

THE
KEYS
OF
REVELATION

FRANK SHALLIEU

THE KEYS OF REVELATION

Jesus' Testimony



Frank Shallieu

Revelation Research Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 450
Hamburg, New Jersey 07419

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The High Priest
(See explanation of Revelation 1:13.)

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Preface

To attach sufficient weight and importance to the Book of Revelation, the reader must realize how carefully God guided and directed all the details. Such a realization not only gives confidence in the correctness of the prophecy—that not one jot or tittle shall fail until all be fulfilled—but also awakens a great interest in God’s plan, leading to a close examination and careful search for the meaning of those visions (Matt. 5:18).

To be devoid of such desires indicates a lack of interest in, and appreciation of, God’s purposes . . . of which salvation the apostles, the prophets, and the angels all desired and sought earnestly to know, “searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify” (1 Pet. 1:10,11). This interest on the part of the Lord’s people is ever pleasing to Him. Though in times past God did not gratify such desires to any considerable extent because the due time had not yet come, He never chided such interest. On the contrary, He called the inquiring Daniel “greatly beloved,” and answered his inquiry so far as was consistent with the divine plan (Dan. 10:11,12; 12:9).

Such inquiry, therefore, is not an improper prying into the secrets of God. His children are urged to manifest an interest in His plans, to search the Scriptures and take heed to the “sure word of prophecy,” thus assuming the proper waiting attitude for quickly discerning dispensational truth as it becomes due (John 5:39; 2 Pet. 1:19). To intentionally ignore this portion of God’s Word would be a derogatory reflection upon the character and judgment of its author. “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever” (Deut. 29:29; cf. Matt. 13:10–12).

No explanation of the prophetic and highly symbolic Book of Revelation and its “secret things” can be heartily received with assurance, nor accepted by discriminating minds, unless all its component parts are taken into consideration and given a complete and harmonious application. This necessitates a step-by-step approach, that is, a verse-by-verse treatment and analysis of the content. Such an investigative pursuit in understanding helps to minimize both conscious and unconscious evasiveness on the part of the expositor, who is thus required to face up to and address the intricacy of detail.

The purpose of this publication, therefore, is to satisfy the truth-seeker who, being less interested in a smooth, fiction-style, sermonizing rendition, is more concerned with receiving an explanation of the vision in all its minutiae.

Seven Messages of the Apocalypse

Part I: Chapters 1–3

Revelation Chapter 1

Verses 1 to 3 of the highly symbolic Book of Revelation form a preface, or introduction, affording a brief insight into the motivation behind the entire work and some of the principal characters associated with it.

Verse 1:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, . . .

The introductory words of this prophecy have unusual force and character. At the very outset God is identified as the author of this book. Although it does say “the Revelation of Jesus Christ,” note the qualifying clause “which God gave unto him.” Jesus’ role is that of the revelator.

. . . to shew unto his servants things which must shortly [begin to] come to pass; . . .

The title of this last book of the Bible, “Revelation,” comes from the Greek word *apokalupto*, signifying an uncovering or revealing. God provided these revelations to enlighten His covenant people on things needful and helpful for them to know. Designed to be gradually revealed and progressively understood by the Lord’s people, the Book of Revelation concerns the earthly experience and pilgrimage of the nominal Church as prophetically seen and portrayed throughout the Gospel Age, a period of almost two thousand years. Prior to his death, Jesus instructed his disciples to both anticipate and be on the alert for information of this very nature pertaining to “things to come” (John 14:16–18; 16:12–15).

The extent to which Divine Providence in the past has permitted a measure of odium or indifference to attach itself to the investigation of the Book of Revelation has merely served to enhance its value. By covering these truths in symbolic and dark sayings, as well as by permitting contempt or ridicule, God has purposely obscured the subject to all but the class for whom it was intended, thus hindering the worldly-wise from apprehending it (Matt. 11:25).

. . . and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

God sent and *signified* this message (transmitted it in His own secret code language of signs, symbols, and visions to prevent any untimely disclosure of its mysteries) through His angel Jesus, the messenger of the covenant, unto His servant the Apostle John (Mal. 3:1; Heb. 1:1,2; Rev. 5:9; 20:1,2; 22:6,7).

Verse 2:

Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Here, again, is a reminder that God is the author of the Book of Revelation, “the word of *God*.” Jesus, as the revelator, dictated or testified the message to John in

an audible manner. John, in turn, acted as recording stenographer and faithfully “bare record” of the message, which he transcribed into writing.

Verse 3:

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.

Although it has been generally understood that a blessing will attend those who reverently examine and obey (“keep”) the things written in the Book of Revelation, a further and deeper meaning is alluded to in the words “Blessed is he [singular] that readeth [aloud], and they [plural] that hear the words of this prophecy [read aloud].” This text is a picture of or reference to a common practice in the apostles’ day, namely, the Sabbath-day reading of the Law in the synagogues (Matt. 4:23; Mark 1:21,22; Luke 4:14–21; Acts 15:21). According to custom an individual appointed as scribe or reader was given portions of the Torah to read in a clear, audible voice to the congregation in the synagogue; in addition, he could expound upon these excerpts. The Master and his apostles frequently utilized this privilege to preach the glad tidings of the coming Kingdom.

Verse 3, therefore, implies that just as God in olden times appointed or “raised up” various individuals as His mouthpieces, such as the prophets in the former Jewish dispensation, so likewise during the Gospel Age He would provide some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists for the perfecting of the saints and for the edifying of the body members of Christ (Eph. 4:11,12). Subsequent verses will show that God has appointed seven readers to the nominal Church throughout the Gospel Age—one servant for each of the seven periods of the Church’s development. These seven individuals, used by God as special stewards or mouthpieces, have the more honorable office and the more blessed experience. Also blessed are those who come within range of the voice of these readers (within range of the message of the one doing the reading, or interpreting, of God’s communication for each of these respective periods). God has used these servants to declare dispensational truths appropriate to time and place, “meat in due season,” for the household of faith (Psa. 145:15).

Divine truth is found in divinely appointed channels; sense is derived by realizing that God is the author, Jesus Christ is the revelator, the Apostle John is the recording stenographer, and the seven messengers are the favored readers, or expounders, of the message to the hearing Church (verse 20). Verse 3 signifies that the commencement of events about to be depicted was concurrent and had already been set in motion; fulfillments began in the days of the apostles and continue to this day.

Verses 4 to 6 serve as a greeting, or salutation.

Verse 4:

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: . . .

With simplicity John addresses himself to his task. He does not refer to his apostolic office or identify himself with a title. Such native humility is similar to and reminiscent of that displayed by John the Baptist. Common to all the apostles, this

simplicity commends them as men of humble minds—the very kind the Lord would use as special servants and messengers to His people. This characteristic marks them as being in the ministry not for the gratification of vanity or the seeking of earthly rewards of any kind, but simply as the servants of God, who delight to do His will and to tell the good tidings, mentioning themselves and their affairs only when such mention is necessary and helpful to the Church. All the Lord’s followers should note this characteristic of the Master and of those specially chosen to be his followers and the Church’s exemplars. This simplicity contrasts strikingly with the pomposity of the majority of those who claim to be pupils and fellow servants of the apostles and who delight in such titles as *Reverend*, *Right Reverend*, *His Holiness*, *Doctor of Divinity*, and so forth. In proportion to the quenching of the spirit of the world by the spirit of Christ, and in proportion to the zeal of the Lord’s people in seeking and finding “the old paths,” these human titles, which seem so important to the world, appear vain, inappropriate, and deceitful (Jer. 6:16).

Although the messages given to the seven churches of Asia Minor were applicable to them, these messages (enumerated in Chapters 2 and 3) have a still wider application to the whole Church of Christ for several reasons. Considering on one hand the importance of this writing, which is designed to enlighten the alert and faithful of the past and present, and on the other hand the relative insignificance of some of these seven contemporary churches, it seems unlikely that the Lord’s interest was specially centered in these congregations of Asia Minor (see verse 1). To think otherwise attaches more importance to the seven comparatively small churches than they deserve and implies an ignoring of other churches more numerous and more influential, such as the churches at Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Colosse, Philippi, and Thessalonica. However, if these sites are viewed from the standpoint that the Holy Spirit selected them because their etymological meaning and their historical background would shed light in a symbolical sense upon the experiences of the nominal Church of God during its seven epochal stages of development, all then comports well with the exalted theme of the opening lines of Revelation. A further indication of the wider application to the Church of God is the use of the number seven to symbolically represent completeness as, for example, in the seven golden candlesticks and the seven stars of verses 12 and 16.

. . . Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; . . .

John’s heart, so full of love for fellow disciples of the Master, goes out in faith and sympathy to greet all those of the future, yet unborn, who will respond to the heavenly call of the Gospel Age. John gives assurance that favor and peace of the ever-living God will be continuously exercised toward His Church throughout this entire period of time. The Lord’s people can place complete confidence and trust in Him who ever lives to preserve the interests of His universe and the welfare of His subjects. Thus His saints are assured that both during this present life and after their death, their interests are safely entrusted to the care of the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psa. 121:3,4).

Wherever it is found, the appellative clause “which is [in the present], . . . which was [in the past], . . . which is to come [will ever be in the future]” exclusively

designates the Supreme Deity.¹ God is the Eternal One, who always was and ever will be, “that inhabiteth eternity,” “from everlasting to everlasting,” without beginning or ending of days (Psa. 90:2; 106:48; Isa. 57:15). Essential being is stated first (“him which is”), then time past, followed by time to come. This emphasis harmonizes with Jehovah’s declaration to Moses in respect to His being the “I AM” (Exod. 3:14).

John’s greeting to the Church (verses 4 and 5) could have been expressed in a much simpler, more understandable form: “Greetings to all from the Father, from the Holy Spirit, and from the Son.” Why is it more elaborately stated? Perhaps God wishes His people not only to identify Him as the primary source of all blessing, but also to meditate upon the capabilities of their benefactor and to ponder the manner in which He is pleased to confer that benefaction upon the Church. God is reminding His Church of the very nature of the office He occupies as Creator and Sustainer of the universe; of the reality of His eternal presence, which spans the uttermost reaches of the remote past as well as the vast realm of the illimitable future; and of His alertness and ability to penetrate the noise and tumult of life’s present day, coupled with equal capability of detection in the short, quiet watches of deepest night. He can hear the faintest cry of His feeblest and humblest child in any age and can succor such in His own time and in His own way.

. . . and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

Comfort and consolation of the Holy Spirit emanate or “proceedeth from the Father” to those destined to be His children (John 15:26). This gift of the Father is in harmony with Jesus’ promise to his disciples prior to his departure and ascension to heaven at his First Advent (John 16:13). Although there is only one Holy Spirit, there are diversities in its operation (1 Cor. 12:4,8–13). In this text of Revelation, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as “seven Spirits.”

This loving provision for seven outpourings of the Holy Spirit is further evidence of God’s tender care for His Church. The seven Spirits are figuratively portrayed as sentinels “before his throne,” that is, as emissaries of Jehovah sent to aid and enlighten the Church (John 14:16,17; 15:26). Stated another way, God’s intention is to distribute seven dispensations of the Holy Spirit upon the Church during the Gospel Age. Seven separate, successive, timely messages would be sent from heaven, largely dispensational in character, to guide the Church during the seven stages of its chronological development. How carefully and wisely the Heavenly Father foresaw and considered the interests of all His people! He knew what suffering, ignominy, shame, and sorrow would be inflicted on His beloved children all through the Gospel Age. His omniscient eye foresaw the fagot, the torch, the rack, and the thousand refinements of cruelty with which satanic ingenuity would fight the Church on her journey through this wilderness to the Promised Land. These glimpses of Jehovah’s character show how true were the Master’s words to his disciples: “The Father himself loveth you” (John 16:27).

1. The phrase “which is to come” refers not to the Second Advent of Christ but to the abiding nature of God. The Master admits this title does not apply in his case, for there existed a time when he was not. “I am he that liveth, and *was dead*” (verse 18).

Verse 5:

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. . . .

The blessing the Apostle John is baring record of comes (a) from the Father, (b) from the Holy Spirit, and (c) “from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness.” This reference to Jesus is a further proof that the title “which is, and which was, and which is to come,” mentioned in the forepart of the salutation (verse 4), belongs not to the Master but to the Father. The love of Jesus, as well as that of the Father, stands guardian of the way. Attention is directed to the Master’s success as “the faithful witness” who pioneered and prepared the way for others to follow, serving as a sure and steadfast anchor for the soul (Heb. 6:19,20). Shortly before his death, Jesus talked with his disciples: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). The experience and counsel of Jesus are of immeasurable benefit to the Lord’s people. Throughout his entire earthly ministry, Jesus demonstrated his personal loyalty to God; but not until his mission was fully accomplished, not until his testimony was sealed in faithfulness unto death, was it eternally secured and made a surety for man’s redemption.

Because of Jesus’ loyalty and faithfulness, the Father raised him up out of death as the firstborn of a firstfruits class; that is, Jesus was the forerunner of a class who would similarly arise from death to obtain spiritual rulership over the earth with him (1 Cor. 6:14; 15:20; 2 Cor. 4:14; James 1:18). Those of the Church must, in principle, have a somewhat similar experience or a demonstration in their lives of devotion to God in order to secure the hope of their inheritance to the kingship to which they are called.

“The first begotten of the dead” does not signify a mere awakening from death. There are several recorded instances of awakenings, or resuscitations, in the Old Testament where various prophets raised some of the dead. In the New Testament the Lord Jesus Christ raised some from the death condition, for instance, Lazarus. But all of these individuals lived out their lives and a few years later returned captive to the tomb. Therefore, prior to the death of Jesus, there were merely awakenings and resuscitations, but there was not a real resurrection from death. The Lord Jesus Christ was the first to rise from the death condition wherein the shadow of death no longer posed a threat to his destiny.

Jesus is referred to as the “prince” or heir apparent to future lordship over the earth. When he takes his great power and reigns, when he is recognized by earth’s billions of humanity as King, “every knee should bow” and “every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10,11). The term “prince of the kings of the earth” does not refer to Christ’s lordship over earthly monarchs. Rather, it refers to his future position amidst the overcoming Church.

. . . Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Among these Kingdom saints, or rulers, Christ is the worthy head or chief ruler, having purchased their redemption with his precious blood, opening the narrow

way. Can any of his blood-bought followers, endeavoring to walk in his footsteps, doubt his tender mercy or the sincerity of his love? Not only the blessing of the Master's counsel but also the blessing of his love is bestowed upon his Church, the King having died for his fellow rulers and also for the subjects (the world) over whom he will rule.

Verse 6:

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; . . .

Here the thought of joint-heirship or joint-rulership in the Kingdom is further substantiated; the overcomers are shown to be "kings and priests unto God."² The hope of the world lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by the Redeemer and his glorified Church in the Millennial Kingdom.

Speaking on behalf of the Lord's people, the Apostle John expresses his admiration of the love that prompted Jesus to leave the courts of heaven to suffer and die a bloody death on Calvary for man's sin. Also implied is an expression of amazement that before the world's opportunity of restoration in the coming Kingdom, the Church is called to be the rulers and priests over earth's subjects in that grand era of redemption. The two highest elevations in rank among men, the regal and the sacerdotal, are combined in similitude to the Melchisedec priesthood. Verse 6 mentions these two offices to show the glorious prerogatives and the state of the children of God.

. . . to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Whether this expression "to him" refers to God Himself or to His Son, the Redeemer, might be questioned. Both would be appropriate; but in this particular context John seems to continue the theme of the personal worthiness of Christ, and heartily assents to God's honoring the Son with such preeminent glory. Of course, the Father, who delegates such honor to the Son, is superior in every way. God does not suppress or expunge the personality of John, but allows him to enthusiastically appraise and heartily endorse the Master with a loud "Amen." He who honors the Son honors the Father (John 5:23).

In summary, verses 4 to 6 reveal that the blessing and favor of *God*, and of *His* Holy Spirit, and of *His* Son attend the Church on her journey. Blessed be the God and Father of Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has made such glorious provision for the Church's need!

Verse 7:

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, . . .

To conclude that an initial spectacular visual display will accompany Jesus' Second Advent is erroneous. This text is figurative, not literal. Only by interpreting this text in a figurative sense can all scriptural testimony related to the subject of the coming of Christ be harmonized, for the Bible depicts Messiah as coming:

2. In the expression "unto God and his Father," the word "and" is the Greek *kai*, which not only signifies the conjunction "and" but also frequently has the thought of "even." In this case "even" is the proper rendition of the verse; i.e., Jesus has "made us kings and priests unto God, *even* his Father."

- seated on a white cloud (Rev. 14:14)
- seated on a white horse (Rev. 19:11)
- seated as a refiner of silver and gold (Mal. 3:3)
- seated on the right hand of power (Matt. 26:64)
- standing at the door, knocking (Rev. 3:20)
- having a chain in his hand (Rev. 20:1)
- having a sharp sickle in his hand (Rev. 14:14)
- having a trumpet (1 Thess. 4:16)
- having a golden crown on his head (Rev. 14:14)
- having many crowns on his head (Rev. 19:12)
- having a sharp sword going out of his mouth (Rev. 19:15)

Obviously, all of these references, these different postures, are figurative allusions to various activities Messiah will be engaged in at his Second Coming. For example, Jesus is to rule the nations with a rod of iron (Psa. 2:9; Rev. 19:15). Surely that rod is not literal. The thought is that in establishing his reign of peace, Messiah will brook no interference in carrying out God's reclamation program of redemption; nor will he tolerate any insubordination on the part of earth's subjects over whom he is to reign. But he will rule, or shepherd, the nations in love and *with* law and order.

Another factor must be considered. Since his crucifixion and ascension to the divine plane of glory, Jesus has become the express image and likeness of the Father's person (Heb. 1:3). Further, the Scriptures clearly teach that "no man hath seen God at any time" (in the past), "nor can see" (in the future) (1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 4:12). In other words, the glory of the divine office is such that in a physical sense no man can look thereon and live. The Master declared in no uncertain terms that "the world seeth me no more," that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation," or outward show (Luke 17:20; John 14:19). The Day of the Lord "cometh as a thief," that is, secretly and quietly; and if any man say, "Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. . . . Behold, I have told you before" (Matt. 24:23–25; 1 Thess. 5:2–4). Jesus counseled his followers to watch and pray for his return—to be like those servants who watch for their lord to return from the wedding—because such an attitude of heart and mind would keep them alert and help them detect his invisible return preparatory to the establishment of his Kingdom (Mark 13:33; Luke 12:36). The Master promised that the Day of the Lord would not overtake his people as a thief; they would be spiritually informed through the light of God's Word and the fulfillment of certain prophecies not merely predictive of the imminence of his coming, but indicative of the fact of his arrival already consummated. Satan, the usurper, "the god of this world," "the prince of the power of the air," is likewise invisible to the naked eye but, nonetheless, a very real personality (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). Thus the Lord comes quietly to steal his crown jewels, his "little flock," his body members, who are elect and precious in the sight of God, to take them home to heaven (Luke 12:32).

Throughout the Gospel Age, the Lord's people have, with the eye of faith, recognized Jesus as their Redeemer and Deliverer. Of the billions of people who have

lived and are now living, comparatively few have had such eyes of faith and understanding. The majority, as the Apostle Paul declared, are blinded by Satan and by error, and fail to get a proper, true view of Christ. Although the god of this world has blinded the minds of all unbelievers “lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ . . . should shine unto them,” the Lord has graciously promised to open the eyes of the blind in due time (Isa. 35:5; 2 Cor. 4:4).

The sense in which the world will see Jesus is comparable to the proverbial remark of the blind man who exclaimed, “I see, I see.” Although blind, he saw or understood the situation. The world will be made aware of Messiah’s presence and rule, for “behold, he cometh with clouds”; i.e., he will manifest his authority and be revealed in a time of great “trouble, such as never was since there was a nation,” terminating the Gospel Age (Dan. 12:1). “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed . . . in flaming fire [in consuming trouble] taking vengeance on them that know not God [who, not really acquainted with God, fail even to obey the light of conscience, which all possess to some extent], and [also on those who, while knowing God] . . . obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:7,8). Though God’s wrath or vengeance will be expressed in general and widespread trouble, drastic reforms destructive of evil will also be executed. Righteousness will begin to flourish, and favor will be shown to the righteous. “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:9). As these dealings become more and more apparent, mankind will begin to realize that a new power has taken control of human affairs; thus the *presence* of the Lord Jesus as King of Kings will be revealed to the world.

Even now the inhabitants of the world see the clouds of trouble gathering and darkening; some realize that a power is at work in the affairs of men with which the governments cannot cope. Thinking men observe the persistency with which questions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, are forced upon their consideration, demanding an expression of their individual principles. Many recognize the glory and power of earth’s future ruler, and some believe his “coming in the clouds with great power and glory” (the great power and glory of justice) is imminent; yet because clouds and darkness still surround him, they do not recognize that the King himself is already present (Mark 13:26).

Not until hailstones and coals of fire have fallen to batter down and consume man’s pride, selfishness, and prejudices will the clouds disappear and reveal the full majesty and glory of Christ’s presence (Psa. 18:12,13). If men would consider and hearken to the voice of the Lord, which now directs the course of justice and warns of impending retribution, the great disasters of the near future would be averted. But “God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. . . . Then he openeth the ears of men [in the thunder tones of ‘the day of trouble’], and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his [own] purpose, and hide pride from man” (Job 33:14–17). Thus Jesus will come with clouds of trouble, and in due time “every eye shall see [discern] him [shall recognize his presence, power, and authority].”

. . . and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. . . .

In that day men's hearts will be smitten with anguish and remorse, and their spirits will be sorely vexed. The Greek word *koptomai*, translated "wail," signifies a beating or smiting of the breast, or chest, accompanied by agonizing sound—an outward manifestation of the depth of their inner sorrow at the realization of the Redeemer's love for them.

None will feel this anguish of soul more keenly than "they also which pierced him"; that is, the Jewish nation ("the house of David," "the inhabitants of Jerusalem") and, *not at this time* but later, the Roman soldiers identified with the actual crucifixion. The failure of the Jews to recognize Jesus, a member of their own race, as the promised Messiah will cause them to "mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son," and to "be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [the loss or death of] his firstborn" (Zech. 12:10). "In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as [similar to] the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon," when Israel lamented the death of good King Josiah (2 Chron. 35:23–25; Zech. 12:11). Just as Joseph, the viceroy of Egypt, comforted and assuaged the fears of his astonished brethren who had previously cast him into a pit and sold him into slavery, assuring them that God's providence marked his pathway to glory, so Jesus will likewise comfort his people. Humbled and loathsome in their own eyes, this chastened people will, under the leadership of their resurrected prophets and the illustrious patriarchs of ancient days, prove to be a suitable channel of blessing to all nations (Isa. 60:1–3,20; Ezek. 20:43; 36:31–36).

Lest other nations point with scorn at Israel's previous behavior, these words are added: "All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Swift will come the recognition of all the nations that they, too, shared in the guilt. Although some of these nations have adopted Jesus nominally as their Saviour and with their lips honor his name, their hearts are far from him (Matt. 15:8; Mark 7:6). Yea, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). God hath concluded (Rom. 11:32,33) "all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the . . . wisdom and knowledge of God!" How unsearchable are His ways and past finding out!

. . . *Even so, Amen.*

The Apostle John again adds his spontaneous endorsement and approval to this entire arrangement of affairs. He realizes that out of the bitter experience will come the peaceable fruits of righteousness and that the Lord will lift His redeemed people out of their self-imposed abasement and shame, giving them the oil of joy and beauty for the ashes of mourning (Isa. 61:3).

Verse 8:

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.

Verse 8 abruptly interrupts John's narrative and the opening theme of the Book of Revelation. It is an interjection of thought by the Redeemer himself to personally confide some important truth; namely, that he is the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," and that he is declared to be such by no less an authority than

the great Jehovah, the Almighty God,³ the One “which is, and which was, and which is to come.”

Alpha and *omega* are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. The context signifies some unique office singularly occupied by the Saviour, one that he was “the first” and one that he is to be “the last” to possess. Two such roles already exist in which Jesus meets these requirements.

First, Jesus is “the beginning and the ending” in that he is God’s “only [directly] begotten Son,” “the image of the invisible God, the *firstborn* of every creature” (John 3:16; Col. 1:15). “The beginning” in the text does not refer to the beginning of the existence of Jehovah, *the* God, the Father, because He is “from everlasting to everlasting” and never had a beginning (Psa. 90:2; 106:48). However, Jehovah’s work of creation did have a beginning. Jesus, “the faithful and true witness . . . the creation of God,” did not create himself but was begotten of his Father (Rev. 3:14). Since Jesus was the first (beginning) and *only* (ending or last) direct creation of God, all other sentient beings—human and angelic—were subsequently created “of” the Father but “by” or “through” the Son (John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Rev. 1:17; 2:8). “Let *us* make man in our image” (Gen. 1:26). “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible” (Col. 1:16).

Second, the title “Alpha and Omega” refers to a position occupied solely by the Master among those who are called by God to joint-heirship upon the divine plane

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3. Though Jesus is referred to as the “mighty God,” and although he himself declared that “all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” it is not proper to refer to him as the “*All-mighty* God” for the same reason it is not accurate to speak of him as the one “which is, and which was, and which is to come” (Isa. 9:6; Matt. 28:18). There were two periods of time when Jesus did not exist: prior to his original creation and later for a brief period from his death as a human on Calvary till he arose the third day. Both of these terms properly describe and thoroughly apply to Jehovah, particularly since the latter one is consistently ascribed throughout Revelation to the Father Himself (Rev. 1:4; 4:8; 16:5). Apparently, the difficulty in understanding verse 8 lies in a failure to discern that while Jesus is the speaker, he is merely referring to the origin and authority for his title “Alpha and Omega”; it was given to him by the Father (cf. Psa. 2:7; 45:6,7; Heb. 1:4–8).

When used in the Old Testament, the expression “the first and the last” refers only to Jehovah. It applies to the dignity and the authority of the divine office itself, to the sole and everlasting supremacy of the great Creator as emperor of the universe. Under no circumstances does He intend to share or abdicate this office. “I am the LORD [Jehovah]: that is my name: and my glory *will I not give to another*” (Isa. 42:8; 48:11). “Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Isa. 43:10). “I am the LORD [Jehovah]; and there is none else” (Isa. 45:18). “I the LORD thy God am a jealous God” (Exod. 20:5). “I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God” (Isa. 41:4; 44:6).

However, when this expression applies to Jesus (see Rev. 1:11,17), it refers to the signal honor and perpetual relationship that exists between the Father and the Son. This relationship is beautifully illustrated by Joseph’s career in Egypt and the confidence and power Pharaoh invested in Joseph. In this instance, Pharaoh is a prototype of God, and Joseph’s life typically parallels Jesus’ experience. Note Pharaoh’s words to Joseph: “‘Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. . . . See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.’ And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, ‘Bow the knee’; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, ‘I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt’” (Gen. 41:40–44).

of glory, for God sent Jesus to be the everlasting head over the Church, his body. “He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (Col. 1:18,19). Accordingly, Jesus issued a caution to his followers: “Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your [spiritual] father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ” (Matt. 23:8–10). Indeed millions of professed followers of the Master unwittingly disobey this injunction whenever they address local parish priests as “Father.”

In the introductory remarks of Revelation, Christ calls himself the Alpha and the Omega in order to emphasize that the true Church of God is neither man-made nor man-ruled, that its members are enrolled not on earth but in heaven (Heb. 12:23). The Church has but one head: Jesus. His word is its law. The Church is built upon the testimony of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being its chief cornerstone. Not only are Christians to be cut off from institutional heads,⁴ synods, and authorities; but they are to cease to have heads and wills of their own, and to accept instead the headship, the will, of the Lord Jesus. Although Jesus is meek and lowly of heart, he does not intend to shirk the honor and responsibility of office conferred upon him by the Father; rather, he intends to take complete charge in the fulfillment of his role as the spiritual guide and caretaker of the Church. The Lord’s people are to look to Jesus alone for direction in the present life because “thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Heb. 1:9).

Verse 9:

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, . . .

No doubt John only partially understood the meaning of the many and varied apocalyptic visions he witnessed. However, it was manifestly clear to him that the symbolisms did portend surprising developments: Trouble and hard experiences lay ahead for the true Church of God. For the benefit and solace of all Christians throughout the age, John purposely identifies himself as having patiently endured much persecution in his day. Though he was an apostle, he was also a fellow member (“brother”) and a sympathetic participant (“companion”) in the same sufferings that Christ left behind for the body’s sake—the necessary prerequisites to Kingdom honor (Col. 1:24).

4. Institutional heads would include papal authority. The word *Pope* is derived from the Latin word *Papa*, signifying “Father [of fathers],” a blatant misuse of a prerogative belonging to Deity only. On the other hand, the Lord’s people should acknowledge leaders, for the entire history of God’s dealings with His people—the typical as well as the antitypical—shows that He is pleased to use human agencies as His representatives in teaching and leading His people from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge. It should be remembered, however, that the Lord is thoroughly competent to manage His own work, for while He may use human agencies, Christians are cautioned to put their trust not in the wisdom and strength of these agencies, but in the *Lord’s* wisdom and strength guiding these agencies and, through them, the Lord’s people. “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20).

. . . was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

John had already been severely persecuted. According to tradition he was cast alive into a caldron of boiling oil from which he was miraculously delivered. Whether this experience was literal or figurative is not certain. In any event, it indicates the zeal and energy with which John Boanerges, the son of thunder, pursued the unpopular cause of Christianity. Because of his faithful espousal of the truth of the gospel, John was exiled at a very advanced age (in his nineties) to a little island in the Mediterranean Sea called Patmos, the “Devil’s Island” of that day. There political and religious dissidents, as well as hardened criminals, were banished with little or no hope of escape because of the distance of the isle from the mainland.

Prior to the exile of the aged and infirm John, the demand for the counsel and services of this sole surviving apostle was such that the brethren very willingly carried him about in a litter from place to place to obtain optimum benefit from his physical presence in their midst. However, God had other plans for John. It was necessary for him to be relieved and separated for a time from his accustomed schedule of pastoral duties. Therefore, it was Divine Providence, and not merely his faithful sufferings for Christ, that directed him to Patmos. That the Apostle himself fully realized this experience was providential is evidenced by his referral to verse 2; namely, that his placement on the isle was to “bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ.” With remarkable modesty, John neither mentions his previous service for the truth nor concentrates on the attendant persecution; he merely attributes his being on Patmos to Divine Providence and overruling.

The Book of Revelation was written at a time when severe persecution was upon the infant Church—near the close of the first century, probably A.D. 93–96 in the reign of the emperor Domitian, though some date it nearly thirty years earlier in the reign of Nero. In either case, the book was written at a time of special peril and severe persecution. Although John received the visions in Patmos and perhaps recorded them there, the past tense “*was in . . . Patmos*” indicates that he finished the book—at least the introductory remarks prefacing the work—after his release. This completion, therefore, occurred between the persecutions of Domitian and Trajan, the latter having begun in A.D. 100.

To some degree, John typifies, or represents, the last living members of the Little Flock, as shown by Jesus’ statement, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” (John 21:20–23). Though John did not tarry till the return of Christ, he nevertheless did tarry, outliving the other apostles and, apparently, all his contemporary brethren. Thus John illustrates a class who will tarry till the Second Advent: the tarrying members of the body of Christ. This class will see, that is, understand, the visions and revelations that John saw in symbols in a trance.

To the extent that John’s exile symbolized ostracism (isolation from others and treatment accorded prisoners), the Lord’s followers may expect similar ostracism in the close of this age. However, much comfort comes from the thought that just as the Lord’s favor and revelations to John more than offset his persecutions, so for the Lord’s people the opening of their eyes of understanding and the granting to them of greater lengths and breadths and heights and depths of knowledge and

appreciation of the Lord and His plan will far more than offset the various experiences His providence may permit. God assures us that all things shall work together for good to those who love Him, to those who are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). Whoever rests his faith securely upon this promise may indeed, with the Apostle Paul, count all tribulations as loss and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:8).

Verse 10:

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

John's attention is first attracted by the trumpetlike voice of Christ behind him. The fact that the location of the voice is mentioned implies it has a special meaning. Just as John heard a voice behind him and looked in that direction, so the Lord's people now, having the reality, find the message is behind them; they turn and look backward in time to see the fulfillment of the various features of the divine plan, and to hear and understand the message given by the risen Lord.

Prophetically speaking, human history is broken down into three major categories called world orders (Greek *kosmos*). The first of these Peter called "the world that then was"; that is, the pre-Flood era, a period of time spanning from Adam's creation to the Noachian deluge (2 Pet. 3:6). The second epoch, "the heavens and the earth [world], which are now" or "this present evil world," covers the interim period from the Flood until the introduction of Christ's Kingdom (Gal. 1:4; 2 Pet. 3:7). The third world order is "the world to come," the "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"; it will be a "world without end" (Isa. 45:17; Heb. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:13). The *forepart* of this third unending era will be the day God has appointed to "judge the world in righteousness by that man [Jesus] whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given *assurance* unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

This one-thousand-year day of reclamation is spoken of in Scripture as "the day of Christ," "the day of the Lord," or as stated in verse 10, "*the Lord's day.*" Doubtless the Apostle Paul was given a glimpse of this next dispensation, which he calls "the world to come." He says he was "caught up" (physically or mentally or both—things were so real to his view that he could not tell) down the stream of time to the new condition of things, the "new heavens," hence the "third heaven." Paul thus saw things as they will be under the spiritual control of Christ, things that he might not then disclose (2 Cor. 12:2–4). Doubtless also, John later saw these same things on the isle of Patmos and was permitted to express them to the Church in symbols so that they would be understandable only as their revealment became due.

Verse 10, therefore, informs the Christian that John "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day"; he was caught up or transferred by the power and agency of God's Spirit down through the corridor of time into the Millennial Age. "The Lord's day" refers to earth's great Sabbath, or Millennium, the last, or seventh, of a series of one-thousand-year days since Adam. In this day the "voice, as of a trumpet" ("the trump of God," "the last trump") is to symbolically sound (1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16). From this vantage point, futuristic from the Apostle's day—namely, at this end of the age—he was able to look upon prophesied events as either already

fulfilled or in process of being fulfilled. This thought is confirmed by John's hearing "behind" him, that is, historically in the past, the great trumpetlike voice of Jesus, indicating the commencement of earth's Sabbath day, the day of Christ's invisible presence, and the beginning of a series of symbolisms and tumultuous events spoken of in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 as "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."

Verse 11:

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 Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

John is not only authoritatively commissioned, but actually commanded to record the details of this apocalyptic experience in a book. Furthermore, he is charged with the responsibility of sending that written message first to the congregation at Ephesus, and then successively to the other churches enumerated.

As previously stated, the message of Revelation was primarily designed to benefit God's people progressively throughout the age. Nevertheless, Jesus tells John to send it to seven specific local congregations in order to prevent the Lord's people of the early Church from becoming unduly discouraged.⁵ A full realization of the great time lapse before the fulfillment of these prophecies might have been detrimental to the spiritual development of the Lord's people. On the other hand, an erroneous conjecture that its completion would occur either during their lifetime or shortly after their decease would have a salubrious effect, inspiring them to zeal, energy, and joyous expectation of the imminent fruition of their hopes in Christ.

Verse 12:

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

The phrase "being turned" is similar to John's hearing "behind" him the voice of Jesus. From this turned posture, the Apostle looks back upon history as prophecy fulfilled. From this perspective he discloses the contents of each message to the seven churches. The introduction of seven candlesticks in the vision is a reminder of

5. The Codex Sinaiticus, the oldest and *generally* most reliable manuscript, renders the following order of the churches named in verse 11: Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Smyrna, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Sardis (the name of this last church is found only as a marginal reading). However, the apparent discrepancy and evident error of the foregoing are readily discerned by noting that in the second and third chapters of Revelation in this same codex, the order in which the messages are presented to the seven churches harmonizes with the other oldest existing codices as well as with the King James Authorized Version. Thus the manuscript is corrected by its own internal evidence. That the rendering of verse 11 in the Codex Sinaiticus is probably a copyist's error, and later chapters a correct rendering, is manifest, for the probability is greater that a word or two were misplaced through a transcription error than that whole messages to the Church were transposed. Also, Sardis is *omitted entirely* in the first, or original, writing of the Sinaitic manuscript. At some point a copyist inserted Sardis in the margin of this manuscript, after Laodicea, to correct what was to him an obvious oversight. In mentioning this church, though, he himself was careless as to the exact order or proper insertion.

the light used in Israel's Tabernacle and of the later use of candlesticks in the Temple of stone, which replaced the "tent of meeting."⁶

In the Tabernacle only one candlestick was necessary to illuminate the interior of the Holy compartment. However, the candlestick had seven branches, three branches on either side of a central branch stem. It was made of one piece of *solid* gold, which was beaten, or hammered out, into final intricate form, representing the disciplinary experiences that come upon the Lord's people in holding forth the light of truth (Exod. 37:17).

In reality the Menorah was a *lamp stand*; the top of each of the seven branches, including the central stem, terminated in a small platform, or miniature table, upon which seven separate lamps, or hollow almond-shaped vessels, were placed (Exod. 37:23). The nose, or snout, of each vessel had a hole into which the wick was inserted. Only the small residue of the wick extending out of this aperture was ignited. The oil in the vessel, therefore, flowed by capillary action through the cord to supply the outside flame with fuel.

The design of each of these almond-shaped vessels was unusual in that it permitted the illuminating flame to be pointed or directed, at least symbolically, toward the central shaft of the candelabrum. This effect was achieved by turning the noses of the three vessels on both sides of the main shaft *inward* toward the principal stem. The vessel resting on the central branch was turned to the front of the lamp stand. In one sense the main stem of the candlestick was one of the seven branches; in another sense it signifies Jesus Christ as the main light-bearer of the gospel. The primary purpose of positioning the lamps in the manner previously described was as if to say: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The inclusion of the main stem amidst the other six branches increased the full count to seven, the numerical symbol of completion or perfection. Thus Jesus supplies the necessary complement to produce the sacred symbolism of seven. The standing of a Christian before God, that of reckoned perfection, is made possible only through union with Christ.

This same lesson is further intensified in another way. Three bowls were fashioned for each of the six branches, and each bowl had a corresponding knop and flower (Exod. 37:19). The central stem, however, had four bowls, knops, and flowers (Exod. 37:20). Not only did the six branches *collectively* in combination with the central branch total seven; but also each *individual* branch with its three bowls, knops, and flowers, plus the four similar counterparts on the principal stem, added up to seven. Therefore, each branch singly or separately, as well as all the branches collectively, signifies completion and perfection when united with the

6. The Tabernacle, as its name suggests, prefigured the temporary abode, or house of pilgrimage, of God's saints; it corresponds to the experiences and providential leadings of His people during their wanderings here in the Wilderness of Sin, prior to the Temple condition of rest. The history of the Tabernacle and its services was one of relative purity. Infractions of its ceremonial features were the exception rather than the general rule, perhaps because such irregularities received swift retribution, often incurring the death penalty (Exod. 28:43; Lev. 10:1,2; Num. 4:15,20; 17:13; 1 Sam. 6:19,20; 2 Sam. 6:6,7). Perhaps, too, infractions were uncommon because the structure was designed to picture the experiences of the true Church rather than the nominal one. The "Holy" compartment pictures the inner life of the spirit-begotten class who live as new creatures in Christ Jesus in the present age (Eph. 1:3).

chief branch. The seven lamps, as a perfect and complete number, represent all the true saints or light-bearers in all the various phases of nominal Church development, from the head, Jesus, down to and including the very last member of the Little Flock being taken out from among men to be partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

Although the candlesticks, or lamp stands, mentioned in Revelation are related to the Menorah used in the Tabernacle, yet the parts are separated, the union or relationship between them being supplied by the Redeemer, the antitypical high priest. The lamp stands of Revelation symbolize the Lord's *nominal* Church of this Gospel Age, including the true Church, and are more closely identified with the candlesticks placed in the Temple at the Lord's direction.⁷ The candlesticks hold forth the light of life, the light that shines in darkness, the light God directed to shine before men so that they might see the good works of His people and glorify the Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Alas, the Master evidently found few good works and little glorifying light shining out from his earthly representatives in many of these epochs, as will be shown by the messages, chidings, and encouragements that he gave to each of the seven epoch churches represented by the seven candlesticks, or

7. In the larger Temple structure, ten seven-branched candelabra were used to supply light within— five stands aligned on each side of the interior of the Holy, on its north and south walls. The number ten infers an association with earth and the present life; for instance, *ten toes, ten horns, ten virgins, ten lepers, ten talents, ten strings, ten pieces of silver, ten women, ten plagues, ten commandments*, etc. In Ezekiel's Temple, which pertains more particularly to the future state of the true Church, the candlesticks appropriately are neither mentioned nor found in its specifications (Ezekiel 41). Thus the Tabernacle and Ezekiel's Temple, on the whole, prototype the true Church in the present and the future life, respectively (Ezek. 43:7,8; 48:35; Zech. 14:21). The other temples—Solomon's and Herod's (Zerubbabel's)—more fittingly correspond to the nominal Church or temple class in this age, as seen in a less favorable light, for the history of these temples is one of general corruption and gradual defilement, ending in degradation. Apropos references to each of these temples are as follows: Solomon's (2 Kings 21:1,4–7; Ezek. 5:11; 8:6–18; 23:38,39; Jer. 7:30); Zerubbabel's (Neh. 13:1–5,10,11,15–18,29); and Herod's (Dan. 9:26,27; Mark 11:15–17).

In a similar manner the nominal Church of this Gospel Age has become contaminated (Dan. 8:11–14; 11:31; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:3–8; Rev. 11:1,2). These previous literal edifices strikingly prototype this latter defilement. The lamp stands of Solomon's and Herod's temples do not represent the Church in the future state of glory giving light to the world. Nothing in or connected with the Church in glory will need cleansing; nothing will be impure and nothing of a defiling nature will enter. However, the temple, or Church, of the present time is composed of a mixed multitude, which is distinguished in Holy Writ as the *sanctuary* and the *host* of nominal Christians (Dan. 8:11–14). In other words, under the names of "Christian" and "Church" are many thoroughly unchristian persons and parties connected with the things of this world on a purely selfish basis. The Lord proposes a thorough cleansing of this nominal sanctuary or temple class (Christendom), as testified through the prophets.

In the declaration "Ye have made it a den of thieves," Jesus intimated that responsibility for the prevailing condition of things in his day rested upon those in authority—the scribes and the Pharisees. For graft and other considerations, they had permitted the especially consecrated house of God to become a place of merchandise. Moreover, some claim the Temple was frequently used as a place for barter on a larger scale. Here money-sharks found an opportunity to meet people in distress who had come to the Temple for prayer. Such opportunists were referred to by Jesus as those who robbed widows, while for a pretense they made long prayers (Matt. 23:14; Mark 12:38–40). In other words, Jesus judged that some in his day made a cloak, or pretense, of their religion in order to take advantage and to reap pecuniary benefit. Hence the Temple had become a "den of thieves."
(cont.)

lamp stands. When the Lord addresses each of these lamp stands, or churches, he finds fault with the many and approves the few. This situation is especially true in the last, or seventh, Church: the Laodicean Church of the present.

The descriptions in verses 13 to 16 are a character study of Jesus in glory, and not a reference to his personal appearance. This symbolic picture denotes the various abilities, perfections, and attributes of the risen Redeemer, which are used to benefit his Church during its earthly pilgrimage here below.

Verse 13:

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.

When Jesus was on earth in human form, the Apostle John was well acquainted with him and was honored as his friend. John now sees him in glory so resplendent that Jesus seems to be another person. The risen Redeemer is clothed like a priest “with a garment down to the foot.” This vesture is “girt about the paps [breasts] with a golden girdle,” indicating the Master is employed in the divine service of Jehovah. The fact that the Master is girt about the breasts, or chest, instead of the waist, is significant. Although God has highly exalted Jesus, giving him a name above every name and making him a partaker of His own nature, Jesus’ strength and delight are still to do his Father’s will and be harnessed in divine service. Thus the Master’s service is voluntary and different from that of a bond servant; it is performed wholeheartedly with love, devotion, compassion, and great desire. Also intimated by the placement of the girdle on the breasts are the *preciousness of Jesus’ love* and the *tenderness* with which he maintains the cause of his people as a sympathetic high priest touched by their infirmities.

Although the lamp stands of Revelation are obviously single-stemmed, in contradistinction to the seven-branched lamp stand of the Tabernacle, the lesson is the

In olden times, as with many at present, a literalness was attached to the word “theft” that only partly covered its meaning. The loansharks infesting the Temple feigned sympathy for those in trouble, and then loaned money on exacting terms that devoured the property of the widow and the orphan in a legal manner. The same is true today; religion is still used as a cloak to cover selfishness. People who would not think of literally committing theft or robbery often succumb to the arguments of warped consciences. The Master, who was especially indignant at such misuse of the house of God of old, holds the same sentiments today. If any use religion hypocritically, in vain is their claim to be his followers, his disciples, his friends, or members of the true Church of Christ.

Within the hallowed precincts of the nominal temple of today are many who have long been making merchandise of their privileges, opportunities, and knowledge. All intelligent people well know that to a large extent merchandise has been made of religious matters. In the Roman Catholic Church there are so many penalties, prohibitions, and limitations that the people are led to believe they can present nothing acceptable to God except through their priesthood. They are expected to pay the priesthood for the birth and baptism of every child; they are expected to pay at every service to become participants in the blessings of the common Mass; they are expected to pay for every blessed scapular sprinkled with holy water; they are expected to pay for every funeral service and for every prayer, as well as for the privilege of being buried in holy ground. These practices provide a close counterpart to that which Jesus designated a den of thieves, making merchandise of divine things. Many evidences of the same spirit exist among the Protestants, but as they represent a more enlightened class, the exactions upon them by the clergy are more refined.

same. As the branches of the Menorah were united into a central stem, so the seven separate candlesticks of Revelation are unified by the personage of Jesus walking in and out of their midst, clothed with long priestly vesture. True to his promise in Matthew 28:20, Jesus has been present with his Church throughout the past nineteen centuries, protecting the interests of his cause, directing the affairs of the Lord's people, and especially inspecting and caring for the Church as a light-bearer, a candlestick. In attending to the candlesticks, the Master trims the wicks and supplies the oil; hence he is caretaker of his professed Church, trimming it of earthly and doctrinal dross. Alas, how poor the wicks sometimes have been, how feeble the light that has at times shone out into the darkness, how much trimming has been necessary, and how much more may yet be necessary!

Verse 14:

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; . . .

The Master's hair is compared to wool to signify his wisdom and likeness unto the "Ancient of days"; he is the express image of his Father's person (Dan. 7:9). In the early settlement of the United States, it was customary for statesmen to wear white woolen wigs or similar material to designate them as *elder* statesmen whose venerableness, maturity of judgment, and experience qualified them for office. The wigs inspired confidence in and respect for the wisdom and righteousness of their decisions or declarations. Even today this custom is observed in many parts of the world. Here such symbolism portrays Jesus with characteristics of knowledge, experience, and wisdom as judge and inspector of the Church, capable of offering wise counsel and judgment. Head "as white as snow" symbolizes not only the Master's purity of mind and motive, but also his innate ability to use *cool*, dispassionate reasoning in the exercise of a fair and equitable judgment, in the rendering of a pure verdict.

. . . and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

The Master is omniscient regarding his Church. Not deceived by outward forms or ceremonies, he can and does read every thought and intent of the heart; he can see through hypocrisy. The fiery or electric glance of his X-ray eyes represents penetrating intelligence and the ability to see and know everything pertaining to his Church.

This scene is one of comfort because Jesus is looking after the needs of his followers. He also knows their faults. Christians should desire to have these penetrating eyes reveal their secret faults so that they, in turn, may be cleansed. A strong faith is not fearful of these searching eyes; indeed, faith should surmount fear. Jesus' eyes are so prominent in this vision that he says in each of the messages to the seven churches, "I know" (Rev. 2:2,9,13,19; 3:1,8,15). *Nothing* escapes Jesus' attention. He knows where his followers are and what they are doing, and he is aware of injustices done to them as well as their own misdeeds. What a Counsellor! Every virtue is inherent in him.

Verse 15:

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; . . .

Jesus' feet have the appearance of brass heated in a furnace until white-hot and glowing.⁸ In his previous earthly ministry when he trod the human plane, pictured by the brass feet, Jesus endured the fiery trials of life and of the narrow way in a furnace of affliction, which led eventually to his crucifixion. Thus the Master assures his footstep followers of his ability to console and sympathize with them, since he "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," and "acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3; Heb. 4:15).

. . . and his voice as the sound of many waters.

Jesus speaks to and through the Church by the written Word of God in the varied languages of earth.

Verse 16:

And he had in his right hand seven stars: . . .

The seven stars in the Master's right hand represent seven special individuals, or light-bearers, in the Church during its seven phases of development. The fact they are held in his right hand indicates they are in the Master's favor; that is, under his guidance, protection, and care. The symbol "star" is used today to refer to individuals held in high public esteem, for example, baseball and movie stars. Thus God has appointed His own stars—prominent, faithful, outstanding personages—who are to be esteemed by His people as leaders and instructors.

. . . and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: . . .

Obviously, this description is symbolic. Messiah's words are not one-sided, not merely directed against sin in one class; his words are sharp and cut in every direction, reproving sin when found in his most earnest followers as well as in his enemies. The doctrinal sword coming from his mouth signifies the risen Redeemer would send strong, penetrating messages to the Church during this Gospel Age.

. . . and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

The risen Lord, elevated to and henceforth dwelling in the light that no man can approach—namely, on the very highest plane of existence in the presence of God—has himself been transformed and now radiates a glory like unto his Father (Heb. 1:2,3,13). This text is also a reminder of Paul's description of the great light he saw en route to Damascus, which represented the glorified Lord shining above the brightness of the sun at noonday (Acts 26:12–18).

Verse 17:

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. . . .

So great was the splendor John beheld that he fell as if dead. Likewise, Daniel fell prostrate and was like a dead man in the presence of the mighty one whom he saw, and Saul of Tarsus fell down before the majesty displayed to him (Dan. 10:5–9; Acts 9:3,4). The lesson applies symbolically to the Lord's people. Once they glimpse the glories of the divine character through the divine plan and get a

8. This text does not refer to the feet members of the mystical body of Christ, for it must be kept in mind, as already pointed out, that this entire vision in all its detail (verses 10 to 20) is a symbolic portrayal of the personal attributes and prerogatives of Jesus solely.

true view of Jesus as the great heart-searcher and caretaker of the Church, they fall before him in humility, realizing their imperfection, their inability to stand before the Master, and their unworthiness of his favor and blessing.

. . . And he laid his right hand upon me, . . .

The Master touched John gently, raising him up. Thus Jesus speaks words of comfort, peace, and love to his followers, providing assurance that as high priest, he is touched by their infirmities and can mercifully assist them. He has bought them with his own precious blood, and will number them as his body members as long as they abide in him and seek in their hearts to know and do his will. Upon all such followers he places his hand (power) and gives his message.

In the remainder of verse 17 through verse 18, Jesus provides comforting assurance to John.

. . . saying unto me, Fear not; . . .

The Father sent the same message through the Prophet Isaiah: “Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men” (Isa. 29:13). The absence of paralyzing fear is one of the first lessons the Lord’s people must learn. They cannot come into close sympathy with the Master and learn other features of his plan until they have confidence in him, submitting themselves to his guidance and believing his purposes work continually for their welfare.

. . . I am the first and the last:

The Lord’s people must recognize that Jesus is next to the Father and is His representative in everything pertaining to the affairs of the universe. His exaltation to this high position and relationship with the Father is not temporary, subject to possible change, but enduring and permanent. Therefore, the Lord’s people can hold fast to their profession and receive strong consolation.

Verse 18:

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; . . .

The Lord’s people must also recognize that Jesus was dead, dying for their sins, and subsequently raised out of death by the power of the Father. It is necessary to realize that death has no more dominion over Jesus. The work of sacrifice is complete and perfect, as shown by his words on the Cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30; Heb. 7:27; 9:12,25–28; 10:10–14). Neither sacrifices of the Mass, nor death in any other sense or form, have or ever will have dominion over him; nor will they ever be needed.

During Jesus’ earthly ministry, the disciples began more and more to center their hopes and confidence implicitly in him as the promised Messiah. As a result of his death, they experienced surprise, disillusionment, and disappointment, even though the Master had foretold the Crucifixion and the events preceding it (Matt. 26:2,21). With their faith in Jesus as Messiah at its lowest ebb, their cherished hopes dissipated by his ignominious death, the sorrowing disciples needed his glorious resurrection to bring them new life, revive their longing hopes, and animate them again with fervent zeal (Luke 24:20,21). The Apostle Peter declared, “Blessed be the God

and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us *again* unto a *lively hope* by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3). Paul assures the Lord’s people they have an eternal high priest in the heavens who will intercede for them; they need not fear a similar recurring disappointment of their hopes (Heb. 7:24,25). John interjects his own “Amen” to express his approval and joyful pleasure.

. . . *and have the keys of hell and of death.*

Of further comfort is the wonderful message that the glorified Redeemer has the “keys” of hell; that is, the authority and power to deliver all who are imprisoned there. He has the keys of death in every degree, so that those whom he liberates from the tomb, as well as those who have not yet died but are under the sentence of death, may all be ultimately delivered, or set free, from the dominion of sin and death (Matt. 8:22). The privilege and opportunity of deliverance from death into abundance of life, of freedom from the bondage of corruption, and of full liberty as the sons of God will be extended to every creature of Adam’s race (Rom. 5:18; 1 Cor. 15:22).

At present Messiah is still permitting death to prevail against the Lord’s people, who to all appearances go down into death, or oblivion, as do others. Therefore, they need his encouraging assurance that death shall not forever prevail against them, that the doors of oblivion shall not remain closed. Just as he symbolically burst the bars of death and came forth in resurrection glory through the Father’s power, so the Church shall be delivered from the power of death and share in his resurrection, “the first resurrection” (Rev. 20:6).

Since the purpose of verse 18 is to encourage God’s people, “hell” (*hades*) cannot mean a place of torment.⁹ If it did, the expression would lack force. These words imply the Lord’s people go to *hades* (oblivion), regardless of who else may go there, and the hope of the Lord’s people is that in due time the great Redeemer will unlock this figurative prison house of death, open the doors of darkness, and bring forth the captives from the tomb.

The significance of Jesus’ having the keys is that he intends to use them; he can open and he can shut. All power is given into his hand (John 3:35). Similarly assured by the Father in Psalm 16:10, the Redeemer knew his soul would not be left in hell (Hebrew *sheol*). Evidently, this promise was very precious and a source of consolation to Jesus as he neared the portals of death.

Verse 19:

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

John is instructed to write the things already brought to his attention, as well as the things to be subsequently brought to his attention, in order to enable the Lord’s people to comprehend the depths of divine love and obtain the peace that “passeth

9. *Hades* is the Greek word for death or the great prison house of death, the unconscious and unseen state or condition of the dead.

all understanding” and can only be received through revelation from God (Phil. 4:7). The words of the Saviour are too good to be fully contained!

Verse 20:

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

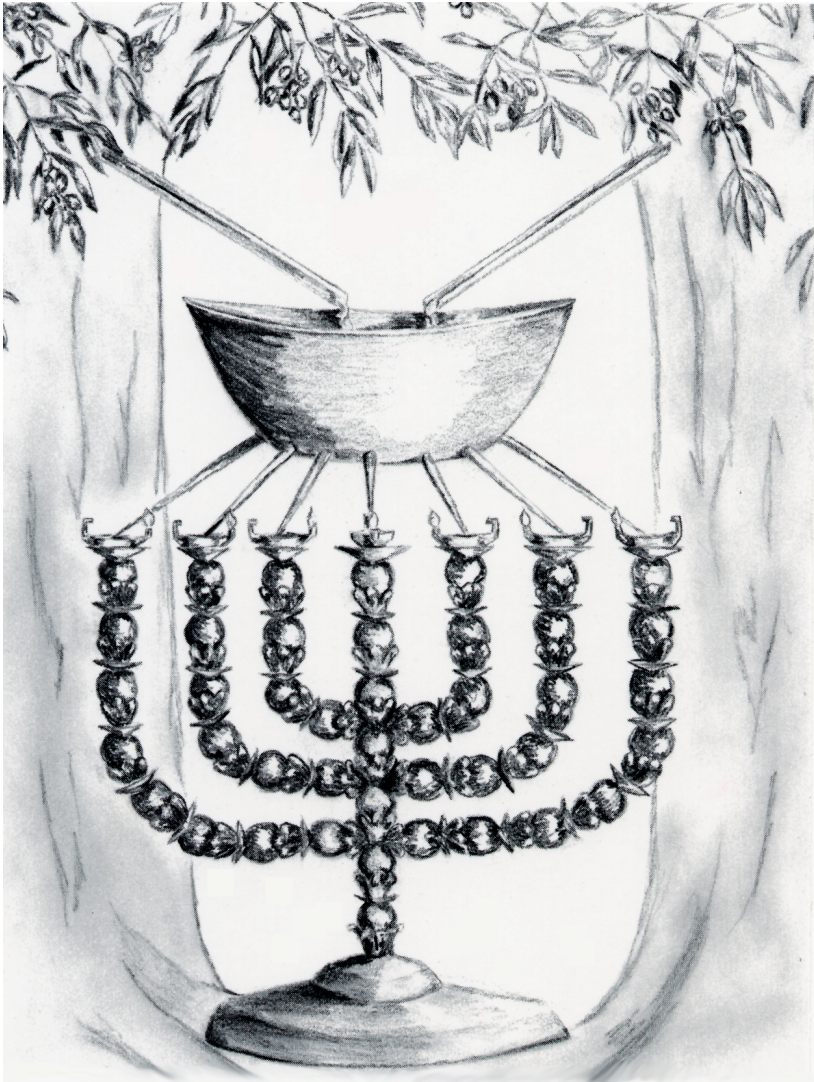
As seen earlier, the form of a son of man, a human figure, in the midst of the seven candlesticks symbolically represents Christ in the midst of the Church, providing criticism, judgment, and direction and upholding the seven chosen stars, or ministers. As a picture or symbol, these stars are impressive and instructive; they reveal divine guidance in all of the Church’s affairs and prove things are proceeding according to divine plan.¹⁰

*Jesus! the very thought of thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far thy face to see,
And in thy presence rest.*

*No voice can sing, no heart can frame,
Nor can the mem’ry find
A sweeter sound than thy blest name,
O Saviour of mankind!*

*O hope of ev’ry contrite heart,
O joy of all the meek,
To those who ask, how kind thou art!
How good to those who seek!*

10. Further corroborative testimony of the order of divine blessing is given in the prophecy of Zechariah. The golden candlestick shown to the Prophet in vision differed from the ones in the Temple and the Tabernacle by having a special bowl as an oil reservoir and two pipes leading from the bowl to two olive trees, one tree on each side of the bowl (Zech. 4:12). The oil flowed from the two trees through the two pipes to the bowl, and from the bowl the oil was conveyed through seven pipes to the seven lamps upon the candlestick, thus perpetually supplying a light (Zech. 4:2). The olive trees represent the Old and New Testaments, the source of supply of the Holy Spirit. The large bowl represents Jesus, the head of the Church, the one upon whom the Holy Spirit was poured without measure and through whom the Spirit is dispensed to the Church (John 3:34; 1 John 2:27). Thus Jesus, the high priest, daily fills the Lord’s people more and more with “the mind of Christ,” trimming off the dross of the old nature (the wick through which the Holy Spirit operates). The seven pipes represent the seven channels of outpouring, or distribution, of the Holy Spirit from the head (Jesus) to the Church throughout the seven stages of its development, the seven stars, or messengers to the Church, being the agencies used to convey this supply of oil. All the anointing oil was poured upon, or emptied into, the bowl; *from there* the oil was distributed to the various branches. Here is an important lesson: Whereas the Bible contains all the necessary oil to supply a person’s every need, it becomes available only in proportion to his relationship with Christ (his identification as a member of Christ’s body, the Church, pictured by the candlestick) and to his harmony with the agencies God uses.



Candlestick of Zechariah 4

Revelation Chapter 2

In Chapters 2 and 3 Jesus gives messages to the seven churches. The chronological position of these churches is significant. Ephesus covers the period during the lives of the apostles; Smyrna, the time of the pagan persecution, reaching to Constantine's day when he became emperor of Rome and adopted Christianity. Pergamos embraces the transition period in which Papacy rose to power; Thyatira, the period the true Church was in the wilderness and the apostate Church sat as a queen, living deliciously with the kings of the earth. Sardis includes a short interval just prior to the Reformation; Philadelphia, the period from the Reformation until recent times; Laodicea, the nominal Church of today.

The first chapter contained a description of Jesus, the "one like unto the Son of man." One or more of the features of this description are peculiarly appropriate to Jesus, the giver of the message, in each of the successive stages of the Church. The last part of each message contains a promise that is especially pertinent to the "overcomers" of that particular period; yet it also applies to the overcomers of all seven periods of church history. In other words, each of the messages was intended to be *specially* applicable to the period of the Church to which it was addressed as well as *generally* beneficial to the entire Church down through the Gospel Age.

Message to Ephesus (A.D. 34–70)

Verse 1:

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;

Ephesus signifies "first" or "desirable," and is characteristic of the first period of church history. Contemporaneous with the lives of the apostles and sometimes designated the "Apostolic Era," this period covers the time span from A.D. 34 to 70.

In the effort of the early Christian Church to promulgate the gospel, two names predominate: the Apostles Peter and Paul. Of the two, Paul was chosen as the Lord's special representative and servant to the Church at large during this era chiefly because his ministry, in both scope and influence, was more far-reaching than that of Peter. Although Peter possessed remarkable supernatural powers and performed many astonishing wonders, "God wrought *special* miracles by the hands of Paul," so that even the fallen spirits recognized Paul's superior authority (Acts 19:11,15).

Furthermore, Paul's repeated warnings of existing detrimental conditions in the Church, as well as his constant exposure of dangerous teachers and teachings inimical to the interest of the Church, reveal that he was adapted for and fulfilled the prophetic description of the service to be performed by the servant of that era (Acts 15:1,2; Gal. 1:6,7; 1 Tim. 1:19,20; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:17). "The care of all the churches" rested upon Paul; he was a vessel chosen to bear the Lord's name

“before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15; 2 Cor. 11:28; Gal. 1:15). Moreover, the Church of Ephesus was founded by Paul.

It was not necessary for Paul’s ministry to have commenced at Jordan or at Pentecost to permit his designation as the first “star” of the Church, any more than this condition was essential for his apostleship. Nor was it a prerequisite for fulfillment that the Book of Revelation be written before this period and an understanding of verses 1 to 7 be revealed to the early Church as a whole. Addressed historically to the Church of Ephesus, this message merely epitomizes the nature of the Lord’s counsel and the method of his dealings peculiar to and characteristic of this particular era. These words also indicate that the *risen* Lord would and did superintend such a message and messenger, appropriate to the needs of his people at that time.

Ephesus (Selcuk) was the ancient capital of the western province of Asia Minor. In the days of the zenith of its glory, the city was called “the Light (*Lumens*) of Asia.” A promenade called the Arcadiane, flanked by a row of columns on either side, is reported to have had a lamp of fire atop each post—fifty in all. By night, late travelers from afar were afforded a spectacular entrance from the harbor into the heart of the metropolis. Apparently, in a secondary sense the main body of the prophetic narrative alludes to this former splendor of Ephesus by drawing attention to the starlight, or lamp stand, role (verses 1 and 5) of the true Church instituted by Jesus, thereby dimming the significance of its false counterpart.

Verse 2:

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:

The special message to each of the seven churches begins with “I know thy works” (Rev. 2:2,9,13,19; 3:1,8,15). The Lord is ever present with his people . . . always thinking of them, protecting their interests, guarding them in danger, providing for them in temporal and spiritual things, reading their hearts, marking every impulse of loving devotion to him, shaping the influences around them for their discipline and refining, and hearkening to their faintest call for aid or sympathy or fellowship with him. How blessed the realization of such abiding faithfulness! No real child of God is devoid of this evidence of his adoption and of the Master’s watch-care as indicated by the words “I know thy works.”

Characteristic of this Ephesus period, the Church sensed the power and presence of Jesus to a truly remarkable degree, for in the early Church some were given the supernatural power and ability to discern teachers and disciples of error to an extent not since realized. The cases of Ananias and Sapphira, of Simon and Elymas the sorcerers, and of others reveal this power (Acts 5:1–11; 8:9–24; 13:6–12). The apostles could and did promptly recognize and properly identify these promoters of error and of the Adversary. The apostles were further endowed with powers enabling them to punish and make an example of such evildoers, thus ridding the Church of their defiling influence (Acts 5:11–13). It was not until “men [the apostles] slept [in death]” that the tares of the Adversary’s sowing began to take root and to flourish in the Lord’s wheat field (Matt. 13:25). While alive, the apostles exposed the fraudulent claims and deeds of these workers of iniquity, so that neither

the evildoers nor their works prospered at that time. For this reason the Master commends the Church of Ephesus for relative purity and patient endurance.

If the primitive Church had been organized like the Papacy or other denominations of today, the records would have been quite different. Reference would have been made to Jesus' great ceremonial installation of the apostleship, Jesus himself sitting somewhere in state as a pope receiving the apostles in scarlet robes as cardinals. Strict laws and regulations would have been instituted to abstain from meat on Friday, to sprinkle holy water upon the apostles or upon the multitude, to make the sign of the cross, and so forth. Mary, mother of Jesus, would have been remembered with an account of her claimed miraculous conception and an announcement that she was "the mother of God." Jesus himself would have paid her special homage and instructed the apostles to approach him through her. Some injunction would have been given about the use of holy candles, about the Mass, about other disciples recognizing Peter as the pope, about prostrating themselves before Peter, and about Peter performing Mass for them all, declaring he had the power to re-create Christ in the bread and sacrifice him afresh for personal transgressions. There would have been an account of Stephen's burial: how Peter or the others consecrated a grave for him so that he would lie in sacred ground, and how they put a holy candle in his hands while saying certain prayers over him. Rules and regulations would have been proclaimed in the Scriptures to respect the various orders of clergy, showing the laity are subservient to them and not their "brethren." In turn, higher and lower orders would have been established among the clergy (Reverend, Right Reverend, and Most Reverend; bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and popes); particular directions would have been given to the clergy for attaining these positions, for seeking honor one from another, and for deciding who should be greatest.

The fact that these matters are in no sense of the word even hinted at by the apostles is *prima facie* evidence that the systems which claim, either in whole or in part, such divisions of the Church, such authorities, and such offices were organized neither by the apostles nor by the Lord, who appointed the apostles and recognized their work (John 15:16; Acts 1:2; Rev. 21:14). In addition, this omission proves that the Bible was not concocted by these "wise" organizers; had they forged the Bible, it would undoubtedly contain abundant references such as those suggested.

Surely every Bible student has observed that Jesus and the apostles recognized no division in the Church and ignored everything akin to schism, both in fact and in name. With them the Church was one and indivisible: one faith, one Lord, and one baptism. It was spoken of from this standpoint as "the church," "the church of God," "the church of the living God," and the "church of the firstborn"; individuals were called "brethren," "disciples," and "Christians" (Acts 11:26; 18:27; 20:28; Eph. 1:22; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:23). These names were used indiscriminately whether referring to the whole Church or to a small gathering of individuals—even just two or three—at Jerusalem or Antioch or elsewhere. The variety of these names and their general use clearly imply they were not intended to signify separate denominations. All of these names were illustrative of the significant fact continually set forth by the Master and his apostles that the Church (*ecclesia*, body, company) of the Lord's followers are the "elect," who share his cross and learn needed lessons now, in preparation for their later association with him in glory.

This “oneness” of the Church should have continued, but was changed during the Dark Ages. When error developed, the sectarian spirit accompanied it and peculiar designations followed, such as Church of Rome, Baptist Church, Lutheran Church, Church of England, Holy Catholic Church, Wesleyan Church, Christian Church, and Presbyterian Church. These names, devised by *man*, are marks of *carnality* (1 Cor. 3:3,4). As the Christian emerges out of the gross darkness that has so long covered the world, he will become enlightened upon this point. Observing the error and appearance of evil, he will not only come out of sectarianism but will also refuse to be known by these unscriptural names—though he will willingly answer to any and all names that are biblical.

The Apostle Paul declares that “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). As the Father’s representative, Jesus began to rear his Church upon this foundation (Matt. 16:18).¹ In so doing, he called twelve apostles, not by accident but by design, just as the twelve tribes of Israel were twelve not by accident but in conformity to the divine plan. Not only did Jesus

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1. Matthew 16:18 is sometimes quoted to prove the Apostle Peter was the first pope. Yet the following notable Church fathers—within the ranks of Catholicism itself—testified to the contrary. Gregory I wrote: “. . . when a patriarch gives himself the name of *Universal*, the title of patriarch suffers discredit. Far be it from Christians to desire to give themselves a title which brings discredit upon their brethren!” Pope Pelagius II stated in Letter 13: “. . . the title of universal . . . has [been] usurped illegally. Let none of the patriarchs take this profane name. . . .”

St. Hilary, in his second book on the Trinity, said: “The rock [Greek *petra*] is the blessed and only rock of the faith confessed by the mouth of St. Peter.” In his sixth book on the Trinity, St. Hilary explained further: “It is on this rock of the confession of faith that the church is built.” “God,” said St. Jerome in his sixth book on St. Matthew, “has founded His church on this rock, and it is from this rock that the apostle Peter has been named.” St. Chrysostom stated in his fifty-third homily on St. Matthew, “On this rock I will build my Church—that is, on the faith of the confession.”

What was this confession of the Apostle Peter? “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). Thus the Lord Jesus Christ is the rock upon which the Church is to be built. Archbishop Ambrose of Milan, St. Basil of Seleucia, and the fathers of the Council of Chalcedon all taught exactly the same thing.

Of all the doctors of Christian antiquity, St. Augustine is one of the most prominent for knowledge and holiness. Of significance, then, are the words in his second treatise on the first epistle of St. John: “What do the words mean, ‘I will build my church on this rock’? *On this faith*, on that which said, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God . . . [In other words,] On this rock which thou hast confessed I will build my church, since Christ was the rock.’” Believing not that the Church was built on St. Peter, St. Augustine said about Matthew 16:18 in his thirteenth sermon: “Thou art Peter, and . . . on this rock [*petra*] which thou hast known, saying, ‘Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,’ I will build my church . . . I will build it on Me, and not Me on thee.” At that time St. Augustine’s explanation of this celebrated passage was the opinion of all Christendom.

Perhaps a surprise to many, in the apostolic days there was no question of a pope, or a successor to Peter, or a vicar of Jesus Christ. There is not one single chapter, not even one little verse, in which Jesus gave Peter mastery over the other apostles. If Simon, son of Jonas, had been what many believe the pope to be, surely Jesus would have said, “When I ascend to my Father, you should all obey Simon Peter as you now obey me. I establish him as my vicar upon earth.”

Not only was Christ silent on this point, but so little did he think of giving a head to the Church that when he promised his apostles they would some day judge the twelve tribes of Israel, he promised them twelve thrones, one for each, and did not say that Peter’s throne would be higher than the others (Matt. 19:28). What conclusion is to be drawn from this omission? That Christ did not wish to make St. Peter the head of the apostolic college! (cont.)

choose just twelve apostles for that position, but he has never given authority for any more (barring the fact that Judas, having proved himself unworthy of a position among the twelve, fell from his place and was succeeded by the Apostle Paul).

With great care Jesus watched over the apostles. In the hour of his trial, he prayed for them all, and afterward made special appeals to Peter to feed his sheep and lambs (John 17:9–11; 21:15–17). With doubting Thomas, Jesus demonstrated the fact of his resurrection. Of the twelve Jesus lost only the son of perdition, Judas, whose defection was foreknown to the Lord and foretold in the Scriptures. As recorded in Acts, the choice of Matthias was not the Lord's. Although Matthias was, doubtless, a good man, he was chosen by the eleven without authority (Acts 1:23–26). Rather than reprove them for this undesigned meddling with his arrangement, Jesus simply ignored their choice and in his own time brought forward the Apostle Paul, declaring, "He is a chosen vessel unto me" (Acts 9:15). Paul himself said he was chosen from his mother's womb to be a special servant; and he "was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 11:5; Gal. 1:15).

This limitation of the number of apostles discredits the views of Papacy, the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Catholic apostolic churches, and the Mormons, all of whom claim that the number of apostles was not limited to twelve, and that successors since their day have spoken and written with equal authority. Further evidence

Other questions arise in connection with the ecumenical council assembled at Jerusalem to decide on issues dividing the faithful (Acts 15). Who would have convoked the council if Peter had been pope? St. Peter. Who would have presided? St. Peter or his legate. Who would have promulgated the canons? St. Peter. But such authority was nonexistent. Although Peter assisted at the council as did all the others, it was St. James who summed it up; and the decrees were promulgated in the name of the apostles, the elders, and the brethren.

St. Paul, whose authority cannot be doubted, said the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). If Peter had been the vicar of Christ, Paul would not have openly rebuked him for his dissembling conduct (Gal. 2:14). Also, in enumerating the offices of the Church, Paul mentioned apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors (Eph. 4:11). Through some strange oversight could he possibly have forgotten the first of these offices, the Papacy, if the Papacy were a divine institution?

None of the writings of Paul, John, James, or any other sacred writer sanction a trace or germ of the papal power. The very silence of Peter is mute testimony that such a primacy did not exist. If Peter had been the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, as millions now regard him to be, surely he would have known and proclaimed it.

Therefore, it is established that: (1) Jesus gave to all his apostles the same power he gave to St. Peter (Matt. 18:18; John 20:23). (2) The apostles never recognized Peter as the vicar of Christ and the infallible doctor of the Church. (3) Peter never thought of being pope, and never acted as if he were. (Acts 10:25,26; 14:11–15 furnish insight into the character and deportment of Simon Peter, the other apostles, and the brethren.) (4) While recognizing the high position the bishop of Rome occupied in the Church because of his location in Rome, the councils of the first four centuries accorded him a preeminence only of honor, never of power or jurisdiction. (5) The early holy fathers understood not that the Church was built on Peter (Greek *petros*) or on any of his successors, but that it was built on the rock (Greek *petra*); that is, on the confession of faith of Peter, who said Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. The Saviour alone is the rock upon which the Church is built (1 Cor. 3:11). Belief upon and obedience into Christ on the part of the Lord's people constitute the means by which the Church is constructed. As Peter himself declared, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone . . . Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:4,5).

(Quotations and excerpts are taken from Bishop Joseph Georg Strossmayer's "*Speech Before the Vatican Council*," June 2, 1870.)

counteracts these false claims and proves there were only twelve apostles. The Lord chose the twelve with particular care, using the number twelve prominently in sacred things pertaining to this election, as in the symbolical picture of the glorified Church in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation. There the “new Jerusalem,” the symbol of the new millennial government (the Church, the Bride united to her Lord), is clearly delineated. Statements are distinctly made that the twelve foundations of the city are precious, and that the “names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” are written in the twelve foundations. What excellent proof that there were never more than twelve of these apostles of the Lamb!² As the Apostle Paul suggests, any others were “false apostles” (2 Cor. 11:13). In the Ephesus period fictitious apostles were put to the test and found to be liars pretending a divine commission, which they had not, and teaching false doctrines as if they were indeed God’s truth.

There is no need for more apostles, for those twelve are present even today through their testimony and the fruit of their labors. In the Bible are records of their ministries, as well as their accounts of the Lord’s words, deeds, and miracles and their epistles on the various topics of Christian doctrine. These records are sufficient, as the Apostle Paul explains, “that the man of God may be . . . thoroughly furnished” (2 Tim. 3:17). Explaining the matter further, he stated, “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). What more is necessary?

Verse 3:

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Verse 4:

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

The word translated “patience” signifies a development of heart and character manifesting itself in an endurance of wrong or affliction with contentment, without rebellion of will, and with full acquiescence in the divine wisdom and love, which, while permitting present evils, have promised their overthrow in God’s due time. The Master recognizes and commends the existence of this grace in the early Church as evidenced by their unceasing toil and labor of love for his name’s sake; nevertheless, he declares, “Yet I have this against you—that you no longer love *Me* as you did at first” (Weymouth translation). Evidently, the “first love” of the Church for the Master—the warm, personal devotion and affection for him—gradually waned; and their latter works were not as pleasing to him as their earlier works. Formerly the Lord’s followers had “endured a great fight of afflictions” and thus had not required counseling to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith; they had *joyfully* accepted the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had “a better and an enduring substance” (Heb. 10:32,34).

2. Revelation 12:1 pictures the Church adorned with a crown of twelve stars, namely, the twelve apostles.

Verse 5:

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

As the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so the Church was corrupted from its original simplicity in Christ (2 Cor. 11:2,3). Falling from a position of favor and harmony with the dear Redeemer, the Church did not “hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” (Heb. 3:6,14). Adam and Eve were banished from and barred access to the tree of life and denied the privileges of Eden.³ Similarly, the Church in Ephesus was in danger of losing the privilege of receiving and transmitting the light of God’s Word, of being His light-bearer (His “candlestick”) before the world . . . unless it repented and did the “first works,” thus gaining *reinstatement* into divine favor and again having access to its former privileges. “Works” were in Ephesus, but evidently not the works of *faith*; “labour” was there, but the labor of *love* was wanting; “patience” was there, but apparently not the patience of *hope*. These seemingly had dimmed, the dust of distraction having settled upon the glass through which faith views its possessions.

The statue and the Temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, were the pride and joy of the literal city of Ephesus in the first century A.D. (Acts 19:34,35). All that now remain are a single upright column, a small portion of pavement, and a fragmentary wall. In the process of time, and by extension, this idol and its sanctuary were a carry-over from the more ancient heathen worship of the Lydian goddess Cybele, the mother of the mythical Zeus, the god of gods. Origiastic festivals were regularly performed in honor of Cybele. This religion merged into that associated with Artemis, the Grecian mythical goddess, and then finally into her Romanized counterpart Diana, the chaste(?) or virgin goddess of the hunt. Obvious contradiction can be seen at the local museum in Turkey, where one of the original replicas of Diana of Ephesus is on display. A multiplicity of breasts on the forepart of her upper torso symbolically represents her as a goddess of *fertility*.

That this emphasis was an important characteristic of the city is manifested by the attention given to the carving of footprint directional markers in the stone masonry of the streets to guide pilgrims to the famed House of Diana, or “House of *Love*,” which in reality was a brothel, or house of harlotry. The suppliant servants of this institution consisted of daughters of both the nobility and the citizenry who dedicated their bodies in voluntary sensuous service to enrich the coffers of the temple and the city. These were the vestal virgins of that era. How significant was the Master’s admonition as to where the slightest defection could ultimately lead if not corrected!

Verse 6:

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

3. Verse 5 is a reminder of how Adam’s fall impaired his powers of *communication* with the Creator.

Jesus commends the early Church for their hatred of the “deeds of the Nicolaitans.”⁴ Nowhere is there even a slight suggestion to the apostles, or concerning them, that they were to be lords (Nicolaitans) over God’s heritage or that they were to consider themselves different from other believers, exempt from the operations of divine law, or specially favored or secure in their everlasting inheritance. The apostles were continually to remember that “all ye are brethren” and “one is your Master, even Christ” (Matt. 23:8). They were also to remember the necessity of making their calling and election sure, for unless they obeyed the law of love and were humble as little children, they would “not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3; 2 Pet. 1:10). They were given neither official titles nor any instruction respecting special garb or peculiar demeanor. Instead, they were to be examples to the flock so that others who saw their good works would glorify the Father, and so that others walking in their footsteps would thus be following in the footsteps of Jesus, ultimately attaining the same glory, honor, and immortality, partaking of the same divine nature. Their commission was one of service: they were to serve one another, serve the Lord, and lay down their lives for the brethren.

Thus the theory of *apostolic succession*, though it had some following, was not tolerated by the early Church in general; and the Lord commends his people of that day for their inability to bear with the evil ones,⁵ for their hatred of the “deeds of the Nicolaitans,” and for trying “them which say they are apostles, and are not . . . [finding] them liars,” even “false apostles” (2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:2).

Verse 7:

He that hath an ear, let him hear . . .

Jesus frequently used this familiar saying during his earthly ministry to call attention to remarks he wished his disciples to especially heed, grasp, and remember (Matt. 11:15; 13:9; Mark 4:9,23; Luke 14:35). Such information was meant neither for the world nor for mere believers, but was intended for those who earnestly sought to know and do the Master’s will, thus leaving all to follow him, forsaking the world and its allurements. Unto such “it is given . . . to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [the superficial hearers] it is not given” (Matt. 13:11). The multitudes, who heard Jesus but were not sufficiently impressed to desire further knowledge of his doctrine and how it pertained to them, followed him for the loaves and fishes; that is, for the temporal benefits and advantages they might acquire either through association with him or as recipients of his healing powers (John 6:26). To this class Jesus did not disclose the exceeding great and

4. “Nicolaitans” is derived from the Greek *nikao*, “to conquer,” and *laos*, “people” or “laity.” There is no ancient authority for a sect of the Nicolaitans. If the word is symbolic, it refers to the earliest form of the notion of a priestly order, or “clergy,” which later divided an equal brotherhood into priests and laity (Matt. 23:8). What in Ephesus were only “deeds” became in Pergamos a “doctrine” (verse 15).

5. “Bear,” from the Greek *bastazo*, means to bear or carry a burden, to sustain what is wearisome (Matt. 3:11; Luke 7:14; 14:27; John 16:12; 19:17; 20:15; Acts 15:10; Rom. 15:1; Gal. 6:2,5). Primarily the word relates to the body; figuratively, to the mind. The Ephesians could carry their crosses, though heavy, for patient endurance they had; but they could not endure the burdensome Nicolaitans, and thus resolutely resisted them.

precious promises reserved for those *who love the Lord in the day of his humiliation*, in this age of ungodliness prior to the day of his glory soon to be ushered in.

Here the Saviour is urging his followers to heed the advice given to them: “He that hath an ear [to understand spiritual things], let him hear [hearken further and obey].” “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear . . . So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him” (Psa. 45:10,11).

. . . what the Spirit saith unto the churches; . . .

This text harmonizes with Revelation 1:4, where the message to each church is designated a Spirit, thus making a total of seven Spirits to correspond with the number of churches. Although at first it may seem obvious that Jesus is “the Spirit” in verse 7, the meaning is otherwise. This text is a *message* emanating from the Father Himself; it is “of God” from “before the [His] throne” (Rev. 3:1; 4:5). The message is a dispensational outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit peculiarly suited to the requirements of the Church during the Ephesus period. The application of the term “Spirit” to signify a doctrine, or teaching, is used elsewhere in the Scriptures. “The Spirit [personified as the voice of prophecy] *speaketh* expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith” (1 Tim. 4:1). “Beloved, believe not every spirit [doctrine], but try the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1; see also 2 Thess. 2:2).

That the term “the Spirit,” signifying message, concludes Jesus’ utterances to each of the seven churches again confirms the thought that these Spirits are the “seven Spirits of God” (Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22). This instruction delivered from the Redeemer’s lips is really the Father’s message to the Church (Rev. 1:1). Although Jesus is the speaker in verse 7, he is not referring to himself as “the Spirit,” but is calling attention to the *words uttered* under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, his Father.

The words addressed to the first Church (verses 1 to 7) comprised the message of the hour for the saints of that day and were specially adapted to their needs. However, in both application and instruction, the message is not limited solely to that era. It has had a salutary effect upon God’s people throughout the entire Gospel Age, benefiting the whole Church in all seven stages of its development: “what the Spirit saith unto the [seven] churches.”

. . . To him that overcometh . . .

The rewards set before the Lord’s followers in each of the seven apocalyptic periods are, without exception, to be granted not to overcomers in the ordinary sense of the word but to those who are the “more than conquerors” (Rom. 8:37; Rev. 2:7,11,17,26–28; 3:5,12,21). It is to this class of staunch warriors of the faith that the expression “to him that overcometh” applies. In other words, the rewards to be given will be the fulfillments of singularly unique promises to a singularly unique class of individuals.

. . . will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

In view of the previous explanation, an apparent contradiction arises. The Book of Revelation clearly indicates that the willing and obedient of mankind—after the marriage of the Lamb, after the completion of the Little Flock—will have access to the tree of life⁶ on a human plane, or level of existence (Rev. 22:2,17). Indeed, the hope of the world lies in an opportunity yet to be extended to every member of Adam’s race—after corrective judgment—to walk up the highway of holiness to an inheritance of eternal life (Isa. 35:8–10; John 1:9; 5:25–29; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9).

Still another question demands consideration. The Apostle Peter states that faithful disciples of the Master will become partakers of the divine nature; that is, they will possess self-inherent life, a life wherein death is an absolute impossibility (2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 20:6). Likewise, the Apostles Paul and John concur that such individuals will never need, either literally or figuratively, to partake of any life-giving fruit for their sustenance, for they will possess a life *welling* up within themselves (John 4:14; 1 Cor. 15:53; Rev. 22:17).

Why then, it may be asked, when Jesus was addressing a spiritual class with spiritual hopes, does he allude in verse 7 to an *earth*-Edenic paradise that was lost but is to be an *earth*-Edenic paradise restored (Gen. 3:17–19; Rev. 22:1–4,14,15)? Was this allusion not designed to assist the primitive Ephesian Church to a realization of the *mercy of God*? If there is yet hope for a sin-sick world (the living and the dead) to again gain access to the tree of life (after retributive judgment and contingent upon everlasting obedience), would there not also be a glimmer of hope for backsliding Christians to regain close fellowship with their Master and Lord (upon stringent terms of *self-discipline*)? The point of comparison in this promise to the first Church is not so much to emphasize the necessity to partake of food to sustain life but is, rather, to indicate the need for restoration to the “garden” of God’s favor.

To state the matter another way, the lesson is one of a renewal to fellowship with God, of a reinstatement to divine favor, of access to a former relationship, of recovery from a fallen to an upright status.⁷ Therefore, by prompt and proper deeds of repentance, these Christians could attain their former spiritual condition of favor and harmony with God and His Saviour, and ultimately receive the inheritance of the saints. Thanks be unto the Lord for all that is implied by these words addressed to Ephesus! They reveal some of the depths of His forgiving grace: He was not ready to forget the work and labor of love they had shown toward His name.

Message to Smyrna (A.D. 70–313)

Verse 8:

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; . . .

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6. The expression “the midst of” should perhaps be omitted, as it is not found in some of the most ancient manuscripts. However, its inclusion does not alter the sense or meaning, as both the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil are spoken of as being in “the midst of” the garden (Gen. 2:9; 3:3). The latter was good for food and pleasant to the sight; yet because of the penalty attached to it, this tree proved to be a tree of death rather than of life.
 7. An example is provided by Mark, who, though formerly disapproved of by Paul, was later reinstated into the Apostle’s favor, evidently because of his compliance with the conditions referred to here by Jesus (Acts 15:37,38; 2 Tim. 4:11).

The name Smyrna is said to have been derived from an Amazon or female warrior called Zmyrna. It signifies “myrrh” and is thus translated in Matthew 2:11; Mark 15:23; and John 19:39. Significantly, the English word “myrrh” is derived from the Arabic *marra*, meaning “to be bitter.” The Hebrew word *marah* is the name given to the first water found by the Israelites in the wilderness, and is also the name chosen by Naomi in her affliction (Exod. 15:23; Ruth 1:20).

This stage of the Christian Church, extending from A.D. 70 to 313, was a period of intermittent bitter persecution under the Roman emperors subsequent to Nero through Diocletian. The chronological location is from the end of the Ephesus period, following the Apostle Paul’s death at the hands of Nero, to the beginning of the reign of Constantine.

Here in Smyrna in the year A.D. 169, Polycarp, a reputed disciple and confidant of the Apostle John, was martyred along with eleven other citizens from Philadelphia of Phrygia.⁸ Although to Christians the most notable event associated with Smyrna was the martyrdom of Polycarp, hundreds of additional such deaths occurred here subsequently. “The hillside of Pagus, on which Polycarp was burned, has since been reddened with the blood of fifteen hundred confessors at one time, and eight hundred at another.”⁹ These deaths were eulogized far and wide, and hence Smyrna was associated with martyrdom. Henry C. Sheldon states about such deaths at Smyrna: “Some were thrown to wild beasts, some burned at the stake. . . . [Yet] not one of them let a sigh or groan escape. . . .”¹⁰

The messenger to the Church in Smyrna was the Apostle John, for the character of his writings corresponds in many particulars to the message for this era. Two themes dominated his writings. First, Jesus was constantly called the “Logos,” the only begotten Son of the Father, whose life and works throughout his earthly ministry verified his claims that he was from the bosom of the Father (John 1:1–18; 17:3–8; 1 John 1:1,2). Second, much emphasis was given to *life* as the gift of God procured through the Saviour’s death (John 1:4; 3:16; 4:14; 5:24–29; 6:33–40; 17:2; 1 John 1:1; 5:11–13). In addition, John recorded the Apocalypse and announced that ten days of tribulation would befall the Church of Smyrna (verse 10).

The Apostle reportedly returned from banishment on Patmos to Ephesus in the year A.D. 96, when Nerva became emperor of Rome. At the time of John’s death, which is said to have occurred during the reign of Trajan, he was a centenarian. In fact, some claim John lived to be 120 years old.¹¹

*. . . These things saith the first and the last, which was dead,
and is alive;*

8. *Peloubet’s Bible Dictionary* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Co., 1925), p. 637. *Apostolic Fathers, The Loeb Classical Library* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1919), Vol. 1, p. 337. John D. Davis, *The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, rev. by Henry Snyder Gehman (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1944), p. 569. Jas. L. Meagher, *Of Christ’s Kingdom on Earth* (Cazenovia, N.Y.: Christian Press Association Publishing Co., 1891), p. 156.

9. J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse, Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 14th ed. (Philadelphia: Approved-Books Store, 1869), Vol. 1, p. 124.

10. *History of the Christian Church* (New York: Thomas V. Crowell, 1894), Vol. 1, p. 146.

11. Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, eds., *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* (Hartford: S. S. Scranton & Co., 1879), Vol. 2, p. 126.

The message was sent by the Redeemer, who is ranked first not only in seniority but also in honor, dignity, and station. He is above all other sons of God, not one of whom was or ever shall be, like himself, the direct creation of Jehovah. For proving his faithfulness even unto death in the redemption of the human race, Jesus was raised from death to life by the Father and highly exalted (Eph. 1:20).

The reference to Christ as “the first and the last” seems to imply that the “Lord Caesar” worship, the emperor cult, would exert considerable pressure upon the Christian to waver in his obedience to Christ.

In regard to the phrase “was dead, and is alive,” it is an interesting historical fact that ancient Smyrna once “was dead”; that is, the city was captured and destroyed in 550 B.C. For three centuries it disappeared from sight, only to arise from the ashes to newness of *life* and to still greater splendor under late Grecian and then Roman rule.

Verse 9:

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.

With emphasis the thought “but thou art rich” is interjected, as if to say: “You poor? No! Treasure is reserved for you in heaven. Be faithful unto death so that I may give you the crown of life.” Smyrna was a poor Church, not so much in their lack of worldly goods as in their continual state of being buffeted and persecuted. True Christians were even held in disesteem by *fellow professing Christians* who claimed to be “Jews” but were not, and who began to flourish in this era and attract the attention of pagan rulers.¹² In Ephesus the defiling influence had applied to an *individual* here and there, but had been rejected by the majority. Now in Smyrna this same influence embraced a congregation, or *group* of individuals, here and there. In the eyes of the world, these deceived believers were eventually regarded as the true representatives of Christ because of their increasing numbers; but they were, in fact, of “the synagogue of Satan [adversary or opposing spirit].” The Apostle Paul’s words to the church at Corinth described a similar element or condition: “Now ye are full, now ye are *rich*. . . . We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised” (1 Cor. 4:8–10).

Verse 10:

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: . . .

12. Throughout the writings of the Apocalypse, the nation of Israel, or the Jew, is used as a symbol to represent the Christian believer (whether Jew or Gentile). This symbolism is based on God’s former dealings with natural Israel, of whom it is written: “You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2). The Israelites were recognized as His people, and He as their God; consequently, they fittingly portray the professed people of God in the Christian era (Josh. 3:9; Ezek. 39:22; Gal. 6:16).

Pagan Rome—which is symbolized as the devil, the calumniator, or the accuser (from the Greek word *diabolos*)—was the agency used by the Adversary to carry out his malevolent designs as “the accuser of our brethren,” and to pursue a course of open animosity and opposition toward the professed Church of Christ whenever the occasion was propitious to do so (Rev. 12:10). Although the Saviour did not promise that his followers would be exempt from this suffering, he did assure them they would be sustained.

This message provided comfort and hope to the suffering martyrs. It was as if Jesus had said: “Fear not, my faithful ones; since they have persecuted the Son, do not consider it strange that they should persecute you. In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world. I, too, was put to death by this same power; yet I live! Fear not to follow in my steps, for I shall take care of you. I have risen in glory, in power, in immortality. Follow me! I tell you these things so that you will have peace” (John 15:18–20; 16:33).

To those in authority the new Christian faith seemed to be incompatible with good citizenship, since it forbade its adherents to show the usual respect for the emperor and the government. Therefore, the Romans formulated a special device called a *libellus* to help them identify Christians.¹³ The *libellus* was a written notarized statement affirming that its possessor had always been faithful in the worship of the gods and had also offered sacrifice in the presence of a government commission and witnesses. In some parts of the empire, every Roman citizen, no matter what his religion might be, was obliged to possess such a certificate and to show it on demand. When a Christian was accused and apprehended, some officials sought to modify and expedite this requirement of the law by requesting the defendant to recant by merely throwing a handful of incense upon their pagan fire altar. Refusal to obey such a condescending gesture greatly infuriated the government representatives, who then usually inflicted full punishment upon the victim.

The “ten days” refer to the last and most severe persecution under the Roman emperors: the ten years of persecution from A.D. 303 to 313 during the reign of Diocletian.¹⁴ Some were impaled alive. Some had their limbs broken and were left to expire. Some were roasted by slow fires. Some were suspended over a fire by their feet with their heads downward to suffocate from the smoke. Some had melted lead poured down their throats. Some had their fingers and toes torn off. Houses filled with Christians were set on fire. Numbers were tied together and thrown into the sea. In just one month, 17,000 were slain. During the continuance of this persecution in Egypt alone, 144,000 Christians died by violence, in addition to 700,000 others who expired through the fatigue of banishment or the public works to which they were condemned.

13. James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Times, A History of the Early World* (Boston: Athenaeum Press, 1916), Part 5, p. 663.

14. The “ten days” are symbolic—a day for a year (see Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:4–6). This ten-year period of persecution has been recorded in history and noted by Gibbon, Mosheim, and several other eminent historians. (Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, trans. M. F. Guizot [Oxford, Ohio: David Christy, 1841], Vol. 1, p. 201. John Fletcher Hurst, *Short History of the Christian Church* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893], p. 39.)

The following is an excerpt from Wilson's *Sketch of History*: "During ten years the persecution continued with scarcely mitigated horrors; and such multitudes of Christians suffered death that at the last the imperial murderers boasted that they had extinguished the Christian name, and religion, and restored the worship of the gods to its former purity and splendor."¹⁵ Those familiar with the history of this period can understand the depth of the words "that ye may be tried." Some of the most sublime pictures of Christian endurance seen by the world were enacted during the Smyrna period.

. . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Through all this persecution the faithful flock, anticipating death as martyrs, could see living words in letters of light spanning the heavens like a glorious bow of promise: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Smyrna (Izmir), strategically situated on the Aegean coast of western Turkey, is forty miles north of Ephesus. With its harbor surrounded by high hills on three sides, the city is a natural bastion of offense and defense, dominating vital land and sea routes in the area. Seeing the military importance of Smyrna, Alexander the Great ordered that its chief hill, Mount Pagos, be strongly fortified with a citadel. It is this sector, and not the northern more ancient site three miles distant, to which the Apocalypse refers.

The main street, called the Golden, was once strung across the city from west to east, beginning at the temple hill of Zeus and running around the lower slopes of Pagos to the temple hill of Cybele on the east. Aristides the orator, on account of the fine well-ordered buildings then seen throughout its length, compared the Golden to a necklace of jewels around the head of a statue.

Voyagers approaching by sea into the harbor were struck with Smyrna's imposing appearance. The lofty, rounded headland promontory, particularly the acropolis with its circle of buildings atop Pagos—its fortifications, turreted towers, and crenelated walls—resembled a royal diadem. The epithets "the crown of Smyrna" and "the crown of Asia" seem to have thus arisen.¹⁶

Verse 11:

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.

For faithfulness unto death, the promise is not only a crown of life but also immunity to the "second death." Thus the faithful will receive life in its highest form: immortality.

The allusion to the overcomers' immunity to Second Death suggested the likelihood—indeed the probability—that faithful Christians of the Smyrna era would

15. Frank Elmer Wilson, *The Divine Commission* (New York: Gorham, 1940).

16. James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 867. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th ed. (New York: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1929), Vol. 20, p. 847.

suffer a violent, sacrificial death. These promises were calculated to strengthen such to meet the experiences soon to befall them, and to enable them to have a firm hope unto the end for the glory that will be revealed in them in the Day of the Lord Jesus (Rom. 8:18; Heb. 3:6). Such expressions from the Father and the Son of loving sympathy and tender regard are precious ointment to the soul.

From this text it is evident that the kings who will reign with Jesus do not receive their crowns or reign as kings in *this* life. The Church at present—in its incipient, embryo condition—is not the Kingdom of God set up in power and glory. All the expressions of the New Testament referring to the present Church and its experiences harmonize with this thought. The Kingdom of heaven now suffers violence at the hands of the world (Matt. 11:12). Just as the Redeemer was maltreated and crucified, whoever follows in his footsteps will likewise suffer persecution and violence in some form. This persecution applies only to the real Church, not to the nominal one. But the promise is held out that if the members of the Church, the embryo Kingdom, now suffer with Christ, they will be glorified and reign with him when, in due time, he takes his great power and reigns (Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 4:12,13).

During the Smyrna era of church history, an opposing thing hindered the rapid development of the Antichrist; namely, the place aspired to was already occupied by another (2 Thess. 2:7). Not only did the Roman Empire conquer the world and give it politics and laws, but recognizing that religious superstitions are the strongest chains for holding and controlling a people, the empire adopted a scheme that had its origin in Babylon during the time of her greatness as ruler of the world. The plan stipulated that the emperor be esteemed the director and ruler in *religious* as well as civil affairs. To support this idea, the claim was made that the emperor was a demigod, in some sense descended from heathen deities. As such he was worshipped and his statues were adored; and as such he was styled *Pontifex Maximus*, that is, Chief Priest, or Greatest Religious Ruler. This very title has been claimed by and given to the pontiffs, or popes, of the Roman hierarchy ever since this Antichrist obtained “his power, and his seat, and great authority” from the former ruler of Rome (Rev. 13:2).

In essence, what hindered the early development of the Antichrist, and the illegitimate exaltation of the nominal Church of Christ to the coveted seat of spiritual supremacy, was the fact that it was filled by the representatives of the strongest empire the world had yet known. For any to have attempted an open display of ambition in this direction would have exposed them to the wrath of the masters of the world. At times the imperial rulers viewed Christianity with suspicion and distrust. Hence at first this iniquitous ambition worked secretly, disclaiming any intent to gain power or authority until a favorable opportunity was presented—after the nominal Church had become large and influential and the imperial power, shattered by political dissensions, had begun to decay. Smyrna, therefore, represents this opposition and the bitterness encountered by Christianity prior to its unlawful acquisition of the power of Imperial Rome.

Compared with the later persecutions of the Christians under Papal Rome, those under Pagan Rome were less frequent, less extensive, and less severe to endure in some respects. The ten years of persecution under Diocletian were an exception. In

the provinces the majority of the Roman magistrates, whose hands held the power of life and death, were men of polished manners and liberal education who respected the rules of justice. They frequently declined the odious task of persecution; dismissed charges against Christians with contempt, as Pilate and Herod attempted to do with Jesus; or suggested legal evasions to accused Christians (Matt. 27:24; Luke 23:14–16,20,22). When possible, magistrates used their power to relieve rather than to oppress the Christians, and the pagan tribunals were often the Christians' surest refuge against their accusers. The cruel persecution under the execrable tyrant Nero, who burned Christians to divert public suspicion from himself, forms one of the darkest pages in the history of Pagan Rome; but his victims were *comparatively* few. The victims of pagan persecution were not entire communities but prominent individuals. Even these persecutions of leading representatives were not so much the result of a fixed, persistent opposition by the government as they were the result of uncontrollable popular clamor, awakened by superstition, which the rulers satisfied in the interest of peace and order. Several illustrations are found in the career of the Apostle Paul, as well as in the lives of the other apostles (Acts 19:30–41; 25:24–27; 26:2,3,28). Between these persecutions there were often long periods of peace and quiet. Despite considerable harassment, Christianity prospered under the emperors of the Smyrna era.

Message to Pergamos (A.D. 313–1157)

Verse 12:

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; . . .

The derivation of the name Pergamos is enlightening. *Per* is an article of emphasis, sometimes signifying “above” or “higher than,” usually before the genitive case. Thus the name *Perga*, generally understood to mean “earthy,” has also the sense of “above the earth” (Acts 13:13). The Greek word for a heap of earth is *gaion*, *gaionos*. Therefore, *Pergamos* (*per-gaionos*) would signify with emphasis “earthly height” or “elevation,” an appropriate description of Papacy’s rise to power. Interestingly, Pergamos was the name given to the citadel of Troy.

Others suggest dividing the word into the two parts into which it naturally separates: *per* meaning “although” or “however” in the sense of calling attention to something objected to; and *gamos* meaning “marriage.” Hence *Pergamos* also conveys the thought of “although a marriage.”

Probably both meanings are intended in the etymological signification. The one derivation describes Papacy’s rise to power; the other indicates a disapproval of the *means by which* this rise was accomplished—a certain marriage into worldly power.

The angel of the Pergamos period, extending from A.D. 313 to 1157, was Arius the presbyter of Alexandria, Egypt, who first began to attract the attention of the Christian world about the year 312.¹⁷ His opposition to both the theory of lordship in the Church and the doctrine of the Trinity, which is of heathen derivation—as well as the general character, chronological location, scope, and influence of his teachings in and upon Christendom—indicates he was chosen by God for this office.

17. Dean Dudley, *History of the Council of Nicea*, 7th ed. (New York: Peter Eckler, 1886), p. 34.

According to Gibbon even the most implacable enemies of Arius have acknowledged the learning and blameless life of this eminent presbyter.¹⁸

With characteristic humility, Arius personally manifested his opposition to lordship in the Church by refusing the episcopal throne of Alexandria. Of this matter Philostorgius states [Book I, Chap. 3]: “When the people, by their votes, were on the point of electing Arius, he declined the honor in favor of Alexander,” who, soon after his election, got involved in doctrinal disputes with Arius and never relented until the latter had been twice excommunicated, banished by an imperial edict, and anathematized by the universal synod of Nicaea.¹⁹

The views that prevailed at Nicaea (A.D. 324–325) are embodied in the Nicene Creed, a strictly Trinitarian statement. At the synod the Trinitarians believed Christ’s generation was *from eternity*, so that he was coeval—i.e., coeternal with the Father—whereas the Arians believed he had a beginning. The Trinitarians claimed the Son was derived of and from the Father, being of the same *identical* essence and not merely of *similar* essence, as the Arians thought. The Arians held that the Son was created by the power of God, out of nothing, and that he was the *first created being ever*.²⁰ The Council of Nicaea defined the Godhead(?) as the absolute unity of the divine essence and the absolute equality of the three persons.

By no means did Arius intend to lower the dignity of Christ by ascribing to him a beginning of existence. Indeed Arius attributed to him the greatest dignity that a being could have after God, without entirely ignoring the distinction between that being and God. Yet Athanasius, the leading spokesman for the Trinitarian view and perhaps Arius’s bitterest contemporary opponent, vilified him in different works with such statements as “Arius the atheist,” “He vomits forth the poison of impiety,” “Arius the serpent that deceived Eve,” and so forth. In view of these slanders, Cardinal Newman’s observation is interesting: “. . . [that] the language of the Ante-nicene Fathers on the subject of our Lord’s Divinity, may be far more accommodated to the Aryan [*sic*] hypothesis than can the language of the Post-nicene, is agreed on all hands.”²¹

In the doctrinal dispute between Arius and Athanasius on the nature of Jesus and his relationship to the Father, it was the emperor Constantine who presided at the Council of Nicaea and decided in favor of Athanasius and the doctrine of the Trinity. Although Constantine subsequently vacillated back and forth for a time, he ultimately rejected Arius and his views. Thus it was Constantine, a supposed convert to Christianity, who made a decision that has had a profound effect upon Christianity down through the age to the present. However, his deeds negated his claim to be a Christian so that, in fact, it was a *worldly* man who predominated at a council that decided a *spiritual* matter of great importance (Matt. 7:15–20). Mosheim says that

18. *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. 1, p. 270.

19. See Bohn’s edition, translated by Edw. Walford.

20. When the aged Arius rose to speak in his own defense at the synod, he was struck in the face by one named Nicholas. Others soon ran out, thrusting their fingers into their ears in simulated horror at the old man’s supposed heresies.

21. John Henry Cardinal Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1885), p. 135.

“Constantine’s life was not such as the precepts of Christianity required.”²² “The same year of his reign in which he convened the Council of Nice was polluted by the execution of his eldest son.”²³ He put to death his wife Fausta on a groundless suspicion; he cut off his brother-in-law Licinius and the unoffending eleven-year-old son of Licinius contrary to his plighted word. Moreover, the three sons who succeeded Constantine were sired of an adulterous woman. And Gibbon states that he degenerated “into a cruel and dissolute monarch, corrupted by his fortune, or raised by conquest above the necessity of dissimulation. . . . The old age of Constantine was disgraced by the . . . vices of rapaciousness and prodigality. . . . Though he still retained the obedience, [he] gradually lost the esteem of his subjects.”²⁴

In view of the foregoing facts, it is ironic that Catholicism, and to a large extent Protestantism, have venerated the memory of Constantine, of whom it is said, “The gratitude of the Church has exalted the virtues and excused the failings of a generous patron who seated Christianity on the throne of the Roman World.”²⁵ The Greek Orthodox Church has even canonized him, adoring the memory of “*Saint*” Constantine.

When Arius died suddenly at Constantinople in the year 336 under “strange and horrid circumstances”—in all likelihood he was poisoned by a conspiracy of his enemies—his opponents rejoiced.^{26,27} And thus the voice of this archenemy of orthodoxy was silenced.

. . . These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Pergamos, now named Bergama, was a fortified stronghold situated on a steep terraced mountain slope. Therefore, much emphasis was placed on the martial arts and upon the mental alertness and physical fitness of its subjects. Moreover, Pergamos was noted for the superior quality of the *sword* manufactured within its precincts. The Master exhorted and encouraged Christians of this era to contend for the faith not with carnal but with spiritual weaponry—with truth, the sword of the mouth (verse 16).

The speaker is Jesus; it is he who “hath the sharp sword with two edges.” And truly the sword, or Word of God, is sharp (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). It is “two-edged” because it represents the Old and New Testaments. Also, the two edges enable the sword to cut in two directions—while one edge is presented toward the enemy, the other edge is directed toward the one who wields it. In other words, the sword “cuts” both the enemies of the truth and the consecrated people of God. It reveals both flagrant and secret sins and lusts; and the Christian should willingly submit to this searching out of his character. The Lord’s truth is uncompromising; it frowns on sin wherever it is found . . . whether in His people or in His enemies. Christ has

22. Dudley, *History of the First Council of Nicea*, p. 26.

23. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. 1, p. 258.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 258.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 274.

27. Dudley, *History of the First Council of Nicea*, p. 86 footnote.

given the sword of truth to the Church to be used in his service. Woe to the one who handles it unskillfully!

Under Constantine's reign, the opposition of the empire to Christianity gave way to favor, as shown by the celebrated Edict of Milan (A.D. March 313), which granted religious freedom to every individual of the Roman Empire. The "opposing thing" characteristic of the Smyrna period was removed; and Constantine, the imperial *Pontifex Maximus*, became the patron of the professed, but really apostate, Church of Christ (2 Thess. 2:7). He sent forth an imperial decree that all persecution should cease. For a time at least, the true followers of Christ enjoyed, with the nominal Church, the cessation of persecution. Taking this apostate Church by the hand, Constantine assisted her to a place of popularity and splendor from which she was able afterward, as the imperial power grew weak, to put her own representative upon the religious throne of the world as Chief Religious Ruler—*Pontifex Maximus*.

Now came the chief test of this period: Would the Church endure the test of imperial patronage as she had borne the test of imperial persecution? Those Christians who remained true to the Lord, resisting the temptation of worldly patronage and the desire to rule before the appointed time, constituted the overcomers of the Pergamos period.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Church at this time was a pure (virgin) Church suddenly lifted into a dignity and power which became her snare. Quite the contrary is true. A great falling away had occurred—from primitive purity, simplicity, and freedom into creed-bound, ambitious factions. Resembling pagan philosophies, garnished with some truths, and enforced and clinched with the doctrine of everlasting torment, the errors and ceremonies of these factions drew into the Church a vast horde whose numbers and influence became valuable to Constantine and were respected and used accordingly. No such worldly man ever thought seriously of espousing the cause of the humble Christlike Little Flock, the truly consecrated Church, whose "names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). Constantine's popularity with his soldiers, mentioned by historians, was very different from popularity with real soldiers of the Cross.

The following four verses (13 to 16) indicate that the Pergamos period was characterized by *doctrinal controversy*, and that the Church was to heed the example Jesus set in exposing and opposing the false claims and pretensions of the religious leaders of his day.

Verse 13:

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: . . .

There once stood in Pergamos, amidst an array of large, impressive structures, yet significantly separate and distinct on a lone hillock or elevated terrace level, the Altar of Zeus. It is of interest that the disciples of Jesus situated in Asia Minor particularly detested this altar, which they regarded as the seat or throne of Satan, and which is referred to here as the figurative emblem of the centrality of the Adversary's power. However helpful this identification in verse 13 would have been in enabling those Christians to withstand the encroachment of evil all about them, such

a localized application of the identity of the satanic throne would be of rather limited benefit to the Church at large. Although the messages directed to the seven churches in Asia Minor each have a historical and allegorical significance related to the particular site named, which gives meaning and direction to the inner spiritual content intended for that era of the Church, it must ever be kept in mind that the real purpose of these messages is to furnish valuable clues for a broader application to the Church as a whole (Rev. 1:4). Accordingly, the Altar of Zeus is but an index finger pointing to the real central seat of power; namely, Pagan Rome, which was later rechristened Papal Rome. An ancient maxim reputed among the Jews was that where the law of God was *not* studied, there Satan dwelt.

The removal of the seat of the empire from Rome to Constantinople in A.D. 334, the subsequent exposure of the city of Rome to the invasion of the barbarians from the north, and the continual changes of generals and governors in the fast-falling empire left the bishop of the Church at Rome the most permanent and most honored official there. His gradually increasing prestige was heightened both by the removal of the rival splendor of the imperial court to Constantinople and by the reverence the peoples of the world were attaching to the name of Rome itself. The bishop of Rome actively took advantage of this veneration for the place and name by claiming a superiority to all other bishops, governors, and rulers. In time he claimed not only ecclesiastical dominion of the world but also civil dominion; he claimed God had invested the Church of Rome with the dominion of earth, endowing the bishop with the right to crown and uncrown, to elevate and degrade, any and all rulers of the old Roman Empire.

In Constantine's day there were many teachers and more controversies than ever before. The dispute of "who should be greatest" arose. The tendency was toward an earthly head, and of course many coveted the honor. The bishops (or patriarchs as they preferred to be called) of Rome, Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Carthage, and Constantinople had acquired a degree of preeminence over the others; and a long-continued rivalry existed among them. The supremacy was finally divided between Constantinople and Rome, with strife continuing for several hundred years between them. To settle the conflict, the Church was divided; the eastern or Greek Church accepted the patriarch (chief father) of Constantinople for its head; and the western or papal Church acknowledged the bishop of Rome as pope. An awareness of this controversy will aid in understanding the following passage.

. . . 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.

Many of the true followers of Jesus denounced the attempt to disobey the Master's direct command to call no man "Father," and of course they received the promised persecution (Matt. 23:9; 2 Tim. 3:12). Their fidelity is particularly noted because of their adverse surroundings. This class in Pergamos is commended by the Lord under the symbol of "Antipas" as "my faithful martyr." In Greek *anti* means "against," and *papas* signifies "fathers." In holding fast the endearing name of the Father and recognizing Jesus as the true and only representative to the Church, this

faithful band opposed the development and establishment of Papacy and other similar movements.

Verse 14:

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 stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

The ancient city of Pergamos contained a multiplicity of heathen gods and goddesses of demon origin that were introduced and designed to confuse, pervert, and mislead the populace from the proper worship of the *one true God*. Each of the various temples had its own variety of corresponding ideologies, which the Lord summarized into two categories: the ancient “doctrine of Balaam” and the “doctrine of the Nicolaitans” (verse 15).

The doctrine of Balaam, which predated Christianity, can be defined as catering to and satisfying the desire of the flesh with material reward or temporal pleasure. And in this city of satanic delusion, the Devil designed his statuary to distract and to divert the unwary. The emphasis was placed on earthly love and pleasure, as evidenced by (1) the invariably nude Aphrodite, (2) the habitually drunk Dionysus, and (3) the Serapis bull of sexual virility. This same “Balaamitic” doctrine should now be considered in its broader, more subtle sense.

Persecution of the Smyrna period having ceased, the policy of the emperor became the policy of both the priests and the people, and the nominal Christian Church soon became filled with worldliness. Many pagan philosophers, finding it expedient and prudent to join the ranks of the rising religion, sought correspondencies between Christianity and paganism conducive to blending the two together. They succeeded only too well. Many tried to develop a compromise religion, combining their ancient theology and the new doctrine spreading in the empire; they persuaded themselves that the same truths Christ taught had been concealed for a long time by the priests of the gods under the veil of ceremonies, fables, and allegorical representations. Since the old theology had a number of chief gods with many demigods of both sexes, the “Pago-Christians” reconstructed the list for the new theology. At this time, therefore, the doctrine of three Gods was introduced: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Also introduced was the goddess Mary. To make the list as impressive in numbers as the long line of pagan deities, the Pago-Christians canonized the dead apostles and an unlimited number of martyrs and angels, real and imaginary. Thus the pagan priests, being unwilling to lose their positions of honor and influence among the people, sought to bend their ideas to fit the new religion. While nominally professing Christianity, they brought many of their former ideas with them into the Christian Church. Eventually these ideas were grafted to “the faith . . . once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

All the vile doctrines that have saturated the papal Church and still permeate Protestantism had their origin in this period. History proves that Papacy’s adoration of images, dead saints, and relics; its holy candles and holy water; and all of its vain rituals were borrowed from heathen sources. Cardinal Newman voices

Papacy's excuse: Although such things are "the very instruments and appendages of demon worship," they were, however, "*sanctified by adoption* into the Church."²⁸

Plato's philosophy of immortality was engrafted, a parasite upon the scriptural stock. This vile fungus—planted by Satan in Eden, watered by the Egyptians, and brought to an increase by a pseudo-Christianity—has borne an abundant harvest of errors and exhaled an influence more deadly than the bubonic plague (Gen. 3:4). Purgatory, eternal sin, eternal torment, Mariolatry, saint worship, transmigration, and Mohammedanism are some of its natural fruits, which could not have existed without the original fungus.

Thus gradually the Church was led away from God into error and evil practices. The allusion to Balaam and Balac in verse 14 refers to this trend. In Old Testament history the kings of Midian and King Balac of Moab found themselves unable to subdue Israel by force of arms. Balaam, who had been a prophet of God (picturing those who were formerly pagan priests), instructed King Balac (the Roman imperial power) how to tempt Israel (Christianity) to sin—i.e., how to "cast a stumbling-block"—and thereby achieve what the king could not accomplish by his own powers (what Imperial Rome failed to accomplish through force and open opposition in the Smyrna phase).²⁹ (See Numbers 22 through 24; 31:16.) The pagan priests taught the Church to indulge in spiritual fornication, and thus brought upon her the withering blight of the wrath of God. This marriage into worldly power—pronounced by the Saviour as adulterous, idolatrous, and Balaamitic—was an unholy and degrading alliance. Not dissolved by the fall of the Roman Empire, this union between Church and State has been perpetuated in much of Christendom down to the present. Enthusiastically received at the time, the alliance has also been subsequently viewed by many as the realization of the Millennium itself and the great consummating victory of the Cross. Here in the Book of Revelation Christ gives his verdict of the alliance, denouncing it as an idolatrous uncleanness, a joining of Israel to Baal-peor, a fearful and disastrous compromise of Christianity with the world, which disfigured and debauched the Church.

Verse 15:

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

The "doctrine of the Nicolaitans" is related to former Amazonic worship, which was designed to tempt one's *ego* with power, influence, and leadership. The Nike goddess of victory is found amid the Pergamon statuary. This goddess invariably has one breast exposed not so much to denote femininity but to point her out as the provider of nutriment for overcoming strength and resultant victory.

First noticed in Ephesus, the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, the theory of lordship or headship in the Church, found its development in Pergamos and has been a burden ever since. In Ephesus it was designated "the deeds of the Nicolaitans," that is, a *tendency* towards lordship in the Church; in Smyrna there emerged an organization

28. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 373.

29. A stumbling block, in the sense used here, is that part of a trap upon which the bait is laid; when touched, it ensnares the prey.

of believers referred to as “the synagogue of Satan”; now in Pergamos that which should never have been tolerated—which the Ephesian Church abhorred—became an established and recognized doctrine: clericalism.

Verse 16:

Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

This verse is an allusion to the sword and the angel of the Lord who three times temporarily withstood the headstrong Balaam on his mission to King Balac (Num. 22:23,24,26).

The Lord speaks directly *to* his Church as “thou” or “you,” but speaks *of* the world and worldly Christians as “they” or “them.” For instance, in the following Scriptures the knowledge the saints will have in the Day of the Lord is contrasted with the world’s ignorance of the significance of transpiring events: “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, *ye* have no need that I write unto *you*. . . . For when *they* shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon *them* . . . and *they* shall not escape. But *ye*, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake *you* as a thief. *Ye* are all the children of light” (1 Thess. 5:1–5). “Take heed [says the Lord] to *yourselves*, lest at any time *your* hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon *you* unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all *them* that dwell on the face of the whole earth” (Luke 21:34,35). Therefore, it now should be apparent that Daniel was speaking of the nominal Church when he said, “*They* shall mingle *themselves* with the seed of men”; that is, the nominal Church, dabbling in politics and mingling in and associating with the affairs of men, would thus form an admixture of Church and State designated in the Scriptures as harlotry (Dan. 2:43).

In verse 16 the Lord threatens to deprive the faithful of their privilege of defending the faith—of wielding the honored sword of truth—if they slacken their efforts in combating the error becoming so prevalent. While the nominal Church was growing popular in the Pergamos period, the true Christians were being tested and proved by the introduction and development of pagan (Balaamitic) and papal (Nicolaitan) ideas.³⁰ To be numbered among the faithful *witnesses*, the loyal followers of Christ had to be ready to wage *aggressive* warfare against the evil, whereas the tendency was to wage *defensive* warfare, as revealed in the apologetic nature of the writings that have been handed down. The faithful held fast the Lord’s name and did not deny the faith; accordingly, they were commended for their good works. However, they suffered others to debauch and mislead the Church into eating “things sacrificed unto idols” (verse 14); that is, they allowed others to seduce spiritual Israel to feed upon and mentally assimilate doctrines of demons, and this laxness led to spiritual fornication and every other excess. Unless the Lord’s people waged good warfare against those who thus subverted the faith and oppressed the faithful, they would lack full approval.

30. “Balaamitic” conveys the thought of being introduced to Christianity *from without* by the pagan priesthood. “Nicolaitan” signifies a development *from within* the Church of a class that exerts unauthorized lordship over the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:3).

The fact this sword emanates from Jesus' *mouth* signifies that the warfare to be waged by the saints in the Master's service is of a *doctrinal* nature (Rev. 1:16).³¹ By threatening to deprive his followers of the privilege of combating the error and thus assume sole responsibility for that work himself, Jesus reveals not only the importance of defending the gospel, the character of God, and the people of God, but also the honor attached to that defense.

Verse 17:

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, . . .

Manna, the bread that came down from heaven as a life-sustainer for Israel, represents spiritual food, the Word of God, as well as Jesus himself, the Living Bread, who came from heaven to provide life for the world. The manna fed to the Israelites in the wilderness was *corruptible*, and therefore had to be gathered daily (Exod. 16:14–36). Hence in the millennial Kingdom all the obedient of mankind, who will be recognized as Israelites, will ever seek supplies of life and grace and will thus be provided with everlasting life, i.e., with conditional supplied and renewed life.

On the other hand, the Little Flock will receive *incorruptible* life, or immortality. The golden pot of manna deposited in the ark in the Tabernacle represents the immortality of The Christ. In verse 17 the Saviour refers to this symbolism: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the *hidden manna*." To those who become Christ's joint-heirs or members of the anointed body, God offers a special and peculiar sort of manna: "hidden manna." Thus the incorruptibility of the golden pot of manna well illustrates the immortal, incorruptible condition promised to all members of the "seed," which is the Church (Exod. 16:33; Gal. 3:29; Heb. 9:4).

In one sense the hidden manna is a continuation of that which the Lord's people receive and feed on now, and it demonstrates the close connection between the present life and the life beyond. For this reason the promise of the hidden manna appeals most solemnly to the Lord's people while on earth. The way they live *here* affects their reward *there*. However, this promise has only a partial application here, as pictured by the shewbread of *promise* proffered in the Holy, for the hidden manna was reserved in the Most Holy compartment of the Tabernacle, beyond the veil of human experience, to be entered only by those in the divine condition.

It is no mere coincidence that Pergamos won worldwide acclaim as a health resort and center of healing, and that much emphasis was placed upon health and prolongation of life. Here, according to tradition, the evangelist Luke was trained under the tutelage of the renowned Dr. Galen of the first century.

31. In addition to being a great educational *center of indoctrination*, Pergamos was world famous for its library. Second only to Alexandria's, the library contained over 200,000 volumes or rolls (that is, until they were bequeathed to and sent by Mark Anthony as a gift to Cleopatra). The librarians of Alexandria, jealous of the library at Pergamos, persuaded Ptolemy of Egypt to prohibit the exportation of papyrus (for bookmaking) to Pergamos in order to curtail the phenomenal growth of the latter. However, "necessity being the mother of invention," a remarkable and most important discovery was induced: the invention and manufacture of a new writing material called *Pergama Charta*, now known as *parchment*. This development opened the door to a much wider dissemination of knowledge.

Associated with the cures at this health center was the Aesculapian-god hospital, where mental and physical exercises were employed accompanied with the administration of sleep-inducing drugs, opium smoke inhalation, audio-suggestive sounds, a whispering tunnel, and musical therapy in a seance atmosphere of *hidden mystery* and darkness. The remains of a tunnel and dark sleeping room, in which one was subjected to hallucinating ideas to promote hypnotic or psychopathic cures, are still in existence.

The promise, therefore, to true Christians of this Pergamos era was significantly appropriate; namely, that those who hearkened diligently to the instruction of the Lord and who pursued the *mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven* would attain far greater health, a much higher reward: the *hidden manna of life and immortality*.

. . . and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

“To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone.” In ancient times the Greeks and the Romans had a custom of noting and perpetuating friendship by means of a white stone. The stone was divided into halves; and after each person inscribed his name on the flat surface, the parts of the stone were exchanged. The production of either half was sufficient to insure friendly aid even from the descendants of those who first divided the stone. A king would sometimes observe a similar custom by breaking a white stone into two parts, one of which he would retain. The second part of the stone would be given to a special ambassador; if returned to the king at any time, it would insure aid. Thus the divided stone became a token of perpetual friendship as well as a mark of identification.

Apparently, the text refers to this ancient custom. The white stone signifies a precious token of the Lord’s love, and the new name written in the stone suggests that the Bridegroom will give a personal name to each overcomer. A secret relationship will exist between the great King of Kings and each individual. In other words, the overcomers are not to be recognized merely as a class, i.e., the Bride class; but each will have the personal favor and friendship of the Lord.

It may be said that the overcomers receive the mark of identification—the antitypical white stone—now, in the present life. This mark is the sealing of the Holy Spirit by which the Lord identifies the overcomers. Although the sealing is part of the final reward of the Church, God’s people have this personal acquaintance with the Lord from the very beginning of their experience. The full seal of the Holy Spirit will be given in the resurrection when the new body is received. In a sense, therefore, the stone is loaned to the Lord’s people now; if they are faithful, it will ultimately be *given* to them.

The appropriateness of the Saviour’s comforting message to the Church of Pergamos is more readily understood by the realization that the very things the saints are willing to suffer and die for rather than be deprived of—namely, Jesus’ personal love and the recognition and holding fast of his name only—are the very things they will receive more abundantly in the next life: the white stone of favor and esteem with a new name written therein.³² Hallelujah! The appropriate reward for feeding

32. Combat skills and gladiatorial engagements were performed at Pergamos to popularize and magnify the martial arts. The Revelation message to this Church perhaps alludes to the custom whereby

upon the pure heavenly manna in this life's wilderness, in preference to the idolatrous food and pleasures of Egypt (the world), is *immortal* life within the *inner circle of Jesus' love*. Such is the significance attached to the *hidden* manna and the *secret* name "which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Message to Thyatira (A.D. 1157–1367)

Verse 18:

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; . . .

Thyatira means "sweet perfume of sacrifice," which is suggestive of relatively slow-burning incense and implies a long period of suffering. (*Thya*)*teiro* denotes "to rub hard," especially in regard to the effects of pain and sorrow on body and mind, "to wear away, wear out, distress." Thus those Christians in the Thyatira era who were submissive to the Lord's leadings and the crushing experiences became, as a result of their obedience, like a sweet powdered incense, or fragrance, in the nostrils of their God.³³

An additional etymological significance to the name (*Thya*)*tira* is "tiara," a coronet or diadem of regality.³⁴ When given an unfavorable connotation, the tiara alludes to the reign of the false Church.

During the Thyatira period, which extended from A.D. 1157 to 1367, the virgin Church was enduring the hardships of the wilderness under papal persecution, while the apostate Church sat on the throne of her royal paramour. The literal city of Thyatira was known for purple dye (described in the *Western World* as a "turkey" or "cardinal red") and for scarlet cloth and dyed linens, which won wide recognition (Acts 16:14). The purple and scarlet cloth fittingly corresponds to the regal robes worn by the worldly Church during her reign with the kings of the earth—when she was a "woman . . . arrayed in purple and scarlet colour" (Rev. 17:4).

the unskilled victims for this sordid sport were taken from the midst of undesired criminals (often Christians and Jews) and pitted against more experienced warriors to further develop the skills of the latter. The hapless victims were often herded like cattle and treated as unwanted brute beasts, having neither name nor rank; and their unfortunate selection for destruction was sadistically determined by lot with the extraction by their own hand of a black, instead of a white, stone from a common coffer. The Lord's promise to his faithful spiritual warriors is that they will be chosen to life and to honor not by random lot but by him as individuals, and they will be named for permanent favor not upon perishable parchment but upon engraved, enduring stone. They are to be given a *white stone* and a *new name*—not a mere ballot stone but a signet stone, one half possessed by the Master, the other half in the custody of the individual so honored.

33. Exodus 30:34,35 amplifies this thought: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; . . . with pure frankincense: . . . and thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection [in powder, not liquid, form] after the art of the apothecary [or pharmacist of old, who would place the ingredients in a durable crucible and firmly grasp a hard-nosed pestle to press, crumble, and pulverize the whole—see verse 36—until it became], tempered [blended] together, [and was made] pure and holy." The incense was finely crushed to eliminate all lumps so that it would *flow* evenly.
34. The headdress that adorned the statue of the goddess Diana of Ephesus was fashioned in a most conspicuous manner into the likeness of a single high masonry double-turreted tower, suggestive of a corner of a fortified wall and resembling somewhat a piece used in the game of chess called a "castle." (See Kitto's *Illustrated Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 203.)

Located fifty-two miles northeast of Smyrna and currently named *ak-Hissar*, the village of Thyatira signifies “white castle.” Its present remains indicate that it was relatively unfortified except for an area of Christianized ruins in its midst. The city was once comfortably, commercially, and profitably situated on a broad plain astride the main northern route to the Byzantine-Dardanelles region.

Notably absent today are the usual remnants of other relics of rival worship. This fact attests to the former uncontested, dominating influence of nominal churchianity in Thyatira. It also harmonizes with the apocalyptic role Thyatira occupies in depicting the golden era of the pseudo-Church, which was to the true Church a time of severe trial and fiery ordeal sometimes styled the Dark Ages.

The star, or angel, to the Church of Thyatira was Peter Waldo, a rich merchant of Lyons in southern France. Approximately A.D. 1157 several of the principal citizens of Lyons were conversing together on various matters, as was customary in Italy and France during the summer.³⁵ Suddenly one of them fell to the ground and expired.

This awful occurrence, an example of the mortality of man and a vivid reminder of the death penalty upon the human race, terrified one of the men, namely, Peter Waldo, a man of great wealth. He began to reflect; impelled no doubt by the Holy Spirit, he resolved to repent, amend his life, and be more diligent in the fear of God. As a result, he started to distribute alms liberally; and when opportunities arose, he discussed goodness with the members of his household and others who came to him, admonishing them to repent and strive for true godliness.

35. The Waldensian movement commenced about 1157, not 1170 as is generally recognized. The history of this movement is rather obscure because the earliest accounts come from those who were chiefly concerned with its suppression. However, there is considerable evidence that it began just prior to 1160. The following testimonials support this conclusion:

“For the year 1160, we gave an account of Peter Waldo and his conversion, as well as of his having brought many who sat in the darkness of popery, to the light of the Gospel. . . . The rise of these people called Waldenses, and Albigenses, is fixed about A.D. 1170, that is, ten years after Peter Waldo began to teach them. . . . It appears from several ancient writers, that the Waldenses, or at least, people who held the same belief, existed long before the year 1170, *yea, before 1160* [italics added]; seeing that already in that year 1160 they had increased to such an extent, that they were summoned to Rome before a Synod, and were condemned as obstinate heretics. . . . The same occurred A.D. 1164, in the Synod of Tours. . . . Hence, when their beginning is fixed A.D. 1170, this must not be understood of their origin, but of their rising, progress, and greatest prosperity.” (T. J. Von Braght, *Martyrs* [Facsimile of original Dutch 1660 ed., reprinted in Ephrata, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1748], pp. 310–312.)

“The Waldenses, of whom mention is made for the year 1159. . . .” (P. J. Twisck, *Chron.*, p. 479.)

“Circa annum Domini 1160 . . .” (“About A.D. 1160 several citizens of Lyons were together”). (Matthias Flaccius, *Illyricus Catalog*, Testitum Veritatis, Januarii anno Domini MDLXII [1562], Sec. CCLXVII, p. 631. Jac. Mehring facsimile [Francofurti: ex Officina Zunneriana, 1672].)

“The council of Oxford in 1160 consigned a company of Waldenses, who had emigrated from Gascony to England, to the secular arm for punishment. Accordingly, King Henry II ordered them, men and women, to be publicly whipped, branded on the cheek with a red-hot iron, and driven, half-naked, out of the city in the dead of winter; and none were permitted to show them pity or to grant them the slightest favor.” (*The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. [East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1889], Ser. 2, p. 334.)

An item under “Historical Notes” in the Clarendon Press 1886 edition of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* mentions that Waldo wrote *The Last Age of the Christian Church* in A.D. 1156.

Waldo continued for some time to help the poor and became increasingly zealous to learn as well as teach. As people brought questions to him more and more, he began to expound on the Holy Scriptures in the common French language. Being extremely desirous for the advancement of true piety and Christian knowledge, he employed a priest called Stephanus de Evisa to translate the four Gospels and other books of Holy Writ from Latin into French. By carefully perusing these sacred books, Waldo realized the religion of the Roman Church differed from that originally inculcated by Christ and his apostles. Struck with the glaring contradictions between the doctrines of the pontiffs and the truths of the gospel, and animated with zeal, he abandoned his mercantile vocation and distributed his riches among the poor (whence the Waldenses were called the poor men of Lyons). He formed an association with other pious men of similar sentiment and devotion, and began to preach publicly and teach the multitude the doctrines and precepts of Christianity, seeking to revive primitive pureness of living in the Church.³⁶

The bishop and the prelates, who claimed to have the keys of heaven but did not go in themselves or allow others to enter, were greatly vexed that this “unlearned” and common man should bring the Holy Scriptures into the vernacular language and expound upon them (Matt. 23:13). Already great numbers were gathering at Waldo’s house for instruction and admonition.

Thus, hundreds of years before the Reformation, the Waldenses possessed the Bible in manuscript form in their native tongue. Having the unadulterated truth rendered them special objects of hatred and persecution. However, the purity and simplicity of those who followed “this way,” the innocence that shone forth in their lives and actions, and their contempt of riches and honor were so conspicuous in their conduct and conversation that all who had a true sense of piety and a love for righteousness were sympathetic.

The Waldenses aimed to reduce the form of ecclesiastical government and the manners of both the clergy and the people to the simplicity and primitive sanctity that characterized the apostolic Church. They denied the supremacy of the Roman pontiff and maintained that ministers of the Church were obliged to imitate the poverty of the apostles and procure their own sustenance. To a certain degree, they considered every Christian qualified and authorized to instruct, exhort, and confirm the brethren in their Christian course. At the same time, they affirmed that confession to priests was not necessary, since the humble offender could acknowledge his sins and testify his repentance to any true believer, and thus receive appropriate counsel and admonition (James 5:16). They maintained that the power of delivering sinners from the guilt and punishment of their offenses belonged to God alone; they claimed that the remission of sins was obtained through the merits of the Lord Jesus only and that indulgences were a criminal invention to satisfy the avarice of a false and greedy Church. Prayers and other ceremonies instituted on behalf of the dead were regarded as vain, useless, and absurd; the existence of departed souls in an intermediate state of purification was denied. Several of the Waldenses even denied the obligation of infant baptism, and rejected image worship as idolatry. They

36. Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary*, 5th American from 3rd London ed. (Philadelphia: W. W. Woodward, 1818), 2 Vols. in 1, p. 514.

resisted the papal doctrines of invocation of saints, worship of the Virgin Mary, transubstantiation, celibacy of the clergy, and the Mass; they discountenanced pilgrimages, festivals, the burning of incense, sacred burial, the use of holy water, sacerdotal vestments, and monasticism; and they asserted that the teaching of the sacred Scriptures should be received instead of the traditions and claims of the Church of Rome.³⁷ They identified the Church of Rome as the apostate Babylon of the Apocalypse and resisted her corruption at the peril of their lives (Rev. 17:5). Under the pressure of long-continued persecution, some gradually compromised their faith, yielding its distinctive principles; others held fast the truth.

Long before the days of Martin Luther, the faith and works of this people were a stand for reformation and a protest against error. Their doctrines, backed by simplicity and morality, shone out with great luster in contrast to the pompous pride and flagrant immoralities of the then-exalted Papacy.

Waldo and his followers became so obnoxious to the Church of Rome that they were anathematized by Pope Innocent III, who determined to crush out the heresy, to “exterminate the whole pestilential race.” No longer safe in Lyons, the Waldenses took refuge in Alpine mountains and caves. Their doctrines traveled with them, flowing all over Europe. Waldo finally settled in Bohemia, where he died in 1179, the same year in which his tenets were denounced by an ecumenical council. The Waldensian Church was a beacon light on the mountains during the Dark Ages.³⁸

. . . *These things saith the Son of God, . . .*

Here is a more emphatic declaration of who the speaker is than in any previous message. The emphasis was necessary, for a usurper had arisen who, as foretold by Daniel, had “a mouth speaking great things” and who, claiming to be the vicar of Christ, assumed to speak as the mouthpiece of God (Dan. 7:8). Thus Jesus announces himself as the speaker, the *teacher* of the Church.

. . . *who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;*

The attributes Jesus emphasizes here are his eyes and feet. His eyes like “a flame of fire” indicate his searching and penetrating gaze, his ability to see through hypocrisy with X-ray eyes. Nothing escapes the Master’s attention . . . neither the ignominies and injustices suffered by the Lord’s people nor the acts committed by the evildoers of this period. He is aware of *all* things. To the faithful Christians hunted down like animals in the forest during this period of Papacy’s power, it was comforting to realize the Lord knew of their suffering—even if nobody else did. How appropriate it is that the Redeemer assured these loved ones of his ability to discern their faithfulness in this wilderness state!

