only, namely, as a stepping stone or means of entrance into the High Calling of God in Christ. At the beginning, the believer (not having yet received the Spirit) sees nothing of the grace of God beyond the point of *reconciliation, or salvation from sin*; hence, in a figurative sense, he is said to be covered with a robe of righteousness, or, as elsewhere stated, he is counted righteous. Any standing still at this stage, without the desire to make further progress in the knowledge of God's will, would mean receiving the grace of God in vain. (2. Cor. 6., 1.) It would not accomplish the purpose for which it was intended in the Divine Plan. If, on the other hand, the consecrated believer—appreciating the mercy of God in his deliverance from condemnation—is in the attitude of full devotion to the will of God, his consecration is accepted of the Lord and the change of nature through the begetting of the Spirit begins. It is at this stage that the believer begins to realise that justification by faith is *not an end in itself*, but merely a means whereby one can enter into the hope of membership in the Bride of the Lamb. From that vantage ground of the Spirit, the robe of righteousness *becomes to him an invitation to a wedding*. Otherwise stated, it is then a wedding garment. It is thus seen that, in the case of the Spirit-begotten believer, the terms *robe of righteousness* and *wedding garment* are interchangeable; they refer to one and the same thing, namely, to the righteous standing granted to the believer on the basis of his faith.

## SERVANTS IN THE TEMPLE

In the vision under consideration, the great multitude are seen as servants in God's Temple. (Rev. 7., 15.) The Temple is a symbol of the *glorified Church* who, with their Lord, occupy the throne of the heavenly Mount Zion. At the time indicated in the vision, the marriage of the Lamb as well as the marriage feast in which they are invited to share, *are in the past*, and as a wedding garment signifies an invitation to a wedding, it would have been inappropriate to represent the great multitude as wearing such a garment. A white robe, on the other hand, indicates that the wearer is righteous, either actually, or reckoned so, in the sight of God. The white robes aptly demonstrate that justification has been *retained*, although there has been slackness in sacrifice.

It should always be borne clearly in mind that the Great Company is *not* a class of justified believers who have not gone on to consecration, and thus wash their robes in the great tribulation in order to occupy a special place in the earthly Kingdom. We are not aware of any Scripture which could reasonably be interpreted as having reference to such a class; neither is there such a hope set before anyone in the Divine Plan. According to the record of Rev. 7., 15, the class in question are seen (in vision by John) *in the Heavenly Kingdom* as servants in the Temple of God and *must therefore have reached the spiritual plane* of life. For that reason alone, the description given in this verse could not refer to a class of human beings upon the earth. Moreover, our Lord informs us that in the day of trouble and strong delusions now approaching, there is *only one class—the elect—who will be able to overcome* the wiles of the Adversary; all others will be deceived. (Matt. 24., 24.)

The Great Company, while not of the elect, are a Spirit-begotten class and even they *will for a time be overcome and deceived* by the delusions of the hour. As a result, they will lose the hope of joint-heirship with the Lord in His Kingdom, but they will be forced into the wilderness of tribulation for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of opportunity. In this way, they will have the opportunity of washing their robes in the great tribulation.

The same class are apparently referred to by the writer to the Hebrews as occupying a place in Mount Zion, the city of the living God. (Heb. 13., 23.) They are described as the spirits of just men made perfect. Note, however, that it is *not the men* as human beings who are made perfect, but their spirits, or spiritual nature. While on earth, they were justified and counted righteous in the sight of God. Moreover, they must have been begotten of the Spirit, as, otherwise, their spirits could not be said to be made perfect. The perfecting process is accomplished by the destruction of the flesh and their fleshly desires in the great tribulation.

## SILENCE IN HEAVEN

After describing these events and tracing the developments of the Divine Plan down to the close of the Harvest-time, when the sealing work will have been completed and the work of this Age brought to a close, the Revelator then adds—"and when he had (thus) opened the seventh seal"—or to express the thought differently, it might be read "and having fully opened the seventh seal"—there was silence in heaven during the space of half an hour.

The half hour's silence is understood to refer to the time when the mystery of God has been finished. (Rev. 10., 7.) The hope of this Age will then have been realised by the world's High Priest—Christ, Head and Body—who, having passed within the veil, will sprinkle the blood of the antitypical Goat upon the Mercy Seat, in order to make propitiation for the people.

This interval of "silence in heaven", between the closing of the hope of this Age and the opening of the world's hope, through the sealing of the New Covenant, corresponds, in figure, with the time between the entrance of the Priest into the Most Holy and His coming out to bless the people. (Heb. 9., 28.) During this interval, the people are in a waiting attitude, as indicated by the record in Leviticus 9., 23-24.

The silence will be broken when, as a result of the Atonement having been completed, the Holy Spirit will be poured upon all flesh so that the highway of holiness begins to be opened up. (Isa. 35., 8.) The point to be noted, however, is that the seventh Seal upon the Divine Scroll must be fully opened and its entire contents made bare *before* the silence in heaven begins, and the fact of the silence itself is an indication that the work of the present Age has been brought to a close.

Notwithstanding the above, many find it difficult to understand why Rev. 8., 1 *follows* the events mentioned as transpiring under the seventh Seal—the Seal of the living God. They point to the fact that under the preceding six Seals, the announcement of their opening is made and then the developments concurrent with the opening are set forth. Why, therefore, should the order seemingly be reversed in the case of the seventh Seal?

The opening of each Seal must be understood as a *gradual* development, covering a considerable number of years. Although, in the case of the first six, the announcement of each Seal having been opened is made first, the events recorded in connection with each Seal must, of necessity, synchronise and coincide with the period during which the Seal is opening.

The only difference noted in this respect, regarding the seventh Seal, is that the events in connection with the opening of this Seal are described first, under the figure of the Seal of the living God, and the record of the Seal having been opened is made last.

The matter is quite clear, however, when viewed in the light of the context; further, when rightly understood, it must be seen that the verse in question (Rev. 8., 1) could not be in any other place and still preserve the harmony of the whole. Moreover, it has concealed the true significance until the due time.

The explanation of the matter has to do with the special features revealed under the Seal of the living God. In other words, the mention of the silence is delayed, because there must first be made clear, not only the completion of those who are to *share* the Lord's throne, but also the class who will be *before* the throne, as the servants of the Royal Priesthood. (Rev. 7., 1-17.) It is evident, therefore, that the silence in heaven is the final feature of this Age and it would be out of place to mention the silence in chapter 7, before the vision concerning the completion of the sealing of the servants of God and the Great Company class had been disclosed.

## CHAPTER II

# THE VISION OF THE LITTLE BOOK

*“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:*

*And he had in his hand a little book open: . . . and I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.”* (Rev. 10., 1, 2, 9.)

The vision of the Revelator contained in Chapter 10, in which the symbolic seven thunders and the angel with the little book are brought to our attention, relates exclusively to the Harvest period. The mighty angel of the vision is none other than our Lord Himself, who returned to earth at the commencement of the Harvest-time in the glory of His Kingdom—the New Jerusalem. (Rev. 3., 12.) In the vision there are various symbols introduced and they all have to do with events connected with the time of the Lord's Second Presence.

The coming down of the angel from heaven surrounded, or clothed with a cloud, very clearly harmonises with the teaching of many other Scriptures, namely, that the Second Advent would be accompanied by evidences of gathering storms of trouble and unrest amongst the peoples of the earth. “Behold, he cometh with clouds” is another symbolic picture, given by the same writer, of conditions which would prevail at the time of our Lord's Return. (Rev. 1., 7.)

The prophet Daniel also foretold that a storm of trouble would follow the “standing up,” or taking of control by Michael (Christ at His Second Advent). “There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.” (Dan. 12., 1.)

### THE OPEN BOOK IN THE ANGEL'S HAND

Possibly the most striking symbol of the entire vision is that of the *little book* open, in the angel's hand. In this there is a very significant symbolic description of the vision of Present Truth made known to the watchers amongst the Lord's people in the early days of the Harvest-time. It is interesting to note that this *little book* is said to be *open*, the implication being that it is the *due time to read it*. The general unfoldings of the Divine Plan relating to the experiences of the Lord's people throughout the entire Age are



described, in contrast, as a book *sealed* with seven seals. (Rev. 5., 1.) The opening of these seals, described in chapters 6 and 7, covers the entire Age.

Another important symbol contained in this vision and which links up with the *seven thunders* is the loud voice with which the angel cried "as when a lion roareth." This loud voice of the angel who came down from heaven corresponds with the Apostle's description of the Second Advent, as given in 1. Thess. 4., 16—"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

The voice of the angel is not, of course, an audible one, but is descriptive of the effects of the increased light and liberty in the minds of men as it radiates from the presence of the Lord and His unseen Kingdom. The Second Advent is described in a later chapter in almost similar language and reads—"I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the *earth was lightened* with his glory." (Rev. 18., 1.)

The roar of a lion is a very apt symbol to describe the effects of light and liberty upon the minds of the ignorant and down-trodden masses of humanity. It means not only an awakening to a sense of their bondage and lack of a share of the good things of this life, but the creation of a sense of fear and uncertainty for the future. In these circumstances, increased light means unrest and trouble and that has surely been the experience of the human family during the present Harvest-time. The symbolic thunders are the result of these flashes of God's lightnings in this day of increased knowledge and discontent. Literal thunder always follows the lightning flash and seven denotes completeness, or the full complement of that which it concerns.

## THE VOICES OF THE SEVEN THUNDERS

The fact that John was instructed by the voice from heaven to seal up and write not what the voices of the seven thunders uttered seems to have stimulated in some minds a greater eagerness to know what it was that the voices of the thunders said. Earnest enquiry is, of course, always commendable provided it does not develop into idle and irresponsible speculation. The fact, however, that a certain degree of prominence is given to the matter in the context of this very important vision of Harvest truth would seem to lend colour to the view that the sealing up of their message, by Divine direction, may have some *important lesson for the Lord's followers* of our day.

Before it is possible clearly to understand why John was instructed to seal up and write not the message of the seven thunders, it is necessary to know why he wrote down the details of the various visions shown to him at the hand of the angel. The answer to this is found in chapter 1., 11 where we read—"what thou seest, *write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches* which are in Asia."

These seven churches represent progressive stages of the church of Christ throughout the Age, down even to our own day. It thus seems reasonable to suppose that these visions represent unfoldings of prophetic truth which our Lord saw needful for the spiritual enlightenment of His followers throughout the Age. John himself, as the recorder and medium of these messages, would seem to represent a class of faithful servants whom the Lord has from time to time raised up to give the "meat in due season" to the household.

The fact, then, that John was instructed by a voice from heaven (the wisdom from above) *not to write down* the message expressed by the voices of the thunders seems clearly to indicate that their *message was unsuitable and would be a hindrance* rather than a help to the Lord's true followers.

It has already been noted that this vision applies subsequent to the time of the Second Advent and that the thunders symbolise the clamourings of the various sections of humanity for liberty and freedom from the bondage of the present evil world. This world-wide urge of the teeming millions of humanity for the betterment of their conditions corresponds to the incident in the figure of the Israelites in Egypt when God, at the hand of Moses, made the request of the rulers of Egypt to "Let my people go." (Exod. 5., 1.) So far as regards those human leaders who are interested in social reform and uplift, there is no room for objection to, or criticism of, their legitimate strivings. Why, then, was John instructed not to write down or send to the churches for their instruction and guidance the things uttered by the voices of the seven thunders?

In order fully to answer this question, it is necessary to understand three important features of truth concerning the Divine Plan, viz.:—

1. The *hope set before the Lord's people* during the present Age is not in any sense, or degree, an earthly hope. On the contrary, it is a *heavenly inheritance* to gain which necessitates the *sacrifice of all earthly hopes and rights* that appertain to the natural man.

2. The *work of the Lord's followers in this Age* is not to attempt the conversion of the world, or to reform the present world conditions. On the contrary, the scope and service of the Lord's people should be *solely in the interests of the Body-members of Christ* and their own spiritual upbuilding.

3. The blessing of the world is *not the work of the church in the flesh* and no lasting blessings can flow to them until the New Covenant is sealed after the last member of Christ has passed within the veil.

The attempt to convert the world and to reform society has been a *snare into which the great majority of professing Christians have fallen* ever since the days of the Apostles. The idea appeals to the natural mind and does not necessitate the faith and self-sacrifice incidental to the narrow way. But it is, in a particular sense, a

snare to the Lord's people since the time of the Second Advent when the loud voice of liberty began to awaken the down-trodden masses of humanity to a sense of their bondage. The transition period between the Ages is always a time of testing amongst the Lord's professed followers. It was so in the overlapping period of the Jewish and Gospel Ages, when many in Israel did not recognise the time of their visitation and endeavoured to *persist in the sowing work* of that Age. (Matt. 23., 15.) Even amongst those believers who had accepted the hope of salvation through Christ, there were many who were later misled by false teachers to believe that faith in Christ alone, apart from the works of the Law, was *not* sufficient to ensure for them the blessing of this Age.

To-day is a similar testing time and many who have failed to put on the necessary armour of light provided for this evil time are *in doubt as to what is the work of the Lord* in the present transition period. Some, not understanding *the instructions of the Lord to the reapers* in this "time of harvest" to *stop the sowing work and commence the work of reaping and gathering*, insist that the work of sowing and witnessing to the public concerning the call to the Kingdom hope of this Age is still the work on hand. (Matt. 13., 30.) Others, perceiving that the end of the Age has truly come and realising that a considerable change in the outlook has come about, are confused in mind regarding *what constitutes harvesting* and are not at all sure whether the work they are doing is either reaping or sowing, or for that matter both. Still others, like those who at the beginning of the Age believed that it was necessary to augment the Gospel message with the works of the Law, think that it is necessary now to *add to the Gospel message* the hope of the New Covenant. The deception in this case is just in the opposite direction. In all these cases, the difficulty seems to be that insufficient attention has been given to the voice from heaven to "*go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel.*"

It has already been noted that the angel who came down from heaven prefigured our Lord at His Second Advent and that the "little book" open in His hand symbolised the Harvest Truth or, as generally termed, Present Truth. This little book of Present Truth now due to be understood by the Lord's true followers *contains all the information necessary for their enlightenment* and instruction concerning the work and purpose of the present Harvest-time.

### THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH WILL GUIDE INTO ALL TRUTH

The true understanding of "seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered" would seem to be that if we are subject to the leadings of the Spirit of God, as revealed in God's Word, then we shall not become *involved in efforts on behalf of the world* in this day, contrary to the Divine Plan.

God is *not dealing with the people of the world* in the sense of blessing them during the present Age, and no lasting blessing is

provided for them in the Divine Plan prior to the sealing of the New Covenant. All efforts put forth by the Lord's professed followers during the past fifty or more years on behalf of the world have ended in disaster to those concerned. Not only have they failed to accomplish what they set out to do in that direction, but, in the attempt, those concerned have *lost sight of the spiritual hopes* of the Age and come down to the purely worldly viewpoint of things. To-day, these so-called churches can only be classed as parts of the present world organisations. This failure on the part of the great church systems of our day has resulted from their *neglect to obey the voice of heavenly wisdom* which instructed John to "seal up (and follow not after) those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."

Guided by motives of sympathy for the human family in their struggles for greater liberty, the churches have been attempting to save the world by their own wisdom through human endeavour, instead of giving attention to the Divine Plan and to the wisdom which is from above. The result is that the only Gospel proclaimed by the larger sections of Christendom to-day is the necessity of living a good life and the avoidance of open sin. Otherwise stated, this means that their chief interest centres in the accomplishment of a world uplift in harmony with what the seven thunders uttered.

There is no suggestion, of course, in all this that the Lord's people should be lacking in sympathy for the groaning creation in their trying circumstances, or that when occasion arises they should withhold the helping hand of assistance. It does, however, mean that such expressions of sympathy and kindness *should not be mistaken for, or take the place of the service of the Truth*, or of the work of Harvest.

### PRESENT TRUTH IS ALL-IMPORTANT

The Present Truth now due—to which the *little book* relates—is the vision of the Lord's will for our day. Without the knowledge of this Harvest feature of truth, the Lord's people would be in darkness as respects His will for our day, and in their blindness they would be an easy prey for the wily Adversary. Where there is no vision the people perish, because they lack the knowledge of God's will. (Prov. 29., 18.)

Two important points should be noted, in reference to the little book which the mighty angel is seen holding in his hand, as follows:—

1. This little book was not available for the Lord's people until *after* the mighty angel had come down from heaven.

2. The little book, being open when the angel came down from heaven, implies that when our Lord returned and *not before*, it was the due time for its contents to be revealed.

It is sometimes suggested that the little book symbolises the recovery of the truth, by the Lord's people, during the Reformation period. Against this view, however, it should be noted that the

Scriptures are entirely silent about any mighty angel coming down from heaven at any time during the Reformation period. On the other hand, there is an abundance of Scriptural testimony to the effect that this mighty angel, Christ, did return from heaven at the beginning of the Harvest-time, about the year 1874 A.D., and that only *since that time* has the little book, representing the Harvest message, been available. Moreover, the facts themselves, as they relate to the experiences of the Lord's people during the past seventy years, should furnish conclusive proof.

### EATING THE LITTLE BOOK

A point of deep significance to the feet members of Christ who are "alive and remain" during the present Harvest-time is the instruction given to John by the angel from heaven to *take the little book* and eat it up. It will also be noted that this advice follows upon the warning previously given to refrain from recording, or sending to the churches, the message conveyed by the voices of the seven thunders. In plain language, this means that while the consecrated class (prefigured by John) are cautioned by heavenly wisdom not to devote time and energy striving to uplift and convert the world in this day, they should understand that *another work of more urgent import* is due to be accomplished, namely, the casting in of the Harvest sickle of the Present Truth, symbolised in the contents of the little book.

Still another significant point brought to light in this connection is the fact that it was not sufficient merely to accept the little book from the hand of the angel. Additionally, John was instructed to *eat it up*. The significance of this should be obvious and it is illustrated in the case of the prophet, when he declared—"thy words were found, and I did eat them." (Jer. 15., 16.) It implies a proper assimilation and appreciation of the Present Truth on the part of all who would be overcomers and be found amongst the class prefigured by John.

There are many shades of viewpoint, however, held by brethren to-day throughout the Harvest field, ranging between the purely earthly-minded gospel of the older sects of Christendom as voiced by the seven thunders and that of the Present Truth symbolised in the "little book" held in the hand of the mighty angel who came down from heaven. Many things account for this confusion of ideas concerning the Present Truth. To begin with, of course, the "armour of light" for this day is provided only for the fully consecrated and spiritually-minded followers of the Lord. "Every one that is of the truth (led by the Spirit of truth)," declared our Lord, "heareth my voice." (John 18., 37.) There are many other voices including that of the seven thunders craving the attention of the Lord's followers to-day. Only those who are of the truth and who possess its Spirit will *escape the delusions and snares* of the present strife of tongues. All others, save the elect, will be deceived. (Matt. 24., 24.)

The testing of faith and of spiritual discernment amongst those who profess to be the Lord's followers and to be of the truth goes on apace to-day. Amongst even the thousands of those who in earlier days professed to have taken the "little book" out of the angel's hand and to have eaten and enjoyed its sweetness, but few in these latter days continue to appreciate the sweetness and spiritual sustenance of the Present Truth which it contains.

Conditions to-day amongst those who have made profession of being in the Present Truth surely reveal that, of the many thousands who at one time *made this profession*, few indeed have in the symbolic sense *eaten* the little book. Only those who did so can fully realise, as indicated in the figure, the sweetness and joy of the truth as well as the subsequent bitterness of going unto Him "without the camp" of mere profession. Those who, like John in the figure, have experienced something of this sweetness and bitterness because of a faithful witness for the truth are generally *regarded by the majority* of the brethren as extremists and bigots because of their steadfastness in the faith.

### **SWEET AS HONEY IN THE MOUTH**

A more expressive symbol could hardly be imagined to indicate the sense of holy joy and sweet satisfaction which have been the portion of all who have received the Present Truth, in the love and understanding of it.

It will be recalled how Daniel also expressed a similar thought when, in vision, he looked forward to the time when the Lord would return, and exclaimed—"Blessed is he that cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days"—1874 A.D. (Dan. 12., 12.)

As already noted, the little book, symbolic of Present Truth, was not available until after the mighty angel from heaven had appeared. The lesson of this is that the term Present Truth, as applied to our day, relates not to the general doctrines of the Plan revealed in other days, but to the "meat in due season" provided by our Lord for the household during this Harvest period. Otherwise stated, Present Truth to-day, is *Harvest* truth and mainly concerns those features of the Divine Plan which have to do with the presence of the Lord and the inauguration of His heavenly Kingdom. (Dan. 2., 44.)

Surely nothing could be sweeter to the spiritual palates of the feet members, still in the flesh, than the soul-stirring tidings of Zion's watchmen that—"Thy God reigneth!" and that "the Lord hath founded Zion." (Isa. 52., 7-8.)

### **BITTERNESS RESULTS FROM EATING THE BOOK**

The present world is no friend to God, or to His people. The Apostle has forewarned us that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2. Tim. 3., 12.) The persecutions of the Lord's truly consecrated followers do not often come directly

from the world, as such, but more often from professed followers of the Lord who have imbibed the worldly spirit. This was true in our Lord's case, as well as in the case of those who have walked in His steps, throughout the Age. It is likewise true to-day; and the indications of Scripture are that it will become increasingly so in the days which still lie ahead of us. (Rev. 13., 15-17.)

The spirit of the truth is a spirit of holiness and separation unto the Lord, which in those who are rightly exercised will separate them from all that is nominal, or a mere profession. Moreover, it will lead the same class into all truth, as it becomes due. For this reason, the pathway of the Lord's true followers, through the present evil world, must necessarily be a very narrow one, if they would avoid the many dangers from the enemies of the new creature.

The tendency to-day amongst many of the brethren, however, is to seek to broaden the pathway and thus to imbibe again the worldly spirit from which they were once separated by the spirit of the truth. Such a course would certainly avoid the bitterness of persecution and reproach which a full consecration to the truth always brings, but, if pursued, it can have but one ending—disappointment and loss. (1. Cor. 3., 15.)

### THOU MUST PROPHESEY AGAIN

It is most significant that it was not until John had taken and eaten the little book and had experienced the sweetness and bitterness accruing therefrom that the *information concerning a further prophesying* on his part was made known to him. "Thou must prophesy again," declared the angel, "before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

John, in the vision, prefigured the faithful feet members of Christ who are "alive and remain" during this day of our Lord's presence, and the angel's statement that he must prophesy again suggests to our minds the following important questions:—

1. In what sense, if any, could the members of Christ in the flesh (prefigured by John) be said to prophesy?
2. When did they on *any previous occasion* do any prophesying, and in what circumstances must they prophesy again?
3. Is there any significance attached to the fact that the "prophesy(ing) again" *follows* the eating of the little book?

#### Question No. 1

The answer to the question concerning the sense in which the Lord's people "must prophesy again" may readily be supplied once it is understood how and when the first prophesying was done. Fortunately, it is not necessary to look far afield in order to obtain the desired information regarding the previous prophesying. The same writer, in another vision, calls attention to the *first* prophesying in the following words—"I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days

(3½ years), clothed in sackcloth.” (Rev. 11., 3.) The word “power”, as supplied by the translators of the Authorised Version, is in italics and has no correspondency in the original text. It should be omitted as it only beclouds the sense of the context. Moffatt’s rendering is clearer and reads—“I will allow my two witnesses to prophesy for 1260 days clad in sackcloth.” The reference is to the 1260 years during which the true Elijah class, like the prophet in the figure, were in the wilderness condition—isolated by the persecutions of the Papal system. During that period, their testimony as the prophet, or mouth-piece of God’s Word, was carried out under the most trying circumstances, described in the vision as *clothed in sackcloth*. This period corresponds to Elijah’s first flight of 3½ years (1260 days) into the wilderness, when fleeing from the persecution of Jezebel who was a figure of the Papacy. During these days, many of the Elijah class were called upon to bear witness (prophesy) concerning their faith before kings and authorities and many sealed their testimony with their blood. Their prophesying was in the sense of a public witness when called upon to give a reason for the hope that was in them.

### Question No. 2

The circumstances in which the Elijah class, or, as depicted in the Revelator’s visions, the John class, were called upon to prophesy in the manner just explained should already be apparent. Elijah, it will be recalled, experienced two flights into the wilderness and both were occasioned by the persecutions of Jezebel. The first flight of 1260 days, as already seen, corresponded to the 1260 years of the Papal persecution of the saints of God—539 A.D. to 1799 A.D. During that period their testimony, in a figurative sense, may truly be described as in “sackcloth” conditions of the most trying and depressing kind.

The second flight of Elijah from the persecution of Jezebel was after he had slain the prophets of Baal. It is recorded that, on that occasion, he was miraculously provided with two meals in the wilderness, on the strength of which, after 40 days’ journey, he reached the Mount of God. (1. Kings 19., 1-8.) This second flight, in its antitypical aspect, has *yet to be fulfilled* and is understood to be the same experience as that to which the angel referred when he declared to John—“thou must prophesy again (a second time), before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.” As already explained, the *first* prophesying in wilderness conditions during the 1260 years of Papal persecution was mainly in the sense of having to bear witness to the hope that was in them. So also will it be when the church is called upon to “*prophesy again*” in the manner described by the angel when the antitypical Jezebel comes back to power.

A vision of the antitypical Jezebel (Papacy) when in the future she returns to power as the Eighth Head of Gentile rule, is given in Revelation 17. John was shown the vision by one of the angels about to pour out the seven last plague vials. As John, in figure, represented the watchers amongst the Lord’s followers, the implication



is that the *understanding of the vision* concerning the events described in Rev. 17 would become clear to them when the seven last plagues were about to begin. It is clear from Rev. 16., 2 that the first of the seven last plagues affects particularly the worshippers, or supporters of the Image of the Beast, the making of which—as the Seventh Head—is still future. From all this it must be obvious that the violent persecutions of the saints of God at the hands of the antitypical Jezebel, described in Rev. 17., 6, refer *not to the past but to the future* when the John class will once again in “sackcloth” conditions be forced to prophesy (witness) for their faith “before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”

In view of the severe tests of faith and endurance which still lie ahead of the Lord's followers, it is easy to see why the Apostle so earnestly exhorts the believers to take unto them the *whole armour* of God that they may be able to withstand (the testings of) the evil day. (Eph. 6., 13.)

### Question No. 3

In the Revelator's vision there seems to be a very close connection between the eating of the little book and that of his prophesying again. Indeed, a reasonable inference might be drawn from the context that the “prophesy(ing) again” is dependent upon the eating up of the little book.

In Elijah's day there were many thousands in Israel who did not bow the knee to Baal, but they escaped the persecution of Ahab and Jezebel. (Rom. 11., 4.) Evidently, there was something in Elijah's witness very different from that of the thousands just mentioned, something which drew upon him the active opposition and persecution of Ahab and Jezebel. The witness of God's prophet was of a *positive* character and concerned the will of God in relation to events which at that moment were troubling Israel. On the other hand, the attitude of the thousands who escaped the persecution while, at the same time, refusing to bow the knee to Baal was of a purely negative character. May it not be that the circumstances in which Elijah found himself in the days of Jezebel were intended to illustrate, in some measure, what may be expected by the Elijah class when the antitypical Jezebel returns again to power?

The witness of the Elijah class to-day is likewise of a positive character. It concerns the all-important message for Zion's feet members that the Lord hath founded Zion and that the reign of Christ over the earth has already begun. (Isa. 14., 32.) In a word, then, the witness to-day is the proclamation of the Present Truth—say “unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (Isa. 52., 7.)

The little book of Present Truth, revealed by the angel from heaven, provides a very important part of the complete armour, without which it will be impossible to withstand the snares and deceptions of the evil one. Viewed in this light, it explains why John was instructed by the voice from heaven to go and take the little book

from the hand of the angel and to *eat it up*. (Rev. 10., 8-9.) It explains, moreover, why the same voice of heavenly wisdom instructed John to seal up (not to interest himself in) the things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not (to the churches) since they related only to the strivings and ambitions of the natural man.

The Lord's true followers, instructed like John in the figure, have neither the time nor the inclination, far less the ability, to accomplish any uplift of the world in the present Age. Experience also goes to show that any neglect of the "one thing" on hand, or any effort undertaken on behalf of the world by the Lord's people in the past has always ended in disappointment and disaster, so far as their own spiritual hopes were concerned.

The Scriptures indicate that as the day of deliverance for the human family draws near, the thunder voices of discontented humanity and their clamour for the long suppressed rights of men, brought to light by the flashes of God's lightnings, will grow ever louder. The strife of tongues then prevailing not only amongst the various human factions, but also amongst the numerous sections of the professed followers of the Lord, will test to the uttermost the faith and discernment of every footstep follower of the Lord. More and more will it be necessary, in the days yet future, to close the ears to the many voices which, if followed, would draw away from the all-important work of making ready the remaining members of the Bride class for entrance into the Bridegroom's presence.

The only safe course, as in the case of John, will be to give heed to the voice which speaks from heaven; the voice of the Spirit of truth which will guide the Lord's true followers into all truth, including the contents of the little book of Present Truth specially provided for the strengthening of the faith and hope of the Lord's people in these closing days.

### MEAT IN THE DUE SEASON

When Elijah fled into the wilderness on the second occasion and his life was threatened by Jezebel, he was miraculously provided, as already noted, with two meals in the desert. On the strength of these two meals, he reached the Mount of God. (1. Kings 19., 8.) It has been suggested that the two meals provided for Elijah in the wilderness, during his flight from Jezebel, would fittingly prefigure the faith-sustaining meat in due season provided, upon the Lord's table, from the prophetic visions of Daniel and Revelation. In harmony with this thought, who would question that the Present Truth, due at the close of the Age, is not mainly derived from these two greatest of all Bible prophecies—Daniel and the Revelation?

The Revelator, referring to the time when the two witnesses prophesied in sackcloth, says—"It was given unto him (the Fifth Head—Antichrist) to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." (Rev. 13., 7.) Daniel adds—"And he 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., 25.) Concerning the operations of the Eighth Head, when the saints of God will require, in a special manner, to prophesy again and to bear witness to their faith a second time, possibly by a martyr's death, it is written—"these (the horns of the Eighth Head) shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they (the saints) that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." The fact that when these events are transpiring some, perhaps the bulk, of the saints are with the Lord in the Kingdom, clearly proves that the time is *subsequent* to the Lord's Second Advent. (Rev. 17., 14.)

It would appear that it is during the operations of the Eighth and last Head of Gentile power that the last members of the body will be changed. Like Elijah, in the figure, who reached the Mount of God during his second flight from the wrath of Jezebel, so it would seem that the ascent into the antitypical Holy Mount of the last members of Christ, will be during the fiery experiences of persecution, at the hands of the antitypical Jezebel, when she sits upon the scarlet-coloured beast of organised temporal power. (Rev. 17., 1-3.)

Without the sustaining food, supplied by the angel to Elijah in the wilderness, doubtless he would have failed to reach the Mount of God. It was a forty days' journey, but on the strength of the food thus specially provided, Elijah, we are informed, reached the Mount. (1. Kings 19., 5-8.) The figure, forty, seems to carry with it special significance in connection with the Lord's people. It seems to imply testing to the full limit of their faith. If that be so, may we not then see the reason why those prefigured by John are urged to eat the little book of Present Truth, now specially provided by the Lord, in order to sustain their faith during their final test, before reaching the Mount of God?

Can we not see, too, the importance of taking from the hand of the mighty angel the little book of "meat in due season," as did Elijah from the angel in the wilderness, if our faith would endure unto the end? Without the special food provided for this day, none will be able to stand. The Psalmist gives us a fitting symbolic picture of the circumstances of the Lord's followers in these latter days and declares—"Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. Blessed be the Lord; for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city"—Zion. (Psa. 31., 20-21.)

## CHAPTER III

# THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

*“The seventh angel blew his trumpet; and there followed loud voices in heaven which said, ‘The sovereignty of the world **now** belongs to our Lord and His Christ; and He will be King for ever and ever’ . . . ‘We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Ruler of all, who art and wast, because Thou hast **exerted Thy power, Thy great power, and hast become King**.’” (Rev. 11., 15-17—Weymouth.)*

The Seventh Trumpet is not only the last of the three Woe Trumpets of Revelation; it is also the last and most important of the entire Trumpet series and is thus termed by the Apostle “the trump of God.” (1. Thess. 4., 16.)

The view that the Trumpet vision began to have its fulfilment at the beginning of the Age is not considered satisfactory or capable of being harmonised with the immediate context of the vision. On the contrary, it is understood that the Trumpets began to sound at the commencement of the Reformation movement and that they will continue until the close of the thousand years of Christ’s reign over the earth. From this point of view, it is seen that the first six Trumpets cover the period from Martin Luther’s day until the Second Advent of our Lord. The seventh, or last, termed also the “trump of God,” began to sound when our Lord, in the glory of His mighty Kingdom, descended from heaven at the beginning of the Harvest-time, a matter of 70 or so years ago.

### WHAT THE TRUMPET SOUND IMPLIES

The blowing of a Trumpet in Israel generally indicated a call to war against an enemy. The Apostle, in his letter to the Corinthians, also indicated this thought when he wrote—“if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle ?” (1. Cor. 14., 8.)

The seven Trumpets of Revelation indicate a similar thought. It is understood that they symbolise stages in the warfare against the various forms of Papal oppression and tyranny, in which not only the Lord’s people but also the mass of her subjects had been so long held by that cruel and wicked system.

During the period of the first six Trumpets, God, by His providences, so overruled matters as to permit an increasing measure of light and knowledge to be disseminated concerning the rights and liberties of the people, in general, and the Lord’s people, in particular. The translation of the Bible and the invention of the printing press

played very important parts in the reform efforts. By these and other providences of the Lord, the subjects of Papal domination and ignorance were encouraged to free themselves from the conditions of superstition and oppression in which they had been so long held.

The fact that the angels (agencies) which blew these Trumpets are said to "stand in the presence of God"—ready to execute His will—would indicate that, in a general way, the entire Reformation movement was overruled by Divine providence in the interests of His faithful followers.

The prophet Daniel seems to refer to this measure of comfort and relief that came to the Lord's people through the efforts of the reformers, when he wrote—"they (the leaders of reform) shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries." (Dan. 11., 34.)

It was not then the due time in the Divine Plan for the complete overthrow or destruction of Satan's kingdom or of the Papal system which was the Adversary's chief mouthpiece and agent amongst men. Complete destruction of both of these enemies has been reserved for the day of the Seventh Trumpet, when they will be completely overthrown and eventually destroyed.

