

Notes on the Book of  
**REVELATION**

by

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## Table of Contents

	Page
Preface .....	7
Chap. 1. 1. Introduction. ....	9
2. The Son of Man in the midst of the Church. ....	15
Chap. 2, 3. The history of the Church from Pentecost to Christ's second coming .....	24 and 43
Chap. 4. 1. The rapture pictured in John's call to come up hither. ....	69
2. Christ worshipped as the Creator. ....	75
Chap. 5. 1. The Lord takes the seven-sealed book. ....	78
2. Christ worshipped as the Redeemer. ....	83
Chap. 6. 1. The opening of the seven seals. ....	87
2. The horrors at the beginning of the tribulation. ....	91
Chap. 7. 1. Israel, God's earthly people of the future sealed for protection during the coming tribulation. ....	96
2. A preview of the Gentile nations saved and pre- served during the great tribulation. ....	99
Chap. 8. 1. Silence in heaven before the storm breaks loose on earth. ....	101
2. The first four trumpets are sounded. ....	105
Chap. 9. 1. The fifth and sixth trumpets blown. ....	107
2. The invasion of the land by the "yellow peril." ....	115
Chap. 10. 1. Christ, the mighty Lion, roars. ....	118
2. The mystery of God about to be finished. ....	121
Chap. 11. 1. The witness borne by the faithful remnant of Is- rael during the tribulation. ....	123
2. The Kingdom of Christ has come. ....	129

	Page
Chap. 12. 1. Christ born and exalted to the throne in heaven. ....	133
2. Satan cast down to earth and Israel preserved during the great tribulation. ....	137
Chap. 13. 1. The two beasts. The first: the coming Superman. ....	147
2. The second Beast: The Antichrist. ....	155
Chap. 14. 1. A complete review of these great closing events. ....	160
Chap. 15. 1. A preview of the Jewish martyrs of the tribulation. ....	176
2. The seven angels with the seven vials full of the wrath of God. ....	181
Chap. 16. 1. The seven angels pour out their vials of wrath. ....	183
Chap. 17. 1. The mother of harlots—the corrupt church. ....	188
2. Her destruction by the Beast and his allies. ....	195
Chap. 18. 1. The destruction of the false church as a great political, religious and commercial power. ....	198
Chap. 19. 1. The marriage in heaven of Christ and His Bride. ....	203
2. Christ comes forth to take vengeance, with His Bride by His side. ....	205
Chap. 20. 1. The millennial reign of Christ. ....	208
2. The final judgment of sinners at the great white throne. ....	211
Chap. 21. 1. The Eternal State. ....	214
2. A description of the Church as a Bride of Christ under the figure of a “City.” ....	219
Chap. 22. 1. Closing appeal and warning. ....	222
2. Three times “I come quickly.” “Amen, even so Come, Lord Jesus.” ....	223



## PREFACE

**T**HE thoughts presented herewith appeared serially for over three years in "*Light and Liberty*" magazine, published at Kansas City, Kansas, by Walterick Publishers. They are now issued in book form at the suggestion of many who enjoyed and benefited from them through those years. Well aware how many books have been written on this subject, we can only pray that the Lord will use this also, and by it stir the hearts and challenge the faith and zeal of His saints.

We have read other views on the book of Revelation, from postmillennialism to no-millennialism and others in between. Still we feel perfectly convinced in our own soul that the interpretation that comes nearest to the full truth is that which sees in this marvelous book the unfolding of events (after the first three chapters) still in the future, and God's judgments during Daniel's seventieth week; that is, during the tribulation that will sweep this world after the Lord has caught His Church home to Himself. I am sure, although other applications can be made, that this view is the true interpretation.

However, I do trust the book is not going forth to raise controversial issues. It was written with the sole purpose of stirring Christians to be awake and alert; redeeming the time that remains to us before the Lord comes to take us home.

There is no claim whatever to originality; no desire to say something no one else ever said before; no sensational prognostications. The great longing of our soul is that the Lord's people might realize what tremendous days we live in, and what fearful judgments are coming on the earth, that we might seek to be in earnest in telling men the gospel of His grace and in warning them of the judgments to come. May the Lord be pleased to bless to this end, for the glory of Him Who is the Theme of this great book, as He is of all the Scriptures.



# Notes On The Book Of Revelation

## INTRODUCTION

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

*John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. Chap. 1:1-7.*

Throughout the Revelation of "things" in this book, there runs the grand theme of the unveiling of Jesus Christ. This is not the unveiling of a statue, which generally represents a dead person, but rather the unveiling of the Christ, the Son of the living God; the unveiling of Him Who was dead but is alive forevermore (Chap. 1:18). While on earth, in the hour of His deep humiliation, He veiled His glory in flesh, in lowly humanity (Heb. 10:20);

but in this closing book of the Bible He is unveiled, and is seen in all the glory of His Deity, as He takes the reigns of government into His hands. In studying this book, let this thought be ever present with us, that the theme of it is the once crucified, but now glorified Lamb of God. Let us not lose sight of Him when looking at the things which "must shortly come to pass" (Chap. 1:1).

He sent and signified these revelations by His angel unto His servant John. These tremendous truths are conveyed by signs or symbols, preparing us for the fact that the book of Revelation presents these mighty events in parabolic form; so that most of what is revealed here is not to be conceived as being literal, but rather figurative. This implies, of course, that these great truths are not easily understood, but require earnest, consistent study and research in the Word of God as a whole. Hence, encouragement is given to him who reads, hears, and keeps these things (Chap. 1:3).

These things were to be shown to God's servants (Chap. 1:1), which must surely include all God's people anywhere and anytime. Therefore, when John delivers this message to the seven churches which are in Asia (Chap. 1:4), it cannot be limited to the seven churches in Ephesus, etc.; existing at that time, since we have just been told that these things are written for all God's saints. Hence these seven churches, as has been understood by students of Scripture for centuries, are representative of the One Church of God throughout the Christian era. They give a panoramic view of Christendom between the first and second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we shall see when considering chapters two and three.

The frequent appearance of the numeral three in these introductory verses is interesting and appealing. We might, indeed, expect this, since this concluding volume of the Bible presents God the Father's unveiling of the

glories of His Son, by the inspiration and ministration of the Spirit.

There is a great triplet in verse five: "Jesus Christ, (1) the faithful witness, (2) the first begotten of the dead, (3) the prince of the Kings of the earth". This presents our Lord: (1) in His life on earth as Prophet, (2) in His resurrection and consequent session at God's right hand as our Priest, (3) and in His future reign as King; thus giving us: (1) the past, (2) the present, and (3) the future.

Then follows another triplet: "unto Him that (1) loved us, and (2) washed (loosed) us from our sins in His own blood, and (3) hath made us kings and priests (a kingdom of priests) unto God"; presenting: (1) Christ's love to us in the past (for His love to us is eternal), (2) His redemption of us through His blood which is our present happy experience, and then (3) our future reign with Him (though already today we enjoy the great privilege of priesthood).

Another triplet is seen in verse seven: (1) "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, (2) and they also which pierced Him, (3) and all kindreds of the earth (better yet: all the tribes of the land, for the reference is to Israel) shall wail (mourn) because of Him." Every eye seeing Him has reference to the whole world seeing Jesus when He comes in power and glory; they which pierced Him has special reference to those represented at the Cross who crucified Him. John 19:37 is not the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zech. 12:10, for that prophecy tells how Israel will mourn and repent when they look upon Him Whom they pierced, and they certainly did no such thing when Christ hung on the Cross. When they see Jesus at His coming and shall look on Him Whom they pierced, then they shall mourn over their guilt, which is the tenor of the third statement in

verse seven of our text. Passages like Zech. 12:10; Isa. 60:20; and Isa. 61:2 refer to that day, when their mourning shall end their mourning; when in repentance they shall accept Him as their Lord Whom once they despised and crucified.

*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. Chap. 1:8.*

The words "beginning and the ending" are left out here in the Revised Version. They are found in chaps. 21:6 and 22:13. Four times these amazing words are spoken; four times the tremendous claim is made by the Lord Jesus that He is the "Alpha and Omega". This is but another way of saying that He is the "Word", the Revealer of all God's thoughts. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and thus includes all the letters in between. Thoughts infinite in number, variety, beauty, power, and grace can be expressed in words that are composed of those few letters of the alphabet. Thus in Him are found, and by Him are made known all the purposes of God; all the infinite resources of grace and glory. He is the first to speak, for He is the Alpha. After Him no one has anything further to say, for He is the last letter—the Omega. What fathomless depths are here! I use words to express my thoughts. He is the Word, and is greater than all words ever spoken; all true thoughts ever conveyed. He is the Revealer of everything; He is the Revealed of God Himself, for by seeing and hearing Him we know the Father.

He is the Ah—Alpha; He is the Oh—Omega. Both these sounds are used by us as exclamations of surprise and wonder. Surely, as we hear Him speak through His life, through His death, through His victorious triumphs we exclaim with wonder: "Oh! Ah! What a wonderful Savior Jesus is"!

*I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Chap. 1:9.*

The author, banished to the rugged island of Patmos for his testimony to Christ, and suffering severely for his faithfulness to his precious Lord, is given a series of the most marvelous visions ever unfolded before human eyes. What a great comfort and thrill to the lonely suffering saint this great mercy must have brought. John must have been lifted into ecstasy as he beheld again the Lord he loved so well on earth; seeing Him not in His humiliation and the shame man heaped upon Him, but magnified and glorified. He appeared before his eyes as the One Who is soon to come to judge the world and to reign in power. May we too see our Lord so, dear fellow believer, as we with raptured hearts behold by faith the glorious unfoldings of Christ, which John saw by sight.

John tells us he is in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. The Kingdom is truly His; His right is to reign. But now, while He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, He is waiting for that day when His enemies shall be made His footstool. II Thess. 3:5 employs the same expression: "the patience of Christ". What infinite patience he has shown, as for 1900 years since His death on the Cross He has borne with the rebellion and hardheartedness of sinful man. God is long-suffering not willing that any should perish. Since He so patiently waits for that day of Glory when He shall be revealed to wondering worlds and shall come into His own. Well may we wait too, while sharing a while in His rejection.

*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. Chap. 1:10.*

Some think that the Lord's day mentioned here is the same as the "day of the Lord" which so often occurs in the Word of God, referring to the coming day of the judgment of the world and the triumph of Christ. But the Greek phrase used here is quite different, and is used only twice in the New Testament; here, and in I Cor. 11: 20, where it is used in connection with the Lord's supper. It is the word "*Kuriakos*". It is from the contraction of this word the Scotch word "kirk" for "church" comes, intimating that the church is composed of those who are the Lord's. In connection with the Church two features are prominent in the use of this phrase "Lord's": (1) To John is revealed the entire history of the Church in the seven messages to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3; (2) the same expression "Lord's" is used in connection with the remembrance of the Lord in His death, which is the only outward, physical ceremony of the Church of God upon earth. Both the Church and the Lord's supper are directly connected with the Lord's day, for the Church was baptized by the Holy Spirit into the one body on that very day, and the Lord's supper is celebrated on the first day of the week also. How suited therefore that John should be in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

The fact that he heard a voice behind him further emphasizes the thoughts expressed above, for while on the Lord's day the saints normally would be remembering the Lord in His death, thus looking back to the cross, John is compelled to turn around by the voice behind him. From looking back, as it were, he is called to reverse his gaze and now throughout this amazing revelation of Jesus Christ he looks onward to the things that lie ahead. With him, we too now look—by faith as yet—to all that concerns Him Who is now about to enter upon that which is His right. May our hearts thrill to the unveiling of Himself to our spiritual vision!

*Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyra, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. Chap. 1:11.*

One might wonder why these seven particular churches were singled out by the risen Lord, when there were many and larger congregations of saints elsewhere. The answer probably is that these seven churches, in the order in which they are found in this book, presented every spiritual phase that occurred in the Church of God through the last 19 centuries. Not only so, but they form a striking outline in the order in which they are given of the spiritual condition of the Church in its entire history. There can be no doubt, that together with the seven feasts in Lev. 23 and the seven parables of the kingdom of heaven in Matt. 13, these seven too, give a consecutive history of this present dispensation of grace. Each series of these sevens presents its own view of the vital age in which our lot is cast.

The names of these seven churches are themselves full of meaning and conform to their spiritual content. Ephesus means "desirable", as a bride is to her husband; Smyrna means "myrrh", and this answers so well to the suffering and death she so well knew in the years of bitter persecution; Pergamos means "though married", and suggests its unfaithfulness to Christ though married to Him; Thyatira is "incense"; Sardis a "remnant"; Philadelphia "brotherly love"; and Laodicea the "people's rights".

*And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. Chap. 1:12-13.*

John saw seven golden lampstands (as the word should read) and in the midst stood the Son of Man. This was the same dazzling person Whom John had once seen when on the Mount of Transfiguration, and His face shone like the sun. It was the same Jesus, John knew so well; the Jesus on Whose bosom he lay (John 13) on the night in which He was betrayed, at Whose feet he now falls.

Jesus stood in the midst of the lampstands. In the tabernacle there was just one lampstand; in Solomon's temple there were ten. Here there are seven and we are told in verse twenty that they represent the seven churches; or in other words, the One Church during this dispensation of grace.

From Exodus 25:37 we learn that one purpose of the lampstand was to throw light on the lampstand itself. These seven lights, then, were to set forth the beauty and perfection of Christ, for the lampstand is Christ Himself. So here, the Son of Man is surrounded by these seven lights, and their business is to throw light on Him and to reveal the moral and glorious beauty of the exalted Son of God, the Son of Man, and the Savior of the world. To us is committed, dear fellow believer, the privilege of calling attention to Christ; once crucified but now glorified.

The title "Son of Man" is one used some seventy times by our Lord in the four gospels. It is a title He alone used of Himself. It bespeaks the infinite condescension which brought Him from the highest pinnacle of glory down to the depths of woe. It is a title He took when He became Man, and shall never relinquish, for as Son of Man He shall reign forever. About half the time the title is used by the Lord when speaking of His sufferings and the other half in connection with His coming glory. As He said to Caiaphas: "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).

John here sees that coming glory in anticipation, as he turns at the sound of the voice he hears. Mary saw Him too when she turned around (see John 20:16). She saw her risen Lord. John sees his Lord as He shall be in the day when He comes in glory.

John sees Him in the long flowing robe that in the East betokened honor and dignity, and His breasts were girded with a golden girdle. Usually in Scripture the loins are girded but here it is the breasts. Is this not meant to tell us that this Glorious One is the Same One Who loved us and gave Himself for us at Calvary? Does not the golden girdle call attention to the glory of His grace? Do not the "breasts" suggest His power, since the very word for God as the Almighty One means the Breasted-One? Praise His name; grace, power, and glory all are His!

*His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.*

Chap. 1:14-15.

These descriptions, symbolic as they are, are all found elsewhere (in Ezekiel and Daniel) and are easy to read. The "white hair" speaks of His eternal Godhead (He is called the "Ancient of days" in Dan. 7:9), and also of the wisdom, and experience and holiness that mark this Judge.

The eyes of fire, of course, tell us that nothing is hidden from Him and that He judges surely and purely. All things are naked and open in the sight of Him with Whom we have to do.

His voice is like "the sound of many waters". As the Psalmist says: "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea than the mighty waves of the

sea" (Psalm 93:4). There is something fearfully impressive about the crash of mighty seas as they break on a rocky shore. I have often stood looking at it and listened with awe. His mighty voice will be heard above the noisiest roar of rushing torrents. Yet we have heard that same voice, gentle as a summer breeze, whispering peace to our weary souls. It is the same Jesus. The same One Who in love died for us lives to execute judgment; first on His own in discipline, and then on the world. In our chapter He judges among His own. Bye and bye he will judge this Christless world.

*And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: Chap. 1:16-17.*

Stars indicate powers or authorities. Being in the right hand of Christ indicates that all spiritual authority is in His hands. He is the Head of the Church and there is no one else.

The sharp sword, as Heb. 4:12 tells us, is the Word of God. Christ always exercises authority in conformity with the Word of God. The Word which saves the soul that trusts in Him is the very Word employed to judge all that is not according to His mind and will.

His countenance was like the sun in its glory. That face once so marred, once so spit upon and beaten, now shines with all the majesty of divine excellence. John had seen it once before like that on the Mount of Transfiguration, as it showed forth His power and glory. I am afraid we may forget in our joy at being His through saving grace, that this same Jesus who once died for us to make us His own is also the majestic Person depicted here in Revelation chapter one. Sin in God's people is

as hateful (yea, more so) as sin in those who are not saved and will receive His judgment. However, praise His Name, He deals with sin in His saints here and now, for "judgment must begin at the house of God." May we, like John, fall humbly at His feet, and with a deep sense of His greatness and glory, worship Him in our lives and with our lips.

There is another full length portrait of our Lord in The Song of Solomon (Chap. 5:10-16). They are in such sharp contrast that one might think they describe two different persons, but they do not. One depicts Him as lovely and attractive in the eyes of His Bride; the other in His official glory as the Judge of men. Both, however, are portraits of this same Jesus. In the Song of Solomon the glory of His Deity is seen in the Head of gold and the glory of His lowly humanity in the feet of gold. In Revelation, however, His face like the Sun and His feet glowing hot express His dazzling purity and holiness as the Son of Man. His feet no longer tread the earth as they once did, but now have the earth for their footstool as He sits upon the throne of God.

In the Song of Solomon His hair is seen black and curly; full of the life and vigor of youth. It is a portrait of a lover as His beloved sees Him. In Revelation, however, these hairs are white like wool; as white as snow. The latter words make one think of Isaiah 1:18. A sinner washed becomes white as snow; as clean and pure as the Lord Himself. It has happened in life that extreme or sudden grief has turned black hair white overnight. This may suggest that between the Song of Solomon and Revelation stands the Cross of Christ; and thus, those white hairs may tell us of the awful woe our blessed Lord endured for us at Calvary. However, we do know from Daniel 7:9 that white hair denotes age, and this tells us that the white hair of our text speaks of the Eternity of

God and of His absolute purity as seen in His blessed Son our Savior.

In The Song of Solomon His eyes are like those of doves, gentle and tender, but in our chapter they are like a flame of fire. He walks there among the seven lampstands, seeing ever His own redeemed ones, and judging them day by day, that they may walk to His glory.

"With mercy and with judgment  
My web of time He weaves."

There is one feature which shows that these two portraits depict one and the same Person. A feature of His Person left out in The Song of Solomon is brought out here in Revelation. The "breasts" are noted here but omitted there. While gold is mentioned twice in the O. T. passage, it is found here but once in connection with the girdle around His breasts.

There are two unusual touches here: (1) the girdle is seen encompassing the breasts instead of the loins, and (2) the word for breasts is that for a woman's breasts. In this awe-inspiring sight of the Son of Man, the Spirit of God thru the golden girdle around His breasts, calls attention to His self-sacrificing, tender love as seen in a woman's love. How striking is this reminder of warmest love amidst the blazing face, flaming eyes, and burning feet! The girdle is a "golden" girdle, and tells the story that the glory of God is intimately connected with the infinitely tender love of Christ Jesus.

The "breasts" are seen in Scripture as meeting the need of the baby as well as satisfying the longing of man (Prov. 5:19). There the babe in Christ finds food and the advanced believer perfect satisfaction. Our Lord came from the bosom of the Father, yet never leaving it, to tell us of the Father's love. John came from the bosom of Christ (John 13:23) to write of Christ's great love for us. God is called the "Almighty", which means the God

of the breasts. Truly in Him is found all that the longing soul wants!

In the Song of Solomon His lips are like lilies, the lowly lilies of the valley. Did He not say while down here, that He was meek and lowly in heart? In the Song of Solomon His mouth was most sweet, but here His voice is as the sound of many waters. When Christ was here, and even now as in grace He reigns, many fail to hear and heed His still small voice of appealing grace. The day is coming, however, when He shall in tremendous power roar against His foes and smash them to pieces by His mighty power. The believer even now loves to hear that voice and to realize that all power is in His hands.

Instead of gentle, tender words, there comes out of His mouth a sharp sword, typical of the Word of God. When He comes to judge the world, out of His mouth shall come that sharp twoedged sword with which He shall smite the nations, for He shall rule then with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15). Here that day of judgment has not come as yet, but that same sharp sword, the searching Word of God, is now judging the saints. Praise God, it is only here and now, that we may not be condemned with the world.

*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Chap. 1:17-18.*

What triumphant words are these! He invaded the courts of death and of hades and came forth from thence triumphant. The Scripture had foretold: "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption". Death could not keep His body for He was sinless and death therefore had no

claim upon it. Hades could not keep the soul, for He committed His spirit into the Father's hands. Hallelujah! Christ arose! Now the keys of hades and of death are His. For the believer in Christ this means that death and hell have been robbed of their terror and their power. He can say: "Oh death, where is thy sting; Oh grave (hades), where is thy victory"?

While the believer still passes (until the Lord comes) through the article of death, yet it has lost its sting. The sting of death is sin, and Jesus has conquered sin for the believer. For him to die is but to be put to sleep by Jesus. Hades, too, has lost its victory, for the believer goes to be with Christ when the hour of his departure from this world strikes, whether this be at death or at Christ's coming for His saints.

As to the sinner, Christ also has the keys of hades and death. The sinner's body is locked in the grave and his soul is in hell until the final judgment day arrives. Then Christ will use those keys to unlock the grave and every sinner shall come forth thence. Hell shall give up the soul as well, and the sinner shall stand with soul and body reunited before the great white throne. The Judge on that throne shall be the one who here holds the keys of death and hell.

*Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; Chap. 1:19.*

In this verse the whole book of Revelation is divided very simply into three distinct sections. First are the things John had seen, referring to the truths concerning the Person of Christ unveiled in this chapter. This is clear, for in verse eleven John is told to write the things he *would* see and in verse nineteen to write the things he *had* seen, proving that those things are the ones unfolded in the first chapter. Secondly, the things which are, re-

ferring to the history of the Church of God in this age of grace, as pictorially set forth in chapters two and three. Third are the things which were to come after these, speaking of the prophetic program seen in the rest of the book of Revelation from chapter four to the end. These pregnant chapters tell of God's dealing with Israel and the world during the time of the great tribulation, which is so much the burden of O. T. prophecy. All is climaxed by Christ's coming, His judgment of the world, and His millennial and eternal reign.

The book of Revelation presents these great stirring events in chronological order (the only book in the Bible which does so) and thus is comparatively easy to understand.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **The Address to the Church in Ephesus**

*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; Chap. 2:1.*

The Church of God as a whole is composed of all true believers in the Lord Jesus. It is the Church which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28). A local church, like the one at Ephesus addressed here, refers to the Christians in any given locality who are accustomed to meet together in Christian fellowship. The Lord Jesus walks in the midst of His saints, seeing everything they do and speaking to them for guidance and blessing as well as warning.

What a privilege to be called a lampstand for Him. Christ Himself, as God's lampstand, was a light sufficient to light the whole world. While He was in the world, He was the light of the world. Now He has left us here to be lights for Him. A lamp bears light in the dark and this suggests that we are in this dark world of sin. It behooves us to let our light shine that men may see Christ through us; and thus, the light we shed may show them the way to God. Christ is seen here in the midst of the seven lampstands as Scripture so often shows Him to be. As the lampstands cast their light they will reveal the Person of the Christ if they give Him the central place in their gathering, their heart, and their life.

He holds the stars in His right hand. Yes, He keeps and sustains His people and His servants by His power. He walks in the midst of His own, setting us an example, that we should follow His steps.

He speaks, addressing the angel of the church of Ephesus. We are told in other places that stars, the title here given to the angel of each church, represent believers who serve God and turn many to righteousness (Daniel 12:3). Thus, they point to those who realize their responsibility as God's servants and witnesses. The lampstand speaks of light borne here upon earth, while the star speaks of light that is borne perpetually in heaven. The use of "star" may suggest that the believer today is a heavenly being; and though on earth, bears witness to heavenly truths and glories. Also, we may take it that if as a lampstand the believer shines now, as a star he will shine forever.

Though the angel (an individual) is addressed, yet the Lord speaks to the whole church. In fact, all the churches are to hear what is said to any and each individual church, for He says each time: "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches". The letters are written in the form of individual language, so that each believer may personally feel and meet the challenge conveyed in these messages. As we have already remarked, these addresses to the seven churches cover the whole history of the Church, and in their spiritual content have something to say to the heart and conscience of each one who hears. May each one of us truly have an ear to hear!

In the message to Ephesus we see the bright beginning of the history of the Church and in that to Laodicea its terrible end. God in His mercy, as He did in the O. T. with Israel, gave times of spiritual revival, as here in Smyrna and Philadelphia. Apart from such, however, the Church, even as every other responsibility given to man, has proven to be a sad failure. It shall finally (after the true believers are taken home to glory) be spued out of His mouth in total disgust (Chap. 3:16). We want to gather spiritual lessons for our own hearts from these seven messages.

*I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Chap. 2: 3.*

There was much to commend in this assembly. The Church of God on earth started out bright and happy with all believers together and sharing their goods while enjoying the fellowship in the things of Christ. The Lord commends not only their works, labor, and patience; but also their ability to both detect false claims and teaching and to reject it and them that taught so. But underneath even this commendation there is a note of sadness. In Paul's letter to the young converts at Thessalonica he speaks of their labor of *love*, work of *faith*, and patience of *hope*. Those three beautiful words—faith, love, and hope—are omitted here, however. The works, even at the outset, had become more or less cold and formal. The warm spirit of gladhearted devotion was already lacking, as it is so often with us now. They detected evil in others but were apparently unaware of the insidious lack in their own souls. What a lesson this should be to everyone of us! There is nothing easier than to be busy and yet out of touch with the Lord Jesus. So often increased activity is but a symptom of a lack of true devotion.

*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Chap. 4: 5.*

The word "somewhat" is not there in Greek, for to have left one's first love is not a light matter. It is the underlying cause of all failure, and even of downright sin

in the believer. These saints did not lose their first love; they *left* it. Other loves were taking the place of the first love for Christ which once had been so precious and so real.

Repent is the cry! Remember from whence thou art fallen. Not "to where" but "from where". Don't look down into the mess you have fallen into, but up to Him from Whom all blessing comes. It is thus restoration and communion will be experienced.

*But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.* Chap. 2:6.

The word "Nicolaitanes" means the "rulers of the laity" (the people). When saints get away from God in heart, they naturally allow man to come in between themselves and Him. The people of old asked Moses to stand between them and God. "Let not God speak to us," they said. The principle of some taking a place between the soul and God and the people standing at a distance (which God says here He hates) is known today as the clergy ruling over the laity. We must not blame the clergy too much, for the fault lies largely with the professing church itself. Long ago Jeremiah lamented that "the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means". He then adds the sad comment: "And my people love to have it so" (Jer. 5:31). Often when believers sit back and do not study God's Word or take responsibility in maintaining a testimony for Him, aggressive personalities take the lead; and alas, often develop into spiritual dictators. These saints at Ephesus as yet hated this evil root of the gravest consequences, but soon the root would grow into a mighty tree that would overshadow and darken the proper function of the Church of God.

*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will*

*I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Chap. 2: 7.*

In each address an appeal is made to the overcomer. Every true believer overcomes to a degree, for we read that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). Let us crave a high degree of victory in our Christian life. There are, in every age, so many things that are contrary to the teaching of God's Word. The believer must stand firm, and earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

Eve, when tempted, placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden (Gen. 3:3). God however had said that the tree of life was there (Gen. 2:9). The tree of sin was in the center of Eve's thoughts, so that she got it in the center of the garden as well. But Christ is the tree of life and He is in the midst. Let Him be the Center of your life, worship, and service now, and you shall feast on all the fulness there is in Him in the paradise above.

### **The Address to the Church in Smyrna**

*And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou are rich) . . . Chap. 2: 8-9a.*

The Church became the butt of bitter persecution, to which Smyrna (which means "bitter") so well answers. First the hatred came from the Jews. Later on, for centuries, it came from pagan Rome. Finally, in its worst form, it came from papal Rome.

The Lord speaks of Himself here as the "first and the last", and "He who was dead and is alive again". If He Who is first became last of all, then His Saints need expect nothing else. Praise God, however, though He was put to death by wicked hands, He lives in the power of an end-

less life. So also shall His persecuted saints live. They too may suffer death, as many of them did, at the hands of their persecutors; yet they shall live again and wear the martyr's crown, as they live and reign with Him forever.

Jesus knows their works, as He says in every one of the seven addresses. How comforting this is! Men so often judge wrongly, but He knows, and will estimate each believer's life at its truest value, and reward each accordingly.

"I know thy poverty", He says, "but thou art rich". This is the very reverse of the condition in Laodicea, Chap. 3: 17) where they thought they were rich but actually were poor and wretched and miserable. How much better it is to be poor materially and rich spiritually. Trial, suffering, and persecution often lead to the truest wealth and to the acquisition and appreciation of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

*I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich); and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Chap. 2: 9.*

The final statement in this verse reminds us of the introduction of the false element which early infested the church of God. The epistle to the Galatians deals with this "blasphemy" in detail. The infusion of legalism into Christianity; introducing the earthly, fleshly religion which as a terrible scourge, has blighted millions of souls with the vain and false belief that works have something to do with the salvation of the soul. Religion—the devil's counterfeit of true Christianity—from Cain on to the present, is just the setting aside of God's simple, way of divine salvation by grace through faith, and substituting for it man's own works—man's own self-righteousness.

"Those who say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan", does not refer to some who claimed

to be Jews in a national sense, but rather those who nullified God's way of salvation through faith in Christ alone—on the basis of the work He did on Calvary's Cross, and who trust for salvation in their own religious doings, ritual and worship. The world has been cursed by this devilish imitation and perversion of the truth of God. Those who rest their eternal welfare solely on the redemptive work of Christ at Calvary are comparatively few; the rest add works to faith, and thus nullify the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

No wonder our Lord here calls those who take this Jewish ground of salvation by works as belonging to the "synagogue of Satan". The true Church is composed of those "gathered out" by Christ which is the meaning of the Greek word for church; but millions of religious professors *gather together* in the religions of this world, which is the meaning of the word "synagogue". May we praise Him for opening our eyes to see in Christ our alone and all-sufficient Savior!

*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Chap. 2:10.*

The "ten days" mentioned are thought to refer to the ten distinct periods of persecution which the early church suffered under the rule of the Roman emperors. Certain it is that the pagan persecutions were very severe and thousands of the early believers laid down their lives; among them, of course, the apostle Paul and a number of the twelve apostles as well.

The "devil" shall cast some of you into prison. We know without a doubt, from other scriptures, that our gracious God overrules everything in the lives of His dear people. He permits Satan to oppress His saints, as

we see so clearly in the case of Job. In fact, it appears from the Word of God that all the trials and sufferings the people of God endure are actually inflicted by Satan, but only under the superintending wisdom and love of God. Our times are in His hands; not in Satan's. And God permits it all for the furthering of His own purposes of grace; all for His glory and for the eternal good of His saints. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations".

In those early centuries and again later on during papal Rome's wicked power, Satan sought to crush Christian testimony by brute force. But he learned that the "blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church", and eventually changed his tactics, and turned from opposition to imitation. Now we need to be on guard against his beguilings, as once the saints suffered from his buffetings. But how precious to realize that, whatever the devil may do, he is only God's tool for the ultimate blessing of saints and for the glory of God.

*Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. Chap. 2:10-11.*

Some believers mistakenly believe that their going to heaven depends on their faithfulness down here, but this is not so. Our Lord here promises, not heaven, but a reward, to those who were faithful unto death. Such would receive a crown of life. Many crowns are mentioned in Scripture; to those true to Christ even unto a martyr's death, the special crown called the crown of life would be given. I take it this means that in heaven's glory by and by life with Christ would be specially wonderful for them. If they suffered death here, they would live up there all the more, as a suited reward. Scripture teaches the principle that everything done for

Christ here will reap a corresponding return by and by. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him".