Moreover, Jesus could assure his followers of his sympathy and solicitude on their behalf because he himself had endured similar hostility from those who sat “in Moses’ seat” when he *trod* the earth (Matt. 23:2). Thus his feet of tried and refined white brass especially qualified and enabled him to walk by their side as they scaled

37. Buck, *A Theological Dictionary*, p. 515.

38. M’Clintock (McClintock) and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894), s.v. “Waldenses” and “Waldo, Peter.”

the rugged mountains or wandered footsore and weary, seeking a place to plant the seeds of truth.³⁹ How comforting for them to realize their exalted head “knoweth them that are his” and was their companion and guide (2 Tim. 2:19)!

Verse 19:

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.

Properly translated, verse 19 should read: “I know thy works: even thy charity, and faith, and service, and patience; and thy works, the last to be more than the first.”⁴⁰ In essence Jesus is saying, “I know thy works: love, faith, service, and patient endurance [Greek *hupomone*]. Of thy works, I commend thee more for the last [patient endurance] than for the first [charity or love].” It was perhaps more difficult for the Lord’s followers of this era to discern and reflect the sunshine of God’s loving favor than at any other time, for the test was that of endurance, of holding fast and keeping his works unto the end (verse 26). Those who proved loyal under these trying circumstances were especially commended for their last works, namely, their patient endurance.

The faith of the true Christian in this era was tried to the uttermost, for this was the period of Papacy’s regal power and triumphant supremacy. It was especially true of this time that the papal power began to “wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws” (Dan. 7:25).

Verse 20:

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.

In time, after the apostles had fallen asleep in death, the majority of the Church began to neglect the lamp and to look instead to human teachers for leadership. Puffed up with pride, these teachers assumed titles and offices, claiming power over God’s heritage. Gradually there came into existence a special class called “the clergy,” who regarded themselves, and were regarded by others, as the proper guides to faith and practice, aside from the Word of God. Thus the great system of Papacy, which usurped Christ’s prerogative, was developed by an undue respect for the teachings of fallible man and a neglect of the Word of the infallible God.

39. Brass or copper as a symbol signifies perfect humanity. The white-hot or glowing feet of the Master in Revelation 1:15 allude to his former earthly ministry and to the severe testing of the mettle of his character . . . to how much he endured in demonstrating his faithfulness to the Father. Therefore, Christians must ever keep in mind this example of Jesus as “the Apostle and High Priest” of their profession lest they become weary and faint in their minds (Heb. 2:17,18; 3:1; 12:3).

40. The oldest manuscripts transpose the *English* version order to read “faith, and service.” The four qualities are subordinate to “thy works”; thus, “I know thy works: *even* the love and the faith [these two form one pair, as ‘faith which worketh by love’—Gal. 5:6], and the service [ministration to the suffering members of the Church, and to all in spiritual or temporal need], and the endurance of [i.e., shown by] thee [this pronoun belongs to all four].” The final “and” in the Authorized Version is omitted in the most ancient manuscripts.

Verse 20 alludes to the Prophet Elijah, who fled for his life into the wilderness from the wrath of Jezebel, the idolatrous wife of King Ahab (1 Kings 18:19; 2 Kings 9:22). The nourisher and protector of the priests of Baal, Jezebel wielded her husband's kingly power for her own purposes. The description of Jezebel corresponds to the papal Church, the mother of abominations. In the same way that Jezebel brought idolatry to Israel, Romanism wedded pagan ceremonies to Christian doctrine, seducing many by word and practice to "eat"—that is, to swallow or accept—doctrinal error. The result was a promiscuous and illegitimate relationship with the world and its attendant evils.⁴¹ Accordingly, King Ahab of Israel represents the kings or kingdoms of Europe who committed spiritual fornication with the "mother Church." The pagan and papal ideas introduced and developed in the Pergamos period became the established doctrine of the Church in the Thyatira period (verses 14 and 15).

Among the pretensions of the false Church, styled Jezebel, were several of its doctrines, particularly the early doctrine of Church infallibility, which paved the way to others. A most serious error, Church infallibility was claimed even before the office of pope was acknowledged, and it has prevented rectification of errors afterwards discovered. Furthermore, this doctrine has placed the decrees of Church councils beyond contradiction or question by either reason or Scripture, and has made human ignorance, weakness, and misconceptions the *standards of faith* instead of God's Word, the Bible. Once it was conceded the voice of the Church council was *infallible* and unerring, everything had to conform to it; each council felt bound to render no decisions contrary to preceding councils, and those who did otherwise were liable to be repudiated. An error once affirmed could not be denied or even dropped, and the Bible and reason had to be interpreted and twisted to match these *infallible* decrees of fallible men. No wonder it required an expert theologian to interpret the Scriptures to make them agree with the so-called infallible decrees! No wonder either that, for expediency, Antichrist proscribed the Bible!

The history of Papacy clearly shows that, while professing to reverence the Bible as the Word of God, in the past the Church of Rome has kept the Bible in the background and promoted its own teachings instead. In addition, the Papacy has condemned God's Word as unfit to be read by and dangerous to the people so that its own infallible word might have full control. The Papacy well realized the Bible

41. As the idolatry practiced by natural Israel found its parallel in more subtle besetments to spiritual Israel, so natural Israel's fornication likewise foreshadowed a higher, subtler kind of fornication. While fornication in the form in which fleshly Israel transgressed is to be deprecated, it is not a common or general sin in true spiritual Israel today, even as the lower forms of idolatry (i.e., the worshipping of the golden calf, etc.) are not common today and indeed are never practiced by professing Christians. Rather, the temptation before spiritual Israel is of a more insidious kind that is frequently warned against in the Book of Revelation (2:20,21; 14:8; 17:2,4,5; 18:3; 19:2). The use of the word "fornication" in these cited cases seems to imply, as its symbolical significance, any illicit fellowship with the world on the part of those who have betrothed themselves to be God's consecrated people. In other words, the Christian is admonished against fellowship in spirit with those who, having the spirit of the world, have not the spirit of the Lord. To an enormous extent this improper course, this sinful fellowship, is indulged in by the professed Church of Christ. The worldly are not only invited but almost pressed into foremost positions in the nominal Church, while those who are faithful to the Lord, standing aloof from and rebuking worldly aims and methods, are disesteemed as being fanatical and peculiar.

threatened its power and constantly denounced its blasphemous pretensions. Hence in the days of papal power, the possession or reading of the Bible by the people was treated as a criminal offense.

Inevitably, the infallibility of the Church, as expressed in its councils, eventually led to the dogma of papal infallibility. Official recognition and declaration of the Church's lord and head, the pope, as the more lawful spokesman of these unerring decrees occurred in 1870. With the retention of Church canon laws, the institution of papal infallibility produced even more damaging results.

An examination of a few historic statements reveals the true sentiments. Said the Council of Trent in its A.D. 1546 session: "In order to restrain petulant minds the council decrees that in matters of faith and morals, and whatever relates to the maintenance of Christian doctrine, no one, confiding in his own judgment, shall dare to wrest the sacred Scriptures to his own sense of them, contrary to that which hath been held, and still is held by the holy mother church, whose right it is to judge of the true meaning."

From the bull of Pius VII against Bible Societies, issued June 29, 1816, to the primate of Poland: "We have, with the utmost care and attention, deliberated upon the measures proper to be adopted by our Pontifical authority, in order to remedy and abolish this *pestilence* as far as possible. . . . The Bible printed by heretics is to be numbered among other prohibited books, conformably to the rules of the Index."

From a bull by Leo XII to the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland in 1825: "It is no secret to you, venerable brethren, that a certain society, vulgarly called the Bible Society, is audaciously dispreparing itself through the whole world. After despising the traditions of the holy fathers, and in opposition to the well-known decree of the Council of Trent, this society has collected all its forces, and directs every means to one object: to the translation, or rather the perversion, of the Bible into the vernacular languages of all nations."

The authorized translation of Pope Leo XIII's *Apostolic Constitution*, "By Divine Providence," which concerns the prohibition and censorship of books (Chapter 3, rule 8), states: "All versions of the Holy Bible, in any vernacular language, made by non-Catholics, are prohibited: and especially those published by the Bible Societies, which have been more than once condemned by the Roman Pontiffs, because in them the wise laws of the Church concerning the publication of the sacred books are entirely disregarded."⁴²

Pope Pius IX expressed his anguish of heart at the triumph of the great enemy, the Bible: "Accursed be those very crafty and deceitful societies called Bible Societies which thrust the Bible into the hands of the inexperienced youth."⁴³

From the beginning and until recent times, the Roman Church has consistently opposed giving the Bible to the people in the vernacular. The Bible was a book permitted, not encouraged; a treasure to be guarded, not a spiritual food to be dispensed.

42. Delivered 25 Jan. 1897, at St. Peter's, Rome; authenticated by A. Card. Macchi.

43. Papal encyclical given at St. Mary Major, Rome, 9 Nov. 1846; printed in English by Charles Dolman of London.

Pedro Cardinal Segura y Saenz, Roman Catholic archbishop of Seville, Spain, issued a strong denunciation of Protestantism on March 9, 1952.⁴⁴ In a pastoral letter entitled “The Heresy of Protestantism,” he declared, “Protestant proselytizing, having broken through the dam of intolerance, does not hesitate to press openly for religious freedom in our country.” The pastoral letter accused the Franco government of having adopted a “benevolent attitude toward Protestants.” It was further stated that Catholics would peacefully tolerate Protestantism only as long as its adherents merely professed their cult; “but now they are doing their utmost to convert Spain into a land for their missionary work and are threatening Spain’s religious unity.”

Ecclesia, a weekly magazine that reflects the views of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Spain, upheld Archbishop Segura’s contention.⁴⁵ *Ecclesia* declared that, far from being four centuries behind the present age, Spain had clearly seen the Protestant danger before anyone else since the sixteenth century, and that she had fought Protestantism not only with her theologians and armies but also *with the Inquisition*.⁴⁶ “The Spanish prelates and theologians do not prescind from political philosophy, but maintain that Catholics, in fields affecting state and church relations and religious freedom, must conform more with theology and Papal encyclicals than with political philosophy, which needs to be enlightened by theologians in such delicate matters. Unless this is done, there is a danger of falling into the error of ‘irenics’ [misguided, conciliatory attitude toward Protestants], condemned by His Holiness Pius XII in his recent encyclical ‘*humani generis*.’”

In his encyclical *Humani Generis* (“Of Mankind”) on Roman Catholic doctrine, August 12, 1950, Pope Pius XII stated:

44. *The New York Times*, 10 March 1952, p. 1.

45. *The New York Times*, 12 May 1952, p. 1.

46. The honor of inventing the infernal Inquisition, or “Holy Office,” is sometimes ascribed to Dominic, the leading spirit in this crusade, although Benedict, who is zealous in ascribing to St. Dominic the honor of being the first Inquisitor General, is doubtful as to whether the idea originated with Pope Innocent or St. Dominic. The Inquisition, first established in A.D. 1204 by Pope Innocent III (considered by many to be the most powerful of all the popes), was perfected under the second following pope, Gregory IX. The Inquisition was the Church court for detecting and punishing heretics, and under it everyone was required to inform against heretics.

St. Dominic was a monster, devoid of every feeling of compassion, whose chief delight was torture and misery. During the crusade against the Albigenses, he carried a crucifix in his hands as he led and encouraged the holy warriors to deeds of death and destruction. Although in Dominic’s day the instruments of torment were not perfected to the state later exhibited, nevertheless, even without such machinery, he found abundant means of torture in dislocating joints, tearing nerves, and lacerating the limbs of his victims, as well as in burning at the stake those whose convictions were unshaken by other means and who would not renounce their faith and liberties.

Under his commission from Pope Innocent to punish with confiscation, banishment, and death the heretics who would not receive his gospel, Dominic stimulated the civil magistracy and populace to massacre the heretical Waldenses. On just one occasion he committed 180 Albigenses to the flames. For such faithfulness in the service of Antichrist, Dominic was canonized a saint, and is today adored and prayed to by Roman Catholics. The Roman Breviary, somewhat like a prayer book, lauds St. Dominic for “his merits and doctrines which enlightened the church, his ingenuity and virtue which overthrew the Tolossan heretics, and his many miracles which extended even to the raising of the dead.” The Roman Missal, which embraces the service connected with the administration of the Lord’s Supper, eulogizes his merits and prays for temporal aid through his intercession. Thus Antichrist still upholds and honors its faithful heroes. (cont.)

“God has given to His church a living teaching authority to elucidate and explain what is contained in the deposit of faith [the Bible] only obscurely and implicitly.

“This deposit of faith our Divine Redeemer has given for authentic interpretation not to each of the faithful, not even to theologians, but only to the *teaching authority of the church* [italics added]. . . . Hence our predecessor of immortal memory, Pius IX, teaching that the most noble office of theology defined by the church is contained in the sources of revelation, added these words, and with very good reason; ‘In that sense in which it has been defined by the church. . . .’

“In interpreting scripture, they [some outside the Catholic Church, as well as some liberal souls within its fold who are irenically inclined] will take no account of the analogy of faith and the tradition of the church. Thus they judge the doctrine of the fathers and of the teaching church by the norm [standard] of holy scripture, interpreted by the purely human reason of exegesis, instead of explaining holy scripture according to the mind of the church Christ our Lord has *appointed guardian and interpreter of* [italics added] the whole deposit of divinely revealed truth. . . .

“It would indeed be unnecessary to deplore these aberrations from truth if all even in the field of philosophy directed their attention with proper reverence to the teaching authority of the church [likened to that woman Jezebel], which by divine institution, has a mission, not only to guard and interpret the deposit of divinely revealed truth, but also to keep watch over the philosophical sciences themselves in order that *Catholic dogmas may suffer no harm* [italics added] because of erroneous opinions. . . .

“Let teachers in ecclesiastical institutions be aware that they cannot with tranquil conscience exercise the office of teaching entrusted to them unless in the instruction of their students they religiously accept and exactly observe the norms which we have ordained. That due reverence and submission which in their unceasing labor

It is impossible to convey briefly an adequate conception of the horrors of the Inquisition or the dreadful fear it inspired among the people. Those not loudly praising the Antichrist or those critical of its methods were suspected of heresy. Without warning or redress, such persons were liable to imprisonment in a dungeon indefinitely until a convenient time for trial was arranged, both the accuser and the accusation often being equally unknown to them. The proceedings of these trials were conducted secretly, and tortures were often employed to extort confessions. The tortures inflicted were almost too appalling to be credited in this age and land of freedom. Yet their reality is confirmed by evidence that even Catholic historians cannot deny; and their fruitless attempts to apologize for these acts only tend to substantiate the evidence. Instruments of torture, relics of the Inquisition, are still in existence. The Holy Office even employed physicians to watch the process of torture and stop it when death seemed likely to relieve the sufferer; the victim was then allowed partial recovery so that torture could be applied a second or even a third time. These tortures were not always inflicted as punishments for the offense of heresy; generally they were intended to compel the accused to confess, retract, or implicate others, depending on the individual case.

The Inquisitor pronounced sentence, and the victim was turned over to the civil authorities to be imprisoned for life or burned. The victim’s property was confiscated and divided between the Church and the State. In the period immediately following Innocent III, the Inquisition did its most deadly work in southern France, but also claimed vast multitudes of victims in Spain, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands. Later on, the Inquisition was the main agency in the Papacy’s effort to crush the Reformation. It is stated that in the thirty years between 1540 and 1570, no fewer than 900,000 Protestants were put to death in the pope’s war to exterminate the Waldenses. For five hundred years the Inquisition was used to maintain papal power. *None of the subsequent lines of “holy” and “infallible” popes have ever sufficiently apologized for this record.*

they must profess toward teaching the authority of the church, let them instill also into the minds and hearts of their students.”

Thus the success of the dogma of Church infallibility and its consequent usurpation of the individual’s right to private judgment or interpretation has been largely due to a prevailing superstitious reverence for the Church.⁴⁷ The basis for such reverence is the misconception that she was responsible for the preservation and purity of the sacred writings as they have been handed down through the ages, and that as guardian of this priceless treasure, she—more than anyone else—has the right to be its interpreter. Hear her boast: “Through nineteen hundred years the Church governed by the Bishop of Rome has carefully guarded the Bible. If this Church had not guarded the Bible there would be no Bible today.”⁴⁸

But observe: Did not the scribes and the Pharisees pride themselves in being careful custodians of the Law and the Prophets? Did not they jealously guard the Hebrew Testament in its purity and yet, strange to say, make null and void its teachings by giving greater prominence to the Talmudic writings and other man-made traditions? Were not they the living exponents of the Law, sticklers for its outward observances, having a form of godliness yet denying its power? Hear Jesus’ condemnation of this class: “This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men. . . . Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. . . . Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered” (Mark 7:6–13).

A rather remarkable fact is that the prophets, with few exceptions, were not of the priestly class. Their prophecies were generally repugnant to the degenerating and time-serving priesthood of their day as well as to the idolatrously inclined people. And the religious rulers of Jesus’ day were the ones who opposed his teachings and were chiefly responsible for his death and crucifixion.

Jesus and the apostles constantly alluded to scriptural authority for the message they proclaimed: “What saith the scripture?” (Gal. 4:30). “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in

47. Some cite 2 Peter 1:20 and falsely conclude the individual believer has no right to privately interpret Scripture. They contend that the individual is forbidden to personally investigate the Word and that it is unlawful for one to privately judge and obey the sense of Scripture according to the dictates of his own conscience and his own responsibility before God. In no way does this Scripture warrant such a conclusion. When this text is quoted in its entirety, a different light is shed on its meaning. “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:20,21).

This passage has no relationship to the question of freedom of investigation. It simply asserts that all prophecy of Scripture is divinely inspired, and that the utterances of the prophets are not the mere utterances of men—of human origin, of private interpretation—but are of God. Consequently, in 2 Peter 1:19 the Apostle Peter provides assurance that the Bible is “a *more sure* word of prophecy.” Every child of God should beware of any teaching that claims to be in advance of the Word, or of any teaching that Christ or the Holy Spirit speaks to such advanced Christians independently of the Word.

48. Joseph Finegan C.S.P., “The Story of the Bible,” *Our Sunday Visitor Press*, 15 March 1943, p. 33.

them” (Isa. 8:20). The brethren in Berea were “more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so*” (Acts 17:11).

Can the Lord’s people of today afford not to require a “thus saith the LORD” for what they receive? Are they not enjoined to “prove all things,” to “hold fast that which is good” (that which is scripturally substantiated), and to study to show themselves “approved unto God . . . rightly dividing the word of truth” (1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Tim. 2:15)?

Truly the Word of God needs to be neither abridged nor supplemented by the decrees of councils or synods or by the tradition of early Church fathers (excluding the apostles), which tend to make “the commandment of God of none effect . . . teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:1–9; Rev. 22:18,19). “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, *thoroughly furnished* unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

Truth-seekers should empty their vessels of the muddy waters of tradition and fill them at the fountain of truth—God’s Word. A religious teaching should have weight only if it guides the truth-seeker to that fountain.

Jesus’ sole criticism of Thyatira was “thou sufferest that woman Jezebel . . . to teach and to seduce.” Verse 20 is a reminder of Paul’s admonition to “suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2:12). Although Paul was referring to woman’s literal province in the Church, his statement is, nevertheless, based upon the typical significance of the relationship between man and woman (1 Cor. 11:3–12; Eph. 5:22–25). The woman represents the Church; the man represents the Lord. As man is head over the woman in the natural household, so Christ is head over the Church in the household of faith. Thus the Church is to have no head or will of its own, for its head and bishop is Jesus and its law is his word. The Church has but one Lord, one faith, and one baptism—all built upon the testimonies of the holy apostles and prophets, with Jesus as its chief cornerstone. Despite Paul’s advice the tendency of the Thyatira period was to only *passively* resist Papacy’s encroachment upon its liberties and not to actively expose and condemn its fallacious claims and pernicious teachings.

How appropriate this counsel is today! Contrary to the Redeemer’s own sentiments expressed here in Revelation, the spirit of the time is *not* to criticize or call attention to doctrinal differences of the various religious faiths because to do so will lead to dissension and strife and, moreover, incur displeasure. Candid investigation and freedom of expression are in danger of being throttled under the pretense of good for the commonwealth, and truth is proportionately sacrificed in the interest of peace at any price. It has been said of Protestantism that the “ism” exists, but what has happened to the “protest”?

Under no circumstances did the Lord counsel physically resisting or violently opposing Antichrist with carnal weapons of the Adversary, such as the rack, the fagot, and the thumbscrew used by the Inquisition in the extermination of “heresy” during this same Thyatira era. Rather, the true soldiers of the Cross were advised to wage a more aggressive warfare along spiritual lines by combating the pretensions of

Antichrist in the way the Master himself exposed the religious rulers of his day, incurring their jealousy and wrath.

Verse 21:

And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

The word translated “space,” from the Greek word *chronos*, means “a time.” A symbolic year as used in prophecy is calculated on the basis of a lunar year (twelve months of thirty days each, or 360 days), with each day representing a year. Consequently, a symbolic “time,” or year, signifies 360 symbolic days, which would represent 360 years (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:4–6).

The question then arises: Does the “time” referred to merely indicate an indefinite but sufficient space of time in which the papal system had opportunity to reform, or is the term symbolic and definite in meaning? The latter view is more reasonable. Not only does the term intimate a judgment of definite character coming upon the apostate Babylon, but it also reveals the Lord foreknew that after 360 more years of illicit relationship with the kings of earth, Papacy would still be unrepentant (Jer. 51:9). The 360 years from Waldo’s message in 1157 (see footnote on page 53) would thus end in 1517, the very year Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses condemning Papacy’s practices and doctrines to the church doors at Wittenberg.⁴⁹ The year 1517 witnessed the beginning of the great Reformation, a movement that solemnly warned of dire woes awaiting the Roman Church for failure to reform.

Verse 22:

Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Those who “commit adultery with her [the Roman Church]” are primarily the nations, or kingdoms, of Europe, plus others proportionate to their guilt. Here again is an allusion to antitypical Jezebel’s abominable practices and the law of retribution sure to follow (Isa. 47:8,9). “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

49. It should be realized that the messages to the seven churches can be viewed from two standpoints; namely, (1) as a series of progressive and onward fulfillments since the days of the apostles, and (2) from a *finished* standpoint looking back (Rev. 1:10). From this latter perspective Papacy has had a second opportunity to repent, from the Reformation (October 31, 1517) to the spring of 1878, i.e., another total of 360 years.

Of the final four kings of Judah, the two legally appointed heirs to the Jewish throne, Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin, proved abortive, lasting in office only three months each (2 Kings 23:31; 24:8). These two kings were respectively replaced by two others, not legally appointed, who also had reigns of similar, but longer, duration; that is, eleven years apiece (2 Kings 23:36; 24:18). Though both in the latter pair, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, were of royal lineage, they were selected and placed upon the throne by an alien power. Therefore, unheeding Judah, a prototype of nominal spiritual Israel (Christendom), had two equal warning periods—whether including or excluding the three-month reigns—with ominous portent before final judgment came in 606 B.C. Likewise, churchianity has failed to heed the forewarnings of pending doom, when its grapes of wrath will be sickled and thrown into the winepress of the great time of tribulation (Rev. 14:18,19).

queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow” (Rev. 18:7). A harlot’s bed of ease and pleasure is contrasted with a deathbed of anguish and affliction—“great tribulation”—awaiting her, her lovers, and her offspring “except they repent of their deeds.”

Verse 23:

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.

As Elijah the Prophet once converted the entire nation of Israel from the worship of Baal back to the worship of God and caused the prophets of Baal to be put to death, so during the Millennial Age the Elijah class (the true Church), glorified and empowered, will bless and teach the world, restoring all things as promised (Matt. 17:11). The expression “her children” refers to Papacy’s Protestant daughters as well as her own loyal sons and following. Note, however, that the phrase “kill her children with death”⁵⁰ does not imply that all those who associate with the papal system and partake of her spirit will suffer a death of violence. When Papacy’s adherents see her true character and begin to experience some of the judgments that will come upon her at the conclusion of this age in the Time of Trouble (the “great tribulation” of verse 22), they will forsake her, terminating altogether their association with her. Thus they will become dead in regard to their trust and allegiance to that system; and they will become alive to the true King and his Kingdom.

“He which searcheth the reins and hearts” will give to each the proper reward. Those loyal to Messiah will receive praise, honor, and glory at the time of his presence. Those disobedient—those who hearken unto the Roman Church and follow after her words—will receive shame and dishonor. Elijah and his God were ultimately vindicated in the eyes of Israel by the God “that answereth by fire” (1 Kings 18:21–40); similarly, in the imminent day of Christendom’s visitation and in the subsequent exaltation and glorification of the Elijah class, “all the churches”—all the living and the dead of the past seven periods of church history—will know the true followers from the false among the Lord’s people.

Verse 24:

But unto you I say, and⁵¹ 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.

Verse 25:

But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

Having expressed his sentiments and his intention concerning Jezebel and her consorts, Jesus turns again to the faithful remnant who did not bow to Baal and commends them for their disapproval and rejection of the blasphemous doctrines.

50. This punishment is referred to in Deuteronomy 13:5; 18:20 and Ezekiel 23:45-48.

51. The three oldest manuscripts omit “and” and translate the beginning of the passage, “But unto you I say, unto the rest in Thyatira.” However, since the Greek word *kai* is used in current renditions, the text should read, “But unto you I say, *even* unto the rest in Thyatira.”

In desperation the apostate Church tried to find some accusation against these meek followers of the Lamb. Since no fault could be found with their general deportment, or behavior, it became expedient to condemn them as heretics, as wolves in sheep's clothing, who were despoiling the peace of Christendom by insidiously undermining the faith of the people.⁵² Jezebel, the apostate Church, warned her subjects against these "heretics," styling them sly teachers of error who were learned in the deep things of Satan and skillful in all the subtle arts and crafts of the Wicked One.⁵³ But "he which searcheth the reins and hearts"—before whom "all things are naked and opened"—knew otherwise (Heb. 4:13; Rev. 2:23).⁵⁴ Therefore, upon this faithful remnant was laid no other burden than that which they already had, for under the trying circumstances of the era, such a test of endurance and of faithfulness unto death was sufficient to prove their love and loyalty to the Master.

Verse 26:

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

Verse 27:

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.

52. "And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, 'Art thou he that troubleth Israel?'" (1 Kings 18:17).

53. For this reason the falsely condemned heretic was dressed in a yellow coat variegated with pictures of dogs, serpents, flames, and devils; led to the place of execution; tied to the stake; and committed to the flames.

54. The word "reins," from the Greek *nephros*, signifies "kidneys." In the ancient system of physiology, the kidneys were believed to be the seat of desire and longing. Thus the kidneys were often coupled with the heart (Psa. 7:9; 26:2; 73:21; Prov. 23:16,17; Jer. 12:2,3; etc.).

In the Tabernacle arrangement and services, the choice portions of animals sacrificed to Jehovah included the kidneys (Exod. 29:13,22; Lev. 3:4,10,15; 4:9; 7:4; 8:16,25; 9:10,19; etc.). The kidneys are described as part of "the food" of God, "my bread," and "the food of the offering made by fire unto the LORD" (Lev. 3:11,16; Num. 28:2); in contrast, the hide, flesh, and dung of the bullock were burned outside the "Camp" (Tabernacle arrangement). While the humanity of the royal priesthood is destroyed as a vile thing in the eyes of the world, as represented by the burning of the bullock outside the Camp, God accepts the heart devotion that prompts the sacrifice: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God"; "I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psa. 40:8; Heb. 10:7,9; 13:11-13). This sacrifice was represented by the offering on the altar within the Tabernacle enclosure, or Court, of the fat (loving zeal) and parts of the inward life-producing organism as a "sweet savour" unto the Lord. The heart, liver, and other vital organs were considered a part of the "flesh" that was "burnt with fire without the camp" (Lev. 8:17). However, the kidneys, retained and offered upon the brazen altar, were sufficiently comprehensive to symbolize the devotion of the believer's heart; and the omission of the heart intensifies the depth of meaning to be attached to the kidneys. Because the kidneys, situated on both sides of the body cavity, are known to exert a strong influence upon the action of the heart—and similarly the reins or bridle of a horse governs, or directs, its course—perhaps there is an etymological significance to the relationship of these two words, viz., "reins" and "kidneys."

In view of these observations, a distinction is to be noted between the words "hearts" and "reins." The heart represents the seat of emotions, the desires and thoughts of one's heart; the kidneys represent the intent, the motive, the secret cause or prompting power *underlying* these desires.

The promise to the overcomers of Thyatira is peculiarly appropriate. At this time Papal Rome was in the height of her glory, claiming she was the Kingdom of God and Christ's reign had begun through his vicegerent, the pope. Expropriating, of course, the promises given to those who are to reign with Christ in the future, Papacy literally ruled the nations with a firm hand, a rod of iron, dashing into pieces those who opposed her. Ah, yes, Jesus' humble little band of followers could patiently bide their time, for they knew the faithfulness of Jesus, who had promised to perform his good work toward them in due time. Henceforth there would be laid up for them a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, would give them in that day; and not to them only but unto all who love his appearing would a crown of righteousness be given (2 Tim. 4:8).

Thus the overcomers of this period, those who "keepeth my [Jesus'] works unto the end," were comforted with the promise they will occupy a similar position of power over the nations.⁵⁵ Backed by divine authority, they will rigidly enforce the righteous decrees of the coming Kingdom. Love and compassion will motivate their actions as they shepherd the nations under their care.

Verse 28:

And I will give him the morning star.

The Master himself states, "I am . . . the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16). What a cheering thought for those in the Thyatira period, the Dark Ages, to look forward to the promised day when the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in his wings to bless all the families of the earth! He will scatter the darkness of sin, ignorance, and superstition—the works of the Prince of Darkness, who will then be bound for a thousand years to prevent him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years are finished (Rev. 20:2,3).

Thus the "morning star" is a symbol of hope, a harbinger of good things to come. Under the pall of darkness, the only ones who see the path of righteousness distinctly are those guided by the "lantern," God's Word, and by the light of the bright morning star, Jesus, the Church's forerunner. The promise "I will give him the morning star" indicates the faithful will be intimately associated with the dear Redeemer, sharing his personal fellowship and glory as luminaries in the Kingdom of heaven.

Verse 29:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The exceeding great and precious promises contained in the message to this Church are not confined solely to Thyatira, for "the Spirit saith unto [all] the churches." God has given the "sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19). The day star of hope and desire will meet its fulfillment in the fruition of the things hoped for.

55. Notice the contrast in emphasis between "my works" (verse 26) and "their deeds" (verse 22).

Revelation Chapter 3

Message to Sardis (A.D. 1367–1517)

Verse 1:

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; . . .

The name Sardis, in a more modified application, means “that which remains” in the sense of a used garment or remnant; something out of which the life or virtue has departed. As its name implies, Sardis was the remains of the true Church carried over from Thyatira. The slow, persistent crushing oppression of former centuries had left telling effects. “Worn out” by a long series of bloody persecutions, the object of which was to exterminate the opposition and thus silence the voice of protest against the Jezebel system, these discouraged witnesses of Christ needed special help from the Master to strengthen and enable them to resume their divinely appointed work (Dan. 7:25). To these survivors of the former era, the message of the Sardis Church is especially directed.

However, there is an additional etymological thrust to this message. The name Sardis, as it applies to the false, pretending Church, takes on the harsher connotation of remnant in the sense of (a) refuse or sweepings and (b) *carnality*.¹

Sardis (presently Salihli), on the western coast of Asia Minor, was the capital of the ancient Lydian Empire. The city was then situated on the slope and at the foot of one of a series of hills forming a transitional change from the neighboring high Tmolus range. The citadel of the city was of imposing strength, for it stood upon a thousand-foot-high, flat-topped, elongated spur. Not only did the acropolis have steep sides, but one side was such a sheer perpendicular precipice that it was deemed unscalable and left relatively unguarded. This, its strongest asset, later proved to be its fatal weakness.

In order to understand the import of the message to the Sardis Church, as well as its messenger John Wycliffe, the bold English reformer, one must have a knowledge of some of the historical, political, and religious events just prior to and during the Sardis period, which extended from A.D. 1367 to 1517.

Wycliffe was first noticed at Oxford when he defended the university against troublesome neighbors, the *begging friars*, who taught that begging was a gospel institution and that Christ and his disciples were beggars also.² In addition, he called attention to the pomp and luxury of both the English clerics and the superiors of the mendicant monks, contrasting them with the simplicity practiced in the early Church.

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1. “Sardis was notorious for its immorality.” (John Elder, *Archaeology and the Bible* [London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1961], p. 176.)
 2. William Byron Forbush, ed., *Fox’s Book of Martyrs* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Co., 1926), p. 135.

Because of their hymn singing, the followers of Wycliffe were called Lollards, from the Low-German word *lollen* or *lullen* meaning “to sing softly or slowly,” as in the English word *lullaby*. The Papists used the term “Lollards” as an epithet of reproach and as a synonym for *lollia*, that is, *tares* commingled with the wheat.³ “Whatever be the derivation of the word Lollard, certain it is that by this name alone the followers of John Wickliffe (q.v.) were always designated, who, in the early stage of the reformatory movements of the bold English churchman (about A.D.1360), consisted of the ‘Poor Priests’ (q.v.), a class called together by Wickliffe to carry the glad tidings of the Gospel into the remotest hamlets, and to counteract the influence of the *begging friars*, . . . who were then strolling over the country, preaching instead of the Word the legends of the saints, and the history of the Trojan War. . . .”⁴ With staff in hand the “poor priests” set off barefoot, wearing a coarse robe, living on alms, and being satisfied with the plainest food.⁵ (It is one thing for Christians to receive *voluntary* and *spontaneous* contributions for their labor and service in the Lord’s vineyard; however, it is quite another matter for almsgiving to be solicited and coaxed through the ploy of moral embarrassment or through the leverage of either theological or political pressure—Lev. 22:18.)

In 1365 an event occurred that incensed the English people. Pope Urban V revived the long dormant claim of the Holy See against the crown and realm of England for feudatory tribute. After a lapse of thirty years since the last payment, it was generally assumed the claim had been abandoned. Its revival, therefore, greatly offended both the crown and the people, and public indignation had reached its height when Parliament opened in May 1366.

What was this feudatory tribute? It was a legacy of humiliation left to the crown and to the people more than 150 years earlier by the inglorious British monarch King John. In 1205, after the death of Hubert, the archbishop of Canterbury, the junior canons of the cathedral met clandestinely and, without formal permission, elected Reginald, their subprior, to the vacant see. Since the object of the canons was to anticipate the action of the king, prompt action was necessary. Reginald was enthroned the same day he was elected; the next day he was already en route to Rome to obtain confirmation from the pope. News of these events soon reached King John; in indignation he ignored the action of the canons and arranged the election of the bishop of Norwich to the archiepiscopal office. Both parties then appealed to Pope Innocent III, thus creating a propitious situation for the pope, whose object was to establish a universal dominion in which kings and emperors would be puppets, subject to the authority of the Vatican. Annulling both elections, Pope Innocent III asserted his own authority by appointing Stephen Langton to the vacant see. When the king resented such interference and refused to recognize the

3. McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1890), s.v. “Lollards.” David Morris, *A Class-Book History of England* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), p. 136.

4. McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, s.v. “Lollards.”

5. J. H. Merle D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1872), p. 584.

appointment, the pope placed the kingdom under interdict—a sentence that in those days implied a state of things almost too horrible to contemplate, for a kingdom under interdict was deprived of all the privileges of the Church and all favors of heaven.

A people less free from superstitious fears could not have endured this condition—even for an hour. Yet for two whole years this situation continued with neither the king nor the pope yielding. In fact, Pope Innocent III adopted a still bolder course in pronouncing a sentence of excommunication, thereby deposing King John from the throne and absolving his subjects from their allegiance. To enforce this sentence, the pope decided to employ military force. He solicited the aid of Philip Augustus of France, to whom the English crown was offered. It was a tempting bribe, and Philip began immediate preparations for the invasion of England. His courage failing at last, King John submitted completely to the pope. John consented to the election of Langton and promised restitution to the injured clergy. He resigned his kingdoms—England and Ireland—to God, to St. Peter, to St. Paul, and to Pope Innocent III and his successors, pledging to hold these dominions as feudatory of the Holy See by the annual payment of a thousand marks (seven hundred for England and three hundred for Ireland); moreover, he agreed that forfeiture of the throne would result from violation of this bond, unless suitable repentance and satisfactory redress followed.

The surrender was humiliating enough in itself, but it was accompanied by circumstances worse than humiliation. Bowing before Pandulph, the papal legate, John removed his crown and laid it on the ground. The haughty legate contemptuously kicked it from John, and then permitted the king to replace it on his head. Next John offered his tribute, which the legate tossed with disdain. Then, yielding to characteristic wisdom, the legate stooped and picked up the tribute—money was of more immediate value than the crown. Never before had England been so humbled in the person of her ruler!

The barons were indignant because they had not been consulted. Believing that with their assistance the king could have saved both himself and the realm of England from dishonor, they rebelled against the arrangement. Runnymede soon followed; and in a sense, the Magna Charta may be regarded as the fruit of John's disgraceful submission to Rome.

Objected to from the outset, and regarded as the odious symbol of an odious bond, the tribute was irregularly and grudgingly paid. Eventually, the papal demand was unheeded and, therefore, discontinued. From the time Edward III took the reins of the English government into his own hands, the tribute had not been paid. The revival of the claim in 1365 was a sort of climax to a protracted contest between the Papacy and the realm of England, in which aggression was the characteristic feature on the one side and resistance the characteristic feature on the other. Offensive in itself, the demand was rendered doubly so by its language and its tone of superiority. Payment was to include not only the annual tribute but all arrears; and in the event payment was not complied with, the king was to appear at Avignon to answer for his conduct to his feudal superior. Edward III, aroused over the exorbitant papal exactions upon his nation and keenly resentful of seeing such sums leave England to

go to a French pope, protested that “the successor of the Apostles was commissioned to lead the Lord’s sheep to pasture, not to fleece them.”⁶

It was in connection with the Parliament of 1366 and this demand for tribute money by the pope that John Wycliffe, the messenger to the Church of Sardis, first burst forth into public view. Drawn into the arena of the politico-ecclesiastical conflicts of the day, Wycliffe published his “*Determinatio quaedam de dominio*” in support of Parliament’s refusal to pay the tribute demanded by Pope Urban V.⁷

Thus in 1366–1367 John Wycliffe began his *public career* by proving England was not bound to pay tribute. Just twelve years later, in 1378, he was attacking the very foundation of the Papacy itself as lacking scriptural sanction. His opinions were spread abroad by hundreds of sermons and popular pamphlets written in English for the people. He was the herald of reform, not for England alone but for all Christendom.

Like other reformers, Wycliffe did not foresee at the outset in what direction his work would lead him. Initially, his opposition was not deliberately directed against the abuses of papal authority. Inevitably, however, devotion to truth brought him into open conflict with the Papacy. When Wycliffe’s attention turned toward the Scriptures, he investigated with the same thoroughness that had enabled him to master all the learning of the schools. His disregard of the authoritative teaching of the Church and his reliance upon the Bible as the adequate source of faith and moral teaching certainly dated from an early period. Because of his constant references to the Scriptures, his students called him “the evangelical doctor.” One of his works alone contains seven hundred Biblical quotations, and many of his sermons and tracts are little more than excerpts from the Bible with a running commentary. In matters of religion he considered neither the tradition of the Church nor the authority of the pope or the councils to be of any weight when compared with the words of the Bible. Perhaps this view was his most fundamental divergence from the conceptions of the official Church.

Wycliffe himself, notwithstanding his scholastic training and habits, was more interested in spreading a simple and devout religion than in causing academic controversy, though historical works concerning his exploits generally are more interested in the latter.⁸ In addition to his own preaching, he continued to encourage traveling preachers (the “poor priests”) to go throughout the country.

Three papal bulls were dispatched to England—to the university, to the king, and to the prelates—all commanding immediate and decisive measures to silence the teacher of heresy.⁹ Even before the arrival of the papal bulls, zealous bishops had

6. Wallace K. Ferguson and Geoffrey Bruun, *A Survey of European Civilization*, 2nd ed., ed. William L. Langer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947), Part 1, p. 346.

7. John Laird Wilson, *John Wycliffe, Patriot and Reformer* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), pp. 66–71.

8. Among other statements, Wycliffe has been described as “the most eminent doctor of theology of those days”; “peerless in logic, philosophy, divinity, morality and speculation”; and “in philosophy second to none, in scholastic learning incomparable.” (Herbert B. Workman, *The Dawn of the Reformation, The Age of Wyclif* [London: Charles H. Kelly, 1901], Vol. 1, pp. 113–114.)

9. All three bulls were issued prior to 1378, showing the importance Papacy attached to Wycliffe and the fear that his influence would become even more damaging to its cause.

summoned Wycliffe before them for trial. However, two of the most powerful princes in the kingdom accompanied him to the tribunal; and the people, surrounding them, hindered the bishops from executing their desires. With the arrival of the papal bulls, a peremptory command was laid upon all England for the arrest and imprisonment of the heretic. But, in preparation for the Reformation, God's providence still further overruled events. The death of Pope Gregory XI was followed by the election in 1378 of two rival popes, one in Rome and the other in Avignon.¹⁰

A stormy session ensued in which an Italian cardinal, Urban VI, was appointed to succeed Gregory. Urban elected to establish Rome once again as the seat of papal authority, but a few months later the French cardinals retired to nearby Anagni and selected Clement VII in Gregory's stead. Thus two popes claimed to be Christ's vicar on earth. This forty-year period of Papacy (1378–1418) is designated the *Great Schism*.¹¹

Before long both popes—the one returning to Avignon, the other to Rome—began hurling anathemas at each other.¹² The Council of Pisa (1409) deposed the current occupants of both thrones, and appointed Alexander V as their replacement. When Alexander died a few months later, a successor was selected, namely, John XXIII. However, neither of the schism popes agreed to this decision of the council, and the result was that there were now *three* contemporary popes: Gregory XII, John XXIII, and Benedict XIII.^{13,14} The Council of Constance (1414–1418) finally healed the breach by appointing Martin V as the sole authentic pope, and establishing his authority in Rome.¹⁵ This decision was acquiesced to by all parties concerned. But the schism, with all its attendant strife and corruption, had prepared the way for the Reformation by revealing to the people the real nature of the Papacy.

All the preceding had produced an unprecedented scandal in the Roman Church, resulting in widespread discussion not only of how the schism might be healed but also, contrariwise, of the nature of and the justification for the Papacy itself. By

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10. Another item of historical importance touching upon the forefront of the Sardinia era produced a destabilizing influence upon Papacy. In 1309 Philip the Fair of France exerted sufficient pressure on the cardinals of the Church to force the election of a French pope, Clement V, who promptly removed the papal capital from Rome to Avignon on the Rhone. Here the popes remained for nearly seventy years (1309–1378). This period, known as the *Babylonian Captivity* of the Roman Church, ended when Gregory XI died while on a visit to Rome in 1378. (Wilson, *John Wycliffe, Patriot and Reformer*, p. 141.)
 11. Ferguson and Bruun, *A Survey of European Civilization*, pp. 346, 349. James Harvey Robinson, *An Introduction to the History of Western Europe, The Background of Modern History* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1924), Vol. 1, pp. 373–374.
 12. Wycliffe concluded both were right in their judgment of each other: "Now is the head of Anti-Christ cloven in twain." He soon produced a tract against popery that was eagerly read by the populace. (Wilson, *John Wycliffe, Patriot and Reformer*, p. 146.)
 13. Ferguson and Bruun, *A Survey of European Civilization*, p. 351.
 14. It appears that the duplication and the adoption by Pope John XXIII of recent memory (1958–1963) of the very name and sequence number of his counterpart (1410–1415) may not have been because of the exclusion of the female Pope John (Joan) VIII (855–858) from the official papal listing. Rather, the reason may have been a desire to be remembered by posterity as a prime promoter of the reunification of the Eastern Orthodox and the Western Protestant branches (*fratelli separati*) to the mother Church.
 15. B. K. Kuiper, *The Church in History* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), p. 196.

able and emphatic testimony against the abuses of Papacy, Wycliffe drew upon himself the enmity of the English prelates. He came to be recognized as the advocate of reform and the leader of a movement for that very purpose. Even when he was forced to withdraw from Oxford University and to spend his last days at the small parish of Lutterworth, he zealously continued to pursue his activities.

Wycliffe was one of the greatest reformers. In breadth of intellect, in clearness of thought, in firmness to maintain the truth, and in boldness to defend it, he was almost without equal. Purity of life, unwearying diligence in study and labor, incorruptible integrity, and Christlike love and faithfulness characterized his ministry . . . notwithstanding the intellectual darkness and moral corruption of the age from which he emerged.

Indeed the Papists, who had failed to work their will with Wycliffe during his life, could not satisfy their hatred while his body rested in the grave. By the decree of the Council of Constance—belatedly executed with great ceremony more than forty years after his death—Wycliffe’s bones were exhumed and publicly burned and the ashes thrown into a neighboring brook.¹⁶ “This brook,” said the poet Wordsworth, “hath conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over.”

With this brief historical background in mind, the reader is better prepared to understand the Lord’s instruction to those in Sardis. The burden of the message applies to the test that came upon the Church *following the demise of the Reformer*.

. . . These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; . . .

The mighty risen Lord, though invisible to the eyes of man, is the true keeper of the flock of Israel. He is the Redeemer, the guardian of the Church, the one who holdeth each star and each starlight (spirit) in his right hand throughout the Gospel Age. It was specially important for those living in the Sardis period to let this truth sink down deeply into their hearts.

During Wycliffe’s lifetime this watch-care was apparent in all the remarkable providences that spared his life and prospered his teachings. Several historians remark how wonderfully he was preserved and shielded from the power and the wrath of his adversaries, notably in 1378 and 1384.¹⁷

But now, in view of Wycliffe’s disappearance from the scene, it was imperative that faith’s anchor should be, as always, in Christ. Down through the Gospel Age, would not the work and the message of reform have been thwarted, vitiated, or silenced in its entirety, had not the Saviour intervened on behalf of the seven special messengers held in the right hand of his power? Most assuredly, yes! Although Wycliffe shone almost alone in the religious firmament, particularly in the forepart

16. Forbush, *Fox’s Book of Martyrs*, p. 139. Kuiper, *The Church in History*, pp. 196, 275. Wilson, *John Wycliffe, Patriot and Reformer*, p. 230. John Fletcher Hurst, *Short History of the Christian Church* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), p. 245. Willis Mason West, *The Story of Modern Progress* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1920), p. 117.

17. Thomas Fuller, *Church History of Great Britain*, 3rd ed. (London: Thomas Tegg, 1842), Vol. 1, pp. 449, 456.

of the Sardis era, yet one far mightier than he was at the helm, guiding all true followers to their promised haven of rest.¹⁸

*. . . I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest,
and art dead.*

A few miles from the ancient town of Sardis is a megalopolis of the dead called “Cemetery Hill,” where over one thousand graves have already been excavated. One of the characteristic burial mounds, a monument to Alyattes, the father of Croesus, is described by the historian Herodotus as “the greatest structure in Lydia.” A half dozen of these mounds can be seen from the distant Tmolus range. Ironically, this scene of death and desolation is sometimes called “the city of the resurrection.” Although at different times the future of Sardis was one of great promise, the city was but a hollow shell like its spiritual counterpart described here in verse 1.

The spiritual fulfillment occurred in the following manner: For a time after Wycliffe’s death, his followers were active in the diffusion of Christian doctrine. How rapid their progress was can be judged from the *panic-stricken exaggerations* of their opponents. A few years later came the complaint that the followers of Wycliffe abounded everywhere and in all classes—among the baronage, in the cities, among the peasants of the countryside, and even in the monastic cell itself. “Every second man one meets is a Lollard” became a byword of the times.¹⁹ However, in spite of this reputation the Lollards had for zeal and activity, the Master was not deceived. “I know your works; you have the name [reputation] of being alive, and you are dead” (Revised Standard Version) was his judgment of affairs.

As more time passed and opposition to Lollardism increased, the spirit of reform abated. Lacking competent external leadership, the movement suffered proportionately in its power of expression and advancement. As far as any *collective public testimony* was concerned, Christ’s true witnesses were reduced to silence.

Verse 2:

*Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are
ready to die: . . .*

The literal citadel of Sardis, for all its formidable appearance and strength, was situated atop an *alluvial* hill, which itself betokened ultimate decay and ruin. Constant erosion has since worn away much of the plateau. It is well known to local residents that, due to heavy rains and the nature of the soil, there has been considerable depletion of ground surface in the Sardis vicinity. Many pointed hills and deep gullies attest to this fact. Thus, in spite of the citadel’s appearance of lasting security, an undermining process was going on. The message to Sardis warns of pending doom: “things . . . ready to die.”

Another unusual circumstance that perhaps had a bearing upon the spiritual intonation of the message to Sardis was the appearance of a pestilence of unheard-of

18. Wycliffe is even styled “The Morning Star of the Reformation.” (Wilson, *John Wycliffe, Patriot and Reformer*, see subtitle.)

19. Forbush, *Fox’s Book of Martyrs*, p. 138. Wilson, *John Wycliffe, Patriot and Reformer*, p. 169.

virulence, a form of bubonic plague moving west from Asia. Called “Black Death,” this pestilence was so severe that it is said to have extirpated half the human race.²⁰ After devastating the European continent, it appeared in England in 1348. Almost at a blow it swept away half the nation.²¹ At Oxford, where the twenty-eight-year-old Wycliffe was ascending the ladder of academic achievement and office, two thirds of the students died.²² This calamity shook the social order, the feudal system, to its very foundations, producing profound changes in civic and religious institutions. An aftermath was also the stirring up of radical behavioral habits in prince, priest, and populace, so that many were excited to debauchery and great excesses in riotous living. Some, however, reacting favorably, were induced to greater sobriety and godly living.

. . . for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

A better translation of this passage would be: “For I have not found thy works fulfilled before God.”

Unlike Luther later, Wycliffe translated the Scriptures into the language of the people from the Latin Vulgate, not Greek. (Greek, the mother tongue of the New Testament, was not well known and hence was not a standard part of the university curriculum in this pre-Reformation period.) This work—perhaps the most important part of the Reformer’s ministry—was accomplished in the latter days of his life. It is significant that he could, and did, take this additional step of putting the people in permanent possession of the Word of God. In so doing, Wycliffe set a precedent that led to Tyndale’s translating the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek into the English language in the subsequent Philadelphia period.

The observation has been made that the work commenced by Wycliffe “was not completed. . . . He had not broken the power of Rome in England. He had not fully inaugurated the Reformation. But the fault was not his. The times were not ripe.”²³ Instead of carrying the work forward to a successful conclusion, the followers of Wycliffe had all they could do just to maintain the ground already won.

Rather than rest upon the laurels of earlier achievements, Wycliffe’s followers were to “be watchful” and to be built up in the most holy faith in preparation for that which still lay ahead.

Verse 3:

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, . . .

Indeed it appears that many later yielded to persecution and even abjured their former beliefs.²⁴ For the most part, Wycliffe’s followers “were plain, meek and often timid folks attracted by the word of God, desirous of living according to

20. D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 581. G. M. Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe* (Cambridge, Eng.: Trinity College, 1899), p. 187.

21. West, *The Story of Modern Progress*, pp. 106–107.

22. H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History* (Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1931), p. 712.

23. Wilson, *John Wycliffe, Patriot and Reformer*, p. 230.

24. Robinson, *An Introduction to the History of Western Europe*, p. 373.

God's commandments."²⁵ But as the supporters of the Reformer's doctrine increased, so likewise did the opposition of the clergy. At last the Roman Catholic ecclesiastics in England succeeded in getting legislation passed that was favorable to their cause in the following manner.

During the reign of Richard II (1377–1399), the followers of Wycliffe were described in the preamble to the statute on heresy “‘as going about from town to town, and under pretense of great holiness, and without license of the ordinary, or any other authority, preaching daily in the churches, churchyards, markets, fairs and other open places, uttering in their sermons heresies and notorious errors.’ It was also added, that they ‘preached divers matters of slander to engender discord and disension [*sic*] between divers estates of the realm.’ Wherefore it was enacted that the King's commission should be directed to the sheriffs, and other officers, or other learned persons, ‘in pursuance of *certificates from the Bishops*, to be made in the Chauncery [*sic*] from time to time, *to arrest all such persons, and to hold them in prison until they could justify themselves according to the law and reason of the holy church*’ [emphasis added].

“Against this provision the Commons protested the next year, declaring, that they meant not to bind themselves or their heirs to the prelates any more than their ancestors, and that therefore they never consented to the law. Their remonstrance had the effect of procuring a temporary repeal of the law” (Stat. 5 Ric. 2. st. 2. c. 5).²⁶

Under Henry IV (1399–1413) conditions deteriorated. “Although the statute made against heretics in the preceding reign was repealed, yet the spread of these people, under the name of Lollards and others, became so alarming as to render the interference of the legislature necessary for the suppression of their meetings, which are described in the preamble to the statute, as confederacies to stir up sedition and insurrection. Among other regulations, it was ordained that if persons, sentimentally convict, *refused to abjure their opinions, such persons were to be left to the secular arm*; and in such cases evidence was to be given to the diocesan or his commissary, and the sheriff, mayor, and baliff [*sic*], was, after sentence promulgated to receive them, and, *in a high place, before the people, to cause them to be burnt* [emphasis added]. By this statute, authority was given to the bishop to direct execution without the writ, *de haeretico comburendo* [Latin signifying ‘for the burning of a heretic’]” (Stat. 2 Hen. 4. c. 15).²⁷

And when Henry V (1413–1422) was on the throne, legislation became even more stringent. “The Lollards being considered at this time as the principal disturbers of the peace, not only of the church, but of the whole kingdom, uniting, as the preamble to the act states, ‘in confederacies to destroy the king and all other estates of the realm,’ it was enacted, that the chancellor, treasurer, justices, sheriffs, mayors, and baliffs [*sic*], of cities and towns were, *on entering their office to take an oath that they would use their whole power and diligence to destroy all heresies*

25. D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 591.

26. George Crabb, *A History of English Law*, 1st American ed. (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich, 1831), pp. 334–335.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 348–349.

and errors, commonly called *lollardies*, and assist the ordinaries and their commissaries, as often as required by them. In addition to the penalties already inflicted on such offenders, they were now to suffer *forfeiture of goods and lands, as in case of felony*, but no heretics were to forfeit their goods till they were dead” (Stat. 2 Hen. 5. st. 1. c. 7) [emphasis added].²⁸

Now for the first time, the law of England made heresy punishable with death, which included the forfeiture of all land and goods by the deceased’s legal heirs. It also became illegal, through Archbishop Arundel’s “cruel constitution,” to preach or teach, to translate any Scripture text into English, or to print treatises or tracts of a similar nature *without episcopal sanction*.²⁹

. . . and hold fast, and repent. . . .

From one end of England to the other, those accused of being Wycliffites perished in flames. In the course of little more than one generation, “the hand of persecution having fell [*sic*] heavily upon them . . . Lollards passed almost completely out of public view. . . . The productions of the Reformer would be shunned by all, except the lingering remnant of his own disciples, and even among them fear would suggest the propriety of concealment. . . . There was still a lingering remnant . . . which had not bowed the knee to Baal. But the sentiment was weak, and the remnant small.”³⁰ As a result of the persecution, the intimidated Lollards became an underground church.

The following are examples of the fiendish executions that took place in the name of Christianity.

In 1410 William Sawtre, a priest, became the first English Protestant martyr. He was brought to trial on eight charges. The first charge was presuming to teach that “instead of adoring the cross on which Christ suffered, I adore Christ who suffered on it”; and the last, the eighth, was for teaching that “after the pronouncing of the sacramental words of the body of Christ, the bread remaineth of the same nature that it was before, neither doth it cease to be bread.”^{31,32} It was this last accusation that was the most offensive to Thomas Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury. As was the prevailing custom thereafter, Sawtre was dragged to St. Paul’s, with his hair shaved off and a layman’s cap on his head, and handed over by the primate to

28. Ibid., p. 358.

29. McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, s.v. “Lollards.”

30. Wilson, *John Wycliffe, Patriot and Reformer*, p. 10.

31. Fuller, *Church History of Great Britain*, p. 474.

32. Referred to here is the sacrament of the Eucharist, or the doctrine of transubstantiation, where the bread and wine of the Mass are thought to be changed miraculously into the very flesh and blood of Christ. In later life Wycliffe attacked this central doctrine of the Roman Church, questioning the sacramental power of the priests, who are merely members of the fallen human race and hence sinful. “How can a priest, who is but a man, make his Maker?” As a result, several of Wycliffe’s ardent and learned supporters became alarmed, their zeal abated, and many forsook him. Day by day the circle about Wycliffe contracted, but the strife between popes Urban and Clement distracted his enemies so that he was buried in peace at Lutterworth on the last day of the year 1384.

the mercy of the earl-marshal. This “mercy” was shown to him—he was burnt alive!³³

Sir John Oldcastle, a favorite of the king, was dragged on a wooden contrivance to the place of execution. There he was suspended by chains over a fire and slowly *roasted to death*. Others suffered a similar fate wherein it was decreed that they should be “*hung on the King’s account, and burnt for God’s.*”³⁴

A common practice was to fasten about the neck of accused Lollards such scraps of Scripture or other condemned writings as were found in their possession. These Christians then shared the victim’s fate, all being consigned to the flames.³⁵

As previously stated, many appear to have yielded quite readily to persecution.³⁶ However, the Master’s admonition to “hold fast, and repent” was needed, for in a number of instances those who had recanted under pressure, later zealously resumed their former works and practices, ending their lives at the stake. And it is significant that “all the precautions of the bishops and the severity of persecuting laws were ineffectual to [totally] suppress the hated opinions.”³⁷

Through all the years of the Sardis era, the seeds planted by Wycliffe never died. “In the fourteenth century began a *resistless* movement against the Catholic Church. This movement was in the sixteenth century and ended in the establishment of Protestantism in England.”³⁸ Erasmus the scholar, in writing to Pope Adrian VI in 1523 to urge upon the new pontiff “the remarkable doctrine of the uselessness of persecution, confesses that ‘once the party of the Wycliffites was overcome by the power of Kings; but . . . it was only overcome and not extinguished.’”³⁹

In summary, the doctrines taught by Wycliffe continued for a time to spread; and his followers, known as Wycliffites and Lollards, not only traversed England but scattered to other lands. Soon after his death in 1384, however, a pitiless storm of persecution burst upon those who dared to accept the Bible as their guide.⁴⁰ The

33. D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 591. Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, p. 334.

34. D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 591.

35. Forbush, *Fox’s Book of Martyrs*, p. 138.

36. Robinson, *An Introduction to the History of Western Europe*, p. 373.

37. McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, s.v. “Lollards.”

38. John Stockton Littell, *The Historians and the English Reformation* (Milwaukee: Young Churchman Co., 1910), p. 22.

39. Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, p. 349.

40. Huss the Bohemian was an ardent advocate in his native land of the teachings of Wycliffe. In 1415 he suffered the humiliation and the indignity of the ceremonial *ritual of divestiture* at the Council of Constance (Kuiper, *The Church in History*, p. 196). In the presence of all the assembled bishops and nobles, and even the emperor himself, every article of his priestly attire and office was removed, one by one, by four religious dignitaries, each of whom in turn uttered what was considered to be an appropriate epithet for the occasion, such as “Thou cursed Judas!” A three-pronged paper cap was specially prepared for Huss. Painted on each prong was a devil, depicted as eagerly awaiting the departure and plucking at the soul of the damned. Not only was this cap placed upon Huss’s head, but about his brow was written a Latin inscription signifying “Here is an arch-heretic” (Benito Mussolini, *John Huss the Veracious* [New York: Italian Book Co., 1939], p. 67). He then was led out in mean lay attire, the hair of his head being shorn in the form of a crucifix, to be burnt alive at the stake. (To a greater or lesser extent, depending upon

English monarchs, who were eager to strengthen their power by securing the support of Rome, did not hesitate to sacrifice the reformers. The stake was repeatedly decreed against the faithful disciples of the gospel, and martyrdom succeeded martyrdom. Despite the rage of cruel persecution a calm, devout, earnest, patient protest continued for a century and a half against the prevailing corruption of religious faith. Many bore fearless testimony to the truth in dungeon cells, in “Lollards’ towers.”

. . . 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.

Literal Sardis reached the height of its greatness under the rulership of Croesus, the richest king of the world. Even today his name is synonymous with wealth—“as rich as Croesus.” Possessing immense power and an abundance of resources, he and his people—like the citadel itself that was considered impregnable because of the openness and steepness of ascent on all sides, exposing any would-be attacker to mortal danger—became imbued with overconfidence, contentment, and carelessness. Nevertheless, because of the city’s outstanding natural endowments, one views with wonderment the fact that Sardis was notably overtaken by surprise at least three times in its history.

First: In the sixth century B.C., a former servant to the governor of Sardis witnessed a Lydian warrior descend the sheerest side to retrieve his fallen helmet and, to the viewer’s astonishment, again ascend the precipice on this unguarded side. This incident cast a different light upon the supposed invulnerability of Sardis. Sometime later this same servant became a Persian slave.⁴¹ When the city was under attack in 546 B.C., he offered his services to the enemy. Followed by others, he climbed the rock at this same place and took the fortress by storm. Thus by this stratagem the citadel was taken by the Persian general Cyrus, and the city was utterly pillaged and plundered.

Second: Less than half a century later, the Ionian Greeks marched up the Cayster Valley and took the lower city by surprise, sacking it and reducing it to ashes.

Third: As if these invasions were not enough, in the third century B.C., the impregnable fortress aloft was penetrated once more in a manner similar to that used earlier by the Persians. The conquest was accomplished by the perfidy of a former Cretan resident of Sardis who lured the governor of the citadel down the secret staircase with the false promise of safe conduct through the besieging army’s line.⁴² The betrayer’s knowledge and use of an unnoticed oblique crevice on the perpen-

the importance of the personage, this same procedure was practiced in England throughout the fifteenth and the forepart of the sixteenth centuries.) When the fagots were piled up to the very neck of Huss, he said to his executioner, “You are now going to burn a goose [‘Huss’ signifies goose in the Bohemian language], but in a century you will have a swan [strange as it may appear, this was the family coat of arms of Martin Luther] which you can neither roast nor boil” (Forbush, *Fox’s Book of Martyrs*, p. 143). Following the death of Huss, his enemies, with great affected diligence, gathered his ashes together and cast them into the river Rhine so that even the least remnant of that man would not be left upon the earth.

41. Charles Rollin, *Ancient History* (New York: Pratt, Woodford & Co., 1844), Vol. 2, p. 127.

42. Rollin, *Ancient History*, Vol. 6, p. 164.

dicular side enabled Antiochus the Great to capture the acropolis and completely subjugate the metropolis below.

Therefore, since literal Sardis was overtaken by stealth and surprise, it behooved the Lord's people of the Sardis era to "be watchful," to "remember" how they at first had "heard," and to "hold fast, and repent," lest they be overtaken "as a thief" (verses 2 and 3).

Verse 4:

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.

Implied here is the thought that of all the seven periods of church history, Sardis would be the least productive in developing faithful saints . . . that many would become defiled by compromising with the world and its spirit, thus spotting their robes. However, many of the Great Company, a secondary spiritual class, were probably developed during this epoch—proportionately speaking, that is, for the greater number of this class are to be developed during the Laodicean period.

Verse 5:

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.

The reward of white raiment, and so forth, to be granted to the faithful was consoling indeed to those in Sardis who were accused of contamination in life and doctrine. The nature of these promises reveals that an opposite experience is the reward for faithfulness in the present life. Considered odious, hypocritical "wolves in sheep's clothing," these innocent, faithful ones of Sardis were ostracized by their professed brethren who, *refusing to walk with them*, separated themselves. The very names of the faithful were cast out as evil (stricken from membership in the earthly Church); those truly the Master's were publicly put to shame (Luke 6:22).

However, the assurances of the next life are sufficient to help the Lord's people bear whatever ignominy they suffer here. And what are the precious promises to the faithful that cheer them to greater endurance and faithfulness? Public recognition of their purity ("white raiment"), being members of good and permanent standing in the true Church of God ("not blot out his name"), being intimate companions of the Master ("they shall walk with me"—verse 4), and open acquittal—nay, even commendation—by the Saviour himself before the Father and His angels (not by the pope or lesser church dignitaries who had previously condemned them).

According to the Scriptures, from the moment of consecration a Christian is figuratively clothed in white raiment, which represents free justification.⁴³ A robe without a spot, this white raiment is sometimes spoken of as the robe of Christ's

43. The words "consecration" and "sanctification" can often be used interchangeably. There are two parts to sanctification. The first is the individual's and the second part belongs to God, for He sanctifies only those who sanctify themselves. "Sanctify yourselves" and "I will sanctify you" is the principle. The individual must first give up his own will and accept God's will, setting himself apart for the Lord. (cont.)

righteousness because it can be obtained only through Christ. The Saviour temporarily imputes, loans, and grants this robe to the individual.

White linen signifies purity. Figuratively, Christ's merit is like a white garment covering the imperfections of those to whom it is given; it is an imputation of his righteousness, providing justification. The exhortation to the Lord's people to keep their garments unspotted from the world means they are to preserve or maintain this imputed righteousness. However, they cannot fully maintain this righteousness by their efforts alone, for despite the endeavors of the Lord's people, their tongues sometimes utter unruly words and their hands sometimes do contrary things (Rom. 7:15). Hence God has provided a way to eradicate *unwillful* blemishes or transgressions; namely, the daily supplication for cleansing through the precious blood of Jesus. The Lord's people are thus able to keep their garments unspotted from the world and to maintain their justification, their white robe.

In the final analysis, however, having merely the imputation of the Saviour's righteousness is not sufficient, as this imputation is only a temporary arrangement. The Christian needs to have a righteousness of his own, a permanent covering, for even the Heavenly Father is represented in symbolic pictures of the Scriptures as being clothed (Dan. 7:9). In addition, the Book of Revelation pictures Jesus and the saints as clothed in white garments, and the angels who appeared at the time of the Lord's resurrection were visually clothed in white (Mark 9:3; Rev. 3:4).

The glorified Church is represented not as taking off the robe of righteousness but as continuing to walk in white raiment, for at that time the robe of imputed or reckoned righteousness will be replaced by a robe of actual righteousness. Those then clothed in white garments will be recognized as the pure ones. "And to her [the Bride, the victorious Church] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:8). Thus seen, the Church in glory will stand arrayed in their own righteousness, "the righteousness of saints"; but at the present time the saints have no righteousness of their own in which to present themselves before the throne of grace. As expressed by the Prophet Isaiah, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6).

Overcoming is a gradual work, progressing throughout the Christian course, from the moment of consecration to the conclusion of life. Verse 5 refers to the conclusion of the work, and implies that at the end of the trial, or race course, the individual has attained the degree of righteousness that classifies him as an overcomer. Such an overcomer will be clothed in white raiment and walk with Jesus.

Throughout the Bible there are allusions to the "book of life," some being to Jehovah's Book of Life (Exod. 32:32,33) and some to the Lamb's Book of Life. However, there is no contradiction, as all references pertain to the same book. God is the author and Jesus is the caretaker, the Father having committed custodianship of the book and its contents to the Son.

All instruction that is received from the Lord comes through, or is based upon, the *written Word*. The Word of God is *sufficient*, declares the Apostle, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:15-17). "Christ . . . loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water *by the word*" (Eph. 5:25,26).

The Redeemer is indeed the great Prince ordained by God to stand forth and deliver His people—all who love God in truth and sincerity—from sin, ignorance, pain, and death and from all the persecutions and besetments of Satan's blinded servants, which are almost overwhelming at times. All whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be delivered forever from all enemies; these names are to include (a) those found worthy during the Patriarchal and Jewish ages, as well as (b) those found worthy during the Gospel Age, and (c) those who will be found worthy during the Millennial Age. Though all God's people—all who, when brought to a knowledge of Him, love and obey Him—will be delivered, the degrees of honor to be granted to the overcomers are carefully noted.

That special portion of the Book of Life open at the present time is the one in which the names of all the overcomers of this Gospel Age are written. When an individual takes the step of consecration and is begotten of the Holy Spirit, he is appropriately reckoned as belonging to the family of God. Just as a family keeps a record of its members—Joseph, Mary, Martha, etc.—so the names of the members of the family of God are recorded through Christ. When a consecrated Christian starts to live the new life and to demonstrate his loyalty, his name is entered into the Lamb's Book of Life. Those whose names are recorded during this present Gospel Age are not only members of the family of God but also members of the Bride class. In order to maintain this position, however, they must be overcomers. Just as these individuals are clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness in advance of actually being tested, so their names are written in the Book of Life prior to testing. If they do not remain faithful, their names will be blotted out of the Book of Life as part of the Bride class.

Jesus' words "I will confess his name" indicate that, although begotten of God, the Lord's people have never been introduced to Him—in His actual presence. For this reason Jesus is represented not only as the Bridegroom but also as an elder brother; and he is pictured as waiting on the other side until the Church, his brethren, pass over. And as they pass over, it is appropriate that Jesus, delegated by the Father to instruct them in the school of Christ, is the one to introduce them to the Father.

In Luke 9:26 Jesus said, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me . . . of him shall the Son of man be ashamed," implying the Great Company—also a consecrated class in the Gospel Age—will not be introduced to the Father and His holy angels. That the special introduction, or confession, applies only to the Bride of Christ is pictured in Psalm 45:13–15, "She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee." The Bride will be presented to the Father; the virgins, her companions, will be there also, but will not be confessed.

All the Lord's people are to hope and strive for a place among the Bride class. Although the names of both the Great Company and the Little Flock will be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, the Great Company will not have the abundant entrance granted to the Little Flock (2 Pet. 1:11). And the same distinction is made between these two classes in connection with the white raiment. While all the consecrated receive the robe of Christ's righteousness, some do not keep their garments unspotted from the world. Thus their white raiment becomes spotted and soiled,

bedraggled by contact with the earth. Their justification, or robe of Christ's righteousness, becomes unpresentable. When a spot appears, instead of having it immediately cleansed away, they allow it to remain; and the spots accumulate until their garments become quite soiled. Then at the conclusion of their course, when the examination day comes, their robes are found to be spotted; yet they continue to wear them—they are not divested of that robe of justification. They have not abandoned God and He has not abandoned them; but they have failed to use the means He provided for their cleansing.

In the Book of Revelation this class is spoken of as "a great multitude," hence the Great Company. But to maintain their standing in even this secondary class, they will have to come up "out of great tribulation, and . . . [wash] their robes, and . . . [make] them white in the blood of the Lamb." Instead of doing a cleansing work day by day, maintaining their justification with God and being ready for the change by means of their faithfulness, they will, on the contrary, be found unworthy of the chief place. Provided they remain loyal, *their robes will not be taken from them*; but they will be obliged to suffer great tribulation, to wash their robes white in the blood of cleansing, so that they, too, will be clothed in white and will have pure bodies in their resurrection. Only by passing through this great tribulation can they obtain a state of purification and justification (Rev. 7:9–14).

Verse 6:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

See explanation on pages 34 and 35.

Message to Philadelphia (A.D. 1517–1877)

Verse 7:

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; . . .

As is well known, *Philadelphia* means "brotherly love." (An explanation of the appropriateness of this term will be temporarily postponed.) This stage of the Church covers the period from A.D.1517, the beginning of the Reformation, to the end of 1877, i.e., up to the beginning of the Gospel Age harvest.

Soon after the Papacy's humiliation at Avignon, the popes regained much of their power, so that at the beginning of the sixteenth century, as Mosheim said, "No danger seemed to threaten the Pontiffs."⁴⁴ Even the revival of learning, which followed the invention of printing in 1440 and awakened in many the love of truth and liberty, apparently did not make the heads of the apostate Church uneasy. The reason for this fancied security was that none dared to resolutely attack the supposed *canonical* authority of the Roman bishops. Education had not yet become general, and the great masses of people, still ignorant and superstitious, revered the pope as Christ's vicegerent. With such power at their command, the pontiffs

44. James Murdock, *Mosheim's Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, rev. by James Seaton Reid (London: William Tegg and Co., 1878), p. 558.

were able not only to punish and coerce the refractory element but also to buy off their more dangerous enemies with honors and rich emoluments.

In 1492 the conclave of cardinals elected a “monster of a man” to the papal throne. This pope, Alexander VI, is justly called the “Nero” of pontiffs because of his horrid crimes and villainies.⁴⁵ He died suddenly in 1503 by inadvertently taking poison he had prepared for others. His successor, the belligerent Pope Julius II, was almost as villainous; noted for his “intemperance and licentious excess,” for his arrogance and vanity, he also had a mad passion for war.⁴⁶ As Fisher states, “Old man that he was, he took to the field [of battle] himself in the dead of winter.”⁴⁷ Moreover, he was responsible for a “horrible massacre of Christians.”⁴⁸

Although many good men strove against the dreadful corruption, they were powerless to stem the downward course. Papacy only laughed at any attempt to shake its power, which even the early reformers—Marsiglio, Wycliffe, and Huss—and all their helpers had been unable to curb for long. Nevertheless, the sun, temporarily obscured with clouds, was soon to shine forth and flood the world with light. Soames, in his preface to Mosheim’s *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 3, remarked: “When the sixteenth century opened, Rome had apparently regained much of the ground she had lost at a former period. But this appearance was delusive. A temporary calm had come over the religious world, leaving all the materials for a mighty storm in full, though concealed activity. By that very calm was the explosion hastened.” While the Roman pontiff thought everything was safe and settled, and all pious men were near despair over the religious reformation they so earnestly desired, a certain obscure and inconsiderable monk in Saxony, a province of Germany, suddenly opposed the power of Rome single-handedly with incredible resolution. This monk was Martin Luther, the messenger to the Church of Philadelphia. It was not until Luther’s day that the false claims of Antichrist were so fully exposed.

Luther possessed extraordinary talents, uncommon genius, a copious memory, astonishing industry and perseverance, superior eloquence, a greatness of soul that rose above all his human weaknesses, and consummate erudition for the age in which he lived. Under this great reformer—who was ably seconded by other leaders and men of learning, such as Melancthon, Carlstadt, and Zwingli—the course of history changed.

An exemplary, very religious monk, Luther practiced all forms of fastings and scourgings, and for two years endured indescribable anguish. In 1508 he became a teacher at the University of Wittenberg, a position he held till his death in 1546. Then in 1511 he went to Rome. Upon catching his first view of the city, he fell upon the earth and cried out, “O Holy Rome, I greet thee.” While he was climbing on his knees and halfway up the Scala Santa (or Pilate’s Staircase) as a reverent and

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 534, 559.

46. Leopold Von Ranke, *History of the Popes*, trans. E. Fowler, rev. ed. (New York: Colonial Press, 1901), Vol. 1, p. 40.

47. George Park Fisher, *Outlines of Universal History*, rev. ed. (New York: American Book Co., 1904), p. 386.

48. D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 102.

penitential pilgrim, the Scripture came to him, “The just shall live by faith.”⁴⁹ He descended the steps, left Rome, and returned to Germany.⁵⁰

Though appalled at the corruption and vice of the papal court, Luther still accepted the authority of the Roman Church. The impiety of Italian churchmen, the scandalous stories about Popes Alexander VI and Julius II, and the evidence of immorality against the popes all probably helped Luther later conclude that the head of that system was the chief enemy of religion.

Nearly a century after the invention of printing, when men were beginning to think for themselves, the public sales of indulgences—authorized by the pope in this instance to raise money for the completion of St. Peter’s Cathedral at Rome—aroused general indignation.⁵¹ The sale of indulgences by John Tetzel, a Dominican monk of notorious character and shameless effrontery, was particularly offensive.

Papal indulgences had originated with Popes Pascal (817–824) and John VIII (872–882). Found to be exceedingly profitable, papal indulgences soon gained widespread use. They were offered as an inducement to go on Crusades, to wage wars against heretics, to oppose kings the pope wished to punish, to encourage Inquisitors, to foster pilgrimages to Rome, or to gain support for any public or private enterprise of the pope; or they were *sold for money*. Pope Sixtus IV in 1476 was the first to apply them to souls already purported to be in purgatory. Indulgences were farmed out to be retailed. Thus the selling of what in practice amounted to license to sin became one of the most lucrative sources of papal revenue.

In 1517 John Tetzel traveled through Germany selling certificates signed by the pope, offering pardon of all sins to buyers and their friends . . . without confession, repentance, penance, or absolution by the priest. “At the very instant,” Tetzel told the people, “when the piece of money chinks on the bottom of the strong box, the soul comes out of purgatory, and, set free, flies upward into heaven.”^{52,53} Martin Luther was horrified to hear such things.

On October 31, 1517, Luther posted ninety-five theses on the church door in Wittenberg. Relating primarily to indulgences but in substance striking at the

49. The stairway, purported to be the one Jesus had climbed to reach Pilate’s judgment hall, was claimed by the Roman Church to have been miraculously transported to the Eternal City from Jerusalem.

50. D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 54, 57.

51. An indulgence was a lightening of the pains of purgatory, that is, a remission of the punishment for sin. According to Romanist teaching, the pope claimed to have the exclusive prerogative and power to lessen, or altogether remit, these sufferings.

52. D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 71.

53. “The theory of indulgences as preached by Tetzel is shown in a pattern sermon to be used by the priests in his district around Leipzig: ‘With these confessional letters you will be able at any time in life to obtain full indulgence for all penalties imposed upon you, in all cases except in the four reserved to the Apostolic See. Throughout your whole life, whenever you wish to make confession, you may receive the same remission, except in cases reserved to the pope, and afterwards, at the hour of death, a full indulgence as to all penalties and sins, and your share of all spiritual blessings that exist in the Church militant and all its members. . . . Are you not willing, then, for the fourth part of a florin, to obtain these letters, by virtue of which you may bring, not your money, but your divine and immortal soul, safe and sound into the land of Paradise?’” (Francois Pierre Guillaume Guizot, *General History of Civilization in Europe*, ed. George Wells Knight [New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1928], p. 324.)

authority of the pope, the ninety-five theses were merely a notice in Latin stating Luther's willingness to discuss these things in the university and challenging all comers to debate. When printed copies were eagerly sought all over Germany, the theses proved "to be the spark that set Europe aflame."⁵⁴ Tract after tract followed, in Latin for the scholar, in German for the people. By 1520 Luther had become the most popular man in Germany.

Luther declared the indulgence was unimportant, urging the poor man to spend his money instead for household needs. The truly repentant, he argued, do not flee punishment but bear it willingly as a sign of their sorrow. Faith in God and the cleansing merit of the Redeemer's blood, not the procuring of pardons, bring forgiveness; and every Christian who feels true contrition for his sins will receive remission of sins. Luther questioned: "If the Pope releases souls from purgatory for money, why not for charity's sake?"⁵⁵ Another question was "Since the Pope is as rich as Croesus, why does he not build St. Peter's with his own money, instead of taking that of the poor man?"⁵⁶ Luther further remarked that the money of the Germans flew "feather-light" over the Alps to Italy, but it suddenly became like lead when there was a question of its coming back.

In 1520 the pope issued a bull excommunicating Luther and declaring that, unless he retracted within sixty days, he would receive the "penalty due for heresy" (i.e., death). Luther publicly burned the papal bull on December 10, 1520. A new age in history began that day.

Luther was subsequently summoned to appear before the Diet at Worms by Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire, which at that time included Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, and Austria. When ordered to retract in the presence of the assembled dignitaries of the empire, he replied that he could retract nothing except what was disproved by Scripture or reason: "Here I stand; I can do naught else; so help me God."⁵⁷ Although he was condemned, he had too many friends among the German princes for the edict to be carried out. On May 26, 1521, the official bill of outlawry was signed and issued against Luther.

While hiding for ten months in Wartburg Castle under the protection of Elector Frederick, Luther accomplished, among other things, the translation of the New Testament and part of the Old into German.⁵⁸

54. D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 85.

55. This is a paraphrase of the eighty-second thesis of Martin Luther's Ninety-five Theses. (Robinson, *An Introduction to the History of Western Europe*, p. 408.)

56. This is a paraphrase of the eighty-sixth thesis of Martin Luther's Ninety-five Theses. (Robinson, *An Introduction to the History of Western Europe*, p. 408.)

57. D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 204.

58. In preceding generations Waldo of France and Wycliffe of England, respectively, rendered the Scriptures from the Latin Vulgate into French and English, the language of their peoples. Now in the forepart of the sixteenth century, by the strangest coincidence *almost simultaneously*—and unwittingly—Luther of Germany and Tyndale of Britain (the latter living in exile) translated in a marvelous manner the original language of the Bible (the Hebrew and the Greek) into German and English, respectively. In this way Divine Providence overruled to assure the utmost success of the Reformation.

The historical background and messenger of this period of the Church having been considered, an explanation of why this era was designated *Philadelphia* (“brotherly love”) can now be more fully appreciated.

First, the city of Philadelphia is located in Lydia, twenty-seven miles southeast of Sardis. It was founded in 133 B.C. by Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamos. At about an eight-hundred-foot elevation, the city is situated on a broad, defensible plateau that gradually slopes upward into the Tmolus range.

The spirit of *brotherly love* is manifest in that “the whole period of the planting of Protestantism abounds in remarkable adjustments and surrenders of individual tastes and capacities for the achievement of a great end. Each man was as necessary to the rest as their joint work was necessary to the success of the whole movement. It was a harmony of opposites, and as complete a providential blending of diverse natures as the world has seen since the days of the apostles. All temperaments and all classes of society were drawn upon to make the one harmonious picture of a young and vigorous Protestantism. . . . These men were mostly won to the cause of reform by the reading of Luther’s writings, or the hearing of his lectures, or by his hymns; and having once come within the charm of his person became his willing co-operators in the various departments for which each was fitted.”⁵⁹

The following is an example of Luther’s native humility and of his opinion of the character and the works of others whom he esteemed. He spoke of Melancthon’s works as a whole: “I love his books better than my own. He ploughs and plants and sows and waters with joy, while I am only a coarse forester, digging up the roots and tearing out thorns.”⁶⁰ Of Melancthon’s *Loci Theologici*, Luther said, “For theological study it is the best book, next to the Bible.”⁶¹

A significant characteristic of the writings sponsored by many of the Protestant movements was their departure from customary terminology like “Very Reverend” or “Reverend” in favor of “Brother.” In other words, there was an appreciation of the *brotherhood* of the Church.

Moreover, “it has been said that the central fact of the religious revolution of the 16th century was the severance of the Protestant nations from the Roman see. . . . For an infallible church they substituted the Bible as the unerring expression of God’s relation to man; the interpretation of the Bible they left to the individual consciousness. This freedom was of necessity only nominal, since the members of any

59. Hurst, *Short History of the Christian Church*, p. 232.

60. Yet Petrus Mosellanus, who was a professor of Greek at Leipzig when Martin Luther was there, wrote to Julius Pflug in 1519 of Luther’s public disputation with Eck: “His [Luther’s] knowledge of Scripture is so great that he has all at his fingers’ ends. He is so conversant with Greek and Hebrew that he can judge of the fidelity of interpretations. He possesses, too, a great abundance and command of words and facts. . . .”

Mosellanus further commented: “Of all Luther’s gifts to the German people, his translation of the Bible is, no doubt, the most valuable. In nothing are the resources of his intellect and the vigor of his character more manifest than in his ability, in the midst of a literary warfare with a hundred antagonists, to undertake most important works of a positive character, involving a great amount of thought and toil, for the upbuilding of the church. The translation of the Bible cost him a world of labor.” (George P. Fisher, “Martin Luther After Four Hundred Years,” *New York Magazine*, Vol. 26 [1881], pp. 861–862.)

61. Hurst, *Short History of the Christian Church*, p. 231.

Protestant church were members only on condition of their accepting the church's interpretation of the contents of the Bible, and since each different church deemed itself the special depository of the only true conception of the perfect will of God. It was from this attitude of the Protestant reformers to the Bible that the developments of modern thought sprang. . . . In the medieval conception church and state made one organism; what menaced the life of the one menaced the life of the other. Hence the state was at the church's bidding whenever its arm was needed to deal with any suggestion of heresy. But having no great central head, such an organic union was impossible for any Protestant church, and religious error could not be regarded as a crime against the existing government. So complete was the revolution wrought by this changed relation of church and state that toleration of different creeds, and not an iron uniformity, was in time seen to be the indispensable condition of civil society. Medievalism rested on the belief that society was threatened if any of its members questioned the body of truth of which the church was the custodian [*sic*]; it is the distinctive principle of the modern spirit that truth shall be followed wherever facts are believed to lead."⁶²

A word of caution is necessary. The term "brotherly love," as it applies to the Philadelphia era of the Church, should be kept separate and distinct from the contradiction and conflict of Catholicism versus Protestantism, and likewise from the fratricidal sectarianism and confusion within the ranks of Protestantism itself. Nay, the true Church of Christ has ever been, as the poet so aptly expressed it, "All one body we; one in hope and doctrine, one in charity" (from the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers"). The Lord's true Church has always been a "little flock" disowned of men (Luke 12:32). The Word of God admonishes that "the friendship of the world [its spirit, methods, aims, ambitions, and worldly pleasures] is enmity with God" (James 4:4). Therefore, any boast of a numerous nominal membership may be a tacit indication of a proportionate departure from "the narrow way" and from "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Matt. 7:14; Phil. 3:14). The true Church of God during this period consisted of individuals both within and without the orthodox Catholic and Protestant fellowship. It is to this special class of the Philadelphia era that the characteristic designation "brotherly love" chiefly applies.

. . . 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;

This portion of verse 7 asserts the sanctity and authority of Christ himself as the one and only true head of the Church. In marked contrast to Jesus—"the way, the truth, and the life"—was the corrupt and profligate Roman see, the false vicar of Christ, the Pretender (John 14:6). Rome was claiming to be the only holy and true Church, and her popes assumed titles indicating this prerogative.⁶³ She claimed to

62. Wells, *The Outline of History*, p. 614.

63. Shortly after ascending the papal throne, Pope Leo XIII designated himself "*Leo de tribus Juda*," that is, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah." Similar appellations of sanctity are characteristic, such as "Pope *Innocent*," "Pope *Pius*," "*Holy Father*," and "*His Holiness*." In contrast, the blessed and glorious Master disowned such flattering titles during his earthly ministry, and only with quiet simplicity and conservative manner did he admit his Messiahship. His earthly ministry was

have the sure mercies of David (the throne and Kingdom of the Lord), with the power to open and shut the gates of heaven. She further asserted herself as the only true synagogue, the only one having the right to bear the Lord's name.

However, it is the resurrected, glorified, victorious Christ who is addressing the Church of Philadelphia. He is the "holy" one, the "true" one, the possessor of "the key of David," and he has not given his prerogative to fallible men. Although he did lend keys to Peter to open the gospel doors to both Jew and Gentile, and he did grant Peter the privilege of preaching the opening sermon to the Jews at Pentecost and to the Gentiles at Caesarea three and one-half years later, Peter fell asleep in death, and it is the Master who holds the keys (Acts 10). The Master will unlock the gates of *hades* and of death, freeing the long-bound captives (Rev. 1:18). No "successor" of St. Peter ever has had or ever will have this power.

Throughout the Bible the divine proposition is clearly stated that the great heir of the throne of the world, the great King of Israel, was to come from David's line. In view of such promises of future rulership through David's lineage, and because keys are a symbol of authority, privilege, and power, the expression "key of David" conveys the thought of a royal hereditary house of rulership ordained by God. Just as in the past the House of Savoy, the House of Hapsburg, the House of Hohenzollern, and other ruling houses played large roles in shaping the course of the kingdoms of Europe, so the House of David is a synonym of divine authority in future rulership and dominion over the earth. History reveals the usurpation of this power by various religious systems prior to its scheduled fulfillment during the Second Advent of Messiah . . . "until he come whose right it is" (Ezek. 21:27).

There can be no question here also of Jesus' presupposition that the queenly prerogatives to be granted to his Bride, the Church, in future Kingdom glory, would be blasphemously usurped beforehand by the papal office and abusively exercised (1) in the granting ("opening") of illegitimate dispensations of grace to its favorites, and (2) in the practice of cutting off ("closing") all privileges to individuals in disfavor, as well as by placing offending nations under interdict.

Verse 8:

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.

Considerable similarity exists between the work begun at Pentecost and that of Luther and his friends. The Reformation was, in a sense, the beginning of a new era, a dawning of light where all had been darkness, the separation of the true from the false, and a new start in the way of truth. No doubt all the powers of Satan were exerted to close the *door of the Reformation* then opened; but "he that is true" had said "no man shutteth" (verse 7). Compared with the mighty hosts of their enemies,

a time of testing and proving his personal worthiness or unworthiness for inheriting future Kingdom honors and glories reserved for him by the Father. In Mark 10:17,18 Jesus asked, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." Indeed, how inappropriate it is for Christians to accept the laurels of victory during their earthly sojourn! "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off" (1 Kings 20:11).

the small band of reformers had little strength; but they knew they had the truth and they fully trusted the Giver. Luther's hymn is expressive and characteristic:

A mighty fortress is our God,
 A bulwark never failing;
 Our helper He amid the flood
 Of mortal ills prevailing.
 For still our ancient foe
 Doth seek to work us woe;
 His craft and power are great,
 And, armed with cruel hate,
 On earth is not his equal.
 Did we in our own strength confide,
 Our striving would be losing;
 Were not the right Man on our side,
 The Man of God's own choosing.
 Dost ask who that may be?
 Christ Jesus, it is he. . . .

In the statement "thou hast a little strength," Jesus is saying, "You have but little power." However, instead of chiding the small band of reformers for their lack, the Master expresses his pleasure and approval of their bold stand against the host of Christendom. Nevertheless, their efforts would be futile without his assistance; and for this reason "he that hath the key of David" guarantees success ("I have set before thee an open door"), and commends them for keeping his word and not denying his name (verses 7 and 8).

Verse 9:

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Who are these who "say they are Jews, and are not"? Are they not those who professed Christianity but whose profession was false—in fact, so false that Jesus condemns them as a veritable "synagogue of Satan"? The whole description, says Seiss, shows that they were the chief body of professed Christians in the Philadelphia period. Although they had things largely in their control, they were self-deceivers, hypocrites, and liars, and were so far departed from all genuine Christianity and so destitute of faith and charity as to be in reality the children of the Evil One; they were an apostate crew, not at all entitled to a place in the congregation of believers. If the question lay simply between being pseudo-Jews and Jews of the true natural blood of Abraham, Jesus could no more acknowledge them in the one case than in the other because both were apart from the Christian faith and profession. Therefore, only one conclusion remains: Those who falsely claimed to be "Jews" were professing Christians.⁶⁴

64. Joseph A. Seiss, *The Letters of Jesus* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1889), pp. 208, 210.

Verse 9, therefore, is very plain language regarding the opposers of the truth, who claim to be the Church of God but whom the Master identifies as “of the synagogue of Satan.” After the great Time of Trouble has humbled their pride, they will not only learn who the chosen are but will have to render them obeisance. In other words, they will have to, as it were, *fall on their faces and confess that God is indeed in the midst of the true Church*, the ones whom Jesus loves in a special sense. This promise was especially appreciated by those in the beginning of the Reformation movement, for they were the ones who made the more radical departure and, consequently, got more of the abuse. (Some of the counsel to the Church of Philadelphia is more for the early part of the Reformation era, and some for the latter part.)

Verse 10:

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.

The test of patience seems to have had a more marked occurrence toward the latter part of the Philadelphia era. Indeed, also, the characteristic feature of “brotherly love,” which Divine Providence used to denote this sixth Church, was particularly applicable in the closing years.

The Miller movement, a religious movement, began in 1829 and culminated in 1844. The participants were, and are, generally known as “Second Adventists” and “Millerites” because they expected the Second Advent of the Lord to occur in 1844 and because William Miller, an earnest and esteemed New England Baptist, was the leader and prime mover. Between 1829 and 1844 the movement attracted the attention of all classes of Christian people in the United States, especially in the East and the Midwest. Years earlier, Professor Bengel in Tubingen, Germany, had called attention to prophecies and the coming of Messiah’s Kingdom, while the celebrated missionary Wolff had done the same in Asia. The center of this work, however, was America, where social, political, and religious conditions favored—more than elsewhere—independence in Bible study as well as in other matters. Similarly, the First Advent movement, though confined to Judea, reached the ears of devout Israelites everywhere (Acts 2:5).

Most know something of the failure of Brother Miller’s expectations. That the Lord did not come in 1844 and the world was not burned up with fire, as he had expected and taught others to expect, constituted a great disappointment to those “holy people” who had so confidently looked for Christ to then appear and exalt them to power and glory with him. This disappointment of 1844 is briefly recorded in the Parable of the Ten Virgins by the statement “the bridegroom tarried”; i.e., to the expectant ones he *seemed* to tarry. The subsequent confusion and darkness, and the consequent sorrow, are shown in the statement “While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept” (Matt. 25:5).

The same parable reveals a second movement, comparable to the Miller movement and yet different, among the same general class of virgins (but not necessarily the same individuals). Disappointment having been predicted for the first movement, it was necessary to wait for the 1,335 “days” of Daniel to be fulfilled:

“Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days” (Dan. 12:12). This second movement was not a disappointment, for, based on the scriptural principle of a day for a year, fulfillment came exactly at the termination of the 1,335 prophetic days—that is, in October 1874.⁶⁵ Just following the 1,335-year period of “waiting,” the fact of Messiah’s presence, as taught by foregoing prophecies, began to be recognized. It was very early in the morning of the Millennial Age, the “midnight” hour as far as the deep-slumbering virgins were concerned, when the cry (still ringing) went forth: “Behold, the bridegroom!” (Matt. 25:6 RSV). The cry was not that the Bridegroom *will come*, but that he *has come*; and all are now living in the presence (Greek *parousia*) of the Son of Man.

The thirty-year period of waiting, from the disappointment of 1844 to the realization at the end of the 1,335 days, caused a sifting among the professed people of God. Those who did not doubt became all the more interested in the Bible as the Word of God; others became haughty and skeptical, asserting that the Bible was a foolish old book, that anybody who studied these prophecies was soft in the head. This latter group did not keep the Word of God, but discarded its declarations. Though positive and numerous, the promises and prophecies of the Bible relating to the Master’s Second Coming were abandoned by most of the great teachers. Consequently, the general public knew little about the Bible, and of course, their faith could not be much greater than their knowledge.

Miller’s interpretations and deductions were in error on almost every point, as he understood neither the *manner* nor the *object* of the Lord’s return. In expecting a sudden appearance and the end of all things in one day, he thought all time prophecies must end there, and his aim was to force them all to this common terminus. Hence his failure occurred—beyond which God did not immediately enlighten any, as further enlightenment was not *then* due. Despite these errors the Miller movement was in God’s order, accomplishing an important work in separating, purifying, refining, and thus preparing a faithful people waiting for the Lord.

The movement had two definite “designed,” yet opposite, effects—in one class it awakened an interest in the subject of the Lord’s coming; in another class it cast reproach upon the subject through mistaken expectations. These designed effects correspond to the First Advent movement, when at Jesus’ birth the wise men came from the East and “the people were in expectation” of him (Matt. 2:1,2; Luke 3:15). Also, there is a time correspondency: Just as thirty years elapsed from Jesus’ birth to his anointing at age thirty, when he began his work as Messiah, so thirty years elapsed from 1844 to 1874. The “Millerite movement,” as it is disparagingly called, brought an individual blessing to the people who participated in it. The movement led to a careful searching of the Scriptures and to confidence in God’s Word above the traditions of men; and it warmed, fed, and united the hearts of God’s children in nonsectarian fellowship, for those who were interested were of all denominations, though principally Baptists. Since the end of that movement, some have organized as new sects, thus partially blinding themselves to blessings due in the harvest period.

65. The 1,335 years commenced in A.D. 539, the year Papacy became the Man of Sin.

In effect, then, the Miller movement separated those who patiently kept the Word of God from those who lost faith in His Word. Keeping “the word of my patience” refers to this persistent, patient faith of the true saints of God. The “hour of temptation,” therefore, came not upon the Philadelphia Church but upon those who followed—the Laodicean Church. The Philadelphia Church, which had patiently passed through a severe trial of faith, would not be subjected to the later test.

Verse 11:

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

The hope of the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the accompanying reward to his Church constituted a prominent feature of the closing moments of the Philadelphia era. Yet, sad to say, the implication here in verse 11 is that during this period of the Church, and particularly at its close, there would be many *crown-losers*. Those who failed to “hold fast” did not obtain the prize of the high calling and hence lost their crowns.

Verse 12:

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: . . .

During the Philadelphia period, especially the first and last phases, the faithful were obliged to come out of the nominal temple or be expelled for their straight testimony. The promised reward is that each will become a vital part, a pillar, in the true and eternal temple—a part which cannot be removed while the structure exists. During the trial state in the nominal Church, the names of the faithful were cast out as evil. Branded as infidels and heretics, they were not recognized as children of God, as citizens of heaven, as Christians. However, all will be reversed, for “the Lord knoweth them that are his” and in due time will fully and eternally acknowledge them (2 Tim. 2:19).

The following is a historical note of consequence about the literal city of Philadelphia: “At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom above fourscore years; and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect; *a column in a scene of ruins* [emphasis added]; a pleasing example, that the paths of honor and safety may be the same.”⁶⁶

Even today, conspicuous amidst the ruins of this once prosperous city, there stands erect and starkly alone, an entry arch of great antiquity supported by its single posts. This relic and verse 12 are strongly reminiscent of the two colossal pillars in front of Solomon’s Temple. The one on the right was called Jachin (“*He shall establish*”—1 Kings 7:21, AV marginal rendering), and the name of that on the left was Boaz (“*In it is strength*”). The latter name calls to mind the romance between Boaz and Ruth, which, in addition to being factual, pictorializes the affection

66. Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, trans. M. F. Guizot (Oxford, Ohio: David Christy, 1841), Vol. 2, p. 408.

Jesus has for his future Bride, the Church (see Book of Ruth). Jachin, the first pillar mentioned, seems to represent the new name for “Ruth” as the glorified Queen seated or established to the right of her Lord Jesus, her “King Boaz.”⁶⁷

Furthermore, since the two pillars of the Temple were adorned atop with lily work, the columns are intended to signify beauty as well as the more obvious qualities of permanence, prominence, and strength (1 Kings 7:22).⁶⁸

Another peculiar characteristic appears to be associated with both the literal city of Philadelphia and the message to the Church itself. A dozen cities in that region were destroyed in A.D. 17 by an earthquake. However, the quake was even more demoralizing in Philadelphia because the tremors continued over an extended period of time. The city has long been liable to serious natural disasters of this kind. Indeed, throughout this region of Asia Minor, Philadelphia is currently known as “earthquake city.” This unsettled condition has caused a great change from its former status as a prosperous city to that of a mean village. Because of the frequent tremors prevailing there, its residents prefer to live in humble dwellings on the open plain. Since, therefore, the people have had to flee for safety more than once when terror-shaken by a violent earthquake, the promise “he shall go no more out” seems appropriate in its application to an era of instability. The hope of becoming an essential part, or pillar of stability, in God’s future spiritual edifice was of special solace to the Christians enduring the trials of this period of church history.

The village of Philadelphia, because of the volcanic character of the surrounding country and the color of its soil, is now called *Ala-Shehir*, or “Red City.” Its situation on the edge of a district known as the “Burnt Region” is also indicative of its volcanic nature. For this very reason, the Hermis plain is perhaps the richest portion of all Asia Minor; it is celebrated for its choicest wines.

Still another lesson might be drawn here. The age of the Renaissance, which both immediately preceded and considerably overlapped the Philadelphia period, brought about an era of chaotic change filled with political, social, and intellectual ferment that opened up before an eager and curious generation new vistas of attainment and a heightened desire to break free from the shackles of ecclesiastical bondage and rigid governmental autocracy. This climate and soil eventually resulted in a fruitage of joy and discovery that occasioned the rise, development, and success of the revolution in America, with its Declaration of Independence and standard of “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” followed by the French Revolution and its cry of “Liberty, equality, and fraternity.” Amidst all this confusion and turmoil, the faithful few of the Master’s followers stood immovably firm, upholding the banner of truth.

67. Christ is presently described as “set down” with his Father in the latter’s throne (Rev. 3:21); but in reality this language is intended to convey the thought that Jesus is seated (also sometimes standing—see Acts 7:55,56) on the right side of God (Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22). There the overcoming Church will be seated with Jesus, and to his right, even as he is with the Father (Rev. 3:21).

68. This explanation does not negate the additional thought that each individual faithful Christian can be viewed as a separate pillar amidst many others in God’s temple complex.

. . . and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

The literal city of Attalus Philadelphus has had frequent changes of name: *Neo-Caesarea* in deference to Tiberius, *Flavia* in honor of Vespasian, again *Philadelphia*, *Neocorate* for wardenship of emperor worship, *Allah-Shehir* (or “City of God”) under Mohammedan rule, and finally its present Turkish name of *Ala-Shehir*, or “Red City.”

Here in verse 12 the Saviour promises to write three names on the overcoming Christian: the name of God, the name of God’s city, and Jesus’ own name. These appellations are to be *prominently displayed* upon the pillar class, previously described, in the sense that all mankind will know with certainty to whom they properly apply and will remember the names and the exploits of those whom God deigns to honor.

“The name of my [Jesus’] God” is perhaps a reference to Jeremiah 33:16 (correct rendering)—“This is the name by which she shall be called, ‘*The Righteousness of Jehovah.*’” This text in Jeremiah applies to the Millennial Age, when the world will behold the glory of Christ and the revealed true Church. Then the world will recognize and appreciate the office and work of Messiah and acknowledge his avowed Bride, who will share in his glory and in his work of reconciling the world to God. Thus God’s name that is to be given to the Church is a public name, by which His people will be identified and shown to be *His elect*.

“The name of the city of my [Jesus’] God” is “the new Jerusalem,” not Rome. Therefore, the city name implies that the Church, collectively, will be seen as *God’s government* in the earth.

Finally, “my [Jesus’] new name,” the designated title of his own choice to be granted to the Bride class, may be “Jachin,” already mentioned.⁶⁹

This promised *future* honor and acknowledgment of faithful Christians by the *Heavenly Father* and *His Son* are a sharp contrast to the esteem *now* granted to the unworthy by their *fellow man*. The names of the latter are conspicuously displayed in houses of worship, inscribed on pillars of earthly temples, or publicly extolled from the pulpit. But all will be changed, for the new Jerusalem has no earthly origin and is neither man-made nor man-ruled. It “cometh down out of heaven”; its ministers are divinely appointed, and their names are enrolled in heaven, not on earthly tablets or rolls (Heb. 12:23). Upon such is *Jesus’* “new name” to be written.

Verse 13:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

See previous explanation on pages 34 and 35.

69. This *collective* public title to be conferred upon each saint should not be confused with the secret name also to be given to each one (see Rev. 2:17); nor will this public title be inscribed through a man-made process of beatification rites and later appointment to sainthood down here, for it will be *personally* given by Jesus to each of the 144,000 comprising the Little Flock.

Message to Laodicea (A.D. 1878–1998?)

Verse 14:

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; . . .

This seventh and last period of the earthly pilgrimage of the nominal Church is styled “Laodicea.” There is a dual significance to this term, namely, (a) “a judged people” and (b) “justice for the people.” The Laodicean epoch commenced with the year 1878, the beginning of the Gospel Age harvest, and appears likely to end in 1998(?).⁷⁰

As the chief city of Phrygia Pacatiana in Asia Minor, Laodicea was situated a little south of Colossae and Hierapolis, near Denizli, about fifty-six miles east southeast of Smyrna. Laodicea lay on the line of a great road that gave rise to both its wealth and its pride. Ruins of the city still exist at a place called *Eski-Hissar*, signifying “old” or “decadent castle.”

The messenger to the Church of Laodicea was Charles Taze Russell; he was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1852 and died in 1916.⁷¹ As was the case with the prior six messengers to the Church, Russell’s ministry was and still is viewed in an unfavorable light by contemporary religious orthodoxy. However, a dispassionate

70. Some of the evidence in support of this hypothesis is as follows:

(1) Noah, a prototype of Christ, warned his scoffing contemporaries of the pending great deluge *120 years in advance* of its occurrence (Gen. 6:3; 2 Pet. 3:3–8). *Likewise*, during this harvest period the message of the returned invisible Lord continues to sound a warning of the future figurative flood, or great Time of Trouble, that is to immediately precede the inauguration of his Kingdom of peace and rest (Matt. 13:39,30; 24:38,39). The Master specifically states that “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matt. 24:21,22).

(2) In John 4:35 Jesus seems to intimate that the harvest at this end of the age would last four months, that is, a day for a year ($4 \times 30 = 120$ years).

(3) Moses, a prototype of The Christ, head and body members, died just before the Israelites entered the Promised Land; his age was *120 years* (2 Cor. 3:6–13,18; Deut. 34:7; 1 Cor. 15:50).

(4) The Ark of the Covenant, symbolic of Christ, preceded the host of Israel, symbolic of the world of mankind, by the space of two thousand cubits, i.e., two thousand years (Josh. 3:3,4). Since the true date of Jesus’ birth as an infant was 2 B.C., the year A.D. 1998 would therefore mark the termination of two thousand years. (Perhaps it should be explained that the Ark is a symbol and prototype of the nativity as well as of the baptism of Christ—Exod. 2:1–3; Luke 2:16; 1 Pet. 3:20,21.) (*The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. [East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1889], Ser. 2, pp. 54–62.)

(5) In Luke 10:25–37 Jesus, to twit or embarrass his accusers, mockingly assumed for the moment that role they had cast for him of being a Samaritan (cf. John 8:48). To expose the sham of their hypocrisy and pretense to virtue, piety, and goodness, the Master in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (which, among other things, possesses sensible moral considerations as well as prophetic implications) implied that at the conclusion of his earthly ministry, upon his departure, he would pay, *on deposit*, the host of the inn a two-pence wage to cover the remaining two (one-thousand-year) days (cf. Matt. 20:2), or *two thousand years* of labor and servitude subsequent to the First Advent; that is, the two pence would cover that portion of the ransom price particularly appertaining to the Gospel Age. Upon the Master’s return, or Second Advent, at the appropriate time, payment in full would be made for Adam’s sin-sick race and for his residence in this benighted planet.

71. Details of Russell’s life are substantiated in *The Laodicean Messenger* (Chicago: Bible Educational Institute, 1923).

overview of the character and extent of his work will be seen to comport well with the prophesied content of the message to be declared in the Laodicean period.

Up to age fifteen Charles Russell believed as gospel truth only the sectarian doctrines he had been taught, including the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination and foreordination, in which an austere God shows partiality by electing a few to be saved and dooms the remainder to eternal suffering. As he grew older and matured in thought, he realized how discordant all the creeds of Christendom were. Not only did they sharply conflict with and contradict each other, but in many fundamentals they were wholly irreconcilable with reason and were therefore in violent opposition to a proper concept of a just, wise, and loving God, which the Scriptures declare the Heavenly Father to be.

This discordance was brought to a head by Russell's attempt to reclaim an infidel. The latter, through skillful questions that were unanswerable by either minister or layman from sectarian standpoints, and by the maneuvering of many seemingly paradoxical Scriptures, completely routed young Russell, who within a few months became an admitted skeptic. Here, as in nearly every similar case, the Bible was discarded along with the doctrines of the creeds. Few indeed under such circumstances study the Scriptures to see whether they have been properly interpreted, and up to this time Charles Taze Russell was no exception.

Desiring to learn the truth concerning the hereafter, he devoted the next few years to investigating the claims of leading Oriental religions, all of which he found unworthy of credence. Hence he approached manhood with a mind unsatisfied, a mind that, despite all efforts to the contrary, was still occasionally distressed because of the earlier impact of the eternal torment theory. Thus the solace for head and heart so diligently sought seemed as remote as ever. He continually requested divine guidance through prayer.

In time he decided to examine the Scriptures—to search them from the viewpoint of a skeptic, divesting his mind of all prejudice. God rewarded his earnest endeavor by illuminating the Bible to him. Amazed at the harmonious testimony he found, which proved an unexpected but satisfactory answer, he undertook systematic Bible research. As a result, he gained complete confidence that the Bible was truly inspired by an all-wise, powerful, loving, and just Creator, worthy of adoration and worship. Thus a sure anchor for a fainting hope was found, and an honest, truth-seeking heart rejoiced.

That which had at first threatened to be the utter shipwreck of faith in God and the Bible was, under Divine Providence, overruled for good, and merely wrecked his confidence in human creeds and systems of misinterpretation of the Bible. Gradually Russell was led to see that though each of the creeds contained some elements of truth, they were, on the whole, misleading and contradictory of God's Word. He began to see what the theologians of the ages had failed to see—the *harmony* of the Word of God and the beauty of His plan.

In 1872 he gained a clearer view of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary—that it is the *foundation* stone of Christianity, the strength of all hope of restitution. At this point he examined the subject of *restitution* from the standpoint of the ransom price given by Jesus for Adam, and consequently for all lost in Adam; and he was

fully assured that ALL *must come forth* from their graves and be brought to a clear knowledge of the truth and to a full opportunity to gain everlasting life in Christ. He realized that the *object* of the Lord's return is to *bless*, not to destroy, all the families of the earth. He recognized the difference between the Lord Jesus as the man who gave himself and the Lord who would come again, a spirit being, invisible to men . . . that his coming would be thieflike and not in the flesh (1 Tim. 2:5,6). He further recognized that the harvest work, the gathering of the Church and the separation of the *wheat* from the *tares*, would progress in the end of the Gospel Age without the world's being aware of it.

One of the pioneers in the development of the successful idea of chain stores, Russell soon started a store of his own and rapidly increased his ownership to a chain of stores. His prospects for wealth were indeed great. At age twenty-one he was already worth more than \$250,000.

In due process, his business responsibilities continued to multiply, interfering with his hours for theological research. Yet in 1876, at age twenty-four, he became aware of the time features, or prophecies, of the Scriptures, which revealed the important truth that 1874 was the year the Lord's *second presence* began. He immediately realized that the special time had an important bearing upon Christian work and duty; that it was the *time of the harvest* and hence harvest work should be done; that *present truth* was the sickle by which God would have His people do a gathering and reaping work everywhere among His children.

A decision became necessary: Should he continue his search for truth on religion, or should he abandon such hope and strive instead for fame and fortune among the financial and commercial captains of his day? Undoubtedly, had he remained in the race for commercial supremacy, utilizing his extraordinary management and leadership ability and financial acumen to pursue wealth, his fortune would have rivaled that of John D. Rockefeller. Fortunately, he chose the former course and in 1877 gave up his secular work to devote his time and wealth to the work indicated in the Scriptures as incident to the close of the Gospel Age and the change of dispensations impending.⁷² To determine whether his purposed course was in harmony with the Scriptures, and also to demonstrate his own sincerity, he decided to test the Lord's approval as follows: (1) devote his life to the cause; (2) invest his private fortune (about \$350,000) in the promulgation of the work; (3) prohibit collections at all meetings; and (4) depend on *voluntary*, unsolicited contributions to continue the work after his own fortune was exhausted.

Subsequently, he actively engaged in the Lord's work for forty-two years, laboring day and night without desiring the praise and approbation of men and without seeking any personal advancements. During that entire time he worked seven days a week, never taking a vacation. To spend and be spent was the impelling theme of his life.

72. Russell's background and experience were similar to those of the fourth messenger, Peter Waldo of Thyatira, who also was a rich merchant and did not rise up within the ranks of orthodoxy as a licensed minister, yet was ordained by God and was both congregationally and individually recognized by countless thousands of consecrated believers.

Throughout his ministry he claimed nothing of superiority, or of supernatural power, dignity, or authority. He claimed only, as a faithful student of the Word of God, to be an index finger to help Bible students trace for themselves, on the sacred page, the wonderful plan of God. The truths he presented as God's mouthpiece were not revealed in visions or dreams, or by God's audible voice, or all at once, but gradually, especially since 1870 and particularly since 1880. The clear unfolding of truth he attributed not to human ingenuity or acuteness of perception but to the simple fact that *God's due time had come*, and if he had not spoken, and no other agent had been found, the very stones would have cried out.

Not the founder of a new religion, Russell merely *revived the great truths taught by Jesus and the apostles*, and turned the light of the twentieth century upon these. In so doing, he did more than any other man of modern times to establish the faith of the people in the Scriptures. By the citation of *scriptural authority*, he taught and proved the following doctrines:

Man does not possess an immortal soul; he is a soul and is mortal. (Ezek. 18:4,20)

The wages of sin is death, not eternal torment. (Rom. 6:23)

Death came upon man as the just penalty for the violation of God's law. (Gen. 2:17)

Death means the destruction of man. (Eccles. 9:5; Psa. 115:17)

God, in His goodness, planned the great ransom price whereby man may be delivered from the bondage of sin and death. (1 Tim. 2:4-6)

God's beloved Son, Jesus, became a man, grew to manhood's estate, was put to death as a man, and was raised from the dead a spirit being, inheriting the divine nature. (Heb. 2:14,16; 1 Pet. 3:18; John 5:26)

By means of his death and resurrection, Jesus provided and produced the ransom price to effect man's deliverance and restoration. (John 10:17,18; 6:51)

Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, his Father, tasted death for *every* man. (Heb. 2:9)

Every man in God's due time must, therefore, have a *fair* trial for life, and to this end there shall be a resurrection of *all* the dead. (John 3:16; 5:25,28)

Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and must come the second time. (John 14:3)

The period of time elapsing between the First and the Second Advents of the Lord is devoted to the election of the members of the body of Christ, taken from among men. (Acts 15:14)

The requirements for election to that exalted position are full faith in the shed blood of Jesus as the ransom price, full consecration to do the Father's will, and a faithful continuance in obedience to the Father's will even unto death. (Rev. 2:10)

All who thus are consecrated and begotten of the Holy Spirit and are overcomers shall have part in the chief resurrection; that is, they shall be exalted to positions in the heavenly Kingdom of God, and shall participate with Christ in his millennial reign for the blessing of all the families of the earth. (Rev. 20:4; 21:2–4)

During the thousand-year reign of Christ, all of the dead shall be awakened from the tomb and given a fair and impartial trial for life or death. (Acts 17:31)

Under said reign the willfully disobedient shall be everlastingly destroyed, while those obedient to the righteous rule of Christ shall be fully restored to human perfection of body, mind, and character. (Isa. 35:5–10; Job 33:25; Acts 3:22,23)

During this millennial reign the earth shall be brought to an Edenic state—paradise; it shall be made fit as a place habitable for perfect man. (Rev. 22:1–3)

Man, fully restored, will inhabit the beautiful earth in all the ages to come. (Psa. 78:69; 37:9–11; 115:16; Mic. 4:4)

In serving the Lord, Russell traveled more than a million miles, often fifty thousand miles a year; delivered thirty thousand lectures, sermons, and table talks (many of his public lectures were three hours long); and wrote more than fifty thousand book pages. In addition, he personally wrote most and edited all of the articles appearing in *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, a semimonthly thirty-two-page journal of biblical expositions and religious facts.⁷³ He also supervised the printing and publication of *The Bible Students' Monthly*, *The People's Pulpit*, and *Everybody's Paper*, which were distributed—free for the most part—in thirty-three different languages to Bible students throughout the world. A worldwide “lecture bureau” that he established and supervised was composed of about seventy field workers, or pilgrims, who gave daily lectures on Bible topics. In addition to the regularly employed lecturers, there was also under his supervision an auxiliary force of seven hundred who lectured part-time.

73. Although Pastor Russell was the original founder of the *Watch Tower*, this journal should not be confused with the organization under that name today, for upon his death the new succession to leadership made a radical departure from the prior emphasis given to the publication. Instead of encouragement and admonition slanted towards a gospel Church hoping to attain a spiritual resurrection and a destiny of abiding life throughout all eternity with the dear Redeemer, the attention of the readership was directed towards an earthly hope, calling, and residence. Of course this doctrine is inimical to the development of those who wish to abide by, and to claim for their own, the aspirations and instructions given to the followers of Jesus throughout the New Testament. Therefore, those holding to heavenly hopes, aims, and ambitions have no recourse but to look elsewhere for leadership and counsel.

Still another branch of the harvest work that he inaugurated and supervised was the *colporteur service*. While unique, this plan was nevertheless the essence of simplicity. Never in all the history of the Church had there been anything like it, particularly for quick results. Consecrated men and women, who loved the Lord and appreciated what the truth meant in their own lives, found their sweetest joy in going through the streets of every city, town, village, and hamlet in the land to present the beauty and the reasonableness of God's great plan as revealed in His Holy Word and amplified in Russell's writings. To the untiring efforts and supreme devotion of this army of about eight hundred workers, much of the success of the harvest work is due.

An extensive newspaper work also provided a worldwide witness. From a small beginning the work expanded until approximately four thousand newspapers and magazines, at one time or another, published his sermons—about two thousand doing so simultaneously. By this means he preached to an estimated fifteen million to twenty million people weekly. These sermons, supplied free, received publication in Great Britain, Australia, and South Africa, as well as in the United States.

The volume of work he performed seems almost incredible considering the circumstances of the time in which he lived. The following list indicates, in order, the extent of some of his writings and publications:

Age	Title	Circulation
Books		
29	Food for Thinking Christians (cost him personally \$40,000)	1,450,000
29	Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices	1,000,000
34	The Divine Plan of the Ages	4,817,000
37	The Time Is at Hand	1,657,000
39	Thy Kingdom Come	1,578,000
42	The Battle of Armageddon	464,000
45	The Atonement Between God and Man	445,000
52	The New Creation	423,000
Booklets		
	What Say the Scriptures About Hell	3,000,000
	What Say the Scriptures About Spiritism	600,000
	Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return	1,500,000
	The Bible Versus Evolution	425,000
	Answer to Robert Ingersoll	155,000
	Scenario Photo-Drama of Creation	<u>2,500,000</u>
	TOTAL CIRCULATION	20,014,000

(Although the books continue to be published today, these figures are based upon sales records up to the time of Russell's death in 1916.)

A monumental endeavor was the *Photo-Drama of Creation*, a narrated slide presentation of the history of the world from the dawn of creation to the present and into the future. Costing more than a million dollars, it required several years to plan, gather material for, and produce the scenario. Hundreds of paintings and sketches were made from which the stereopticon slides were produced. The lectures were a marvel of conciseness and comprehensiveness. In all, there were twenty complete dramas, each in four parts, so that eighty cities could be served daily. The *Photo-Drama* was shown throughout Europe, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia in approximately four thousand places with about twenty thousand exhibits, reaching about ten million people. All showings were free of charge.

In 1910 Charles Russell was privileged to speak to four thousand Jews at the Hippodrome in New York City on the text Isaiah 40:1,2. Initially suspicious of this Gentile preacher, the audience became increasingly enthusiastic as the message continued, and ended up giving him a standing ovation. His message to the Jew was one of comfort and encouragement, not a proselyting attempt; it scripturally supported, through prophecies of the Old Testament, the return of favor to the Jew and the reestablishment of the nation of Israel.

On all matters pertaining to the Bible, he asserted that a Christian should *prove all things* and not shirk his personal responsibilities by placing them upon teachers. He once declared, “Those who are so unfair in mind as to tenaciously hold to that which they have never *proved* by sound logic or the Word of God, are rightly called bigots (a bigot is one who *will not reason*; a fool is one who *cannot reason*); one who is blindly and obstinately devoted to his own church or opinions is a *slave*.” He further stated: “We should know what we believe and why we believe it; then be courageous and uncompromising in declaring the truth. Some have neglected the plain statements of God’s Word and as a result have suffered spiritually for their disobedience.”

Russell’s *thoroughness* in Bible study aided him in discovering the harmony of the Bible, and he introduced his thorough method to others. He thus revolutionized all existing ideas as to the proper methods of approaching the Bible to understand its teachings.

While his work was destructive of error and superstition, it did not leave his hearers victims of unbelief. On the contrary, he unfolded a harmonious, reasonable, scriptural view of the Bible that evidenced its inspiration. Beside and instead of the ruins of the temple of error, he erected the sanctuary of truth as a refuge against all the storms of doubt, superstition, and unbelief.

This Laodicean messenger enabled students of the Lord’s Word to see that the mystery of God is THE CHRIST, head and body; that The Messiah or mystery class is developed during the Gospel Age; and that thereafter “the times of refreshing shall come,” when the great restitution blessings for mankind will be put into operation (Acts 3:19; Col. 1:26,27). How gloriously comforting is the message of restitution for the groaning creatures of earth! As Christians have been delivered from the captivity of nominal Zion (Babylonish systems), and have learned of the coming blessings of restitution to all the obedient of mankind, their hearts have found expression in the words of the Psalmist: “Then was our mouth filled with

laughter, and our tongue with singing: . . . The LORD hath done great things for them [the world of mankind]" (Psa. 126:2).

That the returned invisible Lord would enlighten his people toward the close of the Gospel Age with truths both new and old through this special messenger, the following Scriptures clearly indicate:

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is *that servant*, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. (Matt. 24:45–47)

Blessed are those *servants* [plural], whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he [the Lord] shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. . . . And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is *that servant* [singular], whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. (Luke 12:37,42–44)

The subsequent interpretation of the message to Laodicea would not have been possible without the elucidation of its dispensational content as set forth in the writings of "that servant."

. . . These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

"Amen!" signifies a voluntary and hearty endorsement of some subject or theme. Here the designation of Jesus as "the Amen" of God indicates his complete sympathy with the divine program. Moreover, his close attachment to the Father and his delight in Jehovah's plan and method of operation prompted him to bear unswerving obedience and testimony to the truth. The ministry of the Lord Jesus, from Jordan to Calvary, was characterized by loyalty and submission to the Father's will. As "the faithful and true witness," he ultimately sealed his testimony in blood.

In his preexistent state, the archangel of God was known as the "Logos." Because of faithfulness unto death—even the death of the Cross—Jesus was exalted to the express likeness of the Father's person, and now dwells "in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. 6:16).⁷⁴

74. The nearest thing the ancients could find in nature to depict the all-powerful and all-pervading beneficent influence of the hidden God was the sun, the center of life in earth's universe. The solar disk, with an accompanying pair of wings, was used to emblemize Amen-Ra, or Amon, the major deity of Egypt, usually associated with the false Osiris-Horus worship of that day.

However, among other things, the heavenly orb was originally created to *signify* the coming true Hebrew Messiah, figuratively portrayed as "the Sun [also the Son] of righteousness," who would "arise with healing in his wings." The pinions and feathers of the wings thus constituted the varied and multiple radial blessings that would be associated with Messiah's coming (Gen. 1:14; Mal. 4:2; Dan. 12:3). (cont.)

The following singular Eastern custom perhaps best illustrates Jesus' title "the Word" (Logos): "In Abyssinia, there is an officer named *Kal Hatze*; the *word* or *voice* of the king, who stands always upon the steps of the throne, at the side of a lattice window, where there is a hole, covered in the inside with a curtain of green taffeta. Behind this curtain the king sits; and speaks through the aperture to the *Kal Hatze*, who communicates his commands to the officers, judges, and attendants.' *Bruce's Travels*."⁷⁵

As previously explained, the addressing of Jesus as "the Amen" primarily signifies his delight to do the Father's will, come what may; but it also has the secondary purpose of *finality*. "Amen" in the Bible means "So be it." Jesus is saying, "The one speaking to you is the 'Amen.'" Thus his reputation and his authority should be convincing. The scriptural designation of Christ as the "Logos" (Word), signifying God's mouthpiece or spokesman, is closely synonymous to "Amen." He is the Amen, the Word—the *final* Word on any subject. Whatever Jesus says is "the Amen."

The Master next refers to himself as "the faithful and true witness." At his First Advent Jesus said: "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things"; "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me"; "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 7:16; 8:28; 14:24). The Saviour hereby testifies that he truly transmitted the whole message of the Father to those called of God, and that his faithfulness to the instructions he received cost him his very life. Although this dual nature of his witness (i.e., truth and faithfulness) characterized his whole ministry, it particularly climaxed *the end of his ministry*. It is to this latter application that Jesus apparently alludes. He was eventually accused by the religious leaders of his day of being politically dangerous to the Romans, possibly jeopardizing their power and prestige. Pilate questioned him on this accusation (Mark 15:2). Jesus had claimed to be the King of the Jews, and Pilate asked, "Are you what you claim to be?" Jesus replied, "Yes, thou sayest it"; in other words, "I am." The truthfulness of that answer was his final public testimony, and his faithful adherence to that claim caused him to be a "witness" (Greek *martus*, or martyr) in the fullest sense of that word.

The last of the triad of titles referred to in verse 14 is "the beginning of the creation of God." Although Jesus was God's dearest and "only begotten Son," "the firstborn of every creature," His "beloved Son," yet it pleased God, in His wisdom, to bruise Christ both to make his soul an offering for sin and to make the Captain of the soldiers of the Cross perfect through sufferings (Isa. 53:10; Matt. 3:17; John 3:16; Col. 1:15,18; Heb. 2:10).

Therefore, the title "Amen" is also predictive of the truth, or verity, that the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ will be recognized as the sun in its resplendency; i.e., as God's double or representative before men, as the great revealer of God's purposes respecting mankind. Now in this end of the Gospel Age, the Lord's people are privileged to glimpse in grand and glorious detail the life and teachings of the Master. The literal sun is but a feeble representation of the fullness of the gospel and tidings of great joy that shall be unto all people, shining in the face of Jesus Christ.

75. Benjamin Wilson, *The Emphatic Diaglott* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: International Bible Students Association, 1942), p. 313 footnote.

Jesus clearly understood that in order to be constituted the Redeemer, the purchaser of Adam and Adam's race, he had to give his life as a ransom. His faithfulness each step of the way brought compensatory blessings, assurances of the Father's approval. However, the Beloved One, absorbed in his mission of mercy to mankind, did not realize the full depth of trial he had to undergo as the "Man of Sorrows." Although he was a Son—yea, "the beginning of the creation of God"—he had to experience the following as a corresponding price to offset Adam's sin.

Adam the Sinner

A *serpent* was associated with the death of Adam.

Adam was betrayed by his *companion* and wife Eve in the *Garden of Eden*.

Part of the curse upon man was that he till (plow) a *thorn-* and thistle-yielding earth with the *sweat* of his *brow* (Gen. 3:17–19).

Adam was created a *king* with the earth as his domain. He was condemned to death.

The *curse* of death came upon Adam through the medium of a *tree* and its fruitage.

In sinning, Adam incurred a feeling of *guilt*, a sense of shame and of *separation* from God; he hid *behind a tree* (Gen. 3:8; Isa. 66:17).

The time was the "cool of the day" (Gen. 3:8).

Christ Made Sin

Satan, through the instrumentality of the *dragon* (serpent), or Roman civil power, executed Christ.

Jesus was betrayed in the *Garden of Gethsemane* by the kiss of Judas, his own "*familiar friend*" (Psa. 41:9; Matt. 26:50).

A crown of *thorns* encircled the Saviour's *brow*. Earlier he *sweat* blood, accompanied with tears and strong crying (Matt. 27:29; John 19:5; Heb. 5:7).

Jesus was mocked as a *king*. Nailed to the Cross was the inscription "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (Matt. 27:29; John 19:19).

"*Cursed* is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). Christ was hung upon a cross, or *tree*; he tasted vinegar and gall (Acts 5:30).

Jesus, the innocent Lamb of God, had to experience a sense of *guilt*: (1) He was crucified between two thieves. (2) The Master's clothing was completely removed, and he was shamefully exposed stark naked not in back but *in front of the tree*. (3) To qualify as the Redeemer in the fullest sense of the word, Jesus had to drink the last bitter dregs of the cup of death; namely, in order to take the sinner's place and partake of the curse to the full, he had to have a feeling of utter *alienation* from God for one brief moment (Psa. 22:1).

Jesus died on the Cross at the "ninth hour," that is, 3:00 P.M. (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34).

Only now is one prepared to see the depth of sorrow and degradation that “the messenger of the covenant” had to fulfill. The career of One who saved others from disease and sin, whose lips poured forth grace and truth, was thus brought to an abrupt and astonishing termination.

Naked and twisted, with joints dislocated from hanging, his dying form was exposed to the unsympathetic public, who gaped upon his nudity (Psa. 22:13,14,17). No wonder the prophet declares: “As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 52:14). He was figuratively disfigured more than any other man previously or since . . . for in the light of his claim to be the true Messiah, the Beloved of the Father, an unbelieving nation looked upon him as an obvious blasphemer who incurred God’s wrath, as evidenced by the manner and circumstances of his death. Jesus felt the shame of his exposure *to the quick*, and inwardly drew the analogy, “I am a *worm*, and no [not a] man” (Psa. 22:6–8).

Due consideration has now been given to the separate component parts of the titles by which Jesus addresses the Church of Laodicea; namely, “the Amen,” “the faithful and true witness,” and “the beginning of the creation of God.” The significance of their use as a composite whole by the Holy Spirit is as follows. Jesus’ sympathy with the divine program led to the sealing of his testimony with his own blood upon the Cross—even though he was the chiefest of God’s creation. Similarly, the career of the Little Flock (who are likened at the end of the age unto “gods,” the apple of the Father’s eye) will terminate in violence. While the Church of Philadelphia was spared and kept back from the “hour of temptation,” which is yet to come, this will not be true of even the faithful ones in Laodicea—that is, *in the closing moments of this era*—as is indicated by Psalm 82:6,7. “I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like [fallible] men, and fall [sacrificially] like one of the princes [Prince Jesus—see Dan. 11:22].” For this very reason the Master refers to his own similar experience and provides the needed assurance that his special sympathy and counsel will be with the last fateful members. “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [age]” (Matt. 28:20).

Verse 15:

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

While the comparison here is *boiling hot* and *icy cold*, it is the intermediate state of lukewarmness that is, in reality, most accentuated. There is more hope that the cold of the world, who have not yet been warmed by the gospel call, may become hot and fervent Christians than for the lukewarm, who have already been brought within the proximity of the holy fire but were not heated by it into fervent zeal.

If the lukewarm state is a mere transitional stage to greater warmth and fervency, it can be considered in a favorable light; but if it indicates a changing phase towards coolness and abandonment, it will result in a most fatal condition unless speedily rectified. What Jesus is severely castigating is an *abiding* lukewarmness, the condition of a mere sufficiency of religion to lull the conscience into a false sense of

security and drowsiness.⁷⁶ This in-between condition he refuses to recognize, for it is better for mere nominal professing Christians, who have not yet made a public commitment or a private vow to serve the Lord, to cease their false pretensions as “tares” and to become either “hot” or “cold.” As for those who have indeed at one time or another covenanted to serve the Lord, the admonition is to do so with fervency and zeal.

Verse 16:

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Being “cold” indicates not mere cool indifference, but blunt and frank opposition to dispensational truth. Being “hot” signifies fervency of spirit for doctrine and instruction with accompanying zeal for service in the truth. Being “lukewarm” describes the present condition of the nominal Church as a whole, which is neither hot nor cold in its reaction to the responsibilities of the Word. This lukewarmness is manifested by those “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Tim. 3:5).

Surprising perhaps to some, the Lord looks more favorably upon active antagonists of present truth than he does upon professed lukewarm followers of his cause. Jesus’ remark “I would thou wert cold or hot” is tinged with sarcasm to underscore his disapproval of the indifference of his nominal followers to his instruction. It is also true that lukewarm Christians with lethargic, puttylike dispositions can seldom be roused to zealous activity in the Lord’s service. He is looking for “jewels” who display firmness of character and who enthusiastically mirror forth divine grace and truth in their lives (Mal. 3:17).

Far more hope exists for those who are now cold in receiving the instruction of God’s Word; in some instances, their hearts may be loyal to God, but their heads and energies are misdirected in the path of Christian duty. Remember how violently Saul persecuted the early Church and thus thought that he was doing God a service, until his eyes of understanding were opened by Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 8:1–3; 9:1–22). Thereafter, the converted Saul—i.e., the Apostle Paul—was just as faithful and zealous in his defense and espousal of the truth as he previously had been in his opposition.

Because of the current lukewarm condition of the professed Church as a whole, Jesus implies there is little or no hope of bestirring the nominal mass to a favorable reception of his counsel. There was a time when stewardship of the Word was entrusted to the nominal Christian Church, who were God’s ministers of reconciliation to the world, commissioned to teach and preach the gospel to the spiritually poor. “Babylon [mixture of Catholic and Protestant church systems] *hath been* a golden cup in the LORD’S hand” (Jer. 51:7). Jesus’ remarks (verse 16) indicate this privilege would be revoked; indeed a fulfillment along these very lines has already com-

76. It is significant that in the vicinity of the literal city of Laodicea, approximately four miles distant—if not once an integral part of the city, then a suburb—there are noticeably visible the white-robed cliffs of Hierapolis (meaning “holy city”), a place of abounding lukewarm springs and a variety of remarkable pools. Thus spiritual Laodicea is pictured as relaxed, indolent, lukewarm, and indifferent in its zeal for the Lord, his truth, and the garments of his righteousness.

menced. Prophetically, the Master declares it is merely a matter of time before he will “spue out” (utterly disavow or vomit forth) the church systems per se, which for all practical purposes heretofore served collectively as the Lord’s *mouthpiece* either to the world without or to his body members within.⁷⁷

Throughout the gospel dispensation the apostate Church has exerted a “Nicolaitan” spirit over God’s people, or heritage, as well as over the profane or secular public (see pages 34, 48, and 49). Having formerly exercised all the prerogatives of judgment, it condemned to the fagot and torch any who questioned the assumed role of clerical authority. As a climactic conclusion to this gospel era, the balance of power is to be reversed (not before, however, a brief “hour” in which a police state with orthodox religious associations will predominate). As a result of the reversal, all religious perversions will be disallowed. Those who have exercised judicial abuse will themselves experience retributive justice; they will become a “judged people,” as the name Laodicea suggests.

Samson fell asleep in Delilah’s lap and was subsequently bound, fettered, and blinded in servitude to the false Philistine system of “Dagon” control and worship. The religious public at large have likewise been blinded with superstition, ignorance, and prejudice to serve mystic Babylon. Ultimately, as their counterpart Samson did, they will in blind fury tear down the temple structure of society, thus accomplishing the divine purpose of judgment.

The apocalyptic vision contains an implied irony and a meaningful choice of words. That religious system (the Nicolaitans) who lorded it over the people (masses) in the Dark Ages is now, in turn, to be judged by the people during the Laodicean period. This judgment is to progress in two stages: (1) Marking the commencement of this period, there was a legal and mental rejection of Babylon by the Lord. (2) Marking the termination of this era, there will be a stern execution of the sentence divinely decreed. Thank God, the Kingdom of Messiah, when inaugurated following this judgment and the *close* of the Gospel Age with its seven stages of *development*, will usher in a promised era of reconstruction and lasting happiness!

Verse 17:

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:

Verse 18:

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

77. The ruins of Laodicea are of great interest. With the exception of an amphitheater and a gymnasium on the side of a hill, the great bulk of this once vast city is so reduced to rubble that hardly any of its remains exceed four feet in height. Thus the future prophetic fate of spiritual Laodicea is now forcibly and visibly demonstrated and historically displayed and exemplified in type. Truly it is a city “spewed out” and strewn over a huge area.

This message indicates the self-complacent attitude of the nominal Church of Christ, which is completely unaware of its true condition. The following table is presented for convenient examination:

Nominal Christian's Personal Evaluation: "I am . . ."	Risen Lord's Appraisal: "Thou art . . ."	His Remedial Counsel: "Buy of me . . ."	The Proposed Cure: "That thou . . ."
Rich	Poor	Gold tried in fire	Mayest be rich
Increased with goods	Naked	White raiment	Mayest be clothed
[In] need of nothing	Wretched, miserable, and blind	Eye salve	Mayest see

In the past the city of Laodicea became a great banking and commercial center (Tacitus, *Annals*, 14:27). Great wealth was acquired primarily from its wool and textile trade, as the city was noted for its breed of sheep that produced soft, glossy *black* wool, which needed no dyeing. The civic pride of Laodicea was such that though it was severely damaged by an earthquake in A.D. 60, it refused proffered aid from the treasury of Imperial Rome . . . the city was in "need of nothing." In addition, Laodicea was a medical center for eye and ear maladies, and was specially noted for its famed Phrygian powder compounded into tablet form for the cure of ophthalmia.

