

War in Heaven.

OLD PATHS PUBLICATIONS,
ILFORD, ENGLAND.

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14, OXFORD ROAD, ILFORD,
ESSEX, ENGLAND.

SYNOPSIS.

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WAR IN HEAVEN.

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels.

And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." (Rev. 12., 7-9.)

"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." (Rev. 19., 11.)

The brief record of the war in heaven, related in the above Scriptures, is not understood to refer to any historical conflict which took place in the far distant past; neither is it considered to be correct, hastily to assume that the heaven involved is away in some remote part of the universe, quite outside the scope of human affairs. On the contrary, it is suggested that these visions of the Revelator, of which the above Scriptures form part, are prophetic and relate to mighty events which have their culmination at the close of the present Age, involving the future hopes and destiny of

the entire human family, as well as the very planet on which they dwell. As will be seen later, the "War in Heaven" mentioned above means nothing less than the end of the long reign of sin and death through the defeat of the author of evil, Satan, and the overthrow of his Kingdom.

HEAVEN IS MY THRONE.

The King of Glory. It would be a serious mistake to suppose that the issue in the conflict between God's Kingdom and that of the powers of darkness and evil had ever been in doubt at any time. Such a view would fall far short of the true conception of the greatness and majesty of God, as revealed to us in the Scriptures.

In order to get a glimpse of the majesty of the heavens, we require to lift our minds above the earthly limitations of the flesh and with the eye-salve of the Holy Spirit to take a view of the Creator through the telescope of the inspired Word.

In the fourth chapter of the Revelation there is given a symbolic picture of the Throne of the Universe and of the One who sits thereon. After a vivid and symbolic description of the Throne and its Occupant, the Revelator adds—"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal:

and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind." (Rev. 4., 6.)

This vision somewhat lifts the veil and reveals the mighty Ruler of the Universe in all His serenity and undisturbed poise of mind. The four living creatures fittingly represent the chief attributes of the Divine character, as seen in the outworking of His Plan. The glassy sea, before the Throne, representing undisturbed peace and serenity, would seem to suggest that this mighty Being—perfect in Justice, Wisdom, Mercy and Power—cannot be disturbed, or taken by surprise, by any circumstance which may arise in any part of His vast domain.

In the realisation of something of the greatness of God, we are prepared to appreciate the fact that the rebellion of Satan, in connection with the creation of man in Eden, did not take the Creator by surprise nor in any way upset the Divine programme. On the contrary, we learn from the Scriptures that the deflection of Satan from the path of righteousness and his subsequent opposition to the Creator were not only foreseen from the beginning, but amply provided for as revealed in the wisdom and foreknowledge seen in the Divine Plan. Moreover, we learn that by virtue of full

confidence in His own ability, not only to over-rule evil for the lasting benefit of all creation, but also eventually to destroy all evil and evildoers, God has permitted Satan to continue his course of opposition and evil, measurably unopposed, for the past 6,000 years.

It will thus be seen that the "War in Heaven", or the conflict between Michael's Kingdom and that of the Adversary, does not relate to any events which took place at the time when Satan first became the Adversary of God and righteousness, but to developments in the day when, in accordance with the Divine programme, God will *no longer* permit evil, but will exercise His great power for the overthrow and destruction of Satan's Kingdom.

SATAN'S DEFLECTION, SUDDEN AND IRREVOCABLE.

How Art Thou Fallen. There is but little revealed to us in the Scriptures, concerning the actual rebellion of Satan and his position prior to his fall from Divine favour and it would be idle to speculate beyond what is written. It would appear, however, that the impulse which led him to an open revolt against God was *sudden and irrevocable*. This seems to be

indicated by our Lord's words to the 70 disciples upon receiving their report to the effect that "even the devils are subject unto us through thy name". (Luke 10., 17.) On that occasion, our Lord declared—"I watched Satan fall from heaven (harmony with God) like a flash of lightning". (Luke 10., 18—Moffatt.)

Evidently, our Lord did not mean to suggest that the fall of Satan had taken place *at that moment*, or that he had fallen, in a *literal sense*, from heaven to earth. It would seem more reasonable to infer that this graphic description of Satan's downfall related to the distant past, a tragedy of which He was reminded afresh by the report brought to Him, on this occasion, by the disciples. The Scriptures seem to indicate, too, that his deflection was the result of uncurbed pride with a consuming ambition to be like God and to rule over a Kingdom entirely his own. In contrast to this ambition of Satan, it is written of our Lord that He "thought not equality with God (as a ruler) a thing to be seized upon, but made himself of no reputation". (Phil. 2., 6-7.)

Apparently, the fatal hour for gathering the fruits of this ill-conceived ambition arrived when our first parents, as the head

of the human race, were placed in the Garden of Eden. The idea of seizing this earth for a dominion of his own with a race of human beings as his subjects, fired his latent ambition and, quick as lightning, the fatal decision was made. The results of that decision have been evident, amongst the human family, during the past six thousand years.

It would be beyond the power of human tongue, or pen, adequately to describe the far reaching effects of this mighty upheaval in God's Kingdom, so suddenly precipitated by this ambitious gambol for power, on the part of the great Lucifer, one of the bright stars of the morning. A brief pen picture of the downfall of Satan seems to be given to us by the inspired prophet, veiled under the description of the King of Tyre, as follows:—

“Son of Man raise a dirge over the King of Tyre, and give him this message from the Lord the Eternal. You were the father of wisdom, the perfection of beauty, you lived in Eden, the garden of God; you were adorned with every jewel, the jasper, the chrysolite, the sardonyx, the topaz, the beryl, the onyx, the sapphire, the garnet, the rock-crystal, their setting wrought in gold . . . On the day you were created I placed you beside the cherubs on the sacred hill of God; you walked amid the flashing thunder-stones. From

the day you were created, you lived a perfect life, till you were discovered doing wrong; rich traffic made you rife with violence and you sinned. Hence I have expelled you as a profane thing from the hill of God, and the Cherub has driven you to your ruin away from the flashing thunder-stones. Your beauty made you proud of heart, your brilliance depraved your wisdom; so I cast you down . . . your fate is awful, there is no future for you". (Ezekiel 28., 12-19—Moffatt.)

We think that there is little ground for the suggestion which is sometimes made to the effect that Satan, prior to his fall, held high office in the *presence* of God and that, having sinned, he was expelled from the Divine presence and cast down to this earth. This rather crude view of the matter is partly gathered from a very inadequate conception of the vastness of God's great Empire in boundless and immeasurable space, quite beyond the comprehension of the finite mind.

In order to illustrate the inability of the human mind to grasp the immensity of the Universe and the almost measureless distances separating the various heavenly bodies from this earth, let it be remembered that astronomers tell us that light from some of the fixed stars takes more than 50,000 years to reach this planet, notwithstanding the fact that light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles

per second. Then again, the sun which is the centre of the solar system, with the planets (of which this earth of ours is but one) revolving around it, has a diameter of 865,000 miles, while its mass is 330,000 times as great as that of the earth. In consequence, our own planet which, from the standpoint of the human mind, occupies such an important place in the Universe, can only be regarded as a tiny speck in that Universe, and with the Psalmist we can say—"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8., 3-4.)

It follows, therefore, that if the Majesty of the Eternal and the vastness of His Kingdom be taken into account when considering the fall of Satan, it must be recognised that the above mentioned view of Satan's fall as being, in a literal sense, from the heaven of God's presence to earth, is not a likely conception of the matter. Satan's fall should be regarded rather as a deflection from the doing of the will of God, and as a consequence, a fall from Divine favour and approval.

Whatever sphere Satan may have occupied in God's Kingdom prior to the preparation

of Eden as man's home and the creation of the first pair therein, it would seem, at least, that when the actual fall did take place, his sphere of activities, as God's representative, had to do with the human creation, to whom the dominion of this earth was entrusted. (Gen. 1., 26.)