The address to each church closes with a word of encouragement to the overcomer—to the victor. There are so many things that need to be overcome. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. This seems an odd encouragement for certainly no believer shall ever be hurt of the second death, which, according to Rev. 20: 14 is the lake of fire—the eternal doom of the lost. I suppose it is given here to make the suffering Christian realize that any suffering known now is far better than to endure the eternal sorrow of weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth forever. The path may be dark but it leads to eternal bliss.

### The Address to the Church in Pergamos

*And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.*

Chap. 2: 12-13.

Here we see the Church, though married to Christ (see Rom. 7:4), now married to the world; that's what the word "Pergamos" means "though married". Once it was Christ and the church; now it is Satan and the church. The Church is dwelling where Satan's throne is, and Satan's throne is in this world; he is the prince of this world. This word "dwell" is ominous, for the people of

God are not supposed to dwell in this world, but to be pilgrims in it, travelling home. There is this illicit union between the church and the world, as illustrated in Israel's mixing with Moab, and which God calls here "fornication". Another evil couple is the "clergy and the laity", as suggested in that Pergamos holds the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. How sad to read of one who was slain "among you", where Satan dwells. Just think of Satan making his home among the professed people of God, where Christ should be the Center; where He should reign upon the throne of our hearts, and not the devil. Dispensationally this church at Pergamos pictures the days following the first centuries of pagan persecution—as seen in Smyrna—a period which began when Constantine the Great made Christianity popular, and when it degenerated into Christendom; a system where the devil is at home in the church.

There are some, however, even here, who held fast His name and did not deny the faith. Apparently there were but few for Antipas was martyred and his name means "he who is against everybody". If one is to be true to Christ it often means to take a stand against the generally accepted standards of falseness. How many, through the ages, have died for Christ's sake rather than to deny Him.

*But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. Chap. 2:14.*

We all remember the history of Balaam, whose mission was to curse the people of God. God would not permit him to do so, but he did nevertheless bring a curse upon them by counselling intermarriage between the women of Moab and the Israelites, and by inducing them to idolatry

(see Num. 25:1-2; 31:16.). Union with Moab led to the worship and service of their gods. So, when the believer unites with the world (whether in religion, business, marriage or what else) how often it leads to a course out of touch with God; Christ ceases to be the Center of one's life, idols ascend the throne of the heart. Not of course always the worship of idols of wood or stone; remember that Scripture says that a thing like covetousness is idolatry; yea, everything that displaces Christ is idolatry.

The Bible speaks of the way, the error and the doctrine of Balaam. It warns believers against these. Back of Balaam's evil purposes was his passion for money—he loved the wages of unrighteousness. And how great a part the love of money plays even in the things of God; how many degrade divine things by seeking their own interests, instead of like Paul seeking to make others rich, while being themselves poor. Like our blessed Lord we should become poor that others through our poverty may be made rich.

God's judgment fell on Israel in Balaam's day; no doubt much of the professing church's weakness is this spiritual fornication with the enemies of Christ.

*So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.* Chap. 2:15-16.

The deeds of the Nicolaitanes, as seen in the message to Ephesus, have now grown into the "doctrine" of the Nicolaitanes. Ephesus hated the deeds, but nothing is said here of Pergamos hating the doctrine. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes simply means the universally accepted idea of the clerical system—the clergy lording it over the common people. God hates it, yet it is fully and wholly accepted and honored in Christendom. According to God's Word every believer is a "minister" and

should function as such. There are of course, godly and wise leaders among the saints and true ministers of Christ, but God's Word in no manner of form allows the taking of titles and thus setting the clergy above and in a special class from all believers. In its worst form, often, instead of such feeding the flock, they are in the business of shearing the sheep, and clothing themselves with the wool.

Repent, says our Lord, or I will come and fight against them. Notice how the Lord says that He will come unto "thee", but will fight against "them". The judgment is threatened, not on the saints, but on those who take a place God's Word does not permit. Judgment will fall not on those who earnestly and humbly seek to serve the Lord, but on those who oppress the people of God; on the blind leaders of the blind.

Our Lord in Pergamos is seen as the One Who has the sharp sword, with two edges. These unholy unions of the church with the world; of the Church finding a home where the Devil dwells; of the clergy above the laity; all these shall feel the sharp edge of the sword, which divides even to the parting of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*  
Chap. 2:17.

In each address the reward to the overcomer is in direct contrast to the evils that need overcoming. The manna carries us back to the journey through the wilderness where they went as pilgrims and which illustrates our pilgrim character; this is in direct contrast to "dwelling where Satan's seat is". Manna is our food down here,

and is in contrast to feeding on things devoted to idols. Christ is the Bread of life—the Manna—to the believer down here; and, as we enjoy Him here below treading our pilgrim way, we find Him laid up for us up there. Christ Himself is the One we shall delight in throughout eternity; if a believer feeds on the world's things, what will he do up there, where Christ is all in all?

The "white stone" I understand, was a ballot cast in those days with the name of the candidate engraved on the stone. As our blessed Lord down here below is the Object of our worship and service, we as it were, cast our vote for Him. It is He Who rules in our life; not the clergy which is to direct our life or worship. And if He is, as it were, my Candidate here, I shall be His candidate up there. My name shall be on that white stone then; I shall have a new name, as He has. The manna expresses my appreciation of Him; the white stone His appreciation of me. It will be intensely individual, for no man knows its meaning but the recipient alone. How good to know, that, in the midst of the great professing mass of Christendom, our blessed Lord knows each of His own, and will reward each one with His own perfect estimate of their worth. If men do not value us; praise God, our blessed Savior does. May we all be truly over-comers!

### The Address to the Church in Thyatira

*And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass, Chap. 2:18.*

To Thyatira and Laodicea, which picture the worst spiritual condition during the Church's history, the longest

messages are sent. In the one we see apostate Roman Catholicism; in the other apostate Protestantism. Where things are wrong, more counsel, more encouragement and also more warning must be given. We saw that consequent upon the persecutions under pagan Rome—in the earlier centuries of Christianity—there arose that time when Constantine the Great made it popular to profess Christianity, and so the Church, instead of being a stranger, barely tolerated by the world, became acceptable and popular. Instead of suffering, it began to reign, and out of this arose religious Rome to take the place of political Rome. Soon those true to Christ felt the heavy hand of Papal Rome as their fathers had from pagan Rome. This period is pictured in this address to the Church in Thyatira. Every word in this message is full of the deepest meaning, presenting the sad spiritual state then existing, and also giving a picture of how Rome held undisputed sway over the souls of men, until challenged successfully in the days of the Reformation, as next seen in the address to Sardis.

In conformity with this theme the Lord introduces Himself here as the "Son of God"—not as the Son of Mary, as Rome loves to do. His eyes are like a flame of fire; He is not now the meek and lowly Jesus, on the virgin's breast, nor the Sufferer hanging on a crucifix, as Rome ever displays Him. No, Rome is a corrupt system that has exalted the woman instead of the Man, but His eyes see and estimate that idolatrous worship and perversion of the truth; and His feet burning like brass heated white hot in a furnace are ready to move in fearful judgment on this caricature of Christianity. He sees it all and looks on this wretched corruption, not with eyes of sympathy but with eyes that speak of devouring judgment and inflexible holiness.

*I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Chap. 2:19.*

There is a lot of activity—works and more works; works to begin with and to end with. No doubt there are some of God's true saints there too, and their love and patience He knows well, for the Lord knoweth them that are His. In the dark centuries when Rome was in complete control, He knows how many of His own suffered under the terrible darkness and spiritual idolatry that then held sway, and how true they were to Him. But on the whole the Roman system was shot through with spiritual and consequently moral corruption.

*Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. Chap. 2:20.*

Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, introduced the idolatrous worship of Baal in Israel and led the people astray and away from God into devilish abominations. Here in our text this false church—the evil woman which calls herself the “mother-church”, of which we shall hear so much more later in the book of Revelation, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth (Rev. 17:5) is leading men astray with her false teachings resulting in moral and spiritual fornication.

This woman is teaching; something that God's Word forbids as stated in I Tim. 2:12 where we read: “I suffer not a woman to teach”. Thyatira answers to the fourth parable in Matt. 13 where the woman is seen mixing leaven in the meal (the food of God's people) till the whole is leavened. The fourth parable of Matt. 13 and the fourth church of Rev. 2 cover the same time and idea

the introduction of false doctrine and false practices into the truth of God as set forth in His holy Word. It operates—this evil leaven—till the whole is leavened. For the Bible says clearly that in the end the whole professing Church will be permeated with false and evil lies, till in the final church of Laodicea the Lord will spue the whole thing out of His mouth; after the true Bride of Christ has been raptured to glory.

How well this 20th verse pictures the Church of Rome. It boasts in calling itself the mother church, but the Scriptures call her the mother of harlots; not the true Church as Rome claims to be. Not pure in its character as the chaste Bride of Christ, but a wretched prostitute, committing fornication with the men of this world (Chap. 18:3). Every student of Scripture, who knows anything of the tenets of Rome, knows that most if not all of its beliefs and practices are not found in the Bible, or are directly contrary thereto, and perversive of it. How we do praise God that we were brought up under the clear teaching of God's holy word, and were led to simple faith in Christ. May we all increasingly value our precious heritage of truth!

*And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. Chap. 2:21-23.*

The Lord gave Romanism time to repent of her grievous sins, but she repented not. For many centuries she was in absolute control of the faith and fate of her church, until God in mercy relieved the fearful darkness and oppression by the light of the Reformation. Many were de-

livered from the tyranny and terror of Rome, but she herself has gone on utterly unchanged. If anything, her tenets ever depart further from the truth, and throughout the centuries succeeding popes have added additional blasphemies to those already held, such as the infallibility of the pope, or more recently the assumption of Mary. Rome prides herself as never relinquishing any of her unscriptural claims; and her only change is in her conduct which she suits to the circumstances obtaining in the various countries and conditions, as has been so well said: "Rome is a lion in prosperity, a fox in equality and a lamb in adversity". The skin changes but the nature is always the same.

But her judgment shall come some day, though long put off. Chapters 17 and 18 of this book portray this coming doom. During the great tribulation not only Israel, but apostate Christendom also shall feel the fiery wrath of a sin-hating God. The Lord says that He will judge her (Chap. 17:1); He will use the future rulers of the Federation of European powers to make Rome desolate, to eat her flesh and to burn her with fire—Rev. 17:16.

Her children also shall be slain. Rev. 17:5 tells us that Catholic Rome is the mother of harlots. She is truly the mother-church, but her children are the apostate churches of Protestantism. Even today we see many so-called Protestant churches (who long ago have ceased to protest against anything), drift back toward Rome; and Rome is putting out sometimes subtle, sometimes bold feelers to gather her apostate brood back into the fold. Why don't such read the Bible and see there that this mother is not a true mother, but an evil perverter of the ways of God? As a system Rome is unspeakably vile, but manages to hide most of it under a sanctimonious pretense of chastity to those who know but little of the truth of God. But

in that day all the saints shall know that God does not judge by the outward appearance, but that He judges the reins of the heart.

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

In the Church of Rome there are as everywhere, truly born again souls unaware of its vileness and falsehood. As our text says, such do not have Rome's false doctrine, and they do not know the depths of Satan. I Cor. 2:10 says that God has revealed to us by His Spirit the deep things—the depths—of God. There are the depths of God and there are the depths of Satan. Did believers but enter into the depths of God by searching His Word, they would never be deceived by the depths of Satan. There are fathomless depths of truth which delight the soul of the child of God and which urge him on to ever deeper searching of the Scriptures. There are also the depths of Satan, which more firmly blind the gullible minds who do not study the Word for themselves, but who swallow hook, line and sinker—the bunk of Rome. There are deep depths of evil in Satan's falsehoods; he is a past master in deception, for he deceiveth the whole world, except those whose eyes have been opened to see Jesus.

*And he that overcometh and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Chap. 2: 26-29.*

To the overcomer is held out the reward of "power over the nations". That's what Rome has wielded all through her reign. It will be wrested from her and given to those she has abused, persecuted and dominated so fiercely down here. The order will be reversed. The oppressors shall become the oppressed, and the lowly suffering believer, who suffered so much in order to be true to Christ, shall reign with Him.

Such shall rule with a rod of iron. In Chap. 19:15 we read that the Lord Jesus shall rule the nations with a rod of iron when He comes to reign; here the very same thing is said of Christians. He will share His throne with them, in that day of accounting. Rome has reigned for centuries, but His once-suffering saints shall reign with Him for ever and ever. Somehow it thrills one to the core to read that some day justice shall take the place of sin. How longsuffering and patient our blessed Lord has been! Oh, how we do praise Him that in His infinite mercy He has privileged us to be brought up under the clear light of truth and not under the falsehoods of Rome. How we do pray that many of its dupes may yet have their eyes opened to see Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

The promise to the believer is the "Morning Star". It is one of the blessed titles of our Lord, as of Him who will come to take us home to glory. When the spiritual darkness completely covers the world, suddenly He will come and we shall meet Him in the air. This is meant to be a great encouragement to the believer today. "Perhaps today". "Even so come Lord Jesus!" Let us occupy till He come!

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Address to the Church in Sardis

*And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*

*Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Chap. 3:1-2.*

As to its place in history Sardis (the word means "a remnant") presents that period of time which followed the reign of Roman Catholicism, as seen in the church of Thyatira. A "remnant" came out from Catholicism during Reformation times. Alas the mass soon degenerated into a sort of dead formalism so that the Lord has to say of it that it has a name of being alive, yet in reality was spiritually dead. Of course, there were many individuals among this profession with true spiritual life, and such are urged, in the second verse, to be on the alert, to strengthen the truth that remained, and to stand for those things that apparently were ready to die. In v. 1 the mass is spoken of as dead; in v. 2 there is a spark of life, as there is in every true believer in Christ; and they are urged to fan this spark into a flame.

Well may we challenge ourselves as to this also! Often there is such spiritual lethargy of which we might well be ashamed. We should watch ourselves, as well as watch for the souls of our fellow believers (Heb. 13:17). Our works often are not perfect before God either. Why not? Because works, if they are to meet with His approval,

must be the fruit of faith, energized by love. Faith and love—the latter specially—are often so sadly lacking among Christians. “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead”. Aren’t we asleep when there are 150 out on Sunday mornings and 25 at the mid-week prayer meeting?

Strengthen the things which remain. Do not wait for a great revival; start with a small one—in your own soul.

*Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*  
Chap. 3:3.

It seems to me that this verse, as well as verse one addresses the whole professing mass of Christendom, while verses two and four single out the real believers who are mixed in with the vast host of sinners, as we see to this day in the professing religious world. Our Lord threatens to come as a thief, which in I Thess. 5:2 and 4 evidently has the unbelievers in view.

Remember how thou hast received and heard. The order of these words is significant. The receiving evidently is not the individual reception of the Word when a soul is saved, for in that case it would be preceded by hearing. No, it is rather the great truths which have been received by us as passed on to us by our fathers, even as children profess the same religion often as their parents do without any personal conviction or personal appropriation by faith. There has been a receiving and a hearing, but often without any repentance or true conversion to God.

Repentance is mentioned last in our verse, while in true conversion it comes first. The truth received here was received second-hand. Yet there is nothing wrong with second-hand things. In fact, the second-hand things very

often are such because of their great value. One does not buy a pen or a pencil second-hand, but does buy an automobile or a piano that way. The more expensive things are the most likely we are to buy them second-hand. Even so the truth of God, so infinitely valuable, comes to us second-hand.

Our foreparents paid a tremendous price for it; many even laying down their lives for Christ's sake. From them we received God's truth; let us see to it that we cling tenaciously to that which cost so much, that we hold it fast and repent of any failure that has been our experience regarding devotion to Christ and His Holy Word. Many may not care, but those of us who know and love the Lord Jesus should. Our forefathers bought the truth; let us not sell it.

*Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.* Chap. 3: 4.

Only a few names. A remnant within a remnant. In this vast religious world there are, comparatively speaking, only a few really out and out for Christ. He knows such. He knows each believer who walks apart from the spiritual corruption of the day—who do not defile their garments. The world knows them not, as it knew Him not. Here and now they are the poor, despised, unknown quantity, but to Him they are precious. They walk with Him here; they shall walk with Him there.

They shall walk with Me, saith the Lord. That is their joyous hope, the eternal bliss of the saint—to walk with Jesus. The religionist walks hand in hand with this world. He goes arm in arm with the unsaved finding his pleasures, his honors, in the same exact way and place that the worldling does. But the believer is bidden to come out from among them and to be separate. To walk

with Him, even now, makes the heart burn within us (Luke 24:32).

The particular failure in Sardis seems to have been association with the world; what is here called the defilement of the garment. The "garment" in Scripture speaks of the life we live among men. When we turn to II Tim. 3 we learn that the fruit of mere religion—the form without the power—is an unholy life. There is precious little difference between the awful sins of II Tim. 3 (descriptive of corrupt Christendom), and those of Romans 1 (picturing raw heathenism). Our blessed Lord ate and drank with publicans and sinners, yet remained utterly holy, harmless and separate from sinners. But we cannot do so. We must associate with the people of God, walk in separation from unbelievers, or we shall become defiled.

*He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.*

*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Chap. 3:5-6.*

Praise God, there is power available for a holy life, for He hath the Seven spirits of God; meaning the Spirit of God in the plenitude of its power. The Spirit of God in His sevenfold perfection is His, and by grace is ours too. Each believer has the Spirit of God; the question is—Does He have you? Is He merely a resident, or the president of our lives?

Through Him the believer is able to overcome, instead of being overcome. The overcomer shall be dressed in white raiment, reminiscent of the pure life He lived here below.

His name shall not be blotted out of the book of life. He is not one of those who had a name in the world's annals down here, nor merely a name that he lived, yet was dead. The names of such are not written in the book of life, while the name of the true saint shall never cease being in the book of life. Not only is his name in the book of life but the Lord Himself shall mention that name before His Father; shall acknowledge the faithfulness and devotion of that soul before the assembled hosts of glory. "He that confesseth Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven".

Some would turn a negative into a positive by asserting that some names may be blotted out of the book of life. Let us rest in the blessed assurance given here that He will *not* blot out the name of those truly His. The humble believer may not have his name recorded anywhere down here as of any consequence; how wonderful to have it registered in heaven where it really counts!

### The Address to the Church in Philadelphia

*And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth. Chap. 3:7.*

Sardis, as we saw, soon lost the charm of its beginning during the Reformation period, and sank largely into a lifeless formalism—a dead orthodoxy, with only a few there who really walked with God. God in His mercy saw fit to send spiritual awakenings at various times, notably under the Wesleys, Whitefield and others. And these were followed by a movement of God early in the

nineteenth century; a movement which took the people of God back to the first principles of truth; back for a while to the warmth and zeal of Pentecostal days.

"Philadelphia" portrays this happy period in the Church's experience. "Brotherly love", as the word means, became the most marked feature of this mighty spiritual revival. Protestantism had sunk into a formal dead system; the professing church split into numberless sects and divisions, often in bitter antagonism to each other. It was then that the Lord aroused His true saints to the simple, obvious truth that all real believers are "one" in Christ and that brotherly love should be the blessed bond to unite them all together, because all are united to Christ. Denominational, man-conceived barriers were ignored, and believers once again met together in Scriptural simplicity, according to the custom followed by the early church, when they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and in prayers (Acts 2:42). The central feature of this original happy Christian fellowship was the remembrance of the Lord Jesus in His precious death, as God intended it should be done, and as the disciples in the halcyon days of the long ago had practiced regularly (Acts 20:7).

All that believed were together (Acts 2:44). It does not mean that all saw alike on every subject, nor that all did the Lord's work in the same manner, nor that all believed in baptism; no, but that all believed in Jesus. Only those that believed, and all who believed, met together. One hundred and fifty years ago almost, these blessed divine principles were revived under God's gracious hand, and the Lord mightily owned and honored this return to His Word. Human names that speak of division were dropped, and believers met as brethren in Christ alone. It was not what you belonged to, but Whom you belonged to. Alas, this scriptural prosperity did not last

long; soon divisions arose, tearing the saints apart into small groups; each claiming to be *the* right one.

Dear saints, let us humble ourselves before God and get back to "what saith the Scripture?" Saints are refused fellowship in many assemblies because of some division that took place more than a century ago and with which we today have nothing whatever to do; or because of some minor point of manner or method, of no consequence whatever. Alas, that so many Christians insist on majoring on a minor, and are far more anxious to shut out true believers from their midst than to shut out pride and sin out of their own lives.

Remember? This is the period known as "Philadelphia"—brotherly love. Let brotherly love continue. Don't ask, when a believer comes to your assembly, whether he knows brother so or so; or what he thinks of this or that technical question, but whether he knows the Lord Jesus as his Savior and Lord. Brotherly love takes in all the true saints of God, regardless of who they are or where they come from. Only false doctrine held by the individual himself, or an immoral life, can shut one out from the fellowship of saints. You who, in pride, shut out true believers from your midst, what answer will you give to Him in that day; to Him Who received those you refused?

Now let us look a little at our text. If brotherly love is to be manifested in our ways one with another, we must needs be close to Him, Whose love is perfect. And oh, how important love is in the believer's life! The exhortation to "love one another" is found some twenty-five times in the New Testament, more than any other single phrase. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." I believe every Christian ought to read I Corinthians 13 every day of his life. There

we learn how to live a life of perfect love, exemplified as it was in the life of our blessed Lord Himself.

These things saith He that is holy. Love can truly be real when it flows from a life that is holy and pure. For true love goes out to others; hence does not cater to self. Love is not first of all shown in deeds, but in character. What we do must flow from what we are. God is holy, and so God is love.

He is true, too. Christ was true to God and true to man. He was holy amidst the world's sin; true amidst its false show. He speaks of Himself as the true light, the true vine, the true witness. Oh, how reassuring to know that in this world, where so much is false, so much is deceptive, there is One Who is true in all His ways. He never went back on His word; He never turned away from the path He came to tread. If He loves His own, He loves them unto the end. We may fail; He abides faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. True love is always the same; it is not affected by the sins or failures of others. It seeks nothing for self but sacrifices always. His love is the source from whence springs brotherly love in us.

If the reader will turn to Isa. 22:15-25 and read those verses, he will discover the meaning of our Lord's words to the church in Philadelphia. Shebna the treasurer of the king, was to be put out of his office and Eliakim given the position in his room. The words spoken to Eliakim in Isa. 22 are applied by our blessed Lord to Himself in the book of Revelation. In other words, the Lord Jesus is the Treasurer of the King of kings here. All the wealth of the eternal God is under His control. He holds the key to God's vaults—called here the key of David. Some day He shall make available to Israel, that rejected Him 1900 years ago, all the treasures of God's marvelous grace.

But here in our chapter this future bliss for Israel is applied to the Church today. He has opened the door

to the infinite resources of God's fulness; He has made available to us the unsearchable riches of Christ. Our blessed Lord, through His death upon the Cross, has opened the storehouses of God's bounties to us; He has opened and no man can shut.

Come in, dear reader, help yourself! You need not say, as Ali Baba did: "Open sesame", for the door is standing open right now. Our Lord does not invite you to help yourself to pearls, diamonds or gold pieces, but to riches infinitely greater; to all the fulness of the love of God in Christ Jesus. Help yourself! Oh, dear fellow-believer, what a shame that we fail so much to lay hold on all that God has provided for us in Christ. Men struggle for wealth and fame and honor here, not realizing that Jesus Christ our Lord has the key to all the spiritual wealth that makes rich and adds no sorrow with it. The door's open wide; step right inside.

*I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name. Chap. 3:8.*

An open door! That open door first emboldened man to come in as a poor sinner when he found the Lord's words indeed true that "if any one enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9). That door gives ingress to the treasure house of God, as Isaiah 22 clearly proves. And ever since the believer in Jesus has the liberty to go in and out, again and again, and to avail himself of all the privileges that belong to God's children. He may fill his mind with the truths of God, his heart with the love of God and the joy of His fellowship. He may go in to gather riches not merely for his own joy and growth in grace, but also that he may dispense them in profusion to all who do not avail themselves of their privilege to help themselves as much as God wants them to.

Ah, if the door to a bank vault stood wide open and men were invited to come and help themselves to the fortune stacked within, what a wild scramble there would be; yet, when asked to grasp God's riches in Christ, how few avail themselves of this open door, which gives access to riches far greater than this poor world can boast.

I know thy works, He says. There is no rebuke after these words, as there is in Sardis or in Laodicea. He knows what the faithful believer is doing for Him, though others generally do not. He measures success not by its apparent results, but by faithfulness to Him and obedience to His Word.

A little strength is equivalent to conscious weakness. There is not sufficient strength, as it were, to open a door, so He has opened it and seen to it that no one shuts it. Little strength may enter through an open door and find great strength by laying hold on the resources that are in God Himself. One reason for entering this open door and coming to the very throne of God is to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. When I am weak, says Paul, then am I strong, for when a believer realizes his own personal weakness he will depend more on God for the power he needs. As he does so, he will be fitted to keep His Word. And we may be sure it requires all the power of God to be true to the truth in this world where everyone does what is right in his own eyes.

Even among real Christians, how little regard is often had for "What saith the Lord?" Even true believers often regulate their conduct by what they think or want, rather than by what the Bible teaches. It takes backbone to walk in obedience to the Word.

"His Name." We acknowledge that name when we come to Christ as sinners (Acts 4:12); we confess it in baptism; we bow before Him in worship, owning the greatness of that name (Phil. 2:10); we plead its worth

when coming to God in prayer (John 16:24); we own the authority of that name, when we meet together in that Name (Matt. 18:20). We own no other name; His Name towers above all others. Why should Christians take any other name but the name of Christ?

*Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie.*  
Chap. 3:9.

In the address to Smyrna (Chap. 2:9) the same class (those who say they are Jews and are not) is called the synagogue of Satan. But here our Lord says that He will *make* them of that group. False cults, like Seventh Day Adventism and Jehovah Witnessism, claim to be *the* 144,000 though the book of Revelation plainly shows they are Jews—12,000 of each of the 12 tribes of Israel. By making such a claim these cults therefore say that they are Jews, which they are NOT; hence these solemn words of our Lord in our verse must apply to them, and to all others who take a Jewish stand. Such are really, as our Lord says, a gathering together of Satan's dupes—the synagogue of Satan. The same may be said of all who deny redemption by grace alone and substitute human works (the works of the law which was given to the Jew alone) for the perfect, all-sufficient grace of God in Christ Jesus.

The true Church is a gathering out—an *ecclesia*—while this is a gathering together. I take it that Roman Catholicism, as a system, is the supreme expression of this "synagogue of Satan". It is the devil's supreme masterpiece of imitation of the real thing, of the true church composed of true believers in Christ; some day these will have to bow before the Lord, when the true Bride shall be by His side.

*Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*  
Chap. 3:9.

The true Church has often been a suffering Church. Throughout the centuries Satan has afflicted her by persecution and imitation, and has led untold millions along the path that leads to eternal destruction. God alone knows the many millions put to death for Christ's sake. He alone knows how much ignominy, contempt and reproach has been the portion of those who are His, and who stood true to Him and His Word. Truly, as our Savior said, in this world ye shall have tribulation.

But the hour of adjustment is drawing near. Satan's followers, including all the persecutors of God's dear redeemed ones, shall be made to bow down, not alone at *His* feet, but at the feet of His Bride. As she comes to reign with Him—the Queen dressed in gold of Ophir as it were, our blessed Lord will make every Christ rejector bow before her. He will make them to see that she is the one He loved and for whom He gave Himself in deepest love. Satan himself shall be bruised, not only under *His* feet, but under *ours* (Romans 16:20). In that glorious day, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and be admired in all them that believe, all the suffering and shame shall be forgotten when the whole universe shall bow in wondering awe before Him and His bride.

Then it shall be seen that He loved the Church, even though He permitted her to suffer so fearfully through the ages. Then her sorrow shall be turned into joy; then she will read the meaning of her tears; then she shall know the "why" of every grief, pain and shame (so mysterious often down here); then glory shall forever blot out the stain of every wound. Hail the Great Coronation Day!

*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. Chap. 3:10.*

Here is the glorious promise that the believer of today shall be kept out of the fearful time of tribulation yet to come upon all the world. This time of universal destruction shall try those "that dwell upon the earth"; this therefore has no reference whatever to the Church for she is anything but an earthdweller. The believers of this age are strangers and pilgrims here. The expression earthdwellers is found some ten times in the book of Revelation, and each time it refers to apostates—the worshippers of the Beast, as seen so clearly in chap. 13:8. Our Home is in the glory above; this world is not our dwelling place, but we are pilgrims, travelling to our heavenly home.

Not merely is the believer kept from, but he is kept "out of" the hour of tribulation; in other words, he is not on earth at all when it arrives. The reason for this is that the Church is looking for her Lord to come, the One Who will deliver His own from the "wrath to come" (I Thess. 1:10). We are looking for that blessed hope, ever set before the Church as a bright and blessed prospect; praise His Name, He may come at any moment to take us home to be with Him.

The Church will not go through the tribulation, as this verse shows, and this is backed up by many, many other passages of Scripture; all teaching the same blessed truth. Like Enoch, the Church will be caught up to glory before the flood—the fearful deluge of judgment—will engulf this world, as happened in Noah's day. So shall it be in the day when the Son of Man comes to judge the world.

*Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Chap. 3:11.*

This is the only one of these seven churches where the Lord's coming quickly is presented as an encouragement to His people. In Ephesus it is brought as a warning, and so also in Pergamos where it is a threat, a warning of coming judgment. We all know, how, in the last chapter of the book of Revelation, our Lord three times over uses those precious words of comfort, as He assures His own that He will come quickly. It does not say that He will come soon, but quickly. It does not refer to the time, but to the manner of His coming. It is not to tell us when, but how He will come when He comes. The same thought is expressed in Luke 18:7 and 8, where, though the Lord may bear long in patience, yet when He comes He will do so speedily.

Bearing long and coming speedily seem contradictory on the surface, but they are really not. It simply means that, when the hour of His coming has struck, He will not delay another moment. He is far more anxious to have us with Him in the glory than we are to be there. This present time is the kingdom of the "patience" of Jesus Christ (Chap. 1:9). He is waiting patiently till His enemies shall be made His footstool, but before that hour comes, He will come in the clouds to catch His redeemed ones home to be with Him.

Here He encourages the hearts of His loved ones with this blessed hope. We must ever keep bright before our souls the promise that our Lord may come for us at any time—any day. In view of that day, we must be like men who wait for their Lord to come. Only to this church in Philadelphia, where the saints are in some measure wholly His, is this precious promise found in accents of cheer and encouragement. "Behold, I come quickly". May we all be able to respond with glad hearts: "Even so come, Lord Jesus".

To the faithful remnant in Thyatira, Sardis and Philadelphia is this exhortation given to "hold fast". To those

in Thyatira—to saints of God in the midst of Romanism—the Lord says He will not burden them with anything further than just to hold on; they have it hard enough as it is. To the easy going Protestant in Sardis there is added to the command to hold fast, to repent. Repent of the callous deadness of mere formalism. To the saints in Philadelphia the warning is added not to lose their crown—their reward. To Laodicea there is nothing said about holding on at all. There they have nothing to hold fast, for they have forsaken the truth altogether and are sunk into apostasy. There they say that they have, but the Lord does not say so; in Philadelphia the Lord says that they have (v. 8), and they do not say so. Ah! it is blessed indeed when He can say something good about us; it is sad and worthless when we ourselves say so.

That no man take thy crown. In Jer. 7:29 the word translated “hair” is the same word as this word “crown”. The same word in Numbers is translated “separation and consecration”. Samson’s strength was found in his hair, speaking as it did of his separation and consecration to God. That was his crown. Thus, if men take our crown, as here in Rev. 3:11 we are warned against, it might mean that they would rob us of our separated life unto God. Hence I take it that this statement can apply to the present—to the danger of the believer being led astray into the world and its religion and thus losing that which is his glory and his crown—separation from the evil all around, thus losing the spiritual strength that goes with it, as physical strength did in the case of Samson.

And then, of course, the crown speaks of future reward. Men can not take our life, but they can steal from us the reward held out for faithfulness to God and His truth.

*Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out; Chap. 3:12.*

The Christian will always be victorious when he walks through life under the leadership of his commanding General. He can say: "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ". Only when he goes forth in his own strength will he be beaten in the battle. I John 5:4-5 puts it so well—by being born again the believer "overcomes the world" in principle for he immediately is taken out of the world, becoming a child of God by heavenly birth, with a divine nature and destiny. And in daily practice he overcomes as he acts upon the knowledge that Jesus his Savior is the Son of God, to Whom all power belongs and Who by grace divine provides the stimulus for faithful service and holy living.

The victorious believer will be made a pillar up there. If he has upheld the honor of His name down here, he will eternally have the joy of upholding the glory of God up there.

He shall go no more out. He shall eternally dwell with Christ. Revelation speaks a good deal about the earth-dwellers. Praise God, since the believer was not a dweller on earth but a pilgrim, he shall be a dweller in those courts of light forever. And not only a dweller, but he shall have a prominent place as a pillar in the house of God.

The overcomer went out a good deal down here, but he shall go no more out up there. Here he came out from this world when he trusted Christ as his Savior; he came out from among the religious, often Christ dishonoring sham of this world, to walk in separation with his Lord. Here he went out oftentimes into the dark places of the earth to carry the message of the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ; so, someday he shall go no more out; there will be no partings there. Here everything is so changeable, so fluctuating; there all is fixed and sure. No more out, but forever in His presence, where there is

fulness of joy and at His right hand, where are pleasures forevermore.

*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.* Chap. 3:12.

Four times our Lord here speaks of the Father as "My God". It is an expression denoting His humanity here upon earth, for only then did He have a God—He Who Himself is God. He could only as Man speak of the Father as "My God". Thus, in this verse our Lord has reference to His own path here below, which is further emphasized in its fourfold repetition, for four is the number of the world in its meaning.

Yes, those who walked even as he walked shall share the joys even as He shared them. Those who suffered with Him shall share His honors as well. The believer shall be in the temple of My God, where He dwells. The Lord when down here ever lived in communion with the Father—He dwelt in His presence. That shall be the portion of the overcomer forever; to dwell with Him, to see His face, and sing the glory of His grace.

He will write on us the name of His God. Down here the Lord Jesus ever revealed the Father's name; now this name shall be written on the believer, telling us that the grace and glory of the Father shall be indelibly impressed upon us—on our hearts and minds.

He will write the name of the city of His God. Down here the Lord always pointed heavenward as He spoke to His own of heavenly things. Their earthly city was sunk in sin and would be set aside; in its place there is that Zion—that new Jerusalem—that is our happy Home.

He writes on us His new Name. Who can know what this will mean? Like God Himself and all He ever does,

it implies ever fresh wonders of wisdom, love and power unfolded to our hearts. What bliss lies in store for the believer in Jesus!

### The Address to the Church of the Laodiceans

*And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; Chap. 3:14.*

We have come to the last of the seven churches addressed, and so this message to Laodicea truly depicts the condition of things in the last days of the Church's history upon earth. As with everything committed to man, it too ends in sadness and failure. But in the midst of it the Lord still has His own bloodbought ones, and millions of them will ascend to glory when Jesus comes for them.

In this final phase of the professing Church we find nothing but rebuke, while in Philadelphia there is none. Not even His coming is mentioned here; this would seem to indicate there is no ear for that truly Christian hope.

This is the only church of the seven addressed to individuals as such; it is not written to the Church as a body as it were, but to individual Laodiceans. It suggests that as a body the church is in a hopeless state; now only individuals can be expected to hear His voice. It is the only church of the seven where the Lord Himself is seen as definitely on the outside, as He knocks for admittance into the individual heart.

Laodicea means "the rights of the people". From Thyatira (Roman Catholicism) where the common people have no rights whatever, we come to the other extreme—

gone-to-seed Protestantism—where man has everything to say; where everyone thinks and does what is right in his own eyes. Here is communistic religionism in contrast to imperialistic Romanism; the man of sin over against the woman of sin (c. f. II Thess. 2:3 with Rev. 17:3-5). Both these are far indeed from the mind of God; the proper spiritual condition is seen in the Church between these two—in Philadelphia, where Christ and His Word hold sway, with neither the blind obedience of Catholicism nor the wilful defiance of spiritual apostasy.

To Laodicea the Lord speaks of Himself as the "Amen". How suited this is! He is truly the last word in everything. All the promises of God in Him are Yea and in Him Amen to the glory of God. Man may prove a failure as is so sadly evident, but God will carry out His own purposes of love and wisdom. The Church has failed as a true witness for Christ here upon earth, even as Israel failed in the Old Testament days. But the Lord is the faithful and true witness. He was that while revealing the Father here below, for He ever spoke of God and His glory, and He lived so that he that saw the Son had seen the Father. And then in complete faithfulness to God and man He died upon the Cross to make God's salvation available to poor sinners. And in this way He is: "The beginning of the creation of God". This of course refers to the new creation. When God finished the old creation He said, "it is done" and then He rested; when the Lord Jesus finished the new creation, He too rested when His work was done. In spite of man's failure and the devil's wiles and wickedness Our Lord will bring into full perfection the new creation both on earth and in heaven, with its eternal, unforfeitable blessings. This shall be completed at Christ's glorious return in power. The whole creation waits for that day, the day of the manifestation of the sons of God. Thus as the:

Amen, we see our Lord in the glory of His Person and Word.  
As the Faithful and True Witness in His perfect line on earth.  
As the beginning of the creation of God in His future reign.

*I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot;  
I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou  
art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue  
thee out of My mouth.* Chap. 3:15-16.

How well this describes the condition of things in this religious world today, the period to which Laodicea refers. The one outstanding feature today is the spiritual apathy and indifference in regard to divine things. There is no particular animosity or opposition, except in a few quarters, but where the gospel has been preached for many years, the general attitude seems to be "who cares?" Be broadminded, believe what you like, what's the difference?

I am sure every servant of Christ in these so-called civilized lands has been impressed and oppressed by the fearful lack of concern regarding man's status before God. And alas, even among true believers there is so often such a listless attitude of carelessness as to the Lord's claims upon them; an ever increasing going after the things of this life. The many amazing inventions of this age have not helped either to encourage Christian life or testimony.

Lukewarmness is nauseating and the Lord says He will spit the Church out of His mouth. This, we know, will take place after the true believers have been raptured to glory. It is to those true saints that the Lord makes His appeal to hear His voice and heed His way—in the closing verses of this message. For, praise His Name, there are always many who are truly His and who sigh and cry for the abominations around them and among them.

*Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with  
goods and have need of nothing; and knowest not that*

*thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* Chap. 3:17.

“Thou sayest and thou knowest not”. There may be much material prosperity and apparent success, yet in His sight the spiritual condition is pitiful indeed. The professing church is given to boasting and to the natural mind with some show of reason. Look at the big buildings, the increased church attendance, the apparent activity, etc., but while those may deceive superficial thinkers, God sees beyond them and sees the wretched condition of spiritual blindness and nakedness. “Need of nothing”, and one might add almost “need of nobody”, not even of God, for man goes his sweet way of religious formality; draws nigh with his lips but with his heart far from God; Christ Himself is seen standing outside the door.

Boasting never becomes us, but humility. We can only boast in the Lord and in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. That cross separates the believer from the world, so here it is left out, for in Laodicea we see the church united to the world.

*I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that though thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.* Chap. 3:18.

If you are so rich, says the Lord, then buy of Me. He presents Himself as a Merchant selling precious things. Instead of selling for gold, He has gold for sale. The gold speaks of the eternal worth of all God has for us in Christ, bought for us and tried in the fire of Calvary's bitter cross. How can a bankrupt sinner buy such treasure, for did not the Lord say that thou art poor? Surely not with gold or silver. We must buy this gold in the same manner

our blessed Lord bought us. He did not buy us with silver or gold but with His own precious blood; He gave Himself for us. As He bought us with a life laid down, so in a minor way but similarly, we buy the worthwhile things of God by surrendering self, by yielding ourselves to God in our need, and, having received Christ as Savior, by yielding our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service. Jesus has gold for sale; not paper money which is made out of the rags of selfrighteousness, but gold tried in the fire of divine judgment.

Raiment to be clothed therewith. Garment in Scripture always speaks of divine righteousness when used typically—the believer clothed in Him; henceforth in daily life to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of parading around in the rags of human pride and self-importance, as in v. 17, we should exhibit Christ, be clothed in His perfection, that men around may see Jesus in us.

And, in order to see the glories and beauties of our blessed Lord, we must have the eyesalve to see. The proud religionist is blind and often knows it not. The believer by new birth has been made to see—John 3:3, and as we surrender our time and our possessions to Him, we shall thus purchase a better understanding of Christ and His love; we shall walk more to His praise; we shall acquire spiritual riches laid up for the day of glory that is to come.

For the poor He has gold for sale; for the blind there is eyesalve to see Christ and all His perfections; for the naked there is the garment of praise and service. May each of us heed the counsel of this "Merchant" and purchase the wealth that will stand the test at the judgment seat of Christ!

*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent.* Chap. 3:19.

As written previously, I believe the Lord will spue the false church out of His mouth after the true Bride of Christ has been taken to heaven at the rapture. Apostasy is steadily increasing and the only power holding back its complete manifestation and dominance is the presence of the true saints of God down here. In every age, no matter how dark things may have been, there has always been a true remnant, always those who loved and sought to serve their Lord. It is such the Lord has in view in the above text; those who are truly His in the midst of the well-nigh universal departure from the truth.

Yes, praise His name! there are many whom He loves, who are really His own through grace, though perhaps not too much can be said as to their love for Him. Hence, says Jesus, that He will rebuke and chasten them. Even among true believers there is so much weakness, so little out and out-ness for Christ; even among them the world and its subtle influence has so much attraction. He chastens His own only, as Heb. 12:8 shows, and He does it in order to draw their hearts close to Himself. Oh, let us seek so to live to deserve His commendation, rather than suffer His rebuke!

Be zealous, He says. Zealous and jealous are exactly the same in meaning. He wants us to be jealous for His glory, even as He is jealous over us. And being jealous leads to being zealous—to be in earnest in our witness for Him and faithfulness to His Word.

*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* Chap. 3:20.

In the Church of Philadelphia we read that the Lord set before us an open door; here the church sets before Him a closed door. What a solemn pathetic picture this thought presents! The Lord of life and glory standing

outside the door of the very Church for which He died, for He loved the Church and gave Himself for it. Of course, the Church has largely become a mere professing body without any real spiritual life; a form without the power. It does not call for any spiritual capacity to see this all around us. There is room in myriads of church buildings today for anything and anyone, except for Christ Himself. His name is mentioned of course, but His claims are ignored. He is on the outside. His Word is set aside; His authority is flaunted; His Deity is often denied; His gospel is conspicuous by its absence or perversion.

But He calls upon every truly saved soul to hear His voice and to open the door. Professing Christendom refuses Him His place, but the individual believer can and must give Him not just "a", but "the" place in his or her heart. Do so, and then you'll know the joy of fellowship with your Lord. I will come in to "him", says Jesus. Not into the professing church, but into the soul who welcomes Him. As to church fellowship the believer is told not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; he is to leave that, and welcome his Lord.

The Lord says: "I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me". He will rejoice in what we have to offer to Him, but better, He will bring His own feast alone, for the believer shall sup with Him. When we welcome Him, He always brings a feast along. The invited honored Guest will become the Host.

*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. Chap. 3:21.*

Our Lord Himself passed through this scene, where man even then set himself against God. He walked apart from the religion of that day, and both by His life and His lips rebuked the false pretensions and empty hypocrisies

of that day. As a result He was hated and despised by the religious leaders who stirred up the common people against Him too. He truly overcame and supremely so in that dark hour of suffering at the hands of men and from His God when He hung on Calvary. He trod the path of lowly obedience, even unto death, the death of the Cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name. Because He overcame, He has been accorded a place at the right hand of the Majesty on high, upon the throne of God. Our Lord reminds His saints of this, and bids them to overcome, even as He set them such a marvelous example.

The way to the throne is by the way of the cross. Those who suffer with Him shall reign with Him. Only those who stand for Him here shall sit down with Him there. Those who confess Him here He will confess before His Father and before the holy angels.

He has never promised that this earthly path should be an easy one. We are living in a world where sin holds sway; where Satan rules. He wants the throne and some day shall actually sit on the throne in Jerusalem, claiming that he is God—in the person of the Antichrist. He wants the rule now and ever tempts man to desire the same for himself. But our God assures us of hatred, suffering and reproach now; of the throne bye and bye.

*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.* Chap. 3:22.

We have reached the end of these two great chapters, with their tremendous, far-reaching and searching messages to every believer. While these seven Churches typify certain definite periods of time in the history of the Church from Pentecost to the glory ahead, yet we may and should learn spiritual lessons from all of them. That's why each time the message closes not by saying, "he that

hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the *church*, but to the *churches*—plural. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime are written for our learning, for our spiritual profit.

We might briefly note for instance as a sample from each of the seven messages the spiritual voice these should have to us now: Church 1) Ephesus: We may well heed the warning not to leave our first love, but to know the force always of II Cor. 5:14-15; 2) as in Smyrna, to be faithful unto death; 3) as in Pergamos, to hold fast His name; 4) in Thyatira to beware of the false, subtle villainess of Rome and her teachings; 5) in Sardis to be one of the few who walk and talk with Him; 6) in Philadelphia to remember that He is coming quickly and to be like men who wait for Him to come; 7) as in Laodicea to welcome fellowship with Him, opening our heart's door to welcome Him in, while the world shuts Him out.

Oh, may our meditations on these messages cause us to search ourselves, and to seek a closer walk with Him, till He comes!

## CHAPTER FOUR

*After this I looked, and behold, a door open in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. Chap. 4:1.*

It has been noticed by many that in v. 19 of the first chapter of this marvelous book of Revelation, John was told by the Lord Jesus to write of the past, the present and the future; that is: of the things he had just seen, of the things that are, and of those that were to come "hereafter". Chapter one unveils to John the past, for it showed him the great facts of the Christian faith, and showed him the risen Christ, carrying the keys of hell and death at His girdle. Then chapters two and three set forth in a most interesting and comprehensive manner the history of the Church of God on earth all during the present day of grace, beginning with the happy conditions as outlined in the address to Ephesus and ending with the awful apostasy that marks the church's last days upon earth, as outlined in the address to Laodicea.

Now this period of things that "are" is to be followed by the things which shall be "hereafter" and, in the opening verse of chapter four John is told he is about to be shown those things which will take place in the future. Therefore it is quite clear that chapter four begins the amazing unfolding of God's plans and purposes concerning His blessed Son that lie still in the future, as they did at the time John heard this voice from heaven, calling him up to the glory. In other words, Rev. 4:1 pictorially presents the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ calling His own up to heaven—to the glory He has gone to prepare

for them. With John we shall now, in anticipation, see those things that perhaps before long shall become realities.

Before John was caught up to heaven he saw a door open in heaven. It is not "opened" as in the A. V., as if he saw a door then being opened but he rather saw a door in heaven already standing open. This is a very precious truth indeed . . . a heaven standing wide open, inviting any one who will to enter—by faith—Heb. 10:19. It was not always so, as it were. Psalm 115:16 tells us that it is the earth that God had given to the children of men; that was to be their abode. But through sin man forfeited his right to live on earth, as Cain said in Gen. 4:14: "Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from Thy face shall I be hid". But, praise His name, by matchless grace, though man has lost his right to be on earth, God has made it possible for him to go to heaven—a place far more beautiful and wonderful than even this wonderful earthly creation. You and I are not going to live here; we shall be taken off the earth, and if believers in Christ we go to heaven with our Lord; or if not, we go to hell with its eternal woe. Oh, how we praise Him that He, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, by His sacrificial death on the Cross, has opened the way for us into heaven itself, to be with Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us. As our Lord said to the dying thief by His side; "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise".

Yes, Jesus has opened the way for us into heaven. The door is even now standing open wide for the believer, for by faith we enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; some day to enter there actually, when Jesus shall come to take us there, when we are transformed into His likeness. John being caught up there in our text pictures the rapture of the saints in that day soon to come, we hope.

John looked—looked up, saw a door open and heard a voice. Even so we believers should always be looking

up to see the way to God open, and to hear the voice of Him we love. What John did on this special occasion should be the regular habit of every Christian. Are we not told to set our mind on things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God; not on things on the earth? To seek those things which are above? Alas, how much we often look around; how little we look up. We should be constantly looking off unto Jesus, while running with patience the race set before us. We are not even told to look for the signs of His coming, but to look for the Savior, Who shall change our bodies and fashion them like unto His own body of glory.

John apparently at first only heard a voice, but did not see anyone. But when we shall hear the voice calling us home we shall see His face and instantly shall be changed into His likeness, for if He shall be manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. May you and I daily look on Him; daily look for Him. By faith even now we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honor. And we hear His voice, and follow Him.

How precious to be able to look through heaven's open door and see the One Who once hung on a cross of suffering crowned with thorns, now sitting on a throne of glory, crowned with a crown of glory. Seeing Him there, we are encouraged to be true to Him here; even, if needs be, to suffer for His sake; to bear His reproach.

I understand the more correct rendering is "the voice which I heard at first", referring to the voice of Christ which John had heard speaking to him as seen in chapter one. It is *that* voice—not the gentle human voice that spake so graciously here on earth as John walked with his Lord those years, but the voice like the roaring of many ocean waves (Chap. 1:17). Jesus is now to take His place of majestic power and greatness on the throne of the universe, and His mighty voice matches the majesty

of His supreme glory. But the first thing that voice does, with accents of greatest triumph, is to call His own up to heaven, as our Lord shall do when He is about to take to Himself His kingdom and reign. The first thing will be the calling home of His Bride, when we shall hear His: "Arise, my love, my fair one and come away. Come up hither".

Therefore, Rev. 4:1 is a miniature picture of the rapture—when Jesus comes to snatch His own away from this world of sin. I Cor. 15:52 tells us that His coming will be with the sound of a trumpet, even as we have in our text. It will be the rallying blast, heard world-wide, that shall raise the dead saints and translate the living ones together to meet the Lord in the air and so to be forever with the Lord (I Thess. 4:13-18). This latter passage details for us this tremendous event. Then, as it were, all the redeemed ones shall hear the trumpet call; all shall hear His voice and shall rise to meet Him. We shall respond to that cry we have here: "Come up hither". And we shall be shown things, not alone those which John saw here, but through eternal ages, He will reveal to us the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness to us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7). Are you ready for the call? Is Christ your Savior? Is heaven your destiny?

*And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. Chap. 4:23.*

In Exodus 28, where the names engraven on the precious stones of the highpriest's breastplate represent the people of God, the first is the sardius and the last is the jasper. Here these two stones, the first and the last, are seen to reveal the glory of Him Who is the first and the last. In Exodus they set forth the beauty of the saints

of God in His eyes; here the glory of their Savior. He and His saints, as it were, are associated thus; we too shall shine with an undimmed lustre forevermore; we too shall sit on the throne.

The first and the last stones of Exodus 28 are reversed here. Is it to tell us that He Who in grace took the place of last of all, is now therefore forevermore the first? The white of the jasper with the red of the sardine stone unite to tell the story that infinite purity has been secured for us by infinite love through the shedding of the "red" blood of Calvary. As a result there is the emerald green of eternal life and fruitfulness, as seen in the rainbow. And the rainbow of green tells us that the storm of judgment is past and the glory of God shines all the more brightly through the dark storm of Calvary. Here on earth we always see a rainbow only partly, for our vision is limited by the earth, but in heaven we see the rainbow in full—all around the throne. Here and now only the half is told as it were; there we shall see all the glory of God fully revealed, and shall know and enjoy all the riches of God's unchanging love.

*And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. Chap. 4:4.*

Around the central throne were four and twenty other thrones, for the word translated seats is the Greek word for throne the same as with the throne of God. We know from Chap. 5:8-10 who those elders are—they are the redeemed from all the nations of the earth. They are seen in heaven, in our text, suggesting plainly that they have been raptured to glory; that the Lord Jesus Christ must have come for His Church. This blessed truth is intimated in verse one of this chapter, where John was called to come up hither. All the believers, both dead

and living, shall hear that shout when Jesus comes. There are three outstanding facts in our text:

1. These saints are all sitting.
2. They are clothed in white raiment.
3. They are crowned with crowns of gold.

This proves first of all that these saints have been caught up at the coming of Christ, seen by John of course in anticipatory vision, for many passages of Scripture teach that the giving out of the rewards (always pictured in the bestowing of crowns) will not take place till after the saints have left the earth. As Jesus says in Rev. 22: 12 "Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be".

Secondly, it proves that these are fit for the glory, for they wear white garments and there is only one thing that can make garments white enough for God's presence, and that is the infinite worth of the precious blood of Christ.

Third, they are sitting on thrones, proving that the time for suffering is over and the hour to reign with Him has come.

*And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: Chap. 4: 5-6.*

There was a rainbow around the throne—in v. 3, and a rainbow always is seen when the storm is about over. But now, in our text, there is evidently another storm brewing, marked by lightning, thundering and (which marks this storm as different from ordinary storms, proving it is not merely nature's ebullition) "voices".

We know now which storm it is that is about to break loose. When we, the redeemed of this age, have gone home to heaven, the storm for us is forever past and in

heaven we enjoy the peace and security of eternal bliss. The rainbow around the throne reminds us of earth's trials, sorrows and hatreds, making heaven more sweet, as we enjoy that eternal haven of rest.

But, when the storm stops for us, the most fearful tempest this world has ever known will break forth upon this poor earth. Then shall come the hour of great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of time, nor ever shall be again. Up there, before God's throne, the once for us so stormy sea is now a pavement of crystal; life's fearful waves forever stilled. But here below the storm of wrath will sweep the world. Praise His name, though, its awfulness is controlled and directed by Him Who sits on the throne, and the voices mingled with the lightning and thunder probably tell how even then through those horrors Christ will speak to human hearts, and will draw many to Himself as the gospel of the kingdom is being preached for a witness unto all nations. The tempest is seen to have the very throne of God for its center, for it is the very God Who saves the repentant sinner who will judge the unrepentant world.

*In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind . . . And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Chap. 4: 8.*

Those four beasts (more accurately "living creatures") undoubtedly are symbolic and would represent God fully revealed in Christ. All Bible students see these four features of the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle, seen here and also in that similar vision of Ezek. 1:10, as portraying the fulness of God, as revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Each of the four gospels presents our Lord in

one of these characters stamped upon these four living creatures. Matthew presents Him as lion—as the king; Mark as the ox—God's faithful servant; Luke as man—the Son of Man, and John as the eagle—Christ in His heavenly character as the Son of God.

These living creatures were full of eyes before, behind and within. This well sets forth the eternal greatness of Him Who was, is and is to come. The eyes behind would tell us that He knows all that is past; He knew it before it ever happened. The eyes within tell of His present omniscience—nothing is hid from His eyes; He knows the innermost thoughts of the heart as well as the motives thereof. The eyes before remind us that all the future is known to Him as well.

And is it not blessedly true that, in a minor measure, the same may be said of us, His redeemed ones? He has revealed to us in His Word the wonders of His power and His ways in the past; we now see wondrous things hidden from the eyes of others, and in this book as well as elsewhere we see much of the future, and shall learn more as eternal ages roll their course.

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

The Person sitting upon the throne is not mentioned by name. But, as elsewhere in Scripture, there is an undefinable connection between the Father and the Son, and what is intimated of the One is also intimated of the

Other. From chapter 5:6-7 one might gather that the One sitting upon the throne is God the Father, for the Lamb—the Lord Jesus Christ—is seen to take the book out of the hand of the One upon the throne. Yet the close of our chapter indicates that the One on the throne is the Son, for to Him is ascribed the creation of all things, and Col. 1:16 informs us that all things were created by Him. Our little minds cannot encompass the infinitude of Deity. We do know that the Father and the Son are One.

Here the living creatures and the elders ascribe all praise to Him as the Creator of all things; in the next chapter such praise is for Him as the Redeemer. The first and the second; the old and the new creation, are all His handiwork. He said "it is finished" on both occasions, and rested from all His work. And all was made for His pleasure; a pleasure which, thank God, we even now partially share with Him, and which also shall be our joy throughout all eternity. His presence is fulness of joy; at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Amen!

## CHAPTER FIVE

*And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. Chap. 5:1-3.*

There are, I believe, six distinct books mentioned in the book of Revelation, of which this is the second. The first one is in chapter 1:11—the book concerning the messages to the seven churches. The third mentioned frequently, is the book of life, as in Chap. 17:8, etc.; the fourth, the books containing the life's records of men—Chap. 20:12; the fifth, the book of Revelation itself—Chap. 22:7, etc., and the sixth, the little book of Revelation 10:2, which most likely has reference to the Old Testament books of prophecy, having to do with Israel and the earth.

The book of our text is more than full; it is even written upon on the outside covers. We learn later that this book contains the judgments about to be poured out on this sinful world; judgments held back for so long that they, as it were, seem to overflow. Man has treasured up wrath for the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Rom. 2:5); and the hour for its outpouring is now about to strike. Hitherto they have been sealed off, and the seals can only be broken by Him to Whom all judgment has been committed (John 5:22).

The Lord Jesus Christ fills this chapter. He is the strong angel calling forth the Worthy One able to open

the book. He also is the Lion and the Lamb, whom John saw in the midst of the throne. He is always in the midst—the Center of all God's thoughts and plans; the Central Object of universal worship and adoration.

*And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. Chap. 5: 4-5.*

Neither heaven, earth nor hell could produce one great enough to either look on this book, or to open and read it. But John tells us that there is One Who does prevail; He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David. These very titles tell us that this book and its contents have the people of Israel specially in view. The scepter should be wielded by Him Who is the lion descended from Judah, by Him Who is the root of David. After the flesh Christ is the offspring of David; as to His Eternal Deity He is the Root of David. Thus He is able to take the book for He is none other than the Son of God Who in grace became the Son of Man, born of the tribe of Judah, to reign as the victorious King of kings.

He would do three things now with this book; look upon it, open it, and read it. No one else is said to be worthy to do so. The book was sealed with seven seals, and the sealing of the book suggests that only He for Whom the book is intended has any right to handle it.

Looking on the book suggests His understanding of its contents.

Opening it indicates His right to unveil the tremendous things the book contains and to introduce the judgments about to fall.

Reading it suggests the execution of those judgments.

*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. Chap. 5:6.*

What an amazing sight! John heard that the Lion was about to take the book, but when he looked he saw a Lamb. The Lion and the Lamb are one and the same blessed Person. Literally it says that John saw a "little" lamb. Twenty-eight times in this book of Revelation our blessed Lord is seen as the little Lamb. It seems as if God would stress the marvelous contrast of a mighty lion and a weak little lamb, to point in this way the greatness of His love that led the One in Whom all power resides, to take the place of abject weakness on the Cross of Calvary. Yes, here in this book where the Lord Jesus takes to Himself His great power and assumes the reins of universal sway, God would have all men know that it is the little lamb Who is doing so. Could any contrast be sharper than that between a ferocious lion and a meek little lamb? Christ is both.

For this is the Lamb that has been slain. This is the Lamb of Calvary, who yielded Himself in weakness to the fearful shame and suffering of the Cross. And it is there, through weakness and defeat, that He won the meed and crown. The One Who humbled Himself is now the highly exalted One at the right hand of the throne of God. He is the One before Whom every knee shall bow; Who shall subdue all enemies; Who, like a lion as it were, shall tear His enemies to pieces.

All power is His, as the seven horns indicate; all intelligence and knowledge is His, as the seven eyes tell us. And those eyes, in our text, are looking downward to the earth, for the hour of His vindication has arrived; the hour when He shall reign. He shall break the seals, and

cause the wrath of God to sweep over this doomed world. John in heaven is told not to weep, but the earth is about to be deluged in tears.

*And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. Chap. 5:7.*

Let us try to identify this book. It evidently has to do with the judgments to be poured out upon the world in the day of the Lord now drawing so near, for the very loosing of the seals results in fearful catastrophies, as chapter 6 goes on to unfold.

There is a beautiful Old Testament picture meant to explain what this book of our text really is. It is found in Jeremiah 32:6-15. In that chapter we learn Jeremiah is in prison and the land of Israel is about to fall into the hands of the Chaldeans. It is then that Jeremiah is told by the Lord to buy a field in Anathoth. He buys it for his future heirs, for it was not till Israel's return to their land from Babylon that this property could be possessed again. Even so our Lord bought this world for His heirs when He died at Calvary. See Matt. 13:44 where the Lord bought the field, which v. 38 of that chapter assures us is the world. Jeremiah's property was in Anathoth, meaning "affliction". Hanameel who sold it means "the favor of God", and he was the son of Shallum, which means "restitution". The title to the property was given to Baruch, whose name means "blessed". Those very names teach that through affliction the people favored of God would yet be restored and blessed.

The title deeds to this property were sealed—Jer. 32:10—while one copy of the deed was left open and unsealed. The open copy of the deed refers to God's Word we now hold in our hands, where we may read of the wonderful inheritance our blessed Lord bought for us at the Cross. Here, too,, Israel may read in the Scriptures their title to the land of Israel in the day of their future restoration.

The sealed copy could only be opened by the rightful heirs, when later on they could regain the right to their possession. This copy is pictured for us in our chapter in Revelation. The Only One Who has a right to break the seals to His own property which He bought and paid for on Calvary is the Lord Jesus Himself, for He is the One appointed by God the Heir of all things (Heb. 1:3). He will break the seals; judge His enemies who are squatting on His property—this earth—and then bring the people of Israel back into their earthly inheritance, which in infinite grace He has secured for them, and out of which, because of their rejection of Christ, they were driven 1900 years ago. Israel shall be His earthly people and share His earthly glory; we shall be His heavenly Bride and reign with Him on high.

*And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.*  
Chap. 5:8.

Only One, as we saw, was worthy to take the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, and that One was the Lamb Who once gave Himself for us upon the Cross. He was sheared of His glory and then led as a lamb to the slaughter. Now the hour of His triumph has come, as He takes the book that entitles Him to assume the reins of government and to execute the judgments which the Father has given into His hands.

As Jesus takes the book, the heavenly saints fall down before Him. You and I, dear fellow-believer, shall be present on that tremendous occasion. That hour for which all creation groans, to which Israel may well look on with mixed emotions, for apostate Israel shall feel His wrath, while those who will turn to Christ shall hail Him as their Deliverer. The hour will then be ushered in, for

which His saints have prayed so long, and for which our blessed Lord has so patiently waited.

The heavenly saints play upon their harps, and carry bowls of sweet incense, which are the prayers of saints. The saints referred to here are the saints then upon the earth (those from among Israel shall then receive Christ), and who will cry to God in their fearful sufferings during the great tribulation, and whose cries are presented before God by means of us, His saints in heaven, and to whose prayers the Lord Himself adds the sweet incense of His perfection—see also Chap. 8:3-4. God will hear those cries and show mercy to His tried and persecuted Jewish people on the earth at that time. The harps in heaven stringing forth His praise; the judgments on the earth displaying God's power.

*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*  
Chap. 5:9-10.

They sung a new song. Yet when we listen to that song and join in it up there in the glory, we find it is the same song we have been singing down here below for many years. Ah, it is not new because it is new, but it is new because it never grows old. Eternally it shall retain its freshness, its wonder, its thrill.

From every nation under heaven, but no longer divided into nationalities, myriads shall join in the ever swelling paean of praise to Him Who alone is worthy. He is worthy of homage and of praise; worthy by all to be adored. Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays, Thou, Thou are worthy, Jesus, Lord.

He was slain, brutally shamed and dishonored by man, whose sins He bore on the Cross. Forever this shall keep us humbly at His feet. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Our exceeding guilt became the cause of our redemption. He has redeemed us—set us free from sin and shame forever. But not only so, He has redeemed us “to God”, bringing us into intimate fellowship with Him against Whom we had sinned and rebelled.

And, praise His Name, He has bestowed royalty upon us. We are now a kingdom of priests, to serve and worship Him and to serve man. And we shall reign with Him over the earth, in that day of His glory.