Jesus therefore is saying, as it were: "Buy of me not the black garments of your looms, but the white garments of my righteousness. Glory not in the white-robed cliffs that beautify and adorn the entry way leading to your city, for they signify ease and opulence. . . . Buy of me the spiritual eye salve of truth, not your own eye salve of carnal-mindedness."

There is only one way to obtain ("buy") the gold, the white raiment, and the eye salve of which the risen Lord speaks. To effectually begin to rid oneself of the contaminating influences of the world, the flesh, and the Devil, the individual must do three things (whether or not he is actually aware of the second).

First, he must recognize Jesus as the Saviour sent of God, and be repentant of his former life in sin and under condemnation in Adam.

Second, he must give up his earthly inheritance in order to obtain the spiritual. In other words, the Christian must relinquish his right to a future hope of everlasting human life here on planet Earth as guaranteed to each member of Adam's race by the Redeemer, who tasted death for every man and gave his life "a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (Heb. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:6). This declaration will go forth in the resurrection age, when all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and come forth, and they that hear (obey) shall live (John 5:25-28).

Third, the individual must commit his entire life and trust into the Lord's hands. He must recognize Christ as his Redeemer in the strictest sense of that word, as the Master and Lord of his life. In short, the Christian must consecrate his all to God through Christ in order to be eligible for a spiritual inheritance.

Such consecration and surrender are required to buy of the Master the reward reserved in heaven for those who love God supremely. Therefore, all things incidental and vitally related to this salvation are also the Christian's by reason of his obedience to and compliance with the Lord's instruction.

In the Parables of the Field and the Pearl of Great Price, Jesus presented his own life as an example and pattern of behavior. He indicated that he himself sold all he had of his former glory *that he might buy* the field (the world), which contained the pearl of great price (the true Church)—see Matthew 13:44–46.

The “gold tried in the fire” means that the exceeding great and precious promises are given to the Christian to enable him to become an ultimate partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). This gold, the divine nature, can be secured only by his successful endurance of the fiery trial of faith in the earthly house of his pilgrimage.

The “white raiment” is the robe of Christ's righteousness imputed to the Christian to cover his sins and shortcomings from divine indignation. Such clothing, made possible through the advocacy of Christ, enables the Christian to approach unto and commune in prayer with the Father, who dwells “in the light which no man can approach unto” and is a “consuming fire” (1 Tim. 6:16; Heb. 12:29). Without this covering, the Christian would be naked in God's sight.

The anointing of “thine eyes with eyesalve” by the Master is essentially the impartation to the Christian of the promised Holy Spirit from on high, enabling him to understand the Word of Truth, the Bible (John 14:26). Through the Holy Spirit, previously blind eyes of understanding are henceforth as truly and miraculously opened as were the literal blind eyes of some of the beggars of Jesus' day—and by the same gracious Lord.

The Master further enjoins:

Verse 19:

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

The Master's penetrating gaze could easily and very properly find fault with the propensities of fallen man. Indeed he could succinctly and with utmost clarity point out the pertinent sins of the most exemplary members of Adam's race. He could judge not only the world and the worldly Church nominal, but his most ardent followers as well. If, however, pity for humanity prompted him to heartily respond to the Father's invitation to fulfill a key role in the divine plan of redemption, which provides universal opportunity of salvation for all mankind under the more favorable conditions of the Millennial Age, how much more his sympathy extends to those who now, in this “present evil age,” look to him for the promised liberty and privilege of sonship . . . to those who flee to him for refuge from the oppressive tyranny of sin.

Thus the Master's words in verse 19 are of a constructive, not critical, nature; they are designed to restore to spiritual health those who heed the Good Physician's advice and take the prescribed remedy (see Revelation 2:7, page 36). “For he [the Lord] knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Psa. 103:14). “And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”

(1 John 2:1). “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15).

The Lord counsels that he will look favorably upon his followers in proportion to the zeal and applied energetic steps of repentance they take to restructure their lives in the channel of his instruction and discipline. “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?” (Heb. 12:6,7).

Verse 20:

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.

The messages of the Lord to the six previous churches in Asia were sent forth to his followers from a far country (Matt. 25:14,15; Luke 19:12). Although absent from earth, yet he has, in one sense, been present and ever near to his followers by means of the administrative capabilities of his exalted office at the right hand of the Father. “All power is given unto me [Jesus] in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). Innumerable holy agencies, principalities, and powers are at the Master’s command to effectually safeguard his little ones from the least to the gravest danger—except for those experiences he purposely allows to filter through to test and develop them as new creatures.

His message to Laodicea differs from the previous messages in that it presumes the Saviour is already invisibly present in earth’s atmosphere. Note that he does not threaten an imminent return, but instead speaks to his Church as one having already arrived, true to his promise (Matt. 24:45–47; Luke 12:42,43). He *stands present*, waiting for a response to his message, a reaction to his *knock*; that is, he providentially directs attention to various time-feature prophecies recorded in the Word of God that indicate the fulfillment of this event (Dan. 12:12). Only those who are searching for and are alert to the signs of the times—only those who, in addition, have been divinely guided to hear his *voice*—are in a position to open the door of their hearts and to be fed with the deep spiritual truths available now and promised to those who abide in the “time of the end” (Dan. 12:9).

Many sincere, devout Christians identified with the present nominal Church systems have, in some measure, unwittingly become intoxicated with the spirit of worldliness. Overcharged with the cares of this life, they are listless and lethargic, their spiritual senses numbed with a slow paralysis and deep slumber. In Song of Solomon 5:3, they are pictured as having put off their street dress or work habit. Having disrobed and changed their garments to sleepwear, and having washed their feet of earthly defilement—incurred in the daily course of their lives—by application for mercy and forgiveness at the throne of grace, they rest upon the Laodicean couch of comfort and contentment, overindulgent in their spiritual progress for the day and confident in their “*need of nothing*.”

When the Master stands outside the chamber in the closing hours of the Passover night of sin with “the drops of the night” (this time corresponds with the early

morning hours of millennial “dew”), he not only knocks but also *affirms his presence* by suggestively and gently rattling the latch of the “fast-closed” door to indicate, on his part, the assurance of his love (Song of Sol. 5:2–4).⁷⁸ This virgin class residing in Babylon, in sympathy and heart union with the Lord, contemplate the sacrifice involved, the additional energy required, in going “forth to meet the bridegroom” (Matt. 25:1). After reflecting upon the matter for a while, the members of this class do finally respond to his loving call, but—to their dismay—too late! They do not exercise themselves soon enough to obtain his chief approval. The Master absents himself for a time from this foolish virgin class and looks elsewhere for his Bride. Ultimately they do enter “his [the Lord’s] garden,” but only after the wedding of the Lamb (Song of Sol. 6:2; Rev. 19:7,9). It is only after they go to the common mart of hard experience coming upon the whole world, referred to in Scripture as the time of great tribulation, that they wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb and make themselves ready to enter the King’s palace (heaven) to forever be with the Lord as a secondary class of bridesmaids or servants *before*, not in, the throne (Matt. 24:21; Rev. 7:14,15). Only those who love the Master supremely will be *in* the throne.

In the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, *all* the virgins slumber and sleep for a time (Matt. 25:1–13). However, upon being awakened, the wise virgin class instantly arise and bestir themselves to “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth” (Rev. 14:4).

A famous contemporary artist has dramatically portrayed a portion of this lesson. In the painting Jesus is standing outside a home; he has already knocked on the door and is expectantly waiting for the invitation to enter. Through the use of skillful perspective, the artist heightens the intensity of the lesson by subtly drawing attention to the door, to the very spot where—alas!—the handle of the outside door lock is missing. At first the viewer is dismayed, thinking the artist blundered in this detail of a work of art otherwise so beautifully executed. However, the viewer soon realizes that, far from being an accidental oversight, this omission is an intended lesson; namely, it is not the Master but the individual who opens the door of the *heart*. Although, condescendingly, the Master does reveal himself through the window of the *intellect* (that is, he enables the fortunate ones to hear his knock), the individual himself must open the heart door—*from within*—and welcome in the Master in order to receive the rich blessings (Song of Sol. 5:4,5). These fundamental truths are both old truths (long-forgotten biblical doctrines now restored to their pristine glory) and new truths (special dispensational lessons now due).

There is a definite significance to the expression “hear *my voice*.” At his First Advent, Jesus was introduced to the Jewish nation, his professed people, by means of a *human instrumentality*: primarily John the Baptist and secondarily John’s sympathetic followers. It is important to note that John was Jehovah’s initial and personal honored agent at the end of the Jewish dispensation. John’s role was to identify the then present and unrecognized Messiah; to prepare as many as were willing, to receive him; and to announce a coming judgment on the nominal mass

78. In the hymn “O Jesus, Thou Art Standing,” Jesus is pictured as “standing outside the fast-closed door” of a home or church, “in lowly patience waiting to pass the threshold o’er.”

for their rejection of him. The Scriptures specifically forecast the role of John as “*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord!’*” (Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3). In essence his message was:

Behold the [present] Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

There *standeth* one among you [present, in your midst], whom ye know not. (John 1:26)

Now also the axe [in preparation] is laid [aimed] unto the root of the trees. (Matt. 3:10)

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost [Spirit], and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his [threshing] floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire [irrevocable destruction of Jewish polity in A.D. 69–73].⁷⁹ (Matt. 3:11,12)

Similarly at the end of the Gospel Age, the Lord has used a human agent as his instrumentality, as “his voice,” to awaken those who have “an ear to hear” and alert them to the secret thieflike presence of the Master in their midst. Just as John the Baptist contemporaneously introduced Jesus and declared an impending day of judgment upon the nation, so in this Laodicean era an individual, Charles Russell (and, secondarily, those associated with his work), announced Messiah’s invisible presence commencing in 1874 and the day of trouble coming upon Christendom and the world, ushering in the Kingdom. The very title of the religious journal Russell edited is meaningful: *Watch Tower and Herald of CHRIST’S PRESENCE*. The title is indeed unique, for all previous reformers announced Christ as the *coming one*, not as “Behold, the bridegroom [already present!]” (Matt. 25:6).^{80,81}

Also significant is the fact that if any man opens the door upon hearing the knock, the Master will come in *personally*, and not through the medium of a priesthood. In much the same way, believers at the First Advent had their attention directed to Jesus as the Messiah; and as they accepted his role and leadings in their lives, they were proportionately blessed. As a class, the scribes and Pharisees did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, nor did they assist others to believe upon him. That conditions at this end of the age are similar is implied by the nature of the Master’s promise to come in privately and personally—to “sup”—with individuals responsive to his call. Although a “knock” is not mentioned, Song of Solomon 3:1–4 describes the endearing characteristics of those the Master will specially enlighten with deep spiritual truths in this harvest period.

79. The “fire” is not merely a reference to the experience peculiar to Pentecost, where the visual cloven tongues of flame visited upon the heads of the waiting Church indicated their acceptance into the mystical body of Christ; it is also a reference to the fire of judgment and indignation (Acts 2:3). The comparison of water and fire is one of contrast, not of similitude.

80. The word “cometh” was improperly inserted in the King James Version and should be omitted, as it is not found in the Sinaitic and other ancient manuscripts.

81. See *The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, pp. 103–172.

Verse 21:

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.

The appropriateness of the promises peculiar to each of the six preceding churches of Revelation has already been noted. Likewise, the above promise to the overcoming Church in Laodicea is singularly significant. As the career of the pilgrim Church during the present era of its humiliation draws to a conclusion, the time is at hand for the anticipated *throneship*, or promised reign, of Christ to begin.⁸² However, before the robes of glory and beauty of the royal priesthood can be worn, the sacrificial garments must first be laid aside. It is still true that only if we suffer with Christ, shall we also reign with him (2 Tim. 2:12).

Brief allusions were previously made to some of the similarities prophesied and prefigured under the John the Baptist type dealing with the initial as well as the broad and general features of the Laodicean harvest period.⁸³ The key thought embodied in the message to Laodicea pertains to the expression “even as I also overcame.” Revelation 3:21 intimates that a close parallelism exists between the harvest at the end of the Jewish Age and the harvest at the end of the Gospel Age, relating particularly to the closing experiences of Jesus’ ministry at his First Advent. A similar trial will befall the last feet, or heel, members of the body of Christ (Gen. 3:15).

Jesus, put to death in the flesh, arose in the spirit and is set down upon Zion’s hill at the right hand of the Father, awaiting the completion and resurrection change of his body members; hence his followers, in the not-too-distant future, will have trials remarkably similar to those of the Master. Then the Father’s signal will come for The Christ (the anointed head and body) to dash Satan’s kingdom to its destruction. A better understanding of the nature of the events to be expected is provided by the Second Psalm, which casts considerable light upon the subject; namely, upon the meaning of the expression “even as I [Jesus] also overcame.”

The Apostle Peter discloses the prophetic nature of this Psalm and its partial fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:25–28). Moreover, a careful consideration of the Psalm indicates a further fulfillment at this end of the age. Note the Apostle Paul’s commentary: “God hath fulfilled the same [promise to the fathers] unto us their children, *in that he hath raised up Jesus again*” (Acts 13:33). The same thought is expressed in Psalm 2:7, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee [literally, brought thee forth].”⁸⁴

82. Antiochus II, surnamed Theos (god), named the city “Laodicea” in honor of his sister (on his father’s side), who also was his wife and queen. This relationship corresponds to the pseudo-Church, which, during her reign in the Dark Ages, was figuratively married to an earthly king instead of waiting for the Lord from heaven at his Second Advent. Near the close of the Laodicean era, there will be a reenactment of this drama for one brief “hour” (Rev. 17:12). It is meaningful, therefore, that the promise to the faithful in the Laodicean Church is that after death they will sit down with Christ in his throne, even as he has sat down in his Father’s throne. The true Church *in glory*—strange as it may seem to the uninitiated—is pictured as Christ’s sister (Song of Sol. 4:9,10), his wife (Rev. 21:2,9), and his queen (Rev. 3:21).

83. See *The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, pp. 249–266.

84. This text does not refer to Jesus’ natural begetting, or to his baptism and dedication at Jordan; it refers to his resurrection and ascension to heaven (Psa. 2:6).

Psalm 2:1,2 reads: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed.” There is a consensus among some Bible students that these verses describe troublous conditions and unrighteous acts prevailing throughout the earth incidental to the transfer to Jesus of that power which he is to take unto himself in asserting his kingship over the nations. However scriptural, however true this view may be based on other inspired texts of the Bible, the Holy Spirit does not indicate this thought here.

The Apostle Peter furnishes information vital to a proper understanding of Psalm 2:1,2—“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4:27,28). In other words, this prophetic Psalm pertains to the experience of Jesus, which God deemed necessary to come upon him (a) to try his faith, (b) to prove the mettle of his character, and (c) to give his life a “ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:6). “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23).

Psalm 2:1,2 can now be considered in the light of Peter’s testimony in Acts 4:25–28. “Why do the heathen [Gentiles, Roman centurion, and soldiery—John 19:23] rage, and the people [Israel—Matt. 27:22,23; Mark 15:13,14; Luke 23:21; John 19:6] imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth [Pilate and Herod—Luke 23:12] set themselves, and the [religious] rulers [Sanhedrin and chief priests—John 19:15,16] take counsel together, against the LORD [God’s predetermined plans], and against his anointed [The Christ].”⁸⁵

The rage of Psalm 2:1 was not that of nation versus nation but that of an infuriated mob, incited by false witnesses supplied by an envious priesthood, who clamored vociferously for Jesus’ death.⁸⁶ This scene contrasted sharply with the Master’s calm and meek submission to his foes . . . without protest like “a lamb dumb before his shearer” (Acts 8:32). The prevailing pandemonium led to the world’s grossest and most notorious perversion of judgment, resulting in the unmerciful rejection and crucifixion of “the just [One]” and the gratuitous release of Barabbas the murderer (James 5:6).

If today, while there is yet a “green tree,” a similar trend is toward license for evil and the miscarriage of justice, wherein enlightened(?) changes in the law of the land, instead of protecting the innocent citizen, are seemingly slanted to favor the criminal, then “what shall be done in the dry [tree]” (Luke 23:31)?

During this hour of Satan’s power in Jesus’ case, the Prince of Darkness capitalized upon the envy and fear of some to mastermind and put into operation a nefarious scheme. With one stroke—namely, the odious death and crucifixion of Jesus upon the Cross—the Adversary and others in sympathy with his evil plan thought they could (a) silence forever by imprisonment in the dungeon of death the Master, who in their estimation posed a constant threat of jeopardy to their position of

85. Counsel is taken first against Jesus, the head of the anointed class, and then later, at the end of the Gospel Age, against his tarrying body members.

86. *Pilate’s Report to Caesar* (Akron, Ohio: Hamilton Publishing House, 1966).

leadership and esteem before the people; (b) nullify the popularity and power of Jesus' public ministry and retard the influence of his doctrine; (c) minimize espousal, or discipleship, to his cause; and (d) effect a relaxation of public moral restraint by his removal from the scene.

The Second Psalm continues in verses 3 and 4: "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall [have the last] laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." The Enemy and his sympathizers mocked and spat upon the Master, derisively goading him ("Prophesy, who is it that smote thee?"—Luke 22:64) and also jeering him as their King. In spite of many previous differences, in this hour of trial the parties to the crime—Satan, the civil and religious leaders, and the general public—*were all united against the Lord*. The unholy spirit of ecumenism and its contagion affected all who breathed hatred and threats to any who dared to challenge their authority. This calls to mind the present scriptural injunction "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid" (Isa. 8:12).

But, thank God, the gates of hell did not prevail against Jesus (Matt. 16:18)! He burst the bonds of death: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). Thus the Apostle Peter reveals both the nature of the bands and cords and who attempted to do the fettering.

Considerable space has purposely been used to elucidate to those living at the latter end of the Laodicean period, the last Church, the significance of the expression "To him that overcometh . . . *even as I also overcame.*"

Following is a sample listing of experiences that came upon Jesus and that will befall the heel members of the body of Christ before the Gospel Age ends:

1. Gethsemane sorrow
2. Betrayal by Judas
3. Satan's hour
4. Expediency of one man's dying (Jesus' doctrine was more feared than that of the agitators of violence); release of Barabbas
5. Clandestine trial and kangaroo court
6. Incited mob and false witnesses
7. Jesus' patriotism questioned (called a civil insurrectionist); opponents' hypocritical declaration "We have no king but Caesar"
8. Criticism of Jesus' prophecy regarding destruction of the holy Temple (established religionists of his day)
9. Fickle behavior of crowd ("Hosanna in the highest"; "Crucify him, crucify him"!)
10. Scourging and crucifixion
11. Feeling of being forsaken (Psa. 22:1–6; 82:6,7)
12. Note of triumph ("It is finished")

Verse 22:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

See previous explanation on pages 34 and 35.

Further Analogy of the Seven Churches

Hitherto, each message to each church was examined for its pertinent application to the specific era involved. Now all seven messages should be considered as a composite whole, for then their progressive historical fulfillment will be seen as the correct method of interpretation from yet another standpoint.⁸⁷ A historic overview of the experience of the Christian Church during this Gospel Age is based on prior *successive* events and dealings by God with men ever since the inception of human history. The following vast panoramic vista of human experience exhibits the value inherent in understanding the progressive nature and fulfillment of prophecy.

Adam, as originally created, was most desirable in his primitive simplicity and purity. So, likewise, was Ephesus in its “first love” for the Saviour; that is, until it fell from its intense personal love (Rev. 2:4,5). Adam’s affection for Eve superseded his former reverence for the Creator. The promise made to Ephesus intimates a previous expulsion from the garden of God’s favor, but restoration to Edenic grace was possible through a prompt and hearty repentance (Rev. 2:7). Also, just as the Logos (Voice) of God customarily walked in the Garden of Eden and com-

87. On a hilltop outside the suburbs of Laodicea, the last-mentioned of the seven churches in Revelation, a religious structure has been built in honor of the Apostle of the Apocalypse. It is called “St. John’s Church.” This building is not an ancient pagan temple later restructured and rededicated to the Apostle; rather, it was designed originally for Christian use. There are nine conspicuous abbreviated towers, seven of which are arranged in a unique manner to form the inner core of this complex. At the base of each of the seven towers, there is a semicircular supporting arch and opening. A circular pathway conducts through each of these in a mysterious and intriguing manner, and the towers stand astride the circular walk at evenly spaced intervals. Above, upon the front face of each arch, a simple emblem is inscribed; for instance, a circle containing a cross is on one, and another has the star of David. The circle apparently represents both a crown and unending life, and the cross signifies the means by which these are obtained. In other words, it is suggested that the seven arches were intended to represent the seven stages of the development of the Church down through history. The seven would also indicate a complete and sacred sequence of the whole.

Such ceremonial arches were commonly erected as memorials by the Romans in the Apostle’s day, and ever since by other nations, to serve as *symbols of victory*. The famous Titus’s Arch in Rome displays that emperor’s conquest of Israel; the decorative frieze profusely portrays various features of that struggle and the consequent reward and spoils of conquest—among other things, the lamp stand and the shewbread table of the Jewish Temple. There is also Trajan’s, as well as Hadrian’s, Arch. In more recent times Paris has been the site of the “*Arc de Triomphe*.”

The symbolism inherently implied in each arch of St. John’s Church, with its individual insignia embossed at the forepart, sets forth the promise, or spiritual reward, to be given to each Church; namely, to each one who successfully passes through the arch or, stated another way, “to him that overcometh.” The one who enters and passes beneath and beyond this covenant rainbow arch of promise, obediently abiding by the terms denoted, will receive the reward.

The idea of this inner processional circular walk was probably suggested by the observation that the seven churches or cities in Asia Minor each follow after the other in a *geographic circle* in the very successive order of the Apocalypse.

muned with the first human pair until sin entered, so in the very beginning of Ephesus the Saviour walked amidst the candlesticks of light and favor.

The trouble and tribulation of Smyrna correspond to Israel's distress in the land of Egypt, which was likened to a trial in the furnace of affliction (Deut. 4:20; Rev. 2:10). Israel's bondage existed up to the time of the Exodus with its *ten plagues* (compare Rev. 2:10). The obedient Israelites, who faithfully applied the Passover blood of the lamb to the doorposts of their dwellings, were spared from the destroying angel of death (Exod. 12:12,13). Those faithful in Smyrna were promised they would "not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:11). Of the Israelites, only the firstborn were liable to death if disobedient. The loyal firstborn class were later signally honored pictorially by their replacement and representation in the crowning glory of the Levitical priesthood of that nation (Num. 3:45).

Pergamos corresponds to the further development of Israel as a nation following their exodus from Egypt up through the period of the judges. In the Apocalypse this is significantly alluded to by the reference to the "hidden *manna*" (Rev. 2:17). During the forty years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness of Sinai, they were fed with manna from heaven (Exod. 16:4,5). In the latter part of this experience, they encountered the very persons mentioned in the message to Pergamos, namely, Balaam and Balac (Num. 22:10–12; Rev. 2:14). Israel's entrance into the Land of Promise was a climax in itself, for there they obtained residence and independent rulership under their own judges for over four centuries.

Thyatira closely parallels Israel's becoming a royal kingdom, reaching the zenith of her glory in the days of King David and King Solomon, and then gradually declining during this same era of kings to Queen Jezebel, who hastened the degradation with her evil and pernicious influence. It is to be observed that the Lord was displeased from the very beginning of this period of kingship; and, as it were, He only grudgingly agreed to tolerate this arrangement because the nation would have many valuable, though sad, experiences through their headstrong desire to have rulers like other peoples (1 Sam. 8:4–9). Various captivities toward the close of this period of the kings, ending with the Babylonian captivity, portended national disaster for Israel.

Sardis pertains to the "few names" of the remnant of survivors who barely escaped with their lives, who were not blotted out of existence in 606 B.C. when Israel was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

The Philadelphia period of natural Israel covers their freedom from captivity when King Cyrus of Persia issued a decree of release in 536 B.C. At this time the door was open to them to return to their homeland. The re-laying of the foundation and the erection of Zerubbabel's or the Second Temple occupied an important part of this period. Reference is made both to an open door of opportunity and to the erection of pillars and the reconstruction work first of the temple and then of the city (Rev. 3:8,12). Spiritual Philadelphians who were obedient were spared a specially severe "hour" of trial to occur in the next period (Rev. 3:10). The Philadelphia time parallel in Jewry corresponds to the period from 536 B.C. up to the initial advent of Christ.

Just as in the Laodicean period or harvest of the Jewish nation at the time of the First Advent, Jesus' presence, announced by John the Baptist, was generally unrecognized—"There standeth one among you, whom ye *know not*" (John 1:26)—so likewise today, spiritual Israel is blind to the reality of Christ's second presence. However, the Apostle John, while noting the nation failed to hearken to Jesus, observed that as individuals they could sup and commune with him: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11,12). And just as spiritual Laodicea is to be spewed out of favor and existence, so upon his own nation Jesus declared, "Your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:38). In A.D. 70, some years after Jesus' death and departure, this pronouncement was fulfilled in a most gruesome manner, culminating in the destruction of Israel's national polity.

In conclusion, it should be remembered that following Jesus, in the best sense, means walking in his steps, striving to do as nearly as possible what he would do today, and taking lessons from what he personally did and said and from the instructions he left through the apostles in respect to the path of fellowship in his sufferings, that is, in respect to the path to glory and joint-heirship in his Kingdom.

The Throne Scene

Part II: Chapters 4 & 5

Revelation Chapter 4

Verse 1:

After this I looked, . . .

The statement “*After this I looked*” should not be interpreted to mean that the spiritual fulfillment of the events and things John was about to see and hear commenced immediately, for it should be remembered that the preceding message and forecast of events given to the seven churches embraced the entire Gospel Age in their fulfillment.

. . . and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: . . .

How unbelievable this spectacle must have seemed to John—to see a door ajar in heaven! The Apostle does not describe the door in the present sense, as an “open door,” but infers he witnessed it in the process of *being* opened. No doubt John’s curiosity and desire were fired by the very motion of the door opening, a motion that seemed to beckon him to enter its portals and gaze therein. No doubt also, he was impressed with the insufficiency of his own humanity, confined by gravity to earth, to gain access to an open door in the ethereal atmosphere. Despite the willingness of his spirit, his flesh could but with futility aspire to attain the proper height and perspective to look within. (Apparent here is a spiritual lesson from Isaiah 55:9—“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”)

. . . and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, . . .

If the reader puts himself in the Apostle’s place, he can imagine what utter amazement struck John when he heard this voice emanating from the heavens! Such was its volume and megaphonic force, with a corresponding immensity of coverage, that it sounded not simply like the amplified voice of mortal man but like a trumpet blown with divine power, producing an articulate, authoritative pronouncement (1 Cor. 14:8).

While this voice was the first audible sound John heard in this particular vision, it also emphatically reminded him of the former or first voice; namely, that of his risen Lord, who had addressed him with a message to each of the seven churches (Rev. 1:10). The significance of this reference to the trumpetlike voice of the Master is that the John class would be granted a miraculous insight (open door) into the deep things of God (in heaven) in regard to His counsel and future purposes . . . similar to the backward panoramic view of Revelation 1:12. The spiritual fulfillment and experience by the John class commenced in 1878, a date that will be considered further in examining the fourteenth chapter of Revelation.

. . . Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

In view of John's physical limitations, already mentioned, such a request might appear meaningless; yet by the very utterance of these words, the Holy Spirit indicates otherwise. The purpose is to underscore the personal worthiness of the Apostle John to receive such an *invitation*. His interest had already been attested by holy devotion and zealous activity in the Lord's service (Rev. 1:2,9). The fact that no further demonstration of faith was required by John is manifest because, without delay, he was translated to the heavenly realm and to spiritual things above in order to be given a preview of things to come.

Verse 2:

And immediately I was in the spirit: . . .

Sometimes, when the due time for unveiling prophecy arrives, the faithful are rewarded with understanding in an abrupt and unanticipated manner. Thus the faithful John class is compared to (1) Daniel the beloved, who beseeched the Lord for enlightenment concerning a prophetic vision (Dan. 10:11–14; 12:8); (2) the early disciples, who queried the Master on the meaning of his parables (Matt. 13:36; Luke 8:9); (3) the Bereans of old, who daily and diligently searched the Scriptures (Acts 17:11); and (4) those who laboriously search for truth as for “hid treasures” (Prov. 2:3,4).

. . . and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

The inferred jetlike ascent of John, and his being deposited within the heavenly court, heighten the sense of anticipation. What spectacle, first and foremost, will attract his attention? Quickly John's gaze was riveted upon a marvelous throne chair in heaven that, for the moment at least, occupied central importance in the vision. Hence the fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation are referred to as “The Throne Scene.”

Note that the Apostle does not say he beheld One seated upon a throne in heaven; rather, he first beheld a throne . . . and then One seated thereon. Perhaps he entered the spacious throne room either from the rear or in such a manner that, initially, he was unaware of any occupant upon the throne. Only subsequently did he behold the One sitting on the throne. In the next verse John paints a word picture of this most important personage eternal in both the heavens and the earth, for he beholds a symbolic portrayal of Jehovah as Emperor over all, a Being of unsurpassed greatness and, certainly, of far more transcendent importance than the chair upon which He sits.

There is an important lesson here for the John class; namely, that order, authority, and power do exist above, although at present, to all outward appearance, they seem to be inoperative. Despite the disdainful disregard and often relentless persecution of the saints down through the Gospel Age, and despite the perversion and miscarriage of justice in matters both civil and religious, the predominance of evil is both temporary and illusory. The fact that this chair is already established, set in heaven, provides a foundation for faith and an anchor for hope.

Verse 3:

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: . . .

The Scriptures unequivocally state and teach that in the literal or actual sense “no man [including John] hath seen God at any time” (John 1:18). All that anyone, apostle or prophet, has ever been privileged to see is a symbolic or figurative representation of God’s likeness.

Observing the physical aspect of this representation of the Creator, John discerned the exposed portions of His body and noted that the skin was not soft and fleshlike in texture and tone; instead it possessed a hard stonelike appearance. In other words, while the form of the One seated on the throne resembled that of a man in a body-structure sense, it differed in composition. The entire body *substance* consisted of just two gem stones. That they were probably neither marbled nor stratified in appearance will be shown shortly.

A person is sometimes referred to as “a jewel,” meaning he or she possesses a particularly admirable character trait.¹ Thus, of all the stones that exist in nature, the Holy Spirit in this instance selected the jasper and the sardine stone to picture most suitably the two primary qualities of office possessed by the Eternal One: *glory* and *love*.

The jasper stone of the New Testament is the diamond, which represents God’s wisdom, justice, and power—the ingredients that best illustrate the *glory* of His office.² The transparency of the diamond signifies God’s love of purity and truth, as well as the purity of His good intentions (there “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning”—see James 1:17). Also included in the symbolism is His corresponding hatred of iniquity in both doctrine and practice.

It is likely that the head, the arms, and the legs consisted of the clear transparency and brilliant reflective qualities of the jasper (diamond). The slightest movement of head, arms, or legs would cause a corresponding marvelous display of *glory*, enhancing God’s intellectual brilliance in planning (wisdom—the head); His ability to perform (power—the arms); and His own righteous walk (justice—the legs). As Revelation 15:3 exults, “Just and true are thy ways”!

The sardine, or sard, is a stone considered choice by lapidarians. Used for cameos, brooches, figurines, and so forth, the carnelian is noted for its beauty, its ease (relative softness), and its adaptability for carving and engraving purposes; yet it is sufficiently hard for durability.³ The name carnelian (sard) suggests its warmth of color and fleshlike appearance. Accordingly, this stone represents God’s *love* and tender mercy; that is, He is approachable (through Christ), impressionable, easy to be

1. See Appendix 1, “The High Priest’s Breastplate,” pages 575–617.

2. The other Revelation jewels will be discussed in the twenty-first chapter.

3. There is a factory in the village of Sardis where a certain material called alabaster is shaped into vases, trays, figurines, cups, etc. In reality this rock of two-strata color composition is a form of onyx stone. More particularly, it is the sardonix of the famed variety referred to by the Apostle John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as the “sardine [*sard*] stone” (Greek *sardius*). It is therefore possible—nay, quite probable—that the Apostle was familiar with this variety of stone related to Sard or Sardis in the land of his ministry.

entreated, and compassionate toward the contrite and repentant sinner. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isa. 57:15).

John, in witnessing the vision, was probably afforded a discreet and modest disclosure of a portion of the trunk, or torso, of the Creator’s body. Such a view could have been accomplished by the type of attire and the manner in which it was worn. Although the vision does not specify such detail, it is stated that He who sat on the throne “was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone,” implying that the entire body consisted solely of these two gem stones. If these stones had been displayed in a mixed or conglomerate fashion, John could not have been certain that only two stones were employed. Apparently, then, the Creator’s body proper, or torso, consisted of carnelian stone. The upper portion, or chest cavity, which housed the heart, represents His affection and love; the lower half, His pity and compassion, His *bowels of mercy* (Col. 3:12).

The jasper and the sard can be considered from yet another standpoint. The sheer *brilliance* of the diamond represents Jehovah’s intellect, purity of thought, and penetrating gaze; the *hardness* of the stone represents His fixity of purpose and the overwhelming omnipotence of His power; and the *interior transparency* of the gem indicates the absolute holiness inherent in His character and in His walk. All of these qualities—pictured by the head, the arms, and the legs of jasper, together with the general awesome appearance of His *personal majesty* and its attendant effulgence of light—at first TEND TO FRIGHTEN AND REPEL THE SINNER. On the other hand, the depth (bowels) and the warmth of God’s (*heartfelt*) love, as revealed in His plan of redemption through Christ, strongly attract the sinner. Therefore, these two extreme qualities of glory and love are superlatively counterbalanced in the person of the Creator in this idealistic, yet practical, vision John beheld.

. . . and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

While a rainbow viewed from the surface of the earth is semicircular in appearance, the same phenomenon seen from an airplane frequently appears as a circle, or *ring*, of variegated light. In Scripture the complete circle, or fractional part thereof (the bow), usually indicates a covenant. Thus the nose, the ear, finger rings, and bracelets generally denote a covenant either of marriage or friendship, or of servitude of some kind. The rainbow-encircled throne describes Jehovah’s sovereignty and His general attitude and conduct toward man in redemptive grace.

The miracle of the rainbow, which is formed by a glorious refraction and reflection of the sun’s rays by droplets of rain in the sky, was intended by its Creator to be a remembrancer of the waters of the Great Deluge, calling to mind not only that His wrath was severe but, more important still, that the Flood itself is a backdrop which magnifies the riches of His grace in providing a way of escape for repentant sinners. As a type, Noah and his sons represent, respectively, The Christ and the

willing and obedient of Adam's race who will be carried over, beyond the Millennium, into the new life and age of eternal bliss (in the ages to come).⁴

Furthermore, the bow in the cloud represents God's recognition of mankind's need for mercy and tolerance on His part if they are to survive the searching scrutiny of divine justice. The bow was the token of God's promise that nevermore would He destroy all flesh as He did in the Flood (Gen. 9:12–17). Of course the bow of promise did not indicate that henceforth God could not, or would not, reserve the right to exercise severe judgments; rather, it indicated His purpose to never again destroy such an extremely high percentage of humanity—only eight souls survived!

In regard to John's description of the throne scene, he reveals that the bow, or arc, encircling Jehovah's throne did not characteristically exhibit the various colors of the spectrum, but consisted solely of one color: emerald green. In other words, the bow about the throne resembled the rainbow in *form* but not in color composition. Not only did the bow fail to possess variegated colors, but also it did not have the usual aqueous appearance or hazy, misty quality. Instead, it had a hard, durable finish, resembling the *surface* as well as the color of the emerald. If the bow had been typically aqueous, John would have stated that a green rainbow encircled the throne, instead of a rainbow "in sight like unto an emerald [stone]."

The lesson here is similar to that already considered in connection with the enduring administrative qualities of God's office prefigured in the sard and jasper stones. His "emerald rainbow covenant" would not be illusory, vague, and ephemeral like the ordinary bow in the heavens, but would be steadfast and enduring . . . a *concrete* assurance of hope for the future.

The emerald green color denotes that freshness, vigor, and eternal *youth* will be the fruitage of this covenant. These desirable qualities will be the proverbial pot of gold, *God's gift*, at the *end* of the rainbow, namely, at the conclusion of the next age (1 Cor. 15:24–26; Luke 20:35,36). "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man[']s life] than the golden wedge of Ophir" (Isa. 13:12).

Verse 4:

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.

The Revelator next observes that encircling THE GREAT THRONE were twenty-four subsidiary thrones. The expression "twenty-four seats" used in the King James Version is an inferior translation of the original Greek text, and should more properly be rendered "twenty-four thrones." This latter term is especially appropriate because (a) these chairs were in close proximity to the central seat of divine government, and (b) each occupant of the twenty-four seats was robed in *kingly* attire.

The intriguing posture of these enthroned "elders" about the throne excites interest—who are they? Some Bible expositors believe the twenty-four elders represent

4. Viewed from another standpoint, this type also has a Gospel Age application.

the action and mood of the redeemed, or true, Church class of the Gospel Age. Part of the reasoning behind this deduction is as follows.

In preparation for the Solomonic Temple services, David established twenty-four courses, or time periods, throughout the ecclesiastical year, in which portions of the priesthood would take turns at full-time employment in Temple work. This plan ingeniously afforded an opportunity for all the priestly family, which had grown to considerable numbers since the initial establishment of the priesthood five centuries earlier, to actively participate in the Temple ceremonies. It also helped to minimize jealousy, partiality, and contention within the priestly family itself.

Since the twenty-four thrones do call to mind this former priestly arrangement of the courses, it is natural to infer that the twenty-four elders of Revelation are somehow associated with the priesthood and that, therefore, they actually represent the Church, or priesthood, of the Gospel Age. However, this conclusion is inaccurate; and later on, where most appropriate, conclusive proof will be presented to show how it fails to satisfy all the requirements everywhere the expression “four and twenty elders” is found in the Apocalypse.

It is important to reiterate that Revelation is a book of symbols, replete with imaginative language; sometimes the descriptions employed are seemingly of personalities or beings, whereas the internal theme of the vision indicates otherwise. Thus, correctly reasoned, the twenty-four elders personify the canon of Scripture. More specifically, the number “twenty-four” indicates the *twenty-four* books of the Hebrew Testament.⁵ The term “elders” is associated not with the prophets but with the *prophecies*, or books, of the Old Testament; the “white raiment” alludes to the *Holy Scriptures*; the “golden crowns” point to the *divine authority* of the Word of God; and the “thrones” provide assurance of infallibility or *surety of fulfillment*.

However, so that a misunderstanding will not develop, it is important to state that a deliberate association is intended between the twenty-four elders of Revelation and the twenty-four courses of David. The lesson is that the Word of God itself performs a priestly function in connection with the Temple, that is, on behalf of the true Church or Temple class.

Verse 5:

And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: . . .

5. The following title page is submitted as substantive evidence:

TWENTY-FOUR BOOKS
 OF THE
 HOLY SCRIPTURES
 Carefully translated after the best
 Jewish authorities
 By
 Isaac Leeser
 Hebrew Publishing Company
 50-52 Eldridge St., New York.
 1923

It is first necessary to give a basic definition to the terms “lightnings,” “thunderings,” and “voices”—all of which are, in a figurative sense, part of God’s arsenal, the weaponry of His warfare.

The lightnings represent God’s arrows shot forth to subjugate His enemies. Primarily they are *sharp, penetrating truths* sent forth to slay His opponents in either of two ways: (1) A change can be effected in the hearts of adversaries by their death to a former condition; i.e., God’s *arrows of conviction* sometimes so pointedly prick the hearts and the consciences of sinners that they are converted to the path of righteousness and cease to be His enemies. (2) Others have so hardened their hearts that the lightnings, instead of causing them to fall down and prostrate themselves in adoration at His feet, bring down upon them condemnation and resultant confusion or destruction. “Yea, he [God] sent out his arrows, and scattered them [in panic]; and he shot out *lightnings*, and discomfited them” (Psa. 18:14). “Thine arrows also went abroad . . . the lightnings [en]lightened the world” (Psa. 77:17,18). The lightnings also indicate (a) God’s awareness of the deeds of darkness, (b) His disfavor, and (c) the manifestation of His judgment through startling revelations of truth that publicly and dramatically disclose the object of His wrath (such as the rebellion of Korah—Num. 16:23–35).

The thunderings represent God’s *voice of power and authority*. “God thundereth marvellously with his voice” (Job 37:5). “Canst thou thunder with a voice like him?” (Job 40:9). “The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty” (Psa. 29:4).

Who has not, at one time or another in his life, witnessed a violent thunderstorm, and who has not been enthralled in awesome wonder to hear “the God of glory thundereth” (Psa. 29:3)? The more fortunate ones have even heard the voice of rumbling thunder literally roll across the floor of heaven—from one end to the other—to culminate in a fearsome crescendo or clap of thunder! Although a fragmentary and feeble representation of God’s actual authoritative voice, thunder is, nevertheless, a very powerful similitude . . . one that can be mentally grasped and, in a physical sense, thoroughly appreciated. Also frequently associated with thunder is the thought of dissatisfaction or God’s displeasure.

The voices emanating from the throne represent the *multiple and varied agencies*, both animate and inanimate, at God’s disposal and His resourcefulness in making His judgments unmistakably clear. Moreover, the voices indicate His ability to communicate, if necessary, to even the densest of His creatures in a language they cannot fail to understand.

Next to be observed is the sequence of the terms *lightnings*, *thunderings*, and *voices* mentioned in verse 5. This order is not always adhered to either in Holy Writ or in nature.

“And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices.” (Rev. 4:5)

“And there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings.” (Rev. 8:5)

“And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings.” (Rev. 11:19)

In nature the lightning is usually perceived to precede the thunder chiefly because light travels with greater speed than sound. However, at the very center of the storm, the lightning and thunder are practically simultaneous, as indeed God Himself declared in Job 38:25, “Who hath divided . . . a way for the lightning of [His] thunder.” Note that He does not state “the thunder of [His] lightning,” but gives priority to the thunder. It is not unusual to hear rumblings of thunder unaccompanied by light, nor is it unusual to witness frequent flashes of lightning with no accompanying peals of thunder.

In verse 5 the sequence is significant in that the attention of the reader is directed to the commonly assumed relationship between lightning and thunder as that of cause and effect. The voices were added to provide the further detail that the percussive effects of the storm reach down to the level of each individual to whom the storm is directed. The emphasis, therefore, is to call attention to the *source* of these judgments. In all three elements of the storm, the action is clearly of divine origin; it comes “*out of the throne.*”

Now that the basic meaning of these three symbols has been established, more pertinent observations can be made as to the intent of the vision. The lightnings, thunderings, and voices coming forth from the throne do not, in this instance, represent broad and extensive glimmerings of truth. Neither do they represent the general increase of knowledge, nor educational reform, nor the awakening of the masses to either their real or their fancied rights. Moreover, the emphasis of this particular scene should not be traced *merely* to the law of retribution, or to a public exhibition of that which is right or wrong in human society. Rather, the scene emphasizes the open and manifest intervention of God into earth’s affairs as revealed to, and clearly understood by, all those participants involved upon the field of action, the vast majority being destroyed and the few experiencing salvation. Following is a list of such historical occurrences.

1. *The Flood of Noah’s Day*—The previous inhabitants of earth scoffed at Noah and his predictions, but when the Deluge arrived, all became confirmed believers—too late, however, to change their destiny. On the other hand, to Noah and his family, this act of God was favorable and resulted in a thrilling salvation.

2. *The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah*—Flaming fire and molten brimstone lava rained destruction upon these two cities. For a few moments at least, the people were aware of their doom. Abraham, Lot, and the favored few also were cognizant of what was happening.

3. *The Ten Plagues and the Dividing of the Red Sea Waters*—The people of Egypt and Pharaoh’s army and horsemen were witnesses to the judgments of Jehovah either in their discomfiture or in their destruction. The Israelites viewed all these acts as God’s glorious messengers of deliverance.

4. *The Destruction of Solomon’s Temple and the Babylonian Captivity*—The nation of Israel saw in the destruction of their city and of the Temple an act of God in retribution for their former evil.

5. *The Battle of Armageddon*—Those then living will witness not only the decisive defeat of God’s enemies but also the *climax* of all His acts of intervention up to that time.

. . . and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

This text directly refers to the Holy, the secret compartment of the Tabernacle that contained the seven lamps of oil atop the candelabrum,⁶ which provided light for the chamber and, in turn, enabled the priesthood to perform their sacred duties. God Himself, in the highest sense of the word, is the Great Shepherd, or caretaker, of the Church, even though His special agent, Jesus, as the High Priest, is closely associated with the service of trimming the wicks and replenishing the illuminating oil of the Holy Spirit. The fact that seven lamps are supplied here indicates the presence of a “lamp” (a message) to guide the feet of God’s children and enlighten their pathway during each of the seven successive stages of their journey from Ephesus to Laodicea.

If verse 5 is considered in its entirety, there seems to be a contrast intended between (a) the more stately operations of God in history, which are marked by the *sporadic* flashes of His lightning and the intermittent rumblings of His thunder, representing the infrequent public demonstrations of His divine power and authority as exhibited in the natural “heavens” (that is, as understood by the world, or the natural man); and (b) the more quiet acts of His mercy and the *continuous* supply of inner spiritual enlightenment to the “called ones,” those more favorably and immediately situated “before the throne.”

Verse 6:

And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: . . .

The “sea of glass” before the throne, like the “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne,” is another reference to Israel’s Tabernacle and Temple arrangement. First, it is a reminder of the laver of water situated just *outside* (“before”) the first veil, or entrance into the first holy compartment of Israel’s tent of meeting. Whereas the candlestick was located in the interior or the Holy of the Tabernacle, the laver, placed in the courtyard without, was exposed to semipublic prominence before the nation.

“Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD” (Exod. 30:18–20).

According to Scripture, the laver consisted of two primary parts: first, a large round vessel, or basin; and second, a pedestal, or base, called the “foot,” upon which the basin rested. The purpose of the basin was to serve as a supply, or reservoir, of clean water. This large bowl had convenient spigots or outlets below, which enabled the priest to conserve and regulate the flow of fresh water from the vessel above.

6. See pages 17–18.

Hence these faucets permitted one to draw water without contaminating, or directly washing in, the main body of the liquid.

The lower part of the foot, or base, of the laver was conveniently shaped like a large saucer with a thick protruding rim that curved upward. Rising in the center of this curved, troughlike portion of the base was a vertical column with an enlarged capital, designed to support the basin. Therefore, in addition to functioning as a pedestal, or prop, for the bowl above, the foot, or base, served as a shallow circular tub, enabling one to both sit and wash his hands and feet.

“And he [Bezaleel] made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the *lookingglasses* of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” (Exod. 38:8). The ancients did not have glass pocket mirrors such as are commonly possessed by women today, since glass was not known or manufactured for public use. Rather, a flat piece of highly polished metal served this purpose in a most practical manner.

What this interesting scriptural detail reveals is that the laver was not simply made of brass or copper, but was constructed of very refined, highly polished material. Thus, not only did the laver and its foot serve as a vessel, but its gleaming exterior served as a mirror, enabling the one washing thereat to see both the need for and the specific area in need of cleansing. In its antitypical signification, the mirror serves the twofold purpose of showing the Christian’s image in need of cleansing, as well as of theoretically reflecting Christ’s glorious image as an example of holiness for the Christian to copy.

The laver represents the Word of God in the following capacity:

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear [reverence] of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).

“And [having] our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:22).

“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:23–25).

More specifically, the term “sea of glass”—a reminder of the main laver used in Solomon’s Temple, which is related to the laver of the Tabernacle—merely emphasizes a corresponding larger receptacle. The word “sea” usually refers to an extensive body of water, such as an ocean. Purposely designated a sea for this reason, the laver in the Temple was a large vessel, containing an ample reserve, or supply, of water for the Temple service. “And he made a molten sea, ten cubits [15 feet] from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits [7½ feet]: and a line of thirty cubits [45-foot circumference] did compass it round about” (1 Kings 7:23). “It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the *sea* was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward. And the thickness of it was an handbreadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; and it received and held *three*

thousand baths” (2 Chron. 4:4,5).⁷ Thus God’s power (the oxen) on behalf of the nation (twelve oxen, hence twelve tribes) was constantly on the alert. “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him” (2 Chron. 16:9).

In the foregoing it is apparent that the primary purpose of the laver was for cleansing. However, the laver serves another less conspicuous but essential function; namely, in addition to being a mirror, the Word serves as a *telescope of things distant*. “For now we see through a *glass*, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am [clearly] known” (1 Cor. 13:12).

It is more in this latter sense, and less as a cleansing agent, that the laver in Revelation is to be considered. Furthermore, the laver is presented not from man’s standpoint but from God’s standpoint. As the candlestick within the Holy compartment of the Tabernacle of congregation was in close proximity to the Most Holy—that is, God’s “throne room,” wherein He figuratively dwelt between the cherubim above the mercy seat—so the laver stood without to the east before the structure in the Court. Thus both articles of furniture were before the throne, one outside and one inside the forepart of the Tabernacle. The laver, then, also represents God’s predictive ability, His unerring foresight—in short, His *omniscience*. God sees perfectly into the future. All things are clear and openly manifest to Him, whereas, as the Apostle says, the Lord’s people can only partly understand His perfect Word—they see “through a glass, darkly.”

The reader should remember, too, that the laver was semispherical in shape and contained water, a transparent fluid. Hence the laver is a reminder of the evil and fraudulent use by the mystic of a *large crystal ball* to assist him in his clairvoyant power as a seer.

*. . . and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne,
were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.*

The Common Version translation of the words “four *beasts*” (Greek *zōon*) and “four *living creatures*” (Hebrew *chai*, Ezek. 1:5) should be rendered more properly “four *beings*” or “four *living ones*.” In Ezekiel (Chapters 10, 11, and 41) they are also styled “cherubims”; in Isaiah (Chapter 6), “seraphims.” However, the terms “seraphim” and “cherubim” are synonymous, having a direct etymological connection. Wherever mentioned as such in Scripture, these four living ones are essentially the same beings. Any seeming discrepancy of detail merely accentuates various aspects of their operation, and was intentionally inserted by the Holy Spirit for reasons peculiar to the scene and the theme of each vision.

In their activity throughout Holy Writ, the four living ones occupy a unique and most honored position in their association with Deity. In verse 6 there is a deep significance to the expression “in *the midst of the throne*.” Surely the four beings are not within the chair itself, for God is the sole occupant of that chair. Rather, these four entities play a most important role at the very core of the symbolic vision, that is, “in the midst of” *the throne scene*. Their close proximity to the seat of Jehovah implies a direct and significant relationship.

7. Compare 1 Kings 7:26.

For a proper understanding of verse 6, it is essential to review the symbolic vision of God that Moses and the nobles of Israel saw at Mount Sinai (Exod. 24:9,10). There they beheld a paved work (or pavement) of sapphire, which upheld God's throne. Described as "the body of heaven in his [its] clearness," the platform resembled a large block or flooring of ice, and it was the color of the sky throughout; indeed, it was as though the platform were frozen *atmosphere*, the body (firmament—see Gen. 1:6–8) of heaven in its clearness.

Additional information is furnished by the Prophet Ezekiel, who reveals the supporting function of the four living ones; namely, the heavenly floor, or platform, upon which the Creator's throne stood was, in turn, supported from beneath by four symbolic cherubim.⁸ "And the likeness of the firmament *upon the heads* of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. . . . And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne" (Ezek. 1:22,26).

The propitiatory lid, or cover, to the Ark of Testimony, the only article of furniture in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle, was made of solid gold hammered out into a flat slab, at either end of which were two cherubim also formed out of the same piece. In a crouched stance, facing inward toward each other, the two cherubim gazed fixedly down upon the slab between them. With wings outstretched, they were ready and eager to fly when the atonement blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat (Exod. 37:6–9).

The symbolism of the lid, in part at least, denotes that God's Love and Power (the two cherubim) cannot fly on their errand of mercy on behalf of fallen man until the blood of redemption has been applied, until the ransom price has been paid over to Justice, pictured by the flattened portion of the propitiatory cover. In other words, justice precedes generosity. The basis for mercy is, first, the satisfaction of justice.

Thus the Ark of the Covenant emblemizes, in a simplified and condensed version, the throne scene of God's glory. It is important to note the representation of both the throne floor and the throne chair. First, the propitiatory slab pictures the supporting pavement of God's throne. "Justice and judgment are the habitation [foundation] of thy throne" (Psa. 89:14). Second, the throne chair, while not seen, is implied. "Thou that dwellest between [sitteth above] the cherubims, shine forth" (Psa. 80:1; 99:1). It is reasonable to assume that the unseen chair is theoretically obscured by the overwhelming effulgence of God's personal glory, as evidenced by the Shekinah light above and between the cherubim. Of great significance is the inseparability of the cherubim from the mercy seat, all three being linked together in one piece. More accurately, there are four attributes united into the one whole if the Shekinah light (God's Wisdom) is viewed as one of the four.

8. The lively action and highly figurative terminology used in describing the cherubim and their actions should not be understood to indicate that they represent actual living personalities—literal spiritual beings or "superangels"—who somehow support God's throne. Emphatically not! Jehovah is thoroughly capable of sustaining His work and doing His entire good pleasure. "I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 46:9). He needs no helping hand. What the cherubim do represent are the four basic attributes of character that underlie *all* of God's actions and upon which His throne, or government, is established.

This same lesson of mutuality and inseparability is further confirmed by the four-faced cherubim that the Prophet Ezekiel saw in vision (Ezekiel 1 and 10).⁹ When one of the cherubim moved, it did not matter which one of the four faces assumed the leading or *frontal* role; for the other three faces—though less prominently displayed because of their arrangement upon the same skull, common to each—had to, of necessity, accompany the more conspicuously featured face whithersoever the head and body frame of the living creature went.

In other words, the spiritual application is that whichever one of God's attributes is most prominently displayed in any divine activity, it must not violate, but must be in conformity to and have the harmonious consent of, the other attributes. This coordination of the attributes, coupled with the statement that the four beasts were full of eyes before and behind (verse 6), denotes that no matter from what standpoint their operation is viewed, the supreme intelligence of Deity is everywhere manifest.

Two important lessons become apparent as consideration is again given to the throne platform, which resembled gleaming ice, or frozen atmosphere, in the Ezekiel vision. (1) The very existence of the platform suggests that a distinct barrier of holiness and purity separates God from sinful man. This partitioning medium emphasizes the reality of the extreme gulf between the High and Lofty One seated above, the mere mention of whose name should inspire profound reverence, and sinful man here below (Isa. 57:15). Accordingly, the substance of which this platform was composed is described as "terrible [or awesome] crystal" (Ezek. 1:22). (2) The existence of this barrier should not be interpreted to mean that God does not know, or is indifferent or aloof to, what happens on the earth. Rather, the reverse is true. The platform, like glass in its *transparency*, emphatically denotes His capability and awareness of even "the sparrow's fall" (Matt. 10:29).

While the Book of Revelation does not actually mention the throne floor referred to by Ezekiel and Moses, yet the floor is implied in the symbol of the sea of glass before the throne. This symbol combines the thought of the laver, or sea, of the Temple with that of the awesome crystal throne platform of Ezekiel. Man's ability to probe above this otherwise impenetrable barrier is only by means of the laver, or Word of God, which instructs with the wisdom of the All-Cognizant One . . . with His unlimited ability to see (or sea!).

Verse 7:

*And the first beast was like a lion,
and the second beast like a calf,
and the third beast had a face as a man,
and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.*

Consistent with their appearance and activity throughout Scripture, the living creatures—(a) in the absence of any statement to the contrary, (b) in harmony with the detailed description given in the vision of Ezekiel, and (c) by the implied physique of the seraphim in the sixth chapter of Isaiah—each possessed a body that, for the greater part, resembled a humanlike form. However, each apocalyptic cherub

9. See Appendix 2, "Disposition of Ezekiel Faces," pages 619–621.

possessed but a single-faced head in contrast to the four-faced head of each Ezekiel creature.

In Ezekiel *all four* of God's attributes—Justice, Power, Love, and Wisdom—are represented in or by each individual cherub. Singly stationed about each side of the throne of glory, facing the four points of the compass, the cherubs signify the *comprehensiveness* of their coverage over the Creator's vast domain and their *alertness* to do God's bidding. They run as "a flash of lightning" to satisfy the needs of His subjects or any other contingency that may arise; then they return to their assigned position beside the throne and "let down their wings" to await further instruction and orders from the "voice [of the *Almighty One*] from the firmament . . . over their heads" (Ezek. 1:14,25). Also signified are the diverse qualities and the *varied capabilities* of each cherub. In short, the portrayal of the cherubim in the Ezekiel vision affords extensive insight into the visual minutiae and the spiritual mechanics of their operation.

On the other hand, the description of the apocalyptic cherubim intentionally avoids a too detailed account of the living creatures in order to focus immediate attention upon the sequence in which they are enumerated. The lion-headed creature is declared to be the *first* beast, the calf- or ox-headed being is referred to as the *second* beast, and so forth. Later on, the Revelator stresses the mood or spirit that the living creatures manifest.

The following comparison of the attributes of God should be noted:¹⁰

Revelation 4:7	Ezekiel 1:10	Ezekiel 10:14
1. Lion (Justice)	1. Man (Love)	1. [Cherub] Ox (Power)
2. [Calf] Ox (Power)	2. Lion (Justice)	2. Man (Love)
3. Man (Love)	3. Ox (Power)	3. Lion (Justice)
4. Eagle (Wisdom)	4. Eagle (Wisdom)	4. Eagle (Wisdom)

Revelation 4:7

Detailed reasoning for the order of the attributes in Revelation 4:7 will purposely be deferred until the discussion of attributes in Revelation 6:1–8, at which time the meaning of their involvement and activity will be explained. Suffice it here to say that the attributes in Revelation 4:7 are viewed from a Christian standpoint; that is, among other things, the attributes were *signified* by God "to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1). The attributes are to be considered primarily from the viewpoint of their operation during the *Gospel Age*.

1. Lion (Justice)

Throughout Scripture the lion is used to denote power or strength. For example, when Samson proposed a riddle to the Philistines, "Out of the strong came forth sweetness," the key to the enigma was the honey (sweetness) that the bees stored in the carcass of the dead lion (the strong one) (Judg. 14:14,18). Another example is 2 Samuel 1:23. In the Apocalypse Jesus is referred to as "the Lion of the tribe of

10. For an explanation of the order of attributes in Ezekiel 1:10 and 10:14, see Appendix 3, "Symbolism of Ezekiel Faces," pages 623–627.

Juda . . . [who] *hath prevailed*,” and accordingly, he is acclaimed as the strong or worthy One who *overcame* (Rev. 5:5,12).

However, in spite of these and other Scriptures that correlate the lion with power, the lion face represents the attribute of *Justice* whenever it is associated with the living creatures, as evidenced by the following citations:

“The LORD shall *roar* [as a *lion*, that is, voice His displeasure or indignation] from on high” (Jer. 25:30; Joel 3:16; Amos 3:8). “The lion [the King of Babylon, the instrument of God’s judgment] is come up from his thicket” (Jer. 4:7—compare 1 Kings 13:24,26; 20:36).

The Adversary is also an unwitting agent of destruction, i.e., God’s executioner. “As a roaring lion, [Satan] walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8); and the prayer of the righteous is that they may be saved “from the lion’s mouth” (Psa. 22:21).

The hearth, or platform, of the brazen altar that will stand in the court of Ezekiel’s Temple in the future, upon which the fire and sacrifices will be offered, is called the *Ariel* (Hebrew), meaning the lion of God (Ezek. 43:15,16). In times past, Solomon’s ivory throne was conspicuously ornamented with brazen lions, representing messengers or agents of judgment (2 Chron. 9:17–19).

2. Ox (*Power*)

It is appropriate that the ox face portrays God’s attribute of *Power*, for the ox is universally recognized as a symbol of power. A person may have the “strength of an ox” or be as “strong as a bull.” Oxen or water buffalo, prized in the Eastern World for plowing, possess much more strength and stamina than the horse that is employed in the Western Hemisphere. The dread behemoth, a derivative of the word *behemah*, is translated over fifty times by the term “cattle” (Job 40:15,16).

The steer *horn* also denotes power. As the bull’s weapon of offense, the horn itself, a part of the animal, is emblematic of the whole.

3. Man (*Love*)

“God is love,” says the apostle (1 John 4:8,16). That the face of a man denotes the attribute of *Love* is more easily discerned after the symbolisms of at least two of the other faces have been identified. Several pertinent observations follow.

Man was originally made in the likeness or image of God. Of all the animal creation, only man possesses the unique quality of love—the ability to reverence and worship the *unseen* Creator.

Compassion for one another and responsiveness to God’s leadings are scripturally designated “a heart of flesh”; contrariwise, coldness of demeanor and callousness of feeling are considered “a heart of stone” (Ezek. 36:26).

Three or four centuries ago the word *humane* was merely a variant spelling of *human*; gradually it became more associated with mental sensitivity and moral quality, which emphasize kindness or benevolence—other forms of *love*.

Both God’s face and the face of man made in God’s image are used in Scripture to denote favor. “The LORD make his *face* shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee” (Num. 6:25). “And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew *face to face*” (Deut. 34:10). God’s *presence* symbolizes His

care and His sympathetic interest on behalf of His people. “My presence [Hebrew *panim*, face] shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (Exod. 33:14). Also, the choice food, representing the promises of God on behalf of His called priesthood, is emblemized by the loaves of bread placed on the table in the Holy of Israel’s Tabernacle. “And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread [that is, bread of ‘presence’ or ‘faces’ (plural)] before me alway” (Exod. 25:30; Num. 4:7).

4. Eagle (Wisdom)

That the eagle represents the attribute of *Wisdom* presents no difficulty, as this bird is noted for its keenness of vision and its voracious appetite. No doubt its wondrous ability to behold afar off is a natural development and result of its vigilant search for food to satisfy its hunger. There is a spiritual parallelism here: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6). Moreover, “Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock [Christ—see 1 Cor. 10:4], upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood [John 6:54–56; Matt. 26:27,28]: and where the slain are, there is she” (Job 39:27–30).

This association of the eagle with wisdom and the Christian’s search for more of Christ, the Wisdom of God, is what the Master meant when he said, “For whosoever the carcass is [that is, the core of the gospel, the dead humanity of Christ given for man’s justification], there will the eagles be gathered together [in mental communion and spiritual fellowship, feeding upon Christ and his Word]” (Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37).

A person possessing either exceptional vision or mental alertness is sometimes spoken of as having “an eagle’s eye.”

Wisdom will be seen as the architect of God’s *finished* plan of redemption . . . when all its glory is revealed, following the complete removal of the rough scaffolding of sin. Until that time, Wisdom is satisfied to remain in the background lest it unduly prejudice the freewill offerings of man, interfere with the work of faith in the past or the present age, or mitigate the test of obedience at the close of the Millennium.

It is a strange fact, but true, that Wisdom’s unfathomable depth is not comprehended until maturity. “Wisdom is justified of her children,” said the Master (Matt. 11:19). In all three listings—Revelation 4:7 and Ezekiel 1:10 and 10:14—the hoary head of Wisdom is the last attribute to be identified. Though last to be perceived, Wisdom is ever operative, ever active; hence it is portrayed as a “flying eagle” (verse 7).

Verse 8:

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.

Wings are used in Scripture to denote the Word of God. For example, “He shall cover thee with his *feathers*, and under his *wings* shalt thou trust: his *truth* shall be

thy shield and buckler” (Psa. 91:4). Separately, the feathers represent some of the more individual promises, or other singularly outstanding component parts or doctrines of the Bible. Collectively, the feathers comprise the Word of God as contained in both the Old and the New Testaments (the *two wings*).

The Mosaic Law permitted the use of a fowl as a sacrificial offering upon the altar and in the sealing of a covenant. Such practice often involved the laying open of the chest cavity; that is, the fracture of the bird, after it was slain, along the line or length of its backbone. However, the complete severance of the bird and, consequently, its wings—the “dividing” asunder into two separate parts or halves—was prohibited. Hence the power of the symbolism was preserved, emphasizing (a) the *inseparability* of both the Old and the New Testaments, neither of which, when properly viewed, is designed to be whole or complete by itself; and (b) the *close relationship* that exists between the two parts (the two wings), as recorded in Ezekiel 1:9,11—“Their wings . . . joined [Hebrew *chabar*, i.e., were paired as a couple] one to another.” In harmony with this thought, the wings are consistently referred to in Scripture in the plural sense, always being mentioned in pairs. The tenderness of this union is noted: “The wings . . . touched [Hebrew *nashaq*, i.e., kissed] one another” (Ezek. 3:13).

The function of the six wings in verse 8 is best explained by the apparent parallelism of Isaiah 6:2—“With twain [one pair, or two wings] he [the seraph] covered his face, and with twain [one pair, or two wings] he covered his feet, and with twain [one pair, or two wings] he did fly,” totaling three pairs, or six wings. Two lessons may be drawn: (1) The principles of the divine government and the divine character are represented by the face, and (2) God’s overruling providence—both His movement and His authority—in the affairs of earth is represented by the feet. The face and the feet are covered, or hidden, to the world (1 Cor. 2:9,14), yet revealed to the Lord’s saints (1 Cor. 2:10,16) by the same Word of God (the wings). A third lesson is that the divine attributes (the seraphim, or living ones) always *act* (fly) in harmony and cooperation with the wings.

Furthermore, verse 8 reveals that the wings “are full of eyes all round and within” (Revised Standard Version). The point is that even the nominally believing world recognizes the Bible as the most outstanding book of all ages; that is, the enlightened public can perceive *externally* the wisdom contained in Holy Writ, which is “full of eyes [intelligence] all round [about on the *outside*].” On the other hand, the child of God is additionally enabled to see, shrouded *internally* (“full of eyes . . . *within*”), the mysteries of the Kingdom (Matt. 13:11).

The four beasts, or living ones, “rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” Not only does He that keepeth Israel neither slumber nor sleep, but the principles of His government have ever been (in the past), are (in the present), and forever will be (in the future) ceaselessly active in the planning and/or execution of the works of Him that *ever liveth* (Psa. 121:4).

Contrary to logical assumption, the text does not specifically state that the repeated utterance of the righteous acts of Jehovah proceeded forth from the mouth of each of the four beasts. Rather, the sound was produced by the *wings*, which acted

as a loudspeaker, broadcasting forth the praise due His holy name.¹¹ This detail of information is supplied in Ezekiel 1:24; 10:5 (compare Isaiah 6:3), where the wings are said to generate a most awesome and majestic sound, duplicating and simulating the commandments and the instructions of the Creator Himself. The realization that the wings function as an agency to transmit information pertaining to God leads to a more refined interpretation of the substantive matter in verse 8; namely, to those who have a hearing ear, the Word of God has, throughout history, continually borne *witness* and testified to the glory of the Father.

Verse 9:

And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

Verse 10:

The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

Verse 11:

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Briefly stated, the message here is that “when[ever]” the four beasts glorify God in voice and song, the twenty-four elders also join in the melodious refrain. They do not sing ceaselessly with endless rhythmic regularity or vain, monotonous repetition; but rather, the four beasts and the twenty-four elders are ever vigilant, always alert, to give commensurate and periodic praise, whenever and wherever appropriate, to the varied acts of Deity—particularly to those related to the earth (see Isaiah 6:3), to those that affect the destiny of nations and shape the course of history. Indeed the saying is true!—prophecy is history written in advance, and history is prophecy fulfilled.

It is interesting to note that the autocratic rule of the twenty-four elders *manward* is absolute and inflexible. Their role *Godward*, however, is one of suppleness to the divine will and pleasure, as demonstrated by the submission of their crowns before the throne. This subserviency is quite in order, for the elders (or books of the Old Testament), representing the prophetic utterances of the Lord, owe their regal posture and legal authority to “thus saith the LORD” in the first place!

The highly figurative imagery of this scene—depicting the harmonious and admiring consent of both the attributes and the canon of ancient Holy Writ to the righteous acts of Jehovah, accompanied with their exuberant, reflective joy in the realization of the perpetuity of the divine office and the consequent eternal assurance of divine grace—lifts the Christian’s heart and thoughts above, to a level of sublimity, and is truly a fitting prelude to the throne scene drama of Chapter 5.

11. The phrase “Holy, holy, holy,” a thrice-repeated utterance, may infer a relationship to the *three* pairs of wings.

Revelation Chapter 5

Verse 1:

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.

There was a time when the divine plan was entirely absent from view, kept secret, in the mind of God (Eph. 1:4; 3:11; 1 Pet. 1:19,20). But when God prepared the earth for habitation, and breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, then it became quite apparent to those in heavenly places that He had an ulterior motive with respect to this brand-new creation. That which had previously been a concept locked within His intellect, was now discernible as the initiation of an undisclosed project, at hand, under His control.

The angels knew something was going on, for God did reveal little things here and there, scraps of information recorded in the Old Testament (Isa. 28:10,13; Heb. 1:1). They knew there was a plan, but they could not understand it. When they looked at the book in the hand of Jehovah, they could see some writing. There were scattered encouraging promises, such as that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head and that in Abraham "all the families of the earth" would be blessed; but they could not put together in an understandable way what was happening down here (Gen. 3:15; 12:3; 28:14). The angels knew about the promised Messiah. They were very interested and *earnestly* desired to look into these things (1 Pet. 1:12).

The message was sealed, or locked up, until the proper time for this "meat" (understanding) to become due (Matt. 24:45). The same principle applied to Daniel, who was given considerable information but little understanding (Dan. 12:9). Neither Daniel nor the other prophets could comprehend with distinction their own prophetic utterances given under the impulse of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:10–12).

This introductory explanation has been given to the setting of the first verse of Chapter 5 *as seen from the standpoint of the holy angels and the prophets*. Now the vision is to be considered from the perspective of John the Apostle himself, who declared in his opening remarks of both verse 1 and verse 2, "I saw . . ."

The "book" (Greek *biblion*, i.e., scroll) John saw in God's hand was not the conventional book associated with modern-day society. Resembling a rolled document with external writing—that is, with introductory or preface remarks thereon—it was *held firmly* in Jehovah's grasp.¹ Notwithstanding this fact, the document was

1. The external writing apparently alludes to the purpose of God in regard to His dealings with mankind in general, whereas the internal contents of the scroll pertain to the experiences of His Church during the Gospel Age. The plan of God, with reference to man, spans three great periods of time, beginning with man's creation and reaching into the illimitable future. Designated "worlds" by Peter and Paul, these three great epochs represent three distinct manifestations

sufficiently unfurled (perhaps just a curl in the corner of the parchment) in such a manner as to reveal as well as confirm that it also contained a message within.

Since a book or scroll is usually held in the left hand, this detail concerning the right hand should not be considered a more or less superfluous matter, for it indicates a deeper significance; namely, that the subject matter, or content, of the scroll was near and *dear* to its Author. None but the closest and the most worthy associate would dare hope that the Creator would relinquish control for even a momentary perusal or examination of the hitherto undisclosed divine purpose contained therein. The writing on the back, or outside part, of the scroll merely whetted John's appetite for further information concerning the hidden mystery, but—alas!—the document was fastened securely with seven seals. No one would have the audacity to break the King's seal without express authorization (Dan. 12:4,9; 1 Pet. 1:10–12).

Subsequent detail in the vision concerning the manner in which the contents of the book were kept securely and firmly *in hand* indicates that the seven seals were not affixed in a parallel line along the single outer edge of the rolled scroll. Why not? Under such an arrangement, the breaking of the seals, one by one, in slow and successive order would not sufficiently expose the inner content of the message to meet the requirements of the vision (Rev. 6:1,3,5,7,9,12; 8:1). The breaking of one seal of the scroll would not enable a person to investigate further, for the effort would be thwarted by the six other seals affixed along the same edge. Therefore, under this circumstance, all seven seals would have to be broken before the divine plan could even begin to be understood.

How, then, were the seals affixed? Each seal was fastened to the document in the approximate center of the page. For example, the impression of the first seal was externally visible midway along the outer edge of the scroll. The second impression would be completely hidden from view until the first seal had been broken and the scroll unfurled a sufficient distance, i.e., to the end of the first message. Then, and only then, would the second seal be encountered. One by one, the remaining seals were distributed internally in a similar fashion.

The question arises: If the seals were arranged this way, how did John know that six other seals existed deep within the document? The customary way to affix legal seals to a document was, and still is, to use a metal tool or finger ring with a flattened head or stamp, upon which was engraved a sharply defined insignia or coat of arms pertinent to the author or executor of the enactment (Esther 3:12; Dan. 6:17; Matt. 27:66). A mixture of hot wax or paraffin was applied to the document and a long, colorful ribbon was placed in the melted paraffin. Then, when the metal stamp was pressed into the slightly hardened paraffin, both the distinctive design of

of Divine Providence. The first, from Creation to the Flood, was under the ministration of angels and is called "the world that then was" (2 Pet. 3:6). The second great epoch, from the Flood to the establishment of the Kingdom of God, is under the limited control of Satan, "the prince of this world," and is therefore called "this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4; 2 Pet. 3:7). The third is to be a "world without end" under divine administration, the Kingdom of God, and is called "the world to come . . . wherein dwelleth righteousness" (Isa. 45:17; Heb. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:13). The first of these periods, or worlds, under the ministration of angels, was a failure; the second, under the rule of Satan, the usurper, has indeed been a sinful and "evil world"; but the third, under divine rulership, will be an era of unending righteousness, peace, and blessing to all the families of the earth. Then will the Lord's Prayer be answered: "Thy kingdom come."

the mold and the ribbon became embedded in the mixture and, upon further cooling and hardening, became firmly attached to the scroll. In other words, John beheld six other quality ribbons protruding from either of the two small ends—not the broad edge—of the scroll. Perhaps there were three from one end of the document and three from the other end. The Apostle, observing the extension of these ribbons, properly reasoned that each respective ribbon terminated within the parchment with a corresponding seal. A confirmation of this thought would be the complete exposure of the first seal and its appendage—a sample of the other six hidden within the parchment.

Verse 2:

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

Verse 3:

And no man [no one] in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able [worthy] to open the book, neither to look thereon.

The Apostle was impressed with the strength of the angel—possibly because the angel possessed a Herculean torso with bulging muscles and biceps, and a booming voice to correspond with the largeness of his stature and the solidness of his frame. Nevertheless, the angel's loud proclamation "Who is worthy?" seems to be tinged with a note of pathos and a sense of futility that he, or any other being, could ever hope to merit the honor and the privilege of understanding the precious mystery held in the mighty Jehovah's power.

This dramatic figure is introduced into the apocalyptic vision to accentuate in a striking manner the fact that, among the multitude of participants in the throne room scene, including John, none as yet were aware of anyone sufficiently worthy for the occasion. The angel may be a purely imaginary figure, an idealistic symbol, intended to personify that even the most promising candidate to aspire to such a task could entertain little or no hope in such an endeavor.

Although the explanation just given is preferred, there is an alternate interpretation of the meaning of the term "strong angel" that merits equal attention. It is that the angel represents the whole Law of God, that is, not merely the Ten Commandments written on tables of stone but the *moral code of God in its entirety*.

For example, we may be sure that when sin entered the Garden of Eden and man fell, the prior song of the angelic sons of God (Job 38:7) soon hushed and a deep sense of dismay and gloom pervaded the heavenly realm. Soon, however, their sadness was replaced with a laudable desire to help lift man up out of the quagmire of sin. Divine Providence foresaw the incapability of the angels to handle the situation but determined to alert them to their lack by affording them this opportunity. Their administration of the first age was tolerated, permission being granted to the *holy* angels to see what they could do.

What happened? Many heavenly messengers themselves fell into sin through prolonged contact with the contaminated human race, thus visibly demonstrating the true axiom "evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33). Several of the angelic host became inordinately enamored with the beauty of womanhood, the

female sex being previously unknown and uncreated in the spiritual realm. “And they took them wives of all which they chose” (Gen. 6:2).

Since God did not act hastily either to prevent or to suppress their participation in this unauthorized action, many of the angels foolishly concluded He was powerless or disinterested in doing so. This assumption, in turn, emboldened them, and led to an increasing number of sons of disobedience who left their prior heavenly estate, preferring to settle here on earth. These are variously styled as fallen angels, unclean spirits, demons, devils, etc. Such were bound in chains of darkness at the time of the Noachian deluge (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

On the other hand, an encouraging factor in this time of trial and testing is that an even greater number of the angelic ministers of the first dispensation maintained their integrity and purity. As time progressed, they became proportionately disinclined to linger too long in their earthly ministrations, realizing their status as righteous agents could be compromised. They preferred instead to keep their heavenly habitation and to perform their services down here expeditiously.

Thus the fact remains that the holy angels, though imbued with great power and authority (Heb. 2:2), failed in their mission to uplift humanity; and therefore, in the world to come, in the third great dispensation, or Messiah’s Kingdom, they will not be commissioned to be the agents of deliverance (Heb. 2:5). In spite of their earnest endeavors, history has demonstrated the declaration of the strong angel that “no man in heaven” up to that time, or subsequently up to the First Advent, was known to be worthy to “open the book” or break the seals thereof (verse 3).

This unworthiness would also be true with respect to fallen man, born and “shapen in iniquity” (Psa. 51:5). For such to perfectly obey the Law of God in the present life would be an utter impossibility. In view of the lack of success on the part of the holy angels, what chance of success would there be that a righteous man could be found—one who was worthy to open, reveal, or execute the undisclosed contents of the scroll?

Therefore, to the “strong angel”—whether it be a representation of God’s Law or the personification of the most promising imaginary candidate for such a role—the picture appeared bleak. The general lesson and pervading atmosphere of the dramatization remain the same: It is one of helplessness and futility in either instance.

In harmony with scriptural usage elsewhere, the words “heaven” and “earth” might be interpreted in terms of *earthly* society—that among those in positions of religious or civic leadership (“in heaven”); or among those who are governed (“in earth”), either the public at large in civilian life or those congregated under ecclesiastical control; or among the illustrious dead, both great and small (“under the earth”); no one worthy of such honor had yet been found or recognized.

However, the breadth and the depth and the significance of the vision seem to require a more comprehensive interpretation. “Heaven” refers to God’s heaven and the heavenly host of angels above; “earth,” the habitable earth and its occupants here below; “under the earth,” the buried dead in the earth.

That no one worthy could be found among the living or the dead of a sin-sick race comes as no surprise, but what about those living in the sinless realm above? Apparently, the virtue and merit of the holy angels, who did not sin either prior to

or since the Flood, do not sufficiently qualify them for this privilege. Their goodness consists primarily in passive obedience and restraint from evil.

What about Michael the archangel, the Logos, namely, Jesus in his preexistent state before coming to earth in the likeness of man—was he not worthy? Yes, he was, but only the Father knew the sterling character and superlative worth of His only begotten Son. Others perceived not the depth of loyalty, the hidden grace, and the potential strength of the Master. Although the angels had witnessed his devotion to his Father and his zealous interest in his Father's every act, such enthusiasm had been exhibited under conditions most favorable to himself and had not entailed any suffering, dishonor, or sacrifice on his part. Already, as the most highly favored among the sons of God, he had been showered with honor and authority. Probably all, or most, of those beholding the actions of the Son reasoned that under the same circumstances they would likewise prosper and compare favorably to his example. Moreover, the angels would have attributed his previously exalted station as the Logos to parental favor—to the partiality of the Father—which would have been entirely proper irrespective of the fact that family relationship is a prerogative of the divine office (2 Tim. 2:20). Little did the angels then realize the residual worth of Jesus' character.

Verse 4:

And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

If the vision had commenced with the first verse of Chapter 5, it would have been difficult to rationalize John's depth of feeling and emotional involvement as a spectator when he heard the strong angel's announcement and subsequent silence (verses 2 and 3). It is another matter entirely when the enactment of this drama is considered, in its proper perspective, to comprehend all of both the fourth and fifth chapters of the Apocalypse. Chapter 4 afforded an insight into the character of God, the Creator and Author of salvation and atonement. Though John had not read, up to this point, a single word of the scroll held in Jehovah's right hand, he knew it contained something *ultimately very favorable*.

The holy joy and the optimistic enthusiasm voiced by the living creatures and the twenty-four elders extended and exuded into Chapter 5, creating a mood or aura of hope and expectancy. Consequently, the Apostle wept *much* when he heard the discouraging announcement of the strong angel that no one had the capability and authorization to execute God's program. With such a hope deferred and Jehovah's mission of mercy seemingly aborted, a cloud of mental and emotional frustration plunged John into a deep despondency. For not only was no one found worthy to open—to analyze, absorb, and execute—the great plan, but no one was found worthy even to gaze upon the external writing of the scroll and thus give an intelligent synopsis of the program contained within.

In summary then, the posture of Jehovah holding the scroll (verses 1 to 4) is the condition of things that prevailed from Father Adam down through the ages to Christ, with particular attention focused on the *end period* of the Old Testament era.

Verse 5:

And one of the elders saith unto me [John], Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

The elder who gives John some comfort, some assurance of what to expect, is the message found in, and personified by, the first book of the Bible: Genesis. “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be” (Gen. 49:10). Although a long, long period of time had to expire before the arrival of the Promised One, this prophecy narrowed down the field of inquiry to one specific family, the tribe of Judah. The elder assures John that Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in Bethlehem of *Judea*, the city of David, and who was put to death in the flesh and is now raised victoriously to glory, is indeed Messiah² and that Jesus will soon disclose to the beloved Apostle the mystery of the scroll; i.e., the dispensational contents locked within—yea, sealed with seven seals.

In the Book of Revelation and in several other instances, the “lion” pictures justice and judgment; frequently, however, it symbolizes power.³ Both thoughts are implied here. First, it was necessary for Jesus to satisfy the claims of justice against a sin-cursed race: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the *just* for the unjust” (1 Pet. 3:18) and “without shedding of blood is no remission [of sins]” (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). The other aspect, that of power, is apparent in that he “hath prevailed.”

However, the statement that “the Lion . . . hath prevailed to open the book” does not signify that Jesus actually opened the book at this point in time, but that he proved *worthy*. This verse brings the reader up to the First Advent and then hurriedly introduces, in the next verse, not the “slain” Lamb of Calvary but the *now risen and ascended* Lord, acknowledging his worthiness in that he “hath prevailed.” It is not until Revelation 6:1 that Jesus actually starts to open the scroll.

Verse 6:

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.

In Chapter 4 the center of attraction was the great and glorious Jehovah; here, in Chapter 5, all eyes are focused on Jesus, the agent of God’s salvation. However, not until the Master had laid his all on the altar and was slain at Calvary did he acquire stewardship of the scroll. “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). On several occasions prior to his death on the Cross, Jesus expressly stated that there were some secrets of the Father concerning which he was uninformed (Mark 10:35–40; 13:32).

2. Pope Leo XIII, upon ascending the papal throne in 1878, shortly thereafter had the audacity to blasphemously subscribe himself “*Leo de tribus Juda*,” i.e., “the Lion of the tribe of Judah”!

3. See pages 134–135.

That the risen Lamb, representing Jesus, has “seven horns and seven eyes” indicates that the Father entrusted to him the complete custodianship of the Church, who are called to be his body members. Since approximately two thousand years are required to find, develop, and crystallize the foreordained number of the “called, and chosen, and faithful,” Divine Providence has deemed it expedient, during this long interval, to mark out seven periods of time, or phases of development, in which the body members are to be tried dispensationally along different lines (Rev. 17:14). In other words, there would be seven messages of the Spirit, or “seven Spirits” (as previously explained in the second and third chapters). As this message of the Holy Spirit is dispensed in each period, it has a twofold effect upon those whom it benefits. (1) Chiefly, the dispensational message helps them to have the “*power* [horn] . . . of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7) and affords them grace and *comfort* to endure the trials peculiar to each period. (2) It causes them to have “a *sound mind* [eye],” a knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities peculiar to each period. This reasoning is not mitigated by the fact that it is the Lamb who has the seven horns and seven eyes and, furthermore, that the Lamb represents Jesus only, for the lesson is that the Master and High Priest has been given a stewardship over the pilgrim Church’s perilous journey during the nighttime of sin. The Lamb’s horns and eyes express his vigilance over and concern for his body members; he manifests his care by intervening in the affairs of life to rescue and succor them whenever and wherever the need arises for such spiritual (and sometimes physical) aid to be “sent forth into all the earth.”

Verse 7:

And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

Praise the Lord for this confirmation of the lesson contained in the first chapter; namely, that Jehovah alone is the Saviour in the highest sense of the word—“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which *God* gave unto him.” The Book of Revelation is styled “the Revelation of Jesus Christ” not because he is its author but because he is the one chosen by God to be its revelator, the one who will break the seven-sealed scroll. Thus, to a certain degree, the breaking of the seven seals is contemporaneous with the exercise of the seven horns and the seven eyes as they separately operate in each of the seven phases, or eras, of the Church’s journey. The Lamb freshly slain (verse 6) represents the recent death of Jesus in John’s day, and is a mark of identification of him who was slain on Calvary as God’s choice of the Redeemer. The Lamb corresponds to the signifying angel of Revelation 1:1.

Verse 8:

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

For generations prior to the First Advent of Christ, the twenty-four elders (that is, the books of the Old Testament), “every one of them,” both individually and collectively prophesied either directly, allegorically, typically, or symbolically of a

coming Messiah to bring deliverance to mankind. Each elder, or book, has its own verbal message or content (voice); its own stringed instrument of musical intonation (harp); and its own emotional theme (vial of fragrance). In short, each has its own individual as well as collective role to play in the overall anthem of praise to the dear Redeemer. What is this new refrain? It is none other than that which they are about to acclaim; namely, not only the arrival of the prophesied One, but the successful conclusion of the primary objective at his First Advent: the laying down of his life as “a ransom for all” (John 10:15–18; 1 Tim. 2:6).

The elders’ posture in verse 8 is one of grateful acknowledgment and adoration of Jesus for his faithful performance in doing the Father’s will in strict conformity to the written Word—for not having disappointed them, in view of their having previously spoken of him in such glowing terms in their predictive utterances. The four beasts, or attributes, are pictured as likewise concurring with these same sentiments, for the Saviour did all things in absolute obedience to the principles of divine government.

O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm [Jesus], hath gotten him the victory.

The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.

He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.

With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.

Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity. (Psalm 98)

Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD. (Psa. 150:6)

Attention should be called to the fact that the “golden vials full of odours [incense or sweet fragrance] . . . are [the same as] the prayers of [the] saints.” One might ask, in what sense could the prayers of the saints be found in the Old Testament? In response, are not Christians given a comprehensive insight into the innermost thoughts of Jesus at the time of his crucifixion, and are not also some of the very words he uttered in his death agony on the Cross explicitly forecast in advance of their occurrence (Psalm 22)? Jesus’ heart attitude and his audible submission to the Father’s will—“Lo, I come . . . to do thy will”—were recorded in the Old

Testament more than a thousand years before being written in the New Testament (Psa. 40:7; Heb. 10:7).

The thoughts, feelings, and prayers of the saints are also shown in the Old Testament. For example, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Psalm 23); “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet” (Psalm 119); etc. Such expressions of the obedient are indeed a sweet fragrance in the nostrils of God and are equally pleasing to the risen Lord.

Verse 9:

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 [men—A] to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;⁴

Verse 10:

And hast made us [them—SA] unto our God kings and priests: and we [they—SA] shall reign on the earth.⁴

The word *us* in verse 9 and the words *us* and *we* in verse 10, as given in the King James Version, are rendered differently by almost all modern English translations of the Bible. The pronouns (1) “us,” (2) “us,” and (3) “we,” in this sequence, are more accurately translated by the substitution of the words “men,” “them,” and “they.” The following versions use these latter terms: Revised Standard Version, New International Version, Jerusalem Bible, Weymouth’s New Testament in Modern Speech, Phillips Modern English, The Amplified New Testament, Today’s English Version, The New American Bible, New American Standard, New English Bible, Smith and Goodspeed Holy Bible, Rotherham’s Emphasised Bible, etc.

Thus the four living ones and the twenty-four elders attest to Jesus’ worthiness to be fully entrusted with the custodianship of the book of God—with the responsibility of the further carrying out of God’s plan and purposes throughout the Gospel Age and everlastingly thereafter.

God’s program of mercy and redemption in its outworking includes a hope of recovery for all of Adam’s race, a hope that will become a reality to the willing and obedient of the world of mankind in the Millennial Age during the reign of Christ. However, the message as given in verses 9 and 10 focuses particular attention on the Father’s drawing in the *present age*, the drawing of those called to be earth’s potential rulers in the future Kingdom ordained to bring the blessings of good tidings to all (Luke 2:10).

4. The *Sinaitic*, *Vatican*, and *Alexandrian* codices are among the most ancient Greek manuscripts extant. However, the *Vatican Codex* is deficient in that not only the last chapters of the Book of Hebrews but also the epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, as well as the entire Book of Revelation, are missing in the Vatican Manuscript No. 1209. Therefore, as far as the Apocalypse is concerned, only the *Sinaitic* and the *Alexandrian* codices remain among the most eminent and reliable authorities.

For convenience’ sake, the bracketed symbols “S” and “A” denote the *Sinaitic Codex* and the *Alexandrian Codex*, respectively, as the authorities for the alterations in verses 9 and 10.

Furthermore, this elect class, or Church, will be neither exclusively Jewish nor only Gentile, but will be international in scope and character. It is to be composed of individuals selected out of all races and kindreds upon earth. What a joyous hope and privilege is this! . . . that in spite of former nationality, race, creed, or misconduct, the truly repentant might now be called the sons of God (John 1:12).

Verse 11:

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;

The “angels” round about the throne include all the heavenly host—all the holy angels on the various planes of being in spirit nature. The number of angels here rendered in the Authorized Version as “ten thousand times ten thousand” is incorrect. It should be translated as “myriads of myriads,” that is, “*ten thousands* [plural] *times ten thousands* [plural], and thousands of thousands.”⁵ If this same number is expressed another way as “tens of thousands times tens of thousands, and thousands of thousands,” it can then be more clearly seen that the total number must exceed 100 million but be less than 10 billion. The limits of this divine equation are thus positively stated. Why does the Holy Spirit express the matter in this fashion? The phraseology indicates a *huge* but *indefinite* number.

In addition to the immensity of this number, another clue that the term “angels” refers to the angelic host, and not to the Church of Christ or the Great Company class, is that the Church class is not pictured as having arrived on the scene yet. If this were a portrayal of the glorified Bride of Christ in the future, the “angels” would be *in the throne*, and not “round about the throne.”

Verse 12:

Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Surely this scriptural refrain reminds many of the majestic theme and the inspirational music of Handel’s *Messiah*. How appropriate that this work should honor the Saviour’s memory!

It should be noted that this accolade of verse 12 to our dear Redeemer was made after his resurrection, at the time of his ascension to heaven forty days later . . . but before he exercised this power in any way. At this time Jesus had just proven his worthiness to receive such power, honor, and glory. Moreover, this portion of the drama took place *prior* to the breaking of the seals of the book. The fact that the

5. This number should not be confused with that found in Jude 14. It will be observed that in the latter instance no multiplier or multiplicand is mentioned, but simply “ten thousands.” The fact that ten or tens (not hundreds) of thousands are given indicates that the Enoch number is best expressed in units of ten thousand, but is limited to less than a plural *two* (one hundred) thousands. This prophecy reveals the approximate number of the exalted Church, who are to return with Christ during his Second Advent. Elsewhere, however, this number is definitely stated as 144,000, a figure less than 200,000 (Rev. 7:4; 14:1).

Lamb was *freshly slain* furnishes an additional clue as to the time this acclamation was given. The powers and prerogatives had been bestowed upon Jesus, but he had not fully exercised them yet.

Verse 13:

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 honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

The wording of this verse might seem to contradict the time setting as previously explained unless it is understood that this picture projects beyond the initial proclamation given to Jesus, showing that *ultimately all* will praise God and Jesus. This “grand hallelujah chorus” will take place at the end of the Millennial Age. At that time every heavenly and every earthly creature will join in the praise; and the “sea,” the hitherto *in-between* and *undecided class*, will have been eliminated either by their going over to the Lord (Exod. 32:26; Josh. 24:15; Matt. 25:31–46) or by their going into Second Death (Rev. 21:1,8). In the final picture, every person will be either all for the Lord or not for the Lord; each one will either become a part of the “new heavens” and the “new earth” or become extinct (2 Pet. 3:13).

It should be noted that the Lamb and the Father, the One sitting on the throne, are being acclaimed here, and not the Bride. This verse, therefore, projects ahead, down to the end of the Millennial Age, in order to show that eventually everybody then living will join in the chorus of praise which began at the time of Jesus’ ascension. Although included in other pictures, the Church is not specifically shown here. It is the worthiness of God and of Jesus that is being emphasized.

Earlier, in verse 11, only the holy angels (“many angels”) pronounced Jesus worthy. Later, here in verse 13, “*every creature . . . in heaven*” gives praise, demonstrating that the latter is a *future* portrayal which will occur *after* the judgment of the fallen angels and the destruction of those proven to be incorrigible (Matt. 8:28,29; 1 Cor. 6:3; Jude 6).

Verse 14:

And the four beasts said [enthusiastically], Amen! And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Seven Seals and Seven Trumpets

Part III: Chapters 6–11

Revelation Chapter 6

The seals about to be broken by the risen Lord are none other than those affixed to the document seen earlier . . . as held fast, and as kept secret, in the hand of the Almighty One (Rev. 5:1). The initial disclosure of the contents of the scroll pertains to what the future would hold in store for God's elect; that is, it is the shocking revelation of the then soon-to-come aberrant behavior of the professed Church of Christ during the gospel dispensation.

The vision of this prophetic scroll¹ clearly indicates (a) the Creator's *foreknowledge* of history *prior to fulfillment* and (b) His intention to assure the faithful that no matter how surprising the developments about to arise, somehow behind all of them an ultimate benefit would accrue. It is important to realize that since these appalling circumstances do not originate with Divinity, they do not involve consequent moral responsibility on the part of Deity. Nonetheless, the subsequent tolerance and unchecked continuance of the evils, about to be unveiled by the Master, can be seen as the providential testing and proving ground for the development of the true Church and its worthiness to share future honors, power, and glory. The revelation of the sealed mystery is observed to occur in seven successive steps.

The First Seal (A.D. 33–323)

Verse 1:

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!

Since in succeeding verses (verses 3, 5, and 7) the remaining three beasts are presented as “the second,” “the third,” and “the fourth,” it seems eminently reasonable to suppose that the statement in verse 1—namely, “one of the four beasts” invited John to “Come and see”—was uttered by the *first beast*. The classified enumeration of four beasts in Revelation 4:7, denoting the four fundamental attributes

1. This vision should not be confused with the “flying roll,” or scroll, of Zechariah 5:1–4. The latter is a theocratic indictment against the individual evildoer. It is Jehovah's indignation and curse directed against the merely nominal people of God—in whatever age. The divine intention is that the deeds of His subjects must square, or match *moral alignment*, with the law of His sanctuary; that is, they must abide by the spiritually significant side measurements (20 cubits by 10 cubits) of “the Holy” compartment of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness of Sinai.

If these cubits are converted into feet (i.e., 30 × 15 = 450 square feet), a multiple is obtained which corresponds to the peripheral measurement of the Court of the Tabernacle, namely, 300 cubits, or 450 feet. This courtyard, described as “the holy place,” is where corrective judgment was rendered to sinners in Israel. The number 450 is also associated with the trial and testing period of the Judges (Acts 13:20).

In other words, the Zechariah scroll vision depicts the ultimate triumph of right over wrong, whereas the apocalyptic portrayal of the breaking of the seals denotes the opposite condition temporarily. The seal openings reveal the temporary permission and prevalence of evil during the Gospel Age.

of God, indicates the first living creature to be the lion-headed being symbolizing Justice. Therefore, the Apostle John's hearing the utterance of the first beast to "Come and see," which resembled the sound of thunder, is consonant with and similar to the exceedingly deep roar of the lion. In this context the connotation is that something ominous and deeply disturbing is about to be observed: something in violation of Justice, the standard of truth and righteousness.

The next point to be noted is that when John initially viewed this scene of the breaking of the First Seal, he was *apart* . . . at a respectful distance. Presumably, he obediently stepped forward at the invitation of the living creature, prepared to fix his gaze upon (that is, to look into the exposed portion of) the scroll. So vivid is the prophetic scene portrayed in subsequent verses that that which originally was seen as only the surface of a parchment with lettering transcribed thereon, soon changed and merged into a screen and a theatrical audiovisual presentation. So real were the things John saw that the transfixed apostle viewed matters henceforth not as a dramatization but as a factual occurrence of events.

Verse 2:

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.

General Observations of the Four Horses

The breaking of the seals and the ensuing events relate to the Lord's permission (but not His sanction) of evil in the Church. In a spiritual sense a "horse" represents a doctrine or a teaching. Since the color white usually denotes purity, truth, or righteousness, the first impression rendered is that in some manner the white horse indicates a satisfactory state of affairs—whatever the interpretation given. Yet there are extenuating circumstances connected with the vision which teach otherwise.

It is to be observed that the next three horses (verses 3 to 8) are of obvious evil import. Does not this suggest the possibility that all four, including the first horse, are of a foreboding and threatening nature?² To carry this reasoning further, there exists evidence that the unidentified personages on the first three horses (verses 2, 4, and 5)—those entering and disappearing off the scene—are one and the same. They must be seen to somehow identify with the last, or fourth, mysterious horseman, the one whose "name . . . was Death." The interpretation, therefore, proceeds with the assumption that the horse and the rider are the same in all four

2. The four chariots of horses in the prophecy of Zechariah 6:1–8 are diametrically opposed in character to the four horses of Revelation 6:1–8. The different-colored Zechariah horses seen coming forth from between the two copper mountains (the Kingdom of the first Adam and that of the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven) indicate the doctrines of God which lead to the development and later approval of four classes arising between Paradise Lost and Paradise Restored. The *black horses* of the Old Testament prophecy, which "go forth," represent the Little Flock of saints whose destiny is heaven, "the north country" (Zech. 6:6,8), whence they will "quiet" God's Spirit—that is, the overcoming Church will become the Father's resting place (Eph. 2:21,22).

In the Song of Solomon, the love poem that depicts the affection between Christ and the class called to be his Bride, the latter is referred to in the present life as "my love" (i.e., Jesus' love—his Church), and is identified as "*black, but comely*" (Song of Sol. 1:5,9). (cont.)

instances but viewed, as it were, in succeeding time frames in a variety of colors, differently armed and postured. Studied from this perspective, the results bring conviction that such a method of interpretation is the only reasonable and proper one.

The expression, either made or inferred, that there “*was given unto him*” (verses 2, 4, 5, and 8) a crown, a great sword, a balance scale, or power to destroy implies that the subjection over others—allowed to each of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse—lacked divine approval. This authority given to the rider resembles that granted to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as well as that allowed to the three universal Gentile empires that followed (Dan. 2:37,39,40). Although these kingdoms arose not with the Lord’s blessing, they were permitted in order to show to future posterity how unfit they were and are to govern.

This principle of being “given unto him” was again demonstrated when the Lord put into Satan’s power all that Job possessed (Job 1:12; 2:6). The Adversary proceeded at once to take away from Job his servants, his cattle and goods, and his children. The Devil then estranged Job’s wife and impaired his health, *but took not away his life*.³ (Compare Rev. 6:6b—“hurt not the oil and the wine.”)

White Horse and Rider

The activity of the white horse and its rider embraces both the Ephesus and Smyrna periods of church history, a time when Christian doctrine remained *relatively pure*. In Ephesus the defiling influence applied to an *individual* here and

The Authorized King James Version states in Zechariah 6:3 that in the fourth chariot there were “grised [Hebrew *berudim*] and bay [Hebrew *amutstsim*] horses.” The first Hebrew word is connected with *barad* signifying “hail.” In this instance it would mean having multiple white patches like hail and, therefore, horses that were spotted or dappled, that is, *speckled*—a fitting representation of a pluralistic human society. The second Hebrew word is associated with *amats* meaning “strong,” but in an unfavorable context would signify a headstrong and self-willed class described as obstinate and hard-hearted in Deuteronomy 2:30; 15:7 and 2 Chronicles 36:13. When associated with color, the Hebrew *amats* signifies *deep red* (cf. “bay” in Young’s *Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible*).

Therefore, the fourth chariot is initially seen by the reader as drawn forth by two varieties of horses. But soon (Zech. 6:7) the fiery steeds styled “bay” seek permission (Deut. 30:15,19) to be loosed from the fourth chariot and express a desire to roam at will (Job 1:7; 2:2; Ezek. 28:14) throughout the earth. The bay (red) horses, a Second Death class, manifest a restless disposition (Isa. 57:20,21) at variance with the Lord’s spirit, leading to a consequent straying (2 Kings 21:22; Acts 14:16; Rev. 20:9) from the path of life—the southern destiny of salvation on the human plane marked out by Divine Providence for the willing and obedient of mankind.

In summary, the Zechariah vision of the horses teaches the same lesson as the vision of the “flying roll” (Zech. 5:1–4; see footnote on page 153), namely, the ultimate and final triumph of right over wrong. This is in marked contrast to the scenario of the Apocalypse, which foreshadows the temporary permission and dominance of evil men and evil deeds.

Zechariah 6—A Time Sequence of Selection and Development

- First chariot: Red horses (Ancient Worthies)
- Second chariot: Black horses (Little Flock)
- Third chariot: White horses (Great Company—see Rev. 7:9,10,13–17)
- Fourth chariot: Speckled horses (Saved World of Mankind) and bay horses (Second Death Class in Kingdom)

3. Job’s life spiritually parallels, in many instances, the experiences of The Christ, head and body members.



The White Horse

there, but was rejected by the majority. In Smyrna this same influence increased to embrace a congregation, or *group* of individuals, here and there. The following testimony is helpful.

“When Christianity came forward with its strange claims upon the confidence of men, there was but little in its exterior which could awaken sympathy. The most despised land produced it. Its founder suffered death on the ignominious cross. Its first Apostles were of humble origin and with the exception of Paul, not one had drunk of the classic fountains. . . . When Christianity began its career for the world’s possession, the Roman rule was universal. . . . Political government and fidelity to the prevailing mythology were held to be inseparable. Hence Christianity was bitterly opposed so soon as the antagonism was discovered. It was seen to be hostile to the elaborate temple service. The emperor who was also *Pontifex*

Maximus, or supreme priest, was held responsible for the support of the state religion. Temples and pagan rites must be sustained. The more closely Christianity came into view the more stringent became the measures for its suppression. The Christians made no concealments. They absented themselves from the temples, threw off all faith in the ruling mythology, and openly declared their hostility to it. . . .

“The changes in the imperial succession were frequent, and new methods of repression of the Christians were constantly adopted. During the whole time, however, the Christian Church grew in numbers and *aggressive force* [emphasis added]. From A.D. 64 to 313, when Constantine granted an edict of toleration to the Christians, persecutions prevailed about seventy years.”⁴

Foreseeing future developments, Jesus likened the nominal Kingdom of God class unto a little “leaven, which a woman took and *hid* in three measures of [unleavened] meal, till the whole was leavened” (Luke 13:20,21).⁵ In the early Church the bulk of the professed followers of the Master were honest and sincere, but there coexisted a troublesome minority who entertained unholy ambitions. Whenever illicit deeds secretly spawned surfaced, they were not tolerated but were promptly exposed . . . even as Paul admonished the doers of such deeds: “Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us. . . . Now some are puffed up. . . . For such are false apostles, *deceitful workers*, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ” (1 Cor. 4:8,18; 2 Cor. 11:13). The Apostle John issued similar warnings (1 John 4:1–3; 2 John 7; 3 John 9–11). In fact, the mysterious rider of the white horse was identified as none other than the “*mystery of iniquity*,” which the Apostle declared in his day “*doth already work*” (2 Thess. 2:7).

The risen Lord commended the Ephesian Church: “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate,” and “thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” (Rev. 2:6,2). In Smyrna, while observing the increasing numbers of the unfaithful, Jesus still found the Church as a whole not sympathetic to this class; he declared, “I know the blasphemy⁶ of them which say they are Jews [i.e., Christians], and are not, but are the synagogue [i.e., church] of Satan” (Rev. 2:9).

The early Church looked for the speedy coming of Christ and the end of the world order (Matt. 24:3; Acts 1:6). Quite satisfied with the simple scriptural organization of believers they were taught to follow, they met in private homes, sang hymns, and listened to readings and exhortations from the Bible. Small Christian

4. John Fletcher Hurst, *Short History of the Christian Church* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), pp. 9, 11, 12, 19.

5. The three measures in the parable refer to the three basic doctrines (1 Cor. 13:13) of pure unleavened meal into which the woman Jezebel introduced the leaven of sin and error:

1. Faith (Rom. 10:17; 3:20–26)
2. Hope (1 John 3:2,3)
3. Love (1 Tim. 1:5)

6. Such “blasphemy” consisted of the example of some who misinterpreted and misrepresented the cause of Christ before mankind. This small but influential clerical element was viewed by the unbelieving, unconverted populace as the true representatives of Christianity, even as the Apostle John forecast: “They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them” (1 John 4:5).

communities were thus formed, consisting of an unpretentious and humble brotherhood of believers united by a common faith and a common hope. But in time, as the number of converts increased and the churches multiplied, a more complex organization arose, with bishops in the principal cities being the more prestigious leaders of the flock. This trend eventually led to the separation and the establishment of an elaborate clergy, as distinguished from the common body of the consecrated membership, who subsequently were viewed as inferior and were classified, therefore, as the laity.

Attention is now focused upon what John sees with the breaking of the First Seal (verse 2). The rider of the first horse is already in possession of “a bow,” and it is the *unauthorized* use of this article of warfare that is inferred. The bow is a long-range weapon of stealth, revealing the long-term objective of a conniving and grasping clerical element desirous of earthly honors and emoluments, which are represented in the “crown.”

Although it is true that the message set forth in the Gospel does contain a bow of promise or the hope of rulership and kingly authority, yet such power is not to be sought in the present life here on earth. “Be thou faithful unto death [first], and [then, afterwards] I will give thee a *crown* of life,” promised the Master to his loyal band of followers while others, professing his name illegally, usurped this authority at the conclusion of the very time period in which this advice was particularly applicable (Rev. 2:10). “Henceforth there is laid up for me a *crown* of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing,” commented the Apostle Paul (2 Tim. 4:8; cf. 1 Pet. 5:4).

The significance of verse 2 is somewhat as follows: “I saw a white horse, its rider held a bow, and [eventually] he was given a crown: he went forth as a conqueror bent on conquest.” That inglorious day of conquest occurred when Constantine surrounded himself with Christian bishops, freed the clergy from oppression and taxation, permitted legacies to be left to them for religious purposes, and spent large sums of money to build churches. The following testimony is characteristic of how this event is viewed by many. Under the caption “The Church Is Victorious, 313,” the ensuing statements are made:

“In the city of Milan, Constantine in the year 313 issued an edict concerning religion. This edict did not set up Christianity as the only official religion of the Empire. It did not forbid the practice of heathen religions. But it did more than merely grant toleration to the Christian religion as the decree of Galerius in the year 311 had done. The Edict of Milan put a stop to the persecutions, and proclaimed absolute freedom of conscience. It placed Christianity upon a footing of equality, before the law, with the other religions of the Empire. . . . The Edict of Milan marks the victory of the Church over heathenism. . . . The year 313 marks . . . a very decisive turning point in the history of the Church. . . . The Edict of Milan proved to have a very definite disadvantage. It was now no longer a shame, but an honor to be a Christian. The Christian name now secured many and great material advantages. The Christian name had become a passport to political, military, and social promotion. As a result, thousands upon thousands of heathen joined the

Church. Unfortunately many of these were Christians in name only. . . . But from this time on Christians under the banner of the cross fought many wars.”⁷

Of even more importance is the observation of another writer: “Constantine published in A.D. 313 an edict tolerating Christianity as one of the legal religions of the empire. But in the year 323 he enlarged the scope of his favor and made Christianity the established faith of all his dominions.”⁸

In the portrayal of the opening of the first four seals, the different equine colors seem to depict not merely the deterioration of doctrine in the Church, and the infusion of error, but perhaps—and more important still—an additional thought. As the circle or the wheel is a symbol of industry and progress, so each horse in the spectacle John witnessed is representative of a *time-frame reference*, the color of each horse furnishing a clue as to what period of the rider’s activity is being referred to. Therefore, the white horse of the First Seal, presently under consideration, would refer to the early Church of the first three centuries, before the apostasy, or great falling away, took place.

To the faithful Christian, the gradual development and the permissive toleration of the manifestation of a Nicolaitan spirit under the First Seal—even to the minutest degree—appeared to reflect an increasing lack of attention or sensitivity on God’s part to the creeping violations of principle being wrought in church affairs and its government, contrary to the charter laid down in the Word. Even the divine attribute of Justice metaphorically, as it were, stands appalled, gazing with astonishment at the scene being enacted in the earth and voicing profound displeasure with peals of thunder (verse 1).

The permission of evil in the Church can now be seen to be the invaluable proving or testing ground furnished the true soldiers of the Cross for the exercise of their faith in their Maker under circumstances of doubt and conditions of duress. The mystery rider of the various horses is revealed in gradual stages: first under the guise of clericalism, then in an illicit authoritarian church hierarchy, and finally, to be seen later, in the Papacy itself—the Antichrist.

Practical Observations

There is here a *paronomasia*, a meaningful insinuation or play upon words, for *two classes of conquerors* are exhibited in the Apocalypse. A marked difference is to be seen between those possessing the proper spirit of the Master and those having the hateful Nicolaitan disposition (Rev. 2:6).⁹ Indeed, God’s people are urged throughout this early period to be overcomers, conquerors (Rev. 2:7,11),¹⁰ but in a completely different sense from the conquering spirit manifested under the symbolism of the First Seal. The followers of the Lamb are to assume a role of submission in the present life in order to inherit Kingdom honor in the next. Such are exhorted

7. B. K. Kuiper, *The Church in History* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 69–71.

8. Hurst, *Short History of the Christian Church*, p. 39.

9. “Nicolaitan” is the Greek derivative of *nikao laos*; i.e., to lord it over the congregation, to gain the victory over the people.

10. The Greek word for “overcome” and “conquer” is *nikao*; i.e., to lord it over (self), to gain the victory over (the spirit of the world).

to “let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: [who] . . . made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:5,7). And better is “he that *ruleth his spirit* than he that taketh a city” (Prov. 16:32).

Yet another lesson and another comparison are to be seen, for *two crowns* are being contrasted here. Coincidentally, both were obtained or secured at the same time, namely, at the terminating point of the First Seal activity, which was the close of the Smyrna period. The first crown is the illegal, unlawful, *unjust acquisition* of earthly recognition and regal honor in the present life, referred to as “a crown was given unto him.” The second is the legitimate crown for the faithful, the crown being *laid up in reservation* for the Kingdom Age.

The Second Seal (A.D. 323–539)

Verse 3:

And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see!

Apparently, the Apostle, after witnessing the scenario accompanying the breaking of the First Seal, discreetly stepped back to the place he had formerly occupied in the throne room. But upon hearing again the words “Come and see,” he stepped forward at this request of the second beast—the living creature with the head of a calf (an ox), representing Power—to behold now a startling display of the perversion of power.

Verse 4:

And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon . . .

The particular shade of the color red possessed by the second horse is meaningful. More properly, the Greek word *purrhos* should have been translated “fiery red,” a color that is associated with the *flamen*¹¹ pagan priesthood of Rome. The flame-red horse seen here indicates the infusion of heathen philosophy into the body politic of the professed Church of Christ. It also points out the time period charac-

11. In remote antiquity the sun, under the name Baal, was worshipped as the great source of light and heat, as the great enlightener and purifier. As this luminary in heaven was the chief object of heathen worship, so *fire*, its counterpart, was revered as its earthly representative. Thus the oldest and probably the most important of the Roman cults was Vesta, the goddess of the hearth and its fire. Her round temple was centered in the heart of Rome at the south end of the Forum. There she was worshipped under the symbol of eternal fire. The latter was watched over by vestal virgins, whose duty it was to keep the sacred fire ever burning. Among other things, a College of Pontifices was formed to maintain this cult. These priests in ancient Rome were devoted to some special deity, such as the flamen to Jupiter or the flamen to Mars, both great national gods. The chief pontiff not only supervised these priests but usually assumed sole custodial care over the temple of Vesta. In the days of Julius Caesar, the king was considered the supreme religious officer of the empire. The pontiffs were installed in office by the supreme dignitary of the Roman religion: the chief pontiff with the title *Pontifex Maximus*, who thereafter was usually the emperor himself.

(Note: Latin *flamen* is a diademed priest; one who wears a fillet around his head. Latin *flamma* is a flame, blaze, or flaming fire. The assignment of a red hat to a cardinal upon appointment by the Pope probably had its origin in the flamen priesthood.)



The Red Horse

terizing the second seal, which began when Christianity was adopted as the religion of the empire in A.D. 323.

Orthodoxy Versus Paganism

From this time forward, the pagan priesthood prudently converted to the new faith, bringing into the Christian Church many of the heathen superstitions, practices, and doctrines. In fact, paganism disappeared from without the Church in the exact proportion that it now appeared within it. Strife for positions of influence in the new religion of the empire arose between the so-called orthodox hierarchy of the Christian faith and the new inductees of the former flamen priesthood—or, stated another way, between those espousing the doctrine of the Nicolaitans and those holding the doctrine of Balaam. Both elements coexisted in the Pergamon Church

(Rev. 2:14,15).¹² The former are pictured by the mystery rider; the latter, by the red horse. True to the scene enacted, the rider retained mastery over the red horse in this particular rivalry. The bishop of Rome was made Pontifex in A.D. 378, thereby appropriating to himself all the prerogatives of the pagan priesthood as well as retaining many of their false doctrines and practices. The aspirations of the Balaamites were thus terminated.

. . . to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: . . .

Doctrinal Strife

The professed Church was also torn asunder over the doctrine of the Trinity . . . between the sympathizers of Arius, the reformer, and those of Athanasius, the defender of orthodoxy. All Christian communities were agitated and exasperated by the torturous and sometimes elusive arguments about the nature of God. However, most of the Trinitarian advocates characteristically accused their antagonists of mean and secondary motives in a manner that clearly betrayed their own base spirit. Such felt the necessity for a definitive dogma to preserve the unity of the faith as they saw it, and their efforts led to character assassinations, riots, and banishments. The weapons of excommunication were forged in this period and dogmas established. Thus the change made by Constantine in the status of the Church raised vexing problems that troubled the peace of the realm.

Patriarchal Rivalry

Within the ranks of orthodoxy there arose still another struggle. The idea in the first century of a universal brotherhood of believers disappeared step by step. As the bishops in various localities became more and more politically minded and less and less spiritually minded, they began to vie with one another for their own bishoprics to grow larger and larger and more and more influential, until Papacy finally won out.

. . . and there was given unto him a great sword.

The era of the Second Seal brought to light a bitter political rivalry and controversy in the Eastern World between the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople, until the latter gained the ascendancy among the primates. On the other hand, in the West, the authority of the bishop of Rome was uncontested because there were no other cities of great importance, and the emperor in distant Constantinople did not have sufficient authority or power to dampen the ardor and aspirations of the western pontiff. Nor did the barbarians who overran Italy from time to time seriously interfere in religious matters. Therefore, the Latin primate became increasingly important since he occupied the seat of former imperial power, now vacated; accordingly, he exercised immense political influence at home and possessed considerable prestige abroad. An edict of Theodosius II, A.D. 438, proclaimed the bishop of Rome the "Rector of the whole church," but in practice this decree pertained to the Latin branch of the empire where all the churches readily acquiesced to the Roman bishop in matters of faith and discipline. Authority in the

12. See pages 47–49.

area was also given imperial sanction by a law of Valentinian III, who conferred upon the prelate jurisdiction over all the other bishops of the *Western Empire*.

In the East, the emperor Justinian was the effective head of the Church in matters of faith as well as government. Thus, in effect, the Church in this part of the world became practically a department of the state. (To this day, the Greek Church has not entirely freed itself of subservience either to czars or to the civil authority.) Yet it was Justinian—the same emperor who boldly asserted his right to decide disputed points of dogma and to enforce acceptance of his opinions on the *Eastern Church*—who would modify his own authority only so long as such modifications did not conflict with the opinion of the bishop of *Rome*, whom he acknowledged as his ecclesiastical superior.¹³ Hence it remained to Justinian to yield the scepter of authority in religious matters, that is, to bestow the “great sword” of the Second Seal to “him that sat thereon.”

The legal triumph of the Roman Church over paganism, over rival patriarchs, and over all so-called heresy—a triumph that began in Constantine’s day and was finalized under Justinian in A.D. 539—completed its evolution from a persecuted sect to a persecuting state Church. This warfare for supremacy in ecclesiastical matters and its deleterious effects are what is referred to in verse 4.

This was a period of great confusion. Even those with the proper heart attitude were profoundly disturbed by what was happening. As a result, God’s attribute of Power was called into question: Why did He not stop the abusive exercise of power? True Christians would not be unduly alarmed about existing sin in the world because such know that “the whole world is in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19 RSV). But glaring contradictions within the brotherhood itself were more difficult to understand. Yet faith would reason: “God must have some wise purpose in permitting such things to happen.” A sufficiency of knowledge is essential to sustain faith; such strength comes from God’s Word (Rom. 10:17).

13. It was not until A.D. 533 that Justinian, fearing that a warm religious discussion with regard to the Virgin Mary’s worthiness of adoration and worship might divide the Church and the empire, sided with the bishop of Rome in the dispute. He addressed Pope John, the patriarch of Rome, as the head of all the holy churches:

“For we do not permit that any question be raised as to anything which concerns the state of the churches, however plain and certain it be, that be not also made known to your Holiness, *who is the Head of all the holy churches.*”

“Nec enim patimur quicquam, quod ad ecclesiarum statum pertinet, quamvis manifestum et indubitatum sit, quod movetur, ut non etiam vestrae innotescat sanctitati *quae caput est omnium sanctarum ecclesiarum.*”

Upon the same occasion Justinian wrote a letter to Epiphanius, the patriarch of Constantinople; an extract follows:

“. . . but in all respects the unity of the most holy churches with his Supreme Holiness, the Pope of ancient Rome (to whom we have written in like manner), has been maintained. For we do not suffer that any of those matters which relate to the state of the church be not also referred to His Blessedness, since he is the head of all the most holy churches of God. . . .”

“. . . sed in omnibus servato statu unitatis sanctissimarum ecclesiarum cum ipso S. S. Papa veteris Romae, ad quem similia hisce perscripsimus. Nec enim patimur ut quicquam eorum, quae ad ecclesiasticum spectant statum, non etiam ac ejusdem referatur beatitudinem: quum ea sit caput omnium sanctissimorum Dei sacerdotum. . . .”

(Justinian’s *Volume of the Civil Law*—Codicis lib. I. tit. i.)

Two Swords Contrasted

The sword (*rhomphaia*) in the Pergamon context (Rev. 2:12) seems to indicate a straight, two-edged, narrow blade resembling a rapier, which is designed chiefly for lunging or thrusting. Its usefulness is dependent upon the skill, dexterity, and artistry of its handler.

Seen to come from the risen Lord's *mouth* (Rev. 1:16; 2:16), this sword pictures doctrinal confrontation. The Scriptures enjoin warriors of the Cross to "fight the good fight of faith" and to "earnestly contend for the faith . . . once delivered unto the saints" (1 Tim. 6:12; Jude 3). However, Jesus threatened to withdraw this privilege from those of his followers in the Pergamon period who were derelict in their duty of defending the standard of truth and righteousness. Of course, this warfare was not to be fought with the carnal weaponry of malice and wickedness, nor was physical harm to be inflicted by the sword. The sword of the Spirit was designed to combat error with sincerity and truth.

In contrast, the "great sword" (*machaira*) given to the mystery rider was a heavy-duty weapon contoured, if necessary, to hack or bludgeon through an opponent's defense. Its effectiveness in crushing the enemy depended more upon machete-wielding energy and brute strength.

Therefore, true soldiers of the Cross had little, if any, involvement in the struggle, described earlier, to obtain power and leadership and to "kill one another." Howbeit, Jesus exhorted his followers to join the ranks of Antipas, the faithful martyr class of this period, and to decry the spirit of patriarchal rivalry, particularly that which was headquartered in Rome, the seat, or throne, of Satan (Rev. 2:13).

Thus two swords are being contrasted, both coexistent in the same time frame, namely, (1) the Pergamon sword of the faithful and (2) the Second Seal sword of Antichrist.

The Third Seal (A.D. 539–1367)

Verse 5:

And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. . . .

Again the Apostle stepped forward, this time at the request of the third beast, or the living creature with the head of a man, representing the attribute of Love. John was about to witness a scene of greed, a scene devoid of pity or compassion.

. . . And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

The black horse signifies doctrinal darkness¹⁴ or error. But since this symbol is coupled with a rider carrying a pair of balances, an additional thought is conveyed

14. It so happened that a dark period of material and educational need accompanied the hypothetical duration of the Third Seal. The following are some testimonials:

"The *Dark Ages* . . . refer to the period of intellectual darkness from the decline of classical learning, after the establishment of the barbarians in Europe in the 5th century, till the Renaissance (q.v.) in the 15th century." (William and Robert Chambers, *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* [Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1888], Vol. 1, p. 91.) (cont.)

to indicate a state of scarcity, bread by weight being a curse (cf. Lev. 26:26; Rev. 6:6). Therefore, the black horse also denotes a time period of prevailing famine (Lam. 4:8; 5:10).

The expression “a pair of balances” is a translation of the sole word *zugos*, which in its primary sense means “a yoke” and is thus rendered everywhere else in Scripture. Of course the choice of this word is intended to identify the type of measuring device employed, namely, a yoke-beam balance scale. Might not the thought of a *yoke* scale be also intended to indicate a prevailing condition of oppression and servitude?

Verse 6:

And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, . . .

The voice here is that of Deity (Ezek. 1:24,25; 10:20,5), as if to say that this wretched circumstance, like that of Job, did not escape divine notice but *was foreseen* and permitted as a test. The scale held aloft by the mystery rider shows that the horseman had complete custody over the food rationing about to take place. This calls to mind the role of the apostate Church as the dispenser of doctrine: “Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD’S hand” (Jer. 51:7).

. . . 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.

Before the significance of this verse can be interpreted, a definition of the terminology employed is essential.

A “measure” (Greek *choenix*) denotes a small quantity containing approximately 1½ pints of dry measure (see Young’s *Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible*).

“Wheat” is a symbol both of God’s elect (Matt. 3:12; 13:30) and of their food (Psa. 81:13,16; 147:11,14).

A “penny” (Greek *denarius*) is a just wage for a day of labor (Matt. 20:1–16).

“Three measures” signifies error being more prevalent than truth, reminiscent of the leaven which that woman Jezebel used in adulterating three measures of meal (Matt. 13:33).

The disorders and destruction of these invasions did indeed bring in an age called “dark.” “Most of our knowledge of European history from the sixth to the twelfth century is derived from monkish chronicles, whose authors were often ignorant and careless, and usually far away from the scenes of the events they recorded.” (Willis Mason West, *Modern Progress* [New York: Allyn and Bacon, 1920], p. 201.) Towns shriveled up, libraries closed or rotted away from neglect, schools were closed, disorder prevailed, and those who could either read or write became increasingly scarce.

“For the whole four hundred years [marginal reference indicates ‘The Dark Ages 400–800’] . . . Europe remained a dreary scene of violence, lawlessness, and ignorance. The old Roman schools disappeared, and classical literature seemed to be extinct. . . . For centuries of violence and brutality, the thousands of monasteries that dotted Western Europe were the only almshouses, inns, asylums, hospitals, and schools, and the sole refuge of learning. . . . The first three centuries (800–1100) were a *continuation* [emphasis added] of the ‘Dark Ages’ of the barbarian invasion, after the brief interruption by Charlemagne.” (James Harvey Robinson, *History of Modern Europe I* [Boston: Ginn and Co., 1924], pp. 29, 36, 128–129.)

The clergy held the key of knowledge, for they alone had the ability to translate from the dead languages, or even to read at all. The people starved both educationally and spiritually.



The Black Horse

“Barley” is a common food that is sometimes associated with an adulteress (Hos. 3:1,2) or that is linked with the jealousy offering of a wife under suspicion of infidelity (Num. 5:15).

“Oil” represents the Holy Spirit.

“Wine” denotes the joy and love of the truth.

By combining all these terms from a natural standpoint, one is able to sense the thrust of the vision. This insight, in turn, assists in understanding the spiritual application. Thus the following picture is first presented for consideration: The rider of the black horse, in a time of scarcity, carries a scale in his hand to ration grain that is for sale at an exorbitant price considering the proportional amount of meal obtained, especially the wheat. After a hard day of labor, a man is able to procure

only a scant daily provision of wheat, the bare subsistence level of food allowed a slave, without any surplus for his family. Therefore, the servant is forced to purchase the barley, instead of the wheat, in order to feed the other hungry mouths.

This scene calls to mind the greed of those described in Amos 8:5, who “set forth wheat, making [a] the ephah small [i.e., fraudulently diminishing the standard measure], and [b] the shekel great [increasing the sale price to an unnecessary inflationary level], and [c] falsifying the balances by deceit [manipulating the scale itself by some artifice so that the commodity purchased is ostensibly correct but in reality underweight].” The buyer is thus shortchanged in a *threefold* manner. “Will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces [the smallest bits] of bread?” (Ezek. 13:19).

In the land of Israel, the professed nation of God, a 3½-year drought prevailed in the days of King Ahab. The general populace, with the exception of the Prophet Elijah, was greatly distressed. Elijah was instructed of the Lord to hide himself by the brook Cherith: “Thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. . . . And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook” (1 Kings 17:3–6). Obviously, the Prophet’s God-given supply of food differed from that of the general public. Though not abundant, it was sufficient for the need of each day. No doubt the Prophet partook of his portion, delivered in such a miraculous manner, with deepest gratitude and open thankfulness to the source whence it came.

Spiritual Application

So, likewise, a somewhat similar condition of want is described under the Third Seal, affecting in this instance the whole of Christendom. It is a condition not of material deprivation, but of spiritual need—“not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD” (Amos 8:11,12). Yet the faithful Elijah class of this black horse era, though not finding an abundance of Scripture available, nonetheless fared better than did others. Instead of a diminution of benefit, the “no frills” life-support system furnished for the Lord’s people seems to have had the opposite effect. The comfort and consolation of the Holy Spirit (the oil), and the love of the truth with its exhilarating, compensatory joy (the wine), appear to have disproportionately far outweighed their meager provision of food (Psa. 37:16).

The duration of the Third Seal corresponds with the greater part of the Pergamon Church and the whole of the Thyatira period. The teaching role of Jezebel in the fourth Church (Rev. 2:20) bears a striking similarity to the black horse mystery rider’s role as custodian of the food supply.

The Fourth Seal (A.D. 1367–1517)

Verse 7:

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

Again, for the last time in this vision, the Apostle John stepped forward. At the request of the fourth beast, or living creature, which had the head of an eagle,

representing the attribute of Wisdom, John was ready to witness a scene of brutality, the toleration of which deeds appeared totally unwarranted.

Verse 8:

And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with [omit "with"]¹⁵ him. . . .

The latter portion of the verse quoted above should more properly be rendered: "His name that sat on him was Death, and the grave [Greek *hades*] followed him." Joel 2:3 illustrates the same principle.

The Greek word *chloros*, used to describe the color of the fourth horse, is translated "pale" in the majority of New Testament versions. This word occurs only four times in Scripture. In the three other instances, it is rendered unequivocally as "green" since it is associated with the color of grass. But in verse 8 the translators designated the horse as simply "pale" without reference to any specific color. The inference is that the animal was somewhat of an off-shade whitish hue, no clue being given as to whether there was a tinge of green or yellow.¹⁶ Some translators prefer to think of the horse as ashen, a color more easily identifiable with death. Others, however, qualify the color as "deathly pale" (Jerusalem Bible) or "sickly green" (Phillips Modern English).

Without doubt Holy Writ implies some relationship between the equine beast and its rider, although there is not the slightest hint about the garb or the aspect of the horseman. Before the significance of the vision is determined, the following should be considered.

While the horse should properly be regarded as pale, sickly green in appearance, yet both horse and rider were soon seen to inflict great havoc upon others (see remainder of verse 8). The rider used the animal to pursue and destroy what it considered to be the enemy. In fact, so successful was the horseman's endeavor that he was aptly named Death. Why was this appellation used? The color of the horse not merely signifies its death-dealing activity against opponents, but also exposes a self-contained, inherent malady that portends an eventual fate (not here delineated) similar to that being meted out to others—ultimate *retribution*.

This vision seems to indicate that both the leadership and the doctrine of the orthodox Church were directed against an unnamed and despised foe deemed (erroneously) as heretical (John 16:2). The very exposure of a latent disease in the body politic of the Church by the advocates of reform infuriated the rider to rally his forces against such informers. The spirit of the mystery rider was reflected in the body of the horse, in the church doctrine, which figuratively was blanched white¹⁷ with frustration and anger, hurt to the "quick," stung with the reproach of

15. See the Revised Standard Version or Vatican Manuscript No. 1160, both of which omit the word "with." If one insists upon retaining the preposition, then Phillips Modern English is a superior rendition; namely, "The name of its rider was death, and the grave followed *close behind* him."

16. *Chloros* is closely akin to *chlorine*, a greenish-yellow gas, and to *chlorophyll*, the green coloring matter of plants.

17. *Chloros* is also related to Clorox[®], which is a bleaching or whitening agent for the removal of color or stain.



The Pale Horse

“heretical” reporting that disclosed the identity of the false Church as Antichrist (otherwise designated as Death).

Lest the foregoing be considered a flight of fantasy and wild speculation, a self-incriminating footnote appears in an officially authorized Roman Catholic version of the New Testament. This statement, which follows, implies justification of the atrocities committed under the symbolism of the Fourth Seal:

“Chap. VI. Ver. 2. White horse. He that sitteth on the white horse is Christ, going forth to subdue the world by his gospel. *The other horses that follow* [emphasis added], represent the judgments and punishments that were to fall on the enemies of Christ and his church: the red horse signifies war; the black horse, famine; and the pale horse (which has death for its rider), plagues or pestilence.”^{18*}

. . . 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.

The reading “power was given *unto them*” can be misleading, for the impression given is that both death and *hades* were delegated with authority to kill. It sounds as

*This footnote is wholly contained on the next page.

if two personages are being brought into view—and that either (a) both rode the same horse, (b) two horses were involved, or (c) one person was in the saddle and the other was on foot. However, every one of these suggestions appears utterly invalid. It is far more understandable that only one personage, one rider, was named Death, that only a single individual was pictured on horseback, being referred to as “his [not their] name that sat on him” (verse 8a). The context indicates that the rider, Death, was the causal factor in the carnage and that *hades* followed in the wake of Death. To express the matter another way, *the rider and his horse proceeded forth, and a graveyard of destruction was left behind*. But if it is insisted that the words “power was given *unto them*”¹⁹ be retained, then it must be equally maintained that the pluralized pronoun is meant to inform the reader that the rider, though designated by a singular pronoun, is in reality meant to point out a *class* of individuals representing church leadership. Viewed in this light, the details blend into a harmonious whole.

The vision declares that “power was given . . . *over the fourth part of the earth*.” There were four parts, or four major divisions, of Christendom during the Fourth Seal; namely, (1) Spain and Portugal; (2) England; (3) France, Burgundy, and Italy; and (4) Germany and the House of Hapsburg. Of these divisions, the

18.

DOWAY [*sic*]
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(The same footnote is included in a re-edited edition by The Douay Bible House of New York under the imprimatur and approbation of His Eminence, Patrick Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop of New York, under the date January 7, 1938.)

19. The New English Bible substitutes “to him” for the phrase “unto them” (verse 8). Though the plural pronoun is contained in the Sinaitic and Alexandrian manuscripts, the singular form is found in the Vatican Codex No. 1160. There exists considerable ancient authority to render the expression in the singular.

Text (<i>auto</i> , “to him”)	Century
Memphitic Version, Schwartz edition	Not later than third
Thebaic Version, Mingarelli edition	Third or fourth
Armenian Version, Zohrab edition of Miesrob	Fourth
Aethiopic Version, Bode edition	Fourth(?)
Syriac, Prms. Cmpl.	Fifth or sixth
Q Codex Guelpherbytanus B	Sixth, possibly fifth
Jerome’s Vulgate, Codex Amiatinus	Sixth

(Reference: Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *The Greek New Testament* [London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1857–1879], Vol. 1, Introductory Notice Part VI. i.; Vol. 2, Marginal alternative reading, *auto* “to him,” p. 961.)

scene and activity described in verse 8 relate to England primarily. It was there that the spiritual warfare occurred.

The power was used “to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” First, one is immediately struck with a seeming anomaly, an apparent redundancy, for how could one “kill . . . with death”? Since “kill” already means to destroy in death, is this third condition (“with death”) an interpolation? Evidently, all modern translators think so, since invariably the third judgment is replaced with another word, such as “plague,” “disease,” “pestilence,” or “violence.” However, taking the liberty of such substitution is wholly unwarranted since there is no creditable codex or manuscript to justify the change. Even Westcott and Hort, in their effort to revise and to restore the Greek New Testament to its original state, dared not remove *thanatos* (death) as the third condition. The King James Version also retains the word—and properly so, for its inclusion had a purpose, which will be examined shortly. But first, a mood-setting or background theme should be observed.

The four enactments seen in the portrayal of verse 8 are a flashback to the four sore judgments—i.e., sword, famine, noisome beast, and pestilence—that the Lord God inflicted upon natural Israel (Ezek. 14:21; Lev. 26:22–26). Three of these judgments correspond in nature to those displayed in the Apocalypse, the exception being pestilence, which is omitted. Instead, the calamity death is inserted. Calling to mind these judgments of the past enables the viewer to sense the fanatical frenzy motivating the mystery rider. The afflictions visited upon the hapless victims during the Fourth Seal were executed without mercy as though they were judgments by divine appointment.

The Four Judgments

“To kill with sword [*rhomphaia*, rapier]”—the deliberate provocation of doctrinal controversy in order to entice, ensnare, and prosecute (“kill”) the religious reformers.

“To kill . . . with hunger”—by the authority of papal interdict or prohibition, the restraining of Lollards from ecclesiastical functions, such as the sacraments of the church: holy matrimony, burial in sacred ground, family baptismal rites, and so forth. But perhaps even more far-reaching in ferreting out enemies (the Lord’s little ones) were the subtle establishment of rules and regulations in universities and schools and the placing of other restrictions upon access to employment. Through impingement upon conscience, these methods ultimately brought to light and exposed for apprehension those who were sympathetic to views considered inimical to orthodoxy.

“To kill with . . . death”—the direct issuance by the bishops of certificates of arrest, which amounted to *death warrants* to those victimized thereby.

“To kill . . . with the beasts of the earth”—the ecclesiastical imposition upon local public officials to aggressively, on their own initiative, assume responsibility for the detection and prosecution of errorists.

All the above four conditions were designed to bring Lollardism under control, to stamp out heresy either through recantation or by silencing in death.

Similarities to Sardis

Attention is now brought to bear upon certain similarities in activity between the Fourth Seal time period and the Church in Sardis. The etymological meaning of Sardis²⁰ and the message “thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead” (Rev. 3:1) have a dual application, one of which pertains to nominal churchianity. Although possessing a name or reputation of life and vitality, the nominal Church contrariwise, in the eyes of Christ, should more aptly be named “Death.” The Fourth Seal confirms this former appraisal by revealing the name and identity of the rider as Death. In the horse and rider scene, the Lord’s Little Flock are unnamed, but in Sardis they are promised a future name of utmost distinction and honor (Rev. 3:5). The word “name” is mentioned four times in the Sardis message, once in the seal vision.

A further remarkable coincidence took place to mark this period: a ravaging, literal pestilence known as the “Black Death.”²¹ Also, the context of the next seal opening reveals another strong confirmation of the parallelism between Sardis and the time frame of the Fourth Seal.

The Fifth Seal (A.D. 1517–1789)

Verse 9:

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:

Verse 10:

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?