### THE ANGEL WHO STOOD AT THE ALTAR

The key to the time when the Trumpets began to sound is found in Rev. 8., 3-5. This small vision of three verses, complete in itself, is parenthetical and has no immediate connection with the Trumpets of the context, apart from the fact that it provides *the key to the time* when the Trumpet vision begins to be fulfilled and at the same time *serves to conceal* the correct understanding of the vision from all who have not the spirit of discernment.

In view of the foregoing, it will therefore be necessary in the first place to ascertain the significance of the angel standing at the Altar with the Golden Censer, without which it would not be possible to determine with certainty just where the Seven Trumpets which follow began to sound.

The Altar in question undoubtedly refers to the golden incense Altar which stood in the Holy of the typical Tabernacle. On the typical Day of Atonement, the High Priest alone was permitted to offer incense in the Holy, before passing the vail into the Divine Presence with the blood of the typical Sin-offerings.

The Gospel Age is the antitypical Day of Atonement during which the World's High Priest—Christ, Head and Body—officiates in the true Holy, or Spirit-begotten condition. Our Lord and Head officiated in the antitypical Holy *during the three and a half years of His earthly ministry*. Since Pentecost, the antitypical Priest has continued to offer incense at the same Altar in the person of His Body members in the flesh.

The argument, therefore, that the angel at the Altar represented our Lord, since Pentecost, advocating with the Father and rendering

acceptable the prayers of the saints by means of the incense from the Altar which He causes to mingle with them, would not hold good. *It would not be correct to say that our Lord since His ascension into Heaven has been offering incense in the antitypical Holy or Spirit-begotten condition.*

Moreover, there was nothing during the three and a half years of our Lord's earthly ministry that would correspond with the Revelator's statement that the *angel cast fire from the Altar into the earth* which resulted in voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. (Rev. 8., 5.)

These symbols, rightly interpreted, are understood to represent the mounting tension and conflict between light and darkness awakened by the Reformation movement in the days of Martin Luther and which reached their climax in the great earthquake of the French Revolution at the close of the 1,260 years of Papal domination over the nations, as the fifth "Head" of Gentile dominion.

It has already been noted that the *only one eligible to serve at the incense Altar* during the antitypical Day of Atonement is Christ. But, declared the Apostle, "as the (human) body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; *so also is Christ.*" (1. Cor. 12., 12.) Prior to Pentecost, Christ in the flesh who officiated in the Holy or Spirit-begotten condition was our Lord alone. Since Pentecost Christ in the flesh embraces only *the living members of His Body* and it is these members of the antitypical Priest who officiate at the Golden Altar since Pentecost, as did their Lord and Head.

The particular angel, or messenger, mentioned in the vision is understood to be a very prominent member of the Body who played an important part in the *opening conflict* with the Papal system. Martin Luther's action in challenging the authority of the Pope by nailing his 95 theses to the Church door at Wittenberg, in the year 1517 A.D., marked the commencement of the Reformation proper. There were, of course, earlier Reformers, but not until Luther's day could the part that any one or all of these played be rightly depicted as *casting fire from the Altar into the earth*, leading to the results described as voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. (Rev. 8., 5.) Martin Luther's action, just mentioned, started a conflict with the Papacy which increased in violence until it reached its climax in the terrible earthquake of the French Revolution.

### THE EFFECTS OF THE FIRST SIX TRUMPETS

With the commencement of the Trumpet vision now clearly located, it will be possible to discern more easily the significance of the various Trumpet blasts of truth and liberty, as, with increasing vigour, they bring retribution and disintegration upon every phase of Papal power—social and political, as well as ecclesiastical. Indeed, the Trumpets affected not only the mother system, but in due course the daughter systems, or offshoots, as well, for every reform

movement in due course became corrupted by the flatteries of kings and princes and in time was a *hindrance rather than a help* towards further light and liberty. (Dan. 11., 32-35.)

There is a considerable difference between the effects produced by the first six Trumpet blasts and that of the Seventh. Whereas these six result in only a partial retribution upon the Papal empire and its offshoots, described in symbol as a "third part" (chap. 8), the Seventh Trumpet will witness the complete overthrow and destruction of the Papal system and all her supporters in the fierce fire of anarchy and perdition. (Rev. 17., 16.)

In general, the effects of the first six Trumpets represent the efforts of the Lord's people and of the great mass of awakening humanity to free themselves from the chains of darkness and bondage in which they were so long held by that wicked counterfeit of God's Kingdom. During all that lengthy period of time, from Luther's day until the time of our Lord's Second Advent, it was not God's purpose then to overthrow, or destroy completely, either Satan's kingdom or the Papal empire, termed by the Revelator "Satan's seat," or chief agency of his power over men. (Rev. 2., 13.) Notwithstanding the terrible sufferings which the faithful followers of the Lord were permitted to endure throughout the entire period of Papal domination, we must believe, that what God in His far-seeing wisdom has seen fit to permit, will in the end work out for the best to those concerned.

It should not be thought that all the Trumpet soundings are of equal duration, or that the effect of one Trumpet blast ceases when the next Trumpet is sounded. From the human standpoint, they represent the cumulative effects of increasing light and liberty in the minds of those long held under restraint through the ignorance and superstition foisted upon them by Papal domination.

So far as the Lord's true followers were concerned these Trumpet blasts represent the efforts of their leaders to reform the corrupt Papal Church and to free themselves from the bondage of its erroneous teachings—hence, the various Protestant breakaways from the Mother Church which took place between Luther's day and the overthrow of Papal power through the French Revolution. The results of these efforts at reform have since become crystallised in the various sections of the so-called Christian Churches. On the whole, the doctrines of their creeds differ but little, apart from one or two exceptions, from those of the parent system.

It is not our purpose in this chapter to trace, in detail, the events described under the sounding of the first six Trumpets. In passing, it need merely be mentioned that they are understood to describe, in highly symbolic language, the efforts of reform by the Lord's people and the struggles for greater liberty by the people in general throughout the Reformation period and onward to the time of the Second Advent.

## THE TRUMPET HAS NO UNCERTAIN SOUND

As each Trumpet blast of liberty brought to light some additional aspect of the bondage and ignorance in which Papacy's subjects in general and the Lord's people as well had been so long held by that vile system, so each one, in turn, affected some aspect of the Papal empire. The first Trumpet, for instance, is said to affect the (symbolic) earth; the second, the sea; while the third makes bitter the rivers and fountains of waters.

Viewed in this way, it will be seen that, so far as the Lord's people are concerned, each Trumpet provided an increasing measure of light upon the pathway of those walking in fellowship with the Lord and searching for the goodly pearls of truth buried under the traditional errors of the Dark Ages. (Matt. 13., 45-46.) Each Trumpet, therefore, provided a witness against the errors and corrupt teachings of the Papacy, and was at the same time a *witness for the truth* amongst the Lord's faithful followers.

The witness of the Seventh Trumpet likewise, but to a much greater extent, *concerns all the members of Christ in the flesh* during these days of His Second Presence. It is of supreme importance, therefore, to all who are striving to walk in harmony with the Lord's will for this day that they give earnest heed to the witness message of this Trumpet. It is not only the last and greatest of the Trumpets; it is the Trumpet of God as well.

Unlike the previous six Trumpets which symbolised the efforts of those in bondage and darkness to free themselves under the overruling providences of God, the Seventh Trumpet heralds the direct *intervention of God*, through Christ, to overthrow all opposition to His will and to make an end of evil and all evildoers. With this brief introduction to the message of the last Trumpet, some features are now studied of its witness to Zion's feet members. To all who are upon the watch tower of expectancy, in this late hour of the Harvest-time, the message surely has no uncertain sound.

## GREAT VOICES IN HEAVEN

The first indication to John that the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet had begun was that great voices were heard in heaven. The heaven of the vision is not, of course, the far-off heaven of God's presence nor the political heaven of this world, but the *spiritual heaven* prefigured by the Holy of the typical Tabernacle—the Spirit-begotten condition.

Voices, in contrast with the thunderings of the masses for their rights and liberties, symbolise movements of truth. In this case, the truth proclaimed by these great voices is for the special benefit of, and can only be appreciated by, those who are spiritually-minded and have been accepted as new creatures in Christ. They are rightly described as great voices, for, as will be seen later, they proclaim a great truth for which the whole creation has, for 6,000 years, been groaning and travailing "in pain together until now." (Rom. 8., 19-22.)



Moreover, unlike the speculations of the human mind, these voices indicate no hesitancy or uncertainty regarding their message. They have no "uncertain sound" in the ears of those whom John prefigured, for their message is of God and is based upon the inspired word of His holy Apostles and Prophets. The Seventh Trumpet is therefore rightly termed the "trump of God".

### WHAT THE GREAT VOICES WERE SAYING

The message of the Seventh Trumpet, proclaimed by these voices, must sound strange indeed to the ears of all except the Spirit-begotten (or heavenly-minded) class of the Lord's followers. It is nothing less than the startling announcement that the approaching end of Satan's empire and all for which it stands has already come and that the sovereignty of this world has now passed into the hands of the One "whose right it is". (Rev. 12., 9.) Dr. Weymouth's rendering of what these voices were saying is very clear and pointed. It reads—"the sovereignty of the world NOW belongs to our Lord (Jehovah) and His Christ". In view of the emphasis upon the time element of the message, it will be of interest at this stage to enquire to whom the sovereignty of the world belonged prior to the Second Advent of Christ.

### EARTH'S FIRST DOMINION LOST

The prophet Micah had a vision of the coming to earth of Christ's Kingdom and of its establishment in the top of (above) the mountains, or kingdoms of earth, at the Second Advent. (Micah, 4., 1.) Later in the vision, he describes the results of the thousand years' reign of Christ and the restoration to mankind of the first dominion, or ruling authority of earth, lost by father Adam at the Fall. (Micah 4., 8.)

After man was created in Eden, God gave to him dominion over all the earth and everything appertaining to it. (Gen. 1., 26-28.) Adam never actually exercised the dominion outside the Garden of Eden whereas, had he remained obedient, it was assured to him and his offspring by the unchangeable Word of God. (Gen. 1., 26-28.) This dominion, or right to the rulership of earth, will be restored to the obedient of the human family by virtue of the Atonement, as foretold by our Lord in the parable of the sheep and goats. We read concerning the sheep of that Age—"then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, *inherit* the kingdom (dominion of earth) prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25., 31-34.)

After the Fall, it doubtless seemed to the heavenly hosts that God's Plan for the human family had failed. The angels were permitted to try what they could do towards the recovery of the race and the restoration of the lost dominion. Good intentioned as they doubtless were, they were no match for the wily Adversary who led them into sin and disobedience and away from the Creator. This effort,

on the part of the angels, was brought to an end at the Flood. (Gen. 6., 1-8; Heb. 2., 5.)

After the Flood, God called out Abraham and gave to him and to his seed the promise of world dominion, whereby the entire offspring of Adam should be reinstated in their original inheritance. We read that the "Promise that he should be *heir of the world*, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Rom. 4., 13.)

The promised dominion, however, passed down through Abraham's natural seed until the First Advent, when, because of their rejection of the Lord, they, in turn, were cast off and the Kingdom hope taken from them. On that occasion, our Lord declared—"The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof". (Matt. 21., 43.) Our Lord alone kept the terms of the Law and, in doing so, earned the right to the promised dominion as the true seed of Abraham. Christ alone (with the members of His Body) constitutes the promised seed of Abraham and the Heir to the first dominion lost in Eden. (Gal. 3., 16, 29.) He will exercise that dominion for a thousand years, until mankind themselves are fully restored and trained to exercise the dominion on their own account. At the close of the thousand years, this long lost dominion of earth will be handed back to the human family, to be exercised on their behalf through their earthly representatives whom God will "make princes (rulers) in all the earth." (Psa. 45., 16.)

### THE DOMINION USURPED BY SATAN

The question might be asked, at this stage, how it came about that Satan succeeded in establishing a kingdom, and a mighty one, too, over the nations and mankind generally. The answer is that Satan usurped the dominion by force and cunning deceit, as well as by misrepresentation of God's character. Satan's kingdom has been a kingdom of darkness and a dictatorship where no ray of light or truth from the Divine presence has been allowed to penetrate. Satan, after becoming an enemy of the Creator, had no more right to the dominion of earth than he had to exist at all. God, however, in His far-sighted wisdom, permitted him within certain bounds and time limitations to carry out his purpose in establishing a rival kingdom over the earth. In the wilderness temptation, we read that Satan offered to share the glory of his usurped dominion with our Lord on condition of His co-operation with him and the recognition of him as the ruler of earth's dominion. (Matt. 4., 8-10.)

A further question might also arise in relation to the "Times of the Gentiles." How came the Gentiles, as a part of Satan's kingdom, to exercise the dominion of earth for the "seven times", or 2,520 years? The answer, once more, would be that the Gentile nations had no more right to the dominion of earth than the great Adversary himself who deceived and controlled them. The important point to be noted here, however, is that as long as God's typical

Kingdom remained on earth, *neither Satan nor the Gentiles could exercise the full universal dominion* of earth. God's typical Kingdom in which, by virtue of the "Promise", the rightful dominion of earth inhered, was an insurmountable barrier to the exercise of universal dominion by any Gentile kingdom. That is why universal Gentile kingdoms are never mentioned prior to the overthrow and destruction of Israel's typical Kingdom.

When God, on account of Israel's disobedience, overthrew the nation and sent them into captivity, they could no longer exercise the dominion, but became a subject people. Since then, no king has sat upon the throne of Israel. In the meantime, by God's permission, the Gentile nations, under the Adversary's control, extended their dominion world-wide and unopposed for a set period of 2,520 years which began in 606 B.C. and terminated in 1914 A.D.

The term "universal" empire is often used in respect to the leading Gentile nations, but at no time has any one of these nations actually exercised their authority world-wide. The dominion of earth was given to them by Divine permission, but from the Divine standpoint *all Gentile rule is regarded as a unit* under its leading "Heads" controlling the entire human family. From this standpoint, it will be seen that the dominion of earth exercised by the Gentiles *is not a divisible authority* granted to separate nations. It is a unit upon which successive "Head" powers, controlling and influencing the policy of the nations in general, have from time to time arisen.

Seven such "Heads", with the addition of an eighth brought about by the rise to leadership a second time of one of the seven, fill up the entire period of the "Times of the Gentiles" plus the additional period during which the Gentile image is being broken to pieces by the Stone Kingdom. (Rev. 17., 9-11.)

## **EARTH'S DOMINION IS NOT CHRIST'S KINGDOM**

Many brethren seem to confuse the dominion of earth, wrested from the control of the Adversary at the Second Advent, with the Kingdom of Christ. They do not realise that Christ's Kingdom is *entirely spiritual*—comprised of spirit beings—and that He entered into it at His Ascension, when He was glorified and highly exalted as the Head of all principality and power in the Universe. They therefore think of the restoration of man's earthly Kingdom, controlled for the thousand years by our Lord, as the setting up of Christ's Kingdom.

This conception of Christ's Kingdom is not only out of accord with the Scriptural viewpoint of the matter, but it falls far short of the prophetic description of the City which God hath chosen for His habitation and in which He will forever dwell as the climax of His creative desires. (Psa. 132., 13-14.)

In order to obtain the right approach to the matter, it is necessary to distinguish sharply between our Lord's reign as the Father's representative which commenced *when, at the First Advent, He ascended upon high*, and His reign over the earth which commenced *at the*

*Second Advent* when He cast down the Adversary from his throne and wrested the dominion of earth from his control. (Rev. 12., 7-10.)

When our Lord was glorified after His ascension, He received the Kingdom to which He referred in the parable where He likened Himself to a nobleman going into a far country to *receive for himself a Kingdom* and to return. (Luke 19., 12-15.) Having received the Kingdom, He returned to earth at the Second Advent in all its might and glory to commence His reign over the earth which, for 6,000 years, had been under the Adversary's control and in open rebellion against God.

Contrasting the highly exalted position of our Lord after receiving His Kingdom with that of the angels, the Apostle, when writing to the Hebrews, declared concerning the Son—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom". (Heb. 1., 8.) That description of Christ's Kingdom and glory was written nearly 2,000 years ago and, without doubt, the Apostle had the right understanding of the matter and believed that our Lord had already entered into His Kingdom.

The object of our Lord's coming to earth, amongst other things, was to wrest from the Adversary the dominion of earth and all that appertains to the earthly sphere. He will retain and exercise the rulership of earth on man's behalf for a thousand years. At the end of that time when the human family, through their earthly leaders (the Ancient Worthies), are capable of ruling themselves in accordance with the Divine will, the dominion or sovereignty of earth will be handed back to them.

In the parable of the sheep and the goats our Lord confirmed the fact that it was the Divine purpose to restore the first dominion to the worthy and obedient of the human family—the sheep class—at the close of the Millennial reign.

The parable describes the separation, during the thousand-year Judgment Day, of the entire human family into the two categories of sheep and goats. To the sheep, the faithful and obedient class on the right hand of Divine favour, the King will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom (dominion of earth) prepared for you from the foundation of the world". (Matt. 25., 34.)

## **OCCUPATION OF THE EARTHLY SPHERE BY CHRIST'S KINGDOM**

After several Millenniums of domination under the kingdom of darkness, the human family have become so degraded and accustomed to the ways of evil and selfishness that, if left to themselves, and even if the Adversary's kingdom were completely destroyed, they would not be in a fit condition to govern themselves or to assume responsibility for the lower creation. Selfish ambition will require to be controlled and eventually stamped out by the occupying forces of Christ's Kingdom.

The Ancient Worthies, raised from the tomb, will be given perfect bodies and minds and will be trained as princes to represent the authority and instructions of Christ's Kingdom amongst men. They will eventually take over the sovereignty of earth and as "princes in all the earth" will exercise its authority on behalf of the faithful and obedient of the human family. It will require the occupation of earth and the control of its sovereignty by the invading forces of Christ's Kingdom for a thousand years before the evil effects of Satan's rule are completely eradicated from the human race.

A modern illustration of the principle involved in the invasion of Satan's kingdom and the restoration of Man's first dominion, through Christ's Kingdom, may be witnessed in Europe in our own day. The Nazi clique by force and misrepresentation seized the control of the German State and exercised dictatorial power over the people for a considerable number of years. The result was that when the Nazi dominion was overthrown by the invading powers, they realised that, after all these years of domination and misrule, the people of Germany had become so wedded to the evil system and so depraved in their outlook that they were totally unfitted to govern themselves. It is necessary, therefore, for the invading forces to occupy the country for an indefinite number of years. The dominion and control of Germany will be held by these powers until such times as they are fitted with the assistance of the occupying Forces to govern themselves, when it will be handed back to qualified representatives of the nation and the occupying Forces withdrawn.

In the case of the above illustration, no one would seriously argue that King George's reign *only began* when his Forces had victoriously invaded and seized the reins of government in the enemy territory. King George, and all the other rulers whose armies are concerned, had been exercising regal authority over their own countries, but had not previously intervened to establish their ruling authority in Germany.

In the light of the foregoing illustration, why should it be argued that when our Lord returned to earth at the Second Advent *He had not then received His Kingdom* or commenced His reign? Why should it be taught that *He is still without a Kingdom and that He will shortly set up His Kingdom* and commence His reign?

Such views detract from the majesty of the highly exalted Son of God and rob Him of His glory as the occupant of the highest and most glorious throne and Kingdom in the Universe—the Father's alone being excepted.

Why not drop such earthly-minded views of the Christ of glory and proclaim the truth concerning His exaltation, as set forth in the Scriptures? (Rev. 20., 11; 21., 2, 10.) According to the Scriptures, our Lord *entered into and was glorified in His Kingdom*—the new Jerusalem—when He ascended up on high, far above all principality and power. (Eph. 1., 21.) Christ's Kingdom is an "everlasting kingdom" and His "throne is for ever and ever". A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of His Kingdom. (Heb. 1., 8; 2. Pet. 1., 11.)

Since His glorification, our Lord has *never ceased to reign* as the Father's representative throughout the Universe, nor will He ever do so throughout the eternal Ages. At the Second Advent, He returned to earth, seated upon the glorious throne of His Kingdom, and all the holy angels which comprise the Kingdom with Him. (Matt. 25., 31.)

The Revelator was given a vision of the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom—the Heavenly Jerusalem. (Rev. 21., 2.) Since breaking into the “strong man’s” (Satan’s) house, and overthrowing his power in the heavenly sphere, this spiritual and invisible Kingdom has taken control in the heavens, and will exercise the dominion of earth for a thousand years. Satan’s power, already bound in the heavens, will in due course also be bound upon the earth, with the overthrow of the nations and the passing away of the present evil order through which he has so long operated.

### **THE SETTING UP OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM PRECEDES THE TIME OF TROUBLE**

The point which many brethren seem to overlook is that before Satan's house (kingdom) could be broken into and the usurped dominion of earth wrested from him, the Kingdom of Christ which accomplishes that work had first of all to “come down out of heaven from God” and by the exercise of mighty power it had to conquer the enemy.

There is no foundation whatsoever in the Scriptures for the view so generally held that our Lord, at the Second Advent, returned to earth *in order to receive His Kingdom* and, having received it, commenced His thousand year reign. This view presumes that the Church is the spiritual phase of the Kingdom and that it will be fully set up when all the elect have passed beyond the veil. According to the same view, the earthly phase of the Kingdom will come into being and be set up when the Ancient Worthies have been brought back from the tomb. This conception of Christ's Kingdom falls far short of the truth, for instead of the Church being the Kingdom, *they together with their Lord are the heirs of the same Kingdom*. This view also overlooks the fact that when our Lord was about to leave His disciples and ascend to the Father in order to receive His Kingdom, He promised them that He would prepare for them a place in it. Moreover, when He returned, *having received the Kingdom*, He would receive them unto Himself, that where He was there they might be also. (John 14., 3.)

As already explained, Christ's Kingdom into which He receives the Bride Class was “set up” in the heavens when He returned to earth at the Second Advent. It will exercise the dominion, or sovereignty of earth, through the earthly Kingdom which will in due course be set up and placed in the hands of the faithful Worthies of the past. The authority to exercise the sovereignty of earth, on their own account, will not be handed over to the representatives of the

human family until the end of the thousand years' reign. Meanwhile, the terms and regulations of the New Covenant will be strictly enforced by the Great Mediator—Christ, Head and Body.

When the purpose of the Kingdom has been accomplished at the end of the thousand years, the occupying spiritual forces of the Great White Throne Kingdom will no longer be necessary. They will be withdrawn and the earthly Kingdom will be handed over to the restored human family and placed in the hands of their faithful representatives—the Ancient Worthies. (Psa. 45., 16.)

### THE KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED

In harmony with the foregoing, the writer to the Hebrews refers to the Lord's followers as those *who are to receive a Kingdom*. (Heb. 12., 28.) It is the same Kingdom which our Lord inherited and in which He promised to prepare for them a place so that they might sit with Him in His throne when He returned to receive them unto Himself. (John 14., 2.) The same writer refers to this immovable Kingdom as Mount Zion, the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem. (Heb. 12., 22.)

With such a prospect before us of sharing with our Lord the very highest throne and Kingdom in the Universe (the Father's throne excepted), it will surely prove an incentive to every one, as exhorted by the Apostle, to lay hold upon the grace provided of God in order that we might render unto Him acceptable service and so make our calling and election sure.

As it has been possible to trace the distinction between the spiritual Kingdom of Christ which the overcomers alone will share, and the earthly dominion which will be restored to the human family at the close of the thousand years, some readers will now be better prepared to appreciate and proclaim the "great Trumpet" voices of Present Truth and join in the *Harvest work* of sealing the servants of God in their foreheads with an understanding of His will for to-day. (Rev. 7., 3.)

### THE FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS

Another important point arising out of the message of the Seventh Trumpet concerns the testimony of the four and twenty Elders. These twenty-four Elders are understood to symbolise the prophetic visions of the old dispensation, all of which foretell the coming of earth's great Deliverer and the signs which accompany the exercise of His mighty power, in the overthrow of the enemy.

Holy men of old were moved by the Spirit of God to foretell—in vision, and figure, and song—the circumstances and signs which would indicate to the watchers amongst the Lord's people *when the change of dispensation and commencement of Christ's reign* would take place. These symbolic Elders are said to render obeisance and worship to God, as the watchers begin to recognise the fulfilment of their prophetic utterances respecting the coming of Messiah's

long-promised Kingdom and righteous reign. Otherwise stated, it means that the recognition of the fulfilment of these prophecies by the watchers, thousands of years after they were uttered, enhances the glory of the Divine character and foreknowledge. In consequence, these symbolic Elders, in a figurative sense, are said to fall down and render worship to the One whose wisdom and foreknowledge were the source of their inspiration.

The important point to note, in relation to the worship rendered by these Elders, is that they all, with one voice, ascribe praise to God because *He hath taken to Himself His great power and hast reigned*. In plain language, this means that when the Seventh Trumpet should begin to sound, the watchers would be enabled to interpret the prophetic signs indicating that the *reign of Christ* had begun. These signs are everywhere evident to-day, and their testimony to those who have spiritual discernment is that God's Kingdom has indeed come and that its power is already manifest in the shaking of the present world order. (Rev. 11., 17.)

Only in the light of Present Truth and of the knowledge that the reign of Christ over the earth has begun (for the overthrow of the present evil world), can much that is written in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms be understood. In the understanding of these prophetic visions, the foreknowledge of the Creator who inspired them is made manifest, as well as the far-seeing wisdom embodied in the Divine Plan. The events of our day confirm the testimony of these faithful servants of God and, in the light of their fulfilment, the glory of the Creator's character and Plan is to-day made manifest as never before. In the Revelator's vision concerning the things of our day, these prophetic testimonies are personified and seen to fall upon their faces to render praise and worship to their Divine Author. The glory of God, as revealed in the testimonies of these holy men of old, is as yet seen only by *those who have spiritual perception* and who are walking in the light of Present Truth. To the world in general, they are nothing more than poetic sentiment inspired by the national hopes of the people of Israel.

The truth represents God and without the knowledge of the truths contained in the Holy Scriptures, we would have no knowledge whatsoever of His character and attitude towards the human family or of His Plan for their deliverance from the Adversary's control. Every advance step in the unfolding of the Divine Plan throws fresh light upon the sacred oracles of the Divine storehouse and this, in turn, makes manifest the glory and greatness of the One who is worthy of the praise and thanksgiving of every one of God's intelligent creatures.

### **HAST TAKEN TO THEE THY GREAT POWER**

The exercise of the mighty power of God became necessary in order to put an end to evil and "still the avenger" of God and humanity. Our Lord, as the Father's representative, was given all power in heaven and in earth by virtue of His faithfulness unto death in carrying out the heavenly Father's Plan. This mighty power had



not, however, been exercised by Him prior to His Second Advent. In every other part of God's Great House, with the exception of the earthly sphere, God's will is faithfully and loyally done by all His intelligent creatures, and the exercise of power and force has therefore been unnecessary. Power is one of the four chief attributes of the Creator's character. This attribute of power is the *last of the four to come into operation* in the execution by our Lord of the Divine Plan of salvation for humanity.

The tragedy of Eden which resulted in the infliction of the death penalty upon Adam and his offspring was a stern reminder that God was an *all wise* God who knew the end from the beginning. It further made manifest the knowledge that He was at the same time just and holy in all His ways. *Divine love and mercy* also played their part in the execution of the Father's Plan, but it was not until the Second Advent, when our Lord descended from heaven with the voice of the Archangel and Trump of God, that He exercised His mighty power to overthrow the archenemy of God and mankind.

For a period of no less than six thousand years, God remained silent and, within certain limits, permitted the Adversary to carry out his plan to establish for himself what he doubtless thought to be an impregnable kingdom in the heavenly sphere of our planet. When Satan became a rebel and usurped the dominion of earth, God's Kingdom ceased to operate in the earthly mansion of His House. In comparison, however, with the immensity of God's Kingdom, with its countless mansions of higher creations, earth's dominion becomes too insignificant to take into account.

The expression "taken unto thee thy great power" is of deep significance. Satan's kingdom is likened by our Lord unto a strong man's house and it would seem that he considered it safe and impregnable against any attempt on the part of the Creator to overthrow it. It may also have been that, having succeeded in putting our Lord to death, he considered there was no longer any danger from that quarter. Something like that may have been implied in the Apostle's statement concerning the mighty power of God "which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion." (Eph. 1., 19-21.) Again, we read—"Having spoiled (Greek—stripped off, or unclothed) principalities and powers (of their reputation), he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Col. 2., 15.)

The exposure of the limitations of Satan's power and of his inability to prevent the resurrection of our Lord from the tomb may have given hope to those of the "spirits in prison" who, while still in bondage to the Adversary, would be glad of the opportunity to escape and return to the paths of righteousness in God's Kingdom (1. Pet. 3., 19.)

### AND HAST REIGNED

Wherever the will of God is done, there God reigns and the royal law of love and liberty which operates throughout God's Kingdom prevails. His will has not been done on earth since the entrance

of sin in Eden. With the coming of Christ's Kingdom at the Second Advent, the exercise of "all power in heaven and in earth" given unto Him of the Father began, so that in due time the prayer "thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" will be answered. (Matt. 6., 10.) Then, at last, will it be true that "nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"; it will be possible to "sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree: and none shall make them afraid." (Micah. 4., 3-4.) Then, indeed, will the desire of all nations have come and the Golden Age of men's visions and dreams, so long anticipated, will at last have been realised.

Little, however, does the world at present know what lies ahead of them and what is involved in the solemn word of warning—"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." (Rev. 12., 12.) Perhaps it is best for them that, in the circumstances, they should not be fully enlightened concerning these events, for then would their responsibility and the severity of their judgment be proportionately increased. For the Lord's followers the matter is, however, very different and their responsibilities are much greater.

Many through failure to put on the "armour of light," necessary to shield their faith and hopes in the evil days of the Church's closing experiences, will be unable to withstand the strong delusions which will deceive all except the spiritually-minded elect overcomers. Many whose love for the truth has grown cold seem to think that, after all, the knowledge of the truth is of but minor importance because love is the principal thing. Such do not seem to realise that the truth represents the Lord and that fellowship with Him is only possible so long as we walk in the light of the truth. This means not only the doctrines of the "faith once delivered," but also the present and prophetic aspects of the truth, as they continue to shine more and more upon the pathway of the Lord's people.

The love of God is not merely a matter of kind and sympathetic heart intentions or of sentimental feelings. It embraces all of these, but much more. It is the fruitage of the Holy Spirit which cannot be cultivated apart from fellowship with God, and fellowship with Him is only possible through the knowledge of the truth. (1. John 1., 6-7.) "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, *hath not* (fellowship with) God. He that *abideth in the doctrine of Christ*, he hath both the Father and the Son." (2. John 9.)

There is still another aspect of the matter which is very important to every sincere follower of the Lord of this day. It is implied in the words of the Revelator—"And who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6., 17.) The suggestion is sometimes heard that knowledge will not take one into the Kingdom. This is, of course, a truism that no one would wish to dispute, but the implication of the suggestion goes much deeper and implies that the Kingdom may be gained *without any serious attempt to gain a knowledge* of the truth. It is not, however, a question of gaining the Kingdom because of the

amount of knowledge of the truth one may possess. No! the real question which every one of the Lord's followers should carefully ponder is—"Shall I be *able to stand and endure to the end* of my earthly course, or shall I, like the thousands mentioned by the Psalmist, stumble over the stumbling stone in the pathway and fall?"

The real tests of faith and of spiritual discernment *have not yet come* upon the feet members still in the flesh, but they certainly will come, just as they came upon our Lord and Head. Only those who have put on the armour provided against that evil day will be able to stand. (Eph. 6., 13.) Thousands have already fallen and have made shipwreck of their faith because they failed to put on the armour necessary for their protection, and thousands more will doubtless also fall.

The solemn duty, then, of all who are awake and watching is not to waste valuable time and opportunities in attempting some mighty effort on behalf of the world or of the worldly-minded followers of the Lord who have no ears for the message of Present Truth. Their duty lies in "sealing the servants of God in their foreheads" with the knowledge that "the Lord hath founded Zion" and that safety and deliverance can only come from that source. (Isa. 14., 32.)

### THE NATIONS WERE ANGRY

The peoples of all nations are to-day on the march for greater liberty and freedom. The great increase of knowledge and the running to and fro brought about by the coming down of the New Jerusalem—Christ's Kingdom—from God out of heaven has resulted in the present unrest and anger of the nations. The Revelator had a vision of the coming of Christ in His Kingdom, concerning which he wrote "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having **great power**; and the earth was lightened with his glory." (Rev. 18., 1.) The coming of this angel (messenger of Jehovah) undoubtedly refers to the Second Advent of our Lord in the glory and majesty of His mighty Kingdom—the holy Jerusalem. (Rev. 21., 10.)

Language would completely fail to describe the glory and greatness of this heavenly mansion, prepared as the eternal home of the Bride and Bridegroom. In order, therefore, to convey to our human minds some faint idea of its glory, the Revelator is given a description of what might be considered our highest conception of a material city of abnormal strength, built with the most precious stones of which the human mind could conceive. (Rev. 21., 10-27.) This is the same city—Mount Zion—which the Psalmist describes as "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth . . . on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." (Psa. 48., 2.)

### THY WRATH IS COME

The seven last plagues are described by the Revelator as the plagues of God's wrath and the pouring out of these plague-vials is said to fill up the wrath of God. (Rev. 15., 1.)

A striking figure of the deliverance of the human family (including the Church of the First-borns), from the bondage of the present evil world is provided in the deliverance by Moses of the nation of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. Indeed, the vision of the symbolic plagues of Revelation is based upon the figure of the Egyptian plagues.

In the figure, the plagues *followed the coming of Moses* to deliver the people of Israel from Egypt. There were ten plagues, in all. The first three were common to both Israelites and Egyptians, while the seven last were limited to the Egyptians alone. Moreover, these seven last, generally known as the judgment plagues, were of a more severe character than were the first three, and it is significant that, unlike the first three plagues, the last seven *could not be counterfeited by Pharaoh's magicians*.

The lesson in all this is that the antitypical plagues must all fall *within the Harvest period and subsequent to the Second Coming* of the antitypical Moses—Christ. Moreover, as in the figure, the seven last plagues are placed in a different category from the first three and are thus termed the plagues of God's wrath. The first three are in the nature of judgments upon Babylon's creeds before she becomes allied with the federated kingdoms of the world. This exposure of her errors and false teachings, as in the figure, results in the separation and coming out of Babylon of the Lord's true followers—Israelites indeed—from the great mass of mere professors prefigured by the Egyptians. Those who fail to obey the call to "come out of her" will receive of the plagues—the seven last. (Rev. 18., 4.) By identifying themselves with Babylon, they are counted as partakers in her sins and consequently will receive of her plagues.