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

When the elders sing His praises in v. 9 the theme of their song is the redemption our blessed Savior wrought at Calvary, but when the angels chime in here in v. 12, the song of redemption is omitted, for angels cannot join in that glorious note. We are not going to be angels and with the angels stand. No, we have been lifted far above angels, for God has redeemed us by His grace and has adopted us into the royal heavenly family of our God, made sons and heirs of God, and has purposed that we shall sit with Him upon His throne. Angels shall be our servants in that day. Oh marvel of marvels; how utterly surpassing human thought and almost surpassing belief. But God has said so, praise His holy name; it is true.

There is a sevenfold ascription of praise as these millions upon millions—yea, billions upon billions—of heav-

only saints and angels ascribe to the once slain Lamb the glory due unto Him. Again we are reminded that this is the Lamb that was slain. He shall never hear the last of this; the matchless love shown at Calvary shall be the eternal theme of praise in those courts of light.

Down here on earth poverty, weakness, dishonor, shame, cursing and death were His portion, endured by Him in infinite grace; much of it heaped upon Him by wicked men. Now His hour of glory and triumph has come, and for weakness that led Him to be nailed to the Cross there is now power; for poverty there are riches; for shame there is honor; and blessing for Him Who bore the curse for us. Lord Jesus, before Thee we bow our knees in humblest adoration.

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

How far reaching the results of the work of the Lamb upon the Cross: According to Gen. 22 He died to meet the claims of God—of one Person, as Abraham said to Isaac: "God shall provide (for) Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." First of all Christ in His death satisfied divine justice; He glorified God the Father; according to Exodus 12:3 He died to save one family; wider still, in Lev. 16 He was offered to meet the need of a whole nation—the nation of Israel; according to John 1:29 He died so the whole world could be saved (though alas, men won't); and in our text His death as the Lamb is acclaimed by the whole universe. Thus in ever widening

circles He is acknowledged as Lord of all—worthy of all praise. Yea, in our text even souls in hell (those under the earth) join in acclaiming Him. How very solemn that those eternally lost, too, shall be made to bow the knee and confess Jesus Lord—to the glory of God the Father, though it means their eternal doom.

How inexpressibly blessed are those who have learned to bow the knee to Jesus now and who, not because forced to do so, but because they delight to honor Him, sing His praises and tell forth the praises of Him Who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

As chapter four of this marvelous book acknowledges Him as Creator, and ascribes the praise therefor to Him, so chapter five exalts Him as Redeemer. As we read in the first chapter of Colossians, He is the Firstborn of all creation, and He is also the Firstborn from the dead—the Head of His church. And in this double capacity He is the One Who will reconcile all things unto Himself, and bring them into full harmony, so that sin shall be banished from God's creation. And He also is the One who reconciles men to God, when they accept Him as Savior and own Him as Lord of all.

## CHAPTER SIX

*And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals,*  
Chap. 6:1.

The opening of the seals ushers in the terrible judgments to fall upon this earth after the Church has been caught up to glory, as we saw in chap. 4:1. There are seven of these seals, as there are seven trumpets and seven vials. Personally I am inclined to believe that these three sevens run concurrently and show us, in various connections, the fearful horrors of Daniel's seventieth week.

The seals present the general judgment as it falls on the world as such; the trumpets specially have the nation of Israel in view, and the vials present the pouring out of God's wrath on apostate Christendom. The "Lamb" is prominent in connection with the seals; the "angels" with the trumpets, and "God" with the vials, in the outpouring of His wrath.

Seals, trumpets and vials all end in a similar setting. At the close of the seventh seal an angel fills his censer at the golden altar (Chap. 8:3-5), which suggests the temple where the altar was placed; at the close of the seventh trumpet the temple is opened and the ark revealed (Chap. 11:19); and at the close of the vials again the temple is mentioned (Chap. 16:17). So also there is a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seal; between the sixth and seventh trumpet and between the sixth and seventh vial, suggesting that all three cover the same period of time. So in chapter 11:15, after the seventh trumpet, the kingdoms become His kingdom; so after the seventh vial we hear "it is done", also indicating the end is reached of that day of wrath (Chap. 16:17).

During the seals the Lamb and His saints are seen; during the trumpets the Lamb disappears from sight and the angels are prominent, which would indicate the trumpets are in relation to Israel, for God ever dealt with Israel through the instrumentality of angels; it is only when grace reigns that He draws near to His saints, as He does in relation to His church.

*“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals”*,

I believe it will help greatly in the understanding of the book of Revelation if you look at these three series covering, as I suggested the whole seven years of tribulation, but as applying to the three classes then upon the earth—to the Gentile, the Jew and the apostate church.

Of these seven seals the first four are introduced by each one of the four living creatures; the last three are not. The seven parables of Matt. 13 are also divided into four and three, and probably for the same reason as are these seven seals. The first four are more open and public and exhibit Satan's activity, as also in the first four parables of Matt. 13. The last three are more secret, and tell us rather of God's doings, as is also the case in Matt. 13. The number is nearly always divided in Scripture into 4 and 3, presenting things as they relate to the whole world and giving us the devil's activity in world events, while God is seen in His workings in the final three.

The opening of the seals suggests that God's judgment is only really realized in heaven, for only in heaven is the opening of the seals seen. Man is so slow to realize that God is a judge of evil; man likes to blame his troubles on others or on the devil. None of these judgments break loose until Christ breaks each seal; judgment is under His control and shall not burst loose upon this world until He

gives the word. And not till we have left it for the glory above—praise His Name!

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

*And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given unto him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword. Chap. 6:1-4.*

It is difficult to dogmatize on the exact meaning of these men riding these horses. It is clear, however, that the first one depicts peaceful, bloodless conquest; the second violent, apparently mostly civil war and bloodshed. The first rider certainly is not the Lord Jesus, though some take it to be He (I suppose because, like this rider, He too is seen on a white horse—Rev. 19:11). But our Lord comes on the white horse at the close of the book of Revelation. There is no public appearing of Christ suggested in Scripture at the beginning of this hour of vengeance. Since Antichrist is the imitator of Christ—as seen in other verses of the Bible—it is but logical to think that in this first rider we see antichristian power riding forth and conquering and deluding the minds of men by the false lies that then shall prevail—see II Thess. 2:11-12. Perhaps it may not be the personal antichrist, but certainly the nefarious deceiving power of that sinister personage.

The white-horse rider may also suggest a time of plenty and peace—see I Thess. 5:2—followed by sudden destruction, as seen in the rider on the red horse. The liv-

ing creatures say "Come"; not come "and see". Their call is not to John but to the riders to come forth. The fact they spoke with a voice of thunder shows this. The same is true in all of the first four seals.

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

Quite evidently the curse suggested here is that of famine, which so often follows in the train of war and its many attendant miseries. The black of the horse suggests this thought too, as we read in Lam. 5:10: "Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine". Usually about eight measures of wheat could be bought for a penny at that time, so that food is here said to be eight times the normal price—true *black* market gouging. The pair of scales also intimate the scarcity of food, as if the least grain of wheat or barley had to be weighed. A measure of wheat (about a quart) was hardly enough food for one man for a day so that in this time of suffering as it were it would take a man's full day's pay to buy just food enough to keep him alone alive, without any for his family.

From this scourge the wealthy of course escape in a measure, since the oil and the wine (the possession of the rich—Jer. 31:12) are not hurt as yet. But under the sixth seal (v. 15) the rich reap their doom as well.

A voice from the midst of the living creatures speaks here; it is God's voice, showing these catastrophies are not just happenings, but are divinely ordered and imposed by

infinite justice. What an awful time awaits this poor Christless world!

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

This fourth seal is directly connected with God's judgments on the land of Israel in the latter days, as prophesied in Ezek. 14:21. The four sore judgments found under this fourth seal are mentioned there also, pinpointing this fourth seal clearly. This fourth and final seal, as far as the public open view is concerned, generalizes the sad and awful state of things on the earth during the great tribulation. The "power" seen under the first seal; the "sword" under the second seal; the "hunger and famine" under the third are all reiterated here, combined with that of the "beasts of the earth", which no doubt refers to those sinister persons called "beasts" in Revelation 13 and which, I feel sure, present the future Ruler of the European confederacy of nations, and the Antichrist, seen in the latter part of that chapter.

We have no details in these seals, as later on under the trumpets and vials. Here we have rather a general, comprehensive view of those fearful coming years of sorrow and judgment which shall devastate the world. Alas, not as man hopes or dreams, universal peace; at least, not till after men, by means of God's judgments, have learned righteousness. Not till after the sinners have been taken out of this world and put in hell. Then shall His earthly saints take the kingdom; Christ shall reign in equity and

majesty. What a day of rejoicing that will be, when peace on earth shall be an abiding reality!

*And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. Chap. 6:9-11.*

Who are these who cry for vengeance? They are certainly not the martyrs of this age of grace, for a desire for vengeance is never found on their lips; nay rather, like their Lord, they pray for their enemies, saying: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do".

But we do find this demand for the vengeance of God on the saints' enemies very often on the lips of God's earthly people Israel. Many times they are heard to cry, as in the so-called imprecatory Psalms, for God to avenge them of their haters and oppressors. Many times they utter that passionate "How long?" How long shall evil triumph and righteousness suffer? Many of the Psalms look on to Israel's day of great tribulation and her suffering during that awful time; the very time of which our Lord spoke in Matt. 24:9 when He said: "They shall deliver you up and shall kill you and ye shall be hated of all nations for My Name's sake".

The saints of our text are those who were slain during the first three and a half years of the seven years of sorrow yet to come upon the earth; they are told to be patient until the rest shall also be slain in martyrdom—during the 3½ years of what is called the "great" trib-

ulation. Their suffering will be fierce, but their reward commensurate, for those martyrs shall share the heavenly glory and honor, instead of only Israel's blessing upon the earth.

*And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. Chap. 6:12-14.*

One cannot always speak with assurance as to whether such language is symbolic or literal. We do know, however, that very often in Scripture bodies like the sun, moon and stars represent people. God is spoken of Himself as the "sun" and shield (Psalm 84:11); Joseph's mother was likened to the moon, and the stars are often spoken of as symbolic of men.

Hence the figures employed in this text may well suggest that in the awful days to come all ruling powers, as seen in the sun and moon; all great men, as suggested by the stars; mighty nations, as pictured by the mountains and smaller, more isolated kingdoms, as seen in the "islands" will collapse. There will come fearful political upheavals, with accompanying bloodshed and destruction, suggested in the turning of the sun into blackness and the moon into blood.

But there is no reason to doubt that, together with these human, political catastrophies, there will be terrific upheavals in nature, such as earthquakes, famines and pestilences in many places. Praise God, dear fellow believer, you and I will not be here. These things are for those who "dwell upon the earth". We do not; we're only pilgrims here; our Home is up there where Jesus is.

*And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Chap. 6: 15-16.*

An old hymn reads:

They shall pray to the rocks and the mountains;  
they prayed, but their prayer was too late!

Our text describes this great prayer meeting at the time when God will not hear those prayers. The day of grace for the apostate Jew and Gentile will have reached its end, and there remains nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.

Man's boasted civilization will come down with a crash; man's dream of peace on earth will dissolve into chaos. Man must learn that it is not grace, but judgment that will usher in God's reign of perfect righteousness. The kingdom will be established, not by social improvement, but by God taking out, in divine wrath, every unbeliever and rebel against Him, and consigning such eventually to the lake of fire.

Very many Old Testament scriptures foretell the scene depicted in our text. In fact, our passage contains direct quotations from the prophets Isaiah, Joel, Haggai, etc. As in Isa. 34:4: "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine and as a falling fig from the fig tree". Oh, how blessed is our portion who have found a shelter in the Rock, Christ Jesus, who have seen the glory of

God's grace in the face of Jesus Christ and who draw near to Him, instead of like these hiding from that face.

*For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? Chap. 6:17.*

One is deeply impressed by this amazing paradoxical expression: "the *wrath* of the *Lamb*". It seems difficult to reconcile wrath with a lamb, for no creature is more inoffensive than a little lamb. Yes, truly, and no one could be more gentle, more kind, more compassionate than He of Whom this "little lamb" speaks—the lowly, gentle Jesus. The blessed One Who said of Himself: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Yet it is this One, so full of love and mercy, Who will truly pour forth His wrath on this Christ-rejecting world. Generally it speaks in the Bible of this coming wrath as the wrath of "God", but we know that it is Jesus Who 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" (II Thess. 1:7-8).

Even while He was here upon earth, the very Savior Who died for us on the Cross in matchless love is also the One Who spoke of the horrors of hell, and warned sinners there is a place of eternal weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. He Who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, He Who yielded Himself to the fearful agony and shame accorded Him in order that He might make it possible for sinners to be saved; He it is Who will judge in fiery wrath all who scorn His love and blaspheme His holy Name. Make no mistake about it; the wrath of the Lamb will be a fearful thing, for love scorned—especially God's amazing love, can only mean eternal doom. Who shall be able to stand in that day? Only such as stand solidly on the Rock of Ages; cleft for sin.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

*And after these things I saw four angels standing in 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. Chap. 7:1-3.*

In this text earthly saints are sealed, while today we His heavenly saints are sealed (Eph. 1:13). These are sealed just before the great tribulation starts, after the rapture of the Church, while we His saints are sealed now and are caught up to glory ere these things transpire. These are sealed for physical protection from physical death; we are sealed for spiritual safekeeping. For these 144,000 sealed ones are Jews—the redeemed remnant of the latter days—of which the Old Testament prophets have so much to say; of whose happy future the Psalms speak so very, very often. These are they of whom the Lord Jesus spoke when He said: “He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13). The Lord was speaking of their salvation from physical death; not the salvation of their soul, though of course they will be saved ones in that way as well. This group is composed of those who will pass alive through the tribulation—while many others of Israel will be slain during that time of fearful retribution. These are they who will enter the millennial reign of Christ here upon the earth; those of whom the Lord said in Matt. 25:34: “Come ye blessed

of My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Some interpret this group as being spiritual Israel; in other words, the believers of the present age. The simple fact that never—not once—does Israel in Scripture mean anything else or other than the Jewish people refutes that interpretation. Let's keep the record straight; Israel is Israel in Scripture and the Church is the Church; and never the twain shall meet.

*And I heard the number of them that were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Chap. 7:4-8.*

This seal is stamped on the foreheads of these saints, where it can readily be seen as it were. Thus God openly acknowledges and claims these as His own people, as later Satan's followers are branded in their right hand and in their foreheads. It was the practice among the Romans to mark their soldiers in their right hands, and slaves branded in their foreheads. Hence those marks of God here, and of Satan in Chap. 13 are meant to indicate insignia of ownership and thus allegiance.

It is questioned by many whether this number 144,000 represents the exact number of preserved Israel. For myself I am inclined to think it may be the actual number that shall pass alive through the tribulation. Of course this number has in mind only the men; adding to this the wives and families, the total number might reach a million. Just remember that even in the second world war (and that was only a dress rehearsal to what is coming on the earth) almost one-third of the world's Jews were exterminated; no doubt during the tribulation that will be far surpassed. You know, of course, that cults like Jehovah Witnessism, the house of Zion and others all claim

to be *the* 144,000. The nonsense of such claims is easily recognized when we remember that these 144,000 are of the literal twelve tribes of Israel; they are Jews and nothing else. While this actual number is not given elsewhere, their existence in the latter days is the theme of hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament.

It is interesting to note that Dan and Ephraim are left out in this list of the tribes, with the name of Joseph taking Ephraim's place. Dan and Ephraim were the first two tribes to go into idolatry, which may account for their omission here. Others suggest that Manasseh should be excluded here as he is naturally included in Joseph, and that probably the first letters of the name Manasseh—being the word "man", were a copyist error and that Dan should have been named instead.

*After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.*

*And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. Chap. 7: 9-12.*

These are the Gentiles saved from the many nations of the world and blessed with Israel here upon earth. In Rev. 5:9 where the heavenly saints are in view it states they are the redeemed *out of* every nation, but here they are said to be of all nations (v. 9). They retain their national status here, for they are the Gentiles saved to en-

joy the millennial blessing with Israel here upon the earth; in heaven, as seen in Rev. 5, national distinctions are of course unknown.

Ever so many Old Testament prophets speak of this future blessing of the Gentiles with Israel having the prominent place on earth. Isaiah 60: 3 for instance, where "the Gentiles shall come to thy (Israel's light) and kings to the brightness of thy rising". Romans 15:10: "Rejoice ye Gentiles, with His people". The net cast into the sea (Matthew 13) pictures the ingathering of these Gentile saints during the tribulation times. And as these saints ascribe praise to God and to the Lamb, next we see the myriad hosts of heavenly saints, with the angels, break out in worship to God in a sevenfold paean of praise. What a glorious day it will be for the earth when Christ shall reign, with Jerusalem and the Jews the head of the nations; and the nations that are saved then, blessed in a world of peace. Heaven and earth here in anticipation are heard to join in that song of eternal joy.

*And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of tribulation (the great one) and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Chap. 7:17.*

We are definitely told that these came out of the great tribulation. They are saints from among the Gentiles, to live on earth. They are not on thrones, as the heavenly saints in chapter 5, but before the throne. They are not sitting on thrones, but standing before a throne. They serve God in His temple, which proves they are on earth, for we are told clearly in Chap. 21:22 that there is no temple in heaven.

They are all saved people, for they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This is a typical earthly way of speaking of redemption's work. Of us it does not say that we have washed ourselves but that we have been washed. Nor does it say of us that we wash our robes, as it does of these. The robe speaks of the life seen by man; On earth the life that is lived is in view—the doing of things by us—and so these are seen to have a life that is pure, but pure not through their own works, but as made so in virtue of the blood of the Lamb.

There is suggested an end to the present age of trial, suffering and pain. God shall wipe away all tears; they shall never hunger any more; the Lamb Himself shall lead them to living fountains of waters. Here is truly a picture of earthly bliss. Our bliss is in the glory above, as we know, which will far surpass this.

The last verse of this chapter is a quotation from Isaiah 49:10, where the whole context shows Israel's and the Gentile nations' future blessing here on earth is in view.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

*And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour . . . and another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hands.*

*And the angel took the senser, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. Chap. 8:1-5.*

The calm before the storm—silence in heaven. It is as if it were like the ominous, heavy brooding atmosphere that will depress us just before a fearful storm breaks. Angels are about to sound the trumpets of judgment that will bring down the deluge of wrath upon the world. But, before this happens, we get another view of Him Whom we have seen before, for the angel of our text, so it seems to me, is none other than the Lord Jesus Himself. Down on earth, where the great tribulation is about to strike, there are many of Israel who have turned to Him in repentance and now He hears their prayers for His mercy and care for them during this time of unparalleled suffering about to fall upon them. (We read such prayers very often in the psalms of David). And He, their soon to come Messiah and Deliverer, offers their prayers up before God on their behalf, adding to them the infinite worth of the incense of His own perfections and intercessory grace.

First He offers the prayers of the saints with the golden censer; then the same censer is filled by Him with fire of the altar and that is cast into the earth, telling us that the very judgment once borne by Him on Calvary when He offered Himself upon the altar of sacrifice is the measure of judgment now about to be poured out on those who rejected His sacrificial love. Salvation and damnation both are centered in the altar—in the Cross; salvation in this day of grace; damnation in the day of judgment.

*And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. Chap. 8:6-7.*

The book of Revelation of course is highly symbolic and, while some of these afflictions called forth by the trumpets may also be literal, yet I believe in general they are literal similes employed to impart spiritual truths; spiritual judgments which shall plague men in that day of wrath. Hail and fire, mingled with blood, would suggest these judgments have spiritual meaning, for we never see blood mingled ordinarily with hail or fire. Hail intimates the withdrawal of heat, telling us that in that awful day the love of God will be withdrawn, and instead of that the fire of God's judgment shall sweep the world, this of course resulting in the destruction of millions, in the shedding of their blood.

Similar language is employed by Isaiah, as for instance in Chap. 28:2 and 17. In the latter verse the hail apparently is not literal hail, for that would not sweep away the refuge of "lies". Evidently the hail and storm there refer to God's judgments of men to their destruction. When God delivered His people from Egyptian bondage the hail and the fire were literal, as seen in Exodus in

the seventh plague, but here they are as clearly figurative. So also the trees and the grass of our text refer not to literal plants, but to the great men of earth under the figures of trees—see Dan. 4:20-22; the common people being referred to in Scripture as grass—I Pet. 1:24. In other words, God's stroke will fall on the great and the small.

*And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. Chap. 8:8-9.*

A mountain represents a kingdom or established governmental power—see Jer. 51:25. Its being cast burning into the sea speaks of the judgment of God causing the fall of this evil power and that as a result—the sea (typical in Scripture of the nations of the earth) will suffer greatly. The fact that a third part of the ships are destroyed intimates that commerce and business will be greatly affected by the collapse of this mighty government. Under the first trumpet the earth—typical of Israel—particularly suffers; here it is the sea—typical of the Gentile nations. Jeremiaħ 51 makes it clear that this burning mountain is Babylon—the mother of harlots and abominations—which will then suffer the fire of God's vengeance, as delineated in chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation. In Chap. 18 we read how commerce is affected by her doom, for the merchants of the earth will wail because of her fall; a truth plainly suggested here in the destruction of much of the shipping in that day.

In other words, we see under the sounding of the second trumpet, the eventual doom of Catholicism, with its fearful religious and political power. It speaks repeatedly here of only a "third" part being touched, and I take it

that in this the doom of those awful days is depicted as it specially relates to Israel, for Israel will be divided in that day into three parts, as we are told in Zech. 13: 8-9. The nation will consist of those who pass alive through the great tribulation and who will thus enter the millennial reign of Christ; of those who are martyred for their faith and will be caught up to glory to share heavenly bliss; and the third part will be that section that will turn apostate and will fall under the wrath of God poured out. It is that latter third part which is specially in view in these judgments under the trumpets.

*And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountain of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. Chap. 8: 10-11.*

We saw a great mountain v. 8; a great star in v. 10. While a mountain refers to a group comprising a nation or power of magnitude, the star pictures rather an individual. No doubt this star is the one called the Antichrist in Scripture. As the tree which Moses cast into the waters made the bitter waters sweet (and that tree speaks of Christ and the work of the Cross), so here this evil star makes the sweet waters bitter. The false Satanic lies this evil Person will propagate will poison the sweet truths of God's Word; shall be the strong delusion God will send upon men by means of this evil coming imitation of our Christ.

It thus becomes quite clear why this trumpet follows the one before. As in trumpet No. 2 we see the fall of Romanism—the woman of sin—so now in this trumpet we see the curse of Antichrist—the man of sin. As there we see God's judgment on corrupt Catholicism, so here

His judgment on apostate Christendom. "Rivers" in the Bible picture the national life of the people; fountains speak of the influences that act upon people. All are corrupted here by the devilish delusions which shall sweep the world after the restraining influence of God's true saints has been removed at the catching Home of the church to heaven.

Water is a significant figure in the Bible for "life"; there is no living without it. So here all water is polluted in a spiritual sense—there will be no possibility of eternal life—of salvation—but many will die (that is, perish eternally) because of those poisoned waters. As we read in II Thess. 2:11 "God will send men a strong delusion that they all should believe the lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness". Our present subject then pictures the fearful darkness of apostasy in those awful days.

*And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.*

*And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound. Chap. 8:12-13.*

In these four trumpets we see how the earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains and now the sun, moon and stars are all affected; these having reference to Israel, the nations, Babylon the great, Antichrist, men of power and earthly greatness, etc. All bringing before us in symbolic form truths taught in Old Testament prophecies, as well as throughout the New Testament.

Our present text pictures anarchial communism—the abolition of all constituted authority, with, back of it all, the denial of submission to Him Who truly, like the Sun in the sky, reigns supreme. A careful meditation on v. 12 will show the language here is symbolic, for naturally there would be no sense in the sun shining only one-third of the day because one-third of the sun was dark; its degree of darkness would not affect its length of shining in any way; hence this, as so much in Revelation, is clearly figurative. It means that in the awful time of God's wrath governmental authority will cease during part of the tribulation period and that anarchy will reign, with all its attendant suffering. Do you want a sample of it? You can find it in the French revolution.

But the end is not yet, and v. 13 speaks of three woes still to come. Again we do praise the Lord that we shall not be on earth during those awful years of woe. We shall be in the glory above with Him. Above the lightning and the thunder—in the eternal sunshine of His love. All glory to His Name!

## CHAPTER NINE

*And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. Chap. 9-1-2.*

In Chap. 8:10 a star is seen to fall upon the waters; here it falls upon the earth. Hence, in chapter 8 (under the third trumpet), the apostate Gentiles are in view; here in our text the apostate Jews, for the earth is usually mentioned in connection with them, since they are God's earthly people. The "star" in both cases most likely pictures the Antichrist, though many see it to be the Devil himself. I hardly think so, for Satan is seen as cast down in Chap. 12:9, while this star is seen as fallen already, for the proper word in Chap. 9:1 is "fallen".

While possibly all that is said under the fifth trumpet may be interpreted as applying to what is now history, as for instance the famous invasion of the Saracens, as many do interpret it thus, yet we feel sure that there is a deeper, yet unfilled explanation of this as seen in the great horrors to come upon the world in the last days.

The Antichrist is given a key to open the bottomless pit. That place is mentioned seven times in the book of Revelation, and is clearly the abode of the devil and his evil demons—see Luke 8:31, where the same Greek word is translated "the deep".

The coming religious apostate lets loose these evil spirits, who darken the air and choke the atmosphere with their evil, lying falsehoods. The "air" in Scripture is the

proper atmosphere of the Christian, and is consistently used to picture the heavenly truths and blessings of the believer in Jesus, even as typically the sea has reference to the Gentile nations and the earth to the Jews. So we see here how Satan and his hosts of evil spirits will befoul by false teachings (the delusion which God will send on all men) the now so precious truths of our faith. Apostasy will sweep the world in that awful day, with all its attendant moral and physical results.

*And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. Chap. 9:3-4.*

While in Proverbs 30 the locusts are seen as a mighty army going forth for God; here we see them as a mighty army against God and for the devil. As in Proverbs these locusts picture believers warring the spiritual fight of faith against Satan, as described in Ephesians 6, so here we read of Satan-inspired creatures spreading the evil doctrines of delusion and death. That these are not actually locusts is easily seen, because the very things—grass, green things, and trees—which locusts do destroy they are not to touch, but only to afflict men.

The grass, speaking of God's downtrodden earthly people Israel, the godly remnant of Israel during the tribulation; "any green thing" speaking of all who have divine life; or any tree speaking of the godly leaders of that day; these the locusts are not to harm. But only those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. In other words, this torment inflicted by these evil forces is not the torment of the body, but of conscience and soul; and is inflicted not on saints, but on the wicked sinners of the

day. Again it is the strong delusion of II Thess. 2, that is in view.

In Luke 10:18-19 our Lord connects the scorpion and the power of the enemy with Satan. Their sting is in their tails, and Isaiah 9:15 tells us the prophet that tells lies, he is the tail.

How good to see in these verses that this fearful spiritual blinding cannot break loose until the antichrist is given the key by God, and then he can only torment those who are not sealed by the Spirit of God.

*And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.*

*And in those days shall men seek death and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. Chap. 9:5-6.*

Historically the five months of torment inflicted by these locusts is supposed to refer to the one hundred and fifty years of unchecked conquest by the Mohammedan hordes, on the year-for-a-day reckoning. This no doubt has some merit, but the direct interpretation again undoubtedly goes way beyond this, and has the future in view. These seals, trumpets and vials have the coming great tribulation as their theme. Five months is said to be the natural life of a locust, and perhaps this tells us that these evil spirits, who of course operate through human instrumentality, will do their awful work while they live.

So awful will this coming scourge be—when the Church has been caught up to glory and the gospel of God's grace shall be preached no more—that the victims of it shall actually crave to die, but death shall flee from them. Some find it difficult to believe that spiritual darkness

would lead wicked men, who normally do not care much about anything, to desire death to relieve them of their suffering. But is it not true even now that people who have cast away the sheet anchor of hope in God often suffer mental collapse, and that this is the cause of more suicides than anything else? It is usually not physical pain but mental torment that makes people take their own lives. It is impossible for us today, who live in the sweet atmosphere of truth, peace, love and hope—in a world where Christian influence permeates and adds tone to all life—to realize how awful it will be in a world where Satan will rule supreme and where God will leave men alone to learn what hell is, right here upon earth. Oh that men would now flee from the wrath to come!

*And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.*

*And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. Chap. 9:7-8.*

Now we have a description of these “locusts”—these devil-driven monsters, though you’d never think so when you see them. For there are plenty of them operating right now. Look at their description—men full of energy, like horses; of prominence in religious life—heads crowned with gold; plenty of intelligence—faces as men; with outward gentleness and a lowly mien—hair like women, but hidden behind that lovely exterior the ferocity of lions, ready to tear to pieces all that is of God. We see such modernistic infidels right now, possessed of Satan.

Satan, the great Imitator in many ways apes God’s true servants by his own false and deceitful workers. They are seen in battle array, as God’s saints are seen in Eph. 6; only they are fighting what is of God, splendidly organized

and financed. They have on their heads crowns of gold, though the believer will not wear a crown till he gets to heaven; these are reigning already. But the crowns are imitation crowns, for we read that they are crowns *like* gold. The glory of this world is only make-believe and it is here and now, while the believer is waiting like his Lord for the crowning day that's coming bye and bye.

They have faces as men, claiming intelligence, even as the modernistic infidel boasts of his intelligence and looks with pity on the poor dupes that implicitly believe God's precious Word; they have hair as the hair of women, making a pretense of humility and submission; a pretense of faith in God, yet denying every vital truth. But again it is only "as" the hair of women; it is a cheap imitation.

The teeth are real enough—they are the teeth of lions. Joel, Chap. 1:6, speaks of men in the last days as having lions' teeth. Their purpose is to destroy and to damn, no matter what their outward appearance might otherwise indicate. Satan never comes out openly with his false theories, but will ever seek to entrap the unwary with his wiles. Only the Spirit of God in His Church today hinders Satan's success, but He who now hinders—the Holy Spirit—shall be taken out of the way, when the saints depart for heaven (II Thess. 2:7).

*And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.*

*And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. Chap. 9:9-11.*

They have no pity, as the teeth would suggest, nor can be turned back, for their breastplates will repel attack, and the rushing of their wings suggests the speed and irresistibility of their movement. The sting in their tails, as we saw earlier, has reference to the lies these apostate hordes of evil men will spread.

The campaign is a well planned one, with a commanding general in charge, even as the armies of the redeemed go forward under the leadership of the Captain of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 6:10). The angel of the bottomless pit is of course Satan himself. The star of v. 1 was *given* the key to the pit, showing his was a delegated authority; while the term, the "angel of the pit" makes this person one who is holding an independent position, as in charge of this frightful mob. It is Satan waging his final and most successful war, spreading far and wide his evil doctrines. And he will be successful, for God in that day will—through the devil's instrumentality—send men a strong delusion. Men who have rejected in this day of grace the precious news of a full and eternal redemption through Christ will then believe the devil's lies (as many do now) and shall be doomed to eternal perdition.

Satan's title is given both in Hebrew and in Greek. In Hebrew first because Israel is prominently in view in the tribulation; in Greek also, for apostate Christendom is included. Abaddon means destruction; Apollyon means destroyer.

*And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. Chap. 9:13-15.*

In Chap. 8:3 the prayers of the saints on earth are offered up on the golden altar, to which the Lord Jesus is seen to add His sweet perfume. Now, from the horns of that same altar the judgment of God falls by a mighty army pouring in from the East. Therefore this is a judgment that falls on the enemies of the faithful Jewish remnant, whose prayers God has heard and whose petitions for help He is now about to answer by a great deliverance.

Right here we might notice that there are two mighty gatherings of armies in those closing days, which meet in two distinct locations in the land of Israel. The one location is Armageddon, as seen in Rev. 16: 14-16. It is known as the plain of Asdraelon. It lies quite a distance north and west of Jerusalem. At the seaward end lies the Bay of Acre, which runs from Jaffa (called Haifa today) to Acre. Millions have been spent to make the harbor of Haifa a splendid one, and it is here that the Western European nations will land their armies just before the Lord Jesus returns from heaven in power and glory.