In the light of the foregoing, the references in the book of Job to Satan presenting himself with the sons of God, may be the more easily understood, and the text (Job 1., 6) may be explained in the manner following.

The incident referred to in this connection relates not to matters which transpire in the Sanctuary of the Great King who sits upon the "Midnight Throne", but to circumstances concerning the human family and the rulership of this world. (John 12., 31.) The Creator Himself does not leave His Sanctuary, but has His representatives, carrying out His will, in every part of His vast Realm. These agents speak for, and act in the name of the Lord, just as if He were actually present. An example of this principle may be seen in connection with the giving of the Law to Moses. While it is stated that Moses spake face to face with God, yet we know, as recorded elsewhere, that it was an angel, representing God, who

gave the Law to Moses and with whom he spake in the Mount. (Ex. 33., 11; Acts 7., 53.) In like manner, we are told that God spake to Moses out of the burning bush, but in this case also, we are informed that it was an angel representing God, who spake to him. (Ex. 3., 4; Acts 7., 35.)

The incident recorded in Job 1., 6 is thus understood to refer to a gathering of the angelic messengers before a greater authority representing God Himself, and with them came Satan with his evil influence. In like manner, the verse following, does not mean that Satan literally walked "up and down" and "to and fro in the earth", but rather that he interested himself in the affairs of the earth, over which he ruled as the "prince of the power of the air". (Eph. 2., 2.)

In Eden, the Garden of God. The suggestion contained in the Scriptures seems to be that Satan was entrusted with some special part in connection with the creation of our first parents, in the Garden of Eden—"Thou hast been in Eden, the Garden of God". (Ezek. 28., 13.)

It was doubtless this close contact with the head of the race and the realisation of the possibilities, through their offspring, of a world filled with intelligent beings, that proved too great a temptation for his proud

and ambitious spirit. His fall was thus precipitated, as so vividly described both by our Lord himself and the inspired prophet. (Luke 10. 18; Isa. 14., 12-14.)

THERE SHALL BE NO LONGER DELAY.

Although it has been the hope of saintly men of God, from the earliest days, that God would intervene in human affairs for the suppression of evil and the restoration of His Kingdom upon the earth, yet for the long period of 6,000 years, no effort was made in this direction. This hope, nevertheless, was a sure one and will be realised, in due time, in harmony with our Lord's prayer—"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done *in earth as it is in heaven*". (Matt. 6., 10.)

God's Kingdom has not been ruling over this earth, or amongst the human family, except in a typical sense in the Nation of Israel, since Adam, as God's representative, lost that dominion through the fall. Satan has usurped the dominion and, by deceiving mankind, has kept them in subjection. (1. John 5., 19.)

Meantime, however, unknown to the world, God has been secretly preparing an instrument which, in accordance with the Divine Plan, will shortly overthrow Satan's King-

dom and re-establish His own Kingdom over the whole earth. The Scriptures reveal to us not only that the time has *now arrived* for God to intervene, in order to suppress Satan's rebellion, but they also inform us of the reason for the long delay. (Rom. 16., 20.)

The Times of the Gentiles. According to the Divine Plan, as revealed in the Scriptures, it is understood that God decreed that the Kingdoms of this world (which represent the earthly phase of Satan's Kingdom), should continue to exercise the dominion of this world for a period of seven times (2,520 years) from 606 B.C. to 1914 A.D. In consequence, until the expiry of this period, generally known as "Gentile Times"*, it was not in harmony with the Divine programme for God to intervene for the overthrow of Satan's Kingdom.

Another matter also involved in the permission of Satan to exercise the dominion of the world during this set time of Gentile rule, is the calling and preparation of the members of Christ who, when joined with their Lord and Head, will share in the work of overthrowing the Adversary and his Kingdom. (Rev. 2., 26-27.)

In the light of the foregoing, it will be seen that the "War in Heaven" resulting

*See Booklet "The End of All Things", p. 4.

from the conflict between God's Kingdom and that of the Adversary, *could not begin* so long as God permitted evil and its Author—Satan—to continue in power. It requires two active and opposing armies to start a war. Since God, however, in accordance with His Plan did not actively intervene to overthrow the usurper for a set time, the war, or conflict, resulting from that intervention, could not begin until the *set time had expired*.

The Scriptures represent God as in a reclining, or sitting posture, during the time of the permission of evil. When the time arrives to intervene for the overthrow of evil and of Satan, He is represented as rising up—"Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I *rise up* to the prey". (Zeph. 3., 8.) The same figure is used also to represent the work of our Lord at his Second Advent, when, as the Father's representative, He comes as the rightful heir of God, in order to claim the dominion of this world. The prophet Daniel, looking down the stream of time, in vision saw the time arrive for Satan's Kingdom to be overthrown and for God's Kingdom to be set up. At that time, declared the prophet, "Shall Michael *stand up*, the great prince which *standeth* for the children of thy people: and there shall be (war in heaven, and upon the earth) a time

of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time". (Dan. 12., 1.)

It is true, of course, that ever since the time when sin entered Eden, there has been enmity between Satan's Kingdom and those who have endeavoured to free themselves from its spirit and control. Notwithstanding this fact, however, it could not be said, at any time, prior to the full end of Gentile Times, that God had ever attempted to dispossess Satan of the control of this world, by making war upon his kingdom. The Scriptures not only indicate plainly that Satan's exercise of dominion, as the prince of this world, has been with God's permission, but they further show that the Lord's followers themselves should be subject to the powers that be, during the interim of Gentile rule. (Rom. 13., 1.)

PRESENT TRUTH ALL IMPORTANT.

On the Watch Tower. The Scriptures clearly indicate that the dominion of this earth which was given to the human family representatively in the first pair in Eden and lost through the fall, is to be restored again to the race. (Gen. 1., 26; Psalm 8., 1-9.) They further tell us that

in order to deal with the usurper of man's dominion and at the same time to reveal to the entire universe the exceeding sinfulness and foolishness of sin with its terrible consequences, as well as to demonstrate His own righteous laws and character, God has been silently working out, through the Ages, a great and wonderful Plan. (Eph. 3., 11.) Moreover, we learn that the centre and pivot of the entire Plan is Christ, whom God has not only highly exalted to the Divine nature, but for whom He has, during nearly two thousand years, been selecting and preparing, from amongst the human family, a Bride of 144,000 members. (Rev. 19., 7.) All the members of this class share in the sufferings of Christ now, by walking in His steps, and they will also share in the honour and glory of recovering for mankind their lost dominion of the earth, with the undoing of the awful consequences of Satan's wicked and foolish rebellion against the Creator.

It seems clear to those who are on the "Watch Tower" and who can therefore read the meaning of the present world events, that we are at present living in the time when *war has been declared* by God, against Satan's Kingdom.

The purpose of this issue, therefore, is not only to trace the history of Satan's rebellion

and opposition to God's Kingdom from its beginning, but additionally to confirm our faith in the fact that God has perfect control of the situation and is working all things after the counsel of His own will. Furthermore, it will be our endeavour not only to trace, through the prophetic visions of the Revelator, the steps already taken, according to the Divine Plan, in preparation for the overthrow of the enemy, but to bear witness to the fact that *the time has arrived* for Satan's Kingdom to be overthrown and that *war has already been declared* upon the enemy, as mentioned above, and has been in progress since 1914 A.D.

If this is seen to be the right understanding of the matter, based upon the more sure word of prophecy, and corroborated by events transpiring in the world to-day, then it will prove to those who are awake and watching that—

1. The greatest crisis of the ages is already upon the human family; a crisis which the Scriptures tell us will eventuate in a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." (Dan. 12., 1.)
2. So far as the Lord's people are concerned, they are already in the "evil time" spoken of in the Scriptures and the question of the moment is not so much who may fall, but who will be able to stand until their course is run.