The seven last plagues are due to begin when the Image of the Beast, or "Seventh Head," has been set up. This can be gathered from the fact that when the first of these seven last plagues is poured out, its judgments come upon those who worship (uphold) the Image. (Rev. 16., 2.)

The lesson in all this for those who would "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" is to *separate themselves* from every form of Babylonish confusion and bondage and to stand fast in the full liberty of Christ. Under no pretence whatever should they allow themselves to be entangled in any form of bondage, either of unsound doctrine or propaganda contrary to the work and witness of the Harvest-time. (Matt. 13., 30.)

There is but *one organisation and one alone authorised by the Scriptures* and that is the Ecclesia, or Church of the living God. Any additional organization introduced amongst the Lord's people, however wise it might seem, is not of faith in the Word of the Lord and, sooner or later, it will result in trouble and disappointment. The Scriptural principle to which all who seek the Lord's approval and blessing should adhere is that *obedience to His Word is better* than any sacrifice or witness work on our part which has not His authority and approval. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1. Sam. 15., 22.)

## THE TIME FOR JUDGING THE DEAD

The next feature of truth brought to John's attention, under the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, concerns the time when the dead are judged. This can only commence after the completion of the antitypical Day of Atonement, when the last member of the Lord's Goat class has been sacrificed and the blood sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat *on behalf of the people* by the antitypical Priest—Christ, Head and Body members.

The dead in question embrace not only those in the tomb, but the living nations as well who, in God's sight, are dead. The Ancient Worthies will be the first of those in the tomb to come forth and they will have a "better resurrection" than the human family in general. Their faith has already been tested and, on this basis, they have been justified, or counted righteous in the Lord's sight. They will therefore not only come forth with perfect bodies, but will be given *positions of authority* as representatives of the human family under Christ's Kingdom.

The living nations which have passed through the great tribulation and have escaped destruction will apparently be the first to stand before the judgment seat of the Great White Throne of the Kingdom of Christ. (Rev. 20., 11-12.) Next, will come those who are in the tomb, until all the human family, small and great, have had their opportunity of gaining life and lasting blessing under the terms of the New Covenant.

## REWARDING THE PROPHETS AND SAINTS

The time for rewarding the prophets of old will be when they are brought back from the tomb. Doubtless, these holy men of old who in their day suffered much on account of the faithful testimony which by the power of the Holy Spirit they were moved to give, will share with the patriarchs of other Ages in the better resurrection. (Heb. 11., 35.)

They will no doubt also be rewarded with positions of honour and responsibility under the Kingdom, as representatives of the human family, in the Day when the first dominion, lost in Eden, will be restored to the human family. As already mentioned, the complete authority of the earthly Kingdom will not be handed over to them until they have fully demonstrated their worthiness of it, at the close of the thousand years. (Matt. 25., 34.)

The saints in this connection are not the saints of the present Age who are heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom. The bulk of these Gospel Age saints have already entered into their reward and the remainder, still in the flesh, enter into their blessedness one by one as they die in the Lord "from henceforth." (Rev. 14., 13.)

There are earthly saints as well as the heavenly, spiritual saints of the present Age. Aaron, for instance, is referred to as a saint of God and his reward will be in the earthly Kingdom. (Psa. 106., 16.) The term "saint" means a holy one—sanctified by the power

of the Holy Spirit of God. The operation of the Holy Spirit, in connection with the earthly Kingdom, will not be for the purpose of begetting to a higher or spiritual nature.

It will be *poured out upon all flesh* who are desirous of coming into full harmony with the Mediatorial Kingdom in order that they might be sanctified and made worthy of eternal life upon the human plane. Nothing less than the complete sanctification of heart and mind will be able to pass the final test which the Lord will permit to come upon all, in order to prove their worthiness of everlasting life in the restored Paradise of God. (Rev. 22., 14.)

## DESTROYING THEM WHICH DESTROY THE EARTH

The destruction of the finally incorrigible of the human family as well as of the great Adversary himself, will take place after the thousand years have ended. (Rev. 20., 7-10.) It is true, of course, that during the thousand years any who do not respond to the blessings of the New Covenant and who refuse the assistance of the Mediator to enable them to walk up the Highway of Holiness will, after an opportunity of a hundred years, be cut off in second death as unworthy of any further opportunity of life. (Isa. 65., 20.)

It would seem, however, that the final test through the loosing of Satan, brought about by the withdrawal of the occupying forces of Christ's Kingdom and the end of the iron rule, will reveal that many who feigned loyalty to the Kingdom and shared in the restitution blessings are *not wholly sanctified* in heart and mind. These, probably disappointed that they were not given a *share in the rulership* of the earthly Kingdom, will quickly respond to the Adversary's agitation against the "camp of the saints" in Jerusalem—the earthly princes in whose hands the authority of earth's dominion has been placed. (Rev. 20., 9.)

It may be that they will be influenced by the Adversary to believe that they have a grievance in being overlooked when the Kingdom authority is handed over to the earthly representatives at the end of the thousand years. The matter will apparently develop into an organised revolt against the "new earth" order, set up under the direction of Christ's Kingdom. It would seem that a deputation in force will go up to Jerusalem in order to press their claims and to have the matter rectified. They will not, however, be permitted either to alter or destroy the new earthly arrangement placed in the hands of those worthy men of old who, on account of their faithful witness in turning many to righteousness, will shine as the stars for ever and ever. (Dan. 12., 3.)

Their attitude towards the Divine arrangement will reveal not only their unworthiness of any authority in the earthly Kingdom, but (like the Adversary who deceived them) also their unworthiness of eternal existence in any circumstances in the earthly mansion of the Creator's great House. (Rev. 20., 9.) Complete and hopeless destruction will suddenly overtake them as well as the evil system which they will have succeeded in building up.

When we read that the devil "that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and false prophet are" (were cast), we are to understand that this refers to the organised system through which the Adversary operated and by means of which he deceived those who took part in the insurrection. A similar use of the term "devil" is found in the message to the Church at Smyrna where the Papal system is called the devil. (Rev. 2., 10.) It is, of course, true that the Adversary himself will also be destroyed, but the vision described by the Revelator in this case concerns only events which transpire amongst those of the human family after the rule of the Mediator has come to an end.

### TRANSFORMED INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT

When the Adversary sets out to deceive any of the Lord's people, he is careful not to reveal himself as an enemy of God or of His Word. To do so would be to defeat the object which he has in view. Instead, he approaches his would-be victims as an "angel of light," implanting in the mind suggestions which, if entertained, would *appear to be* for their highest good so that they must seemingly spring from a good source.

The matured mind, sanctified by the truth and capable of discerning between good and evil, will readily realise the principle underlying the suggestions and thus see where it would lead as respects the Lord's will and approval.

If there is any lingering trace of selfish ambition in the heart, it will colour and distort the judgment so that the mind will be incapable of discerning the true nature of the temptation. The result will be failure and the consequences will be disastrous. There are many suggestions placed before the brethren to-day which, if judged by themselves *apart from the Divine will and Plan* for our day, would *appear* to be good works. Examples of such may be seen in efforts to *enlighten the world* concerning the hope for the departed friends or to *give a witness to the public* concerning the world's hope and the good time coming for all mankind.

To the babe in Christ, not clearly discerning the will of God for His followers concerning the *work and purpose of the Harvest-time*, the pursuit of such efforts would appear to be "a way which seemeth right unto a man, but (if pursued far enough) the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14., 12.)

In conclusion, it must be evident to all discerning minds that the message of the Seventh Trumpet has brought to the Lord's followers greatly increased enlightenment through their sealing (intellectually) with the knowledge of Present Truth, but at the same time it has brought *tests of faith and discernment* which will *test to the uttermost* the heart loyalty and obedience of every one who professes to be a follower of the Master.

The Seventh Trumpet, then, is indeed a great Trumpet. Its message concerns the greatest event of all time—the intervention of

Christ's Kingdom for the suppression of evil and the restoration of mankind to the long lost dominion of their earthly home—Paradise restored.

Blessed are those who have heard its joyful sound and doubly blessed are all who have the faith and discernment to *recognise its true import* and who realise the urgency of making themselves ready to enter in before the door of all opportunity into the Kingdom is forever shut. (Matt. 25., 10.)

### OBJECTIONS TO CHRIST'S REIGN HAVING BEGUN

**Objection No. 1.** How could we think of the Kingdom having been set up and the reign of Christ begun before He has any subjects to reign over? Does not a kingdom imply a king and governmental laws, as well as subjects for whom the laws are made?

**Answer.** The implication underlying these questions is that Christ Himself and the members of His Body are the Kingdom, and that when, in due time, the world is brought into subjection as willing subjects, then the Kingdom will be set up and Christ's reign will begin.

In order, however, to get the correct viewpoint of these most important truths, it is essential to have our minds clear on two points:—

(1) **The first of these points is that Christ and the overcoming church are not the Kingdom proper**, except in the sense that the Kingdom belongs to them by virtue of the Promise. Christ, Head and Body, sit upon the throne of Zion's Kingdom. (Rev. 3., 21.) In the same way, we might speak of King George as being the heir and ruler of the British Empire, but it would not be correct to say that he and his Queen on the throne were the Empire.

(2) **The second point to note is that Christ's Kingdom is not composed of earthly, material beings.** On the contrary, it is of heavenly origin, as the name Heavenly, or New Jerusalem implies. (Heb. 12., 22.) It is comprised of heavenly, angelic beings, and therefore invisible to natural sight. It was to this Kingdom, or Mansion, that our Lord made reference when, before ascending to the Father, He informed the disciples—"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a *place for you*, I will come again, and receive you unto myself (into the prepared place); that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14., 2-3.) It was concerning this prepared Kingdom, or Mansion, that our Lord spake when He declared to the disciples "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12., 32.) It will thus be seen that inheriting, or receiving the Kingdom, and actually being the Kingdom, are quite different matters. This Kingdom, which came down out of heaven from God at the Second Advent, was complete in itself, and only awaited the gathering of the Bride Class to *share its throne* with their Royal Bridegroom. If it be asked who constitute this Kingdom, the answer is that they are the myriads of angelic beings who comprise Mount Zion, the city of the great King. (Psa. 48., 1-2.)



## CHRIST'S KINGDOM EXERCISES THE DOMINION OF EARTH FOR A THOUSAND YEARS

While it is true that Christ's Kingdom, as such, is complete in itself as a spiritual organisation of heavenly beings, yet in order to accomplish the deliverance of the human family, it will seize the dominion of earth from the usurper—Satan, and exercise it for a thousand years. The subjection of the human family to Christ's Kingdom will last only until the work of restitution is complete, when mankind have been fully delivered from the power of sin and death.

Then, at the end of the thousand years, all enemies will have been put under the feet of Christ, and the Kingdom will be handed over to those for whom it was originally prepared—the redeemed and restored human race. (Matt. 25., 34.) It is thus seen that while the human family will, for the purpose of their deliverance from the power of Satan, be subject to Christ's Kingdom for a specified time, yet it is only in this relative sense and for a limited period that they may be regarded as a part of the Kingdom.

**Objection No. 2.** Another objection to the view that Christ is now reigning is expressed in the suggestion that the reign of Christ could not commence until all the members of His Body were complete and with Him beyond the veil.

**Answer.** We are not aware of any Scripture that would appear to teach or imply that the setting up of Christ's Kingdom, or the commencement of His reign, must wait until all the members of His Body have passed beyond the veil. Many Scriptures, on the other hand, might be referred to which would seem clearly to teach that, for a considerable time after Christ's Kingdom has come into power and His reign begun, there would be the remnant of those "who are alive and remain" still in the flesh. When once it is recognised that Christ and His Body members do not, of themselves, constitute the Kingdom, but, on the contrary, are the *heirs of the Kingdom* whose throne they occupy, then it may easily be seen that the functioning of the Kingdom does not depend upon the time when those who are alive and remain have been gathered.

A simple illustration might serve to make this point clear. When an earthly king ascends the throne of the kingdom to which he is heir, his right to reign over and occupy the throne, or even the functioning of his kingdom, do not depend upon whether or when he may take to himself a queen, as joint-occupant of his throne and kingdom. Moreover, it must be remembered that the church's share as joint-ruler with Christ in His Kingdom is purely of Divine grace and not of necessity. Furthermore, from the Divine standpoint, the marriage of the Lamb was *reckoned as complete* when, at the commencement of the Harvest-time, the sleeping saints were raised and the balance of the 144,000 had been called. So far as the remnant of those who are still alive and remain are concerned, it is only a question of time until they, too, pass beyond the veil and are joined to their Lord and Head.

Briefly summarising the matter, it means, then, that the reign of Christ, with the resurrected saints, began at His Second Advent when, accompanied by His mighty angels, He descended from heaven in the glory of the New Jerusalem. The "Great White Throne", the seat of His mighty power, has been established in the heavens, from whence He will rule and judge every enemy and bring them under control. The Judgment Day, corresponding with the thousand years of Christ's reign, began when the strong man's house (kingdom) was broken into and Satan, the proud occupant of its throne, was cast down to earth from his place of power in the heavens. (Rev. 12., 9.)

## CHAPTER IV

# THE MAN CHILD VISION

*“There appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars :*

*And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered . . . .*

*And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” (Rev. 12., 1-2, 5.)*

Most students of the Scriptures would agree that among the many visions which comprise the Book of Revelation, there is none more striking in its symbolic figures than the one contained in Chapter 12. When rightly understood this reveals to the truth-seeker some of the profoundest features of prophecy concerning the present developments of the Divine Plan.

Indeed, the Book of Revelation as a whole is rightly termed a prophecy by the angel who conveyed the contents of its visions to John. It is a prophecy, however, which stands in a category of its own, for it contains many vital aspects of truth essential for the protection of the faith and hopes of the Lord's people of this day. Without the spiritual food so abundantly provided therein for the strengthening of the faith and hopes of the new creature, he would not be able to endure unto the end. Elijah, it will be recalled, on his second flight in the wilderness from the persecutions of Jezebel was provided by an angel of the Lord with two meals, on the strength of which he reached the mount of God. (1. Kings 19., 4-8.)

The Church in the flesh are the Elijah class and Jezebel is coming back again to power in the near future. The true Elijah class will therefore need the strengthening food provided in these meals if, like Elijah in the figure, they would be able to overcome the difficulties of the journey and find strength to reach the antitypical mount of God—the Heavenly Kingdom. Elijah's two meals miraculously provided at his time of direst need, are understood to prefigure the strengthening and soul-stirring truth for this day of the Church's sorest need found in the prophetic visions of Daniel and Revelation.

### SEALED BUT NOT BY GOD

It may seem a startling suggestion to make, but it is nevertheless true that some of the most vital features of the prophecies of both Daniel and Revelation (which concern chiefly the Lord's followers of our day) have been in the past and are, even now, sealed visions to many who profess to be in Present Truth. They are not sealed by Divine authority but by interpretations from the past handed down from one to another of the Lord's people.

These views have for various reasons become so deeply rooted in the minds of some that neither the reasoning nor logic concerning a more harmonious and Scriptural interpretation of these prophecies would seem to have any weight with them. Others, little accustomed to the exercise of their senses (spiritual faculties) in the discernment of truth and error, are afraid to trust their judgments concerning the interpretation and assimilation of the strong meat contained in the visions of these two prophetic Books. For the present, it is our purpose to limit study to the visions found in the twelfth chapter of Revelation.

The view generally held among those who profess to have an understanding of this symbolic vision locates its fulfilment many centuries ago in the Papal system. The line of interpretation adopted is that the man child represented the Papacy which rose to power as Head over the nations about the year 539 A.D. and continued to exercise that authority for a period of 1,260 years.

According to this view, the woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet prefigured the Gospel Church which, in Apostolic times, maintained its virgin chastity under the guidance and authority of its twelve Apostolic stars. Following the same line of interpretation, it is considered that the expression "she being with child" which follows, implies that at a later stage the once virgin Church was no longer chaste, but had become contaminated with the worldly spirit and hence had proved unfaithful to her Lord and Head. It is claimed that the bringing forth of a man child, at a still later stage, represented the culmination of the apostasy in the exaltation of the Papacy to temporal and spiritual authority over the nations as God's Kingdom.

According to this line of interpretation the other symbolic features of the vision—"war in heaven"—"the casting down of the great dragon"—"the coming of the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ"—all had their fulfilment in the rise of the Papal system and its persecutions of the Lord's followers during the 1,260 years of its ascendancy over the nations of the earth.

### **THIS INTERPRETATION BELONGS TO THE PAST**

When this method of interpreting the vision was first propounded or by whom, it would not now be possible to determine. It is generally attributed by the upholders of this viewpoint to Brother Russell, but apart from a brief article in question and answer form found in "Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence" during the first year of its publication 1879 A.D.—nearly seventy years ago—there is little indication in his writings that he had arrived at any fixed conclusions regarding the significance of many features of this vision.

It is common knowledge that during his later years he had little or nothing to say regarding the Book of Revelation. His expressed belief was that, one day, he would be permitted of the Lord to write a book on Revelation which, in anticipation, was generally referred

to as the Seventh Volume. Brother Russell, as is well known, passed to his reward without writing Volume Seven. As a consequence, he has left in his later writings little indication of his views concerning either this or any other important vision of Revelation.

When answering questions by the brethren at Conventions as to when they might expect the Seventh Volume, his reply on such occasions was that when he had received the key to the Book, he would write the Seventh Volume. The key, he anticipated, would be found in the 17th chapter of the Book.

Most brethren are familiar with these matters, but they are mentioned here because they have an important bearing upon the subject-matter of this chapter. Since the passing from our midst of our dear Brother, a strong sentimental feeling has taken root in the mental outlook of a great many brethren. This finds expression in the view that no fresh light, or clearer understanding of truth, should be looked for, or anticipated, since our Brother Russell's departure. The natural and unconscious tendency of such an attitude of mind towards the truth is to regard the writings of our late Brother as a creed, or yardstick, in determining what is truth and error.

Once that spirit has taken root in the mind, further progress in the increasing light upon the pathway becomes impossible. Such could no longer profess to believe that "the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day". (Prov. 4., 18). On the contrary, such an outlook regarding the truth would be more correctly expressed by an alteration of the text so that, instead of reading "more and more unto the perfect day", it would read "more and more unto the death of Brother Russell".

In all this there is no intention of either belittling or depreciating the importance of Brother Russell's writings as helps to Bible Study. It is a different matter, however, for one to develop into a *student or interpreter of Brother Russell*, rather than to make use of these Bible helps as *aids to progress* in the increasing light of truth.

Lest someone may think that this picture of the general outlook amongst many of the truth people to-day is overdrawn, one example recently brought to the writer's attention is mentioned. A brother had a copy of one of the truth Journals recently sent to him and, on reading through the articles, was so struck by the frequency with which the Editor quoted Brother Russell in support of his viewpoint that he decided to total up the number of times on which Brother Russell's name was invoked as giving support to his line of interpretation. To his great surprise he found in that one issue of the Journal the total number of times was 104, while at the same time only a few references were made to the Scriptures themselves.

This is surely an *example of the sectarian spirit*, pure and simple, for it gives greater prominence and weight to the writings of our late Brother than to the original Scriptures concerned. Progress in the light and close fellowship with the source of all true light—God Himself—cannot be attained upon that pathway. It is only if we

*walk in the light*, as He is in the light, that we can have fellowship the one with the other. (1. John 1., 6-7.)

Those who adhere to the view that Revelation 12 was fulfilled in the past, and that the man child of the vision prefigured the Papacy, fail to appreciate the deep spiritual truths which the vision contains. It is believed that, rightly understood, this twelfth chapter of Revelation will be seen to contain some of the most profound aspects of Present Truth found anywhere in the Scriptures. On the other hand, the view to-day held by many that its fulfilment is a *matter of past history*, completely seals the vision and hinders progress in the light now shining so brightly upon the path of the Lord's followers. As a consequence, some of the most vital truths concerning the *present developments* of the Divine Plan are obscured and have but little interest for the Lord's followers of this day. Instead of providing the strengthening food and assurance essential for the comfort and well-being of the Lord's people in this evil day, the life-giving word of prophecy is *rendered lifeless* and of none effect.

Rightly understood, the twelfth chapter of Revelation reveals more clearly than any other portion of the Scriptures the depths of Satan's workings at the present time. As he knows that he "hath but a short time", he is at present making every endeavour to consolidate and retain his control of the human family. At the same time, by misleading interpretations of this and other vital prophetic visions, he is endeavouring to *conceal from the Lord's people* the Present Truth concerning the overthrow of his kingdom in the heavenly sphere of earth, through the might and power of Christ's Kingdom.

## THE TWO VIEWS OF THE VISION CONSIDERED

Having so far dealt only with the subject in a general way, it will now be appropriate to consider, in detail, the chief points of difference between the two widely different views of interpretation.

In order to avoid needless repetition of detail, the view which holds that the vision of the man child was fulfilled in the Papacy, will hereafter be referred to as the "old" view. Similarly, the more recent view and the one that is believed to be the correct interpretation will be referred to as the "new" view.

It would be a mistake to suppose that Revelation, chapter 12, comprises a consecutive narrative of events having their fulfilment in the order in which they are recorded. On the contrary, we must recognise that this chapter, like the book of Revelation generally, is a record of various symbolic pictures which describe the experiences of the Church, throughout the Age, from various standpoints. Some of these events are of brief duration, while others cover the greater part of the Age and often synchronise in the time of their fulfilment.

The following is suggested as a correct division of this chapter and one in accordance with which the entire vision may be harmonised:—

**Verses 1-2.**—These verses are understood to cover the entire Gospel Age, being a description of the Church from the days of the Apostles onward.

**Verses 3-5.**—The events described in these verses run concurrently with those of the previous verses and thus extend throughout the Gospel Age.

**Verse 6.**—The narrative recorded in this verse is retrospective and is not to be understood as having its fulfilment subsequent to that of verse 5.

**Verses 7-12.**—This portion of the vision is understood to have its accomplishment from 1874 A.D. onward, when Michael stands up to claim the dominion of this world.

**Verses 13-17.**—These verses, according to the context, apply to the Harvest period, from the time of the resurrection of the sleeping saints onward.

Three important symbols—the great red dragon, the woman clothed with the sun, and the man child—are the chief figures concerned in the vision. The leading figure of the three is the man child, the interpretation of which largely determines the understanding of the entire vision. It will be wise, therefore, to consider the symbol of the man child first.

### WHO IS THE MAN CHILD ?

As already explained, according to the old method of interpretation the man child symbolised the Papacy which came into being and rose to the position of “Head” over the nations, early in the sixth century.

Three main reasons are advanced in support of this interpretation of the symbol. When carefully examined in the light of the Scriptures generally, it is believed that the old view will be seen to be not only unsound and unconvincing, but incapable also of being harmonised with the Scriptures. The arguments in favour of the old view are as follows:—

- (1) That the Papacy fulfilled the prophecy to which the Revelator referred when he wrote concerning the man child—“who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron”. (Rev. 12., 5.)
- (2) The woman clothed with the sun, generally understood to prefigure the virgin Church of Apostolic days, is later said to be travailing in child birth. It is held, therefore, that at that stage the Church is no longer a chaste virgin betrothed to her Lord, and consequently the man child which she brings forth could not be the overcoming Church, but the counterfeit Church, namely, the Papacy.
- (3) Since the woman of the vision represents the Church, the man child, it is argued from the standpoint of the old view, could not also prefigure the Church. To believe so would

mean, it is claimed, that the Church brings forth the Church and this is held to be an absurdity. Hence, the man child could not represent the true Church, but the false Church which is the Papacy.

## POINT NO. 1—RULING THE NATIONS WITH A ROD OF IRON

Since, as stated by the Revelator, the man child "was (according to prophecy) to rule all nations with a rod of iron", it is of primary importance that the prophecy in question be identified and full particulars concerning it ascertained. Only in the light of this prophecy is it possible to determine by whom it was fulfilled and thereby to identify who is the man child.

If the Papacy alone fulfilled the terms of the prophecy, then it must be taken that the Papacy was the man child. If, on the other hand, it is found that the Papacy did not fulfil the particulars mentioned in the prophecy and that they were fulfilled by someone else, it will be wisdom on our part at once to concede that the man child of the vision *did not symbolise* the Papacy, but must symbolise the one who has fulfilled the prophetic visions.

There is only one prophecy in the Scriptures which conforms to the identification mark of the Revelator respecting the man child which reads—"Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron". This prophecy is found in the second Psalm and reads—"I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel". (Psa. 2., 6-8.)

It will be conceded by everyone that the King referred to in the context of this prophecy and who is termed "my king", is none other than Christ, and, as it is hoped to show from the New Testament Scriptures, the prophecy covers also the members of Christ's Body. Apart from the reference to this prophecy in connection with the man child, the Revelator on two other occasions quotes the same prophecy as follows:—

**Revelation 2., 26-27** — "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And *he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I* (according to Psalm 2) *received of my Father*".

In this Scripture, it is definitely stated by our Lord that *He received from his Father* the authority to "rule all nations with a rod of iron" and He now promises to the overcoming members of His Body a share with Him in the same ruling power.



**Revelation 19., 15**—"Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall *rule them with a rod of iron*: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God".

It should be particularly noted that in the three instances in which reference is made to ruling the nations with a rod of iron, *the time when the prophecy has its fulfilment* is when Christ's Kingdom takes control of earth's dominion, during the Harvest of the Age, and *not before* the "Times of the Gentiles" have ended.

**Psalms 2., 6-9**—applies only after God has set His King upon the holy hill of Zion.

**Rev. 2., 27**—could not apply to the Church in the flesh, but only when the sleeping saints have been raised and are with the Lord in Mount Zion beyond the veil.

**Rev. 19., 15**—refers to the treading of the winepress, when the wrath of God is poured out through the antitypical plagues from the Temple beyond the veil. (Rev. 16., 1.)

It should be further noted that, in each of these Scriptures quoted (and these are the only ones in which the prophecy occurs), the expression *ruling with a rod of iron* means *breaking the nations to pieces like a potter's vessel*. There is no indication whatsoever, as is sometimes suggested, that ruling with a rod of iron means shepherding them, in the sense of preserving and taking care of them as a shepherd does with his sheep. No nation upon the earth will be shepherded in that sense. The iron rule is an unbending rule of righteousness and strict justice and no Gentile nation now, or at any time, could measure up to its requirements.

Nebuchadnezzar's metallic image prefigured the Gentile nations as a whole and when Daniel saw it smitten by the Stone Kingdom, we read that all of it was "*broken to pieces together*, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them." (Dan. 2., 35.)

There is only one Scriptural answer, then, concerning the one to whom the prophecy was given and to whom its terms apply. It was foretold by the Psalmist (Psa. 2., 6-9) concerning Christ and was applied by the Revelator to the overcomers of the present Age. (Rev. 2., 27.)

The policy of the Papacy, on the contrary, was not to "break them (the nations) with a rod of iron" or to "dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel", but to preserve and make use of the nations over which she exercised authority as horns of defence and support. Moreover, the security of their thrones was entirely dependent upon the support which they, in turn, rendered to the Papal system. In *no sense whatever* could it be reasonably inferred or asserted that the Papacy did fulfil the prophecy concerning the man child—"who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron".

From the foregoing, it should be evident, therefore, to every reasonable mind that the man child of the vision in question did not symbolise the Papacy. Since the terms of the prophecy apply to Christ and the members of His Body alone, the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn is that the man child symbolised the overcoming Church of Christ, joined with her Lord and Head, in the Kingdom beyond the veil.

The identification of the man child is thus seen to be *entirely a matter of faith* in what is recorded in the Scriptures and, from that standpoint, there would seem to be no ground whatever for the view held by many to-day that the man child prefigured the Papacy in the days of her ascendancy over the nations—539 A.D. to 1799 A.D.

## POINT NO. 2—THE VIRGIN CHURCH TRAVAILING IN CHILD BIRTH

Those who adhere to the old view concerning the identity of the man child make much of the argument that since, later in the vision, the woman is seen to be travailing in birth pangs, she cannot any longer represent the Church as a chaste virgin. Furthermore, it is suggested that, in this condition, she prefigured a fallen and unfaithful Church, imbued with the worldly spirit. It is claimed that the man child is the offspring of this union of the Church with the world, and could not therefore represent the overcoming Gospel Church, but must represent its counterfeit, the Papacy.

A closer study of the Scriptures bearing upon the matter, however, reveals that the expression "travailing", as in child birth, occurs in numerous instances throughout both Old and New Testament Scriptures concerning the Lord's people. It is used, however, *not to imply unfaithfulness or lawlessness on their part, but rather to symbolise their afflictions and sufferings.* Concerning our Lord, for instance, it is written—"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied". (Isa. 53., 11.) Again, in referring to the trouble coming upon nominal Zion (Babylon) during the present Harvest period, the prophet declared—"before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child". (Isa. 66., 7.) The man child of this vision is undoubtedly the overcoming Church of the Firstborns who have their portion in the first resurrection which began at the Second Advent.

The Apostle Paul also makes use of the expression "travailing in birth" when describing *his own afflictions* and sorrow which came to him as a result of his faithful ministry to the saints. His words to the Galatians were—"My little children of whom *I travail in birth again* until Christ be formed in you". (Gal. 4., 19.) It was the Apostle's one purpose in life to *bring forth spiritual children* and to fit them, as overcomers, for a place with the Lord in His Kingdom.

A further use of this expression by our Lord is found in Matt. 24., 19. Here, however, it is not used in reference to those approved

by Him because of their obedience in carrying out His commands. On the contrary, it is applied to some who *fail to recognise the times and seasons* of the Divine Plan and the fact that we are now living in the Harvest-time, and who therefore still put forth great efforts to bring forth spiritual children. Child-bearing in season under the general Call of the Age, as implied in the Apostle's words above, was commendable and fully in harmony with the Lord's will. It is not, however, in accordance with His will for the Harvest-time. "Woe unto them (declared our Lord) that *are with child* (endeavouring to bring forth spiritual children), and to them that give suck (direct their efforts in providing milk for babes) *in those days!*"—the days of His Presence. (Matt. 24., 19.) To those who have ears to hear and who "tremble at his word", this surely is an *indication of His will* concerning the work of the present time.

It is thus seen that, when rightly interpreted, the figure of the sunclad woman in travail is descriptive of the sufferings and afflictions of Christ's members, in their endeavours through the preaching of the Gospel to beget spiritual children *during the entire Gospel Age*. It corresponds to the fishing efforts of the parable which ended when the net was full and drawn to the shore. (Matt. 13., 47-49.)

In confirmation of this it will be noted that, in the vision under consideration, *the moment that John saw the sunclad woman* she was then (in Apostolic days) seen to be with child and travailing in birth pains. The old view that the Papacy is the man child could not be harmonised in this respect, for the great falling away from the faith which culminated in the Papal system did not take place until a *considerable time after* the Apostles had fallen asleep and the Papacy itself was not, so to speak, born until the close of the fifth century.

It follows that the view is obviously untenable which teaches that merely because the woman is seen to be travailing in child birth she must be a figure of an unfaithful and fallen Church giving birth to the Papacy. This view is also out of harmony with the use of this figure in the Scriptures generally in relation to the Lord's people.

### POINT NO. 3—DOES THE CHURCH BRING FORTH THE CHURCH ?

Another reason sometimes advanced in favour of the old view concerning the man child is that if the man child be interpreted as the overcoming Church, this would mean that the Church brings forth the Church which would be inconsistent.

The answer to this objection to the new view concerning the man child is that the objection has *no real Scriptural support*. All who are acquainted with the teaching of the Scriptures, concerning the Church, must surely agree that the Church in glory and the Church in the flesh are different in many respects. Many are called out from the world and many have responded to the Gospel Call to become members of the Church in the flesh. Comparatively few

of these, however (in all but a little flock), are eventually made partakers of Christ and members of the Church in glory. (Heb. 3., 14.) A "great multitude" out of these called ones, after being accepted as members of Christ, fail to abide in the Body and consequently become castaways from Christ. These lose their crowns which are taken by others who prove to be more worthy of them. (Rev. 3., 11.)

This great multitude nevertheless have all in their day been regarded as belonging to the Church in the flesh and, indeed, so were countless numbers of others who were never at all begotten of the Spirit. Neither of these classes will have any part amongst the overcomers who comprise the Church of the Firstborns and Bride of the Lamb.

This viewpoint of the matter is further borne out by the Lord's messages to the Seven Churches. To each of these ecclesias, the Lord addressed words of encouragement and warning according to their loyalty or otherwise to His will. To the overcomers of each Church, however, He addressed a special word of comfort and assurance concerning the rewards of their faithful obedience to His will.

In all this, it must surely be evident that there is no inconsistency whatsoever in the view that the Church in glory (the 144,000 overcomers) is the result of an election, or selection, from the much larger numbers of those who have comprised the Church in the flesh throughout the Age. It seems obvious, then, that it is from the travail and affliction of the Church in the flesh, greater by far in numbers than the Church in glory, that the man child is brought forth.

Brother Russell confirms the foregoing in Volume IV, p. 575. "There are spiritual 'babes', as well as fleshly babes, and bastards as well as sons. The Apostle Paul describes his interest in gospel work as that of a mother travailing with child. He says—'O my little children (because) of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.' (Gal. 4., 19.) Similarly all faithful servants of Christ, all earnest labourers for souls, are such as are described in this text as being 'with child'. Spiritual child-bearing after the apostolic example is most honourable service, and engages the attention of some of God's most devoted children. But alas! as the desire of Abraham and Sarah to help fulfil God's promises led to an unauthorised *method* and produced an Ishmael class, which, born after the flesh, persecuted the seed born legitimately, so is it with many of these who now are 'with child'—they are helping to produce illegitimate 'children of God'. It should be remembered by all, however, that only legitimate means should be employed: all the children of God are begotten by the word and spirit of the truth, and not by human theory and spirit of the world."

It will be seen, then, that the various arguments used in support of the old view that the Papacy is the man child are entirely without Scriptural basis. They are founded upon interpretations of the past

and adhered to by many to-day because they believe that, in some measure, they were supported by Brother Russell in some of his earlier writings. The more recent view that the man child is the glorified Church with her Lord is seen, on the other hand, to be fully in accord with all Scriptures which have any bearing upon the matter.

Moreover, the understanding of this view of the man child vision has been the means of unsealing this important prophecy and of freeing it from the obscurity and sentiment which in earlier days had gathered around it. At the same time, it has opened up and given life and *meaning to important aspects of Present Truth* which, from the standpoint of the old view, were all fulfilled many centuries ago and are therefore of no importance whatsoever to the Lord's followers of our day.

### THE TWO FLIGHTS OF THE WOMAN INTO THE WILDERNESS

All who have given serious consideration to the various features of this vision will have noted that the woman on two occasions fled into the wilderness for protection from the dragon.

The first flight mentioned is in verse 6 of the chapter where she is said to have "fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days". The second wilderness flight is referred to in verse 14 which states that "to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent".