The other gathering place is "the valley of Jehoshaphat" (Joel 3:2) which lies immediately outside the city of Jerusalem, at the base of the Mount of Olives. Here too there is a mighty gathering of nations, but it is a different group altogether. This gathering is mentioned in the Old Testament; Armageddon in the New. It must be kept in mind that the Old Testament deals with the nations East and North of the land of Israel, and that these were ever the bitter enemies and oppressors of Israel; such as Syria, Assyria, Babylon, etc. Except in symbolic form in the book of Daniel, the European powers are never mentioned in the Old Testament; they did not exist at the time. I believe it is evident that the northern and eastern powers, represented in the coming day by Russia and her satellites; and the mighty hordes

of the yellow peril from the East (China, Japan, etc.), as seen in v. 16 of our present chapter, gather at the valley of Jehoshaphat as the enemies of the Jews, with the intention to capture and destroy them, while the Western powers come to their rescue to help them, for we read in Daniel 9:27 that they have made a treaty with Israel. Apparently they get there too late, for Russia and her allies have already reached the city of Jerusalem and captured it, while the Western powers are just landing at Haifa and are camped in the place called Armageddon; miles north of Jerusalem. Zech. 14:2 shows that Russia will have taken Jerusalem, and it is then that the Lord will burst upon them in fury and completely destroy them. A similar judgment will fall upon the armies of the revived Roman empire—the European nations; only theirs will find them at Armageddon.

In connection with these two judgments the coming of the Lord is suggested also in a dual form. According to Daniel 7:13; Matt. 24:30, etc., Christ comes in the clouds of heaven and destroys them at Armageddon, but according to Zech. 14:4 He comes right down to earth when He destroys the northern and eastern armies at the valley of Jehoshaphat, for His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives.

Since the horde from the East number 200,000,000 men, they no doubt have reference to the "yellow peril"—the Asiatic nations who in that final day will also move towards the land of Israel. I am not aware that Scripture mentions their destruction in any special way but it is likely they are also destroyed at Christ's coming.

The exactness with which the actual hour of vengeance is recorded tells of the great importance and unusualness of this cataclysmic hour of doom, yet to fall upon the nations gathered together against the Lord (see Rev. 19:19), which refers also to this destruction at Armageddon.

The loosing of the four angels, so that this fearful horde of men can break forth, again tells us, with the wondrous comfort this always brings to the saints of God, that nothing can happen without His will; nothing can befall till He speaks the word. The "when, the how and the where" are all in His almighty hands. The hour of grace is fast running its course, and the hour of doom shall strike. Only He knows when; may we, seeing we look for such things, be diligent, without spot and blameless (II Peter 3:14).

*And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and jacinth, and brimstone, and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.*

*By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. Chap. 9:16-18.*

The river Euphrates was given as the eastern limit of the promised land (Gen. 15-18). For a brief period David and Solomon ruled that far (I Chron. 18:3; II Chron. 9:26). These eastern nations, probably armies of China, India and Japan, etc.—the well-known yellow peril—will invade Israel in the final day, as depicted in our text. Fire and brimstone are both used in connection with physical destruction as well as with spiritual doom in Scripture. The use of these terms suggest that here on earth the victims of this plague will, as it were, suffer already the torments of hell—hell will break loose on earth. The mouth and the tails suggest that all these are animated by the same spirit, even though the lies of Satan are manifold.

Unlike those seen under the fifth trumpet, these do have power to kill. Spiritual doom and physical destruction also are suggested here, I believe. These evil powers will probably inflict physical destruction on those who refuse to accept their evil message. Then, in turn, when our Lord comes from heaven, they will fall under His vengeance and Israel shall be delivered and blessed under His beneficent sway.

*For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:*

*Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their theft. Chap. 9:19-21.*

The language employed here strongly leads one to believe that the false church, today so prominently seen in Catholicism, is also the butt of these evil powers, for this worship of gold, silver, brass and wood is specially connected with that system. The expression "the works of their hands" is a phrase peculiar to idolatry—see Isa. 2:8; Jer. 1:16, etc.

In the last verse of this chapter the words "sorceries and fornication" are directly connected with that woman Jezebel. So it is a real comfort to know that wicked system shall feel the vengeance of God even during the tribulation time.

We may not be able to speak with authority on the actual, literal meaning of verses as found in this ninth chapter of our book, but we do know the general truth they are meant to convey. They tell us that in the great

coming day of wrath apostate Israel, apostate Protestantism and Catholicism, blatant modernism, yea, and even God's then repentant earthly people Israel shall know the horrors of His wrath. God has a controversy with men who refused His love in this day of wondrous grace. Oh, how we do praise His Name that we shall not be here on earth then, but shall be with our blessed Lord in the glory!

## CHAPTER TEN

*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 he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. Chap. 10:1-3.*

There is a break here between the sounding of the sixth and the seventh trumpet—from Chap. 10:1 to 11:15. Even so there is between the sixth and seventh seals and vials. This break is the longest; that between the vials is the shortest—two verses in Chap. 16:15-16. Both in chapter 8:3-5 and here in Chap. 10 an “angel” appears in the interlude. In Chap. 8 He appears in heaven; here He is seen come down to earth. Before the tremendous drama of divine judgment on earth unfolds further the stage is cleared for a moment of all participants and we are bidden to behold the central, glorious “Leading Man” on the center of the stage. He must ever be in the midst. No true Christian can fail to see our blessed Lord and Savior in the description of this “mighty Angel” of v. 1; as also in Chap. 8:3. He is called an “angel” several times in this book, because as God’s messenger He is carrying out God’s decrees of judgment. The One with “face as the sun and feet as pillars of fire” is the same One as the Son of Man of Chap. 1:13-17. There He is seen as “Man”; here as “Angel”. In judgment He takes as it were a more distant and awesome place, though the very One about to tear His enemies to pieces is still the One Who once came to seek and to save the lost.

But the day of grace is now over and the day of retribution has arrived. The Lamb once slain is also the Lion. We hear the mighty Lion's voice in v. 3 of our text. In Chap. 5 we heard the Lamb speak; now we hear the Lion roar.

*And He had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. Chap. 10:2-3.*

Three times in this chapter the Lord Jesus is seen standing on the sea and the earth. Each time the sea is mentioned first, unlike in other places, such as Chap. 5:13, 7:1-3, 14:7, where the earth is first given. The suggestion plainly is that now the sea is prominently in view, and since the sea is the familiar figure speaking of the Gentile nations, that now the Gentile powers are about to feel the supreme power of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

In His hand He holds a little book open. The reason the interpretation of the seven trumpets is so difficult is because the judgments they contain are outside largely the scope of Old Testament prophecy. But we are now about to come to what is found in the "little book"—that is, within the range of Old Testament prophecy. It is probably called a "little" book because it does not cover the future nearly as widely as it is unveiled in the book of Revelation. Divine revelation is much more limited in the Old Testament than it is in the New, as for instance I Cor. 2:9-10 shows.

Ezekiel too was told to eat the word (Chap. 2:9 to 3:4) and so are we told (Jer. 15:16). Eating the word of course has the idea of making it your own through reading and meditation. It was sweet in John's mouth, but bitter in his belly. I imagine sweet to his taste because

the judgment day will bring deliverance to God's redeemed people; bitter because of the fearful suffering and sorrow Israel will pass through ere their blessing fully arrives, and bitter because of the awful woes millions must suffer in that dread hour to come.

*And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.*  
Chap. 10:4.

The voice like a lion's roar is answered, as if by an echo, by the voice of seven thunders. These thunders are not mere sounds, but intelligent voices. Just as the seven spirits of God speak of God's Holy Spirit, complete divine intelligence, so the seven thunder-voices indicate perfect divine judgment.

But before the horrors of destruction, which those thunders imply, are to become a reality, John is told to seal them up for the time being. First, judgments must fall which are already known, revealed as they are in the open little book seen in the hand of Christ. In the next chapter the "Beast" is introduced and the book of Daniel plainly foreshadows his doom; it is therefore something that was already revealed or open, as suggested in the open book in Christ's hand. John was to prophesy again, not before, but concerning many people and nations and tongues and kings, which he does in the succeeding chapters of Revelation now to come.

However confused and confusing this book might seem to us, as it does to so many even of true believers, there is nevertheless perfect and divine order throughout. The repetition of voices—twice in v. 3; twice in v. 4; in vs. 7 and 8—tell us that divine intelligence orders and controls everything. No one can be sure as to every small detail, but the general truths connected with the day of

judgment as unfolded in the book of Revelation, are very clear.

*And the Angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up His hand to heaven, And swore by Him that liveth forever and ever, Who created heaven, . . . that there would be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to his servants the prophets. Chap. 10: 5-7.*

Time (or "delay" as it should read) is now over, and the judgments of God on the Gentiles and on Israel (as those of the trumpets were chiefly on Christendom) are now to fall in all their fury. When the seventh angel begins to sound the mystery of God would be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets. The latter phrase shows these judgments were foretold in the Old Testament, as those under the trumpets were not.

What a remarkable statement this is in v. 7: "the mystery of God should be finished". Most commentators believe this refers to the (to man often so mysterious) strange silence of God during these centuries when evil triumphs and Satan seems to be in the saddle. How many of God's dear saints have wondered whether God had forgotten them; how many with the psalmist have stumbled at the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the saints, until they came into the sanctuary of God and there understood their end (Psalm 73). That "end" is reached in our chapter. Judgment in that day perhaps so near will set all things straight.

Our blessed God and Father does all things with a view to eternity; then the saints shall be blessed forever and rewarded for every little bit suffered for His sake; then the wicked shall reap their just reward. There is a day of retribution coming; God hath declared "these

glad tidings", (as it should read) to His servants the prophets (v. 7). The words "glad tidings" have been omitted in the A. V., but should be inserted. It is truly good news to the believer to know that some day God shall deal in judgment with their oppressors; but in rich blessing with His saints. "And then, yes then, we'll understand"; the mystery of God shall be finished.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

*And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. Chap. 11:1-2.*

The temple and the altar are measured. Such measuring took place in those days either with a view to taking possession, or prior to intended destruction. Since this is Jewish worship here in a literal temple, it is clear that the church is no longer on earth. We know from Scripture that this temple will be built in the future by unbelieving Israel, yet God acknowledges it here and notes its true worshippers.

The court is given to the Gentiles, which they shall tread under foot. This shows that Israel, apostate from God, will be delivered over to Gentile oppression, even though at first they will be under the protection of the Beast. But, as the succeeding chapters of the book of Revelation make so abundantly plain, the people of Israel will be oppressed and persecuted by the Beast for three and a half years. As we learn from Matthew's gospel as well as in the book of Daniel, the abomination of desolation will be set up in the temple at Jerusalem, and the awful days of the "great tribulation" will burst forth upon that poor stricken nation of Israel.

Our text indicates that the Jewish people will build a temple in Jerusalem before the tribulation begins. So far there is no indication of such a project, though it could develop, I am sure, very quickly. The site for it at

present is not in Israel's hands. But it will happen some day, for God's Word here shows it so.

We are living in momentous days. May we, His heavenly Bride, be in earnest in our witness to our blessed Lord, and be daily looking up for His coming to take us Home!

*And I will give power unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth.* Chap. 11:3.

In this chapter, for the first time in the book of Revelation, is the length of the great tribulation given. Four times in chapter 11; once in chapter 12 and once in chapter 13 we are told that it lasts three and a half years. It is said to continue for forty and two months (Chap. 11:2); 1260 days (Chap. 11:3); three and one-half days (Chap. 11:9); and time, times and half a time (Chap. 12:14). Daniel, in his monumental revelation in Chap. 9:24-27 explains the meaning of these three and one-half years. At the end of sixty-nine weeks (each week standing for a year), said he, the Messiah was to die; Jerusalem was to be destroyed, and the people of Israel to be scattered and driven out of their land. All this came to pass 1900 years ago. Israel was set aside as God's people and the Church, God's heavenly people, was shown to be God's plan for the present day of grace; Jew and Gentile saved through faith in Christ and united in One Body by the Cross. But Israel was not to be set aside permanently. Some day a covenant would be made with Israel by the to-be-revived Roman power for one week, or seven years. In the midst of that period of seven years the "abomination of desolation" was to be set up in the future temple in Jerusalem, and the fearful persecution of the Jews would then begin. It is this latter period of three and a half years, so well known as the great tribulation, with which our chapter now deals. It

is the hour of Jacob's trouble—see Jeremiah 30:7 (read that whole enlightening chapter) though Israel's enemies shall by no means escape their just punishment.

*These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth. Chap. 11:4.*

The fourth verse connects directly with Zech. 4. As verse 14 of that chapter says concerning them: "These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth". In our text they are called God's two witnesses, which prophesy during those three and one-half years of Israel's tribulation. No doubt they are said to be clothed in a sackcloth because Israel is then suffering on account of her sinful departure from God and her crucifixion of the Messiah. While apostate Israel is being punished, God's true repentant ones among them are living by the power of the Holy Spirit (as suggested in the figure of the olive trees), and are bearing faithful witness to their God, as suggested by the simile of candlesticks, which bear light in the darkness. For this they will suffer, though their witness for God leaves them inviolate from interruption till their testimony is fully accomplished, according to the mind and purpose of God.

Unbelieving Israel will rebuild their temple in Jerusalem, as the first two verses of our chapter make clear. At first the Jews will go on there with their worship, under the protection of the Roman "Beast", but during the great tribulation that protection will be withdrawn, and Israel's enemies shall tread their holy city under foot. But God will not be without a testimony to Himself and His claims, and will in a signal manner protect His witnesses till their work is done.

*And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if*

*any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.*

*These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. Chap. 11:5-6.*

Who are these two witnesses? The language of v. 6 has clear reference to Elijah, in the first part of the verse, and to Moses in the second part. For this reason some believe the two witnesses must be Moses and Elijah, but this seems to me unreasonable. Elijah surely would not have been taken to heaven without dying now to be done to death upon earth. It simply means, I believe, that the testimony of these witnesses is accompanied by signs of power and judgment on their enemies, as was that of Moses and Elijah of old. Moses was the leader who delivered the people out of Egypt and brought them to their promised land, while Elijah is he who brought the nation back to the true worship of God. Both these purposes shall again be fulfilled in that day ahead, for Israel shall be brought back to their own land and brought back to the true worship of the Lord. It will be similar ministry committed to these witnesses that is in view; hence their analogy to Moses and Elijah.

Who are these two then? If they are actually two men, we don't know of course who they are. While it may be that two men will be outstandingly prominent then, yet I believe the number two here is rather to be taken as standing for a competent and full testimony, as we read elsewhere that in "the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established". They of the people, nations, kindreds and tongues shall see their dead bodies three and a half days. If these two were literally two men, there seems little sense in saying that their bodies would lie in Jerusalem three and a half

days. What would be the purpose of saying how long their bodies lay there? But if the three and a half days, as seems so logical in connection with the other mentions of 3½ months, 1260 days, etc., stand for the three and one half years of the great tribulation, then all becomes transparently clear. It means that during the whole tribulation time these Jewish witnesses (standing for all the Jews who witness for Christ then) are being martyred for their faithfulness (as other passages show they will be, as we shall see), and at the end are caught up to glory (see v. 12) to the astonishment of their enemies.

*And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. Chap. 11:7.*

Here, in v. 7, is the first mention of this "beast," a fearful character found thirty-six times in the book of Revelation. He is mentioned 36 times or 6 times 6, and his number is 6-6-6. (see Chap. 13:18). Though this is the first time he appears on the scene he is named as if well known and indeed he is. Daniel wrote of him long ago (Chap. 7:7, etc.). In Chap. 13:1 he is seen rising out of the sea; here as ascending out of the abyss. While his historical rise is human and Gentile (for he comes up out of the sea, always typical of the Gentile nations in Scripture), his spiritual rise is Satanic—from the pit.

As we compare our text with Chap. 13:7 we find, I believe, definite substantiation for my contention that these two witnesses are actually more than two—that they represent all the Jewish martyrs during the great tribulation. We see them caught up to heaven in our chapter, verse 12; then we see them in heaven (Chap. 15:2-3), and then we see them once more throned in glory in Chap. 20:4. In our chapter it says the "beast" slew these two witnesses and overcame them, while in

chapter 13:7 it says he overcame the saints of God, evidently a much greater number than two. Thus these "two" here evidently represent all the martyred Jewish saints of that day. This is confirmed further in v. 12 of our chapter where they go to heaven in the cloud, and their enemies look on with amazement. To me it is much more consistent with truth elsewhere to conceive of these two as being God's testimony in its completeness to the world in those closing days.

While they are martyred in the final analysis, yet their witness for God is a terrible affliction on their enemies. They have power to slay their enemies, as did Moses and Elijah, and to this will be added the damning power of their message of divine wrath, suggested probably by the fire that proceedeth out of their mouths. God's judgment on the wicked is like a fearful fire, to which the rich man in hell bore sorrowful witness (Luke 16).

*And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell on the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.* Chap. 11:8-10.

The 3½ days that these bodies of the saints lie in the streets of Jerusalem answer to the 3½ years of the great tribulation, and all during that period those Jewish martyrs will die for their faith and faithfulness to God—perhaps by the tens of thousands, for the enemies of God and of Christ will then be fiercely bitter in their hatred of all that reminds them of God.

The latter thought is suggested by the statement in the latter part of v. 10, that these witnesses "tormented"

those that dwell on the earth. As we said before, that expression "earthdwellers" in this book has reference to the worshippers of the Beast and the Antichrist who then, as now, hate all that is truly of God. How striking that the preaching of the truth is considered torment by such. It is even so today. To a Christ-rejecting soul nothing is more aggravating than the plain unvarnished truth of God; how a wilful sinner writhes under the eyes of a holy God, while to a believer to see and hear Him is the sweetest music. Surely the eternal torment of Chap. 14:10 includes the suffering which the rejection of God's perfect love in Christ will inflict forever on the soul lost and doomed. Oh, that men might flee from the wrath to come!

*And after three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly. Chap. 11:11-14.*

We see these same raptured saints in Chap. 20:4. They are those who did not worship the Beast nor his image; who were slain for their faithfulness to God and who thus shared in the final stage of the "first resurrection". As has been said before, the first resurrection is that in which only believers share, and it is seen in Scripture in at least four stages. First Christ Himself in I Cor. 15:23; next the saints of Matt. 27:52-63; then the Church and all the saints who died from the beginning of time—I Thess.

4:16; and finally these Jewish martyrs of the great tribulation. Apparently, when the Lord calls us home, the rapture will be a secret event, but here in our text this ascension is witnessed by their enemies, and this tremendous, climactic, sensational miracle of their ascending to heaven in the cloud of glory filled those enemies with fear and wonder. Simultaneous with the rapture of these saints occurs a great earthquake (as at the resurrection of our Lord) and the bliss of these martyrs is matched by the doom of their persecutors—just a sample of the final great rectifying of all things now so unequal. These hear the call “Come up hither”, as does the Church at the rapture, as seen typically in Chap. 4:1. The end is almost reached, and with the seventh trumpet arrives the hour of His great triumph and glory.

*And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.*

*And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to Thee thy great power, and hast reigned. Chap. 11:15-17.*

With this seventh and last trumpet we reach the end of the great day of the wrath of the Lamb and that hour to which all time and eternity has looked onward has arrived—the perfect reign of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All the prophets wrote and dreamed of that glorious day now drawing perhaps so near. That great stone of Dan. 2:34, cut out without hands and typical of none other than our blessed Lord, shall smite all other kingdoms and destroy them, and His kingdom shall fill the whole earth. What a wonderful day that shall be

when the King shall reign in righteousness and at the same time in perfect love. What a day, when justice and holiness, mercy and love shall rule the world so stormtossed today; so full of nameless fears.

No wonder the heavenly saints, as seen in the twenty-four elders of our text, who till now had been wondering witnesses in heaven of all the tremendous doings upon the earth, now shout in acclamation and adulation and praise, as they worship God in heaven, saying: "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned". Though it is Christ Who is said to reign, they say it is the Lord God Almighty who is doing so. Here is another Scriptural tribute to Him whom men despised and slighted, but Whom the heavenly saints declare to be the Lord God Almighty, and before Whom they fall on their faces as they worship His holy Name.

*And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.*

*And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament; and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*  
Chap. 11:18-19.

In v. 18 the duties and rights of Christ—the righteous King—are enumerated, though for some reason that I do not know, not given in chronological order. First we read of the wickedness of the nations; then His wrath poured out during the tribulation; then the great white throne, more than a thousand years later, where the dead are judged as we know; then the judgment seat of Christ

(which at this stage had already taken place) and finally, it seems, the doom of His enemies at His great second coming. All things are in His hands; both doom and reward He deals out. The small and great will stand before the judgment throne to be judged for their sins, as in Rev. 20; here the small and great (saints of course) will be rewarded. How comforting to know that the least bit of true devotion to Him He will recognize and recompense in that day. How it thrills the heart of the believer to know that this sad, wicked, unjust world shall be set straight by Him, and that He shall rule in perfect equity. We praise God for this with all our hearts!

The "temple" of the last verse is apparently a symbolic idea, for we read later that there is no temple up there. The suggestion is that through everything God has remembered His covenant with Israel, based on the unconditional promises to the fathers, and assured by the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat upon the ark—typical of the shed blood of Christ. For us it means that all His dealings are on account of the blood our precious Savior shed upon the Cross. Judgment for the sinner; reward for the saints, all flow from Calvary.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. Chap. 12:1-2.*

From chapter 12 on to the end of this wondrous book of Revelation we pass away from outward events and conflicts to take a look behind the scenes to view the inward, unseen, supernatural forces that operate and control these dramatic happenings. A number of times we read this word "great", as the great wonder, the great dragon, great wrath, a great eagle, etc.

Chapters 12 to 14 present one continuous prophecy, from the birth of Christ in our present text to the time when He shall tread the winepress of the wrath of God; that to take place at His second coming, when He shall tread His foes under His feet.

We see a woman in heaven who brings forth a son. That woman is Israel of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. There are four representative women on the stage in Revelation: Jezebel, picturing the false church; Israel, in our text; the harlot of Chap. 17, picturing specifically Catholicism; and the Bride of the Lamb in Chap. 19.

John saw the sign of this woman—Israel—in heaven, though actually she is on earth, as v. 6 plainly tells us. The woman is Israel, the man child of course is the Messiah—our Lord Jesus. Jacob's son Joseph dreamed a dream about the sun, moon and the eleven stars (he himself being the 12th star) bowing before him, who is such a clear type of Christ in Scripture. Rev. 12:1 shows

clearly that this dream had the nation of Israel in view, of whom the Savior of the world was born. If unbelieving Israel crucified Christ, to her eternal dishonor, we must not forget that believing Israel, in Mary of Nazareth, brought the Messiah into the world.

The second verse of our chapter is a most intriguing and amazing one. We naturally think of it as referring to the birth of Christ. Yet, while this is included and involved in the setting, yet actually the literal birth of Christ of over 1900 years ago is here employed as a picture of the spiritual birth of the nation of Israel in the tribulation days. This will become evident when we compare our text with Isa. 66:7. In our text birth takes place after Israel has the travail pains that accompany birth (which is the normal order in the birth of a child), but in Isa. 66:7 the birth takes place before Israel travailed; before her pain came she was delivered of a man child. The explanation is this: Isa. 66:7 refers to the birth of a Christ in Bethlehem, which took place before Israel's day of tribulation (Matt. 24:8 speaks of Israel's tribulation time as her "sorrows", and that word is literally the "travail pains" that accompany birth). While our text in Rev. 12 speaks of Israel's new birth as a nation which will take place *after* her time of travail; that is: after the tribulation. Isa. 66:7 and Isa. 66:8 being those two mighty events together—the birth of Christ and the birth of Israel—for v. 7 speaks of travail before birth; v. 8 of travail after birth, and we are plainly told that this second birth is the birth of a nation.

Our text does exactly the same thing. It combines the birth of Christ with the birth of Israel in the future, for vs. 5-6 pass immediately from the birth of Christ to the start of the great tribulation, completely skipping the whole present day of grace. There is a space of more than 1900 years between v. 5 and v. 6 of our chapter. Well may we marvel at the intricate perfection of God's

holy Word. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

*And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*  
Chap. 12:3.

The book of Daniel has already identified this fearful creature for us. He tells us it is the Roman power—dreadful and terrible. Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar are both called dragons, together with their empires (Ezek. 29:3-4; Jer. 51:34). Egyptians considered the dragon (or crocodile) the source of all evil and worshipped him under the name of Typho.

The description of this dragon points to the Rome of 19 centuries ago, at the time that Christ was born, for we read that the seven heads were crowned, and Revelation 17 shows us that these "heads" represent the sevenfold series of Roman government of the past. Being crowned suggests Rome was actually reigning then. This is confirmed by the fact that the "beast" of Rev. 13:1 has the horns crowned and not the heads, and Rev. 17 tells us that these horns represent the ten kingdoms Rome—controlled power of the future of the tribulation days. Hence, the dragon of our text is Rome of the past; the beast seen in Rev. 13 the Rome of the future.

Yet it is worthy of note that the dragon is said to have the ten horns. Rome of the past did not have any ten kings reigning at one and the same time, but this is strictly future, but still they are seen on this dragon, clearly therefore in anticipation only. Our text combines, in these crowned heads and ten horns, the Rome of the past and of the future. And in this way sets forth the double truth I already have mentioned that the picture before us speaks of the birth of Christ of the past and the birth of Israel in the day now so near. This is further con-

firmed by the fact that, when the child is born (Christ's birth at Bethlehem) the woman (Israel) flees into the wilderness, with its 3½ years of tribulation persecution. Leaving out entirely the present day of grace (as is often done in Scripture) our text unites in one thought, the birth of Christ and the spiritual new birth of Israel in the day to come, with Rome as the bitter enemy on both occasions.

Since the dragon also pictures the mighty ruling power behind Rome, that is, *the devil*, see v. 9, the dragon is seen in both the above events, as Satan was and will be the sinister power behind the throne.

*And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.* Chap. 12:4.

We may have here a solemn intimation given nowhere else that I am aware. The first clause of our verse seems to say that Satan, when he fell into sin, carried one third of the angels of heaven with him in his rebellion against God. For while the dragon undoubtedly pictures Rome here, yet it is Rome inspired by the devil himself; he too is called the dragon in Chap. 12:9 and Rev. 20:2. He used Herod to seek to destroy Christ the moment He was born. That he did not, and could not, succeed is of course a matter of record. Satan did not even arrive on the scene "as soon as Christ was born". Matthew's gospel makes it clear that Jesus had been born some months before the wise men arrived and that it was not at Bethlehem, in the stable, but undoubtedly in Nazareth in the home that they brought their gifts to Him. The power of Satan may be great, but there is a Greater than he, and all his efforts must come to naught for God shall and will carry out all His purposes of wis-

dom, love and power. No one, or nothing, could touch our blessed Lord till His hour had come. Time and again we read that all efforts to destroy Him failed, because His hour had not yet come. The smiting of the Shepherd was not to be the work of Satan during our Savior's life on earth, but the solemn judgment of God as He died for us on Calvary's Cross (Zech. 13:7). His life and death at Calvary are significantly left out here in the book of Revelation, for wise reasons.

*And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, . . . Chap. 12: 5-6.*

She brought forth a man child (literally: a male son). He was born King; not a prince. To us a Son is given. Of course only One ever born into the world will rule all nations; His Name is Jesus.

The child is caught up to God and to His throne, referring to the ascension of the Lord Jesus after His death and resurrection. Thus the whole thirty-three years of our Lord's life here on earth are omitted. And in the next verse the woman—Israel—is seen fleeing and being persecuted for three and a half years, referring of course to the period of the great tribulation. So that two periods of time are passed over completely in this passage: the life of Christ on earth (including His death and resurrection), and the whole 1900 years of the present day of grace. Our text takes us from the birth of Christ right up to the start of the great tribulation still future, omitting all else in between.

This is a clear proof that the theme of Revelation is concerning the people of Israel and not the church. Christ's life and the present dispensation are left out because neither have anything to do directly with the deliverance of Israel and Christ's judgment of the world. His birth is

given, for He Who came to earth as Man will, as the second Man—the Son of Man—assume all rule and power. His birth, coming as Man to be the Redeemer, but despised and rejected as such, gives Him the title to reign; His ascension to glory and to God's throne proves that title and His coming again will be noted by His assumption of that title to the throne of the world. These things are the theme of the book of Revelation and are sharply focused in our present text. As said previously, please note the more than 1900 years gap between vs. 5 and 6. How wonderful is God's Word; how worthy of our most careful search. It richly rewards the earnest seeker, and fills the heart and mind with adoring wonder and praise at the greatness and glory of our God.

*And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there for a thousand two hundred and three score days. Chap. 12:6.*

From Christ upon the throne at His ascension the vision carries on to Israel persecuted in the future tribulation, omitting the first three and a half years and beginning at the fearful persecution of the great tribulation, inspired against them by Satanic leadership (see v. 13). The 1260 days of this verse of course are the same period as the 3½ years given elsewhere, or the 42 months of Chap. 11:2. Driven and in fearful danger the woman—the people of Israel—flees into the wilderness to hide from its terror. Our blessed Lord, in His great sermon in Matt. 24 foretold all this and warned the faithful to flee: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains . . . 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 begin-

ning of the world, to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. 24: 15, 16; 20, 21).

*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angel fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. Chap. 12: 7-8.*

What a dramatic scene is here! We would not know anything about it except for divine revelation. Physical wars have been raging for centuries, with Satan as the commander in chief of the evil forces and, according to this passage, with Satan’s headquarters in heaven. Now the hour has struck for that fearful evil power to be cast out of heaven. A mighty battle takes place up there beyond the blue between Satan and his hosts and Michael and his army of the true angels of God. And Satan is ignominiously defeated and thrown out of heaven for good. Isaiah long ago prophesied of this expulsion, (Isa. 24: 21).

Michael is the leader of the heavenly hosts arrayed against the devil and his armies. Michael is mentioned five times in the Scriptures, and each time as the one who specially looks after the interests of the people of Israel, as said so plainly in Daniel 12: 1. “At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people—which are Daniel’s people—Israel. And this Michael, according to this verse in Daniel, would arise for Israel when their great tribulation is about to begin; just as we have in our chapter.

Satan’s great and sinister purpose was, away back in the beginning, to be like God—see Isa. 14: 14, and because of his attempt to attain this, he fell and was cast down. How suited thus that Michael should here vanquish Satan, for his name means, “Who is like God?” What solemn irony that he who would be like God is overcome by him whose name means just that. Satan of course

wanted to dethrone God and take His place. By matchless grace we shall be made like Him, not by dethroning Him, but because our blessed Lord left the throne and became obedient unto death; even the death of the Cross.

*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. Chap. 12:9.*

How frightfully successful the devil has been in deceiving men and blinding them. As our text says, he deceiveth the whole world. He has blinded the minds of all who would not believe the gospel of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He is a past master at the art of camouflage and has something to suit every appetite; some falsehood that appeals to all classes of men—from those in the lowest strata of life to the highly educated or proudly religious elements. And no doubt his masterpiece is that false system known as Roman Catholicism, of which we shall yet see a great deal in this remarkable book of Revelation.

But now the devil is completely unmasked. There are four of his most prominent characters set forth in the four titles given him in our text: He is first called the dragon, which links him, as we saw, with the Roman power of the past and the future, expressing his brute force. Christ's coming into the world 1900 years ago and His coming again in the near future both take place while Rome is the mighty political power on earth, and through that power the devil operates in persecuting Christ and His saints.

Then he is the old serpent, whose slimy trail we may trace from the garden of Eden to the present moment; it presents Satan as the arch deceiver by his lies, more subtle than any other creature. He is Satan which word means "adversary", ever opposing all the counsels and

purposes of God; and he is the devil, which means the "accuser", for he has ever delighted in slandering and accusing the saints of God. Now he is cast out into the earth, to vend his spite on Israel during those terrible days of their coming ordeal that await that unhappy people and also this wicked world. Again, how we praise God that we will be in heaven then, with our blessed Lord.