Indeed, the Apostle warns us that none but those who have put on the whole armour of light, due in this day, will be safe. (Eph. 6., 13.)

3. The marriage of the Lamb, or union of the members of the Bride class with the Bridegroom is now taking place and, very shortly, the last members of the Body will have passed within the veil, whereupon the door of opportunity for further entrance into the Kingdom will be forever shut. (Matt. 25., 10.)
4. Before the door is shut, all the wise virgins of the parable will have arisen from their slumber of ignorance and indifference, as regards the present truth, and having again trimmed their lamps as did the same class during the earlier period of the harvest time, will have freed themselves from every form of bondage and prejudice which would hinder their full fellowship with the Lord, through the truth. (Matt. 25., 7.)
5. If any of the virgin class allow such things as indifference, self-satisfaction or sectarianism, in any form, to hinder them from going forth into the full liberty and knowledge of the truth now due, then it is an indication of extreme foolishness and of lack of appreciation of the great privilege of becoming a member of the Bride class.

REVELATION, CHAPTER TWELVE

So far as the Lord's people to-day are concerned, the vision of Revelation, Chapter

twelve, is perhaps next in importance to that which is contained in chapter seventeen. In the latter, we have revealed to us a panoramic picture of Gentile rule, culminating in the judgment (doom—Moffatt) of its last head. This has enabled us to get our bearings, fairly accurately, regarding where we are to-day in relation to the end of Gentile dominion.

The vision of chapter twelve, which it is our purpose to consider at present, not only reveals, in its vivid symbolism of a "war in heaven", the intervention of God's Kingdom for the purpose of overthrowing Satan's empire, but traces in addition, under the figure of a "man child", the preparation of the instrument which God will use for the suppression of Satan's rebellion.

When later in this issue the vision is dealt with more in detail, we think it will be seen that the correct understanding of Rev. 17., helps us, to a large extent, rightly to divide the subject of the vision now under consideration. Without the important information furnished in Rev. 17., regarding the rise to power of the Papacy a *second* time as the eighth head, it would be difficult to harmonise the statements contained in chapter 12 in which the woman is represented as going into

the wilderness condition a *second* time. (Rev. 12., 6-14.)

It has been generally considered, heretofore, that the description of the Papal beast found in Rev. 13, and that which is given later in Rev. 17, both refer to the past record of this Antichristian power. In the light of a clearer understanding of Rev. 17, however, we can now see that this chapter describes a phase of Papal exaltation which is yet in the future.

In a similar way, the two records given us in Rev. 12, of the "woman" going into the wilderness, have heretofore been regarded as having their fulfilment during Papacy's persecution in the past. In the light, however, of what will be advanced later in this issue, we think it will be evident that just as the antitypical Jezebel returns to power a second time, so there are two flights of the woman into the wilderness recorded in this chapter, corresponding with the periods of the fifth and eighth heads of Gentile dominion. (Rev. 12., 6, 14.) Incidentally, we remind ourselves too, that Elijah, who is generally regarded as a figure of the church, fled a second time into the wilderness in order to escape the wrath of the wicked Jezebel—the paramour of Israel's weak and rejected King. (I. Kings 19., 1-3.)

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE VISION.

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 stand-points. 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 1914 A.D. onward, when Michael stands up to claim the dominion of this world. The reasons why it could not apply before the close of Gentile Times are elsewhere discussed in this issue.

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—a woman clothed with the sun, a great red Dragon and a man child fill the leading parts of this vision and it will therefore be necessary, in the first place, to obtain a general understanding of their significance, as well as of their relationship to each other in the context.

THE SUN-CLOTHED WOMAN.

Travailing in Birth. Bible students generally are agreed that the woman referred to in the vision is a symbol of the Gospel Church, as it came into prominence, in the days of the Apostles. The sun, fittingly represents the light and truth of the Gospel with which the Church, in its earlier days, was so fully enveloped.

The expression, "the moon under her feet", would emphasise the thought that the types and shadows of the Law are in no sense in conflict with the hopes of the Lord's followers of this Age, but that, when rightly understood, they are confirmatory of them. (Heb. 10., 1.) The twelve stars fittingly represent the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, who, apart from the Lord himself, are the only inspired teachers given to the Lord's people in this age. (Rev. 21., 14.)

Looking back over the experiences of the Christian Church since the days of the Apostles, it would seem, from the point of view of the natural mind, that the purpose of God through the Gospel has been an entire failure. The experiences of the true followers of the Lord, as they have endeavoured to walk the narrow way of separation from the world and its spirit, are well described here as one long agony of sorrow, pain and suffering like the travail of birth pangs. (John 16., 21-22.)

It has been a wonder, not only to worldly-minded Christians, but often even to the Lord's followers themselves, why God permits such travail of persecution and suffering to come upon His Church, at the hands of the great Adversary and his dupes. Such matters can be understood only by those

whose minds have been illuminated by the Spirit of God and who are thus able to judge all things from the Divine viewpoint. (I. Cor. 2., 10-16.)

It is only from this standpoint and with the understanding of why God permits the afflictions of the righteous, that we can appreciate the depth of the Psalmist's words when, speaking prophetically of the call and travail of the elect church of this Age, he declares—"I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works my substance (body) was not hid from thee when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth". (Psalm 139., 14-15.)

It is when we realise that the travail and sufferings of the present time are necessary for the perfecting of the members of the world's High Priest, that we can appreciate the Lord's words when He tells us that of the many called, only the few will eventually be chosen, or elected. (Matt. 22., 14.)

It is thus seen that the sufferings and experiences permitted by the Lord to come upon His Church during the present Age, and here likened unto the travail and birth pangs of a woman, are necessary for the full development of the elect little flock—the man-child—

who, as the seed of the "Promise", will be the blesser of the human family. (Gal. 3., 29.)

In a figurative sense, the members of this class are begotten in the promise—"This is the word of promise, at this time will I come and Sarah shall have a son." (Rom. 9., 9.)

THE GREAT RED DRAGON.

The Dragon, is one of the several names applied, in the Scriptures, to Satan, *since his fall* from Divine favour and active opposition to God and His Kingdom. The name indicates a fierce and cruel disposition and reveals somewhat of the corruption and wickedness of Satan's own character, as well as the systems through which he operates amongst the human family. (Rev. 20., 2.)

Most students of prophecy agree that the Dragon mentioned in the second verse of this vision refers, not so much to the personal Satan himself, but rather to that wicked and cruel power through which he persecuted the early Christian church—Imperial Rome. The Dragon power referred to in this verse is identical with the fourth beast which Daniel saw in his vision and for which, apparently, he could find no suitable comparison amongst the beasts of the earth. (Dan. 7., 7.) Both Daniel and the Revelator mention the same peculiarity about it, in that it had ten horns.

The Advent of Jesus, who became the Head of the promised seed—the instrument destined to overthrow, in due course, Satan's power and kingdom—evidently excited Satan's wrath with the object of destroying, not only our Lord Himself, but also His followers (represented under the symbol of the sun-clothed woman) by stirring up fierce persecutions against them through the Roman Emperors. All down the Gospel Age, the Dragon (Satan) has pursued a relentless opposition against the church with ever-increasing subtlety and deceit.

After the break-up and downfall of the Roman Empire, instead of continuing openly to persecute the church, Satan transformed himself into an angel of light and, in the guise of a friend and protector, began to attack the church from within. This method proved much more successful than the previous one, with the result that, in a short time, he was successful, not only in corrupting the entire faith of the church, but also in deceiving Christendom into the view that the Antichrist, through which he continued to operate against the Divine Plan, was the Kingdom of God ruling upon the earth. (2. Thess. 2., 4.)