There is no place for these two flights into the wilderness in the old way of interpreting this vision. Attempts have, however, been made by those who adhere to the old view to show that both flights mentioned in the vision refer to one and the same period of time, namely, the 1,260 years of Papal persecution—539 A.D. to 1799 A.D. Stated another way, the suggestion is that what is said in verse 14 is just a repetition in other words of what has already been recorded in verse 6 of the chapter.

The ground upon which this argument is based concerns the tense of the verb and the fact that in both instances the same time period of 1,260 years is mentioned. We read that the woman fled into her place where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. (Rev. 12., 14.)

It is further urged by those who adhere to the old view that since in each case the time period of 1,260 years is mentioned, then to insist that two separate flights are involved would imply that there is yet in the future another wilderness experience of 1,260 years of Papal persecution ahead of the Lord's people. This, it is argued, would not seem likely.

The answer to the foregoing is that the entire argument turns upon the translation of the Greek verb "trepho" which is here rendered in the present tense—is nourished. If this verb can be translated in the past tense—was nourished—then the sense of the verse is seen to be quite different. It will be seen that while it describes a second flight of the woman into the wilderness, it is said to be into her (former) place where she *was* nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

Understanding verse 14 in this way, it will be seen that *no length of time* is specified regarding the *second* flight. The verse merely states that in the second flight she returns to her place where she was (formerly) nourished for a time, and times, and half a time—1,260 years—from the face of the serpent.

There are good reasons for understanding the verse in this way. With respect to the tense of the verb, it is stated on authority that although in this connection the form of the Greek verb is present tense, yet as in most Western languages it can be a historic present, that is, it can be present in form and yet express an action which took place in the past or habitually takes place.

Ferrar Fenton, one of the most critical of our modern translators, renders verse 14 as follows—"The woman was, however, supplied with two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the desert to her retreat where she *was* fed for a time, and times, and half a time away from the presence of the serpent".

A similar use of the English present tense may be seen in 1. John 2., 2—"He *is* the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world". In this instance, the present tense form of the verb covers two separate acts of propitiation, one of which took place in the past, while the other is yet future. The Apostle John is in this verse describing the counterpart, or antitype, of what took place on Israel's typical Day of Atonement.

On the typical Day of Atonement Aaron, the High Priest, made propitiation upon the mercy seat, first with the blood of the Bullock for the priestly class. Afterwards, he sprinkled the blood of the Lord's Goat upon the propitiatory, making propitiation for the people.

The counterpart of Israel's Day of Atonement is the Gospel Age. At the commencement of the Gospel Age, our High Priest—Christ—appeared in the presence of God in the antitypical Most Holy—Heaven itself—and there made propitiation for the members of His Body. When the sacrifice of the Lord's Goat class has been finished and all have passed beyond the veil, He will again appear in the presence of God and make propitiation for the world in general, through the sealing of the New Covenant.

Understood literally, then, it means that He has made propitiation for our sins in the past and that He will make propitiation for the people in the future, nevertheless both actions are referred to under the present tense of the verb. It is evident, therefore, from

the foregoing that the argument based upon the present tense of the verb affords no support whatsoever against the view that a second flight of the woman into the wilderness is clearly taught in this vision of chapter 12.

### ANOTHER OBJECTION TO A SECOND WILDERNESS FLIGHT

A further objection to the viewpoint that Rev. 12., 14 refers to a second wilderness experience is the fact that it is said to take place after the man child is born. If the man child refers to the overcomers amongst the Lord's followers joined with their Head in Kingdom glory, would not this, it is argued, imply that the second wilderness experience takes place after the Church is glorified which all must agree would be an impossibility?

The answer to this objection is that, from the Divine standpoint, God counts things which have only commenced as if they were already completed. The Apostle indicates that thought when, in his letter to the Romans, he quotes the prophecy given by God to Abraham—"A father of many nations have I made thee". (Gen. 17., 5.) When the prophecy was given, Abraham was ninety years old and Sarah, his wife, was barren. Abraham believed God, but, declared the Apostle, it is understandable only from the viewpoint of faith in "God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not (yet in existence) as though they were". (Rom. 4., 17.)

From the same standpoint, God counts the man child as having been born at the commencement of the Harvest-time when the sleeping saints were raised from the tomb. It is recognised, however, that there is still a remnant of the 144,000 overcomers yet in the flesh, nevertheless God counts the Church as complete from the time when the dead in Christ were raised.

In Rev. 14., 1-5 we are given a symbolic picture of the Second Advent and the Lamb standing on the Mount Zion with the hundred and forty and four thousand having His Father's name written in their foreheads. It is evident that some of these are still this side the veil from the fact that John hears the voice of harpers harping with their harps, while later he is instructed to write—"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth". (Rev. 14., 13.)

The second wilderness experience of the Church can affect only those who are "alive and remain" in the flesh after the dead in Christ are glorified. The faithful remnant of this class will have a very trying experience at the hands of the antitypical Jezebel when as the Eighth Head she has returned to power and leadership amongst the nations.

It will be seen, then, that when examined in the light of the Scriptures, this so-called objection to the second wilderness experience of the Church in the flesh is entirely void of Scriptural support.

## ELIJAH'S TWO WILDERNESS FLIGHTS

It is the generally accepted view of those who profess to be in Present Truth that Elijah, the prophet, was a Divinely-arranged figure of the Church in the flesh. It is for this reason that Elijah's persecutions at the instigation of "that woman Jezebel" (Rev. 2., 20) are regarded as illustrations of the sufferings and persecutions of the Lord's faithful followers at the hands of the antitypical Jezebel—the Papal system.

Jezebel's persecutions of Elijah were accomplished through the instrumentality of her wicked partner on the throne of Israel—King Ahab. This also is very significant and is generally understood to prefigure the fact that the Papal persecutions against the Elijah class of this Age have been carried out through the instrumentality of the temporal powers who held their thrones by virtue of the support rendered to that wicked system as its horns, or means of defence.

All this has an important bearing upon certain features of the man child vision under consideration. It has already been demonstrated from the Scriptures that, contrary to the old interpretation of the vision, the prophetic outline indicates two distinct flights of the symbolic woman into the wilderness from the persecutions of the dragon. The first of these corresponds to the 1,260 years of Papal ascendancy over the nations as the Fifth Head—539 to 1799 A.D. The second is yet future and will occur when the antitypical Jezebel has come back to power a second time as the Eighth Head of Gentile rule.

When the foregoing points are all brought into alignment, what is the result? It is that in so far as the first wilderness flight of the Church and her persecution by the Papacy are concerned, these are attested by no less than three different witnesses. The Scriptures, when referring to the length of the Church's wilderness experience, define the period by no less than four different symbolic terms—"A time, and times, and the dividing of time" (Dan. 7., 25); "A thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev. 12., 6); "A time, and times, and half a time" (Rev. 12., 14); "Forty and two months" (Rev. 11., 2). It will be noted that all these symbolic terms, when interpreted literally, are of exactly the same length, namely, three and a half years, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Reckoning a prophetic day for a year we have 1,260 years (Ezek. 4., 6) as the length of the period when the Papacy dominated the nations and drove the Church of Christ into the wilderness condition. Secular history makes reference to the period under the significant description of the Dark Ages.

In further corroboration of this time period, it will be recalled that Elijah's first wilderness flight from Jezebel lasted exactly the same length of time, namely, three and a half years, during which no refreshing rain fell upon Israel. (1. Kings 18.)

In contrast with the clearly defined length of time occupied by the Church's first wilderness experience, it is most significant that



in no Scripture referring to the second wilderness flight is there any time feature specified. The Revelator merely mentions that it was "into *her place*, where she *was* nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent". (Rev. 12., 14.)

As regards Elijah's second wilderness flight from Jezebel, we are informed that, after receiving the two meals from the angel, he went on the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God. (1. Kings 19., 5-8.)

The number forty is understood to signify the thought of a period of severe testing. Undoubtedly, the closing years of the Elijah class in the flesh, when the antitypical Jezebel returns to power and leadership amongst the nations, will be a very trying experience for the remnant of the Lord's faithful followers. It is thus seen that, unlike Elijah's first wilderness experience, no particular length of time is mentioned in the record. The point, however, to be particularly noted as regards the Elijah figure is that it amply confirms the prophetic vision of the Revelator concerning the *second* flight of the woman into the wilderness into her place where she *was* previously nourished for the 1,260 years of Papal persecution. It confirms also that the old interpretation of the Revelator's vision, in which it is argued that the wilderness flight of verse 14 is merely a repetition of the one already mentioned in verse 6 of the vision, is entirely without Scriptural support.

### THE CHURCH'S SECOND FLIGHT WILL BE UNEXPECTED

The fact that Elijah's second flight into the wilderness was quite unlooked-for and apparently unexpected, since he had just emerged from the greatest victory of his career as a true prophet of God, seems more than significant. It corroborates the truths contained in the visions of the Revelator that, in the closing years of the Harvest-time, there will be unlooked-for developments on the part of the Papal power, the result of which will mean a second wilderness experience for the faithful Elijah class. (Rev. 17., 6-8.)

The further fact that it was during Elijah's second wilderness flight from Jezebel that he was given a figurative manifestation of the approaching great climax of trouble would seem to indicate that the Church's second wilderness experience will take place *near the close* of her career in the flesh.

Elijah knew beforehand that he was shortly to be taken up as did also Elisha and the school of the prophets. This may indicate that, as the time draws near for the last members to pass beyond, they, like Elijah, will be conscious of indications concerning not only the end of the way but also the *means of their removal* from these earthly scenes. (2. Kings 2., 1-11.)

### THERE WAS WAR IN HEAVEN

Another important feature of the vision—war in heaven between Michael and his angels and the dragon and his angels—according

to the old method of interpretation also had its fulfilment in connection with the rise of the Papacy many centuries ago.

It is suggested that this refers to the conflict between the declining power of Pagan Rome and that of the rising Papal kingdom which culminated in the Antichrist. It is further suggested, from the same viewpoint, that the Imperial power of Rome is to be understood as the dragon, while Michael represents the Papal power which rose upon the ruins of the Imperial empire and finally displaced it.

We cannot agree, however, with this interpretation of these symbols inasmuch as it necessitates the application of the name Michael to the Papal power, or Antichrist. Michael literally means "who is like God" and is one of the names applied in Scripture, in several instances, to our Lord. Three times it is used in reference to Him in Daniel's prophecy, and in Jude He is referred to as Michael the Archangel. (Jude 9.)

It would seem that any view which necessitates the application of the names, or titles which belong to Christ, to the Antichrist, or any of Satan's agencies, is altogether wrong and entirely misleading. The view which interprets the mind of the Spirit should be harmonious and easy of application, requiring no such unreasonable methods of handling the sacred records as just mentioned.

The conflict between the Papal power and Pagan Rome which it displaced had no connection whatever with the war in heaven. On the contrary, it could only be regarded as a war between two of the Heads of Gentile rule. The war in heaven *did not commence* until the Second Advent when "Michael stood up" in the power and glory of His mighty Kingdom and broke into the strong man's house. It was then that the conflict in the heavenly sphere of earth began which will eventually result in the overthrow and complete destruction of the Adversary's kingdom through which he has long held the human family in bondage to sin and death.

Clearly, then, this important feature of the vision, when rightly interpreted, is incapable of being harmonised with the view that it had its fulfilment in the conflict between the disintegrating empire of Pagan Rome and the more virile Papal power striving for leadership amongst the nations. Moreover, the acceptance of such an interpretation of the matter must surely seal the vision so that the light which otherwise it should give forth is made to appear as darkness and error.

## THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD AND THE POWER OF HIS CHRIST

Once again, it is necessary to point out that the declaration of verse 10—"Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ"—could not be harmonised with the old method of interpretation which claims that it had its fulfilment in the Papacy, about fifteen hundred years ago. Such an interpretation of the verse demands nothing less than the application of the title "Kingdom of God" to the Papal system, while

the overthrow and uprooting of the remnants of the old Pagan empire by the rising Papal empire power has to be understood as the exercise of the power of God's Christ.

Rightly viewed, however, there is no need for such strange and contradictory methods of interpreting the Scriptures. The reference clearly portrays the great *events which follow* the Second Coming of our Lord in the power and glory of His mighty Kingdom. It reveals the exercise of His mighty power for the overthrow of the Adversary's kingdom and the liberation of all who have for many centuries been held in bondage to it.

Deliverance comes first of all to the fallen angelic beings who having "left their own habitation" were reserved in chains of darkness under the control of Satan's kingdom unto the judgment of the great day. (Jude 6.) Later, with the overthrow of all earthly kingdoms and man-made organisations, deliverance will come to the entire human family for "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet". (1. Cor. 15., 25.)

It is only by rightly interpreting this and all similar prophecies concerning the Present Truth that God's people, walking in the light to-day, can see and rejoice in the unfolding of these things before their eyes during the present Harvest-time. Viewed, however, from the standpoint of the old way of interpreting this vision, the strong meat which it contains concerning the present developments of the Divine Plan is sealed and hidden to sight under traditional views handed down from the past.

As a result of the coming of the Kingdom of our God and the exercise of the power of His Christ, we read that Satan was cast out (of his place of control) into the earth. It is important to understand that the operation of Christ's Kingdom, for the overthrow of His enemies, begins first of all in the heavenly sphere of our planet. This accounts for the fact that, although the war in heaven began a matter of seventy or more years ago, evil is still rampant amongst the peoples of the earth. Indeed, according to the words of the Revelator, the deliverance of the heavenly sphere and the casting down of Satan and his angels are followed by greater activities amongst the human family.

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Thus did the Revelator write concerning the present and future developments amongst the peoples of the earth, and surely this outline of the Adversary's activities, as witnessed by the unfolding of events on the earth to-day, is not in any sense overdrawn.

To apply this description of events, as the old view suggests, to matters connected with the rise of the Papal power, a matter of fifteen centuries ago, seems not only void of reason but contrary also to the records of the Scriptures and of secular history. It is a good example of the need for walking in the light, instead of looking to

the past for the interpretation of the prophecies relating to the events of this day. If we are satisfied with an interpretation of prophecy which, upon examination, can neither be harmonised with reason nor the teaching of the Scriptures generally, then obviously we have failed to put on the "armour of light" provided for our protection and guidance in this evil day.

Natural Israel stumbled over the truth concerning our Lord's First Advent. They put their trust in the traditions of the Elders and were misled by the commandments of men, with the result that they were not prepared to receive the light then due concerning the presence of their long looked-for Messiah and Deliverer. As a consequence, while He proved to be a sanctuary and place of safety and protection for the few who were in the attitude to receive Him, yet to the nation in general He was a stone of stumbling and rock of offence over which they stumbled and fell. (Isa. 8., 14.)

The position of spiritual Israel to-day, in relation to the truth concerning the Second Advent and Presence of Christ, is on a parallel with that of the typical people. The principles involved are precisely the same. "Have the Scribes and Pharisees believed on Him?" would appear to express the viewpoint of mind adopted by many in our day who profess to be walking in the light of Present Truth.

### **REJOICE YE HEAVENS AND YE THAT DWELL IN THEM**

Still another feature of the vision under consideration which is claimed by the upholders of the old view of interpretation to have been fulfilled in the Papal system many centuries ago, is contained in the exhortation—"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them". (Rev. 12., 12.)

It is held that these words of exhortation, sent by our Lord through His angel unto His servant John, concerned the final triumph of the Papal hierarchy in the conflict between the rising Papal power and the remnants of the Pagan Roman empire.

It is hard to see how such an exhortation, however, could be addressed by our Lord in any circumstances to a worldly power, far less to that vile agency of the Adversary, termed in the Scriptures—Antichrist. (1. John 2., 18.)

Regarded, however, in the light of what is considered a more satisfactory way of interpreting the vision, everything seems reasonable and consistent. Moreover, important aspects of Present Truth, long obscured by interpretations of the past, are unsealed and become luminous and of vital interest to the Lord's people of this day.

It is understood that while the words quoted above, in their primary sense, apply to those angelic beings delivered from the Adversary's control through the overthrow of his spiritual power in the heavens, yet there is a sense in which they apply to the Lord's followers in the flesh since the time of His Parousia.

The Spirit-begotten of the Lord's people are said to be living in a heavenly condition of mind and outlook. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit", wrote the Apostle, "if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. 8., 9.) The coming of our Lord to earth in the glory of His Kingdom, accompanied by myriads of holy angels which comprise His Kingdom, has brought deliverance from the Adversary's evil influence and power in the heavenly sphere. It has likewise brought deliverance, in a vital sense, to the Lord's true followers in the flesh who, like the typical people of God in literal Babylon, sat by the muddy rivers and wept when they remembered Zion. (Psa. 137., 1-2.)

The Present Truth concerning the Lord's Presence has not merely brought deliverance from the errors and confusions of Babylon's creeds. It has at the same time enabled all the heavenly-minded class, who are walking in the light and following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, to rejoice and be glad because they have escaped from the city of confusion now being broken down and soon to be completely destroyed. (Isa. 24., 10.)

The prophet Daniel had a vision of this happy experience which he declared awaited the Lord's faithful followers at the Second Advent and wrote—"Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days", which days reached to the year 1874 A.D.

It should not be thought, however, that this blessedness with deliverance from bondage which was the experience of the Lord's people in the early days of the Harvest-time is assured to His followers unconditionally until the end of life's journey here below. On the contrary, if we would continue to enjoy the increasing blessedness of the light of Present Truth and to rejoice in the deliverance of mind and Spirit brought to us by the "power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ", we must continue to walk in the light as it shines more and more upon the path of the just. (Prov. 4., 18.)

If to-day after many years of contact with Present Truth our vision of it is no clearer than when we first received it, we may take it that there has been some measure of slackness or failure on our part to walk in the light and to be guided by the Spirit of truth into all the truth now due, as well as the things to come. (John 16., 13.)

Walking in the light implies an earnest and sincere desire to know the will of God as respects the present and future developments of the Divine Plan. It implies additionally the thought of full submission to His will at every advance step along the pathway of increased light. Moreover, in order to be guided by the Spirit of truth into all truth as it becomes due, there must be a willingness on our part to cleanse our minds of every form of sectarian bias and error, as soon as detected. Failure to do so must result in hindering and obscuring the full vision of truth now shining upon the Christian pathway which alone can protect us from stumbling over the otherwise hidden stumbling stones of this evil day.

In conclusion, it should always be remembered that truth and reason never conflict or antagonise each other. If, therefore, our viewpoint of any feature of truth is seen to be in any degree unreasonable or incapable of being harmonised with every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, it will be wisdom on our part immediately to call a halt and in an attitude of true humility and prayer to wait upon the Lord for further light and guidance upon the pathway.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IV

In view of the acknowledged difficulty of the subject, the following questions and answers have been prepared in order to summarise the conclusions of the Chapter.

**Question 1.** *Who or what does the Great Red Dragon represent?*

**Answer.** There is no such creature as a dragon found amongst the beasts of the earth. It is a mythical beast and its name conveys the thought of a fierce and cruel disposition. The Dragon is one of the many names applied in the Scriptures to Satan, since his fall from Divine favour. It forcefully describes the wicked and cruel disposition of this great Adversary of God and of the human family. The term, however, is not limited to the personality of the Adversary alone, but is also used (as in this instance) to describe that fierce and cruel system of the Imperial Roman Empire, through which he carried out his wicked designs against the Lord's followers in the early days of the Christian Church.

**Question 2.** *What reason is there for believing that the Great Red Dragon of this Chapter represents Pagan, or Imperial Rome?*

**Answer.** In the 7th Chapter of Daniel we are given a description of the Imperial Roman Empire—the fourth Beast of the prophet's vision. Verse 7 reads—"I saw in the night visions, and beheld a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly . . . and it had ten horns". Note how this coincides with the Revelator's description of the Great Red Dragon which, he informs us, also had ten horns.

Daniel apparently knew of no animal with which he could compare this fierce and terrible Beast of his vision, but the Revelator terms it the Great Red Dragon because it was the *willing instrument of Satan's operations* against the Seed of Promise. A similar instance occurs in the message to the Church at Smyrna where the Revelator, referring to the same persecuting power against the early Church, terms it the Devil. "The devil"; declares the writer, "shall cast some of you into prison . . . and ye shall have tribulation ten days." Commentators in general are agreed that this refers to the ten years of blood-stained persecutions of the Church during the reign of the Emperor Diocletian, 303-313 A.D.

**Question 3.** *When Pagan Rome (the fourth Beast) fell and gave place to Papal Rome (the fifth Beast) (Rev. 13., 1), did the Dragon cease to use those beastly powers as instruments of persecution against the followers of Christ?*

**Answer.** In Rev. 13., 2 where a description of the Papacy, or fifth "Head" power is given, we read that the Dragon gave unto him his power, and his seat, and great authority. This is understood to mean that although Papal Rome blasphemously claimed to be the Kingdom of God on earth, yet it was nothing more than a change of tactics on the part of the Great Adversary. Instead of the fury of open persecution, as carried out through the rulers of the previous Beast, Satan's policy through the Papal Empire was to seduce and deceive the followers of the Lord by false claims of friendship and support. It was the Dragon spirit, however, all the while, and it proved to be much more successful than his previous policy through the fourth Beast.

Again, we read concerning the sixth Beast of Rev. 13., 11 that although it had horns like a Lamb, it spake as a Dragon. Thus Satan, in using the beastly power of Gentile rule in an *endeavour to destroy the true Seed of Promise*, transformed himself into an angel of light to suit the occasion. Nevertheless, he all the time displayed the same fierce Dragon-like spirit of hatred and opposition to the Lord's true followers. The term, Dragon, seems to apply more particularly to the secular powers used by the Papacy and other false systems as an instrument of persecution of the Lord's people, *in the same manner as Jezebel, in the figure, used Ahab to persecute Elijah, the true prophet of God.*

**Question 4.** *Who or what is represented by the Sun-clad Woman?*

**Answer.** In the Scriptures, a woman is frequently used as a symbol of the Christian Church before she is united with her Head, beyond the veil. The Apostle, addressing the Church at Corinth, wrote—"I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ". (2. Cor. 11., 2.) The term is also applied in Scripture to the false Church, as in the Lord's message to the Church at Thyatira. (Rev. 2., 20.) The reference in this instance is to the Papal Church—"Thou sufferest that *woman* Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols". The "woman" of Rev. 12., refers to the *true* Church, as it came into prominence in the days of the Apostles. Clothed with the Sun suggests the thought of a full acceptance and appreciation of the Gospel message and a faithful walk in harmony with that message. The Moon, with its reflected light, is a fitting symbol of the Mosaic Law which, in its ceremonial observances, foreshadowed the good things contained in the Gospel. Standing upon the Moon, implies the thought that the Law, in its types and figures, confirmed the hopes of the Lord's people and provided a *sure foundation* for faith. The

twelve stars fittingly represent the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, the inspired mouthpiece of our Lord.

**Question 5.** *What significance is there in the fact that the moment the woman is seen in the vision, she is described as being with child, travailing in birth and pained to be delivered?*

**Answer.** A woman in the travail of birth pangs indicates the thought of agonising suffering and sorrow. This figure is used in the Scriptures to describe the *sufferings and afflictions of all the faithful followers of the Lord* during the present Age, as they strive to walk the narrow way of sacrifice and to bear faithful testimony for the truth concerning the Kingdom hope.

**Question 6.** *When did the Church of Christ begin to experience the symbolic travail of birth pangs?*

**Answer.** As already suggested, the Sun-clad Woman symbolised the Church *from its earliest inception* in the days of the Apostles. The fact that *the moment she is seen in the vision she is in figure described as with child and suffering the travail of birth pangs*, implies that the sufferings and afflictions of the Lord's followers commenced in the very earliest days of the Gospel Church and will continue until the last member has passed beyond the veil.

The sufferings and sorrow, prefigured in birth pangs, result from a faithful witness for the truth concerning the hope of the High Calling and joint-heirship with our Lord in His Kingdom. The object of the witness work during the Age was to *bring forth spiritual children*, frequently described in the Scriptures as new-born babes. The Apostle referred to those spiritual babes whom *he in travail had brought forth* when he wrote—"I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it". (1. Cor. 3., 1-2.)

Peter addressed the strangers scattered abroad in these words—"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile . . . as *newborn babes*, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby". (1. Pet. 2., 1-2.) As a further illustration of the use of this figure, the Apostle wrote to the brethren at Galatia "**My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you**". (Gal. 4., 19.) Commenting on this Scripture concerning the figure of child-bearing, our late Brother Russell in Volume 4 of "Studies in the Scriptures", page 575, wrote—"The Apostle Paul describes his interest in gospel work as that of a **mother travailing with child**. He says—"O my little children (because) of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you". (Gal. 4., 19.) Similarly *all faithful servants of Christ, all earnest labourers for souls, are such as are described in this text as being 'with child'*. Spiritual child-bearing after the apostolic example is most honourable service, and engages the attention of some of God's most devoted children."



Throughout the Age, the Great Red Dragon has endeavoured to destroy these spiritual babes, as doubtless he recognised in them *the Seed of Promise which was to bruise his head*. (Gen. 3., 15.) When the required number have been fully developed and are in the First Resurrection brought forth from the tomb, they—united with their Lord and Head—will constitute the Man Child of the Revelator's vision.

**Question 7.** *The true Church of Christ is likened in the Scriptures to a chaste virgin, whereas in the vision under consideration the woman is seen to be travailing in child-birth. Does not this indicate that the woman in this instance represents the unfaithful Church?*

**Answer.** The sufferings and persecutions of the narrow way incidental to a faithful testimony of the truth, prefigured in the travail of child-birth, are *not experienced by the worldly-minded and unfaithful* followers of the Lord. Instead of suffering the consequences of a faithful witness for the truth, the Apostle described them, in contrast with his own state, as reigning "as kings without us". Continuing, he said "I would to God ye did (really) reign, that we also might reign with you". (1. Cor. 4., 8.) The faithful followers of the Lord alone bear His reproach and they are seen in the figure of the Lord's Goat as going "unto him without the camp". (Heb. 13., 13.)

**Question 8.** *If the woman represents the unfaithful and fallen Church which some centuries later brought forth the Antichrist, how would this agree with the fact that in the vision under consideration she is seen to be with child and in travail of birth from the beginning—"she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered"?* (Rev. 12., 2.)

**Answer.** Such an interpretation of the symbol could not be harmonised with the details given in the vision by the Revelator. In the natural figure, the travail of birth pangs commences **immediately before the birth** takes place. The Antichrist, however, was not set up, or fully born, until the year 539 A.D. Hence, according to the old view there could be **no travail of birth pangs for several centuries** after the Church came into being.

**Question 9.** *In 1. John 4., 3 we read that the spirit of Antichrist was then in the world. Does this not prove that the unfaithful Church was then travailing in birth and pained to be delivered?*

**Answer.** It would *not be in harmony with the natural figure* to suggest that the spirit of Antichrist, recognised by the Apostle John *several centuries before* this false system was born, represented the labours of child-birth. In the vision we are considering, it is the **travail of child-birth alone** and not the initial developments which led up to it that is here emphasised. The question of the begetting of a counterfeit Man child through the inception of error in the days of the Apostle *does not enter into the symbols* of this Chapter. Even if we attempt to introduce into the vision the thought of begettal

and birth, which *obviously is not intended*, it would not harmonise with the context which reveals that the "woman" was enduring the pangs of child-birth *from her earliest days*. In the natural order, the travail of birth pangs occupies only a *very brief time* compared with the more lengthy period necessary for begetting and development. Moreover, it is the faithful few alone of the professing Church who endure the sufferings of Christ and eventually comprise the Man Child. This faithful class are likened by the Apostle unto a chaste virgin. (2. Cor. 11., 2.) Our Lord, the great Head of the Church, was literally born of a virgin through the power of the Holy Spirit and it should not therefore be thought strange or unreasonable that the members of His Body are by the same power the product of the *virgin Church*. Thus, the Body-members like their Head are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1., 13.)

**Question 10.** *Who is the Man Child ?*

**Answer.** The Revelator gives the *inspired answer* by telling us that he is the one concerning whom the prophet declared that he would "rule all nations with a rod of iron." (Rev. 12., 5.)

**Question 11.** *Where in the Scriptures is the promise to rule the nations with a rod of iron given ?*

**Answer.** The original and *only* prophecy to this effect was given by the Psalmist concerning God's anointed King—Christ—in Psalm 2., 9. The same prophecy is twice quoted by the Revelator and in one instance applied to the members of Christ's Body. We quote the three instances of this prophecy as follows:—

**Psalm 2., 8-9.** "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen (nations) for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt *dash them in pieces* like a potter's vessel."

**Rev. 2., 26-27.** "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be *broken to shivers*: even as I received (the same promise) of my Father."

**Rev. 19., 15.** "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

It will be noted that the foregoing description of what the iron rule will accomplish is precisely what the Revelator informs us will be done by the Man Child of Rev. 12., 5—"Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." Nowhere in the Scriptures is there any prophecy to the effect that the Papacy is to rule with a rod of iron.

**Question 12.** *Since the promise of ruling the nations with a rod of iron is given in the Scriptures exclusively to Christ (Head and Body) and is applied by the Revelator to the Man Child of Rev. 12., 5, what is the obvious conclusion to be drawn?*

**Answer.** The only obvious and logical conclusion to be drawn would seem to be that Christ (Head and Body) and the Man Child of Rev. 12., 5, are *one and the same*.

**Question 13.** *Did not Antichrist counterfeit the fulfilment of the promise to rule all nations with a rod of iron?*

**Answer.** Ruling the nations with a rod of iron is explained by the Psalmist to mean *dashing them to pieces like a potter's vessel*. (Psa. 2., 9.) A somewhat similar definition was given to the prophecy by the Revelator where, in applying it to the overcomers of the present Age, he declared "to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers." (Rev. 2., 26-27.)

In Rev. 19., 15, where the expression is again applied to Christ, it is explained to mean *smiting the nations* and treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. It must surely be obvious that the Antichrist *neither did, nor could* fulfil this prophecy. Antichrist's policy towards the nations was just *the very opposite*. Instead of attempting to destroy them, the policy of Papacy was to preserve them and use them in its own interest, as *horns of protection* and defence.

**Question 14.** *If the Man Child symbolised the Antichrist, as has been suggested, why did the Dragon seek to devour it as soon as it was born?*

**Answer.** There would be no object whatsoever in Satan attempting to devour the Man Child if, as suggested, it represented the Antichrist. Antichrist, on the contrary, is regarded as the masterpiece of Satan's cunning deceptions and wicked devices against the true Seed of Promise. To suggest, therefore, that Satan would attempt to devour the child of his own wicked device would seem to be entirely devoid of reason and Scriptural support. On the other hand, there would seem to be no reasonable or Scriptural ground of objection to the view already suggested that the Man Child represents the overcoming "little flock" joined in resurrection power with their Lord and Head.

**Question 15.** *If the woman represents the Church, how could the Man Child also represent the Church?*

**Answer.** The woman represents the *Church in the flesh* throughout the present Age, whereas the Man Child symbolises the *Church in glory*, joined to the Lord beyond the veil. The difference, it will be seen, is that the Church in the flesh has comprised many who fail to obtain the Kingdom reward—"Many be called, but few chosen." (Matt. 20., 16.) The Church in glory, on the other hand, will comprise the overcomers alone.

**Question 16.** *In Isaiah 66., 7 we read that "before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child." How can this be harmonised with Rev. 12., 2 which describes the woman as being in travail as soon as seen in the vision ?*

**Answer.** The harmony of these Scriptures may be seen once it is realised that Rev. 12., 2 refers to the travail of suffering experienced by the *faithful members of the true Church* throughout the Age, while Isa. 66., 7, on the other hand, refers to the trouble coming upon the city of Babylon—nominal Zion—at the close of the Harvest-time. Before the *great tribulation* comes upon Babylon, the true wheat class, comprising the Man Child, are gathered into the Kingdom. "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then *sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child*; and they shall not escape." (1. Thess. 5., 3.)

**Question 17.** *When will the prophecy of ruling the nations with a rod of iron be fulfilled by the Man Child ?*

**Answer.** This prophecy commenced to have its fulfilment at the close of the "Times of the Gentiles" in 1914 A.D. From the time of the Second Advent, when the dead in Christ were raised from the tomb and glorified with their Lord in His Kingdom, the Man Child is *counted as having been born*, notwithstanding the fact that there is a remnant still in the flesh. (Rev. 12., 5.) God "calleth those things which be not (yet fulfilled) as though they were (already accomplished)." (Rom. 4., 17.) The Man Child has already brought salvation to the heavens and, since the close of the "Times of the Gentiles" (1914 A.D.), he has been smashing the nations like a potter's vessel in order to bring salvation and deliverance also to the human family. (Rev. 12., 10-12.) The smiting of the nations now goes on and will continue until every vestige of Gentile rule is overthrown and destroyed. (Dan. 2., 44.)

**Question 18.** *What does the Woman's flight into the wilderness represent ?*

**Answer.** The wilderness flight of the "woman" seems to represent a period of exceptionally severe persecution of the Church at the hands of the powers that be, during which its very life and existence are at stake.

**Question 19.** *How often, according to the Revelator's vision, did the Woman flee into the Wilderness ?*

**Answer.** Two flights into the wilderness are mentioned by the Revelator and these seem to have been prefigured by the *two flights of Elijah* from the persecutions of Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah's first flight of 3½ years, or 1,260 days, fittingly corresponds to the 1,260 years of the Church's bitter persecution at the hands of the Papal system which the Scriptures indicate was prefigured by "that woman Jezebel". (Rev. 2., 20.) Elijah's second flight from Jezebel's threat

to take his life points to a future experience of the Church, when the antitypical Jezebel (Papacy) has again come back to power as the eighth and last "Head" of Gentile rule. (Rev. 17., 11.)

**Question 20.** *Why do students of prophecy generally refuse to accept the view that the Church will have a second wilderness experience at the hands of the antitypical Jezebel?*

**Answer.** Most Bible students think that the Papacy will never rise again as a leading power amongst the nations, hence a second wilderness experience at her hands is believed to be an impossibility. Those who take this view endeavour to account for the two flights mentioned in the vision by suggesting that both refer to the same period of Papal persecution in the past, from 539 to 1799 A.D.

**Question 21.** *If both wilderness flights of the woman mentioned do not refer to the same period of Papal persecution of the past, how can we account for the fact that in both instances they are stated to continue for the same length of time, namely, 1,260 days (ver. 6) and (ver. 14) a time, and times, and half a time which are equivalent to exactly the same number of days?*

**Answer.** The sense of verse 14 hangs entirely upon the tense of the verb "is nourished." Regarding the tense of the verb, it has been stated by one Greek scholar that although in this connection the form of the verb is present tense, yet, as in most western languages, it can be an historic present, i.e., it can be present in form and yet express an action which took place in the past, or which habitually takes place. Ferrar Fenton, one of the most critical of our modern translators, renders verse 14 as follows—"The woman was, however, supplied with two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the desert to *her retreat where she was fed*, for a time, and times, and half a time away from the presence of the serpent."