These verses, describing the souls of those under the altar who were crying with a loud voice for the avenging of their shed blood, their death, clearly address the first incidence of murder recorded in the Old Testament (Gen. 4:3–11). In fact, a close scrutiny of the Genesis account sheds considerable light upon the significance of the lesson embodied in the Fifth Seal. Back there brother Cain slew brother Abel; but here in the Apocalypse the analogy and enigma being presented are of a *persecuting Church* inflicting punishment upon a *persecuted Church*. In the distant past, the firstborn Cain was moved with jealousy and envy against innocent Abel; in the Revelation account, the time-honored nominal Church is stirred with anger against what it considers to be a late-coming, dissident (though in reality a peace-loving) membership. Cain could not fault Abel or find any valid reason to justify his malignant disposition toward his brother. Likewise, Papacy vented its wrath upon an innocent law-abiding citizenry who chose to worship God in a manner differing from that of apostate orthodoxy.

20. See page 67.

21. See pages 73–74.

The voice and the blood of verse 10 bear a striking similarity to the voice and blood of Genesis 4:10. That the voice is not to be taken in a literal sense as the anguished cry of the deceased²² is discerned in that both symbols (the voice and the blood) have a spiritual significance depicting retributory justice—i.e., justice which demands satisfaction and punitive judgment for a violation of life-rights. The blood at the bottom of the altar indicates a martyred class. It is to be observed that with the consecration and the installation of the true Aaronic priesthood in the type, blood from the sacrifice was sprinkled upon the altar, and the remainder was poured out into the earth at the bottom, or foot, of the altar. This procedure signified not only the purchased redemption of earth but also the pouring out of life unto death, the resisting unto blood spoken of by the Apostle Paul (Heb. 12:4). Those of this fifth period who faithfully sealed their testimony in blood were thus in line to receive the crown of life.

Nor will this cry for the requiting of blood go unanswered. In a similar situation the Master prophesied that which befell natural Israel in A.D. 69, when “all the righteous blood *shed upon the earth*” (within established human society organized under the control or influence of nominal religious leadership) from righteous Abel down to Zacharias would be and was required of the generation of Jesus’ First Advent (Matt. 23:35; Luke 11:51). The inference is quite clear: A similar judgment will befall the generation living today because of the evils committed during this gospel dispensation.

St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre

The following event occurred in the period of the Fifth Seal. At the hour of midnight on the twenty-fourth day of August 1572, a bell in the tower of the royal palace gave the signal for a general massacre of the Huguenots, in which estimates

22. The spiritual hope of those martyred under the preceding seals, up to the commencement of the fifth seal, was in a *future* resurrection of the *dead* when those figuratively asleep in death are to be awakened in “that day” (2 Tim. 4:8).

If wayward loved ones who died out of Christ are *already* in “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone,” and the righteous dead are *already* in bliss, why do the Scriptures say, “The Lord knoweth how to . . . *reserve* the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished,” and on another occasion, “If there be no resurrection of the dead, . . . then they also which are *fallen asleep* in Christ are perished”—Rev. 21:8; 2 Pet. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:13,18.

If those who have “fallen asleep” have *already* “gone to their reward,” why did the Master himself say that they should be “recompensed at the resurrection of the just,” when the Son of man shall come in his Father’s glory, when *every* man shall be rewarded according to his works?—Luke 14:14; Matt. 16:27; Rev. 11:18.

If God’s faithful ones are to be crowned at death, why did the apostles say that their crowns were “laid up” for them until “the chief Shepherd shall appear”?—2 Tim. 4:1,8; 1 Pet. 5:4.

If they are *already* in the presence of God and singing His praises, why does “The Sweet Singer of Israel” say, “In death there is no remembrance of thee [God]” and “The dead praise not the LORD”?—Psa. 6:4,5; 115:17.

If the prophets and other worthy individuals of the past were taken to heaven at death, why did Jesus say during his ministry, “No man hath ascended up to heaven,” and Peter at a still later date declare, “David is not ascended into the heavens”?—John 3:13; Acts 2:34.

If the *apostles* were to go to heaven immediately at death, why did Jesus say to them before his ascension, “Whither I go, ye cannot come,” but “If I go . . . I will come again, and [then] receive you unto myself”?—John 13:33; 14:3.

vary that between 30,000 and 70,000 persons were murdered in Paris and the outlying provinces. The pope celebrated the events of this St. Bartholomew's Day by a procession to the Church of St. Louis, a grand "Te Deum," the striking of a commemorative medal, and the proclamation of a year of Jubilee.

Verse 11:

And white robes were given unto every one of them; . . .

The reward to be given to faithful Christians *previously slain* (by those in nominal churchianity possessing the murderous spirit of Cain) is here designated. The Abel class is assured that white vindication robes, representing also victory togas, are secured to all thus "slain for the word of God," even to "every one of them" maintaining their integrity and sealing their testimony in "blood"—in *death* (verses 9 to 11a). All such, whether of the Very Elect (Rev. 19:14) or of the Great Company (Rev. 7:9,13,14), will receive a better resurrection to life (Mark 8:35,36; Luke 9:24,25) and inherit a white (pure) nature in the spirit realm.

. . . and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, . . .

This "rest yet for a . . . season [*chronos*, a time]"²³ is symbolic; i.e., a period of 360 literal years is signified.²⁴ In other words, the more-than-overcomers slain in Christ were appointed to a rest, or sleep in death, for a fixed duration of time: from the latter part of A.D. 1517 to the early spring of A.D. 1878.²⁵

It should be noted that the subject matter of verses 9 to 11b is not a commentary covering a series of events, but is, rather, an observation designating a *single reference point* on the stream of time, namely, the year 1517. Pertaining to Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation, this date serves as the terminus of the Fourth Seal as well as the introduction to the Fifth Seal. The double perspective harmonizes the association of the white garments mentioned in the concluding promise to the Church of Sardis (Rev. 3:5) with both the time indicator (verse 11b) and the white robes (verse 11a) that mark the commencement of the Fifth Seal. This moment in time also synchronizes with the opening of the door (Rev. 3:8).²⁶

. . . until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The two words "brethren" and "fellowservants" were employed because of a distinction in meaning. "Brethren" is a broader term referring to all those who, through repentance and full commitment to Christ, have been adopted into God's family, whereas "fellowservants" designates a higher form of fellowship in Christ, denoting greater fervency of zeal *in serving* the Lord, the truth, and the brethren. "Fellowservants," therefore, is first in importance. Both terms are used elsewhere to denote two different aspects in viewing the same person (Rev. 19:10; 22:9). However, in this instance (verse 11c) the signification is of two classes faithfully

23. The Greek word *micron*, "little," is omitted in Vatican Manuscripts Nos. 1160 and 2066(046).

24. See page 63.

25. See page 63 footnote.

26. See pages 88–89.

enduring the same fate. All fellowservants are brethren, but not all brethren reach the level of fellowservants.

The expression “killed²⁷ as they were” is a further confirmation that time must still elapse before those formerly slain under prior seals would receive their resurrection change. It is also an indication that the Fifth Seal will countenance rigors similar to those of the fourth.

The Sixth Seal (A.D. 1789–1878)

Verse 12:

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; . . .

The “earthquake” is not a mere earth tremor or trembling, either great or small; it refers instead to a violent *eruption* of the lower strata of society long chafing under centuries of repression and misrule, resulting in the temporary overthrow of the established norm of law and order and its replacement with a ten-year reign of terror. This earthquake, which introduces the Sixth Seal, is the French Revolution (1789–1799). (A sharp distinction and separation should be noted between the earthquake of the Sixth Seal and the still greater earthquake to come at the consummation of the Gospel Age—Rev. 16:18.) The fall of the Bastille was the tocsin announcing this upheaval in France. Conditions leading up to this climactic event are treated by John Abbott in his book *The French Revolution*,²⁸ which is excerpted below.

The Bastille

“The monarchy was now so absolute that the king, without any regard to law, had the persons and the property of all his subjects entirely at his disposal. He could confiscate any man’s estate. He could assign any man to a dungeon for life without trial and even without accusation. To his petted and profligate favorites he was

27. “And it may safely be said that human and Satanic ingenuity were taxed to their utmost to invent new and horrible tortures, for both the political and religious opponents of Antichrist; the latter—heretics—being pursued with tenfold fury. Besides the common forms of persecution and death, such as racking, burning, drowning, stabbing, starving, and shooting with arrows and guns, fiendish hearts meditated how the most delicate and sensitive parts of the body, capable of the most excruciating pain, could be affected; molten lead was poured into ears; tongues were cut out and lead poured into the mouths; wheels were arranged with knife blades attached so that the victim could be slowly chopped to pieces; claws and pinchers were made red hot and used upon sensitive parts of the body; eyes were gouged out; finger nails were pulled off with red hot irons; holes, by which the victim was tied up, were bored through the heels; some were forced to jump from eminences onto long spikes fixed below, where, quivering with pain, they slowly died. The mouths of some were filled with gunpowder, which, when fired, blew their heads to pieces; others were hammered to pieces on anvils; others, attached to bellows, had air pumped into them until they burst; others were choked to death with mangled pieces of their own bodies; others with urine, excrement, etc., etc.” (*The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. [East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1889], Ser. 2, pp. 346–347.)

To those desiring a fuller account of these awful times and scenes, the following are commended: Macauley’s *History of England*, Motley’s *Dutch Republic*, D’Aubigne’s *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, White’s *Eighteen Christian Centuries*, Elliot on *Romanism*, and Fox’s *Book of Martyrs*.

28. John S. C. Abbott, *The French Revolution* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), Vol. 1, pp. 53–57.

accustomed to give sealed writs, *lettres de cachet*, whose blanks they could fill up with any name they pleased. With one of these writs the courtiers could drag any man who displeased them to one of the dungeons of the Bastille, where no light of the sun would ever gladden his eyes again. Of these sealed writs we shall speak hereafter. They were the most appalling instruments of torture despotism ever wielded.

“The Bastille. At the eastern entrance of Paris stood this world-renowned fortress and prison. In gloomy grandeur its eight towers darkened the air, surrounded by a massive wall of stone nine feet thick and a hundred feet high. The whole was encircled by a ditch twenty-five feet deep and one hundred and twenty feet wide. The Bastille was an object exciting universal awe. No one could ever pass beneath its shadow without thinking of the sighs which ceaselessly resounded through all its vaults. It was an ever-present threat, the great upholder of despotic power, with its menace appalling even the boldest heart. It is easy to brave death from the bullet or the guillotine; but who can brave the doom of Cardinal Balue, who, for eleven years, was confined in an iron cage, so constructed that he could find no possible position for repose; or the fate of Harancourt, who passed fifteen years in a cage within the Bastille, whose iron bars required in their riveting the labors of nineteen men for twenty days? To be thus torn from wife, children, and home, and to be consigned for life to the unearthly woe of such a doom must terrify even the firmest soul. It is painful to dwell upon these details, but they must be known in explanation of the scenes of violence and blood to which they finally gave birth.

“Charles of Armanac, for no crime whatever of his own, but because his *brother* had offended Charles XI., was thrown into prison. For fourteen years he lingered in the dungeon, until his reason was dethroned and his spirit was bewildered and lost in the woes of the maniac. Constant de Renville, a Norman gentleman, was accused, while in exile in Holland, of writing a satirical poem against France. For eleven years he was immured in one of the most loathsome dungeons of the Bastille. He appears to have been a man of true piety, and upon his release wrote an account of the horrors of his prison-house, which thrilled the ear of Europe. . . .

“Imagination can not conceive of an abode more loathsome than some of these horrible dens. The cold stone walls, covered with the mould of ages, were ever dripping with water. The slimy floor swarmed with reptiles and all kinds of vermin who live in darkness and mire. A narrow slit in the wall, which was nine feet thick, admitted a few straggling rays of light, but no air to ventilate the apartment where corruption was festering. A little straw upon the floor or upon a plank supported by iron bars fixed in the wall afforded the only place for repose. Ponderous double doors, seven inches thick and provided with enormous locks and bolts, shut the captive as effectually from the world and from all knowledge of what was passing in the world as if he were in his grave. His arrest was frequently conducted so secretly that even his friends had no knowledge of what had become of him; they could make no inquiries at the gloomy portals of the Bastille, and the unhappy captive was left to die unknown and forgotten in his dungeon. If by any happy chance he was liberated, he was first compelled to take an oath never to reveal what he had seen, or heard, or suffered within the walls of the Bastille.

“Thus any person who became obnoxious to the king or any of his favorites was immediately transferred to these dungeons of despair. Cardinal Richelieu filled its cells with the victims of his tyranny. The captive immediately received the name of his cell, and his real name was never uttered within the precincts of the Bastille.

“The Bastille was often full to overflowing, but there were other Bastilles in France sufficiently capacious to meet all the demands of the most inexorable tyranny.

“It is the more necessary to dwell upon these details since the Bastille was the mailed hand with which aristocratic usurpation beat down all resistance and silenced every murmur. The Bastille, with its massive walls and gloomy towers and cannon frowning from every embrasure, was the terrific threat which held France in subjection. It was the demon soul of demoniac despotism. So awful was the terror inspired, that frequently the victim was merely enjoined by one of the warrants bearing the seal of the king to go himself to the dungeon. Appalled and trembling in every nerve, he dared not for one moment disobey. Hastening to the prison, he surrendered himself to its glooms, despairingly hoping, by prompt obedience, to shorten the years of his captivity.

“There were vaults in the Bastille and other prisons of France called *oubliettes*, into which the poor victim was dropped and left to die forgotten. These were usually shaped like a bottle, with a narrow neck and expanding beneath. In one of these tombs of massive stone, twenty-two feet deep and seventeen or eighteen feet in diameter, with a narrow neck through which the captive could be thrust down, the inmate was left in Egyptian darkness amid the damp and mould of ages, and, trampling upon the bones of those who had perished before him, to linger through weary hours of starvation and woe until death came to his relief. Sometimes he thus lingered for years, food being occasionally thrown down to him.

“There were twenty bastilles in France. In Paris, besides the Bastille, there were thirty prisons, where people might be incarcerated without sentence, trial, or even accusation. The convents were amply supplied with dungeons. All these prisons were at the disposal of the Jesuits. They were instruments of torture. The wretched victim, once consigned to those cells, was enshrouded by the oblivion of the tomb. The rich man was robbed of his wealth and taken there to be forgotten and to die. Beauty, whose virtue bribes could not destroy, was dragged to those apartments to minister to the lust of merciless oppressors. The shriek of despair, smothered by walls of stone and doors of iron, reached only the ear of God. (Jules Michelet, *Historical View of the French Revolution*, trans. C. Cocks [London: H. C. Bohn, 1860], Vol. I, p. 66.)

“During the reign of Louis XV. one hundred and fifty thousand of these *lettres de cachet* were issued, making an average of two thousand five hundred annually. The king could not refuse a blank warrant to his mistress or to a courtier. All those who had influence at court could obtain them. They were distributed as freely as in this country members of Congress have distributed their postage franks. St. Florentin alone gave away fifty thousand. These writs were often sold at a great price. Any man who could obtain one had his enemy at his disposal. One can hardly conceive of a more awful despotism. Such were ‘*the good old times of the monarchy,*’

as some have insanely called them. Even during the mild reign of Louis XVI. fourteen thousand *lettres de cachet* were issued. Let us enter the prison and contemplate the doom of the captive.

“A gentleman by the name of Dessault offended Richelieu by refusing to execute one of his atrocious orders. At midnight a band of soldiers entered his chamber, tore him from his bed, and dragged him through the dark streets to the Bastille, and there consigned him to a living burial in one of its cold damp tombs of iron and stone. Here in silence and solitude, deprived of all knowledge of his family, and his family having lost all trace of him, he lingered eleven years.

“‘Oh, who can tell what days, what nights he spent
Of tideless, waveless, sailless, shoreless woe!’

“At last his jailer ventured to inform him that Richelieu was on a dying bed. Hoping that in such an hour the heart of the haughty cardinal might be touched with sympathy, he wrote to him as follows:

“‘My lord, you are aware that for eleven years you have subjected me to the endurance of a thousand deaths in the Bastille—to sufferings which would excite compassion if inflicted even upon the most disloyal subject of the king. How much more then should I be pitied, who am doomed to perish here for disobeying an order, which, obeyed, would have sent me to the final judgment with blood-stained hands, and would have consigned my soul to eternal misery. Ah! could you but hear the sobs, the lamentations, the groans which you extort from me, you would quickly set me at liberty. In the name of the eternal God, who will judge you as well as me, I implore you, my lord, to take pity on my woe, and, if you wish that God should show mercy to you, order my chains to be broken before your death-hour comes. When that hour arrives you will no longer be able to do me justice, but will persecute me even in your grave.’

“The iron-hearted minister was unrelenting, and died leaving his victim still in the dungeon. There Dessault remained *fifty years* after the death of Richelieu. He was at length liberated, after having passed sixty-one years in a loathsome cell but a few feet square. The mind stands aghast in the contemplation of such woes. All this he suffered as the punishment of his *virtues*. The mind is appalled in contemplating such a doom. Even the assurance that after death cometh the judgment affords but little relief. Michlet [*sic*], an unbeliever in Christian revelation, indignantly exclaims, ‘Though a sworn enemy to barbarous fictions about everlasting punishment, I found myself praying to God to construct a hell for tyrants.’

“When we remember that during a single reign one hundred and fifty thousand were thus incarcerated; that all the petted and profligate favorites of the king, male and female, had these blank warrants placed in their hands, which they could fill up with any name at their pleasure; that money could be thus extorted, domestic virtue violated, and that every man and every family was thus placed at the mercy of the vilest minions of the court, we can only wonder that the volcano of popular indignation did not burst forth more speedily and more desolatingly. It is true that in many other countries of Europe the state of affairs was equally bad, if not worse. But in France wealth and intelligence had made great advances, while in central and north-

ern Europe the enslaved people were so debased by ignorance that they had no consciousness of the rights of which they were defrauded.

“The court demanded of a rich man, M. Massat, six hundred thousand livres (\$120,000). Stunned by the ruinous demand, he ventured to remonstrate. He was dragged to the Bastille, where the vermin of his dungeon could alone hear his murmurs. M. Catalan, another man of wealth, after experiencing the horrors of such an imprisonment for several months, was glad to purchase his ransom for six millions of livres (\$1,200,000). (Alexis De Tocqueville, *L’ancien Régime et la Révolution* [The Old Regime and the Revolution] [Paris: Michel Levy, 1856], p. 191.)

“The money thus extorted was squandered in the most shameless profligacy. The king sometimes expended two hundred thousand dollars for a single night’s entertainment at Versailles. The terrors of the Bastille frowned down all remonstrances. A ‘stone doublet’ was the robe which the courtiers facetiously remarked they had prepared for murmurers.

“On the 1st of May, 1749, a gentleman of the name of Latude was arrested by one of these *lettres de cachet*, and thrown into the Bastille. He was then but twenty years of age, and had given offense to Madame de Pompadour, by pretending that a conspiracy had been formed against her life. For thirty-five years he remained in prison enduring inconceivable horrors. In 1784, several years after the death of both the mistress and her subject king, he was liberated and wrote an account of his captivity. It was a tale of horror which thrilled the ear of Europe. Eloquently, in view of the letters of Latude, Michelet represents the people as exclaiming,

“‘Holy, holy Revolution, how slowly dost thou come! I, who have been waiting for thee a thousand years in the furrows of the Middle Ages, what! must I wait still longer? Oh, how slowly time passes! Oh, how have I counted the hours! Wilt thou never arrive?’

“A young man, in a Jesuit College, in a thoughtless hour, composed a satirical Latin distich, making merry with the foibles of the professors and of the king. A *lettre de cachet* was immediately served upon him, and for *thirty-one years*, until youth and manhood were giving place to old age, he remained moaning in living burial in one of the dungeons of the Bastille. One of the first acts of the Revolution was to batter down these execrable walls and to plow up their very foundations.

“In view of the facts here revealed one can not but be amazed at the manner in which many have spoken of the French Revolution, as if it were merely an outburst of human depravity. ‘Burke had no idea,’ writes De Tocqueville, ‘of the state in which the monarchy, he so deeply regretted, had left us.’ Michelet, glowing with the indignation which inflamed the bosoms of his fathers, exclaims, ‘Our fathers shivered that Bastille to pieces, tore away its stones with bleeding hands, and flung them afar. Afterward they seized them again, and, having hewn them into a different form, in order that they might be trampled under foot by the people forever, built with them the Bridge of Revolution.’ (Michelet, *Historical View of the French Revolution*, p. 64.)”

Religious Attitudes

Nearly all the ablest French scholars and writers of that day despised the *Church* and were unbelievers in *Christianity*. They consequently availed themselves of

every opportunity to assail religion. Thus infidelity soon became the fashion. Many of the nobility, with amusement and pleasure, hearkened to these teachings of unbelief, which relieved them from the restraints of Christian morality. Later the court, becoming alarmed, laid a prohibition on their works, but did not dare to punish the writers themselves as they were too numerous and powerful. Notwithstanding such restriction, their writings proliferated and became one of the most powerful agents in ushering in the Revolution. These philosophers hated the religious establishment as a political institution. They were concerned not because the ecclesiastics assumed to regulate the concerns of the next life, but because they oppressively controlled the present life through their status as landlords, seigniors, tithe-holders, and administrators. The ecclesiastics occupied positions of honor, privilege, and might in a society that was to be overthrown.

The teachings of true Christianity do erode and undermine dictatorial government, and therefore, despots have invariably waged warfare against the Bible. When Papacy became the great spiritual despotism that darkened the world, the Bible was the book it hated and feared above all others. With caution this corrupt hierarchy selected a few passages about submission and obedience, which it allowed to be read to the people, while the majestic principles of equality and fraternity, upon which the moral code of the Bible is reared, were vigilantly excluded from the public mind. "The peasant detected with a Bible," as one has so aptly stated, "was deemed as guilty as if caught with the tools of a burglar, or the dies of a counterfeiter."

In short, Christianity had two classes of vigorous assailants: (1) There were those who did not know how to discriminate between true Christianity and churchianity with its corruptions; this class considered Christianity and the Papal Church as one, and endeavored to batter down the hateful structure as a bastille of woe. (2) The second class understood Christianity to be a system that frowned upon all impurity and that continually pressed upon the mind a final judgment. Restive under such restraints, they labored for the overthrow of Christianity so that guilt might find repose in unbelief.

Oppressive Taxation

So excessive was the burden of taxation that an appalling estimate has been accurately computed: If the produce of one acre of land amounted to sixteen dollars, the king took ten; the duke as proprietor, five, leaving one dollar for the cultivator.²⁹

The following describes a typical scene: "Upon one of the eminences of the town there characteristically stood a lordly castle of stone, with its turrets and towers, its park and fish pond. This massive structure belongs to the duke. Weary of the solitude of the country, he has withdrawn from the castle, and is living with his family in the metropolis, indulging in all its expensive dissipations. His purse can only be replenished by the money which he can extort from the cultivators of the land which

29. Betham Edwards, ed., *Autobiography of Arthur Young, Esq. F.R.S.* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1898), Vol. 1, p. 574. Cf. Jack L. Cross, "[Chief Justice] John Marshall on the French Revolution and on American Politics," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., Vol. 12, No. 4 (October 1955), p. 322.

surrounds his castle; and his expenses are so enormous that he is ever harassed by an exhausted purse.

“For a few weeks in the summer he comes down to his castle from the metropolis, with his city companions, to engage in rural sports. Wild boar, deer, rabbits, and partridges abound in his park. The boars and the deer range the fields of the farmers, trampling down and devouring their crops; but the farmer does not harass them, lest he incur the terrible displeasure of the duke. The rabbits and the partridges infest the fields of grain; but the duke has issued a special injunction that even the weeds must not be disturbed, lest the brooding partridges should be frightened away, to the injury of his summer shooting.”³⁰

In the year 1785, Thomas Jefferson wrote from Paris to a Mrs. Trist of Philadelphia: “Of twenty millions of people supposed to be in France, I am of the opinion that there are nineteen millions more wretched, more accursed in every circumstance of human existence, than the most conspicuously wretched individual of the whole of the United States.”³¹ The same year he wrote to M. Bellini, a professor at William and Mary College: “I find the general state of humanity here most deplorable. The truth of Voltaire’s observation offers itself perpetually, that every man here must be either the hammer or the anvil.”³²

. . . and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

Verse 13:

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.

Verse 14:

And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

The sun becoming dark “as sackcloth of hair” signifies not a mere diminution of sunlight but a mournful, impenetrable darkness beclouding the earth on a clear day. This celestial disturbance recorded in the Apocalypse, a book of *symbols*, does not imply a literal darkening of the sun or an actual discoloration of the moon, for it is to be interpreted spiritually. True, there are Scriptures that indicate at least partial fulfillments along natural lines as signs of impending judgment at the end of the age, but these were to occur *subsequent* to the French Revolution, and are mentioned elsewhere (Joel 2:30,31; Luke 21:25a; etc.).

While the startling spectacle witnessed by the Apostle—namely, the catastrophic quake upon the earth and the dissolution of the heaven above—is seen to have a direct cause and effect relationship, yet an additional thought is inferred. Both the disturbance below, upon the earth, as well as the disorder above it occur almost concurrently, that is, *during the Revolution* itself.

30. Abbott, *The French Revolution*, p. 51.

31. Henry S. Randall, *The Life of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1858), Vol. 1, p. 432.

32. Ibid.

As the light, heat, energy, and gravity of the sun (the moon also) exert their influence upon the planet, affecting vegetation and animal life, so likewise the lessons and precepts of Holy Scripture, whether properly or improperly drawn, have affected the populace. The surface of the earth represents organized society underneath religious restraint. The mountains depict autocratic, authoritarian kingdoms of earth; and the isles, republican or democratic institutional forms of government. The heavens represent the powers of spiritual control.

The rupture and upheaval of the *status quo* of earth's civil institutions, and the obscuration and discoloration of the two main lights (and the star displacement shower) in the celestial religious realm, need identification. In the human family arrangement the sun, the moon, and the stars constitute the father, the mother, and the children, respectively (Gen. 37:9,10). With regard to earth's rulership, the sun, the moon, and the stars would represent the king, the queen, and other governmental dignitaries, respectively. In the Apocalypse the different stellar lights have special meaning, as presented in tabular form below. Which "heaven" was affected by the earthquake, the true religion or the nominal religion? Both, it is answered, but chiefly the nominal.

The True Heaven

1. Sun = the true light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of *Jesus Christ* (2 Cor. 4:6; John 1:9; 8:12).
2. Moon = the Mosaic Law supporting the gospel light (Rev. 12:1). Non-believers failed to realize that the *animals were first slain*³³ before being offered and burned on Jewish altars, that they portrayed, typically, the humanity of The Christ to come and the necessity of the shedding of blood for the remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). Thus nonbelievers viewed these animal sacrifices as barbarous, detestable, and cruel. They saw the Law, i.e., the *moon*, in a bloody light.
3. Stars = the twelve apostles and the seven messengers to the Church.

The Nominal Heaven

1. Sun = the false light of the office of *Papacy*, the Antichrist system, of which the Pope is the head.
2. Moon = the church canon law backing up Papacy. Church canon law was responsible for the proscription of books, including the Bible, that were deemed heretical and inimical to Papacy's teaching. The enforcement of canon law had a direct relationship to the barbarism and the fiendish *torture of innocent victims* as practiced by the Inquisitors in their attempts to secure a recantation testimonial.
3. Stars = the cardinals, archbishops, etc.

(Jude 13 mentions "stars," or leading personalities, who are neither apostles nor prophets. Called "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever," these prominent brethren misrepresent the truth. They are talented but in a manner that is harmful to the true Church.)

33. The jugular veins of these animals were skillfully cut, causing a swift, painless ebbing of life, vitality, and consciousness on the part of the victim. Properly so, the average householder has no moral qualms in cooking and consuming the meat of already slain animals on almost a daily basis.

This portion of the Sixth Seal vision (verses 12 to 14), in which the stars of heaven are seen to fall unto the earth, primarily deals with those in the ecclesiastical realm whom the populace had previously looked up to, but who now, in the French Revolution, fell from this esteem.

Why are the falling stars likened to a “fig tree” casting “her untimely figs” when shaken of a mighty wind? Obviously, this is another figurative representation of the Revolution earthquake.

The Fig Tree

Just as the Jewish nation, the fig tree (Matt. 24:32; Jeremiah 24), was the professed people of God, so the fig tree here, in antitype, is the professed gospel Church. Jesus’ cursing the fig tree at his First Advent, so that it withered in one day, indicated the soon-to-come destiny of Israel for rejecting Messiah (Mark 11:12–14, 20, 21). When Christ came to his own, he looked for fruitage but found it not (John 1:11).

The Master said, “If they do these things in a green tree [if they do such things while the tree has some life and hope in it], what shall be done in the dry?” (Luke 23:31). John the Baptist predicted dire consequences to come upon such a class: “Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance. . . . And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Luke 3:7–9).

Untimely Figs

That figs represent either good or evil individuals of the Jewish nation is clearly seen in Jeremiah 24. In the Revelation account the same is true, the representation being of individuals of the professed Church of Christ. In this instance, however, only the *nominal* individuals are depicted (true Christians are excluded). The “untimely figs”³⁴ suggest that though this picture closely parallels some of the events

34. The fig tree, having lost all its leaves during winter months, begins to put forth tender leaf buds about the end of March (Matt. 24:32; Mark 13:28; Luke 21:29,30). At the same time, at the junction of the old wood with these leaves, tiny figs appear. These little figs develop along with the leaves up to a certain point, to about the size of a small cherry; and then the great majority of them fall to the ground, carried down with every gust of wind.

These (a) immature figs are sometimes partaken of when they fall. Yet a certain small portion of these little green figs continues to ripen and (b) reach a choice or prized ripeness in June (Isa. 28:4; Jer. 24:2; Hos. 9:10; Mic. 7:1), at which time the little buds of the (c) next crop begin to appear higher up in the branches. These buds steadily develop and form the great crop of figs, which comes about August.

Thus the fig-bearing tree passes through three stages of development. The “untimely [*olunthoi*—unripe, immature] figs” (verse 13) refer to the first phase of earliest fruitage, which so easily separates from the tree. Though these figs could be eaten, they were deemed so undesirable and of such inferior quality that they were not reckoned at all as “the time of figs,” i.e., the time of ordinary edible figs (Mark 11:13). Therefore, only the later second crop was considered the first nutritional harvest and named the time of “early figs”; and the third gathering was considered the second, or general, harvest of figs.

The Lord, hungry at the time of Passover, looked upon a certain tree for these low-grade figlets, which only the very poor or the weary traveler partook of for nourishment. He found none, for the tree was barren (Matt. 21:18,19). (Cf. James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909], p. 262.)

of the end-time, it is but the “fore-crop” of the full and even more bitter harvest still to come.

The scenes of violence in the French Revolution were untimely, premature, for the iniquity of the spiritual Amorites was not *then* yet full (Gen. 15:16). In another illustration, the clusters of the vine of the earth were not *then* yet ready to be pressed in the winepress of the wrath of God (Rev. 14:18,19). To all practical purposes, the earthquake (verse 12) and the “mighty wind” (verse 13) are synonymous, both representing different aspects of the same Revolution. The “four winds” (Rev. 7:1), *only when unleashed*, together with still another earthquake (Rev. 8:5), portray the great Armageddon. The Revolution in France, with its wind/earthquake, serves as a prototype of that which is to occur in the near future.³⁵

During the dreadful events of those former days, the wave of public opinion, plus the turbulence and emotion of the masses, put to constant use the newly invented *guillotine*. This infernal machine was so gruesomely, surgically efficient in lopping off the heads of leading French clerics and nobles into baskets that it could well be likened unto stars falling like figs unto the earth.

Heaven Departing as a Scroll

Verse 14 (“the heaven departed as a scroll . . . rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved”) should not be confused as the fulfillment of Isaiah 34:4, even though there exists a most remarkable correspondency with the Old Testament prophecy. The New Testament Sixth Seal vision has already had a historic fulfillment; yet the events are but a preview of a future enactment upon a larger field of operations.

The imagery depicts a document rolled up prior to being discarded. The dissolution of “the heaven” pertains to the form of rulership of but the *one* nation, France. However, all other “mountains”³⁶ and “islands”³⁷ were affected by what happened in that nation. In other words, *all* nations, whether monarchical or republican, experienced some change as a result of the events of the French Revolution. Concessions were granted and more consideration was given to the needs of the populace than hitherto. It is to be further noted that every mountain and every island were “moved,” *not removed*, out of their former position; that is, a *partial* displacement or change occurred from the rigid stance of prior centuries.

35. In the type (1 Kings 18:44), a small cloud arising out of the sea (i.e., restless humanity no longer under religious restraint) and shaped like “a man’s hand,” or *fist*, was seen by the prophet Elijah at the approaching end of the 1,260-day/year drought in his day, which in antitype corresponds to the French Revolution and the date 1799 (A.D. 539 + 1,260). This trouble is pictured as a miniature premonition of a budding and still yet future unfolding of a larger catastrophe to occur sometime subsequent to the fulfillment of the seven times ($7 \times 360 = 2,520$ years), marking the end of A.D. 1914, when the lease of Gentile dominion expired.

36. A “mountain” would be a monarchy, strong dictatorship, or autocratic form of government where one individual, or a select group of individuals, gives all the directives.

37. An “island” is a body of land completely surrounded by water (i.e., the people). It represents a republic or more democratic form of government, such as the British Isles or the United States, where the leadership is subject to control; for instance, a “government of the people, by the people, for the people.”

Verse 15:

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

Verse 16:

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:

Verse 17:

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Here again the circumstances described in these verses, though similar to, are not time-commensurate with the fulfillment of the events revealed in Isaiah 2:19–22, and for the same reason. The details of the Sixth Seal have already occurred; the Old Testament prophecy has a future fulfillment not directly related to the Sixth Seal.

Verse 15 reveals that from the highest to the lowest, all people in the realm were eventually affected by the reign of terror. Even those who were initially receptive to and proponents of reform became sick of the bloodshed and longed for stability and moderation of government. As time ensued, conditions evolved to such a state that all, both great and small, feared for their own safety and sought every manner of escape.

At first, security was sought within the confines of the nation, but it seemed there were as many informers as there were people. Soon attempts were made to elicit the intervention and aid of foreign governments—even for invasion by these powers—to put a stop to the revolt. This effort failing, many of the citizenry fled to other lands (“*mountains,*” kingdoms), seeking to lose their identity there in some haven or refuge styled “the dens.” Some tried to identify with others of foreign extraction who had notable power and influence, particularly in the military. These are “the rocks” (instead of Christ) alluded to (1 Cor. 10:4; Matt. 7:24).

The expressions “fall on [or ‘over’] us” and “hide us” disclose the people’s abject humiliation; the complete abnegation of former assumed rights, titles, and privileges, if any; and the casting of their entire lot and fortune to the custodial care of others. The context seems to indicate that even those who formerly lived in unbelief now sensed, in this reversal of the state of affairs in their lives, that somehow a divine retribution for past misconduct and misdeeds was being brought to their attention. Historians verify that many in those days thought, indeed, the dread Armageddon had come.

Revelation Chapter 7

Verse 1:

And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

Verse 2:

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,

Verse 3:

Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

“He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth” (Isa. 40:22) is well aware that this planet is an oblate spheroid, and not a flat plane with borders. Even today such terminology as “the four corners of the earth” is used in newspaper parlance to indicate universal breadth and completeness of coverage. Since no mention is made in the vision as to whether the four corners or the four sides are compass-oriented, this detail apparently is not pertinent to the interpretation of the scene. Yet it is obvious that the four angels standing at the four corners are positioned in a direct relationship to the wind current, whatever that may signify. From this perspective it can be more readily discerned that the four corners and the four winds are not meant to specially emphasize or designate different classifications or meanings in antitype. The reader should also note that “the four winds of the earth,” in the very next breath, are spoken of as “the [one] wind.” *The wind* is the terrifying or foreboding factor. The four angels at the four corners represent the well-organized restraint, the complete coverage, the astute alertness, and the providential care exercised through spirit agencies of divine power.¹

1. Judgments of divine origin are often implemented through human instrumentalities. Even evil men unawares and heathen kings are sometimes utilized by the Lord to carry out these judgments. Cyrus the Persian is called “my shepherd” and the Lord’s “anointed” (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, is styled “my servant” (Jer. 25:9). Hazael was anointed king over Syria and Jehu king over Israel (1 Kings 19:15,16). And the pompous Napoleon seems to have likewise been so used. Bonaparte joined in a plot that overthrew the Directory and set up in its place a government called the Consulate, with himself as the first of the three consuls. Under this cloak he firmly ruled France till 1804, when he threw off the cloak and became “Napoleon I, Emperor of the French” instead of General Bonaparte. The Catholic Church, which had been suppressed in the course of the Revolution, was reestablished by an agreement between the government and the Pope known as the Concordat of 1801. Thus the French Revolution was brought under control. (*Compton’s Pictured Encyclopedia* [Chicago: F. E. Compton & Co., 1944], s.v. “French Revolution” and “Napoleon.”)

The opening verse of this chapter is an arbitrary division of the narrative decided upon by the translators of the Authorized Version. This disassociation with the prior chapter, however temporary or unintentional, tends to dislocate or break the continuity of thought of the Sixth Seal vision. The reader should keep in mind the previous, rather abrupt introduction to a violent land eruption and an equally alarming disturbance in the celestial realm, followed by the panic of all classes of society—identified internally as the participants and the spectators. Therefore, the scene of the holding back of the four winds in this chapter is but a continuation of the former sequence of events. Two truths are thus revealed: (1) The Revolution itself was initially precipitated by an outside wind or extraneous source. (2) It was considered expedient to countermand or stop this evil wind (spiritual power), which fomented or stirred up the trouble, by the introduction and exercise of an equalizing and stabilizing force of Providence in order to prevent the disorder from continuing and from spreading to other nations. If allowed to continue unchecked, the French Revolution would have eventually provided an impetus to the creation of a larger, circuitous air current, producing a whirlwind effect that would embrace the entire civilized world—and thereby would not have been limited to “a mighty wind” in France only. The setting of verse 1 indicates that an abrupt termination of the disorder of Revelation 6:12–14 had been set and its limits previously determined by divine mandate.

Why was it found necessary to somewhat restore former conditions? Why was further molestation of “the [old] earth [order]” and “the [former] sea” prohibited? Why was it decreed that there be no disruption in the life and development of “any tree” (of anyone progressing towards maturity in Christlikeness—Isa. 61:3; Psa. 1:1–3; Luke 6:43–45)? The answer is supplied in the vision itself; namely, the sealing process of the saints in 1799 was not then, and is not now (almost two centuries later), yet complete. When the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads is finished, then, and then only, will the four winds be loosed and the great vortex of worldwide trouble be unleashed. Eventually, as the time for the climax of trouble nears, the fallen angels will be loosed (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6) and will be permitted to materialize, producing a violence in the earth no less troublesome than that which happened in the days of Noah prior to the Flood (Gen. 6:1–5; Matt. 24:21,22). The continued preservation, or relative *status quo*, of the present order of the earth and the sea serves as the arena in which the Christian can fight the good combat of faith and acquire the skills essential to character growth, skills that are developed in resisting the encroachments of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Four Winds of Daniel

The four winds seen by the Prophet Daniel that “strove upon the *great sea*” (that is, restless mankind) effectively dramatized, in time past, the role of Satan and the fallen angels, even the strong mental projection of thought (Matt. 4:1–11) and the exercise of their influence upon the minds of Adam’s race (John 8:44). This spirit power engendered the development of ideologies and events conducive to the origin and birth of the various beastly world powers from the Prophet’s day onward (Dan. 7:2–7).

The blowing of wind upon the waters shows a direct relationship between principalities and powers, of which the Apostle Paul spoke (Eph. 6:12), and earth beings here below (Rev. 17:15). The striving of the winds upon the great sea implies some frenetic difficulty in manipulating the minds of “the children of disobedience” (Col. 3:6) on the part of the Adversary and his cohorts, as well as some degree of dissension in the ranks of the fallen angels themselves. Yet Beelzebub, as leader of the demons, has yet to be displaced as the great usurper in spite of the various changes in regime. He is still “the god of this world,” “the prince of the devils,” “the prince of *the power of the air*” (2 Cor. 4:4; Matt. 12:24; Eph. 2:2).

The difference between the four winds that are responsible for the emergence of the former *universal empires* (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome) and the four winds brought to attention under the Sixth Seal is (a) previously Satan and his minions were involved in the *formation* of governments; whereas, (b) at the time of the French Revolution, this same power was directed toward the *destruction* of government—the abolition of all semblance of law, order, and morals. The implied intensity of wind pressure held back by the four angels suggests a proportionate effort also to break the shackles of restraint and to materialize in human form to wreak havoc as in the antediluvian era.

God’s Angel from the East

The angel seen to ascend from the sun rising, or “the east” (verse 2), is none other than “the dayspring [sun rising] from on high,” who, through the tender mercy of God, visited earth at his First Advent “to give light to them that sit in darkness” (Luke 1:78,79). The reference to Jesus as God’s angel, thus seen arising, points forward to the approaching Second Advent of the Lord and to a subsequent harvest work in the last, or Seventh Seal, time frame—at the conclusion of which the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings (beams) to dawn upon the world (Mal. 4:2).

The scene of verses 2 and 3 seems at first to indicate an event contemporaneous with the commencement of the restraint of the four winds of the preceding verse. This conclusion is not valid, however, for the seal-bearing angel is a highly figurative symbolization of *the future*,² as the personification of the Lord, authoritatively beckoning *the past*, the four angels, to steadfastly restrain the destabilizing influences of the Revolution both up to, as well as throughout, the end-time harvest . . . until his angels accomplish the harvest work (Heb. 1:14; Matt. 24:31; 13:30,39).³

In the present age, Christ has ever been the seal-bearing angel of God or the sanctifying “High Priest of our profession” (Heb. 2:11; 3:1), “the author [beginner] and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2), “who of God is made unto us wisdom, and

2. This same thought can be explained in a completely different fashion: from the standpoint of the angel actively ascending, in the *present* tense, from the East, while in reality his ascending would be a *future* event. The present tense is also frequently used in the Scriptures to express either habitual or immediate future action (John 7:52; 10:32; 13:6,27; 17:11; Rom. 15:25; 2 Cor. 13:1; Col. 3:6).

3. This explanation in no way mitigates against the Lord’s using human agents as “angels” to further his purposes and to assist in the harvest work. Examples would be “the man . . . with . . . the writer’s inkhorn by his side,” namely, the Laodicean messenger (Ezek. 9:2–4), and others as co-laborers.

righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption [final deliverance]" (1 Cor. 1:30). The Master continues to firmly press upon the hearts of the willing and obedient the seal of the living God—the imprint of the Father’s image, which corresponds with Christ’s own character likeness.

Sealing of God’s Servants

The forehead sealing of the saints signifies more than the acquisition of dispensational truth, for such knowledge would become meaningless in the unending ages to come. Such seasonal information has been obtained, understood, and appreciated by many more individuals than the predetermined number indicated in the vision. *Only 144,000* are to be sealed (verse 4), not one more, not one less. When this select group has been found and suretied, the door of opportunity to the high calling will be closed. This sealing is of a *permanent nature* and is of the highest caliber.

To be sealed signifies the acquirement in the present life of that degree of the knowledge of God and of His Word; of the humility of mind that was in Christ Jesus; of the progress and growth in the graces and the fruits of the Holy Spirit; of the fixity of purpose and crystallization of character in both mind and heart; of the attainment to, and standing fast at, the mark or standard of the high calling; and of faithfulness unto death—all deemed essential to secure election to the reward of the saints in glory beyond the veil of human experience.

Verse 4:

And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

The 144,000 That Are Sealed

Although Revelation is a book of symbols, *numbers*—but not necessarily what they are used to designate (“days,” “times,” “tribes,” etc.)—always have a literal application. Therefore, 144,000 is the predetermined number to comprise the Bride of Christ; that is, it is the actual count of body members to be associated with Jesus in his Kingdom throne.

The expression “of all the tribes of the children of Israel” is a spiritual designation or reference to the true Church, “the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16 NIV). This latter classification in New Testament usage is not confined or limited to natural Jewry but is open to those exercising the faith of Abraham (Rom. 4:12,13; 9:6–8,24–26).

Verse 5:

*Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand.
Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand.
Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.*

Verse 6:

*Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand.
Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand.
Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.*

Verse 7:

Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

Verse 8:

Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

This tabulation of the spiritual tribes, when compared with the names inscribed on the breastplate jewels of the high priest, based on Numbers 2:3–31,⁴ notably omits the tribe of Ephraim and the tribe of Dan. The exclusion of these two particular tribes does not escape the attention of the close and discriminating student of the Word of God (Matt. 4:4). It seems quite apparent that the omission is intentional and meaningful.

What lesson is meant to be conveyed? The deletion signifies that those Christians possessing the characteristics of these two classes *in the unfavorable sense* will be most in danger of failure, and thus will not be found amidst the elect body of Christ in glory. The implication is that among the called of God, the greater proportion of those who fail to be specially sealed will be such as give loose rein to the Ephraim and Dan injurious character traits.

A word of caution is necessary. Though these damaging propensities will have to be dealt with and most aggressively controlled by the selfsame two tribes, these unfavorable qualities are also possessed to a greater or lesser extent by all the tribes. In other words, what the Spirit might imply concerning the two tribes is a warning to *all*. Watch and pray!

Ephraim

“Ephraim,” an eponym for the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, can refer to either natural or nominal spiritual Israel. Here in Revelation the term tacitly indicates a large spiritual class. Among other things, Ephraim means *multi-fruitful*, that is, a large seed-bearing progeny later designated “a great multitude” (verse 9).

This tribe is referred to as “a cake not turned” or a cake half-baked, representing immaturity (Hos. 7:8). It is also likened to “a silly dove” (Hos. 7:11); that is, a chaste and undefiled, though unwise, body of Christians described by the Lord in the Parable of the Wise and *Foolish* Virgins (Hos. 13:12,13; Matt. 25:1–13). Although those comprising this company do inherit a spiritual reward, it is of a secondary nature. A primary fault of their own choosing is that they are improperly schooled in the exercise and control of emotional judgment.

Dan

The omission of the tribe of Dan from the list of the sealed represents another class of Christians with spiritual hopes who fail to meet the standard requirements of the Very Elect. However, those of the Dan class receive a far more ominous fate

4. See pages 577, 580–583.

than that of Ephraim, for their deeds merit “second” or eternal death as a reward (Rev. 2:11).

Jacob’s prophecy (Gen. 49:17) reads:

Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward [to destruction—see 1 Sam. 4:18].

Sow a thought; reap an act. Sow an act; reap a habit. Sow a habit; reap a character. In Bible symbolism the horse signifies doctrine, and the rider represents the one who follows, or is carried by, that doctrine to a corresponding destiny. In addition to a serious tampering with and alteration of doctrine, Genesis 49:17 indicates a hypercritical, backbiting, faultfinding disposition with regard to others that leads the possessor to the most disastrous consequences (Luke 17:1,2).

Again, a word of caution is necessary. The exclusion of Dan makes sense only when viewed from the foregoing condemnatory standpoint. Quite to the contrary, in all other tabulations of the tribes throughout Scripture, Dan occupies a position of either acceptance (Gen. 49:16) or esteem, such as an identification with the Kingdom tribes of the future and an association with the entrance gates of the Holy City to come (Ezek. 48:1,32).

Verse 9:

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

Verse 10:

And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

Verse 11:

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,

Verse 12:

Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

The “great multitude” are a class who will receive a spiritual inheritance. Seen standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb, they are clothed in resurrection white robes and have the palms of prior victory in their hands. It is significant that they stand *before* but are not seated upon or in a throne (cf. Rev. 3:21). They are spoken of as an unnumbered class of individuals, not as an innumerable or unlimited assembly of people. Thus the Holy Spirit calls attention to, and contrasts the Great Company with, the previously mentioned fixed number (144,000) of the tribes of Israel. This secondary large company, which no man can *presently* num-

ber, is the antitypical Levite class. The Lord spoke to Moses about His typical people: “Thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel” (Num. 1:49).

The great multitude are selected out of all nationalities (verse 9) in a manner similar to the call of the Very Elect (Rev. 5:9,10 RSV); yet the Elect in the Sixth Seal vision are considered on a higher level of representation and are counted, as it were, the Israel of God indeed. As Jehovah anciently favored natural Israel with the designation “You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2), so here in the Apocalypse (verse 4), the 144,000—though composed of those formerly either Jews or Gentiles—are figuratively elevated to a similar status and to a closer relationship than that granted previously to Israel or that given later to the Great Company.

John (verse 10) hears the great multitude utter loud acclamations, exulting in their deliverance from extinction, or eternal death. They accredit their salvation to Him “which sitteth upon the throne,” thanking God and Jesus for past mercies on their behalf and for their new life in the spirit realm.

Next (verse 11) all the angels of God, being magnetically attracted to this ceremony, stand “round about the throne” and with eagerness and joy welcome this new addition to the family of God. The angels prostrate themselves before the throne; and the other dignitaries, both real and figurative, join them in a sevenfold accolade (verse 12), the refrain of joyous assent to this enlarged manifestation of God’s tender mercy on behalf of others. There is a resounding “*Amen!*” as they praise Him from whom all blessings flow as both blessing and *blest* in Himself. His *glory* appears in the exhibition of His deeds, and His *wisdom* constantly reveals rich treasures of truth and revenues of grace. He is worthy to receive *thanksgiving* from all His subjects, whom He has created—not only the offering of the fruit of the lips but, with readied eagerness, the desire to perform deeds of service upon invitation and thus render homage and *honor* to the Supreme Deity. There is thorough contentment with the *power* vested in His hands and the capability to do all His good pleasure, as well as thankfulness that all authority and *might* should be everlastingly His as Emperor of all universes. To this refrain John the Revelator, in recording the scene, interjects his own “*Amen!*”

The fifth chapter of Revelation contains a different sevenfold accolade.

Revelation 5:12	Revelation 7:12
Power	Blessing
Riches	Glory
Wisdom	Wisdom
Strength	Thanksgiving
Honor	Honor
Glory	Power
Blessing	Might

When these two refrains are compared, it appears that the various complimentary attributes are not meant to be understood in either an ascending or a descending sequence of importance. Neither are these qualities, which are inherent in Deity, meant to be studiously analyzed in step-by-step detail.

It is as though the Holy Spirit, in enumerating these characteristics differently, was indicating that the praises offered in both instances are not presented in a premeditated, ritualistic fashion; the refrains are not rendered as a formal, repetitive salutation or intended to be a studious guide or scientific evaluation of the Heavenly Father's meritorious propensities. Rather, the characteristics appear in random order, in a purposeful, scrambled listing. Can it be that these praises were designed to appear as though uttered with enthusiasm, with a ring of genuineness, as would more likely be made manifest in an uninhibited, unstructured, and spontaneous emotional outburst?

As there is joy in heaven over even one sinner who repents (Luke 15:10), no wonder that such acclamation is made in the gathering together of former sheep who are brought back into the fold and fully saved out of their sins. No creature strays more easily than a sheep, and none is so incapable of finding its way back to the flock when once it has gone astray. It will bleat for the flock and still run on in an opposite direction to where the flock is. Amazing grace!

Verse 13:

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

Verse 14:

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Twenty-four Elders (Books)

Josephus and the Latin church fathers mention a division of the Old Testament sacred canon into twenty-two books, corresponding with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. But there is not sufficient evidence that such a division obtained among the Jews themselves. Jerome includes Ruth with Judges, and Lamentations with Jeremiah, numbering twenty-two books; yet in his preface (*Prologus Galeatus*) to Kings, he admits that quite a few others considered Ruth and Lamentations as separate books to be included in the *Hagiographa*, bringing the total to twenty-four books.⁵

The accepted Jewish canon is divided into three parts comprising the following books: (a) *five* in the Pentateuch, (b) *eight* in the Prophets, and (c) *eleven* in the Holy Writings. Thus the sacred canon consists of twenty-four rolls in all.

5. "Atque ita fiunt pariter veteris legis libri viginti duo, id est Mosi quinque, Prophetarum octo, Agiograforum novem. Quamquam nonnulli Ruth et Cinoth inter Agiografa scriptitent et libros hos in suo putent numero supputandos ac per hoc esse priscae legis libro viginti quattuor."

"And so it is possible to obtain the long-venerated canon of twenty-two books, therefore of the Law, five; of the Prophets, eight; of the Holy Writings, nine. Although some persons designate Ruth and Cinoth [Lamentations] to be numbered among the Holy Writings, and do not presently count these books as joined formerly together [that is, Ruth to Judges, and Lamentations to Jeremiah], and also on this account conceive it to be a twenty-four-book canon." (Translated by author.) (Robertus Weber, ed., *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatum Versionem* [The Sacred Bible, Authorized Vulgate Version] [Stuttgart: Wurttembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969], p. 71 footnote.)

The Twenty-four Elders or Books⁶⁻⁸

THE LAW <i>(Torah)</i>	THE PROPHETS <i>(Nebim)</i>		THE HOLY WRITINGS <i>(Kethubim or Hagiographa)</i>
1. Genesis	(The Earlier)	(The Later)	1. Psalms
2. Exodus	Historical	Major	2. Proverbs
3. Leviticus	1. Joshua	5. Isaiah	3. Job
4. Numbers	2. Judges	6. Jeremiah	
5. Deuteronomy	3. 1 & 2 Samuel	7. Ezekiel	The Five Rolls <i>(Megilloth)</i>
	4. 1 & 2 Kings		
		Minor	4. The Song of Songs
		8. <i>The Twelve</i>	5. Ruth
		Hosea	6. Lamentations
		Joel	7. Ecclesiastes
		Amos	8. Esther
		Obadiah	
		Jonah	9. Daniel
		Micah	10. Ezra-Nehemiah
		Nahum	11. 1 & 2 Chronicles
		Habakkuk	
		Zephaniah	
		Haggai	
		Zechariah	
		Malachi	

“Whence Came They?”

Asked to identify the white-clad palm-bearing (a symbol of victory) multitude, the Apostle, with characteristic humility, tacitly acknowledges his inability to proffer a response. He refers the reply back to the questioning “elder,” who obviously possesses superior insight into the matter. It is apparent to John that the query is intended to attract his attention to this particular group praising God amidst the host of heaven. What class is referred to? Who is the elder speaking to John? And whence came this company?

The Scriptures teach that all who are drawn of God to Jesus are called to repentance and conversion, and are instilled with the *one* hope, if faithful, to be with

6. Ezra-Nehemiah is *one* book, and the Hebrew canon consists of *twenty-four* books. (Cf. John D. Davis, *The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, rev. by Henry Snyder Gehman [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1944], p. 91.)

7. “The last group in this part [Subdivision 9–11 of the Holy Writings] of the scripture was formed by Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles, making a total, as the Jews counted, of twenty-four books, corresponding to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, which may be reckoned as either twenty-two or twenty-four.” (Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Story of the Bible* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936], p. 167.)

8. “Ezra was, along with Nehemiah, reckoned one book by the ancient Jews, who called them the First and Second Books of Ezra. . . .” (Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, eds., *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* [Hartford: S. S. Scranton & Co., 1879], Vol. 1, “Preface to the Pentateuch and Historical Books,” p. 8.)

Christ in glory and to reign in his future government over earth. In the final outcome, however, there will develop *two* classes who receive a heavenly inheritance. The first, the Little Flock, will obtain Kingdom honors. The second, the Great Company, will receive a lesser but spiritual reward, for God's grace cannot admit to heavenly perfection those who do not have robes of spotless righteousness in the eventide of the Gospel Age. The following are only a few of the many examples thus set forth in Holy Writ of the two classes.

1. Rebekah, a type of the true Church, was accompanied by those described as *her damsels* when she went to meet Isaac, a figure of Christ, who was in the field (the world) at the end of her long journey (the Gospel Age)—Genesis 24:61–67.

2. Both the wise and the foolish virgins went forth to meet the Bridegroom. The former went in to the wedding, the door being shut; the latter had to go back to the marketplace of experience (the Time of Trouble) to secure more oil for their vessels—Matthew 25:1–13.

3. In addition to the King's (Jehovah's) daughter, the true Church and future Queen of the world, there are "the virgins her companions that follow her. . . . *With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace*"—Psalm 45:13–15.

4. Jesus and the glorified Church speak on behalf of their little sister who "hath no breasts," that is, who lacks proper development and maturity according to the precepts of the Old and the New Testaments—Song of Solomon 8:8.

5. In the spiritual poem of the two sisters, one awakens and arises of her own volition and ventures into the night, diligently seeking her Lord. Shortly she finds him whom her soul loveth, and both enter her mother's house (the Sarah Covenant; cf. Gen. 24:67)—Song of Solomon 3:1–4; 5:1. The other sister needs to be prodded to bestir herself and to follow the example of her sister, but—alas!—she finds that the Lord has already entered his garden—Song of Solomon 5:2–8; 6:1,2.

6. Two surviving sons were in line to succeed to the office of high priest upon Aaron's death. The one, Eleazar, did obtain that office; the other, Ithamar (land of palms),⁹ did not—Leviticus 10:12; Deuteronomy 10:6.

7. There were two goats upon which lots were cast: the one lot was for the Lord, and the other lot was for the scapegoat (Azazel)¹⁰—Leviticus 16:8. Whereas the Lord's goat was sacrificed upon the altar in the Court, the live goat was taken by the hand of a fit man to Azazel in the wilderness. The scapegoat corresponds to a class referred to by the Apostle Paul: "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, *that the spirit may be saved* in the day of the Lord Jesus"—1 Corinthians 5:5; 3:15.

8. "Two parts [the Little Flock and the Great Company] therein shall be cut off and die; but the third [part—Israel] shall be left therein"—Zechariah 13:8.

9. *Peloubet's Bible Dictionary* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Co., 1925), p. 281.

10. "It seems impossible to dissent from the opinion that 'Azazel' instead of being a name for the (e)scape goat is the name or title of an evil Being, opposed to Yahweh, to whom the live goat on the great Day of Propitiation was sent." (Joseph Bryant Rotherham, trans., *The Emphasised Bible* [Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Co., 1897], Vol. 3, Old Testament Appendix, p. 918.)

9. Neither the priesthood nor the Levites had any inheritance in the land; in other words, in antitype both receive a spiritual inheritance. The Levites were given as a gift to Aaron and his sons, that is, to the priesthood—Numbers 8:19.

Verse 15:

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.

Verse 16:

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

Verse 17:

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.

Jesus, as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, will furnish (“feed”—verse 17) the Great Company with everlasting life on the same basis as the angels who proved faithful and *sinned not* in the days of Noah (Luke 20:35,36), for the Great Company will be accounted a similar degree of worthiness to those angels. Consequently, they also will not die anymore, being at least equal to those holy angels; they, too, will be counted as the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

The Great Company will live on a spirit plane of being in harmony with their former aspirations. However, they will need to partake of nourishment and the spiritual water of life to sustain that life which they possess, for spirit beings (except those who are partakers of the *divine* nature) need spirit food as much as humans need natural sustenance. Having been followers of Jesus in their former state on earth, the Great Company will rejoice that the Master himself assumes personal responsibility for this provision and for their care. They prove to be overcomers, but not *more than* overcomers, and therefore, they receive not the *abundant* entrance into the Kingdom of heaven referred to by the Apostle (2 Pet. 1:11).

Since the Great Company, in their prior life, did make a commitment to serve the living God with all their heart, it is indeed pleasing to note that the Father also loveth them. Magnanimous grace condescends to offer words of comfort and additional deeds of kindness, consoling them for their effort to rectify mistakes and for their failure to achieve the higher reward—thus wiping away their tears of disappointment for not pleasing God supremely.

Identity of Elder

It is appropriate that consideration now be given to the identity of the elder (Rev. 7:13) who spoke to John concerning the white-clad palm-bearing multitude. For the following reasons, the *Book of Numbers* answers to that description:

1. Revelation (7:9) speaks of an unnumbered company. The Levites were not to be numbered—NUMBERS 1:47; 2:33.
2. Revelation (7:14) notes that the Great Company wash their robes, making them white in the blood of the Lamb. The Levites, with striking similarity, had to

wash their clothing and to be cleansed from sin with the offering of two bullocks (representing Christ's humanity sacrificed on their behalf), the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for them—NUMBERS 8:7c,8.

3. Revelation (7:14) indicates that the washing of the robes occurs during the great tribulation,¹¹ out of which the Great Company will come, in answer to the question in Revelation 7:13, "Whence came they?" Jude also speaks of this class: "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23).

Preparatory to their installation for service, the Levites were sprinkled with the water of separation and of purification for sin. This was obtained by taking cedar wood (symbol of everlasting life), hyssop (purgation and discipline), and scarlet (the recognition of the need for redeeming blood) and casting them into the midst of a burning heifer (a simulation of the fiery experiences that tried the Ancient Worthies—Heb.11:33–38); the resulting ashes (memory) were then mixed with water to constitute the water of purification. The shaving of the flesh of the Levites foreshadowed the destruction of the flesh—NUMBERS 19:6–9; 8:7.

4. Ithamar (isle or land of *palms*), the son of Aaron the high priest, had a special relationship with the Merari Levites (the Merarites, or the sons of *bitterness*). The palms and bitterness (or trouble) are significantly comparable to the experiences of the Great Company—NUMBERS 4:33.

5. In the Sixth Seal time frame (Rev. 7:15), the great multitude are futuristically spoken of in the present tense as serving God day and night in His temple. The Levites were ordained for religious service in the Tabernacle—NUMBERS 1:50; 8:15; 18:21,23.

6. In Revelation 7:15 the Great Company are with the angels of heaven "before the throne of God," and it is said that "he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." The Lord God spoke of the Levites: "I [have] taken them unto me" and "the Levites shall be mine"—NUMBERS 8:16,14.

7. In the Sixth Seal (Rev. 7:16,17) it is said, "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."

The Levites had no lack of money, food, or goods. They were told to "eat . . . for it is your reward." In antitype all tears will eventually be wiped away as a consequence of this provision for the Great Company and their ultimate spiritual association—NUMBERS 18:24,26,30,31; 35:2,3.

Summary of Events

In the Sixth Seal and especially the seventh chapter, the following points are to be noted. The French Revolution earthquake (Rev. 6:12) serves as the introduction to the opening of the Sixth Seal. The four winds related to that event (verse 1) are held back or estopped until the remainder of the 144,000 are sealed—not necessarily

11. The twofold article in the Greek makes this trouble specially emphatic, that is, "the time of the great trouble" yet future.

implying that these, “the trees,” are destined for destruction by the power of the wind(s) but, as already stated, until the rest of the 144,000 are sealed at some point of time under the seventh seal.

Verse 14 clearly states that the Great Company will be delivered in, and out of, the great Time of Trouble. The absence of such a reference with respect to the selection of the final members of the 12,000 out of each of the spiritual tribes suggests that the Very Elect will escape harm from the release of the winds. It is the Great Company who will have this experience and who will be dealt with *after* (“after this”—verse 9) the former faithful have been finally sealed and taken home.

Noah and his family were *shut in* the Ark before the Flood came. The Deluge occurred after they entered the Ark (Gen. 7:7,10,13,16,17). Hence the Church will be complete before the Time of Trouble. Abraham did not share the experience of Lot, who pictures the Great Company, but viewed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah from afar (Gen. 19:1–29).

Revelation Chapter 8

The Seventh Seal (A.D. 1878–1998?)

Verse 1:

And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

With the opening of the previous six seals, John witnessed startling events, but when the Seventh Seal is broken—the last and the most significant of a series because the others led up to it—what happens? Nothing! This example of the Apostle’s patient obedience, this demonstration of loyalty—that is, his waiting in the midst of profound silence for *one-half hour* before the recurrence of sound and visual movement (without prior explanation or direction indicated)—to most persons would seem psychologically interminable. No doubt John sensed that the literal silence he was experiencing had some spiritual significance. It perhaps heightened and intensified, rather than dampened or diminished, his ardor or his curiosity as to the reason for this absence of sound.¹

Silence in Heaven

In which “heaven” does the silence occur? Is it (a) God’s throne or the angelic realm where ceaseless activity and works ever abound (Psa. 121:4); (b) the literal starry heaven or (c) earth’s atmosphere, both of which are in themselves characteristically silent; (d) the nominal ecclesiastical heavens, which are feverishly engaged in missionary efforts (Hab. 2:13,14; Isa. 26:18) and are to pass away with a great noise (2 Pet. 3:10); or (e) the circumstance of consecrated believers, who are portrayed in the present life as seated in communion with Christ in a heavenly or spiritual condition² (Eph. 1:3; 2:6)? The last heaven is the location of the silence.

In what sense can it be said there will be a heavenly half hour of silence in the spiritual life of the Christian here on earth below during the time period of the Seventh Seal? It is replied: A marked sense of alienation, a feeling of want of instruction, a temporary lack of communication with God—all these sensations will be experienced by those individuals who prove not fortunate enough to be identified with the Very Elect as participants in the spirit (invisible) rapture of the last members of the Church in the flesh.

Is there a precedent in Scripture that would illustrate this point? Yes. Prior to his ascension to heaven in a cloud, Jesus told his disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait there for further instruction (a reference to receiving the Holy Spirit of light and

1. Although silence is the first characteristic the reader is made aware of when the Seventh Seal is opened, the whole subject matter of the Seventh Seal (Rev. 8:2 through 11:19) explains this silence, with activity both preceding and following not the literal silence but its antitypical meaning and fulfillment.

2. The Christian’s being seated in heavenly places is illustrated by the Holy compartment of the Tabernacle.

understanding). The apostles heeded the admonition and went to the city, where they waited behind locked doors because they feared the Jews. They remained there for ten days—waiting. Then, in the due time, the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit fell upon them. They *heard* the sound of a mighty wind, *felt* the house tremor, and *saw* tongues of fire appear on the head of each one assembled there. When this strange happening subsided, each found he could speak in some foreign tongue or dialect. The appearance of tongue-shaped flames on their heads signified that the Holy Spirit had given them this ability as a gift. Henceforth, this prior sign proved to be a symbol of their capability not only to speak various languages, but to do so with power and authority (John 14:26; 16:8; Acts 1:3–5, 12–14; 2:1–4). One noteworthy point should be kept in mind: The waiting period of silence and inactivity back there was punctuated, at its conclusion, by a startling and dramatic event—a demonstration of *wind, shaking, and fire*.

While the ten-day waiting period of the disciples is the *key* to understanding verse 1, another comparison should be fastened in memory. Jesus completed his sacrifice on Calvary, rose from the dead the third day, confirmed his resurrection and presence in divers manners throughout a forty-day period, and then ascended on high. All these events *preceded* the commencement of the session of silence marked by the risen Lord's ascent to heaven itself.

The apostles, as representatives of the “Kingdom of heaven” class, tarried in a locked room in silence . . . without getting a response. But in the angelic realm, in the courts of heaven, during this same spiritual interval of the absence of sound, a far different condition prevailed. Jesus was being honored and feted above, in that heaven. During the time of silence down here, there was jubilation up there, the cry going forth, “Worthy the Lamb!” Things down on earth were temporarily forgotten, as it were, and given secondary consideration.

No doubt the guardian angels appointed to watch over the saints on earth were assigned split shifts to enable them to participate in some portion of the celebration so that the whole host of heaven could share in the acclamation. Recognition of Jesus' worthiness was of primary importance, and God, the Father, in His foreknowledge, had allowed a sufficiency of time—ten days—for those in the spirit realm to honor His Son with a spontaneous outburst of emotions and to see his glorification. Thus it was *after* this festivity in heaven, and *after* the formal presentation of Jesus' redeeming merit on behalf of Justice, that the Pentecostal blessing came upon the waiting apostles.

Adequate consideration having been given to the last events of the Lord's life at the First Advent, and to the experience of the apostles at that time—these being a basis for understanding the future period of silence referred to in the Apocalypse, the silence that will occur at this end of the age—attention will now be focused on concluding events yet to come.

The lesson is that down here at the end of the Gospel Age, *between* the completion of the sacrifice of the last members of the elect body of The Christ and the future Time of Trouble, there will be a jubilation period in heaven above, concurrent with a momentary void in the lives of those remaining below. Thus the Seventh Seal silence refers to a situation somewhat similar to the closing events of the First Ad-

vent. The comparison is to the departure of the last members of the Little Flock beyond the veil of flesh while the secondary or Great Company class are left behind to await renewed strength and further investiture of the Holy Spirit.³

When The Christ is complete, the half hour of silence will occur, preceding the earthquake. In other words, the silence will take place between the completion of the sacrifice and the Time of Trouble. It will accentuate the earthquake, and the earthquake will punctuate the silence. During this interim period, the Church will be formally presented to the Father and given their reward. After their grand entrance (2 Pet. 1:11), God has a time scheduled—the exact length of which is unknown (perhaps six months more or less)—that will be a waiting period for the Great Company class. Very likely, the expression “about the space of half an hour” is meant to be *commensurate with the last half of the future “hour” of power of the beast in Revelation 17:12*.

The Great Company will wait down here during the silence, realizing they have missed out on the high calling, sensing an experience of withdrawal and alienation, and wondering where they stand with the Lord. The Bride will have made herself ready (Rev. 19:7), and the Great Company will be deeply disappointed and chagrined at first, for but ever so brief a moment of time, that they were not chosen by the Lord. They will realize they have not been as faithful to their vows of consecration as they could have been. As a result, they will begin an introspection and examination of their lives and say, “I know the Lord has not been pleased with me to the extent of choosing me as his Bride, but I love the Lord, not the world, and now I need his forgiveness.” Accordingly, this class will cry unto the Lord for help. Thus the period of silence will be beneficial in that it will awaken the Great Company to their shortcomings and a realization of their need for more of the Holy Spirit.

Just as in the type it was a prerequisite that Elisha see Elijah being taken, so in the antitype the Great Company will recognize the true Church having departed. The Elisha class will be given rejoicing experiences later, but first there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 25:1–13; Hab. 3:18). In fact, when the door to the high calling closes, three classes, finding themselves outside, will weep and gnash, knock, and try to enter the door (Matt. 7:21–23; Luke 13:24–30; Matt. 22:2–13): the Great Company (1) without and (2) within the church systems, and (3) the Judas class, whose doom is oblivion (Jude 12,13). The Great Company will, however, be later comforted and told that it is blessed to go to the marriage supper (Rev. 19:9). The way the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles at Pentecost is similar in principle to the manner in which those of the Great Company will get the “double” portion of Elijah’s spirit after the Church is beyond the veil (2 Kings 2:9).

3. When Elijah the Prophet was taken up to “heaven” or earth’s atmosphere, Elisha, his companion, was left below. Elisha cried with anguish, and rent his clothes, before donning Elijah’s cloak of authority left behind (2 Kings 2:11–13).

As the wise virgins were entering the marriage, the foolish virgins went to the marketplace. The latter, returning with oil in their vessels, found the door shut and themselves denied entry (Matt. 25:10,11).

After the Lord’s goat offering was consummated, the live goat was taken into the wilderness (Lev. 16:20–22).

After the Bride of Christ is complete and the wedding ceremonies have subsided, a marriage supper will be prepared. The Bride will return down here to get her bridesmaids to come to this supper, but first the Great Company have to be made ready by entering into the Time of Trouble and washing their robes white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14). They will be led into the wilderness “by the hand of a fit man” to get this experience (Lev. 16:21). Then they will be rescued with the destruction of the flesh so that the spirit may be saved (1 Cor. 5:5). The Song of Solomon (8:8) reveals that the Bride will go to her companion, who is comely but has not been selected as the Bride because she is undeveloped, has no breasts, i.e., is flat-chested. The purpose is to mature, or develop, this “little sister” so that she can continue to be the companion of the Bride and enjoy the after-ceremony. While Psalm 45:14,15 states that the bridesmaids will follow the Bride into the King’s palace, it does not mean they will enter at the time of the wedding ceremony itself. Rather, the bridesmaids will be brought in *afterwards*. Today it is customary at weddings for bridesmaids to pick up the train of the bride and follow immediately after her. But in the antitype that is not the case, for the bridesmaids will not be at the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb, but will attend only the wedding supper.

An additional testimony of Holy Writ describes the void of silence:

Though the fig tree do not blossom,
nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail
and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold
and there be no herd in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.

(Hab. 3:17,18 RSV)

The innermost feelings of an enlightened class—the Great Company—are reflected in these verses. They also faintly suggest a prior chagrin in not being chosen as the Very Elect, even though their feeling of disappointment has been changed to one of consolation and joy (Jer. 8:20; Rev. 19:7–9). The subject content of the above prophecy indicates that this class is knowledgeable concerning the signs which portend the end of the age and that the converging rays of prophecy are then about to come to a focal point of fulfillment, thus marking the due time for the establishment of Christ’s Kingdom.

The Habakkuk prediction, therefore, discloses a future moment or interval of time, as it were, “betwixt and between” the ages, in which all six enumerated conditions will apply, namely:

1. The blossoming forth of the fig tree—that is, the Jewish nation—to a full restoration of divine favor (Jer. 31:31–34), though imminently near, is *not yet fulfilled*.

2. The other nations being, by implication, subsidiary vines or branches joined to Israel, the choice vine (Psa. 80:11,14,15), to derive fruitage, nourishment, and life under the terms of the New Covenant (Isa. 4:2; 25:6–9; Ezek. 17:22–24) is also *not yet fulfilled*.

3. There is a failure in the yield of the olive and its oil—that is, a temporary diminution of the Holy Spirit, to be followed shortly thereafter by its restoration, as pictured in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. 25:1–13; 2 Kings 2:9–13).

4. A worldwide crop failure or extreme food shortage prevails with an accompanying cessation of all commerce (Isa. 8:21; 24:1–3); in addition, no new growth or yield of spiritual wheat is to be found, the call to be of the Bride class having terminated.

5. The Little Flock is absent, having been cut off in death from the earthly fold (2 Kings 2:11; 1 Thess. 4:17).

6. “No herd in the stalls” is a reference to the Ancient Worthies. Under the Law, the bullock offered in sacrifice, in lieu of or in Aaron’s stead (Lev. 16:6), represented the man Christ Jesus as an offering for sin (Isa. 53:10). A bullock in the type indicates perfect humanity (Psa. 51:19; Mal. 4:2,3). In the Habakkuk prophecy, the herd, or bullocks, picture those worthy ones (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc.) *not yet made perfect* (Heb. 11:39,40), *not yet installed into office* (Psa. 45:16), i.e., into their appointed places.

Verse 2:

And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

John’s remark that he “saw the seven angels which stood before God” indicates a previous familiarity with them. Indeed they were none other than the messengers to the seven churches already encountered in the second and third chapters of Revelation. In harmony with the interpretation of their prior activities, and in the absence of a statement to the contrary, the assumption is that the seven angels standing before God were each given a trumpet *one at a time*, showing the messages about to be blown are separate and distinct, as well as *successive*, in fulfillment. It would be rather unusual for all seven angels to be presented simultaneously with a trumpet. If such were the case, the reader would be so informed.

Another point merits attention. It should be noted that verse 2 is intentionally separated from its natural association with verse 6, and is seemingly misplaced in an incongruous manner before verses 3 through 5, which describe a scene quite foreign to the theme of trumpets. This purposed interpolation will be explained with the treatment of verse 6.

Verse 3:

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.

Verse 4:

And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.

Verse 5:

And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Angel with the Censer

The angel is first observed with a golden censer approaching the brazen altar in the Court. Here he dutifully pauses to stand, alert to perform service. Much incense is given into his custody to be offered up within the sanctuary. Who is this personage? The angel is none other than a portrayal of Jesus as priest and caretaker of the Church. Seen in this favorable context, the censer of gold represents divine judgment, while its implied coals of fire indicate a mandated ordinance of fiery trials and discipline (1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12).

It was customary for the high priest to enter the Holy with coals of fire from off the altar in a censer suspended from his wrist by a chain, together with heaping incense cupped in the palm of each hand.⁴ Once he was inside, the censer was set down on top of the golden incense altar-table, and the incense was crumbled upon the open mouth of the censer pot. As the powder entered the coals and burned, it sent up smoke, yielding a rich perfume, or fragrance, that arose and drifted as a cloud into the Most Holy. This infiltration of smoke was made possible by the existence of a slight aperture high above the incense altar at the ceiling, where the veil, or curtain, hung suspended from four pillars positioned for that purpose (Exod. 26:31–33). The cloud of smoke was to “cover the mercy seat that . . . he [the high priest] die not” (Lev. 16:13).

In the type the high priest was required to offer and burn incense in this fashion “every morning” when he dressed and trimmed the lamps and “at even” when he “lighteth the lamps” (Exod. 30:7,8). And so, in the antitype, Jesus has been “dressing the lamps” and “burning incense” all down through the Gospel Age. Prayer accompanied the offering of incense at both ends of the day in this continued service, so that ere long the golden table was known as the prayer altar as well as the incense altar. Similarly, Jesus has been in the Holy condition making intercession on behalf of the Church continuously: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

Although the high priest offered prayer morning and evening at the daily sacrifice, it was the 3:00 P.M. service (“between the two even[ing]s”)⁵ that was more widely recognized as “the time of incense” and as “the hour of prayer” from the standpoint that more people joined in worship at that hour (Luke 1:9,10) in both the ancient Tabernacle and the later Temple arrangements as well as privately at home.

4. On the Day of Atonement, in addition to the incense, the priest took blood in a basin, which hung with a chain from his other wrist, into the sanctuary. No mention of blood is made in the Revelation scene of the angel with the censer. This omission is most significant because the emphasis, and therefore the explanation of the vision, must, of necessity, be shifted away from the Atonement Day incense offering, and be placed upon the *daily incense offering*. Blood was not associated with the performance of this daily ritual, nor is it seen in verses 3 to 5.

5. The technical beginning of evening is 12:00 P.M. (noon), when the sun begins its declination overhead, until 6:00 P.M., when the sun sets. “Between the two evens,” therefore, is 3:00 P.M. (Exod. 30:8 KJV margin).

According to Hebrew reckoning, 3:00 P.M. was known as the ninth hour (Acts 3:1; 10:3,30). In recognition of this association, the Psalmist David declared (141:2), “Let my prayer be *set forth before thee* as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”

The incense represents the perfections of Christ, which make prayers acceptable to God and enable them to ascend up out of the angel’s hand (verse 4), lifted on the cloud of incense, as it were, to the heavenly throne. The moral virtues and qualities possessed by Christ were pictured as “beaten small” in the crucible of experience (“the work of the apothecary”) so that no lumps or unevenness would mar the glorious blending of a harmonious whole, even the supremacy of his model character (Exod. 30:36; 37:29). When these perfections came in contact with the trials of life, they yielded up the sweet perfume (or “smoke”) of faith, love, obedience, and praise to the Father.⁶ This “incense” is offered “with the prayers of the saints” (verse 4).

Jesus taught his disciples to pray in this manner: “Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father *in my name*, he may give it you” (John 15:16). In other words, the name of Jesus is invoked in connection with prayers so that they will be heard by God.

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6. In ancient and medieval civilizations there existed little hygiene. The close proximity of chicken coops, animal stalls, and garbage heaps to family living quarters was the order of the day. Inadequate sewage drainage and disposal, and the noxious vapors of perspiration in body and clothing, of beasts of burden, and of human waste, added to the tenacious presence of flies, mosquitoes, and insects everywhere—these were among the unpleasantnesses of the past. There was some relief, however. The use of burning spice acted as a strong deterrent in repelling insects in the household and also camouflaged unpleasant odors. Although burning incense is not considered to have a most delightful aroma by the effeminate, sterilized Western civilization of today, to the ancients the contrary was true. Burning incense was a most welcome and delicious fragrance—*even treasured*.

Holy Incense Ingredients (Exod. 30:34–38)

The commandment was that nothing like the holy incense should be made for common use, death being the penalty for disobedience. This command was meant to instill a reverence among the Israelites for whatever was of divine institution so that they would assiduously guard against its profanation or abuse. For the Christian Church the admonition is to beware of counterfeit presentations or any unhallowed prostitution of the ordinances of God.

All four ingredients of the holy incense are designated as incense of pleasant odor, “sweet spices.” All four are gum resins that come forth, in one manner or another, in tearlike form, usually hastened along by repeated incisions—*cutting* experiences.

(1) **Stacte** (Hebrew *netaph* from *nataph*; to drop, that is, a droplet). A kind of gum or precious ooze produced from the storax shrub or small tree, stacte retains a waxy or resinous form instead of flowing out as a liquid. It possesses medicinal value and when burned has a subtle balsamic fragrance.

The spiritual symbolism seems to be *abiding faith* (possessing elements of trust, confidence, and hope). Jesus called attention to what mighty deeds could be performed by its possession in even a mustard-seed quantity (Matt. 17:20; Luke 17:6). Today an expression for such smallness is a mere “*drop* in the bucket.”

(2) **Onycha** (Hebrew *sheheleth*; Syriac *shehelta*; a tear or a distillation). Most critics consider the Greek *onycha* (meaning *nail*, as in fingernail) to signify the hard external lid or covering of a shellfish, mollusk, or perfume crab. But the context and the etymology seem to require the gum of some aromatic plant, perhaps *gum-ladanum*. The Hebrew word would seem to mean *something that exuded*, having odorous qualities.

The spiritual counterpart appears to be *emulating love* (the sympathetic *tear*, pity, compassion).

(cont.)

Jesus' righteousness, or justification, must accompany the prayers of the saints. Primarily because Jesus himself was faithful, and also because he is acting as Advocate on behalf of the Church, these petitions can be recognized (1 John 2:1).

Another thought sometimes presented is that the incense can also represent the *imputed* perfections of the Church, but only when these are coupled with the *actual* perfections of Jesus can they be a part of the "much incense" offered. To intensify the primacy of Jesus' merit, Holy Writ keeps separate and distinct the mention of the saints; the saints are associated with the prayers only.

A knowledge of the background of the censer-bearing angel is helpful in understanding where the vision is located on the stream of time. Prayers of the saints have been offered all down through the Gospel Age. But because here, in the vision, the prayers of all the saints are specified, the picture is an all-inclusive one, covering the entire age and progressing to a conclusion. En route to the garden of sorrow (John 17:20) just before his death, Jesus prayed for himself and for the saints then associated with his ministry, as well as for all the saints yet future. However, that prayer is not the fulfillment of verse 3 because the Gethsemane offering was *FOR ALL* saints, whereas, in the Seventh Seal, the offering will be the prayers *OF ALL saints—something quite different*.

Attention has already been called to the Old Testament practice of offering incense daily, morning and evening. In antitype this practice would indicate a special presentation at the beginning and the end of the Gospel Age. But, as indicated previously, the emphasis is to be placed upon the second portion of this enactment, thereby forcibly marking the future termination of the incense offering. The lesson now becomes abundantly clear . . . Jesus will not cast the censer into the earth (verse 5) until *all* the prayers of The Christ, head and body members, have ascended. The true Church has to be complete, and to be changed from the flesh condition to the spiritual condition above, *before* the Time of Trouble can occur.

When the censer-bearing angel finishes offering the incense in the Holy, he returns to the Court. There he fills the golden censer anew with live coals of fire

(3) **Galbanum** (Hebrew *chelbenah*, that is, *chalab*, milk, and/or *cheleb*, fat, plus *nah*, a contraction of *noah*; to weep, lament, or mourn, in participle form). Galbanum is a resinous gum usually found in clumps of hardened, yellow tearlike drops, probably from the *Cistus galbanum*, a shrub. Most scholars incorrectly identify galbanum with *Bubon gummiferum*, which has a strong, piercing smell and is therefore not in agreement with its biblical designation, a *sweet incense*.

This spice seems to represent *zealous obedience* (submission, self-denial, cross-bearing).

(4) **Frankincense** (Hebrew *lebonah*; whiteness). Frankincense is a sweet-smelling gum obtained from the tearlike exudation of the frankincense tree. The first incision into the tree yields a milk-white substance that exudes quite freely. With the second incision the substance loses much of its whiteness. The third incision usually produces a golden-hue, translucent resin—its most prized form. The name "frankincense" signifies whiteness, which is its chief early noticeable characteristic. It is more likely that the scriptural designation "*pure frankincense*" refers to its later translucency rather than to its early whiteness. The color comes with aging.

Frankincense means *praise* (and thanksgiving). The early convert to Christianity, as the newborn babe, desires the sincere milk of the Word that he may grow thereby, and is quick and responsive to praise his Maker with his lips. The mature veteran of the Cross, if completely faithful in the discharge of his duty, offers a more disciplined and meaningful Godlike (golden) praise to his Creator. Jesus gave thanks for the cup, symbolizing his ignominious death on Calvary hill (Mark 14:23). "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" (Psa. 116:15).

from the brazen altar and then casts both censer and coals into the earth. Again, divine judgment is suggested, but now it is the Day of God's Wrath. The statement "judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17) has two applications. First, it pertains to the trial of the *true* Church. After that comes the judgment upon the *nominal* Church (and the world). However, this latter judgment will not occur, in the sense of destruction, until the true Church has finished its course. Thus a second work follows the completion of the first.

The taking of *two* batches of coals of fire from off the altar indicates *two kinds of divine judgment*: first pertaining to the true Church, afterwards against the nominal Church and the world. The Lord has been judging His people for over nineteen centuries by refining them, by purging the dross from the silver and the gold (Mal. 3:3). Then, at the end of the age, a judgment will come on the world, on the living generation. Hence God allows the ministry of evil—of sorrow, trouble, calamity—to befall both the Church and the world. But the ministry, or temporary permission, of evil that comes upon the gold or Church class is one of special friendship and sonship, while to the world it is one of rebuke and condemnation.

Such a judgment coming on the world does not mean that God has not love in His heart for earth's inhabitants, but He does have to *wound in order to heal* and bring mankind to repentance. Throughout the Gospel Age the selection and the recognition of the saints have been going on secretly in the Holy, and the offering of incense and prayer still continues unbeknownst to the world. However, once the Church class is complete, the golden censer and its contents will be cast into the earth, and tremendous repercussions will immediately follow: blood and thunder, as it were.

The use of the censer on behalf of the Church yields incense and a sweet perfume, but a marked contrast is seen upon the entry of the coals of fire into the world. The censer will create trouble and a wrath designed to humble mankind preparatory to future blessings for the willing and obedient. Today's distress and disorder, described as the Day of Preparation (Nah. 2:3), are merely indicative of far greater woes to come. But beyond the future great tribulation, the sunrise of Messiah's Kingdom of glory and peace shall prevail.

The Seven Trumpets

Verse 6:

And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

As Moses at the burning bush, on holy ground, received his commission from "the angel of Jehovah" (Exod. 3:2)⁷ to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage . . . so Joshua also, on holy ground, was ordained by one called "a man" and "captain of the host of the LORD" (Josh. 5:13–15) to conduct Israel's entry into the Land

7. This angel was purposely authorized to speak as the mouthpiece of Jehovah, and to do so in such an explicit and emphatic manner as to create the impression that God Himself was speaking. Indeed the message was sent direct from God Almighty (Gen. 3:7–10; Isa. 63:9; Acts 7:38,53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2). It is impossible for humans to behold Jehovah face to face except in a figurative fashion (Exod. 33:20; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 4:12).

of Promise. Both Moses in the one account (Acts 3:22) and Joshua⁸ in the other are prototypes of Christ.

The sixth chapter of the Book of Joshua sheds considerable light on the meaning of the blowing of the seven trumpets in Revelation. More attention will be paid to certain other details in the narration of the conquest of Jericho when the sixteenth chapter of the Apocalypse is examined. Suffice it here to say that the blowing of all seven trumpets under Joshua was of divine sponsorship. The trumpets were blown by the *priests* in the taking of Jericho. It should likewise be noted in Revelation 8:2 that the seven angels, prior to their later activity, were given their trumpets as they “stood before God.” In the Old Testament account the men of war, as well as the seven individual priests, preceded in march the Ark of the Covenant. The seven priests there portray, in type, the seven angels, or messengers, to the Church (Rev. 1:20). The armed men (Josh. 6:13) represent those Christian warriors who, in their earthly sojourn of the present life, battle not with carnal weapons, but fight instead the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12), endeavoring to conquer and to subdue the lusts of the flesh, the world, and the devil. But when these warriors are changed to Kingdom glory, then they, as priests and kings, will be empowered to administer justice in the earth.

In the type, *as regards the overthrow of Jericho*, the people were under divine mandate to keep silence; in like manner, soldiers of the Cross are to remain obedient to the powers that be (Titus 3:1; 1 Tim. 2:1–3) as conscience towards God permits (Acts 4:13–20). The entrenched citadel of religious orthodoxy, which has so long hindered and obstructed entry into the Kingdom of heaven (Matt. 23:13), is to be assaulted with truth when Jesus gives the order to shout. His legions await the command to forward the establishment of the long-promised Kingdom of God on earth (Matt. 6:10).

The sounding of the trumpets prior to the prearranged signal⁹ was unusual in that instead of inciting the host to war, its martial airs were more ones of faith and rejoicing, as though victory had already been assured. And so the Christian message throughout the age has been the glad tidings of the gospel and the good news concerning the Kingdom to come, in which *all the families of the earth are to be blessed* (Gen. 12:3). The message is not limited to the drawing of this age, in which the consecrated alone are called with a heavenly hope to live and to reign with Jesus; but it includes a future hope of earthly restitution to mankind in the messianic era. This joyous sound, however, is viewed with consternation by most religionists, who perceive only the few to be saved and the vast majority of mankind to be consigned either to hell or to extinction. The message of God’s magnanimous love, with the extension of a hope of retrieval of the willing and obedient after retributive judgment, is bitterly opposed by orthodoxy steeped in false traditions of the past.

8. The name Joshua in the Hebrew signifies Jesus.

9. In the type, the priests blew the trumpets *intermittently* throughout the day in a continuous fashion as they circled the city. The signal for the conquest of Jericho was blown with the same instruments used daily, but this time the trumpets were blown in a different manner. Instead of continued, short bursts of sound, which both the Lord’s host and the besieged inhabitants of the city were so incessantly made aware of throughout the seven days, the new signal for attack was characterized by a very long blast upon the same horn (Josh. 6:5).

Superficially, it would appear that verse 2 is out of place and should more properly have been inserted before verse 6. But of course the Holy Spirit, by the use of this strange anomaly or seeming misplacement, has some lesson to point out. If verse 2 had followed verse 5, which describes the censer-bearing angel, this would tend to confirm the thought that the *antitypical application* and commencement of the fulfillment of the sounding trumpets followed the censer being thrown into the earth; whereas, more properly speaking, the two dramas are a *dual-phase* vision. The correct thought is that during, or contemporaneous with, the interim offering of incense, the trumpets are successively being blown. To state the matter another way, the appearance of the trumpeteers directly preceding and immediately following the censer-bearing angel scene is intended to show that a close interrelationship exists between the two visions, namely, the incense offering and the sounding of the trumpets.

What is the meaning of that relationship? Are not the two visions intended as clues to furnish information as to the significance of the prior half-hour silence in heaven of verse 1? It is important to observe the progressive and time-consuming nature of both the morning and afternoon incense offerings and the blowing of the seven trumpets; and it is equally important to note that *both end in a singular startling event*: “voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake” (compare verse 5 with Revelation 11:15,19). Such being the case, it should be no wonder that the development of the two dramatizations to a common conclusion should also have a somewhat approximate common starting point, that is, at Pentecost. Furthermore, the future earthquake, which will close both scenes, corresponds to the falling flat of the walls of Jericho.

An Important Comparison

The Lord purposely used three symbols in describing the history and development of the church class from Pentecost to the end of the Gospel Age because each presents a different standpoint. The following is a comparison of the seven messages to the Church, the seven seals, and the seven trumpets. These distinctions should be carefully noted.

(a) The seven messages are the *admonitions and the instructions of the Lord* to the Church in the seven periods of its development.

(b) The seven seals represent the experiences and trials that befall Jesus' true followers during the same period at the hands of clerical autocracy, *as seen in the eyes of his saints*.

(c) The seven trumpets¹⁰ demonstrate what appears to be the devastating effect that the public witness and the preaching of the faithful followers of Jesus have upon the religious world, *as seen in the eyes of the orthodox Church*. The seven angels sound the seven trumpets separately and successively. The sounding of the first four is followed by calamities in different elements of the earth: the dry land, the sea, the rivers or springs, and the heavens.

10. Today there are journals called *The Clarion*, *The Trumpet*, *The Herald*, *The Bugle*; each represents a public proclamation or announcement of news events.

The First Trumpet (A.D. 34–70)

Verse 7:

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.

All seven trumpets, or messages, sound against the *religious* world; they are directed to the professed people of God. This first message occurred at the beginning of the Gospel Age and was proclaimed by Paul, who was the “first angel,” the messenger to the Church of Ephesus. He founded the Ephesian Church, not the Apostle John. And it was Paul who *doctrinally reasoned* with the Jews on conflicting schools of thought, not Peter.¹¹

Messages of truth given by God’s servants throughout the Gospel Age have been regarded as calamities, or messages of *alarm*, by nominal orthodox religious leaders, who hold to their established creeds and beliefs. When a new doctrine arises that seems to threaten their positions of prestige and honor—that is, if that new doctrine

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11. Undoubtedly, many in the early Church were profoundly impressed by the power of Paul’s logic, the depth of his understanding, the unsurpassing fervency of his zeal, his unequalled possession of miraculous gifts and his ability to heal others, and his judgmental capabilities, which none could effectively withstand or deny—nay, even feared to openly contest. Indeed, in such matters Paul was not one whit behind the chiefest of the apostles (2 Cor. 11:5).

Notwithstanding such attributes, many of the brotherhood of Christ had lingering perplexity as to the authenticity of Paul’s apostleship for other reasons perhaps chiefly introduced by his opponents. The perplexity was primarily due to the unsettled feeling that the minimal requirement for appointment to such an office would necessitate an explanation of the following questions: (1) Had Paul ever communed with Jesus face to face? (2) Could he personally affirm the Master’s resurrection? (3) How could he occupy an office already filled by Matthias through the casting of lots (at Peter’s suggestion and in seeming harmony with Scripture—Acts 1:15–26) by the 120 convened in the upper room at Jerusalem? (4) And last, but not least, how could Paul account for what appeared to be an abnormal lapse of time between the legal Holy Spirit endorsement of the gospel Church at Pentecost and his own late arrival to the Church dispersed throughout Gentile lands?

To rebut the first two anticipated points in question, the Apostle strongly asserted that his encounter was more unique than that of the other apostles, in that he had seen, heard, and talked with the glorified Redeemer as though being born to the spirit nature before the due time (1 Cor. 15:8). This striking providence on his behalf would more than compensate for his lack of companionship with the man Christ Jesus during his earthly ministry.

The third obstacle to belief in his apostleship he inferentially countered with the observation that the election of Matthias was of man (Gal. 1:1)—that is, at the suggestion of Peter—and that the decision of the 120, no matter how well intentioned, was nonetheless also of man. In correctly observing that a prophetic replacement of Judas was divinely authorized (Acts 1:20), Peter had wrongly presumed it was up to the brotherhood to carry this out speedily and as judiciously as possible. Such an assumed procedure was not God’s intention. Jesus had chosen the eleven; therefore, he alone was to choose the *replacement* (not as the successor, since apostolic succession is scripturally forbidden and Judas’s case was the exception). Paul strongly certified that he was appointed by Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11,12), and that Ananias of Damascus could confirm this testimony (Acts 9:10–12), and other brethren there could relate his evangelical activity in that area for the greater part of three years. Two other witnesses, James the Lord’s brother and Peter (Gal. 1:18,19), could also testify as to his subsequent though early visit with them at Jerusalem before Peter went on a missionary tour to Lydda and then proceeded on to Joppa, from whence he later departed to Caesarea to baptize Cornelius the Gentile (Acts 10) in A.D. 36, which marked the end of the seventy weeks (490 years) of exclusive Jewish favor (Dan. 9:24). (cont.)

or religion gains popularity and thus poses a potential threat—the leaders view it with alarm and terror rather than, in humility, calmly assessing its truth or falsity predicated upon the Word of God. For this reason, just from the standpoint of their positions of authority, it was very difficult for the scribes and Pharisees to accept Jesus' teachings. They were already looked up to as religious leaders of instruction. No doubt the scribes and Pharisees were men of learning and understanding, but their wisdom was not as soul searchingly deep as that of the prophets and the Lord in their midst. They had to overcome bias in order to recognize truth.

Thus the sounding of the trumpets pictures the concern with which the religious leaders and influential thinkers in society view the advent of truth. In the Lord's case, they viewed his doctrine as a spurious offshoot of Judaism, whereas in reality it was the old gospel taught by the former faithful prophets. Similarly, throughout this age, the truth has been viewed as a strange, new belief instead of the "*old, old story*" of Jesus and the apostles.

When the first angel sounded his trumpet, certain things occurred: hail, fire, and blood caused the destruction of trees and grass. The meaning of these symbols will now be considered.

"*HAIL*" is water congealed, hence *hard* truth that hurts or "smarts." In contrast, dew, also a form of water, comes down gently and brings refreshment; it is neither seen nor felt during downfall. Dew, rain, and hail are all water forms—and thus truth. However, the hail is in a harder form; it is hard, distressing truth.

"*FIRE*" is a symbol of both destruction and truth. An interesting property of fire is that it burns or destroys some things, such as paper; but other things, such as gold and silver, are purified or refined by it. The Bible speaks of fire as judgmental truth. In James 3:5,6 the tongue is likened to a match that sets the forest afire. A *big* body contains but a *little* tongue, and yet that wiggly, waggly member can be uncontrollable. In setting on fire the course of nature, the tongue is pictured not from the standpoint of truth, but from the standpoint of slander, backbiting, evil speaking, and spreading messages harmful to the Lord's people.

In verse 7, "fire" is truth viewed with alarm because of the *rapidity* of its growth. When a fire starts in the woods, what happens to one little spot of ground is not so important, but the *potential spread* into a full-fledged forest fire causes great alarm. Those other than sincere Christians view the truth not only as hail but as fire. Although hailstones are distressing in that they can hurt or kill a person, they

Putting all these facts together signifies that Paul was appointed an apostle three years prior to Cornelius's conversion, that is, sometime in the latter part of A.D. 33, the very year of the Pentecostal blessing, startling as that may seem. The brethren in Judea, a center of information, were not fully aware of Paul's earlier activity in Damascus. Therefore, he reviewed his own history to acquaint the brethren at large with these facts. He confirmed the same with a solemn oath before God (Gal. 1:20). There can be no satisfactory explanation, *other than a vindication of his apostolic office*, for so positive a manner of expression in relating what otherwise would be but a simple autobiographical sketch of his life. As for his late ministry *among the Gentiles*, this, among other things, was provisionally ordained since Jesus had instructed his disciples to preach first in Jerusalem, then in Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8; see also Acts 9:25–29; 26:12–20).

All of the foregoing testimony further strengthens the identification of the Apostle Paul as both the angel to the Church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1) and the first angel to sound a trumpet.

are *limited* to a specific area or individuals. On the other hand, fire is more widespread. A match may fall in one tiny place, but the fire that results can consume a thousand square miles. Thus fire is viewed with consternation because of its *consuming* quality and rapid spread.

“*BLOOD*” is a reference to the fact that the apostles preached the blood of Christ. To the Lord’s people, that blood is efficacious and means life and hope, but to others who do not believe in redemption work, the thought of death sacrifice seems crude and repulsive. Agnostics and atheists view the doctrine of the blood of Christ as distasteful because they do not understand the philosophy of and the necessity for the Ransom. Christ’s followers welcome the fire and hail of truth because of its *cleansing* power in their lives; the *righteousness* of truth beats down the “old man,” or depraved nature, inherited from Adam. To those who do not have a hearing ear, such truth is an odor of “death unto death”—it is a plague (1 Cor. 1:23,24; 2 Cor. 2:16).

“*EARTH*” is the professed Christian Church or Christendom under religious restraint.

Symbolic Destruction

Truth destroys error in those who *accept* it. On the other hand, those who reject the light refuse to give up their errors when the truth is sounded, or blown, against them; they are reluctant to acknowledge they are wrong. Psalm 45:5 illustrates this principle: “Thine [Jesus’] arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s [God’s] enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.” Jesus is pictured as shooting arrows into God’s “enemies” (the people *not* converted).

When Christ preached righteousness, he suffered the reproaches that were meant for God. Therefore, Jesus’ enemies were also the enemies of Jehovah. At the time of the establishment of the Kingdom, the people (or “enemies”) will be those who have *not* yet bowed their knees and hearts in submission to his will. Then the arrows of truth will pierce the hearts of the disobedient. The revelation and penetration of the Holy Spirit divideth between the sinews and bones, and searcheth even the marrow of the bones (Heb. 4:12)—that is how sharp the sword of truth is!

When the people heard Peter and John preach at Pentecost, they realized they were hearing the truth: “they were pricked in their heart” (Acts 2:37). As a result, “about three thousand souls” were converted and then “about five thousand” soon thereafter (Acts 2:41; 4:4). The principle is the same: arrows from the quiver of scriptural testimony penetrate the heart. The arrows of conviction, upon entry into the heart, cause the recipients to cease to be “enemies” of the Lord and to prostrate themselves before him. They “fall” under Jesus in the sense that they become converts to his messiahship. In the Kingdom Jesus will rule with a rod of iron, and the truth will be made so plain and so penetrating that even a fool will understand (Rev. 2:27; Isa. 35:8).

The Third Part a Class

A noticeably repetitious term under the first four trumpets is “the third part.” The appearance of this expression elsewhere in the Bible as a precedent helps to

justify the explanation that it does not necessarily refer to a numerical third but can have application to a *class*.

In Zechariah 13:8 the following statement is made:

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land [the whole earth], saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third [part] shall be left therein.

The third part that remains will receive an earthly inheritance after the two spiritual classes are cut off. This third class will be disciplined for their own good in a manner somewhat similar to the treatment of the other two parts, even as it is written in the next verse (Zech. 13:9):

And I will bring the third part [Israel] through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

Thus, when the two spiritual classes are dealt with (the Little Flock and the Great Company), God will turn His attention to natural Israel and to the future capital of the world—Jerusalem (Isa. 24:23; 27:13; 62:7; Psa. 68:29; 99:5; Jer. 3:17; Joel 3:16,17; Mic. 4:2; Zech. 14:8,9,17).

Identification of the Three Parts

In the preceding explanation of Zechariah's prophecy, three classes were pointed out, namely, the Little Flock, the Great Company, and the nation of Israel. But what are the three parts, or classes, mentioned under the blowing of the *First Trumpet* (Rev. 8:7)? John 19:19,20 provides that information:

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in *Hebrew*, and *Greek*, and *Latin*.

The title "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" was put on the Cross in the three languages of the biblical world. The governor of Israel, Pontius Pilate, was a Roman, and Roman centurions and soldiers were stationed in the Holy Land, which was garrisoned and under subjection to Rome. In fact, the whole "earth," or Mediterranean basin, was under Roman control. Thus many buildings bore (1) Latin inscriptions, and instructions were often issued in that language. Another prominent tongue at that time was (2) Greek because of Alexander the Great's conquests and influence three centuries before. Greece was also noted for its learning and scholarship. In addition, (3) Hebrew or Aramaic was important since it was the language of the land where Jesus was crucified, and disciples from that nation carried the gospel forth unto all the world.

Therefore, in this period three nations or peoples exerted their influence throughout the earth: Italy, Greece, and Israel. But of these three, "the third part" particularly affected by the First Trumpet message was the *Hebrew part*, the Jews both

inside and outside the confines of Israel. When Jesus came to that nation, he directed his message to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24). The apostles were Jews, and they ministered largely to their own people both in Israel and later in foreign lands.

The Trees

When the trumpet sounded, orthodoxy viewed the element who accepted the truth as being destroyed. Indeed converts did die: they died to self, to the yoke of the Law, and to the false traditions of men. Why was the third part of trees burned? If only *one* part of the trees was burned, then two parts (the Roman and the Greek) escaped the fire and were not affected, or at least were only marginally affected. In the Bible, trees picture individuals established in truth or falsehood. For example, the wicked are likened to the “green bay tree,” which monopolizes the moisture and crowds out lesser growth; and the righteous, to the upright “palm tree” (Psa. 37:35; 92:12).¹²

It was harder for “the trees”—those confirmed in their own beliefs—to accept the gospel because of a longer indoctrination and growth in error and a corresponding inherited prejudice against acknowledging Jesus. However, in spite of this predilection, a surprising number of the priesthood believed on him (Acts 6:7). The apostles and others as evangelists and teachers were men of strong, determined character. In addition, there were women who exercised a notable and far-reaching supportive influence upon the brotherhood. These can all be likened to trees amidst Jewry, for in the primitive Church prior to A.D. 69, during the sounding of the first trumpet, there were few, if any, Gentiles who were stable and staunch *teachers*—long indoctrinated in the truth and familiar with Scripture. Therefore, the third part of trees was Israelitish.

The Grass

Why was only a third part of the trees burned but *all* of the green grass consumed? The statement “all green grass was burnt up” indicates that *all three parts* of the grass were destroyed. To state the matter another way, the Roman, the Greek, and the Jewish grass was affected. The Jewish part will be considered first.

In the Gospel of Mark (12:37), it is stated that “the common people heard him [Jesus] gladly.” What was true concerning the response to Jesus’ message at the First Advent was undoubtedly also true of the ensuing ministries of the apostles throughout the beginning era of church history. The Jewish homeland third part was influenced by the gospel message in both cases.

But what about alien Jewry and the other two parts, the Gentiles? When the Apostle Paul, the first angel, sounded, it was the humble, unprejudiced, right-hearted green-grass element (both Jew and Gentile) in other lands who gladly received the message he so boldly declared. Paul, “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:13), did an extensive evangelizing work in territory that was mostly virgin as

12. In the apocalyptic vision, the term “trees” has an even more specialized application. It refers only to those properly *rooted* and *grounded* in the righteousness of Christ. The “*green grass*” similarly pertains only to the humble, lowly, new ones who have the *hope of life* engendered within their breasts through the hearing of, and compliance with, the Word of God.

respects the hearing of the gospel. A new green element, having hearing ears, was fostered and developed in the lands he traversed. These individuals were, for the greater part, unbiased to a gospel that they had not heard previously and that was based upon Old Testament doctrine, with which they were equally unfamiliar. Thus large numbers of both Jews and Gentiles were marvelously introduced to the glad tidings. Opposition and bitter persecution developed, but this occurred, in many instances, after conversion had already taken place. These converts among the Gentiles were a new growth that might be styled “grass roots” assemblies of Christians.

The Second Trumpet (A.D. 70–313)

Verse 8:

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;

Verse 9:

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.

Before the details of this portion of the vision are interpreted, it would be appropriate to step back and observe the trumpet scene in an overview. The seven trumpets unfold seven different scenarios; yet they are but threads woven into one harmonious whole.¹³ The varied background scenes all, in essence, teach the same thing, namely, the effect that the proclamation of truth has upon the same nominal religious world.

More specifically, the “earth” (verse 7), the “sea” (verse 8), the “rivers” and “fountains of waters” (verse 10), and the stellar firmament (verse 12) all represent the same religious realm. The introduction of these *major symbols*, covering various fields of operation or arenas of conflict, is not intended to mean different strata or areas of involvement; nor do the symbols in themselves teach basic differences in interpretation. However, the *other subsidiary emblematic terms*, such as “grass,” “trees,” “ships,” etc., do have finer shades of significance. In the ninth chapter of Revelation, this principle of interpretation will be more conclusively demonstrated.

The Burning Mountain

The sounding of the Second Trumpet had significant repercussions (verses 8 and 9). What does the “great mountain burning with fire” represent? In Scripture a “mountain” sometimes can picture a nation, a kingdom, or even the government of the whole world (Psa. 78:68; Isa. 65:25; Dan. 9:20; 2:35). A *burnt* mountain signifies a destroyed kingdom (Jer. 51:25).

13. Since all three major religious festivals comprehended in the Law of Moses are found within the limits of the first seven months of the Hebrew calendar, it can be stated that, in a certain modified sense, and to all practical purposes, the *sacred* year consisted of seven months (Num. 28:16 through 29:40). Viewed in this light, the *blowing of the trumpets* at the beginning of each of these particular months—at the appearance of the new moon (Num. 10:10; Psa. 81:3)—foreshadowed the blowing of the trumpets in the Apocalypse at the beginning of each epoch of church history.

An important clue that helps identify the particular mountain being referred to in verse 8 is the Gospel incident involving the cursing of the fig tree (a symbol of the nation of Israel). A paraphrasing of Jesus' remarks upon that occasion gives the gist of what he said: "Yesterday I cursed this tree [compare Mark 11:13,14 with 11:20–23], and now you see it shriveled up [the disciples marveled that the tree dried up in one day]." Jesus continued, "You think what happened to the fig tree was so wondersome, but if you had even the smallest iota of a truly perceptive and enlightened faith,¹⁴ you could say *to this mountain* [in all likelihood pointing to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem], 'Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea! it shall be done.'" The cursing of the fig tree and the condemnation of Israel are inseparably linked with destruction (Luke 3:8,9; Matt. 21:43), and the Judean mount is an apt illustration of this judgment. The Temple, city, and nation were soon exposed to the merciless wrath, turbulence, and plunder of the *enveloping Roman foe* (the "sea," the masses not under religious restraint). Thus "a great mountain [Israel, a small but very important nation in God's sight] burning with fire" was cast into the sea in A.D. 70.

The Third Part

The territory most influenced was lands adjacent to Israel, to the north and the west; and the people involved were both Jew and Gentile. Where Paul left off his ministry, John carried on. The Roman world at that time was a geographical unit composed of the peripheral margins of three continents—Europe, Africa, and Western Asia—bordering the Mediterranean basin. Of these three, *Western Asia and its environs* constituted "the third part." The latter part of the Apostle John's ministry, beginning about A.D. 70, was centered in Asia Minor.

A Bloody Sea

The Scriptures "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6) and "he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9) are a cardinal tenet of the Christian faith. Many believers in the Lord Jesus seek to imitate his lifestyle and consider him a worthy pioneer of truth; a way-shower among men; an exemplary friend of the poor and of sinners; a healer of the mentally, physically, and spiritually diseased . . . but these same individuals sometimes have little or no appreciation of the doctrine of redemption. They neither value nor understand what they consider to be the "bloody" offerings instituted in the Old Testament, or the vicarious nature of the sacrifice of Christ in the New Testament as the offset for the sin of Adam and a dying race.

The intellectual(?) feel that only inferior people of little education and poor mentality could accept such beliefs, which they further deem as barbaric. Those who long for the unadulterated truth of the gospel soon come to realize that God's firm justice required blood to be shed for the remission of sins (Heb. 9:22), and that

14. Only true faith—not credulity, nor even sincere belief—could or should presume to make such a declaration unauthorized by a "thus saith the LORD." Such a faith cometh by "hearing," that is, by a thorough understanding of the Word of God. In this instance, Jesus was well aware (Matt. 23:38) the Prophet Daniel (9:24–27) had foretold under divine inspiration that sometime after the "seventy weeks" (490 years), just such a desolation of the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary would take place.

such “blood” is an attraction, not a repellant. It is written that “whosoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together” (Matt. 24:28).

A carcass is usually associated with putrefaction. No matter how rotten carrion may be, vultures descend and feed upon the remains. On the other hand, eagles eat carrion only out of necessity, for they prefer *freshly* slain or live animals. An eagle leaves the blood residue of the prey for her young eaglets to suck up (Job 39:30). Since blood separates and coagulates shortly after death, time becomes an essential factor. The analogy is that eagles represent Christians searching for spiritual food—which proves to be the dead humanity of Christ sacrificed on their behalf. The gathering of the eagles about the carcass harmonizes with the thought of the *freshly slain* Lamb (Rev. 5:6), viz., not one in which there is putrefaction and stench, but one from whom flows life-giving blood.

Those opposed to the thought of a purchased redemption, of the blood-bought soul, look upon this facet of the true gospel, with askance, as a “savour of death unto death,” whereas it should be received as a “savour of life unto life” (2 Cor. 2:16). Therefore, “the third part of the sea,” which became blood, refers to that portion of the sea of humanity most attracted by this doctrinal theme. The blood not only depicts the Lord’s death—the cost to himself of this benefit to others—but is an evidence of *sacrificial love*.

Death of Marine Life

During the First Trumpet blowing, all the “green grass” was burned up. And so here, under the Second Trumpet, “the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and *had life*, died.” The destruction of the nation of Israel, the flight of believing escapees, and the dispersion of surviving captives of the holocaust all resulted in a worldwide distribution of the seeds of knowledge concerning the new doctrine of Christ. As a result, in the Second Trumpet era Grecianized Jewish and Gentile converts were most notably affected in the geographic area of Western Asia.

In the ruins of the more ancient Christian edifices, and more particularly in the remains of the mosaic tile floors, there are conspicuous picture portrayals in which the *fish* is prominently displayed. The use of this Galilean symbol is clearly understood to refer to the Master’s earliest injunction to his disciples: “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (the latter, or humanity, being characterized as fish—Matt. 4:19; Mark 1:17). In another instance, those attracted by the gospel are compared to fish caught in the net of truth (Luke 5:1–11).

Maritime Vessels Destroyed

A Christian is often likened to a ship in the ocean—he fares well as long as the ocean is not in the ship. The desire is to reach the safety of a port and a secure haven. In the professed Church there are both true and nominal believers, that is, both the wheat and the tare classes. To some extent, all have similar aspirations in the “pursuit of happiness,” but verse 9 states that one third of the vessels were demolished by the blowing of the trumpet.

Orthodoxy regarded the effects of the proclamation of truth as disastrous. Those who became interested in the message were viewed as having made *shipwreck* of their souls and, therefore, were considered to be outside the circle of orthodoxy’s

love and sympathy. These doomed individuals were in reality, however, those who espoused true Christianity and who gave heed to the dispensational doctrine of the Apostle John, the second angel.

The Third Trumpet (A.D. 313–1157)

Verse 10:

And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

Verse 11:

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.

This scene presents truth in an unfavorable light similar to the soundings of the two prior trumpets. The luminous body seen falling is none other than the third angel himself, namely, Arius. As “a *great* star,” as a bright and most promising individual, this African prelate appeared in the religious firmament, or heaven. Though he was deposed as a presbyter by his superior in an A.D. 318 Alexandrian synod because of his non-Trinitarian doctrinal stance, Arius’s fall from the ecclesiastical realm (verse 10) relates to the spectacular fashion in which he was excommunicated by the Council of Nicea, A.D. 325. Be it noted, however, that his plummeting as a star from grace and the ranks of the nominal church heaven does not indicate any fall whatsoever from divine favor.

Arius’s experience is likened to the deposition of a burning lamp; that is, the descent from favor of a zealous preacher, of a renowned Greek scholar and *expounder of Scripture* (Psa. 119:105; Prov. 6:23; Matt. 25:1). The emphasis given is . . . Look what happened to him! What a shame such talent was wasted and brought to naught! In the eyes of the conventional Church, the demotion bore a striking resemblance (1) to Satan’s banishment from God’s presence referred to by the Prophet Isaiah (14:12), “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer,¹⁵ son of the morning”;¹⁶ and (2) to the statement made by Jesus in the Gospel, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke 10:18). The latter comparison does not mean Satan fell with the speed of lightning, but that he fell like a brilliant meteor.

15. The term Lucifer (Hebrew *helel*, daystar or shining one—see Isa. 14:12 KJV margin) was applied to the Adversary under the symbolism “king of Babylon” (Isa. 14:4). Lucifer was Satan’s *good or favorable name* prior to his fall. As the “king of Tyrus,” he was represented as “perfect in beauty,” bedecked with “every precious stone,” and “perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee”; therefore, he was “cast . . . as profane out of the mountain of God” (Ezek. 28:12–16).

16. Satan was previously one of the sons of the morning, one of the two archangels; namely, the Logos (Michael, or Jesus, the only begotten of the Father—John 1:14) and Lucifer (the next earliest created being, who derived life from the Logos). Both have existed from the earliest dawn of the spirit creation and hence are styled “the sons of the morning” in contrast to the later angels, who are called “the sons of God” (Job 38:7). The Job citation affords insight into the former harmonious relationship that once existed between the two archangels, that is, before the deception of Eve and the sin of Adam.

The Third Part

The Third Trumpet covered a span of more than eight centuries involving continuous vacillating circumstances with proportionate complexities. For convenience' sake, the world at that time might be considered as divided into three major components: (1) the Western Empire, consisting of Britain, Gaul, Spain, and Italy; (2) Thracia and Asia Minor; and (3) Syria and North Africa. In an overall sense, the third part most lastingly affected was the *African part*.

During the first two centuries of this particular era, Arianism continued to spread, with varying fortunes, through the East. Constantinople was deemed for a time the center of this persuasion, while Rome was seen as the enduring champion of orthodoxy in spite of the deterioration of the empire in the West and various devastating barbaric incursions.¹⁷ At the same time Arianism also flourished among the Germanic tribes (Goths, Heruli, Lombards, etc.) in Northern Europe *outside the frontier*; in addition, it was generally viewed with sympathy by the Vandals and Moors of North Africa. But *within* the empire itself, the cause of Arianism was lost in the early sixth century A.D., during the reign of Justinian.

By the year 700, due to the rise of Islam, all the provinces in Africa and Asia, except the peninsula of Asia Minor, were lost to the empire. Thus the Byzantine portion of the empire was cut down to a comparatively small territory, with part in Europe and part in Asia, the center being the city of Constantinople, which now was thoroughly committed to conventionalized religion. North Africa had to be written off by the approved Church, since Mohammedanism completely controlled that arena of influence (and still does up to the present day). During the third trumpet era, monotheistic Islam viewed Arians with more tolerance than it viewed Trinitarians.

It is interesting that the Orientals often typify calamities of any kind by poisonous plants, such as wormwood. The waters turned bitter because of contact with the star called by the name Wormwood, which signifies bitterness. The lesson is that the waters became bitter after the emperor banished Arius—that is, *upon his return from exile*—for it was then that Arius became very active and was even more effective in his ministry.

The “fountains of waters” are synonymous with springs, or *sources* of information, which supply the approved channels (“rivers”) with streams of the doctrine of the authorized Church. The vision suggests not only that the message heralded by Arius successfully converted many of the populace to Christ personally, so that they died to their former erroneous beliefs, but that many in the theological centers of learning and among the ordained were likewise affected.

17. Some biblical expositors interpret and identify the fallen star that wrought such havoc to the third part of the waters to be either (a) the Visigoth *Alaric*, who sacked Rome A.D. 410; (b) the Mongol *Attila*, “the Scourge of God” conqueror of Italy in A.D. 453; or (c) *Genseric*, king of the Vandals, who by ship came upon and despoiled the city of Rome in A.D. 455.

It must ever be kept in mind that the apocalyptic trumpets are blown by the seven angels who figuratively stand before God. They are the *true* reformers, or special messengers, sent to make known dispensational truth to the Lord's humble followers during their earthly sojourn—the seven angels are not heathen men of war.

In fact, so gross was the exaggerated opinion of standard religionists that they frequently attributed all heresy in some degree or form to the fall of that star. To this day, staunch conservatives steeped in churchianity consider the reformer to be the arch-heretic of all time, for out of the Arian fountain came forth bitter worm-wood poison that has been troublesome to them ever since.

The student of Scripture should be aware that so-called Arianism, as professed and practiced throughout the blowing of the third trump by adherents of that belief, is by no means a true indicator of the degree of faithfulness to the original teachings of the great reformer. The true saints of God, “the little flock,” are such a small minority amidst the mass of believers and religionists that an accurate, continuous historical account of their deeds can scarcely be recognized. If it were not for the apocalyptic message itself shedding light on this subject, the existence and continued presence of the Lord’s little ones, whom “the world knoweth . . . not” (1 John 3:1), could not be traced nor discerned. Certainly the atrocious deeds and practices sometimes enacted by so-called Arians—though often with exaggerated frequency and severity—can no more be attributed to their founder than can some of the equally horrendous crimes committed by Catholics and Protestants of the past be laid at the feet of the Master.

The Fourth Trumpet (A.D. 1157–1367)

Verse 12:

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.

The biblical narrative continues to relate the things John saw (Rev. 1:11) and of which he bare record (Rev. 1:2) for the benefit of God’s believing servants. The Fourth Trumpet blast results in the darkening of one third of the sun, moon, and stars. Further descriptive information helps to clarify what occurs when these celestial bodies are smitten. It is explained, first, that the third part of the sun being smitten produces the darkening of a third part of the day; and, second, that the third part of the stricken moon and stars is followed by the darkening of a third part of the night.

Before the investigation can proceed, two postulates must be considered: (1) As the sun rules the day for twelve hours (John 11:9), so the moon and stars rule the remaining hours by night. (2) As the sun illuminates half the earth exposed to its rays by day, so the moon and stars enlighten half the globe by night. To summarize, the first condition pertains to the *passage of time*; the second refers to *area coverage*. To which of the two circumstances does “one third” of the day and night apply? Does it signify four hours of daylight and four hours of evening light—or some other such fractional part? Or does it refer simply to a third sectional, divisional, or zonal area being affected? The latter question is answered in the affirmative. In other words, whether the sun, or whether the moon and stars, on a given side of the earth shone, a part or portion of the globe would be illuminated under normal circumstances. But now the account purposely, alarmingly, and exagger-

atedly portrays a one-third portion as failing to receive any light whatever. Nor would the sun, moon, or stars themselves be visible to those resident in that area. Such is the graphic description given.

The Third Part

In this era Italy, France, and England were the three major nations where Papacy, the nominal Church of Thyatira, reigned supreme as the representative of orthodoxy. By this time the Byzantine Church of the East¹⁸ and the African continent to the south had dropped from serious contention and relevance. What, then, was the third part afflicted by the blowing of the Fourth Trumpet? It was *France*. From Papacy's standpoint the contagion or pestilence of Waldensianism and Albigensianism was most prevalent in that nation. France was the area "darkened" by the truth because it was there that the messenger Waldo performed his mission. For a long time this nation had been a staunch supporter of the Vatican, and it was deemed necessary by Papacy's adherents that France continue in that role at all costs. To Papacy the light of truth was esteemed as darkness and its own darkness considered as light. Hitherto, as explained in Revelation 6:12,13, the sun in the false heaven signified Papacy; the moon represented the canon law of that system; and the stars pictured the cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and leading theologians of the Church. All the foregoing stellar luminaries are part of the nominal, traditional Christian heavens, shedding their "light" on the believing world.

Verse 13:

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!

After the blowing of the Fourth Trumpet, an outside source independently causes an interruption, which the King James Version describes as an "angel" flying through heaven, making a pronouncement of woe. In the Sinaitic manuscript the "angel" is an "eagle," a more accurate rendering, the wings of the eagle being emblematic of the Old and New Testaments. This message of the eagle is extraneously introduced or inserted between the Fourth and the Fifth Trumpets.

The fourth period (Thyatira) was the era of Papacy's strongest power—the reign of Papacy and the Inquisition. Waldenses were hunted like animals and their cities burned; many fortunate enough to escape fled into the mountains of Switzerland and there laid the basis of the later Reformation movement by Calvin, Zwingli, etc. Others sought refuge in Germany and prepared the way for Luther. Still others went afar into Ireland, where they suffered terrible persecutions.

During this fourth period, then, the true Church had been driven into the wilderness, fleeing on the wings of a "flying" *eagle* (Rev. 12:14). The ever active Word supported and fed the true Church with devotional and doctrinal information during

18. The complete schism between East and West, between the Roman and the Greek Church, took place in A.D. 1054. (William and Robert Chambers, *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* [Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1890], Vol. 5, p. 396. John Fletcher Hurst, *Short History of the Christian Church* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893], p. 145.)

this experience (Exod. 19:4). Concerning the Hebrews of old, a type of spiritual Israel, God “found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him” (Deut. 32:10–12). It should come as no surprise that the same eagle which betokens peace to the Lord’s disciples should, in pantomime, return to direct stern prophetic admonition towards the persecutors of this favored class. Yet three more woes, *of greater severity*, must be inflicted under the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Trumpets.

The calamities that occurred under the first four trumpets were viewed as afflictions endured by a steadily rising clerical power from a position of ever increasing strength, whereas the next three trumpets contain more pronounced premonitions of coming doom and judgment. The declaration of *coming woes* reveals that the trumpets are dispensational and progressive. There are usually two extremes in religious interpretations of the Apocalypse. Some put everything future; others explain everything as historical, as occurring in the past. Verse 13 shows that, at that point in time, four trumpets had already sounded and three were yet future; hence the trumpets sound one after the other.

The message content of the first four trumpets is brief, although their prophetic fulfillment was very important to whomsoever they applied at the time. The very fact the Lord furnishes more detail about the last three trumpets points to their added significance.

The mention of “the *other voices* of the trumpet of the three angels,” yet to come, differs from the characteristic statement of the prior four trumpets that an “angel sounded [a trumpet].” Now the trumpets are shown to be “voices,” or *messages*, rather than mere musical soundings or dirges. Many understand the happenings under the various trumpets to be physical phenomena or events, but the Book of Revelation is symbolic. The “voices” and the “trumpets” can sometimes be thought of as synonymous terms. John the Baptist was “the *voice* of one crying in the wilderness” (Matt. 3:3). The Apostle Paul, endeavoring to encourage Christian maturity and leadership in others, states, “For if the *trumpet* give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”—that is, “Who shall fight the good fight of faith?” (1 Cor. 14:8). The trumpet sound is the message from the Word of God as proclaimed by the Christian. This same basic thought and use of terminology is employed in a dispensational sense by the Revelator.

Revelation Chapter 9

The Fifth Trumpet (A.D. 1367–1517)

Verse 1:

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.

Here another *prominent* star falls from the ranks of traditionalism. The descent of Wycliffe from heaven bears striking similarity to the fate of the third messenger to the Church, Arius. Papacy considered Wycliffe, the fifth angel, a heretic. He, like Arius, was likened by papists to a demon under satanic influence. Formerly esteemed in the nominal heaven, he fell, in their eyes, to such depths that he now was welcomed in the ranks of the Enemy, rewarded with the key to the city of infernal darkness, and made custodian of its bottomless pit. This view was given great prominence and notoriety by the poet Dante, who had been condemned to be burned alive by Pope Boniface VIII. Dante's work *Divina Commedia* (*Divine Comedy*) featured Hell (the *Inferno*) as that most awful place in the center of the earth.

Verse 2:

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.

"Hell hath enlarged herself," the Prophet declares (Isa. 5:14). Death greeteth all who enter its chambers. With room to spare, the yawning portals of the grave can ever accommodate the living (past, present, or future) despite any population explosion. For this reason, the abyss whence the smoke arose is likened to the "bottomless pit" (verse 1). It has been erroneously fantasized in the past that Satan, the prince of demons, resides in this nether realm beneath the earth amidst fiery furnace flames and surrounding blackness. Therefore, the vision is presented from this common conceptualized viewpoint.

The picture under the Fifth Trumpet is as it appeared in the eyes of ardent Catholics. The papal hierarchy viewed the emission of acrid and potent smoke from the pit with grave concern, for it darkened the sun (diminished the prestige of the papal office) and clouded the religious atmosphere with noxious vapors (resulted in a growing disgust by the populace for the abuses of clerical authority). The smoke also indicates the confusion, anxiety, and chagrin experienced by the orthodox clergy and its laity because of the exposure, by the searching rays of truth, of the fallacy of many of its time-honored and revered doctrines based upon the traditions of men (Matt. 15:1–9; Mark 7:1–13).

Papal bulls were issued against Wycliffe, but his fall from ecclesiastical favor merely resulted in the redirection of his energies more toward the enlightenment of

the populace.¹ Formerly his doctrinal treatises were addressed chiefly to the learned—often in Latin. The nominal Church saw Wycliffe’s unlocking of the pit much in the same light as the opening of Pandora’s fabled hope chest: nothing but trouble came out.² The reformer’s teachings, which were considered heretical, spread out in the land, disturbing and discomfiting the whole society.

Verse 3:

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.

There is the well-known saying “where there is smoke, there is fire.” The conflagration implied in verse 3 would be the doctrinal controversy aroused by the faithful exponents of truth in that era. The smoke that ensued, as a result of the sounding of the Fifth Trumpet message, was a most distressing spiritual irritant to the eyes and nostrils of the apostate clergy, who were confused and perplexed as to how to remedy the situation.

The locusts symbolize those who espoused and advocated to others the doctrines associated with Wycliffe. From time immemorial, locusts³ have been known for their cloudlike invasion of the land in countless numbers. They are subsequently represented in this vision as directed in their flight and march by God (verse 4) and used in the chastisement of the guilty (cf. Deut. 28:38–42).

“Wycliffe’s criticism of the established clergy and of the accepted doctrines had hitherto been mainly confined to the schools [the learned school men—editor]; he

1. An adversarial viewpoint: “Master John Wycliffe . . . by translating the gospel into English has laid it more open to the laity, and to women who can read, than it was formerly to the most learned of the clergy, even to those of them who had the best understanding. And in this way the gospel pearl is cast abroad and trodden under foot of swine; and that which was before precious to both clergy and laity is rendered, as it were, the common subject of both. The jewel of the Church is turned into the sport of the people; and that which was hitherto the principal gift of the clergy and divines is made forever common to the people.” (John Laird Wilson, *John Wycliffe, Patriot and Reformer* [New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884], p. 213.)

“It was unlikely that a doctrine so convenient to the secular authorities should long have remained a mere subject of obscure debate in the schools; as it was, it was advertised abroad by the indiscreet zeal of its orthodox opponents, and Wycliffe could declare that it was not his fault if it had been brought down into the streets and ‘every sparrow twittered about it.’” (*The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. [Cambridge: University Press, 1911], Vol. 28, p. 867.)

2. According to Greek mythology, Pandora was the first woman on earth. In her hands the immortals placed a casket, which she was forbidden to open. Overcome one day by curiosity to know what the vessel contained, she lifted the cover and looked in. Forthwith there escaped every form of human ill, which spread abroad throughout the earth.

3. The locust has four wings and varies in size up to five inches. Having six legs, it walks on four, while the hindmost pair, much longer than the others—of body length—it uses for leaping (Lev. 11:21,22). The Mideast locust is akin to the American grasshopper but is much larger and far more vigorous.

Nine different Hebrew words in the Old Testament are given for insects of this kind. Some names indicate varied species; others designate various stages in their development. Sometimes the insects appear as wingless *larvae* (creeping caterpillars), or as *pupae* (an intermediate stage of growth), or as adults. From the first they are excessively voracious and, legion upon legion, they ultimately denude the landscape of all greenery. Often, by stress of hunger, they even devour one another. Excessive multiplication of the flying insects forces them to migrate in great swarms, which have been traced over a stretch of country several hundred miles in length and are dense enough in places to obscure the light of the sun.

(cont.)

now determined to carry it down into the streets. For this purpose he chose two means, both based on the thesis which he had long maintained as to the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures as the great charter of the Christian religion. The first was his institution of the ‘poor’ or ‘simple’ priests to teach his doctrines throughout the country; the second was his translation of the Vulgate into English, which he accomplished with the aid of his friends Nicholas Hereford and John Purvey.”⁴

In prior periods the proclamation of the gospel and the work of evangelization were largely accomplished through the ministry of preaching in public forums, communal meeting places, houses of worship, and open fields. The Wycliffe “poor priests” and others sympathetic to the movement continued to employ these same methods of instruction, but to this work was added a new feature. Instead of preaching the message to those who perchance might hear (i.e., to passersby), they brought the message to the people. The Lollards distributed tracts and leaflets *from house to house, from door to door*. It is true that the Catholic Mendicant friars had also, for some time, gone throughout the countryside in a somewhat similar fashion. However, the procedure was followed in an indolent, self-serving, self-indulgent manner; and the friars often lingered, where profitable, for a considerable period.

The “poor priests” were well tutored and organized to perform their task diligently and methodically—and with such alacrity that a mere handful of these conscientious missionaries could so effectually canvas the villages and hamlets of the land as to leave the impression that great numbers of Lollards were engaged in such activity. The clergy loyal to Rome were astonished at this new development and the rapid spread of the “locust” doctrine, its potency in the vision thus being likened to the sting of the scorpion.⁵

The following description, based upon the observation of a contemporary, is of interest. “Clad in russet⁶ robes of undressed wool, without sandals, purse, or scrip, a long staff in their hand, dependent for food and shelter on the goodwill of their

“When they light upon the ground, they cover it over completely. They then march forward, in regular order, toward the north, passing in a straight line over everything that comes in the way, devouring the whole herbage of the field and stripping every tree of its leaves and tender bark. Nothing can stop them: ditches may be dug, but they are directly filled up with their bodies; fires may be kindled, but they move right into them, and by their numbers soon put them out, with little loss to their huge army.” (John W. Nevin, *A Summary of Biblical Antiquities* [Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1849], pp. 56–57.)

4. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., Vol. 28, pp. 868–869.

5. Scorpions range from one to eight inches in length. They are a near relative of spiders, but on account of their claws, they bear a resemblance more to miniature lobsters or crawfish in form, having an abdomen ending in a long, jointed, slender tail. Virulent fluid is stored not in proximity to their jaws but in the last joint of the tail, which is the swollen venom gland. This gland is armed with a hard, sharp, curved, and perforated needle, by which the poison is discharged.

Scorpions come out at night and are quick and active. They move along in a constantly threatening attitude with their tails elevated and curved over their backs. When a scorpion has clutched a prey in its great powerful claws, it further extends its tail over its own head and plunges the paralyzing stinger into the helpless creature.

6. *Russet*: “1. Reddish brown, or (with some) reddish gray; also, yellowish brown. . . . 3. Made of coarse cloth of a dull reddish brown color; hence, coarse; homespun; rustic.” (*Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language* [Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1927], p. 1861.)

neighbours, their only possession a few pages of Wyclif's [*sic*] Bible, his tracts and sermons, moving constantly from place to place, . . . [they were] 'wolves in sheep's clothing,' as Courtenay called them. . . ."⁷

It is just possible that some indeed thought of the Lollards as locusts going from household to household. In such garments and in their walk, aided by the movement of the long pole in hand, they might, by a stretch of the imagination, have resembled the sidewise view of the enormous hind legs of the grasshopper.

Verse 4:

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.

The righteous element is pictured as having life: the grass, green things, and the trees. The locusts' being commanded not to attack any such foliage is an extraordinary circumstance—contrary to the most basic instincts of these creatures. This interdiction implies not only that it came from the Divine Ruler of all nature, but that the reader is intentionally being alerted lest the phenomenon be overlooked. This mandate is a most important clue to the interpretation of happenings under the Fifth Trumpet; namely, that matters are being presented *opposite from the normal scriptural viewpoint*—not as seen in their true light, but as viewed in the eyes of orthodoxy. The strange anomaly put forth in the vision therefore strengthens the significance that the symbolic smoke and insects bothered only *counterfeit* Christians, those having false credentials, those who had not "the seal of God in their foreheads." It also confirms the observation that the smoke and the insects of verses 2 and 3 darkened the *nominal* heavens.

The question might be put forth: Why, in the case of the first four trumpets, was the element that *had* life affected . . . whereas, in the instance of the Fifth Trumpet, the condition is the opposite—the element with life is *not* affected? First, it should be carefully noted that God's anointed priests, particularly the special messengers to the Church, were responsible for the various soundings. The truth was the causative factor that produced the results recorded in each scenario. When the four prior trumpets were blown, those who embraced the truth "died" to their former beliefs and condition, which then became completely unacceptable and utterly distasteful to them (Rev. 8:11). These earlier visions consistently present the matter from the *orthodox* viewpoint; with alarm the leaders of orthodoxy observed great inroads being made into their membership, depriving the Church of some of the most loyal supporters. But now, in the fifth era, a new condition arises. Whereas, previously, circumstances were seen in a somewhat detached stance, orthodoxy now is more

The color of locusts is generally brown, their underparts bordering on yellowish green. The female locust, which is prized for eating, is *reddish*. A Mr. Morier says he beheld "whole swarms of them falling about us. These were of a red color." Dr. Shaw remarks, "Those which I saw were much bigger than our common grasshoppers and had brown spotted wings, with legs and bodies of a bright yellow." (*A Dictionary of the Holy Bible* [New York: American Tract Society, 1859], p. 264.)

7. Herbert B. Workman, *The Dawn of the Reformation, The Age of Wyclif* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1901), Vol. 1, p. 209.

inextricably involved, having to confront directly, despite an indisposition, the issues brought to light—*vis-à-vis*. It was and is the *same* truth that to one class is a life-giving fragrance and to others a stench of death.

Verse 5:

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.

Verse 6:

And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

The torment of the scorpion⁸ lasted for five symbolic lunar months, that is, for 150 years (5 × 30 = 150 days, each day representing a year—Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6). The Wycliffite message and the resultant plague persisted throughout this interim. Of course, the fifth messenger did not live for that length of time, but the doctrines he and his coworkers espoused endured until Luther, the sixth angel and next reformer, appeared on the scene. Hence the “five months” refer to a distinct period of time, the era of the fifth angel (A.D. 1367–1517): 150 years.