Although the Papal power which rose upon the ruins of Imperial Rome is described by

the Revelator as a *separate and distinct* beast, yet it is clearly seen, from the language used in describing its rise to power, that it was the same "Dragon" spirit of Satan which operated through it. We read, concerning the Papal beast, that "the Dragon gave him his power, and his seat (throne) and great authority." (Rev. 13., 2.) Moreover, it will be noted that later, when the two-horned beast rises to exercise the dominion, in place of the Papal beast, it is also described as being a mouthpiece of the Dragon—he had (two) horns like a lamb and he spake as a Dragon. (Rev. 13., 11.) Furthermore, when the seven last plagues are poured out, at the end of the harvest time, we find the Dragon yet in evidence, for we read that three unclean spirits, like frogs, came out of the mouth of the Dragon and out of the mouth of the Beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. (Rev. 16., 13.) Later still, we read of the Dragon being bound for a thousand years. (Rev. 20., 1-2.)

From the foregoing, we would gather that while Imperial Rome is termed by the Revelator, the Dragon, having been used as a special *instrument* of Satan in an attempt to devour the child of promise, yet since the days of Roman ascendancy, even till the present time, other agencies have been used

by Satan, in his endeavour to destroy the seed of the woman. (Rev. 12., 6.)

**Seven Heads and
Ten Horns.**

It has already been noted that the great Red Dragon represents Imperial Rome *during the days of her ascendancy amongst the nations*, under the Emperors. Viewed locally and as a *separate* beast, its seven heads would represent its Imperial Rulers who, in turn, directed and controlled its destiny. The ten horns upon its heads represent the various divisions of the Empire which were the means of its power and protection, just in the same manner as the horns of a literal beast are essential to it as a means both of offence and defence.

The fact that the Dragon is said to have crowns upon its heads and none upon its horns would imply that the regal authority was vested in its heads. In a later picture describing the Papal beast, we note that the crowns are upon the horns and not upon the heads, as in the case of the Dragon just described. The lesson in this would be that during the days of Papal power, the horns, or powers, which supported the Papal dominion were kings in their own right, though their occupancy of those thrones was conditional upon their supporting and defend-

ing the heads of the Papal beast—the Popes. (Rev. 13., 1-3.)

Nothing in the foregoing *local or individual* view of these beasts with their heads and horns, conflicts with the *wider and more comprehensive* view of Gentile rule which, as already seen, is represented as a unit. From the latter point of view, there is only one beast recognised during the whole of the Gentile Times and each ascendant power, or dynasty, in turn, is seen to be but a head upon that beast. (Rev. 17., 10-11.)

THE BIRTH OF THE MAN CHILD.

It has been already noted that the woman of this vision represents (as does a woman generally in Scriptural symbology) the church in the flesh. Had all the called ones, who throughout the Age have been accepted to membership in Christ, been faithful to their Head, then the church militant and the church triumphant would have been one and the same, as regards membership. The Scriptures inform us, however, that of the many called unto membership in Christ, only a little flock of overcomers eventually would be counted worthy of the Kingdom. (Luke 12., 32.) It is this little flock of faithful followers of the Lamb, who, when joined with their Head beyond the veil, are under-

stood to be symbolised in this vision by the "man child." The term, man child, simply means a male child, or literally, a son, a male. While the church in the flesh is symbolised by a woman, the church in glory, when joined to her Head, is always pictured by a male—hence the man child of the vision. (Rev. 12., 5.)

An Alternative View examined. We are aware, of course, that another and very different view of this vision, and particularly of the interpretation of the man child, has been advanced by certain writers on the subject. In order, therefore, that the reader may be able to judge of the merits and demerits of both views, it has been thought best, briefly to set out the salient points of each.

The alternative view, to which reference has just been made, is understood to regard the man child as symbolising the climax of the great *falling away* from the true faith which took place in the early church and which resulted in the birth of the man of sin, or Antichrist. In harmony with this thought, the view further suggests that the fact that in verse 2 the woman is described as being with child, implies that the church, at this stage, is no longer the virgin church of earlier days, but has now become allied

to the state. In brief, this view suggests that the statement of verse 5 had its fulfilment when Antichrist was set up in power and, as the head of the Papal empire, exercised the dominion of the world as the fifth head, for a period of 1,260 years.

It will be obvious to the reader that this view differs entirely from that which has been presented in the earlier portion of this article and which is understood to be the correct interpretation of this vision. The reasons for differing from this latter view, with the main objections thereto, are given as follows:—

ANTICHRIST AND THE DRAGON NOT ENEMIES.

Objection No. 1.—The Dragon, ready to devour her child.

Our first reason for differing from the view suggested above is that it demands too great a stretch of the imagination, in order to interpret these symbols in the above manner. The interpretation which reveals to us the mind of the spirit is, on the contrary, always *easy of application* and requires no gymnastic turns of the imagination, in order to discern the harmony thereof.

According to the vision under consideration, the Dragon is seen to be the *enemy* of the woman, as well as of her child—"Ready to

devour her child as soon as it was born." (Rev. 12., 4.) If, however, we regard the man child as the Antichrist, or Papal power, as above suggested, why then should there be any enmity between the Dragon and the child? Was not the Antichrist Satan's greatest masterpiece of deception and opposition to the Divine Plan that the world has witnessed up to the present time? Have we not already seen, too, that the Dragon gave his power and his seat (throne) and great authority to the Papal beast and does not that indicate more the *action of a friend* and father, rather than that of a devouring enemy?

It would seem that the replies to the above questions should be obvious to all and that in the light of the only possible answers, it would be difficult and unreasonable to apply the man child symbol to Satan's masterpiece—the Antichrist.

Objection No. 2.—Caught up unto God and to His throne.

If, as suggested, the man child is to be regarded as the Antichrist, it would seem very inconsistent to find that he was caught up unto God and to His throne. God is not the author of evil, in any form, nor could it be understood that He is the supporter of any wicked, or evil system. So far as the Papal system is concerned, the Scriptures

consistently attribute its rise and activities to the workings of Satanic power, operating through the minds of fallen and deceived human beings. Instead, therefore, of being caught up (elevated as a ruler) unto God, it would seem more in accordance with the facts to say that he was caught up unto the Dragon—Satan himself—who is the God of the present world. (2. Cor. 4., 4.)

Furthermore, presuming the man child to be the Antichrist, as has been suggested, how could it be true that he was caught up unto God's throne? We have already seen that God's throne has not been in the world since the day when Adam, as God's representative, lost the dominion in Eden. We have seen, too, that Satan has since usurped earth's dominion and that it is Satan's Kingdom that has been ruling over the world, instead of God's Kingdom, as represented in Eden before sin entered.

It is in harmony with this thought that our Lord taught His disciples to pray -- "Thy Kingdom Come"—and, as already seen, it is the *fulfilling of this request*, by the intervention of our Lord for the setting up of God's Kingdom, that is the *cause of the war* in heaven and the world-wide trouble upon the earth to-day.

All the obvious inconsistencies above mentioned, however, may be avoided by interpreting the symbols in harmony with the Divine Plan and general teaching of the Scriptures. According to the Scriptures, it is the seed of the woman (true church) to whom this promise of overthrowing Satan's Kingdom was given, but before that promise can be fulfilled, the seed of promise (man child) must be caught up, in resurrection power, unto God and to His throne. (Rev. 20., 4-6.)

By taking the simple and obvious application of these symbols in harmony with the Divine Plan, we shall avoid the inconsistency of regarding the throne of Satan as that of God's Kingdom, for which the Saints of God still hope and pray.

Objection No. 3.—Who was to rule all nations.

The promise of rulership of the nations which, of course, implies Kingdom power and authority, was not given, or promised to the Antichrist, or to any other medium of the usurper's activities. This promise, in the first instance, was made to our Lord Himself, as the Head of the true seed—the man child. (Psa. 2., 9.) Later, in harmony with the Divine Plan, from which it is seen that the members of the Body share in the same glory and office as their Head, this promise was

also given to the overcomers of this Age.
(Rev. 2., 27.)