Understanding verse 14 in this way, it will be seen that no length of time is specified regarding the second flight. The verse merely states that, in the second flight, she returns to her place where *she was formerly nourished* for a time, and times, and half a time (1,260 day-years) from the face of the serpent.

**Question 22.** *If the Man Child represents the overcomers with their Head beyond the veil, how could the Woman be said to fly into the wilderness after bringing forth the Man Child?*

**Answer.** From the standpoint of God who "calletth those things which be not (accomplished) as though they were" (Rom. 4., 17), the birth of the Man Child took place when our Lord returned at the Second Advent and raised the sleeping saints from the tomb. There remained the remnant in the flesh, of whom the Revelator elsewhere wrote—"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." (Rev. 14., 13.) It is this remnant, still in the flesh, whom the second flight concerns.

**Question 23.** *What is understood by the War in Heaven ?*

**Answer.** The Heaven of this vision does not relate to the far off Heavens of God's Throne, but to the Heavenly sphere of our planet.

Since the Fall, Satan has usurped the dominion, or rulership, of earth, and has established a mighty spiritual kingdom in the Heavens, comprised of fallen angelic spirits, termed in the Scriptures, demons. God has permitted Satan to carry out his wicked designs in this respect, subject, of course, to certain restrictions and limited to a set time. The *set time* for God to intervene in order to overthrow the power of Satan and to liberate the human family from the control of his kingdom was at the Second Advent of Christ, 1874 A.D. It is understood that at that time our Lord returned to earth, in the glory of His Kingdom, and broke into the strong man's house—Satan's kingdom. (Matt. 12., 29.) At that stage, the war in heaven between the Kingdom of Michael and that of the Dragon commenced. Satan's control in the heavens has already been overthrown and his power is now limited to the sphere of earth. The breaking up of the remnants of his kingdom, represented by the nations of the earth, began at the close of the "Times of the Gentiles" and these will eventually be broken to pieces, as foretold by the prophet. (Dan. 2., 44.)

**Question 24.** *Who are Michael's Angels ?*

**Answer.** This term is understood to apply to the myriads of angelic beings who comprise the Kingdom of Christ. The Scriptures invariably make mention of these angels in connection with the Second Advent of our Lord. Amongst these many references, attention is called to the following:—

**Psa. 68., 17.** The Psalmist refers to the hill (kingdom) in which God has desired to dwell and declares—"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, *even thousands of angels.*"

**Matt. 16., 27.** "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father *with his angels.*"

**Matt. 25., 31.** "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the *holy angels with him*, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

**2. Thess. 1., 7-8.** "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven *with his mighty angels*, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God."

**Jude 14.** "Behold, the Lord cometh *with ten thousands of his saints* (holy ones, or angels)."

**Rev. 14., 10.** "He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone *in the presence of the holy angels*, and in the presence of the Lamb."

**Question 25.** *Who are the Dragon's (Satan's) Angels ?*

**Answer.** Satan's angels are understood to refer to fallen angelic beings who comprise the unseen spiritual kingdom of the Adversary.

The Apostle refers to these in his letter to the Ephesian Church—  
“We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,  
against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against  
spiritual wickedness in high (heavenly) places.” (Eph. 6., 12.)

**Question 26.** *We read that during the Woman's second flight into the wilderness, the Serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the Woman that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. What does this mean?*

**Answer.** The second wilderness experience of the Church, as seen in the figure of Elijah, takes place when Jezebel (Papacy) comes back again to power as the eighth “Head.” Papacy, then the mouthpiece and chief instrument of the serpent's operations, will apparently whip up a flood of propaganda and false accusations against the Elijah class, with the object of having them exterminated by the civil powers, or horns of the Beast. Water as a flood always denotes a serious trouble, or calamity, while when in the form of gentle rain, or dew, it refers to the refreshing influence of truth. The temporal powers (horns of the Beast) will for a time support the policy of the Papacy and carry out her wishes in the persecution of the Lord's people, but will later turn and rend her, and burn her with fire. (Rev. 17., 16-17.)

**Question 27.** *Following the casting out of Satan from “his place” of spiritual control in the heavens, we read that a loud voice was heard in heaven saying “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.” When does this take place?*

**Answer.** It is understood that the overthrow of Satan's dictatorship in the heavens, here described, took place at the Second Advent when our Lord, in the glory and power of His mighty Kingdom, returned to earth and broke into the strong man's (Satan's) house. It is a poor conception of the Second Advent of our Lord that pictures Him, as it were, a lone individual coming down from Heaven and being present in the Heavenly sphere of our planet for a matter of about 70 years without any apparent results, so far as the powers of darkness and evil are concerned. The Scriptural view is that He returned in power and great glory, at the head of His mighty Kingdom comprised of myriads of glorious spirit beings; also that *this Kingdom has now replaced Satan's kingdom in the heavens*, while the prince of this world and his angels have been cast down to the regions of earth. (Rev. 12., 8-12.) This accounts for several things outlined in the prophetic Word, such as—“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath.” It accounts also for the fact that salvation and liberation have come to the Heavens through the binding of the strong man's power in the Heavenly sphere. Moreover, it will hasten the overthrow of Satan's power over mankind, while beyond the great day of trouble it will bring blessing and peace to the entire creation.

**Question 28.** *Is there any connection between the casting down to earth of the prince of this world and the present world-wide trouble and distress upon humanity?*

**Answer.** The spirit of the great Adversary, in his hatred of the Creator and opposition to His righteous rule, will not permit him ever to acknowledge defeat, or to give up the fight, whatever may be the cost in suffering to those involved.

Following his defeat and overthrow in the Heavenly sphere, it appears that he is *now making an all-out effort* to consolidate his control in the earthly sphere of his kingdom. This effort will, of course, also fail, for the Stone Kingdom of Christ, under the control of our Lord and the glorified saints—the Man Child of this vision—will by means of the Seven Last Plagues smash to pieces like a potter's vessel the kingdoms through which he hopes to retain his control of the human family.

The final clash between the spiritual forces of Michael's Kingdom and those of the kingdom of darkness will result in the destruction of every organised system that would stand in the way of Christ's Kingdom and the complete liberation of the human family from the bondage of the present evil world. In accomplishing this, it will mean, so far as the human family are concerned, a time of trouble and suffering such as mankind has never before witnessed.

The rulers of this world, deceived by the great Adversary, will *endeavour to uphold the present world order* and thus unwittingly be found making war against the Lamb. In doing this they will, according to prophecy, organise the nations into a confederacy, or new order, which the Scriptures term an Image of the Beast. This Image will be the seventh "Head" of Gentile rule. This effort to hold the discontented masses in subjection will fail after a "short space" and, in desperation, they will be forced to call to their aid the hated, but nevertheless stabilising power and influence of the Papal system. Papacy, as the eighth and last "Head" of Gentile rule will, as a result, rise again to power as a leader amongst the nations. The eighth "Head" will thus be *one of the previous seven*, namely, the fifth or Papal power that at the Reformation received the deadly wound which was afterwards healed. This final effort of the Adversary to uphold the remnants of his kingdom will be engulfed during the last plague in an earthquake of revolution, such as was not since men were upon the earth. (Rev. 16., 18.)

**Question 29.** *What should be the attitude of the Lord's people in this great conflict of spiritual and earthly powers?*

**Answer.** The first and most important thing for the Lord's people to do is to acquaint themselves fully regarding the work that the unseen Kingdom of Christ is now doing, lest they, like the world in general, be found fighting against the Lamb. The next important point is that they *stand apart from all efforts to uphold, or improve*



the present order—the earthly remnants of Satan's kingdom. Their witness work, while still in the flesh, should be to declare in Zion (amongst the remaining feet members of Christ) the glorious message that already "Thy God reigneth!" in the Heavenly sphere of earth and that, very soon, His reign will be extended to every corner of the earth—"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." (1. Cor. 15., 25.) This armour of light is essential to the protection of the faith and hopes of the overcomers in this evil time, into which we have now entered.

## CHAPTER V

# THE LAMB ON MOUNT ZION

*“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.*

*And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.”* (Rev. 14., 1-2.)

The vision of the Lamb on Mount Zion is essentially a Harvest picture. It depicts the fulfilment of “that blessed hope” for which the Apostle in his day so earnestly longed, namely, the appearing “of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (Titus 2., 13—Diaglott.) Otherwise stated, it is the announcement of the Lord’s Presence, through the instrumentality of the Present Truth. Mount Zion is one of the many titles, used in the Scriptures, in reference to the Kingdom promised by our Lord to the overcomers of this Age. (Rev. 3., 21.) The literal Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, was a stronghold held by the Jebusites in the early days of David’s reign. The taking of this stronghold by David is recorded in 2. Samuel 5., 7. Mount Zion later became the seat of government from which the kings of Israel ruled over God’s typical Kingdom. As a figure, Mount Zion is used throughout the Scriptures to represent Christ’s Kingdom which, for a thousand years, will exercise the dominion of earth and deliver the human family from the bondage of Satan’s kingdom.

It should be clearly understood that the antitypical Mount Zion is *in no sense* an earthly Kingdom, nor is it comprised of earthly beings. It is termed by the Apostle the “heavenly Jerusalem” and is comprised solely of heavenly, angelic beings. In consequence, it is invisible to human sight. (Heb. 12., 22.) The *occupant of Zion’s Throne*, the Lamb, as well as the 144,000 members of His body who share that Throne with Him, are all taken from amongst the human family and are made partakers of the Divine nature. (2. Pet. 1., 4.)

Other Scriptural terms used in reference to Zion’s Kingdom are the “Jerusalem which is (from) above” (Gal. 4., 26) and the “holy city, new Jerusalem.” (Rev. 21., 2.)

## THE JERUSALEM FROM ABOVE

Our Lord made reference to this Kingdom, when before His Crucifixion He said to the disciples—“I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.” (Luke 22., 29-30.) Moreover, it was the same Kingdom, or mansion, which according to the parable our

Lord at His Ascension "went into a far country to receive," and into which, at His return, He promised to receive His faithful followers. (Luke 19., 12-15; John 14., 1-3.) Furthermore, our Lord in His message to the overcomers of the Church at Philadelphia writes—"I will write upon him the name of my God, and the *name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God*; and I will write upon him my new name." (Rev. 3., 12.) Mount Zion, then, is the Kingdom with which our Lord in power and great glory has returned to receive His Bride. **It has already come down from God out of heaven** and, unknown to the rulers of the world, has been "set up" in the heavenly sphere of the earth. The sleeping saints, already raised, have been caught up to share its Throne with the Lamb, while Satan, the usurper of earth's dominion, has been cast down from his place of power. (Rev. 12., 5-10.)

Many of the Lord's people, even to-day, are as yet not aware of the fact, or have not the faith to accept the Scriptural testimony concerning the good news that the thousand-year reign of Christ has already begun in the heavens and that this is the cause of the world-wide shaking of the present order of things. Notwithstanding the teaching of the Scriptures to the contrary, many to-day are misled by various traditions into thinking that the Kingdom cannot come into being, or be set up, until all the present rulers of the world have been overthrown. Such a view of the matter, however, lacks spiritual discernment and fails to appreciate the true nature of Zion's Kingdom whose situation in the heavens is described by the Psalmist as "on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." (Psa. 48., 2.) Moreover, the orthodox view could not be harmonised with the record of Daniel's vision, for it clearly indicates that it is Zion's Kingdom which, *after having been "set up"* in the heavens, will break in pieces and destroy all the kingdoms of this world. (Dan. 2., 44.)

## THE CLOSE OF THE GOSPEL CALL

In order fully to appreciate the meaning of this vision, it is necessary to be in the light of *Present Truth* and to recognise something of the work and purpose of the Harvest-time. Only from this standpoint can one harmonise the first verse, in which the complete number of the elect members of Christ (144,000) is represented as being with the Lamb on Mount Zion *at the time of the Second Advent*, with a later verse of the chapter which reads—"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." (Rev. 14., 13.)

The harmony of the matter may readily be seen when it is recognised that before the work of Harvest could begin, the full number of the complete 144,000 elect must have been called and accepted as new creatures in Christ. At this stage, *the Gospel call from the nations ended* and the work of the Harvest under the direction of the Chief Reaper began. (Matt. 13., 30.) This very

important aspect of dispensational truth was further emphasised by our Lord in the parable of the drag net. (Matt. 13., 47-49.) The Gospel net, or general call from the Gentiles, began at the commencement of the Age. The net was full *at the beginning of the Harvest-time* when the required number had been accepted into the race, for membership in the Bride class. At this stage, the net was drawn to shore and the work of separation (illustrating the Harvest work) began—"so shall it be at the end (Harvest) of the world (Age)." (Matt. 13., 49.)

Another point of importance to note in this connection is that *from the time when the full number has been called* to complete the Bride class, the remaining members still in the flesh are referred to in the Scriptures as part of Zion. This explains why, in the vision under consideration, the 144,000 are represented as being on Mount Zion *at the commencement* of the Harvest-time. Actually, many of these are *still this side the veil* as may be seen from the following verse where they are heard harping with their harps. (Rev. 14., 2.) There will be no harping with harps (the Word of God) beyond the veil in the Kingdom. Among various Scriptures which clearly apply the term, Zion, to the feet members still in the flesh during the Harvest-time, are the following:—

**Isaiah 52., 7.** "*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings . . . that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*"

This vision has its fulfilment from the time of the Lord's Second Advent. It undoubtedly refers to the feet members in the flesh, during the days of the Lord's Presence. It is important to note, moreover, that according to this prophetic vision, the Harvest witness, proclaiming the presence of the Lord and the commencement of His reign, concerns only the members of Zion still in the flesh.

**Psalms 97., 1-8.** "*The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice . . . clouds and darkness are round about him . . . a fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about . . . Zion heard, and was glad.*"

This prophetic Psalm opens with the announcement that the reign of Christ (representing God) has begun. The consequent shaking of the nations and world-wide trouble follow, while immediately after it is stated, "Zion heard (the good news that Christ's reign had begun), and was glad." The Zion class of which the Psalmist speaks are without doubt the members of Christ, still in the flesh during the days of His Presence. Surely, it was the same stirring vision of Harvest truth which inspired the prophet Daniel to exclaim in such exultant language—"Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days"—1874 A.D.—the time when the full number of Zion's members had been called into the narrow way and the thousand-year reign of Christ was due to begin in heavenly places. (Dan. 12., 12.)

## LET NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN

In harmony with the foregoing, it is of interest here to note that in our Lord's message to the Church at Philadelphia—bringing us to the commencement of the Harvest period—the following significant exhortation is given—"Behold, *I come quickly*; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 3., 11.) At the close of the Philadelphian period, all the 144,000 crowns had been allotted, and the Second Advent of the Lord took place.

Although the full number to make up the elect were called and all the crowns allotted *before the work of Harvesting and judging began*, it does not follow that all then in the race would eventually secure their crowns. In the same way, it does not follow that all the many thousands who then and since have identified themselves with the Harvest message were either accepted as new creatures, or were in the race for the heavenly call. On the contrary, it would seem that from the Divine standpoint many of these were not spiritually begotten at all, but were merely tares, or imitation Christians.

Again, it would be a mistaken view to imagine that the many thousands who during the Harvest testings have lost interest in, or become enemies of Present Truth, were all relinquishing crowns which had been allotted them. On the contrary, it is thought that *only a minority* out of these many thousands ever complied with the terms of the call, or were accepted as candidates in the race for heavenly crowns. This is doubtless true even of the majority of those associated with the Harvest message to-day.

It follows, then, that although the general call ended at the commencement of the Harvest-time when all the crowns were taken up, many have since lost their crowns, while their places have been taken by others who have been admitted into membership of the Body. This testing must continue so long as there are any of the prospective members of Zion this side of the vail.

## I WILL WRITE UPON HIM THE NAME OF MY GOD

Names, in ancient days, were chosen to indicate something of the character of the individual concerned. Reference to any dictionary of Old Testament names will make it manifest that, in those days, a name was regarded as more or less prophetic of the characteristics of the individual to whom it was given. In the vision now under consideration, the entire 144,000 seen with the Lamb are said to have His Father's name written in their foreheads. As already noted, the majority of these are now beyond the vail and seated with their Lord on the Holy Hill of Zion. The remaining members, still in the flesh, are mentioned later in the same chapter as the blessed which die in the Lord from henceforth. (Rev. 14., 13.)

The members of Christ unlike other angelic orders, are not direct creations of God. They are first of all begotten of the Spirit, while still in the flesh, and later clothed with spiritual bodies in the

resurrection. Their acceptance into God's family as sons begins at consecration, when they receive the earnest of their heavenly inheritance. (Eph. 1., 14.)

It is of interest to note, in this connection, that one of the special promises to the overcomers of the Philadelphian Age was that they should have the name of their God written upon them. (Rev. 3., 12.) The Philadelphian period, as already noted, brings us down to the time when the Second Advent was due. Since that time, the Lord's true followers have in a very special sense been a separated people from the great body of professing Christians in general. The call out of Babylon which began early in the Harvest-time constituted a very important aspect of Harvest truth.

### THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD

There is a further deep spiritual truth contained in the promise to the overcomers of the Philadelphian period. The close of this period introduces the day of the Lord's Presence and Kingdom when the full number to complete the Body members of Christ has been called. The message reads—"I will write upon him . . . the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God." (Rev. 3., 12.)

Most commentators have a difficulty in arriving at any concrete understanding of this Scripture. To the ordinary mind, there seems little sense in the thought of a City, or Kingdom, coming down from God out of heaven and, in consequence, it is usually explained as having some reference to the literal city of Jerusalem. In the light of Present Truth, however, the spiritually-minded need not experience this difficulty.

Our Lord when about to leave His disciples informed them that He was not in any sense deserting them. Indeed, it was in their interests that He should go to the Father—"I go to *prepare a place* for you." (John 14., 2-3.) The name of the City is Zion, the *New Jerusalem*. It is not a material City but is comprised of heavenly, angelic beings. *Zion has already come down* out of heaven from God and has been "set up" in the heavenly sphere of earth. The sleeping saints, awakened from the tomb at the Second Advent, are already seated with their Lord on the Throne of Zion. (Psa. 2., 6.) It was concerning the remaining members of the Bride class, the overcomers still in the flesh, that the Lord's message to the Philadelphian Church applied, as noted above.

### HARPERS HARPING WITH THEIR HARPS

The voice of the harpers which John heard could not refer to the members of Christ beyond the veil, but to the feet members still in the flesh. The Word of God is the Divine harp and the players are those who, walking in the light of Present Truth, are enabled to harmonise the various lines of prophetic truth and doctrine, all of which focus upon the great events of this Harvest-time.

At no time in the history of the Church of Christ has there been so much tuning and harping upon the Divine harp as has taken place during the last 60 or 70 years. It is true, however, that many in our day have again hung their harps upon the willows by the rivers of Babylon and once more have gone to sleep beside Babylon's muddy streams. (Psa. 137., 1-2.) Many of these will doubtless awaken later, only to find that the "harvest is past" and the summer-time of special favour ended. If rightly exercised by the winter of tribulation, however, they may yet obtain a place in Mount Zion, as servants of the Bride and Bridegroom. (Rev. 7., 15.)

### **FOLLOWING THE LAMB WHITHERSOEVER HE GOETH**

The function of the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of truth), during the present Age, is to guide the Lord's people along the pathway of ever-increasing light. (John 16., 13.) Although the Lord in bygone days permitted His followers to go for a time into captivity to mystical Babylon, yet as in the case of typical Israel, these experiences have in the end worked out for the good of the few faithful Israelites. When the due time came for deliverance from Babylon, only the Israelites indeed who remained faithful to the promises given to the fathers availed themselves of the opportunity. In this way the true Israelites were separated from the nominal mass. The time for deliverance from spiritual Babylon came at the commencement of the Harvest-time, and the voice of Present Truth proclaiming liberty to Zion's captives has since been heard in every quarter of that great City. The true Israelites, obeying the voice of their great Leader—"Come out of her, my people"—have returned to Zion and are eagerly engaged in building up Zion. In obedience to the voice of the Lord—"build thou the walls of Jerusalem"—the great truths of this day concerning the Presence of Zion's King and Kingdom are being built up, as an effective wall of protection for the faith of Zion's members still in the flesh. (Psa. 51., 18.)

In the case of spiritual Israel, it is not a question of locality as in the type, but of relationship to the various creeds and systems of Babylon. It implies separation unto the Lord and a willingness to follow the leadings of the Spirit of truth, so as to be guided into all truth now due. As stated in verse 5—"In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

The vision continues in the succeeding verses through the messages of three angels which are summarised below, while certain features are studied in detail in Chapters VI-VIII.

### **THREE ANGELS FLY IN MID-HEAVEN**

The three angels, proclaiming their message in mid-heaven, must not be interpreted as literal angelic messengers, either human or spiritual. In their symbolic sense, they represent *important movements of truth* amongst the Lord's people, relative to the work of God in their midst. It is doubtless true that not only human agencies but spiritual

forces as well, are concerned with such developments, but from the standpoint of the vision, it is the special *movements of Harvest truth amongst the Lord's people* that are here brought to our attention.

### THE FIRST ANGEL'S MESSAGE

The first angel is referred to in verse 6 as *another* angel. Certain manuscripts omit the word "another," and this seems more in harmony with the context. The first of the three angels mentioned in the context could hardly be correctly referred to as *another* angel. The verse then reads—"I saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

In order fully to appreciate the significance of this movement of truth which was proclaimed by the first angel at the commencement of the Harvest-time, two points of special importance require to be noted.

The first point is that the angel's message concerns the world of mankind as well as the Lord's followers, and will in due time reach every kindred, and tongue, and people dwelling upon the earth. Despite this fact, however, it is *not proclaimed by the angel to the peoples of the nations*, but in mid-heaven, that is, amongst a class who are heavenly-minded and therefore reckonedly dwelling in a heavenly condition. It may be asked why this symbolic angel did not on this occasion proclaim his message also to the world? The answer is that there is *no message of hope* for the world until the New Covenant is sealed through the completed sacrifice of Christ's Body-members. In the type, it was not until the High Priest had sacrificed the Lord's Goat—the sin-offering for the people—that he came out and blessed the people. (Lev. 9., 15-24.) The fact that this angel's message and the two which follow are directed amongst the heavenly-minded class only, harmonises with the teachings of our Lord concerning the work and purpose of the Harvest-time. (Matt. 13., 30.)

The second important point in reference to this angel's message is that it announces that *the hour of judgment* (the thousand-year day of judgment) has come and that the Judge has taken His seat upon the throne of earth's dominion. (Rev. 20., 4-12.) This subject is fully discussed in Chapter VI.

### THE SECOND ANGEL'S MESSAGE

The second angel's message contains a further aspect of Harvest truth. This message was proclaimed early in the Harvest-time, amongst the same spiritually-minded class in mid-heaven. The proclamation by this angel that Babylon had fallen from Divine favour and was rejected by the Lord, acted as a *sickle to separate* the true wheat class from the great mass of Babylon's tares. This message followed the exposure of Babylon's errors through the proclamation of the first angel and has continued from the early days of the Harvest-time down to the present moment. Moreover, what was then true of



that great city, Babylon, in the earlier days of the Harvest-time, is to-day *applicable in principle to many smaller sections of Babylon* which, in recent years, have grown up amongst those professing to be walking in the light of the first angel's message.

### THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

The message of the third angel like that of the second angel, is said to be proclaimed with a *loud* voice. The latter symbol doubtless conveys the thought of a clear and precise message, calling for urgency and prompt attention on the part of the Lord's people. (Rev. 18., 1-4.) Moreover, this angel's message brings to the spiritually-minded class, in the Holy, an important witness and testimony of prophetic truth concerning the "things to come". (John 16., 13.) Otherwise stated, it is an up to date *development of present truth* and an important part of the armour provided by the Lord for this day, in order to protect His followers from the serious deceptions immediately ahead of them. "Where there is no vision (the faith of), the people perish." (Prov. 29., 18.) The third angel's message is dealt with in Chapter VII.

## THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME

*“ And I saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” (Rev. 14., 6-7.)*

The proclamation of the text which reads—“ Fear God, and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment is come ”—forms part of the first angel’s message. This message went forth, amongst the Lord’s people, at the beginning of the Harvest-time. It is only since the Second Advent of our Lord that any clear hope for the world, as distinct from that of the elect Church, has been revealed.

This symbolic angel is understood to represent a testimony, or movement of truth given forth by the watchers, in the early days of the Harvest-time. Instead of attempting to proclaim the Lord’s message to the nations, as heretofore, the angel carried it swiftly amongst a class described as dwelling in the midst of heaven (mid-heaven)—a spiritually-minded class. The sowing-time for witnessing to the nations and calling out from the Gentiles the heirs of the Kingdom, had come to an end, and the Harvest, or reaping work amongst those already called, had commenced. The hour of God’s judgment had come with the commencement of the Harvest-time, as it is hoped to show later.

The Scriptures reveal that, from the earliest days of human history, God has from time to time made known His purpose in a coming Judgment Day. Away back in Eden, at the time of the Fall, God’s threat to the serpent that the seed of the woman would bruise his head, clearly implied a coming day of retribution upon evil and evil-doers. (Gen. 3., 15.) Moreover, following man’s expulsion from Eden and right along the course of human history, we have brought to our attention examples of God’s hatred of evil, revealing a continual conflict between the kingdom of darkness and the Kingdom of light.

Outstanding examples of this conflict may be noted in the records of the flood, in the days of Noah, and later, in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, at the time of Abraham. In addition to such examples, however, we have the testimony of the more sure word of prophecy. The Apostle Jude calls our attention to the prophecy of Enoch—“ Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to

execute judgment upon all." (Jude 14-15.) Moreover, the prophet Daniel, describing in vision the Second Advent of our Lord, declares—"A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." (Dan. 7., 10.)

## GOD NOT IN LEAGUE WITH EVIL

The examples just mentioned are merely isolated illustrations of God's hatred of evil and of evil-doers. They are necessary instances, however, in order that it might be clearly evident that God is not, in any sense, in league with evil, but that He is the embodiment of just the opposite principles, namely, righteousness and truth.

The fact that God's retribution upon evil and upon Satan, its author, lingers, must in no wise be taken as an indication of weakness, or laxity, on the part of the Creator. On the contrary, it is an example of His long-suffering and patience, in view of the ultimate issue of the Divine Plan.

Moreover, in the end it will be seen that He maketh the wrath of His enemies to praise Him, for the overthrow of Satan's empire will eventually make manifest the perfection and righteousness of His own character and government.

### 1. WHY THERE IS A DAY OF JUDGMENT

Regarding the first point, as to why there must be a Day of Judgment, it is thought that all would agree as to its necessity. For more than 6,000 years evil has held sway over the human family. The enemies of God have prospered, while the righteous have suffered at the hands of the wicked. The prophet sums up the position in a few brief words, when he declares—"Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." (Mal. 3., 15.)

Since God is righteous, however, and has declared His opposition to evil, and since He has the power to overthrow it, His own righteous character guarantees that He must eventually put an end to evil and evil-doers. Moreover, He must likewise execute judgment upon, and eventually destroy, all who refuse to obey His will, for the will of God must eventually become the will of every intelligent being in the Universe. The Psalmist also confirms this viewpoint by saying—"All the wicked will he destroy." (Psa. 145., 20.) To think otherwise would be to suppose, either that God Himself was in league with evil, or that He lacked the power and ability to destroy it.

A Day of Judgment, then, is not only a *necessity*, but it is as well a *certainty*, for the benefit of all who love the ways of righteousness and desire to live in harmony with their Creator.

### 2. WHEN THE JUDGE TAKES HIS SEAT

All prophetic references to the Day of Judgment indicate that it commenced at the time of our Lord's Second Advent. Moreover, every prophecy having any direct bearing upon the subject indicates

that the day of trouble now upon the world and all its institutions is *the result* of Christ's Kingdom having been set up in the heavens and of earth's great Judge having taken His seat upon the Throne of Judgment. (Rev. 20., 11.)

**The Great White Throne Vision.** It should be noted that this vision covers the entire period of Christ's Millennial reign (see Chapter X). The fleeing away and destruction of the present symbolic heavens and earth (Satan's spiritual kingdom and earthly organizations) result from the fact that the Judgment Day has begun.

**Whose voice shook the earth.** The writer to the Hebrews reminds us of the correspondency between the typical Mount of God, from which God gave His Law, at the hand of Moses, to the nation of Israel, and Mount Zion, the Kingdom of Christ, from which God, through the greater than Moses, will judge and instruct all the subjects of the new Kingdom. (Heb. 12., 25.)

We read, concerning the figure, that before Israel received the Law, there were blackness and darkness and tempest in the Mount. Moreover, there was the sound of a trumpet; also the shaking of the earth. (Heb. 12., 26-27.) Corresponding with this, in the antitype, the Apostle directs our attention to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, from which the voice of liberty and truth is now shaking not only the earth (human institutions) but also the heavens (Satan's kingdom) as well. Then again, corresponding with the trumpet voice from the Mount Sinai, there is now heard, by those who have ears to hear, the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, proclaiming that the reign of Christ has begun and that the day of emancipation and deliverance of the human family from Satan's control has come. (Rev. 11., 15-17.) Furthermore, the Apostle, after stating that God's voice from Mount Zion, the heavenly Kingdom, will shake not only earth but also heaven, adds that eventually He will remove both. (Heb. 12., 26-27.)

It is clear, then, from the Scriptures generally, that the removal of Satan's kingdom and his control over the human family, result from the setting up of Mount Zion, in heavenly places, at the time of the Lord's Second Advent. It was at that time that the great Judge took His seat upon the throne of earth's dominion, and there the Day of the Lord—the Judgment Day of one thousand years began. (2. Pet. 3., 10.)

The suggestion is sometimes made that the reign of Christ cannot begin until the present evil world has first passed away and peace has been established upon the earth. This suggestion is understood, however, to be quite contrary to the testimony of the Scriptures, and although the reasoning might seem plausible to certain minds it could not be harmonised with the teachings of both Old and New Testaments. (Dan. 2., 44; 2. Pet. 3., 10.)

Instead of the reign of Christ being a time of uninterrupted peace, the Scriptures indicate that its commencement will result in the greatest day of trouble that the world has ever witnessed. (Dan. 12., 1;

Rev. 11., 17-18.) The harmony of the matter can be appreciated only when it is realised that Christ's Kingdom is spiritual, that it is set up in the heavens, and that after overthrowing Satan's power in the heavens it will then take control of the earth and the human family, as shown below. It will eventually cause God's will to be done upon the earth, as it is now done in heaven amongst all heavenly beings in harmony with their Creator. (Rev. 21., 1-4.)

### 3. FOR WHOM THE JUDGE WILL SIT

It should be noted that, from the standpoint of the Creator, there is but *one opponent* of the Divine government, and that one is Satan. He is the author and instigator of evil, as well as the organiser of opposition to God's Plan. It is true, of course, that Satan has now gained many followers, on both the human and spiritual planes, but these are all, in a measure, under his influence and control. The Apostle John describes the human family as lying in (or under the control of) the wicked one. (1. John 5., 19.)

Opposition to the Divine government, therefore, must in this sense be regarded as a *unit*, and judgment must begin with the *chief offender*—Satan.

The Judgment Day, however, will affect, in turn, all those under his influence and control. Indeed, the severity of their judgment will be in proportion to their opposition to the Kingdom of righteousness and truth.

Broadly speaking, therefore, the Judgment Day will affect the following parties, viz:—

- (a) **The great leader**, Satan.
- (b) **The angels** who kept not their first estate and came under Satan's control.
- (c) **The Lord's body members** still in the flesh during the Harvest period.
- (d) **The human family** who became Satan's subjects.  
(1. John 5., 19.)

#### (a) BINDING FIRST THE STRONG MAN

It would be useless to attempt the uplift and blessing of the human family while, at the same time, Satan's kingdom and power in the heavens remained intact.

Our Lord indicated this when, addressing the Scribes, he said—  
“No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.” (Mark 3., 27.) Satan's house (kingdom) was broken into when the Lord returned in the power of His Kingdom, at the beginning of the Harvest-time. Eventually, he will be completely bound and all his goods will be spoiled and his house entirely broken up.

It must not be supposed, however, that Satan's binding would be completed in a brief moment of time, for that would not be in

accordance with the Divine Plan. On the contrary, the binding of Satan and the limitation of his power and control in the heavens are gradual, occupying a considerable number of years. The Revelator, when describing this work of binding Satan and his angels, says that they prevailed not against Michael's Kingdom, neither was their *place* found any more in heaven. (Rev. 12., 8.)

The prophet records how Satan usurped the place of power and control in the heavens, when he aspired to have a kingdom on his own account and to "sit upon the sides of the north." (Isa. 14., 13.)

Our Lord's Kingdom, now established in the heavens, occupies the place of power from whence Satan has been cast out—"beautiful for situation is Mount Zion, on the *sides of the north*, the city of the great King". (Psa. 48., 1-2.)

The judgment upon Satan, then, has already begun, and although not yet fully bound, his complete binding is only a matter of time. The thousand years of Satan's binding count from the time when his house, or spiritual kingdom, is broken into, just as the thousand years of Christ's reign count from the same point when His spiritual kingdom takes control in the heavens—about the year 1874 A.D.

The hour of Satan's judgment, therefore, has already come and his house is now being spoiled by the stronger than he. (Matt. 12., 29.)

### (b) THE ANGELS THAT SINNED

The judgment of the angels could only take place *after* Satan's house had been broken into and his power over them broken. Satan's kingdom has been a dictatorship, and its spirit is becoming very evident, in our day, amongst earthly rulers, as seen in vision by the Revelator—"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is *come down* unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." (Rev. 12., 12.)

Those angels who sinned in the days of Noah were apparently influenced and deceived by the great Adversary. Now that Satan's control over them has been broken, the *hour of their judgment* is come and they will require to choose between the kingdom of darkness and the Kingdom of righteousness and truth. Those who still choose the ways of evil and wickedness will be destroyed in the Second Death.

### (c) THE JUDGMENT OF GOD'S HOUSE

Another class whom the Apostle informs us must be made manifest before the Judgment Seat of Christ, has reference to those who profess to be members of God's household—those in the world, but not of its spirit. (1. Pet. 4., 17-18.) The Judgment, or separating work amongst this class, commenced at the beginning of the Harvest-time, when the sickle of Present Truth was cast in. The work of this day has many aspects and, in due course, it will affect every individual who makes a profession of being a follower of the Lord.