*And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before our God day and night.*

*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Chap. 12: 10-11.*

Satan cast out of heaven brings great joy in heaven, but deep sorrow on earth. The rest of this chapter shows that this period here is the middle of the final seven years of God's dealings with Israel; it is the beginning of the "great tribulation".

Up to this moment, which today is of course still future, Satan has been the accuser of the saints of God in heaven's court. What an amazing statement this is! The devil accuses the saints before God day and night. Court is always in session in heaven, with Satan as the accuser—the prosecuting attorney. But, praise God, our blessed Lord is there as the Lawyer for the defence, Who pleads the merits of His precious blood on our behalf, for we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous" (I John 2:1). And our blessed Lord wins every case that Satan ever enters in God's court, for He pleads the infinite worth of His precious blood. And so we sing in so many of our hymns:

“What though the accuser roar  
Of ills that I have done?  
I know them well, and thousands more,  
Jehovah findeth none.

“Though the restless foe accuses  
Sins recounting like a flood;  
Every charge our God refuses,  
Christ has answered with His blood.”

They overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. This suggests that many of those saints in that day will be slain for their testimony to Christ, but yet it says that they “overcame”. We see the same blessed thought in Chap. 15:2 where those same martyred saints are said to have gotten the victory over the beast, even though he had slain them. It tells us that the believer in Christ is always victorious; we are always more than conquerors through Him that loves us. Praise His Name!

*Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. 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. Chap. 12:12.*

Joy in heaven; great sorrow upon earth. What a great relief to us to have Satan finally banished forever from any access into the presence of God. He is cast down to earth here, and before much longer shall be cast down still lower to the bottomless pit. He who would climb to the highest height is thrust down to the lowest depth. It is ever true that he that humbleth himself shall be exalted and vice versa. May we as believers ever remember such a salutary truth!

When the church is prominent and in view, as still is true today, Satan operates in the heavenlies, for the Church's destiny and testimony is heavenly; when Israel shall again be prominent Satan is on earth, for Israel is

God's earthly people. Today we fight him in heavenly places (Eph. 6); then believers will wage spiritual warfare against him upon the earth, as v. 11 of our chapter shows.

Satan knows when he is cast out, that his term is fast drawing to a close; he knows that his end is near, so he unleashes all his fury against God and the people of God, in those final months of the great tribulation. While heaven rejoices, where we see the Church of God in the glory with her Lord, since Christ has come before this to take us up to be with Him at the rapture, the earth will groan and bleed during those awful days of terrible distress. The judgments shall fall both on the earth and on the sea, according to our text; that is—both on Jew and Gentile. Heaven is mentioned in the plural form but once in the book of Revelation; here in our text. All creation will rejoice in Satan's downfall; love supreme shall occupy the throne in glory. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!

*And when the dragon saw that he was cast out unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times and half a time, from the face of the serpent. Chap. 12: 13-14.*

The dragon of v. 3 is Satan, according to v. 9. But it is Satan, working through the instrumentality of the Roman power, for its seven heads and ten horns identify it for us as the Roman political power of that day. As Rome existed in the past, so it will in the future. Chap. 12: 3 sees its crowns upon its heads, identifying this dragon with imperial Rome of the past, as explained in Rev. 17: 9-10, while the crowns seen on the ten horns (Chap. 13: 1) identify the dragon with the Roman power of the future, as explained in Rev. 17: 12-16. It is by means of this yet

to be formed revived future Roman empire, consisting of ten European powers banded together under one mighty leader called the Beast, that Israel will be persecuted during the days of the great tribulation, as foretold in v. 13 of our text. But the woman—Israel—flees and is miraculously protected from harm by divine intervention, as v. 16 of our chapter indicates. This Israel, protected from Satan's venom, undoubtedly has reference to that part of the nation which shall pass unscathed through the great tribulation and is seen sealed (for God's preserving care) in the 144,000 of chapter 7. Our Lord spoke of this same group when He said in Matt. 24:14 that "he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved". The saved there are those who will pass alive through the fiery tribulation and will enter Christ's millennial reign upon the earth.

*And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. Chap. 12:15.*

Verse 14 reminds one irresistibly of Israel's past deliverance from the world—from Egypt by Moses. There too God brought His people into the wilderness, delivering them from Egypt through the flood; the flood not only of the Red Sea but of the mighty army under Pharaoh that pursued them. And as in the future, so in the past, a "great eagle" will carry them safely beyond danger. God tells His people, in Exodus 19:4, that "He bare them on eagles' wings and brought them unto Himself". Some think that the wings of a great eagle intimate that God will deliver His remnant in those tribulation days by means of planes. Perhaps so, but certainly back of those plane wings will be the mighty sheltering wings of their Jehovah-God.

Israel is brought into a "prepared" place, vs. 6 and 14. Many believe this place to be the city of Petra in Mt. Seir,

where the Jews fled for refuge when Titus besieged Jerusalem. This city is uninhabited and is a city carved out of red sandstone rock. Many believe that Isa. 16:1-4 speaks of this future hiding of the remnant, and "Sela" mentioned in Isaiah is the same word "Petra". Wherever or whatever it is, the hideout is apparently successful for our text says they are hidden from the face of the serpent; he can't find them where they are.

And there God nourisheth them for those three and a half years. Again, how reminiscent this of Israel's past, when God preserved His people for 40 years, nourishing them in the wilderness, surely He can do the same thing miraculously for only 3½ years during the tribulation that is to come.

*And the earth helped the woman, and the earth openeth her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Chap. 12:16-17.*

It is doubtful that v. 16 is to be taken literally in this book, where so much is highly symbolic. The "flood" will scarcely be a literal flood of water, since it is seen coming out of the mouth of the serpent—Satan. When the sword is seen in the mouth of Christ (Rev. 19:15) no one thinks of this as an actual sword, but rather as the Word of God, by which all rebels shall be judged—see Heb. 4:12. So here I take it the flood out of the dragon's mouth refers to a flood of propaganda and oratorical ranting, intended to stir up the enmity of the nations against Israel, urging their destruction; and the earth swallowing that flood probably indicates how some counter defence of Israel may nullify Satan's malice even in that day. After all, Israel's God still lives and when He

seals His own, no hands can touch them, no matter to what lengths they might go. No one can pluck His saints out of His hand.

The last verse of this pregnant chapter shows Satan and his emissaries (the powers of earth through whom of course he works), mad because they can not get at that spared remnant of Israel, and so they turn their attention with increasing fury and rancor to those Jews which they can reach. For we must remember that long ago God had prophesied that part of Israel would go through the fire (Zech. 13:9) and would be spared to enter the millennium with Christ, but that two parts should die (Zech. 13:8). The one part is that section of Israel that turns apostate and will be slain under God's judgment poured out on the world; the other part consists of God's redeemed ones who shall die in martyrdom during Satan's fiery persecution and shall share the heavenly bliss of God's heavenly saints. The last verse of our chapter has that third part of Israel in view, who bear testimony for their Savior and who die for their faithfulness to Christ.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

*And I stood upon the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. Chap. 13:1.*

The R. V. says correctly that it was not "I", but "he" that stood upon the sand of the sea. The "he" is none other than the one last seen in chapter 12, viz. the Devil himself—the dragon of Chap. 12: 4, 9. As an evil exorcist he brings forth, as it were, from among the sea of nations, the "Beast" with the seven heads and ten horns. This beast represents a mighty political power of the future, as we shall see. But while here the beast is seen to rise out of the sea, typical of the nations of the earth, in chapter 11: 7 and 17: 8 he is said to rise out of the abyss. Thus we learn that while the beast is Gentile as to his nationality, he is a product of the devil, comes from the bottomless pit, spiritually. He and the second beast of this 13th chapter of Revelation are Satan's spawns and pawns in his endeavor to thwart the purposes of God in and through Christ Jesus. As chapter 12 presents God's plan, chapter 13 unfolds the devil's attempt to hinder God's plan from being carried out.

The beast has seven heads and ten horns. As we saw in chapter 12, the heads were crowned there, having in view the mighty Roman empire of history under its then sevenfold form of government, as we shall see later in chapter 17. But here the crowns are on the "horns", and chapter 17 again shows that this refers to the coalition of European nations of the future, now probably so near at hand, and which shall unite (probably, as we see now, for united protection against Russian aggression) and

shall be under the leadership of some mighty coming Superman who shall rise in Rome.

On the heads of the beast was the name of blasphemy, for the Roman rulers of old demanded divine worship, claiming that which is due only to God. This same feature shall be obtained in that day now at hand—see v. 12 of this chapter—where the “beast” is worshipped.

Just a little more about this beast. Here in our text it is not merely the individual that is in view, (though the term is applied both to the Leader and to the coalition of nations). The beast in its corporate capacity represents the future European confederacy of nations, usually called the revived Roman empire, because Rome will be the headquarters of this Satan-inspired Monarch. The “Nato” of our day is a shadow cast before of what shall happen in the coming day of God’s wrath. The horns here being crowned suggests, as said before, that this is the Roman empire of the future, for never in the world’s history have ten powers united themselves under one Head, and Rev. 17:11 definitely tells that this is an event of the future. As we said, we already see its makings in “Nato”, an attempt to unite all the Western powers, largely for the purpose to enable them to meet Russia on equal terms.

On the horns are diadems—not crowns—which denote despotic powers while crowns as such constitute monarchies. This again proves that this ten-kingdom confederacy is future, for the Rome of the past was not a despotic, but a constitutional government.

The seven heads seen on the beast probably represent the sevenfold form of Rome’s government of the past, as John was told in Rev. 17:10. However, others think these seven heads represent the great imperial powers that had been and were in existence up till the time John saw and wrote the book of Revelation. They were said to

be Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome the sixth, and the to-be-revived Rome the seventh.

*And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*

*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. Chap. 13:2-3.*

This second verse tells us that this mighty future Power will combine in him and in itself all the characteristics of the mighty empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece, as they are described in Daniel 7:4-8. In other words, it will practically be the perfection of Satanic brute force and skill. These mighty powers of the past are given in our verse in reverse chronological order, showing that it is their moral rather than their historical meaning we must gather from their mention. The dragon—Satan—gives this beast his great authority, the very authority he once offered to our blessed Lord in the temptation, but which our holy Savior refused. Later on our Savior purchased this world by His death on Calvary, where he “bought the field, the world” (Matt. 13:44, 38. Satan here gave great power to the beast, but the time has about arrived for Christ to claim the world as His, and to wrest it from the grasp of this evil devilish power who would usurp that which rightfully belongs to Christ—the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Apparently, from v. 3, we learn that this beast falls for a time, but is miraculously restored to power. His being wounded most likely does not refer to some physical injury, but to political collapse, but he is in a remarkable way restored to power through Satan’s help. Lifted from political hopelessness a new spirit is infused into him—

truly, as was Judas, entered into by the Devil himself. He becomes a Satan-possessed person, the admiration and the wonder of the whole world—the mighty Superman for which this world is looking.

*And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? Chap. 13: 4.*

There will be worldwide astonishment at the miraculous political salvation and rise, and at the greatness of this "beast". In Daniel 7:8 the little horn tears up three horns which would leave seven out of the ten, and thus he himself becomes the eighth horn. This is not mentioned here in Revelation, but in its place we read of the eighth beast (Rev. 17:11). The conclusion is that the eighth horn of Daniel and the eighth beast of Revelation are one and the same person. Three of the future revived Roman empire's ten rulers apparently will fall before the superior power and prestige of the beast and he will become the supreme Ruler of this future powerful confederacy of Western European nations. Will this coalition include the United States? Perhaps so.

So astounding and impressive will be this monster's accomplishments that the world as a whole will worship him and worship the evil power back of the scenes—the devil—whose tool and dupe he is.

Men refused to worship Him Who came in blessing to this earth and Who went to the Cross of suffering and shame to redeem them from sin, death and hell. Blinded by envy, hatred and downright ignorance, they scorned and crucified the God of all grace, but they will fall down in admiration before this terrible being who will seek the doom of their blinded souls. How utterly tragic all this is!

Who is able to make war with this beast? Ah, there is One; One Who has never been defeated, but Who even in

the throes of an awful ignominious death on a Cross won the mightiest conquest ever waged. We worship Him, with all our hearts. "Jesus, Thou alone art worthy".

*And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blasphemy his Name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. Chap. 13: 5-6.*

This Beast continues in power for 3½ years. So did those two infamous men of history—Antiochus Epiphanes, the bitter enemy of the Jews, who persecuted them for three and a half years; and so did the horrible Nero who persecuted the Christians. Both are distinct types of the future great Superman, called the "beast". The little horn of Daniel 7 was also said to wear out the saints of the most High. He and this beast have reference to the same person.

If man is to rise then of course God is to come down—in their philosophy. And so the rise of this mighty Power is accompanied by defiance of God and by the blaspheming of His name. And not only is this blasphemy directed against God and His people on the earth, but even against the saints in heaven. Praise God, we'll belong to that latter group. It seems that, since the Lord has called His heavenly saints home to glory, out of the reach of this fearful wicked one, yet in mad spite he still raves and rages against those who are forever beyond his reach. Ah, He Who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.

Today we know that communism delights in blaspheming the name of God and of our blessed Lord. Is it not awful to read that the nations, which today at least render lip-service to God (specially in Europe and in Amer-

ica) will in that day join hands with communism in defying the God of all grace? God shall send men strong delusion that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Ah, things are dark down here and will get progressively darker (we have no false illusions) but the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more, until the perfect Day, when Christ our Lord shall reign supreme. Amen!

*And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And 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. Chap. 13: 7-8.*

The supreme power of this "Beast", the coming Head of the revived Roman empire, will last for three and a half years, as said in v. 5. The very same things are said of the little horn of Daniel 7, who also makes war with the saints of God then upon the earth, and who also operates for three and a half years—see Dan. 7: 20-25, thus clearly showing that these two represent the same person. The saints then persecuted and slain are of course God's earthly people Israel who will at the close of that terrible time of horror possess the kingdom—see Dan. 7: 22.

The "dwellers upon earth", a phrase used ten times in the book of Revelation, are the worshippers of this beast, because they refused to worship the true God. Rather than being pilgrims on the way to a heavenly home they chose this world as their home; and rather than worship the true Christ, they will worship the Antichrist—they worship the Devil who is the unseen power behind all this. Their names are not written in the book of life of

the Lamb. But the saints' names are written there, from the very foundation of the world. This again is an expression typical of Israel, for the Church was chosen in Him not from, but *before* the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4), while Israel is His people from the foundation of the world—as Matt. 25:34 also states.

They shall worship the beast, these earthdwellers. All shall do this. At last the Devil will have succeeded in his constant endeavor to make a mere man as God—in a universal way.

*If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. Chap. 13:9-10.*

In the addresses to the seven churches in chapters two and three we read each time: "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith", but it adds "what the Spirit saith unto the churches". That latter phrase is left out here, for the appeal here has a worldwide reach, and does not take in the Church, for it will be in heaven, but includes believers here on earth during that time of wrath. Those terrible days of deception and destruction may well arouse men to turn to God. Many will do so, though of course those who today hear the gospel of the grace of God and refuse to turn to the Savior will be eternally lost then. But some from among the heathen nations who never heard the gospel in this age will then be reached as the gospel of the kingdom is preached to all nations. With God there is always mercy even during the darkest period this world shall ever know.

And God is a God of righteous, retributive judgment. As our blessed Lord said to Simon Peter in Gethsemane: "Put thy sword again into his place, for all that take the

sword shall perish with the sword". I imagine the first sword in this sentence is a literal sword; the second a spiritual one. All who use the sword without warrant shall die by the sword (not necessarily by the literal sword, for we know that in actual human experience this is not so) but by the spiritual sword—the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. God's Word in that day shall judge and slay all those who take judgment into their own hands, without the authority God's Word gives to normal, governmental authority. Here in our text it may largely be literal, this use of the sword, for all the enemies of Christ shall fall under His sword of judgment when He comes in power to reign—see Rev. 19:21. Such shall die physically; later to be judged for their sins spiritually at the great white throne. The day of judgment shall set straight all that is so wicked and crooked now.

The present day is the day of suffering and reproach. In patience God's people are to endure (we today and Israel in the day to come) and by faith to wait God's time, whether now or in that day of great tribulation with which our chapter really deals. Our blessed Lord Himself is patiently waiting till His enemies shall be made His footstool.

*And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. Chap. 13:11-12.*

There seems no difficulty in the recognition of this second beast of our chapter. The fact that he is like a "lamb" would identify him as the infamous imitator of the Christ of God—the Antichrist. He arises out of the

earth, suggesting that he is a Jew, as the earth in the book of Revelation and elsewhere is always associated with Israel, who are called God's earthly people, even as the first beast rises out of the sea, thus identifying him as a Gentile. This beast is powerful too, as the two horns imply and is, just as the first beast, the emissary of Satan for he too speaks with the voice of the dragon. The first beast of this chapter 13 is therefore, I believe, the coming political Superman who will rule the confederacy of nations, while this beast is the religious leader, plainly known as the Antichrist, Who, said the Lord Jesus, would come in his own name and whom men would receive (John 5:43).

The "two" horns would suggest a dual power; that of "king" which he is said to be in Daniel 11:36 (referring to this same personality) and "prophet", as he is called in Rev. 19:20. The king of Daniel 11:36-47, the antichrist of II Thess. 2 and this beast of Rev. 13:11 are all the same person. Saul in the Old Testament and Judas of the New are undoubtedly types of this sinister Person.

Even as the true Christ, while here on earth, urged men to worship God and in all His ministry exalted the Father, so this Satanic imitator also leads men to worship the first beast as their God. As the first beast presents the devilish substitute of the Father in heaven so the antichrist substitutes for Christ the Son and Satan back of all this is an evil all-pervading spirit—the false counterfeit of the Holy Spirit. Satan has his devilish trinity.

*And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he has power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

*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. Chap. 13: 13-15.*

This antichrist makes fire come down from heaven, as Elijah did (I Kings 18). There and then God would not permit Satan to deceive the nation by enabling those false prophets to call fire down from heaven, but here he does permit Satan this exhibition of power. The time for the complete delusion of men has come and Satan is permitted to exercise miracle-working powers. Perhaps he does a little of it already today, though during the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church most of it is restrained. Apparently antichrist here is trying to make the Jews believe that he is God's prophet since he can do what Elijah did. But, unlike Elijah, instead of leading the nation back to God, he is leading them into utter and damning idolatry.

He urges the setting up of an "image" and gives life (the word is "breath") to it. Satan cannot either give life or take it, but there will no doubt be some skullduggery which makes it appear that the image actually lives. This "image" very likely is the same as the "abomination of desolation" spoken of in the book of Daniel and in Matt. 24, and it is meant to make Satan himself the God whom men will worship then.

The fact that this beast does miracles again connects him clearly with the antichrist, of whom the same thing is said in II Thess. 2:9. Even today so many are looking for the sensational, for miracles, instead of being hungry for God's message of grace. And so in this coming day of spiritual darkness Satan will readily impress men by these miracles and blind them all the more surely—to their eternal destruction.

*And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Chap. 13:16-17.*

These verses foretell an almost universal boycott. The great day of liberty, of which the communists talk so much and of which idealists dream has arrived; this is it! Capital and labor have finally become one great union, with all their differences merged under the iron heel of the greatest oppressor the world will ever know. Not only do we see here perfect harmony in the world of secular interests, but now also all churches are united—the World Council of churches will have become more than a dream; it will have become a dread reality. This is the Utopia blinded political leaders in their field and religious leaders in theirs have wanted and have worked for. Here is the product of political and religious communism. It is the terrible and deadly submission to Satanic power; it is the liberty of doing what you are told, or else . . .

In the spiritual realm (which specially interests us believers) the whole world will worship the beast and his image; in blind delusion will sink into the worst form of idolatry. The only people standing out against this will be a portion of the people of Israel that will turn to Christ during the tribulation; and for their boldness and faithfulness will become the butt of the fiercest persecution ever known.

Those that submit to this brutal domination will escape the wrath of the Beast and his fellow devil-inspired minions, but they shall be crushed under the fearful wrath of the Lamb, as the next chapter, in vs. 9-10, plainly shows us.

Alas, that men should refuse to worship Him Who is meek and lowly in heart, but shall bow before that fearful

being who is as it were the incarnation of Satan himself—the liar and murderer from the beginning. We have had samples of this type in the dictators of the last 20 years. Those who today refuse to come to Christ and thus be marked as His own redeemed ones by the seal of the Holy Spirit, shall then be marked by Satan's seal; a seal that saved them from Satanic wrath, but exposes them to the wrath of God. A seal that will save them in time physically, but will damn them in eternity spiritually. Oh blessed Lord, how we do praise Thee for opening our eyes and our hearts to see and own Thee as our Savior and our God!

*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. Chap. 13:18.*

Usually, in writing a biography, the name of the person whom it concerns is mentioned immediately at the outset, but this creature's name is given only at the close, and then it is only a number. This superman no doubt will be a very great personality in the eyes of his fellow-man, but he does not register with God; is not even dignified with a name. His name is a number. It's in jail, among other places, where numbers take the place of names. And it is the eternal prisonhouse of the "lake of fire" that is the destiny of this supreme production of Satan.

Here is wisdom. The one that understands God's ways can count the number of this beast. The number is 666. That repetition of the number "six" reminds the understanding believer that here is man, in spite of his highest endeavors, falling short of real accomplishment, for seven is the number of completion and perfection in Scripture. And seven is also the number that speaks of "rest" in the Bible; but man is always doing, laboring, trying, and yet

never finding rest by his own efforts. Yes, man's number is six-six-six; the same wearisome repetition of work and scheming and climbing, but never getting anywhere. Here is human wisdom, but in the end it totally fails.

But let's look at true wisdom—the wisdom of God. Its number is 7-7-7. For He on Calvary did truly complete that mighty work of redemption; He through one offering has provided perfection forever for those who trust in Him. He has secured rest for the weary and heavy laden. He will complete all God's purposes of grace and power.

He is not known by a number, however. Of this beast God speaks of the number of his name. Of the blessed Lamb of God we sing of the number of His *names*.

Join all the glorious names,  
Of wisdom, love and power;  
That mortals ever knew  
Or angels ever bore;  
All are too weak to speak His worth,  
Too mean to set the Savior forth.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

*And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, 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. Chap. 14:1-2.*

Chapter 14 is a truly comprehensive chapter, giving us a preview of all that is to take place during the tribulation period, and detailing God's dealings with Israel, Christendom, Babylon and closing with the judgment our blessed Lord will execute at His coming, both in His vengeance on His enemies and His discriminatory judgment on the nations of the world, as given in detail in Matt. 25, especially the closing portion of that chapter. There are seven distinct subjects in this marvelous chapter now before us, as follows:

1. The 144,000 seen spared through the tribulation, seen here in anticipation.
2. The everlasting gospel preached during that period of sorrow.
3. The fall of Babylon—the false church doomed.
4. The doom of the worshippers of the Beast—Christian apostasy.
5. The blessedness of the Jewish martyrs during the tribulation.
6. The harvest reaped—the judgment of the sheep and goats, as in Matt. 25.
7. The vintage of wrath—at Christ's coming to judge the world, as seen in detail in Revelation 19.

As we saw Satan prominently active in chapter 13; so God is seen in action in chapter 14. In verses 1-5 we have a picture of the 144,000 of Israel redeemed during the great tribulation and spared from physical death, to enter the earthly reign under Christ their Deliverer. They are seen standing on Mt. Zion. This is the only mention of Zion in this book of Revelation. These saints are the very same that we saw in chapter 7. There they were presented as before the tribulation; here they are anticipatively seen after they have passed through that time of ordeal. The harpers in heaven, in the second verse, are the Jewish martyrs slain during this same tribulation, joining their song in heaven with that of their Jewish brethren on the earth.

*And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*

*And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. Chap. 14: 2-3.*

Inasmuch as it says that only the 144,000 redeemed out of the earth could learn the song the heavenly harpers sing, it seems evident the reason this is so is that both have had a similar experience, and that experience is that both have known the horrors of the great tribulation. The heavenly harpers are those who were slain as martyrs during that time; the earthly ones have escaped physical death and thus are the 144,000 who shall form the nucleus of the new nation of Israel to dwell on the earth during the millennial reign of Christ and forever after. How thrilling to listen in on this mighty chorus of praise

(Chap. 15: 3-4 gives us the lyrics of that song); a mighty choir with part of the members singing on earth and the rest singing in heaven, under the accompaniment of heavenly tuned harps; together they shall chant a tremendous ovation of praise to the God of all grace.

The following verses shall clearly show that these 144,000 are truly the remnant of Israel converted and preserved during the great tribulation time. They are here seen in anticipation as already having passed through that hour of unparalleled horror. Their sorrow shall be succeeded by joy, as the prophet Isaiah so beautifully sings in Isa. 35: 10: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away". The fulfilment of that happy prophecy is set forth in our text in Rev. 14. Glory to His Name!

The "elders" listen in, and we know that these elders represent all the heavenly saints caught up to glory at the rapture. "We" shall be the audience of the mighty hallelujahs sung in that day of Israel's jubilee.

*These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.*  
Chap. 14: 4-5.

These saved Jews have been preserved from the fearful apostasy of those days, for they are said here to be virgins, with the striking explanation that they were not defiled with "women". Thus these virgins are men, kept pure from defilement with evil women. No doubt the idea here is purity from spiritual defilement, rather than moral or physical corruption.

False doctrines have almost always been promulgated by women, as the picture of the woman mixing leaven in the meal in Matt. 13 implies. It is seen so horribly in that woman Jezebel, standing for that system known in the book of Revelation as the "great whore". Many of the evil cults of today were either started or advanced by woman, such as Christian Science, Theosophy, Unity and even Jehovah Witnessism.

These 144,000 saints have been kept from the false worship of the Antichrist; from the delusion that shall engulf Christendom in the days after the Church has been taken home to glory, as seen in II Thess. 2:11-12. These virgins, instead of following the blatant, cruel wild beast follow the Lamb Who in meekness was led as a lamb to the slaughter. They are the saved of Israel; saved both spiritually, and physically brought through the horrors of the great tribulation.

These are the redeemed among men. Even after the Church is gone to heaven, the work of redemption will still be going on. As Romans 11 so clearly teaches, God will take up again His earthly people Israel and with them will reach out to the Gentile nations of the earth who have never heard the gospel. Many shall be reached and redeemed from their sins and be brought to own Jesus as the Messiah in those days, and shall form the nucleus of Israel as God's people on the earth. Ever so many old Testament passages speak of Israel's future spiritual as well as political restoration. God will put a new heart and a new spirit within them; they shall all know the Lord, from the least to the greatest of them.

Let it be clearly understood that this future blessing of Israel in no wise affects men today. Anyone who hears the gospel today and fails to trust Christ as Savior will be eternally lost when this day of grace ends. For all men today the message is: "Now is the accepted time; today

is the day of salvation". It is only because God made promise to the fathers of Israel that He will give them an opportunity to be blessed in the tribulation days; it does not apply to anyone who hears the gospel today, whether Jew or Gentile; for them there is nothing but eternal perdition when Christ calls His saints home to heaven.

The Jewish believing remnant is called in our text the "first fruits to God and to the Lamb". The Church is heaven's firstfruits, as James. 1:18 suggests; Israel will be the firstfruits of the redeemed of the earth. As the Church occupies the central place in heaven, so will Israel on earth.

In their mouth is found no guile (or "lie", as it should read). The lie of that day will be the great deceit of palming off to the Jews the antichrist as the Christ. That special lie is mentioned in John 8:44 where the devil is said by the Lord Jesus to be the father of *the* lie; also in II Thess. 2:11 where the strong delusion is that they all should believe *the* lie. Or again, as we read in I John 2:22: "Who is *the* liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" Satan then, as he does now, will deny that Jesus is the Christ and will then foist his Christ—the Antichrist—on men in place of the true Christ of God. That lie is not found in the mouths of these 144,000 and so they are without fault before the throne of God. He who acknowledges Jesus as Lord shall be faultless forever, whether his home shall be in heaven, as those of Jude 24; or upon earth, as these of Revelation 14.

*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, to every 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.* Chap. 14: 6-7.

Only here, in all Scripture, do we read of the "everlasting" gospel. The Bible speaks of the gospel of the kingdom; of the gospel of the grace of God; of the gospel of Christ, etc. It would seem to me that this term "everlasting gospel" gives the underlying truth embodied in the various expressions used as to the gospel. Everlastingly the same truth obtains in all these various phases of the gospel, and that is, that they all call on men—in whatever age they live or lived—or in whatever form the message came to them, to give glory to God and to fear Him. That is the basic message conveyed in the gospel, however variously it may be presented.

Today we are singularly blessed in hearing the gospel of the grace of God in all its fulness, telling the complete story of God's matchless love in Christ, displayed at Calvary. When our Lord was upon earth to the lost sheep of the house of Israel the message was: "repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand", which surely is not as full and clear as the gospel we preach now; in the day our text speaks of the message will be to bow before God because the hour of judgment is near; again a message quite different from what we preach now. But the main thought is ever the same; God must be listened to; His word believed.

It is not a different gospel from that which Paul preached (Gal. 1: 8), but it is presented in different words, suited to the time. The central theme is ever the same—every knee must bow to Him and every tongue own Him Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Blessing in any case, in any age, depends upon and flows from the fact that Christ died on the cross. This was not directly mentioned in the Old Testament, nor when the Lord Himself was on earth; nor will it be in the tribulation, but never-

theless salvation in any age rests upon that accomplished redemption.

To Cornelius God did not send an angel, but he sent Peter. Here an angel is seen carrying the message, though no doubt it is men who actually do preach this gospel. Yet the mention of the angel suggests the distance maintained as it were, for we do not now have the glorious preaching of the wondrous love of God, but a solemn warning of God's imminent judgment. So many passages show that the converted Jews will be carrying this message worldwide during the tribulation period. At the close of Matt. 25 we read the result of this universal broadcast of this message of judgment, which is intended to save those who will believe and receive it. So it is called a gospel, for when men repent they will find that a threat of judgment is exchanged for the assurance of God's mercy. A clear example of this is found in the book of Jonah where Nineveh repented. In fact that incident is a striking illustration of the very day and events of our chapter. Jonah typifies the Jewish messengers who go with the message of coming judgment to the Gentiles, and who are largely successful because many of the Gentiles, as these did in Jonah's day, will repent and turn to God.

The message of the everlasting gospel goes forth, according to v. 6, to two great classes—to the dwellers on the earth, and to those of all nations and tongues. The first group, mentioned ten times in the book of Revelation, comprise the worshippers of the antichrist, and they are those who will refuse to bow before God and who will reap the awful doom reserved for them—see v. 10 of this chapter. While the other group comprise the Gentile nations to whom the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in that day (they are the heathen nations who have never heard the gospel in this present day of grace),

many of whom shall turn to God in repentance and shall with Israel inherit the new earth. The sheep of Matt. 25 represent this group; the goats the other.

It is at that time that the warning can be trumpeted abroad—the hour of His judgment is come. Today we say: The hour of God's grace is *here*. Oh, that many would heed this and come to Jesus now!

*And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.* Chap. 14:8.

This is the first mention of Babylon in this book, though not the last. Here its fall is announced; in chapters 17 and 18 its actual fall is described, as also in Jeremiah 51. There is a significant addition here to Jeremiah's account. Here the word "fornication" is added, but left out in Jeremiah, Chap. 51:7. There Babylon's political smash is pictured; here that of religious Babylon. She is the religious "whore" of Rev. 17—the false church. That wicked system, ever posing under the guise of being the "true" church but rotten to its inmost core, shall be exterminated by the fiery judgment of God; a judgment executed by men's hands. Rev. 17 shows us how the ten kings shall hate the whore and make her desolate and burn her with fire.

In Daniel's day Babylon's doom and the deliverance of Israel were associated events; it will be so again in this day of which our text speaks. There is Babylon's fall in Rev. 17 and 18, then a mighty celebration in heaven, as this false, corrupt church is destroyed and the true Bride of Christ is united to Him and is displayed in glory, in Chap. 19. What wondrous things are these! May we thrill at them, and praise Him from Whom all blessings flow!