It has been suggested that this prophecy was fulfilled by the Papal power when, during the 1,260 years after its ascendancy, she deceived the world with her false claims of being God's Kingdom. We would point out, however, that there is a *great difference* between deceiving and oppressing the nations, through ignorance and false teaching, and that of ruling them with the object of breaking the oppressor and granting judgment and justice to the oppressed. "Who was to rule the nations" means that of Him (Christ—the man child) it was *prophesied* aforetime that He should be the ruler of the nations and, as already seen, this prophecy was made only concerning Christ—Head and members.

The rod of iron rule over the nations, implies strict justice for mankind and liberty from the yoke of the oppressor—Satan and his agencies. The record of Antichrist's rule is one of oppression, cruelty and deceit, as well as opposition to light and general progress. Further, so devastating has been the effect of that rule upon the general enlightenment and progress of humanity, that even the period of his rulership is designated by historians as the Dark Ages. It should be obvious, then, that Antichrist's reign did

not fulfil the prophecies of world rulership above mentioned and which are said to be spoken concerning the man child of the vision.

For the foregoing reasons, we think it will be quite evident to most Bible students that the man child of this vision could not reasonably be interpreted to mean the Antichrist, or Papal power, and as already remarked, to apply the symbol in this way would require a much greater stretch of imagination than the Scripture would seem to allow. On the other hand, by understanding the symbol to refer to the child of Promise — the anti-typical Isaac — there would seem to be no difficulty in harmonising all the details of this vision with the records of history and the Divine Plan. Moreover, as will be apparent later in this issue, the second view emphasises and clarifies various features of the present truth which are of paramount importance to the Lord's people to-day.

THE WOMAN'S WILDERNESS FLIGHT.

Elijah prefigures her experience. Although the record of the woman's flight into the wilderness is stated after the birth of the man child has been described, yet there is no immediate connection between these two parts of the vision.

Verse six, standing alone, is retrospective and describes the experiences of the true Church during the 1260 years of Papal ascendancy.

The wilderness, represents not only a condition of persecution and separation, on account of a faithful witness for the truth, but it also implies a means of Divine protection and safety for the persecuted. God preserved Elijah's life in the wilderness during the $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of the drought and famine in Israel, saving him from its effects, as well as from the wrath of the King. (1. Kings 17.) In his flight, however, the prophet had to endure much affliction and suffering as well as isolation from his friends and brethren.

Elijah's experience fittingly describes what, in the vision under consideration, is symbolised by the woman fleeing into the wilderness. It will be recalled that, at the close of the $3\frac{1}{2}$ years in the wilderness, Elijah returned to the land of Israel and presented himself to the King, who it would appear was powerless to do him injury. Subsequent to this, we read of him slaying the prophets of Baal and demonstrating, by fire from heaven, that Jehovah was the true God and Elijah his prophet. (1. Kings 18.)

The events which followed the return of Elijah from the wilderness and the end of

he reached Mount Horeb, God hid him in a cleft of a rock and caused to pass by a great and strong wind, an earthquake and a fire, followed by a still small voice. (1 Kings 19., 11.) These manifestations are understood to represent certain aspects of the final trouble which will overthrow the last vestige of Gentile rule and introduce the day of deliverance and blessing for the human family.

It is important here to note that, in the vision under consideration, the woman, who as already seen represents the Church of this age and of whom Elijah is generally regarded as a figure, is also said to go into the wilderness a *second* time. (Rev. 12., 14.) In the case of Elijah, he fled in *both instances* from the wrath of Jezebel. Likewise, as regards the woman, she is spoken of as fleeing, in both cases, *from the persecution* of the Dragon. As regards the Church of this age, whose experiences in this respect are illustrated by Elijah and the woman of this vision, it is understood that, in both cases, her wilderness condition results from persecution at the hand of the antitypical Jezebel—the Papal power. The Church's first flight into the wilderness took place during the 1260 years of Papal ascendancy, otherwise known as the fifth head. (Rev. 12., 6.) Her second flight into the wilderness is understood to

be yet *future* and corresponds with the time when the Papal beast shall ascend from the bottomless pit and as the eighth head of Gentile rule, exercise world dominion. (Rev. 17., 8.)

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 visions of the Revelator which seem to indicate that *after the great slaughter* of false doctrines and creeds which took place between Luther's day and the harvest time, there will yet be unlooked for developments on the part of the Papal power, the result of which will be a *second* wilderness experience for the faithful Elijah. (Rev. 12., 14.)

The further fact that Elijah, during his second flight from Jezebel, was given a manifestation, in figure, of the approaching great day of trouble, would appear to indicate that the Church's second wilderness experience will be 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 schools of the prophets, and may not this indicate that, as the time draws near for the last members to pass beyond, they, like

Elijah, will be omissions of indications as regards the end of the way, as well as the means of their removal from these earthly scenes. (2 Kings 2, 1-11.)

TWO SEEMING DIFFICULTIES EXPLAINED.

In the vision under consideration, as set forth in Revelation 12, the second flight of the woman is referred to in verse 14 and reads as follows—"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."

Two seeming difficulties might be urged against the view that this verse refers to a second flight into the wilderness and, indeed, most Bible students regard the language of this verse as merely restating, in different words, the experience already described in verse 6. These difficulties, it is suggested, are more apparent than real and arise from a misapprehension of the true meaning of this vision.

OBJECTION NUMBER ONE.

The first objection which might be made against the above view is that, what has just been described as a second flight into the

wilderness, is apparently said to last for a period of 1260 years. It may be urged that it is not at all likely that there will be another period of 1260 years' persecution, at the hands of the Papal church, and that when the Papal beast does ascend from the bottomless pit, it is not likely to rule for more than a comparatively brief period of time. In view of this, it might be further urged that verse 14 is merely a restatement of what has been already described in verse 6 of this chapter.

The Answer — The principal ground on which this objection might be sustained is in regard to the *tense of the verb* here used in describing the purpose of the wilderness flight. We read that the woman flew into her place where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time. (Rev. 12., 14.)

Owing to the form of the Greek verb "trephetai" which is here rendered "by our English present tense "is nourished", the verse has been understood by many to teach that the time and times and half a time (1260 years) during which the woman is nourished in the wilderness are *subsequent* to and related to the flight referred to in the verse. If, however, this verb can be understood to express something of the thought of our past tense, 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 the verse in this way, it will be noted that no length of time is specified regarding *the duration of the second flight*, but merely that it is to the *same place* where she was previously nourished for a period of 1,260 years from the face of the Serpent. Otherwise stated, the period of time here specified has no relationship to the flight into the wilderness spoken of in this verse, but to the previous flight mentioned in verse 6 of the chapter.

There are good reasons for understanding the verse in this way. With respect to the tense of the verb it has been stated by one Greek scholar that although, in this connection, the form of the verb "trephetai" is present tense, yet, as in most western languages, it can be a 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*.*

* A somewhat similar use of the English present tense may be seen in 1. John 2., 2. The present tense as here used, not only in referring to an action which took place in the past, but which

Moreover, for the reasons following, it may be seen that this sense of the verse harmonises best not only with the vision of this chapter as a whole, but also with the language of the verse itself.

1. Into her place. The fact that the wilderness flight of the woman, described in this verse, is said to be "into **her** place", would seem plainly to imply that this was *not her first* wilderness experience; and that it does not refer to the same experience as mentioned in verse 6. The expression "her place" clearly indicates a certain degree of contact and familiarity with it, on the part of the woman, and this, we suggest took place when, for a period of 1,260 years, under the persecution of the fifth head, she was, like Elijah, providentially nourished there.

2. Where she is nourished. There is no

will also take place in the future—"He is the propitiation for our sins (His body members—Himself) and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world"—the people.

The Apostle apparently had in mind Israel's priest who, on the day of Atonement, sprinkled the blood upon the propitiatory in the Most Holy, first for His own sins and then for those of the people.