The Apostle indicates that the judgment work of this Day is to make manifest three classes amongst the Lord's professed followers—the righteous, the ungodly, and the sinner. (1. Pet. 4., 18.) It is evident that this description could not refer to the world in general because their judgment as individuals has not yet commenced, neither have they at present any standing by faith before the Lord, as a basis for judgment.

It seems evident that this Scripture describes the Harvest-testings amongst the Lord's professed followers. The Present Truth, concerning the Return of our Lord and the Harvest work, is the sickle which the Lord has used in testing the faith and loyalty of all who have made a profession of consecration to do His will. The attitude of each one towards the increasing light of truth upon the pathway makes manifest whether they are of the righteous, or ungodly, or sinner class.

**The righteous** are fully consecrated to the Lord's will and therefore in an attitude of heart and mind eager to embrace the increasing light of this day. This class, having put on the armour of light provided as a protection for the faith of the feet members against the inroads of error and doubt in this evil day, are able to withstand the attacks of the enemy. They are of the class described by the Psalmist as dwelling in the secret (Holy) place of the Most High, and therefore under His special care and providences. (Ps. 91., 1.)

**The ungodly** (lawless) class is descriptive of those who, while professing full consecration to the Lord's will and Word, are careless and indifferent to His instructions. Their attitude towards the Present Truth and the Harvest viewpoint of the Divine Plan, reveals a lack of faith and appreciation of His will for this day. They are, consequently, in measurable darkness as respects the Lord's will for them and the special work of Harvesting now in progress. Like Saul of old, they may be engaged in making great sacrifices in the name of the Lord, but, being out of harmony with His will, they are therefore unacceptable in His sight. They have not learned the lesson that obedience to the Lord's will and instructions is more acceptable to Him than any sacrifice which they could make, and, consequently, they will not be able to stand the tests of this hour of judgment.

**The sinner**, as used in this connection, is in a limited sense applicable to some amongst the Lord's people who, having enjoyed the light and blessing of the Present Truth, have allowed other interests of a worldly kind to turn them aside from paying their vows unto the Most High. Like the class already described, they are lawless through indifference to the instructions of God's Word and, additionally, are guilty of bartering the truth for the sake of present interests.

They are therefore judged unworthy of a share in the Kingdom and, sooner or later, will go into the outer darkness of worldly wisdom and the deceptions of the Adversary (2. Thess. 2., 11.)

#### (d) THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD

Although the judgment upon Satan's kingdom in the heavens began at the time of the Lord's Second Advent, yet the kingdoms

of this world had a lease of power which did not expire until 1914 A.D. It was not until the expiry of the "Times of the Gentiles" (1914 A.D.) that the smiting of the metallic Image of Gentile power began, by means of the Stone Kingdom. (Dan. 2., 44.)

Although the smiting of the nations is now in progress, the end of Gentile rule is "not yet." (1. Pet. 4., 7.) The seventh and eighth Heads, described by the Revelator, have yet to play their parts. (Rev. 17., 10-11.) The hour of *judgment upon the nations*, then, has already come, is now in progress, and they will soon be broken to pieces like a potter's vessel. (Psa. 2., 9.)

The judgment of the world, as individuals, could take place only after the wrath of God has been completed upon Satan's kingdom and when they are freed from the control of all earthly organizations. It will begin with the sealing of the New Covenant and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all who come into harmony with the Kingdom. (Jer. 31., 31-34.)

All will have an opportunity of receiving back again the perfection lost in Eden through the fall. Those who are willing and obedient will be helped up the Highway of Holiness and have the assistance and protection of the great Mediator and His Kingdom.

Although, as already seen, all creatures involved in the rebellion of Satan on both the spiritual and human planes have their part in the great Day of Judgment, yet there is only one Judgment Day in the Divine programme, and that day occupies a period of one thousand years. (2. Pet. 3., 8.)

## HAVING THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

It was not until the Harvest-time that the day of judgment was in any way associated with the everlasting gospel. Indeed, it may not be appreciated by all that at the commencement of the Harvest-time, before the first angel's message went forth, only a very few insignificant followers of the Lord had up to that time been able to free themselves from the defiling errors of the Papal system. Moreover, at that stage, the general doctrines of the "faith once delivered" had not been fully recovered from the creedal errors of Christendom, neither had they been co-ordinated as now seen in the Divine Plan of the Ages. God's purpose in the permission of evil was still obscure to most of the Lord's people. There was no Gospel of glad tidings for the world in general, apart from the vague understanding of the heavenly hope of the Lord's people. The marvellous blessedness due to the Lord's people at the close of the 1,335 days, and foretold by the prophet Daniel, was brought to them *through the first angel's* message. (Dan. 12., 12.) It restored to the watchers amongst them, not only the harmony and beauty of the everlasting Gospel as it concerned the saints of this Age, but additionally made manifest the world's portion in the Divine programme. Moreover, it proclaimed in Zion (amongst the feet members) the Presence of our Lord and His Kingdom. (Isa. 52., 7-8.)



## CHAPTER VII

# THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

*“The third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” (Rev. 14., 9-10.)*

The third angel's message, part of which is contained in the heading of this Chapter, contains a warning to the Lord's followers, the implication of which is that severe and unexpected tests of faith lie in the pathway immediately ahead of them. We say “unexpected,” because the majority of those who profess to be in the truth are blind as respects the “things to come.” There is thus “no vision” in their midst and this is on account of neglect of the armour of light provided in the prophetic Word for this day. In consequence, none but the few will be able to stand and overcome the subtle deceptions of the hour.

In Chapter V the vision of the Lamb with the 144,000 on Mount Zion was discussed generally. It is therefore unnecessary to dwell upon the details of the vision on this occasion, except to remind ourselves that Mount Zion is the Kingdom which, at the Second Advent, came “down out of heaven from my God,” prepared as the home of the Bride and Bridegroom. (Rev. 3., 12.)

The prophet Daniel was given a vision of this Kingdom “set up” at the Second Advent, and of the events to transpire when our Lord, accompanied by a mighty host of heavenly beings, would commence to take control of earth's dominion.

In his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's metallic image, he was given an outline of Gentile kingdoms from his own day down to the overthrow and destruction of all human governments. Moreover, his attention was particularly directed to the peculiar composition of the kingdoms represented by the feet and toes of the image.

It has been suggested that the iron and clay features of the feet of the image represent the ecclesiastical and political elements of these kingdoms. It would not seem, however, that Nebuchadnezzar's image depicts any religious systems whatsoever. On the contrary, the various kinds of metals degenerating in value from gold to iron and iron mixed with clay, seem to represent Gentile kingdoms, or dynasties, of which Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was the first, or head

of gold. It is true, of course, that like the figure of Ahab and Jezebel, a religious system may be associated with the temporal power, but ecclesiastical power, as such, is not represented in Nebuchadnezzar's metallic image. The gradual declinature is aptly depicted, from the autocratic form of government, as represented by the gold of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, down to the forms of government of our day, seen in the iron and clay of the feet and toes of the image. (Dan. 2., 41-43.)

The iron element of human governments, though very strong and in some respects apparently more satisfactory than the gold element of absolutism, nevertheless exhibits some very objectionable qualities. Its strength, in the hands of degenerate men, is generally used as a means of trampling upon and destroying the rights and liberties of the people. This quality is very manifest in dictatorships of recent times. It is a glorification of racial or state idealism, at the expense of individual rights and liberties.

The clay element represents the democratic forms of government which, in principle, are just the antithesis of dictatorships. All Gentile kingdoms of our day, generally speaking, come within these two categories, and this explains why most powers are at present linking themselves up under one or other of these two banners.

### LET HIM THAT READETH UNDERSTAND

The important point of Daniel's interpretation of the image, so far as we are concerned, is that it was during the period in which these Gentile kings (the toe phase of the image) *were still reigning*, that the God of heaven would set up the Kingdom. (Dan. 2., 44.) It is this same Kingdom, prefigured by Mount Zion and set up at the time of our Lord's Second Advent, to which reference is made in Rev. 14. It should be evident from the record of Dan. 2., 43-44 alone, apart from many other confirmatory Scriptures, that the ordinary view is incorrect. This view, so generally held by many brethren, teaches that Christ's Kingdom will not be set up until all the present kingdoms of the world have first been overthrown. Such a view fails to take into account the true nature of Mount Zion, whose throne on the "sides of the north" is the seat of spiritual control. (Psa. 48., 1-2.) It is when the events described by Daniel as the breaking in pieces of the toes of the Gentile image are taking place that the Revelator's vision of the Lamb on Mount Zion, with the 144,000 sealed ones, has its fulfilment.

### THREE OUTSTANDING POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

There are three important points brought to our attention in the message of the third angel, to which all the Lord's people would do well to give special attention. Brief reference is made to these as follows:—

**Point No. 1.** First of all, it should be particularly noted that the message concerns the experiences of the Lord's people living on the

earth *near the close* of the Harvest-time. Rev. 14., 10 clearly states that the experiences take place *in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb*. The holy angels, to which reference is here made, comprise the "City of God," the "New Jerusalem," in which our Lord, at His Second Advent, came down from heaven, and which was then established on "the sides of the north." (Psa. 48., 2.) Various Scriptures of both Old and New Testaments describe these angels as being associated with our Lord at the Second Advent. Amongst these, are the following:—

**Matt. 25., 31.** "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

**Luke 9., 26.** "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's (glory), and (in the glory) of the holy angels."

**Jude 14.** "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints (holy ones—angels)."

From the foregoing and various other Scriptures, it will be seen that the holy angels whose presence is mentioned in Rev. 14., 10, are none other than the holy angels associated with our Lord in His Kingdom, symbolised in Scripture as Mount Zion. (Psa. 2., 6; 110., 2.) Since the beginning of the Harvest-time, our Lord has taken His seat upon the throne of Zion and associated in the throne with Him, as joint-heirs, are the sleeping saints raised in the First Resurrection. (1. Thess. 4., 16.)

**Point No. 2.** The second point to be noted in reference to the third angel's message is that it represents an important *witness of prophetic truth* concerning the things to come. Moreover, it constitutes an important part of the armour essential to the protection of the faith of the Lord's people during the closing days of the Harvest-time. This witness, as indicated in the context, is to be given in mid-heaven—amongst a spiritually-minded class. It is described as being given with a loud voice or, in other words, with no uncertain sound. This angel, like the two preceding ones, is symbolical of a movement of present truth amongst the Lord's people. It will no doubt be an important factor in the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads (intellectually), as indicated in Rev. 7., 2-3. This knowledge of the things to come is revealed by the Spirit of truth, in order to guard the faith of the Lord's followers and so protect them from the subtle deceptions which will deceive all but the very elect. (Matt. 24., 24.)

**Point No. 3.** The third and vital point for consideration relates to the *subject* of this angel's message. It concerns two important world systems which, towards the close of the Harvest period, will for a time come into prominence, and as leading powers amongst the nations will constitute the seventh and eighth Heads of Gentile

dominion. (Rev. 17., 10-11.) These two Heads are identified in the context (verse 9) as the beast and his image. The beast is Papal Rome which for 1,260 years, from 539 to 1799 A.D., occupied the position of leader amongst the nations, as the fifth head of Gentile dominion. This beast is described in detail by the Revelator in Rev. 13., 1-2.

By a comparison of the following three Scriptures, it will be seen that it is this beast (Papal Rome) that is referred to in the third angel's message. (Rev. 14., 9.)

**Rev. 13., 3.** "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his **deadly wound was healed**: and all the world wondered after the beast."

**Rev. 13., 14.** "And (the sixth head) deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast (Papal Rome); saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should *make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*"

**Rev. 14., 9.** "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, *If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.*"

### WOUNDED TO DEATH BUT STILL LIVING

The Papal power received its deadly wound when Napoleon dethroned the Pope and made him prisoner. For a time it seemed that the wound was fatal and that the Papacy could not survive the treatment received at the hand of Napoleon. The deadly wound began to be healed, however, when the Pope was restored to his throne. We say *began*, because the healing process has been a gradual one. This process will only be complete when Papacy's power and position are regained amongst the nations. Then, as the eighth head, she will say in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no (longer a) widow, and shall see no sorrow." (Rev. 18., 7.) The Papal Church (Jezebel) has been a widow since deprived of temporal power, represented in figure by Ahab. Papacy lost its position as the head, or leading power amongst the nations, at the time of the French Revolution. Since that time and until recently, it has existed wholly devoid of temporal authority. Symbolically, it is described as being in the bottomless pit—a condition of powerlessness and obscurity. In the near future, however, it will "ascend out of the bottomless pit" and again become wedded to temporal power as the eighth head of Gentile rule. (Rev. 17., 8.) Later, it will "go into perdition" and be swallowed up in the great earthquake, of world revolution. (Rev. 16., 18-21.)

### MAKING AN IMAGE TO THE BEAST

It is essential to keep in mind that it is the beast that cometh up out of the earth, with horns like a lamb (the sixth Head of world dominion), that suggests to the nations that they make *an*

*image to the beast which had the wound with the sword* and did live. (Rev. 13., 14.) It has already been noted that the beast, to which the image is made, was the Papal power, in the days of its ascendancy over Christendom as the fifth Head. It comprised a central authority, the Pope with the hierarchy or church as head, while the ten horns embraced the kingdoms, or divisions, into which the Roman Empire had been apportioned. These held their crowns by virtue of their allegiance to, and support of, the Papal power. As a system, it has been well described as a counterfeit of the Kingdom of Christ.

As we have examined, in a general way, the original beast according to which the image is to be made, it will enable us to understand, in some measure, what the image itself will be like when fully developed. It will not be an image of the beast in its present condition, divorced of power and influence amongst the nations. The image will be a likeness of the beast as it existed *prior to receiving its deadly wound* at the hands of Napoleon.

The suggestion has sometimes been made that the image refers to a certain phase of the beast itself and that its fulfilment relates to bygone days of the Papal supremacy. Such a view could not be harmonised, however, with the visions contained in this fourteenth chapter of Revelation. In the first place, the entire context of the vision under consideration refers to the *Harvest period*, and the worshipping of the image is said to take place in the *presence of the Lamb*. (Rev. 14., 10.) Moreover, if the image was but a phase of the beast itself, there would be no sense in describing it as an image of itself. A thing could not reasonably be described as an image of itself. The fact, too, that at the time when the image, or seventh Head, rises to power, the beast itself is also said to play an important part, should clearly prove that the image is *quite distinct from the Papal power*.

The making of the image is understood to have commenced some time since, during the Lord's Presence, when the idea of collective security was conceived. The basic principle is that of peace and mutual security for all nations. In order to accomplish this end, it became evident that such an organization must have power to act as a kind of super-parliament of nations with *authority to command obedience* from all coming under its jurisdiction. (Rev. 13., 15.) The fact that the development of the image and its rise to power have been delayed, does not mean that this prophetic vision will fail of fulfilment.

The fact that the beast, after which the image is to be patterned, exercised both temporal and spiritual power over its subjects would indicate that the image will in like manner wield spiritual as well as political control over all who come within its sphere. Not only are the nations to-day eager to give their strength and support to what they describe as an organised and lasting peace, but every religious sect is also anxious to join in building up such an organization.

## WHEN THEY SHALL SAY, PEACE AND SAFETY

The nations are to-day not only war-weary, but their leaders will be glad to discover a *way out of the pit of* despair into which they have fallen. (Isa. 24., 18.) Men of good will everywhere desire peace, and will be glad to give their support (worship) to any power which can bring about the hoped-for condition of peace and safety.

The motives behind the making of the image, in so far as the people in general are concerned, will no doubt be honourable and humanitarian. Like every other effort of mankind to better their conditions, however, it will fail in its object. Through the power of the Adversary, the effort will be diverted to a different end.

It would appear that the rise to power of the image will be hailed by all sections of humanity, political and religious, as the establishment of God's Kingdom upon earth. As a leading power and head amongst the nations, it will continue for a short space as the seventh Head, to be followed by the eighth and last Head—the Papal system again restored to a position of power and leadership amongst the nations. (Rev. 17., 11.)

## IF POSSIBLE, THE ELECT WOULD BE DECEIVED

In our Lord's great prophecy, as recorded in Matt. 24., 23-24, we are given some indication of the need for such a warning as is contained in the message of the third angel. (Rev. 14., 9-12.) False Christs, in the sense referred to by our Lord in this connection, do not relate to the claims of individuals, but to counterfeit systems which profess to represent God and the work of His Kingdom amongst men. Chief amongst such in bygone days was Papal Rome, in the days of its ascendancy as the fifth Head. Rome claimed to be God's Kingdom on earth and to do the work of Christ's Millennial Kingdom. Despite such claims, however, that very system has been identified in the Word of God as a false, or counterfeit Christ, labelled by the Apostle as the Man of Sin. (2. Thess. 2., 3.) The image of the beast will also be a false Christ, as may be seen from the fact that it will be an image of the fifth beast, or Antichrist. Doubtless, the image of the beast, or seventh Head, will be one of the important false Christs referred to by our Lord in Matt. 24., 24. Apparently, it will for a time have the support of all lovers of peace amongst men, political and ecclesiastical, who see no higher hope for humanity than the efforts of fallen men. The very elect will be forewarned, however, and having on the armour of light respecting the things to come will not be deceived, but will see a higher vision of the world's hope. They will have heard the good news proclaimed by the feet members in Zion that the Lord hath founded Zion and will therefore put their trust therein. (Isa. 14., 32; 52., 7-8.)

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE BLESSED FROM HENCEFORTH

*“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.”* (Rev. 14., 13-14.)

Blessed, beyond all human comparison, are they who win the approval of our Heavenly Father in this Age and gain a place in the Kingdom. Our Lord, in speaking of this class, said—“Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Matt. 13., 16-17.) Moreover, the Apostle Paul, in a later day, after referring to the faithful walk and testimony of the Ancient Worthies of the past, contrasts the hope set before them in the Divine Plan with the “more excellent glory” and hope set before the saints of this Age. Indeed, he adds—“God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11., 40.)

If it be asked why there should be this difference between the grace bestowed upon the overcomers of this Age and those of other Ages, the answer is that we are living in the day when it has pleased the Heavenly Father to make known to the sons of men the exceeding riches of His grace. (Eph. 2., 7.)

The grace of God through Christ will, in due course, operate towards all mankind, offering life and blessing to whomsoever will upon the *human plane*. To the elect of this Age, however, the reward of faithfulness transcends every other feature of the Divine Plan, for it is nothing less than the Divine nature, that is, immortality. (2. Pet. 1., 4.) Referring to the hope of this Age, the Apostle, in his letter to the Corinthians, writes—“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.)

All the aforementioned grace and much more, then, is implied in the use of the expression “blessed,” as found in our text.

### THE BLESSING NOT UNLIMITED

According to the text, the blessing in reference to this Age is not open to every member of the human family. The Revelator informs us that it is limited to the dead. It must be obvious that

this could not mean those of the human family who are in the tomb, for, according to the Scriptures, there is neither knowledge nor blessing there. (Eccl. 9., 10.)

Moreover, death, as such, is never in the Scriptures represented as a state of blessedness, but always as being in the nature of a calamity, or evil.

### THE ONE EXCEPTION

It may easily be gathered from other portions of the Apostle's writings that the dead, described as "blessed", in Rev. 14., 13-14, are not the dead in their graves. In his letter to the Colossians, he addresses the members of the church at Colosse as dead—"Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God". (Col. 3., 3.) Similarly, in addressing the believers at Rome, he describes them as being "dead with" Christ. (Rom. 6., 8.)

The explanation of the above and similar Scriptures is that the Apostle is referring therein to such as have consecrated their lives to the Lord and who are, therefore, dead to self and to the world with all its attractions and allurements.

The purpose of God, in this Age, is the making of a New Creation, and membership is offered only to those who are willing to give up their lives as *human* beings, in sacrifice, with the hope that, in due time, they will receive life on the Divine plane. Our Lord, as the Head of the New Creation, took this step at Jordan and His followers are called to walk in His steps. (1. Pet. 2., 21.) There is no other way of entry into the Kingdom, in this Age, apart from the way of consecration and sacrifice, as exemplified in the case of our Lord.

Consecration, however, in the Scriptural sense, is not understood as merely a turning from sin, in order to lead a good life. Indeed, according to the Scriptures, consecration is not intended for sinners at all. On the contrary, before the sinner can be accepted of God, in consecration, he must have taken two previous steps which are defined in the Scriptures as Repentance and faith unto Justification. (Rom. 2., 4; 5., 1.) It is the justified one, then, who is invited to become a follower in the Master's steps and to be dead with Him, in consecration, as exemplified during the three and a half years of His ministry.

It follows, therefore, that the blessedness referred to in the text can apply only to those who are dead, in the sense of having become footstep followers of the Lord.

### VARIOUS LIMITATIONS TO THE BLESSING

#### (a) The dead who die

While it is clear that only the consecrated who are sacrificially dead and who have been accepted as new creatures in Christ, can claim the blessedness of the Kingdom hope, yet there are certain limitations or conditions, even so far as they are concerned. To inherit the blessing mentioned in the text, it is stated that those described as dead, in consecration, must first of all *die physically* as well.



Expressed differently, it means that each follower of the Lord must not only make the vow of consecration, whereby he promises to sacrifice his earthly life and hopes, but also perform that vow by a faithful adherence thereto, even unto death. (Rev. 2., 10.)

The glory and blessing of the Kingdom cannot be entered into in the present life, and any attempt, on the part of the Lord's followers, to lay up treasures upon the earth, or to seek the honours and praises of men, would imply a lack of faithfulness to their vow of consecration. The sufferings of Christ, both Head and Body, relate to the present life, while the honour and glory of the Kingdom belong to the future.

The promise of our text, then, limits the blessing to those dead ones who have reached the end of their earthly experiences and who have thus passed within the portals of death.

### (b) Dying in the Lord

While the Scriptures clearly teach that the Kingdom blessings are limited to those of this Age who are dead with Christ and who finish their consecration in actual death, they also reveal to us a further limitation with respect to those who thus die.

The text under consideration contains this additional limitation, in that it refers only to those who die *in the Lord*. Dying in the Lord and dying in Adam, express two distinct thoughts and mean very different things.

All the world, by heredity, are dead in Adam, for they have all been condemned by the one offence of the first man. (1. Cor. 15., 21-22.) All of Adam's children who have gone into the tomb, with the exception of those who have been accepted as new creatures in Christ, have died in Adam, and cannot have a resurrection until the New Covenant has first been sealed on their behalf. (Isa. 49., 8-9.)

In accordance with the Divine Plan, atonement has, as yet, been made only for the Priest and His house, whose house are we if we be "dead with him" and hold fast to our consecration vow. At consecration, therefore, we pass from the death condition in Adam, unto that of life in Christ. (1. John 3., 14.) Such only, then, as have taken the step of consecration and been accepted in Christ, could eventually be said to die in the Lord.

It should be noted, however, that not all who are accepted in the Beloved do eventually die in the Lord. Out of the many called to become dead with Christ, only the few ultimately overcome and are accepted by the Lord as His joint heirs, in the Kingdom. The majority, so it would appear, fail to overcome and consequently lose their position in the Body, hence they could not be said to die in the Lord. This class, sometimes termed the Great Company, occupy a distinct category of their own and were prefigured by the Scape Goat, on the typical Day of Atonement. (Lev. 16., 20-22.)

It follows that only such as abide in Christ, and remain faithful unto death, can be said to die in the Lord.

### (c) Blessed from henceforth

While the Scriptures teach that those who have died in the Lord and slept in their graves during the Age are to be raised and enter into the blessing of the Kingdom at the Lord's Second Advent, yet it should be distinctly noted that the text under consideration makes no reference whatsoever to such. On the contrary, this Scripture marks a starting point—*henceforth*—from which time onward, but not before, dying in the Lord is stated to be blessed. It seems clear that the reference, in this connection, is to those of the Lord's people who would be alive in the flesh, at the time of the Lord's Second Presence. Such, the Apostle informs us elsewhere, unlike those who died prior to the Second Advent, would not need to sleep in the tomb, but would be changed instantly, at the moment of death. (1. Cor. 15., 51-52.)

It may easily be seen, from the general context of the verse itself, that the point of time indicated therein as "henceforth", marks the commencement of our Lord's Second Presence. The verse following (Rev. 14., 14) reads—"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle".

Most Bible students would agree that this verse describes, in clear and vivid symbolism, not only the fact of our Lord's return, but also that He has already begun to take over the sovereignty of this world and to gather His elect home to the Kingdom. (Rev. 11., 15.) Nowhere in the Scriptures is it suggested that dying in the Lord, prior to the time of His Second Presence, was blessed. On the contrary, such are described as having been asleep and, for the time being, not consciously existent, except in the mind and purpose of God.

### BEHOLD, I SHEW YOU A MYSTERY

The understanding of this text has been a mystery to Bible students of the past and commentators on the Revelation have had to admit that there seemed to be no clear explanation thereof. The true interpretation was hidden and could not be appreciated until after our Lord's Return, which became an accomplished fact about the year 1874 A.D. Once it was realised that our Lord was no longer a human being and that, as a highly exalted and glorious spirit being, He could be present, unseen and invisible to the natural eye, new light regarding the manner of the Second Advent began to dawn upon the watchers of that time. Moreover, the recognition of the fact that the signs mentioned by our Lord, in His great prophecy and elsewhere, were not signs of the *nearness of His Coming*, but rather evidences that He was *already present*, threw a flood of light upon this text, and also upon all other Scriptures relating to this day in which we live. (Matt. 24., 27-41.)

Prior to the Harvest-time, it was generally understood by those who were looking for the Lord's Return that He would appear in a material body, whereupon all His followers, both living and dead,

would be simultaneously caught away to meet Him in the air. The fuller light upon the Scriptures, however, quickly dispelled these erroneous views, and revealed to the watchers the truth concerning the Lord's Presence and the consequent resurrection of the sleeping saints. (1. Cor. 15., 52.)

Moreover, as regards the living members of Christ, instead of being caught away simultaneously with those who had slept, it was seen that, according to the Scriptures, these would remain and during the Harvest period of the Lord's Presence, be changed individually, at the moment of death. It was concerning those saints who would be alive during the Lord's Presence that the prophet Daniel, under inspiration, was caused to exclaim—"Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days". The starting point of Daniel's vision was 539 A.D. Thus  $539 \text{ A.D.} + 1335 = 1874 \text{ A.D.}$ , the year which, according to the Scriptures, marks the close of the 6,000 years from the Fall and the date of the Lord's Second Presence. (Dan. 12., 12.)

It was not, however, until after 1874 A.D. had passed and the signs of the Lord's Presence had been understood by the watchers, that Rev. 14., 13, hitherto obscure and meaningless, became one of the most luminous and soul stirring Scriptures of the New Testament. What could be more stimulating, comforting and encouraging to those then looking for that "blessed hope" of the Lord's appearing, than the realization that the long looked-for One had already vacated the Heavenly Courts and was indeed present, though unseen by natural sight? (Titus 2., 13.)

### GATHER THE WHEAT INTO MY BARN

With the return of the Lord, the general call, or sowing work amongst the nations, came to a close, and the work of reaping and gathering the called ones commenced. As already noted, the first feature of the Harvest work was the gathering from the tomb of the sleeping saints—"the dead in Christ shall rise first". (1. Thess. 4., 16.)

While the work of raising the saints who slept was but a momentary matter, the gathering of those who were alive and remained in the flesh has already occupied a period of approximately 70 years. Although at present signs are not wanting that the Harvest work is rapidly drawing to a close and that but few of those who still remain will apparently be found to be genuine wheat, yet the Scriptures do not furnish any date when the last members will be gathered home.

To our understanding, there are no chronological dates given to us in the Scriptures extending beyond the close of Gentile Times in 1914 A.D. This does not mean, of course, that the watchers, in our day, have no signs, or landmarks of prophecy, whereby they may be assured as to the meaning of passing events and gain knowledge of "things to come". On the contrary, it is understood that the panoramic symbolism of the Revelation, as well as other features of prophecy, now in the main clear and convincing to faith, furnish a

better and more stimulating assurance to those who are walking in the light than could any guesses concerning future dates. It is our understanding that there are no Scriptural grounds whatsoever for the many speculations promulgated amongst the brethren, in our day, regarding future dates. All such prophesying amounts to nothing more than mere speculation and those who place their faith in these prophecies will discover, sooner or later, that they have been following but will o' the wisps. (Isa. 50., 11.)

### MY LORD DELAYETH HIS COMING

Many brethren who have apparently ceased to walk in the light of the Harvest truth, are now losing faith in the fact of the Lord's Presence. Such, in effect, are declaring that the Lord delayeth His coming, for they have lost faith in the signs which our Lord, in His great prophecy, indicated would be the evidence to the watchers, not that He was about to come or even was on the way, but that He was indeed present. (Matt. 24., 3—Diaglott.)

Moreover, the tendency of such is to return to the more or less materialistic viewpoint of the Second Advent, as has long been held by many of the smaller sects of Babylon. In consequence of this departure from the light which the Scriptures describe as going into "outer darkness", many who, at one time professed to rejoice in the knowledge of the Lord's Presence, now regard the Second Advent as an event yet future. This view, furthermore, suggests that when, in accordance with its expectations, the Lord does return, all the saints of God, living and dead, will be caught up *simultaneously* to be forever with the Lord.

It should be noted, however, that such a view of the matter admits of no place whatsoever for the truths contained in the Scripture text which forms the heading of this article—"Blessed are *the dead which die in the Lord* **from henceforth.**" (Rev. 14., 13.)

Obviously, if as suggested foregoing, all living and dead saints were caught up at the same moment in which the Lord appeared, there would be none dead in consecration left over, to die **from henceforth**—during the days of His Presence. Furthermore, this viewpoint has no use at all for the many signs which our Lord indicated would be an evidence of His Parousia—Presence. (Matt. 24., 3-51.)

### RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

Much of the error and confusion regarding the manner of the Lord's Second Advent is based upon a wrong conception of the Apostle's teaching, as found in 1. Thess. 4., 16-17. In eagerness to uphold certain pre-conceived ideas on the subject, this Scripture is frequently misread in such a manner that it appears to support a view practically the opposite of what the Apostle intended it to convey, when writing to the church at Thessalonica. The Scripture in question is often read as though the Apostle were teaching that there would be a sudden and simultaneous "rapture" of the entire church, living

and dead, at the moment of the Lord's return, whereupon both living and dead would be caught up together, at the same moment of time.

Strange as it may seem, this idea is just about the opposite of what the Apostle really wrote and intended to be understood from his letter. The trouble arises from a poor translation of certain words in the Greek text and from a failure rightly to divide the Word of truth, respecting the subject of the context.

It should be noted, in the first place, that in harmony with the Apostle's teaching elsewhere, when the Lord descends from heaven, the dead saints are said to rise first. (1. Cor. 15., 52; 1. Thess. 4., 16.) The rising **first** of the sleeping saints is stated in contrast to the living ones, who, the Apostle declares, **remain**. (1. Thess. 4., 17.) To remain, means to be left over, or to stay behind, after others have gone. If, then, as suggested by the Apostle, the dead saints **go first** and the living ones **remain** and do not go then, ought it not to be self-evident that both do not go at the same moment? In harmony with this thought, the same Apostle, writing to the church at Corinth, makes it clear that when the (seventh) trumpet sounds, heralding the Lord's return, the living members of Christ will, at death, no longer need to sleep in the tomb, for each one, at the moment of death, will be changed, in the twinkling of an eye. (1. Cor. 15., 51-52.) With this agrees the statement of the Revelator that from the time our Lord returns—*henceforth*—blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. (Rev. 14., 13.) This is the class described by the Apostle as the ones who are "alive and remain".

The Greek word translated "together" in 1. Thess. 4., 17, is the word "hama". It occurs, in all, eight times in the New Testament and is variously translated as follows—once as "and"; three times as "together"; once as "with"; and three times as "withal". Obviously, the translators had some difficulty in determining the correct meaning of the word and hence the widely divergent meanings given to it, in its various occurrences.

Professor Young tells us that "hama" is an adverb of time the meaning of which relates to time and not to locality. The Diaglott translates the word "at the same time" which fairly accurately expresses the sense of the context, in each of its occurrences.

The sense of 1. Thess. 4., 17, therefore, is that we who are alive and remain when the Seventh Trumpet heralds the commencement of our Lord's Parousia, shall be caught away, one by one, at death, "during the same (parousia) time" at the beginning of which the dead in Christ are raised *first*. Otherwise stated, it means that all the saints, dead and living, at the moment of the Lord's Return are gathered during that period of the Parousia which is Scripturally termed the Harvest. The difference between the gathering of the dead and the living is that the former are all gathered out of death "first", that is, at the commencement of the Harvest, while the latter who are "left over" are changed, momentarily, at death, throughout the same Harvest period of the Parousia.

This view is further confirmed by the Revelator, when he declares that it is *in the days* of the voice of the seventh angel, when he begins to sound (during the early part of his sounding), that the mystery of God should be finished. (Rev. 10., 7.) The mystery of God is the Church and, as here stated, the last members of the Church will be gathered home during the early part of the sounding of the Seventh Trump. (1. Cor. 15., 52.) This Trump is also called the Jubilee Trump and will continue to sound throughout the thousand years of Christ's Millennial reign.

Let all the true saints of God who are yet alive and remain be thus fully assured of the blessedness that awaits those who die in the Lord in this day and let no delusion of the Adversary rob them of this blessed hope.

## CHAPTER IX

# THE VENGEANCE OF HIS TEMPLE

*“After that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven (last) plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.” (Rev. 15., 5-6.)*

*“The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.” (Rev. 16., 17.)*

*“The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of his temple.” (Jer. 50., 28.)*

The full import of the prophet's words concerning the judgments upon Babylon cannot be appreciated until it is seen that the ancient city of Babylon was merely a figure of a still greater and far more powerful Babylon of our own day. The Babylon of the New Testament, concerning which the Revelator has so much to say, was not the ancient and historical city or, indeed, any other similar city of bricks and mortar. This can easily be seen from the fact that the Revelator's prophecies concerning the doom of Babylon were made many centuries after the ancient city lay in ruins.

The real Babylon, described in the Revelator's visions, of which the literal city was but a figure, is Christendom—that great symbolic city which has held millions of the professed followers of the Lord in bondage to its creeds and dogmas. Christendom, as the name implies, claims to be Christ's Kingdom established upon earth for the blessing and well being of the human family.

While it is, of course, true that the visions of the Old Testament prophets concerning Babylon had a primary application to the ancient and literal city, yet it must be recognised that their main application is to mystical Babylon of our own day. Assurance regarding this principle of interpretation is given to us by the Apostle, when to the Romans he wrote—“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” (Rom. 15., 4.)