The unconsecrated but hypocritical “Christians” were specially distressed by the locust infestation. This message was not merely a constant source of irritation and annoyance but indeed a cause of torture because of the questions raised repeatedly by those who based their belief on the Word of God. Yet those steeped in orthodoxy need not have been subject to such torment. Had they bowed their hearts in submission to the instruction of Scripture, had they sincerely come to Jesus as their personal Saviour, seeking forgiveness for their sins and, additionally, presenting themselves as free, voluntary offerings to do God’s will even as “it is written,” they would have been granted immunity to the suffering described by John the Revelator (Heb. 10:7).

While a goodly number of the populace were intermittently sympathetic to the message of that era because of clerical abuses, the doctrinal contradictions of the established Church, and the Church’s intolerance, yet few indeed were willing to pay the cost of suffering and shame that characterized true discipleship or any identification with Lollardism.

In the next age obedience will be made mandatory. Psalm 45:5 mentions how, in the Kingdom, Messiah’s sharp arrows of truth will pierce the hearts of God’s enemies, causing them to “fall under”—i.e., they will cease to be God’s foes (1 Cor. 15:24–28; Phil. 2:10; Acts 3:23).

Verse 7:

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.

8. The effect of the poison on human beings occasions extreme pain and continued suffering, collapse, and, in the case of those of weak constitution or where the afflicted part is left unattended—that is, where the wound is not scarred and the poison sucked out—even death.

The head of the locust, with its long face and prominent eyes, is proverbially likened to a horse's head, possessing strangely similar physiognomical features. These insects are called by the Italians "little horses" and by the Germans "hay horses."

The scene brought to the attention of the reader was a notable practice in days of yore. Strict attention was given to the positioning and alignment of horses in preparation for assault into battle. The horses had been previously trained for warfare from the standpoint of (a) adroitness, agility, and fleetness of foot; and/or (b) their brute strength, for they carried massive protective gear and were more or less flesh-and-blood armored tanks. Cavalry charges were known to cut a wide swath in the enemy's ranks. The lesson, therefore, appears to be this: When the message of truth came to a particular area, the religious leaders heard rumors of it in advance and became alarmed. Thus the *reputation* of the truth, based upon past instances, preceded the actual arrival of the doctrine in a new locale . . . as if the invading army had reached the suburbs of a given parish. From the nominal Christians' viewpoint, particularly the leaders, the spiritual locusts were seen as a plague, as horses coming to battle. The message bearers were well *organized* and advancing toward them. Properly trained horses do not falter in the battle charge, and neither did these exponents of truth.⁹

It is essential to note that under the sounding of this trumpet the locust-horses are *riderless*—there are no horsemen. Each locust itself represents an individual loyal follower of the Master. It is the locust that wears a crown and has a human face; an unseen rider is *not* implied. The locust is a truth bearer.

A person having little or no formal education but possessing a knowledge of the Word of God—particularly a familiarity with the New Testament gospel—could fearlessly confront the cleric in a doctrinal disputation with a "thus saith the LORD" or an "it is written" excerpt of Holy Writ. The priesthood had difficulty responding, being fettered with false doctrinal bias as well as an unwillingness to blatantly deny what was in the Bible. Because the Lollards could back up their teachings by the kingly authority of the Divine Word, they are represented as wearing golden¹⁰ crowns (Acts 4:13).

The next characteristic of the locusts to be considered is their "faces of men." The face of a man is a symbol of love (Rev. 4:7; Ezek. 1:10). It represents one having a heart of flesh in contrast to a heart of stone, a capability to be touched with feeling for the infirmities of others seeking forgiveness and retrieval. Conversely, the traditional Church had a "face of terror," such as in teaching its adherents the necessity of Masses for the dead and the payment of sums of money to shorten the period of their departed loved ones in Purgatory. Papacy also believed in a God of eternal hellfire. "Heretics" were handed over to Satan to suffer an *eternity of torture* for what were deemed unpardonable sins committed in the present short life. On the other hand, the message of the gospel bespeaks love, mercy, and compassion toward those manifesting true repentance and reformation.

9. See Appendix 7, "Jehovah's Description of the Horse," pages 641–642.

10. Gold is a symbol of things pertaining to Divinity (Exod. 25:17,31; Rev. 3:18; 21:18).

Verse 8:

And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

The hair of a woman, symbolizing beauty, is her glory (1 Cor. 11:15). In like manner, the truth was and still is *attractive* to those drawn to it, but traditionalists consider the truth in a different light—as *dangerously seductive*. The Wycliffite colporteurs were nicknamed “singers” by their opponents. Their reasoning upon the Scriptures and the issues of that day seemed so plausible that the established Church warned parishioners to be wary lest they be lulled to sleep by the musical charm of the Wycliffite message.

The lion, swift of foot but for only a short distance, capitalizes on another asset it is endowed with by nature. It bellows forth a deep and frightening sound. With this roar the lion momentarily paralyzes its prey; it then takes advantage of the mini-second hesitation for decision to pounce upon its victim. Unpleasant as the sight of a vulture devouring a carcass is, how much more terrible it is to witness a lion, with its massive jaws and powerful teeth, ripping apart a young deer or fawn, eating the flesh, and scrunching the bones. The lesson is that not only were the statements of the reformers (a) authoritative (*the crown of gold*), (b) compassionate (*the face of a man*), and (c) attractive (*the hair of a woman*), but also (d) their oral pronouncements had “bite” to them (*the teeth of a lion*).¹¹

Verse 9:

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.

Breastplates are a protective covering used to shield the heart, the liver, and other vital organs from mortal injury. The iron additive intensifies the symbolism of that which is *inflexible* and unyielding (Dan. 2:40). In the next age Christ is to rule with a “rod of iron” (Psa. 2:9) that will not bend one way or the other but will be applied exactly as he sees fit. The use of the iron—that is, its linkage with a breastplate in this setting of verse 9—suggests an *impenetrable defense*. From an adversarial standpoint, others would like to designate the iron breastplate as a form of obstinacy (Isa. 48:4).

Here the “wings”¹² call attention to movement and the mode of locomotion or travel, showing the *activity* of the truth and its messengers throughout the land. The hierarchy received many circulating reports and heard rumors of much commotion taking place. To them the reports and rumors seemed like the sound of a mighty

11. Locusts have large heads and formidable mouth-organs. Because their teeth are edged like saws, these insects, when they enter dwellings, can gnaw leather and even chew woodwork (Exod. 10:5,6; Joel 2:9). Trees barked by them look white (Joel 1:4,7). Cornfields, in a few hours, are reduced to bare stalks or stumps. When locusts are feeding, their powerful and ceaselessly moving jaws make a sound comparable to a spreading flame or to the crackling of burning stubble.

12. The flight of locusts has been described as slow and uniform. Yet the fearful din of activity within the swarm and the noise of their distant approach may be heard up to six miles. The locusts come “thick as snowflakes,” and darkening the sky in “myriads numberless.” Travelers liken the sound of the rushing wings to that of a cataract or a broad river with rapids.

host, with many horses and chariots already engaged in successful warfare, approaching ever nearer to extend their conquests.

Verse 10:

And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

Why are scorpion tails introduced into this scene? A clue is furnished in the Old Testament:

The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. (Isa. 9:15)

This Scripture alludes to conditions prior to the First Advent of Messiah. The Ancient Worthies and the faithful prophets of old were “the head,” “the ancient and honourable”; but those who later usurped their authority and office were the false prophets and teachers represented by “the tail,” which, in turn, also suggests a later development and *progression in time*. The exclusive favor of (a) the people of Israel who were led astray, (b) the assumed false leadership, and (c) even the special identification of the nation of Israel with the former faithful fathers—all these ties were severed, that is, removed from that nation with respect to the spiritual promises (Rom. 11:7,11–15). A similar situation arose during this gospel era, beginning with Jesus and the twelve apostles, “the head,” “the ancient and honourable.” In spite of scriptural admonition to the contrary, their office was usurped and taken over (Matt. 11:12) by an apostate Church, “the tail,” “the prophet that teacheth lies,” under the false pretext of “apostolic succession” (Rev. 2:2; 21:14).

Again, it is necessary to consider the scene from the perspective of the Establishment, from Papacy’s view of the head/tail sequence and misapplication of its significance. Wycliffe and his associates were looked upon as the primary culprits (“the head,” i.e., boldly assertive, charmingly deceptive, coquettishly attractive, but satanically seeking to devour—verses 7 and 8) responsible for the defection of people from the ranks of orthodoxy and, worse yet, for the ills and discomfort of the church hierarchy . . . for the Lollards were diligent and tenacious in seeking the redress and reform of the professed Church of Christ.

If the foregoing trend of thought is pursued, the meaning of the vision is furthered, the explanation being somewhat as follows: Papacy looked upon “the head” —that is, the original onslaught and inundation of truth into their domain during the era of the Fifth Trumpet—as a most dreadful circumstance. Yet they considered the aftereffects, “the tail,” of this message to be even more disastrous in that if not contained, it possessed a potential for still further incalculable destruction to the entire structure of the traditional Church. The death of Wycliffe the reformer did not rid their land of the pestilence as anticipated. The truth proved to be not just a momentary scourge, for it had a most distressing lasting effect upon them. The light of truth could not be expunged. It persisted for 150 years despite Papacy’s most strenuous efforts to obliterate it. Calling attention a second time to the mysterious “five months” (cf. verses 5 and 10) emphasizes the importance of this time period as a key to the correct interpretation of the vision and its location on the stream of time and its placement in history.

Verse 11:

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.

The leader of the locust swarm is identical to the star seen falling from heaven in verse 1, the one who opened the bottomless pit. The star was an “angel” and, by inference, none other than the Fifth Trumpet blower. Wycliffe was seen in a most unfavorable light by his opponents, being indeed, as it were, a carbon copy of Satan himself. “Abaddon” in the Hebrew and “Apollyon” in the Greek tongue both signify a *destroyer*.

In Scripture “we” and “us” are frequently contrasted with “they” and “them.” The expressions “they” and “them” pertain to professed Christians, who are not specially recognized by the Lord. One should note that in the Apocalypse itself, already two precedents have occurred, and therefore the reference to Satan should not be thought too strange. Daniel 2:43 speaks of the “they” class as those who “shall mingle themselves with the seed of men.”

1. Revelation 2:24 states, “But unto you I say, and [even] unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have *not* this doctrine, and which have *not* known the depths of Satan, as *they* speak [accuse]; I will put upon you none other burden.” In other words, the Lord was telling faithful Christians, “They [the nominal element] have accused you of knowing the depths of Satan, but I know you are not in sympathy with the doctrine of the Adversary.” Thus the false element considered themselves as among the faithful, and they viewed those who were actually loyal to God as emissaries of the Devil.

2. Revelation 3:9 is similar: “Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews [that is, Christians in good standing, or in covenant relationship with the Lord], and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” The “they” class claimed to be “Jews,” but the Lord said they were of “Satan.” And conversely, *they* accused the true Church of being associated with Satan, but the Lord knew otherwise.

Review: This very principle of *opposite expression* has served to lock the Book of Revelation all down through the age. For example, if a person thought the locusts represented doctrinal error or evil-practicing individuals (such as the followers of Mohammed), the entire message became distorted. For the locust plague to represent those advocating *truth*, a radical, exact-opposite viewpoint has to be taken.

The locusts acted contrary to nature: (a) they were commanded not to eat any green thing (verse 4); (b) they had a king or leader.¹³ With the blowing of *every* trumpet, the message sounded was truth. The green or righteous element was affected during the first four trumpets, and now during the sounding of the Fifth Trumpet, Papacy is seen to be the afflicted one. While such a conclusion is certainly true,

13. In nature locusts march in organized ranks, but they have no leader: “The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands” (Prov. 30:27). The fact that Revelation 9:11 states the opposite is significant. It alerts the reader to the perspective in which the vision is to be seen—that it is also *contrary to normal expectations*.

as far as it goes, yet this too hasty appraisal does not satisfactorily present the matter in its entirety.

The righteous element in the former soundings willingly died or succumbed to the truth; yet it should be kept in mind that *all* the trumpets are slanted not from the true Christian outlook, but from the standpoint of the “they” class. The death of the former righteous class represents the chagrin and disappointment of the “they” class in what they saw to be a loss from amidst their own ranks. The Fifth Trumpet also represents affliction coming upon them; the only difference now was that they saw themselves being victimized in a more personal sense . . . as being ferreted out for torment. They would not appreciate or even be aware of the commandment concerning those “which have not the seal of God in their foreheads” (verse 4). When the truth reaches an individual, it pricks his conscience, stirring him up to a knowledge of good and evil. If he does not obey that prompting and yield to the truth, his conscience (if not seared) will disturb him. The truth will be a constant source of friction, and he will want to get away from it. Therefore, if the unrighteous class had accepted the message and died to their former condition and to the spirit of the world, their torment would have ceased.

Verse 12:

One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

On the surface this verse seems like a mere statement of fact, but it is important, for it verifies that the Book of Revelation is to be interpreted dispensationally or historically. The statement “one woe is past” indicates time progression. Many are inclined to emphasize that because the same words appear after each message to the seven churches (“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto [all] the churches”), the different messages have a general application and are not specially time-related. Verse 12 most explicitly indicates that something yet future was to happen—one prophetic event had already occurred and two more were yet to come. Hence it is demonstrated that the fifth angel was followed by the sixth and seventh angels. In other words, the trumpets are not blown simultaneously, but in consecutive order, down through the Gospel Age. The Fifth Trumpet (or Wycliffe message) was the first in a series of three final woes; it is like saying, “One, two . . . three!”—that is, the third woe would be a fitting climax.

The Sixth Trumpet (A.D. 1517–1877)

Verse 13:

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

John the Revelator states that he “heard a [single] voice from [the four horns of] ¹⁴the golden altar which is before God.” The instruction given to the sixth angel originates in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle of God, and goes forth from His

14. The words “the four horns of” are excluded in the main body of the Codex Sinaiticus; yet they are found as a marginal addition squeezed between the second and third columns of the text. Since the codex itself is either (a) a copy of another contemporary edition or (b) more likely a still

presence, but is revealed only in the Holy *by intercom*, as it were, as though heard through a multiple loudspeaker system—namely, *the horns* of the golden altar, which stood before the Veil—to be understood by those seated with Christ in heavenly places. The sound heard through the horns does not signify four different voices but a *solitary* voice (Phillips Modern English version).

Verse 14:

Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, . . .

This is another indication that all seven trumpet-bearing angels were God-directed holy messengers, and that the truth, not error, was responsible for the effects produced by their ministry. Further examination will indeed reveal that during the God-directed blowing of the Sixth Trumpet, the second “woe” transpired. The sixth angel was Martin Luther.

. . . Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

The expression “*in the great river*” is correct. When coupled with the dative case, the Greek *epi* is properly translated by the English preposition “in.” The river Euphrates generally signifies mankind. Its use in the Apocalypse is modified to mean that world communion of believers which supports the Roman *Catholic* Church, the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters (Rev. 17:1).

The four angels of Revelation 7:1 are God’s agencies or power holding back an evil wind.¹⁵ But here, in verse 14, the portrayal is the opposite: the loosing of a favorable circumstance. The loosing of the four angels corresponds to the Lord’s setting before Luther and his associates the “open door” mentioned in the sixth message, namely, the message to the Church of Philadelphia. A corrupt system, the Euphrates, is represented in pantomime as seemingly frustrating the divine purpose—the four angels and their work. Of course God’s plan must and will prevail, for in reality it is but His *permission* of the evil that allows Satan to buffet and test the saints for their ultimate good.

There seems to be a definite co-relationship between the *four horns* of the altar and the *four angels* bound in the great river. The four horns of the altar represent the power of God (sent into all the world of Christendom) that is unto salvation to those in the Holy condition. The ministrations of the four angels bound in the Euphrates does not indicate four different varieties or agencies of operation but,

earlier document, it appears that an entire line was overlooked in transcribing the renowned codex, and that the words in question were added to amend this oversight. The hand of the corrector could very well have been that of the original copyist but, if not, that of an early associate.

There are other writings of similar age as well as some more ancient than the Sinaitic MS, such as the Coptic Version *sa* (third century), Papyrus 47 (third century), the Miniscule Uncial 0207 (fourth century), and the later Alexandrian Manuscript (fifth century). These contain the clause in question and refer to the “horns” in a similar or slightly altered fashion. The Armenian Version (fourth century) renders the bracketed phrase as follows: “from the *four beasts*, those being in the presence of God’s altar.” The latter, though it differs widely from the King James Authorized Version, is in strange harmony with the thrust and practical interpretation of the vision.

15. See pages 187–188.

rather, completeness of coverage and action toward the worldwide fulfillment of a foreordained purpose.

In like manner, just as the two angels, or cherubim, on the lid of the Ark of Testimony¹⁶ are restrained from the accomplishment of their purpose until God's due time for action, so the four angels bound in antitypical Babylon were held in check by that system. The Bible, too, was shackled, being locked in the dead language of the Latin Vulgate. Those advocating the distribution of its message were persecuted and prohibited from doing so.

Verse 15:

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.

It is not necessary to interpret the time feature in a symbolic manner, for the attention of the reader is called not to a period of time but to a *specific point* on the stream of history. A precise moment had been predetermined by the Creator long before the great Reformation process commenced in earnest. The dramatic action that marked this beginning occurred when Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany, on the Feast of All Saints, October 31, 1517. This incident corresponds to Christ's opening of the door (Rev. 3:7,8) for the sixth messenger to the Church. All effort would have been to no avail without the Lord's assisting grace.

Thus the four angels, or forces of destiny, were locked within the Establishment, but were positioned and alert for action when once the hour of God's prophetic time clock would strike. The effect of their ministry was similar to what happened during previous trumpets. "The third part of men" (the righteous element) was slain. Luther's message did not merely affect Germany—it reverberated throughout all Christendom, extending, as it were, to the four quarters of the earth in obedience to the direction of "the four horns of the golden altar" and the instruction given to "the four angels."

Verse 16:

And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

16. Beyond the Veil in the Most Holy, there was but one piece of furniture—the Ark. It was a rectangular box of wood overlaid with gold, having a lid of pure gold called the Propitiatory or Mercy Seat, upon which the blood of atonement was sprinkled. On the two ends of its slab cover of solid gold, and made of the same piece of metal, were two cherubim with wings uplifted as if ready to fly. Their faces looked inward and downward toward the center of the plate on which they were affixed. These two angels represent two elements of Jehovah's character, viz., divine Love and divine Power. They were postured in a stance similar to that of runners at the start of a foot race, and with wings positioned to fly at a moment's notice . . . waiting for the blood of atonement to be applied the second time (Lev. 16:14,15). Thus, in a figure, Love and Power are eager and ready to swiftly wing their flight to bless the human race as soon as the age of sacrifice is complete. However, they cannot go on their errand of mercy until Justice has been fully satisfied. The two angels, in part therefore, represent the eternal purpose of God—His foreordained arrangement of riches of grace for mankind in The Christ (head and body members), the "mystery" hidden for ages (Col. 1:27).

The horses (cf. verse 17) represent the doctrines characterizing the Protestant Reformation. The horsemen indicate those sympathetic to the cause Luther championed. They were a mixed multitude of more or less righteously disposed individuals consisting of a “host” (of nominal sympathetic believers) and a “sanctuary” (of the Little Flock and the Great Company) class, the sanctuary eventually being separated from the host at the end of the 2,300 days (or years, viz., A.D. 1846) prophesied by Daniel (8:13,14).¹⁷ Even some of the princes and leaders of the land gave their support to the reform movement, which they perceived to be a revolt not only against religious tyranny but against political oppression as well. Thus two classes of reformers were brought into sympathy and cooperation with each other. The chief impetus behind the riders in the vision was a minority composed of those who had wholeheartedly dedicated their lives to the teachings and example of Christ . . . of those who symbolically and often literally were “slain” for the testimony of Jesus. Many others clung with “flatteries” (Dan. 11:34) to those who espoused Protestant doctrines in this deeper sense. Luther’s sermons were appreciated because they were down-to-earth, blunt, to the point, and without frills, and because they covered a wide range of subjects, some of which were of much practical benefit.

Historical Review

Two prophecies in Daniel provide a historical review:

And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall [because of their faithfulness] by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days [prior to and following Luther’s time].

Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help [such as the open door of the Reformation]: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

And some of them of understanding [verse 33] shall fall [from divine favor], to try them [the faithful], and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end [A.D. 1799 and onward]: because it is yet for a time appointed [until A.D. 1878—see page 174 regarding Rev. 6:11].¹⁸ (Dan. 11:33–35)

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up [A.D. 539], there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days [A.D. 1829].

17. The cleansing work in a measure would be finished in 1846, the 2,300 days thus terminating somewhere in the period called “the time of the end.” (See *Thy Kingdom Come, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. [East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1890], Ser. 3, pp. 95–120.)

18. *The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1889), Ser. 2, pp. 356–357; *Thy Kingdom Come, Studies in the Scriptures*, pp. 37–39, 48.

Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days [A.D. 1874].

But go thou thy way till the end [of the age] be: for thou [Daniel] shalt rest [in the tomb], and stand in thy lot at the end of the days [1998(?)].¹⁹ (Dan. 12:10–13)

Number of Horsemen

As previously explained, the immense number of horsemen (verse 16)—namely, 200 million strong (“two myriads of myriads,” *Diaglott*)—did not consist only of those who had dedicated their lives to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. The Apostle John, in witnessing the vision, could not possibly have made this count by himself, and therefore, he was provided with that information in some manner: he “heard the number of them.” This gigantic army was composed of not merely the generation contemporary with Luther, but included those considered as Protestants throughout approximately four centuries from the year 1517 up to the initial sounding of the Seventh Trumpet in 1878.

To Catholics, the new turn of events during the Sixth Trumpet era was neither the development of a splinter movement nor an exaggerated figment of their imagination, but a *certified large following* of unmistakable proportion. From their standpoint little distinction would be made between a “sanctuary” and a “host” class—it was simply a frightening army of opposition!

Verse 17:

And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: . . .

Both the horses and the riders had breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone. Together, they appeared very formidable to the enemy. The sole authorized(?) Church viewed the reformers and their doctrine with terror, and regarded the intrusion into their domain as that of a conquering or invading army.²⁰ These breastplates were not filled with jewels like the one worn by Israel’s high priest. Their use in this portrayal is that of defensive armor, but possessing three outstanding characteristics. There are two possible explanations: (1) Some of the breastplates were of fire, some of jacinth, and some of brimstone. (2) Each breastplate possessed, in some manner, all three qualities. The latter explanation appears more proper. Of the three characteristics, only the jacinth would have *solidity*, whereas the fire and brimstone are *gaseous* in their application. Therefore, the breastplates were

19. *Thy Kingdom Come, Studies in the Scriptures*, pp. 82–84.

20. The question naturally arises: How can the rider of the horses in Revelation 6:2,4,5,8 represent *Antichrist* when the horsemen of the Sixth Trumpet picture those inclined unto *righteousness*? First, as previously demonstrated, it should be noted that the rider of the white, the red, the black, and then the pale horse is directly related to the *breaking of the* (first four) *seals*; whereas the locust-horses prepared unto battle and the army of horsemen and horses appeared in connection with the *blowing of the* (fifth and sixth) *trumpets*. Two different perspectives are brought to the attention of the student of the Word of God. The breaking of the seals is the self-evident portrayal of persecutions and experiences befalling true Christians as seen by themselves (Rev. 6:10). The blowing of the trumpets, on the other hand, is the trouble upon the nominal Church membership in which they see themselves being victimized.

basically fashioned of jacinth stone instead of the customary iron. The other two elements (*plus the gleaming reflective rays of the jewel*) apparently darted forth sporadically from these shields in an awesome manner. Yet it must be remembered that these breastplates were *defensive* armor.

FIRE destroys. Therefore, the breastplates of fire destroyed any error directed against them. The Reformation doctrines were so formidable that enemies of the truth could not make any effective penetration. The shield of faith was able to quench all the fiery darts of the Wicked One (Eph. 6:16). Whatever was thrown against or in the direction of such breastplates was consumed by fire. Though a weapon of defense, these shields possessed a remarkable retaliatory power.

JACINTH (Latin *hyacinthus*) is a transparent, bright-colored variety of zircon of different shades of red, passing into orange and poppy-red. In hardness it exceeds chalcedony and its varieties. The surface luster of some crystals almost rivals that of the diamond. In fact, at one time the jacinth was supposed to be an inferior kind of diamond. Some stones show ill-defined tinges of green, blue, red, and yellow which, if cut as a “brilliant,” reflect a *bewildering array of color*.

BRIMSTONE (sulfur) has a far-reaching influence. This element, with its purgative stench overpowering all other odors, was strongly offensive, spiritually speaking, to the nostrils of Catholic adherents. As far as Papacy was concerned, the truth had the effect of sulfur because the ever present reformers filled the landscape and their doctrine permeated the atmosphere. Sulfur coupled with fire is a traditional emblem of utter destruction upon whomever it falls. Those who advanced in opposition to the truth were repulsed by the fire, the deadly fumes of brimstone, and the glare of jacinth. Papacy could not stand up to the resourcefulness of this shield of defense, but had to retreat. The armor was so remarkable a defense that it was almost a weapon of offense!

. . . and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

These animals, which had the body of a horse and the head of a lion, pictured the *powerful, aggressive nature* of the doctrine brought forth. The emphasis in this representation, instead of being placed upon the lion’s paralyzing roar and rending teeth, focuses upon a still more dreadful feature: the fire, smoke, and brimstone that issued forth “out of *their mouths*.” Thus stress is laid primarily upon the bold doctrines rather than upon the riders.

In 1520 Luther responded to the proclamation that the ninety-five theses which had been nailed to the church door at Wittenberg were heresy. He denounced, in unmeasured terms, the doctrines of transubstantiation and human immortality and the claim of the pope to be “Emperor of the world, king of heaven, and God upon earth,” as “monstrous opinions to be found in the Roman dunghill of decretals.”²¹

With regard to the fire, smoke, and brimstone: Two of these symbols have already been treated, but the smoke remains to be explained. In the first part of verse 17, the *breastplates* of both man and beast are seen to possess “fire,” “*jacinth*,” and “brimstone”; but in the latter portion of the same verse, there are observed to

21. *Thy Kingdom Come, Studies in the Scriptures*, p. 109.

come forth—out of the *mouth of the horses*—“fire,” “smoke,” and “brimstone.” Only the middle characteristic in each instance varies. Of the differing two, the smoke is more amenable to ready interpretation. It obscures, chokes, and confuses the individual enveloped therein. When new questions were directed to the traditional church membership, they could not answer with conviction and clarity—they were rattled by the power of the truth doctrines. Now, with regard to the jacinth of the breastplate, the reader is furnished the indispensable clue that a similarity exists—nay, is intended—between the light reflected from that jewel and the smoke: both are *blinding agents*.

Verse 18:

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.

It was not the fire, smoke, and brimstone springing forth from the breastplate of the horse, or the breastplate of the rider, but that which came out of the *lionlike mouth of the horse* that did the killing. The horsemen were a mixed multitude. Included in their number were those who wholeheartedly embraced the Reformation doctrine, becoming dead to the world and to their past associations but alive to Christ. Thenceforth walking in newness of life, they joined the swelling ranks and became active in the Protestant cause. Such listened to the doctrine as it came “straight from the horse’s mouth.” Harkening to the urgent admonitions and dire warnings directed against the apostate Church, they defected to the invading army. In Catholic eyes these came too close to the foe and thus succumbed to the new doctrine; Papacy regarded them as dead, as slain by the enemy.

In this period of the Sixth Trumpet, there is a notable omission. Neither the horsemen nor the horses wore golden crowns on their heads as did the locusts under the Fifth Trumpet. In the previous era, both rider and horse were comprehended in the single symbolism of the locust. The Lollards were predominantly men of more devotion and spirituality than the mixed multitude of the present invading army.

Prior to Luther’s day a “sanctuary” and a “host” class were both nominally contained within the fold of the one Church, that is, under the dominion of the papal horn and power (see Dan. 8:9–13). However, during the Sixth Trumpet presently being considered, a different situation arose. A major division took place. Now there existed three parts: (a) the sanctuary class, (b) a large portion of the former host class found within the ranks of the reformers, and (c) the remainder of the host class still loyal to the orthodox Church. The “third part of men” slain refers to those named in the first category. It was the sanctuary class, not the host, whereof Daniel prophetically spoke that was to be continually and progressively cleansed. The host, *in either camp*, remained unregenerate.

Verse 19:

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.

The serpent tail inflicted harm, but the lion head brought death. Direct confrontation with the head was soon considered by antagonists to be inadvisable and to be avoided at all cost.

The tail of a horse usually contains numerous strands of long, somewhat wiry hair. The tails in the vision were thicker than normal, resembling a snake with its head presumably at the bottom end of the tail. A free translation of this portion of the text might be rendered in two ways: (a) Each horse had one serpent tail; therefore, the several horses had several tails (one apiece). Or (b) each horse had a cluster of snakes for a tail; therefore, the several horses had several (multi-serpent) tails. The last interpretation is contextually superior.

The lion head of the horse represents early Reformation doctrine, such as that proclaimed by Luther and his contemporary associates.²² The work began as a loud protest against religious tyranny in doctrine and practice. But as time progressed—symbolized by the hind or latter part of the horse with its tail—a notable change took place: That which before had been a single wide breach in the world of Catholicism now became splintered into several other denominational sects, each with its own head or spokesman. The lionlike roar and teeth of the *one* head of each horse were supplanted by the sinister quietness and the softer hissing tongues of a *multitudinous* serpent-headed tail. The lion head of each horse, though an exceedingly dreadful antagonist, was easier to identify and confront face to face than the less outspoken—but more numerous—subtle, evasive, and nonetheless deadly foes later to arise. Thus Papacy viewed the *horse-doctrines* under the Sixth Trumpet.

In this light Papacy has, from time to time, surveyed the progress and the effect of the Reformation. It perceived the difficulty of countering the success of the Reformation and pondered, with perplexity, how to bring the Protestants back within its fold. Could unity be achieved—especially with Christendom fragmented into so many divisions? Ah! the strategy now to be pursued is the policy the Adversary has used most successfully; it is not one of salt and vinegar, but one of sweetness and light—the *false* ecumenical spirit of extending the hand of *reconciliation*.

Verse 20:

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:

Verse 21:

Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

The “rest of the men” were not the “third part” but the *unrighteous* element, or remnant, that was not destroyed. The “third part” was destroyed (verse 18), and the other two parts “repented not” of their misdeeds. It is significant that the damages inflicted by the fire, smoke, and brimstone are called “plagues”; hence plagues can be *doctrines*. Fundamentalists believe the plagues of Revelation are

22. The Sinaitic MS reads: “For the power of the horses is in their mouth” (verse 19).

natural phenomena. In other books of the Bible, this premise is often true, but Revelation is different. These are *spiritual* plagues . . . related to doctrines.

The expression “yet repented not” might better be rendered “did not even repent.” There was not even a minimum of reform, namely, the putting aside of the worship of demons or idols. There are two major categories of evil, the abolition of which is necessary to evidence any degree of sincerity pertaining to repentance:

1. *The work of the hands*: the worship of demons even through idols, such as those sculptured in wood or stone or those made of metals (cast in molds); imagery on medallions of real or fancied saints; icons; scapulars; etc.

2. *The work of the flesh*: committing murders, the use of drugs, ever present fornication, and thefts. To practice any of these in any degree or form—failing to put these sins aside and continuing to excuse or allow them—would be taking the name of the Lord in vain (falsely calling oneself a Christian).

Revelation Chapter 10

Verse 1:

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.

This verse is often associated with the Lord's return at his Second Advent because of the descent "from heaven,"¹ the "cloud," the "rainbow," and the glory feature "his face was as . . . the sun." The "mighty angel" is indeed a representation of none other than the risen Lord Jesus, who in the first chapter of the Apocalypse (1:16) was described as one whose "countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" and whose feet are "like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace" (1:15)—or as "pillars of fire" in the present scene under consideration. However, in Chapter 10 the reader is pointedly reminded that the *seventh* angel, signifying the return of the Redeemer (Matt. 24:45–47), *had not yet sounded* (verse 7); therefore, the vision under scrutiny falls specifically within the time frame of the *Sixth* Trumpet. The third woe, or the Seventh Trumpet, does not appear on the scene until the eleventh chapter (11:14,15).

The previous chapter (Rev. 9:13–21) drew the attention of the reader to historical happenings from the commencement of the Reformation (A.D. 1517) up to the beginning of a period designated in Scripture as "the time of the end" (A.D. 1799).² Chapter 10 proceeds onward from the latter date for the remainder of the Sixth Trumpet period. The ninth chapter presented the viewpoint of the hierarchy, who saw themselves victimized by the trumpet blast, whereas the tenth chapter, in its fulfillment, corresponds with the events described under the Sixth Seal from the French Revolution onward (cf. Rev. 7:1–3). Therefore, the thrust of the vision for the remaining eight decades of the Sixth Trumpet period reverts back to the perspective of the opening of the seals; namely, the experiences that come upon the *true* Church as evidenced by the Christians themselves.

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1. Was it possible for Jesus to come to earth as a spirit being prior to his Second Advent when Acts 3:20,21 states that the heavens must retain him "until the times of restitution of all things"? It is answered, Yes. On the road to Damascus Saul (Paul) saw Jesus as one born prematurely (1 Cor. 15:8; Acts 9:1–9). Although Paul did not see Christ in the sense of the fullness of the divine nature (1 John 3:2), yet even this modified glimpse of the Saviour's glory resulted in blindness. Paul testified in later life that he was not an eyewitness of a dream but of the resurrected Christ himself—"last of all he was seen of me." This incident is one example that Jesus did visit the earth as a spirit being prior to his Second Advent. During the Gospel Age Jesus *resides in heaven*, coming to earth only as rare occasion might demand a specific need. During the Millennium, Christ will *reside in earth's atmosphere* and return to the heavenly courts as oft as he deems fit. In both periods of residency he departs and returns as expediency requires.
 2. The year A.D. 539 + 1,260 symbolic days (cf. Dan. 12:7—3½ 360 = 1,260) = A.D. 1799. The Time of the End, or A.D. 1799–1998(?), is an all-embracing *period of time* covering *several* concluding events of the Gospel Age.

The tenth chapter picks up the thread of history that followed the long persevering persecution of Christians during the Dark Ages when the patience and faith of the true Church were so sorely tried (Dan. 7:21,25). First, the Lord comes as an angel, or *messenger from God*, clothed in a “cloud” with its incipient blessing of refreshment (Psa. 147:8; Prov. 3:20; 16:15) to comfort the oppressed saints. His descent from heaven with a “rainbow” upon his head is a symbol of hope and assurance (Gen. 9:13–16). As the gentle and beautiful rainbow sometimes follows the most violent storm, or as the refreshing showers follow the long drought, so comes the blessed Lord upon the scene.

Verse 2:

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,

In the wake of the French Revolution, which occurred from 1789 to 1799, there sprang up Bible societies dispensing the Word, or water of truth, with accompanying Bible aids and concordances for advancement in the understanding of Scripture. The Prophet Daniel of old was told the vision had to be sealed, or shut up, till “the time of the end” (Dan. 12:4). But now, with the arrival of this time period, and in harmony with the implication of a revealment being due, the angel is seen with an *open* little book in his hand.

The book is in Jesus’ own hand and hence under his control . . . just as the stars were in his hand (Rev. 1:16,20). The book is described as “little” because it is not meant for everybody—only for the John class. In contrast, the whole world will know when the books of Revelation 20:12 are opened up: “And the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life.” But in regard to the little book, “These things . . . are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [age] are come” (1 Cor. 10:11). And again, “None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand” (Dan. 12:10). In the Kingdom, however, the wicked will understand, for everybody will know the Lord’s way at that time (John 5:28,29; 1 Tim. 2:4; Isa. 35:8). The smallness of the book also denotes a *partial* and *progressive* disclosure of prophetic truth—the plan of God.

The placement of the angel’s feet, a symbol of subjection (1 Cor. 15:25), is significant. The stronger right foot was placed upon the sea (the restless masses not under religious restraint); the other foot was planted upon the earth (organized orthodox society). The positioning of the feet clearly implies that if this holding-back authority had not been exercised, the sea would have overwhelmed the earth, precipitating the great Time of Trouble (Luke 21:25; Matt. 24:21,22) *prematurely*.

The time setting of the opening drama in Chapter 10 (A.D. 1799) is definitely parallel to, and contemporary with, the holding back of the four winds of Chapter 7. Satan, “the prince of the power of the air,” was the unseen force in back of the French Revolution, which he contrived to serve his purpose. So critical was the situation that it demanded the personal attention, presence, and mighty power of Christ to initially stop the Revolution in its tracks. Once Jesus stabilized conditions, he then left responsibility for a continued maintenance of order to the charge of other divine agencies, which are symbolized by the four angels holding back the four winds. The angel having the seal back there (Rev. 7:2) is analogous to the

angel holding a book in his hand here (verse 2). The “seal of the living God” and the “little book open” both represent the same source—the Word of God—whence come the dispensational knowledge, the fundamental doctrine, and the Spirit power necessary to seal the saints. The Sixth Seal back there (Rev. 6:12 through 7:3) falls *within* the confines of the Sixth Trumpet here (verses 1 to 11).

Time Periods Represented by Individuals

On the Mount of Transfiguration, the Apostles Peter, James, and John saw, among other things, the principle of a time factor demonstrated (Matt. 17:1–9). Moses and Elijah, in vision, were seen standing on either side of and talking with Jesus in their midst. Moses represented the Law dispensation and the Ancient Worthies developed under it, while Elijah represented the Christian dispensation and the gospel Church developed thereunder. Each of these classes was represented by one individual; yet two ages were involved: the Gospel Age and the prior Jewish Age. In other words, each of the personages standing beside Jesus represented a time period; those who lived prior to Christ *looked forward to his coming* at the First Advent (Heb. 11:24–26), and Christians all down through the Gospel Age have *looked back to the Cross* and Jesus as the founder of their faith.

There is a relationship between Daniel 12:5–7 and the subject under consideration. In Revelation 10:2 the angel is seen standing with one foot on the sea and the other upon the earth; likewise in Daniel, one person is seen standing on one side of the river and another person on the other side. *Both*³ of the Daniel personages ask a question of the “man clothed in linen,”⁴ who was standing on or above the river: “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders [the startling oppression of the holy people of God]?”

The posture of the angel above the river signifies *control* of the waters; that is, the containment of the turmoil and tumult of the anarchistic forces, the restraint of the turbulence of the masses. The French Revolution began with the fall of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, and lasted for ten years, ending in 1799. When the Revolution began, Christians wondered if it was the great Time of Trouble predicted and whether the power of the Papacy had been crushed altogether or whether it would come to the ascendancy again. After the Revolution was brought under control, a great sigh of relief came over France because of the absence of the former tyranny. Christians then looked back upon the date 1799 and wondered if it indeed marked the end of papal authority and intolerance forever. Just as Moses and Elijah represented two time periods with Jesus in the midst, so in Daniel the two on either side talking to the one above the waters represented Christians *prior to* and *subsequent to* the French Revolution.

Even though the angel (Dan. 12:7) emphatically declared that with the expiration of the predetermined period of “3½ times” or 1,260 years, a marked change would come—“it shall be for a time, times, and a half”; and “*when the power of the*

3. The Daniel 12:6 context clearly indicates that *both spoke*. The word “one,” an improper insertion by the translators, is wanting in the Chaldaic text.

4. The linen-clad man is a spirit being still superior to the high-ranked angel Gabriel, namely, the archangel Michael (one of Jesus’ titles prior to his First Advent) (Dan. 8:16; 10:13).

dispenser of the holy people shall come to an end”⁵—Daniel properly sensed that information was being withheld notwithstanding and replied, “O my Lord! what shall be the end of [all] these things?” (Dan. 12:8). It was not given him to know.

However, the declaration of the angel is strong affirmation that never again in the future would such a long, oppressive rule be tolerated. The statement *should not be understood to mean* that in no sense would Papacy again be permitted to rise to power, be it ever so brief a time, for many Scriptures indicate a future short rise and fall.

Verse 3:

And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

Verse 4:

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.

The Apostle John initially saw Jesus as a “mighty angel” with a rainbow-haloed head and a blessing-cloud for a garment; with book in hand, he stood with one foot on the sea and the other on land. But then John beheld him in a somewhat different role: Jesus uttered such a mighty roar that a resultant shock wave of sound reverberated in seven resounding peals of *thunder echoing in the distance*. These thunderings actually occur during the next and last trumpet yet to be blown (Rev. 11:15,19), and constitute a “sign,” or the *miraculous disclosure*, of the Lord’s displeasure against nominal spiritual Israel to be manifested *during the wheat harvest* at the end of the age (Matt. 13:39; 1 Sam. 12:17,18).

The significance of the roar of a lion is as follows:

1. It marks the identity of the mighty angel as “the *Lion* of the tribe of Juda” (Rev. 5:5).
2. A symbol of justice and judgment, the lion is used to indicate the Lord’s disapproval of something (1 Kings 13:21–25; 20:35,36; 2 Kings 17:26; Prov. 19:12).
3. A symbol of power, the lion represents the exercise of authority (Judg. 14:18; 2 Sam. 1:23; Prov. 30:30).
4. The lion roars as a man of war against the enemies of true spiritual Israel (Isa. 31:4; 42:13; Jer. 25:30; Joel 3:16).
5. The lion’s roar is related to the watchman’s cry of Isaiah 21:8.⁶

One cannot sympathetically enter into the spirit of the vision without feeling disappointed about the withholding of information as to what the seven thunders uttered, especially since these were intelligible sounds capable of being understood; but a disclosure of the information was forbidden at that time. Similarly, Daniel, the prophet of old, was instructed to go his way, for the words he heard were closed

5. This translation is a variant reading favored by Dr. C. D. Ginsberg in his Critico-Massoretic Hebrew Bible; it is a superior rendering of the passage. See also Daniel 8:24.

6. See Appendix 8, “A Prophecy Nearing Fulfillment,” pages 643–646.

until the Time of the End. The implication back there was that one day the wise would understand, and blessed would be the contemporaries of that future day who, with patience and faith, “waiteth, and cometh” to the end of the 1,335 days; namely, A.D. 1874 and thereafter, during the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet (Dan. 8:26; 12:4,9,12).

In the type, seven trumpet-bearing priests circuted Jericho on seven successive days (Heb. 11:30). They compassed the city once daily for the first six days (Josh. 6:3,14), blowing in continuous short blasts the rams’ horns. The seventh day they marched in like manner as hitherto, but made *seven* revolutions about the city the same day (Josh. 6:15) before the walls of fortification fell to the ground. The seven circuits of ominous portent on this last day correspond to the *seven thunders* of Revelation 10:3,4 heard in the *distance* yet reported by John under the symbolism of the *Sixth Trumpet*. This miniaturized forecast—before the due time of its larger fulfillment—is not unlike that of the Day of Wrath being seen in advance by the same apostle under the *Sixth Seal* (Rev. 6:17).

Both visions of the French Revolution—the earthquake and the holding back of the four winds preparatory to a harvest sealing of the saints (Rev. 6:12; 7:1–3), and the holding back of the sea from the land preparatory to the feeding of the John class upon the little book in the angel’s hand (Rev. 10:2,10)—bear a remarkably similar connotation. The thunderings (verses 3 and 4) constitute *seven messages of indictment* to be sent forth, in the era of the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, against antitypical Jericho (mystic Babylon).

Verse 5:

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

Verse 6:

And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

Verse 7:

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.

For the reader to get the proper thought of verses 5 to 7, the Revised Standard Version is recommended as follows: “And the angel . . . swore by him who lives for ever and ever [that is, *Jehovah*], who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there should be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God, as he announced to his servants the prophets, should be fulfilled.” Notice, this account does *not* say that when the seventh angel would *begin to sound* the trumpet, the mystery of God would be finished, as does the King James Version. The Revised Standard Version says that sometime *during* the Seventh

Trumpet, which is *about* to sound, the mystery will be finished, but it does not say when this will occur.

This oath, suretied by the Creator of heaven and earth, was to assure the John class that only seven epochs of church history had been predetermined (already the sixth was soon to expire). Therefore, the suffering and ignominy afflicting the Lord's little ones would not continue on in an endless haphazard fashion to an indefinite conclusion; but like all His other finished creative works, this one was, and is, proceeding on schedule according to a fixed plan.

These verses are not a direct reference to the 1,260 days of Daniel 12:7, but are specifically directed to the unraveling of the "mystery of God." What is the significance of this veiled remark? Assuredly, no small part of this mystery is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). It not only refers to the completion of the body members of The Christ, but also alludes to a further revelation—to come—of what the seven thunders uttered in verses 3 and 4.

Verse 7 bears closer examination. The statement made is not that the mystery would be finished in the days of the seventh messenger, but that it would be finished in the days *of the voice* of the seventh angel. The implication is that both the completion of the Church and the revelation of the mysterious thunderings would occur after the death of the seventh messenger. In other words, the voice and works of "that servant" (Matt. 24:45–47) continue on after his demise.

Verse 8:

And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

Verse 9:

And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

Verse 10:

And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

The voice of God, which John heard, was the same the Apostle had previously pointed out as coming from the horns of the golden incense altar in the Holy of the Tabernacle in heaven—the same voice that had introduced the Sixth Trumpet scene (Rev. 9:13).

So long had the book been sealed in the prophetic sense that such matters were eventually considered to be accepted with blind faith and not meant to be understood till Kingdom come. Therefore, John was divinely prompted to take the little opened book in the angel's possession, for the period designated in Daniel as the Time of the End had arrived and the Day of Preparation for the harvest was at hand.

The Time of the End—a large, encompassing period of time starting with the French Revolution and then continuing on to and through the harvest, which is the

end-time of the Time of the End—is marked by three important prophetic events that precede the harvest: 1829 (the 1,290 days of Daniel 12:11), 1846 (the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14), and 1874 (the 1,335 days of Daniel 12:12). These dates also imply that the unfolding of the plan of God was to be gradual, and that it began to be revealed even prior to, as well as after, the date 1874. This book of knowledge is pictured as being in the charge of God’s angel, the risen Lord Jesus Christ. John the Revelator, representing the faithful, obediently complied with the divine instruction and politely requested custody of the little book (verse 9). Those who are encumbered with the cares of this life fail to be thus energized to seek and to find the treasures of heaven.

“This message concerning Michael’s Kingdom, gradually opening from 1829 onward, is symbolically represented in the book of Revelation (chap. 10:2,8–10) as a ‘little book,’ which the ‘wise’ of the ‘holy people,’ represented by John, are instructed to eat. And John’s experience, as expressed in verse 10, is the experience of all who receive these truths. They bring wondrous sweetness: Oh the blessedness! But the aftereffects are always more or less a blending of the bitterness of persecution with sweetness. And the effect upon those who patiently endure to the end is to purge, purify and refine, and thus to make the bride of Christ ready for the marriage and exaltation, due toward the close of the Day of Preparation.”⁷ Hence this portion of the vision commencing with verse 8 began 1829 onward; it had a *gradual fulfillment*, becoming the present-truth movement later on.

The “mouth” (verses 9 and 10) is used to *taste* and to chew, or masticate, while the “belly” represents the digestive organs, which take the nutritive value out of the food and give strength to the organism. In the mouth the food is pulverized and prepared for digestion in the stomach and intestines, where it is then converted to energy. This analogy pertains to the experiences of life. When *individual* Christians “eat” the Book, or Words of Life, they consecrate and appropriate the truth, thus *beginning* in the narrow way to life. And in the beginning such are so enthused with the message that they are somewhat frenzied with zeal and cannot be contained, thinking everybody should and would accept it. Alas, they find that others just do not see what seems to be such self-evident truth. Then come the repercussions and bitter experiences.

Throughout the entire Gospel Age, such experiences, more or less, have been the lot of the Lord’s people in connection with the message of truth. But here in Chapter 10, the happenings are particularly related to the “little book” in the period designated the Time of the End. Therefore, the interpretation of the little book is narrowed down to present truth, and this book will yet become bitter in the belly of the Lord’s people *as a class*.

While from a practical standpoint the twofold mouth-belly experience has occurred in the life and circumstance of the true Christian in the Time of the End up to the present, yet from a collective or dispensational viewpoint, this prophecy

7. *Thy Kingdom Come, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1890), Ser. 3, p. 89.

awaits a still future fulfillment. To explain: the initial eating⁸ of dispensational truth began early in the Time of the End, but the later belly or bitter “tail end” experience pertains to the last members of the body of Christ and signifies the coming severe persecution.

Verse 11:

And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

This last verse is about *prophesying*. “Thou” refers to the John class. Thus the John class must prophesy before many nations. A work of this nature has already been accomplished. A century ago the message of truth was circulated through books, pamphlets, and magazines numbering into the millions—though largely unbeknownst to present society—and printed in the major languages of earth. Let it not be misunderstood that the present writer has overlooked or not appreciated this mammoth work. But verse 11, taken with other texts and allegorical representations in Scripture, indicates there is yet to be a still further *worldwide witness* of the truth before the end of the age. This message will terminate in a message of rebuke that will be the “bitter belly” *final* experience of the true Church, *collectively speaking*. The clue is indicated in the closing phrase of verse 11: “Thou must prophesy *again* before . . . *kings*.”

A remarkable, though not exact, parallel exists between the experiences of the following three individuals:⁹

Elijah the Prophet 1 Kings 18 and 19	John the Revelator Revelation 10	Daniel the Beloved Daniel 12
(Elijah is <i>atop</i> Mt. Carmel at the end of 1,260 days—18:42.)	(An angel is seen standing on sea and on land, <i>above</i> the Revolution—10:2; cf. Rev. 6:12; 7:1.)	(An angel-man clothed with linen stands <i>upon</i> the waters of the river—12:6,7.)
The Prophet is informed of a <i>cloud</i> on the horizon (18:44).	John sees the angel with a rainbow halo and a <i>cloud</i> garment (10:1).	
It is a <i>little cloud</i> resembling a man’s hand (18:44).	The angel holds a <i>little open book</i> in his hand (10:2).	Daniel is told sealed <i>book will be opened</i> in Time of the End (12:4,9).

8. The King James Version, verse 10, states: “. . . it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and *as soon as* I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.” Based upon insufficient evidence, this passage has been improperly translated as though John, upon eating the book, immediately suffered stomach bile, or bitterness.

The Greek word *hote* meaning “when” is improperly translated “as soon as,” whereas the passage should be rendered merely “when” or “after” John had eaten the book, he suffered stomach distress. No special emphasis should be placed upon the swiftness with which the aftereffect took place. Indeed, to the contrary, a delayed reaction is implied.

9. See “Hypothetical Prophetic Time Parallels” chart on page 288.

Elijah the Prophet

1 Kings 18 and 19

The little cloud *arises out of the sea*, like a man's *hand* (18:44).

Elijah goes to Beersheba, "well of the *oath*," where Abraham had called on the Lord, the *everlasting* God (19:3; cf. Gen. 21:22–33).

Beersheba is also called (RSV) "well of *seven* [ewe lambs]" (Gen. 21:28,31).

Elijah, after day's journey, *eats* a first simple meal: a baked cake and a cruse of water (19:4,6).

Elijah consumes a second, *more substantial* meal (19:7,8).

John the Revelator

Revelation 10

The angel standing upon *sea* and earth lifts up a *hand* to heaven (10:5).

The angel makes an *oath*, swearing by Him "that liveth *for ever and ever*" (10:6).

John hears *seven* thunders utter their voices (10:3,4).

John is instructed to *eat* the little book (10:9).

The little book is in the mouth *sweet* (10:10).

The little book is in the belly *bitter* (10:10).

Daniel the Beloved

Daniel 12

The angel upon the *waters* lifts both *hands* to heaven (12:7).

The angel makes an *oath*, swearing by Him "that liveth *for ever*" (12:7).

The wise are to *understand* at the end of 1,290 days (12:10,11).

Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1,335 days (12:12).

Daniel is told to rest and stand in his lot at end of the days (12:13).

Revelation Chapter 11

Verse 1:

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.

The same “angel” whom the Apostle John saw in vision in Revelation 10 (i.e., Jesus) now gives him a reed and instructs him to arise and measure three things: the Temple, the altar, and the worshippers. To “measure,” in this sense, means to give thorough and profound consideration, to mark well.

The Reed

The common standard of fixed length used today for measurement is the foot-ruler or yardstick. And so the spiritual measuring “reed” (Greek *kalamos*; Hebrew *qaneh*—a stalk, reed, cane) that was given to John was also of fixed length. It represents, in part, the cane or canon of Scripture—the rule of faith of the Christian Church. Used to measure the glorified Holy City, this divine standard is described as “golden” in Revelation 21:15. It is there defined not merely as the instrument, or rule, that the messenger of God utilized, but also as the measure(ment) of the angel himself (Rev. 21:17). The golden reed represents the equivalency of the stature of the man Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 4:13). It signifies Christ as the exemplary model or pattern *set forth in Scripture* before the Church as the ideal Son of man or Son of God. The word translated “rod” in verse 1 (Greek *rhabdos*—rod, staff, scepter) is described as a scepter of “rightness or straitness” (Heb. 1:8) in the margin of the Cottage Bible, and as the “rod of uprightness” in the English interlinear Nestle Greek text.

The Temple

What is meant by the expression “the temple of God”? Does it refer to the Temple complex as a whole, including the various buildings, courts, and subsidiary chambers? Or does it pertain to just the main building that housed the Holy and Most Holy compartments? The latter, it is answered. In Matthew 24:1 the Greek word *hieron* indicates the Temple in the broader sense, whereas here in verse 1 the Greek term is *naos*, namely, dwelling place or inner sanctuary. *Naos* usually signifies the Temple proper in the restricted sense, that is, with regard to one or both chambers within (Rev. 11:19; 15:5; 16:17).

The next question to be asked is: What spiritual significance underlies the measurement of the Temple by the John class? The Apostle was summoned to rise and bestir himself—to take the time and to make the necessary effort—to measure, first, the Temple of God. Why? Perhaps the spiritual import can best be determined through a process of elimination . . . by ascertaining what the Temple measurement is not:

1. It should not be considered commensurate with the prophetic measurement of the Holy City described as the Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9,10,15–17)—the *yet future* glorified Church.

2. Nor is it analogous to the measurement of Jerusalem (Zech. 2:1–5), which relates to the *future* glory of the capital city of Jewry and the exaltation of natural Israel.

3. And it does not pertain to the measurement of the Temple and the city by the Prophet Ezekiel (Chapters 40 through 48). The Ezekiel writing is, by far, the most comprehensive and detailed account, having both natural and spiritual connotations. Its dramatic enactments focus in upon the closing of the door of gospel opportunity, as indicated by the permanent shutting of the outer east entry gate after the Lord's glory passes that way into the sanctuary (Ezek. 43:4,5; 44:1,2). A primary purpose of the Ezekiel Temple vision, to be seen in the *near future*, is to shame both nominal houses of Israel—the natural and the spiritual—in the knowledge that the chief blessing and golden opportunity of the high calling have been lost (Ezek. 43:7–11; 44:6–8). Consolation, however, is proffered to those who are “ashamed of all that they have done”: “shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof” (43:11).

One reason for ruling out these three measurements is that they have a future application, whereas the Temple of Revelation 11:1,2 applies primarily to the sanctuary class in the *present* life; it is designed to encourage the faithful to endure hardness as good soldiers yet awhile longer. God foreknew, foretold, and is presently aware of every trial of faith encountered by His own . . . trials meant but to enhance their future glory.

Returning now to verse 1 and the continuing question: Why was John instructed to arise and devote time and energy to measuring the Temple of God? Was it not to call attention to the fact that the Temple is a *structured* edifice, requiring careful consideration of the purpose and design of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: its number (144,000 being foreordained); its law, order, and discipline; its organization and judgment; and its baptism? Although the Apostle Paul declared the Church to be the Temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19–22), the consecrated are now, in the present life, merely *prospective* members of the Temple class. Only if faithful now, will they become permanent members after death, in the next age.

The Altar

Almost invariably, with the absence of contextual evidence or the lack of such qualifying words as “golden” or “incense,” the bare expression “the altar” would signify the brazen altar in the court (Rev. 6:9; 8:3a,5; 14:18). Still, the question remains: Which altar is referred to in verse 1—the one in the Holy or the one in the court? A strong case can be presented for either horn of the dilemma.

Both altars call attention to a most important truth, namely, that all who would come to the Father must recognize Jesus as the appointed channel of communication and the justifier (John 14:6). The conclusion here advanced, after much deliberation and difficulty, is that the location of the altar in verse 1 is in the Holy. Why? Because the setting appears to be the altar and the worshippers therein; that is, the latter are exercising their sacerdotal service *within* the sanctuary (temple, Greek

naos). They abide there “in the secret place of the most High [God]” (Psa. 91:1), where neither harm nor molestation can occur to them as new creatures in Christ according to the Spirit. The (incense of sacrificial praise) altar is for those *already sanctified* and called of God to be priests.

The Worshippers

How can the worshippers be measured? The sanctified are measured in the sense that they are expected to bring their lives as far as possible into alignment with the perfect pattern of the Redeemer set before them in the Word of God. They are seated within the sanctuary in heavenly places with Christ (Eph. 2:6). The measuring of the worshippers here under the Sixth Trumpet corresponds to the sealing of the saints discussed under the Sixth Seal (Rev. 7:3,4).

Verse 2:

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.

John is instructed not to measure the Gentile court without. This prohibition is somehow related to the Gentiles’ abuse of the Holy City for a mysterious time period of forty-two months.

The Court Without

The word “without” implies the existence of two courts, one within and one without. Since the Tabernacle in the wilderness had only one court (Exod. 40:33), it is not being referred to here. The future Temple of Ezekiel is to have two courts: an inner court and an outer court (Ezek. 40:32; 42:1). In this Temple arrangement of the Kingdom Age, the outer court will pertain to lessons and experiences of the world, whereas the inner court will answer to the priesthood. However, the burden of the message in Revelation 11 does not concern the world in the next age but the consecrated class of this age. Neither, then, does verse 2 refer to Ezekiel’s Temple.

It is true that the Temple picture is sometimes given a present application—“Ye *are* [present tense] the temple of God” (1 Cor. 3:16)—but the *prophetic* implications of two other edifices better illustrate the historical happenings during the Gospel Age. These two buildings were the first and second Temples. Both were holy edifices; both were ordained of God. The first Temple, built by Solomon according to the pattern the Lord gave to David (1 Chron. 28:11,12,19), was defiled from time to time, as allegorically summarized in Ezekiel 8:5–18. The second Temple, that of Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:8), which was later enlarged by Herod the Great and others (John 2:20), was also sullied (Matt. 21:13). These two Temples, Solomon’s and Herod’s, more fittingly correspond to the apocalyptic portrayals of debasement, for in the future Temple of Ezekiel no defilement, literal or symbolic, will be tolerated (Ezek. 39:7; 43:7; 44:9; Zech. 14:21).

Since the identity of the Temple, the altar, and the worshippers referred to the building proper or chief edifice, the expression “the court . . . without” applies to the court immediately outside the sanctuary, or Holy, that is, the inner court. It is to this *inner* court that allusion is made. With the time frame of the vision pertaining to this age and not the next, John was, in reality, commanded to measure only those

things related to the New Creation. Only the approved are to be measured and sought out. The court of belief without, with its *mixed* occupancy, is to be passed by for the present. Mere nominal belief is unacceptable (John 17:9).

Given unto the Gentiles

It is the “Gentiles” who trod underfoot the Holy City. In the Book of Revelation, the following symbols are used:

1. “Jews” are true Christians.
2. “Gentiles” are professed Christians, i.e., a hypocrite or tare class.

Although those in the second category use the name “Christian,” they are but “Gentiles” from God’s standpoint. The text “[they] say they are Jews, and are not [they are liars]” (Rev. 2:9) refers to the class who take the name of Jesus but who are unconsecrated and unconverted in heart. They are nominal believers—Christians in name only (Isa. 4:1). The true worshippers are those who suffer and are given into the hands of false spiritual Israelites (John 16:2).

The Holy City

In the present life, the prospective Temple or Holy City class of worshippers demonstrate character development in an *inner* religious sense, obeying conscientious scruples. When the same class are pictured in the court, the representation is of their *outward* visual deportment as observed by professed but nominal believers. The basic thought of the Temple and priesthood in the *next* age will be that of blessing, healing, comforting, educating, and mediating—all of which are involved with *reconciliation*. The city, however, is a symbol of those who, if faithful now, will share in the future *government* rule, enforcement, power, and authority. Those who are to become priests and kings of the next age must, in the present life, undergo a severe test of *inner obedience* and *outer discipline*.

Forty-two Months

The forty-two months are symbolic, a day for a year. Numbers in the Apocalypse are literal, but the months or days are based on the lunar calendar (42 ÷ 30 = 1,260). The treading down of the Holy City (or true Christians) lasted 1,260 years, from A.D. 539 to 1799, corresponding to the “time, times [double time], and an half” of Daniel 12:7 and the power given to Papacy “to continue [at one stretch] forty and two months” (Rev. 13:5). It is significant that the Israelites of old wandered in the wilderness throughout forty-two sojournings prior to their entry into Canaan (Numbers 33).

Verse 3:

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

The passage as rendered above conveys the wrong thought, for the word “power” is omitted in the Sinaitic and other ancient manuscripts. If anything, power was given over to the enemy rather than being granted to the two witnesses. The lesson clearly implied is that the witnesses (Greek *martus*) not only would be given

scant recognition for the long duration of 1,260 years but would be *martyred* for 3½ “days,” or years.

The speaker in verse 3 continues to be the “angel” of verse 1, as well as the “mighty angel” of the tenth chapter. Such a one as Jesus could well speak thus, and with authority, “I will give unto *my* two witnesses”—the expression “two witnesses” being an allegorical representation of the Word of God: the Old and New Testaments.

“And the sacred volume which once she [Rome] confined in chains, kept covered in dead languages, and forbade her deluded subjects to read . . .”¹

“ . . . God’s ‘Two Witnesses’ (the Old and New Testaments), which had so long been bound, and which had prophesied only under the sackcloth of dead languages . . .”²

“The Lord refers to the Old and New Testament Scriptures as ‘My two witnesses,’ . . . and faithfully they have borne their testimony to every nation.”³

The Holy Spirit depicts the two testaments in the role of bearing *true* testimony (2 Cor. 13:1) concerning Christ on God’s behalf. Verse 3 alludes to the time Moses carried the *two* tables of the Law down from the Mount of God. In the literal Hebrew, the two tablets are called “*witness-tables*.”⁴ The Law of Moses bore witness to the coming reproaches of Christ (Heb. 11:24–26), his testimony (John 5:39–46), and his followers (Heb. 13:11–14).

The next logical question: When did the 1,260-year sackcloth era begin and end, and when did the mourning, sackcloth-attired Bible arise from its ashes? Three possible explanations need to be considered:

Proposition 1. The 1,260 years correspond to the 42-month period of verse 2, namely, A.D. 539–1799.

Proposition 2. The 1,260 years date *from* A.D. 122 to 1382, when Wycliffe first began to translate the Scriptures into English.

Proposition 3. The 1,260 years are reckoned *from* A.D. 265 to 1525, when Tyn-dale first began to translate the Scriptures into English.

Proposition 1 (A.D. 539–1799)

This proposition is flawed for several reasons. First, verse 7 states that the two witnesses are overcome and slain *after* they have finished their testimony, and there exists no historical evidence that the Bible was slain for 3½ symbolic days subsequent to A.D. 1799. Furthermore, measuring 1,260 days backwards from 1799 does not furnish the date when the Bible was translated into the dead language of Latin.

With regard to the 42 months of verse 2 . . . verses 1 and 2 relate to a temple setting, whereas verses 3 to 13 are a separate scenario. Therefore, the 42 months of

1. *Thy Kingdom Come, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1890), Ser. 3, p. 50.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

3. *The Battle of Armageddon, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1961 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1897), Ser. 4, p. 258.

4. Joseph Bryant Rotherham, trans., *The Emphasised Bible* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Co., 1897), Vol. 1, footnote for Exodus 32:15.

verse 2, the 1,260-day flight of the woman into the wilderness of Revelation 12:6, and the 42-month period of Revelation 13:5—though of equal duration—are not necessarily synonymous in time with the sackcloth period.

Proposition 2 (A.D. 122–1382)

This proposition is also flawed. (1) There is no historical evidence of a specific 3½-year demise of the Scriptures following closely after the year 1382 (verse 7). (2) Wycliffe’s translation of the Bible into English was based upon the Latin Vulgate, not the original tongues of Scripture. (3) The Old Latin Version⁵ of the mid-second century, which purportedly marked the beginning of this 1,260-day period, pertained to the west North African coast of the Mediterranean, and not to the Church of Rome or Europe in general *at that early date*. (4) Only a few hundred handwritten copies of the Bible were available in the Wycliffe era. Moreover, only the educated could read and understand it, and the wealthy alone could afford its possession. “Copies of the Bible . . . sold for prices which priests could not afford. Not one man in five hundred could have spelled his way through a psalm. Books were few and costly. The art of printing was unknown.”⁶

The Lollards, during the fifth epoch of church history, relied on the Gospels and portions of Holy Writ for their spiritual sustenance. They did not possess or have access to a complete Bible.

Proposition 3 (A.D. 265–1525)

“About twenty-five or thirty years after Wycliffe’s death Johann Gutenberg discovered the art of printing, and in 1454 the use of movable types was discovered. These discoveries made it possible to multiply copies of the Scriptures almost without limit and at such reasonable cost as to bring them within the reach of the humblest man in the realm. At the same time it did away with the danger of introducing errors into the text, which were inevitable under the old method of copying.

“The introduction of printing was followed by another event, which was destined to have an immense influence upon the development of Bible study; namely, the revival of interest in the classics, notably Greek, and with it the revival of the study of Hebrew. The first Greek grammar was published in 1476 and the first Hebrew grammar in 1503. About the same time Erasmus, the great Greek scholar, began work on his famous Greek New Testament, which was published in 1516.

“These events, doubtless, appeared at the time to most people to be matters that were of interest to scholars only, but it is clear now that they were a preparation for the great evangelical awakening which came with the Reformation.”⁷

It is this period of time, A.D. 265–1525, that meets the scriptural and historical requirements of Revelation 11:3. The commencement of this period can only be conjecturally arrived at; but the terminal point, 1525, can be fixed with reasonable certainty, for at that time Professor Tyndale published in Germany, and sent to

5. See Appendix 9, “Second-Century Old Latin (*Vetus Latina*) Version,” pages 647–648.

6. Thomas Babington Macaulay, *History of England* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1899), Vol. 1, p. 94.

7. *The Master Library: Using and Teaching the Bible* (Cleveland, Ohio: Foundation Press, Inc., 1923), Vol. 9, p. 103.

England, the first of a series of translations of the New Testament. And a little later, in 1530, the Pentateuch was published in the English language. These were translations from the original Greek and Hebrew tongues.

Some background information may be helpful. The Old Testament in Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint were most convenient to Jewish Christians, who constituted the greater part of the Church in its infancy, particularly before the gospel canon was fully developed and organized. But the New Testament was providentially rendered in the Greek tongue to suit a new dispensation and an increasing need for believers, both Jew and Gentile. Although Latin was the official language of the empire, it was used chiefly in legal matters and affairs of state, that is, by the government and the military. Greek was the written and spoken language of commerce and ordinary daily communications. Since Christians are most often found in the common walks of life (1 Cor. 1:26), the Bible spoke to this class in the Greek tongue.

During the first two centuries the churches of Rome and Gaul were essentially Greek,⁸ for they did not become Latinized until the third century. As far as England and the nations of the Continent were concerned, Latin soon became obsolete—a dead language that was understood only by the educated. Even Italians, not familiar with the intricate ecclesiastical terminology and the jargon of the clergy, imperfectly understood Latin. The priesthood cleverly retained the ancient form of the language and did not embrace the Renaissance style, thereby keeping themselves aloof from the laity. By quoting Scripture and conducting religious services in the Vulgate and by swinging a little incense in a censer, the priesthood appeared as very holy and educated men, far above the masses. During the 1,260 years from A.D. 265 to 1525, the Bible was not translated into the vernacular or vulgar languages of the people in the sense of being made available for their use. Those who hungered for the Word had access to but small portions of Scripture, and these were obtained at great sacrifice and jeopardy to their lives.

“About the year 300 A.D., Christian bishops began to claim Apostolic powers and to style themselves Apostolic Bishops. The claim is still made . . . of equal authority with the twelve apostles, while the Bible claims to the contrary—that the twelve apostles selected by Jesus (St. Paul taking the place of Judas) were to be the only foundations of the Christian church, their teachings being on a full parallel with those of the Lord Jesus. . . . This exaltation of the bishops came in gradually and was given great force by the action of Emperor Constantine in calling for a church Council at Nice, Bithynia, 325 A.D. The Council, under the Emperor’s guidance, produced the Nicene Creed as representing the faith of the people of God. Subsequently that creed was impressed upon the people as being the only proper and infallible faith. . . . there was practically no more Bible study for over twelve centuries. During all that time Bible study was considered unnecessary, because the apostolic bishops had formulated the creeds as proper statements of the church’s faith. To study the Bible would have meant the studying of how to fight against the Emperor and the combined views and teachings of the bishops. . . . Twelve

8. See Appendix 10, “Third-Century Roman (*Vetus Italica*) Version,” pages 649–650.

hundred years after the first expression by the so-called apostolic bishops brings us to 1526, when the art of printing had become common.”⁹

Just as the scribes and Pharisees gave more credence to the sayings and fables of the Talmud than to the Old Testament (Matt. 15:2–9; Mark 7:3–13), so the Christian clergy gave more weight and recognition to papal bulls, and to decrees of various church councils and synods, than to the Word of God.

Verse 4:

These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

The two witnesses, the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks all represent the Old and New Testaments, the Word of God in its two parts. But how can these two candlesticks (lamp stands) represent the Bible when in Revelation 1:20 the seven candlesticks (lamp stands) represent the Church of believers? The reply is made, do not the two candlesticks of verse 4 teach humility on the part of the ministers of Christ? Verily, God’s Word—i.e., God’s Spirit—is a power unto itself. In one sense, the Bible is complete, self-sufficient, and contains the whole counsel of God; yet in reality it is the duty and the *privilege* of Christians to hold forth the Word of Life to others.

The Bible can stand on its own two feet. “Standing before the God of the earth” signifies facing the public or world as God’s *mouthpieces*. The Old and New Testaments have been testifying or prophesying, on God’s behalf, as witnesses to the world and to the faithful down through past ages. The source of the oil in the olive trees is the Holy Spirit from God. Verse 4 alludes to the two olive trees of Zechariah 4:14, which are described as “the two anointed ones [sons of *oil*—KJV margin], that stand by the Lord¹⁰ of the whole earth.” Therefore, the two olive trees, as the source of oil, are like the *messengers* (Zech. 6:5) of Jehovah . . . like His two anointed servants whose purpose is to supply the oil to the Church.

Why do olive trees picture the Old and New Testaments? Oil from the olive tree was used for the lamps of the Tabernacle and the ordinary household—for God and for man. In the Bible the olive tree was the logical first choice as the king of the trees (Judg. 9:8). The emphasis is on the *oil*, which is used not only for light but also for food, as a lubricant, and as a medicinal unguent. Besides its oil and its berry or fruit, other peculiar characteristics of the olive tree are its gnarled and twisted trunk; its low stature; its hard, fine-grained wood; and its slow, enduring growth. The gnarled, twisted effect actually adds to its beauty, grace, and individuality.

In Zechariah 4:1–6, 11–14 the two olive trees feed, or supply, *one* candlestick; thus, in this text, the two olive trees are not identical to the candlestick. In Revelation 11, however, the two olive trees are equated with the two candlesticks. There are similarities and differences between the two visions. In the Zechariah account the candlestick is all of gold, picturing divine light. In order for the oil to get to the

9. “Elijah’s Return and Victory,” *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, Vol. 36, No. 15 (Aug. 1, 1915), p. 253.

10. The Hebrew word *Adonai* (Lord) is a reference to Jehovah—see Micah 4:13.

lamps, it came from the two olive trees through two pipes to the one head bowl, and thence through seven conduits to the seven lamps atop the seven-branched lamp stand. However, in the Tabernacle arrangement and in the first chapter of Revelation, it was the high priest who supplied the oil to the candlesticks.

In Zechariah the bowl teaches the same lesson. The fullness of the Spirit was in the Lord Jesus; *all* the oil went on the head of the high priest at his anointing (Psa. 133:2), and the body members receive only a fragmentation or dispensation of that Holy Spirit through their head (Jesus). Thus, just as the high priest of old pictured Jesus, so the bowl of Zechariah represented the head (Jesus), through whom the Holy Spirit from God's Word flows to the Church (cf. Rev. 1:20). In the type of the Tabernacle, the high priest himself supplied the lamps direct; he went to each vessel, supplied it with oil, trimmed the wicks, and so forth. In Zechariah a pipe from each of the two olive trees led to the bowl, showing the illumination of the Old and New Testaments coming to Jesus. Although no New Testament had been written at the time of the First Advent of the Lord, the two parts symbolized in Zechariah indicate that Christ already understood the purpose or intent that God had in mind before the New Testament was spoken or written down for man's benefit. Of course, it is the glorified Lord Jesus who administers to the Church. From Zechariah's bowl the oil went through seven pipes, showing that the risen Lord gave this understanding to the Church through seven messengers or channels. Hence the seven pipes represent the way in which the Church was supplied with *dispensational* light.

When the Prophet Zechariah saw the vision, he asked the angel what these things represented (Zech. 4:4). Notice the brevity of the reply: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit [the oil], saith the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). The primary lesson is that the oil (God's Spirit) enlightens one to the understanding of His Word. It has the power to "move mountains" (Zech. 4:7). It is not the power of man or self-will—mental, physical, political, or any other kind—but the *Lord's* Spirit, or power, that works miracles. "He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it" (Zech. 4:7). The "headstone" represents Jesus. Just as Jesus is the top stone of the Pyramid, so in the candlestick arrangement, he is the bowl at the top.

Some may ask why, in Revelation 11, the Bible is likened to two witnesses (verse 3), two olive trees (verse 4), two candlesticks (verse 4), and two prophets (verse 10)? The answer is that the Word, like the Holy Spirit, has many diversified operations (1 Cor. 12:4,7–11). Why, then, are the two witnesses likened to two olive trees? This role indicates that, as the "sons of oil," the Bible blesses its friends with light, encouragement, and refreshment.

Verse 5:

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.

This verse refers to the enemies of God's Word. It is based on the Old Testament account where Elijah invoked fire from heaven to come down and destroy those who were seeking to apprehend him (2 Kings 1:1–16). The Prophet's experience

pictured that of the Word of God as well as of the Church. In other words, these two witnesses (olive trees, candlesticks) would perform a service such as Elijah did as a representative of the Lord. Verse 5 also alludes to the fire that consumed Korah and those associated with him in the rebellion against Moses, the servant of God (Num. 16:16–21,35; Jude 11).

Depending on the circumstances, fire can be used as a symbol of either acceptance or disfavor. For example, God destroys His enemies with the “fire” of His wrath, but He also employs fire as a symbol of acceptance on His altar. The angel consumed with fire the cakes Gideon placed on the stone, representing that the Lord accepted and ate in fellowship with Gideon (Judg. 6:21). On another occasion, following the unsuccessful attempts of the priests of Baal with their sacrifices to obtain a miraculous response to their petitions, Elijah saturated his offering with buckets of water and offered a simple prayer to the effect that “the God that answereth by fire, let him be God” (1 Kings 18:17–40). And a fire (favorable response) did come down from heaven and devour (accept) Elijah’s offering.

In the Revelation 11:5 picture, however, fire is used in an unfavorable or derogatory sense. The enemies intended to inflict harm and subsequent death upon the Word, but a threatened reprisal of fire was to destroy such adversaries. The point is not that the enemies were to be literally consumed or put to death, but that their *influence* would be terminated by *symbolic* fire.

Revelation 22:18,19 applies to the consecrated: “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.” The penalty for taking away from the Word of God is Second Death and banishment from the New Jerusalem. The Scriptures admonish not to make many teachers because such receive greater condemnation (James 3:1 RSV). If there is any willfulness involved in subtracting from the Lord’s Word and pride hinders such a one from promptly rescinding his action, he will go into permanent extinction.

Verse 6:

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.

A comparison is made to Elijah’s exercise of authority whereby it did not rain in Israel for “the space of three years and six months” (James 5:17). This event had a historical fulfillment in the Church of Rome, which had jurisdiction over those dwelling upon the earth from A.D. 539 to 1799.

Verse 6 also calls attention to incidents in the life of Moses, such as the turning of the waters of the Nile into blood. And allusion is made to the other plagues inflicted upon Egypt. This information about the plagues supplies the earnest truth-seeker with a most valuable clue, namely, that the plagues represent *messages from God’s Word*. The expression “as often as they will” indicates the plagues, or messages, will render reciprocity sometime in the future, i.e., during the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet.

Water represents truth; it cleanses, quenches thirst, and brings life to its recipients. Water is fundamental to both plant and animal life. The water turning into blood meant that that which formerly supplied life now brought death, for blood outside the veins putrefies and signifies death. When blood is exposed to the air in significant quantity, and the clot and serum separate, it has a stench—a horrible, sickeningly sweet smell. This odor is present around slaughterhouses and is even more pronounced when associated with the shedding of human blood in warfare, earthquakes, etc. The odor surrounding the death camps of Germany, where millions of Jews and other religious and political dissidents were exterminated under the Hitler regime, extended for many miles throughout the countryside.

Verse 7:

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.

The introductory clause “when they shall have finished their testimony”¹¹ furnishes a valuable time-frame reference. It locates on the stream of time the particular warfare of the beast against the two witnesses; namely, it is the warfare that would occur after the completion of the Bible’s 1,260-year testimony in sackcloth and ashes.

The words “the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit,” which immediately follow the introductory clause, are merely a mark of identification to pinpoint *which* beast would make war with the two witnesses. The insertion of parentheses would help to convey the correct thought. Accordingly, the portion of verse 7 covered thus far might be rendered:

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the [papal] beast [that (later) ascendeth out of the abyss] shall make war¹² against them . . .

11. “*Telesosi*, 3 pers. pl. aor. 1, subj. act. *teleo*.” (*The Analytical Greek Lexicon* [London: Samuel Bagster & Sons Ltd., 1973], p. 400.)

Since the Greek *otan* (meaning “when”) has been added, thus modifying the interval between the past action and the present time when the assertion is being made, the English rendering of *telesosi* bears the thought “shall have completed.” A more literal interpretation of Revelation 11:7 is as follows: “And whensoever *they may finish* their witnessing . . .” This translation suggests that the actual commencement of the 1,260-year sackcloth era cannot be historically proven, but that the terminal point can be. Therefore, if the end of that period can be determined, then measuring backward that fixed length of time will disclose indirectly, but definitely, the starting point.

“And as soon as they have completed their witnessing . . .” (Rotherham, *The Emphasised Bible*, Vol. 4, p. 258.)

“And when they may finish the testimony of themselves . . .” (Benjamin Wilson, *The Emphatic Diaglott* [Brooklyn, N.Y.: International Bible Students Association, 1942], p. 838 interlinear translation.)

12. This “war” should not be confused with the long 1,260-year warfare against the *saints* from A.D. 539 to 1799 (Dan. 7:21,25). An important distinction is that the Revelation 11:7 conflict is directed against the two witnesses et al, that is, the *Word of God*; this warfare, or subjugation of Scripture, proves to be of short duration: 3½ “days,” or years (Rev. 11:9).

A translation difficulty sometimes encountered merits serious consideration. The Codex Sinaiticus, which is generally the most reliable of the ancient manuscripts, especially as it pertains to the Apocalypse, renders this passage as follows:

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that
THEN ascendeth out of the abyss shall make war against them . . .

Under normal circumstances, this documented contradiction to the earlier explanation would be a conclusive rebuttal. But there exists self-correcting evidence to offset what appears to be an erroneous inclusion of the Greek word *tote*, meaning “*then*,” instead of the Greek word *to*, meaning “*the (one)*.” In the Greek codex itself, two dots have been superimposed above the last two letters: The dots were inserted by either the original copyist or a firsthand contemporary proofreader at the scriptorium, where the skin parchment was transcribed before its release. These dots are a well-known symbol signifying “*to be omitted*.” It is difficult, in this instance, to imagine any doctrinal bias motivating the deletion by the censor.

Moreover, as far as can be determined, all scholars thoroughly familiar with many of the ancient manuscripts, including the Sinaitic, reject the validity of, and thus do not retain, the word “then” as an integral part of the original and unknown authentic source from which most ancient versions are derived.

The Beast

Although a more detailed explanation will be presented in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation, it is necessary to point out (1) that the beast of verse 7 is the same as the seven-headed, ten-horned beast (Rev. 17:3), and (2) that this beast does not ascend out of the abyss until the eighth and *last* condition of fulfillment (Rev. 17:8,11). At that time, during a warfare with the Lamb (Rev. 17:14)—not with the two witnesses—the beast (which will have recently arisen from the pit) is to itself be overcome. The beast’s exit from the pit occurs at the *end* of the age, not during the Sixth Trumpet era, not before “the second woe is past” (Rev. 11:14).

Revelation 17:8

“The beast that thou sawest
was, and is not; and shall
ascend out of the bottomless
pit, and go into perdition.”

Revelation 17:11

“The beast that was, and is
not, even he is the eighth,
and is of the seven, and goeth
into perdition.”

In the Book of Revelation, a beast is a religious government and “the” beast is Papacy. Similar in principle is the fact that in the Apocalypse “the” Lamb is always Jesus. The beast is mentioned in several chapters (13, 16, 17, 19, etc.).

Warfare Against the Two Witnesses

The papal beast waged momentary successful open warfare against the Bible beginning A.D. 1526. Lest some think this warfare took place much later, the following quote is helpful: “. . . no such event, nor anything like it, occurred *at* or *after* 1799. Indeed, the very opposite occurred, for it was *at this time*—the period of the French Revolution—that Papacy received its most terrible blow, at the hands of

Napoleon—a blow that so weakened its power that it was utterly unable to wage a war of extermination on the witnesses of Christ.”¹³

While it is a well-known fact that the leading Catholic bishops of England in Tyndale’s day, with the king’s consent and later his open approval, waged war on the New Testament, one can be assured that the English church hierarchy had more than token approval from the See of Rome. Yea, it received energetic prompting from that source!

“It is notorious that [Bishop] Tunstal and Sir Thomas More were at once zealous and united in the persecution of men called heretics, as well as violently opposed to the books they had published. . . . no one Bishop was more slow in the admission of [King] Henry’s assumed supremacy. . . . Both these men [Tunstal and More] persecuted, without the King’s writ, and Tunstal being thus busy for years, *preferred at this juncture*, the [1520] bull of [Pope] Leo [the Tenth], as the ground and warrant of his proceedings, to that of [King] Henry’s sanction as ‘Head of his Church.’ It will be recollected that neither Tunstal’s nor More’s name were affixed to the letter [from King Henry VIII disclaiming papal supremacy over the English Church] sent to the Pontiff.”¹⁴

Verse 8:

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.

The fact the carcasses of the two witnesses would lie in the street of that “great city” meant that they would suffer an ignominious death, that they would be the object of *public* shame and scorn. The corpses would lie in public view on the main street—like the marketplace. The great city “spiritually . . . called Sodom and Egypt” refers to mystic Babylon (Rome), the capital of Christendom. The “street” of the great city is England.

Sodom

Jesus, it is true, was not literally crucified in either Sodom or Egypt. But the Master was put to death under circumstances where a mood characteristic of both these places prevailed. The Lord God through the Prophet Isaiah declared Israel a “sinful nation,” even comparing His professed people to Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. 1:4,10). The Prophet castigated the responsible leaders of Israel with the biting remark “*ye rulers of Sodom*” and spared not the populace, likening them to “*ye people of Gomorrah.*” The omission of Gomorrah, the twin city of evil, in the Revelation 11:8 account is significant. It appears that the *religious leadership of Israel* as a whole was chiefly responsible for Jesus’ death (cf. Jer. 23:13,14), though the nation and the Roman power partook of that guilt in varying degrees (Psa. 2:1,2; Acts 2:22,23; 4:25,26).

13. R. E. Streeter, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Pastoral Bible Institute, 1923), Vol. 1, p. 511.

14. Christopher Anderson, *The Annals of the English Bible* (London: William Pickering, 1845), Vol. 1, p. 263 footnote.

Sodom's "pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness" led to its downfall (Ezek. 16:49). In like manner, Israel's pride and fullness of bread (false complacency under the Law) were factors in the nation's demise. And Israel was likewise guilty of "abundance of idleness"; that is, not only did the people financially support and maintain an improperly motivated priesthood, affording them relief from secular pursuits, but there was a lack of responsiveness to truth and righteousness (Luke 7:30–35).

Sodom is generally set forth as a prime example of sinners and wickedness (Gen. 13:13), of boldness in iniquity (Isa. 3:9; 2 Kings 23:7), and of being given over to fornication and strange flesh (Jude 7; Rom. 1:26,27). However, the chief focus of Revelation 11:8 appears to be the circumstances surrounding the deliverance of Lot, his wife, and his two daughters from Sodom at the time of its destruction. Even of this small family, Lot's wife became a casualty, being turned into a pillar of salt for looking back with longing for that which was left behind. Two angels were instrumental in Lot's salvation. The wicked inhabitants of Sodom had intended to violate and pollute with shame these two messengers of deliverance (who bear some semblance of a type of the Old and New Testaments). Had the two angels not been endowed with supernatural gifts and exercised that power, they would have been humiliated (Gen. 19:1–11). Such were the mood and intent of the residents of Sodom.

Similarly, Jesus came to seek and to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel, few though they were among the nation's millions. Just as it was in God's plan and purpose that Jesus, in the satisfaction of Justice, give his life for man's redemption, so omniscient Deity also foresaw the planned slaying of His Word. Divine Power did not prohibit the death of the two witnesses because Wisdom deemed it best to reveal to man, ultimately, the depth of his folly and degradation.

An outstanding opportunity was proffered to Israel of old. Although the Israelites' condition was similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord declared, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18). The background of this situation, and the reasoning behind it, are given in the preceding verses (Isa. 1:1–17). The language is strong, describing putrefying, running sores all over their bodies and no dressings or ointment. They were full of rottenness, not sound. Yet, despite these sins and the condition of Israel, which are really the same as those of mankind in general, God offered a way of escape and hope: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). Crimson in a garment is difficult to wash out; usually the article of clothing would be discarded as hopelessly stained. Thus sin in the garment of the Israelites' flesh thoroughly permeated, contaminated, and discolored their whole bodies, which were supposed to be white and righteous; nevertheless, if they would heed this message, the Lord would provide a way for them to get back into at least a typically justified state.

Egypt

Both the houses of Israel (Judah and Israel being prototypes of the spiritual) were contaminated with the whoredoms of Egypt (Ezek. 23:2–8,27) and the multiplicity of its gods (Josh. 24:14); yet it appears that the emphasis of Revelation 11:8 is

along the line of the affliction and reproach borne by the Israelites in that land. Jacob and his seed entered Egypt as a people accustomed to the lowly, but honorable, tending of flocks of sheep and goats. The Egyptian people despised shepherds, who were an abomination unto them (Gen. 46:31–34). The taskmasters of Egypt under Pharaoh (a representation of Satan) afflicted Israel with heavy burdens (Exod. 1:11–14). Egypt was known as a land of oppression and reproach and as an iron furnace of affliction (Exod. 13:3; Deut. 4:20; Josh. 5:9; 24:17) to the Israelites (the called of God out of the land of darkness); thus “Egypt” well illustrates, in this instance, the persecution of Christ *by the people, great and small, under the Adversary’s influence* (John 8:44–48; Matt. 5:10–12; Luke 4:24–29; 13:34). Jesus died in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation that did not appreciate his works of righteousness. Instead of accepting Jesus as their Messiah, the people crucified him . . . just as would have happened in Egypt under Pharaoh, for light and righteousness were made manifest to both the Egyptian monarch and the people under him through Moses’ ministry and the plagues.

It is also possible that Revelation 11:8 refers to Moses’ manifestation of his concern for his people when he came of age while *residing in Egypt*. At that time it was said to him by a Hebrew, “Who made thee a prince and judge over us?” (Exod. 2:11–15). Expecting an imminent betrayal to the authorities by his fellow Jews, Moses absented himself from Egypt for forty years. The same religious climate existed at the First Advent of Christ, when “he came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11).

In summation, Revelation 11:8 is emphasizing that just as Jesus was not crucified in Sodom or Egypt but in Israel, so the Bible was crucified by the Romish Church not in Italy but in England.

Verse 9:

And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies¹⁵ three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

The expression “they of the people” signifies some of the people, that is, a sizable portion of the populace both at home and abroad. Specifically, the expression pertains to those *at the scene of the crime*, namely, in England and in the Low Countries of the Continent, where Testaments and books considered heretical were confiscated and burned with the approval of the emperor Charles V. Not only residents but also foreign visitors witnessed this spectacle. This, then, is the setting where the dead bodies of the two witnesses were seen lying for 3½ days in the

15. In the King James Version the Greek word *ptoma*, indicating a “body” or “carcass,” is found three times in the plural. It occurs once in verse 8 and twice in verse 9 of Revelation 11. In the second of the three instances, the word is rendered in the singular in the Sinaitic manuscript. Some Greek codices use either the singular or the plural for the first *two* instances, adding to confusion and uncertainty. However, all testaments seem to agree that the word should be plural in the third and last occasion.

The singular form in the first two instances appears historically proper in that the New Testament can be representative of both testaments—a *part is frequently put forth for the whole* (Matt. 6:11,22; James 2:10). In Daniel 7:23 the Roman Empire, a part of the earth, is representative of the whole.

public thoroughfare of the “great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt” (verses 8 and 9).

Verse 9 reveals that the disgrace of the two witnesses was *far-reaching*; it was known to other nations. The symbolic $3\frac{1}{2}$ days—that is, $3\frac{1}{2}$ years—represents a fractured half of the whole perfect number “seven.” As such, the number $3\frac{1}{2}$ is symbolic of sacrifice and suffering. For example, the ministry of Christ was $3\frac{1}{2}$ years long. He was “cut off . . . in the midst of the week [seven years]” (Dan. 9:26,27). The broken number, as applied to the Bible, indicates that it, too, would suffer a fate similar to that of Jesus.

The portion of text “they of the people . . . shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves” indicates that the Word of God would symbolically experience, for a time, the indignity of the refusal of a decent burial (1 Sam. 31:8–13; 2 Sam. 2:5; 2 Kings 9:10; Jer. 22:18,19). This experience occurred during the $3\frac{1}{2}$ years from November 1526 to May 1530,¹⁶ when the two witnesses were slain.

Although lunar reckoning, 30 days to the month, is used to reduce $3\frac{1}{2}$ symbolic times (i.e., $3\frac{1}{2}$ symbolic years) and to change 42 symbolic months to a common denominator of 1,260 symbolic days, yet the final result, when converted into literal time, is to be translated as *solar* and not lunar years. In other words, the $3\frac{1}{2}$ -symbolic-day slaying of the Scriptures represents not lunar but $3\frac{1}{2}$ solar years. Similarly, our Lord’s ministry was $3\frac{1}{2}$ solar years:¹⁷

			Years	Days
Baptism	Oct. 1	A.D. 29		30 (minimum)
	Nov.	A.D. 29		30
	Dec.	A.D. 29		31
		A.D. 30	1	
		A.D. 31	1	
		A.D. 32	1	
	Jan.	A.D. 33		31
	Feb.	A.D. 33		28
	Mar.	A.D. 33		31
Crucifixion	Apr. 3	A.D. 33	_____	<u>2 (minimum)</u>
	Total:			3 years, 183 days = $3\frac{1}{2}$ years

As already mentioned, not suffering the “dead bodies to be put in graves” signifies a symbolic denial of a decent burial to the Word of God for $3\frac{1}{2}$ literal years. In a historical sense this denial was accomplished by the *public burning* of the Testaments. Anciently, it was customary for carcasses of those considered to be the vilest of criminals to be cast into the garbage disposal dump outside the city of Jerusalem in the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) to be burned. By a miraculous intervention of Providence, and Joseph of Arimathea’s bold request of Pilate for the body of Jesus, the Nazarene was spared this further humiliation (John 19:38). Thus the parts

16. See Appendix 11, “The $3\frac{1}{2}$ -Day/Year Slaughter of Revelation 11:9,” pages 651–657.

17. Henry Fynes Clinton, *Fasti-Romani—Civil & Literary Chronology, Rome and Constantinople* (n.p., 1845), pp. 2, 276.

of three days that Jesus' body lay in the tomb are not intended to be a parallelism for the two witnesses.

Verse 10:

And they that dwell upon 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.

Usually the "earth" represents stabilized society. However, in the Book of Revelation "earth" symbolizes stabilized society under *religious* restraint or control.

"They that dwell upon the earth," the ones making merry and rejoicing in stabilized society under religious restraint, were nominal Christendom—the great bulk, or tare element, that has overrun the Lord's wheat field ever since the apostles fell asleep. Jesus had foretold that this class would persecute true Christians, all the while thinking they were doing God a service; yea, the time would come when faithful Christians would be cast out by their "brethren" (John 16:2). The influence and control of this tare element were not confined to England but existed in many other nations of nominal Christendom (verse 9). When the Lord's Word was disgraced, a sympathetic chord was struck among those who were steeped in Catholicism, even among those who had not seen but had merely heard the report of what had happened.

The rejoicing and making merry indicate a memorable conquest. Similarly, following a sports event that results in a victory for the hometown, the inhabitants of that town may celebrate when the team returns by having a bonfire,¹⁸ dancing, singing, and so forth. Moreover, the giving and exchanging of gifts suggest a holiday festival, a special commemoration of, in this instance, the humiliation of the Scriptures. In fact, the activity is a strangely suggestive perversion of the Jews' noteworthy victory over the archenemy Haman, which resulted in the establishment of the appointed feast of Purim (Esther 9:20–32). As is frequently the standpoint presented in the Book of Revelation, the scene of verse 10 represents the distorted viewpoint of the *enemy*. The tare element is seen having a holiday at the expense of God's Word, which lay in public shame and disgrace.

Nominal Christendom was happy about the death because the two prophets (or two witnesses) had "tormented them." In connection with the plagues of verse 6, the Word of God brought torment of conscience to many who would not yield to it. Such individuals not only hardened their consciences against truth but even became hostile toward it.

Some idea of the rejoicing of the obedient servants of Papacy can better be ascertained by the following incident that occurred in 1530, the very year the Bible was destined to arise from the ashes of its defeat:

18. "In the latter part of 1526 Tyndale's New Testament had been condemned by the prelates and publicly burned at Paul's Cross. . . . Cardinal Campeggio, writing from Rome in November, 1526, states that he 'has heard with pleasure of the burning of the translation of the Bible: *no holocaust could be more pleasing to God.*'" (William Tyndale, *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, *Christian Classics Series*, ed. Richard Lovett [Piccadilly, England: Religious Tract Society, n.d.], Vol. 5, pp. 33–35 footnote.)

“Thomas [Patmore, a friend of John Tyndale, the younger brother of the celebrated Reformer] had said that the truth of Scripture was at last reappearing in the world, after being hidden for many ages. . . . Moreover, the two friends (who were both tradesmen) had distributed a great number of Testaments and other works. But their faith was not deeply rooted, and it was more out of sympathy for their brothers that they had believed: accordingly, Stokesley so completely entangled them, that they confessed their ‘crime.’ [Sir Thomas] More, delighted at the opportunity which offered to cover the name of Tyndale with shame, was not satisfied with condemning the two friends to pay a fine of 100 IL (£100) each; he invented a new disgrace. He sewed on their dress some sheets of the New Testament which they had circulated, placed the two penitents on horseback, with their faces towards the tail, and thus paraded them through the streets of London, exposed to the jeers and laughter of the populace.”¹⁹

“And shall send gifts one to another” probably refers to the ribald jesting and exchange of Bibles from one individual to another as the Bibles were consigned to the flames.

Verse 11:

And after three days and an 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.

Verse 12:

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.

Following the 3½-day symbolic period from 1526 to 1530, God’s Word, the two witnesses, began to revive.²⁰ The resurrection was in *two phases* just as our Lord’s own revival was. The resuscitation of the two witnesses consisted of (1) the entrance of the Spirit of life and standing upon their feet, and (2) their ascent to heaven. The two phases of our Lord’s revival were (1) his resurrection from the tomb and staying here forty days (John 20:17; Acts 1:3), and (2) his ascending to the Father to a much more exalted position (Acts 1:9–11; Phil. 2:9). Thus the two witnesses suffered ignominy like Jesus and were delivered as he was.

The point is that the witnesses’ rising to their feet and their elevation to great prominence are two different occurrences. In other words, the events of verse 12 did not immediately follow those of verse 11, but took place after a considerable amount of time had elapsed. The Lord did not instantly ascend to heaven but remained invisibly present for most of the forty-day period. During this time interval he judiciously manifested himself in ways calculated to prove “I am he that liveth,

19. D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 719.

20. It was during the 3½-year “dead” period that Tyndale re-edited, enlarged, and reprinted the Bible for circulation. By the time the Scriptures arrived back in England and were in circulation, 3½ years had expired. It is thus more reasonable to end the 1,260-day sackcloth era when the two witnesses actually became the people’s Bible . . . in the days of the two contemporaries Luther and Tyndale.

and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore” (Rev. 1:18). In like manner, the 1,260-year sackcloth testimony of the two witnesses ended in 1525 with a burst of enthusiasm and popularity reminiscent of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem moments before his trial and death. Then, with no appreciable time gap, the 3½-year death interval of the two witnesses commenced in 1526. Their later rising to their feet caused great fear among the previously unsympathetic spectators of orthodoxy.

This fear is like that experienced by the scribes and Pharisees after Jesus’ resurrection. Upon hearing the news of his resurrection, the disciples, who had been in deep despondency, excitedly and jubilantly shouted, “He is risen from the dead! We saw him!” One can well imagine the reaction of the scribes and Pharisees. They considered the announcement of a resurrection to be a worse catastrophe than Jesus’ live ministry. How could such enthusiasm be contained except by harsh persecution? The fear and suppressed testimony of the Temple guards stationed at the tomb and the duplicity of the priesthood are recorded in Matthew 27:62–66; 28:4,11–15. The Bible clearly indicates that Jesus was crucified by the Roman civil power at the instigation of the Jewish priesthood. In a sense, the world stands condemned also.

The revival of the two witnesses and the standing upon their feet are comparable to the printing of various versions of the Bible during the period A.D. 1530 to 1611, when the world-renowned King James Version was published.^{21,22} From that moment onward, the Bible began its slow ascent of two centuries to heaven “in a cloud,” that is, during troublesome opposition which but enhanced its popularity.

Jesus ascended to heaven in a favorable cloud, which helped the apostles to appreciate more fully that all power and authority in heaven had been given unto him (Matt. 28:18). However, here in verse 12, events are characterized from the standpoint of “enemies” beholding the Bible’s ascent to heaven, which spelled trouble for the two witnesses. Way back in Revelation 9:13 the sounding of the sixth angel was announced; from there through Chapter 10 and into Chapter 11 (up to verse 14), the Sixth Trumpet—and its effects upon others—is being explained. Since there is an overlapping of the years covered by the Sixth Trumpet and the Sixth Seal, the events are presented sometimes from the perspective of the true Church, sometimes from the viewpoint of the false Church.

Mount of Transfiguration

It would be helpful to examine anew some of the happenings in Revelation 11. The Mount of Transfiguration, the centrality of Christ, the foretelling of his death,

21. Versions printed included the Coverdale Bible (1535), Matthews Bible (1537), Taverners Bible (1539), The Great Bible (1539), The Geneva Bible (1560), The Bishops Bible (1568), Rheims New Testament (1582), Douay Old Testament (1609), and King James Version (1611).

22. “In a convocation of 1536 the bishop of Hereford declared with reference to the translated Bible: ‘Think ye not that we can by any sophisticated subtleties steal out of the world again the light that every man doth see.’” (Archibald G. Baker, ed., *A Short History of Christianity* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940], p. 119.)

“After a time, of course, the early opposition to the giving of the Bible to the people was removed, for in the years 1531–1534 Henry VIII. effected a complete breach with Rome.” (John Robert Van Pelt, *An Introduction to the Study of the Bible* [New York: George H. Doran Co., 1923], p. 261.)

his transfiguration glory, and the two others in the vision (Moses and Elijah)—these all enter the drama of the two witnesses in the Apocalypse.

1. *Jesus* was crucified; in a sense, so also were the two witnesses (verse 8).

2. *Jesus*, upon his resurrection, tarried on earth before his ascension; likewise, the two raised witnesses tarried (verse 11).

3. *Jesus* ascended to heaven in a cloud; the two witnesses likewise ascended (verse 12).

4. *Moses* is inferentially alluded to in both the turning of the waters into blood and the smiting of the earth with all plagues (verse 6).

5. *Elijah* is brought to mind in the 1,260-day sackcloth testimony (verse 3), his at-will utterances calling down fire from heaven to destroy his enemies (verse 5; 2 Kings 1:10–12), and also his command that it rain not (verse 6; 1 Kings 17:1; 18:1).

Though of equal duration, the 1,260 days of the Bible in mourning (verse 3) and the 1,260 days of the Church in the wilderness (Rev. 12:6) did not occur at the same time. In other words, Elijah's literal 3½-year experience and Jesus' literal 3½-year ministry, the Bible's symbolic 3½-year sackcloth era and the Church's symbolic 3½-year wilderness period, are all separate and distinct happenings.

Great Voice, Ascent, Prominence

“And they [the two witnesses] heard a great voice from heaven.” The “great voice” is “the Lord Jesus Himself, the ‘voice,’ the ‘Word,’ of the Heavenly Father.”²³ The great voice said “unto them, Come up hither.” “The Two Witnesses of God, the Old and New Testaments, ascended to heaven, the place of honor and power, as the Scriptures symbolically represent the matter.”²⁴

“And they [the two witnesses] ascended up to heaven.” “The British and Foreign Bible Society (which has distributed 230,000,000 copies of the Bible) was established in 1803; the New York Bible Society in 1804; the Berlin-Prussian Bible Society in 1805; the Philadelphia Bible Society in 1808; and the American Bible Society (127,000,000 copies distributed) in 1817. Bibles by the million, in over 300 languages, are published yearly and sold at low prices, and many thousands are given away to the poor. It is difficult to estimate the wide influence of this work. Its quiet teaching is the greatest of all levelers and equalizers.”²⁵ Thus, as the statistics indicate, the establishment of multiple Bible societies in the early 1800s was instrumental in the two witnesses finally attaining the heavenly prominence or ascension prophesied in the Apocalypse so many years ago.

Verse 13:

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.

23. *The Finished Mystery, Studies in the Scriptures* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: International Bible Students Association, 1918), Ser. 7, p. 177.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

The phrase “and the same hour” associates the “great earthquake” with the ascension of the Word up to heaven (verse 12). In other words, the “cloud” instrumental in the exaltation of Scripture was the effect of the French Revolution itself, for when the fetters of clericalism were broken, the Bible was propelled into great prominence in the ecclesiastical heavens.

As an aftermath of the French Revolution, Bible societies had a birth in England, the United States, France, and other nations. There was greater liberalism along this line, and the need was seen to get the Holy Scriptures into the hands of the masses to prevent a recurrence of the violence. Because a rebellious, atheistic type of people with no background of morals or compunctions had gotten to the fore, inciting violence and terror for ten years, more attention was now given to the very standard itself, the Bible, rather than just to the lax teachings of the Catholic Church. Thus, in spite of Papacy’s continual warnings about the grave dangers of reading the Bible, the people could see that the Scriptures had a cleansing effect. As a result, concessions were made, and the Bible was greatly benefited. Of the previous experiences of the Bible—being slain, standing on its feet, and ascending to heaven—the last experience was related to the French Revolution, and since that time the truth has never been crushed to the ground. There has been more freedom as a consequence of the French Revolution and the abuses that took place. The slogan of the Revolution was “Liberty, equality, and fraternity.”

An “earthquake” represents a *social explosion*. This particular “earthquake” refers to the French Revolution, not the great Time of Trouble, because it was connected with the second woe, or Sixth Trumpet. This was “*a* great earthquake,” not *the* great earthquake (or third woe) that will occur sometime during the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet.

“The tenth part of the city fell.” The “tenth part” was France, and the “city” was mystic Babylon. Hence France, part of the papal dominion or arrangement (Christendom), fell. Previously the French part had been notable, loyal supporters of Papacy. In fact, at one time Papacy had even been located in France. The wording—that “the *tenth* part of the city fell”—suggests that the “city” of Babylon was composed of ten territorial or component parts. The ten parts, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 17, were part of the papal setup; these were the ten divisions of the Roman Empire.

“In the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand.” This portion of text is related to the Elijah account (1 Kings 19:14–18). When Elijah thought only he was left, the Lord told him that in addition there were seven thousand faithful who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Although the Lord used Elijah more than the seven thousand, the Prophet should not have forgotten—and neither should the Lord’s people now forget—that others besides himself were the Lord’s people. The term “Lord’s people” should not be restricted to oneself, or only to others with whom one is associated, for there are other conscientious Christians who are loyal to God and who have manifested that loyalty in ways known unto Him.

The “seven thousand” who were slain in the French Revolution were an *unrighteous* element. The fact that seven thousand lives were taken suggests retribution. The French Revolution was an act of retributive justice that was brought to an

abortive or premature conclusion. Some of the iniquities that had been building up had a partial requiting at that time, but the French Revolution was like a straw in the wind compared to the coming Time of Trouble. It served as an impending warning of something yet future that will happen on a larger scale.

In many aspects the French Revolution prefigures the great Time of Trouble; it contains clues as to the nature of the trouble and its causes and effects. The fact seven thousand were “slain” indicates that particularly the *clerical* element was affected. To a certain extent, it was a balancing of the scales of some of the injustices that had been done. Revelation 18:6 enunciates the principle: “Double unto her double according to her works.” Although the ministry of evil has been permitted in order to discipline and perfect the Church down through the age, those who have been instrumental in causing that evil will not be freely forgiven. The time will come when those responsible for killing the “Abel” class will be requited. Just as all the righteous blood “shed from . . . Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the [porch of the] temple,” was required of the generation of our Lord’s day, so in the near future there will be a similar requiting of the blood shed down through the Gospel Age (Luke 11:50,51).

The reference to the seven thousand was inserted to show that not only Elijah but also *others* in his day, such as the hundred prophets hidden in a cave by Obadiah (1 Kings 18:4), had to endure difficulties and persecutions. Thus the phrase “seven thousand” was used to suggest and symbolize a certain truth. Verse 13 does not mean that in the French Revolution there were specifically seven thousand slain; rather, the number was used to identify the class upon which retribution would come: the *professedly* righteous, who had abused the Lord’s people.

There are two types of evil. (1) Evil exists on an *international* scale. Papacy and its evils are spread out into other countries, and these international evils will be balanced at the end of the age. (2) Evil occurs on a *national* or more localized scale. The setting of this picture is in France, which is the country where earlier, in the Waldensian period, Christians had been forced to flee naked in the midst of winter into caves and to endure hard experiences. Whole cities had been razed to the ground. Not only were the Waldenses themselves involved, but persecution was even extended to others who, to any degree, proffered mercy and kindness. Such injustice in France needed to be offset in the French Revolution. Hence the Revolution involved retributive justice to the *French* nation.

“And the remnant were affrighted.” Those of the same class—the unrighteous or professedly righteous—who survived the trouble in the French Revolution were frightened. Here is another clue that the seven thousand were an unrighteous element, for if righteous, they would not have been affrighted. They were a negligent class who had been derelict in regard to their duty. When a certain portion of this unrighteous religious element properly received severe judgment (pictured by the seven thousand who were slain), the surviving remnant were partially awakened by the prevailing wind of public opinion and, out of fear, made some concessions to the laity and to the people; they relaxed some of the abuses.

The fact that the remnant of this unrighteous class “gave glory to the God of heaven” does not mean they thoroughly repented, for their relenting was more or

less a *concession*. Similar expressions of extolment are used in the Old Testament in regard to heathen kings such as Nebuchadnezzar, who incurred certain judgments but did not convert to the Hebrew faith. King Nebuchadnezzar did, however, make some concessions to the Jews. Cyrus is another example; pleasant prophecies recorded about him in the Bible helped persuade him to release the Jews (Isa. 44:28; 45:1; Ezra 1:1,2,7,8).

Verse 14:

The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

The first woe was a long five-month (150-year) woe, i.e., the pre-Reformation-era experience in connection with Wycliffe's message (Rev. 9:5). The Fifth Trumpet was the first woe of troubles that began to come on Papacy; it was the first inkling of a change in papal history. Unlike Luther's subsequent movement, Wycliffe's movement was diffused and premature in certain respects; yet Papacy could not stamp it out utterly.

The second woe, the French Revolution, was related to Papacy, the system against whom the Sixth Trumpet was blown.

The third woe is like the traditional count of "One, two, three—you are out!" Christendom's, or mystic Babylon's, *actual* destruction and downfall are still future. The third woe will be the great Time of Trouble. A comparison with Revelation 8:13 shows that the three woes are related to the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Trumpets, respectively.

"The third woe cometh [*relatively*] quickly." Jesus used the word "quickly" elsewhere in the Apocalypse: "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. 3:11; 22:7,12,20). What sometimes causes confusion is that the first four trumpets were each explained one right after the other in portions of a chapter. Considerably more space was devoted to the Fifth Trumpet, and the Sixth Trumpet required several chapters of explanation. When a lot of detail is read, one can lose sight of the general lesson; for this reason verse 14 reminds the reader of the woes and sums them up. An important distinction should be noted: A woe is not necessarily a synonym for a trumpet, because a trumpet can last for hundreds of years or more (a long period of time), while a woe occurs within or *during* the trumpet, and thus is usually of shorter duration. For example, under the Fifth Trumpet, there was a *long* five-month woe of 150 years, which happened to correspond exactly with the entire period of the trumpet. On the other hand, the Sixth (or Reformation) Trumpet, which began with Luther in 1517 and terminated at the end of 1877 with the start of the ministry of the seventh messenger, lasted for more than three hundred years; toward the *end* of that time, there occurred the second woe, the French Revolution. In the *latter* part of the Seventh Trumpet, the third woe, the great Time of Trouble, will occur. In other words, when the seventh angel blew his trumpet, all the events mentioned in Revelation 11:18 did not immediately take place. The events enumerated have to be examined carefully to find out what happens and when.

The Seventh Trumpet (A.D. 1878–1998?)

Verse 15:

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 for ever and ever.

C. T. Russell, the last dispensational messenger, or angel, to the Church (Rev. 3:14), is associated with the initial sounding of this final trumpet. The seven trumpets of Revelation are all of divine appointment. In the type they correspond to the blowing of the trumpets at the appearance of the new moon in the beginning of each Hebrew month (Num. 10:10; Psa. 81:3). The last of the first seven trumpet blowings of the year—namely, that which sounded at the beginning of the seventh month—is sometimes called the Feast of Trumpets, a *shabbathon* rest and trumpet-blowing commemoration (Lev. 23:24). For the Israelites the Feast of Trumpets had a special significance in that it marked the month in which the Day of Atonement was to be observed, and also the month in which, every fiftieth year, the Jubilee trumpet was to be blown on the tenth day.

It appears that the Seventh Trumpet of Revelation 11, beginning in 1878, is of limited duration: 120 years. This trumpet should not be confused with the antitypical Jubilee trumpet, which is yet to sound. In the type, the Seventh Trumpet was blown on the first day of the seventh month, whereas that of Jubilee was sounded *later*, on the tenth day. When blown antitypically, the Jubilee trumpet, a universal message and proclamation of liberty, will be unmistakably heard, understood, enforced, and appreciated by all the inhabitants of earth.²⁶ It is to be spiritually blown, with great force, and, as its name implies, will occasion great rejoicing and *jubilation* (Lev. 25:9,10).

Verse 15 should be more correctly rendered, “The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our LORD, and of His Christ” (Sinaitic MS). This verse is often *erroneously* understood to signify that the kingdoms of this world are become those of “our Lord [Jesus]” and “of his Christ”—the latter phrase supposedly being a reference to the body members of Christ. But several lines of reasoning negate this thought. First, the context bears close scrutiny. The statement “our Lord” refers not to Jesus, but to *Jehovah*; and the following designation “of his Christ” applies primarily to Jesus (the head) and secondarily to the Church (his body). A paraphrase would be: “The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of Jehovah, and of Jehovah’s Christ [head and body].” Peter’s testimony substantiates this conclusion:

26. The bicentennial year of the United States’ declaration of independence from Britain commenced January 1, 1976, although the actual event being commemorated was not celebrated until the fourth of July of that year. In other words, the bicentennial year, beginning on the first calendrical day, received its name from the outstanding event that had occurred on the fourth day of the seventh month two centuries earlier. The same principle applies to the antitypical Jubilee trumpet. The Feast of Trumpets, marking the first day of the seventh month, will probably, in the future, be changed and seen as the first day of the first month of a *civil* year, thus corresponding to the present, scripturally unauthorized *Rosh Hashanah*.

The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ [Anointed]. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, *whom thou hast anointed*, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. (Acts 4:26,27)

The Apostle was manifestly alluding to the Second Psalm:

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD [capitalized, signifying *Jehovah*], and against his Anointed. (Psa. 2:2)

There are other interesting comparisons to be seen:

Psalm 2	Revelation 11
“Why do the heathen rage?” (verse 1)	“The nations were angry.” (verse 18)
“Then shall he [Jehovah] speak unto them in his wrath.” (verse 5)	“Thy [Jehovah’s] wrath is come.” (verse 18)
“Yet have I [Jehovah] set my King [Jesus] upon my holy hill of Zion.” (verse 6)	“Are become the kingdoms . . . of his [Jehovah’s] Christ.” (verse 15)

It is also important to note that in the New Testament the word “Lord” can refer to Jehovah. Although over 90 percent of the references are to Jesus, yet in many places the expression “Lord” applies to God Himself.²⁷ Where the word “LORD” appears in the Old Testament in all capital letters, it *always* applies to Jehovah—and never to Jesus personally. It is the Father’s own personal and jealous name (Exod. 34:14).

The reason for saying the kingdoms will become those of Jehovah is that *primarily* it will be God’s Kingdom. This emphasis is sustained throughout the Seventh

27. Some New Testament references where the title “Lord” signifies not Jesus but Jehovah (as proven by counterpart Old Testament texts):

Old Testament	New Testament
Psa. 110:1 “ <i>The LORD</i> said unto my [David’s] Lord.”	Acts 2:34
Psa. 2:2 “The kings of the earth stood up . . . against <i>the LORD</i> , and against his Christ [Anointed].”	Acts 4:26
Isa. 66:1 “Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith <i>the LORD</i> .”	Acts 7:49
Psa. 110:4 “ <i>The LORD</i> sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”	Heb. 7:21
1 Kings 19:10 “ <i>LORD</i> , they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.”	Rom. 11:3
Zech. 3:2 “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil . . . durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, <i>The LORD</i> rebuke thee.”	Jude 9

(See also Luke 1:9; 2:23,29; 20:13; Rev. 4:11.)

Trumpet message. Although the term “Kingdom of Christ” is also used, in the truest sense it is, first, the Kingdom of *God*. It is the Kingdom of Christ in that God, instead of dealing direct with mankind, has committed all judgment to the Son (Acts 17:31); thus God can, as it were, turn aside and let Jesus negotiate the New Covenant to a successful conclusion. If Jehovah were to face mankind direct all down the Millennial Age, they would soon become guilty of Second Death in their unlearned, undeveloped, untried state—though they be thoroughly forgiven or rid of past sins. By placing mankind under Jesus’ custody, God will not look circumspectly upon them until the end of the Millennial Age. Although God allows mankind to be tutored by Jesus, it is really *His* Kingdom in that He is the One who arranged for it and appointed Christ as the instructor. Only temporarily will Christ be seen to assume a more prominent, a more active, and a more open rulership upon earth than Jehovah. At the end of the thousand years, Jesus will turn the Kingdom over to the Father so that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24–28).

In still a third sense, the Kingdom is considered the Kingdom of the Church. The Kingdom is first Jehovah’s (in the best and truest sense); next it is Jesus’ (because he is the Father’s honored Son and the most prominent in authority under Jehovah); and finally it becomes the Church’s (in that the Kingdom will be given to the saints of the most High God—Dan. 7:18,22,27). Revelation 11:15, instead of stating “God, Jesus, and the Church,” indicates “God and The Christ [God’s Anointed],” which includes three plateaus of authority but is categorized as two.

“And he shall reign for ever and ever [Amen! (Sinaitic MS)].” *God* shall reign forever and ever, for Christ’s reign is limited to a period of time within the thousand years, at the end of which the Son will hand the Kingdom over to the Father, whose reign then will never cease. John the Revelator interjects his own enthusiastic endorsement: “*Amen!*”

A question still arises as to when this reign begins. At the initial sounding of the Seventh Trumpet? No! it is answered. Just because the reign is related to the blowing of the Seventh Trumpet does *not* mean that as soon as the messenger sounded the trumpet in 1878, the reign began. The thought is that sometime *during* the Seventh Trumpet era the reign is to occur. Similarly, *during* the blowing of the Sixth Trumpet, there was a great earthquake; however, the French Revolution did not occur when Luther sounded the trumpet but long after his *death*. Thus most, if not all, of the events predicted to occur during the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet follow the demise of the seventh messenger.

Now that the background of verse 15 has been explored, the “great voices in heaven” can be identified. *After* the kingdoms of this world *have become* Jehovah’s and *after He has assumed* His regal authority, great voices in heaven will announce the events as an accomplished fact. Here “heaven” refers not to the nominal Christian heavens or to earth’s literal atmosphere, but to God’s heaven. Specifically, the “great voices in heaven” signify the entire heavenly host . . . all the holy angels will joyously acclaim and render due praise in connection with the wedding of Jesus and his Bride, the coronation of the King and Queen.

Verse 16:

And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

Verse 17:

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.

The twenty-four elders are personified abstractions of the Word of God in their component parts in the books of the Old Testament. Since at the First Advent there was no New Testament, the twenty-four elders were emblematic of the *whole Word of God*. The prophetic utterances of the Bible concerning the Kingdom, particularly those of the Old Testament, which contains the bulk of prophetic testimony, will culminate and/or be fulfilled at the time the kingdoms of the world become those of Jehovah and His Anointed. It is then, when these prophecies are fulfilled, that the twenty-four elders will bow down and give homage to their Author and Sponsor, the Lord God Almighty.²⁸

The twenty-four elders, who fall on their faces and worship, say, “We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty.” In other words, they give thanks to Jehovah, the *All-mighty* God. The word “Almighty” cannot refer to Jesus, for his proper title is “The *mighty* God, The everlasting [age-lasting] Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). The further designation “which art, and wast, and art to come”²⁹ also cannot apply to Jesus because there was a time when he was dead (Rev. 1:18). Previously in the Book of Revelation, the title “which is, and which was, and which is to come” was seen to apply to the ever-living Jehovah (1:4). Here, under the Seventh Trumpet, the reason the twenty-four elders give this accolade of praise and thanksgiving is “because *thou* [the emphasis being on the *Almighty* God, not Jesus] hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.”

The reign of Jehovah is a *future* event. Once this time feature is properly seen, to *then* say that His reign has begun in any sense of the word would be not merely a

28. See Appendix 12, “Prophetic Utterances of the Twenty-four Elders,” pages 659–661.

29. **A Title of Deity**

“From him which is, and which was, and which is to come”—Rev. 1:4 (KJV).

“Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come”—Rev. 4:8 (KJV).

“O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because . . .”—Rev. 11:17 (KJV).

“Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, *AND* because . . .”—Rev. 11:17 (Sinaitic).

In the last rendering it seems quite apparent that the omission of the phrase “art to come” was a *lapsus calami* on the part of the original transcriber of the Codex Sinaiticus because, as written, the extra “and” after the second descriptive phrase of the divine title would be superfluous. The phrase “art to come” is found in the following ancient versions:

Memphitic Lower Egypt Version (fourth century)

Vulgate Clementine Text based on Jerome’s Text (fourth century)

Armenian Version (Uscan Edition based on a fourth or fifth century text)

91. Codex Vaticanus B. Supplement (about the seventh century)

95. Codex Parham “17” Mt. Athos Scrivener Collation

The phrase “Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come”—whether in two or in three parts—obviously can apply only to Jehovah, the “Lord God *Almighty*.”

diminution of God's glory, but—more than that—a defamation of the Divine Character. With the continuing prevalence of sin and unchecked immorality, rebellion, and terrorism, with evil men prospering and evil deeds flourishing . . . to then blandly state that the ALL-MIGHTY GOD(?) has taken to Himself—that He has assumed—His GREAT POWER(?) and has begun to REIGN(?) is a completely untenable theory. Upon whom is this marvelous authority being exercised? Is not Satan still the god of this world? It is most significant that in these three verses (verses 15 to 17), the role of Jehovah is emphatically asserted, while The Christ is mentioned in a minor or secondary capacity.

Not only is Jehovah not reigning, but also, as already implied, neither is Christ or the Church presently reigning. The Church cannot reign until the whole body is complete. The Apostle Paul said, "I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you" (1 Cor. 4:8), and "that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:17), for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50). The Master himself said, "Be thou faithful *unto death*, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10), and "he that overcometh, and keepeth my works *unto the end*, to him will I give power over the nations: and he [the overcomer unto death] shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers" (Rev. 2:26,27).

The Bride of Christ, when presented before the throne, will be a collective bride, and not be put forth in piecemeal fashion. Nor will this presentation be fragmented in its fulfillment, with some beyond the veil of humanity and some down here in the flesh. The same will be true with respect to the reign. It will be a *joint* reign with Christ, which will follow the marriage of the Lamb. The coronation of earth's King and Queen, the inauguration of the Kingdom, will follow the wedding.

Verse 18:

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.

Here it is declared, "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come." This is a direct reference to verse 1 of the Second Psalm, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" and to verse 5, "Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." To repeat: Revelation 11:18 reads, "And the nations *were* angry, and thy wrath *is* come"; that is, God's wrath *follows* the *previous* anger of the nations (people). The Apostle Peter clearly indicates that this Psalm does not apply to the Time of Trouble of the nations of earth at large (as is so commonly taught) but that it had a *primary* fulfillment at the First Advent; namely, King Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Roman soldiers, and the people of Israel were all involved in Jesus' death (Acts 4:25–28). The Psalm, however, has a further application to the Church at this end of the age. What Jesus experienced will also happen to the Church as a part of Jehovah's Anointed class. It will be thought expedient, as it were, for "one" to die rather than have the whole "nation" perish (John 11:49,50). In addition to false charges and false witnesses, there will be a

wild and tumultuous assembly in connection with the trial. *Pilate's Report*,³⁰ whether truth or fiction, does seem to be in harmony with Peter's applying Psalm 2 to Jesus' death and trial. The people were angry and raging, "Crucify him, crucify him!" (Mark 15:13,14; Luke 23:21,23; John 19:6). In their insanity they put him to death, even the Lord's Anointed. So likewise, the last members of the body of Christ will die violently. The heel members (Gen. 3:15) of The Christ will be bruised . . . just prior to Jehovah's taking to Himself His great power and reigning. He then shall laugh them to scorn and have the persecutors in derision, even speaking to them in His wrath, and vexing them in His sore displeasure—that is, in the world's Time of Trouble (Psa. 2:4,5).

The phrase "and the time of the dead, that they should be judged" follows immediately. It is reminiscent of Daniel 12:1,2—"And at that time shall Michael stand up, . . . and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time. . . . And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting [age-lasting] contempt."

Next it is stated "and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great." Note the order of those to be rewarded: (1) "the prophets" (the Ancient Worthies), (2) "the saints," and (3) those who fear God's name (the world of mankind). The question arises, are these three categories listed (a) in the time sequence in which they will be granted their rewards, (b) in the order of their initial appearance on the human plane of existence, that is, in the time sequence of their trial and subsequent development, or (c) in order of importance?

The key to understanding the sequence of the rewards lies in the significance of the term "the saints" *as used in this particular verse*. Although "saints" are usually associated with the Little Flock, the word "saint," like the word "angel," can have a variety of meanings depending on context. Now to apply the acid test: Do categories (a), (b), and/or (c) restrict the definition of "saints" in verse 18 to signify the Little Flock?

Revelation 20:6 indicates the Little Flock are to be partakers of the FIRST RESURRECTION, which means they are first in the sense of *importance* as well as first in the sense of *time of reward*. Since the term "prophets" precedes that of "saints," the listing cannot be according to (a) or (c). Category (b), therefore, is the answer to the original question, for the enumeration fits the sequence in which these classes appear on the earthly stage from the standpoint of their *historic trial* and testing period. First, there were developed the Old Testament worthies (the prophets and their lesser counterparts); then come the New Testament worthies (the saints and those of less honor—the Great Company); next will be the Millennial Age worthies (the "small and great" of mankind who ultimately prove faithful). Finally, following the development of these three classes, yet one more event will occur as listed in verse 18: the en masse destruction of the incorrigible at the end of the Millennium.

30. *Pilate's Report to Caesar* (Akron, Ohio: Hamilton Publishing House, 1966).

The destruction of the incorrigible is foretold in the clause “[that thou] shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.” This expression does not mean that all those unworthy of life everlasting will be destroyed from among the people before the end of the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, i.e., before 1998(?) expires. To the contrary, it means that this judgment will merely *start* its progressive fulfillment by that date and then continue throughout the Millennial Age. In other words, God’s purpose is revealed here. His intention is to eradicate all evil, and He will eventually remove those who are proven to be unfit. For the world of mankind the Scriptures teach a universal hope of salvation based on works, and not a universal salvation regardless of deeds.

Although the majority of the wicked will be destroyed at the end of the Millennium, some will be destroyed in different stages of development *throughout* the thousand-year period. Those who adamantly refuse to hear the voice of “that prophet” will be cut off almost immediately (Acts 3:23). Those who placidly obey, but do not make sufficient progress after a one-hundred-year trial, will be accursed (Isa. 65:20). Others who outwardly obey and outwardly seem to make considerable progress, yet inwardly are not in thorough accord with the reign of righteousness, will be cut off at the end of the Millennium. Therefore, all the wicked of the world of mankind will be tried and destroyed *during* the sounding of the Jubilee trumpet . . . all enemies will deace *within* the thousand-year period (1 Cor. 15:25). Earth’s antitypical Jubilee *year*, which began in October 1874, is one event; but the sounding of the antitypical Jubilee *trumpet* is another (and separate) event—yet future. Where the Seventh Trumpet (1878–1998?) ends, the Jubilee trumpet begins to sound and follows through to the end of the Millennial reign.

Although this is the day of the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet—the trumpet is already sounding—the world does not know it. The people do not heed or desire to understand the message. Not until the antitypical Day of Atonement will the Jubilee trumpet be blown loud enough for all to unmistakably hear it. “For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not” (Job 33:14). Only the third time, when God will arise and speak awesomely to the earth, will the world wake up. The world did not attentively listen to the two previous announcements (woes), but they will hearken to the third. “Arise, O God, judge the earth” (Psa. 82:8); “the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him” (Hab. 2:20).

Verse 19:

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.

Before verse 19 is considered in depth, a review is in order. Verses 15 to 17 describe the primary event to occur during the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, namely, the reign of Jehovah and His Christ. Verse 18 indicates the trouble and the blessing incidental to the assumption of that power. Verse 19 is *not sequential in fulfillment* to the previous four verses, but sums up the matter by providing a new slant or outlook . . . that none of the events just described (excluding the blowing of the Seventh Trumpet itself) can or will happen *until the Bride class is complete*.

Attention Directed to the Crucifixion Scene

“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.” This event obviously alludes to the time when the veil of the Temple was rent, thus exposing, to those in the Holy, the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy. The fact that this setting of the open veil in verse 19 occurs during the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet suggests that at the close of the Gospel Age, there will be a spiritual fulfillment of this former event. A time will come when those remaining in the “holy” condition will become aware that the wise virgin class have gone beyond the veil and that those still here in the flesh are, at most, the foolish virgins.

The Gospel account is as follows: “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the spirit [Greek *pneuma*]. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in [Greek *eis*, see verse 53] twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks were rent; [*and the graves were opened—omit*] and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection [*and went—omit*] into [Greek *eis*, or *in*] the holy city; [*and—omit*] they appeared [Greek *emphanizo—were made manifest*, passive voice] unto many” (Matt. 27:50–53 Sinaitic MS).³¹

The “saints” who were revived seem to have been followers of Jesus who expired prior to his crucifixion. Their awakening afforded them renewed opportunity to run the race, earlier proffered, of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, which they could not have legally entered until Pentecost. Their unique experience of rising shortly after the death of Jesus was no doubt providentially arranged by God to aptly symbolize the future resurrection of the Ancient Worthies (Psa. 106:16;

31. It is to be noted that this awakening from the tomb occurred in the interval between Jesus’ death and his resurrection. If the reader were to place himself or herself in the situation of those risen disciples back there, it would not be difficult to see how they erroneously considered themselves to be resurrected instead of being merely resuscitated from death. Having no concept of time while lying unconscious in the tomb, they would joyously come forth thinking they had entered the Kingdom. But—alas!—imagine their confusion of mind and appalling perplexity to be informed by others—or possibly even witnessing for themselves—that Jesus was nailed to the Cross! How could they suddenly adjust to so rude and so startling a circumstance? To whom could they attribute their own rising from the tomb? For what purpose were they raised? Had they entered a real world or was this a realm of fantasy?

It is no wonder, then, that until things were sorted out in their muddled minds, they could not intelligibly do anything but probably stayed inconspicuously out of sight. However, when Jesus (the first to truly rise from death) appeared to his other followers and certified the reality of his resurrection, then these risen disciples burst forth with unbounded joy and unleashed enthusiasm and entered the capital, proclaiming, “Jesus is risen! Look what happened to us! We were dead and now we are alive!”

Of course, many friends and relatives would be able to verify the prior death and burial of these dear ones. Moreover, this fact would be seared into the minds of their children and their children’s children. The authenticity of the darkening of the sun; the earthquake and rending of the veil; the testimony of the awakened ones including that of Lazarus, who had been raised earlier—all these strange signs and wonders could not be discounted. Could such supposed imaginations be fraudulently introduced into the Gospels . . . and yet escape detection and exposure? The very fact that Matthew’s Gospel was circulated at an early date and his testimony was passed by without vehement disclaimers by the *living contemporary priesthood*, who were so opposed to the teachings of Jesus, not only is prima facie evidence but merits de facto cognition of the validity of the happenings recorded.

Heb. 12:23) after the death of The Christ at the end of the Gospel Age. Specifically, their resurrection is expected to occur at the climax of Jacob's Trouble, when they will be brought forth from death and appear before men in bodily form (Jer. 30:7-9; Dan. 12:1,2; Psa. 119:62). First, however, all true Christians, regardless of rank, must die and enter into their reward so that the ransom merit of Jesus, the atoning blood of redemption, can be released and applied on behalf of the world (Heb. 11:39,40).

Verse 19, therefore, directs attention to the circumstances surrounding Jesus' crucifixion. After the death of the last members of the Very Elect—that is, the last members of The Christ in the strictest sense of that term—then will come the Time of Trouble . . . with earthquake, lightnings, thunderings, and great hail. This future scene is spiritually reminiscent of the First Advent parting of the veil of the Most Holy in the Temple, which exposed to view the Ark in the innermost chamber.

The Journeying Ark and the House of Rest

The Ark of the Covenant, or "Ark of the Testimony," was the only article of furniture in the Most Holy (Heb. 9:2-4—see *The Emphatic Diaglott* rendering plus footnote). Its name suggests that it illustrated the embodiment of Jehovah's plan, which He had purposed in Himself before the beginning of His creation—before even the minutest development of His plan had taken place. In other words, the Ark is a miniature representation of the eternal purpose of God—His foreordained arrangement of riches of grace for mankind in The Christ (head and body)—"the hidden mystery."³² The Ark is the world's hope chest, in which all the good things of God are stored up. The receptacle, or treasure chest, itself represents the true Church, and its propitiatory cover, or lid, symbolizes Christ, the head of that Church, which is his body. Just as the Ark of the Covenant led the nation of Israel into the Promised Land (Num. 10:33-36), so a secondary application of its spiritual counterpart will lead the world into an earthly paradise.

But the first and primary symbolism pertains to the Gospel Age. The Ark has not yet entered the Most Holy, and it will not symbolically do so until the last members of the Very Elect have passed beyond the veil of human experience. On the Chart of the Ages,³³ the Ark is pictured as already being in the Most Holy because that is the *objective*, the *finished* picture. At present, however, the Ark is still in the journeying process. It is being borne along and will enter the Temple condition when the feet members of The Christ finish their earthly course, when the blood of the second offering of the Day of Atonement is applied to the Mercy Seat (Lev. 16:15).

In a practical manner of speaking, the true Church is temporarily in a fleshly "tent" or "tabernacling" condition. Therefore, when Paul states, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16), he is reminding the brotherhood of their holy calling to be God's *future* Temple. Similarly, when Peter declares, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9), he is far from stating that the Church is currently reigning; rather, he is referring to the hope of their calling. It is

32. *Tabernacle Shadows of the "Better Sacrifices,"* 1966 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1881), p. 121.

33. *The Divine Plan of the Ages, Studies in the Scriptures,* no ed. date (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1886), Ser. 1, see chart in back of book.

in this sense that certain Scriptures give the Temple illustration a present application. Whether individuals are faithful or not, God *will have* a qualified holy priesthood.

Although the Temple and the Ark both picture the Church, the symbols are used in an accommodated sense. The work, or coming judgment, that God has determined is being held in abeyance. It cannot be executed because the Ark is not in His holy Temple yet. When it is, much turbulence will ensue. To differentiate between the Temple and the Ark of the Testament, both of which picture the Church: The Temple is more the *fixed* structure and organizational authority that God has purposed for the future, whereas the Ark pictures the *progressive* nature of the fulfillment of that purpose.

Verse 19 informs the Lord's people that after the Temple of God is opened in heaven and the Ark is seen within, then will come the trouble. Thus a relationship exists between the exposed Ark and the events that immediately follow. When the journeying Ark enters its haven of rest, then will come the "lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."

The "Testament" of the Ark of the Covenant

A testament is related to a covenant, and yet there is a distinction, for a testament implies there are a testator and a death. A testament, or will, is read after the death of the testator, who is usually, but not always, the writer of the will. It is true that sometimes a will, or testament, is called a covenant, but a covenant can also be a promise, which would not necessarily involve the thought of death.

The word "testament" is most appropriate in verse 19 because it signifies the necessity of the death of the testator, the death of The Christ, before the New Covenant can go into operation. But since "covenant" and "testament" in the scriptural sense are somewhat synonymous and interchangeable, another picture is brought to mind; namely, verse 19 also alludes to Exodus 19; 20:18. At the inauguration of the Law Covenant (a prototype of the New Covenant), there were darkness (a thick cloud); fire; a long and continuous trumpet sound, not blown by man, that waxed louder and louder; an earthquake; and lightnings. When the New Covenant is made with the house of Israel (Jer. 31:31–34), not only will it be preceded by miraculous manifestations, but also it will be inaugurated with blood atonement. In other words, when The Testator dies, the blood will be applied and sprinkled on behalf of the people—but trouble will precede this blessing.

Noah's Ark and the Flood

"And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3; Matt. 24:36–39; Luke 17:26–30; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:4–8).

In Noah's day the earth was "filled with *violence*," "the *wickedness* of man was great," and "every imagination of the *thoughts* of his heart was *only evil continually*" (Gen. 6:13,5). This concise, graphic portrayal of conditions back there corresponds to those rampant today. However, to describe either the trouble that prevailed before the Flood or present-day conditions as the Day of God's Wrath not only is incongruous but is totally unacceptable. The violence before the Flood originated with fallen man and a depraved society influenced by demons in open

rebellion against divine authority. The latter took (forcibly if necessary) unto themselves human wives of *all whom they chose* (Gen. 6:2). Both the materialized fallen angels and their subsequent progeny were mentally and physically superior to Adam's race. Man's own inhumanity to man, plus the demoniac violence, makes the ascribing of guilt an easy task, "for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. 6:12). It should be noted, however, that God's wrath was displayed not in the preceding evils but in the precipitation of the Flood itself—something *beyond* human and angelic origin. The same is true today. In no way is God responsible for the obscenity, depravity, lawlessness, and terrorism that afflict human society. These are not the *results* of His anger.