The greater priest, Christ, propitiated for Himself (His members) when, after His resurrection, He ascended into heaven. (Heb. 9., 24.) He will make propitiation for the people after all the members have passed beyond the veil. Literally, then, He *has* propitiated for our sins in the past and He *will* propitiate for the people in the future; nevertheless, both actions are referred to under the present tense.

record of any drought occurring in Israel to cause Elijah's *second* flight into the wilderness, nor is there any suggestion that he was in danger of losing his life through lack of food and water. On the previous occasion, he was miraculously provided for, both beside the brook Cherith and at Zarephath. (1. Kings, 17.) On the occasion of his second flight, however, we read that an angel miraculously provided him with two meals in the desert, on the strength of which he went for a period of forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the mount of God. (1. Kings 19., 4-8.)

The records just mentioned would seem to point to the fact that the Church's first wilderness experience, from 539 A.D. to 1799 A.D., was during a time of *severe drought and famine* for spiritual food and water, during which God had to nourish her miraculously, in order to save her life. When, however, she again flies into "her place" in the wilderness, where she *was* nourished by Divine providence, the two meals of bread and water, provided by the angelic messenger, will give sufficient strength for the journey to Mount Horeb — the mount of God. (1. Kings, 19.)

3. That she might fly into the wilderness. Elijah's first flight into the wilderness was

hidden and secret, necessitating care, in case of discovery. Likewise, the woman, who is a figure of the Church, is said to have fled into the wilderness from the face of the serpent and was protected from all efforts to destroy her, during the 1260 years of Papal ascendancy.

Regarding the woman's second wilderness experience, we read that there were given unto her two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly into *her* place. The second flight of the woman, like that of Elijah, would seem to be sudden and not premeditated, requiring prompt action. In harmony with this, the teaching of Scripture seems to be that Jezebel's return to power and influence, as seen in the "beast that shall be", when it ascends from the bottomless pit, will be sudden and generally unexpected. (Rev. 17., 7-8.)

An eagle appears to be symbolic of God's loving care and providences. "I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself" is descriptive of God's providential dealings with His typical people. (Exodus 19., 4.) One of the chief attributes of God is symbolised by "a flying eagle", and is understood to represent the mercy and love of God, as manifested in His active care and providences around His people. (Rev. 4., 7.)

The "two wings" by which the woman is enabled to fly *above* the range of human circumstances, might fittingly represent the two sublime prophecies of Daniel and Revelation which will undoubtedly play an important part in sustaining the faith and hope of the Lord's people, when the antitypical Jezebel again returns to power. These prophecies, even now, have become so wonderfully clear that the Lord's people have been enabled through them to know, in some measure, "the things to come" and thus to be *elevated in vision*, by their extending wings, whereby they can soar above earthly fears and human strife.

OBJECTION NUMBER TWO.

The second objection to the view that Rev. 12., 14, refers to a second wilderness experience, is that it is said to take place *after* the man child has been born. If, as has been suggested, the man child refers to the overcomers of the church joined with their Head, would it not then imply that this experience takes place *after* the church is glorified and has passed beyond the veil—a matter which all must agree would be impossible.

The Answer. It is understood, from the point of view of the vision and of the

prophetic Scriptures generally, to some of which reference will be made later, that the birth of the man child is spoken of as having taken place when the sleeping saints were raised at the commencement of the harvest time. (1. Thess. 4., 16.)

The Scriptures lead us to understand that the harvest work, or gathering of the saints, would not begin until the *full number* to complete the body members of Christ had been called. (Matt. 13., 47-49.) The majority of these were doubtless included in the "dead in Christ" who were raised at the beginning of the harvest time and who have since been *associated with their Lord* as that great City, the holy Jerusalem, which John saw descending out of heaven from God. (Rev. 21., 10.)

Although those who are alive and remain, after the sleeping saints have been raised, have still to be tested before passing beyond the veil, yet from the point of view of *the required number*, the Zion class is complete. So long, however, as there are any members in the flesh, there will always remain the possibility of one losing his crown and his place being taken by some one else. (Rev. 3., 11.)

In Rev. 14., 1-5, we are given a symbolic picture of the Lamb standing on the mount Zion and with Him an hundred and forty

and four thousand. It may be seen that some of these are still this side the veil from the fact that John hears the voice of harpers harping with their harps and later is instructed to write—"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth". (Rev. 14., 13.)

The prophet Isaiah was given a vision of the very circumstance, to which we now refer, in connection with the birth of the man child. It reads — "Before she (the woman—Zion) travailed she brought forth, *before her pain came* she was delivered of a man child." (Isa. 66., 7.) The pains of trouble come upon Zion during the harvest time, but from the point of view of the vision under consideration, the man child is said to be born *at the beginning* of the harvest period.

The Psalmist, after describing prophetically and in vivid language, the efforts of Gentile rulers to maintain their control of world dominion after Gentile Times have expired, declares—"yet (whilst all this effort is proceeding) have I set my King (Christ—Head and glorified members—the man child) upon my holy hill of Zion". (Psalm 2., 1-6.)

It is thus seen that so-called objections to the view that verse 14 of this chapter refers to a second flight of the woman into the

wilderness are *not real* objections at all and cannot be sustained upon any reasonable, or Scriptural basis. When, later in the issue, the Dragon's persecution of the woman, subsequent to the birth of the man child, is dealt with, it is suggested that this point will be convincingly clear and harmonious.

THERE WAS WAR IN HEAVEN.

It has been already suggested that the "heaven" involved in the war between Michael and the Dragon is not located in some far off part of the Universe, but relates to the rulership and spiritual control of the affairs of this world. The apex of this spiritual dominion is understood to be Satan's throne from which, through innumerable fallen angels, scripturally termed devils, or demons, he wields a mighty influence and control over the fallen and degraded human race. On account of mankind's ignorance of the Creator's character and of His purpose in regard to their future, Satan has succeeded in usurping the rulership of the world and God, in His great wisdom, has seen fit to permit the reign of evil for a set time.

The strength of Satan's Kingdom depends upon the extent to which he is able, through

deception and misrepresentation, to keep the human family in ignorance of the Divine Plan and character. With the object of successfully maintaining his influence over the world, Satan has succeeded in capturing and organising, for his own purposes, practically every effort of mankind, as they have attempted, either to better their conditions, or to break the chains of darkness which envelop the human mind. To such an extent has he been successful, in this direction, that the Apostle John, in his day, could say "the whole world lieth in wickedness"—in Satan's control. (1. John 5., 19.)

It is thus seen that Satan's Kingdom has an earthly, as well as a heavenly phase. The heavenly phase is unseen and unrecognised, so far as the human family are concerned. Its effects, however, are everywhere manifest to those who have eyes to see. The earthly phase of Satan's Kingdom is well illustrated in the metallic image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as well as in Daniel's dream and the visions of the Revelator. These beastly kingdoms reveal the workings of Satanic power, amongst the human family, during the period of Gentile Times.

Like the Israelites in Egypt, it is quite beyond the power of the human family to free themselves from the bondage and control

of Satan's Kingdom. God, however, has not closed His ear to the cry of their affliction and, in His great mercy and loving kindness, has raised up, on their behalf, a strong Deliverer — Christ, Head and body, — symbolised by the man child of the vision under consideration. (Rev. 12., 5.) This One, like unto Moses, will overthrow the power of the antitypical Pharoah (Satan) and will liberate the human family from his grasp. We learn from the Scriptures, however, that like Pharoah in the type, Satan will endeavour to maintain his control of mankind and, as a consequence, the counterpart of the plagues upon Egypt will be necessary, in order to displace the usurper. (Rev. 18., 4-5.)