### HISTORICAL BABYLON AS A FIGURE

In order to understand the real significance of the Old Testament prophecies as they relate to spiritual Babylon and to the Lord's people of this Age, it will be necessary briefly to consider certain details regarding the ancient city and the Lord's people of that day.

The Babylonian Empire, of which the city of Babylon was the capital, became the first "Head" power of Gentile dominion during the period of time defined by our Lord as "The Times of the Gentiles." (Luke 21., 24.) Babylon's capital was a mighty city, regarded by its rulers as impregnable. Within its walls, reputed to be from two to three hundred feet high and seventy-five feet thick, as well as in the vast empire which it controlled, there were numberless slaves carried away as captives by conquest of the surrounding nations. Included amongst these captives of Babylon were the bulk of the twelve tribes of Israel who had been enslaved and transported, at intervals, from their own land. God permitted these judgments to come upon His people because of their unfaithfulness to Him and disobedience to their Covenant. The length of their captivity in Babylon and their subsequent deliverance from its bondage were foretold by the prophets of Israel, even while they were still in their own land. (Jer. 29., 10.)

In due time, the city of Babylon was taken by the armies of the Medes and Persians and Cyrus, King of Persia, proclaimed liberty to all of its captives to return to their own land. Only a small proportion of the Israelites, however, availed themselves of the opportunity. The great majority—most of whom had been born in Babylon and had little faith in the hopes of Zion—elected to remain in the land of their captivity.

The faith and hopes of the faithful remnant, while still in Babylon, are well expressed in the words of the Psalmist when he wrote—"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song: and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." (Psa. 137., 1-5.) The majority, who had lost faith in the future glories of Zion and who decided to remain in Babylon, were from the Divine standpoint no longer regarded as true Israelites, but as Gentiles and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.

The faithful remnant who eventually returned to Palestine included representatives of all the tribes of Israel. Despite much opposition from the people of the land, they succeeded in rebuilding the city of Jerusalem with its walls and Temple. The unity of the nation was once again restored and God, as in former days, dwelt in their midst in Mount Zion. An expression of this unity is found in Psalm 122 where the writer, rejoicing in the restoration of the true worship of God in their rebuilt Temple, prays for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem.

### WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

The importance of the foregoing lies in the fact that it has its counterpart in spiritual Israel of this Age and the things mentioned therein were written not merely for the sake of Israel of bygone



days, but for the special instruction of the Lord's people of our day.

Spiritual Israel, like her prototype, has also suffered captivity at the hands of mystical Babylon of this Age and for a similar reason, namely, unfaithfulness to the Lord and disobedience to the instructions of His Word. Shortly after the Apostles fell asleep, a great falling away from the sound doctrine of the early Church took place and, only a few centuries later, the entire Christian Church had (in the words of the Psalmist) sunk into the "deep mire" of confused and perverted ideas concerning the true "faith once delivered unto the saints". (Psa. 69., 2.) The simplicity of the faith and practice of the Apostolic Church had given place to organisation and formalism, while the teachings of the Lord and the Apostles took secondary place to the traditions and speculations of naturally-minded teachers and leaders. The Babylonish spirit of confusion had taken hold upon the professing Church generally with the same result as experienced by the typical nation—hopeless captivity in an alien land, far removed from Divine fellowship and favour.

Israel's captivity in literal Babylon, as already noted, ended when Cyrus, King of Persia, proclaimed liberty to all of Babylon's captives to return to their own land. The captivity of the Lord's people in symbolic Babylon has in like manner ended through the appearing of the greater than Cyrus—the highly exalted and glorified Christ. At the Second Advent of our Lord, 1874 A.D., there went forth the loud trumpet voice of Present Truth proclaiming liberty to all of Babylon's captives, with the urgent call "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18., 4.)

All who are acquainted with the Harvest developments amongst the Lord's true followers, over the past 60 or 70 years, will understand something of the results of this call out of Babylon through the *voice of those who have fled and escaped* from Babylon's bondage. This voice of truth, proclaiming in Zion the coming vengeance upon Babylon, has gone forth to every corner of the Harvest field. As in the case of typical Babylon, however, only a minority of her captives have responded. The majority, satisfied with their surroundings, prefer to remain in bondage to her creeds.

It was of those who have escaped from the bondage of Babylon's creeds during the present Harvest-time that the prophet wrote, when he declared—"The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of his temple." (Jer. 50., 28.) There is a depth of meaning in these words for the Lord's people of this day, for they have a *direct application* to all who have heard and obeyed the Lord's call—"come out of her, my people"—and who (like Israel's exiles of old) are striving to walk in harmony with the Lord's will by rebuilding the temple of truth and the walls of Zion's faith and hope concerning the Kingdom. Several important features of truth arise from a consideration of the prophet's words in this connection, such as:—

1. *An important witness, or message of truth, implied in the expression "voice of them", is now due to be given*

by those who have escaped from the bondage of Babylon's confusing creeds.

2. *This witness concerning the vengeance of the Lord coming upon Babylon is to be declared in Zion.*
3. **The witness amongst Zion's feet members in the flesh explains to them that the vengeance of the Lord upon Babylon comes from the Temple of God (the glorified Christ) beyond the veil.**

### POINT No. 1. THE WITNESS

The term "voice" is a symbolic expression frequently found in the Scriptures in order to indicate the thought of a witness message, or movement of truth going forth. We read, for instance, in Rev. 11., 15 that when the seventh angel sounded his trumpet there were *great voices* in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." This undoubtedly refers to the proclamation of the Present Truth concerning the fact that the Kingdom of Christ has already been "set up" in Heavenly places.

The Israelites of old who escaped from the bondage of literal Babylon, at the hand of Cyrus, realised the need for prompt and urgent obedience to the Lord's will for them. Apart from the injunction to rebuild the house of the Lord at Jerusalem and to restore the true worship of God therein, there was the burden of the prophets concerning the doom of Babylon. It was the privilege of the returning Israelites to *proclaim in Zion* the good news that the day of God's vengeance upon Babylon had come and that the proud city which for so long had held them in bondage was soon to be completely destroyed. Already, the first act in the drama of her retribution (foretold a century before the prophets of Israel) had taken place, for the city had fallen to the armies of the Medes and Persians. Daniel, we are told, "understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." (Dan. 9., 2.) Realising that the years of Jerusalem's desolation had ended, those who waited for the return of God's favour to Israel were in the attitude of response when, later, the opportunity to return and rebuild Jerusalem came with the proclamation of Cyrus. They were encouraged by the prospect of the restoration of their city and Temple. Additionally, they realised that as Divine vengeance was coming upon Babylon, it was a matter of *urgent necessity* on their own account (as well as for those still living in Babylon) to flee out of her and deliver their own souls before her complete destruction took place.

All of Israel's exiles did not return to their own land at the same time. Their goings-up at intervals, under various leaders, covered a matter of 70 or more years, and they were doubtless encouraged by the increasing evidences of Babylon's disintegration. As these exile bands reached Jerusalem, they had a message of

encouragement and assurance for their brethren engaged in building up Zion. They had already witnessed in Babylon evidences of the fulfilment of the prophetic word that the vengeance of God was coming upon her and would culminate in her utter and hopeless destruction. This voice of those fleeing out of Babylon was surely a comforting word to the weary and sorely tried builders of Zion, for the prophet had foretold that "*when the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.*" (Psa. 102., 16.)

It might well be asked in what way the proclamation of the Lord's vengeance upon Babylon could be an encouragement to those of typical Israel engaged in rebuilding natural Zion. The answer would seem to be that it was an assurance to them of *God's faithfulness to His promises* concerning the future hopes and glory of Zion's Kingdom. Moreover, the judgments upon Babylon emphasised the *righteousness of God's character* and dealings with His people and thus provided a ground of confidence and trust in His overruling providences on their behalf.

Carrying our minds forward to our own day, can we not see in its counterpart, in spiritual Israel, even more wonderful encouragements for those now engaged in *building up the walls* of antitypical Zion. As in the case of the typical people, there is a *witness to give* and a *message to deliver* and, corresponding with the figure, there is a *dual aspect* in the trumpet voice of truth which they proclaim. This encouraging message, on the one hand, is to *proclaim in Zion* that the end of the present world order is at hand and that vengeance is about to fall upon the proud city of Babylon, coupled with the warning to all who are in any way associated with her to "flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence." (Jer. 51., 6.) A further and more important aspect of the witness now due to be delivered by those who escaped from the bondage of Babylon is well epitomised in the words of the prophet—"That saith unto Zion, *Thy God reigneth!*" (Isa. 52., 7.) Expressed in plain language, this means the building up of the faith and hopes of Zion's feet members in the Present Truth and making known to them the fact that the reign of Christ for the overthrow of Satan's kingdom has already begun. Could any theme be a source of greater joy to the builders in antitypical Zion?

## POINT No. 2. THE WITNESS IS FOR ZION

The next point emphasised in the prophet's vision is that the voice of truth, proclaimed by those who have fled from Babylon, is to be *declared in Zion*. Antitypical Zion embraces all of the Lord's people still in the flesh whose hope is that they will eventually attain to joint-heirship with our Lord in Zion's Kingdom. In order that these footstep followers of the Lord might *enjoy full fellowship with God and avoid stumbling* over the present developments of the Divine Plan, it is essential that they should walk in the increasing light of Present Truth. (1. John 1., 6-7.)

Present Truth embraces every aspect of truth arising out of the fact that our Lord has returned to earth in the power and glory of His Kingdom and that He is now breaking in pieces the kingdoms of this world, preparatory to taking control of the entire human family. It is very important that all true followers of the Lord should obtain an *intelligent understanding of the present developments* of God's Plan so that they may not in ignorance be found working in opposition to the Divine programme.

Many of the Lord's people who have come out of Babylon and have received a general knowledge of the Divine Plan, think that in view of the great day of trouble that is coming upon the world it is their duty to do something *now* on the world's behalf. Their efforts in this direction are generally described by the term *public witness*. The thought is that we should give the world a general understanding of the trouble that is coming and of the blessing which God has in store for the human family. In this way it is claimed that comfort will be imparted and that this will bear fruit in the difficult time ahead. The sentiments behind this effort are, of course, good and praiseworthy, but however noble such sentiments towards the world may be, they of themselves are not a safe, or sufficient guide, respecting the Lord's will for His followers in this day. All down the Age similar sentiments towards fallen humanity have actuated the minds of many of the Lord's people to attempt the blessing and uplift of mankind. Instead of accomplishing the object of their desire, however, such efforts have invariably resulted in the lowering of the Christian standard, in order to bring within the fold millions of humanity who are *Christian in name only and not in fact*. All this serves to illustrate the truth of what has already been mentioned, namely, that feelings of compassion towards humanity in their present plight are not at any time a *safe, or sufficient guide*, respecting the Lord's will for His followers. In order that our service may be acceptable to the Lord and our labours fully in harmony with the developments of the Divine Plan, it is essential that we be *guided by what the Scriptures have to tell us* concerning the witness work of our day.

The walk of the child of God is at all times a walk of faith and particularly must it be so in this day when earthly institutions and customs, considered eternal, are fast crumbling and passing away. A true faith must rest upon the *knowledge and assurances given to us in the inspired Word*, for the wisdom that cometh from any other source is both futile and misleading.

What then, it may be asked, do the Scriptures say regarding the witness given by those who in this day have fled and escaped from Babylon's bondage? Searching the Scriptures, we find that there is one consistent and harmonious answer to the question, namely, that the witness concerning the work of God in this day—otherwise termed the Present Truth—is to be given in *Zion*, and *Zion* on earth represents the remaining members of the Bride class still in the flesh.

A few out of the many Scriptures which emphasise this point are quoted as follows—

**Psa. 97., 8.** “**Zion heard, and was glad.**” The reference here is to the proclamation contained in the opening verses of the Psalm, announcing the fact that *the reign of Christ* (God’s representative) for the deliverance of the human family has begun.

**Isa. 52., 7.** “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet (members) of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that *sait*h unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

**Jer. 50., 28.** “The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to *declare in Zion* the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of his temple.”

**Jer. 51., 9-10.** “We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; forsake her, and let us go every one *into his own country*: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies. The Lord hath brought forth our righteousness; come, and *let us declare in Zion* the work of the Lord our God.”

**Matt. 24., 31.** “He shall send his angels (messengers of Present Truth) with a great sound of a trumpet, and **they shall gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

**Rev. 7., 2-3.** “I saw another angel (Christ, at His Second Advent) ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, **till we have sealed the servants of our God** in their foreheads.”

Nothing in the foregoing, of course, implies that the Lord’s followers should neglect any opportunity of doing good, or of speaking a word in season, whenever or wherever circumstances would seem to indicate a suitable opportunity. The *principal point* to be kept in mind, however, is that it is the Lord’s followers and not the world who are in real danger and who need urgent help, in order to be able to stand in this evil time. This is quite different from *organising a great work* of witness on behalf of the world.

Nor will the knowledge and appreciation of the fact that God has a wonderful and gracious Plan for all mankind prove to be a sufficient armour to enable one to *withstand the delusions of these closing days* of the Harvest period. Nothing less than the full light of Present Truth, with its sanctifying influence upon heart and mind, will prove to be adequate protection in the difficult and testing days that lie ahead of the Lord’s people, and who shall be able to stand?

### POINT No. 3. THE VENGEANCE OF HIS TEMPLE

In the typical arrangement amongst God's people of old, the Temple was the *meeting place* between God and the nation. Israel's Temple was God's dwelling place from whence emanated all the blessings of Divine favour upon the nation as a reward for well doing, or retribution for disobedience to His commands. God's Temple, in the antitypical sense, is the elect Church of the present Age. The living stones which comprise this Temple class are taken out from the human family and prepared during the Gospel Age. At the time of the Second Advent, when our Lord returned in the glory of His Kingdom with all the holy angels of which it is comprised, these prepared stones were brought together and glorified with their Lord beyond the veil.

The Temple class, together with their Lord, now share the glorious throne of Zion's Kingdom. While there is still a remnant of the Temple class in the flesh, these are from the Divine standpoint nevertheless counted as already a part of God's dwelling place in the Heavens.

The question now arises as to what all this has to do with the vengeance of God upon Babylon. The answer is that the Kingdom of Christ, of which the Temple class joined with the Lord and Head are rulers, is being used by God as the *medium of His power* for the liberation and blessing of the human family. Otherwise stated, the retribution upon Babylon and the present evil order is the vengeance of God, but it *proceeds from the Temple* of God beyond the veil, hence it is the vengeance of His Temple, as foretold by the prophet. (Jer. 50., 28.)

### THE TEMPLE OF GOD OPENED IN HEAVEN

It is understood that the statement concerning the Temple of God being opened in Heaven is just another way of saying that the *Kingdom of Christ was set up* in the Heavenly sphere of our planet. This took place at the Second Advent, when the sleeping saints were raised and glorified with the Lord in His Kingdom, at the commencement of the Harvest-time. Under the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, the Revelator, in vision, saw the Temple of God being opened, and in the Temple he saw the ark of His testament. (Rev. 11., 19.) The reference to the ark of His testament would seem to imply that the blessings of the New Covenant (testament) are to come to the human family through the instrumentality of the Temple class—the heirs of the Abrahamic Promise. (Gal. 3., 29.)

A further reference to the opening of the Temple in Heaven occurs in Rev. 15., 5-8. In this instance, John sees the seven angels with the seven last plagues *coming out of* the Temple.

It is thought by some that this Scripture refers to the Lord's people coming out of the nominal Temple—Babylon, and that, as a result, smoke (or confusion) fills the nominal system from which they

emerged. We cannot, however, accept this interpretation as satisfactory because the Temple to which the Revelator refers is not an earthly organization, but the Temple of God in Heaven. The Temple being filled with smoke (incense) from the glory of God implies the *fulness of the Divine presence and glory* filling the great Temple of Zion, God's chosen habitation beyond the veil. (Psa. 132., 13-14.) A similar thought is brought to our attention by the prophet Isaiah when, in vision, he saw the inauguration of Christ's Kingdom for the blessing of the human family. (Isa. 6., 1-4.)

The seven last plagues, we are informed, fill up and complete the wrath, or vengeance of God, upon Babylon—organised Christendom. (Rev. 18., 4.) The fact that the wrath, or vengeance of God, comes from the spiritual Temple beyond the veil explains why the prophet speaks of God's vengeance as the vengeance of His Temple. (Jer. 50., 28.)

The day of God's vengeance for the overthrow of the great Adversary's kingdom and for the deliverance of mankind from the antitypical Pharaoh (Satan) began at the Second Advent. The coming of Moses to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage is a fitting figure of the Advent of the greater than Moses for the deliverance of mankind from the bondage of the great Adversary.

When God sent Moses to deliver the Israelites, He instructed him that in the event of Pharaoh's refusal to let them go, he would bring upon the people of Egypt ten plagues. As a result of these judgments, Pharaoh would at last be compelled to give way to the Divine demands on Israel's behalf.

The first three of these plagues were of a different character from the seven last and affected Israelites and Egyptians alike, but the seven last, generally known as the judgment plagues, affected the Egyptians alone.

The same distinction seems to be carried into the visions of the Revelator concerning the antitypical plagues poured out upon Babylon, during the present Harvest-time. In the figure, all the plagues which came upon Egypt were *subsequent to the coming of Moses*, the Instrument of God's power, and this holds good also in regard to the antitypical plagues coming upon Babylon. The plagues upon Babylon *come from the Temple* and the opening of the Temple in Heaven took place when the Kingdom was set up at the Second Advent of our Lord.

Like the Egyptian plagues also, the seven last of these antitypical plagues affect only the enemies of God's people and are designated *her (Babylon's) plagues* which fill up, or complete, the wrath of God upon Christendom. (Rev. 15., 1; 18., 4.)

### MAKING WAR WITH THE LAMB

The first three plagues of the present Harvest period, resulting in the separation of the Lord's true followers from Babylon, cover a more extended period of time than the remaining seven. The seven

last begin to be poured out when the ruling powers of the world bring into being and control what the Scriptures term the Image of the Beast. This Image which constitutes the seventh "Head" power of Gentile rule is regarded, from the Divine standpoint, as *fighting against* the Lord and against His Anointed King who, since the Second Advent, has been enthroned upon the holy hill of Zion in the Heavens.

The object of the nations in creating the Image of the Beast and enduing it with universal power and authority is to *prevent the present world order going to pieces* and thus to keep the human family indefinitely in subjection to the present evil world. This effort on the part of Gentile rulers is diametrically opposed to the purpose for which the Great White Throne Kingdom of Christ has been set up in the Heavens. (Rev. 20., 11.) The object of the coming of Christ's Kingdom is the liberation of the entire human family from the control of Satan's kingdom and the present evil world. The *key to the time* when the seven last plagues begin to be poured out is found in Rev. 16., 2, where the Revelator informs us that when the first of these plague-vials is poured out upon the earth (organised Christendom), it affects those who worship, or support, the Image of the Beast.

Christendom to-day, in its civil as well as in its religious aspects, is being feverishly prepared for the setting up of the Image of the Beast in the very near future. Its coming will deceive all who are *earthly-minded in their outlook*, for it will seem to them the only hope for the human family. Those who refuse to worship (support) the Image will have a very trying and difficult time, as prefigured in the experience of the three Hebrews who refused to worship the Golden Image which Nebuchadnezzar set up in the province of ancient Babylon. (Dan. 3., 1-2.)

### **NO MAN COULD ENTER INTO THE TEMPLE**

A very important and interesting feature of truth is brought to our attention in Rev. 15., 8. The Revelator here informs us that notwithstanding the fact of the Temple of Heaven being opened and filled with the incense and fragrance of the Divine presence, *no man was able to enter* into the Temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. The Temple, as already mentioned, is not only the medium through which the judgments of God come upon Babylon, but it is also the source of blessing and reconciliation for the human family. Entering the Temple signifies having access to the favour and blessing of God through the great Mediator—Christ, Head and Body.

In the figure of the plagues which came upon Egypt, the first-borns were not passed over or delivered, until the outpouring of the last plague. This seems to indicate that the Church of the First-borns will not all be passed over from human conditions *until the operation of the last* of the antitypical judgment plagues. So long



as any members of the Lord's Goat class remain this side the veil, the Atonement for the people will not be finished by the blood being sprinkled on the Mercy Seat. The pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh, when the Day of Atonement is finished and the last member of Christ has passed within the veil, will indicate the Divine acceptance of the sacrifice of the Body-members of Christ and the invitation to whomsoever will to enter by faith and prayer into the heavenly Temple, to take of the water of life freely. (Rev. 22., 17.)

### A GREAT VOICE FROM THE TEMPLE

The Divine record tells us that when the seventh, or last judgment plague was poured out into the air—the air signifying what remains of Satan's spiritual kingdom through which he has controlled the human family—"there came a great voice *out of the temple of heaven, from the throne* (of Christ's Kingdom), saying, It is done." (Rev. 16., 17.) Surely, this means nothing less than an assurance that when the seventh angel (who came out of the Temple) pours out his vial into the air, the vengeance of God's Temple will be completed in the overthrow of Babylon, the wrath of God upon her being then filled up. (Rev. 15., 1.)

As a result of the pouring out of the seventh plague-vial, we read that there were "voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." (Rev. 16., 18.) The Revelator, in these graphic symbols, brings to our attention the climax of God's vengeance upon Satan's kingdom and upon every human organization through which he has succeeded in holding mankind in ignorance and bondage during the many centuries since he first deceived and seduced our first parents in Eden from loyalty and obedience to their Creator. The lesson has been a ghastly and dreadful experience for the human family, and we are glad of the assurance that there will never need to be a repetition.

While the Scriptures reveal that the severest and most terrible phase of the fruits of evil is still ahead of the human family and will not come until the great earthquake of revolution engulfs every semblance of law and order, yet we rejoice in the knowledge that, through the elect Temple class in glory, these calamitous days will be cut short. (Matt. 24., 22.)

### WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT YE TO BE?

Standing as we are to-day on the very threshold of events such as the world has never before witnessed, it behoves each one of the Lord's followers to take heed to his steps lest he be found wandering from the pathway that leads to clearer unfoldings of the Divine will. It is of the utmost importance that Zion's feet members, still this side the veil, should be "sealed in their foreheads" and be fully acquainted with the work that God is now doing through the glorified Kingdom class in the Heavens. (Rev. 7., 2-3.)

The effect of the coming plagues of wrath upon Babylon will indeed seem to the world in general, as well as to the worldly-minded of the Lord's followers, a strange work for the One whom the Scriptures term a God of love and compassion. All such, in their ignorance of the Divine Plan, will be found in the Camp of those who in their endeavours to uphold and maintain the present evil order are thereby fighting against the Lord and against His Anointed. (Psa. 2., 2.)

Only those who are in the light of Present Truth will be able to appreciate the full significance of these events and, in anticipation, to sing the victory song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. None else will realise that the great and marvellous works, resulting from the seven last plagues upon Babylon, are not only *just and true*, but are the vengeance of the Almighty from the glorious Temple of Christ's Kingdom. (Rev. 15., 5-6.)

Who else but those who have fled out of Babylon could lift up the voice in Zion and, in the words of the Revelator, sing—"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come (into thy Temple) and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." (Rev. 15., 4.)

Seeing then that, very soon, the present earth with all the works therein must be dissolved, let us recall afresh the words of the Apostle—"What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2. Pet. 3., 11-12.)

## CHAPTER X

# THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

*“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them.” (Rev. 20., 11.)*

*“Then I saw thrones, and to those who took their seats upon them authority was given to act as judges. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony to Jesus and because of the message of God, for they had refused to worship the Beast or its image, and had not received the brand on their foreheads and on their hands. They were restored to life, and they reigned with the Christ for a (the) thousand years. This is the First Resurrection. Blessed and holy will he be who shares in that First Resurrection. The Second Death has no power over them; but they will be priests of God and the Christ, and they will reign with him for the thousand years.” (Rev. 20., 4-6—Twentieth Century.)*

The vision of the Great White Throne is a vision of the Kingdom of Christ, as it operates for the deliverance and blessing of the human family. The coming of this Kingdom has been the theme of all the holy prophets of bygone days, and it has also been an inspiring hope to the Lord's true followers throughout the present Age. Moreover, the time has now come when a class amongst the Lord's followers (prefigured by the Revelator) can, by the eye of faith, see the Great White Throne and the One who sits thereon. This class comprises the watchers who understand the vision of the Present Truth, and it is their privilege, as indicated by the prophet, to proclaim it to Zion, the feet members of Christ still in the flesh—saying, “Thy God reigneth!” (Isa. 52., 7.)

### A REVIEW OF THE KINGDOM HOPE

Away back in Eden at the time of the Fall, when God said that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, He undoubtedly had in mind the coming of this Kingdom and the deliverance which it would accomplish on behalf of the race. (Gen. 3., 15.)

Later, in the days of Abraham, when God made to him the promise that his seed would bless all the families of the earth, it must have given to Abraham and his descendants of subsequent days, a vision of something very important in store for the race. We read that they regarded themselves as strangers and pilgrims, and looked for a City (Kingdom) whose builder and maker was God. Abraham, according to the record, rejoiced to see that day, and by faith he saw it and was glad. (Heb. 11., 10.)

Again, when under Moses God led His people out of Egypt and established them in the land of promise, it seemed as if the day of blessing was just at hand. These hopes, however, were shattered, for their Kingdom was later overthrown and the people themselves were carried away as captives into Babylon. Their plight in Babylon is graphically portrayed by the Psalmist, when he writes—"by the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion." (Psa. 137., 1-3.) Hope deferred had almost made the heart sick.

Later still, at the time of the First Advent when our Lord proclaimed the Kingdom to be at hand, it seemed that, at long last, their hopes were shortly to be realised. When their King was put to death and His followers scattered, however, it again looked very dark to those who had hoped that it was "he which should have redeemed Israel." (Luke 24., 21.)

After Pentecost, nevertheless, the hopes of a faithful few were not only revived but clarified through the coming of the Holy Spirit. Thus all down the Gospel Age, there have been a faithful few who have prayed "Thy Kingdom come," and now the long looked-for Day of Christ has arrived, as foretold by the Psalmist, when "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." (Psa. 118., 22-24.)

### THE BLESSINGS OF "PAROUSIA" TRUTH

It is only since the Harvest-time began that the Lord's followers have obtained a true focus of the Divine programme and have clearly comprehended the extent of the blessings promised through the Kingdom. To the watchers of our day who are walking in the light of Present Truth, nothing seems more reasonable than that the seventh thousand year period, of which about 70 years are already in the past, will witness the complete deliverance of the human family from their great taskmaster, Satan, and from all the evil effects of his long reign. (Rev. 11., 15-18; 20., 1-3.)

The prophet Daniel, visualising something of the wonderful light due to the Lord's people at the beginning of the Harvest period, was moved by the Spirit to exclaim—"O! the blessedness of him that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days"—1874 A.D. (Dan. 12., 12.) Those who are privileged to be living in this Day can surely testify to their share in the foretold blessing of light and truth, and it is by virtue of this fact that the watchers can now see, by faith, the Great White Throne described by the Revelator. (Rev. 20., 11.)

Before considering the vision of the text in detail, it will perhaps be well to study its setting and context. This chapter (Rev. 20) as a whole must not be regarded as a consecutive narrative of events. Indeed, there are in this chapter no less than three distinct visions,

each one of which describes, from its own angle, events covering the entire period of the Millennial Age. The first of these visions is contained in verses one to three of the chapter; the second begins with verse four and continues to the end of verse ten; while the third—the Great White Throne vision—starts at verse eleven and extends to the end of the chapter.

## THE KINGDOM IN THE LIGHT OF TO-DAY

There are three points concerning the Great White Throne Kingdom to which it is desired to direct special attention, as follows:—

1. Its inception and inauguration.
2. Its purpose in relation to the human family.
3. The results of its reign of a thousand years and after.

### Point No. 1

## INCEPTION AND INAUGURATION OF THE KINGDOM

The figure of a throne indicates an organised kingdom, or government. It implies the seat of authority from which the Sovereign rules His domain. This Kingdom is variously referred to in the Scriptures, under the following terms—"the Kingdom of Heaven"; "Mount Zion"; "the New Jerusalem"; "the Holy City"; and "the Heavenly Jerusalem." It is important, however, to note that this Kingdom, according to the Scriptures, was not inaugurated, or "set up" in proximity to the earth, until the time of the Lord's Second Advent.

There are certain Scriptures, having a direct bearing upon these matters, to which it is now desired to call attention, as follows:—

**John 14., 2.** "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

God's house is the entire universe, the extent of which cannot be grasped by the human mind. Within this great house there are minor houses, or mansions, occupied in their respective spheres by various orders and ranks of spiritual and material creations. Amongst the heavenly mansions, we read of "principality, and power, and might, and dominion" (Eph. 1., 21), of which our Lord, since His resurrection, has been constituted Lord. In a similar manner, there are upon the earth, within Father Adam's house and domain, various mansions occupied by different grades of the lower creation.

Notwithstanding the many heavenly mansions already mentioned, our Lord indicated that not one of these was suitable to be the home of His Bride, the Church of the Firstborns. This is clearly implied in the statement—"I go to prepare a place (a mansion) for you."

This "place," or mansion, should not be understood as having reference to a material kingdom. Spirit beings do not dwell on

material planets, or occupy material houses. The heavenly mansions, to which our Lord referred, are understood to be kingdoms and rulerships of spirit beings of various grades and planes of existence, all without doubt carrying out some function of administrative control in God's house and under the One who is described as the Builder of all things—Jehovah Himself. (Heb. 3., 4.)

Little is revealed in the Scriptures concerning these mighty spiritual dominions described by the Apostle in his letter to the Ephesians as "angelic Rulers, Authorities, Powers, and Lords." (Eph. 1., 21—Moffatt.) There is sufficient, however, to indicate to the spiritual mind something of the glory and power that belong to such exalted and glorious creations. Nevertheless, the Scriptures teach that the glory of nature and power to which our Lord has been exalted, and in which the Bride class also share, is **far above** all rulers and governments of every mansion in God's great house. (Eph. 1., 20-21.)

The indication of our Lord is that the "place" which He went away to prepare for His faithful followers was joint-heirship with Himself in the throne of the highly exalted Kingdom which He was about to receive from the Heavenly Father as a reward for His faithful execution of the Divine Plan. Before they could share with Him this glory the Atonement on their behalf must first be completed by His appearance in the presence of God "for us." (Heb. 9., 24.) Only then could the Holy Spirit, indicating the acceptance of the blood on their behalf, be sent and their begetting to the Divine nature become an accomplished fact.

The prophet Isaiah, in the following words, foretold both our Lord's exaltation and the share in His throne which, in accordance with the Father's Plan, He prepared for His Bride—"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong"—the overcomers. (Isa. 53., 12.)

Moreover, that this mansion was God's gift and part of His reward for our Lord's faithfulness, may be seen from the statement of our Lord contained in another Scripture—

**Luke 19., 12-15.** "A certain nobleman went into a far country to *receive for himself a kingdom*, and (having received it) to return . . . and it came to pass, that when he was returned, *having received the kingdom*, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him."

This parable of our Lord was undoubtedly spoken concerning Himself, for He is the nobleman in question. He went into the far country (heaven) at His Ascension and, during the interim of His absence, the work of proving the worthiness of those saints who were left to *occupy till He returned* has proceeded throughout the Age. The reckoning time with the rewards, according to the parable, was to take place *after* He had received the Kingdom and when He returned at His Second Advent.

It should here be particularly noted that, while the Church class throughout the Gospel Age are the only representatives of the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth, yet, of themselves, they do not constitute the Kingdom in any wider sense than merely as the prospective *members of the great King*—Christ, Head and Body—who occupies its exalted Throne. The Kingdom, through which Christ and His joint-heirs will rule the world, is the gift of the Heavenly Father and is a spiritual organization of *heavenly* beings, comprising myriads of mighty angelic hosts to whom reference will be made later. Strictly speaking, then, it is only the King, or Ruler (our Lord with the overcomers of the Gospel Age), who is taken from the *human* family, while the Kingdom, or “place,” in which He will rule is comprised of *heavenly* beings of angelic nature.

### COMING, NOT FOR, BUT WITH HIS KINGDOM

The Scriptural thought, as may be seen from the foregoing, is not that our Lord returns at His Second Advent, in order to receive His Kingdom. On the contrary, the suggestion is that He ascended to the Father in order to receive it, and after having obtained it—the “place” being ready—He returns in the glory of that Kingdom, to gather His joint-heirs unto Himself, those who will sit with Him in His throne. (Rev. 3., 21.)

There are many Scriptures to which reference might be made in this connection and which, when rightly viewed, fully corroborate this thought. Amongst these, attention is called to the following passages:—

**Matt. 25., 31.** “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the *holy angels with him*, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.”

The holy angels of this Scripture would not refer to all the angels of heaven, but only to those who comprise the Kingdom. In referring to this Kingdom, under the title of Mount Zion, the Heavenly Jerusalem, the writer describes these angels as comprising an “innumerable company.” (Heb. 12., 22.)

The prophet Daniel also, in describing the majestic triumph and glory of our Lord’s Second Advent, writes—“A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment (throne) was set, and the books were opened.” (Dan. 7., 10.)

Jude, similarly describing that great event, quotes the prophecy of Enoch in which is stated—“Behold, the Lord *cometh* with ten thousands of his saints”—holy ones, that is, angels. (Jude 14.)

**Luke 9., 26.** “For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s (glory), and (in the

glory) of the holy angels." Mark's record of this reads—"When he cometh in the glory of his Father *with the holy angels.*" (Mark 8., 38.)

According to these and similar Scriptures, there are no less than three glories combined, at the return of our Lord for His Bride. There is His own glory of person and authority, the Father's glory revealed in this climax and successful issue of the Divine Plan, and, additionally, the glory of the holy angels in their official capacity as an organised power and government, in order to deliver the human family from the power of Satan and cause God's will again to be done on earth, as in heaven.

From the foregoing, three things become evident. Firstly, that the Kingdom is a spiritual government comprised of heavenly angelic beings, organised as the mansion or "place" to be occupied by the highly exalted and glorified Christ—Head and Body. Secondly, that this City was entered into by our Lord at His Ascension. Just how, or by what method these myriads of angelic beings were selected or elected to office in this, the most glorious of all the heavenly mansions, is not revealed in the Scriptures. Certain passages, however, do refer to the "elect" angels and to those angels who are particularly concerned with the well-being and care of the Lord's followers, during the present Age. (1. Tim. 5., 21; Matt. 18., 10.) Whether these refer to the same class or not, would perhaps be too speculative to warrant a definite opinion, but they are worthy of consideration in this connection. Lastly, this spiritual City, or Kingdom, is not confined to a fixed locality in the heavens. The Scriptures indicate that when our Lord, at His Second Advent, descended from heaven into earth's atmosphere, His descent was accompanied with a triumphant shout, in the glory and power of this mighty Kingdom Host. (2. Pet. 1., 16.) For a thousand years, the Kingdom will occupy a position, in relation to our planet, described by the Psalmist as the "sides of the north," the place in our heavens from which Satan has been cast down, and from this place the Kingdom will rule over and bless the human family. (Psa. 48., 1-2.)