We are living in *A* time of trouble, but not *THE* Time of Trouble to come. The "flood" of God's indignation is to be equated, as it were, with the precipitation of a figurative nuclear "winter." In spite of the world's current ills, the Scriptures declare the present time to be still the "summer" of God's favor; that is, although the Gospel Age is expiring, this is still the day of salvation or the time of harvest to as many as will now quickly lay hold of eternal life (predicated, of course, upon prior repentance). The true Church will pass beyond the veil of human experience before "winter" (Jer. 8:20; Matt. 24:20–22; Luke 21:36). But, thank God, those terrible days will be shortened . . . not on behalf of, not for the sake of, but *BY* the Elect.

According to the Apostle the Ark prefigures the salvation of souls through baptism (or consecration) into Christ's death (1 Pet. 3:18–21). Only when Noah's Ark was finished, and entered into, did the Flood come. God waited 120 literal years for the *completion of the Ark*. It took seven days for Noah and his family to enter the Ark; those seven days represent the seven periods of the gospel Church during which the faithful have been entering the antitypical Ark. When the Ark is fully occupied, the Lord will close the door and shut the Little Flock within (Gen. 7:16).³⁴ After that cometh the "flood": the lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake, and great hail of Revelation 11:19.

One reason for supplying information about the Flood is that a definite relationship exists between Noah's Ark, the ark of bulrushes that bore Moses upon the waters of the river Nile, and the Ark of the Covenant seen in the Most Holy of the Temple.

Flashback to the Angel with the Censer

There is a close relationship between the *Temple scene* of Revelation 11:19 and the vision of the angel and the censer of Revelation 8:3–5. Not until after the incense and the prayers of the Very Elect have been fully offered up will the golden censer be filled with the fiery coals of divine wrath and cast into the earth to cause "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." Or stated another way, not until after each of the seven angelic trumpeteers has blown his trumpet (some fifty-eight verses later) will the "lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and

34. Although the salvation of the Great Company class is not concentrated upon in the Noah's Ark portrayal, it is vividly pictured in the reality of the destruction *by fire* of Sodom and Gomorrah and the flight and rescue of Lot and his daughters. Their flight was not to the mountain kingdom of joint-heirship with Christ but to the little city (picturing a lesser or lower salvation) of Zoar (Gen. 19:19–22; see also 1 Cor. 3:15; Jude 23).

an earthquake, and great hail” come to pass. It is during this commotion on earth that the half-hour silence in heaven occurs (Rev. 8:1).

Summation

The “*lightnings*” are further future revelations of truth exposing what conditions should be, but are not.

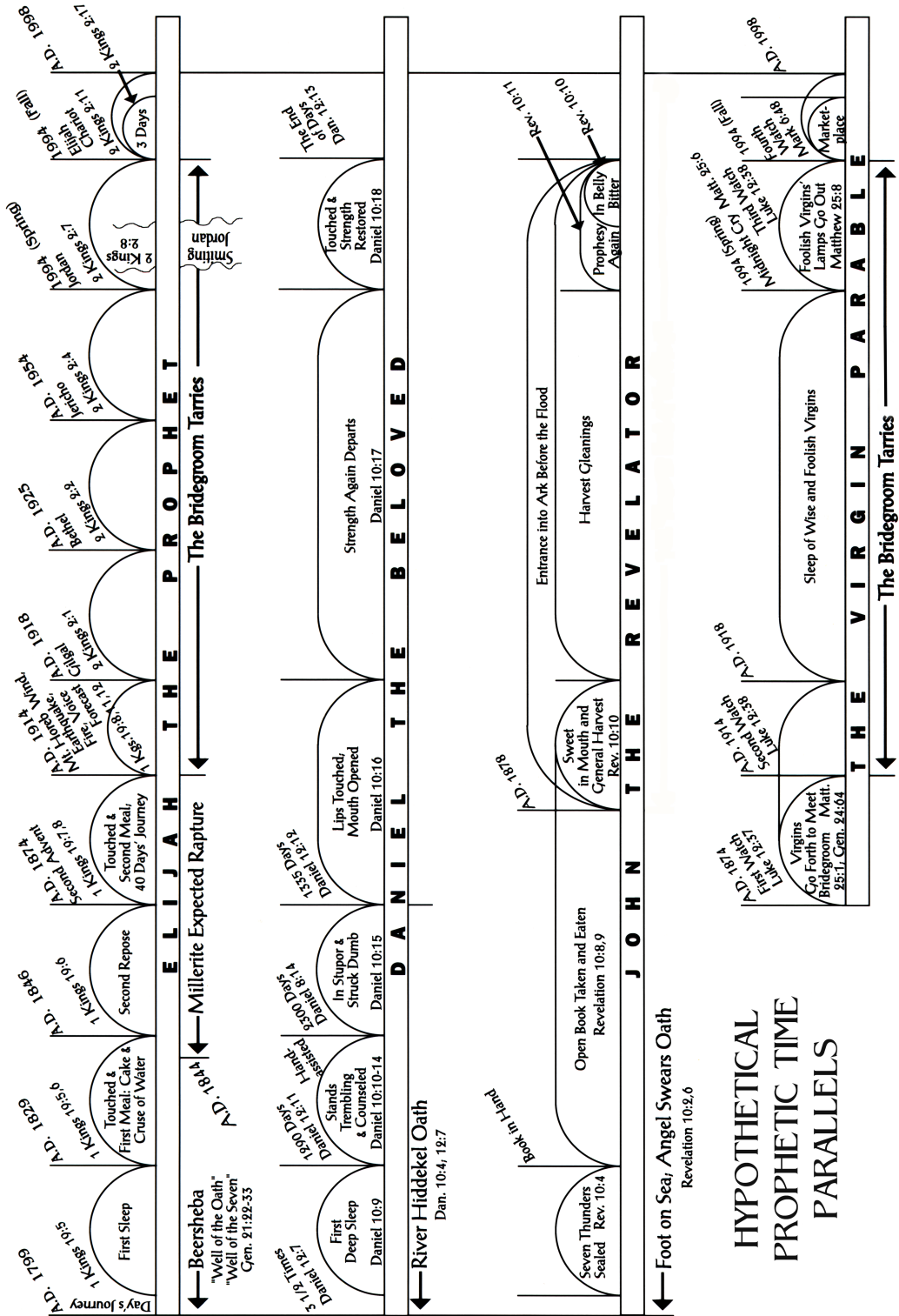
The “*voices*” are vehement clamorings of the people for their real and fancied rights as a result of the revelations of truth.

The “*thunderings*” are the fearful repercussions and sporadic violence associated with such contention.

The “*earthquake*” is the complete rupture and upheaval of Satan’s present order followed by the red hand of anarchy.

The “*great hail*” is a deluge of truth in its most compact form that falls *selectively* upon the heads of the proud and those who do wickedly (Mal. 4:1)—upon those of the world who disobey the instruction to “seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger” (Zeph. 2:3).

Hail is often associated with the voice of God’s indignation (Josh. 10:11; Isa. 30:30; Psa. 18:13), which will “sweep away the refuge of lies” (Isa. 28:17). But it will be specially directed against the “drunkards of Ephraim” (Isa. 28:1–3), the false prophets of Christendom “that prophesy out of their own hearts.” “Thus saith the Lord GOD; . . . Ye have not gone up into the gaps [breaches], neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel [God’s people] to stand *in the battle in the day of the LORD*. . . . [ye] have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; . . . ye, *O great hailstones*, shall fall. . . . So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, . . . and will say unto you, The wall is no more, neither they that daubed it; to wit, the prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem [the city of God]” (Ezekiel 13).



Note: It is likely that the years 1994 and 1998 should be changed to 2014 and 2018, respectively.

Elijah the Prophet

The 40-day journey to Mt. Horeb is as much a prophetic time period as the miraculous provision of food during the 1,260-day drought. Mt. Horeb, here synonymous with Mt. Sinai, represents the expected glorification of the true Church and the establishment of the Kingdom by A.D. 1914 (cf. Heb. 12:18–29).

The four intervening chapters in the Book of Kings that cover events in Elijah's life between his experience at Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19) and his arrival at Gilgal (2 Kings 2) are a historical parenthesis, designed to shed further light on the significance of his final work in smiting the river Jordan. Like Horeb, the mountain of God (Exod. 3:1), the last four stops in Elijah's itinerary are places where the rapture of the Prophet was anticipated.

1. *Gilgal* (wheel or revolution). Place where the Israelites spent the first night after crossing Jordan and entering Canaan, the Land of Promise (Josh. 4:19). The date A.D. 1918 was based upon the parallel dispensation date A.D. 73, when the last Judaic fortress at Masada fell.

2. *Bethel* (house or gate of God). Site of Jacob's ladder, prefiguring the role of the Ancient Worthies (Gen. 28:10–19; 31:13). The date A.D. 1925 was based upon an erroneous calculation of the Jubilee cycles.

3. *Jericho* (new moon—that is, 29+ days until the new moon). Fortified city that, before its fall, barred the Israelites from further entry into the Holy Land (Josh. 6:1,2). The date A.D. 1954 was due to falsely equating the start of Daniel's "70 weeks" prophecy with the decree of Cyrus, 536 B.C., etc.

4. *Jordan* (judged down). Site where Elijah smote the river Jordan, indicating a future smiting message. The date A.D. 1994 is based on the four-month-harvest year-days ($4 \times 30 = 120$) (John 4:35). Also, 120 years were needed to complete Noah's Ark *before* the Flood (the Time of Trouble) came (Gen. 6:3).

Note: Many thousands believed that 1975 would be the true beginning of the Millennium, instead of 1874–1875, because of the misconception that the period of the Judges was a 350- and not a 450-year period. This belief had relatively little impact upon those anticipating a *spiritual* resurrection, an eternal abode with Christ in the heavenly realm. For this reason the 1975 date is omitted.

Daniel the Beloved

This schematic adds new dimension to the unusual detail of Daniel 10:7–21.

John the Revelator

This schematic includes the 120-year Noah parallel, consisting of two parts: (1) the entrance of Noah and family into the Ark before the Flood, prefiguring 1994; and (2) the new order beginning at the end of the Deluge, picturing 1998. The "fig tree" nation of Israel (Joel 1:6,7; Hab. 3:17) put forth its leaf in May 1948 (Matt. 24:32). Could it be that the generation (Psa. 90:10) in which all things would be fulfilled (Matt. 24:34; Luke 21:32) is 70 years, expiring in 2018?

The Ten Virgins Parable

Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence must not be confused with the midnight cry "Behold, the *bridegroom!*" for Matthew 25:10 specifically states that upon this latter announcement, "they that were [then] ready [this side of the Veil] went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." The midnight cry, therefore, and the marriage are yet future.

The Harvest Truth era has witnessed a much larger movement in numbers and degree of understanding than the Millerite movement. Both had similar expectations and disappointments regarding the marriage. The already present Lord has tarried in his role as Bridegroom, for the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7) did not take place either before or after A.D. 1914. The Bride class must first be complete.

The sleep of the wise and foolish virgins does *not* represent a period of inactivity in Gospel works. Rather, it indicates the loss of fervency and expectancy that characterized their going forth to meet the Bridegroom with the climactic date A.D. 1914 in mind—a date that was quickly adjusted to A.D. 1918. Because of these two disappointments, the zeal and enthusiasm of the brotherhood in looking forward to other specific dates progressively diminished to a somewhat hypothetical interest tinged more with curiosity than with a general personal longing to meet Messiah face to face at an appointed time.

The four watches at the bottom of the chart start with the general Harvest period in A.D. 1874. Luke 12:37,38 speaks of the Lord, who, "*having come*" (*Diaglott*) during the *first* watch, does not come for the last of the Bride class until a later watch.

He Will Make It Plain

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

Dragon, Beast, and Image of Beast

Part IV: Chapters 12–14

Revelation Chapter 12

To have the proper perspective and interpretation of the drama unfolded in the twelfth chapter of Revelation, one must realize at the outset that this chapter is the record of certain events *as viewed in the eyes of orthodoxy*. The events were viewed as something wonderful, indeed as God's overruling providential care in granting His professed Church an astounding victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. That Constantine, the ruler of the mighty Roman Empire, would espouse Christianity and make it the religion of the realm was truly a surprising development. Instead of viewing the emperor's nominal acceptance and adoption of Christianity as the religion of the empire in its proper light—that is, as being a most baneful and dangerous influence, as being a trap and an ensnarement of the true brotherhood—Christianity's adherents, for the most part, considered this development a harbinger of better things to come and did not recognize it as an artifice and stratagem of the Adversary, who now would assume the role of an angel of light (Matt. 4:8,9; John 5:43; 2 Cor. 11:14).

First, there comes upon the scene the gospel Church as a glory-garbed maiden adorned most resplendently in celestial garments of beauty. It is subsequently discerned that she is pregnant with the promised hope of rulership over the nations and kingdoms of earth. For was she not, according to prediction, to bruise the serpent or dragon's head (Gen. 3:15)? Note, for instance, the subtle but false inferential comparison made between the virgin birth of Jesus and now the supposed miraculous conception and virgin birth of the Kingdom class—a hope which then engendered the rise and development of the false vicarship of Christ, namely, the Papacy.

It was not wrong for the Church to long for the coming blessedness of the New Jerusalem condition, but it was wrong for the majority of believers to become impatient and ultimately seize the reins of power (Exod. 32:1,7,8). That the awesome power of the Roman dragon, which had already crushed and devoured the whole earth in establishing its universal dominion (Dan. 7:23), was now granting deferential treatment toward the professed Church of Christ seemed too good not to be taken advantage of.

Only those Christians enlightened by the Word of God would be able to discern the artifice and the incongruity of the situation. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50). The overcoming Church must be faithful unto death, and then they (not apart from their successors) will be raised to Kingdom honors and, conjointly with the return of the Saviour, assume rulership (2 Thess. 1:10; Col. 3:4; 1 Pet. 5:4). "Friendship of [or with] the world is enmity with God" (James 4:4). The 1,260, the 1,290, the 1,335, the 2,300, and the 2,520 (7 360) days or years must all reach fulfillment before the official reign of Christ can begin.¹

1. *The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1889), Ser. 2, pp. 73–102. *Thy Kingdom Come, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1890), Ser. 3, pp. 61–120.

Three centuries of unsuccessful opposition to Christ and the faithful, concluding with the most bitter as well as the most relentless persecution (instigated by Galerius but formalized and enforced by the authority of Diocletian in A.D. 303 and lasting eight years beyond the emperor's retirement in A.D. 305, ceasing only with the latter's death in A.D. 313), made it apparent that the Christian religion could not be suppressed. Nay, in the face of such opposition, it increased in numbers, strength, and influence. Satan realized he could no longer be the *outward* opponent of God in religious affairs. This strategy was outmoded, and he would have to adopt new methods. Therefore, the Adversary decided to be "friends" with this vigorous element by swallowing or adopting it into his kingdom, by putting it under the guidance and control of the Roman government. Of course this tactic opened the door of opportunity for advancement(?) for those Christians(?), ambitious for power, who harbored Nicolaitan sentiments.

The Woman

Verse 1:

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:

The "heaven" in this chapter is the ecclesiastical heaven. The "woman" represents the primitive Church in its original purity, and the "moon" symbolizes the Law or the Law Covenant. The moon is pictured as being under the feet of the woman because she is (a) *above* the Law, and yet (b) in harmony with its principles . . . "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4). Just as the sun is superior to the moon in the natural heavens, and is the greater of the two lights (Gen. 1:16), so the illumination of the Gospel is superior to that of the Law. Moreover, the moon, in its shining, is but the reflected light of the sun, whereas the sun emits its own effulgence. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in[to] our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God *in the face of Jesus Christ*" (2 Cor. 4:6). The "crown of twelve stars" upon the woman's head portrays the twelve apostles as official light-bearers to the Church.²

The woman was "clothed with the sun." The account does not state that she was clothed with *sunlight*—as one basking in the sun—but that there was an effulgent emission of light from her clothing. Possibly the Apostle saw clasped behind her shoulders, as a cape, a round, disklike shape suggesting the sun. Thus John, in vision, saw the Ephesian Church as a woman in "heaven," or earth's atmosphere, in strikingly beautiful array. Initially seen in such favorable light, the scene swiftly changes into one of perplexing anxiety.

Verse 2:

And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

2. This identification is another confirmation that the seven stars of Revelation 1:20 represent seven individuals.

As already expressed, a very small yet persistent and determined minority of the early Church membership possessed an impatient and inordinate desire for the promised Kingdom power. At first these individuals were vastly outnumbered and buried in proportional obscurity within the sincere majority body membership of the Ephesian Church.³ During that era, when their deeds surfaced, the brotherhood resented and responded to their impious behavior. The risen Lord commended the righteous majority, “I know . . . 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: . . . this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate” (Rev. 2:2,6).

Nevertheless, that which began with certain individuals later, in the Smyrna Church era,⁴ significantly increased in size and influence; and in Pergamos, the third era, this class constituted a clear and open majority, publicly representative of the whole. This distressing circumstance and progressive development in the professed Church of Christ caused those faithful and true to the Lord to experience pain and suffering, as pictured by the woman herself being in travail, crying out in pain, longing to be delivered of her internal agony.

Not only did the woman long to be delivered, but the growing numbers of the false element in her midst were also equally frustrated by the restricting influence of the holy class. Alas! The woman robed with the sun, and in labor, was somewhat comparable to the white horse of the First Seal, which was destined to come under the control and leadership of *the rider* bent on pursuit and conquest (Rev. 6:2).⁵

The Dragon

Verse 3:

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.

In the Bible a (wild) beast (Hebrew *chaiyah*, *cheva*; Greek *therion*) is sometimes a symbol of government. “In Daniel’s prophecy the great universal empires of the earth are thus symbolized. Babylon was the Lion, Medo-Persia the Bear, Greece the Leopard, and Rome the Dragon (Dan. 7:1–8). The Roman Empire still persists. Christendom is a part of that great Roman Empire which began in the days of Caesar and which, according to the Scriptures, still is in the world.

“Practically all Bible exegetes agree that the Dragon of the Revelation represents the purely civil power, *wherever it may be found* [emphasis added].”⁶ But it is to be observed that both the dragon and the beast of Revelation are pictured as having seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 12:3; 17:3). Yet the dragon and the beast are two separate and distinct symbolisms, *having a similar body form*. It is this latter feature

3. See pages 28–29, 33–34.

4. See page 38.

5. See pages 154–160.

6. *The Battle of Armageddon, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1961 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1897), Ser. 4, p. vi of second foreword.

of similarity of configuration that serves as a mark of identification, denoting that both animals, though diverse in other respects, basically represent *Rome*.

The classic writers, even in John's day, described Rome as the "seven-hilled city." During a period of five centuries, almost every Latin poet of note alluded to the seven hills of Rome. Revelation 17:9 states, "The seven heads are seven mountains [or kingdoms]." Therefore, the seven heads, whether upon the dragon or the beast, are Rome's seven prophetic, successive, distinct *forms of government*. The ten horns represent Rome's divisions of power in Europe. Just as seven phases of experience were prophesied to occur in the development of the gospel Church, so seven heads, or successive forms of government, were to pass upon Rome. In some cases, a head, or form, lasted for centuries, although different individuals occupied the office of ruler.

The crown is a symbol of vested power or authority. In this chapter "seven crowns" are seen on the seven heads, not upon the horns, which signifies that the divisions of power are under the guidance and control of the head. The time indicated is that period when *Rome Imperial* ruled over its provinces with authority, appointing subordinate leaders or generals to enforce its edicts. The time setting of *verse 3* is during Rome's first head, or form of government (during the Gospel Age).

The color red of the dragon is primarily used as a time reference indicator to enable the devout student to understand the thrust of the vision. Flame or fiery red was the color of Imperial Rome as well as of its pagan priesthood; red plumes were worn on the helmets of the soldiery. The Latin *flamen*, meaning flame, is equivalent to the Greek *purrhos*, meaning to refine or purify by fire; hence, *fiery* red is the thought used to describe the initial appearance of the dragon in the vision.

The following excerpts are from Hislop's *The Two Babylons*:⁷

"The dragon of the Greeks," says Pausanias, "was only a large snake;" and the context shows that this is the very case here; for what in the third verse is called a "dragon," in the fourteenth is simply described as a "serpent." Then the word rendered "Red" properly means "Fiery"; so that the "Red Dragon" signifies the "Fiery Serpent" or "Serpent of Fire." . . . The standard of the Pagan Emperor of Rome, as Pontifex Maximus, Head of the great system of fire-worship and serpent-worship, . . . was a serpent elevated on a lofty pole, and so coloured, as to exhibit it as a recognised [*sic*] symbol of fire-worship. . . . "In the mythology of the primitive world," says Owen, "the serpent is universally the symbol of the sun."

The same Greek word *purrhos*, used to describe the dragon as red in color, also delineates the red horse of the Second Seal;⁸ but the red horse is a later development, subsequent to A.D. 323, and it indicates the appropriation and absorption of the color of the *pagan* doctrine of the red dragon into the corporate teaching of the

7. Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1948), pp. 226, 227, 238.

8. See pages 160–164.

professed Church of Christ.⁹ At the time of the vision in verse 3, only the dragon is red. The appearance of the red horse corresponds to Constantine's adoption of Christianity as the sole religion of the Roman Empire, the dragon thenceforth being no longer characterized with this color in the Apocalypse. In what sense could the dragon, Imperial Rome, basically a civil power, have been in "heaven," the ecclesiastical realm, before it was cast to earth in verse 9? Answer: Constantine, as late as A.D. 312, assumed the title *Pontifex Maximus*.¹⁰

The next question to be addressed: Since Pagan Rome existed a considerable length of time *before* the woman, or the Church, appeared on the pages of secular history, why, here in verse 3, is the dragon introduced upon the scene *after* the portrayal of the woman in heaven? Answer: Because the time frame of the vision is later, when the dragon (or more particularly its already comfortably ensconced Balaam priesthood) began to take note that the woman (more particularly her yet unborn child) posed a potential threat to the security and the perpetuation of its religious role in the empire. The woman clothed with the *true* gospel "Sun" (that is, Jesus as the Messiah) was now seen to place in jeopardy the pagan priesthood's *false* sun worship.

Thus the dragon and the woman appear in the same nominal religious arena. Both are symbols. The confrontation is not in earth's atmosphere, not in *tartaroo*; nor is it in God's heaven. It is in the ecclesiastical heaven. Two systems, two composite bodies, two seeds, are at odds with each other. Clearly, an allusion is being made to a much broader, a much deeper long-term significance than the limited activity in this twelfth chapter of Revelation. The allusion is to the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). The portent of verses 1 to 3 can now be better understood as beginning to converge upon the events of the "ten days" (Rev. 2:10) of the Diocletian persecution from A.D. 303 to 313, wherein the woman suffered the late labor pangs of ambitious leadership within, and persecutions without, at the hands of the dragon, or the "devil."

Verse 4:

And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: . . .

In one sense the "tail" of the dragon represents the resources available to the empire; namely, its couriers, its marvelous roads of access and egress, and the line of communication to the uttermost reaches of its vast domain. The tail also indicates what the administration of Imperial Rome considered to be justice. Here in verse 4 Imperial Rome's disciplinary power is employed in casting down to earth some of "the stars of heaven." The inherent thought of the expression the tail "drew"¹¹

9. In the very beginning of the development of the Christian Church, the majority were pure, and not until the apostles fell asleep were any tares sown (Matt. 13:25,38,39). As time went on, however, the situation reversed, so that by the fourth century the tares outnumbered the wheat. No longer was the Church, under the symbolism of the horse, "white" or "Ephesus"; it had changed color and appearance while retaining the name "Christian" (Isa. 4:1).

10. William and Robert Chambers, *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1888), Vol. 3, p. 432.

11. The Greek *suro*, meaning to draw, to *drag*, is used only five times in Scripture. The four other instances of its use all convey the same thought (John 21:8; Acts 8:3; 14:19; 17:6).

these stars is that the dragon apprehended and *dragged* them preparatory to their being cast to the earth. This verse signifies punitive action being taken against true light-bearers considered to be in opposition to the dragon, Satan's organization.

It should be carefully observed that the seizure and casting down of the stars occurred *before the birth of the man-child* (verse 5) in A.D. 314, and therefore did not specifically relate to the Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325. Rather, the casting down parallels the prediction in the message to the Church of Smyrna: "Behold, the devil [another name for the dragon or the serpent] shall *cast* some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have *tribulation* [deep labor pains] ten days" (Rev. 2:10). In other words, the casting down of the stars to the earth and the casting of some into prison are synonymous in their application; both refer to the closing decade of the Smyrna period, A.D. 303–313.

Third Part of the Stars

This designation applies to the true light-bearers. It signifies not a numerical third but a third class. This interpretation is confirmed elsewhere in the Apocalypse, under the blowing of the first three trumpets, where in each instance the same "third part" under different symbolizations is affected.¹² Shortly after this scene of the casting down of stars, three already existing parties were manifest at the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325)—the Athanasians or extreme orthodox party, the Eusebians or middle party, and the Arians or party deemed heretical. *In the council* the latter were few in number and possessed but little influence; the Eusebians, however, were a strong party and for some time resisted certain expressions of the ultra-orthodox which seemed to them both extreme and unwarranted. At length the Athanasians and their Trinitarian views prevailed and found expression in the Nicene Creed adopted by the council. Arius boldly and eloquently defended the cause of truth, but only two out of the 318 bishops in attendance (excluding numerous other lesser dignitaries in the assembly) stoutly sided with him and shared his fate of banishment and exile to Illyria.¹³

A further demonstration that the hurling of the stars to earth was not fulfilled at the Council of Nicaea is the time-frame occurrence. This "casting down" occurs *while* the woman is in advanced labor (the Diocletian persecution of A.D. 303–313) and *before* the cessation of her birth pangs, the last pain ending as a result of Constantine's Edict of Toleration, A.D. 314.¹⁴

Note how the beginning of verse 4 is sandwiched in between the two preceding verses and the end of verse 4, about to be considered:

Verse 2: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth,
 and pained to be delivered.

12. Rev. 8:7—the First Trumpet (A.D. 34–70); see pages 212–217. Rev. 8:8,9—the Second Trumpet (A.D. 70–313); see pages 217–220. Rev. 8:10,11—the Third Trumpet (A.D. 313–1157); see pages 220–222.

13. Arius the Libyan, the third star or angel to the Church, was thrice deposed and excommunicated (A.D. 306, 321, and 325) yet thrice absolved; but he was never fully acceptable to the ranks of orthodoxy.

14. See pages 158–159.

- Verse 3: And there appeared . . . a great red dragon. . . .
- Verse 4a: *And his tail drew the third part of the stars . . . and did cast them to the earth:*
- Verse 4b: And the dragon stood before the [travailing] woman . . . to devour her child as soon as it was born [A.D. 314, and weaned A.D. 323].

What these verses indicate is that the casting down of the stars, and the standing of the dragon before the woman in travail, are *contemporaneous events*. The casting down of the stars occurs before the birth of the man-child.

. . . and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

The dragon power under the leadership of Diocletian desperately attempted to stamp out Christianity, but this effort proved futile. Constantine, soon to become emperor, was alive at the time, and as a notable warrior, he no doubt had to admire the steadfastness of the devotees of this religion foreign to Rome. As an astute politician, he perhaps reasoned that if the membership of this faith could be channeled and inducted into the fabric of the empire, the new blood would add vitality, strength, and stability to the Roman government. But, on the other hand, a marked distinction should be drawn between (a) Christians living in humble piety and simplicity of life, obedient to the laws of the empire where conscience would allow, and (b) those professing the same faith but who were more vain, pompous, ambitious, and politically aggressive. The second class posed a potential threat to the leadership of Rome and *bore watching* on the part of the dragon.

The dragon stood before the woman with the objective “to devour” (i.e., to eat and appropriate) the child unto itself and thus, through digestion and absorption, add to its own strength and influence. The setting, following the man-child’s birth, corresponds to the forepart of the Pergamos era, A.D. 323 to 539 (Rev. 2:14). There were those who held the teaching of Balaam (the pagan priesthood), who taught Balak (the king or emperor) to put a stumbling block before the Israelites (the professed Church of Christ). The pagan priesthood is represented as counseling and influencing the emperor to conquer the enemy Christians by *joining* them (Num. 25:1–3; 31:15,16). And this is what Constantine in effect did by proffering them his hand in marriage.

Constantine joined Christianity—but on his own terms. The incumbent pagan priesthood could, with comparative ease, transfer allegiance and seniority to the new religion of the empire. The emperor invited Christian leaders throughout the realm to convene in council at Nicaea in A.D. 325. Through artful manipulation, he accomplished much of his primary purpose of establishing a fundamental, orthodox creed and discipline, which the populace would be pressured to accept. Articles of faith were drawn up. The doctrine of the Trinity was one of the prominent topics of discussion, and it took two centuries for the Trinitarian view to gain relative uncontested supremacy.

The Man-Child

Verse 5:

And she brought forth a man child, . . .

“And *she* brought forth.” Before the commentary proceeds one step further, it is necessary to immediately lay to rest certain prevailing notions that the woman represents the Sarah Covenant, the New Jerusalem, “which is the mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 3:12; 21:2).

1. It is difficult to see how a covenant could *flee(?)* into the wilderness (Rev. 12:6,14). The Church, not a covenant, fled for safety and sought to *hide* from the *wrath* of the dragon (Rev. 12:13,17).

2. It is equally challenging to understand how a covenant could be *fed(?)* there (Rev. 12:6,14). Rather, it is the covenant or the Word of God that would impart strength and nourishment to the woman (the true Church)—not the reverse.

And another matter bears clarification before proceeding, because some equate the vision of Isaiah 66:7–9 with that of Revelation 12:1–5. Indeed, the Old Testament prophecy does tell about a woman bringing forth a man-child. But does the account refer to the same event as Revelation 12? Certainly not! In the Isaiah prophecy the man-child is born *before* the woman’s labor pains; in Revelation the woman experiences hard travail first, and then brings forth the man-child. Thus *neither the two women nor the two sons are the same*.

Isaiah 66

*Before she was in labor she gave birth;
before her pain came upon her
she was delivered of a son [Hebrew zakar, a male].*

Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Shall a land [Israel] be born in one day?
Shall a nation [also Israel] be brought forth in one moment?
For as soon as Zion was in labor
she brought forth her [other] sons.

Shall I bring to the birth [the Head]
and not cause to bring forth [later the body]? says the LORD;
shall I, who cause to bring forth
[the Head and the body], shut the womb? says your God.
(Isa. 66:7–9 RSV)

The son, or male, in Isaiah 66 refers to The Christ (Head and body members), whereas the male child in Revelation 12 represents *something quite different*, to be explained shortly. Pain is the common yet separating factor that distinguishes the difference between the two accounts. Isaiah informs the reader that the last members of the male-child class will be delivered before Zion’s labor (i.e., before Jacob’s Time of Trouble—Jer. 30:4–9) yet future. Other Scriptures show that this salvation will occur not only prior to Israel’s final holocaust (and subsequent rebirth to everlasting peace) but also prior to Babylon’s (nominal spiritual Israel’s) fall.

Zion, the *nation of Israel*, is the woman of Isaiah 66 to whom the promises, both natural and spiritual, were originally made. Christ was a Jew, and so were the apostles and a majority of the fellowship prior to A.D. 69. The Gentiles became joint-heirs of the spiritual promise because there were not enough Israelites with the faith of Abraham to fill up the predetermined 144,000 membership of the body of Christ. That Zion can, and often does, refer to spiritual Israel is not called into question. But numerous other Scriptures use the term “Zion” to designate natural Israel, such as Psalm 78:68; Isaiah 4:3,4; 64:10; Jeremiah 26:18; and Zechariah 1:17. This is also the case in Isaiah 66. In verse 10 of this same chapter, after Israel’s future miraculous deliverance, all nations are enjoined: “Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with *her* [not only with Jerusalem but with the woman, Israel, of verses 7 and 8], all ye that love *her*.” Verse 12 adds, “I will extend peace to *her* like a river”; and finally verse 20 reads, “And they [the Gentiles] shall bring all *your brethren* for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations . . . to . . . *Jerusalem*.”

Isaiah 66 furnishes an order of events: (1) The male child (the Head, and then later the body members) is born. (2) The woman travails and other children are born, the birth sequence being (a) the Great Company, (b) the Ancient Worthies, and (c) regenerated Israel itself (the holy remnant) (Ezek. 37:9–14; Isa. 48:17,20).

It is difficult indeed to conclude that the woman of Isaiah 66:7,8 is nominal spiritual Zion, that is, Christendom, for the following reasons: (1) The woman does not die in childbirth; she not only survives but is seen in succeeding verses to be honored and glorified. (2) The woman is on the scene *before* the birth of the male child. Neither the true Church nor the false Church could have conceived the Saviour, for he preceded the Church and is the forerunner and Head of the body members (Col. 1:18; 2:19; Eph. 1:22; 4:15). (3) The Church was taken from Jesus’ side (not he from her side), even as Eve was taken from Adam’s side (and not Adam from Eve’s side). Paul said, “The woman [is] of the man” (1 Cor. 11:8). (4) It is difficult to see how Jesus could have proceeded forth from the nominal gospel Church or that he was the product of the Jewish rabbinical school of Sadducees or Pharisees, to which he in no sense belonged (Matt. 9:16,17; John 1:11) and from which he kept himself separate and distinct. The promises to the nation of Israel were another matter.

The woman of Revelation 12 represents the true Church; the woman of Isaiah 66 represents the Jewish nation; the woman of Genesis 35:16–19 prefigures the Sarah (Rachel) Covenant, which produces with difficulty and expires with the birth of Benjamin, the second son, the Great Company.

“And she brought forth a *man child* [Greek *arrhen*, a male].” Thus far, an effort has been made to show that the Revelation woman represents the true Church and not a covenant, and that the man-child cannot represent Jesus or the true Church or The Christ. Then what does this male child represent? Papacy, it is answered, the false Church of Christ in union with its lord and head, the pope.¹⁵

15. The question might arise as to whether the woman would be a virgin after giving birth to the man-child. The Virgin Mary is a good illustration. Her miraculous impregnation by the Holy Spirit of God resulted in the birth of Jesus, but when Jesus was born, Mary was still a virgin. It was the Father Himself—God Almighty—who implanted the seed of the holy child into the womb

The Papacy

The Apostle Paul warned the elders of Ephesus gathered at Miletus, “Take heed . . . to feed the church of God, . . . for I know . . . that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also *of your own selves* shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:28–30). To the Thessalonians he stated, “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [of Christ’s return] shall not come, except there come a falling away [an apostasy, a departure from true doctrine] first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God [Greek *theos*, a god], or that is worshipped; so that he as God [a god] sitteth in the temple [church] of God, shewing himself that he is God [a god]. For the mystery of iniquity *doth already work*: only he who now letteth [hindereth; i.e., the Roman emperor as chief religious ruler, or *Pontifex Maximus*] will let [continue to hinder], until he be taken out of the way [in Justinian’s reign, A.D. 539]. And then shall that Wicked [One, the papal system] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume [at his Second Advent] with the spirit of his mouth” (2 Thess. 2:3,4,7,8).

Therefore, it is both natural and consistent to look back into the past for the Man of Sin and expect to be able to recognize him, for Paul says he would be revealed, or his real character shown and seen, *before the day of the Lord*. This iniquitous seed would be difficult to recognize initially, except as the apostles pointed out by name, with the power and authority of the Holy Spirit vested in them, various individuals of this class in their day. Under the figure of the woman of Revelation 12, the early presence and portent of the false embryo would not be seen, except with the passage of time, when the swelling of the womb and abdomen would manifest the existence of this foreign element working within the Church and constantly on the increase. But not until the birth would the *identity* of the child be disclosed (A.D. 314), and even then the *character* of the child would not be fully revealed until he reached maturity as the Man of Sin (A.D. 539).

. . . *who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron*: . . .

Did not prophecy declare the millennial reign of Christ over the nations, and that he should reign until he had put all enemies under him (1 Cor. 15:24,25)? Papacy claims that when exalted to power, it did put down all enemies, and that for a thousand years it did reign over the kings of the earth, thus fulfilling Psalm 2:6–12, with special emphasis upon the expression “Kiss the Son.” Sometimes kings, in order to receive the papal blessing and their crowns from his hands, were required to kiss the pope’s great *toe*; and in one instance the crown was even placed by the pope’s

of the Virgin Mary. In Revelation 12 the virgin Church is pictured shining as the sun with a diadem of twelve stars and the moon under her feet, and yet she is later found to be pregnant. In this case it was the Adversary who supernaturally planted the unholy seed, and the woman, who fled into the wilderness, continued to maintain her integrity and purity because she in no sense sympathized or fraternized with the evil. She was, as it were, artificially inseminated—not by the Heavenly Father this time but by the Adversary. Thus, when the man-child was born and the woman fled into the wilderness, she was still scripturally considered a virgin Church in spite of what had happened. And so the true Church, or woman, has retained her virginity throughout the Gospel Age, and at its close is spoken of as being composed of ten *virgins*, five wise and five foolish (Matt. 25:1,2).

feet upon the head of the king. For centuries no monarch reigned in Europe without this blessing and appointment of the pope.¹⁶ To offend or disobey was to forfeit kingly titles and thrones. Thus, by appropriating prerogatives and honors due solely to Jehovah or to His Son, Jesus Christ, Papacy exalted itself in this and other ways.

. . . and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

In A.D. 314 Constantine's Edict of Toleration gave the Christian religion a standing of authenticity among the other heathen forms of worship in the empire, thus opening the door for further advancement. In A.D. 323 the emperor elevated Christianity as *the* official religion of his government. There were several prominent bishops in the professed Church in Constantine's day, such as the bishop of Jerusalem, the bishop of Antioch, and the bishop of Alexandria.¹⁷ Yet Papacy was but a newborn male infant until it rose to the status of adulthood and was thence designated in Scripture as the "man of sin."¹⁸ This stature was not attained until A.D. 539, when Emperor Justinian recognized *one* of the prominent bishops, the bishop of Rome, as being superior to all the others and thus exalted the Roman prelate as chief ruler in the ecclesiastical realm. Later, about A.D. 800 in Charlemagne's day, the Papacy became so powerful that thereafter its favor was constantly sought to legitimize and to ceremonially crown Europe's rulers.

Constantine at no time relinquished his prerogative as emperor to have the final say in religious matters whenever he felt compelled to do so. When he died and successors filled that office during the interim period up to A.D. 539, the antagonists are characterized in Scripture as "two kings" (the civil and the papal power) seated at one table in dialogue, with one king (the papal power) finally winning out (Dan. 11:27 RSV). The greater part of the period of Papacy's rise to ascendancy was occupied with this dialogue, but eventually, as the man-child felt his power and strength increasing and as he neared the manhood state (symbolized as the false Michael—Rev. 12:7), the dialogue turned into an open warfare of words with the papal authority gaining the victory. The pope was now recognized as the supreme authority in religious matters, not the emperor. This was a big change. The dragon no longer spoke with uncontested authority with regard to church doctrine. Thus, from A.D. 314 to 539 the Papacy, which entered the religious sphere as a male babe, ascended the ladder of success, reaching maturity as the Man of Sin.

The Prophet Daniel adds: "Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast . . . and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other [horn, i.e., the Papacy]"

16. "The Anti-Christ," *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (December 1881), pp. 5-7.

17. It is claimed, but not definitely proven, that Constantine gave Sylvester, the bishop of Rome, a tract of land and a palace called the "Lateran" as an act of favor. This tradition, whether or not true, nevertheless formed a basis for future recognition, and in 1929 Mussolini signed the so-called Lateran Treaty in tacit recognition of this purported historic status.

Although befriended by Constantine, the Roman prelate was not distinctly set forth as being the superior or head bishop at the Council of Nicaea or during the emperor's lifetime.

18. The vision of Chapter 12 thus far is slanted from the perspective that the phrase the "child was caught up unto God" was the papal view, which regarded this event as a miraculous intervention of divine power and approval, in similitude much like the translation of Elijah the Prophet into heaven (2 Kings 2:11).

which came up, . . . even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High. . . . And he [the little horn] shall speak great words against [Hebrew *tsad*, concerning—Dan. 6:4] the most High . . . and think to change times and laws” (Dan. 7:19–22,25).

And there is Ezekiel 28:2, “Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus [a portrayal of Satan as an individual and his master counterfeit movement, the papal Church], Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat [or throne] of God, in the midst of the seas [of humanity]; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God.”

Did not the Apostle Paul declare to the church at Corinth that in this age the temple of God is the association of believers in Christ, not a literal building (1 Cor. 3:16)? Were not the Thessalonians warned that the Man of Sin would oppose God by exalting himself and sitting “*in the temple of God* [that is, amidst the congregation of the professed Church of Christ, even occupying the chief seat of leadership and authority], shewing himself that he is God [in God’s stead]” (2 Thess. 2:3,4)?

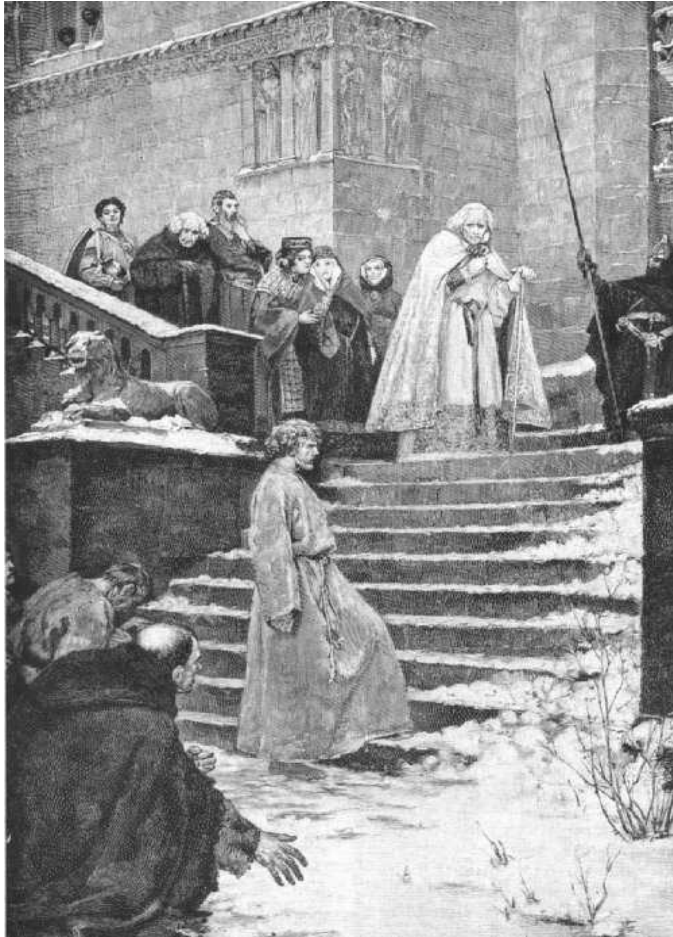
At the beginning of the fifteenth century, two rival popes, Gregory XII and Benedict XIII, were hurling anathemas at each other. In 1409 at the Council of Pisa, the two were deprived of office, and Alexander V was elected in their stead. Both of the prior popes chose to ignore the decree of the council. Alexander died the following year, John XXIII being his successor. Now three claimants occupied the proverbial chair of St. Peter. The Council of Constance (1414–1418) sought to set the matter straight; it successfully deposed all three, elevating Martin V to the papal throne in 1417. Papacy, instead of having three heads, again had one. “Pope Martin stated the matter in his own behalf as follows: ‘All the earth is my diocese, and I am the ordinary of all men, having the authority of the King of all kings upon subjects. I am all in all, and above all, so that God Himself, and I, the vicar of God, have both one consistory, and I am able to do almost all that God can do. In all things that I list my will is to stand for reason, for I am able by the law to dispense above the law, and of wrong to make justice in correcting laws and changing them. Wherefore, if those things that I do be said not to be done of man, but of God—What can you make me but God? Again, if prelates of the church be called and counted of Constance for Gods, I then, being above all prelates, seem by this reason to be above all Gods. Wherefore, no marvel if it be in my power to change time and times, to alter and abrogate laws, to dispense with all things, yea, with the precepts of Christ.’”¹⁹

The Claims of Papacy

From Ferraris’s *Ecclesiastical Dictionary*, a standard Roman Catholic authority, concerning the extent of papal dignity, authority, power, and infallibility, the following appears under the word *papa*, article 2nd:

19. *The Finished Mystery, Studies in the Scriptures* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: International Bible Students Association, 1918), Ser. 7, p. 188.

The Emperor Humbles Himself Before the Pope



When Emperor Henry IV defied Pope Gregory VII, his people revolted, and he was forced to journey across the Alps in the dead of winter to obtain the Pope's pardon. Here is the emperor at Canossa, after he had been kept waiting without food for three days, ascending the steps barefoot and wearing the penitent's robe to kneel at Gregory's feet.

“The pope is of such dignity and highness that he is not simply a man but, as it were, God and God's vicar [substitute, that is, in Christ's stead—ed.]. . . . Hence the pope is crowned with a triple crown, just as if King of heaven, and of earth, and of hell. . . . Yea, the excellency and the power of the Roman pontiff not only pertains to heavenly, terrestrial, and infernal things but also exceeds the angels; he alone constitutes a majority, a quorum. . . . Thus, if it were possible that angels could have erred in the faith, or even entertained sentiments contrary to the faith, they could be judged and excommunicated by the pope. . . . For he is of such great dignity and power that he occupies one and the same tribunal with Christ, as it is written. . . . To such a degree is this true that whatsoever the pope does, it is seen to proceed from the mouth of God.

“Coming down next to the specifics of the authority of the pope. The pope is, as it were, God on earth, the sole prince of the faithful in Christ, the greatest King of all kings, possessing continuous plenitude of power, to whom the government of the earthly, together with the heavenly kingdom, from the Almighty God are entrusted, even as it is self-evident he holds [these] in possession. . . .

“. . . several examples are here called to mind in this regard, even notably: Pope Gregory II who with supreme sovereignty deposed from a lofty height Caesar Leo II; Pope Gregory VII who deposed Emperor Henry IV; Pope Alexander III who deposed Emperor Frederic I; Pope Innocent II who deposed Caesar Otho; Pope Innocent IV who deposed Emperor Frederic II; Pope Clement VI who deposed Ludovic of Bavaria. . . .”

Ferraris further adds: “The pope is of such great authority and power that he can likewise, if it must be so, modify, declare, or interpret the divine law. . . . Hence this dictum, wherefore the pope can sometimes counteract the divine law, [causing this] to take place by limiting, by declaring. . . .”²⁰

This subject concerning the identity, the character, and the boastful claims of the Man of Sin, the Papacy, is beyond the scope of this treatise on the Apocalypse. In Volume 2 of *Studies in the Scriptures, The Time Is at Hand*, Chapter 9, “The Man of Sin—Antichrist,” pages 267–362, this subject is treated in such a scriptural man-

20.

“Articulus II.

Quoad ea, quae concernunt Papae dignitatem,
auctoritatem, seu potestatem, & infallibilitatem

“Papa tantae est Dignitatis, & celsitudinis, ut non sit simplex homo, sed quasi Deus, & Vicarius Dei; . . . Hinc Papa triplici corona (a) coronatur tamquam Rex Coeli, & Terrae, & Infernorum . . . Immo Romani Pontificis excellentia, & potestas, nedum est circa Coelestia, Terrestria, & Infernalialia, sed etiam super Angelos, quorum ipse major est. . . . Ita ut si solet possibile, quod Angeli errarent in Fide, vel contra Fidem sentirent, per Papam iudicari, & excommunicari possent Tantae enim est Dignitatis, & potestatis, ut faciat unum, & idem Tribunal cum Christo, ut per textum. . . . Adeo ut quidquid facit Papa, ab ore Dei videatur procedere. . . .

“Deveniendū igitur ad Papae auctoritatem; Papa est quasi Deus in Terra, unicus Christifidelium Princeps, Regum, omnium Rex maximus, plenitudinem potestatis continens, cui Terreni simul, ac Coelestis Imperii Gubernacula ab Omnipotenti Deo credita sunt, prout clare habetur. . . .

“. . . ubi ad id referunt multa exempla, & signanter de Gregorio Papa II. qui a celsitudine Imperiali deposuit Leonem II. Caesarem; De Gregorio Papa VII. qui deposuit Henricum IV. Imperatorem; de Alexandro Papa III. qui deposuit Federicum I. Imperatorem; de Innocentio Papa II. qui deposuit Othonem Caesarem; de Innocentio Papa IV. qui deposuit Federicum II. Imperatorem; de Clemente Papa VI. qui deposuit Ludovicum Bavarum. . . .

“Papa tantae est auctoritatis & potestatis, ut possit quoque Leges Divinas modificare, declarare, vel interpretari; . . . *Hinc dicim is, quod Papa potest contra Legem Divinam aliquando venire limitando, declarando. . . .*”

Ferraris, Lucius, d. 1760.

Bibliotheca canonica, juridica, moralis, theologica: b nec non ascetica, polemica, rubricistica, historica de principalioribus, . . . ac in octo tomos distributa/c F. Lucio Ferraris.

Ed. 2 romana auctior.

Romae: b Ex typographia Caroli Barbiellini, c 1767.

8 v. in 4; c 35 cm.

From: Eugene H. Maly Memorial Library, Athenaeum of Ohio, Mt. St. Mary's Seminary of the West, Cincinnati, Ohio 45230

ner that little or no room is left for improvement, and in such depth that those with an open and honest mind will be convinced.

Verse 6:

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Woman's Flight into Wilderness

This verse, parenthetical in nature, reflects the proper perspective, that of having divine approval. God clearly foresaw the circumstances that would arise and the plight of the woman, which would necessitate a flight for safety to a condition as far removed as possible from the jurisdiction, the frequency of observation, and the closeness of inspection of the dragon. Therefore, a place of spiritual seclusion and solace was "prepared of God" for the woman.

Her experience here parallels that of Elijah the Prophet: "And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. . . . And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook" (1 Kings 17:2-4,6).

The phrase "*they* should feed her there" refers to the ravens that fed Elijah. The raven is a bird of the crow family, having glossy, jet-black plumage. The blackness of the bird prefigures a class of humanity whose sins are not covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness; that is, an unconsecrated, worldly element and, like the bird, normally self-centered and given to voraciously satisfying its own fleshly desires along material lines, hence *ravenous* by nature. Under God's providence the ravens in Elijah's experience provided the material necessities of life, whereas water from the brook, symbolizing the water of truth, was a commodity the ravens could not supply.

The 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3) of the Bible in mourning (A.D. 265 to 1525) and the 1,260 days (Rev. 12:6) of the Church in the wilderness (A.D. 539 to 1799) do not coincide in their fulfillment and are not meant to, but the number itself is symbolic of humiliation and/or suffering and want.

War in Heaven

Verse 7:

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

Verse 8:

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

Not from the standpoint of history or interpretation, but from the standpoint of the context here, when did this war occur? At first glance, the war would seem to have taken place after the woman (true Church) fled into the wilderness (verse 6), but such is not the case. The woman fled into the wilderness (1) after the man-child

was born and (2) *after the dragon was cast out of heaven* (as proved by verses 13 and 14). The interpretation has to be harmonized with the context of the whole chapter. It was not until after the warfare that the dragon was cast down. Therefore, the warfare, which required time, occurred somewhere between the beginning of the ascension of the child to heaven, who ultimately became as God, and the defeat of the dragon in the religious realm.

There is harmony here. The dragon did not fight before the birth of the child because he had already cast down a third of the stars to earth (verse 4) and was in posture before the woman, waiting to devour her child. The child escaped, however, and was caught up to heaven (to ecclesiastical supremacy). The account tells about a fight between the dragon and his angels, or supporters, on the one hand, and Michael and his angels, or supporters, on the other hand.²¹ This fight occurred sometime between the elevation of that child from before the face of the dragon and the casting out of the dragon. After the warfare, the dragon was cast out.

Is there proof that the woman was not in the wilderness for part of the time during which the dragon was being cast out? Is there proof that the woman's flight did not begin until the dragon's defeat was accomplished? Yes, in verses 13 and 14: "*When the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, . . . 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.*"

Thus the interpretation is narrowed down to distinct points of time, and the order of events is as follows: (1) The woman gave birth to the man-child. (2) The child began his ascension to heaven. (3) A fight occurred in "heaven" between the dragon and his angels, and Michael and his angels. (4) The dragon was cast down into the earth. (5) The woman fled into the wilderness "from the face of the serpent" for 1,260 years.²²

As shown earlier, the dragon wanted to devour (eat) the babe and appropriate the nutrients (the religious fervor) to itself. Accordingly, Constantine became a Christian, thinking that through this political strategy he could make himself head of the Church. And in a practical way, not in a theological way, he did become head of the Church, for people applauded him—a heathen, a pagan emperor, the head of Rome, the power that had been persecuting the lowly religion of the Nazarene—for converting to Christianity. The people were so enthusiastic that they went overboard in their adulation, not realizing, as his deeds made later apparent, that he was far from being converted. Constantine merely adopted the religion for political reasons,

21. This warfare was not a personal conflict between Satan and Jesus in the angelic realm, for God's will has *always* been done in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

22. There is evidence to show that Satan's literal casting out of heaven (Rev. 20:1–3) is not referred to here, that this casting out is not the one at the end of the Gospel Age (still future), for the 1,260 days transpire *after* this casting out. The only way to make the casting out of verse 8 future is to interpret the 1,260 days as literal days, or 3½ literal years. But to hold to the view that the 1,260 days of Chapter 12 are literal and not symbolic days would destroy the fabric of time prophecy in Revelation. Such a change to suit one's whim and purpose would destroy the harmony, continuity, and consistency of the apocalyptic code.

as evidenced by the murders he later committed; and until his death, the political power kept the ecclesiastics in comfortable but complete subjection to its authority.

The warfare in heaven was a contest between the nominal Church (Michael)²³ and the political powers of the Roman Empire. This struggle for supremacy did not take place in the political field but in the *ecclesiastical* or nominal heavens, prior to the pope's being recognized as the highest authority in religious matters. The true Church was not involved in this battle. In A.D. 539 Justinian formally acknowledged that in all matters pertaining to religion, the pope was the supreme head of the Church.

The statement "the dragon . . . and his angels . . . prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven" indicates that from this point in time Civil Rome (the dragon) never regained its authority in the spiritual realm. However, not until Charlemagne's day, A.D. 800, which marked the beginning of the papal millennium, did Papacy exercise considerable authority even in *civil* matters; and thenceforth it was styled the *Holy* Roman Empire.

Verse 9:

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.

Question: Does the fact that "the Devil" is mentioned here provide a basis for some to say "the dragon" is literally Satan? Answer: This conclusion is not valid because of the similar use of the term "the devil" in Revelation 2:10—"The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days."

The fact that Pagan Rome is called "the Devil" by no means disproves the existence of a personal devil but, rather, proves the reverse. It is because there are such beasts as lions, bears, and leopards, with known characteristics, that governments are likened to them; and so, it is because there is a devil, with known characteristics, that the dragon is likened to him.²⁴ Though throughout Revelation the dragon is a symbol of organized governmental control directly or indirectly related to Rome, yet, on the other hand, it should be clearly understood not merely that the characteristics of the great Adversary are involved, but that Satan, as an individual, utilizes the dragon power structure and other symbolisms to achieve his purposes (except where frustrated within the limits of divine constraint).

23. "Michael" is the Grecianized form of the Hebrew, meaning *who is like God*. The Michael of Daniel 12:1 should not be confused with the Michael of Revelation 12. The latter is Papacy's false conception of its power and success in overcoming rivals—triumphs that this pseudo-Michael improperly likens unto the true Michael of Daniel 12, the champion of God's people. (Papacy's actions are similar to the mythological conquest of the dragon by St. George.) Just as Jesus during his earthly ministry read the minds and revealed the thinking of his own disciples, as well as the innermost thoughts of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes who sat in Moses' seat and opposed him, so the Holy Spirit in the Apocalypse enlightens God's people as to the differing viewpoints of both the proponents and the opponents of true Christianity.

24. *The Divine Plan of the Ages, Studies in the Scriptures*, no ed. date (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1886), Ser. 1, p. 259 footnote.

Verse 9 is unusual in that four appellations are more or less synonymously used to characterize the Evil One:

1. The term “dragon” best illustrates the uninhibited, vicious, and violent disposition of the fallen Lucifer when given free rein and license. In Daniel 7:7 the dragon disposition is likened unto a beast that is “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it.” Civil Rome reflected Satan’s disposition—it was characterized as cold, ruthless, and merciless to its foes.

2. “That old serpent” is an allusion to the Genesis account of the Garden of Eden where Satan, through the medium of the serpent, beguiled unsuspecting Eve. The serpent, therefore, symbolizes Satan’s wily craftiness, his subtlety (Gen. 3:1; 2 Cor. 11:3).²⁵

3. “The Devil” comes from the Greek *diabolos*, signifying one who misrepresents, hence a slanderer, an accuser (of the brethren—Rev. 12:10).

4. “Satan,” as a title, means one who is an open and unabashed opposing spirit; that is, an adversary, an opponent, a resister (see Zech. 3:1).

Verse 9, therefore, indicates Satan’s versatility and the ease with which he can transform himself into an angel of light when that role suits his purpose (2 Cor. 11:13–15). This ability best explains and illustrates the transition of Pagan Rome into Papal Rome.

Verse 10:

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.

Verse 11:

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Verse 12:

Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. . . .

Jubilation in the False Heavens

The proclamation by the loud voice is uttered in the false heaven, the same ecclesiastical heaven in which the dragon and his angels had waged warfare against the pseudo-Michael and his angels—the latter being victorious. The song is one of jubilation and triumph. It is the *premature* pronouncement of Christ taking unto himself his great power and reigning. It is the false Michael’s assertion of the establishment of the promised Kingdom of God accompanied with the casting down of Satan and his dragon power, which formerly persecuted the saints. The victors in this contest boastfully accredit themselves as the worthy successors of the prior faithful who, following in the footsteps of Jesus, were obedient unto death (particularly those of

25. See Appendix 13, “Satan, the Serpent, and the Woman,” pages 663–666.

the A.D. 303–313 period), sharing similar martyrdom and overcoming not by arms or temporal means but by the blood of the Lamb.

The Papacy has often conveniently reckoned notable and perhaps faithful Christians of the past as adherents and exponents of the *Catholic* faith, sometimes quite unjustifiably so, such as designating Peter as the first pope and chief of the apostles. The same reasoning was used in Jesus' day by some in Israel. The priesthood was prone to look back to Abraham and the faithful prophets of old as their fathers, yet Jesus charged the religious leadership of his day with responsibility for putting the prophets to death (Matt. 23:29–37). They thought that because they were of the seed of Abraham, the promises unconditionally applied to them and to their children as Jews according to the flesh, not realizing that God could raise up unto Himself other sons for children (Luke 3:8; Isa. 65:1). The priesthood which started with Aaron was deemed reputable and respectable (Psa. 106:16). This custodianship deteriorated, however, as time went on. Originally pure (“the ancient and honourable, he is the head”—Isa. 9:15), the office became degraded with the passage of time (the prophet who spoke lies became the tail).

The false voice and message of verse 10 through the beginning of verse 12 are in harmony with the first nine verses of Chapter 12, which present the history of the professed Church as seen in the eyes of orthodoxy as a wonderful thing, especially the victory of Michael over the awesome dragon power, the latter being cast out of the nominal heaven. Papacy not only attributes the faithfulness of individuals of former times to its own membership (verse 11) but boasts as one having put off his armor, reckoning the age of trial and development in the past.

This loud announcement of success applies to Papacy's acknowledgment of the Emperor Justinian's declaration (which became effectual A.D. 539) that the Roman prelate henceforth was to be considered the supreme universal bishop of the realm. This honor was granted in addition to a prior recognition, several decades earlier, of the Roman bishop, or pope, as the undisputed ecclesiastical head of the *western* branch of the empire. Papacy, however, reached still greater heights and the zenith of its power about A.D. 799 under Charlemagne, and it maintained this power with relevant consistency for a thousand years.

Another clue showing that the voice and message were false—that Papacy was speaking—is the time element. This proclamation is heard *following* the casting out of the dragon, and at the *beginning* of the flight of the woman into the wilderness. How could the Kingdom of God be said to begin while the true Church, pictured by the woman, is still in the flesh (1 Cor. 15:50; 4:8; Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12) and remains in that condition for 1,260 days (years) . . . *and beyond* (verse 17)?

. . . 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.

Warning to True Christians

This part of verse 12 is parenthetical. The Lord is speaking to His own people, designated as the “you” class, giving them notice of dire things to follow, namely,

that the dragon, or civil power, would henceforth search “o’er land²⁶ and sea”²⁷ in hot *pursuit* to persecute true Christians. “Woe betide” any who upon land or sea would dare to shelter, hide, or harbor any of the Lord’s little ones, for the dragon would vent his vengeance upon such, inflicting loss of limb, life, and/or property on those who dared to show any sympathy or compassion for the woman on her flight into the wilderness (verse 14).

Why was the Devil more animated in his persecuting zeal as a result of his experience in the former warfare, evoking the “woe” warning by Jesus? Satan prefers open opposition to God as the accuser of the Lord’s people. He does not like the role of a counterfeit, of having to do things in God’s or Christ’s name. However, when his former strategy failed, the very fact that Satan had to change himself into an angel of light—or in this case to have “water” (truth) come out of his mouth (verse 15) to counteract what was undermining his empire—showed he realized he was losing the battle altogether if something was not done. The true Church thrived better as a result of Satan’s first strategy, because it was a purifying factor for those rightly exercised thereby; when troubles assailed, pretenders were more prone to drop out. Being cast out of heaven, Satan was angry that he had to compromise and change his prior dominant role through the dragon power, and now fight truth with simulated truth. Ever since this setback, he has realized the life-and-death nature of the struggle, that his days were numbered unless he could come up with a plan to outwit God.

The period of papal rule over the dragon continued to afford Satan the opportunity to satiate his anger against those who now were seen to be an even graver foe than the pseudo-Michael class. During the Holy Inquisition period the priests or the clergy interrogated “heretics” who purportedly espoused false worship. The priests instructed the “guilty” ones to recant, to acknowledge their errors, and to return to the Mother Church so that their sins would be forgiven. Those who did not follow this advice were remanded over to the state to be put on the racks and tortured to death. Generally, the priests themselves would not perform the actual torture, for they were “pious” witnesses. The same principle operated in Christ’s day when the Jewish clergy turned Jesus over to Pilate for crucifixion and, adopting a form of godliness, feigned loyalty to Caesar.

The dragon and the pseudo-Michael are two separate systems through which Satan operated at the time of this vision. Satan first used the pagan power as his religious mouthpiece, but then had to change his strategy and divide his authority between the two systems. Regardless of the instrument used, he still is best characterized as the “serpent” or “dragon” because these terms reveal his true identity. Satan would rather have people worship him directly. That he is not deceived in the sense he does not know what he is doing is indicated by his titles which mean “opposer,” “adversary,” and “deceiver.”

26. “Earth” represents the stabler metropolises or centers of orthodox control.

27. “Sea” symbolizes the more lax outlying suburbs of the realm that were not subject to as rigid a control.

Persecution of the Woman

Verse 13:

And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

Does the word *dioko* mean “persecute,” as translated here in the Authorized KJV, or does it mean “pursue,” as commonly rendered in most modern translations? In the favorable sense *dioko* means to follow after or to press toward something beneficial. But the same word, used unfavorably, signifies to pursue with intent to injure or with intent to inflict either bodily or spiritual harm. More than forty times the word *dioko* and its derivatives are translated properly, and most meaningfully, in the sense of persecution; yet this word can, with equal propriety, signify either to pursue or to persecute *depending upon context*.

Apparently, most modern translators consider the Greek word to signify only the *pursuit* and *flight* of the woman (verses 13 and 14). But such a rendering would imply that the dragon *failed* in his pursuit and that the woman *succeeded* in escaping from harm. Such an interpretation would not fit the general tenor of Scripture pertaining to this era, nor would it be historically correct to imply that this time slot of the woman’s wilderness experience was free from persecution. While, on the one hand, it is quite obvious that the dragon here could not, and did not, slay the woman as a collective whole, yet, on the other hand, it is quite another matter to infer that the woman escaped persecution.

To state the thought another way, obedient individuals of the woman class in this era were divinely protected and succored until they were sufficiently developed in strength of character to withstand the rigors of persecution. True Christians, as it were, are immortal until it is time for them to die. In other words, depending upon the exigencies of the situation underneath divine supervision and control, the dragon at times throughout this period successfully persecuted the saints and at other times was frustrated in such pursuits.

When the dragon (verse 13) was cast down to the earthly plane, it persecuted the woman at the prompting of the papal power. Previously the dragon, as Pagan Rome, *gave* the orders; after 539 it *carried out* the orders. In Justinian’s time the emperor recognized and asserted that of the four Christian churches—Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome—the Roman bishop was supreme. Two and a half centuries later, in Charlemagne’s day, the papal office attained a still higher level of authority which it more or less sustained until 1799. Sometimes this period of highest attainment and influence (that is, from A.D. 799 to 1799) is referred to as the papal millennium.

Verse 14:

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.

Providential Watch-Care for 1,260 Years

Verse 6 stated that the woman departed into the wilderness. Now verse 14 speaks in a similar vein. Has she returned from a former exile and gone back again? The flight of verse 6 and that of verse 14 cannot be flights of two different lengths, one of 1,260 years and the other of only $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, for:

1. Verse 14 is an obvious reference to Daniel 7:25, and the $3\frac{1}{2}$ times of Daniel are a period of such long duration as to “wear out the saints of the most High.”

2. Verse 6 and verse 14 no more pertain to two flights of the same woman than do verses 9 and 13 refer to the same dragon being cast out twice. For that matter, the same is true of verse 6 and verse 14 in regard to the two *places*, the two *feedings*, and the two *time periods*, one of 1,260 days and the other $3\frac{1}{2}$ times (a lunar year of 360 days $\times 3\frac{1}{2} = 1,260$ days). The 42 months ($42 \times 30 = 1,260$) of Revelation 11:2 and 13:5 also refer to the same time frame in history.

Verse 6 alluded to Elijah’s experience by the waters of the brook Cherith, where the Prophet was fed by the mysterious “they” class, that is, by the ravens ordained of God to feed him there. The antitype of this incident, as it pertains to the “place prepared of God,” refers not to a geographic location but to a condition of fixed trust and spiritual repose as new creatures in Christ Jesus “safe from all alarm.”

Verse 14, however, with the introduction of the “great eagle” into the scene, calls to mind another typical representation of the same wilderness experience of the gospel Church: the rendezvous of the Israelites of old at the holy mount of God (Exod. 3:12). There the Lord said, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how *I* bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you *unto myself*” (Exod. 19:4). Verse 14, therefore, is another illustration of God’s watch-care over His people, similar to His deliverance of natural Israel from the tyrannical rulership of Egypt and His leading them through the Wilderness of Sinai. In their journeyings the bread of heaven and water from the rock were their means of nourishment and sustenance. While these experiences typically portray God’s concern and providential care for the spiritual necessities of life for His people of the present age, yet by no means were their basic material needs overlooked.

The “place prepared of God” and “into her place” are none other than that pictured by the cloud and the Tabernacle which accompanied the Israelites in their wilderness journeyings.²⁸ They are also none other than that referred to by the Psalmist, “For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me” (27:5) and “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (91:1). A specific time interval was allotted for Israel’s wilderness sojourn—forty years, being a year for a day (Num. 14:34). The same was true of the gospel Church— $3\frac{1}{2}$ times or 1,260 days, also a year for a day.

When God delivered His people Israel from Egypt, He expressed His solicitude for them in the following manner (Deut. 32:11,12):

As an eagle stirreth up her nest, . . .

28. See Appendix 15, “Israel’s Cloud,” pages 675–676.

When the mother eagle discerns that her eaglets have reached sufficient maturity for flight on their own, she removes the soft inner lining of the nest so that the crude, jutting branches comprising the outer framework of the aerie will protrude into the nest, making conditions not only uncomfortable but almost unbearable for the eaglets. This change, in turn, creates in them a craving to depart to a more congenial abode.

. . . fluttereth over her young, . . .

To further implement this desire, the mother bird next spreads her powerful wings apart and flaps them vigorously, producing gusts of wind that almost literally blow her young out of the nest. To secure themselves against these drafts of air, the eaglets have to cling to and hug the craggy, thorny interior ever so closely; but in doing so, they experience intense discomfort which provokes them, in desperation, to seek relief by perching precariously on the outer perimeter of the nest. Ah, yes! One of them next tumbles from the aerie situated high on the mountain precipice. The grown eaglet frantically struggles in its flight, having adult-sized wings but possessing insufficient strength in them to sustain its heavy body. In short order it begins to plummet like a rock toward the ground and the hazardous stones below. But lo! The mother bird ever so swiftly swoops below her youngster, and:

. . . spreadeth abroad her wings . . . [and] beareth them . . .

Forming a platform beneath to catch the eaglet, the mother rescues it from harm. This procedure is repeated, and very soon the bird can fly on its own.

. . . So *the LORD alone* did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.

God dealt with natural Israel in a similar fashion. Conditions in Egypt became so intolerable for the Israelites that they groaned and yearned for deliverance, and God sent them a saviour in the person of Moses. The plagues visited upon the Egyptians resulted in the expulsion of the Israelites. The Almighty also deals with the gospel Church in a similar manner, sending them a Saviour in the person of Christ. It will be noticed that in Exodus 19:4 the word “eagle” is plural:

Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on *eagles’* wings, and brought you unto myself.

Not only is God’s care for His Church as a whole shown, but also His concern for the *individual* members. The faithful are nourished “from the face of the serpent.” They are rescued from spiritual death, for the “wine [of the wicked] is the poison of *dragons*, and the cruel venom of asps”; “their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they [the wicked] are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers [of reasoning], charming never [ever—NKJV] so wisely” (Deut. 32:33; Psa. 58:4,5).

Verse 15:

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.

Verse 16:

And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

The Flood of Truth

“The ‘flood’ in or during which these 1260 years of Papal power terminated—as shown by the angel standing *upon* the flood, declaring the limit of the times [Dan. 12:7]—symbolized a condition of things during the French revolution already referred to.²⁹ This is the same ‘flood’ mentioned in Rev. 12:15,16, where it is shown more fully, as coming out of the mouth of the serpent or dragon, and where its real object, from Satan’s standpoint, is explained to be to overwhelm the ‘woman’ (the protesting Church of God), as her three and a half times (1260 years) of wilderness-hiding were about closing, and she was coming forward into prominence ‘leaning on [the arm of] her beloved,’ The Word of God.—Song of Solomon 8:5

“In symbol, water generally represents *truth*, and the symbol preserves its meaning even though it be said to issue from the mouth of the dragon or serpent. The thought conveyed by this symbol is that *truth* would issue forth through evil agencies, and with an evil intent. And just this we find: the strength of the French revolution lay in the fact that it was instigated by many stern *truths*, regarding priest-craft and king-craft, and regarding the individual rights and liberties of all. ‘*The Rights of Man*’ was indeed the watchword of that revolt against civil and ecclesiastical oppression. Truths regarding human rights were seen and expressed there which cause us surprise when we consider the ignorance, superstition and servility of that day, under which the masses had so long rested. Many of the *truths* which then swept as a ‘flood’ over France, deluging it with blood, are now very generally accepted among all civilized peoples; but they were too strong, and too suddenly put, for that time.

“Indeed, the prophecy clearly shows that the serpent, Satan, did not intend what under God’s providence has resulted, but the reverse. In this he overreached himself, as he has done on other occasions. Satan will never send forth the waters of truth to bless and refresh and release from bondage; on the contrary his effort has all along been to blind and securely bind mankind under ignorance and superstition; and this sudden flood of waters (truth) was designed to act as an emetic, to lead to the casting out of the *food* of liberty already being received by the people from the Bible, as the result of the Reformation, and thus to force rulers and teachers to oppose the truth through fear of anarchy.

“Satan’s design in instigating the French revolution was to create an alarm throughout Europe, especially among the influential class, unfavorable to liberty and to illustrate in France the theory that, were the superstitions of Rome to be overthrown and liberty to be given full sway, all law and order would speedily end. This was a master-stroke of policy, worthy of its author, and designed, as the prophet shows, to overwhelm the ‘woman’ (the reformed Church), and to drive all conservatives and peace-lovers—rulers and ruled—back to union and harmony with

29. See pages 244–246, 251.

Papacy. The failure of the scheme was not due to lack of craftiness in its designer, but to the overruling power of God, whereby he is able to cause all things to work together for good.

“In this case God’s plan, for the protection of the ‘woman’ (Church) from Satan’s wiles and for causing the intended ill to work out good, may be clearly traced, in exact fulfillment of the prediction made seventeen hundred years before, viz: ‘And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.’ The ‘earth,’ in symbol, as already explained, represents society—order-loving people; and it is a fact of history that the flood of truth which spread over France—arraigning Papacy and its priest-craft, and monarchy and its parasitic aristocracy, as the responsible causes of much of the ignorance, poverty and superstition of the people—was swallowed up, or absorbed by the people of Europe generally (the Roman ‘earth’). To such an extent was this the case, that though Papacy and royal aristocracy were thoroughly alarmed, they were also thoroughly separated, by the fall of Papal influence as well as by Napoleon’s armies. And when the ‘man of destiny’ was finally crushed, and the rulers of Europe formed what was called ‘The Holy Alliance,’ for the suppression of the liberties of the people and the perpetuation of their own thrones, it was too late to fetter the people; for, having drunk up the flood waters, they would not submit. It was also too late to think of re-establishing Papacy, which had been so terribly humiliated and whose anathemas against liberty and the French had so reacted against itself; so the pope was *not even invited* to join the ‘Holy Alliance,’ of which before he would have been the recognized head. Thus the ‘woman,’ the reformed and progressing Church of God, was helped, spared from being overwhelmed, and liberty and truth stepped out to prominence before men; and from that time forward the spirit of liberty and God’s Word have led all who were willing to follow, into more and more light and truth.

“Here, then, was the ‘flood’ which marked both the end of [the long period of] Papal power and the beginning of the Lord’s ‘Day of Preparation’ or ‘Time of the End.’”³⁰

Satan used a very clever stratagem to destroy the Lord’s people at the time of the French Revolution, but Jesus intervened to hold back the winds (Rev. 7:1–3; 10:2). Thus this stratagem of Satan backfired, but it would not have done so if all other factors had remained equal. Satan used the strategy of flooding the earth with light on all sorts of subjects—religious, secular, and political. He intended to create such a turmoil among the people that their clamoring for rights and freedom from centuries of being shackled would result in the authorities’ clamping down, thus giving him still greater control. Satan flooded the people with a desire for liberty, equality, and fraternity, hoping suppression by the rulers would bring an even more authoritarian rule. Down through the Gospel Age, the rulers had been dictators, but Satan wanted an even *more* powerful influence. Satan is not content to be just the god of this world; he wants every knee to bow to him, as the Scriptures say will happen to Christ. To achieve this worship, Satan needs still more power, because such “bowing” would be based not on love and true authority but on suppression alone. Satan

30. *Thy Kingdom Come, Studies in the Scriptures*, pp. 64–67.

thought that the rulers would be horrified if the people started clamoring for their rights and that, as a result, more shackles would be put on the masses. The people could not be thus restrained, however. Once they had tasted the “water,” they were thoroughly dissatisfied and things got out of control. When the other nations saw what had happened in France, they realized how unwise it would be for them to enact stronger measures, and they changed their own dictatorships to a republican form of government.

The flood coming out of the dragon’s mouth corresponds to (1) the flood when the angel stood on the banks of the Ulai and talked to the one above the waters (Dan. 8:15–17) and (2) Revelation 10:1,2, where an angel came down from heaven to hold back the sea and the dry land to stabilize both. While the river is not mentioned in the latter instance, the message is substantially the same as in Daniel. In Daniel 12:5–7 the setting is at the end of the 1,260 days. Saints on both sides of the river are asking the angel above the flood, in effect, “Is there more to come?” They are told that the long 1,260-year persecuting power has ended, that Papacy will never again come into power with such duration of time.

In the future Papacy will again have power, but only for an “hour” (Rev. 17:12). The contrast between 1,260 years and an hour shows the latter to be merely a flickering. Thus the emphasis is that the *long* period of papal dominion and supremacy over the Lord’s people terminated and would not recur from the standpoint of any appreciable length of time. Any future power of Papacy would be meteoric—very short even though very powerful.

How, then, did “the earth” help the woman (verse 16)? What is meant by the expression “the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth”? In a nutshell, as a result of the French Revolution, the people in other lands, as well as in France, received greater liberty in politics, religion, conscience, etc., and Bible societies sprang up. No longer did truths come out of the dragon’s mouth in Latin, for the Bible was published in all languages and the people could investigate the Scriptures for themselves.

Verse 17:

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.

War with Remnant of Woman’s Seed

Since verse 16 refers to the French Revolution, should it not be assumed that verse 17 took place shortly thereafter? No, not necessarily! Rather, it is as if the dragon were licking its wounds during an ensuing time interval. The dragon had wanted to overwhelm and drown the woman, but “the earth opened her mouth” and helped the woman, temporarily frustrating the dragon plan. Satan recognized that he had made a tactical error, so he retreated from the scene to contemplate another attack upon the woman in the future. All these thoughts are conveyed in this one short verse. The Adversary is regrouping his forces to attack the woman a second time, and this future warfare will involve the catching up, or rapture, of the last

members of the Church. The use of the word “remnant” (of the woman’s seed) suggests an end-of-the-age setting.

As already stated, in the Book of Revelation the dragon represents *purely civil power*, and particularly the Roman power. France was one of the ten parts of the “city” (Rev. 11:13). The city, in this instance, was the whole setup of the ten horns (called ten toes elsewhere), which represented Europe. The rebellion, or revolution, arose in the French segment of the Holy Roman Empire (of Europe). Thus the French Revolution is related to Rome, even though the scene of action took place in France. And France was the leading power at the time; in fact, at times it had been a stronger supporter of Papacy than Italy itself.

The various autocratic nations saw the tumult in France and the excesses and abuses of liberty that occurred. However, instead of tightening the reins of control in their own countries, as Satan had mistakenly anticipated, they established parliamentary or representative forms of government. This development actually benefited the woman, who was supposed to be destroyed. Greatly angered, the Adversary now purposed “to make war with the remnant of her seed” (verse 17), with those who “keep the commandments of God.” These words are to be coupled in thought with verse 12: “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto *you* [the woman], having great wrath.” These two parenthetical inserts (verse 12 and the latter part of verse 17) are intended, by the Holy Spirit, to set straight and to counteract the false rejoicing of verse 10 through the beginning of verse 12. A clear distinction is drawn between (1) those who *really* “keep the commandments of God” and *truthfully* hold “the testimony of Jesus Christ” and (2) the false Michael, “who as God” possesses a form of godliness but denies the power thereof. A second attack upon the true Church is to be anticipated. The Elijah class this side of the veil must and will be vanquished, but the apparent defeat will only hasten the Kingdom glories.

A Genesis Parallel

I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy [the serpent’s] seed and her seed; *it* shall bruise thy [the serpent’s] head, and thou [the serpent] shalt bruise *his* [its, the woman seed’s] heel. (Gen. 3:15 KJV)

Since the antecedents for the pronouns *it* and *his* are the *collective* noun “her seed,” the more exact rendering of this text would be the collective singular “it” and “its”: “. . . [for the woman seed] shall bruise [crush] thy head [i.e., Satan, the head of the serpent seed class], and thou [both the head and the body members of the dragon seed] shalt bruise its [the collective singular, showing plurality] heel [the last body members to enter the door to the marriage (Matt. 25:10), even ‘the remnant of her seed’].” Genesis 3:14, the preceding verse, clearly indicates that “the LORD God” is speaking to the serpent; thus the pronouns “thee,” “thy,” and “thou” in Genesis 3:15 clearly apply to the serpent, *not to the woman*.

Other translators who basically agree with much of the foregoing statement are as follows:

“. . . they shall strike at your head, and you shall strike at their heel”—James Moffatt.³¹

“. . . they shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise their heel”—George Ricker Berry,³² the Masoretic,³³ and Dr. J. H. Hertz.³⁴

“. . . they shall attack you in the head, and you shall attack them in the heel”—J. M. Powis Smith and Goodspeed.³⁵

“. . . it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise its heel” (the preferred rendition—ed.)—E. W. Hengstenberg.³⁶

In other words, the expression “her seed” (that is, the woman’s seed) is almost invariably considered to indicate some future child or son to be born, or, as an alternate, to indicate the woman’s posterity in the sense of progeny or other children. But that is not the intent any more than the expression “thy seed” (that is, the dragon’s seed) signifies the dragon is to bring forth either a child or other children.

The point is that the woman herself *is* the seed. The woman (Rev. 12:17) is not an individual but a multitudinous seed, a seed class, a plurality of individuals. The same is true of the dragon. The scene portrays a confrontation between the woman seed and the dragon seed. In a somewhat similar vein, the true Church is likened to one body yet consists of many members.³⁷

The Apostle Paul provides the clue as to what the mysterious “it” is in the clause “it shall bruise thy head.” “And the God of peace shall bruise [Greek *suntribo*—tread, crush] Satan [the head of the dragon seed class] under your feet [the glorified Church body members, the completed woman seed class] shortly [cf. Rev. 1:1; 22:6]” (Rom. 16:20).

Like other prophecies of the Bible, Genesis 3:15 was recorded in reverse order as a time lock. The Lord sometimes uses this strategy to hide certain truths until His due time for revelation. Not until other related truths become explicitly understood can the Lord’s people see that a particular Scripture was purposely hidden by an out-of-order sequence. Thus in Genesis 3:15 and Romans 16:20, Satan’s destruction does not take place until the end of the Millennial Age, for his binding and immobilization must occur first, earlier, in the Kingdom Age.

31. James Moffatt, trans., *A New Translation of the Bible* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1935).

32. George Ricker Berry, trans., *The Interlinear Literal Translation of the Hebrew Old Testament* (Chicago: Wilcox & Follett Co., 1943).

33. *The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1917).

34. J. H. Hertz, ed., *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (New York: A. Posy and A. Shoulson, 1941), Vol. 1.

35. J. M. Powis Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed, trans., *The Bible: An American Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935).

36. E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament and a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1956), Vol. 1, p. 26.

37. The multitudinous aspect is the significance of the terms “the dragon and his angels” and “Michael and his angels”; viz., the dragon and Michael are not individuals, but each is an organized society of individuals (Rev. 12:7,9).

Throughout the New Testament Satan is represented as the father of an allegorical seed, with a direct or indirect referral back to the Garden of Eden.³⁸ The Apostle John in his first epistle (5:19) states, “We know that . . . the whole world lieth in wickedness [Greek *en to ponero*, in the Wicked One].” The term “seed” (Rev. 12:17), when used in other books of the New Testament, pertains in some manner to children, offspring, descendants. Verse 17 is the sole instance of its use in the Apocalypse. While, in a sense, the phrase “remnant of her seed” could be thought of as the spiritual progeny or posterity of the woman, yet the view previously expressed that the dragon and the woman each represent a seed class is still preferred. There are other cases where terms used elsewhere in Scripture take on a slightly altered meaning when they appear in the Book of Revelation.

38. Matthew 3:7—John the Baptist spoke of the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, “O generation of *vipers*” (a referral to Eden). Matthew 12:34—Jesus spoke of the Pharisees, “O generation of *vipers*.” Matthew 23:33—Jesus addressed the scribes and Pharisees, “Ye *serpents*, ye generation of *vipers*.” Matthew 13:38,39—The Master explained, “The tares are the *children* of the wicked one; the enemy that *sowed* them is the devil.” Acts 13:10—Paul spoke to Elymas the sorcerer, “Thou *child* of the devil.” John 8:44—Jesus said unto the Pharisees, “Ye are of your *father* the devil.”

Revelation Chapter 13

This chapter somewhat parallels the twelfth chapter of Revelation. The enactment of the drama starts a little later in point of time, however. It begins where the new power is introduced under a different symbolism; that which was called the false Michael in the previous chapter and the little horn in Daniel 7 is now designated the “beast,” which eventually forces the dragon to assume a subordinate role in the affairs of European nations.

Verse 1:

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.

Sand of the Sea

From a stance apart, upon the seashore, the Apostle beholds the spectacle of a beast rise out of the sea. John’s position in the vision shows that in the midst of a scene of restlessness and turbulence, the John class is afforded a detached and enlightened standpoint similar to that of Revelation 4:1,2 and 17:3. Another and more important reason for the Apostle’s stance is that during these chaotic circumstances new creatures in Christ were protected spiritually from being overwhelmed in the confusion; they were protected by the same God who has “placed the sand for the bound[ary] of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it” (Jer. 5:22).

Comparison with the Beast of Daniel 7

In Chapter 13 the wild beast of Revelation makes its appearance for the first time. A strong correlation exists between this beast and the fourth beast of Daniel 7:7,8. Although in the Old Testament prophecy, the beast is not likened to any known creature, yet from information afforded by the Apocalypse and other Scriptures, as well as by tradition, it probably had the similitude of the fabled dragon, most resembling a walking serpent (Gen. 3:14).

In this same seventh chapter of Daniel, the angel explains that the four beasts spoken of represent four kingdoms, four universal empires, that arise out of the earth (verse 17). Elsewhere in Daniel, three of these kingdoms are explicitly mentioned by name: King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the first empire (Dan. 2:37–40); Medo-Persia, the second (Dan. 8:20); and Greece, the third (Dan. 8:21). Since three successive empires are identified, the fourth empire obviously is Rome, the successor of Greece. The Old Testament provides essential information up to where recorded events are reliable, not only from a general standpoint of detail but also from a chronological viewpoint. It was not necessary, therefore, to expressly name the fourth empire, for it is sufficiently disclosed by implication. The fourth beast of Daniel 7 represents the Roman Empire.

In the Book of Revelation *both* the dragon and the beast represent Rome, the former as a civil power, purely secular, and the latter as a religious temporal government. The beast and the dragon are separate and distinct entities, however. The Lord's people recognized early that the Devil used Rome as his international capital, and the city was soon seen to be "Satan's seat" (Rev. 2:13). It has been the headquarters of both the pagan and the papal systems. For many centuries from A.D. 539 onward, the bishop of Rome acted as the temporal sovereign of that city.

The fact the beast is seen initially to arise from the sea indicates that its power was mysteriously spawned during a troublesome era, in the midst of upheaval. Several barbarian incursions into Italy plunged the nation into periods of violence and plunder and the populace into the depths of poverty, hunger, and despair, thus greatly weakening the Western imperial power. Papacy capitalized on the instability of government, particularly in Rome, the ancient and revered capital of the empire, and adroitly maneuvered the situation to its own advantage. The city more and more changed into the city of popes. If it can be said that communism "sets its sails on the sea of discontent," how much more so has the papal system prospered under similar conditions of unrest and turmoil and, through the art of diplomacy, established itself as a strong power and potent world influence.

Daniel 7 says nothing about the fourth beast having seven heads or any crowns attached to its horns. Yet at least one head is implied (by the "teeth" of verse 19), but it is silently and purposely passed by, as if to say that the *seven* heads of the dragon would not be introduced until necessary, in recording the Apocalypse, to show their relationship to the now visible (A.D. 314) birth of papal power.

The beast of Revelation 13 and the dragon of Chapter 12 both have seven heads and ten horns. The heads represent the seven successive powers in Rome. In the following tabulation the words in all capital letters denote the Roman power exercising the predominant authority during the seven successive time periods.

Seven Successive Heads

	Of the Dragon (Revelation 12)	Of the Beast (Revelation 13)
(1)	CIVIL	male child
(2)	CIVIL ¹	male child
(3)	CIVIL ¹	male child
(4)	CIVIL ¹	male child
(5)	civil	MAN OF SIN
(6)	CIVIL	man of sin
(7)	CIVIL	man of sin

1. These three heads are the three horns that are plucked up in Daniel 7:8. The first head removed itself.

The period when the beast controlled Rome as the fifth head is indicated by the following:

Head	A.D. Dates
(1) Imperial Rome ²	314 (Constantine) to 395 (Theodosius)
(2) Western Empire, capital at Ravenna ^{3,4}	403 (Honorius) to 476 (Romulus)
(3) Heruli ⁴	476 to 489/493 (Odoacer)
(4) Ostrogoths ⁴	489/493 (Theodoric) to 539 (Vitiges)
(5) Papal Rome	539 ⁵ (Vigilius) to 1799 (Pius VI)
(6) French Directory	1799 (Berthier) to 1870 (Napoleon III)
(7) Victor Emmanuel dynasty	1870 (Emmanuel II) to 1929 (Mussolini)

The fourth empire of Daniel 7 is seen as a symbolic creature having ten horns.⁶ Yet the vision implies that an eleventh horn existed, at least prior to the three which it plucked up, but it was present in such an undeveloped and unperceived form that it was not noticed in the initial count of ten. Nevertheless, according to Revelation 12:2–5, Papacy’s fetal development and subsequent birth as a small male child (the “little horn” of Daniel 7:8,20) became increasingly apparent, especially when the child was seen to be responsible for the subtle but thoroughly effective uprooting of the second, third, and fourth horns, after which time it rapidly arose to prominence and great stature (Dan. 7:24; 8:9,10) as the false Michael of Revelation 12.

Chapter 2 of Daniel portrays the same sequence and development. The first significant involvement and role of the papal Church is seen to occur *after* the previous development of the civil authority (the first horn of Daniel 7) and the protodivision⁷

2. Although Imperial Rome began in 146 B.C., the setting of the vision commences with A.D. 314.

3. Honorius, the nominal ruler of the West, was only ten years old when Theodosius died. Stilico, the commander-in-chief of the army, acted as regent for the child. At his convenience the general exercised his provisional authority from various field headquarters. Honorius assumed the reins of government eight years later and removed to the security of the city of Ravenna fortress.

4. For further information on these three powers, see *Thy Kingdom Come, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1890), Ser. 3, pp. 76–77.

5. Within six years after Emperor Justinian’s endorsement of the pope (A.D. 533), the Ostrogothic power was vanquished. (John Hammerton and Harry Elmer Barnes, ed., the *The Illustrated World History* [New York: Wm. H. Wise & Co., 1937], p. 363. Wallace K. Ferguson and Geoffrey Bruun, *A Survey of European Civilization*, 2nd ed., ed. William L. Langer [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947], Part 1, p. 141. William and Robert Chambers, *Chambers’s Encyclopaedia* [Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1888], Vol. 2, p. 53, s.v. “Belisarius.” Frederick Converse Beach, ed., *The Americana* [New York: Scientific American Compiling Department, 1912], Vol. 3, s.v. “Belisarius.”)

6. The horns of the fourth beast of Daniel were meant to perform a dual role: (1) The ten horns represent divisions of power in the empire both in the present and in the future. (2) In the absence of any specified or designated *heads* in the description of this beast in Daniel, the ten horns also indicate, but to an intended limited degree, a partial progressive development.

7. This division existed prior to the removal of the seat of government from Rome to Constantinople.

of the empire as shown by the legs of iron (Pagan Rome). It is the feet⁸ (not the legs) and the toes of the image that are composed of iron mixed with “miry” clay (Dan. 2:41). But soon the toes become brittle “potters’ clay” (Dan. 2:42), representing the false, imitation stone Kingdom of Christ.

Ten Crowns

The crowns on the *heads* of the dragon in Chapter 12 represent Rome during the time of the Caesars, when emperors ruled in the name of Rome. Rome was the authority, not the horns. But here in Revelation 13 the crowns are seen on the ten *horns*. Although Papacy governed with an iron hand as an absolute monarchy in religious affairs, in other matters, with foresightedness, it acted or ruled as a temporal sovereign that delegated or distributed sanctioned civil authority to the horns, or powers. The pope crowned or deposed the kings of Europe much as he saw fit or as expediency allowed.

Heads of Blasphemy

The “name of blasphemy” upon the heads of the beast signifies that period of history in which Antichrist attained fullness of power. The pope (each pope in turn) is the *head* of the false Church or Kingdom class, which is his body, even as Jesus Christ is the *head* of the true Church, which is his body. The crowns upon the horns and the name of blasphemy (i.e., “Christendom”) upon the heads pertain to the Middle Ages and the days of the Holy(?) Roman Empire.

Verse 2:

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.

In Daniel 7 Papacy is depicted by a remarkably singular horn upon the fourth beast, but in the Apocalypse a whole beast is devoted to its symbolism. The beast described here in verse 2 possesses features of *all* four beasts of Daniel 7, yet in no way should this composite description be understood to signify that the first four heads of the beast in Revelation 13 commence with the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. To prevent such a misunderstanding, the animal features of the composite beast are purposely narrated out of sequence.

Daniel 7	Revelation 13:2
Babylonian <i>lion</i> (verse 4)	Body of a <i>leopard</i>
Medo-Persian <i>bear</i> (verse 5)	Feet of a <i>bear</i>
Grecian <i>leopard</i> (verse 6)	Mouth of a <i>lion</i>
Roman <i>diverse beast</i> (verse 7)	Seat of the <i>dragon</i>

In Revelation 13:2 the various bestial features detailed are not meant to identify four successive powers that arise or to show a time relationship; instead they call

8. The feet are the terminal part of the leg below the ankle joint.

attention to cardinal characteristics of these empires that Papacy possesses and exemplifies.

Body of a Leopard

It is implied that the main part of the body, or torso, of the beast consisted of the likeness of a leopard. Known for agility and secrecy in movement and for adroit and swift acceleration, the leopard contrasts markedly with, for instance, the bear with its rather slow, cumbersome movements. The leopard wastes no motion in pursuing its prey; it ripples with feline grace, having no superfluity of weight.

The Holy Spirit, therefore, used the leopard to portray Greece (Dan. 7:6), particularly the military exploits and prowess of Alexander the Great. The nation was also known for philosophy, learning, orators, diplomacy, skillful gymnasts, Olympic games, and the oracle of Delphi. The Western world generally concedes Greece (Athens) to be the seedbed of democracy, and Greek architecture and statuary are marvels of grace and beauty. Thus Ancient Greece was aptly symbolized by the leopard that is graceful yet dangerous and lethal toward its prey: “beauty and the beast.” Some examples follow.

One time when Alexander was attacked by an enemy using sizable chariots with protruding axles armed with whirling blades—a devastating spectacle to behold—he simply had the men of his famed Macedonian phalanx strike their swords vigorously against their bucklers to create an uncommon noise and din that frightened the horses of the opposing force, causing a great number of the enemy to turn back against their own troops. Others were allowed to charge through in disarray uncontested, while Alexander had his men swiftly regroup with no break in ranks, for he well knew the chariots could not be quickly turned around and thus, momentarily and conveniently, would be extremely vulnerable to attack from the rear by his vanguard. Also, the outer horses of the enemy’s four-horse chariots were hitched by a single outside trace, which could easily be cut away, leaving the inner-wheel horses exposed to mortal attack.⁹

On other occasions Alexander would have his men in the front ranks charge fiercely forward and then, at the last moment, according to prior instruction, seem to panic. The men would veer purposely to the right and to the left as though afraid of the enemy, causing the unsuspecting foe likewise to be divided in their ranks while continuing in happy though deluded pursuit. This stratagem opened a large, gaping hole in the center of the opponent’s forces, exposing the very inner core of the enemy’s strength to unexpected and sudden mortal confrontation. Alexander had a well-disciplined body of soldiers just behind his front lines in utmost readiness to charge into this opening and defeat the enemy.

When confronted by a foe in India using elephants in their offense, Alexander the Great instructed his soldiers, who were about to be attacked by these huge, formidable creatures, to group themselves into an extremely tight-knit formation, to hold their notorious, long spears at varying heights and lengths in relation to their bodies, and to stand their ground and even press forward. This porcupine formation

9. Charles Rollin, *The Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Medes and Persians, Grecians and Macedonians* (New York: Pratt, Woodford & Co., 1844), Vol. 5, p. 88.

proved so successful in the ensuing engagement that the elephants fled in panic and, in their confusion, carried their riders with them.

Like Genghis Khan, Alexander would have cavalry ride long distances in the night to surprise and capture strategic villages at sunrise. The Persian armies depended upon massive numbers and strength with a corresponding loss in mobility. Alexander depended on speed and relative lightness of armor, baggage, and supplies—when deemed expedient—to cover either great distances or taxing obstacles and thus gain the tactical element of surprise. His own personal valor and that of his men were given the highest priority of consideration.

No other animal but the leopard could have so perfectly pictured Greece and brought out the ingredients of wisdom, grace, suppleness, and cunning. The exploits of Greece, as a nation, and also the accomplishments of Alexander, the nation's general, have captivated the hearts and the imaginations of an unregenerate world oblivious of his unwarranted aggression and his later examples of vanity and cruelty.

The Papal Leopard

Now to return to the vision of the papal beast, which is seen to possess the body of a leopard. The papal government—its functional organization and mechanics of operation—has characteristics similar to those of the leopard. The papal system has political dexterity and maneuverability, its representatives being skilled in the art of diplomacy. When contingencies arise and events do not materialize as anticipated, Papacy always has in preparation alternate options to pursue. Its internal organization and chain of command are well defined with no excess bureaucracy to impede the implementation of its policy and political expertise. An order given by the pope is followed down the line. The organization of Papacy is so exceptional that Adolf Hitler in his book *Mein Kampf* just marveled at its political strength, sagacity, and longevity in weathering the storms of centuries. The dictator desired that his own political organization be patterned in its likeness.

The spots (camouflage) of the leopard also well illustrate papal tactics and change of policy where considered most useful. In other words, in democratic countries Papacy tries to appear liberal, but in lands where, in the past, ignorance and superstition have prevailed, such as Latin America, Portugal, and Spain, Papacy has assumed its true posture and conservative role.¹⁰ In darkened lands where the glorious light of the gospel has shone but dimly, it is intolerant to truth. In more liberal countries, such as the British Commonwealth and America, where there is a republican form of government or parliamentary rule, Papacy tries to appear more lenient and flexible, taking advantage of the benefits of the laws of the land but stubbornly resisting reform. In one country, it is obliged to be more tolerant, yet in another it is given theocratic license. Thus can be seen Papacy's duplicity. Can the Papacy truly reform and find itself in heart sympathy with a pluralistic society? The Scripture rhetorically answers this question in the negative:

10. R. E. Streeter, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Pastoral Bible Institute, 1924), Vol. 2, p. 86.

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard
[change] his spots? (Jer. 13:23)

Feet of a Bear

The feet of a bear possessed by the beast indicate strength and power. With its feet a bear crushes or hugs its prey to death. The animal has such strength that it can pull up small trees by the roots (elephants are the only other creature that can do likewise). Sometimes, to scare a foe, a bear will stand on its hind feet and lift and wave its forefeet (arms) as it approaches. The bear being ponderous in size and weight, such a spectacle is terrifying indeed. The grizzly, appropriately named *Ursus horribilis*, is no figment of the imagination.

The Medo-Persian Empire is symbolized in Daniel 7:5 as a bear because of the great size and numbers of its armed host. The story is told of a quarrel between the Persian and Macedonian kings caused by the refusal of Philip's son, Alexander the Great, to pay the annual tribute of a thousand golden eggs to the Persian monarch, Darab the Second (Darius Codomanus). When Darab sent an ambassador for the customary tribute, Alexander is reported to have replied, "The bird that laid the eggs has flown to the other world."

Darab sent another ambassador with a bat, a ball, and a bag of small seed. The bat and ball were meant to ridicule Alexander's youth; the bag of seed was an emblem of the *countless numbers* of the Persian army.¹¹ Such symbolic messages of olden times were not uncommon among Oriental monarchs. Romantic and fabulous as this account may seem, it at least points out that tradition credits the Persian forces as being of incredulous size.

Xerxes, the Persian king, in his attack on Greece, not only built a fleet of boats to serve as a bridge for his soldiers to walk across continuously for seven days but is attributed to have had five million souls¹² actively engaged in the enterprise in one capacity or another to ensure success; in reality, however, the plan failed miserably. Also, the Bear Empire, which would besiege for years, has been known to even turn a river aside to accomplish its purpose.

Since the Persian armies depended upon the disproportionate numbers of their forces to wear down and conquer enemies, the men were not as highly trained as they would have been under empires such as Greece or Rome. Rome used methodology and *organization*; a soldier in the Roman army was trained with great diligence to do exactly what he was told. In its heyday no one could conquer Rome. The empire was superior to its predecessors in the martial arts because it depended on *discipline*, organization, and prior training. Later, when Rome became too wealthy and self-indulgent and went into debauchery, mercenaries were hired instead of continuing their former policy. It was only a matter of time until the weakened empire crumbled.

11. S. G. Goodrich, *A History of All Nations, from the Earliest Periods to the Present Time* (Auburn, Mass.: Derby and Miller, 1853), p. 104.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 99. Philip Van Ness Myers, *Ancient History*, rev. ed. (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1904), p. 194 footnote. Willis Mason West, *The Ancient World*, rev. ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), p. 175.

The Papal Bear

As in the siege of a city the aggressor sought to cut off all supplies to the inhabitants therein and thus force submission, so Papacy was wont to employ the similar tactics of the bear and to hug its prey to death. Applying the interdict, excommunicating from the sacraments, cutting off from all the privileges of the Church or communication with its members—all of these tactics had a negative impact on the individuals to whom they were directed. The size, influence, and catholicity of the Church indeed made such injunctions a stark reality.

Innocent III (1198–1216) was, in many respects, the most powerful pope of the Middle Ages. He greatly strengthened the temporal power of the Papacy, for in addition to the papal states, which he ruled in Italy, he had as a vassal under him Sicily and Naples, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, Aragon, and Poland. It was to him that King John surrendered England, receiving it back from the pope's legate as a fief. To check in this thirteenth century what was considered to be the waves of heresy that swept over Europe, the Church of Rome established a special tribunal called the Inquisition to try persons accused of revolting against the religious authority. Up to that time, heresy trials had been conducted by local bishops. The new Inquisition courts, which were soon put into the hands of the Dominican friars, were able to carry forward the work on a broader scale.

The Inquisition procedure deserves brief notice here. The suspected party was detained in prison, only to be brought to trial when his judges saw fit to do so. The proceedings were conducted secretly. He was not confronted with his accusers, nor were their names even then made known to him. At a grand ceremonial called *sermo generalis*, the names of the guilty were announced and the punishments inflicted. Punishments ranged from fines and excommunication to imprisonment in the dungeon or the galleys for life or for a limited period; for heretics deemed incorrigible, the sentence was death on the scaffold or in the terrible *auto-da-fé* (death by fire). Since canon law forbade(?) the clergy to participate in bloodshed, the severer penalties were conveniently carried out by the state.

The Inquisition, also called “the holy(?) office,” was chiefly active in Southern Europe and reached its height in Spain during the days of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, when Fray Tomás de Torquemada in 1483–1498 was made inquisitor general for the kingdom.

Thus the application of the interdict or excommunication, and the repression by the forces of the Inquisition, closely resembled the siege tactics of the symbolic Persian bear. Papacy, the little horn of Daniel 7:8 destined to prevail against the saints during the long era of “a time and times and the dividing [or half] of time,” would indeed “wear out [many of] the saints of the most High” (Dan. 7:21,25).

Mouth of a Lion

The lion is called the king of the beasts because of its authoritative voice and stately mien. Adorned with a mane suggestive of a crown, the lion's head is frequently portrayed as a symbol of royalty and kingship. Other animals, such as the water buffalo and the elephant, are more powerful than the lion but do not present as imposing or as regal an appearance.

The lion can run swiftly for only a short distance, yet its great roar (Isa. 31:4; Jer. 2:15) has the significant advantage of terrifying and momentarily paralyzing a prey, thus enabling the capture. The surprised victim sees the roaring lion as all head and mouth, the body behind being obscured by the enormous appearance of its forepart. With a single blow of its massive forepaw, the powerful lion can crush the skull of an ox or break the back of a horse, and it is capable of carrying off a bull-ock in its jaws. The lion usually dispatches its prey by biting in the neck. Awesome jaws and teeth can easily scrunch the bones of a zebra (Job 4:10; Psa. 58:6; Joel 1:6).

The Papal Lion

One of the leading characteristics of the power symbolized by the “little horn” of Daniel 7:8,20 and the beast of Revelation 13:5 is “a mouth speaking great things.” The destruction of the beast in Daniel is said to be “because of the . . . great words which the [little] horn spake” (7:11).

Foxe, in his *Acts and Monuments*,¹³ presents a proper parody of Papacy’s leonine boastfulness based upon extracts of papal statements taken from 221 authentic documents comprising decrees, decretals, chronicles, pontificals, and bulls, all of which are indisputable evidence. The following are brief samplings, complete with marginal references.

“25. Thus you see all must be judged by me, and I of no man. Yea, and though I Pope of *Rome*, by my negligence or evil demeanour, be found unprofitable, or hurtful, either to my self [*sic*] or others; yea, if I should draw with me innumerable Souls by heaps to Hell, yet may no mortal Man be so hardy, so bold, or so presumptuous to reprove me. (*Bonifacius Martyr, dist.40. c.Si Papa*)”

“78. And though this *Henricus* [Henry II] was an Emperor of most stout courage, who stood 62 times in open field against his Enemies, (*Baptista Egnatius*)

“79. yet did not I *Gregorius* bring him *coram nobis*, and make him stand at my Gate three days and three nights bare-foot and bare-leg, with his Wife and Child, in the deep of Winter, both in Frost and Snow, intreating for his absolution, and after did excommunicate him again, so that he was twice excommunicated in my days? (*Platina, Benno Nauclerus*)”

“81. *Item*, Did not I, Pope *Alexander* [III], bring under *Henry* the Second, King of *England*, for the death of *Thomas Becket*, and cause him to go bare-foot to his Tomb at *Canterbury* with bleeding feet? (*Polydore Virgil, Historia ormalensis de rebus Anglorum*)

“82. Did not I [Pope] *Innocentius* the Third, cause King *John* to kneel down at the feet of *Pandulphus* my Legate, and offer up his Crown to his hands; also to kiss the feet of *Stephen Langhton* [Catholic] Bishop of *Canterbury*, and besides merced [indemnified] him in a thousand Marks by year? (*Chronica vernacula*)”

“84. . . . did not I *Calixtus* the 2d . . . bring in subjection *Gregory*, whom the said Emperor [Henricus V] had set up against me to be Pope [in my stead], bringing him into *Rome* upon a Camel, his face to the Horse tail, making him to hold

13. John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments of Matters Most Special and Memorable, Happening in the Church: With an Universal History of the Same*, 9th ed. (London: Company of Stationers, 1684), Vol. 1 of 3, pp. 888, 889, 891, 893, 895.

the Horse tail in his hand in stead [*sic*] of a Bridle? (*Calixtus 2. Plat. de vitis pontificum*)”

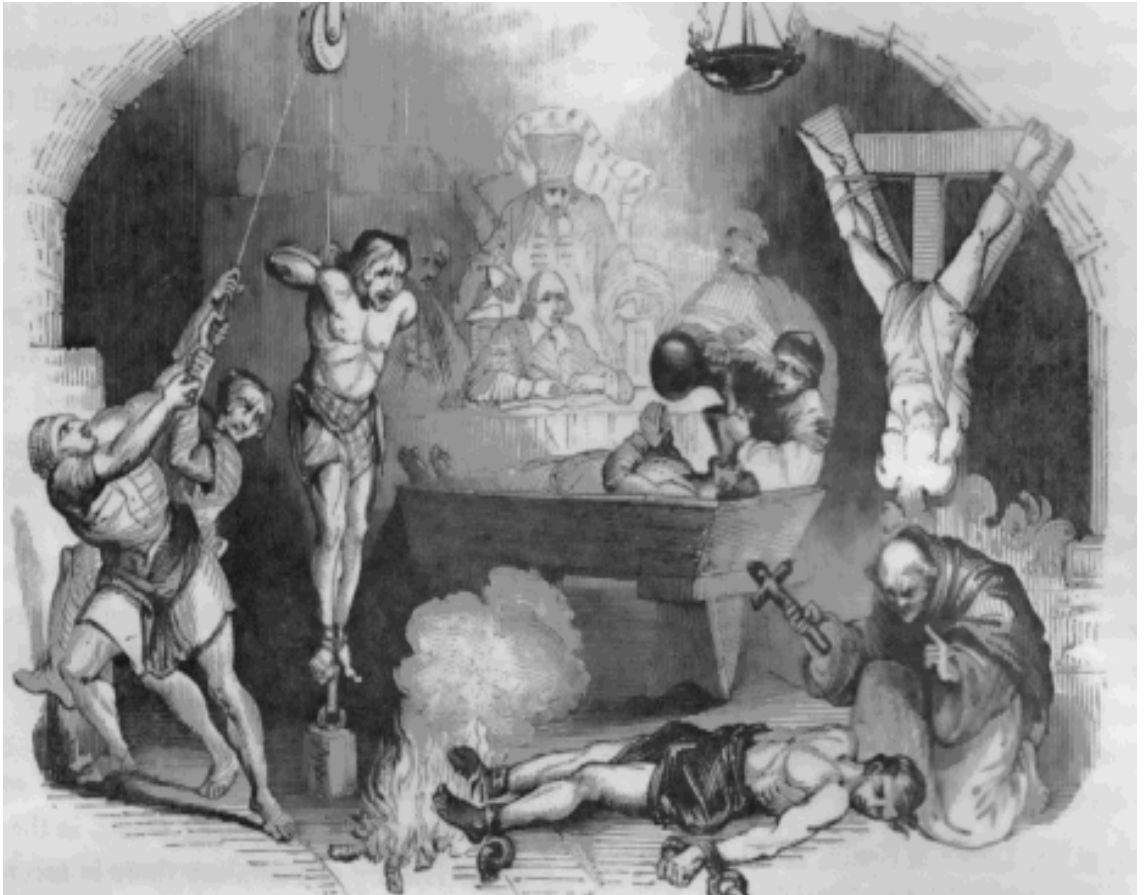
“88. . . . Did not the said *Alexander* [III] bring the valiant Emperor *Frederick* the first to *Venice*, by reason of his Son *Otho* there taken prisoner, and there in *Saint Marks Church* made him fall down flat upon the ground while I set my foot upon his neck, saying the verse of the *Psalm*, *Super aspidem & basiliscum ambulabis* [*Upon the serpent and royalty thou walkest*]? (*Naucerus acta Rom. pontificum*)”

“180. It may seem well verified in me that was spoken of Christ, *Psalm 8. Omnia subjecisti sub pedibus ejus, Oves & Boves, & Universa pecora campi; Volucres coeli & pisces maris, & c.i. Thou hast subdued all things under his Feet, Sheep and Oxen, and all Cattel* [*sic*] of the Field, the Birds of Heaven, and Fish of the Sea, etc. (*Antoninus, Summa majoris 3. part. Dist. 22*)

“181. Where it is to be noted, that by Oxen, Jews and Hereticks [*sic*] [are represented]; by Cattel [*sic*] of the Field, *Pagans* be signified. . . . (*Ibidem*)

“182. By Sheep and all Cattel [*sic*], are meant all Christian men both great and less, whether they be Emperors, Princes, Prelates. . . . By Birds of the Air you may understand the Angels and Potestates [*sic*—Principalities, Powers] of Heaven, who be all subject to me, in that I am greater than the Angels. . . . (*Ibidem*)”

Tortures of the Inquisition



“184. Lastly, by the Fishes of the Sea, are signified the souls departed in pain or in Purgatory. . . . (*Idem Antoninus, ibid.*)”

“188. . . . In his Primacy, he [the Pope] is *Abel*; In Government, the *Ark of Noah*; In Patriarchdom, *Abraham*; In Order, *Melchisedec*; In Dignity, *Aaron*; In Authority, *Moses*; In Seat-Judicial, *Samuel*; In Zeal, *Helias* [Elijah]; In Meekness, *David*; In Power, *Peter*; In Unction, *Christ*. (Nay, thou art *Antichrist*) My Power (they say) is greater than all the Saints. . . . (*Gloss. in caus. 12. q. 3. cap. Absis*)

“189. . . . All the Earth is my Diocess [*sic*], and I the Ordinary [that is, in jurisdiction having immediate or direct authority from God, contrasted with jurisdiction that is delegated!] of all men, having the Authority of the King of all Kings upon Subjects. I am all in all, and above all, (*Gloss. in c. 11. q. 3. Si inimicus*)

“190. so that God Himself and I the Vicar of God have both one Consistory, (*Hostiensis in c. Quanto de transt. praebe*)

“191. and I am able to do almost all that God can do, *Clave non errante*. (*Ex summa casuum fratris Baptista*)”

“196. . . . Wherefore if those things that I do be said to be done not of man, but of God; What can you make me but God? Again, if Prelates of the Church be called and counted of *Constantinus* [the Emperor] for gods, I then being above all Prelates

Pope Alexander Treading on the Neck of Frederick the Emperor



seem by this reason to be above all gods. Wherefore no marvel, if it be in my power to change time and times, to alter and abrogate Laws, to dispense with all things, yea with the Precepts of Christ. . . . (*Decretal. De Transt. Episc. cap. Quanto*)”

“221. Wherefore as I begun [*sic*], so I conclude, commanding, declaring, and pronouncing, to stand upon necessity of Salvation, for every humane [*sic*] Creature to be subject to me. (*Pope Bonifacius 8. Extr. de Majo. & obed. ca Unam Sanctam*)”

Seat of the Dragon

Verse 2 states that the dragon gave the beast (a) its power, (b) its seat, and (c) great authority. During the period of the first head and in the person of Constantine, the dragon, or Civil Rome, granted certain priorities to the Christian religion and deeded one of the most historic buildings in the city to Papacy for its own religious purpose. This recognition afforded Papacy immediate attention, a degree of budding influence, and latent political *power* and prestige. Two centuries after Constantine removed the capital of the empire from Rome to Constantinople—that is, during the emperor Justinian’s reign—the papal presence was foremost in the city of Rome, the former *seat* of the empire. Another two and a half centuries later, in Pepin’s and Charlemagne’s day, the papal *authority* was so great and proved to be so enduring that this period is sometimes referred to as the papal millennium.

Verse 3:

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: . . .

The dragon of Chapter 12 and the beast of Chapter 13 are both seen to possess seven heads. These seven successive heads of Rome are the same heads, be they of the dragon or of the beast, and not fourteen heads; however, this fact does not necessitate that the dragon and the beast must both exist contemporaneously throughout the entire Gospel Age. Neither, on the other hand, does this fact preclude an occasional coexistence.

The seven successive heads simply indicate the particular power structure or prestigious temporal authority most influential in Rome. One should realize that the papal beast did not arise out of the sea until A.D. 539, at which time it issued forth as a beast similar and analogous to the transition of the male child to the *Man of Sin*. At this maturity date, when the beast fully emerged from the sea, *four* of the seven heads were already in the past. In other words, the first dragon-head was Imperial Rome; the second through the fourth dragon-heads were of barbarian origin; the fifth form was the papal beast-head, the temporal power structure most influential in Rome; the sixth, the Napoleonic or French dragon-head controlling Rome; the seventh, the Victor Emmanuel dynastic dragon-head; and the eighth, the papal beast-head restored.

The Roman Catholic Church as a woman, as an ecclesiastical body or mother sacerdotal system, is one thing; but the Papacy as a beast, representing temporal authority and political influence, is quite another. The method of interpretation presented in prior paragraphs is scripturally sound, for in Revelation 17:9,10 *five heads* (four of the dragon, one of the beast) are referred to as having fallen in the past, whereas the sixth and seventh heads pertain to the dragon. The beast corpse

and its head are stated as being nonexistent during the sixth and seventh stages of development, but both the beast and its head are seen to arise from the tomb in Revelation 17:11.

Only the papal beast (*not* the apostate Church, the harlot of Chapter 17, *nor* the civil dragon of the Apocalypse) dies *twice*. The beast dies; it revives—only to die again. It should be noted that exactly the same experience which befalls the head of the papal beast also happens to the beast itself. The beast dies twice, and the head dies twice, the first death of each occurring in the fifth-estate termination. Revelation 17:11 describes the last appearance of the beast-head: “Even he [the beast] is the eighth [form], and is [one] of the seven [prior heads, for the fifth head reappears], and goeth [this time not merely into the pit of death later to arise, but] into perdition [everlasting destruction].” Therefore, the beast and its particular head are synonymous terms representing *papal supremacy*. This eighth condition cannot be described as a headless beast, as some have reasoned, for it is specifically stated as being “of the [former] seven [heads].” Numerically there are eight heads, but only seven are separate and distinct from each other.

It is important to note too that John “saw one of his [the beast’s] heads as it were wounded [*slain*—see KJV marginal reference] to death; and his [the beast’s—incidentally, also the head’s] deadly wound¹⁴ [the wound inflicted upon that particular head] was healed.” The same beast and the same head disappear and then reappear in a later eighth development.

Several questions now arise: Which head of the beast did John see wounded unto death? The fifth head, it has already been answered. When did this slaying occur? In 1799. Why this date and not the Reformation period commencing in 1517? The answer: Although the Catholic Church lost the support of nearly the whole of northern Europe given over to the Reformation cause, yet this loss is not the wound specifically referred to in verse 3. Why not? Because the *ten horns* as they apply to either the dragon or the beast represent the various distributions of power in *Europe*, whereas the *seven heads* represent the successive forms of government dominating *Rome*. While the loss of northern Europe affected the Catholic Church and, to a large extent, papal influence in the Continent, it did not alter in the least the authority of the pope *in Rome*. One of the heads—not one of the horns—is seen as slain. The wounded head focuses upon the traditional capital of the empire and not upon Europe. The Reformation did not cripple the influence of the pope in Rome, whereas the *French Revolution* did. The slaying, therefore, *of one of the seven heads*, the fifth head, should not be confused with the fall of the tenth part of the city referred to in Revelation 11:13, the latter being more comparable to the destruction of one of the ten horns in Daniel, but being left out of consideration in the Apocalypse here in Chapter 13. Nor should the slaying of the fifth head be confused to signify the nonexistence of the pope *as a person* and *as a claimant* to a power he no longer possessed.

14. Literally, “the stroke of his *death*” or “his *death*-stroke” was healed (cf. Rotherham translation and footnote).

The following information on the French Revolution era and subsequent historical events has an important relationship to the prophetic scene under consideration.

The Fifth (Papal) Head Slain—1799

“... in 1796 the revolutionary torrent rushed across the Alps, and beset Pius [VI] in his Italian principality; the invincible warriors of anti-papal and anti-christian France were led into Italy by a young general of Italian race and under Napoleon Bonaparte struck down the king of Sardinia, won victory after victory over the Austrians, drove them out of Lombardy, and then turned against the papal territories. . . . Bonaparte [menacingly] unsheathed the sword of France against the helpless pontiff, who at once yielded and signed the dishonourable peace of Tolentino . . . (February, 1797). The pontiff sank into a dependent [with an indemnity of 1.5 million francs and a hundred of the finest pictures and statues in the Vatican]. . . .”¹⁵

Napoleon left France in May 1798 to pursue his long-cherished Egyptian campaign. “In his [Napoleon’s] absence the Directory which France then obeyed, . . . bent upon hastening the work of regeneration and human emancipation and certainly not wrong in feeling assured that there could be no thorough regeneration of Italy and no final deliverance of mankind while the popedom remained, set about casting that hindrance out of the way. They gave the word; the French soldiers under Berthier marched upon Rome, set up a Roman Republic and laid hands upon the pope.”¹⁶ “. . . the tricolor flag was displayed from the Capitol, and the Pope’s temporal power declared to be at an end. He [Pius VI] was carried captive to France, where, in 1799, he died in exile.”¹⁷

The king of Naples made a vigorous push against the French in November 1798 and obtained possession of Rome, while Lord Nelson took and destroyed the French fleet near the mouth of the Nile the same year. The captive pontiff died in exile on August 29, 1799. Multitudes imagined that the Papacy was on the verge of lasting doom; they wondered if Pius VI was indeed the last pontiff, and if the close of the eighteenth century signaled the perpetual fall of the papal dynasty.

The Sixth Head—The French Empire

The cardinals, previously driven from Rome by the French, assembled at Venice and on March 14, 1800, elected a successor in Bernabo Chiaramonti, who took the name of Pius VII. Bonaparte, having returned to French soil in October 1799, snatched France from the feeble grasp of the Directory, and breathing his own spirit of order and energy into the weakened and disordered republic, he soon retook Italy and awed Europe on the field of battle at Marengo, June 14, 1800. The following month Pius VII reentered the pontifical territory a vassal, as it were, of the French Republic.

“... Napoleon wanted the papacy; he sought a connection with it as a serviceable satellite, sought to widen, strengthen and deepen his sway by yoking it to his

15. Thomas H. Gill, *The Papal Drama* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1866), pp. 348–349.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 349.

17. H. Grattan Guinness, *The Approaching End of the Age* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1884), p. 362.

chariot wheels and appropriating its influence over the Roman Catholic world.”¹⁸ “‘The French people must be lured back to religion,’ said Napoleon [1801], ‘not shocked. To declare the Catholic religion *the religion of the state* is impossible. It is contrary to the ideas prevalent in France, and will never be admitted. In place of this declaration, we can only substitute the avowal of the fact *that the Catholic religion is the religion of the majority of Frenchmen*. But there must be perfect freedom of opinion. The amalgamation of wise and honest men of all parties is the principle of my government. I must apply that principle to the Church as well as to the state. It is the only way of putting an end to the troubles of France, and I shall persist in it undeviatingly.’”¹⁹

“In the time of the Directory, a famous wooden image of the Virgin had been taken from the church at Loretto, and was deposited in one of the museums of Paris as a curiosity. The sincere Catholics were deeply wounded and irritated by this act, which to them appeared so sacrilegious. Great joy was caused both in France and Italy when Napoleon sent a courier to the Pope restoring this statue, which was regarded with very peculiar veneration. The same ambassador carried the terms of agreement for peace with the Church. This religious treaty with Rome was called ‘The Concordat.’ The Pope, in secular power, was helpless. Napoleon could, at any moment, pour a resistless swarm of troops into his territories. . . . and on the 15th of July, 1801, this great act was signed.”²⁰

“When Napoleon, for political reasons, restored the Roman Catholic religion in France, it was only to inflict on it, what its own dignitaries deem, additional insult and injury. It was put on a level with all other sects of religion, and merely tolerated. No trace of an admission of Papal supremacy, or even of Papal influence, is to be found in the concordat between Napoleon and the Pope for France, in 1801, or in that for Italy, in 1803. At his coronation, in 1804, Napoleon required the Pope’s attendance, and made Pius VII. cross the Alps in mid-winter, not to confer a crown, but merely to adorn a ceremony. Napoleon placed the crown on his own head himself; and the Pope stood by, ‘an important and imposing, but purposely slighted witness of the coronation.’”²¹

“. . . however, he [the pope] came back [to Italy] with empty hands. He had not secured the return of the Legations (Bologna, Ferrara, the Romagna) to the Papal States. . . . Another disappointment: the Pope was not allowed to *crowns* the Emperor. Napoleon was convinced that he ruled by the direct grace of God and the will of the people. The Church could anoint, consecrate, confirm him: but not assert any authority over him. Power unlimited was the first among ‘the things which are Caesar’s.’ Ultimately he was to chafe under the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal: ‘They—the priests—want the nobler part of man, leaving me nought but the carcass.’ He was beginning to feel himself the Vicar of God: the Pope was

18. Gill, *The Papal Drama*, p. 354.

19. John S. C. Abbott, *The History of Napoleon Bonaparte*, new ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1883), Vol. 2 of 4, p. 368.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 369–370.

21. Guinness, *The Approaching End of the Age*, p. 362.

but his Imperial Minister of Public Worship, to be dismissed if need be like a Fouché or a Talleyrand. . . .

“But he [Napoleon] had made himself President of the Italian (formerly Cisalpine) Republic; now he decided to be king of Italy (March 13, 1805), and, like his illustrious predecessor Charlemagne, to assume in Milan the Iron Crown of the Lombards (May 26).”²²

“. . . when, a few years later, the Pope resisted his will, he soon showed him who was master. In [May] 1809, in the plenitude of his power, when he was supreme in Europe, he issued from the palace of the Schönbrunn in Vienna, a decree dividing and distributing the dominions yet remaining to the Pope in Italy, and constituting Rome itself the second city in the French Empire. At the same time he reduced the ‘Holy Father’ to the rank of a French subject, and even in his sacerdotal character, a mere salaried official of the French Court, his income being fixed at £80,000 a year.”²³

“. . . Napoleon ordered General Miollis to march on Rome. . . . on May 12, 1809 came the outright annexation of the Papal States; . . . on July 6, the Pontiff was wrenched from the Holy City and imprisoned, at Grenoble, Savona, Fontainebleau.”²⁴ “. . . [at Fontainebleau] he was forced to sign another concordat [January 25, 1813], renouncing all claim to Rome for ever [*sic*]. On the overthrow of Napoleon, the Pope was restored to Rome; ‘but he sat not on his throne as once before; his power was crippled, his seat unstable, the riches of his Church were rifled, and a mighty precedent and principle of action had been established against him, which could scarcely fail of bearing similarly bitter fruit afterwards.’ (Elliott, ‘Horae,’ iii. p. 375.)”²⁵ This new concordat again recognized the annexation of the Roman states to the French Empire.²⁶

Both the Roman beast (the temporal authority of the Papacy) and the fifth head (representing the period of papal supremacy in Rome) were effectively slain in 1799. There remained but the hollow carcass of Papacy’s former self. The body of its temporal power lay unburied yet another seventy years, however. In the meantime, Victor Emmanuel of Sardinia was proclaimed king of Italy in February 1861. At that time Rome alone was outside the newly made Italian nation, and the lack of that central dividing strip of territory was a real handicap. Troops still guarded the pope’s feeble sovereignty which, for another brief decade, was maintained by French bayonets. Victor Emmanuel was too intelligent to attack this garrisoned effete territorial domain of the pontiff and perhaps risk all that he had thus far accomplished. As one has said, he “let the stars in their courses work for Italy.”

22. Albert Guérard, *Napoleon I: A Great Life in Brief* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), pp. 76–78.

23. Guinness, *The Approaching End of the Age*, pp. 362–363.

24. Guérard, *Napoleon I: A Great Life in Brief*, p. 94.

25. Guinness, *The Approaching End of the Age*, p. 363.

26. William and Robert Chambers, *Chambers’s Encyclopaedia* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1891), Vol. 8, p. 209, s.v. “Pius.”

The Seventh Head—The Victor Emmanuel Dynasty

In 1870 the Franco-Prussian War forced France to withdraw its soldiers from Rome. The Roman people, instead of supporting and advancing the cause of the pontiff (Pius IX), welcomed with acclamations the army which Victor Emmanuel II marched into Italy's ancient capital. This event terminated even the archaic semblance of the temporal power of the pope. For the rest of his days he and his successors lived as voluntary prisoners within the Vatican, until the Concordat or Lateran Treaty of 1929 between Italy and the Papacy, which *formally recognized* the temporal power of the pontiff as sovereign ruler over the Vatican and a small adjacent territory.

Strange as it may appear, the very year of papal doom (1870), the following notable event occurred. "Surely, too, in observing modern instances of Papacy's 'great swelling words of vanity,' we should not overlook the notable decree of the Ecumenical Council, held in Rome in A.D. 1870, declaring the infallibility of the Pope. True, it had been claimed now and then in the past, by supercilious popes, that they were infallible; and bishops and princes desirous of flattering their pride had virtually so pronounced them, in the declaration, 'Thou art another god, *on earth*'; but it remained for a Papal Council in this enlightened nineteenth century to coolly and deliberately inform the world how great this 'god on earth' is—that he is *almost* as perfect as the other God in heaven; that he cannot err more than the other; that in his *ex cathedra* utterances the pope is *infallible*—unerring.

"The vote of the council was taken July 13th 1870, and on the 18th the decree was formally promulgated, with ceremony, at the great St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. The following description of the event, by Dr. J. Cummings, of London, will be read with interest. He says:—

"The Pope had a grand throne erected in front of the eastern window in St. Peter's, and arrayed himself in a perfect blaze of precious stones, and surrounded himself with cardinals and patriarchs and bishops in gorgeous apparel, for a magnificent spectacular scene. He had chosen the early morning hour and the eastern window—that the rising sun should flash its beams full upon his magnificence, and by it his diamonds, rubies, and emeralds be so refracted and reflected that he should appear to be not a man, but what the decree proclaimed him, one having all the glory of God. . . . The pope posted himself at an early hour at the eastern window [arrangements had been made to reflect a glory around the person of the pope by means of mirrors at noon, when the decree was to be made²⁷], . . . but the sun refused to . . . shine. The dismal dawn darkened rapidly to a deeper and deeper gloom. The dazzle of glory could not be produced. The aged eyes of the would-be God could not see to read by daylight and he had to send for candles. Candle-light strained his nerves of vision too much, and he handed the reading over to a cardinal. The cardinal began to read amid an ever blackening gloom, but had not read many lines before such a glare of lurid fire and such a crash burst from the inky heavens as was never equalled at Rome before. Terror fell upon all. The reading ceased [and the voices of the Council were lost in the rolling thunder²⁸]. One

27. Guinness, *The Approaching End of the Age*, p. 364.

28. *Ibid.*

cardinal jumped trembling from his chair, and exclaimed, "It is the voice of God speaking, the thunders of Sinai.""²⁹

The Eighth Head—Papacy Revived

The Lateran Treaty of 1929 signaled the *healing of Papacy's "deadly wound"* (verse 3) and the rise of the papal beast "out of the bottomless pit" (Rev. 17:8). A fuller explanation of this matter is deferred until Revelation 17 is considered.

. . . and all the world wondered after the beast.

At first this text seems to relate convincingly to a happening subsequent to the healing of the deadly wound, but further deliberation proves contrariwise. This concluding clause of verse 3 should be the opening clause of verse 4; i.e., "And all the world [Christendom] wondered after the beast. . . ."

The wonderment corresponds to that recorded in Revelation 17:6, and *not* to the wonderment of Revelation 17:8. Revelation 13:1–3a ("And I stood upon the sand of the sea . . . and his deadly wound was healed") is a scenario unto itself. Revelation 13:3b–10 ("And all the world wondered after the beast. . . . Here is the patience and the faith of the saints") is another perspective of the *same* former period, namely, one in retrospect.

Verse 4:

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?

The Sinaitic manuscript renders the forepart of this passage: "And they worshipped the dragon [the civil power] BECAUSE he gave THE authority to the beast." During Papacy's 1,260-year period of power, the Catholic-oriented populace highly esteemed, first, the imperial government ruling from Constantinople and then, in later centuries, from the Charlemagne era to the French Revolution, the Franks because these gave firm support to their religion through various vicissitudes.

Written in the year 1880, the following aptly describes the existing conditions of prior papal rulership. "The people respected the civil power all the more because it had so honored ecclesiastical authority. The various kingdoms (horns) soon learned that their hold over the people was strengthened rather than weakened by allegiance to Papacy, for Papacy in turn recognized them, and commanded the people to recognize those despots as of divine appointment. Thus it is, that to this day, the rulers of Europe claim to rule by Divine right and appointment, and their children after them, no matter how incompetent. For the same reason the Protestant churches of Europe, to gain national favor, protection and assistance, became State churches, and they, as Papacy did, recognize the reigning families as possessed of Divine title to the office and rulership of the people. God's Word, on the contrary, denounces all the governments of earth as beastly, selfish, oppressive, and recognizes only one Kingdom as being of God's appointment, viz., the Kingdom soon to be established in all the earth—Christ and His saints in glory. (Dan. 7:27; Rev. 11:15; 2 Tim. 2:12.)

29. *The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1889), Ser. 2, pp. 317–318.

It is in that Kingdom only that the saints have their citizenship, it alone they recognize, and for it pray ‘Thy Kingdom come.’”³⁰

The bravado and sheer audacity of Papacy awed even the enemy and also gave rise to much of its success. “. . . when, in A.D. 455, the city of Rome was invaded and plundered by the Vandals, and all around was distress and desolation, Leo, the bishop of Rome, improved the opportunity for impressing upon all, both barbarians and Romans, his claim of spiritual power. To the rude and superstitious barbarians, already greatly impressed by what they saw about them, of Rome’s greatness and wealth, Leo, arrayed in his pontifical robes, exclaimed: ‘Beware! I am the successor of St. Peter to whom God has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven and against whose church the gates of hell cannot prevail; I am the living representative of divine power on the earth; I am Caesar, a Christian Caesar, ruling in love, to whom all Christians owe allegiance; I hold in my hands the curses of hell and the benedictions of heaven; I absolve all subjects from allegiance to kings; I give and take away, by divine right, all thrones and principalities of Christendom. Beware how you desecrate the patrimony given me by your invisible king; yea, bow down your necks to me and pray that the anger of God may be averted.’”³¹

Verse 5:

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.

“In a work entitled ‘The Pope the Vicar of Christ, the Head of the Church,’ by the celebrated Roman Catholic, Monsignor Capel,³² is a list of no less than sixty-two blasphemous titles applied to the pope; and, be it noticed, these are not mere dead titles from the past, for they were arranged by one of Papacy’s foremost living writers. We quote from the list as follows:—

- “‘Most Divine of all Heads.’
- “‘Holy Father of Fathers.’
- “‘Pontiff Supreme over all Prelates.’
- “‘Overseer of the Christian Religion.’
- “‘The Chief Pastor—Pastor of Pastors.’
- “‘Christ by Unction.’
- “‘Abraham by Patriarchate.’
- “‘Melchisedec in Order.’
- “‘Moses in Authority.’
- “‘Samuel in the Judicial Office.’
- “‘High Priest, Supreme Bishop.’
- “‘Prince of Bishops.’
- “‘Heir of the Apostles; Peter in Power.’

30. *The Finished Mystery, Studies in the Scriptures* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: International Bible Students Association, 1918), Ser. 7, p. 196.

31. *The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, p. 295.

32. The Right Reverend Monsignor Capel, D.D., was Domestic Prelate of Leo XIII, a member of the Roman Congregation of the Segnatura, and a priest of the Archdiocese of Westminster.

“‘Key-bearer of the Kingdom of Heaven.’
 “‘Pontiff Appointed with Plenitude of Power.’
 “‘Vicar of Christ.’
 “‘Sovereign Priest.’
 “‘Head of all the Holy Churches.’
 “‘Chief of the Universal Church.’
 “‘Bishop of Bishops, that is, Sovereign Pontiff.’
 “‘Ruler of the House of the Lord.’
 “‘Apostolic Lord and Father of Fathers.’
 “‘Chief Pastor and Teacher.’
 “‘Physician of Souls.’
 “‘Rock against which the proud gates of hell prevail not.’
 “‘Infallible Pope.’
 “‘Head of all the Holy Priests of God.’

“In addition to the long list of titles of which the above are instances, the author gives the following quotations from a letter which St. Bernard, Abbott of Clairvaux, wrote to Pope Eugenius III, A.D. 1150:

“‘Who art thou?—The High-Priest, the Supreme Bishop. Thou art the Prince of Bishops, thou art the Heir of the Apostles. Thou art Abel in Primacy, Noah in government, Abraham in patriarchal rank, in order Melchisedec, in dignity Aaron, in authority Moses, Samuel in judicial office, Peter in power, *Christ in Unction*. Thou art he to whom the keys of heaven are given, to whom the sheep are intrusted. There are indeed other door-keepers of heaven, and other shepherds of the flocks; but thou art the more glorious in proportion as thou hast also, in a different fashion, inherited before others both these names. . . . The power of others is limited by definite bounds: thine extends even over those who have received authority over others. Canst thou not, when a just reason occurs, shut up heaven against a bishop, depose him from the episcopal office, and deliver him over to Satan? Thus thy privilege is immutable, as well in the keys committed to thee as in the sheep intrusted to thy care.’

“All these blasphemously flattering titles have been applied to and received by the Roman pontiffs with complacency and marked satisfaction, as rightfully belonging to them.”³³

The “power . . . to continue forty and two months” (verse 5) refers to the era A.D. 539 to 1799.

Verse 6:

And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

Three kinds of blasphemy against God are enumerated: (1) against His name, (2) against His tabernacle, and (3) against those who dwell in heaven. In other words, the blasphemy is against (1) God, (2) the building (God’s arrangement of religious

33. *The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, pp. 306–308.

service), and (3) the worshippers, or dwellers, in that arrangement (the membership of the true Church).