The prophet Micah had a vision of the overthrow of Satan's power by Christ, when he declared — "And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion". (Micah 4., 8.) The dominion of earth was given at first to Adam, as the head of the race, in Eden. (Gen. 1., 26-28.) Through the fall, the dominion was lost and, later, usurped by Satan. The Divine purpose, however, is that Christ, the stronger than he, shall seize the dominion from the Adversary and by the exercise of an iron rule of justice, tempered with mercy, wield

the sceptre of earthly dominion, on man's behalf, for 1,000 years. At the end of His mediatorial reign, the dominion of earth will be handed back to the human family, the willing and obedient of whom will thenceforth inherit the kingdom prepared for them "from the foundation of the world". (Matt. 25., 34.)

The Cause of the War. From the foregoing, it will be seen that the war in heaven results from the intervention of the kingdom of Christ, which, in harmony with the Divine Plan, was due to begin the taking over of the dominion of this world at the close of Gentile Times, A.D. 1914. Had the usurper, Satan, with his hosts of wicked spirits as well as human agencies, been willing to yield up their rulership of the world and to submit to the new kingdom, there would consequently have been no war, or conflict in heavenly places, and the resultant trouble amongst the nations of the world would have been, to some extent at least, avoided.

The Scriptures make it clear, however, that Satan, the strong man of the parable, like Pharaoh in the type, will not yield up control over his enslaved subjects, until compelled to do so by the stronger than he.

(Matt. 12., 29.) This will necessitate an exhibition of Divine power and wrath which, in the Scriptures, is symbolically termed the seven last plagues. (Rev. 15., 1.)

MICHAEL DEFEATS THE DRAGON.

The aggressor in the war above described is Christ, not only the Head, but also the members of His body, who already are with Him beyond the veil. (Rev. 17., 14.) The Revelator elsewhere describes this heavenly warfare and the victorious conqueror, under the symbol of one sitting upon a white horse, judging and making war. (Rev. 19., 11-21.) It is understood that the one in this vision, seen sitting upon a white horse and smiting the nations, is the same one as symbolised by the man child in Revelation, Chapter 12, namely, Christ the Head and those members of His body who are already with Him beyond the veil.

It is further understood that this symbolic picture, in which heaven is seen to be opened, revealing the white horse and its rider, covers the entire period of the harvest time. Moreover, it should also be understood that during that period of the harvest, prior to the end of Gentile Times in A.D. 1914, at which time the war in heaven began, the

important work of gathering the called and chosen and faithful saints, both dead and living, has been in progress. So far, however, as the living members of Christ are concerned, the gathering work is still incomplete and the harvesting, or gathering of these, will continue until the last member has passed within the veil. When the last member has been gathered, the door of admittance into the heavenly Kingdom will be for ever closed and the harvest work of this Age will be finished. (Matt. 25., 10.)

The armies in heaven. It would be a poor conception of the glory associated with our Lord's second advent to picture Him in our minds as a somewhat lonely pioneer leaving the Courts of heaven in order to claim His rightful sovereignty of this world. Many of the brethren to-day, seem to regard the question of our Lord's return and presence as a matter of minor importance to them and not to be viewed as having any important bearing upon the issues of their faith. Such an attitude, however, could not be regarded, from the Scriptural point of view, as an expression of faith in the doctrine at all. Faith, without works arising from a clear conviction in the mind of the believer, is dead and leads nowhere. (Jas. 2., 20.)

The Scriptures, however, represent the second advent of our Lord not only as a blessed and inspiring hope which has given strength and courage to the saints of God all down the age, but in so far as the human family are concerned, as the *most momentous and outstanding event* in the unfolding of the Divine Plan. It is true, of course, that this glory is as yet veiled to the world and, indeed, also to those of His followers who, with lip service, merely pay tribute to the doctrine. (Titus 3., 13; Rev. 1., 7.)

The prophet Daniel, describing in vision the inauguration and glory of Christ's Kingdom, says—"I beheld till the thrones were cast down and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow and the hair of his head like pure wool; His throne was like the fiery flame and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him; thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; the judgment was set and the books were opened". (Dan. 7., 9-10.)

The Revelator, after describing the exalted warrior (Christ, Head and members, in glory) under the striking symbol of one sitting upon a white horse and making war, adds this testimony—"And the armies in heaven

followed Him upon white horses clothed in fine linen, white and clean . . . and He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords". (Rev. 19., 11-16.)

THE DRAGON DISPLACED.

The result of the war in heaven is briefly described in the few words—"The Dragon fought and his angels and prevailed not, neither was their place (of control) found any more in heaven." (Rev. 12., 7-8.)

Just what powers belong to the various orders of spirit creations, or how such powers are exercised, either in defence or aggression, are matters which are not revealed to human beings and such information, therefore, must be regarded as unnecessary, in our present circumstances. It is sufficient for us to know that in whatever way the issue is decided, it means the casting down of the great Dragon from his throne of world dominion, resulting in the gradual lessening of the scope of his opportunities to deceive and eventually in his complete binding.

Daniel describes the breaking up and the removal of the *earthly phase* of Satan's kingdom, under the figure of a great image being smitten by a stone and broken to pieces, so

that the remains are eventually carried away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. (Dan. 2., 34-35.)

Michael and His Angels. It has been suggested by certain expositors of the Revelation that the war in heaven should be understood, not as having reference to the end of the Gospel Age, but to the conflict between the declining power of Pagan Rome and that of the rising Papal Kingdom which culminated in the Antichrist. They further suggest that the Imperial power of Rome is to be understood as the Dragon, while Michael, according to the same view, 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 to us 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 indicates the mind of the spirit should be *easy of application*, requiring no such sleight of hand methods as those just mentioned. Furthermore, admitting that Michael is one of our Lord's Scriptural names, why should it be understood that He makes war with the Dragon, in order to claim the dominion of the earth *prior to* the end of Gentile Times? We have already seen that God *has not attempted* to overthrow Satan's Kingdom, nor to set up His own kingdom upon the earth, until the time appointed in the Divine Plan. In harmony with this, Daniel informs us that the standing up of Michael, in order to deliver mankind from the bondage of Satan's Kingdom, takes place *at the end* of the age and will be followed by a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time. (Dan. 12., 1.) Instead, then, of the Dragon power of Imperial Rome being displaced by Michael's, that is Christ's Kingdom, at the time of Constantine, as the view referred to foregoing demands, we can only regard the ascendancy of the Papal power over its predecessor as a war *between two of the heads of Gentile rule.*

THE ACCUSER CAST DOWN.

As a result of the war in heaven, we read that the great Dragon was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with Him.

We may not fully understand at present, to what extent and in what way the world's troubles are linked up with the powers of evil, but it is clear from the language of the Revelator, used in the context, that these two things are closely related. (Rev. 12., 12.)

Now is come Salvation. It would appear, from certain Scriptures, that the coming into control of the new kingdom is gradual, and that, all the while, Satan's sphere of active operations in the heavenlies becomes less and less, whereas, at the same time, his wrath towards mankind knows no bounds, in a final effort to oppose God's Kingdom by maintaining his control of the human family. Moreover, it would appear from the Scriptures that the binding of Satan's power and influence takes place, first in the heavenly places and later, upon the earth. (Rev. 21., 10.)

It would seem difficult to apply the descriptive language of verses 9-11 to any period prior to the end of Gentile Times. It is apparent that the view which applies the contents of these verses to the great falling away

from the faith about the time that Constantine came to the throne, can have no reasonable support from the Scriptures, or from the Divine Plan. How could it be said that the rising to power of a reprobate church system was the coming of "salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ"? No doubt the wily Adversary is very pleased if he can so succeed in confusing our minds to the extent that we regard darkness as light and the operations of Satan's power as the *advent of Christ's Kingdom* upon the earth.