After the thousand years are ended, the indication of the Scriptures is that this same Kingdom which is the head of all principalities and powers, will be used, in the ages to come, in other parts of God's great house, in connection with other creations yet to be brought into existence upon the countless heavenly spheres which move throughout illimitable space. Such, then, is the Scriptural delineation of the inception and inauguration of the Holy City, which comes down from God out of heaven. (Rev. 21., 2.)

### Point No. 2

## THE PURPOSE OF THE KINGDOM IN RELATION TO THE HUMAN FAMILY

The Scriptures are very definite and explicit regarding the purpose of the thousand year rule of the Kingdom over the earth. The Apostle in his letter to the Corinthians, informs us that the



*object of the reign of Christ* will be to put all enemies under His feet, and that only when the last enemy has been subdued will His reign come to an end. (1. Cor., 15., 25-26.) The chief enemy of God and of His people is, of course, Satan himself—the originator of evil. According to the Scriptures, Satan has a well organized and powerful kingdom in the heavenly sphere of the earth and he is styled by the Apostle, the “prince of the power of the air.” (Eph. 2., 2.)

Moreover, the Scriptures indicate that Satan’s kingdom will strenuously oppose the inauguration of Christ’s Kingdom to rule over the earth. This opposition will, in the first instance, result in what the Revelator symbolically describes as a “war in heaven” (Rev. 12., 7) as explained in Chapter IV. At a later stage, it will bring about a time of world-wide trouble on the earth—“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” (Rev. 12., 12.)

## **WE WRESTLE NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD**

Many brethren fail to recognise the true nature and extent of Satan’s kingdom. Indeed, some are even unaware that he possesses a kingdom at all. In this failure to understand the spiritual nature of the kingdom of darkness, with its myriads of fallen angels, it is imagined that Satan’s kingdom comprises only those forces of evil which are visible to the natural eye amongst the human family. The Apostle, however, in his letter to the Ephesians, partially draws aside the curtain and gives us a glimpse of the mighty forces of evil against which the human family, as well as the Lord’s people, have to contend—“We have to struggle, not with blood and flesh but with the angelic Rulers, the angelic Authorities, the potentates of the dark present, the spirit-forces of evil in the heavenly sphere.” (Eph. 6., 12 —Moffatt.)

The first work of Christ’s Kingdom is to overthrow the kingdom of Satan in the heavens. The result of this conflict is later described by the Revelator, in the following language—“The dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place (mansion) found any more in heaven.” (Rev. 12., 7-8.) The Scriptures are very definite that Satan had a “place” or kingdom in the heavens, from which he has for many centuries ruled over and deceived the world. Our Lord refers to him as the prince of this world. (John 14., 30.) The Apostle likewise describes Satan and his associates as the rulers of the darkness of this world. (Eph. 6., 12.)

When we read of Satan being bound for a thousand years, it is understood that the reference is to the seventh millennium of human history. This period commenced when our Lord, at His Second Advent, took His seat upon the Great White Throne Kingdom and thereby commenced the overthrow of Satan’s power, first in the heavens and later upon the earth. (Rev. 12., 7-10; 20., 11.)

The fact that these things are not discerned by the natural eye, or that the world is in a worse condition of trouble to-day than ever before, is no proof at all that the thousand year reign has not begun. To such as are in the right attitude to be taught God's Word, it is unquestionable proof of the reverse, namely, that the present world-wide trouble upon earth's governments and institutions is *the direct result* of the reign of Christ having already begun in the heavens. (Rev. 11., 15-18.)

The binding of Satan's power and influence, as well as the binding of the Adversary himself, is not accomplished suddenly, but occupies a considerable number of years. Unlike our short-sighted human wisdom which would want to see everything completed in one day, God, in His far-seeing wisdom, has so arranged His plan that, during the years in which the binding of Satan proceeds, the human family are learning some very necessary, though bitter lessons. At the same time, the important feature of the Divine Plan relating to the mystery of Christ will be finished. (Rev. 10., 7.)

It might be asked how it could be said that Satan will be bound for a thousand years, in view of the fact that, even now, we are about 70 years in the thousand year period of Christ's reign and the binding is not yet completed. The answer is that just as the thousand year reign of Christ counts from the time when His Kingdom is set up in the heavens, so the binding of Satan similarly counts from the time when he was dethroned in the heavens and his house, or kingdom, broken into by the stronger than he, namely, Christ. At that time, the "war in heaven" began, through the new heavens taking control, and this will later result in the complete removal of the present heavens and present earth with every vestige of Satan's control of the human family. (Matt. 12., 29; Rev. 12., 7-10.)

### Point No. 3

## THE RESULTS OF THE KINGDOM RULE OF A THOUSAND YEARS AND AFTER

The reign of Christ will overthrow every opponent of His righteous rule and bring all into subjection to His authority. In addition, it will restore God's Kingdom upon the earth. God's Kingdom, it will be recalled, was in operation in the Garden of Eden, prior to the entry of sin. Since the entry of sin, however, God's Kingdom has not been represented upon the earth, except in a typical form in the nation of Israel. God's Kingdom rules and His will is done throughout the Universe, except upon our own planet which has been under the influence and control of Satan ever since the time of his rebellion. (1. John 5., 19.)

The Scriptures indicate that God's Kingdom will be in the hands of the Ancient Worthies. They will be princes, or earthly rulers, representing the human family and their interests. The Scriptures further indicate that the seat of authority of these Ancient Worthies will be at Jerusalem, which is described as "the camp of the saints"

and "the beloved city." (Rev. 20., 9.) Under the Ancient Worthies at Jerusalem, the entire human family will doubtless be organized through local representatives, who will in turn look after their interests and be responsible to the central authority at Jerusalem.

It may be asked whether there will be any need for such representative government amongst men, once Satan is bound and Christ's Kingdom rules over the earth. The answer is that order and representative organization appear to be the rule in every part of God's universal Kingdom. We read of angelic Rulers, Authorities, Powers and Lords, and, in the same connection, it is stated that our Lord Himself has been exalted far above them all. (Eph. 1., 21—Moffatt.) This certainly implies organized and representative government, and the arrangements upon earth, during and after the thousand years, will, as later shown, be no exception to this rule.

### CHRIST'S KINGDOM IS ENTIRELY SPIRITUAL

At this stage, it is well to note the distinction between Christ's Kingdom and God's Kingdom when restored upon the earth. Christ's Kingdom is *entirely spiritual*, and its rule over the earth will not extend beyond the thousand years. God's Kingdom, on the other hand, once it is again in operation on the earth, will continue throughout eternity. (1. Cor. 15., 24.)

The earthly organization, under the Ancient Worthies, is sometimes described as the earthly phase of Christ's Kingdom. There is no Scripture, however, to this effect, and in reality they are two distinct Kingdoms. The dominion, or rulership of earth during the thousand years, will be held by Christ, then at the end of that time it will be restored to the human family, represented by the Ancient Worthies.

In the above connection, the prophecy of Daniel will be recalled wherein the saints of this Age (the wise) are likened unto the brightness of the firmament (sun), while they that turn many to righteousness (the Ancient Worthies, during the thousand years) will shine (amongst men) as the stars, for ever and ever. (Dan. 12., 3.) It could not be said, concerning this Age, that many have been turned to righteousness. It will surely be true, however, of the coming Age, when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the deep. It is therefore understood that the Ancient Worthies will be princes upon the earth for the thousand years of Christ's reign, and that as a reward for faithfulness, they will also represent God's Kingdom upon the earth throughout the Ages of eternity.

### THE RISEN SAINTS ALSO REIGN

The Scriptures are very definite on the point that the members of Christ share in the sufferings of their Lord and also in His glory. Indeed, it is a Scriptural truth that all God's promises to Christ are shared alike by His members. From the time, therefore, when the

Great White Throne was set up in the heavens and the reign of Christ began, the sleeping saints then with Him, shared in His reign. The same is true of those who have died during the Harvest period. (Rev. 2., 26-27.)

It would be a mistake to suppose that the members of Christ, beyond the veil, were engaged in any feature of service individually, or of a kind different from that of their Head. On the contrary, Christ is one, both in office and glory, although embracing many members. The members of the Body are in all things guided by, and subservient to their Head, for, says the Apostle, God "gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all". (Eph. 1., 22-23.)

The throne of an earthly monarch symbolises the seat of his authority and power, while his will is carried out in every part of his dominion by those to whom his authority is delegated. It is so also with regard to the Millennial Kingdom, now set up in the Heavens.

Daniel, the prophet, in describing the inauguration of Christ's Great White Throne Kingdom, at His Second Advent, says—"his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire (consuming earthly institutions). A fiery stream (of judgment) issued and came forth before him." (Dan. 7., 9-10.) This is further confirmed by the Revelator when, after describing the reign of Christ as having commenced, by virtue of the exercise of His mighty power, he adds—"and the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come". (Rev. 11., 17-18.)

### **SATAN LOOSED OUT OF HIS PRISON**

On first consideration it appears almost impossible to believe that any of the human family—after enjoying the blessings of restitution at the hands of the great Priest of that Age—will ever again be found on the side of the great Adversary and in opposition to God's Kingdom. Nevertheless, the Scriptures are quite definite that this will be the case.

In order to appreciate the circumstances involved, it seems necessary clearly to understand the distinction already made between God's Kingdom and the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ. Briefly, the Kingdom of Christ will rule the world for a thousand years and be the means of restoring law and order under the authority of the Ancient Worthies. As previously mentioned, this will involve organised representation of the human family throughout the earth, under the direction of the central government. In consequence, it appears that some will be disappointed because they are not given a place in this arrangement. In this connection, our Lord's words, on the occasion of the miraculous healing of the centurion's servant, appear to be very significant. "Many," declared the Lord, "shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and

gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 8., 11-12.) It is not necessary to suppose that the "many," to whom reference is made, will occupy the same position of authority in the Kingdom as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but the context necessarily implies that they will have some measure of authority. Moreover, it appears that their place of honour and authority will not be granted to them on account of any human relationship, but wholly on the basis of faith and loyalty to God. The "children of the kingdom," on the other hand, clearly refer to some who thought that they had a prior claim to Kingdom honours, by reason of natural descent or profession in the Lord's service. In consequence, there will, on their part, be keen and bitter disappointment, but all must eventually conform to the regulations of the New Covenant, or suffer the consequences—death. Furthermore, the Scriptures indicate that some will merely render outward, or feigned, obedience, in order that they may participate in the restitution blessings then being dispensed.

During the thousand years the unbending laws of the iron rule will be enforced. Justice will be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet. (Isa. 28., 17.) At the termination of the mediatorial Kingdom, however, will come the final test of loyalty to the will of God. The Adversary will once more be permitted to prove the heart attitude and motives of the entire human family. (Rev. 20., 7-8.) The indication seems to be that Satan will be successful in raising a conspiracy and revolt against those in authority. All who have neither been fully sanctified by the Spirit of God, nor in wholehearted harmony with God's arrangements concerning those in places of authority, will prove an easy prey to the Adversary's suggestions. He will doubtless succeed in deceiving some into believing that they are *called upon* to take over the authority of the Kingdom from the Ancient Worthies and others, into whose hands the "first dominion" will have been restored.

It is hard to realise that people can ever be misled in this way, especially those who will have enjoyed such wonderful blessings as will be the portion of the human family under the mediatorial Kingdom. We have only to reflect regarding Satan's own downfall, however, to see that it is possible even for perfect beings to fall. This happens when the heart is not thoroughly sanctified by the Holy Spirit, whereupon a lodgment for the spirit of the Adversary therein is easily gained. Once such a deflection from the path of righteousness takes place, there is no limit to the delusions to which the individual may eventually be subject, under Divine permission.

### EXAMPLES OF SATAN'S POWER TO-DAY

There are many illustrations of this in the records of God's people of former days, and numerous examples of deluded brethren are not wanting amongst the professed followers of the Lord to-day. The delusion, as in the case of the Adversary himself, usually takes the form of pride and vain glory, coupled with a feeling, on the part

of the deluded one, that his talent and abilities are not receiving full recognition. Such a spirit naturally leads to a depreciation of the abilities of others. How else can one understand the course of some who, during the Harvest-time, have professed to believe the present truth for, say, twenty, thirty or more years, and then have suddenly declared that they have been asleep and deceived the whole time? It is still more difficult to account for the activities of some of these brethren who, with much self-confidence, proclaim themselves to be teachers. They thus consider themselves duly qualified to *instruct others* in the deep things of God, immediately after confessing that they have been *deceived* for the greater part of their Christian experience.

In these circumstances, would not the spirit of the Lord, which is a spirit of humility, cause such to realise their inability to become teachers, or safe guides of the Lord's people? Moreover, if they were led by the spirit of a sound mind, would not these self-appointed teachers question whether their "new light" is not *another* great deception, even greater than the so-called "present truth" which was held during the many years they now regard as years of bondage and darkness in Babylon? Finally, would not the spirit of consistency, voiced by the Apostle when writing to the Galatians, be inclined to ask, as on that occasion—"Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?" (Gal. 4., 15.)

As suggested above, the same spirit of pride and inconsistency which is prompted by the Adversary will cause some of the human family to rebel, at the close of the thousand years. They will rebel against the representatives of God's Kingdom, described in the Great White Throne vision as "the camp of the saints" and "the beloved city" (Rev. 20., 9), and that rebellion will be permitted for a time to succeed. In this way, those who are on the Lord's side and who are prepared at all costs to stand by the Divine arrangements will be made manifest.

### AS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH

The human family, as yet, have *not even suspected* the cause of their troubles. Not many, even of the Lord's people, are aware of the setting up of the Great White Throne as the true cause of the present world trouble. The majority are fast asleep and will only awaken from their slumber when, through the increasing troubles on every hand, their sleep will be disturbed by a midnight clamour amongst the virgin class. (Matt. 25., 6.)

The watchers amongst the Lord's people, however, need be in no uncertainty as to the cause of the present world conditions. (1. Thess. 5., 1-8.) The light shining upon the Scriptures, in this day, clearly reveals to them the true significance of passing events. The signs which indicate that the "end of all things" is at hand, are to-day very evident to those who can interpret the more sure Word of prophecy.

The prophet Isaiah, moved by the Holy Spirit, was led to express, in a figure, the circumstances of our day. After foretelling, in vivid language, the disastrous trouble about to come upon the land of Palestine and its inhabitants (a figure of Christendom generally), the prophet exclaims—"what shall one *then* (in the day of trouble) answer the messengers of the nation?" The answer is supplied from the same inspired source—that "the Lord hath founded Zion", (Isaiah 14., 31-32.)

## CHAPTER XI

# THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION

*"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."* (Rev. 3., 10.)

The above text constitutes a portion of the message to the Church of Philadelphia—the period immediately prior to the time of the Lord's Presence. It is, in reality, a precious promise to the saints of that period, namely, that as a reward for their faithfulness they would be kept from the "hour of temptation." This time obviously refers, therefore, to the closing phase of Church history, termed the Laodicean period. (Rev. 3., 14-22.) The text further indicates that the closing years of the Gospel Age are to be a time of severe temptation, in relation to "all the world." On the other hand, other passages show that this will *specially* affect the Lord's people, for judgment begins at the House of God, and it is possible to see this in process of fulfilment to-day.

Although, as will be seen later, the consecrated now find themselves in this "hour of temptation" from which those of former days were spared, there are wonderful truths for the help of the Lord's people to-day, not hitherto known. These sustain our faith and have the power, through the Holy Spirit, to make us more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

If there is one word which would describe the experiences of to-day, it is *sifting*, due to the searching temptations to which all are subject—"seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." (2. Tim. 3., 13.)

This sifting is evidenced by whatever test may be adopted. Vital interest in the truth is lacking on the part of the majority of the Lord's people; strange teachings and false doctrines are held because many have "itching ears," by reason of their turning from the truth to fables; and even numbers—although one of the most superficial of tests—tend to become smaller and smaller, due to classes splitting up into factions and so on. Sifting, then, is the underlying feature of all aspects of the present-day position, and this is because it is the "hour of temptation."

### EACH AGE ENDS WITH A CLIMAX

A review of history, as detailed in the Scriptures, reveals to the Bible student that each dispensation ends with a climax.

The first dispensation ended with the Flood.

The Jewish Age concluded with the Fall of Jerusalem.

The Gospel Age finishes with the great Time of Trouble.

The Millennial Age will terminate with a similar climax.



The principle is expressed in Matt. 23., 35-36—"Upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation." There is no infringement of justice, for greater light brings greater responsibility, and this is especially true of the Gospel Age with which the present study is immediately concerned.

Again, each of these phases of climax, while affecting the people generally, constitutes a special test in relation to God's own children. These latter comprised Noah and his family at the time of the Flood; in the end of the Jewish Age, there were Israelites indeed, as distinct from the nation generally; and to-day, there is the true Church and the world at large, affected by the "hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

### MEAT IN DUE SEASON

It has been noted above that special truths were to be revealed in the "hour of temptation", in order to sustain the faith and hope of the Lord's people. Surely, no one who has been enlightened in our day will deny that there has been a rich feast of meat in due season spread before the Lord's people during the Harvest-time. This has been the fulfilment of Matt. 24., 45-47—"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods". Among these things specially provided for the comfort and protection of the Lord's people are:—

- (a) the joy of realising the Master's return and our joy of gathering together unto Him.
- (b) the precious privilege of engaging in the Harvest work,
- (c) the clearing away of the mists of error which surrounded all the general doctrines of the faith, and
- (d) in particular, the understanding of the perfect will of God for our day, through a knowledge of the Covenants and the Sin-offerings, epitomised in the words, "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach". (Heb. 13., 13.)

In every case, however, the vital thing is whether or not these truths have been made our own, and this equally applies to the light now due concerning the catastrophic developments with which we are surrounded to-day. Incidentally, we do not always appreciate the full force of some Scriptures with the letter of which we are familiar, until we come face to face with the trying experience of this "hour of temptation". Take, for instance, the special comfort to be received from the closing portion of Heb. 12. The writer

graphically describes the disintegration of earthly kingdoms, saying, "Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain". Nothing could better describe the conditions of our times in so striking a tone of finality—"Yet again, once for all" (Weymouth)—as they are inevitably realised to-day by all the Lord's people. Nevertheless, they are not unduly perturbed, but on the contrary rejoice because of the precious promise which immediately follows and belongs to them—"Wherefore *we receiving a kingdom* which cannot be moved (or shaken) let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear".

### CAUSE OF THE TEMPTATION

We may well enquire the cause of the temptation, for we can on every hand see brethren of long standing being overtaken by the deceptions of the hour. The basic cause is the **increased activity of the Adversary**, consequent upon the "War in heaven" and the fact that Christ hath been set upon the holy hill of Zion. Satan is putting darkness for light and light for darkness as never before, hence the need for being on guard. "Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2. Cor. 11., 13-14.) When Satan is apparently found interested in doing a good work, it is a sure sign that his kingdom is divided against itself and tottering to its fall.

Time and again, it has been noticed that when someone departs from the truth, he or she seems to be possessed of extraordinary energy in trying to persuade others to follow the same wrong course. Satan is very active in this way in order, if possible, to deceive the very elect. We recall how, away back in the beginning, it was stated—"I will put enmity between thee and the woman . . . it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel". (Gen. 3., 15.)

It must always be remembered that more have fallen away from the Harvest truths than those who have retained them. Many thousands have embraced the truth but only the few—one here and one there—have manifested sustained interest. The very fact that so few professed brethren pay any real attention to the deep features of doctrinal truth, or for that matter to the *realisation* that we are in the "hour of temptation", is proof of the subtlety of the Adversary. They are not awake to the dangers of the hour. The cause of the temptation is summed up by the Revelator—"the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time". (Rev. 12., 12.)

## ONE MAIN POINT OF FAILURE

Just as there is one root cause of temptation, so there is one main point of failure on the part of the consecrated, and that is **loss of the Spirit** through neglect to walk in the light. If the Spirit be lost, then darkness gradually settles down in place of light, for it is solely by the power of the Spirit that understanding of spiritual things is made possible. If there is loss of the Spirit, then loss of the truth is inevitable and this, in turn, must involve slackness in the payment of our vows. The Psalmist foretold "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee" (Psalm 91., 7), and this, of course, refers to failures on the part of *brethren* around us, as they are taken off their feet in this "hour of temptation". We are only immune if we remain in the secret place, enlightened by the golden candlestick, feasting upon the truth and so rendering acceptable service at the incense altar of continued subjection to the will of God. In this Tabernacle figure, we have the same three aspects of the spiritual life—the Spirit, the truth, and acceptable service.

It has truly been said that deflection from the narrow way by another brother comes about before *we* are aware of such a brother's failure to keep his covenant vows. We simply see, in due course, the outward evidence of what has already taken place within—loss of "first love" and gradual departure from the way of truth in this "hour of temptation". Four important features are studied below:—

### 1. SPIRITUAL PRIDE

Spiritual pride is a means of temptation to which many succumb. We have a striking illustration of this in reference to Moses, who is described as "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth". He was the Divinely appointed leader, but this did not please all, hence we read "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?" (Numb. 12., 1-2.) This is a sure sign of spiritual pride on the part of self-appointed leaders—"hath he not spoken also by us?" Those who seek such positions are often just the ones to whom great harm is thereby brought, for we recall what the Apostle James has to say—"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation". (Jas. 3., 1.)

Spiritual pride inevitably brings with it a blindness to our own limitations. We begin to think that the Lord's work rests upon us saying, in effect—"hath he not spoken also by us?" Let us always remember that we have naught whereof to boast, for we have nothing but what we have received. The perfect example of humility is, of course, our dear Lord, who was rich and yet for our sakes became poor, so poor that He was found in fashion as a man and humbled Himself, even unto the death of the Cross.

## 2. LOOKING TO OTHERS

How many have fallen in this "hour of temptation" because they have looked to the brethren, instead of looking to the Lord. We should not be stumbled by what others do or fail to do, but not a few have lost interest because of the "way they have been treated". This, of course, is only an excuse, for no one has been treated so badly as the Lord, who came unto His own and His own received Him not. All the difficulties which are permitted of the Lord make for our development as new creatures, provided we are rightly exercised thereby. The Apostle tells us how we should regard our brethren when he says—"Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him (so) no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new". (2. Cor. 5., 16-17.)

Although we should not be stumbled by these little "rubs" during the polishing of the Temple stones, it nevertheless reminds us of our duty to be examples of the believers. We have a standard to maintain in our every activity—the highest standard—even in the little affairs of life, such as diligence, punctuality, giving full measure, and so on. "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1. Tim. 4., 12.)

## 3. IDOL WORSHIP

Closely akin to the above is another aspect of deception in this "hour of temptation" and that is idol worship. The Apostle John wrote—"Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1. John 5., 21) and he had in mind not so much the literal idol worship in which the typical people indulged, but the idols of affection, leaders, and so on, set for the ensnarement of the Lord's people. In this "hour of temptation" we must, as never before, be guided by the naked principles of truth and righteousness, if we are to be able to stand. Many, alas, are not so guided; hence, when their leader goes out of the truth, they go as well, as has been evidenced time and again. In this way, the Lord tests the strength of our spiritual individuality. Each one must be proved, for we cannot get into the Kingdom collectively, and if those whom we dearly love defect, it is not for us to follow.

Led by the light Thy grace imparts,  
Ne'er may we bow the knee,  
To idols, which our wayward hearts,  
Set up instead of Thee.

There are other idols, such as the things of earth, which can likewise stumble us, unless we are on guard in this deceptive time. "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in

their shame, *who mind earthly things.*" (Phil. 3., 18-19.) If we are filled with His Spirit and impelled by His truth, then we shall surely find it easy to touch lightly the things of this earth; we shall understand relative values. The only safe course is to leave forbidden things alone, but it is not so simple as this, for the Apostle tells us that all things are lawful but not expedient. This demonstrates the need of *discernment* in this "hour of temptation" if we are to come through successfully. The subtlety of this time, as already suggested, lies in the fact that we can always find an excuse for any wrong course adopted. This is the point of Ez. 14., 3-4, "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart. . . . Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face . . . I the Lord will answer him . . . according to the multitude of his idols". Under this heading, as with the other phases of Harvest siftings to-day, we are able clearly to see that this is the "hour of temptation".

#### 4. LOSS OF TRUTH

As many times suggested, if we lose the spirit, or fail in any of the ways mentioned, it is necessarily linked with the question of the truth; our understanding of spiritual things. The main reason why so many now no longer believe the things that they have learned is, once again, because this is the "hour of temptation". In this connection, we recall one of those sifting experiences among the early disciples and the Lord's question, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter, as spokesman, said in reassuring tones, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6., 67-8) and this is equally true of our day.

No one who has received the wonderful light of our day into a good and honest heart would of his own accord desire to go away. It is the Adversary who sows seeds of discouragement and impatience with God's methods when fulfilment seems to tarry, whereby the soldier of the Cross will fall if he is not watchful. This quality is more than ever necessary to-day when there are deceptions on every hand, if we are to be able to "stand before the Son of man". (Luke 21., 36.)

#### THE WINTER TIME OF TROUBLE

As already noted, the text on which this chapter is based suggests that this time of trouble is to affect "all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" and this clearly means that in some sense all will eventually be involved. Our Lord's words immediately come to mind—"Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world . . . no, nor ever shall be". (Matt. 24., 20-21.) To-day there are sure signs of the approach

of "winter" for the political barometer is at present definitely set to "stormy", although the possibility of another war defies the imagination of man. All these things, however, should in no way prove a temptation to us, but should, on the contrary, strengthen our faith in the omnipotence of God, as "Our King is marching on".

What a comfort, then, should the Present Truth be to all the truly consecrated living in this "hour of temptation", for the fire can only burn the cords and set us free, by glorification beyond the veil. The indications of Scripture are nevertheless that the Church class will be changed before the winter of trouble breaks in its fury (Rev. 7., 1-3), whereas the Great Company will continue into the "winter time" of great tribulation during which they will wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. We should not fear what man can do unto us, for all things are in God's hands and He has assured us in His Word that His grace is sufficient. In a very special sense, it is to-day true to say that individually we know not what awaits us, but we can trust while God "kindly veils our eyes", in the full knowledge that we shall never be confounded.

"My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion: **for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.**" (Psa. 102., 11-13.)

# Summary of the Revelation

As a conclusion to this exposition, a summary of The Revelation is given for the ready reference of our readers.

**Chapter I.** This is introductory and makes it clear that the book is written in signs and relates to "things which must shortly come to pass". A special blessing is promised to him that readeth and them that hear the words of the prophecy, "for the time is at hand". It is a revelation of Jesus Christ and a description of the Son of man is given in forceful symbols in the closing verses of the chapter, while the seven stars in his right hand refer to the angels of the seven churches, and the seven golden candlesticks relate to those churches.

**Chapters II and III.** These chapters contain the messages to the "seven churches"—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. These chapters span the entire Gospel Age, beginning with the early church of Ephesus and reaching to the church of Laodicea which is contemporaneous with the Lord's Second Advent. The persecution of the saints at the hands of the nominal church is described, and a special promise is given to each church, accompanied by the injunction, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches". While the messages apply to successive periods of the Gospel Age, they also contain messages of comfort and encouragement for the church militant living at any time during the Age, and the promises given to the seven churches likewise apply to the saints as a whole.

**Chapter IV.** The Revelator now proceeds to give a description of the Heavenly Father and His throne. The four living creatures relate to the four attributes of justice, wisdom, mercy, and power, and the four-and-twenty elders are understood to refer to the messages of the twenty-four prophetic visions of the Old Testament scriptures.

**Chapter V.** This vision opens with a book sealed with seven seals, and a strong angel (the Law) enquires, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" Eventually, one is found worthy to accomplish this task and He is the Lord Jesus Christ, aptly described as "the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David". The sealed book refers to the Divine Plan which has been gradually made known to the Lord's people during the Age. Little wonder is it that the Revelator declares that the Lamb is "worthy . . . to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing".

**Chapter VI.** In the course of this chapter, six of the seven symbolic seals are opened and this takes us up to the "time of the end". The events of the Gospel Age are described and can be easily identified from history. It is not difficult, for instance, to locate verses 9 and 10 as having their fulfilment at the time of the

Reformation when "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held".

**Chapter VII.** This is one of the most important chapters of the book and the "seal of the living God" undoubtedly refers to the seventh and last seal which is ingeniously hidden in this way from the casual reader. The hundred and forty-four thousand saints (spiritual Israel), who are sealed with an understanding of the truth throughout the Age, are described in verses 4 to 8 inclusive. After this, the Revelator sees a great multitude which no man could number, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. This multitude relates to the Great Company Class who fail to obtain a place in the Kingdom as overcomers but who, in the mercy of God, become servants in the temple, once they have passed through the great tribulation and washed their stained robes, made white in the blood of the Lamb.

**Chapter VIII.** The first verse really belongs to chapter VII, and the half hour's silence relates to the short time between the glorification of the last member of the church and the ushering in of the blessings for all mankind. The Revelator then proceeds to deal with the seven symbolic trumpets, and it is understood that these trumpets began to sound at the time of the Reformation because they are trumpet blasts of liberty, while the seventh trumpet (chapter XI) commences to sound at the time of the Second Advent. Once again, the events described can be located in history and the reference in the chapter to a "third part" shows that the devastating effects of these trumpets had, as yet, only partial results in preparation for the time of the seventh trumpet.

**Chapter IX.** This is a continuation of Chapter VIII and deals with the fifth and sixth trumpets, once again describing the results of these trumpet blasts of liberty.

**Chapter X.** The mighty angel is our Lord at His Second Advent and the "little book open" relates to the Harvest feature of the Divine Plan now made clear to the Lord's people, the seventh and last seal having been broken. The effect of this impartation of truth is to bring great joy to the recipients, but the after-effects are bitter, because they involve the persecution associated with a faithful witness for the truth.

**Chapter XI.** This chapter begins with a reference to the time features under the figure of a "reed like unto a rod" and leads up to the French Revolution when the Papal church received another severe blow, even more serious than that associated with the Reformation. The French Revolution is rightly described as a symbolical "earthquake". The end of the chapter deals with the most important event of all, namely, the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the announcement of the change of sovereignty from the Adversary to "our Lord and his Christ". The result is seen in the trouble which surrounds us to-day for, as stated in verse 18, "the



nations were angry, and thy wrath is come". This has caused the symbolical "lightnings (flashes of truth), and voices (discussions), and thunderings (more forceful discussions), and an earthquake (shaking from within the social structure), and great hail (hard truth)"<sup>22</sup>.

**Chapter XII.** This is another vital chapter which describes the church on earth under the figure of a woman clothed with the sun (Gospel light) and the moon under her feet (supported by the law) and upon her head a crown of twelve stars (the Apostles). Her trials and persecutions are described and her glorification and union with Christ in the Kingdom as the man child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. As often happens in the Revelation, the verses are not consecutive, and verse 6 takes us back to 539 A.D. when the woman went into the wilderness of ostracism for 1,260 days (years) terminating at 1799 A.D., when the time of the end began. The war in heaven relates to the events of our day when the Adversary has been dethroned from his place of power, with consequent severe trouble on earth—"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (before being fully bound). The chapter concludes with the second flight of the woman into the wilderness which is yet future.

**Chapter XIII.** At this point the Revelator takes up the narration of Gentile domination where Daniel leaves off. The Papal system and the British Empire are described under the figures of symbolical "beasts" (the fifth and sixth "Heads" of Gentile dominion), followed by the "image of the beast" (seventh "Head").

**Chapter XIV.** Verse 1 of this chapter is located at the Second Advent, when the Lamb stands on the mount Sion with the hundred and forty-four thousand who sing the new song and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. It is evident, however, that some of them are actually on earth and the succeeding messages of the three angels relate to developments during the Harvest-time. The first angel announces the everlasting Gospel to the heavenly-minded class, declaring that the hour of His judgment is come. The next angel declares that Babylon has fallen, while the third angel's message concerns the time when the image of the beast is in operation. The "alive and remain" class are identified as the blessed who die in the Lord "from henceforth" (that is, henceforth from the time of the Lord's Presence), and the closing verses of the chapter describe the Harvest work, culminating with the trouble with which the Age will terminate. The messages of the three angels correspond with the first three plagues.

**Chapter XV.** This vision is introductory to the pouring out of the seven last plagues and describes the class who have "gotten the victory over the beast and over his image", who are said to be standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire (fiery judgments). These plagues relate to the final trouble and the Revelator aptly

explains that no man will be able to enter the temple (receive restitution blessings) until the seven plagues have been fulfilled and the last member of Christ has passed within the veil.

**Chapter XVI.** The outpouring of the seven plagues is yet future and a perusal of the chapter indicates their devastating effects, ending with the complete destruction of the social order so that every island and mountain flee away and great hail falls upon men "every stone about the weight of a talent".

**Chapter XVII.** This is the key chapter of the book and its application is located at the time of the outpouring of the seven last plagues (verse 1). It relates to the judgment, that is, final destruction, of Babylon, and in verses 9 to 11 the explanation of Gentile dominion is hidden. The seven "Heads" with one of the seven returned to power as an eighth, relate to the various "Heads" of Gentile rule, beginning with Babylon (606 B.C.) and ending with the complete destruction of the present order, as outlined in the closing verses.

**Chapter XVIII.** The opening verses record the declaration that Babylon the Great has fallen and a description of the troubles upon Babylon is given, ending with the destruction of this beastly system which has deceived the peoples of the earth for so many centuries.

**Chapter XIX.** The vision in this chapter largely relates to the future and indicates, once again, the termination of the present "heavens and earth".

**Chapter XX.** The Adversary is here seen to be bound for a thousand years and the Great White Throne of Millennial judgment, already established in the heavens, is indicated in verse 11. Judgment of the world with the loosing of the Adversary for a short period after the expiry of the thousand years is mentioned, and the ages of glory will open immediately thereafter, once death and hell have been cast into the lake of fire.

**Chapter XXI.** Here are described restitution blessings with the establishment of a new heavens and new earth when God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of the people and when "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away". The heavenly City (Christ's Kingdom) is described under the figure of various precious stones and the nations are said to walk "in the light of it".

**Chapter XXII.** Restitution is again the theme, under the figure of a pure river of water of life which proceeds out of the throne. The leaves of the trees by the river are for the healing of the nations; the curse is no more. The last verses indicate that He cometh quickly and that the sayings of the book are no longer to be hid, because, as stated in chapter I, "the time is at hand".

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