Revelation 11:1 made a similar distinction between three elements, but there John was enjoined to note the necessary credentials and qualifications expected of those running for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The number, law, order, discipline, organization, and judgment of the New Creation were set forth in a futuristic, prospective sense. Revelation 11:1,2 and 13:5,6 both refer in a restricted sense to the sanctuary class seated with Jesus in the heavenlies, dwelling in the “Holy” condition. Both instances refer to the present life or the Gospel Age, and both accounts apply to the same forty-two-month period of special trial and disciplinary experience when true Christians were victimized by those professing to be Christians. The same period of time, however, is viewed from two different standpoints: Revelation 11:1,2 indicates that which would come upon the true Church; Revelation 13:5,6 looks back on what has already transpired.

Blasphemy Against God’s Name

Even if Papacy were the most upright and best moral guide to society, it would still be Antichrist and full of blasphemy because of taking unto itself the prerogatives that belong to God or to Christ. The acceptance of homage, reverence, or worship belonging to Deity constitutes Antichrist, not immoral living and all the other vices and excesses.

In Old Testament times God indicated His favor on behalf and in the midst of His people Israel by means of the secret Shekinah glory light that shone between the wings of the cherubim above the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant situated in the Most Holy compartment of the Tabernacle—the *throne room of His presence*. In counterfeiting the Tabernacle arrangement, the pope was actually carried about from place to place on a portable throne with staves such as the Kohathites used, and peacock feather fans held high on either side by attendants represented the cherubim wings (Num. 4:4–6). Although this portable throne was not called the Ark of the Covenant but the *Sedia Gestatoria*, nonetheless it represented the Ark and constituted the rankest blasphemy because the pope was seated there, brazenly and openly, in God’s stead.

Blasphemy Against God’s Tabernacle

Papacy blasphemes God’s tabernacle by substituting its own structured dogma, moral code, rules and regulations, and canon law under which the Church is to be organized. In short, it issues orders as to what the Church can and cannot do.

Blasphemy Against Those Dwelling in Heaven

Papacy has presumptuously beatified and canonized its own saints. Not only has it named individuals who were not saints at all, but it has burned at the stake as heretics those whose names were far more likely to have been “written in heaven” (Luke 10:20; Heb. 12:23).

Verse 7:

*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.*³⁴

“. . . no computation can reach the numbers who have been put to death, in different ways, on account of their maintaining the profession of the gospel, and opposing the corruptions of the church of Rome. A million of the poor Waldenses perished in France, nine hundred thousand orthodox Christians were slain, in less than thirty years after the institution of the Jesuits; the duke of Alva boasted of having put thirty-six thousand to death in the Netherlands, by the hands of [in this instance, not an invading army but just] the [one] common executioner, during the space of a few years. The inquisition destroyed by various tortures one hundred and fifty thousand Christians, within thirty years. These are a few specimens, and but a few, of those which history has recorded: but the total amount will never be known, till ‘the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.’ (*Note, Is. 26:20,21*).”³⁵

Daniel 7:21,25 refers to the same evil power which, in the Apocalypse, is repeatedly designated as “*the beast*” (verse 4).

Verse 8:

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.

Regarding the wide extent of dominion exercised by the Papacy, the following words are significant. “The extent and the character of Papal dominion, during the dark ages, is, in our days, little realized. . . . The world can smile now at the puerility of the proud and preposterous pretensions, of the poor old man who occupies the chair of St. Peter, in his Vatican prison in Rome. It listens to his loud claim to infallibility with a laugh of contempt. . . . But of yore it was quite another thing. Every utterance of the tiara-crowned monarch was heard with awe, every command was implicitly obeyed. Men trembled under his curse, and gloried in his benediction, as if they had been those of Deity.”³⁶

“The following is extracted from the ‘*Ceremoniale Romanum*,’ . . . and describes the first public appearance of the Pope in St. Peter’s, on his election to the Pontificate. After the investiture with the scarlet papal robes, the vest covered with pearls, and the mitre studded with precious stones, the new Pope is conducted to the altar, before which he prostrates himself in prayer, bowing as before the seat of God. An awful sequel then follows. We read: ‘The Pope rises, and, wearing his mitre, is lifted up by the cardinals, and is placed by them *upon the altar to sit there*. One of the bishops kneels, and begins the *Te Deum*. In the mean time the cardinals

34. “. . . and Authority was given him over Every Tribe and People and Language and Nation” (*Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*).

35. Thomas Scott, ed., *The Holy Bible*, Stereotype ed. (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, and Crocker and Brewster, 1833), Vol. 6, p. 749 (comment on Rev. 13:5–7).

36. Guinness, *The Approaching End of the Age*, p. 214.

kiss the feet and hands and face of the Pope.’ This ceremony is commonly called by the Roman Catholic writers ‘The adoration;’ it has been observed for many centuries, and was performed at the inauguration of Pius IX. A coin has been struck in the papal mint which represents it, and the legend is, ‘Quem creant adorant,’ ‘whom they create (Pope) they adore.’ The language in which this adoration is couched is blasphemous to a degree. At the coronation of Pope Innocent X. Cardinal Colonna on his knees, in his own name and that of the clergy of St. Peter’s, addressed the following words to the Pope: ‘Most holy and blessed father, head of the church, ruler of the world, to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, whom the angels in heaven revere, and the gates of hell fear, and all the world adores, we specially venerate, worship, and adore thee.’ . . . Pope Celestine III., when crowning Henry VI., expressed in action his sense of his own superiority to all monarchs: ‘The Lord Pope sat in the pontifical chair, holding the golden imperial crown between his *feet*; and the Emperor, bending his head, and the Empress, received the crown *from the feet* of the Lord Pope. But the Lord Pope instantly struck with his foot the Emperor’s crown, and cast it upon the ground, signifying that he had the power of deposing him, from the empire, if he were undeserving of it. The cardinals lifted up the crown, and placed it upon the Emperor’s head.’”³⁷

The selection of language denoting Jesus as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”³⁸ (verse 8) is significant. The head and forerunner of the New Creation is the example set before the Church in the race toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. If trials, disciplines, and humiliations were necessary to prove the worthiness of the meek Lamb of God, then it should have come as no surprise to his followers that such should be their lot during the 1,260-year period of papal supremacy. When one consecrates and unreservedly devotes his life to God in Christ Jesus, thus entering the divine family, his name is entered in the Lamb’s book of life. Generally speaking, in the time frame focused upon in this verse, all except the spirit-begotten ones worshipped the beast. The atrocities of Antichrist during this period were so blatant that it did not take long for the spiritually informed ones to identify him.

The deception of Papacy was so complete that the world was deceived as well as all the Church, with the exception of the overcomers, whose names were “written in heaven.” From past events and practices has sprung the delusion so common to all Protestants that their names must be connected with an earthly church system or they are not the Lord’s saints. But how much more important it is for Christians to have their names recorded *in the Lamb’s book of life*—the only record of any true value.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 193–195.

38. In the Sinaitic MS as well as in the KJV, it is “the Lamb slain from” and not “the names written before” the foundation of the world that is referred to in verse 8. Perhaps the desire of the copyists and translators was to make Revelation 13:8 more conformable to Revelation 17:8. But these two verses, in some respects, stand in contrast to each other. For example, two different periods of wonderment are referred to, and two periods of different duration are alluded to, one of great longevity, the other a brief hour of exaltation.

Verse 9:

If any man have an ear, let him hear.

Verse 10:

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.

While these words, in one sense, are a pronouncement of the law of retribution as it applies to any age, yet their insertion here is particularly directed to the saints in their sufferings during the foregoing long 1,260-year period of papal dominion. They also allude to the Master's own words of counsel to his followers: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). Moreover, verses 9 and 10 call attention to the example of Jesus as declared by the prophet: "Yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought *as a lamb* to the slaughter, and *as a sheep* before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isa. 53:7).

The prediction of retributory justice had a remarkable fulfillment. At the end of this forty-two-month period concerning the activities of those represented by both the dragon and the beast (verse 4), the streets of Paris and other cities of France flowed with the blood of the leaders of civil and clerical authority. The concluding statement of this exhortation, "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints," follows the axiom "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19).

True Christians, whose faith could firmly grasp these assurances and who, through long-suffering continuance, could steadfastly maintain their integrity, are those "who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:12).

Verse 11:

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.

The Two-Horned Beast

If the preceding wild beast represented an ecclesiastical power or government, then this beast called "another" should be understood to represent a similar ecclesiastical or church power. The first beast ascended *from the sea* (verse 1); that is, Papacy arose as a power, during troublesome times, in the midst of religious as well as political upheaval. But this second beast ascended "*out of the earth*," signifying that it sprang up among a professedly religious people and from a relatively stable society, a society *underneath religious restraint*.

As the first beast had ten horns, or powers, which gave it their strength and protection, so this beast has "two horns," indicating that two powers, or nations, will support it. Another factor must be kept in mind: A *beast* is a government; therefore, to become a symbolic beast, a church must become an element that is in or *part of* the government—and not merely an established church subsidized by government. Only one church fits this symbol perfectly, namely, the Church of England and Ireland. This *system*, like the Papacy, was a blending of Church and State—an ecclesiastical empire.

In the year 1200 England became subject to the pope. In 1531, owing to a dispute between the British king, Henry VIII, and the pope, England withdrew its allegiance to Papacy. The Convocation of its clergy, called the same year, decreed Henry VIII to be “the one protector of the English Church, its only and SUPREME LORD; and as far as might be, by the law of Christ, ITS SUPREME HEAD.”³⁹ However, for fear that the clause “as far as might be, by the law of Christ” would be misinterpreted, the matter was officially settled once and for all by Parliament in 1534 in the Act of Supremacy, which declared the king to be “the *only supreme* Head of the Church of England *upon Earth*.”⁴⁰ All payments to the apostolic chamber and dispensations were abolished; monasteries were subjected to *royal* government and exempted from all other; and the right to summon Convocations, to approve or reject canons (laws or doctrines enacted by the Convocation of clergy), and to hear appeals from the bishops was vested in the *king alone*. Although Henry contemplated no change in the *doctrines* of the Church as then held, it was clear that, within English dominions, the civil magistrate was supreme over Church as well as State. For centuries the title “Supreme Head of the Church on Earth” has been emblazoned on the crown of the British monarch and surmounted by a cross.

Furthermore, the Great Seal of England, besides describing Queen Victoria as the defender of the faith, illustrated her being supported on either side by figures representing *Justice* and *Religion*, which sat at her feet. The queen held in her hand a globe, which represented the earth; the upper half was light-colored to portray Christianity, and above the globe was a cross that, in symbol, declared her to be the supporter, or head, of *the Church* universal.

In many pictures the same, exact symbols are seen in the hands of the popes. They represent, as a whole, that *this head* of the Church on earth, the pope, is the upholder, the supporter of the truth. Of course, Jesus never gave this office to anyone, for it belongs to him alone; any others who claim it are usurpers. Paul said that “Christ is the *head* of the church” and that his followers are to “grow up into him in all things, which is the *head*, even Christ” (Eph. 5:23; 4:15; Col. 1:18). He repeats that God “gave him to be the *head* over all things to the church, which is his body” (Eph. 1:22,23). Paul is speaking of the Church on earth; hence any pope, queen, council, assembly, or conference, or any other man or company of men, who claim or exercise the powers of the *true* Head—Jesus—are opposing him. And all who support such by their influence, presence, or money are upholders of *false systems* . . . some unwittingly.

In all of these systems (the papal mother as well as her daughters), the Lord has had dear children who, in giving such support, verily think they do God service. This delusion has induced all but a few to respect the papal and Anglican beasts as truly representing Christ instead of waiting for “the Lord from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47). From that ancient snare and deception of the Devil, every consecrated saint

39. “The Beast and His Image,” *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, Vol. 3, Nos. 7 and 8 (Jan. and Feb. 1882), p. 7.

40. *The History of Modern Europe*, new ed. (Philadelphia: Columbia-House, 1800), Vol. 2, p. 278. James Harvey Robinson, *An Introduction to the History of Western Europe: I. The Background of Modern History*, rev. ed. (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1924), p. 447.

needs to be liberated, and nothing but the truth can liberate. The coming out of Babylon was commenced by the Reformers, but as history has shown, their followers made only a brief journey, until to a great extent they fell into the same “snare of the fowler” (Psa. 91:3).

What a glorious “Defender of the Faith” and patron founder the Church of England had in Henry VIII, who, out of six wives, divorced two, beheaded two, and by many is supposed to have poisoned one! He was a worthy rival of the Emperor Constantine, who set a similar example of a Christian(?) king.

The Two Horns

The second beast had two horns: England, of course, was one of them and Ireland was the other. History says that in 1537 the Irish Parliament in Dublin passed the Act of *Supremacy*, declaring Henry VIII *Supreme* Head of the Church, prohibiting intercourse with the court of Rome, and making it *treason* to refuse the oath of *supremacy*. Henry also took the title “King of Ireland.” He “appointed bishops for Ireland who favored a religious policy such as he was following in England, and he induced an Irish parliament to declare him ‘of the Church of England and of Ireland on earth the Supreme Head’ (1540).”⁴¹ Thus it can be seen that the second horn came up within the space of about five years after the first.

Three and a third centuries later, on January 1, 1871 (by action of Parliament and the consent of the queen, the *head* of the Church), the Irish Church was disestablished; i.e., that horn was cast off. The second beast cast off the Irish horn, believing it to be a weakness rather than a strength. This in no way changed the identity of the two-horned beast, however. And for that matter, the loss of the ten horns of the first beast, broken off by its demise at the hands of France in 1799, did not change the identity of the papal beast either.

The Lamblike Horns and Dragon Voice

Since the horns of a ram are used for defense, the “two horns like a *lamb*” indicate that this beast would be more peaceably inclined than the first beast, not as aggressive. Indeed the Episcopal Church made no concerted and persistent attempt to displace or uproot the Church of Rome from the latter’s domain in Europe. The possession of lamblike horns must not be mistakenly considered a sign of weakness, however, for in the days of the *initial severance* of the Anglican Church from Rome, this new and separate entity—the two-horned beast—vented its wrath upon those who opposed its claims. But in the subsequent four centuries or so, the two-horned beast has manifested, on the whole, a rather lamblike disposition in comparison to the first beast.

It is worth noting that the statement “he spake as a dragon” does not say “*the*,” but “*a*” dragon. The meaning is simply that the utterances of the two-horned beast resembled those of a purely civil (dragon) power, and that its authoritative pronouncements not only would need formal approval but also would proceed forth from the mouth of the civil magistrate, namely, the king or queen as the case might be. While it is true today that the office of the British monarch is but a relic of its

41. Archibald G. Baker, ed., *A Short History of Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), p. 126.

former self and that the prime minister appoints the archbishops of Canterbury and of York, the two most important positions within the Church of England, the same formal procedure is still followed.

In retrospect, verses 1 to 10 cover a time period that leads up to the year A.D. 1799, the end of the forty-two months of papal supremacy, whereas verses 11 and 12 redirect attention back to the date A.D. 1531 or thereabouts. Verses 13 to 18 then jump forward in time to a yet future date when as many as will “not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (verse 15).

Verse 12:

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.

Verse 12 signifies that Henry VIII, in *his own territory*, executed a similar authority and exerted a similar power in both civil and religious matters as the Papacy, but far more limited in scope and in marked contrast to the papal beast’s subjection of “ALL kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (verse 7). As an illustration of the two-horned beast’s exercise of “all the power,” but with that power being confined to the English realm, the following is submitted: “To put an end to the religious quarrels which these various parties raised throughout the land, a Parliament assembled on purpose, passed [A.D. 1539] the Statute of The Six Articles, which, from its severity, was called the ‘Bloody Statute,’ and ‘the whip with six strings.’ It enacted—(1) the doctrine of transubstantiation; (2) that Communion in both kinds was unnecessary; (3) that it was unlawful for priests to marry; (4) that vows of chastity were binding; (5) that private Masses ought to be continued; (6) that auricular confession should be retained. The punishment for breaking Article 1 was death by burning; for the remaining five, loss of property for the first offence, and death for the second. The passing of this Act was a great blow to the Reforming party in the State. In a short time 500 persons were thrown into prison, and bishops Latimer and Shaxton were also imprisoned and compelled to resign their sees. To increase still further the king’s power in those critical times, the same Parliament passed a decree giving to a royal proclamation the force of law. This measure made Henry a despotic king.”⁴² Under the caption “Henry burns Protestants and hangs Catholics,” it is stated: “He had permitted little change in doctrine; and, to the close of his long reign, he beheaded ‘traitors’ who recognized papal headship, and burned ‘heretics’ who denied papal doctrines. In one day, in 1540, three ‘heretics’ and three ‘traitors’ suffered death.”⁴³

Verse 12 also states that the two-horned beast “exerciseth all the power of the first beast *before*⁴⁴ *him*”; that is, both beasts existed contemporaneously for a time. The first beast did not disappear from the scene until A.D. 1799, when it went into the “pit” condition (Rev. 17:8).

42. David Morris, *A Class-Book History of England* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), p. 214.

43. Willis Mason West, *Modern Progress* (New York: Allyn and Bacon, 1920), p. 156.

44. “Before” is the Greek *enopion*, that is, “in the face,” “in one’s presence or sight.”

The Church of England claimed all the powers and authority that Papacy had asserted. It claimed to be THE Church; it acknowledged and repudiated some of the corruptions complained of by the Reformers and proclaimed itself the “Holy [instead of Roman] Catholic Church.” It asserted the same governmental authority and the same veneration for its decrees as Papacy. By establishing a similar *system*, devoid of some of the grosser papal errors, the Church of England attracted the attention of all to those errors as being the only possible fault of Papacy. And when some of those errors were shortly afterward discarded by Papacy, the inference was that both BEAST systems were right. People of that day, as now, seemed to think those systems were proper and right if their powers and religious activities were properly exercised, but from God’s standpoint the systems were abominable and wrong from the outset.

Both systems have alleged to be the “Kingdom of God” in reigning power. Once admitted, this idea cloaked in justification their persecution of individuals and nations and their forcing such to submit and bow in obedience. It is written that when “the kingdom is the LORD’S: and he is the governor among the nations, all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee [Jesus]”; that Jesus shall “dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel”; and that unto him “every knee should bow” and “every tongue should confess” (Psa. 22:27,28; 2:9; Phil. 2:10,11). To make their claims of kingdom power appear true, both systems simply backed up their right to compel obedience by quoting these very Scriptures. The populace reasoned: If the claims of the systems be true, who could object to their carrying out the scriptural statements?

Not only was this great evil sanctioned, but those who admitted the claim that the Kingdom was established and the reign was in progress were hindered from looking for the *true* Head of the Church to set up the true Kingdom under the whole heavens, which *shall* (still future) break in pieces present imperfect governments, establish righteousness in the earth, and cause every knee to bow and every tongue to confess to the glory of God.⁴⁵

Such false assertions of the second beastly system proved to be a great hindrance to forwarding the cause of the Reformation in its domain. Why? Because in both doctrine and practice in a sufficient number of ways, the second beast resembled the papal beast. This resemblance soon led many in the realm to cease strenuous objection to the first beast, which, at the time, existed contemporaneously. In effect, the two-horned beast caused “the earth” (those already under its influence and religious restraint), as well as many of those “which dwell” on the earth (other independent Christians who, prior to that time, did not support either of those systems), to succumb, that is, “to worship [respect] the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.”

The “deadly wound” of verse 12 is parenthetical in nature, serving (a) as a mark of identity similar to the phrase “that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit” in Revelation 11:7, and (b) as an indicator that the behavior of the two-horned beast in the past, and up to the present, was the underlying factor in the ultimate healing of the deadly wound mentioned later in verse 14. In other words, the reference to the

45. “The Beast and His Image,” *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, pp. 8–10.

deadly wound in verse 14 applies to an event yet future, whereas in verse 12 it applies to a past event (see first paragraph on page 349).

Verse 12, as already explained, has had a past fulfillment. Verses 13 to 18, however, are yet future in their application.

Verse 13:

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

Verse 14:

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do . . .

When consideration is given to the rather uneventful and relatively innocuous long-term behavior of the English Church (apart from its exercise of power in the early days of its severance from Rome in the sixteenth century), one is indeed surprised that this very two-horned beast is destined to do “great wonders” and to make “fire come down from heaven . . . in the sight of men.” This activity calls to mind the challenge and later vindication of Elijah as a true prophet on Mount Carmel, namely, “the God that answereth by fire, let him be God” (1 Kings 18:21–39).

Here, in verse 13, the appearance of figurative “fire” coming down from heaven will convince the witnessing public that this counterfeit system is, in reality, a true and proper channel of communication between God and men. In other words, the miracles and great wonders will give credence to a false religious organization. A common misconception is that manifestations of extraterrestrial presence and intelligence must, of necessity, not only surpass human understanding but also *supersede all earth-oriented ethical standards*.

Again in verse 13, as noted elsewhere in the Apocalypse, the scene depicts false orthodoxy *in the role of challenger*, and in this capacity being supernaturally supported by “the spirits of devils, working miracles” (Rev. 16:14). The language here is too strong to have had such a notable symbolic occurrence in the past; rather, it suggests a *powerful future fulfillment*.

In the case of Elijah’s vindication, the false prophets shortly thereafter were put to death; but in verse 13, the same procedure will be conversely applied *against those loyal to Jesus*. When King Ahaziah sent soldiers to apprehend Elijah, the Prophet called down fire from heaven to destroy them. He said, “If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee [the captain] and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty,” etc. (2 Kings 1:9–17). So fire coming down from heaven was upon Elijah’s enemies as well as, in the earlier instance, in the days of King Ahab, upon the Prophet’s sacrifice. Thus the reader is both directly and inferentially informed of the nature and severity of the test to come upon the Lord’s people and of that which will follow not too long thereafter; viz., the forceful demise of those who oppose the mandated ecumenism of the hour principally devised by the ones who “sit in Moses’ seat” at the time.

If the very nature of these varied wonders and miracles were understood in explicit detail in advance of their happening, then of course their deceptive influence

would be severely undercut. Indeed Divine Providence has seen fit not to obstruct or prevent such delusions, but to allow (not sanction) them as a test upon all Christendom (believers and nonbelievers alike) and as a means of specially exposing the worthiness or unworthiness of those professing Christianity to inherit the promises held out to footstep followers of the Master.

Nonetheless, a few Scriptures are submitted here to shed some light on events to be anticipated in the future:

Deuteronomy 13:1–3—“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, *and the sign or the wonder come to pass*, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

2 Timothy 3:1,8—“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. . . . Now as [the magicians of Egypt] Jannes [the beast(?)] and Jambres [the beast’s image(?)] withstood Moses [representative of Christ(?)], so do these also resist the truth.”

Matthew 24:23–25—“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive [*seduce*, lead astray—Mark 13:22] the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.”

2 Thessalonians 2:9–12—“Whose coming [in the time of the Lord’s presence] is after [accompanied by or during] the working [an energetic operation] of Satan with all power and signs and *lying wonders*, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Galatians 1:8—“But *though . . . an angel from heaven*, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

Revelation 16:13,14—“And I saw three unclean spirits [doctrines] 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.”

2 Corinthians 11:14,15—“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

The clause “and deceiveth [where possible] them that dwell on the earth” (Rev. 13:14) applies to those amongst the Lord’s own followers—Christians unattached to either beast—who will succumb, at least temporarily, to deceptions yet future.

. . . 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.

The expression “in the sight [or presence] of the beast” indicates something even more significant; it has the sense of *before* or *on behalf of*, that is, with the consent or approval of the papal beast. When the time comes, in the near future, for the fulfillment of this Scripture, the “image,” in a later development of the two-horned beast, will allow itself to become spokesman, or false prophet, on behalf of itself and the first or papal beast (cf. Rev. 16:13).

The clause following directs attention to a particular class, namely, “them that dwell on the earth.” As “the earth” previously symbolized those obedient to and supportive of either the first beast or the second beast (or both beasts), depending on context, and thus under religious restraints, so “them that dwell on the earth,” in this instance, includes other independent Christian fellowships also under religious restraints who have not supported either of the two beast systems but who are subsequently confronted with a fateful choice.

In the time period from 1800 to 1846, great numbers of new sects arose, whereas before that, sects were few and prominent. Leaders of the various older denominations grew increasingly uneasy, wondering where this development would lead. As the Bible came to be read more and more by the masses, occasional individuals felt free to preach what they thought it taught, regardless of denominational creeds and the views of older sects. As a consequence, Protestants were fast splitting up into fragments. Denominational leaders began to ask, “By what means shall we check and stop this disposition to individual thought and opinion relative to the teachings of Scripture?” *They wanted to stop the very thing God desired*; namely, that each individual should be free and independent of restraint, with his faith based not on the views of others, not on the decision of the pope, not on things sanctioned by the head of the English Church, but *on the Word of God*.

The question arose: “How can we restrain these preachers?” This was a quandary to all except the Roman and Episcopal churches, since these both claimed the “apostolic succession,” an ordination conferring upon their ministers special power and authority to preach and to administer the “sacraments,” and hence asserting that *no others had a right to do so*, for they were clerical pretenders.

The *example* of the Church of England showed what prestige she had; by reason of the *voice of authority*, she commanded a reverence for her clergy and her teachings. This teaching by example was not lost. The various denominations *felt a necessity* for some common standard of doctrine that would be supported and upheld by all of them, and thus give prestige to their teachings and bring the combined influence of all against any further advance in knowledge or the development of any different phase of truth. They would protect themselves by being able to say, in substance: “*The combined opinion of all Protestants is against you*; therefore, you are heretics and we will shun you and not call you brethren, but use all our influence against you.”

In 1846 the Evangelical Alliance was formed. One of the objects of the Alliance (and it is believed to be the principal one) was to “promote between the different evangelical denominations an effective co-operation in the efforts to repel common enemies and dangers.” Thus, by their actions, the Protestant denominations were following Papacy’s tactics, and in that Alliance they did make “an image.”

How much, in part, the image of 1846 resembled the papal beast may be judged from the fact that the Roman pontiff acknowledged the image—owned it as a creditable likeness—by *sending “greetings” to the last meeting of the delegates of the Evangelical Alliance*. Strange to say, the latter had so far lost sight of the principles and doctrines which had led to the protests against the papal Church (that it was the harlot Church—the Antichrist and the Man of Sin—mentioned in Scripture), that they actually felt flattered by the pontiff’s notice, instead of being alarmed and examining *how* and *why* he who is “THE [chief] ANTICHRIST” should feel *pleased* to greet them as fellows.

A prominent characteristic of the beast, copied by the image, is the honoring of a special class, the clergy, with undue homage and titles. They are known as Reverends, Divines, etc., whereas Jesus, the Son of God, said, “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am” (John 13:13). “Be not ye called Rabbi [Teacher]: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren” (Matt. 23:8). These titles are assumptions fashioned after those of Papacy.

When the various denominations began their existence, they were more filled with the spirit of Christ, and their clergy claimed no such high-sounding titles. The Reformers were not known as Reverend or D.D., but as John Knox, Martin Luther, and so forth; *unpretentious*, like Jesus and the apostles, they were intent upon serving God and therefore became the servants (ministers) of the Church. These had marks of God’s approval, and as a result, their ministries were wonderfully blessed. Now, however, the clergy are far from being servants; they are *lords*. They have itching ears, loving the approval of men. As pride and worldliness have come in, vital godliness and power have gradually departed.⁴⁶

At this juncture several important points need clarification. The image, formed in 1846, *was not another “beast.”* To be a beast in the sense of this symbol, it would have to become *an ecclesiastical power united to and as a part of the civil government*. The image was never even contemplated as such by the Alliance, nor has anything happened historically thus far to indicate that it has developed into a beast-government. It has remained just as that term in its simplest sense signifies, an *image*—a thing that takes on outward *form* and *outline* and thus *appears as a beast*, but is not actually an ecclesiastical government allied with civil government.

For this reason, and for other reasons, the Evangelical Alliance of 1846, though an image of the beast in its past form, does not fit the specific reference to the image in Revelation 13:14. In that verse the two-horned beast addresses those “that dwell on the earth” (independent groups of Christians, as well as Christians in the Evangelical Alliance and other federated churches that have arisen since 1846), saying “that they [including, also, the two-horned beast] both [*kai*—Sinaitic MS]⁴⁷ should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.”

46. The seven preceding paragraphs are excerpted and/or paraphrased from “The Beast and His Image,” *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, p. 8.

47. With unanimity translators either intentionally or unintentionally omit the extra Greek word *kai* found in the Sinaitic text, some perhaps because of its seeming redundancy or its apparent disharmony with the contextual flow of the passage or its seeming disruption of the proper intent of the passage. Such reasoning could be largely due to the unwarranted assumption that, of necessity,

In verse 13 the two-horned beast does not use fire from heaven to make men worship either itself or the first beast; rather, a *neutral* “image to the beast” is made. How very clever! An edict will not be published forcing one to choose between being a Roman Catholic or an Episcopalian or else be put to death; instead, a third or new arrangement will come into being. Standing by this new arrangement will be Catholicism (the beast), and included in the arrangement will be all Protestantism united with the two-horned beast. The two-horned beast will do the talking, saying, “If you do not worship this other third party or have the mark, you will be put to death.” That third party will have “the mark” of the beast and “the number of his name.” In other words, the spirit and organization of Papacy will be in this third system (Rev. 13:16,17). The arrangement will be cleverly done in this neutral manner so that people cannot protest because of not being Catholic, Episcopalian, etc. Catholics would not accept Protestants speaking alone, but a third system, a new arrangement, which purports to be for unity and the spirit of ecumenism will receive their support. Both sides—Protestant and Catholic—will concede to the new arrangement, considering it a necessity. Accordingly, the Church of England is often called the “bridge” between Protestantism and Catholicism; because it has more the forms and rituals of Catholicism than of Protestantism, yet originally seceded from Catholicism, the Church of England has some sympathetic interest to both Protestants and Catholics and is in between the two. As the spokesman between Protestantism and Catholicism, the Church of England will be influential in the future in doing the damage; it will be the church nearest the mother system’s tongue. Several past archbishops of Canterbury have been very strongly in favor of union with Rome.

The next point to be observed is contained in the concluding clause of verse 14: “the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” First, it is important to note that this clause is not of a parenthetical nature or a mere mark of identity, but it constitutes the very reason or basis for making the image in the first place. A most impressive lesson was and is drawn by others from the past experience of Papacy. The first beast was slain and *arose from death*. What more important conclusion could other sects, including the Anglican episcopacy, draw than this?—that Papacy flaunted death itself! The keynote here is the theme and hope of survival from destruction.

Now a most important clue comes to light in verse 14; viz., that the image referred to *could not have been fully formed prior to 1929*, for in that year the temporal power of the pontificate was restored. Only then was the death-stroke healed. Therefore, only *sometime subsequent to 1929* could the two-horned beast be

the two-horned beast is directing attention to what others should do, rather than to what the two-horned beast itself will do in cooperation with others.

There are three optional interpretations with the inclusion of this extra word in the text:

1. “That they *even* should make an image”
2. “That they *also* should make an image”
3. “That they *both* should make an image”

The last option is preferred and *in part* seems to be historically verified. It is interesting that this very word *kai* is translated as “both” in verse 15. See also 1 Corinthians 6:13.

portrayed as saying to those who dwell upon the earth that they should make an image of the beast “which had the wound by a sword, and did live.”

Completion of the Image of the Beast

An organization along similar lines to the Evangelical Alliance, but of much larger scope and proportionate influence, was formed within the required framework of Revelation 13:14. This occurred at the first assembly of the World Council of Churches,⁴⁸ where delegates from more than forty countries met in Amsterdam, Holland, from August 22 to September 4, 1948.

“The thing done at Amsterdam was the thing the churches sent their delegates there to do, namely, to bring into existence a new entity in Christendom, to be called the World Council of Churches. The 151 churches (denominations) represented there had previously accepted as the basis of their participation the single [Trinity-oriented] creedal formula of ‘Jesus Christ as God and Savior.’ On this rock it was believed that the separated churches of non-Roman Christendom could erect a structure which would not only symbolize their common faith, but provide for co-operative action to meet the crying needs of our disordered world. . . .

“The World Council of Churches is a new emergent in Christian history. Not since the Protestant Reformation has an event of such importance to the Christian faith occurred. Its importance can be appraised from many angles. But its deepest significance lies in the fact that it marks a reversal of the direction in which the current of non-Roman Christianity has been flowing ever since the Reformation. For four centuries the trend in Protestantism has been marked by the multiplication of sectarian divisions. No longer ago than two generations these divisions were accepted and even gloried in as a Protestant virtue. They afforded a special kind of church for every national tradition, every belief, every kind of liturgy, every social affinity, and even every taste. That there could be any wrong in thus dividing the church of Christ was hardly perceived. . . .

“. . . it will be seen how insistently the sin of division was condemned and the need of corporate unity proclaimed [by the conferees]. This should provide positive encouragement to every movement now afoot in the United States and Canada *to reduce the number of denominations by mergers* [emphasis added], and to the more comprehensive undertaking that would bring together in one body those denominations which already ‘recognize one another’s ministries and sacraments.’”⁴⁹

Following the subhead “A Declaration on Religious Liberty,” a significant statement is introduced: “The community has the right to require obedience to non-discriminatory laws passed in the interest of public order and well-being. In the exercise of its rights, a religious organization must respect the rights of other religious organizations and must safeguard the corporate and individual rights of the entire community.”⁵⁰

48. But even this organization does not fulfill all the requirements of the vision or complete the formation of the image.

49. “Appraising Amsterdam,” reprinted from *The Christian Century*, Sept. 29, 1948, in *Amsterdam: A Report on the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches* (Chicago: Christian Century Foundation, n.d.), pp. 30, 31.

50. “A Declaration on Religious Liberty,” *Amsterdam: A Report on the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches* (Chicago: Christian Century Foundation, n.d.), p. 25.

Thus it can be seen that ecumenists have declared a divided body of Christ to be sin. In fact, however, it is the ecumenical movement that is the real danger. In spite of their vigorous protests to the contrary, this movement is a striving toward a superchurch. To expect Christians to dissolve their differences in the euphoria of church union is to assume that the principles for which men have suffered and died are not really that important—that Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, and all their spiritual descendants have been haggling over nonessentials. Was the Protestant Reformation a great mistake? Is the big task before Christians the undoing of the Reformation? Nay! The need is not to annul the Reformation but to complete it.

Does not the ecumenical movement, by extension, give birth to a new and frightful form of bigotry, namely, the assumption that anyone who holds to his views is guilty of a perversely obstinate and unchristian attitude? Look again at the years before the Protestant Reformation . . . at a time when Christendom was cloaked in a seamless robe, at a time when Papacy reached its zenith and Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII) forced King Henry IV to stand barefoot in the snow at Canossa. It was seventeen days before the monarch was permitted to resume his reign.

Can it not be seen what will happen when all (or nearly all) Protestant churches unite into one, and this one Church becomes the sole repository of religious doctrine? Where will the dissenter, the nonconformist, the individualist go? Where will one meet if he finds himself at variance with a doctrine or, worse still, the governing authority of that one Church? The implications of a superchurch concept are obvious.

Verse 15:

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, . . .

Many may not realize how much stress was, and subconsciously still is, placed on “apostolic succession.” Although followed through hundreds of years of papal corruption(!), this doctrine is supposed to be a virtue transmitted by the “laying on of hands” of the bishops. Of course this prerogative was vested in the *Roman Church*—and also in the *English Church* because of its being, *at first*, a secession from Papacy rather than a reformation. To many minds, even among the clergy, there was a *veneration for that ceremony*, which neither Papacy nor the English Church was averse to promoting.

In the introduction of Methodism into the United States, much difficulty was experienced because of John Wesley’s superstition on the subject of apostolic succession. He would not sanction the giving of the Sacrament by any except those *ordained* by the holy hands of an Episcopal bishop. Thus up to 1874, Methodists could partake of the Sacraments only from ordained Episcopal ministers. The 1776 War of Independence had tended to make Methodist preachers independent, and they discussed the expediency of taking the authority unto themselves. When John Wesley heard of their intentions, he *applied to the English Church* to have at least *one* Methodist minister ordained for the American Church. Finally, in despair and in the absence of a favorable response, Wesley did the best he could to improvise an “apostolic succession.” He, with two other ministers (none of them bishops), “ordained” Thomas Coke to the office of bishop, and from this makeshift arrangement sprang the office of bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church. This incident is

mentioned merely to show the *superstition on this subject*, of even such a great and good man as John Wesley.

Now to return to the discussion of the World Council of Churches, which currently is a benign organization consisting of a relatively loose association of various denominations. The present alliance is more that of a mutual aid society and bridge whereby its membership can meet together *in council* to discuss ways and means to further enhance their goals and put into limited action certain aspirations which they could not achieve separately. Although the denominations “be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be [figuratively] devoured as stubble” (Nah. 1:10).

What remains to be seen in the World Council of Churches is a further enlargement, a closer, more tight-knit collaboration, a *solidification* of the relationship of the Protestant and other non-Roman churches of the West and of the East—to be followed by, at first, a still further acquiescent recognition by the membership, and then a *sudden* acknowledgment, of the Anglican authority and leadership as the chief representative. The acknowledgment will occur at a time yet future, when the Church of England is endowed with the miraculous powers of verses 13 and 14. This united relationship of the World Council of Churches with the then energized Episcopal Church, already found in its midst, will constitute the predicted super-colossus, namely, THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST. Thereafter the English episcopacy will lose its identity as the two-horned beast, being satisfied with its new role within the framework of the new living organism henceforth known as the “image of the beast,” or synonymously as the “false prophet” (Rev. 16:13).

. . . 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.

Verse 16:

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.

This text indicates a far more aggressive policy on the part of the already organized 1948 Amsterdam union (or another similar alliance) of non-Roman churches with the second beast, which formerly possessed lamblike horns. At a future date the alliance will take on new life and power—due to the incorporation into its midst of a remarkably transformed and vigorously energetic Anglican Church.

The statement earlier in verse 15 that the two-horned beast had “power to give life unto the image of the beast” bears repetition. It reveals that the two-horned beast and the image of the beast will be transformed into a metamorphic union, and after this chapter the two-horned beast will not be mentioned again in Scripture. In other words, the English Church will steer Protestantism in the direction of its destined course. There is an analogy to the fabled sculptor who, in creating an inanimate statue, put so much care and vitality of his own spirit into the statue that it became alive.

Indeed The Living Bible renders this passage as follows: “And he [the two-horned beast] ordered the people of the world to make a great statue of the first

Creature, who was fatally wounded and then came back to life. He [the two-horned beast] was permitted to give breath to this statue and even make it speak! Then the statue ordered that anyone refusing to worship it must die!”

At that time the image will be anything but the proverbial “paper tiger.” Its influence will be all pervasive in lands traditionally Protestant. Every sector of the populace, religious or otherwise, will be required to at least outwardly conform to its regulations, which the civil power will legally sanction and ostensibly enforce in the interest of the common good. All will be required to submit by rendering material aid and cooperation (the mark in the right hand) and/or by mentally assenting to its decrees (the mark in the forehead).

John the Baptist’s experience (Matt. 14:3–12; Luke 3:19,20; Mark 6:16–28) clearly and forcibly illustrates where the responsibility is to be placed in connection with the death of the Lord’s people at the end of the age. When John the Baptist was in prison, the mother Herodias, not satisfied with his imprisonment, desired and plotted his death, but *on the surface* the one who appeared to be most responsible for his execution was Salome, her daughter. It was the daughter who did the dancing. Although she may not at first have intended to obtain the Baptist’s head, her dancing attracted the king’s attention and admiration, resulting in his rash promise that made it possible for Queen Herodias to advise her daughter to request John’s beheading. It is interesting that the king was reluctant to kill John, but he was entrapped by a chain of circumstances. This situation is a reminder of Pilate, who did not want to put Jesus to death. The threat to Pilate was that if he did not have Jesus killed, his actions would be reported to Caesar (John 19:12). In the final analysis, the Roman soldiers, acting as the governor’s agents, crucified the Saviour.

Daniel in the lions’ den (Daniel 6) is another example. At the urging of others who were jealous of Daniel, the king made a rash decree relating to the purported laxity of religious worship in his empire. When Daniel prayed at his window “as he was wont” (cf. Luke 22:39), the king was informed. Although the monarch immediately recognized the duplicity of Daniel’s enemies, he was ensnared. He did not want to put Daniel in the lions’ den, but what could he do? An irrevocable decree had already been declared. King Ahasuerus was deceived in like manner through the wicked counsel of Haman the Agagite.

Similarly Herod made a vow before many witnesses on the occasion of his birthday when Salome danced before him: “Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom” (Mark 6:23). Herodias, the mother, was the real perpetrator and instigator of the crime, but she remained in the background and, therefore, was the least obvious from a visual standpoint. In the forefront of the narration were the king and the daughter.

The lesson should be apparent. The “MOTHER OF HARLOTS” (Rev. 17:5), or Catholicism, corresponds to the first beast, in whose sight or presence the deeds of the second beast and/or the image are performed (Rev. 13:14). The role of the second symbolic beast is that of deceiver (also verse 14), much like that of the daughter of Herodias (Protestantism). King Herod represents the civil power. In the fulfillment of Revelation 13:15, neither the image nor the papal beast will do the

killing; instead, the image will *cause*⁵¹ as many as will not worship it to be put to death by the civil power.

There can be no question about the killing power of the beast being literal in Revelation 13:7,8 and in Revelation 6:9,10. So likewise, the death referred to in verse 15 will be literal as well as figurative. The development of the image of the beast consists of three primary stages, with the killing power to be exerted in the last stage. The three stages are (1) its primitive formation or molding, (2) its completion preparatory to dedication, and (3) its dedication and vitalization by the English Church with the support of the dragon civil power.

Verse 17:

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.

This verse should more properly be rendered “And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark: *either*⁵² the name of the beast, *or*⁵² the number of his name.” In other words, the mark consists of either the name or the number of the first beast.

Those who have “the *name* of the beast” will be Catholics themselves who reside in Protestant lands. Since they belong to the papal system, they already have the name of the beast. However, it will be deemed necessary to somehow identify Protestants as ecumenists, as belonging to the orthodoxy of that day, in order to separate them from those considered as “cultists.”

Protestants and Catholics will maintain their separate identities, but they will cooperate in this joint enterprise as the two ends of a scroll (Isa. 34:4). Each group, under the respective symbols of the image and the beast, will keep its own identity, but both will come together into a close agreement.

Some literal, visible mark of identification will be employed to inform those to whom it may concern whether or not the individual is supportive of the rigid controls to be imposed in the future. An example of a tactic that might be used would be the mandatory wearing of a badge, such as the Republican or Democratic Party badges or pins some have worn to distinguish the political party they belong to. Jews in Nazi Germany were required to wear yellow armbands to distinguish their race. The mark, perhaps supplemented by a carrying card, would thus indicate or certify the individual as a Catholic or a “proper” Christian Protestant.

It appears to have been common, both before and after John’s time, for three classes of persons to have certain *stigmata*, or marks of appropriation—a kind of

51. Some dispute whether the second beast or the image is the subject of the verb “causeth” with which verse 16 opens. Nor is the answer too material. The second beast manifestly is the prompting force in the enactment of the drama, and the image is but its mouthpiece. Yet in a subtle and more responsible sense, it is the first beast, quietly seen in the background, before whom the persecution takes place.

52. *H*, the uncial form of *eta*, is frequently used as a disjunctive to subjoin one or more correlative clauses comparative to the first (namely, *those that had the mark*). In this instance both clauses refer to the same subject; therefore, *H.*, *H.*, should more properly be translated *either.*, *or.*, instead of *or.*, *or.* (Sinaitic MS, see Liddell and Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon* under “H A2 and B2,” p. 639).

tattooing—imprinted on them; viz., slaves, soldiers, and devotees of some god or cult. This mark was generally upon the *forehead* or the *hand*, and sometimes it was simply the name or characteristic emblem of the master or the god. Moreover, the devotees of a god might bear a mystical or hieroglyphic number, which usually consisted of the numerical values of the constituent letters of a particular name. Roman soldiers often bore the emperor's name or mark imprinted on their hand.

“That no man might buy or sell” without “the mark” is indicating, without question, that in a religious sense one will not be permitted to preach the gospel unless duly sanctioned by the authorities. But it appears very likely that there will also be a literal application pertaining to procuring the daily necessities of life: food, employment, etc.

Many will not be in agreement with the implementation of these methods in the future, but since their consciences may not be sufficiently tender or instructed from the true scriptural standpoint, they may grudgingly comply with the requirements for their own protection and that of their families. Satan knows that the Lord's people cannot hide behind a lie. If any do, they will have to suffer later for their actions. Perhaps some will give in momentarily under pressure, as Peter did, and then repent and possibly be saved. Admonition is given to the Great Company, the remaining Lot class: “Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it” (Luke 17:33).

Verse 18:

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.

“By Thy Words Thou Shalt Be Condemned” (Matt. 12:37)

The Council of Trent, as is well known, declared the *Latin Vulgate* to be the only authentic version of Scripture, and doctors at the council preferred it to the Hebrew and Greek text itself—though the latter was written by the prophets and the apostles. For over a thousand years the Roman Church Latinized everything, and to a large extent still does use the Latin: in the *Mass*, *prayers*, *hymns*, *litanies*, *canons*, *decrements*, *bulls*, *titles*, *inscriptions*, and *councils*.

The “number of his [the beast's] name” (verse 17) is “the number of a man,” the “man of sin” (2 Thess. 2:3). In other words, the first beast is the Man of Sin, the Papacy, as heretofore shown. Since according to the prophecy this mystical number is the number of a man, the suggestion is that the number is to be derived from the name or title of some particular symbolic man. The most plausible explanation, noted by others, is a certain Latin title the pope has taken to himself and allowed others to apply to him. The title is “*Vicarius Filii Dei*,” that is, “Vicar of the Son of God.” *Vicar*, meaning “instead of” or “substitute,” describes the pope acting as the representative on earth of God or Christ. Jesus' death on the Cross is sometimes spoken of as a vicarious sacrifice, meaning a substitutionary sacrifice, namely, a man's life for a man's life. The letters of this title, which the Latins used as numerals, add up as follows:

V =	5			
I =	1	F =	0	
C =	100	I =	1	D = 500
A =	0	L =	50	E = 0
R =	0	I =	1	I = 1
I =	1	I =	1	
V =	5			
S =	0			
				Total = 666 (the number of the Man of Sin)

(Note: In Latin the “U” of *Vicarius* becomes a “V,” and the double U [W] is actually a double “V.”)

The following testimony that this title was formerly inscribed on the papal crown was “given by the late Elder D. E. Scoles, of Washburn, Mo.:—

“I have met two men who declare that they have seen this specific crown; and their testimony is so perfectly in agreement that I am convinced that what they saw is true. The first man was M. De Latti, a Sabbath-keeper who had previously been a Catholic priest, and had spent four years in Rome. He visited me when I was pastor in St. Paul, Minn., several years ago. I showed him my tract, “The Seal of God and the Mark of the Beast.” He at once told me that the inscription was not correctly placed in my illustration. He stated that he had often seen it in the museum at the Vatican, and gave a detailed and accurate description of the whole crown. When my tract was published, I was ignorant of the arrangement of the words of the Latin inscription, hence, in the illustration of the crown, placed them in one line. Brother De Latti at once pointed out the mistake, and said the first word of the sentence was on the first crown of the triple arrangement, the second word on the second part of the crown, while the word *Dei* was on the lower division of the triple crown. He also explained that the first two words were in dark-colored jewels, while the *Dei* was composed entirely of diamonds.

“During a tent-meeting which I held in Webb City, Mo., I presented the subject, “The Seal of God and the Mark of the Beast.” I used charts to illustrate it, one being a reproduction of the crown as Brother De Latti had described it. A Presbyterian minister was present, Rev. B. Hoffman, and when I described the crown, he spoke out publicly and made a statement to the congregation, saying that while in Rome studying for the priesthood, he had seen this very crown, and noted its inscription, and that the word *Dei* was composed of one hundred diamonds. I met him and learned his name, and visited him at his home, and was convinced from his description that this was the identical crown that Brother De Latti had seen, but which has been denied by many. I then asked him for a written statement, and he gave me the following:—

““*To Whom It May Concern:* This is to certify that I was born in Bavaria in 1828, was educated in Munich, and was reared a Roman Catholic. In 1844 and 1845 I was a student for the priesthood in the Jesuit College in Rome. During the Easter service of 1845, Pope Gregory XVI wore a triple crown upon which was the inscription, in jewels, *Vicarius Filii Dei*. We were told that there were one hundred diamonds in the word *Dei*; the other words were of some other kind of precious stones of a darker color. There was one word upon each crown, and not all on the

same line. I was present at the service, and saw the crown distinctly, and noted it carefully.

““In 1850 I was converted to God and to Protestantism. Two years later I entered the Evangelical Church ministry, but later in life I united with the Presbyterian Church, of which I am now a retired pastor, having been in the ministry for fifty years.

““I have made the above statement at the request of Elder D. E. Scoles, as he states that some deny that the pope ever wore this tiara. But I know that he did, for I saw it upon his head.

““Sincerely yours in Christian service,
“(Signed) “B. Hoffman.

““*Webb City, Mo., Oct. 29, 1906.*”

“The following extract is from a work entitled *The Reformation*, bearing the date of 1832:—

““Mrs. A.,” said Miss Emmons, “I saw a very curious fact the other day; I have dwelt upon it much, and will mention it. A person, lately, was witnessing a ceremony of the Romish Church. As the pope passed him in procession, splendidly dressed in his pontifical robes, the gentleman’s eye rested on these full, blazing letters in front of his miter: ‘VICARIUS FILII DEI,’ the Vicar of the Son of God. His thoughts, with the rapidity of lightning, reverted to Rev. 13:18.” “Will you turn to it?” said Mrs. A. Alice opened the New Testament and read: “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.” She paused, and Miss Emmons said, “He took out his pencil, and marking the numerical letters of the inscription on his tablet, it stood 666.”

“Here we have indeed the number of a man, even the ‘man of sin;’ and it is a little singular, perhaps providential, that he should select a title which shows the blasphemous character of the beast, and then cause it to be inscribed upon his miter, as if to brand himself with the number 666. The foregoing extract doubtless refers to a particular pope on a particular occasion. Other popes might not wear the title emblazoned on the miter, as there stated. But this does not affect the application at all; for the popes all assume to be the ‘Vicar of Christ’ (see *Standard Dictionary* under ‘vicar’), and the Latin words given above are the words which express that title, in the form ‘vicar of the Son of God;’ and their numerical value is 666.”⁵³

The tiara, in ecclesiastical usage, is the triple crown of the pope. It is a beehive-shaped, somewhat bulging, approximately 15-inch-high headpiece preferentially made of either silver or gold cloth encircled by three coronets, with a mound and cross of gold on top and two loose pendants or streamers hanging from the back. “Tiaras of Renaissance popes were especially ornate and precious, but tiaras of some popes contained no precious stones.”⁵⁴ “From the 14th century the popes

53. Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1912), pp. 624–627.

54. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., Micropaedia Vol. 9, s.v. “Tiara.”

have worn the triple crown. The three tiers of the tiara, richly ornamented with precious stones, indicated the power of the pope over heaven by his canonizing [saints], over purgatory by his granting of indulgences, and over the earth by his pronouncing anathemas.”⁵⁵

Previously the false successors of the apostles were satisfied with a simple episcopal miter, a sort of high cap of white material, helmet-shaped, used in liturgical functions such as public worship. In the development of the tiara, five periods can be distinguished: (1) the white conical Phrygian cap from the eighth century with its decorative edge not yet intended as a crown; (2) the more obvious royal circlet from the ninth century (Nicholas I being the first crowned pope according to *Liber pontificalis*);⁵⁶ (3) the spiked crown evidently of Frankish origin when the House of Theophylact controlled the Church of Rome for nearly sixty years in the tenth century; (4) the double crown set upon the head of Nicholas II at the Lateran Council of A.D. 1059⁵⁷ and later the double crown, indicated by Hefele, from old representations of Innocent III (1198–1216); and (5) the earliest monumental representation of the triple crown, which was found in an effigy of Benedict XII (1334–1342),⁵⁸ and the third crown, as shown in the illustration below, added by Urban V (1362–1370).⁵⁹



Beehive Crown

Moreover, E. B. Elliott states that, according to Irenochoraesus (*Fleming's Editor*, 1793 edition, page 138), the title “*Vicarius Filii Dei*” was inscribed over the door of the Vatican by one of the popes.⁶⁰

For these reasons the Latinized version of the mysterious cabalistic (Kabbala) number 666 is most favored as the one intended in Holy Writ. But others feel that

55. Professor Kurtz, *Church History*, trans. John MacPherson, Vol. 2 of 3 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., n.d.), p. 155.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Collier's Encyclopedia* (New York: Macmillan Educational Co., 1981), s.v. “Tiara.”

59. Chambers, *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* (1892), Vol. 10, s.v. “Tiara.”

60. E. B. Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticæ*, 4th ed. (London: Seeleys, 1851), Vol. 3, p. 255.

since the Apocalypse was originally written in Greek, the mystery should be resolved in that language. Accordingly, the following alternate title, based upon uncial Aeolian Greek (Latin is of that origin), and bearing some credibility, is given for the *Italian Church*, that is, the Roman Church.

I = 10	E = 5	
T = 300	K = 20	
A = 1	K = 20	
L = 30	L = 30	
I = 10	H = 8	
K = 20	S = 200	
A = 1	I = 10	
	A = <u>1</u>	
Total = 666,		the number of the Man of Sin

This view was sponsored by one named Pareus, who tried the substitution of every other conceivable national Church instead of Italika—Greek, Nestorian, Eutychian, Jacobite, Abyssinian, Armenian, English, Lutheran, Swedish, etc.—but no other Church answered.⁶¹

The Golden Image

There is a direct comparison to be made between the golden image of the Book of Daniel and the image of the beast in the Apocalypse.

Image of Beast	Image of Gold
Revelation 13:18	Daniel 3:1
600 (six hundred)	Height 60 cubits
60 (threescore)	Breadth 6 cubits
<u>6</u> (six)	
666	

In both instances the numbers are multiples of six. Both refer to statues that are set up. Both have to do with religious worship, and in each case the penalty for failure to do so is death. A studied comparison of the detailed activity of King Nebuchadnezzar, representative of the civil or dragon element, and the actions of the beast and its image, the clerical or religious element, assists in a better understanding of the prophetic role each will follow in the near future in putting to death the last members of the body of Christ. When the two accounts are combined, the Holy Spirit furnishes a prospectus of what to expect.

Daniel 3 shows that the civil element will act as executioner. In the type, when the three Hebrews were brought before the king, they were given an opportunity to recant. Their reply was, “We are not careful to answer thee in this matter” (Dan. 3:16). In other words, when the chips are down and this issue is brought to public

61. Ibid., p. 254.

attention in the future, religious scruples and conscience being at stake, then a definite and positive stand will have to be taken. Prudence will no longer be expedient.

After the negative response of the three Hebrews, the king of Babylon's visage changed, for their refusal was an affront to his authority and a wound to his prestige—and that before a large audience. The bowing to the statue was to be a display of *unity*. Leaders from all the various provinces were to get together and simultaneously worship the image at a given moment; i.e., when the music, a national or religious anthem, was played.

The image in Daniel was described as golden to indicate a *religious* symbol. The statue was most likely that of Bel. As the god of the Babylonian Empire, “Bel” was incorporated into names such as *Belshazzar* (Isa. 46:1; Jer. 50:2; 51:44; Dan. 1:7; 5:1). The image of gold was set up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon (Dan. 3:1). Since Babylon is a symbol of Christendom, Dura indicates the scene of action. In the near future in Christendom, there will be a drawing together of the peoples to make a choice. King Nebuchadnezzar did not anticipate any dissent, for he thought the circumstances warranted his receiving unanimous support. Although he did obtain a real demonstration of power, he resented the handful who opposed his order. Desiring unanimous compliance, the king gave the three Hebrews another opportunity to indicate their support and loyalty. When they declined, they were thrown into the fiery furnace.

In the type the three Hebrews were delivered miraculously; not even the smell of smoke was on their clothing. Besides the men who cast them into the furnace, the only thing destroyed was the rope, or cords, which bound them. With their survival the king was “astonied” (as stone, frozen with astonishment). In the antitype, however, the Lord's people will be delivered according to the *spirit*, not the flesh. It is the cords of flesh that will be burned, or destroyed. Whereas the Hebrew children were physically delivered in connection with standing by their convictions and honoring God, the feet members of the body of Christ will be delivered only as new creatures; their cords of flesh will be burned, and they will enter beyond the veil of human experience.

The statue erected by the king of Babylon represented two things: (a) the invisible purported national god himself and (b) a physical representation of his likeness. So in the Apocalypse, in the *final* analysis, two entities will be thrust before the public eye: (a) the beast and (b) his image.

The Trinity

The number 666 is composed of three 6's. The fact that it is one number, yet contains three integers, suggests the doctrine to be used as a ploy in the future, namely, the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity will serve as a test upon all to determine their orthodoxy . . . opposers will be eliminated from society as cultists, nonconformists, and heretics.

It should be noted that the number six, in itself, is not sinful, for the Holy City of God (Revelation 21) is replete with the multiple of six. Moreover, the basic measuring reed of the future Temple of God to be built in Jerusalem is spoken of as six cubits in length (Ezek. 40:5). What makes the number 666 so detestable is that it is

the *counterfeit* sacred number whereby the Papacy will assume again the prerogatives of Deity in the present life.

The pagan Trinitarian doctrine, as shown so profusely by Alexander Hislop's *The Two Babylons*,⁶² existed many centuries prior to the introduction of Christianity into the world. This unholy and unscriptural doctrine found its way into nominal churchianity about the time of Constantine. It not only existed in Babylon but also was expressed in the complicated theology of Hinduism and Brahmanism. Nearly a hundred years before Christ, Kalidasa, one of the most renowned poets of India, composed the following hymn in honor of the Trinity:

In those three Persons
The one God was shown,
Each first in place,
Each last—not one alone;
Of Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma,
Each may be first, second, third,
Among the blessed three.

62. Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1948).

Revelation Chapter 14

Verse 1:

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.

The first five verses of this chapter should more properly be *suffixed as a climax* to Chapter 13, which relates (13:15) to the death of the last members of the body of Christ because of their refusal to bow the knee to the image of the beast. Their death according to the flesh will result in their change to spirit nature and the completion of the Church beyond the veil of human experience. The 144,000 who stand on Mount Sion (Zion) represent the glorified Church; hence verse 1 is future in its application. After Jesus fulfilled his earthly mission, he was laid for a foundation in spiritual Zion, being a *tried* (and finished) stone (Isa. 28:16). The Temple class is to be completed in like fashion at this end of the age: as tried and finished stones.

It is this Kingdom—symbolized by Mount Zion, toward which all of the Lord's people march throughout this Gospel Age—that will soon be fully attained. As Moses went up into the quaking mountain the third day (Exod. 19:16–20) and was lost to the sight of the people below, so at and in conjunction with a great time of trouble, the last body members will be, as it were, “caught up,” gathered to the Lord, changed to his likeness. In the Kingdom the Word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem, but the Law will go forth from Zion, *the completed and glorified Church* (Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2). The very number itself, 144,000, is another indication this verse is future.

In Chapter 7 the 144,000 were also mentioned; there the number was said to be “sealed” (Rev. 7:4). “And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” Having God's name written or having His mark branded in their foreheads—permanently fixed there in the most intimate sense—is the same as being sealed. The 144,000 are the sons of God in the highest sense of that term. *Only* 144,000 are to be sealed, and those who are sealed in the full sense of the word will make their calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10). On this side of the veil the Christian is *in the process* of being sealed; where this class is spoken of as *having been sealed*, it is an accomplished fact. The latter is a crystallized, finished work in which God's name is permanently ingrained in the person's character.

Verse 2:

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:

Elsewhere in the Bible both the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are described as speaking with “the sound [voice, noise] of many [great] waters”

(Ezek. 1:24; 43:2; Rev. 1:15). Ezekiel 1:24, where God's voice is described as "the noise of great waters," relates to the Word of God. The two "wings" represent the Old and New Testaments, in which can be heard the voice of God Almighty, for in Holy Writ God can speak in all the languages and dialects of earth. These wings, in the vision, act as a broadcast medium or loudspeaker transmitting Jehovah's voice like the sound of a mighty host. Therefore, while John heard the 144,000 singing in Revelation 14:1–3, he also heard "a voice," the voice of the Heavenly Father, singing in unison with them. God's voice is "as the voice of many waters, and as the . . . [sound] of . . . thunder." The thought conveyed is that of a waterfall, i.e., a *continuous, voluminous* voice. The message intended in the first portion of verse 2 may well be that the Father and the Son are heard singing loudly and clearly, as a duet, above the joyous song of the "harpers." But the Father's voice as of "*a great [singular] thunder*" would surpass all.

Imagine the sound of the Heavenly Father singing! It is not difficult to conjecture how John the Revelator felt upon witnessing this vision and listening to this anthem ("And I looked, and . . . I heard"—verses 1 and 2). What individual Christian experiencing this resurrection change and hearing the personal commendation of the Master ("Well done, thou good and faithful servant"—Matt. 25:21) would not join in and exuberantly and exultingly sing with heart and voice with his fellow brethren? The last members of the true Church having been freshly slain, it would now be possible for the whole retinue of the saints—the entire 144,000 in the "air," or earth's atmosphere (1 Thess. 4:17)—to be formally introduced as a completed company into the courts of heaven "before the throne" (Rev. 14:3).

It is to be noted that the "voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of . . . thunder," is introduced by the expression "And I heard." The "voice of [the] harpers" is also introduced by the expression "and I heard," and is therefore not meant to be equated with the voice of the waters or of the thunder.

The harp, a ten-stringed instrument, is likened to the Word of God (Psa. 33:2,4; 1 Cor. 14:7–9). The ten strings represent the Ten Commandments of the Law given on Mount Sinai to Moses—but brought into pitch and attuned unto the ten declarations of blessedness pronounced by the Lamb in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:1–16).¹ It is these strings, swept by the devoted servants of God, who have the Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts, that yield the most enchanting strains of the music of Moses and the Lamb.

1. The ten declarations are as follows:

- (1) Blessed are the poor in spirit (verse 3).
- (2) Blessed are those who mourn (verse 4).
- (3) Blessed are the meek (verse 5).
- (4) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness (verse 6).
- (5) Blessed are the merciful (verse 7).
- (6) Blessed are the pure in heart (verse 8).
- (7) Blessed are the peacemakers (verse 9).
- (8) Blessed are those who are persecuted for *righteousness' sake* (verse 10).
- (9) Blessed are those who are persecuted falsely for *Christ's sake* (verse 11).
- (10) Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify God (verse 16).

In verse 2 of the Apocalypse, the harping does not refer to the sweet cadence and harmony of Scripture pertaining to the various doctrines of truth in the panoramic unfolding of the divine plan; here the harping indicates the resurrected saints' recognition and appreciation of the indwelling of God's Spirit, the accomplished character development found in their hearts and minds, and their possession of a body in the express likeness of the Father's image . . . as well as the realization that now, at long last, God's blasphemed name is soon to be vindicated in the sight of all mankind.

Some question: Since the harp represents the Word of God in Scripture, wouldn't the "voice" of verse 2 represent the Church singing on this side of the veil? And how can the saints be pictured as possessing harps in heaven? But, it is replied, do not the Scriptures portray the *risen Lord* as possessing a chain (Rev. 20:1), a sword (Psa. 45:3), a sharp sickle (Rev. 14:14), a measuring rod (Rev. 21:15), a censer (Rev. 8:3,5), and a book (Rev. 5:7) in his hand? In the present life the Lord's saints study the music of the Word, attempting to learn how to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and proclaiming publicly and privately the gospel, or good news of God's redeeming grace. The endeavor is to sing sufficiently well now so that in the future the individual will meet with the Father's approval and thus be recognized as one of the sweet singers of Israel.

Verse 3:

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.

Only the 144,000 will ever sing this "new song" in recognition that they have indeed been numbered among the very elect. To learn the truth and to be proficient in explaining it to others is one thing, but it is *God* who will determine whether or not one can sing the song correctly. Some may know all the notes and all the words, but if, from the divine standpoint, they are not fully in harmony with Him—if He has not recognized such in this full sense—then they are off-key. The 144,000 will be those who sing this song *acceptably* as far as the Father is concerned. *Only beyond the veil could all the 144,000 sing together at one time and in one place.*

This scene takes place with the glorified Church "before the throne" (that is, being in the presence of the Father and the Son), "before the four beasts" or living ones (that is, meeting with the symbolic inspection and governmental approval of the divine attributes), and "[before] the elders" (that is, harmoniously fulfilling the predictions of Holy Writ represented by the twenty-four books of the Old Testament, which are emblematic of the whole testimony of Scripture).

It should be noticed that the singers are not the elders (verse 3). Some interpret the twenty-four elders of Revelation Chapters 4 and 5 to be the Church, but here the elders are not doing the singing. Moreover, there are only twenty-four elders, not 144,000. This verse is one of the strongest evidences that the twenty-four elders in the Book of Revelation are not the Church but, instead, represent the testimony of the Word of God, which was spoken of old.

The 144,000 are spoken of as having been “redeemed from the earth.” The thought is that of public purchase, and all the uses of the word *agorazo* throughout the New Testament support a commercial transaction. Accordingly, the word is translated “to buy” twenty-eight times and “redeemed” three times. Revelation 5:9 stipulates the price of redemption of the 144,000, namely, Christ’s “blood.” The context of verse 3, under consideration, does not refer to the initial calling out of the redeemed from the world by the preaching of the gospel but, rather, to their purchase or acquisition at the earthly forum as slaves and their return *to the Master’s house or home above*. The emphasis is on “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the *redemption of our body*,” “which is the earnest of our inheritance until the *redemption of the purchased possession*, unto the praise of his glory” (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; cf. 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 4:30).

Verse 4:

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 first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

The statement “These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins” is not to be understood in a literal sense any more than the other symbols described in this chapter. It indicates singleness of purpose in following the Lord. Paul states, “For I have espoused you to one [spiritual] husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:2).

In the message to the Church of Thyatira, the Master rebuked those who “sufferest that woman Jezebel [the Roman Catholic Church], which calleth herself a prophetess [teacher], to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication” (Rev. 2:20). And in Revelation 17:5 this same religious system, having denominational daughters, is styled the “MOTHER OF HARLOTS.” These are the “women” referred to in verse 4, i.e., the women who cause defilement.

At what point does this defilement begin? It occurs after the Lord’s people find themselves in such human organizations and the light of truth has penetrated, revealing to them how God’s plan and character are being misrepresented by these women systems. When they hear the Lord’s Word say, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4), it behooves them to respond. If one refuses to obey the light granted by God and the voice of His truth, then defilement of conscience begins at that point. Whoever—for family, social, or financial reasons—holds to that which is built upon a wrong principle traduces the divine character and plan; and if affirmative action is not taken, such a one will prove unworthy of being counted an overcomer and will thus fail to have part in the “first resurrection” (Rev. 20:5). Even though many were in the nominal Church down through the age—even though the wheat and the tares did grow together until the time for separation—the true wheat class has never been in harmony with sectarianism (Matt. 13:24–30, 37–43).

In the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the wise represent the Little Flock and the foolish picture the Great Company (Matt. 25:1–12). All are virgins in the parable, but five are foolish. Hence there are different types of virgins. The

context of Revelation 14:4 does not include the foolish virgin class, however. The virgins of the Apocalypse are *special*ly redeemed . . . God's chosen elect. They are special virgins because they "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" and are "not defiled with women." They are not defiled with *sectarianism*; they are not unduly influenced by other people's opinions unless, of course, those opinions are in harmony with the Word of God.

The expression "These were redeemed *from among men*" was explained under verse 3. This redeemed company, being called "a *firstfruit*" (singular—Sinaitic MS), signifies a very special class. It also indicates the completion of that number (144,000) and the conclusion of that harvest. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we [the Very Elect and later the Great Company] should be a kind of firstfruits [plural] of his creatures" (James 1:18).

The 144,000 on Mount Zion are again spoken of as a class already completed: "[These are they] which were redeemed [past tense] from the earth" (verse 3), and "these are they which were not defiled [past tense]" (verse 4). There is a most fitting exception, however, for they are spoken of as "they which follow [present tense] the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." The use of the present tense in this setting does not signify they are following the Lamb on this side of the veil. Nay! The Little Flock are spoken of in their resurrected state, for will not the saints continue, in the ages to come, to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth? During their earthly sojourn this very characteristic or attribute has operated on their consciences as a cleansing agent in maintaining their fidelity to the Master, in avoiding defilement, in preserving their virginity, even as the Apostle has said of those aspiring to be of the Bride class: "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3).

Verse 5:

And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

The previous earthly sojourn of the elect class is commended, for "in their mouth *was found* no guile [no falsehood—Sinaitic MS]." This description contrasts markedly with the professions of the false prophet class (Rev. 13:14; 19:20). The Lord's true saints are honest—not hypocritical—in their confession of faith. It would seem that the accompanying clause "for they are without fault [blame] before the throne of God" is also a reference to the finished course of their previous life here on earth. If this is the case, then perhaps the Greek word *amomos*, rendered "without fault," might better be translated "blameless." Why? Because that which is without fault or defect would be perfect, whereas to be blameless does not necessarily indicate perfection in thought, word, and deed; "blameless" signifies that which is *without censure or imputation of fault*. Certainly all will agree that thenceforth, in their resurrected state, the saints will be both faultless and blameless.

As the Apostle Paul states, the Bride class is being developed so "that he [Jesus] might present . . . to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). The Apostle Jude adds, "Now unto him [Jesus] that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless [blameless] before the presence of his [the Father's] glory with

exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (Jude 24,25).

Verse 6:

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, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Verse 7:

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.

Message of the First Angel

In Scripture there are four primary usages for the word “angel”: (1) It can denote a special, prominent dispensational messenger, or individual, used of the Lord (see Rev. 1:20; 2:1,8,12; etc., regarding the seven messengers to the Church). (2) “Angel” can refer to Jesus (Rev. 10:1,2; 20:1). (3) The word “angel” can portray the forces of nature, such as an earthquake, wind, fire, etc. In such highly figurative or poetic language, the forces of nature are pictured as being God’s servants, showing they are at His disposal to be used in whatever way He might choose (Psa. 104:4). (4) And in the Book of Revelation an “angel” can be a *message*. Such a message can be in the inanimate form of reading material, published thoughts, or proclamations issued to enlighten, encourage, and instruct, as well as reprove, those to whom the message is addressed.

In verses 6 and 7 an “angel”² is seen to fly “in the midst of heaven.” This expression indicates something outside of, different from, or issuing forth between heaven and earth—hence an *independent* voice, or message, not identified with established religious orthodoxy. The harvest message at this end of the age has already gone forth throughout Christendom with the proclamation “Fear God . . . and worship him.”

It is important to note that the first three signs, or messages (“angels”), of Chapter 14 lead up to the introduction of the scene in Chapter 15 pertaining to the seven last plagues (verses 6, 8, and 9). Thus a sort of time frame is provided in which these three messages are to be found and soon explained. Another point to notice is that the account of the first angel does not indicate the establishment of the Kingdom itself, but simply describes the issuing of a bold and important *pronouncement*.

Now to discuss the proclamation “Fear [reverence] God . . . and worship him.” Conservative orthodoxy conceives God as quite cold, aloof, and austere, and Evangelical churches place more emphasis on the role of Jesus and his compassion. Very little is said of the Father. Jesus and God are considered the same, but Evangelicals worship Jesus. Although they know God should be worshipped, they find it more difficult to adore Him from the heart. By and large, Catholics worship Mary and

2. “And I saw [omit ‘another’] an angel.” The Greek word signifying “another” is not found in the main body of the Sinaitic text; it appears as a marginal gloss by a later copyist.

Protestants worship Jesus, whereas the emphasis should be on, first, the Father and then the Son.

“Worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” Prior to the harvest message, God seemed to be an unidentifiable powerful source . . . sort of nebulous. His attributes of Love, Justice, Wisdom, and Power were not fully appreciated. The truth honors the Creator God by laying down the principles of justice, mercy, and forgiveness in showing there is a plan for the world as well as for the Church. It explains the doctrine of the Ransom and the reason for the permission of evil. In fact, the truth honors God to such a degree that when one becomes acquainted therewith, he wants to bow the knee and worship Him in thankfulness that his eyes have been opened to understand, in greater measure, the wonderful hope of the future for all sentient and obedient creatures. Even the literal works of creation (such as the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters), in their variety and beauty, show forth God’s power and handiwork and portend better things to come.

“The hour of his judgment [*judging*—Rotherham]³ is come” is a reference to the judgment of the house of God, both the true and the nominal. The emphasis is on the judgment of the spiritual class. The judgment of the true Church will be favorable, while that of Babylon will be unfavorable (1 Pet. 4:17–19). While Bible chronology indicates that six thousand years transpired from the fall of Father Adam in Eden to A.D. 1874,⁴ Bible prophecy and time parallels indicate that the hour of judgment, or the inspection period referred to in verse 7, began with A.D. 1878. This same date, 1878, also marked the time that God caused His true “everlasting” (age-lasting) gospel to spread throughout the world.

The reader is again reminded that verse 6 is a more fitting commencement of Chapter 14 than verses 1 through 5.

Verse 8:

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.

Message of the Second Angel

Based on the Sinaitic text and contextual evidence, only *one* fall of Babylon is mentioned. The text should read: “And there followed another [angel], a *second*, saying, Is fallen Babylon the Great. . . .” Like the first angel, or message (verse 6), the second (verse 8) is also a pronouncement. The message does not signify an immediate destruction of churchianity. Rather, it refers to the spewing out of the nominal Church from the Lord’s mouth . . . to mystic Babylon’s rejection from divine favor (Rev. 3:16).⁵

3. The word translated “judgment” is the Greek *krisis*, which does not mean final judgment but signifies a trial, a crucial time period.

4. See *The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1889), Ser. 2, pp. 33–54, 239.

5. See pages 106–107.

During the week of his crucifixion at the First Advent, Jesus pronounced a rejection of nominal fleshly Israel: “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:38). These words were uttered nearly four decades prior to the actual destruction in A.D. 70. Here in verse 8 a similar suretied prediction of ultimate destruction is made: of the nominal *spiritual* house. Few realize the already fallen-from-grace condition of Babylon now; none will fail to recognize its sudden and utter collapse in the near future.

Why this rejection by the Lord? The answer given is: “Because she made all nations drink of the [mixed] wine [false doctrines intermingled with some truth] . . . of her fornication [her illicit relationship with the world, imparting her own spirit as well as partaking of the world’s spirit].” Through the Prophet Jeremiah (51:7—Newberry Bible), the Lord states the matter in a similar vein: “[Babylon] made all the earth drunken . . . of her wine [from the cradle to the grave]; therefore the nations are mad [stupefied, sharing in her abominations and impurities—Rev. 17:4].”

The why and the wherefore of the Roman Catholic system’s being likened to Babylon of old will be treated in the explanation of Chapter 16. Suffice it here to say that the fall of Babylon spoken of in verse 8 corresponds to the “hour of . . . judgment” of verse 7 and also to the date A.D. 1878.

Verse 9:

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

Verse 10:

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:

Verse 11:

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

Message of the Third Angel

The third angel in the vision follows the prior two and like them, it is assumed, also flew through the midst of heaven, representing a message independent of orthodoxy. The third message is rather long, but in substance is a warning to those who “worship the beast and his image.” Although it was possible to worship the beast in past centuries, prior to the harvest time, as stated in the preceding chapter, when all the world except the followers of the Lamb (Rev. 13:8) worshipped the beast—and although it was also possible to worship the image of the beast prior to the harvest, since the formation of the image began in A.D. 1846—verses 9 to 11 refer to the beginning of the harvest (i.e., 1878) onward in relation to the fall of Babylon. To state the matter another way, not as much guilt or culpability was involved prior to the declaration of rejection. Now, however, *after* Babylon fell from

favor because she made the nations drunk with the wine of her fornication, the message is: “Beware! If you have the mark of either the beast or its image, you will receive special torment. If you do not respond to the message, then in proportion as you are enlightened with truth and disobey, you will receive the disapproval or indignation of God. This portion you will have to drink with others”—wormwood and gall, as it were. Matthew 24:51 states that the rejected class will have their “portion with the hypocrites.” The rejected ones are a class of hypocrites who are informed but do not obey. As a result, they will share with all the hypocrites the “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Those who lend support to the beast or its image or have the characteristics thereof (verse 9) will have to imbibe or partake of the “wine,” or judgments, of God’s wrath (verse 10). However, one should not think that “ignorance is bliss,” for those who prefer to be “willingly ignorant” will also be held accountable (2 Pet. 3:5–7).

Verse 10 states that such “shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” The torment experience of the harvest period will not come and go right away; it starts with vexation of conscience, trials, and tribulations—especially to those more conscientiously motivated, for the message is particularly addressed to professedly Christian men and women. These are more keenly aware of and more sensitive to the iniquities of the systems and thus are more apt to be vexed. Since 1878 those who are called of God and receive enlightenment yet remain in Babylon because of the fear of man, the reluctance to lose certain honors or prestige, etc., will have to account for their continued presence there. Verses 9 to 11 imply their awareness of their failure to properly respond; they may not discuss the matter with others, but they have mental conflict with their own conscience because they choose to remain in the system.

The message is simply: “From 1878 on, be alert! In this hour of decision the Lord wants a separation. The harvest period is a time of separation. Come out of Babylon, for she has fallen. If you remain in her, you will become guilty in proportion to your understanding. If you hear the Lord’s voice and do not respond, then do not expect to be specially favored when her trouble comes. You will share Babylon’s troubles, torment, and brimstone; you will have the same experience that Babylon will have.”

What will be the nature of the torment with fire and brimstone? “Fire” symbolizes severe trial (cf. 1 Pet. 1:7), and “brimstone,” which is sulfur, adds to the intensity of the fire, signifying either complete purification or complete extermination as God sees fit.

The torment takes place “in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” Matthew 25:31,32 helps to identify the “holy angels” as being to a large extent, if not wholly, the risen saints. The expression “in the presence of the Lamb” seems to be related to the Second Presence of the Lord.

The “torment” with some will pertain not only to the present life but also to the shame that will extend into the Kingdom Age—and even beyond the Millennium into the everlasting future. Whenever those of this class happen to think back, they will experience a twinge of shame because of their past actions. From that standpoint the “smoke” or remembrance of their shame, or torment, will be an everlasting

lesson to themselves and, more particularly, *to others* in the ages to come. Those who, in the present human experience, receive the mark of the beast or his image will figuratively “have no rest day nor night” in the Kingdom Age; only after a period of purgation will the torment cease—but not the “smoke.”

Smoke rises from the place where burning took place. Accordingly, not only will the individual wrongdoers themselves experience shame, but others who reflect back upon certain events, times, and circumstances will think upon those who did the wrong. Thus others will view these wrong deeds and the retribution from the standpoint of example and judgment. The smoke will “ascend” in the sense that, *where necessary*, the sinful deeds will be publicly exposed, or revealed, to both wrongdoer and onlooker. When the Kingdom is established, humiliation will be felt by various popes, emperors, and certain individuals upon their coming forth from the grave and hearing the terms that must be met in order to abide by the laws of Messiah and to receive life. They will experience shame for their past misrepresentation of God and Christ in the earth and for their fraudulent claims not based on Scripture. The Lord will speak of such, “I never knew you” (Matt. 7:21–23); yet they posed as his chief representatives upon earth.

Today there is no literal smoke in the Valley of Gehenna in Israel as there was many centuries ago when the burning was continuous, but anyone acquainted with the history of Jerusalem would know of its past association as the Valley of Hinnom, where garbage was burned and the corpses of criminals considered unworthy of burial were thrown. Even though there is no literal fire or smoke now—even though that consumption took place thousands of years ago—the historical memory of that place lingers on. Likewise in a spiritual or figurative sense, the smoke, or lesson of the past, will linger on.

In summation, three angels went through the midst of heaven. Each was a distinct message, but *all three* pointed out the date 1878. The important point is that a date is furnished without naming the date.

Verse 12:

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

The date 1878 marks the end of the sixth Church epoch and the beginning of the seventh or Laodicean period. The three angels of verses 6 through 11 are simply announcements of facts and warnings addressed to the last stage of church history: (a) “Fear God,” (b) “Babylon is fallen,” and (c) “If any man worship the beast and his image. . . .”

Verse 12 is a commendation of the faithfulness of the true saints of the last members of the Philadelphia era, which terminated at the end of A.D. 1877, and it harmonizes with the remarks addressed to that Church: “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Rev. 3:10).⁶

6. See pages 90–92.

Verse 13:

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Verse 14:

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.

Blessed Dead

“The dead which die” here are not those of Adam’s race, reckoned dead in their trespasses and sins (Matt. 8:22), who later surrender themselves to the Lord and become converts to Christianity. The matter can be reasoned thus: If to “die in the Lord” is viewed as a consecration to God and His service of those who previously were dead in Adam—namely, their crucifixion of the flesh and its lusts and the daily endeavor to keep the body under (1 Cor. 9:27)—then one would be forced to conclude that the “works” which follow or continue would be some deeds of the flesh that took place prior to conversion—obviously the wrong thought.

No, blessed are the dead in Christ (those reckoned dead to sin and the world through consecration and baptism into Christ’s death—Rom. 6:2–4) who die, or terminate their earthly pilgrimage in literal death. Blessed are these dead, in Christ, who thus finish their course, for if their actual death occurs at the time specified and under the conditions of faithfulness implied by the expression “which die in the Lord,” they will experience the happy lot indicated by “the Spirit” as resting from their labors and their works following them.

Some feel that the fulfillment of this Scripture began at Pentecost and continued throughout the Gospel Age as the faithful were laid to rest, their wearisome toil and pilgrimage ceasing there, and that naught awaits such but their reward (Rev. 6:11), to be granted at the last day when they are awakened from the tomb in the first resurrection morn. It is further reasoned that although the faithful are now muted in death (Psa. 115:17; Eccl. 9:5), the memory and the example of their lives linger on, and the counsel, instruction, and noble works of a few of this number have been preserved and passed on to benefit succeeding generations.

However edifying, encouraging, and seemingly reasonable this thought may be, exception is taken, for while the dead might be spoken of as resting from their labors since Pentecost, yet their works did not continue on in the sense required and declared by the Spirit in verse 13. When used in conjunction with the genitive case, the Greek word *meta* is to be translated by the English equivalent “with”; where found in relation to the accusative case, *meta* is to be interpreted as “after.” Since the former condition applies here, the works of the Christian dead should be thought of as following *with* them. Because in the King James, the American Revised Standard, and certain other versions, this Greek word is left untranslated and thus is omitted from the English text, one is apt to draw his own conclusion as to the sense implied. If, on the other hand, *meta* had been retained and inserted into the English

text in the proper manner, there would be no room for conjecture on this point. *Meta*, when used in conjunction with the genitive case elsewhere in the King James Version, is rendered “with” 346 times and is not once translated “after.” Verse 13 states that the works of “the dead which die” follow *with* [*meta*] them, not *after* them!

The phrase “rest from their labours; *and* their works do follow” is worthy of consideration. The word “and” is a poor substitute for the Greek word *de*. “And” is used as an equivalent of this word only four times in the New Testament; in contrast, *de* is translated “but” over 2,000 times, and “but” indeed more properly suits the situation in this case. The line of thought is as follows: The blessed ones who die rest from their labors, *but* their works continue *with* them. The fatiguing aspect of their labors ceases with the acquisition of a new body from above—for then their activities will continue gloriously on, unhampered by the former vessels of clay.

Therefore, verse 13 might be paraphrased thus: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, for now not only may such rest from their toil, but their work of love and joyous service to God accompanies them beyond, uninterrupted by the *sleep* of death.” (Under this circumstance death may be spoken of as a blessing, whereas otherwise it is usually pictured as an enemy—1 Cor. 15:26; Jer. 31:16.)

It would be difficult to reconcile the interpretation of verse 13 as applying to Pentecost onward, since Christians who died thereafter are scripturally referred to as being *asleep* in Jesus (1 Thess. 4:14; Acts 7:60) and this portion of God’s Word bespeaks *activity* following death. Only when the setting and fulfillment of verse 13 are thought of as occurring at the *end* of the Gospel Age is the difficulty removed.

This dispensational aspect is confirmed by the relationship that exists between John’s *hearing* the Spirit utter the blessing to attend “the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth” (verse 13) and his *looking* to the source whence this information emanates (verse 14) and seeing the “Son of man” seated on a white cloud with a sickle in his hand. Evidently, the setting of this prophecy and its fulfillment are pictured as taking place during the Second Advent, when the Master Reaper himself—with an attendant white cloud of blessing, mercy, and truth—superintends the harvest work foretold to occur at the end of the age (Matt. 13:39). In no sense does the period of time in which this prophecy is located apply to the Jewish harvest at the beginning of the age; rather, it lies within the Gospel Age harvest at the close of the age, at which time a twofold harvest is indicated in the vision; i.e., “the harvest of [the wheat of] the earth” (verse 15) and the harvest of “the vine of the earth [Christendom]” (verses 18 and 19), both of which are closely related in time sequence and are pictured as the harvest of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24–30, 37–43) at the end of the age.

The “golden crown” on the Son of man’s head corroborates the time period as the Second Advent, namely, the return of earth’s appointed King. Christ has ever reigned over his true followers since Pentecost (Psa. 2:6,7; Acts 13:33). Therefore, the Son of man’s reign over his true Church is not symbolized here but, rather, harvest activity. Nor does the context indicate Christ’s reign over the world.

The expression “which die . . . *from henceforth*” (verse 13) bears investigation. Attention is called to the fact that this blessing accrues to the dead not *at* such a date but *from* a particular point on the stream of time forward. As John heard a “voice from heaven” explain to him the meaning of the things which were about to transpire, so the Holy Spirit there testified, and caused John to bare record, that a *message from God* would descend upon His people during the harvest, informing them of the arrival of this date and the significance of events as they pertain to the experience of the Christian dead thereafter. This “voice from heaven” is similar to the message which enjoins God’s people to come out of Babylon (Rev. 18:4); as a sharp sickle, the voice, or message, constitutes the separating influence designed to induce God’s children to disassociate themselves from nominal Christendom and its ways. First preached in A.D. 1878, it was peculiarly associated with the work and ministry of Charles Russell, whose expositions of Scripture pertinent to the very subject under consideration have since gone forth, and there is no reason to doubt their authenticity.

The Apostle clearly states that during the sounding of the seventh or last trump, the faithful saints who die will no longer sleep in death but will experience an *instantaneous change* from death to life conditions. Hear his words: “Behold, I shew you a mystery; *We shall not all sleep*, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump[et]: for the trumpet [message] shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:51–53).

Rapture of the Church

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming [presence] of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout [of encouragement], with the voice of the archangel, and with the [seventh] trump[et] of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds [of affliction], to meet the Lord in the air [earth’s atmosphere, not the heaven of heavens]: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thess. 4:14–18)

Paul counsels the flock of God not to be despondent concerning their brethren who had fallen asleep in death. He informs the living disciples that the gates of death would not forever prevail against those loved ones, for as God had raised Jesus from death to life, so likewise would the Father deliver the deceased brethren and lead them forth at the Second Advent “with him,” that is, *as well as* or *in addition to* Jesus. That God’s purpose was to raise not only Jesus but also the Church was, the Apostle reminds the Thessalonian Christians, the logical outgrowth of their belief and faith in God and in the resurrection.

Many think the passage cited above refers to a physical rapture of the Church at the close of the Gospel Age. It is assumed that both the living and the dead saints will, at the same time, be translated together to heavenly glory at the second coming and appearing of Jesus Christ. However, the Apostle declares that (a) those “which *sleep in Jesus*” will God lead forth with him, and (b) the living saints at this time will *not precede* (Greek *phthano*) but will follow the dead, or sleeping members, in resurrection change, because (c) “the *dead* in Christ shall rise *first*.” In other words, the resurrections of the two classes, the dead and the living, do not coincide in their fulfillment.

“Then we which are alive and *remain* shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” The word “then” (Greek *epeita*), having the significance here of a subsequent event, might better be translated “afterward.” Nor is it necessary to hastily conclude that the living saints must be “caught up” immediately following the sleeping members’ change to resurrection likeness of their Lord. The same Greek word is used in 1 Corinthians 15:46, where Paul draws a comparison between the two Adams. The first man, Adam, the natural father of the human race, is spoken of as being “of the earth, earthy”; and the second Adam, the risen Redeemer, is referred to as being spiritual—“the Lord from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47). “Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and *afterward* [*epeita*] that which is spiritual” (1 Cor. 15:46). Since several millennia elapsed between the appearance of the first Adam and “afterward” the introduction of the second Adam, “that which is spiritual,” the possibility arises that, similarly, a period of time, though in this instance of relatively short duration, could also exist between the resurrection change of the sleeping saints and the translation of the tarrying members of the body of Christ, who, being alive during his presence, are “then [that is, *afterward*] . . . caught up together with them [the raised sleeping saints].”

The word “together” (Greek *hama*) should not always be associated with concurrent motion or activity, for it can also mean *place* irrespective of the time element. Indeed, in this very epistle just eleven verses later (1 Thess. 5:10), the brethren are informed that Jesus “died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should *live together* [*hama*] with him.” Place and association are clearly signified in 1 Thessalonians 5:10, but it would be inappropriate to substitute the phrase or thought of living at the *same instant* or the *same time*. However, an intended double meaning holds true for 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Yet even the definition of the term “together” as being indicative of place and association with Jesus constitutes but half its full significance, as will be explained shortly.

Unless a deeper meaning is implied, it would be difficult to account for the peculiar stress the Apostle lays upon the fact that the living saints will *by no means*—shall *in no wise*—*precede*, but will follow in resurrection change those previously fallen asleep. This Paul additionally declares to be “the word of the Lord.” The emphatic distinction would be strange indeed if the resurrection changes of the sleeping saints and the living membership were to occur simultaneously—or nearly so. However, if an appreciable interval of time was to separate the two events, then surely it can be understood why the Apostle would wish to accentuate such particularity. Paul knew such an occurrence would be a surprising development, most

unanticipated, and those for whom it was intended would require special reassurance that this was truly the Word of the Lord. Thus the saints living at this critical point in time are specifically instructed in no uncertain terms.

Two Raptures

In the light of the foregoing, one is in a better position to see that there are to be *two raptures* of the Church at the end of the age: first, an *invisible* rapture of the *sleeping* saints as a body, and later on, a second *invisible* rapture of the *living* saints as a company. 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17 is not primarily concerned with the experience of those individual saints who die during the interim between these two events, or raptures. It is Revelation 14:13 that more particularly discusses the details affecting individuals who die subsequent to A.D. 1878, the date of the first rapture, up to the latter, still future rapture, indicating they receive an instantaneous resurrection change at the moment of death.

Paul, in his epistle to the Thessalonians, informs the Church that those participating in the second rapture—the living remnant—are to be (a) “caught up together [as a company]” and (b) “in the clouds [symbolic of trouble and persecution upon the faithful], to meet the Lord in the air.” Strictly speaking, this has not been the experience of all saints who have died either before or after A.D. 1878. Yet several scriptural references pertaining to the closing days indicate that the very last members will suffer violence and death, thereby being abruptly caught or snatched up from the earthly fold. Their experience would be comparable to that of Elijah (typically representing not an individual but a class), who was caught up in a fiery chariot and an accompanying *whirlwind* (2 Kings 2:11). Other pictures illustrate the same lesson, such as:

The Beheading of John the Baptist (Mark 6:17–28)

Gideon and the Broken Earthly Vessels (Judges 7)

The Bruising of the Heel Members of the Body of Christ (Gen. 3:15)

Vitalization of the Image of the Beast, Followed by the Persecution
and Death of True Christians (Rev. 13:11–18)

After careful consideration of these and other Scriptures, the conclusion seems reasonable that there will be no particular individual who can, in the future ages of eternity, be looked back upon as *the one* last member of THE CHRIST. To have one such individual would detract from the preeminence of Jesus as the Head of The Christ company and would violate, to a certain extent, the principles laid down respecting the office of the High Priest (Lev. 21:17–23). Thus the last members will depart as a company, and the Gospel Age, as it applies to the *Very Elect*, will have a distinct and abrupt ending, even as the Church had a definite commencement at Pentecost. Now the expression “together” (1 Thess. 4:17) takes on its full significance: being caught up *at the same time* or *instant*, as well as to a *place* and *association* with the Master.

If the commonly accepted view of a *physical* rapture of both the living and the dead saints were beheld visually by the world, this spectacle would hinder the development and trial of tarrying Christians who would die thenceforth. In other words, it would prove an obstacle to the purification and trial of the Great Company

class, who do not participate in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6) but are dealt with next in the divine arrangement prior to the inauguration of the Kingdom.

Moreover, it is difficult to reconcile the various prophecies of the Second Advent if they are all considered and understood from a purely literal or physical standpoint. The complexity is further increased if all the prophecies are thought to converge and meet their fulfillment in a single stupendous event occurring at the moment of the Lord's arrival. Consider: Messiah is pictured as coming with a shout (1 Thess. 4:16); having a sword in his mouth and a sword upon his thigh (Rev. 19:15; Psa. 45:3); holding a trumpet, a book, a sickle, a key, and a chain in his hand (1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 10:2; 14:14; 20:1); and being seated on a white cloud, a white horse, and on the right hand of the power of God (Rev. 14:14; 19:11; Matt. 26:64). As the various prophecies marking the First Advent did not all materialize on one single occasion, so these and other Scriptures can be harmonized when understood to depict various activities and events taking place *during the period of the Second Advent*—the character of which is portrayed in figurative and spiritual symbolisms.

However, the purpose at hand is not to attempt to reconcile these events but, rather, to note that a distinct time interval, or period of inspection, is indicated by several of the prophecies which touch upon the first features of the Master's return and the work associated with his presence. The Lord's people are told he will *sit* as a refiner of silver and gold (Mal. 3:3). The seated posture of Christ suggests a *period* of testing and trial, not immediate judgment. In the present life the Christian is under judgment, and this is especially true today, as the setting of this prophecy of Malachi has its real application in the latter days, i.e., in the days of the Master Refiner's return. No mock trial or refining work will be found necessary for foot-step followers of the Redeemer in the life beyond the veil; instead there will be commendation and proportionate reward for having done good in the previous life. Those of the secondary spiritual class, the Great Company, will receive less honor, being deemed merely worthy of life. And those previously enlightened by the Holy Spirit who "have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world [age] to come," but are subsequently proven unfit for life, and thus are worthy of Second Death (Heb. 6:4-8), will have no part in the resurrection to life at all; it will not be necessary for them to hear a sentence pronounced remanding them to the abyss, or eternal sleep of death. To be raised to hear such a sentence would be meaningless—it would serve no good purpose and would not be a trial in the true sense of the word, as the fate of this class was sealed earlier. The trial, testing, and refining of the spiritual seed class take place down here on earth, prior to their reception to honor and glory.

Time is an important factor, and since this judging work is not instantaneously concluded, the Master is shown seated on a white cloud while engaging in harvesting work (Rev. 14:14). In Matthew 13:48 the gospel net is being drawn to shore, and the Lord's messengers, or fishers of men, are shown *seated* while the sorting work is being accomplished. Revelation 3:20 describes the Lord as standing at the door in these latter days, knocking and awaiting the response of the faithful few who are rewarded with food in due season. The door through which the Master comes to his people is not the portal of death but the portal of one's heart which,

when opened unto Jesus in these days of the seventh or last epoch of the Church's experience, will be filled with bounties new and old and will receive a confirmation of the blessedness of the Master's presence in a special sense (Dan. 12:12).

These are but a few of the many Scriptures that give an insight into the nature of Jesus' present judgment, which begins with the "house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17). Suffice it to say that a *period* of trial is indicated for his professed people tabernacling here in the flesh during the harvest at the end of the age.

Present Work of the Risen Saints

What would be the present lot of the risen saints now occupying earth's atmosphere? Might it not be in principle a time period similar to those days of the resurrected Master, prior to his ascension, when he administered to the needs of his disciples? Though all power and authority under God had been secured to Jesus by reason of his fulfilling the supreme and faithful sacrifice of his human nature (Matt. 28:18), he had not yet ascended to the Father (John 20:17) but remained invisibly present with them the greater part of forty days, only occasionally and judiciously manifesting himself to them in different forms and in various ways as would best strengthen them with a new and living hope (1 Pet. 1:3)—by establishing their faith in the *reality* of his resurrection.

To this end Jesus suppressed his own longing feelings for and joyous anticipation of meeting with the Father. What condescending grace! The honor, emoluments, and praise due the beloved Son must needs await the completion of this important work on behalf of his disciples. Forty days later Jesus ascended on high, and the full resplendent glory of his triumphal entry into the courts of heaven commenced. Who can imagine the ecstasy, the grandeur, the joyous tumult and acclamation attendant so significant an event? Worthy the Lamb! Nor would this excitement subside in a few hours or a day. Evidently a ten-day period was decreed by divine foresight, and prophetically so fixed, to allow sufficient time for this jubilation prior to the formal surety of his blood imputation on behalf of his Church, which took place at Pentecost.

The present condition of the risen saints, it is logical to believe, is analogous to that of Jesus during those forty days (Acts 1:3) before his ascension to heaven. The fact that this supposition necessitates a close proximity between the forces of good and evil, as they would occupy the same media or similar environs about the earth, should not be a real obstacle to either faith or reason, for this condition already existed prior to A.D. 1878, ever since the days of Noah. The Devil and his angels have been confined to earth's atmosphere for more than four thousand years. To such an extent has Satan usurped this realm that he is alluded to as the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). Yet this occupation has not prohibited God's holy messengers from having access to and from His people; nor have the demoniac powers been able to interfere with the host of guardian angels and their ministrations on behalf of the consecrated to protect the true interests of the Lord's flock. (Of course divine Wisdom and Power may occasionally permit temporary delays and obstructions to teach humility, appreciation, and obedience to those laws which would keep the consecrated in the protective circle of His love—Dan. 10:12,13.)

This same strange anomaly exists here below on the earthly plane. Various nations with opposing ideologies and hostile intentions habitate the same globe. The same principle holds true with respect to humanity at large: criminals, murderers, adulterers, racketeers, juvenile delinquents—that is, the baser elements of society—dwell together in the same sphere, or realm, with the decent, upright, law-abiding citizens or more respectable members of society. This teeming mass of mixed humanity, scattered over the face of the earth, numbers over four billion souls, and yet there is considerable room for more expansion. The thought as to whether such a paradoxical condition as this could exist—whether an incongruous mixed multitude could live together on earth in close proximity to each other—does not even enter one’s mind because this strange state of affairs is seen daily. The question is not *if* such a condition could ever exist but *why*? The only satisfactory answer lies in understanding the philosophy of the permission of evil; namely, that the condition is temporary and is designed to ultimately teach all of God’s intelligent creatures (a) the exceeding sinfulness of sin, (b) sin’s contagious powers, (c) the necessity of evil to test and develop the faith and obedience of the Church, (d) the desirability of the Kingdom, and (e) the magnification of God’s Justice, Love, Power, and Wisdom through the future eradication of sin by the divine program.

The original question was *what* the risen saints are presently doing. Since over twenty billion souls of fallen humanity, as well as the unnumbered host of angels who were disobedient in the world, or age, before the Flood, are to be judged individually (1 Cor. 6:2,3), how can the risen saints properly perform such a gigantic task unless, prior to this judgment work, they become acquainted with the past lifestyles, deeds good and bad, and the character traits of this mixed multitudinous host of individuals of whom they had not the least prior personal knowledge? Would not the various members of the risen body also need instruction as to what level of authority and what sphere of influence—that is, what place in the chain of command—they are to occupy and control?

The risen saints would *not* be engaged in Kingdom work as respects the remaining members of the body of Christ in the flesh, those still here on earth, for down through the Gospel Age Jesus alone, in conjunction with the guardian angelic host, has *quite efficiently* superintended the development of the Church as its Apostle and High Priest (Heb. 3:1)—without the need for any additional support on the part of the risen membership. Over the past century or so, the risen saints have been occupied with the necessary schooling and orientation preparatory to their future Kingdom work on behalf of others. And the primary work of Christians in the flesh on this side of the veil continues to be their transformation into the character likeness of God’s dear Son.

Therefore, it is believed that the risen saints are now, and have been ever since A.D. 1878, with the Lord “in the air” (1 Thess. 4:17), awaiting the completion of the body members, and that they are presently engaged in works incidental and preparatory to the Kingdom reign of Christ and his Bride. In addition, it is believed that the Church will be introduced to the Heavenly Father as a *class*, or *completed company* (notwithstanding any individual honor or recognition which may later be extended), and that this formal presentation is an event yet future. The condition of the resurrected saints who have been raised to spirit nature (but not office) is

comparable to that of Jesus during those forty days before his ascension. In the interval of time between Jesus' ascension on high and Pentecost, two noteworthy series of events were transpiring. One had to do with Jesus' being feted by the heavenly host for his faithful personal performance in having just freshly laid the basis for salvation of the human race. The other had to do with his apostles and disciples who were instructed to tarry at Jerusalem until the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In the heaven of God's presence above, there was great joy and jubilation; but in the heavenlies (Eph. 1:3; 2:6), or consecrated spiritual realm below, there was silence, a spiritual vacuum, as it were, until Pentecost.

Silence in Heaven a Half Hour

A similar brief, indefinite silence—spoken of as lasting “half an hour” (Rev. 8:1)—will occur at the end of this age. During that time, following the completion of the body of Christ, the Great Company or foolish virgin class will experience a period of noncommunication and lack of recognition from on high. The remaining consecrated in the flesh, those new creatures in Christ Jesus who have lost their crowns, will, for a brief time, have no communication between heaven above and themselves below. This silence will be an evidence or sign that the Bride of Christ is complete, and it will occur while the heavenly host is primarily preoccupied with celebrating the triumphal entry of Christ with his Bride into the courts of heaven. When this exuberant display of feelings abates—after the divinely appointed time expires—then will swiftly follow a succession of events (the first being the deliverance of the Great Company class), which will ultimately usher in God's promised Kingdom on earth. At last, in due time, the glorious effect and the peaceable fruitage of Christ's great redemptive sacrifice will be the happy lot of mankind; the highway of holiness and of opportunity for life will open to such as are willing and obedient (Isa. 35:8).

Verse 15:

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.

Verse 16:

And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

These two verses describe the *wheat* harvest (the harvest of the *vine* of the earth is given in subsequent verses). In verse 15, who or what was the “angel”? Why did the angel come “out of the temple”? By what authority did he command the one seated on the cloud to do a reaping work? Since Jesus was the one on the cloud, a literal angel, a *subordinate*, would not give him such an order. And the “angel” could not be God because of the peculiarities of the Almighty's office—He could not place Himself in such an inferior role. Then how could an “angel” tell Jesus in such an authoritative manner that the time had come for him to thrust in his sickle and reap? The answer is that the “angel” was a message from God Himself, from

“the temple,” and particularly a *time message*: “For the *time* is come for thee to reap,” and “the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

This angelic time message is observed to come out of “*HIS* [Sinaitic MS] temple.” It is the figurative testimonial crying out of the stones (Luke 19:40) of a building, or praise-altar witness to the Lord of hosts—namely, the Great Pyramid temple in the land of Egypt (Isa. 19:19,20)—that chronologically limits the length of the harvest and points out the propriety of its termination at a specific date. The passages of the Great Pyramid, leading to its principal chambers, are prophetic time corridors in which each pyramid lineal inch of travel represents a solar year of progress toward a destination and a symbolic fulfillment. In this passage system it can be shown that the year 1994 marks the completion of the harvest of the elect wheat class, to be followed shortly thereafter with the conclusion of the harvest of the vine of the earth.

Early in his earthly ministry the Master said: “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35). These words appear to have a symbolic as well as a literal significance. In the light of other prophetic time periods, the four months (4 30 days) suggest a harvest of 120 years’ duration at this end of the Gospel Age.

The sickle is “sharp” (verse 14) because it separates. Just as the Word of God has a separating influence, severing the Lord’s people from their earthly ties, so present truth is shown to have a separating influence. Of course, harvesting is not instantaneous but involves a process. From a natural standpoint the reaping process includes cutting the grain, stacking it, threshing it to separate the wheat kernel from the chaff, and then harvesting the kernels into the barn. Spiritual cutting, winnowing, threshing, etc.—all the trials and separations—take place prior to the wheat going into the barn, which represents heaven, the condition beyond the veil. Harvesting is a progressive work, culminating with finality. The statement “the earth was reaped” (verse 16) refers to the time when the Little Flock will be complete, when the harvesting work will be finished. Paraphrased, verse 15 in effect states, “Reap, for now is the time to reap; it is the harvest time and the wheat is ripe.” And Jesus “thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped [*future*]” (verse 16). Although the reaping is not finished yet, some of the wheat has already been gathered into the barn. However, the harvest will not be over until the last grains of wheat have been gathered into the barn. The expression “the earth was reaped” is synonymous with the clause “the harvest is past [*over*]” (Jer. 8:20), indicating God’s purpose with respect to this class in the present life is finished.

In this picture in Revelation, A.D. 1878 corresponds to the time, in the type, when Jesus presented himself as King to the people of Jerusalem. This former entry into the Holy City was prophesied in Zechariah 9:9, “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and [even] upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

The fact that Jesus came invisibly as a King in 1878, at his Second Advent, does not mean he took to himself his great power and reigned at that time. At the First Advent Jesus was spoken of as a “Saviour” prior to his baptism at Jordan and the

commencement of his earthly ministry—when he was just a newborn babe (Luke 2:11). Zechariah 9:9 describes Jesus as being “King” when he came on an ass and presented himself to the nation five days before his death. His testimony before Pilate and the sign affixed to the Cross set Jesus forth as a “King.” When he rose from death, prior to his ascension to heaven, he said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). Yet he was King not in the sense of exercising the power but in the sense of *having secured* the right to do so because of his faithfulness unto death upon the Cross. In other words, there was no danger of his losing the title of “King”—he had earned the crown; it was his. After his resurrection and ascension to heaven, he still did not exercise that power in a kingly sense because Psalm 110:1 (RSV) informs believers that Jesus’ King (Jehovah) said unto Jesus, “Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.” The point is, although seated beside God—on the right hand of God’s power and authority—Jesus did not exercise kingly power but had to wait until authorized by God to do so. Thus Jesus both received the Kingdom and became King prior to his return at the Second Advent (Luke 19:12,15; Psa. 2:6).

There can be no doubt Jesus has been exercising authority and power to protect his true Church and to make sure that the road is always open for the guardian angels of the saints . . . that the holy angels have a clear corridor into the bastion of sin down here. No real interference with these lifelines has been tolerated throughout the Gospel Age. Such action has required the use of great power and influence, but not in the sense of Jesus’ taking his great power to suppress all evil. The power has been employed merely to keep Satan back from particular individuals or areas at certain times. For instance, the staying of the French Revolution required great power—when Jesus stood symbolically on the earth and upon the sea to hold back the turbulence (Rev. 10:2). Of this act the world is or was completely unaware.

But when Christ assumes his rule over the earth, the people will know that a supreme being or power has taken over and that divine wrath and judgment are involved. The literal earthquake, or shaking of the earth, at the time of the Crucifixion convinced some (Matt. 27:54), but the power to be manifested down at this end of the age is to occur in such a manner that the world in general cannot help but know that God, figuratively speaking, is mightily shaking the earth—tolerating disobedience no longer. Otherwise, why would this aspect of Jesus’ coming in “*great power and glory*” be emphasized (Mark 13:26)?

In Revelation 14:14,15 Jesus, as earth’s returned King, is seen *seated* doing a harvesting work. Matthew 13:30 reads, “In the *time of harvest* I will say to the reapers . . . [reap].” In other words, Jesus is the Chief Reaper. He comes “as a thief” (quietly) to first deal with the faithful, the Lord’s jewels (Rev. 16:15; Mal. 3:17). These jewels are rightly his, even though they are in another house (Satan’s house, i.e., the present world order). After Jesus takes the jewels—and they are “crown” jewels, for they shall be a royal diadem in the hand of God (Isa. 62:3)—he will then surprise the inhabitants of the house, particularly the householder, Satan, and wreck his house, or spiritual dominion (Matt. 24:43) over earth’s affairs. Jesus will lay hold upon the Adversary, take his kingdom, and change it to that of the Lord. Jesus’ coming back to earth is one thing; his entering Satan’s headquarters, or spiritual house, is another. “How can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil

[that is, *when viewed from Satan's perspective*, destroy] his goods, except he *first* bind [completely] the strong man? and then [afterward] he will spoil [again *when viewed from Satan's perspective*, destroy] his house" (Matt. 12:29).⁷

In Revelation 14:14,15 Jesus is pictured as *sitting down*, but his still future *standing up* as Michael (his Old Testament name) "for the children of thy [Daniel's] people [Israel]" (Dan. 12:1) is related to Jehovah's speaking once, twice, and *thundering* from on high (Job 33:14; 37:1–4; Psa. 62:11; Isa. 42:13). Another Scripture, "Arise, O God, judge the earth" (Psa. 82:8), refers to Jesus' exercise of power *as King* and to *his reign*.

Verse 17:

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

Verse 18:

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.

Verse 19:

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.

In the first harvest, the harvest of the *wheat* of the earth (Rev. 14:14–16), Jesus as the Son of man, and as Chief Reaper, is seen having the sharp sickle. At the conclusion of the harvest, the time for the completion of the reaping of the fully ripe grain is announced by the testimony of the Great Pyramid, pictured as "another angel" coming out of his own special edifice. But in this second harvest, the harvest of "the *vine* of the earth," a second styled "another angel" (verse 17) is seen to come "out of the temple which is *in heaven*" (perhaps implying the former temple of verse 15 was on earth).

In each harvest the entity possessing the sickle of truth represents an intelligent guiding force. The angel seen coming out of the temple in heaven in verse 17 represents a *class*, namely, the complete and glorified members of the true Church. Together, they share in gathering the "clusters [the various religious denominations] of the vine of the earth [false Christendom]" (verse 18) *preparatory* to their final desolation. This class emerges from the temple in heaven as an "angel" (a) *after a prior bundling of the tares or clustering of the grapes of wrath* and (b) *after the marriage ceremony, or wedding of the Lamb*.

The third styled "another angel" (verse 18), seen coming out "from the altar," is a flashback to the angel of Revelation 8:3–5, who has the golden censer. Of that angel it is said: "There was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of *all saints* upon the golden altar. . . . And the smoke of the

7. For further particulars see pages 506–511.

incense [with the prayers of the saints] . . . ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it [anew] with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." This scene portrays Jesus as High Priest on behalf of, first, his Church. When the incense is completely consumed—when the prayers of God's special elect have been fully offered up and the Gospel Age has thus ended—then that same censer, the ministry of suffering which developed the sainthood, will be used to prepare the world for the Kingdom.

When the wheat is fully garnered into the barn, when the Church is beyond the veil and the harvest of the earth is complete, then Jesus, the angel of the altar who has "power over [the] fire" (verse 18), will command the angel coming out of the temple of heaven—the exalted Church—to gather the already clustered "vine of the earth" and to cast it into "the great winepress of the wrath of God [the mandated circumstances and conditions that will arise to crush Christendom in its coils]" (verse 19).

Verse 20:

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.

The "winepress" represents dire circumstances and troublesome conditions which will arise under Divine Providence to constrict the liberties, influence, and popularity of the worldly Church, eventually crushing within its confines all false systems of worship. The expression "without the city" denotes a place of opprobrium and shame (Lev. 14:34,40).

Blood issuing forth from the winepress is the manifestation of retributive judgment avenging the former spilled blood of the saints (Rev. 6:10). The ensuing bloodbath will reach within the winepress unto the horses'⁸ bridles.⁹ This symbolism indicates that those of the glorified Church, pictured riding on horses elsewhere in the Apocalypse, will share with their Lord in the treading of the winepress (Rev. 19:14,19,20). The same theme is revealed in Isaiah 21:7¹⁰ and also in Daniel 2:34, where the Kingdom class is seen to smite the great image upon its clay-iron feet. Although verse 20 does not specifically state who will tread the winepress without the city, it is strongly implied that the angel of verse 19 (the true Church) is a participant.¹¹

8. Translators are in unanimous agreement that the Greek word for horse (*hippos*) is in the plural form, which contradicts the Common Version rendering in the singular. Moreover, the Sinaitic rendering is in the plural.

9. The term "horses' *bridles*" could almost equally be translated "horses' *bits*" without serious alteration of the symbolism, but "horses' *bits*" seems preferable, signifying having something, as it were, *up to the teeth*. (Rotherham renders this word "bits" in the text.) A "bit" is the metallic mouthpiece of a bridle, to which the reins are fastened.

10. See pages 643–646.

11. At first Isaiah 63:1–6 seems to contradict the thought of the true Church's participation in treading the winepress. However, the garments dyed with blood and the use of the personal pronoun indicate that Jesus assumes full responsibility for the action taken and for his leadership role. Verses 3 and 5, "of the people there was none with me" and "there was none to help," refer to

The next statement, “by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs,” signifies a *time measurement* of 1,600 years¹² reaching from A.D. 314, the birth of the Antichrist system, to 1914. This symbolism does not mean that the doom of Babylon was foretold to happen in 1914. Rather, the 1,600 furlongs denote that place on the stream of time at which the blood guilt of the false system reached “the point of no return” in the *verdict* of its future complete desolation. The date 1878 signifies Christendom’s *fall from favor*; 1914, the rendering of the *verdict*; and sometime in 1994 or shortly thereafter, the *execution* or utter fall of Christendom.

The time measurement of the 1,600 furlongs coincides with, and is corroborated by, the following types or pictures: (1) The Gentile lease of power expired in 1914, predicated upon the “seven times” mentioned several times in Leviticus 26. (2) The “mene, mene, tekel, upharsin” handwriting on the wall in Daniel 5:25, if reduced to gerahs (1,000 + 1,000 + 20 + 500), equals 2,520 years which, when measured from 606 B.C., the year the typical kingdom was removed from Israel, ends in A.D. 1914. (3) The offering by Abraham in Genesis 15:9 of a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old she goat, a three-year-old ram, and a turtledove and a young pigeon each a year old (3 + 3 + 3 + 1 + 1) equals eleven symbolic years or (11 × 360) 3,960 years—still another drama pointing out the date A.D. 1914. (From 2046 B.C., ten years before this offering, when Abraham first entered the land of Canaan and God confirmed the covenant with him, until A.D. 1914 is 3,960 years.)

Jesus stated in A.D. 33 pertaining to the city and Temple of Jerusalem, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:38; Luke 13:35), but the judgment was not executed until A.D. 70. The Master also said to his people the same year that “the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world,” would be required of that generation. “From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias . . . verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation” (Luke 11:50,51). Yet this pronouncement was not fulfilled until A.D. 70. The same principle of delayed fulfillment applies to the end of the Gospel Age—the judgment will come!

No wonder, then, that the saints can sing with joyous anticipation:

Mine eyes can see the glory of the presence of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage, where the grapes of wrath are stored;
I see the flaming tempest of his swift descending sword:
Our King is marching on.

I can see his coming judgments, as they circle all the earth,
The signs and groanings promised, to precede a second birth;
I read his righteous sentence in the crumbling thrones of earth:
Our King is marching on.

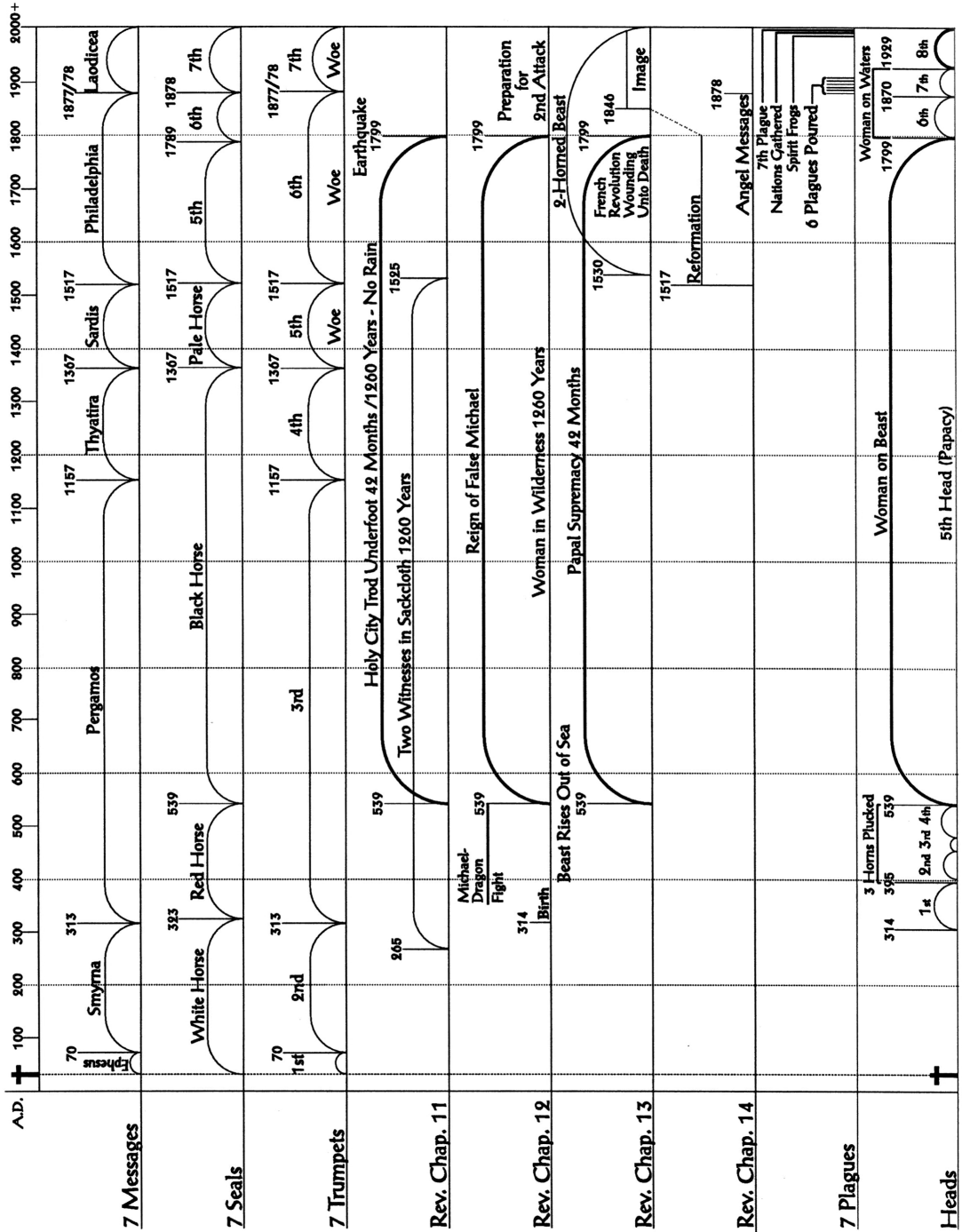
the indifference and apathy of the world at large down here as far as *initiating the divine decree*— apathy, that is, until self-interest and the curtailment of former liberties *of the public* arouse them to action in this direction.

12. Although the Sinaitic text reads, “A thousand *two* hundred furlongs,” a marginal insertion corrects the “two” to “*six*” in what appears unmistakably to be the original copyist’s own handwriting style. Scriptorium deletion marks accompany the correction, further indicating that the “two” should be omitted.

The “Gentile times” have ended, for their kings have had their day,
And with them sin and sorrow will forever pass away;
The tribe of Judah’s Lion now has come to hold the sway:
Our King is marching on.

The “seventh trump” is sounding, and our King knows no defeat;
He will sift out the hearts of men before his judgment seat.
Be swift, my soul, to welcome him; be jubilant, my feet!
Our King is marching on.

Glory, glory, hallelujah! Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah! Our King is marching on.



Seven Plagues and Hour of Power

Part V: Chapters 15–17

Revelation Chapter 15

Verse 1:

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

The seven plagues allude to the ten plagues visited by God at the hand of Moses upon Egypt incidental to the departure of the Israelites from that land. More particularly, the vision of verse 1 focuses attention upon the last seven of the ten Exodus plagues. Special note should be taken of the fourth plague, the plague of flies: “And I will sever in that day the *land of Goshen*, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth” (Exod. 8:22). This plague was different from the first three of the ten in that the Lord excluded the land of Goshen where the Hebrews dwelled; thus a distinction was made between the Egyptians and the Hebrews. In other words, the fourth plague was the first plague in which no harm befell the Jew, and the same distinction holds true for all seven remaining plagues of the ten.

The reference in verse 1 to God’s Old Testament dealing with Egypt is as follows: Just as the plagues that were inflicted upon Egypt happened prior to the final deliverance of the Hebrews from that land, so the seven plagues of Revelation, Chapters 15 and 16, are poured out prior to the final and collective whole salvation of *spiritual* Israel, God’s holy nation—namely, the true Church of Christ—from Satan’s domain here on earth to their heavenly inheritance beyond the veil of human experience.

To the Egyptians the plagues were a most grievous affliction, a torment of pain and death; but to the Hebrews in Egypt, dwelling separately in Goshen, these same plagues were harbingers of hope, portending coming release from bondage. In a similar sense, the plagues of this and the succeeding chapter of Revelation are messages of gloom and doom to spiritual Egypt, i.e., religious orthodoxy (Rev. 11:8), but are foregleams of better things to come for true spiritual Israel. From this latter standpoint the plagues are styled “great and marvellous.” The setting of the scene, therefore, is the end-time, or harvest of the age, when the pronouncement goes forth, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4). This is a call for both a separation of spirit from the world and a departure from a worldly Church (Ezra 10:11).

The seven plague-bearing angels of verse 1 are not the seven Gospel Age individuals or messengers to the Church (Rev. 1:20) but are an allegorical representation of seven messages indicating divine displeasure with—even indignation against—ecclesiasticism and its teachings. The plagues represent, as it were, an expression of *indignation and wrath*. They are but precursors of the *coming actual dissolution* of all false religious institutions, which are to be replaced by the Kingdom and religion of Jesus Christ, soon to reign.

The plagues represent the subject matter in these messages, whereas the angels bearing the plagues are the separate pronouncements or *titles* of these messages. The plagues are similar in character to the smiting messages that tormented orthodoxy in Revelation 11:10,6—messages from the two prophets, the Old and the New Testaments (plural), the Word of God.¹

Verse 2:

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.

Verse 3:

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

Can there be any doubt whatsoever that both of these verses refer to the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt? Is not the setting of the scene a wondrous reminder of what transpired *after* the Israelites' victorious passage through the Red Sea in Moses' day—its climax?

Sea of Glass Mingled with Fire

The proper perspective of the vision in verses 2 and 3 can be obtained by noting some salient points of the historical event recorded in Exodus 14:26 through 15:19. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea [this, it is believed, was executed from a point of elevation on the far side of the Red Sea where both Moses and many of the multitude accompanying him, having crossed that body of water, could witness Jehovah's mighty judgment upon the pursuing enemy], . . . and the sea returned to his strength [that is, was restored to its normal height but with an ensuing awesome and eerie calm that could be likened to a *sea of glass without a ripple*—Matt. 8:26] . . . and [the standing host of] Israel [looking down] saw [in a hushed and prolonged silence] the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. . . . Then sang *Moses* [a type of Christ, *the Lamb*] and the children of Israel [a picture of the 144,000 faithful] this song . . . I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: . . . And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth *thy wrath*, which consumed them as stubble [the literal waters that enveloped the pursuing enemy, covering the turmoil beneath with a water mantle and mask of tranquillity, are likened to a fierce consumption by fire of dry stubble!]." Does not this account explain, in large part, the "sea of glass mingled with fire"? It is significant that the Exodus body of water was, and is, called the *Red Sea*.

Standing on yonder side of the sea,² the Israelites were eyewitnesses of God's judgment on Pharaoh and all his host (Psa. 136:15). In antitype the saints will be

1. See pages 262–263, 269–270.

2. The Authorized King James Version presents the victors as standing *on* the sea of glass, whereas the Revised Standard, New English, Jerusalem, Today's English, and New International versions translate the Greek preposition *epi* to mean *by* or *beside* the sea. From a grammatical standpoint,

found elevated, on the other side beyond the veil of human experience, when the Time of Trouble, symbolized by fire, falls upon Christendom (spiritual Egypt). And like faithful Abraham, they will view the destruction of spiritual Sodom and Gomorrah from afar. But before this event, the saints living at the end of the age must be faithful unto death; they must be victors in the final test when confronted by the beast, his image, his mark, his name, and the number of his name, as explained in the commentary on the latter part of Revelation Chapter 13.³ Therefore, when verses 1 to 3 of the present chapter are *compared with the Exodus account*, does it not suggest that the last members of the Little Flock will be translated to the spirit realm *after the pouring of the plagues but before the destruction of mystical Babylon* (Rev. 18:21)?

There are two pictures in connection with the Red Sea crossing. (1) When the eating of the lamb on the original night of the Passover service is considered *in addition to* the later passage of the Israelites through the sea, the crossing represents the saved class of mankind, those who will ultimately benefit from the ransom sacrifice of Christ by making good and gaining the victory; at the conclusion of the Millennial Age, they, like the nation of Israel, will look back and see the destruction of the incorrigible: Satan and his host. (2) But when the Passover night observance is excluded, as in verses 2 and 3, then the symbolism is restricted to the Gospel Age, particularly its termination, when the saints in glory will all sing, joyously accompanying the antitypical Moses.

Having the Harps of God

Since the harp of God usually represents the Word of God in its present use here on earth, someone might ask, "How can the harps be played on the other side of the veil? Why would they even be needed there?" The answer is fully explained under Revelation 14:2,3.⁴ The point to be observed, which bears repetition, is that this is a song of *deliverance* in the fullest sense of the word. It is true that many Christians sing on this side of the veil. They have a melody in their hearts for the Lord; they rejoice and glory in Him. However, the song in verse 3 is a *victory* song, and not merely a song of the harmony of God's Word. The faithful saints are thrilled to

in overwhelming instances when the Greek preposition is used in conjunction with the accusative case, it is translated as resting *on* or *upon* something, and this usage seemingly justified the translators of the Authorized Version in so rendering the Greek word. However, because *on* in verse 2 causes a disparity both from a philological viewpoint and when a direct comparison is made with the Moses/Exodus account, translators of many of the modern versions substituted the term *by* or *beside*.

Although this change certainly is preferable to the rendition in the Common Version, there is a still better application or route to follow: *Liddell & Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (eighth edition, page 526) translates the preposition (under the classifications "C. WITH ACC. I.5" and "G. WITH THE ACC. In Composition 3") as signifying "of extension *over* a space" or "place." Even in the KJV the same Greek word, used the same way, is translated as *over* 27 times (1 Pet. 3:12; Rev. 6:8; 16:9; 18:20) and also *above* (2 Thess. 2:4); such instances do not restrict its usage solely to indicate resting directly *upon*.

Therefore, contextual evidence indicates a modifying factor and favors the thought of the saints standing *over* and *above* the sea, of their being *adjacent to the sea but at a higher elevation*.

3. See pages 358–361.

4. See pages 369–372.

realize that the former promises of assurance and help in God's Word have now been fulfilled to the utmost in their lives; the promises have indeed proved true and just in their former statements. The very same plagues that are to be visited upon the evildoers in proportion to their guilt are angels of mercy to the obedient.

Cannot, then, one sense the feeling of what the destruction of the pursuing host meant to the Israelites? It was designed to represent a full and final separation from the land of bondage, a complete freedom from anxiety ever again arising from that quarter. So likewise in the antitype, the more-than-overcomers of this age, those found faithful, who will possess immortality, will experience a similar freedom from all fear, a peace and tranquillity beyond words to express, and a complete and everlasting release from sin, death, and demoniac power. The waters of the sea *beneath* will have wrought turmoil and destruction upon the enemy, but to the saints above, they bring victory, peace of spirit, and tranquillity of soul compared to a "sea of glass."

King of Saints

The Sinaitic manuscript renders the phrase "King of saints" as "King of the ages," which appears to be the proper thought. The emphasis indicates that as God brings to a successful conclusion His purposes with respect to the Gospel Age, so likewise He will bring to a triumphant climax at the end of the Millennial Age His purposes in regard to mankind. This is the song and this is the confidence of the saints in verse 3.

Verse 4:

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.

The fulfillment of this and the preceding verse is yet future—the very near future, it is believed! From the standpoint solely of the singers in the vision, the refrain concerning the judgment is of such recent past occurrence that the translators of the King James Version, apparently capturing the spirit, knowingly used the clause "thy judgments *are* made manifest" instead of "*were* made manifest" as most other versions state it. The KJV is more in harmony with the thrust of the vision on the part of those singing.

The world, witnessing the turmoil, the revolutionary and destructive phase of the Time of Trouble coming upon Christendom, will temporarily not understand the significance of these events; but later, when revelation dawns upon them, they will promptly submit to and willingly obey the laws of the Kingdom.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; . . . he [God] shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth. (Psa. 96:11,13)

Let the reader now return to the Exodus account in the Old Testament (15:1–19). One might wonder how the enormous heterogeneous multitude could utter with united voice the words and content of the song in such an intelligible manner that it could be historically and verifiably recorded. Upon reflection cannot one suppose,

with reasonable conviction, the following, which is stated in the present tense to allow the reader to experience Moses' emotions?

During the calming of the waters of the sea and the ensuing silence, the normally sedate and dignified Moses hurriedly detaches himself from the multitude. From this position he then turns about to face his compatriots, *pausing* for the first opportunity to intrude. His hand is uplifted, ready to act as the nation's cheerleader. With his powerful voice, notable on this occasion for its remarkable and unusual clarity of diction and accompanied with robust and rhythmic gestures, he now, by means of simple and single rehearsals, step by step, line upon line, in stanza-like fashion, channels and orchestrates the feelings and enthusiasm of the multitude, coupled with his own inspired and intelligent pronouncements, to sing in a measured, metrical cadence the words and melody of the fitting anthem of victory.⁵

Verse 5:

And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

Verse 6:

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.

Perhaps a nagging question or two still remain. Why are verses 5 through 8 dealing with the plagues so obviously separated from verse 1? Could not verse 1 have been eliminated since attention is called to the character role of the angel-bearers of God's wrath in verse 7? Why was not verse 1 attached in some manner to these later verses without a hiatus between? or vice versa? The key is to realize that this seeming discrepancy is of obvious divine intent, serving some hidden purpose. The gap causes the Christian to pause and to carefully ponder the matter.

Suppose verse 1 had been omitted from the text. Would not those well versed in Scripture conclude that the "sea of glass mingled with fire" was directly related not so much to the account of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea but to the *molten brazen sea* (1 Kings 7:23) before Solomon's Temple? or to the water laver of the Tabernacle made from the refined and *polished copper mirrors* of the women of Israel (Exod. 38:8)? To clinch the matter, would not the "sea of glass" laver of Revelation 4:6 appear to be directly related to the "sea of glass mingled with fire" of Revelation 15:2? How difficult it would be, with the omission of verse 1, to entertain any other option than the laver representation.

It is the positioning of the plague-bearing angels in verse 1, immediately prior to verses 2 to 4, *that unquestionably calls attention to the seven last plagues of Egypt as they stand related to the passage through the Red Sea with the song of deliverance on the other side.* The insertion of verse 1 causes this event to occupy the *forefront* of the vision and the laver theme to remain in the *background*. If verse 1 had been omitted, the emphasis would have been the reverse, with the laver in the foreground and the Red Sea occurrence in the background, thus giving rise to an

5. See Appendix 16, "The Exodus," pages 677-694.

explanation of the saints standing by faith and trusting upon the Word of God in the Time of Trouble *in the present life*—which is not the thought.

Another point. The testimony of the historical account in Exodus is immutable. The plagues of Egypt preceded the arrival of the Israelites at the Red Sea. Yet it might appear to some that there is a contradiction, for the plagues are mentioned after the victory sea anthem of verses 2 to 4. The plagues are discussed from verse 6 through Chapter 16, which describes the pouring of the plagues. Therefore, it becomes necessary to go over, once again, the verses previously examined. Verse 1 is component A, and verses 2 through 4 are component B, of a two-part miniscenario depicting the relationship between the plagues and the Red Sea victory as one of cause and effect. In other words, components A and B together comprise, as it were, a prelude to a later, more detailed explanation and review of the significance of the minipicture. When the sequence of verses is viewed in this perspective, there is no disharmony whatever. Verse 1 introduces the plagues. Next come verses 2 to 4, the Red Sea incident. Verse 6 again introduces the plagues, followed by much detail and a later grand-scale destruction of mystic Babylon (Rev. 16:18,19) comparable to the fate of the pharaonic host in the Red Sea waters.

Seven Divine Messages

In verses 5 and 6, the seven angels come out of the “temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven.” The clue to indicate these angels are messages is the word “testimony.” A testimony is related to a witness of some kind or a message. Testimonies can be either in written form or in the form of living epistles, but in back of both kinds of testimony is the key thought of a message. And the fact this testimony is “opened” shows a measure of revelation is involved—of something that hitherto was more or less obscured. Since the source of the seven messages is the “temple,” they are divine messages; they originate in a holy place, namely, God’s throne, the Most Holy.

The pure, white linen garments of the angels suggest priestly service and holy, righteous messages. Thus here is another clue that the messages are of God, even though the contents of the vials are potent plagues. Not only are the angels clothed with the vesture of underpriests, but they are wearing golden girdles indicative of being harnessed in divine service.

Verse 7:

And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

Verse 8:

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.

It is most fitting that of the four living ones, or beings, the divine attribute of Justice is represented as distributing the vials of the wrath of the ever-living God to the angels. Yea, that which is ephemeral, that which can be shaken, will be shaken.

As stated earlier, the seven angels do not represent seven different personalities. They represent titles, each with its own theme. The “vials” (bowls or vessels) containing the wrath of God signify that the format of His displeasure is written, i.e., it is in book form. Each plague-containing bowl has its own particular list of grievances and/or malpractices that have aroused His indignation over the failure of the nominal Church to follow the straight and narrow way. The vials being “golden” indicates these publications would be sent under divine care and direction.

Temple Filled with Smoke

The temple filled with smoke clearly calls to mind the dedication of Solomon’s Temple, in which the Lord’s glory was described as “thick darkness” (1 Kings 8:12). “The cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD” (1 Kings 8:10,11). Both the Temple and the Tabernacle were structures ordained of God (1 Kings 9:3–5; Heb. 8:5), and both, at their inauguration, were blessed with the manifestation of His presence in the manner described.

Thus both instances of yore, as well as the symbolic vision at hand, were and are intended to represent the future glorification and manifestation of the true sons of God (Rom. 8:19). “The LORD is in his *holy temple*: let all the earth keep silence before him” (Hab. 2:20). The “smoke” refers to God’s glory and power and *not to confusion in the nominal Church*.

Although at first the wording of verse 8 seems to indicate that the temple was filled with glory prior to the pouring of the plagues, the order of events is the reverse. It should be observed that the temple was not filled with the Lord’s glory (verse 8) until *after* (a) “the temple . . . was opened” (verse 5), until *after* (b) “the seven angels came out” (verse 6), and until *after* (c) “one of the four beasts gave . . . vials full of the wrath of God” (verse 7) unto the angels. The temple was not filled with smoke *before* these three events occurred.

Furthermore, the glory-filled temple climaxed a dedication ceremony, foreshadowing the revelation to the world of God’s acceptance of the true and complete Temple class. How long the time interval will be between the three events described and the public recognition of the inauguration of the Kingdom is epitomized in the concluding clause of the chapter: “till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.” In other words, the plagues do not, in their fulfillment, follow the Lord’s glory, for, of necessity, they must precede the sovereignty of God and of Christ and the services of the antitypical priesthood of the next age. In the type it was only after the Lord’s glory had subsided that the typical restitution offerings of the people were accepted by the priesthood. The Church will be completed *during* the fulfilling of the seventh plague but will not officiate on behalf of the world until *after* the plagues have been fulfilled and their repercussions fully felt.

In review, the first four verses of Chapter 15 tie in the plagues with the Red Sea deliverance; verses 5 through 8 link the plagues to the dedication of the temple. The plagues themselves are a common denominator to both equations. Chapter 16 details the pouring of the plagues prior to the completion of the last members of the elect body, which will be followed by the fall of Babylon in the great Time of Trouble.

Here is a comparative listing of the sequence of events in Revelation 15 and 16. The Revelation 15 columns are brief scenarios, whereas the Revelation 16 column is a more detailed vision; to all practical purposes, all three have a common conclusion. In the first column (verse 1), the seven angels are represented as already *having* the plagues. In the second column (verse 6), the seven angels are also said to have the plagues, but not until the next verse (verse 7) are they seen to actually *possess* the plagues, which at that time are given to the angels by a living one.⁶ Thus the two scenes of Revelation 15, recorded as separate events, are, in reality, concurrent in their fulfillment. Some of the events in all three columns are of a continuing nature; the details were omitted for the sake of brevity.