The power of His Christ. Although our Lord was given "all power in heaven and in earth" at the time of His resurrection, yet in accordance with the Divine Plan, this power *was not used* by Him throughout the Age for the purpose of overthrowing Satan's Kingdom or of establishing God's Kingdom, upon the earth. (Matt. 28., 18.) The Revelator informs us that it is not until after the seventh trumpet sounds that He takes to Himself this great power, in the sense of exercising it for the purpose of setting up His Millennial Kingdom. (Rev. 11., 15-17.)

This is in harmony also with what has just been seen in the vision under consideration. The coming, or making manifest the

“power of His Christ,” could not take place before the end of Gentile Times, and any view which would *locate this event* at an earlier period of the age must be regarded as out of harmony with the general teaching of the Scriptures.

To apply this Scripture to the claims of the reprobate church, allied with the temporal powers, in the early part of the Age seems not only without Scriptural warrant, but wholly contrary to the facts of history. Surely all must agree that the rise of Papal power in the church was more a coming and an exhibition of the power of the great Adversary, rather than that of the Church of God.

SATAN'S LAST STAND.

The sending of Moses to Pharoah with the intimation that God required His people, Israel, to go free, in order that they might worship Him in the freedom of the wilderness, seems a very fitting picture of what was due to transpire at the close of Gentile Times, in so far as the human family are concerned. (Acts 3., 20-21.) The time *has now come* to liberate the world from the dominion and servitude of Satan, but like Pharoah in the type, Satan will not let the

people go, until he is compelled by the pouring out of the antitypical plagues of the wrath of God. (Rev. 15., 1.)

Instead of the presence of the deliverer easing the burden and toil of the Israelitish slaves in Egypt, it had, for the time being, the very opposite effect. Whereas previously, they were provided with straw for the making of bricks, they were then commanded, not only to continue to make their full complement of bricks, but to gather the straw themselves as well. (Exodus 5.) The object in this, presumably, was to allow them less time to dwell upon their circumstances and to agitate regarding the matter of their deliverance. Moreover, it was at the same time a means of the more firmly establishing Pharaoh's authority and control over them. Indeed, so irksome did the conditions of the Israelites become, that they began to regard the efforts of Moses, on their behalf, as a *disservice*, rather than as a means of blessing. (Exodus 5., 21.)

The experiences of the Israelites, in this respect, are understood to have their counterpart in the very trying and peculiar circumstances which are settling down upon the human family to-day, and which will doubtless be still more intense, in the immediate future. (Rev. 12., 12.)

The greater than Moses has already returned, with the object of effecting the deliverance of the human family from the power of Satan, but instead of bringing *immediate relief* to the world it has, for the time being, resulted in making their conditions like those of the Israelites, more *intensely irksome*. As indicated by the Revelator, while the sounding of the seventh Trumpet will eventually usher in the day of full liberty and blessing for all mankind, yet the nearer the day of deliverance approaches, the more *complex and difficult* becomes the lot of the human family. Even to-day, men are beginning to question the advantages to mankind of the period of general enlightenment and knowledge, due to the fact that the greater than Moses has already commenced to take control. Many to-day could wish themselves back in the so-called "good old days" of ignorance and comparative irresponsibility such as their fore-fathers enjoyed, and would be glad to escape the responsibilities and difficulties experienced by those who are living upon earth to-day.

Like Pharoah in Egypt, the Devil is about to make a supreme effort, in a *final attempt* to retain his control of the human family. "The Devil is come down unto you" forcefully expresses the position of Satan's King-

dom to-day. It indicates, not only that his position of *control in the spiritual realms* is gone, but that his special efforts will *henceforth* be devoted to organising more thoroughly his control of the Kingdoms of this world. In harmony with this thought, we see, at present, a world-wide effort to unite the nations under one central authority and, at the same time, a growing disposition to sweep aside the hitherto recognised rights of the individual subject, and to vest these in powerful dictators, the counterpart of Pharaoh's taskmasters. (Exodus 5., 13.)

Satan's last stand against the increasing power and control of God's Kingdom and his final effort to organise and retain authority over the human family, through the Kingdoms of this world, seem to be indicated in Rev. 17., 12-14. The ten horns, seen in this picture, seem to describe a combination of European, or International dictators (Kings who have secured no kingdom), who for a time, at least, will give their support to the restored papacy, or eighth head. (Rev. 17., 17.) The final issue of this war is summed up in a few words by the Revelator—"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 which are with Him are called and chosen and faithful". (Rev. 17., 14.)

WATER AS A FLOOD.

It will be noted that the time when the serpent is said to cast out of his mouth water as a flood, in an attempt to destroy the woman, is during her second wilderness experience and *after* she had brought forth the man child. (Rev. 12., 15.) It is understood that this experience is *still in the future* and relates to the time when, under the persecutions of the eighth head, the woman will again flee into the wilderness condition.

As already noted, although from a certain point of view the man child (Christ—Head and body) is said to have been born at the time when the sleeping saints were raised, at the beginning of the harvest time, yet there remains a remnant of the members of Christ still in the flesh. With this remnant are also associated, in some measure, a larger class who are generally described as the “foolish virgins”, or the great company class. (Matt. 25., 8.)

The earth helped the woman. Water, in the literal sense, may prove either a blessing, or a calamity.

Water, in the form of refreshing rain falling upon the parched ground, symbolises the refreshment and blessing through the truth as it is received into a good and honest

heart. A flood of waters, on the other hand, indicates serious trouble and calamity. Had the serpent's scheme succeeded in its object, the result would have been the carrying away and destruction of the woman by the flood. This symbol is frequently used in the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms of David, and in each case seems to carry with it the thought of distress and trouble.

In the vision under consideration, the flood of waters is said to come out of the serpent's mouth. This would indicate an attempt, on the part of the Adversary, to stir up the passions of the masses against the Lord's people, with a view to their destruction and ruin, but his object is apparently frustrated. (Rev. 12., 15-16.)

We should not be surprised were it later to become apparent that the expression of David in Psalm 124, refers to this very experience of the Lord's people, as is symbolized in this vision. The Psalm is prophetic and is understood to relate to the experiences of the Lord's people, during the time of the Lord's presence, at the end of the Age. The language of the Psalmist which is very graphic and seems to relate to a miraculous deliverance of the church, reads as follows:—

“It if had not been the Lord who was on our side *now* may Israel say; if it had

not been the Lord who was on our side when *men rose up against* us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: Then the *waters had overwhelmed* us, the stream had gone over our soul. Blessed be the Lord who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth." (Psalm 124.)

At present, it may not be apparent in what way the serpent will succeed in stirring up a flood of passion against the Lord's people and encircling them with a snare, nor is it necessary now to dwell upon the matter. When the time comes, the course which the Lord's followers should take will be made clear and we know that the Lord is mightier than any flood and able, as the Psalmist again declares, to draw us "out of many waters". (Psalm 18., 16.)

It is the privilege of the watchers amongst the Lord's people to-day, like the Revelator in the vision, to ascend in spirit into the high mountain of God's Kingdom and, in the light of the prophetic word, to view the Holy City as it now descends from God out of heaven, for the purpose of delivering the human family from the bondage of the usurper. It is,

moreover, their privilege to *understand the meaning* of the perplexities and troubles which earth's rulers are at present experiencing and to know that these are the *visible effects* amongst men of the "war in heaven" which very soon will completely overthrow Satan's power in the heavens and eventually grind to powder the last phase of his kingdom operating amongst men, as seen in the metallic image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. (Dan. 2., 34-35.)

Living as we are, then, in the very day when the heavens of Satan's spiritual control are passing away and when the elements of his earthly kingdom are melting with fervent heat, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, watching and waiting in patience till the hour of our change takes place. (2. Pet. 3., 11-12.)

Lift up, lift up thy voice with singing,
O earth with strength lift up thy voice,
God's Kingdom to the earth is coming,
The King is at thy gates—rejoice.

And while the earth with strife is riven
And envious factions truth do hide,
Lo! he the Lord of earth and heaven
Stands at the door and claims his bride.

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