*And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark on 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: Chap 14: 9-10.*

The woman of v. 8 of our chapter now makes way for the "man" of sin, described under the term "beast". The false church outwardly professed subjection to Christ though in reality wholly apostate. In the beast apparent subjection to Christ is cast overboard and is transplanted by total rebellion against all divine authority. The "wild beast" is as contrary to the "little Lamb" as anything could well be. In the woman of v. 8 we see the horrors of Romanism in their climax; in the beast of v. 9 there is the complete apostasy of Communism and atheism. All the worshippers of the beast are tormented forever (there is not one believer in the whole mob), yet in the fearfully wicked system of Rome there are still some true believers and in Chap. 18: 4 the Lord in grace calls them to come out of it. The nations have drunk of the cup of the wine of the harlot's wrath, in v. 8; in that day of tribulation they shall be made to drink the cup of the wine of the wrath of God (v. 10). The cup of Rome's fornication shall be exchanged for the cup of God's indignation. And then follows that awe-inspiring statement that the wicked shall be tormented in the presence of the Lamb, forever and ever.

Cavillers will tell you they can't believe in a God Who would torture His creatures. However, it does not say torture here, but torment. Torture refers to agony applied from without; torment comes from within. The torment here is the fearful remorse of a guilty conscience,

spoken of by our Savior elsewhere as the "worm that never dies". And the crowning doom of all will be that it shall be endured in the presence of the meek and lowly One Who fain would have saved and blessed all men, for to this end He died that all men might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

*And the smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Chap. 14:11.*

Nowhere in Scripture is there as strong an expression of eternal perdition as in verses 10 and 11 of this chapter. I suppose this is so because it concerns the doom not merely of sinners who did not accept the Lord as their Savior, but of those who deliberately despised and hated Him. This is the doom of vile apostates—the doom of the worshippers of Satan. Ah yes, in that final day the "little Lamb" will prove to be indeed vastly superior to the "wild beast", whom wicked men followed and adored.

The torment of these is "without mixture", because their guilt too was without mixture. There was not one redeeming feature of good in them, as there is in a certain way in sinners in general. Theirs was an unadulterated defiance and hatred of God (as we see even now in violent God-haters) and so their doom is complete, without any mixture of mercy to lighten it forever.

Read these two verses—10-11—slowly and solemnly. Every feature speaks of the ultimate in eternal horror. God's wrath, His indignation, man's torment, the fire and brimstone, the eternally ascending stifling smoke and "no rest day or night forever and ever." The exact opposite will be the blessed portion of all who bow in adoration at the feet of Jesus. Instead of His wrath there will be His boundless love; for indignation there will be

His well done, thou good and faithful servant; instead of torment there will be perfect joy and peace; for fire and brimstone the dazzling glory of His presence; instead of the smoke of judgment shall ascend forever the sweet incense of His praise; and for us there will be that eternal rest in that Home of love and light. Glory to His Name!

Men do not believe in eternal punishment, as so many wishfully say and hope. But this forever and ever of our text is used in the book of Revelation of God's own eternal being (Chap. 15:7); it is used of the eternal glory of the Lamb (Chap. 5:13); of the reign of believers (Chap. 22:5). If heaven is eternal, then hell is too.

*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

*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 labors; and their works do follow them. Chap. 14:12-13.*

The saints of v. 12 are no doubt the earthly saints, the Jewish remnant, who shall be saved during the tribulation. They will have great need of patience and endurance. Many will endure, not only in being true to God and to Jesus their new-found Messiah, but they will also endure in a physical way, for they will pass alive through the great dangers and persecutions of the great tribulation. Matthew 24:13 has that idea in mind when it says that "he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved". The "saved" referred to in this text do not go to heaven, but pass alive through the tribulation to inherit the earth. Therefore I believe that the saints of v. 12 of our text refers to the Jewish believers who will be spared physical death during the tribulation, while those of v. 13

indicate the Jewish saints that shall be slain during that time, and who thus shall die a martyr's death. Rev. 6:11 refers to this same class. Rev. 11:7 also mentions them, and we read of them being caught up to heaven in Chap. 11:11-12. And finally we see them seated on thrones in heaven in Chap. 20:4.

That's why it says in our text "blessed are those dead from henceforth". For by being martyred they will share in the first resurrection of the heavenly saints (see Chap. 20:4-6) and will live forever in heaven to reign with Christ and His church, and so they will have a much more wonderful and much higher position than will Israel on earth. That expression "from henceforth" shows that the deaths of these is specially connected with the tribulation, and that therefore it must refer to a martyr's death. They die under the wrath of men here, but how much better than to suffer under the wrath of God eternally, as do those of v. 10.

*And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*

*And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped". Chap. 14:14-16.*

At the close of this tremendous chapter we have two mighty events portrayed under the figures of a harvest and a vintage. They are the two important features connected with Jesus' coming in power and glory. Rev. 19 puts it simply by saying that He shall come to "judge" and to "make war". The "judgment" is the same as the

“harvest”; the “making war” answers to the “vintage”. In a harvest there is discrimination, for some is good—the grain—and some is burned—the chaff. But in the vintage nothing but complete judgment is in view, for, as v. 19 of this chapter states, all is cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. These two events are described respectively in the judgment of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25, which answers to the harvest where the chaff is separated from the grain or sheep separated from the goats, which is the figure used in Matt. 25 of the same event; while in Rev. 16:16 (Armageddon) or Rev. 19:11-21 we read alike of the vintage of judgment. When anyone comes to make war, there is no discrimination practiced, but all enemies are dealt with alike. So, when Jesus comes, those gathered together in rebellion against Him will be summarily destroyed, as described in Rev. 19:11-21, while the nations at home (who were not in the armies) will be reviewed, as seen in Matt. 25:31-46. There those who turned to Christ and received Him as the Messiah shall enter eternal life (here upon earth in Christ’s glorious reign), while the others who rejected Him are destroyed and consigned to the lake of fire.

The “Harvester” is the Son of Man, as Matt. 24:30 also declares though the actual gathering is done by the angels—see Matt. 24:21; Matt. 13:40-42, etc. The gathering of the wheat and tares of Matt. 13; of the elect of Israel in Matt. 24; of the judgment of the sheep and goats of Matt. 25 and the harvest of our text by the Son of Man who is crowned as King, are all one and the same occasion, and were prophesied in the Old Testament, as for instance in Joel 3:12-13: “Let the heathen be awakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there will I sit to judge all the heathen (the word is “nations”) round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great.”

The closing verses of Rev. 14 bring before us both the harvest and the vintage. As we said before, in a harvest there is discrimination made between the good and the bad; in the vintage all are indiscriminately slain. At the harvest Christ will sit as Judge on the judgment seat; at the vintage He comes as mighty Conqueror taking vengeance on the enemies who are gathered together to make war against Him. In the harvest He judges; in the vintage He takes vengeance.

Rev. 19:11 tells us that He at His coming will judge and make war. The judging is of all the nations not actually in the armies that are gathered against Him, and will include of course women, children, the aged, etc. But the making war is against mighty armies arraigned against Him as we read in Rev. 16:14 (Armageddon) and in Rev. 19:19.

In our chapter in connection with the harvest, the judgment of the wicked seems to be specially in view, for the harvest is said to be "overripe", as the thought really is in v.15. Man's iniquity will have reached its height, as Joel 3:13 also states.

As "Son of Man" Jesus takes the kingdom out of the hand of God—see Daniel 7:13-14. He judges the wicked as He sits upon the throne of His glory, and delivers His people Israel, bringing them home to their own promised land.

It is interesting to note that an angel comes out of the temple, calling for judgment. In the early part of the book of Revelation the judgments proceeded from the throne, up to Chap. 11:18; from then on to the end of chapter 16 they emanate from the temple. In the seventh vial, the climax of the wrath of God, throne and temple are united (Chap. 16:17). The throne intimates divine government; the temple the Person of Christ Himself.

Hence the judgments from the temple are more severe, and deal with more open direct defiance of Himself.

*And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*

*And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to Him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. Chap. 14:17-18.*

As we said before, in this vintage there are no believers at all; all are cast into the winepress of the wrath of God. At Christ's coming vast, almost numberless hosts of men are arraigned to fight against Him, and they are summarily destroyed. This is the so-called battle of Armageddon, though there is no battle, but only one fearful massacre of the enemies of God and of Christ. It is called the "winepress of the wrath of God" and was long ago prophesied, as in Isaiah 63:1-4 in these majestic words: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone and of the people there was none with Me, for I will tread them in My fury and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come".

Solemn day, when the hour of doom shall strike for the wicked who refused to bow to Him, Who died for sinners at Calvary! How glad I am that He has brought me low at His feet. Blessed Jesus!

*And the angel thrust in His sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.*

*And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. Chap. 14:19-20.*

Israel is called the "vine", and so this judgment no doubt has special reference to the apostate nation of Israel, though we know it will fall also upon all the nations gathered against Jerusalem at that time. Joel 3:12 shows that the Gentile nations are affected too, and so does Rev. 19:15 where we read: "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".

Joel 3:12 tells us this fearful carnage will take place in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and v. 20 of our text adds that it will be "outside the city". There, where once Israel shed the blood of the Son of God, the lowly Lamb of God, and where the Gentiles joined them in that terrible crime—outside the city where they crucified Him as if unworthy to be within the limits of their so-called "holy city"—it is there their blood shall flow in rivers. Once they stained their souls with His blood; now He will stain His garments with their blood. Alas, what man sows that shall he also reap! The day of vengeance is coming, though man in his blindness refuses to see it or heed it.

So fearful shall be the slaughter that blood will flow to the height of a horse's bridle for a length of two hundred miles. This is said to be about the length of the land of Israel and suggests that the entire land shall be filled with the bodies of the millions then slain. What is your outlook? Glory with Christ in heaven, or fearful doom with Satan in hell?

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

*And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. Chap. 15:1.*

In connection with these future things made known in the book of Revelation we read of three different "signs". There is the sign of the woman clothed with the sun, representing Israel of whom Christ came after the flesh; then the sign of the great red dragon, speaking of the Satan-inspired future Roman empire (Rev. 12:1-3; and here the sign of the seven angels having the seven last plagues, speaking of the fearful outpouring of wrath in that terrible day of holocaust that lies ahead. Each of these signs is seen in heaven, showing heaven controls them and orders them, but they are portents of the great things to take place on the earth.

There are three numbered groups of angels in this book. There are four in chapter 7:1; seven angels with trumpets in chapter 8:2 and seven with vials here in chapter 15:1, while there are twelve angels at the heavenly city's twelve gates. Angels play a large part in these climactic events of the last days; they are the messengers and agents of the power of God, showing forth His glory.

These seven vials contain the wrath of *God*, which is to be poured out during the great tribulation, to be followed by the wrath of the *Lamb* which He shall pour out at the end—at His glorious second coming. These vials closely compare with the seven trumpets, so much so that one is almost forced to the conclusion that they run concurrently. While in the trumpets the judgments are limited to the "third part" each time, which, I believe, has the "third part" (the apostate section of the nation of

Israel—see Zech. 13:8) in view. This distinction is not found in the vials; hence I believe that the judgments as described under the vials specially have the whole world in view, while the trumpets concern Israel—both Jew and Gentile passing through those horrors during the same period of time—during the great tribulation.

*And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. Chap. 15:2.*

We see a company of 144,000 at the opening of chapter 14, but they stood on Mt. Sion, in the land of Israel. They are God's earthly people, Israel, brought alive and safely through the great tribulation. They are about to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. But the company of our text are not the 144,000 (the number is not given), and they are not seen on the earth, but in heaven, for they are seen standing on the sea of glass, and Revelation 4:6 has told us that this "sea of glass" is in heaven. These are the saints that have been martyred during the tribulation because of their faith and their faithfulness to God and His truth. Our Lord foretold His disciples that many would be slain in that day of suffering—see Matt. 24:9, etc. We see these martyred saints again in chapter 20:4 as having been raised from the dead and seated on thrones in heaven, because they did not worship the beast or his image, nor received his mark. Our text here suggests the same thing, for they gained the victory over the beast not by conquest with the sword, but through the power of faith. They gained the victory by dying, as our blessed Savior did on the Cross, though He did so in a much more wonderful manner.

Rev. 4:6 speaks of the sea of glass on which these stand; only there the sea is not seen as mingled with fire.

Here that thought is added, for these saints have indeed passed through the most awful fire of the hatred and wrath of men. In this sea water and fire are seen united into one solid, glorious sea, with the threat of judgment, whether by water or by fire, forever past. Israel shall prove God's mighty grace and power which will make them waterproof and fireproof forever.

*And they sing the song of Moses and servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Chap. 15:3.*

Two very prominent persons are brought before us in verses 2 and 3 of this chapter; both mentioned far more than any others. Both are presented under symbolic titles, but in striking contrast to each other. One is the "beast"; the other is the "Lamb". One is a man; the other is God. And this contrast becomes all the more striking when we note that the word beast is really a "wild" beast, while the Lamb is literally (all the times it is used in this book) a "little" Lamb.

Here in this book of Revelation, where our blessed Lord comes into His own rights as King of kings and Lord of lords, in solemn irony He takes to Himself the title of "little Lamb". Can you think of a sharper contrast than between a wild ferocious beast and a weak, feeble little lamb? Yet that is how God speaks of this future "superman" the beast and of the supreme God over all—called the little Lamb. The one is a man, in all the pride and selfwill of the human heart setting himself up to be God; the other presents God, in infinite grace and lowliness having taken the place of feeble, guilty man, making man's guilt His own as He died for him on Calvary's bitter cross. How truly amazing all this is!

How it should make our hearts run over with adoration, joy and wonder!

No wonder these redeemed saints of our chapter sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. The one speaks of Christ Who delivered His people from the bondage of this world, as seen in Moses' deliverance from Egypt; the other speaks of Christ Who brings His people in to the glory land above, there to sing His praises forevermore.

The "beast" is mentioned thirty-six times in Revelation—six times six, and his number is six-six-six. The "Lamb" is mentioned twenty-eight times, or four times seven. Seven is the number of perfection and completeness, for perfection and eternal peace are secured through Him; through His submissive death on the Cross as the Lamb of God we sing now the eternal song of redemption, as these martyrs do. Praise His holy Name!

*Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. Chap. 15:4.*

They sing to the King of "nations", as the margin puts the word saints. It is thus recorded in Jeremiah 10:7 from where our passage is quoted. So many other Scriptures show, both in the Old and the New Testaments, that nations shall submit themselves unto Him and shall worship Him, such as Isaiah 66:23.

Who shall not fear Thee? is the question raised, as quoted from Jer. 10:7, and then there are three "fors" to prove why all men should praise the Lord. First: "For Thou art holy" (v.4). This is not the usual word for holy, when used of God. It is found only here and in Rev. 16:5 where it is translated "righteous". It denotes

the sum total of moral qualities as inherent in the character of God. Men worship the "beast", though so vile and wicked a being, but God is to be worshipped not because of fear on man's part, but because of the moral excellence that calls forth the admiration and adoration from a heart won by His grace, sustained by love's power and enchanted by divine wisdom.

The second for: "For all nations shall come and worship before Thee". The first "for" gives the why of worship; the second *for* the when of worship. Now every *saved* soul worships God; then *every* soul on earth will do so, while even the wicked in hell will bow and praise Him.

The third for: "For Thy judgments are made manifest". The word actually is "Thy righteousness" and is the same word as in Rev. 19:8. There it is the righteousness of God's people; here the righteousnesses of God. There it insures our eternal blessing; here it results in the doom and destruction of the lost.

*And 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 plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. Chap. 15: 5-6.*

In this fifth verse is found a most peculiar phrase, unlike that found anywhere else in Scripture: "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven". Temple and tabernacle were both on earth, for they had to do with Israel; here they are seen in heaven. The suggestion may be that, though Israel on earth at this time seems wholly given over to the hatred of their enemies as well as to the wrath of God—so fearfully exposed in the midst of worldwide enemies—yet God cares for them. They

may not see their tabernacle of witness on earth, but God as it were sees it in heaven and remembers His covenant with Israel. Because of His promises to the fathers, and because of the worth and the work of Christ (suggested in the truths unveiled in the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant with its mercy seat within the holiest of all) God has not forsaken them and overrules all that takes place on earth for the blessing of His ancient people. The judgments poured out will work out to the deliverance of His own people.

The temple of the tabernacle is open in heaven, suggesting that the veil has been rent, and that God is dealing with His people in view of the infinite worth of the Cross of Christ. Faith can look in through the open veil and see the risen, glorified Son of God upon the throne.

The judgments come forth from the temple, indicating that God's holiness demands judgment; the plagues are executed by angel-priests (for they are clothed in white as was the Highpriest in Israel). From the temple, where in olden days priests came as ministers of grace they now come to minister judgment. And their description tallies with the appearance of the Lord Jesus Himself, as given in Rev. 1:13. Thus it is as it were Christ Himself Who is seen in these "seven" angels, even as the one Holy Spirit is seen in the seven spirits of Rev. 5:6. Christ Himself is portrayed here as the Angel-Priest executing divine judgments on the earth.

*And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. Chap. 15:7-8.*

I take it that actually there is no temple in heaven, as we learn later on in this wonderful book. It is really only a vision given to John to impart the spiritual truths we should know and rejoice in.

The judgment here is deliberate, for the angels have the bowls of wrath *given* to them, and they pour them out only when told to do so. The bowls are of gold. Bowls or vials (or basins, which is the same word) were used in connection with the service of the brasen altar, but were there of brass. Here there is no altar now (the day of mercy is past) and the bowls are of gold, stressing the fact that the fearful judgments about to be inflicted on this poor world are as clearly connected with the glory of God, as is the present offer of salvation on the basis of divine grace. God is glorified in the doom of the Christ rejector as He is in the salvation of the believer in Jesus.

We read in v. 8 that no man could enter into the temple till the vials of wrath had been emptied upon the earth. However, in the Old Testament set-up the High priest could enter the holiest of all under the shelter of the cloud of incense and with the shed blood. Here no one can enter for again the sad fact is true that for the world mercy is past, and no blood or incense will avail now. God's grace has set a limit to man's day of salvation, and for those who refused Christ as Savior only the judgment of God now remains. The temple was filled with smoke, as we read also when Isaiah saw the Lord lifted up sitting upon His throne (Isa. 6:4). There, as here, the glory of God is stressed. It is because the Lord of hosts is "holy, holy, holy" that no one can enter that presence. Isaiah saw an altar by the throne, but there is no altar here in Revelation 15. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

*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.*

*And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. Chap. 16: 1-2.*

The "great voice" coming out of heaven indicates that God in His holiness demands the judgment of rebel sinners. These seven bowls answer to the prayer of God's people Israel as heard in Psalm 79:12: "And render unto our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom their reproach wherewith they have reproached Thee, O Lord."

We mentioned earlier, when looking at the judgments under the trumpets that both those judgments and those under the vials are very similar; each several one in each series compares with the other. This impresses me with the belief that they run concurrently, and, as I said before, I judge that the trumpet judgments specially have Israel in view, while the vials fall on apostate Christendom. The latter are more spiritual in content. While much of the details of these plagues are obscure to us perhaps this is intended to be so, but I am sure they will be quite clear to those who will be passing through them; they need not be to us, for we will not be here to experience them. The general meaning is plain, however little we may be able to dogmatize on the details.

The grievous sore of v. 2 (bad ulcers), was the sixth plague in the long ago of Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

It was the first plague to fall on persons then, and the magicians specially smarted under it. Spiritually it probably suggests the outward sign of inward corruption. Falling on the worshippers of the beast would indicate that this plague is spiritual and moral corruption and apostasy, rather than physical affliction of some kind.

*And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.*

*And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments.*

*And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory.*

*And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*  
Chap. 16: 3-11.

There are slight differences between what is said here and what is said in the case of the seven trumpets. In

the third vial the waters become blood, while in the trumpet it was said to become wormwood. There it is corruption that resulted; here it is death.

In v. 6 the blood of the saints and prophets is the blood shed during the great tribulation; not that of the saints of the Church, as seen in chapter 17: 8.

The seven seals, trumpets and vials are each divided into a series of four and then three. In the horrors under the first four judgments the four departments of nature are prominent: the earth, the sea, the rivers, and the sun. The fifth vial is poured out upon the kingdom of the beast, while the first vial falls on the worshippers of the beast. First the judgment falls on the victims of this terrible system; then on the Headquarters itself. Men gnaw their tongues for pain—the only expression of that nature in Scripture. How horrible will those days be! Again we praise our God we will not be there; we will be with Christ in glory.

*And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.*

*And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.*

*And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. Chap. 16:12-16.*

Under the sixth trumpet we also read of this mighty army pouring in from the East—the yellow peril—and there the actual number of this vast host is given—200,000,000 strong. (See in chapter 9 as to these and their gathering in the valley of Jehosaphat we learn in v. 13 of our text that Satan is busy stirring up the Western powers; no doubt by a mighty wave of propaganda, through the evil spirits coming forth from the mouths of the dragon—the devil; the beast—the coming superman; and the false prophet—the antichrist as the religious leader of those days. That devilish trinity will be, under the overruling hand of God—the instruments to gather the nations together to Jerusalem, where they will be destroyed utterly at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It says in v. 14 that *they* are the spirits who gather the kings of the earth and of the whole world in that supreme test at Armageddon, but v. 16 says that *He*—God—gathered them together. How often men in their vileness only carry out God's plans—and so often to their own doom.

In the midst of it all (v. 15) there is a warning to His saints at that time to be awake. Christ will come as a thief, to steal away man's final chance for salvation.

*And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 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.*

*And 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. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.*  
Chap. 16: 17-21.

These are the last climactic judgments to fall upon this world. The general setting is quite clear and definitely refers to the actual coming of Christ in power and glory. We are told in Matt. 24: 27 there will be worldwide lightnings and thunders at His personal coming and we learn from Zech. 14: 4-5 of a mighty earthquake when His feet shall stand on the mount of Olives. The same features are present here in our text.

Verse 17 tells us that the "end" has now arrived. At the opening of the seventh seal there is silence in heaven, a silence that might be felt, before those last and final horrors burst upon this scene. At the blowing of the seventh trumpet we are also informed that the end has come—the mystery of God is about to be finished. Thus all three point to the final conclusion that God's judgments poured out on this world have reached their climax; that Christ's coming has arrived.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

*And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither: I will show thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters. Chap. 17: 1.*

Note the sharp contrasts:

One of the angels which had the seven vials shows John the harlot. Almost identical is the language in Rev. 21:9 where the angel shows John the true Bride of Christ.

In chapter 17 Babylon is likened to a woman; in chapter 18 to a city. So the true Bride is a woman; and in chapter 21 is called a city.

The harlot is seen from the vantage point of the wilderness (Chap. 17: 5), for the false church has this world as her home. But the true Church is seen from a mountain, for her home is on high (Chap. 21:10).

Babylon, the whore, is earthly and devilish; the Church descends as a holy city out of heaven, from God (Chap. 21:10).

Satan decks the one in gorgeous, glaring colors (Chap. 17:4); God clothes His Bride in fine linen, pure and white (Chap. 19:8).

The cup of the whore is full of abominations and filthiness (Chap. 17:4); the cup of the true believer overflows with love and praise (Psa. 23:5).

The whore is decked with gold, pearls, jewels, etc. It requires a lot of make-up to make her look beautiful; the Bride is clothed in purest white, without any make-up. *She* is His adornment—His pearl of great price.

Of the false church it is said: "I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow". But these very things are not true of Satan's counterfeit church, but they are verily true of the Church—the Bride of Christ.

The harlot is called a mystery—Babylon the great, the mystery of iniquity (Chap. 17:5). The Church is also a mystery—a mystery of God's matchless grace.

The harlot is drunken with the blood of the saints (v. 6); the true Bride is redeemed with the blood of the Lamb (Acts 20:28).

The whore's sins have reached up to heaven (Chap. 18:5); the sins of Christ's true Bride have been cast into the depths of the sea.

God has remembered the iniquities of the whore (Chap. 18:5), but our sins and iniquities are remembered no more (Heb. 10:17).

The earthly city is full of sin and the call is to "come out of her" (Chap. 18:4); the heavenly city is pure and holy and the call is to "come in" (Chap. 21:17).

The false church reigns now (Chap. 17:18); but shall be deposed; the true Church is rejected now, but shall be enthroned with Him (Chap. 22:5).

There shall be wailing on earth over the doom of the harlot (Chap. 18:19); there shall be joy in heaven over the bliss of the Bride (Chap. 19:7).

Earthly kings shall hate the whore and strip her naked (Chap. 17:16); the heavenly King loves His Bride and shall clothe her in garments of glory and beauty.

On earth the nations of the earth shall destroy and be destroyed (Chap. 17:16; 19:19-21); in heaven the saved nations of the earth shall bring their glory to the city (Chap. 21:24).

Here on earth Rome sits on the beast and rides him (Chap. 17:3); in heaven the Bride sits by the side of the Lamb (Chap. 19:8).

To the whore shall come in one day death and mourning and famine (Chap. 18:8); to the true Bride in one day life, and joy and feasting (Chap. 19:7-9).

Babylon is cast down (Chap. 18:21); the Bride is lifted up—to the highest pinnacle of honor and glory and bliss.

*And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.* Chap. 17:5.

From chapter 17 to chapter 21:8 there is a consecutive order of events: the destruction of Babylon by the ten kings (Chap. 17:16 to 18:24) under the leadership of the Beast, and the details about that judgment. How blessed that that devilish system—Satan's all time masterpiece of deception—shall finally receive her so richly merited doom. Let us look briefly at the origin of this wicked system.

Nimrod the rebel was the founder of Babel, which means the gate of God. He was married to Semiramis who is identical with the goddess Rhea or Cybele; also with Aphrodite of Greece and Venus of Rome. All pagan mythologies and systems of idolatry show an underlying unity of character, indicating they all spring from one common origin. All may be traced back to the Babylonian system and the schemes of its first ruler—Nimrod.

At Nimrod's time the wild beasts of the earth, multiplying more rapidly than man, had committed great depredations. By hunting them down and ridding the world to some extent of those monsters Nimrod gained the reputation of the benefactor of the human race. As the first

great builder after the flood, gathering men in masses and surrounding them with walls, he enabled them to pass their days in comparative security. He also delivered them from the old fear of God and the old faith. The flood had left people with an awe of God, but Nimrod through apostate theories lifted that fear. The Bacchanalian orgies were used by him to lead men to think that sensual enjoyment was the whole purpose of life. He was always accompanied by groups of women; he sought pleasure in music and song; in games and revelries.

He was apparently cut off suddenly by death. Persian records reveal that after his death he was deified under the name Orion and placed among the stars.

In the light of the promise of the woman's seed (Gen. 3:15), his widow Semiramis claimed her husband was the woman's seed (Zeor-Ashta), later changed to Zoroaster, whose death had been a voluntary sacrifice.

In the Eleusian mysteries it is proved that Egypt, Greece and Phoenicia all derived their religion and rites from ancient Babylon. Nimrod and his wife were worshipped side by side. But Nimrod's negro countenance caused offence, so, since the Chaldeans believed in the transmigration of souls, it was taught that Nimrod had re-appeared as a fair complexioned posthumous son, supernaturally born by his widow. Thus arose the worship of the "mother and the child". The image of the queen of heaven with the babe was seen everywhere. Ashtaroth and Tammuz became Isis and Horus in Egypt; Venus and Cupid in Italy. When the gospel came to Egypt, the Babylonian goddess and her son were simply converted into the virgin Mary and the child. The worship of Baal, introduced by Jezebel, was identical with the Babylonian idolatry.

Idolatry thus originated with Babylon, and throughout Scripture this name stands for the figure of idolatry. Its destruction is given in the Old Testament—Jer. 51; Isa. 13:19-20; 21:9-10; 47:7-8. Here in Revelation we find its doom in chapters 17 and 18. The Old Testament shows the literal city of Babylon was never to be rebuilt, so here it can only refer to the religious system, as in Isa. 13:19-20; Jer. 51:62.

In Rev. 17 Babylon is a woman; in Chap. 18 a city. Since the Bride of Christ, of which these same two figures are used, is neither a city nor literally a woman, so neither is Babylon. It is the apostate religion, seen in all its blasphemousness in Rome, with its corrupt daughters in apostate Christendom. The chief priest of Rome (now he is called the Pope) took the title of Pontifex Maximus; the very title once worn by Babylon's idolatrous priests.

In A. D. 378 Damasus, then Bishop of Rome, was appointed Pontifex Maximus, and thus became the legitimate successor of the old Babylonian pontiffs. The college of cardinals, with the pope at its head, is the counterpart of the pagan college of pontiffs.

The worship of the "queen of heaven" and the child; purgatory, holy water, priestly absolution, dedicated virgins or nuns, all power and knowledge in the hands of a special priesthood; a special head of the church on earth in the person of the pope (none of which are found anywhere in Scripture) with many more abominations; all these and many more are practiced by Rome and are bodily lifted from Babylonian heathen rites and forms. In short—Romanism is nothing else than religious heathenism. If you want to read up on this subject first hand, purchase the book entitled "The Two Babylons"; it's well worth reading.

*So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored*

*beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet 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:*

*And upon her forehead was a name written, (MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH). Chap. 17: 3-5.*

Rome is easily identified by her wealth and her wickedness, as stated here in v. 4 and again in Chap. 18:12-13. Her cup is full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. While the term abomination in Scripture has in view idolatrous and spiritual wickedness, filthiness implies the moral corruption that always goes along with idolatry—see II Kings 23:13. Any student of church history knows how terribly true these two features are descriptive of Roman Catholicism.

And she is the “mother” of harlots and abominations of the earth. Rome always claims to be the mother church, and is always talking of wanting her daughters to return to her bosom. And they will—many of them—for apostate Protestantism in the future day will share with Rome the judgment promised her, as she sides with the evil Jezebel that sits on the seven hills (see Rev. 2: 22-23). Her renegade Protestant daughters—blinded by the evil denials of the truth already now so prominent in Christendom—will be as bad as the wicked mother Rome in that day.

*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. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the wom-*

*an 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 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. Chap. 17:6-8.*

The beast and the woman are seen in close collaboration here. The beast is the great coming "Superman" who shall unite the European powers under his dynamic leadership. This woman and this man—the Romish church and this Roman Leader (for his headquarters shall be in the city of Rome)—shall work together with the intention of each profiting by the support and prestige of the other. As we know today, the Roman church is a tremendous political power, with her tentacles in almost every government in the world. I take it that Catholicism in that day will not be the dominant power, but Rome will work underhandedly, as she always does. We do not read that the woman rides the beast, as if she were in charge, but that the beast carries her (v. 7). This beast will revive the glory of the old Roman empire, with the alliance of all the Western European nations to strengthen him. When it says in v. 8 that the beast "was", it refers of course to the Rome of the past; when it says that it "is not" it tells us that for many centuries Rome has ceased to exist. But we are told that it shall rise again, and come forth out of the bottomless pit. Chapter 13 sees this Person and Federation rise out of the sea, suggesting that he rises from among the Gentiles; our verse adds that his rise is Satanic, and it forecasts his ultimate and sure doom, for he shall go into perdition (v. 8).

Rome is seen as drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus. How that truth is written

on history's pages is now a well known fact, but our Savior is coming to make inquisition for blood.

*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.*

*And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 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. Chap. 17:9-14.*

Much of this we have looked at before. The seven heads not only represent the seven forms of Imperial Rome of the past, but also are descriptive of the seven hills on which Rome is built, thus connecting the city with the system. When John wrote these visions, five of the seven forms of the government of ancient Rome were past; one was then in power and the seventh was still to come, but would last but briefly. All this is now history. But the Roman power that was, but has not been for these many centuries, shall yet be revived in this final last form, and shall again be a mighty power. Ten powers shall unite with this coming "beast" (v. 12) as also recorded in Chap. 13:1. No doubt the main reason for this coalition of Western European nations is for the purpose

of resisting the aggression of Communistic powers, with Russia seen as the chief aggressor. We see the foreshadow of such an alliance already very clearly in our day.

The sad and awful thing is that not only will this future mighty Power under the leadership of this "beast" be formed to be able to withstand Russia and other allied partners of Russia, but it will be religiously an apostate government, and will dare to make war with the Lamb. That will be the Armageddon we saw in chapter 16, with the never before known tremendous destruction and massacre of millions of rebels, destroying the beast and his armies, as delineated in Chap. 19:19-21. The "little Lamb" will smash and crush the "wild beast".

*And he said unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And 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 into their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.*

*And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*  
Chap. 17:15-18.

What a comfort to the saint of God, now or at any time, to see how our God controls and overrules all earthly events; how He moves men like pawns on life's chess-board. In v. 13 we read that these ten rulers give their power to the beast; in v. 17 we learn that God made them do it; He sitteth over the waterfloods. The "whore" may sit upon the nations and bulldoze them, as Roman Catholicism has been doing for centuries, but God sits upon

the throne of the universe and He is the Supreme Ruler. She may reign over the kings of the earth, for Rome is a mighty political power as well as a religious humbug, but Jesus shall reign wherever the sun does his successive journeys run.

Before Christ comes back and destroys this ten-horned beast, He will employ those European nations to destroy Rome and visit her with the judgment she so richly deserves, and which has been so long delayed. The eighteenth chapter of this book of Revelation is devoted to the details of that doom so terribly earned during the centuries; a doom that will fill all heaven with glad rejoicing (Chap. 18:20). Chapters 17 and 18 of our book describe the earthly city of wickedness—Rome, the false bride, the whore. Chapters 19 to 22 describe the heavenly city, the pure and holy Jerusalem on high, the true Bride of Christ, pure and holy in His sight—redeemed by His precious blood.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

*And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird . . .*

*And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Chap. 18:1-2; 4-5.*

Chapter 18 reveals the worldly, secular aspect of Rome. Rome wields great commercial as well as political and religious influence. Twice it says that Babylon is fallen, is fallen; probably having her religious as well as commercial doom in view, with the final judgment at the hands of the Savior she so falsely professed. For there seems little doubt that the angel of the opening verse is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as on other occasions like that in this book. He is the Angel-Priest of chapter 8; the Angel-Redeemer of chapter 10 and here the Angel-Avenger in chapter 18.

In chapter 17 the destruction of the whore is ascribed to the ten kings (whom God uses to carry out His purposes and do the actual destruction), but here it is said to be the Lord Himself; here human agents disappear, and the doom is traced to God as the source.

Her sins have reached up to heaven. With all her pretended sanctity the false church is but the haven of

every Satanic vile and evil spirit (v. 2). Yet even here are found some souls truly saved and they are bidden to come out, ere those final fearful judgments are let loose.

*Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.*

*How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, . . . Chap. 18: 6-8.*

Verse 7 is quoted from Isaiah 47:7-9, where it refers to Babylon. It could not describe the attitude and conduct of the Roman Church any more graphically.

How thrilling for the true believer in Jesus, member of Christ's true Church and heavenly Bride—to contrast all that is said in v. 7 with what in a most blest reality is true of him. Rome has ever glorified herself here on earth; the Church is waiting for her eternal glory in heaven (I Pet. 5:10). Rome shall change her present life of luxury and pride for a corresponding measure of torment and sorrow for all eternity, while Christ's true Bride shall exchange a life often of sorrow and even persecution for an eternity of delicious joy in His presence.

Rome said: "I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow." She claims to be the Queen of heaven, and prides herself on being *the* only true church. But those redeemed by His precious blood are His real Bride and such shall be His Queen and reign by His side, while the whore writhes in eternal torment. She shall know nought but sorrow forever, while the true church shall share His glory and joy, for at His right hand there are

pleasures forever more. All glory to His Name! In one day shall her plagues come; in one moment shall our supreme bliss come—the moment Jesus comes to catch us up to be where He is.

*And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble.*

*And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. Chap. 18:11-13.*

Gold and silver first on the list; souls of men last. Nothing could be truer than that about this system. It is the biggest and worst financial racket and extortionism on earth. Seven departments of traffic are largely controlled or affected by false religious merchandising as given in our text. 1) Wealth is the aim; 2) gorgeous vestments; where do you ever read in the New Testament teachings as to the Church that God's servants ever wore special robes? 3) Expensive furniture; 4) rich perfumes, including liturgical incense; 5) a reckless living in luxury, with the *very best of everything*, fleeced from the flock instead of fed to the flock; 6) high riding in Cadillacs—chariots for those who fleece the flock and extort money from the poor to live in luxury; 7) infamous traffic in the bodies and souls of men.

In one hour her judgment shall come; in one hour so great riches shall come to nought.

Each one of us can have his choice. We can make the riches of this world our aim and purpose in life; we can go along with a religion utterly contrary to all that the meek and lowly Jesus ever taught; we can ride high now in sinful pride; yes, many do just that—live for self alone, and shall know eternal remorse hereafter. As Abraham said to the rich man in hell: “Thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things and likewise Lazarus evil things, and now he is comforted and thou art tormented.”

*Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets: for God hath avenged you on her. . . . And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*  
Chap. 18:20-24.

Heaven is told to rejoice when the greatest religious Satanic imitation of God's true Church is judged and destroyed. And at the opening of the next chapter that rejoicing fills heaven with its fourfold “Hallelujah.” Praise God, some day my little voice shall chime in too when the billions in heaven shall shout that mighty Hallelujah chorus!

Vengeance with God is often long delayed, for He is a God of wondrous patience and has purposes to serve in the very trials and sorrows His true saints are called upon to endure.

The closing verse of our chapter reiterates what was said in chapter 17:6. The woman is drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus. Here we are told that all the blood ever slain upon the earth was found in her. This of course cannot refer to the Roman church alone, but there is no doubt that she is the most awful exponent of hateful persecution against God's people. It is religion—Satanic religion—of which Rome

is the most blatant example, which is responsible for all the blood of saints and martyrs. It began away back with Cain and has gone on ever since throughout the world's history, largely, sad to say, provoked and stirred up by religious leaders, as in the case of our blessed Lord Himself. Religion, Oh religion, what fearful stains darken thee! Many speak of religion as if it were synonymous with Christianity, but it is not. Religion of history is largely proven to be of the devil, while Christianity is of God. The one is a miserable caricature of the other. Religion hated our Lord and crucified Him. It has done to death millions of God's dear saints. Do you just have a religion, or is Christ your Savior and Lord?

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

*And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.*

*And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleulia.*

*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. 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. Chap. 19:1-6.*

On earth the dirge of sorrow; in heaven the anthem of praise. Happily the translators left the word "Hallelujah" in its original form, as this makes the triumph expressed in its fourfold repetition so much more impressive. This is the only occasion in the New Testament of its use. God is seen as the Judge of BABYLON, while the Lord Jesus is seen as the Avenger upon the Beast, since the beast is shown as in direct opposition to Him. The "elders" are not again mentioned after v. 4 of this chapter, for the Lamb is now married to His Bride, and the elders represent the New Testament believers who

form the Bride: hence they are lost now in the sweeter, more intimate relationship of this holy union.

Here on earth we have listened quite a few times with real thrill to the singing of Handel's Hallelujah chorus, but oh, what a joy it will be to join our voice with that of the vast multitude of billions in heaven in that great Hallelujah, when the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; when we shall gather around Himself in those courts of light. No "tele" vision then, but direct and immediate vision, when we see Jesus. Hallelujah!

*Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 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.*

*And He said unto me, Write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. Chap. 19:7-9.*

On earth usually every eye is on the Bride; here on the Bridegroom. It is the marriage of the *Lamb*. A marriage foreshadowed long ago in the garden of Eden, for Eph. 5:32 tells us God was thinking of Christ and His church away back then. There the bride was presented to Adam by the Lord—the Lord Jesus, I believe. There He was the "best Man"; here He is the Bridegroom. There the bride was presented to Adam; here He presents His Bride to Himself, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

She is arrayed—not in the garment of salvation as such—but in a beautiful white robe, woven by herself, for the white linen is the "righteous deeds of the saints", as it should read. Our dress in that day will consist of the life that was lived for Him here; of the things done here and

now for His praise and glory. Each believer, as it were, weaves and embroiders his or her own bridal dress for that day of bliss. We shall be glad and rejoice, but the honor will go to Him (v. 7). For all of it is due, after all, to His matchless grace, even the things we do for Him are the fruit of His sustaining and empowering grace (I Cor. 15:10).

Ah what a wedding! We will be there, not as guests to attend the reception, but as His Bride, to see and to share His glory and His love throughout eternity.

There are guests at the wedding too; blessed indeed are those who are called to this marriage supper. They are undoubtedly the saints of the Old Testament, who will be in heaven, but will not form part of the Bride, for she was formed on Pentecost and will be caught home to glory at the rapture.

*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. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God.*

*And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 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.*

*And he hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Chap. 19:11-16.*

Here in the final, total judgment executed as Christ the Lord comes forth from heaven in great glory, prophesied so many hundreds of times in the Scriptures. His saints come with Him (v. 14) but they wear no armor nor carry swords. He alone does; He is the Avenger; not we. He wears a vesture dipped in blood, showing this is not the first judgment, for all the previous catastrophes poured out on the earth during the tribulation are also His doing. This is the final day; just before His peaceful reign is ushered in.

The winepress of v.15 is the same as that of Chap. 14: 20 and both are the fulfilment of the solemn prophecy of Isa. 63:3. The sword proceeding out of His mouth is also seen so in II Thess. 2:8.

He comes to judge and to make war. The judgment He executes is portrayed in Matt. 25:31-46. This is the judgment of the nations at home who shall be gathered before Him and from among which many shall prove to be His own—the “sheep” of Matt. 25 who are put on His right hand. But the “making war” of v. 11 of our chapter is His indiscriminate destruction of the beast and his armies which are in amazing audacity and rebellion gathered together against Him. This is the massacre of Armageddon, the doom of II Thess. 1:8-10.

*And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven. Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, etc. . . . And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark*

*of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

*And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat on the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. Chap. 19:17-21.*

The supper of the Lamb in heaven is followed by the great supper of God on earth, to which all the fowls are invited. The bliss of glory is succeeded by the blast of doom. The marriage of the Lamb precedes the wrath of the Lamb. This last judgment ere peace reigns on earth is foretold many, many times in the Old Testament Scriptures. Zech. 14 is one chapter in point. How amazing must be man's conceit to array himself against the Lord of glory; how sure must be the outcome of such an unequal strife. Alas, God's grace for nineteen centuries has lulled sinful man into thinking that God could not execute judgment because He did not. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11).

But now the stroke falls at last. The great leaders—the "Beast" who is the coming man of the hour; and the false prophet—the antichrist—are both cast alive into the lake of fire, and their deluded followers suffer also the vengeance of eternal fire. Wickedness shall ultimately be punished and righteousness triumph.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

*And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.*

*And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. Chap. 20:1-3.*

Revelation 20 is quite a chapter. There are four tremendously important events here: 1) Satan is bound and cast into the abyss for one thousand years; 2) Christ reigns with His saints for a thousand years; 3) Satan is then set free and is finally cast into the lake of fire forever; 4) The final judgment throne is set and all sinners are consigned to eternal perdition.

Seven times this bottomless pit is found in the book of Revelation, and seems to have reference to the "hell" of angels shut up there till the day of their final doom, which is the lake of fire, as Matt. 25:41 shows. The same word is translated "deep" in Luke 8:31, where the demons begged the Lord Jesus not to send them away into it. Satan, with his two symbolic names and his two titles (the same four are given in Chap. 12:9) is bound a thousand years and cast into this abyss.

He is locked up there for a millennium. (It seems almost unbelievable that some who do not believe in this millennial reign of Christ claim that we are in the millennium *now* and that Satan's being bound for a thousand

years really means that right now he is bound in his activities and chained through the witness believers bear to Christ). Needless to say such an interpretation is utterly refused by Scripture everywhere else, as well as in this very passage, for it says Satan is bound that he should deceive the nations no more, and if he is not deceiving the nations *now*, then who is? II Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9 answer that.

Six times in this chapter this period of a thousand years is mentioned, and nowhere else in Scripture is its duration given; we usually speak of it under its Latin name of "millennium". Though the time of this reign is not given elsewhere, yet the period itself is often found in the Old Testament. We learn there is many places of a period of universal peace and blessedness, as in Isa. 11; Isa. 35, etc. The evil one is locked up and the Righteous One reigns in power and glory (v. 4). It is mentioned in distinction from the Eternal State to follow because during the millennium perfection has not been reached; during this time sin is still present on the earth, and God's judgment falls on the sinner—see Isa. 65:20; Zeph. 3:5.

*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Chap. 20:4.*

It does not say who the "they" are that sat upon these thrones, but, since we read in Chap. 4:4 of the heavenly saints (represented by the 24 elders) that they were sitting on thrones crowned with crowns of gold, it seems that these of chapter 20 are the same. Hence there are apparently three classes of saints in this verse:

1. The heavenly saints who were caught up at the rapture, and are seen in Rev. 4:4 as sitting on thrones. Judgment is given unto them, for we read in I Cor. 6:2 that the "saints shall judge the world".
2. The martyrs slain before the great tribulation as such began. They are the souls seen under the altar in Chap. 6:9-11 under the fifth seal, who were told to wait for vengeance till the other martyrs should also be killed. They are said to have been beheaded, and this is the Roman method of killing.
3. The martyrs slain under the beast, during the great tribulation. They are those who refused to worship the beast and the abomination of desolation set up in the temple at Jerusalem, and who will pay with their lives for their faith. All these three shall live in glory with Christ and reign with Him.

*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 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. Chap. 20:5-6.*

It has been said that the first resurrection takes place in four stages. First our Lord Himself—I Cor. 15:23; then the saints who came out of the graves after His resurrection—Matt. 27:52-53; then the saints raised from the dead at the rapture—I Thess. 4:16, and finally these martyrs of the tribulation period.

The rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished, so that there is more than a thousand years between the resurrection of the saints and the resurrection of sinners. John 5:28-29 mentions both these resurrections together, but in reality there is a long space

of time between the two. Many professing Christians believe there is one general resurrection when all shall be raised at once and shall then find out whether they are saved or lost; whether they are sheep or goats. But this is a mistake. We learn from God's precious Word that the believer in Jesus shall never come into judgment for his sins—John 5:24; Rom. 8:1. Perfect love has cast out fear, so that the believer will have boldness in the day of judgment—I John 4:17.

*And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 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.*

*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.*

*And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. Chap. 20:7-10.*

After a thousand years of perfect peace and plenty, Satan is let loose that man might be tested once more. He was tried under law in the Old Testament and failed; tested these last nineteen centuries under grace, and has turned God's love into occasion for rebellion and hatred of Him; now he is to be tested once more under that period of wonderful glory for a thousand years. Again he fails, and follows the devil's leading to eternal doom. And this time he can not blame his failure on the devil, for he was locked up during those entire thousand years.

Here is the last rebellion. It is illustrated in the great uprising against God described in Ezekiel 38 and 39; only there it is premillennial; here postmillennial.

It may be that the "camp of the saints" which they compass about refers to the heavenly saints in glory, and the "beloved city" to Jerusalem on earth. It is Satan's final attempt to overthrow all God's purposes in regard to the blessing of both heavenly and earthly saints. The armies are gathered together (both before the millennium at Armageddon, and here at the close of the millennium) and both times are totally destroyed. Man never seems to learn; Armageddon should have told him what to expect on this occasion. Satan reaches his fearful doom in the lake of fire, to be tormented forever and ever.

*And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Chap. 20:11-15.*

It does not tell us who the Judge is that sits upon this great white throne, but we know from other Scriptures that it is none other than He Who once hung upon the Cross. For the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son (John 5:22). He is to judge the living and the

dead (II Tim. 4:1). He judges the living—see Matt. 25: 31-46; the dead here.

Solomon built a great white throne made of ivory, which he then covered with gold. This one in our chapter is not covered with gold, for the glory (of which the gold speaks) is in the very Person Who sits there. The “white” stands for absolute justice, holiness and righteousness, which shall issue from that throne.

The books were opened. There is a record kept of every human life; even every idle word that men speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. But the sinner is not cast into the lake of fire because his name is written in the books that record his sins, but because it is NOT written in the Book of life; the book that speaks of Him Who saves all who trust in Him. Not to accept Christ as Savior is the truly unpardonable sin: The damning sin of omission.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

*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. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*  
Chap. 21: 1-2.

The first eight verses of this chapter connect directly with chapter 20. There we had come to the end of Christ's millennial reign and the final judgment of the dead. That ends what we speak of as "time" and in the first eight verses of this chapter eternity is ushered in. These verses describe the eternal state, when sinners, sin and sin's consequences shall be gone forever. The eternal ages are more fully described here than anywhere else in the New Testament. It is also referred to in I Cor. 15: 24-28; Eph. 3: 21; II Pet. 3: 13.

The coming down of the heavenly city is given in detail in verses 10-27 of this chapter. At this time the Bride—the new Jerusalem—has been married to her Lord for over a thousand years, for the marriage took place prior to the millennium. Yet she is still dressed in the beauty of a newlywed Bride. That beauty and attractiveness will last forever; He shall present her to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. She is His pearl of great price—setting off the loveliness of her Lover.

There was no more sea. Is this literal? Three quarters of the globe at present is occupied by the seas. The feature of this new earth which struck John is that there would be no more sea. The sea, with its unpredictableness, its violence so often, is gone; instead there is an

eternal calm. Seas in the book of Revelation stand for the restless nations casting up mire and dirt; they will be gone and spiritual as well as physical peace will rule universally.

*And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Chap. 21:3-4.*

Heaven, earth and hell are brought before us in this brief reference to eternal bliss. The Bride, portrayed under the figure of this heavenly city, comes down out of heaven, with the dew of a blooming bride upon her. Then, in these verses, we get a view of earth when sin, with its sad results, is banished forever.

God dwells among men. That was ever His delight, for His delights are with the sons of men. He dwelt in the midst of Israel of old on the tabernacle; then He tabernacled on earth in a human body in the Person of His Son—John 1:14; then He dwelt in the Church, the temple of God on earth; I Cor. 3:16, and in the eternal state He will dwell among His earthly people. Many Old Testament prophets speak of this, as Zeph. 3:17.

He will wipe away all tears. Verse four has often been applied to believers in heaven, but actually here it has to do with earth. As to ourselves we know we shall be changed into His likeness at His coming, so that necessarily all pain and grief shall be removed; here it applies to earth. It is one definite proof that here on earth also the curse of sin will be completely lifted. It still exists in a

measure during the millennium, as we mentioned in chapter 20.

*And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. Chap. 21: 5-6.*

Sin has not been patched up; no, all things are made "new". There is a new creation, a new man, a new song, a new day, a new heaven and a new earth. All things are new. I heard a speaker say once that this word new has the idea of fresh (new in contrast to stale). He makes all things new. There will never be any monotony. Every day throughout eternity will bring fresh thrills, new wonders, new revelations of Himself and His matchless love; new revelations from Himself. In the ages to come He will ever show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Here on earth we get tired of the endless wearisome repetition of things; never over there.

He said: It is done. The same words were spoken in Chap. 16:17. There the end of Christ's judgments was reached; here the end of time itself. The work for which the basis was laid on the Cross when Jesus said "it is finished" has now at last reached its actual conclusion—the Lamb of God has taken away the sin of the world, and introduced everlasting peace. He is the first and the last letter of the Alphabet. All that He has spoken has been made good. He is the beginning and the end. All that He began He has completed.

From that future pinnacle of glory comes back into time once more the offer of salvation. Any thirsty soul is

offered freely a drink of the water of life. It is still time to drink and live. "Ho everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!"

*He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.* Chap. 21: 7-8.

Here is encouragement to the believer who by faith overcomes; and a description of the doom of the Christ rejectors. What a fearful gap separates these two classes. On the one hand eternal riches and fellowship; on the other eternal sorrow and suffering away from God in the place of unending pain. Oh, that men would only wake up and turn to God while it is yet time!

The list of the lost begins with the fearful (those who are afraid to confess Christ for the sake of their standing with mere men); it includes the vilest type of sinners and ends with all liars. Those who have neglected God's love as well as those who have deliberately and wilfully refused Him or perhaps hated Him—all suffer alike the same fate. The crowning and damning sin is that of not coming to Christ and receiving Him as Savior. Through Christ's precious blood God will and can save every one who trusts in Him. But for the grace of God, we would share the doom of these mentioned here. How shall we ever praise Him enough? May the thought of the terrible end of the lost make us all the more thankful for the marvelous grace that sought and found us, and brought us to know and love and serve Him!

*And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last*

*plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.*

*And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; Chap. 21:9-11.*

This city apparently is a symbolic description of the Bride herself. We often speak ourselves of a city and its inhabitants in the same terms, for we say for instance that New York gave a great welcome to some foreign potentate, when actually we mean the people of New York.

The Lord Jesus shall descend with His Bride to reign over the earth. The Bride is dazzlingly beautiful, for the glory of God has been put upon her. As our blessed Lord said in His great prayer: "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be One, as we are One" (John 17:22).

All is glory and beauty now. The sea seen in heaven is like crystal; the river of the water of life is like crystal (Chap. 22:1), and here the Bride is. All the impurities and all the fogginess of earth is gone; all is now purest light and glory. Down here, as the psalmist said, He gives grace; up there He gives glory. It is in the Church that forever shall be displayed the manifold wisdom and love of God (Eph. 3:10).

*And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*  
Read Chap. 21:12-21.

In verses 12 to 21 we have a detailed description of the glory and wealth of the Bride. The measure 12 is very

prominent. It is the number consisting of 3 and 4, multiplied. 3 and 4 added—the number 7—in Scripture speaks of completeness and perfection. The number 12 has the same meaning, but the numbers being multiplied suggests that here is perfection in absolute perfection—God reigning in fulness of power and glory. It is the number of divine government or administration, as its use in many places indicates. There were 12 tribes in Israel; 12 apostles in the Church; 12,000 furlongs measure of the heavenly city. 3 is God's number in the Bible; 4 is man's. *God* is reigning supreme in the *Man* Christ Jesus.

The names of the apostles are in the foundation—see Eph. 2:20. The names of the twelve tribes on the gates. In those days gates were often named after the cities to which they gave egress, as for instance the Damascus gate in Jerusalem would lead towards Damascus. These gates in the heavenly city lead then toward Israel, for from heaven government is exercised over the earth—Christ and His Bride will reign over His earthly people Israel and those with them on earth.

Those gates of pearl might well again remind us of the Church, for she is the pearl of great price of which our Lord spoke in Matt. 13:46.

There is just one street in this city. No slums there; everybody lives on the main street. The street in its meaning stands for the place where business is transacted, stands for intercourse or fellowship, for travel, etc. In heaven every believer shares in all the great privileges the grace of God has made our own. No one will be shut out from all that God's matchless grace has provided. Here alas, there are such wide differences; there all distinctions disappear.

*And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. 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.* Chap. 21: 22-23.

This truly is an amazing city. There was no temple in it. Of course, we might have expected this, for our blessed Savior, when here, said that those who worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and in truth. And Stephen told the proud Jewish leaders that God dwells not in temples made with hands. Even today we have the priceless privilege to worship apart from the ritual and form so sweet to perverted human religious taste. In our cities we can see hundreds of "temples", all supposedly devoted to the worship of God. Even true believers are divided into dozens of sects, but not so up there.

There not a feeble two or three, but millions upon millions will be gathered around Himself. All sectarian differences shall disappear and there, as it should be here, God and the Lamb shall be the Center and Object of every redeemed heart.

Here the Church of God is His true temple, there God and the Lamb are. Here we represent the Father and the Son; there they fill the scene and the testimony of believers no longer will be needed. Here we—the Church of God—are the lights of the world, where we are to hold forth the Word of life; there the Lamb of God Himself, the once crucified, but now glorified One, is the Light of that Eternal Home.

The moon is not needed here. The moon, with its reflected light, typifies the Church which reflects Christ down here. Its light—its witness to her Lord, will no longer be needed in the glory. He will fill that place!

*And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it*

*shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations unto it.*

*And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. Chap. 21: 24-27.*

Many Old Testament passages mention that in the day of Christ's reign the converted Gentile nations of the world will come to worship the Lord of hosts, and will bow before Him, such as Isa. 60:1-3. They do not bring their glory *into* the city, for the city is in heaven and they are upon earth. The word "into" should be "unto". (The Greek word can be used either way). Saved Gentile nations on earth will worship the Lord, come to Jerusalem to bring their offerings to Him, and they will acknowledge Christ in His glory.

This city will be pure and undefiled. Only those cleansed in His precious blood will have the right to enter. What a wondrous prospect this is! A city without defilement, without sin, without strife, without crooked politics. The city of God. How we long to see that day. The gates are always open, for that city will not be a place of idleness. There will be constant coming and going on God's business, for His servants shall serve Him. There shall be the deep joy of eternal happy business, as even today there is much satisfaction in the service of the Lord Jesus. May we earnestly labor for Him now, that He may be able to use us up there!

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

*And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the Tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 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:*

*And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever, Chap. 22:1-5.*

A similar description is given of Israel's earthly blessing in Ezek. 47:7-9. But here the many trees of Ezekiel are reduced to One tree—*The Tree*. None other but the Lord Jesus Himself, Who is the Tree of Life. Here is the heavenly Paradise, with the River, the Tree and the Fruit. Here the river is not divided into four heads, as in Genesis; in heaven all divisions are past. Here the river is traced to its source—to the throne of God and of the Lamb.

The water of life is a familiar figure in Scripture of God's rich spiritual blessings—salvation with all its many attendant joys and satisfactions. Here we learn that all flows from the throne of Grace where the Lamb sits in perfect fellowship with His Father. If we would drink of that soul-thirst-satisfying water of life now, we must keep in touch with the throne of grace.

There is the Tree, its twelve types of fruit and its leaves. It has been said that the Tree—Christ Himself—is specially the portion of the Church His Bride; the fruits are for the twelve tribes of Israel, and the leaves are for the blessing of the Gentile nations. Different fruits every month suggests the infinite variety of grace flowing from the Person and work of Christ. Never anything to clog or dull the soul, but eternally new and constantly fresh revelations of His grace.

We shall see His face. His Name shall be in our foreheads, so that all may know we are His. Yet a little while and He shall come. "Amen, even so come Lord Jesus."

*Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.* Chap. 22:7.

*Behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me,*  
. . . Chap. 22:12.

*Surely I come quickly, . . .* Chap. 22:20.

Ere the last words are spoken and the curtain is run down on God's revelation in this wonderful Bible of ours, our blessed Lord three times assures his own that He is coming quickly. This does not necessarily mean soon, but rather that when He does come. He will come with speed. He will not delay one moment when the hour has struck. This suggests His great longing to have all His saints home with Him in the glory. It's like a young man, just married, who is called away to a job in a distant city. The very moment he is through there, he takes the fastest transportation home to be with his beloved. So with our blessed Lord.

In view of His coming, He urges us first to keep His Word, to walk in obedience to its commands and demands; to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world, as we look for that blessed hope and the

appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Secondly, He challenges us to faithful service by reminding us that when He comes, He will reward each of us for every bit of devotion to Him. So many other scriptures also assure us that at the judgment seat of Christ He will estimate and honor our faithfulness to Him and to His Word.

Thirdly, the book closes with a simple: "Surely, I come quickly." Here it is not our faithfulness to His Word, our service of love, or our obedience that is in view, but it is Himself that fills the picture. Just to see Him, to be with Him, is and should be the utmost desire of our hearts. And so the response is: "Amen, even so come Lord Jesus."

*And he said unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. 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. Chap. 22:10-11.*

Daniel was told to seal the book in his day; John is told not to seal this book of Revelation, for the time is at hand—or present. Its teachings are set before the believer as possible of fulfilment at any time. Away back at the beginning of the Christian era Paul wrote that "the night is far spent and the day is at hand". Yet actually then the night was only beginning, chronologically speaking. But from the standpoint of moral and spiritual conditions the night was far spent even then. All the moral vileness, both physically and spiritually, was present back then as it is now, so that from that point of view, the Lord's coming was at hand even then. May we be like men who wait for their Lord to come.

And when He comes, all assets or liabilities will be frozen and remain static forever. There will be no change after that. The believer will be eternally what he is at the coming of the Lord. Here and now is the hour for growth, development and increased conformity to His likeness. Then, he that is righteous will be righteous forever; the holiness then attained will be the capacity in holiness for eternity. What a tremendous thought this is, as expressed in verse 11 of our chapter.

And what a solemn thought in regard to the sinner. He that is unjust will be unjust still (where the tree falls, there it will lie), and he that is filthy will be filthy still. This seems to be one of the very few passages in Scripture telling of the eternal condition of the lost soul in eternity. We read definitely of a change in the case of the believer in Jesus; his body shall be changed into likeness to the body of glory of his blessed Lord. The intimation in our verse is that the sinner's body will remain unchanged—he will have forever the very body of sin, pain and disease he had while on earth. How fearful such a doom!

*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. But without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

*I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the foot and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star.*

*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Chap. 22:14-17.*

Once more the blessed ones, and the cursed ones. Those within the city and those without. Man's eternal destiny depends on his attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Those "in Christ" now shall be in the city of God then. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation."

Our blessed Lord cannot close this marvelous revelation to His servant and to us without one final appeal to all mankind. The believer is once more pointed to Who He is. He is God manifest in flesh . . . the Root of David referring to His Deity; the offspring of David referring to His birth in Manhood, as a direct descendant of King David. He is the bright and morning Star, pointing to His future coming in glory to take His Bride home to be with Him.

And now the Church, inspired by the Holy Spirit, joins with Him in bidding all men to Come to Jesus. The threefold repetition of the invitational "Come" may well speak of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit united in providing the way for sinners to come and take of the water of life freely. "Come"! Almost 700 times this lovely word is found in the Bible in the form of an invitation. Alas, some day it shall be changed for that awful: "Depart from Me, ye cursed."

*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:*

*And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*  
Chap. 22:18-19.

Whether these verses apply only to the book of Revelation, or whether to all God's written Word, I cannot say

for sure. However, I am sure every believer in Christ knows that all Scripture is as sacred from human meddling.

A double curse is pronounced on this double sin. To add to the Scriptures is as evil as to take from them. The first sin is peculiarly that of Roman Catholicism, which, while nominally acknowledging the Bible as the Word of God, vitiates its force by adding endless rubbish to the pure teachings of the Word of God. A glass of milk ceases to be a glass of milk when a gallon of water is added to it, as well as by dumping it out to begin with. The Lord says of such that they make the Word of God of none effect by their traditions. The second sin is that of higher criticism, known wrongly as modernism (it is as ancient as the garden of Eden, where the devil first introduced it), which denies many of the precious vital truths of Christianity. It is specially the sin of apostate protestantism. Eternal loss and suffering are the portion of those who practice those mishandlings of God's holy Word.

It says that God will take away their part out of the book of life. I have heard this quoted sometimes by anxious souls who have wondered whether it were possible that one's *name* could be taken out of the book of life when once inscribed there. But it pays to notice that the text does not say anything about one's name, but of the *part*. There is a part or portion in God's Word for every soul under heaven, but if men deny the truth of that Word, there will be no part for them and they will find themselves eternally on the outside. The people mentioned in our text are not believers, but those who reject God's salvation either by rejecting the Scripture's truth, or by drowning it in human tradition, which denies God's way of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This great book closes with the promise of His coming again. In longing response all true believers in Jesus chime in and say: "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus".

May the Lord bless you, dear reader, and may the tremendous events that lie ahead make us realize more deeply what manner of persons we ought to be in all holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God!

**THE END.**

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His grasp of the Scriptures is unusual. Fearing the permanent loss of his eyesight, he memorized all of the New Testament. Later, through diligent care, his eyesight was restored.

For the past thirty-one years, Mr. Van Ryn has been used throughout the nation to preach the Word, and he is a welcome speaker at many Bible conferences. His written ministry has resulted in the publication of several books. With the help of God he continues writing, teaching and preaching Christ.