Revelation 15	Revelation 15	Revelation 16
(Verse 1) John sees seven angels	(Verse 6) Seven plague angels come out of temple	
Having seven last plagues	(Verse 7) Plagues given	(Verses 1 to 17) Plague 1 poured Plague 2 poured Plague 3 poured Plague 4 poured Plague 5 poured Plague 6 poured Plague 7 poured
[Pouring of plagues implied]	[Pouring of plagues implied]	(Verse 17) “It is done”
[Translation of the true Church]	[Translation of the true Church]	[Marriage of Lamb]
[Marriage of Lamb]	[Marriage of Lamb]	(Verse 18) Voices, thunders, light- nings, the great earthquake
(Verse 2) Sea of glass mixed with fire		(Verse 19) Babylon remembered
(Verse 3) Victors’ song		(Verse 21) Great hail
[<i>Epiphania/apokalupsis</i>]	(Verse 8) Temple filled with glory of the Lord; Messiah’s Kingdom	[<i>Epiphania/apokalupsis</i>]

6. The phrase in verse 6 “having the seven plagues” merely identifies which seven angels.

Revelation Chapter 16

Moses spoke to his people of Christ: “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, *like unto me*; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you” (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22). Moses, a type of Christ, was absent from his people for forty years (Acts 7:30). During the Gospel Age Jesus likewise absented himself a long time from his people, who were Israelites indeed (John 1:47; Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16). As the time drew nigh for Israel’s redemption from Egyptian bondage, God chose Moses to be their leader and, upon the latter’s return, to occupy the role of deliverer. But Moses, in humility, expressed an inadequacy to fill so great a position and an inability to communicate and address Pharaoh and his court. God consented to let Aaron act as Moses’ *mouthpiece*.

The returned Lord, an invisible spirit being of the highest order, had a communication problem somewhat similar to Moses’. Since in this age the walk of the Christian is one of *faith* (not of sight or auricular disclosure), it was of the utmost importance that the method of communication be less direct and more discreet so as to attract the meek, the humble, and the teachable solely on the basis of the testimony of the Word and the harmony of the Scriptures. Therefore, God appointed a human conduit, the seventh or Laodicean messenger (Rev. 3:14), to read aloud as a spokesman (Rev. 1:3;¹ Hab. 2:2,3); that is, to declare or publish the dispensational message then due and to feed the household of faith under the tutelage and supervision of the returned invisible Lord. This individual, Charles T. Russell, introduced a work entitled *Studies in the Scriptures* in series form, consisting of six volumes (Ezekiel 9; John 2:1–11), but he is also accredited in Holy Writ as responsible for a seventh volume, of which more will be said in Chapter 17. This series, which is viewed as plagues by modern orthodoxy, is a blessing to God’s elect, affording them a helping hand in liberation from sectarian bondage in preparation for the still greater redemption that awaiteth the children of God.

This development should not be so surprising. Did not John the Baptist, “the *voice* of one crying in the wilderness” (Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3), a human messenger, announce Christ’s presence at the First Advent? Likewise, a human agent declared in no uncertain terms the Second Advent, or invisible presence of the returned Lord.

Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony

Before Revelation 16 is examined in detail, it will be helpful to review Revelation 15:5,6, where the seven angelic pronouncements (acting in the highly figurative role of messengers) are seen coming out of the “*temple* of the *tabernacle* of the *testimony*.” Since the Ark of the Covenant was in both the *Tabernacle* and the *Temple*, the Ark is pertinent to the vision even though not specifically mentioned (cf. Rev. 11:19). The Ark contained the tables of the Law—God’s Word, the two

1. See page 4.

witnesses, which consist of the Old and the New Testaments or, as sometimes referred to, the Old and the New Covenants. In essence, therefore, the “Ark of the Covenant” means the “Ark containing the *Testimony*.”

There is yet another perspective. The “temple,” particularly the Most Holy, signifies the primary origin whence the message emanates, namely, from God. Moreover, the “tabernacle” indicates, in a secondary sense, the fountain whence the knowledge flows, that is, the highly informative book *Tabernacle Shadows*. Written in 1881, the book is like the acorn from which the giant oak grows. Out of the acorn come the roots, the trunk, the branches, and the leaves. *Tabernacle Shadows* is a source common to all seven messages (the seven angels and their plagues). The seven angels coming out of the temple of the tabernacle “clothed in pure and white linen” are seen in the symbolic role of righteous underpriests engaged in the purification of sin. The “temple of the tabernacle of the *testimony*” being opened signifies revelation, the disclosure of information.

Plagues and Trumpets Compared and Contrasted

Because the seven plagues are presented primarily from the standpoint of their consequence upon the false or nominal element, they are described as various calamities. There exists a remarkable similarity between the pouring of the plagues and the earlier sounding of the seven trumpets. The same cause and effects produced are demonstrated time and time again. However, a careful analysis reveals that the time periods differ, for the trumpets are blown down through the Gospel Age, while the plagues are poured during the harvest period at the end of the age.

Though in both cases the same adverse effects of the messages of truth upon Christendom are repeatedly shown, the distinctions between the plagues and the trumpets should be attentively considered. To further illustrate the point: Some people think they see evidence in nature that evolution occurred in fish, birds, and animals, while actually they are seeing the results of God’s craftsmanship. The fact that certain creatures have similar characteristics does not necessarily mean they evolved from each other. Rather, the same God is the Author or Master Craftsman of all. The animal species are separate creations . . . like separate pictures hanging on a wall. If the same artist painted each picture, the paintings would have certain similar characteristics, and one who was familiar with those characteristics would frequently be able to identify the artist. So it is with the plagues, the trumpets, and other symbols and pictures; God has a method of teaching that is revealed through familiarity with His Word. With the aid of the Holy Spirit, one can get to recognize the Heavenly Father’s step, touch, voice, and so forth. However, just because the Author is the same, it does not necessarily mean that all pictures are the same or that they were painted contemporaneously, unless, of course, they were dated by the Author or they contain clues or internal evidence that establishes a time frame. Similarities do not necessarily indicate exact correspondencies; neither do they contain unalterable parallelisms in time sequence.

In review, the seven plagues represent hard, cutting messages given during the Second Advent of the Lord. The messages are likened to plagues by those who adversely react to them.

Comparison Between Trumpets and Plagues

<i>Trumpet Angels</i>		<i>Plague Angels</i>	
First trumpet sounds Rev. 8:7	Hail and fire mingled with blood cast <i>upon the earth</i> ; 1/3 trees and all grass burned up	First plague Rev. 16:2	Poured <i>upon the earth</i> ; grievous sore upon men
Second trumpet sounds Rev. 8:8,9	Mountain cast <i>into the sea</i> ; sea became bloody; marine casualties	Second plague Rev. 16:3	Poured <i>upon the sea</i> ; sea became bloody; marine casualties
Third trumpet sounds Rev. 8:10,11	Star fell <i>upon rivers and fountains of waters</i> ; made bitter; many died	Third plague Rev. 16:4–6	Poured <i>upon rivers and fountains of waters</i> ; became bloody to drink
Fourth trumpet sounds Rev. 8:12	<i>Sun, moon, and stars</i> smitten with <i>darkness</i>	Fourth plague Rev. 16:8,9	Poured upon the <i>sun</i> ; men <i>scorched</i>
Fifth trumpet sounds Rev. 9:1–5	Sun and air <i>darkened with smoke</i> ; men <i>tormented</i>	Fifth plague Rev. 16:10,11	Poured upon the seat of the beast; kingdom <i>full of darkness</i> ; <i>gnawing pain</i>
Sixth trumpet sounds Rev. 9:13–15; 10:7	Four angels bound in <i>Euphrates</i> loosed; 1/3 men slain; mystery <i>about to be finished</i>	Sixth plague Rev. 16:12	Poured upon the <i>Euphrates</i> ; waters dried up; <i>way of kings of the east prepared</i>
Seventh trumpet sounds Rev. 11:15–19; 10:7	<i>Great voices in heaven</i> saying kingdoms are the Lord's; mystery finished; <i>lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake, and hail</i>	Seventh plague Rev. 16:17–21	Poured into the air; <i>great voice</i> out of temple <i>in heaven</i> saying, "It is done"; <i>voices, thunders, lightnings, earthquake, and hail</i>

That the seven trumpets have sounded *throughout the Gospel Age* was proven sufficiently by the earlier detailed examination of the component parts.² Therefore, special attention will now be focused on the various elements in the pouring of the seven plagues. It will be shown that the seven plague messages are given during the harvest, or end of the age. In other words, the intention is to prove that although the

2. See pages 209–242, 276–287.

seven trumpets and the seven plagues are far apart from having a common starting point, they do have a common finale or climax.

Verse 1:

And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

God chose and authorized Moses, accompanied by Aaron, to lead His people out of Egypt, the land of bondage. These two, Moses and Aaron, in a manner similar to the two prophets, or the two witnesses (the Old and the New Testaments of Revelation 11:3,6), had “power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.” In particular, the words “and when they shall have finished their *testimony*” (Rev. 11:7) show the two witnesses pronounced a *message* that had a *plaguelike* effect upon those not in harmony with the Word.

So in verse 1 the “great voice out of the temple” is God’s. His authoritative command impels the seven vial/plague angels to pour out the vials of His wrath upon the earth. Not literal calamities, the vials of wrath, or plagues, are messages of truth that have an adverse effect on nominal Christendom. The Apostle Paul said the gospel was hidden to one class, being to them an odor of death unto death (2 Cor. 2:16). The expression “savour of death” is a reminder of the condition that existed outside the camp in the Tabernacle arrangement—the place where the dung, hide, and flesh were burned, causing a stench. The same message is to one class a harbinger of deliverance and to the other class a plague of *death*. A complaint was made that Paul was turning the world upside down with his preaching, and the attention of the authorities was directed to the effect it had on the populace (Acts 17:6). Thus Paul’s preaching was considered a “plague” by some. The same was true of Elijah, of whom Ahab said, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” (1 Kings 18:17). Actually the misdeeds of King Ahab and his wife Jezebel were the source that provoked the trouble upon the nation.

The First Plague

Verse 2:

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.

The Earth

The first angel poured out his vial and plague upon the “earth,” that is, upon the *dry land*. The earth here represents those underneath religious restraint. It must ever be kept in mind that all the plagues are poured on, and affect chiefly, the so-called Christian world.

Noisome and Grievous Sore

A “grievous sore” would be a large boil or an open, ulcerated sore. In either case it would be tender and easily irritated. The pouring of each plague extends

over a period of time, causing periodic hurt in different ways. The leaders of theological schools, as well as the clergy, are, to a certain extent, familiar with but resentful of the truth. However, as long as the truth is not too widely perceived by the masses, they will generally leave its proponents alone. The leadership are not in harmony with the truth, for they consider it to be Arian doctrine and heresy, classifying it among the cults. As soon as the truth becomes prominent, they actively oppose it. The pouring of the first plague, or message, *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, the first volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, written in 1886 and circulated in the millions (now largely lost sight of because of the passage of time), produced this very reaction. Even today a smoldering resentment exists among some of the leadership, but as long as the people are listless, apathetic, and not much concerned with religion, they leave the truth movement alone. They figure, why stir up a hornet's nest, why pull skeletons out of the closet, why furnish free advertising to such a movement? Generally speaking, those in nominal religious leadership positions further reason: "Who are the proponents of that movement? What are they doing now? . . . Nothing." Nevertheless, the message of truth disturbs them.

The word "noisome" is used in the Old Testament to describe a plague: "Surely he shall deliver thee from the . . . noisome pestilence . . . that walketh in darkness" (Psa. 91:3,6). A pestilence is like a plague. For example, the bubonic plague was a "noisome pestilence" in that not only did the disease kill countless numbers of people, but the *news* and the *fear* of the plague were also dreadful. The plague was decimating; sometimes entire families died. When one member of a family contracted the disease, the other members just waited to see who would get it next. Thus *fear* of the oncoming plague was also a part of the plague. The *noisome report* going in advance of the plague paralyzed the people with fear. The plague itself silently and stealthily stole over the people, not making a sound, but news of the plague was broadcast all over the world. As a "noisome" plague, the bubonic plague is a natural example of what in Revelation 16 is spiritual. Therefore, not only the truth itself but the *rumors* or *reports* about the truth—the supposedly damaging effect that it produced—were all part of the "noisome" plague, or the "noisome and grievous sore."

Mark of the Beast and Worship of Its Image

The primary emphasis of the vision is that the plague adversely affected those who "had the mark of the beast" and "worshipped his image." This spiritual "mark" refers to those who support traditional Catholicism.³ And this spiritual "mark" also refers to those who worship the beast's image, i.e., evangelical or confederated Protestantism. This new combination will be esteemed as God's instrumentality for doing the work predicted of Messiah.

While this verse identifies that the message is not popular with Catholicism or Protestantism, it also provides a clue or insight as to the *time* of this prophecy. The image had to be at least formed *before* the plagues could be poured out, for only after the image was formed could it be worshipped. The Evangelical Alliance was

3. See pages 323–367.

formed in 1846⁴ to stem the tide of the fragmentation of Protestantism and to establish those Christian bodies whom it considered to be properly orthodox Protestant. Today the widely recognized World Council of Churches, which had its roots in the earlier Alliance, has become the successor and is part of the image-of-the-beast symbol; those cooperating with the World Council of Churches or the former organization are already worshipping the image. Such individuals think the World Council of Churches is a marvelous development and the best thing that has happened since the schism of the Eastern and Western churches (in 1054) or since Luther and the Reformation (in 1517). They look forward to the healing of old wounds, but the Bible says the opposite: “Say ye not, A confederacy” (Isa. 8:12).

Question: Would the image have to be vitalized to be worshipped? Response: The account does not so state. The image did not have to be vitalized, but it had to be formed before the plagues could be poured. Some have been cooperating voluntarily for a long time with the beast and with its image at an early stage prior to the vitalization shown in Revelation 13. At that time, still future, the image will exercise coercion against those who refuse to render homage. Although not speaking and acting with authority yet, the image is already formed. Otherwise, the plagues could not even begin to be poured until the image was vitalized. And in that case *all* seven plagues would still be *future*. Therefore, it becomes necessary to settle the matter. Have plagues been poured or are they yet future? This treatise supports, with conviction, the conclusion that plagues have already been poured.

Verse 2 alone is not sufficient to understand, with precision, the time setting of the Revelation vision. From the account of the pouring of the first plague, it can be determined that the pouring had to be sometime after 1846, when the image of the beast was formed. Going back to the type further establishes that as the literal plagues were inflicted soon after the return of Moses to Egypt, so the symbolic plagues of Revelation 16 are poured after Jesus’ invisible return at his Second Advent in 1874. In the type the deliverance of the Hebrew firstborn took place contemporaneously with the passing over of the destroying angel at midnight. In the antitype the deliverance of the spiritual firstborn occurs after the pouring of the seventh plague. In other words, the first plague was poured sometime shortly after 1874, and the last plague will be poured sometime before the spiritual future rapture of the last members of the true Church. Thus the time frame begins to narrow down and come into better focus.

4. In the vision of Daniel 8:13,14, the query is raised how long the “sanctuary” and the “host” would be trodden underfoot. The answer was given: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” This prophecy points out the year in which (1) a nucleus of holy believers would get entirely free from papal defilements and errors and (2) the misappropriated “golden vessels,” or precious truths, would begin to be restored to this holy or “sanctuary” class. The key furnished is the succeeding vision concerning the seventy weeks, or 490 years, of Daniel 9:21–27, whose commencement is 454 B.C., the starting point of the 2,300 days, or years. Thus A.D. 1846 is 2,300 years from 454 B.C., and this is the very year the Evangelical Alliance was formed. In restricting membership and shutting out those considered heterodox, orthodoxy actually assisted in the separation of the nominal host from the true sanctuary class. This subject is fully covered in *Thy Kingdom Come, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1890), Ser. 3, pp. 95–120.

In Chapter 14, where the importance of the date 1878 is so graphically portrayed in various ways, a message goes forth (verse 8) that Babylon is fallen from favor and its future destruction is irrevocable. Verses 9 to 11 of that same chapter indicate the *torment* to befall those who worship either the beast or its image—torment that takes place in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. Ever since 1878 the cry has gone forth, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her . . . plagues” (Rev. 18:4). Would not the call to come out, with its implied threat, be fraudulent if no one living back there, at that time (over a century ago), could possibly partake of the plagues for failure to obey?

For centuries on Ash Wednesday many devotees have had a *black mark* placed on their foreheads. Thus, even outwardly the Lord furnished his people with clues earlier in the Gospel Age as to the false system of worship and the “mark of the beast.” In the Middle Ages Christians had difficulty understanding the higher, more intricate symbolisms of the Apocalypse, but they did have reasonable access to the Gospels and epistles of the New Testament, from which they could glean important nuggets of truth. Although the time was not then due for deep doctrinal understanding, true saints on the whole were enabled to identify Antichrist. The following scriptural clues helped to alert many to the situation that existed.

The Scriptures

“Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven” (Matt. 23:9).

“Some shall depart from the faith, . . . forbidding to marry” (1 Tim. 4:1,3).

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Christ] also . . . took part of the same; . . . For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham” (Heb. 2:14,16).

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” (1 John 2:22).

“And he [Jesus] said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God” (Matt. 19:17).

Papal Practices

Priests are called fathers, and the supreme earthly representative is titled *Papa* (Pope), i.e., “Father of fathers.”

Priests are forbidden to marry.

Jesus is called “God Incarnate,” meaning Deity (the divine spirit) clothed or embodied in human form, that is, the “Incarnation of God in Christ”—half God, half man.

Deity is a triune God; the Virgin Mary is called the Mediatrix.

Jesus is God (instead of the Son of God, a separate entity).

The Pope’s titles include Holy Father, His Holiness, Most Reverend, and Very Reverend.

The Scriptures

“Giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; . . . commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. 4:1,3; cf. Rom. 14:6).

“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (Rom. 14:5).

“And as [the Apostle] Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man” (Acts 10:25,26).

Papal Practices

For ages past, fish was to be eaten in lieu of meat on Friday.

The calendar is filled with holy days of papal appointment.

The Pope accepts the adulation and worship of the people. Cardinals, upon receipt of their red hats, render abject submission, oftentimes kissing the Pope’s right toe.

The Second Plague

Verse 3:

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.

The “sea” of verse 3 is the *same* as the “earth” of verse 2; the earth is not one class of professed churchianity and the sea another. Subsequent plagues mention “rivers and fountains of waters,” the “sun,” the “seat of the beast,” the “great river Euphrates,” and the “air.” *All* of these symbols represent Christendom, but instead of the plagues being of repetitive likeness, the pictures vary—perhaps also to add to the difficulty of the interpretation.

The second plague was the second volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, entitled *The Time Is at Hand*, written in 1889. In the narration of the pouring of the plagues, no clue is furnished as to the substance or purport of the message itself, or as to the material content or detailed composition of each plague, except that all in one way or another are expressions of Jehovah’s displeasure over the improper stewardship of those who claim to be His representatives before men yet misrepresent His purposes and malign His character—or His displeasure over those *who remain in association with such*.

The sea “became as the blood of a dead man.” Down through history in times of great carnage involving horrendous bloodshed, there has been the characteristic sickeningly sweet odor of fresh blood. However, the untreated blood of a dead man quickly develops a stench. For this reason and for health reasons, embalming is compulsory today (unless of course the deceased person is a Jew and is buried the same day he dies). Embalming is the practice of draining the blood out of the body

and replacing it with embalming fluid, such as formaldehyde, which is a sweet-odor preservative. When the account states that the sea “became as the blood of a dead man,” both the gruesome color and the odor of blood are involved.

The expression “every living soul” refers to those who, in God’s sight, possess the *potential* to make their calling and election sure in their quest for the crown of life promised to those who love the Lord supremely. Thus “every living soul” refers to the worthwhile ones, the rooftop saints, who are taken out of the system by the message of truth. They might have been earnest Sunday school teachers or humble, energetic workers who formerly gave physical, mental, moral, and financial support to the nominal Church systems. These die to their former alliance and are baptized into Christ’s death, arising to walk in newness of life elsewhere. Former associates who see them leave the sectarian sea of fellowship consider the truth a terrible thing, a calamity, a plague.

The Israelites in the type are a good illustration. Under the conditions of bondage and drudgery that preceded the Exodus, their lives seemed unbearable. Thus, when the plagues befell the Egyptians, the Israelites rejoiced in their realization that God was working on their behalf. From the perspective of churchianity, the first plague produced grievous sores upon those who had the mark of the beast and who worshipped its image; now their sea became contaminated with putrefied blood.

The Third Plague

Verse 4:

And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

Verse 5:

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.

Verse 6:

For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

The third plague was the third volume of the *Studies in the Scriptures* series, titled *Thy Kingdom Come*, written in 1890. This volume traces, among other things, the prophetic and historical workings of Antichrist in shedding the blood of saints and prophets. Since the “rivers and fountains of waters” depict sources of water and not cisterns, lakes, or ocean beds, in which water is collected and stored, it should not, of necessity, be concluded that the third plague was specially directed against Jesuits, theological seminarians, preachers, or Sunday school teachers. All the plagues affect the same religious system as a *whole*. The various symbols are different ways of indicating the same basic lesson while avoiding unnecessary repetition. Due to a paucity of clues in the content or ingredients of each plague vial, only minimal information can be gleaned based upon the effects or language employed.

Usually wherever a river goes, verdure, vegetation, and life are associated with it—the river fructifies the land. The waters of the text being considered are meant to

be thought of as a supply of running water for drinking (verse 6b). A spring is associated with life as Jesus, in a higher sense, informed the woman of Samaria (John 4:13,14). The poet has aptly expressed:

Traverse the desert, and then you can tell
 What treasures exist in the cold, deep well.
 And then you may learn what water is worth.
 The gnawing of hunger's worm is past,
 While fiery thirst lives on to the last.
 The hot blood stands in each gloomy eye,
 And "Water, O God" is the only cry.

Let heaven this one rich gift withhold,
 How soon we find it better than gold.⁵

In the second plague the contaminated sea was likened to the blood of a *dead man*, which soon after death separates into two component parts: the serum and the clot. The clot darkens and sends out a stench of stagnation and death. In the third plague the situation appears to be a continuous flow of *live blood* with a sickeningly sweet stench. Instead of fresh running water, clear and refreshing to the taste, the supply is now red with blood and hence is repulsive and obnoxious—not fit for *drinking*, cooking, or laundering. This condition is reminiscent of how “all the water . . . in the Nile turned to blood . . . so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile” (Exod. 7:20,21 RSV).

The “angel of the waters” (verse 5) is heard to testify that the Eternal God has ever witnessed and been cognizant of—He has not forgotten—the misdeeds of centuries past. Furthermore, the angel, or message, declares it most fitting and worthy of God that He inflict retribution in part for the misdeeds of the present. The persecutors should be given blood to drink as retribution for the blood they shed of the saints in general and of the spokesmen or representatives of these holy ones.

Verse 7:

And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

The Great Pyramid

The Sinaitic manuscript omits the phrase “another out of,” rendering the passage thus: “And I heard the altar *saying*, Even so, Lord God Almighty. . . .” It is as though another voice *immediately* assents to the testimony of verse 6.

A remarkable, additional confirmation of the same theme, although of a different nature, is contained in a separate section of the third volume, *Thy Kingdom Come*. Appended as Chapter 10, the section is entitled “The Corroborative Testimony of God’s Stone Witness and Prophet, the Great Pyramid in Egypt.” The altar that speaks in verse 7 is neither the brazen altar in the Court nor the golden incense altar in the Holy of either the Tabernacle or the Temple ceremonial worship. This verse

5. “The Satisfying Water of Life,” *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Jan. 15, 1905), pp. 30–31.

refers to the Great Pyramid: “In that day shall there be an *altar* to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a *pillar* at the border thereof to the LORD. And it shall be for a *sign* and for a *witness* unto the *LORD of hosts* [cf. ‘*Lord God Almighty*’ in verse 7] in the land of Egypt: for they [a type of the oppressed spiritual Israelites] shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors” (Isa. 19:19,20).

The teaching of the Great Pyramid, particularly the symbolisms of its lower passage system, is in full accord with the testimony of the third plague angel. The Great Pyramid is by no means an addition to the written revelation, for that revelation is complete and perfect and needs no addition. But it is a strong *corroborative witness* of God’s plan and is stated as such by the Prophet Isaiah. The context shows that in a prophetic sense it shall be a witness *in the day* when the great Saviour and Deliverer comes to set at liberty sin’s captives.

The Fourth Plague

Verse 8:

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

Verse 9:

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.

The fourth plague-bearing angel represents the message of the fourth volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, entitled *The Day of Vengeance or The Battle of Armageddon*, written in 1897. As soon as it was published, the volume was sent free to all clergy whose names could be obtained. The clergy are taught, and teach others, that they are important luminaries in the heavens, rivaling in brilliancy and wisdom the Lord himself, whose place they take in the minds of the people by setting forth their own views on every subject rather than God’s Word. Repercussions burst forth like a storm soon after the fourth volume was published.

The word “men” is prefaced by the Greek article in verses 8 and 9. The thought is “the men,” that is, the worshippers of the beast and its image (verse 2). The professed Christian Church comes into prominence for criticism, and the scrutinizing gaze of the public is turned upon her. Her claim to uphold the standard of doctrine, the Bible, is found in disparity with the easy-to-understand gospel of Jesus Christ. Her inconsistent teachings and her conflicting and, in many respects, absurd creeds, particularly the blasphemous God-dishonoring doctrine of literal hellfire and eternal torment, are examined and found to be no longer held in the rigorous esteem of the Dark Ages.

Those who dwell under the very rays of the doctrinal light of their own church (the tenets and practices now under investigation), those who continue to adhere to church dogma, and those who refuse to acknowledge their guilt by continued association—all such are made to experience a “great [*twofold*] heat” (the added fourth plague) of excruciating embarrassment, not to mention God’s displeasure in their action—or their lack of action.

The statement “they repented not to give him glory” indicates that their agony of mind and conscience would cease if a manifestation of remorse and true repentance were followed by a baptism into Christ’s death and the acceptance of Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour. They would die to their former erroneous beliefs and practices.

The Fifth Plague

Verse 10:

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,

Verse 11:

And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

The angel bearing the fifth plague message is the fifth volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, entitled *The Atonement Between God and Man*, published in 1899. This plague is poured out upon the “seat of the beast,” a term that ordinarily refers to the source or location of the throne of the beast, that is, Rome. From another perspective the seat of the beast can be viewed as the chair or doctrinal basis of its authority. In this latter sense the message of the plague strikes at the very root of papal doctrine, which, in large part, is based upon the mystery(?) of the Trinity and the attendant confusion that doctrine spawns.

The message of truth in the fifth volume reveals the Author of atonement as God, its Mediator as Jesus Christ, and its channel as the Holy Spirit—the three being separate but harmonious in operation. The message also shows the necessity and the reasonableness of the “ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:6) as the only basis of atonement versus the nebulosity of the orthodox(?) Trinitarian doctrine. Among the topics treated in depth are the doctrine of the Trinity; who God, the Author of the divine plan, is; who the Son is; what the Holy Spirit is; the meaning of “soul” in both the Hebrew and the Greek; the condition of the dead; the unscriptural Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary; and the true nature of the Ransom (what was atoned for and why, how it was effected, who will benefit from it, and so forth).

The truth comes in like a searchlight, penetrating the basic doctrines of Papacy and exposing them as foundationless. In other words, the truth reveals that all such doctrines are empty and “full of darkness.” The reaction shown is “they gnawed their tongues for pain.” The clergy had great difficulty defending these doctrines; as a result, they felt perhaps it was better to remain silent than to give the opposition undue publicity. Suffering chagrin and humiliation, both clergy and parishioners were tormented by these issues. They wished to defend their doctrines but held back (“gnawed their tongues”) for fear of getting into more trouble.

Verse 11 informs the reader they “blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and [they] repented not.” What is the difference between “pains” and “sores”? Generally pain is sharp and of short duration, and usually it

will subside or can be relieved. A sore is a more chronic source of irritation that flares up with suddenness and with seemingly repetitive constancy upon accidental(?) contact with some foreign body. Spiritually speaking, a person in the nominal system may be bothered by his conscience if he knows that a certain practice or doctrine is not right—that it is not in harmony with the Bible or good morals—and yet he lives with it, even though it is a constant source of irritation. Especially if the matter is brought to light and aired or broached, he is continually and painfully reminded of the condition—as if the “grievous sore” (verse 2) is once again aggravated. However, these conditions can be healed and actually be beneficial if the person is rightly exercised thereby. But if one does not repent, if one is not goaded into action, if one does not separate or disassociate from the evil, that person or individual gets hardened and does one of two things. Either he lives with the condition, proportionately marring his character, or, worse yet, his conscience gets so seared—he gets so incorrigible in the sin—that the condition begins to lose its former irritating effect.

“[They] repented not of their deeds.” It is like the case of Pharaoh and the Egyptian people. Because Pharaoh’s misgivings were only temporary, the institution of another plague was found necessary.

“And [they] blasphemed the God of heaven.” The message is addressed primarily to those who *profess* to be Christians. The seven vials are poured on the earth, the sea, the rivers, etc., of *Christendom*. They are poured on the *believing* world, on those who perceive themselves to be true Christians. If, after enlightenment of unholy conditions, of uncorrected practices, and of blasphemous doctrines that malign the name or character of God, they continue to remain within the institution, they become partakers of the evil (Exod. 20:7; James 4:4).

The Sixth Plague

Verse 12:

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.

This sixth plague message is the sixth volume of the *Studies in the Scriptures* series, titled *The New Creation* and published in 1904. Before this plague can be adequately explained, it is necessary to review the ancient historical event upon which the symbolism of this verse is predicated.

Historical Babylon

Ancient Babylon was a city of impressive proportions and grandeur. According to Diodorus, Queen Semiramis employed two million workmen, collected from all parts of her dominion, in just one building of the city. Herodotus states that the city, built in the form of a large square nearly 14 miles long on each side, stood on *both sides of the Euphrates River*. The protective wall of the city was 56 to 60 miles long; it had an extraordinary height of 300 feet (cf. Jer. 51:53) and was 75 feet thick—wide enough to be the scene of chariot races. In addition, the wall was furnished with 100 brazen gates, 25 on each side. To further fortify the city, iron gates extended to a considerable depth beneath the waters of the Euphrates where the

river entered and exited the city. Thus, to the inhabitants of the city, Babylon appeared impregnable to attack by an enemy.

Babylon's Etymology

In earliest antiquity the city of Babylon was associated with the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:4,9) and with the infamous mighty hunter Nimrod (Gen. 10:8–10). The name *Babel*, hence *Babylon*, is really the Assyrian *Bab-ili*, meaning the “gate of God.” But due to irreligious circumstance the city has become more widely known and viewed in an unfavorable light; its derivation is fittingly associated with the Hebrew *balbel*, signifying “to confound,” and the city is therefore to be considered the “gate to confusion.” Babylon, a symbol of nominal Christendom, claims to hold the key of knowledge of things pertaining to God, but in reality it is filled with confusion of doctrine and jangling creeds.

Babylon's Capture

In planning for an invasion of the city, King Cyrus caused an existing canal fed by the Euphrates to be cleared of debris, enlarged, and deepened so that the river could be diverted from its normal channel. The canal, which ran west of the city, rejoined the main body of water downstream to the east, apart from the city. Babylon's defenders, unaware of the stratagem, were thoroughly confident of their security from harm in spite of the ominous siege all about the city. After much labor and preparation, the forces of Cyrus were finally about to be crowned with success, having achieved the capability of suddenly turning aside the waters. At the most propitious moment and under cover of darkness, the river level was drastically reduced so that in a few hours, the army was able to march along the emptied riverbed and pass underneath the brazen water gates right into the heart of the city (Isa. 44:27,28; Jer. 50:38; 51:36). Phillips Modern English aptly expresses verse 12: “Then the sixth angel emptied his bowl upon the great river Euphrates. The waters of that river were dried up to prepare a road for the kings from the east.”

Daniel 5:31 states that Darius the Mede “took the kingdom” (“received the kingdom” from God⁶—cf. Dan. 2:37). In the consolidated Medo-Persian Empire and its coregency at that moment in time, Darius the Mede (Hystaspis[?], the father of Darius the Great) was superior to Cyrus, although Cyrus was apparently the general of the combined armed forces of the empire.⁷ Cyrus, in turn, appointed Gobryas, a captain in the army, to make the actual entry into the city to execute carnage and

6. A. Cohen, ed., *Soncino Books of the Bible: Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah*, commentary by Judah J. Slotki (London: Soncino Press, 1951), p. 46.

7. Most authorities surmise that Darius was under the sovereignty of Cyrus, but the matter seems quite clearly to be the reverse, as indicated in the following passages:

Dan. 5:28—“Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the *Medes* and Persians.”

Dan. 6:8,15—The expression “the law of the *Medes* and Persians” should not be considered a mere alphabetical deference in a supposed equal coregency.

Dan. 11:1—“Also I in the first year of *Darius the Mede* . . .” No mention is made of Cyrus.

Isa. 13:17—“I [the Lord] will stir up the *Medes* against them.”

Isa. 21:2—“Go up, O Elam: besiege, O *Media*.”

Jer. 51:11—“The LORD hath raised up the spirit of the *kings of the Medes*: for his device is against Babylon.”

Jer. 51:28—“Prepare against her [Babylon] the nations with the *kings of the Medes*.” There is no mention of Persia.

destruction (Jer. 50:29,30). When Cyrus became sole regent two years later, he officially entered the city amidst shouts of acclamation and made his famed proclamation of liberty to those formerly held captive throughout the empire. On the eighth day after Cyrus entered in person, he appointed Gobryas as the governor in Daniel's stead(?), and on that very day Nabonidus died.

Cyrus and Darius

Part of verse 12 in *The Emphatic Diaglott* reads, "The way of those kings who are from the Sun-rising." The name Cyrus (Khoresh or Cheres) signifies the "Sun." The name Darius, of uncertain etymology, appears to signify the "white Lord" or the "pure one." Since the invasion of Babylon by Cyrus and his army is clearly alluded to in verse 12, and since Isaiah 44:28 through 45:4 speaks in an accommodated sense of King Cyrus as Jehovah's servant and as His messiah, it is reasonable to conjecture that in the Old Testament account Darius represents God and Cyrus typifies Jesus as both the *Sun* and the *Son* in the future Kingdom of God; the remaining "kings of the east" picture those associated with Christ as his glorified Church and body members.

In the type of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, the east gate into the Court represents the way of sacrifice in this age for those who hope for glory, honor, and immortality (Rom. 2:7). Jesus is represented as the way (the east gate entry); the truth (the veil, or east door into the Holy); and the life (the second veil, or east entry into the Most Holy). Those who, in God's sight, prove to be more-than-overcomers will become part of the "Sun" spoken of by the prophets Daniel and Malachi and the Master himself: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament [*sun*]" (Dan. 12:3). "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the *sun* in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). "Unto you that fear my name shall the *Sun* of righteousness arise with healing in his wings [beams]" (Mal. 4:2).

Mystic Babylon

The waters of the *symbolic* river Euphrates, which the *mystic* city of Babylon straddles, in a more particular sense represent the mental, moral, financial, and material support given to orthodox religion—Catholicism and Protestantism—by its sympathizers.

The inhabitants of the besieged city of literal Babylon were unaware of the planned strategy of Cyrus. Three stages of the secret operation were essential to its

Dan. 6:28—"So this Daniel prospered *in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*"
Darius and Cyrus had separate reigns.

Dan. 1:21—"And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus."

Dan. 8:3,20—"Behold, there stood before the river [Ulai] a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one [the Persian horn] was higher than the other, and the higher [one of the two] came up [rose higher] *last* [that is, later]. . . . The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of *Media* and *Persia.*"

Dan. 9:1—"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the *Medes*, which was made [by God—cf. Dan. 2:37] king over the realm of the Chaldeans."

Dan. 6:1—"It pleased Darius [the *Mede*] to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the *whole kingdom.*"

Dan. 6:25,26—"Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, *that dwell in all the earth.* . . . I make a decree, That in every dominion of *my kingdom* men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel."

successful conclusion: (1) the long and arduous *preliminary* work of digging and clearing the canal, (2) turning the main stream into the new channel in a relatively short period of time, and (3) the actual entry into the city in but a moment of time.

The time interval of the sixth-vial activity and its antitypical fulfillment embraces the first two stages of the progress report in the previous paragraph. The first stage has been and is currently taking place. The second stage, yet future, corresponds to the dividing of the waters of Jordan by Elijah in another type (2 Kings 2:1–11). The last stage will be the entry into the city through the emptied riverbed of the Euphrates when “the water thereof . . . [is] dried up” (verse 12); this event of the drying up of the water concludes the sixth-vial pouring and also corresponds to Elijah’s and Elisha’s crossing Jordan dry-shod (2 Kings 2:8). The march of Cyrus’s army down the riverbed *outside* the city is the closing feature of the sixth plague; the entry *into* the city is the introduction of the seventh plague. In other words, the sixth plague is the *preparation* phase; the seventh is the *entry* and *final* phase.

This accounts for the considerable lapse of time from the initial pouring of the sixth vial in 1904, long since forgotten, up to the present. The Cyrus episode also helps to explain the seemingly innocuous results (but in reality very effective in the long term) during the greater part of this time interval; that is, until the symbolic riverbed is “dried up.” It also explains Christendom’s apathy and lack of awareness of its mortal danger and impending doom . . . until rudely awakened by the startling events of the near future. Poor world! If they only knew these foreboding occurrences are the death throes of an old order that will usher in the glorious reign of Messiah’s Kingdom!

Summary of Six Plagues

The first plague presents the kingdoms of this world in their true light from God’s perspective as *bestly* governments and as *miry clay* (Dan. 7:2–8; 2:43). The second and third plagues deal with the fulfillment of prophecy, indicating the historical misdeeds of Papacy in the past. The fourth plague—its very title *The Day of Vengeance*, as well as its contents—is offensive to those who are not mourners in Zion (Isa. 61:3). The fifth plague, *The Atonement Between God and Man*, exposes the very roots and strikes at the foundation of the false creeds and concepts of nominal churchianity. The sixth plague is different from all the foregoing in that it is particularly slanted to benefit only those thoroughly dedicated to Christ and the *instruction of God’s Word*. Its contents depict the New Creation’s spiritual call; their order and discipline; their law and baptism; and their marital, parental, and other sundry obligations. Only in the long term and in an indirect fashion does the sixth plague have damaging and telling effects upon the false concepts of an effete, decadent religious order.

Verse 13:

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.

Verse 14:

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.

Verse 15:

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Verse 16:

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

Symbols Represent Principles, Not Individuals

All Christian people credit the Book of Revelation to the Lord Jesus Christ, as St. John does (Rev. 1:1). Therefore, humans are not responsible for the symbolisms used in this book. There are so many ways of being misunderstood, even by good Christian people, that one naturally feels a delicacy about expressing certain views. It is here stated emphatically that *nothing whatever is intended against godly Christians* anywhere, at any time, whether in any church or out of any church. The ensuing discussion involves principles and doctrines, not individuals. God commissions His people to discuss *His Word*, and that Word conveys a terrible arraignment of some of the great systems of the present time—systems long revered and esteemed that contain many who are godly in word and in deed. A clear distinction is to be made between such *individuals* and the *systems* in which they are found.

Agencies Mustering the Hosts

The scene of verses 13 to 16, with its symbolisms, resumes the prophetic narrative of Chapter 13, which pertained to four primary symbolisms: the dragon, the beast, the two-horned beast, and the image of the beast. But in Chapter 16 these four symbols are reduced to three—the union of the two-horned beast and the image of the beast being comprehended under a new symbolism: the false prophet. The dragon represents the purely civil power. Protestant interpreters (until recently) have long generally agreed that the “beast . . . like unto a leopard” (Rev. 13:2) represents the Papacy (also called the “man of sin”). But few indeed, it is feared, are ready to support the view here put forth that federated Protestantism is styled the “false prophet.”

Three Unclean Spirits Like Frogs

The Apostle John, typifying the Lord’s tarrying saints at the end of the age, whose eyes are anointed with the eye salve of understanding, saw an unclean spirit come forth out of the mouth of each of the three symbolic beings mentioned in verse 13 (the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet). All three unclean spirits resembled “frogs,” and presumably they were alike in other respects too. For John to describe them as “spirits,” they must have lacked substance or solidity of form, appearing ethereal in nature. He also possibly noted that an exterior fungus, slime, or mud was associated with this manifestation, thereby prompting him to describe them as “unclean spirits.” Even more important, John identified them as demoniac

in origin: “they are the spirits of devils” (verse 14). This analogy was further confirmed when John saw various supernatural “miracles” performed at their behest—miracles that he does not specify and perhaps was not authorized to disclose. But it appears that these unclean spirits were related to Revelation 13:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:9–11; and Matthew 24:24.

In this scene the unclean froglike spirits represent a prevailing false doctrine of satanic origin, diabolically clever and temporarily successful in gaining popular worldwide support. Sometimes a slang expression is used to describe a person who cannot be trusted in his dealings with others; viz., a “slimy” individual, one who is chronically evil and habitually devious and underhanded. When the Holy Spirit uses a frog to represent certain doctrines or teachings, one can be assured the application will fit well.

A frog has a very wise look even though it does not know much. Although but a small creature, a frog puffs itself up until it almost bursts with the effort to be somebody. And a frog *croaks* whenever it utters a sound. The three most prominent characteristics of a frog, then, are pomposity, an air of superior wisdom and knowledge, and a continual croaking.

When these characteristics are applied to the picture given in the Divine Word, the prophetic lesson is that the civil power, Papacy, and the federation of Protestant churches (such as the World Council of Churches) will send forth the same message from the pulpit, over the air waves, and in the news media. The spirit will be boastful, and an air of superior knowledge and wisdom will be assumed. All three agencies will foretell dire results to follow any failure to obey their commands or any resistance to ecumenism or their decrees as to what is best for the community at large. However conflicting the opinions and the creeds, the differences will be ignored in the general proposition that nothing ancient or time-honored must be disturbed, investigated, or repudiated.

Political parties will unitedly declare, “If any change should come, it would mean disaster!” “Stand pat!” will be the order in Church and State, and the people will be moved by fear. This croaking of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet will arouse the kings of the earth (the leaders of the people) and figuratively gather them to “Armageddon.” The croaking will consist of dire warnings and the battle cry of alarm, yet not knowing, in reality, what to do, those doing the croaking will but hasten the nations onward to the battle of Armageddon. Any persons or teachings in conflict with these boastful and unscriptural claims will be branded as everything vile. The nobler sentiments of some will be strangled by the philosophy of the spirit that spoke through Caiaphas, the high priest, respecting the Lord Jesus Christ (John 11:50; 18:14). As Caiaphas declared it expedient to commit a crime in violation of justice, both human and divine, in order to be rid of Jesus, one individual, and his teachings, so the prevailing opinion will approve of and consider expedient, for self-protection, every violation of principle in order to be rid of the few dissenting feet members of the body of Christ.

According to prophecy, earth’s “kings” (verse 14) will unite. Ecclesiastical kings and princes, with their retinue of clergy and faithful adherents, will be gathered in solid phalanx—Protestant and Catholic. Political kings and princes, senators, and all

in high places, with their supporters, will fall in line on the same side. Financial kings and merchant princes, and all whom they can influence by the most gigantic power ever yet exercised in the world, will join with the others. However, God's side of that battle will be the people's side, and that very nondescript host, the people, will be considered the opposing force by earth's leaders. For a time, the majority of the poor and the middle class will prefer peace at almost any price. The masses have no sympathy for anarchy, for they truly realize that the worst form of government is better than no government at all. They therefore will be submissive at first.

Many noble people in this great army will assume an attitude contrary to their preference. For a while the wheels of liberty and progress will be turned backward, and medieval restraints will be considered necessary for self-preservation—for the maintenance of the present order of things and, unwittingly, for the prevention of the new order that God has decreed, the due time for which is at hand. Even those who may be God's people usually do not stop to consider whether it is His will that things should continue as they have been for the past six-thousand-plus years. The Bible says that such is not God's will, but that there is to be a great overturning and a new order is coming in.

For a brief time these combined forces of Armageddon will triumph. Free speech, free mails, and other liberties that have come to be the very breath of the masses will be ruthlessly shut off under the plea of *necessity*, the pretext of the glory of God, the commands of the nominal Church, etc. The safety valve will be sat upon, and thus the sound of escaping steam will cease to annoy earth's kings and all will seem to be serene—until the “*great earthquake*” takes place. In symbolic language an “earthquake” signifies social explosion, and Holy Writ declares that none like it ever before occurred (Rev. 16:18,19; Matt. 24:21).

Deliverance

The very thing the “kings” seek to avert by their union and federation will be the very thing they hasten. Other Scriptures assert that God, represented by Messiah, will be on the side of the masses. However, it must be stated in no uncertain terms that the *Lord's saints are not to be in this battle at all*. Although longing at heart for Messiah's Kingdom and the glorious year of Jubilee and restitution, which the Kingdom will inaugurate, true Christians must patiently and uncomplainingly abide the Lord's time.

At the very close of Armageddon will come “Jacob's trouble” in the Holy Land (Jer. 30:7). Then Messiah's Kingdom will begin to be manifested. Thenceforth, in the Land of Promise, Israel will rise from the ashes of the past to the grandeur of prophecy. Through divinely appointed princes, the Ancient Worthies (Hebrews 11; Psa. 45:16), the all-powerful but invisible Kingdom of Messiah will begin to roll away the curse of death and to uplift mankind. At last will be fulfilled the promise “in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:8).

“Behold, I Come as a Thief”

The thieflike presence of verse 15 should not be confused with the secret presence or *parousia* of the Lord, which began in October 1874. Verse 15 is an *admonition* interjected between the sixth and the seventh plagues. Double attention is called to this insertion in that it is also interposed—and very obviously so—between verses 14 and 16, interrupting the flow of thought within the sixth plague message itself. The placement of verse 15 before the already gathered forces of Armageddon at the field of battle—that is, immediately before the conflict begins—testifies that this coming as a thief is Jesus’ coming to steal Jehovah’s crown jewels from planet Earth (Mal. 3:16,17). God will spare this class “as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” They will not be spared from trial and persecution any more than Jesus was spared from crucifixion and death, but the jewel class are to be spared from Armageddon. Like Abraham, they will not experience what Lot and his family went through—the unnecessary lingering behind into the great Time of Trouble and anarchy. Such trouble would be sickening and discouraging to the righteously inclined as it was for righteous Lot, who was vexed with the conditions that existed in his day (Gen. 19:1–11; 2 Pet. 2:7,8).

Today’s society is already headed in a direction similar to that which existed in Sodom. Of all the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, only four were not wholly corrupt with perverted desires. Current public standards are rapidly deteriorating, so that whatever is pleasurable to the flesh is less and less considered sin. The Little Flock’s hour of temptation will be more along the line of doctrinal deception and persecution, for all but the Very Elect will be deceived. The world’s hour of temptation will follow, and it will be equal to and even surpass the conditions of evil that existed in Lot’s day and that prevailed immediate to the Flood in Noah’s day.

“Blessed Is He That Watcheth, and Keepeth His Garments”

The Lord warns his people to be specially alert along two lines: first, to be aware of, and have a prophetic interest in, *the times (Watch!)*; second, to be circumspect in personal conduct and morals (*Keep thy garments* lest thou “walk naked, and they [orthodoxy] see . . . [thy] shame”—verse 15). There seems to exist a peculiar relationship here, *fraught with danger*, that Jesus referred to in a parable concerning an individual (representing a class) found in the marriage guest-chamber who was not wearing a wedding garment (Matt. 22:11–14), and that parallels the Master’s betrayal by Judas in the Gethsemane garden (Matt. 26:47–50). The time setting of both incidents (as types) occurs at the very end of the age. Also, one is reminded of the Apostle Peter’s admonition: “Seeing then that all these things [the present evil society or world order] shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [conduct] and godliness” (2 Pet. 3:11).

Another point is worthy of notice. The sudden intrusion of verse 15 into the flow of the narrative bespeaks the imminency of the “marriage of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:7).

Gathering to a Place Called Armageddon

Armageddon is a Hebrew word signifying “Hill of Megiddo” or “Mount of Destruction.” Megiddo occupied a very marked position on the southern edge of the Plain of Esdraelon and commanded an important pass into the hill country; the Plain

of Esdraelon embraced Jezreel and Mount Gilboa. The great battleground of Palestine, this locality was the scene of many famous battles in Old Testament history. There Gideon and his little band alarmed and discomfited the Midianites, who destroyed one another in their flight (Judg. 7:19–23). There King Saul was defeated by the Philistines (1 Sam. 31:1–6). There King Josiah was slain by Pharaoh-Necho in one of the most disastrous conflicts in the history of Israel (2 Chron. 35:22–24). There also King Ahab and his wife Jezebel lived, in the city of Jezreel, where Jezebel afterwards met a horrible death (2 Kings 9:30–37).

These battles were in a sense typical. The defeat of the Midianites released the people of Israel from bondage to Midian; thus Gideon and his band typified the Lord and the Church, who are to release mankind from their bondage to sin and death. The death of King Saul (the Papacy) and the overthrow of his kingdom by the Philistines (the unruly masses) opened the way for the reign of David, who typified Messiah. King Josiah typified Protestantism. King Ahab typified civil government, symbolically called the “dragon” in Revelation. Queen Jezebel symbolically foreshadowed the great harlot, Babylon, and as such she is mentioned by name: “Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants” (Rev. 2:20).

In the Scriptures the Lord associates the name of this famous battlefield, Armageddon, with the great controversy at the end of the Gospel Age between truth and error, right and wrong, and God and mammon. The “place called . . . Armageddon” (verse 16) refers not to a literal arena but to the *figurative site* on which the “battle of that great day of God Almighty” (verse 14) is soon to occur.⁸

The Prophet Micaiah

This coming concerted action is a reminder of the Micaiah account in 2 Chronicles 18. Micaiah was put in prison just like John the Baptist, another type. The direct tie-in between the experience of Micaiah and Revelation 16:13–16 is strikingly powerful but too complex to explain here in depth. The details will be more readily observed as they approach fulfillment in the not-too-distant future.

Simply stated, the Micaiah account records that the kings of Israel and Judah considered whether to join forces and enter battle against a common enemy, the king of Syria. Prior to battle the kings of Israel and Judah sought reassurance and counsel from four hundred false prophets of Jezebel, all of whom, under the leadership of Zedekiah the prophet, the son of Chenaanah, encouraged King Ahab to attack the Syrians at Ramoth-gilead. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, then asked, “Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?” King Ahab responded that, yes, there was one more prophet, Micaiah, but complained that that prophet never had anything good to say about the king. Evidently, when inquiry was made of Micaiah, his attitude was one of humorous *sarcasm* and a cynical parroting of the very words the four hundred false prophets had used: “Go up to

8. Some of the preceding thoughts on Armageddon have been liberally extracted from the Laodicean messenger’s second foreword to the fourth volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, published in 1913, and from a sermon delivered on September 27, 1914, by Charles T. Russell entitled “Forces Mustering for Armageddon” (see *Pastor Russell’s Sermons* [Brooklyn, N.Y.: Peoples Pulpit Association, 1917], pp. 232–239).

Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.” King Ahab realized Micaiah intended this reply to be known as false approval. In effect Micaiah was saying, “Go ahead and take the advice of the others since you are so headstrong and determined to do your own will anyway.”

Micaiah followed up with the narration of two visions, the second of which was as follows: “Hear the word of the LORD; I saw the LORD sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall entice Ahab . . . that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one spake . . . after this manner, and another . . . after that manner. Then there came out a *spirit*, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will entice him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the LORD said, Thou shalt entice him [Ahab], and . . . also prevail: go out, and do even so. Now therefore [Micaiah is speaking], behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of [all] these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil against thee.” In spite of these remarks by the Lord’s true prophet, both kings went forth to the disastrous conflict.

The lying spirits in the mouths of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet (verse 13) will lead these systems to the battle of Armageddon, to the “battle of that great day of God Almighty” (verse 14). Only the Micaiah class will stand in notable opposition. In an effort to warp the judgment of these last ones, the religious and civil leaders will call attention to the wholesale consensus of opinion of those in sympathy with the ecumenical sophistry, and they will urge the faithful not to be dissenters. The attitude of Christians should always be as Micaiah’s: “What[ever] my God saith, that will I speak” (2 Chron. 18:13).

King Jehoshaphat’s being in league with King Ahab during the decision-making process furnishes the backdrop to another Old Testament prophecy that describes the setting for the future great battle as the “valley of *Jehoshaphat*”; all nations will be gathered to this figurative location, also described as the “valley of decision” (Joel 3:2,12,14). A decision is to be made: whether or not to go to battle. The decision will be in the affirmative, resulting in defeat.

The Authorized King James Version translates verse 16, “And *he* [that is, God] gathered them together” to Armageddon, whereas the Sinaitic renders this passage, “And *they* [that is, the three spirits] gathered them [the unholy triumvirate] together.” Which is the correct view? The Sinaitic version is preferable, although to some extent both thoughts are true if the Micaiah account is carefully analyzed.

In no sense did God actually speak through the medium of the false prophet, Zedekiah, in the deception to go forth to battle. From beginning to end the divinely inspired allegory narrated by the true prophet, Micaiah, was not in the least deceptive in itself, for the prophet clearly intended to continue speaking—to get the message straight—but in a manner familiar to those acquainted with the ways of the Orient.

It is quite possible, therefore, that prior to the fulfillment of Revelation Chapter 17, warning will be given of the dire results of going to battle, but regardless of admonition such a course will be pursued.

The Seventh Plague

Verse 17:

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.

Verse 18:

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.

The seventh-plague angel message, yet to be poured, will be introduced into the *air* of the ecclesiastical realm. The prior plagues were poured on the ground, the sea, the rivers, the sun, etc.; but of all the elements affected, the one most essential to human life (from a natural standpoint) and all pervasive—in both the short and the long term and in whatever clime or condition one exists—is the air, or atmosphere. Perhaps the atmosphere is also chosen last to suggest the possibility of the message being *aired* in the news or television media. Divine Providence may cause the message to receive widespread publicity in this manner.

The “great voice” John heard coming forth from the temple in heaven, from the throne, is God’s voice. It comes forth from the antitypical throne room, or Most Holy compartment common to both the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon. The booming pronouncement is made: “It is done”! But what is done?

First: The expression emphatically acknowledges that the last of the seven vials of the wrath of God, which He had so sternly commanded to be poured upon the earth (verse 1) and had so long awaited, has finally reached accomplishment—AT LAST! Now the wheels of God’s chariot could move forward to demolish the old order and usher in the “Thy kingdom come” of the Lord’s Prayer—a fulfillment the saints have long yearned for.

Second: Being uttered subsequent to the pouring of the seventh vial, the statement “It is done” is a reminder of Christ’s dying words on the Cross of Calvary, when he said (John 19:30), “It is finished”! The time frame of the statement “It is done” and other Scriptures indicate that the events and experiences of the last week of Jesus’ earthly ministry are a parallel to those which will befall the feet members.

The next verse (verse 18) is strikingly reminiscent of some of the events that occurred in connection with Jesus’ agony on the Cross. These events include the darkness that came upon the land in Jesus’ last hours and at the actual time of his death; the earthquake that rent rocks, opened graves, and tore in twain the veil of Herod’s Temple; and possibly also a violent thunderstorm.

The Roman centurion standing guard on Calvary observed some of these events and the strange coincidence of time in juxtaposition with Jesus’ agony and death, for the very God of all nature seemed to be venting His open displeasure in an unparalleled public display of wonders because of the death of the Just One. Likewise, when the heel members of the body of Christ decessate, a darkening over all the earth will forebode ominous conditions to follow. There will be “voices” (*universal* tumultuous, internal, vocal controversy), “thunders” (*universal* acts of violence,

sabotage, and explosive social changes as in the French Revolution), “lightnings” (*universal* public displays of mass disapproval of all governmental authority, accompanied by anarchistic graffiti, vandalism, and arson), and a “great earthquake” (an unprecedented complete overthrow of all law and order).

Jesus will not cast the censer of coals (Rev. 8:5) into the earth until *all* the prayers of The Christ, Head and body members, have ascended on high. The true Church has to be complete and changed from the flesh condition to the spirit condition above *before* the real Time of Trouble can occur. Not until the journeying Ark enters its haven of rest in the Most Holy (Rev. 11:19), not until the seven plagues are poured, will come the “voices, and thunders, and lightnings” and a “great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth” (cf. Matt. 24:21). “When they shall say, Peace and safety; then *sudden* destruction cometh upon them” (1 Thess. 5:3).

The following is a comparison from the Codex Sinaiticus:

Rev. 8:5	Rev. 11:19	Rev. 16:18,21
Thunderings	Lightnings	Thunders
Voices	Voices	Lightnings
Lightnings	Thunderings	Voices
Earthquake	Earthquake	Earthquake
	Hail	Hail

The Holy Spirit thus indicates that as far as the “voices,” “lightnings,” and “thunder[ing]s” are concerned, no particular sequence is followed. Therefore, the initial three indicators of each column are to be considered more or less contemporaneous. There is an exception with the last two events, however, for the “earthquake” and the “hail” do follow as a *concluding sequence* of the fivefold descriptive symbols (the same holds true in the King James Version).

Verse 19:

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.

The literal kingdom of Babylon was composed of three parts: (1) the city or capital, (2) the nation, and (3) the empire. All three were called Babylon but from different standpoints. The composite whole was the empire. In a spiritual sense (1) the capital represents Papacy, (2) the province or nation represents Papacy and Protestantism, and (3) the empire corresponds to Papacy, Protestantism, and the civil power. The empire, called the “great city” (verse 19), corresponds to Christendom—the whole ecclesiastical-civil arrangement. Thus it can be seen that the three parts originally were the unholy three, or triumvirate, of verse 13: the beast, the false prophet, and the dragon.

The clause “and the *cities* of the nations fell” should more properly be rendered “and the *city* [Sinaitic manuscript] of the nations fell.” Even though for a time the coalition of international forces will seem successful, it will be short-lived; again for

the sake of expediency, the beast, the false prophet, and the dragon will each seek to remove itself from the former, but now unpopular, association. The separation will expose the mystical center or capital of Babylon, in a particular sense, to the wrath of discontents.

“Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his [God’s] wrath.” For centuries the Church of Rome has maligned and abused those she considered heretics, some of whom were the Lord’s true saints (Rev. 16:6). In the past the Lord remained silent while the evil deeds and pretensions of the false Church kept mounting higher and higher . . . but at this point they will intrude into His very presence, as it were, demanding judgment and retribution. In this retribution setting the “cup” is a reminder of the type where Belshazzar, king of Babylon, made sport of the Lord’s vessels, bringing matters to a climax at the very hour of the city’s fall.

Verse 20:

And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

The thought is that *all kinds* of government will perish. In this picture two kinds are contrasted: islands and mountains. The “mountains” would be the stronger internally structured, more autocratic style of rulerships, while the “islands” would represent the weaker-structured parliamentary or democratic forms of government. All shall fall, giving way to the Lord’s own Kingdom, which will be the “desire of all nations” though now unperceived as such (Hag. 2:7).

Not only is there the emphasis that all kinds of government will topple, but the words “fled away” and “not found” stress a complete removal, not just a melting away. This verse does not pertain to the Nazi, the Fascist, or the Russian Revolution, nor does it refer to socialism; it indicates complete anarchy, a time when there will be *no* government at all, for the abiding Kingdom of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is to be built upon the ruins of the anarchy (Dan. 2:44). This Time of Trouble (verse 20) is related to Babylon’s fall (verse 19) because she has been a bulwark or stay to the whole system. Shortly after Babylon falls, the governments will likewise cease to exist. The seventh plague will bring about Babylon’s fall, which in turn will result in the collapse of the governments.

Samson and the Temple of Dagon

The story of Samson, in regard to the destruction of the Temple of Dagon (a typical representation of mystical Babylon), illustrates how the religious systems uphold the social and civil order. When Samson pulled down the pillars, the religious structure fell, killing the Philistine leadership, or lords, and many others (Judg. 16:21–30). The destruction of the house of worship precipitated the downfall of the Philistine nation, which had harassed the Jewish nation for many years. The two pillars, upon which the temple rested, represent Papacy and Protestantism, and sightless Samson portrays the blinded masses. As Delilah lulled Samson to sleep in her lap, so Roman Catholicism has kept the people in ignorance of the whole Word of God and made them captive to her will (Judg. 16:19–21).

It is purported that Karl Marx spoke of religion as “the opiate of the people.” Although, of course, the nominal religious systems did not have the evil intent he

ascribed to them, there is, nevertheless, considerable truth in his statement that religious devotees have been drugged in some instances with erroneous concepts of right and wrong. The masses have been lulled into a religious stupor to believe that the present order is of God—in the sense that He *sanctions* it as His representative. For example, until recently “In God we trust” appeared for decades on coins, but is this true? The title “Christendom” (Christ’s Kingdom) is misleading. The educational system has so badly influenced the populace and changed public opinion that many question why they ever accepted religion and its mores in the first place. “Who instructs us about morals, and who sets the standard by which we live?” they ask. Leaders of orthodoxy have long taught God as the author of literal hellfire and eternal torment to those who do not accept their interpretation of the Word of God, so grossly misrepresented (Jer. 19:5; 32:35). Today the public’s lack of understanding of the true teachings of the Bible has led many to go to the opposite extreme of not wanting to recognize any authority, whereas previously, in the Dark Ages, the people were slavishly in bondage to tyranny and the Inquisition.

When, in the near future, the masses realize that the nominal Church is not the true Church, they will angrily pull down the pillars of the false religious order. This action will, in turn, lead unhappily to anarchy. The Lord has foreseen and foretold these events and allows them to transpire in this way—not because He wants to destroy the people (Luke 9:55,56) but because He wants to replace the decadent kingdoms of this world with His own Kingdom. Communists know that Christendom is supported by Catholicism and Protestantism; they have long thought that by abolishing religion, they would be able to establish their own order in the wake of revolution. Violence has been preached not because they want to continue disorder forever—a condition perhaps preferred by nihilists and anarchists—but because they hope the confusion will help to bring down present arrangements, thus clearing the way for them to establish their own order worldwide. The Samson illustration represents the fall of the religious house: Christendom. The masses are beginning more and more, even now, to realize the vast potential power they possess even without armaments of warfare. The pulling down of the pillars of the temple will cause the subsequent downfall of all governments.

Strong Message

The message to be given to Babylon by a class known only to the Lord is peculiarly the Elijah message or, in another type, the John the Baptist message. Jesus did not testify at his trial but was meek and lamblike at that time. Although he freely admitted he was the Messiah, he submitted to the experience, allowing himself to be put to death. It was earlier—*prior* to his trial and during the days of his freedom—that Jesus spoke so sternly. He called the Temple a “den of thieves” and said the religious leaders, the scribes and Pharisees, were “whited sepulchres,” etc. (Matt. 21:13; 23:27). In the future when the nominal Church speaks harshly against true Christians while still in the days of freedom, the latter will also speak in a strong manner. John the Baptist is a good illustration; he denounced the illicit relationship of Herodias and Herod *before* his imprisonment, and this denouncement led to his imprisonment. In the future the truth will receive greater publicity; then the lid of authority will clamp down, resulting in the imprisonment and death of the saints. As

an afterthought, the persecution of these humble Christians will cause public resentment, turning the masses against orthodoxy.

Verse 21:

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.

Rendered from the Greek, this passage should read: “There fell upon *the men* [that is, the worshippers of the beast and its image—verse 2] a great hail out of heaven.” Water frequently represents truth. The truth (verse 21) does not come down as dew or rain but in a hard, compact form—as hail. It causes great anguish and, coming down from heaven, signifies divine judgment.

The expression “every stone” is not supported by the Greek text in the Sinaitic. Even the Authorized King James Version indicates these words were introduced by the translators, for they are set in italics. The translators no doubt felt entirely justified in their insertion by reasoning: “How could the hail be spoken of as ‘exceeding great’ if the whole deposit of the storm collectively weighed only one talent? Surely the Greek must mean each hailstone weighed a talent.” While this reasoning would at first appear logical, it must ever be kept in mind that the Apocalypse is to be spiritually interpreted and that its symbols are not necessarily to be mathematically analyzed in a too literal sense. For example, the beast and the dragon are not literal, and the length, breadth, and *height* of the holy city, described as measuring 12,000 furlongs, would each be *1,500 miles* if literal (Rev. 21:16).

Verse 21 refers to the Tabernacle arrangement where a gold talent was used to make the candlestick in the Holy. The seven-branched lamp stand was beaten out of *one* talent of gold and thus weighed one talent with its appurtenances (Exod. 25:39). It is the gold talent (singular) that is directly related to the picture in Revelation 16:21. The candlestick, or lamp stand, was of “beaten work” (Exod. 25:31). In the antitype, the hammering out of the true Church has generally been done by other professing Christians who verily thought they were doing God a service—which they were, but not in the way they thought! The effect of this persecution was to prove the faithfulness of the Elect and to discipline them in their development. However, this persecution by others has to be required. Even though done in many instances in ignorance, the punishment meted out, which helped to develop the true Church, will not be excused but will be part of the “double” (Rev. 18:6). Babylon will receive double (a like portion of) the “cup of the wine of the fierceness” of God’s anger for the evil her supporters were responsible for (Rev. 16:19). Thus “the men” of verse 21 are primarily those in Christendom; upon them will come judgment, vengeance, and “hail” to hammer them into submission.

The question is asked: Will this hail proceed from the Elect? Answer: It will proceed “out of heaven.” Revelation 18:20 states, “Rejoice over her . . . ye holy apostles and prophets.” “Double unto her [Babylon] double according to her works” (Rev. 18:6). The true Church will be instructed to do the doubling from the other side of the veil, and the fall of Babylon will be one of the best evidences not only that the door to the “high calling” (Phil. 3:14) is closed but that all 144,000 are

beyond the veil. The complete and glorified Church will be involved in the judgment of Babylon. The afflictions suffered and patiently endured during the Gospel Age will be required of Babylon. When empowered on high, the Church, in conjunction with Christ, will administer the Kingdom and be responsible for the great hail: “Saviours [plural] shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau [Christendom, which sold its birthright for a mess of earthly pottage or gain—Heb. 12:16]; and the kingdom shall be the LORD’S” (Obadiah 21).

“Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail.” During the anarchy the masses will not fully realize what is happening—what the judgment is all about—although they will know that the events are without parallel in scope. At first they will blaspheme God, but later they will call for deliverance. After experiencing the judgment and the hail for a season, they will recognize the hopelessness of the situation, and the people will look up to heaven. “They shall fret themselves, and curse their king [civil rulers] and their God [religious rulers], and look upward [to the true God]” (Isa. 8:21). Today the various nations look to human leaders, but at that time they will be humbled and really cry to the Lord, asking for help like a drowning man. Then the Lord will step in and save them.

To state the matter again: The false Church will have to retract previous utterances of being the only true Church, of the gates of hell not being able to prevail against her, etc. When the supporters of Babylon see the system is falling, they will realize they have been deluded and will curse both God (in ignorance) and Babylon. Those who have an ill-founded faith will lose all faith in God and be completely disillusioned when their false ideas and hopes perish. Not being true Christians, they will curse not only the system they formerly upheld and what they erroneously thought was of God, but the Bible as well. In anger and disgust, the people will renounce *all* religious pretensions for a while. However, when anarchy results and there is no law or order, they will see that nothing constructive in itself can come from anarchy. When they see the situation is futile and events have progressed beyond the point of any hope of human control, they will cry to the Lord for help.

The pouring of the seventh plague is the pronouncement of a message, but the repercussive effects of that message will occur later. The principle is the same as the pouring or seeding of the atmosphere by plane with sodium iodide crystals with the intention of producing rain under the right conditions. Here, as a result of the seventh plague being figuratively poured into the air, there will be great hailstones. The hail is called the “plague of the hail” in the sense that it is one of the after-effects of the seventh plague. Just as the Seventh Trumpet covers a period of time, so the seventh plague will last awhile though be relatively short in duration. At the start of this last plague, but prior to the fall of Babylon, the feet members will die. The first of the firstborn class, the Very Elect, were passed over *at midnight* when the destroying angel went through the land of Egypt. From another perspective, the familiar type of the Passover observance on the night prior to the Exodus represents the sudden passage, or change, of the faithful firstborn class to the spirit realm at the midnight hour of the age.

The hail of verse 21 should not be confused with that which is to occur in conjunction with “Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). The Ezekiel picture (Chapters 38 and 39) is less symbolic and more figurative and literal than this Apocalypse scene. The

earliest phase of the battle of Armageddon of Revelation 16 deals chiefly with the religious aspect (verse 19); next comes the political aspect (verse 20), which eventuates in Jacob's Trouble; and the last phase (verse 21) pertains to individuals who survive the experiences of verses 19 and 20. In other words, in one sense the battle of Armageddon has successive stages (verse 19 *precedes* verses 20 and 21); but in another sense, *in relation to other Scriptures*, it *comprehends* all three verses.

The battle of Armageddon of Chapter 16 will initially precede Jacob's Trouble, which will be the very last feature at the end of the age; the Lord's deliverance of the nation of Israel will occur at the *end* of the Time of Trouble. Since the events will happen within such a short time period, many other Scriptures are required to understand the details. Even the Great Company will be off the scene when Jacob's Trouble occurs. "Two parts [classes] therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left [delivered] therein" (Zech. 13:8,9). The "third" will be the holy remnant—those Israelites of meek quality. "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his *whole* work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (Isa. 10:12). In this case the "king of Assyria" represents the forces of Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38.

Joshua and the Conquest of Jericho

And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward [the rearward, the unarmed host—the people] came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

And the second day they compassed the city [Jericho] once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times. . . .

And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets [a long blast with the rams' horns—Josh. 6:5], Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent [Rahab was told, "Thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by"—Josh. 2:18].

So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down

flat, so that the *people* went up into the city, every man straight before him, and *they took the city*.⁹ (Josh. 6:12–17,20)

Several details of this incident in Joshua's life are purposely omitted because they are beyond the scope and intent of this treatise. The destruction of Jericho signifies the overthrow of mystic Babylon under another similitude. Jericho's fall indicates the termination of nominal orthodoxy, the end of formalized institutional religion, but not the literal destruction of all its adherents.

For each of the six days, the priests blew the trumpets intermittently in a repetitive fashion throughout the day as they circled the city once. On the seventh day they marched around Jericho seven times, blowing their horns the same way during all seven circuits. However, when the forefront of the armed men finished their seventh circuit (that is, arrived at the starting point of the various cycles of that day), instead of entering camp, the entire procession came to a halt. A complete stationary encirclement of the city was thus formed. Standing in momentary stark stillness, they awaited the prearranged signal from Joshua. When it came, the priests blew their trumpets in a unique way to give the effect of one very long, continuous blast. To accomplish this, probably one priest blew with a loud sustained blast; then a second priest commenced his sounding ere the first priest became winded; a third priest likewise acted before the second was out of breath. On and on went the trumpets until the seventh sounding ended. The host waited breathlessly until the long sounding ceased (Josh. 6:5). Then, after a split-second pause, all the people in remarkable unison gave explosive vent to their long-pent-up seven days of absolute silence (Josh. 6:10)—they shouted with a *great shout*, completely unnerving the inhabitants of the besieged city. The shout corresponded in timing to the falling flat of the walls of Jericho.

Silence, Great Shout, Deliverance

In the Joshua illustration the sounding of the trumpets on successive days was on a triumphant note. On the part of the marching host, it was a noise of confidence and joy somewhat like a New Year's celebration, but to the threatened inhabitants of the besieged city, the sound was strangely ominous. The oddity of the imposed silence on behalf of "the people" of Israel added an aura of puzzling mysticism to the onlooking enemy, instilling even greater fear in their hearts.

It is necessary to digress for a moment. The world does not realize that the real pearl of great price is the present opportunity to be joint-heirs with Christ—to live and reign with him in the next life—if obedient to his instruction in the present life. The common people in Jesus' day thronged about him and marveled at the grace that poured out of his lips, but they *did nothing* about it (Luke 4:22). The scribes and Pharisees witnessed his works but saw in him a threat to their own influence, esteem, and office. Of Israel as a nation, therefore, the Apostle John wrote, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (1:11). Christ could easily have welded that nation together, but he purposely curbed his oratorical powers and influence because he did not want the world to be converted at that time. He said, "I speak these things in parables lest the people be converted, and I should heal

9. See pages 209–210, 247.

them and they should be saved” (Matt. 13:13–15 paraphrase). Jesus will deal with the world in the Kingdom Age.

The common people down through history have been more or less receptive to the message of the gospel and have heard it with some appreciation, but they have not responded with wholehearted obedience; that is, in harmony with the type they remain quiet until the end of the seventh day, or era. Then the people will rise up *en masse* and in wrath against entrenched false Christendom. There will be a great shout of anger and resentment followed by anarchy, the most wretched of conditions. The Lord will not bring deliverance until the people wholeheartedly cry out from the depths of human despair: “Deliver us!” When Peter’s feet began to sink in the waters of Galilee, he similarly cried out, and immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him (Matt. 14:28–32). Such must be the attitude of earth’s inhabitants in that day of the near future. Man’s extremity will be God’s opportunity to save in a most propitious manner.

Further Explanation of Symbols

The Joshua account of the siege of Jericho contains other interesting symbolisms. In one sense, the Ark symbolizes God’s presence amidst His people, but in another sense the journeying Ark and the priests carrying and accompanying it represent the transit of the Christ class from the wilderness state toward the house of rest above. The seven priests who blew the trumpets correspond to the seven individual messengers to the Church (Rev. 1:20), but in a secondary sense they represent the message of the Church. The “armed men” who preceded the trumpet-bearing priests assumed the appearance of a protective shield or vanguard to the entire marching procession; on second thought, they emblemize the guardian angelic host (under the instruction of the risen Lord), without whose aid the fallen angels and legions of demons would frustrate and abort God’s purpose—a thing not to be tolerated. These are the “watchers” of the Israel of God (Dan. 4:13,17). “They that be with us are more than they that be” against us (2 Kings 6:15–17; cf. Psa. 34:7; 91:11; Matt. 28:20; Heb. 1:14).

It is again stressed that the seven trumpets and the seven plagues of the Apocalypse occur under very different circumstances. The trumpets sound down through the age, but the seven plague-message pourings of the seventh day commence during the harvest period shortly after the return of the antitypical Moses, the invisible risen Lord—during the Seventh Trumpet era.

A Confirmation

The Hebrew sacred year was marked by blowing the ram’s horn at the appearance of the new moon each month (Num. 10:10; Psa. 81:3). But the blowing of the ram’s horn on the first day of the seventh month was something extra special. It was styled “a [climactic] day of blowing the trumpets” (Num. 29:1) and “a memorial of blowing of trumpets” (Lev. 23:24). This day is generally called the *Feast of Trumpets*. The term “feast” is frequently associated with the number seven, such as the seven days of the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Tabernacles, etc. The blowing of trumpets on that particular day not only signified that the beginning of the *seventh* month memorialized and included the previous six first-day-of-the-month blowings as an accumulative total of seven, but also signified that

on the first day of the seventh month, there were a recognizable seven soundings of the trumpet, setting it apart from other months of the year. The Hebrew sacred year new-month soundings coincide with the theme of the Joshua scenario.

Midnight Hour Correspondencies

A helpful correspondency exists between the seventh Revelation plague and the tenth or last plague of the Exodus. Viewed from a dispensational standpoint and in a collective sense of fulfillment, the blood-spattered doors of the Israelite households imply the demise and the translation of the Very Elect firstborn, from earth to the spirit realm, at the *midnight hour* of the Gospel Age Passover night. From a similar perspective, the unmarked doors of the Egyptian households signify the demise of the Second Death firstborn class when the destroying angel (Satan) goes throughout the land in his hour of power near at hand. Moreover, the seventh or last plague is synonymous in fulfillment with the midnight hour of the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins and the twelfth hour of the Parable of the Penny (Matt. 25:1–13; 20:1–16).

Revelation Chapter 17

Verse 1:

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

“One of the seven angels” is perhaps the seventh angel; if so, which seventh angel? A literal rendering of this passage in the Sinaitic reads, “And there came one of the seven angels of the *ones* [plural] having the seven vials [bowls]. . . .” In other words, one of the seven plague-bearing angels came and spoke to John; that is, one of the plague *messages*, personified as an angel, testified.

Ezekiel 9 is related to the subject matter at hand. The Prophet Ezekiel saw six men holding slaughter weapons in their hands and one man *among them* clothed in linen with an inkhorn (writing case—RSV) by his side. The man with the inkhorn set a mark (of exoneration) upon the foreheads of the men who sighed and cried for all the abominations done in the midst of the city of nominal Israel (i.e., Christendom). The Lord charged the six men with the destroying weapons to slaughter those upon whom there was no mark. And, lo, upon concluding his mission, the man clothed in linen with the inkhorn reported the matter, saying, “I have done as thou hast commanded me.” In this scenario the man with the inkhorn is the Laodicean messenger. The six men carrying the slaughter weapons are the six *messages* that followed in the wake of the messenger, that is, the six volumes whose writing was superintended by the Laodicean messenger.

There is an interesting comment in the preface of the original first volumes of the *Studies in the Scriptures* series: “The arrangement as at present proposed—namely, to treat the subject in seven volumes, each measurably independent—will, we trust, commend itself to our friends. Our endeavor is to so present the subject that the studious child of God may go onward and investigate them step by step so that these truths may not be stumbling blocks. . . .” Therefore, the seventh dispensational messenger planned to accomplish the work in seven parts. However, whether or not he actually wrote the seventh volume, it should be acknowledged that the keys to the interpretation of this prophecy, the clues thereof, are contained in the harvest message. His work *Tabernacle Shadows*, written in 1881, is the acorn, or nucleus, whence the seven messages come (Rev. 15:5,6).

In verse 1 the angel invites John to “come hither,” suggesting the individual has to bestir and arouse himself from lethargy. The Lord is not going to drop into one’s lap a clear understanding of certain prophecies if the interest is only superficial. The angel further states, “I will shew unto thee the judgment [Greek *krima*] of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.” This ordinary Greek word, rendered “judgment” *in this setting*, is particularly fraught with meaning. The system of jurisprudence might be summarized as (a) the detailed charges of criminality, (b) the

judicial process or trial leading to a decision, (c) the pronouncement of a decision (of guilt or innocence), and (d) the execution of the sentence (in this instance, death). To which of these categories does the word “judgment” apply? Answer: All of them, but especially the last.

At the very outset, particular attention is given to the judgment of the “great whore that sitteth upon many waters.” In end-time prophecy it is she who is of singular interest to the Lord’s people. Who is she? The true Church is pictured as a virgin espoused to her Lord. Since this woman is a harlot, she represents the false Church. The “many waters” upon which the whore sits are given a definition by the Holy Spirit in verse 15; namely, “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” This woman is an *international church*. She openly admits to being the Roman Catholic (i.e., universal) Church.

Verse 2:

*With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication,
and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the
wine of her fornication.*

These are strong words indeed! It is likely that in the dramatization given to the Apostle of the conduct of this woman, he noted her seductive behavior, the details of which he excluded in the narration but which, nonetheless, add peculiar force to his denunciation of her as a “great whore” (verse 1) who has “committed fornication” with the “kings of the earth.” Her ways might best be described in the allegory of a harlot’s behavior:

I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows.
Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and
I have found thee.
I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved
works, with fine linen of Egypt.
I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace
ourselves with loves.
For the goodman [Jesus] is not at home, he is gone a long journey
[“into a far country for a long time”—Luke 20:9]:
He hath taken a bag of [atonement] money [a ransom for sin] with
him, and will come home at [“full moon”—RSV] the day
appointed. . . .
He [the harlot’s victim] goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth
to the slaughter. . . .
Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the
words of my mouth.
Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.
For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have
been slain by her.
Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.
(Prov. 7:14–20,22,24–27)

The harlot of Revelation 17 is in marked contrast to the symbolism of the true Church as a virgin (cf. Rev. 12:1; 14:4). The expression “kings of the earth” in verse 2 refers not only to rulers of nations but also to financial, political, and other leaders of the people.

In what way did the harlot make the nations “drunk with the wine of her fornication”? *Mixed* wine hastens intoxication. The stupefying draft from her cup of a little truth blended with much error causes spiritual intoxication. False doctrines regarding the relationship of Church and State have been largely responsible for the inebriation. The woman claimed it was her mission to instruct governments in connection with the present rulership of earth—in *advance* of the Second Advent of Messiah and *apart* from the Lord. According to the Scriptures “friendship with the world is enmity with God” (James 4:4 RSV). Compassion for the world (a virtue) and friendship with the world are *not* synonymous terms. The Christian is to keep himself separate from worldliness. The false Church teaches the opposite: that it is one of the chief missions of the Church to be the conscience of the world and to direct her communicants and others how to enlighten and uplift society and solve social ills. But the primary mission of the Church is to “take out . . . a people for his name” (Acts 15:14). The true Church is called *out* of the world to have fellowship with Christ, to be in union with the Lord; the purpose is *not* to go *into* the world to accomplish social uplift. No matter how noble such help may appear to others and may seem to be unquestionably the Lord’s work, “this is the will of God, even your sanctification” (1 Thess. 4:3). Nevertheless, it is good and acceptable in the sight of God that supplication, prayer, intercession, and giving of thanks be made for kings, and for all who are in authority, that Christians may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty (1 Tim. 2:1–3).

In what way did the “kings of the earth” commit “fornication” with the woman? “Christendom,” so-called, stands for Christ’s Kingdom. Accordingly, kings and/or nations are referred to as existing “by His [God’s] grace.” Although used with good intentions, such an expression as “one nation under God” and the Church-State arrangement actually apply to and are suitable for the next age. After the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb, the true Church will be kings and priests, thus combining civil and religious affairs. False doctrine has encouraged nominal Church dignitaries to fraternize with civil government leaders and vice versa. Figuratively speaking, the result has been fornication, or illicit intercourse, between the Church of Rome and the State.

Verse 3:

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

One must be taken aside or apart from the wine, the gaiety, and the garish city lights into the solitude and the sobriety of the “wilderness” in order to see the “woman” in her true colors. However, there is a greater significance to John’s translation “into the wilderness.” The Apostle was transferred from one prophetic point on the stream of time (namely, when the woman was seated on “many waters”—verse 1) *backward*, through a time tunnel, to the previous period where

the woman was seated on a “beast.” John was carried back to the prior era when the true Church was given “two wings of a great eagle” (Rev. 12:14) to flee for 1,260 years (A.D. 539 to 1799) during the persecuting reign of the Roman Church and papal power. The fact that the woman was riding the beast is a clue to her character and affords another reason why she is called “Babylon” (*confusion*—cf. Lev. 18:23), a parallel of nominal Jerusalem (Isa. 24:10).

The “scarlet coloured [Greek *kokkinos*] beast” should not be confused with the fiery red (Greek *purrhos*) dragon of Revelation 12:3. These colors are separate and distinct, as are the beast and the dragon. However, the beast in Chapter 17, having seven heads and ten horns, signifying Rome, is the same papal beast that has a similar number of heads and horns in Revelation 13:1. The present chapter states that the scarlet-colored beast is “full of names of blasphemy”; according to Chapter 13 the “name of blasphemy” is on each of its seven heads. In the absence of anything to the contrary, it should be assumed that the disposition or arrangement of the names is similar in both instances. The blasphemy, in part, consisted of the beast’s assertion that it represented the one and only true Kingdom of Christ; yet it reigned (1) *before* the Second Advent of Christ (1 Cor. 15:25), (2) *apart from a contemporary participation* of the twelve apostles of the Lamb and the 144,000 Elect (1 Cor. 4:8; Rev. 5:10), and (3) *without* the visible role of the Ancient Worthies, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 8:11).

Verse 4:

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:

The “woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet,” queenly attire, because she was reigning at that time. Purple and scarlet are both symbols of royalty, but the biblical distinction for those found worthy is that red signifies royalty gained through sacrifice. As Christians generally know, scarlet does in some instances signify Jesus’ shed blood and his costly ransom sacrifice on the Cross on behalf of his Church and the world—his blood was shed *for* others, whereas Papacy shed the blood *of* others. Worldly royalty is obtained through heredity (*blood* lineage) or military (*blood-letting*) conquest.

Seen as a queen, the woman was “decked with gold and precious stones and pearls.” The KJV margin indicates her dress as *gilded* with metallic gold. What ornate attire! The false Church, that is, the clergy, are vested with robes of diverse colors consisting of the finest silk or velvet and made with the best workmanship; there are garments for different holy days and various other occasions. Crowns of the leaders contain numerous emeralds, sapphires, rubies, and diamonds. Down through history this Church has been given to much display and ostentation, which exactly fits the picture in verse 4.

While the false Church is ornately attired, the Master counsels the true Church to buy white raiment so that she will be clothed and the shame of her nakedness will not appear (Rev. 3:18). The Apostle Paul admonishes that “women adorn

themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array” but with that “which becometh women professing godliness” (1 Tim. 2:9,10).

The woman had a “golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.” The “golden cup” represents the Bible. Ostensibly the potion in the cup purports to be the admonition and instruction of Holy Writ, but in reality it is a stupefying draft or mixture of truth and error. The cup is gold to symbolize her claim of being the sole repository and dispenser of divine truth. In the wilderness era, shown here, the woman proffered the cup to others to drink, whereas Revelation 16:19, a later scenario to occur during the pouring of the seventh plague, shows the situation reversed—the Lord will give *her* a cup (of retribution) to drink.

Jesus, during his earthly ministry, spoke to some of the leading religionists of that day: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness” (Matt. 23:27).

Verse 5:

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

Jeremiah’s defamation “thou hadst a whore’s forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed” (3:3) is equally applicable to the “MOTHER OF HARLOTS” in verse 5. The purpose of this description is to identify and include the daughter systems in the judgment, Catholicism being the “MOTHER” of harlot daughters (various Protestant denominations). Revelation 14:4 contained a clue of this nature in the statement “These are they which were not defiled *with women*; for they are virgins . . . which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” In verse 5 the women are called “HARLOTS.” The name upon the whore’s forehead is in plain sight of all the spiritually minded (Luke 8:10). How strange that everyone does not see the association! Indeed, it is a mystery.

The Church of Christ is called the “mystery of God,” the “mystery of godliness,” and “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Rev. 10:7; 1 Tim. 3:16; Col. 1:27) because, contrary to expectation, the Church is to be the Messianic *body*, which, under its anointed Head, Jesus, shall rule and bless the world. The false Church, or Babylon, a counterfeit system of mother and daughters (some more or less corrupt), is designated the “mystery of iniquity” (2 Thess. 2:7). It is Satan who is credited with having deceived the whole world on this subject, putting evil for good and good for evil, light for darkness and darkness for light (Rev. 12:9; Isa. 5:20).

Since the Roman Church is not a single individual but a great religious system, the symbolism indicates that there will be daughter religious systems of similar character. To this description various Protestant organizations fully correspond. However, since the daughter systems parted from the mother under circumstances of travail and were born virgins, some sincere Christians may anxiously inquire, “If all Christendom is to be involved in the doom of Babylon, what will become of Protestantism, the result of the Reformation?” This is an important question, but Protestantism, as it exists today, is the result not of the great Reformation but of its decline.

The claims of apostolic succession and clerical authority are set forth almost as presumptuously by some of the Protestant clergy as by the papal priesthood. And the right of private, individual judgment—the fundamental principle of the protest against Papacy that led to the Reformation—is now opposed almost as strenuously by Protestants as it is by Papists. Protestants seem to have forgotten—for they truly ignore—the very grounds of the original protest; as systems, they are fast drifting back toward the open arms of the holy(?) Mother Church. As Catholics would say, “Long has our common mother called you to her breast.”

Verse 6:

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.

The word “blood” in both instances signifies death through unnatural circumstances chargeable to the orgiastic, bloodthirsty woman. At face value verse 6 seems to say that this symbolic woman is guilty of (a) the “blood of the saints” (all the consecrated—the Little Flock and the Great Company—as in Revelation 11:18; 16:6), and (b) the “blood of the martyrs” (those not spirit-begotten but who nevertheless consider themselves Christians, even suffering martyrdom, though not realizing what it means to be a follower of Christ). Matthew 10:37,38 explains, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.” Many who have died rather than deny Christ and Christianity were never really Christians in the higher sense of the word; nevertheless, they were noble in standing up for what they thought was right and in dying *for* Christ but not necessarily *with* Christ.

The key to understanding verse 6 lies in the observation that the term “martyrs of Jesus” refers solely to those who are to live and reign with Christ the thousand years—the Little Flock (Rev. 20:4). Therefore, with this in mind, the expression “the saints,” preceding the term “the martyrs,” does not include the Great Company class. Why not? Because it would be redundant to say that the woman was responsible for (a) the death of the Very Elect as well as the lesser overcomers and (b) the death of, again, the Very Elect.

In view of the foregoing, the second “and” in verse 6 should be translated “even,” for it is permissible, where occasion warrants, to translate the Greek *kai* as “even” (although the word “and” is utilized with greater frequency). Thus the repetition in the rendition “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, *even* with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” clarifies *which* saints are particularly spoken of and also shows their saintly innocence of the charges leveled against them.

Drunken with the Blood of Saints

The following commentary affords an insight into the deep significance of the words “drunken with the blood of the saints”:

“Charles IX. of France, a Roman Catholic prince, laid a snare for the destruction of the Protestants, by offering his sister in marriage to a Huguenot (a Protestant)

prince of Navarre. All the chief men of the Huguenots were assembled in Paris at the nuptials; when on the eve of St. Bartholomew's day, August 24, 1572, at the ringing of a bell, the massacre commenced. An unparalleled scene of horror ensued. The Roman Catholics rushed upon the defenceless [*sic*] Protestants. Above five hundred men of distinction, and about ten thousand others, that night slept in Paris the sleep of death. A general destruction was immediately ordered throughout France, and a horrid carnage was soon witnessed at Rouen, Lyons, Orleans, and other cities. Sixty thousand perished—and when the news of this event reached Rome, Pope Gregory XIII. instituted the most solemn rejoicing, giving thanks to Almighty God for this glorious victory over the heretics! According to the calculation of some, about two hundred thousand suffered death in seven years, under Pope Julian; no less than a hundred thousand were massacred by the French in the space of three months; the Waldenses who perished, amounted to one million; within thirty years, the Jesuits destroyed nine hundred thousand; under the Duke of Alva, thirty-six thousand were executed by the common hangman; a hundred and fifty thousand perished in the Inquisition; and a hundred and fifty thousand by the Irish massacre; besides the vast multitude of whom the world could never be particularly informed, who were proscribed, banished, starved, burnt, buried alive, smothered, suffocated, drowned, assassinated, chained to the galleys for life, or immured within the horrid walls of the Bastille, or others of their church or state prisons. . . .”¹

Great Astonishment

“When I saw her, I wondered with great admiration[?]” Today, unfortunately, the King James English does not always convey the thought originally intended. It would be better to state: “When I saw her, I wondered with great *wonderment*.” John was dumbfounded, awestruck, *astonished* over what he saw.

Verse 7:

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

The Woman

The time frame of the woman seen by John in regal robes riding the beast is in the midst of the 1,260-year wilderness period, conceived by many as the grandest epoch of medieval papal history. This corresponds in point of time to “that woman Jezebel [of Thyatira], which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols” (Rev. 2:20). The historic or literal woman (the prototype of the symbolic one) was a Phoenician princess in whose hands her husband, King Ahab, became a mere puppet (1 Kings 21:25). She soon influenced the establishment of Phoenician worship on a grand scale in the king's court. At her table were supported no less than 450 prophets of Baal and 400 of Astarte (1 Kings 16:31,32; 18:19). At her orders the prophets of Jehovah were attacked and slain by the sword (1 Kings 18:13; 2 Kings 9:7). On her fell, accordingly, the prophet's curse (1 Kings 21:23); it was fulfilled literally by

1. William Patton, ed., *The Cottage Bible, and Family Expositor*, expositions and notes by Thomas Williams (Hartford: Case, Tiffany and Co., 1852), Vol. 2 of 2, p. 1410.

Jehu, whose chariot horses trampled out her life (2 Kings 9:30–37). The identity of this notorious and mysterious female personage of the Apocalypse is the *Roman Catholic Church* viewed as a woman; that is, solely as an *ecclesiastical* system or sacerdotal power *apart from* her husband and lord, the pope of Rome.

It should be noted that the *beast carried the woman*, not the woman the beast. The beast is the power that carried the woman to such heights.

Beast Distinct from Woman

The “scarlet coloured [like the cardinals’ hats and stockings] beast, full of names of blasphemy” (verse 3) is a profanation of the future Kingdom of Christ, which is to exercise priestly and kingly authority. The sacrilegious animal, or “beast,” betokens a *religious government*. The beast is the Papacy, the “man of sin.” The pope claims both (1) *ecclesiastical* authority over the Catholic Church and (2) *secular* sovereignty over the former papal states. The beast is not, and never was, the dragon, or civil Rome. Neither does the beast represent the various nations of Europe, for at no time in the past did the nations on the Continent collectively cease to exist, a requirement stated in verse 8 as “the beast that . . . is not.” The beast is the Holy See, the political rule and administration of papal government, viz., the pope and those about him engaged in that administration (the *Curia Romana*).

At first, the relationship of the beast and the woman might seem confusing, for one might wonder how they can represent the same thing. However, they do not represent the same thing. The beast depicts Papacy as a religious government, as a state having its own lay college and representatives. Lay diplomats are appointed by the Vatican State in Rome with papal approval. The lay college is composed mostly of Italian nobility and is recognized as the civil authority of the Papacy. Relations between the Roman see and the secular powers are conducted through a cardinal who is designated secretary of state; under him are nuncios and other diplomatic agents of the Holy See, over which the pope acts as the supreme judge.

Ten Horns

The “ten horns” represent the divisions of papal influence *in Europe* channeled through resident diplomatic agents, or official representatives of the pope, called papal nuncios. Hosting nations, in turn, appoint counterpart representatives, usually with ambassadorial rank, to act in this communication role with the Holy See. The “ten horns” indicate that at the *very end* of the age, there will be *ten* divisions in Europe. Thus, from a completed standpoint, when Papacy regains its former prestige and power, there will be *ten* toes, *ten* horns, and *ten* kings (Rev. 17:12). The number ten also symbolizes *contemporary completeness*.

Verse 8:

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.

Beast That Was

The apostasy, since the time of its inception, has always existed as a church, or “woman,” and, as such, boasts of being the “eternal city,” against which the gates of hell will not prevail. Catholicism’s wound (Greek *sphatto*, meaning to kill or slay—Rev. 13:3 KJV margin) unto death was along political or temporal lines. In verse 1, the woman is seen sitting upon many waters. This is the time frame of the entire scenario of Chapter 17 *except for verses 3 through 6*. Verses 7 through 17 merely show the divine intent as regards the future destiny of the beast and the woman from the standpoint or time setting of verse 1.

John was carried away “in the spirit” (verse 3) backward in time to an earlier period when the woman was seated not upon many waters but upon the beast. This transferal was approximately to the middle of the Gospel Age and not to its beginning. During this period the true Church fled into the wilderness—for the 1,260 years from 539 to 1799, the period of the fifth head of the beast.² Within this time frame (but not necessarily all throughout), the scarlet-colored papal beast full of names of blasphemy *rose to the zenith of its power* in support of Catholicism, the woman.

And Is Not

“Is not” refers to the period of time during the “time of the end” (Dan. 12:9) when the papal beast was first shorn of its *temporal* power. Napoleon took away the papal states to all practical purposes in Rome’s sixth head or condition, and in 1870 Papacy lost its last vestige of temporal power under the Victor Emmanuel dynasty, the seventh head or condition. In other words, the beast remains in the “is not” condition *during the sixth and seventh heads*. The beast of verses 3 and 8, which passes into a nonexistent state, is the same beast that in Revelation 13:3,12 is slain in death. The beast of Revelation 13 can in no sense represent Pagan Rome, for in the same chapter and the same setting, the dragon, a separate symbolic entity, is seen giving the beast full cooperation and authority. In Revelation 17 one of the beast’s heads (the fifth) goes into the darkness of oblivion; in Revelation 13 one of its heads (the fifth) enters death. In reality, therefore, the two beasts are but the one: Papal Rome. It bears repeating: *the beast represents Papacy wherever it is found in the Apocalypse*.

And (Yet) Shall Ascend

It is stated simply and unequivocally that the temporal dominion of the beast would at some time in the future—that is, future from the standpoint of one living during the sixth head or condition—be restored from the “bottomless pit.” The pit is called “bottomless” because of its apparent unlimited capacity to swallow an infinite number of corpses and still be able to accommodate an infinity more, thereby implying a *seeming* impossibility of any hope of retrieval of even one of its victims. Verse 8 also indicates that not until the beast descended into and ascended from the grave would it then descend with no hope whatsoever of a second restoration, but it would go into everlasting destruction and oblivion, namely, “into *perdition*.”

2. See table on page 325.

Dwellers on Earth Shall Wonder

Those wholly submissive to the influence of orthodoxy will “wonder” when they witness in Europe not merely the restoration of Papacy to its power of yore but, more astonishingly, the exercise again of its former abusive and persecuting role. In contrast, those whose names, at that time, are found written in the book of life of the Lamb (Rev. 13:8) will not wonder as others.

Jehovah’s book, or scroll, covenanting life to an *elect number* was prepared *before* the “foundation of the world” in the person of father Adam (1 Pet. 1:20; Eph. 1:4; Psa. 139:16). However, the Lamb’s book of life must be understood to include the names of those individuals who have presented themselves in consecration, coming under the terms of the divine call since the First Advent of Christ, since the founding of the New Creation or the new cosmos of this dispensation (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8). And who are those whose names are “written in heaven” (Luke 10:20), whose names are found written in the Lamb’s book of life? Answer: the Very Elect and the Great Company class.

Many of the Great Company will at first be surprised, but when they witness the revival to power of the papal beast in the near future as a historic fact, they will quickly cease former pretensions. There are those who have either long taught others or been taught themselves to believe that such an occurrence was an impossibility. Yea, many all along have been at least superficially familiar with, but not sufficiently interested in, the teaching of other brethren who have endeavored to enlighten them on events to be fulfilled before their very eyes. However, when these unprepared ones perceive their understanding of prophecy being shattered, they will quickly adjust to the situation at hand, fully realizing their inadequacy, and will retrieve their steps with alacrity.

The names of this secondary group, if faithful as overcomers, will not be blotted out of the Lamb’s book of life; the difference is that the Master will not profess their names in laudable manner before the Father and His angels. This book, it is reasonable to think, will be compartmentalized into various categories, and the names of the Very Elect will be found in the honorarium roster or preface.

Verse 9:

And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

The Holy Spirit demands that maximal concentration and observant care be given to an important clue: “*here is the mind which hath wisdom.*” Particular attention is called to the peculiar place and seating posture of the woman upon the beast. The very words “here is . . . wisdom” serve as a directional signal and identification factor as to what woman, or church system, as well as what beastly government, is referred to, such as the number 666 of Revelation 13:18. A “mountain” in Scripture symbolizes a kingdom, or government (Isa. 2:2; Dan. 2:35,44).

Rome, famous in Latin writings for being a city of seven hills, bore the title “the seven-hilled city.” It consisted of the Palatine, Capitoline, Quirinal, Caelian, Esquiline, Viminal, and Aventine hills. The seven symbolic “mountains” of verse 9 allude to these seven literal hills, thus identifying the city of Rome. The “seven

heads” are the seven *successive* forms of government controlling Rome. A time element and progression are involved—as in the seven days of a week, the seven days of the consecration of the priesthood, or the seven epoch days of the Creative Week. When the seven days have ended, the week is complete. Therefore, the number seven shows *time completion*.

Verse 10:

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 there are seven kings.” The term “king” sometimes (as in this instance) represents not an individual but a kingdom, an earthly power, or even an empire (Dan. 7:17,23). The “seven kings,” or successive forms of government, do not represent the universal empires of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, etc. The seven kings, or heads upon the beast (verse 3), all pertain to Rome, the symbolic *seven-hilled city*, as a common denominator.

If “five [heads] are fallen,” then the “and one is” is the sixth head or condition, and the one “not yet come” is the seventh. The seventh head was to continue but “a short space,” perhaps indicating that it would be of shorter duration than the sixth. Moreover, the “short space” would occur before “the beast that was” (verse 11) *would begin to reappear*.

Verse 11:

And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

The account does not state that the eighth circumstance is the appearance of a headless beast. Quite to the contrary, “*the beast that was . . . even he is the eighth.*” Was “the beast that was” a headless beast? In verse 3 the Apostle states that he previously saw “a scarlet coloured beast . . . having *seven heads*,” and in verses 9 and 10 the angel explaining the meaning of the vision to John states that the seven kings were seven mountains, or heads, upon which the woman sat and, further, that the sixth and seventh heads, as well as the eighth head, did not reach a prophetic fulfillment in verse 3. In other words, the fifth head would appear again, this time as an eighth head. The first four heads did not represent Papacy, and neither does the sixth or seventh head according to verses 10 and 11. Thus, while eight forms of government would arise, *only seven* would be separate and distinct from each other. The Holy Spirit, in seeming anticipation of the suggestion by some that the eighth form would be a headless beast, states and reaffirms the matter: “the beast that was . . . even he is the eighth, *and is* [one] *of the seven* [prior forms].” The number seven signifies completion, whereas the number eight means resurrection (though only a temporary one in this case). Question: Does Daniel 7:11,26 refer to the first slaying of the beast when it was *temporarily* shorn of dominion in A.D. 1870, or to its second descent (Rev. 17:8,11) unto *eternal* perdition—the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10)? The latter, it appears.

Seven (Eight) Successive Heads

	Of the Dragon (Rev. 12)	Of the Beast (Rev. 13)	Of the Beast (Rev. 17)
(1) Imperial Rome	CIVIL	male child	—
(2) Western Empire	CIVIL	male child	—
(3) Heruli	CIVIL	male child	—
(4) Ostrogoths	CIVIL	male child	—
(5) Papal Rome	civil	MAN OF SIN	BEAST “THAT WAS”
(6) French Directory	CIVIL	man of sin	beast “is not”
(7) Victor Emmanuel Dynasty	CIVIL	man of sin	beast “is not”
(8) Papal Rome	civil	MAN OF SIN	BEAST “YET IS”

Some have long felt that it would be utterly impossible for Papacy to come back into power in the same manner as it was during the Dark Ages. But verse 11 states that such will be the case and that history in this instance repeats itself. In Catholic countries the manifestation of power will be a duplication of what it was in the past. Papacy’s high-handed activity will recur in Europe. In the United States and England, Papacy will operate *behind* the scenes, using Protestantism as its dancing girl to accomplish the deceit (Matt. 14:6–11).

Let no one misunderstand it to be meant that every Roman Catholic is a man of sin or that the priests or even the popes of the Church of Rome are, or have been, the Antichrist. No *man* is *the* Antichrist, the “man of sin,” described in prophecy (2 Thess. 2:3,4). Popes, bishops, and others are, at most, only parts or members of the Antichrist system, even as all of the royal priests are only members of the true Christ, under Jesus, their Head. The Church of Rome, *as an ecclesiastical system only*, is not the Man of Sin and is never presented under any figure of a *man*. On the contrary, a *woman* is always the symbol used for a church separate from its head and lord. The true Church is symbolized by a “chaste virgin,” while the apostate Church, which has fallen away from primitive purity and fidelity to the Lord, is symbolically called a “whore” (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 17:1). Since the apostasy, the Church of Rome as a woman, as an ecclesiastical body, *has never ceased to exist* up to the present. The Papacy as the Man of Sin, as the spokesman of the Roman Catholic Church, *also has never ceased to exist* since its inception, though at times it has spoken through two or three heads and has passed through varying stages of weakness and strength. However, the Papacy as a beast, as a temporal power, is a different matter; prophecy shows that as such it ceased to exist through the sixth and seventh heads, or forms of government of Rome.

The year 1870 marked the final rejection of the pope as ruler over Rome and the so-called papal states of Italy by the pope’s subjects and the king of Italy, Victor

Emmanuel II (1861–1878), who left Antichrist without the slightest temporal authority. In 1929, as a result of negotiations between Vatican authorities under Pius XI and Mussolini, the leader of the Fascist government of Italy under the nominal House of Savoy, a treaty was signed consisting of three documents collectively known as the Lateran Accord or Treaty. One of these documents, a political treaty, constituted Vatican City as a sovereign state—a temporal dominion—subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the pope, with territorial immunities, the right to send and receive diplomatic representatives, and other attributes of sovereignty. In a nominal manner, the House of Savoy lingered beyond 1929 until King Victor Emmanuel III formally abdicated on May 9, 1946.

The Lateran Treaty was signed on February 11, 1929, and ratified on June 7, 1929. This event marked the beginning of the emergence of the papal beast from the bottomless-pit condition (verse 8), and since then the fortune of the Papacy has risen to such stature that foreign dignitaries are wont to see the pope. Sometimes out of deference or simple courtesy, leaders pay their respects to the head of the civil government of Italy in Rome, but the pope receives more visitors and has more power and influence than all the Italian rulers who have come and gone since. Even those fairly knowledgeable in world affairs scarcely have known or now know the names of the current rulers of Italy—but they are quite conversant, at all times, regarding who occupies the chair of St. Peter.

Verse 12:

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.

Verse 13:

These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

Contemporaneous Powers

The word “kings” is interesting because it can represent powers from two standpoints: (1) progressive or (2) contemporaneous. Daniel 7:17 is an example of “kings” used in the progressive sense: “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.” The four beasts, or universal empires—Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome—are called “kings.” The four kings are *progressive* and not contemporaneous. True, Daniel saw them all on one occasion in the vision, but they arrived one after the other in fulfillment. In Revelation 17 the word “kings” is used both ways in the same chapter. In verse 10 the “seven kings” are *successive* powers of the government of Rome. The ten horns of the text under consideration (verse 12) are “kings” too, but they are *contemporary*, all being on the scene at the same time. Thus in Scripture there are different kinds of symbolic kings: one type being governments down through the age, one after the other, and the other type being contemporary, at the same time. The word “kings” has the basic meaning of powers; the question would be, what powers? To understand whether the kings are progressive or simultaneous, the reader must carefully analyze the context.

Papal Beast

The scarlet-colored beast with seven heads and ten horns (verse 3) seen by John during the wilderness period is the same seven-headed, ten-horned beast he had seen earlier in Revelation 13:1. Revelation 13:4,5 states that the dragon gave his power unto the beast for the space of 42 symbolic months, that is, for 1,260 years—the same wilderness scene as in Chapter 17. Back there the beast and the dragon existed together, contemporaneously. Though only the beast and the woman are mentioned in Chapter 17, it should be understood that both the dragon and the beast are again on the scene at the close of the Gospel Age, as already indicated in Revelation 16:13.

Only *one* of the seven heads (the fifth) actually represented the beast phase, that is, the *temporal dominion of the Papacy* (Rev. 17:3,10). When, under the eighth head or condition (Rev. 17:11), the “beast that was” again appears, it will be a duplicate of the fifth head or condition. Of the seven heads, six do not represent the papal beast at all. The six heads mark out different progressive time periods in which Papacy *as a beast* was nonexistent and during which Papacy *as a government* was not given de jure or de facto recognition at large. The absence of the papal beast during these six periods has nothing to do with the various popes as individuals, for there were popes throughout all seven heads, or past stages of development.

The body of the papal beast is the Vatican State centered in Rome. The horns of the beast represent the extended lines of papal communication with other nations—with particular attention being given to *its operations in Europe*. (Its worldwide communications network is only inferentially implied.) The horns of the papal beast are its points of contact with the nations of the Continent, these being the residences of the papal nuncios. Each *papal nunciature* (or embassy) situated in these nations is legally recognized as the *territory of the Vatican*. At present this arrangement merely proffers a two-way line of communication between the various powers and the Vatican, but meanwhile the Holy See is rising higher and higher in stature, in public esteem, and in political influence. Although the ten horns “have received no kingdom as yet,” they will, in the near future, “receive [great] power as kings one hour with the beast”—the permitted time for this union to prosper being of divine appointment.

The ten horns of the beast (the papal nuncios) and the ten horns of the dragon (the kings of the earth) are currently two separate and distinct sets of entity. To all practical purposes, however, when they act together in future collusion—when the *double set* of ten horns or kings acts in concert much as they did in the past during the symbolic forty-two months (Rev. 13:5) and as predicted in the future (Rev. 16:13; 19:19)—the distinction between the two sets of ten horns will scarcely be discernible.

Hour of Power

Verse 13 states that “these [the nations or powers represented by the horns] have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” Does not this indicate that a concerted plan of action between the various powers and the Vatican (agreed upon after a process of discussion and planned strategy) will be channeled through the agencies already established for this purpose and for other purposes?

Great authority and backing, “power as *kings*” (verse 12), will be conceded and conferred upon the participants involved, aided by “lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:9). As world conditions worsen and become more anarchistic, the ten horns will be authorized to give the beast sweeping powers. It will be reasoned that Papacy has long stood for peace, equitable labor, and the populace, and has firmly opposed disorder and violence.

When Papacy consorted with the nations in the past, it was not for “one hour” (verse 12) but for 1,260 years. The burden of Daniel 7 stresses the *longevity* and the *degree* of papal power exercised in the Dark Ages, wherein it prospered for so long in crushing the saints. In contrast, Revelation 17 shows that in the very end of the Gospel Age, there will be a revival of papal power for *one hour* (perhaps a year). The Revelation account emphasizes the *surprise* element of the hour of power and the *brevity* of its duration before the beast “goeth into perdition” (verse 11)—into everlasting destruction, from which there will be no hope whatever of future resuscitation.

Verse 14:

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.

War with Lamb

At what point and in what sense will the ten horns “make war” with the “Lamb,” a spirit being possessing the divine nature? Answer: The war will start the moment the feet members of The Christ are apprehended and marked for extinction, for by that action the ten horns will demonstrate their opposition to the Lord. Consider the situation, and the principle enunciated, conversely: Jesus said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it [a good deed] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40). Thus the Lord commends those who help his chosen ones as though they are helping him. The opposite situation would be: He who injures one of the least of these is in opposition to Jesus. Therefore, the imprisonment and the death of the saints will be a breach or an act of war. This war is the “one hour with the beast” (verse 12). The Greek word for “hour” is *hora*. Jesus said of John the Baptist: “He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season [*hora*, meaning ‘time,’ ‘hour’—possibly one year, the length of John’s ministry before his imprisonment] to rejoice in his light” (John 5:35).

Retribution for Persecution

The Apostle Paul’s experiences illustrate the principle that those who are responsible for injuring the Lord’s little ones will receive retribution sooner or later (in this life or the next) in proportion to the degree that the injuries were willfully inflicted. In reviewing events that occurred before he became a disciple and an apostle, when his name was Saul, the Apostle Paul stated: “Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they [the saints] were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon as I went to

Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday . . . I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me. . . . I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* . . . And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*” (Acts 26:10–15). The risen Lord knew Paul’s true character; nevertheless, the Apostle received severe retributory experiences for some of those acts.

Second Psalm

The Second Psalm sheds light on the “war with the Lamb”: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, *against the LORD*, and *against his anointed*, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision” (2:1–4). This context does not refer to general conditions in the world. The Apostle Peter quoted this Scripture as having a fulfillment in connection with Jesus’ trial and crucifixion (Acts 4:25,26). When the Gentiles (the heathen, Pontius Pilate, the soldiers, etc.), the Jewish leaders (religious rulers Annas and Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin), and the Jewish populace (the people) were all charged as being responsible in varying degrees for Jesus’ death in fulfillment of the Second Psalm, the Apostle was not talking about conditions in the rest of the world but was speaking specifically about Jesus. At the end of the Jewish Age, the religious leaders of that nation took counsel against Jesus to undercut the influence of his ministry and to nullify any jeopardy to their own positions of prestige as a result of the Master’s teachings. They did so by arousing the people at his trial before Pilate with shouts of “Crucify him, crucify him”! This incitement of the people against Jesus was the rebellion—the raging of the heathen, or people—referred to by the Apostle Peter.

The Psalm applies to both “the LORD [God], and . . . *his anointed* [the Messiah, Head and body members].” Just as at the end of the Jewish Age, counsel was taken against the Head of the Church, so at the end of the Gospel Age, counsel will be taken against the feet members of the mystical body of Christ (Gen. 3:15). The people will be aroused by their leaders into thinking the feet members are the real troublemakers, the ones who are sowing the seeds of anarchy. The thought will be that if something is not done to quiet such as these, the whole “nation” (present civilization as it is now known) will perish. As a result, the feet members will be made a public example. Just as in crucifying Jesus, the leaders put to death the Innocent One but set at liberty Barabbas—a robber, murderer, and insurrectionist (Mark 15:7; Luke 23:18,19; John 18:40)—so the guiltless ones will be slain in the future. After the act of putting to death the feet members, of making war against the Lamb, the Lord of heaven “shall laugh . . . [and] have them [those responsible] in derision.” The Lamb will overcome the perpetrators *after* the glorification of the Church, for it will be seen that those who accompany the Lamb in the final conquest are the “called, and chosen, and faithful.” Only in the early stage of the warfare, before the Lamb makes his presence felt, will the tide of battle seem to favor the forces of the beast coalition. The Lamb will assume the leadership role in

harmony with the Bozrah picture (Isa. 63:1–6), but the Revelation scene (17:14; 19:11–16) shows that the Church shares in the victory.

Called, Chosen, and Faithful

The titles “Lord of lords” and “King of kings” refer not to Christ’s unquestioned authority over earthly potentates but to his authority over those “that are with him,” those possessing in fullness all three necessary qualifications for office in the *royal* priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9); namely, “called,” “chosen,” and “faithful.” These will share kingly honors with Christ. The *called* are those who attentively hearken to the gospel preached unto them. The *chosen* are those who respond to that message and who, in obedience to the call, wholly surrender themselves in consecration to do his will as their Lord, Saviour, and Teacher. The *faithful* are those who maintain supreme loyalty to Christ unto death and hence receive the crown of life and kingly powers (Rev. 1:6; 2:26,27; 3:21; 5:10).

Indeed the pope, the usurper, has wrongfully claimed the right over all nations to dispose of crowns and depose princes at his pleasure, as if he were “Lord of lords, and King of kings”!

Verse 15:

And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

The “peoples, and multitudes, and *nations*, and tongues” refer not to the multi-racial, the pluralistic, the multilingual society comprising merely the papal states but to an extension of *nations*, viz., the far corners of the earth. Therefore, the “peoples” classified mark the universality of the spiritual fornication of the woman, the apostate Church communion.

Attention is again called to the distinction between the Papacy and the woman. According to Boniface VIII in the bull “Unam Sanctam,” the papal insignia of the two swords and the two keys, in effect, represents the twofold dominion of the pope: (1) his spiritual and universal ecclesiastic domain as the mitred or crowned bishop of the Church (somewhat as the man hath dominion over the woman—editor); and (2) his own divinely sanctioned right (as the male or the Man of Sin—editor) to imperial or temporal supremacy as signified in his tiara crown. Thus the pope claims authority as the head of the Church and as the head of the Vatican State, which inherently is supposed to be superior to all other secular authority. The waters upon which the woman sits are reminiscent of the literal city of Babylon situated on the great river Euphrates.

In verse 1, John sees (in the present tense) the “great whore” sitting on “many waters,” not on the beast. Verse 15 gives an explanation of these waters on which the whore is seen sitting (again in the present tense) at the time of the vision, the time setting being the sixth head (verse 10). During the fifth head, the period of 1,260 years, the woman was seated on the beast; in the time of the sixth head and also in the “is not” period (presumably the seventh head), she sat on the waters; during the eighth head she will again be seated on the beast. The unusual fact is that the woman stays on the scene *regardless of circumstance*—whether on the beast or

on the waters in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth heads—whereas the beast is absent in the sixth and seventh conditions. By reason of this survival throughout, the woman, as the Church of Rome, boasts of herself as the “eternal city.”

Verse 16:

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.

Ten Horns upon the Beast

In verse 16, the original text of the Sinaitic and other ancient manuscripts contains the Greek word *kai* (“and”) instead of *epi* (“upon”). This would certainly seem to settle any dispute as to the true meaning intended with respect to the relationship between the horns and the beast. But contextual evidence does not support such a change or amendment of the text—in fact, it is quite to the contrary.

It is now necessary to determine whether the Scripture should be “the ten horns . . . *and* the beast” or “the ten horns . . . *upon* the beast.” That the correct thought is “*upon* the beast” (as in the Authorized Version) will be proven by reexamining several verses. Since verse 12 states that the ten horns are ten kings, the word “these” in verse 13 refers to just the ten horns: “These [the ten horns] . . . shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” Verse 14 continues in the same vein: “These [the ten horns] shall make war with the Lamb.” Verse 16, the one under particular consideration, states: “And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these [the ten horns] shall hate the whore.” And last but not least, verse 17 reads: “For God hath put in *their* [the ‘these,’ or the ten horns of the preceding verse] hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast.” To make the “these” of verse 13 and the “their” of verse 17 signify the “ten horns *and* the beast” would not make sense. Thus the context reveals that the clause in verse 16 should be rendered “the ten horns . . . *upon* the beast.”³

Prior to and *up to the moment of their disaffection*, the ten horns are a definite and integral part of the beast itself—but not thereafter. The Papacy, as an institution, will not hate Catholicism, its breath of life. When the beast died previously, the pope lost his headship over the sovereignty of the Vatican and papal states; but

3. Constantinus de Tischendorf, in a footnote (page 428) to the Greek text of his *Novum Testamentum*, indicates a preference for the substitution of the phrase “upon the beast” instead of “and the beast.” *Holy Bible: The New King James Version* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982)—“And the ten horns which you saw on the beast.” Robert Young, trans., *The Holy Bible* (London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.)—“And the ten horns that thou didst see upon the beast.” George Campbell, James Macknight, and Philip Doddridge, trans., *The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ, Commonly Styled the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1951)—“And the ten horns which you saw on the beast.” Ferrar Fenton, trans., *The New Testament in Modern English* (London: S. W. Partridge and Co., Ltd., 1922)—“The horns, too, which you saw upon the beast.” Ronald Knox, trans., *The Holy Bible: A Translation from the Latin Vulgate in the Light of the Hebrew and Greek Originals* (New York: Sheed & Ward, Inc., 1956)—“And the ten horns, which the beast had in thy vision.” *The Holy Bible* (Douay Version) (New York: Douay Bible House, 1938)—“And the ten horns which thou sawest in the beast.” *The Holy Bible* (Latin Vulgate) (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1914)—“And the ten horns which thou sawest in the beast.”

the pope, speaking in broad terms, has never lost his headship over the Catholic Church since the original usurpation of that office.

The Beast, a Religious Government

Today the Vatican State is a beast, or government. Its lay college and governing body—its lay diplomats also—are a counterpart of the machinery of government patterned in other nations. The cardinals, bishops, etc., of the Catholic Church are the members in particular of the woman. The pope is the head of the Vatican State as well as the head of the woman, an ecclesiastical body. The pope is the head of a secular form of government, and he is the head of an ecclesiastical form of government. This dual office and authority of the pope are so intricately intertwined that the Papacy might well be described as a religious government. Though the two functions are separate and distinct, to the outside observer they appear synonymous. The woman riding the beast does not, in effect, represent the woman riding the dragon. The statement that the dragon gave its seat to the beast (Rev. 13:2) proves the dragon is separate from the beast. Therefore, when this dual feature is considered, it is incorrect to understand that the woman represents the Church as an ecclesiastical body and the beast represents civil government, that is, government other than the Vatican State. Even the difference in color marks the distinction between the beast and the dragon, the beast being scarlet and the dragon being red. A further proof of their separateness is the fact that the dragon and the beast are on the scene at the same time in Revelation 16:13.

At the conclusion of this rather lengthy explanation of the Papacy, a letter, providentially it seems, was called to the writer's attention. An excerpt is quoted here because it is pertinent and relevant to the subject at hand. The letter was written on United States Department of State letterhead on March 12, 1984, by John Hughes, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and Department Spokesman. (The emphasis is added.)

“In the desire to further promote existing mutual friendly relations, the United States and the Holy See announced the establishment of diplomatic relations on January 10, 1984. This is not a question of recognition on our part. The United States has long recognized the Holy See as having an *international personality distinct from the Roman Catholic Church*.

“The United States and the Vatican have maintained close contacts for some time. In recent years, we have had representation in Vatican City in the person of the President's Personal Representative to the Holy See. President Roosevelt established this practice in 1939. What we are doing now is establishing diplomatic relations.

“Our Ambassador will be accredited to the Holy See, an *international focal point of diplomatic contact*. We join 107 other nations, including all our major Western allies, in establishing diplomatic relations with the Holy See. It is an internationally-recognized *sovereign entity* which is represented at such international organizations as the United Nations and the Organization of American States. The Holy See has entered into international treaties, some of which the U.S. Government has also signed. Vatican City is an independent city state, under the jurisdiction of the Holy See. *The Holy See is in effect the government with which our embassy will deal.*”

Hatred of the Whore

Verse 16 indicates a change in the energizing power to be supplied to the beast by the ten nations of the European commonwealth. (This power, which was formerly given through the outreach of the horns of the dragon, will, in the near future, be given through a corresponding outreach of the ten-horned beast to its central headquarters in Rome.) When this relationship sours, both the new national representatives of the various powers and the resident nunciature papal delegates and others will turn from their prior allegiance to the papal beast (2 Kings 9:32,33). This withdrawal of support will result in the sudden downfall of the papal dominion. Next the people will realize that in back of all papal pretensions lies the religion that has stupefied and made the nations drunk, leading to the blind submission of the masses. Now awakened, the masses will angrily vent their wrath against the whore who bewitched them.

When lovers of liberty note the despotism and cruelty in the future newfound power of the Papacy, it will be a startling reminder that the leopard beast has not changed its spots after all but is the same system of old which, only for a time, has lain dormant. With disgust they will suddenly and violently cast down the beast to oblivion. The destruction of the beast (verse 11) will precede ever so slightly that of the woman (verse 16), but Chapter 17 does not make this distinction, for the angel in verse 1 stated: “Come hither; I will shew unto thee the *judgment of the great whore.*”

When the Roman Church ceases to exist, when the Catholic religion becomes a thing of the past, how could the papal beast remain behind to be dealt with? In the past the temporal dominion of the Papacy ceased once, but the religion of the Church did not expire—it survived. On the other hand, if Catholicism were abolished altogether, how could the dominion or the sovereignty of the Vatican continue to be legally sanctioned or recognized or even to exist? The papal beast will debase immediately when the hour of power expires, but the woman, at this same point in time, will meet her fate in progressive stages. “These [the ten horns] shall *hate* the whore [an estrangement reminiscent of the diversion of the waters of the Euphrates, which formerly both supported and barred enemy access into mystical Babylon], and shall make her *desolate* [corresponding to the drying up of the riverbed of the great river] and *naked* [Babylon being exposed and vulnerable to attack, her face being unveiled and her body disrobed to reveal her sin and her shame—Isa. 47:1–3; Ezek. 16:35–43; Jer. 2:33,34; 13:22,26; Nahum 3:5], and shall *eat her flesh* [Babylon’s goods being completely confiscated and Jezebel being devoured by (Gentile) dogs—1 Kings 21:23], and *burn her with fire* [the corpse of the harlot daughter of the priest being assigned to the fate prescribed in Leviticus 21:9].”

Verse 17:

For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

The mere statement “*God hath put [the prophetic past tense being used for the future] in their [the ten horns’] hearts to fulfil his will*” suggests that this consortium to grant such power and authority to Papacy was, from the standpoint of those

living contemporaneously with the sixth head (and for that matter ever since), an *impossible* development.

The Lord accomplishes His purposes in various ways without necessarily interfering directly in man's freedom of choice. For example, He will create or shape circumstances (in this instance, fear of anarchy) with full knowledge of how men will react to those events; or He will providentially arrange that certain select individuals come into positions of influence where, through their own volition, they will accomplish what is necessary to fulfill prophecy.

The Lord has all along exercised authority, suzerainty, in the affairs of mankind; and with full acknowledgment of His right to do so, the Apostle Paul cited the case of Pharaoh, who was king of Egypt at the time of the Exodus and the deliverance of Israel (Rom. 9:17). The Apostle declared that God had raised Pharaoh up for this very purpose. The thought is not, however, that God had effected a bad character in Pharaoh—that God had “raised him up” in the sense of compelling him to be a bad character. Among the various heirs to the throne of Egypt according to the customs of that people, God so ordered, through the death of some of the intervening members of the royal family, that this particular Pharaoh should come to the throne *because he possessed such an obstinate character* that his fight against God and Israel would justly call for the plagues. God had foreordained the plagues not only as a mark of His favor toward Israel and of His faithfulness to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob but, additionally, because the plagues upon Egypt were intended to foreshadow, to illustrate, the plagues with which this Gospel Age will end—the “seven last plagues” (Rev. 15:1).⁴

Therefore, God will “put in their hearts to fulfil his will” by so ordering circumstances and events as to induce the rulers of Europe, the ten powers, to reason of their own accord that in order to stem the tide of anarchy, it will be necessary to invoke the leadership of the Papacy. In reality, however, the coalition will bring about the dissolution of the present order preparatory to the establishment of God's own Kingdom. This short-lived union will but further exacerbate matters, causing violence, death, and destruction in the earth. In God's due time the earth will figuratively cast forth its dead; that is, the graves will be opened and death's prisoners called forth. Such as hearken to Messiah's voice and obey his instruction will walk up the highway of holiness to life everlasting.

Verse 18:

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

The attention of the reader is brought back from the future to the present, to the time the woman is seated on the waters. This concluding verse of the chapter is slightly different from verses 1 and 15. While the scene is located within the time frame of the sixth head, attention now appears to be drawn to the close of the sixth-head condition when the woman reigns as a city (as a solely religious government) in the absence of temporal sovereignty.

4. *The New Creation, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1958 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1904), pp. 173, 175.

A clear distinction must be made between the pope's acting in the dual capacity of a temporal and a religious sovereign and his being only a sacerdotal ruler. The pope (each pope in his turn) is the head of the false Church (the adulterous woman), even as Christ is the head of his virgin Church espoused to be his wife. The setting of verse 18 is probably the very year 1870 when on July 18 the headship of the Catholic Church assumed, in some respects, the highest spiritual exaltation to which it could aspire. On that day Pius IX, as spokesman for the "Mother Church," decreed the dogma of papal infallibility; that is, the occupant of the papal chair, then and since, in all his decisions when he speaks *ex cathedra* in regard to faith and morals is infallible. In that same year, just two months later on September 20, the Papacy was shorn of its last vestige of temporal power. Rome was declared the capital of the united kingdom of Italy, and it became the seat of Victor Emmanuel II. During the sixth head or condition, the Catholic Church lacked temporal authority and, at most, was but a paper tiger. During the seventh head or condition, the pope had not the slightest temporal sovereignty; he was, as it were, a prisoner under house arrest but preferred to be thought of as living in self-imposed exile.

Nevertheless, the woman is described as "that great city," i.e., mystical Babylon. The Sinaitic manuscript represents the woman as reigning over the *kingdoms* of the earth, emphasizing more her rulership over those subjects under obedience and allegiance to foreign governments. This thought would be in harmony with the woman being situated upon and receiving the support of the "waters" (verses 1 and 15)—the peoples of various nations.

Catholicism is so entrenched that even today, when the Church is outwardly shorn of civil dominion, it still rules the world and controls kingdoms secretly, under cover, more thoroughly than any of the Caesars ever ruled the nations subordinate to them. In regard to the outskirts of the Roman Empire, the rulers suffered certain infractions and as a rule only sent troops to suppress actual insurrections. The power of the Catholic Church exceeded that of the Caesars in universality and uniformity of dominion. Its power has been, and still is, equated to and graduated right out to the extremities of the globe. The Church's influence has been broader in scope than that of any other one nation or world power.

Armageddon and Marriage of Lamb

Part VI: Chapters 18–20

Revelation Chapter 18

Verse 1:

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

This different angel seen by John descending from heaven with an effulgence of power proceeding from his person, the effect of which causes the illumination of the earth, is none other than Jesus, the Messenger of the Covenant, in whom Christians delight (Mal. 3:1). Verse 1 refers to the Second Advent of Christ in the year 1874.¹ The earth being “lightened with his glory” alludes to the blessings promised to those who waited patiently for the expiration of the 1,335 days (years) spoken of by the Prophet Daniel (12:12). The blessings include the secret, invisible initial presence of the Master himself and the attendant increase of spiritual knowledge and understanding of God’s Word that has unfolded since 1874, as well as the great strides in medicine, science, communication, travel, and the manufacture and sale of laborsaving devices for the farm, the home, and industry.

This text does not pertain to the manifestation of Jesus’ glory to the nations because the enlightenment of verse 1 precedes both the fall of Babylon (verse 2) and the exercise of Jesus’ great power, yet future, which is treated in more detail in the next chapter.

Verse 2:

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.

The destruction of Babylon is not being emphasized. The first part of verse 2 in the Greek text of the Sinaitic manuscript reads: “And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen is Babylon the Great.” Only *one* fall is mentioned here and in Revelation 14:8. The mystical city, under the similitude of a woman (Rev. 17:18), had, at this point in time, reached a zenith accumulation of iniquity that necessitated her fall from divine favor. The sentence given was final and irrevocable. Of course, this indicates that her execution would follow at some time in the future.

The preceding chapter concluded with the scene of the woman seated on the waters (Rev. 17:1,15,18) during the sixth head or condition passing over the beast. Now the reader is introduced into the seventh head or cycle, in which the beast continues on in the “is not” state (Rev. 17:8,11), and it remains in this mode until the

1. This subject is explained in a convincing and comprehensive manner in *The Time Is at Hand, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1889), Ser. 2, chaps. 5–6.

eighth and last form. During this last state, the beast begins its ascent out of the pit en route to its future “hour of power.”

It is remarkable that only eight years separate the beginning of the period of the *seventh head* of the beast (A.D. 1870) from the year A.D. 1878. And 1878 affixes the date of the commencement of the *seventh message* to the Church (Rev. 3:14); the year of the *seventh Spirit* before God’s throne (Rev. 1:4; 3:22); the year of the *seventh horn and eye* of the Lamb (Rev. 5:6); the year of the opening of the *Seventh Seal* (Rev. 8:1); the year of the sounding of the *Seventh Trumpet* (Rev. 11:15); the year of the sounding of the *last trump* (the trump of God), in which the dead in Christ are raised first and the announcement is made, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth” (1 Cor. 15:51–53; 1 Thess. 4:14–17; Rev. 14:13); and the year of the *fall of Babylon from favor* (Rev. 18:2).

Verse 2 concludes, “Babylon . . . is become the habitation of devils, and the hold [Greek *phulake*] of every foul spirit, and a cage [Greek *phulake*] of every unclean and hateful bird.” The context does not allude to Isaiah 13:19–22 and 14:23 as some seem to imagine, for Isaiah describes a condition that followed the complete annihilation of literal Babylon. Why cannot the prior portion of verse 2 (“Babylon the great is fallen”) refer to the utter destruction of the city as an already accomplished fact? Because in verse 4 the cry is made to “Come out of her, my people.” How unnecessary such counsel would be if Babylon were already in ruins!

The picture presented in verse 2 is that of Babylon as a great prison house—“the habitation of devils”—and the prison keepers are the invisible demons (Eph. 6:12; Heb. 2:14,15; 2 Cor. 4:4). It is the abode of every foul doctrine of demons (1 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 2:13; 16:14) seen in such teachings as literal hellfire torment (Jer. 19:5; 32:35), the Trinity (John 17:20–23), immortality of the soul (Satan’s lie—Gen. 3:4; Ezek. 18:4,20), and deathbed absolution from sin, in which the worst criminal, if he can but time his decease so that he receives this holy(?) unction, or anointing, an instant before death, becomes as innocent as a newborn babe.

“How true it is, that the most execrable of society seek and wear the garb of Christian profession and ceremonialism, in some of the various quarters (sects) of Babylon. Every impure principle and doctrine, somehow and somewhere, finds representation in her. And she is a ‘cage’ which holds securely not only the Lord’s meek and gentle doves, but also many unclean and hateful birds. Of all the defaulters, and deceivers of men and of women, how many are professedly members of Christ’s Church! And how many even use their profession as a cloak under which to forward evil schemes! It is well known that a majority of even the most brutal criminals executed die in the Roman Catholic communion.

“Babylon has contained both the best and the worst, both the cream and the dregs, of the population of the civilized world.”²

Babylon is seen as the “cage of every unclean and hateful bird [the fowl of the night, birds of prey—Lev. 11:13–20].” It is the cage in which the dung of these unclean birds accumulates. Because of this unclean element being in the midst of

2. *Thy Kingdom Come, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1959 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1890), Ser. 3, p. 162.

her precincts, from the Lord's standpoint she has become the repository of filth and stench. The fact that every unclean and hateful bird is seen to roost in Babylon indicates a laxity; that is, little distinction is made between the truly consecrated and the unconsecrated. Thus the unclean outnumber the clean. The Lord's wheat field has become a field of tares (Matt. 13:24–30).

Verse 3:

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

Three classes are categorized as being influenced by her behavior. (1) “*All nations* [inhabitants of the earth—Rev. 17:2] have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Protestantism is embraced in the term “Babylon,” which includes both mother and daughters (Rev. 17:5). All *have been made drunk*, losing their sense of discernment between good and evil. (2) “*Kings*” represent the rulers or political leadership. The Church-State relationship constitutes spiritual *fornication* on the part of the civil rulership and *harlotry* on the part of the woman. (3) “*Merchants*” are those who profit from the system in any way. A comprehensive term, “merchants” includes financiers, craftsmen, architects, contractors, clothiers—any engaged with the professed Church in commercial enterprise. Such are “*waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*” Today the news media reveal that the Roman Catholic Church owns many corporations throughout the world through business ties, stocks, and bonds. With such far-reaching and profitable acquisitions, it is no wonder many feel the Church should not be exempt from taxation. In view of the extent and pervading influence of this religious social order, the apostolic admonition applies: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

Verse 3 for the greater part, with the exception of the reference to the merchants, is a repeat of Revelation 17:2. Why, therefore, again call attention to Babylon's pernicious influence? Those who wish to please the Lord and follow His leading are being prepared to obey the admonition of the next verse.

Verse 4:

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.

The voice that spoke in verses 2 and 3 was Jesus'. The voice now speaking in verse 4 is none other than that of the Heavenly Father addressing His (“*my*”) people. The situation in mystic Babylon is similar to that of the Jews when they were confined within the walls of literal Babylon. God, through the Prophet Jeremiah, revealed to the Israelites residing in the city back there what He purposed to do. He intended to destroy Babylon, which was formerly employed as His instrument (Jer. 25:9), and He even explained the gory details—*long before* the destruction actually happened. Is not the city's fall from favor implied? The city had

outlived its usefulness. The Lord's message (i.e., forewarning) was an appeal to the faithful living in exile to forsake Babylon when they would see the impending siege (Jer. 50:8; 51:6). The faithful left the seeming security and prosperity of the city and removed to the countryside. This departure required the exercise of faith and, no doubt, a considerable degree of sacrifice—financial and otherwise—on the part of those who obeyed God's instruction.

At this end of the Gospel Age, two classes are involved. One class heeded the warning and leave mystic Babylon of their own volition; they come out freely *in advance* of the trouble. Not all who leave Babylon early are of the Very Elect, however, for there are other mitigating factors. The Little Flock, as a class, depart from Babylon the moment they are cognizant that she fell from divine favor in 1878. The other class tarry until events and circumstances compel them *to flee* at the very last moment. Lot (representative of the Great Company) and his immediate family were almost literally dragged out of Sodom the very morning of its destruction. The Great Company are plucked out of the midst of the fire (Jude 23); their flight is in the winter of earth's antitypical sabbath day (Matt. 24:20; Jer. 8:20). Once enlightened, those who remain in the precincts of Babylon—even though they refrain from her sinful deeds—become partakers of her sins and thus are liable to the distress and chagrin of the seven last plagues.

It was shown in Chapter 16 that the plagues were poured subsequent to 1878, the first one being activated in 1886. Here, in Chapter 18, the premise is the same. Upon the Lord's return (verse 1), but after the fall of Babylon from favor in 1878 and the call to come out of her (verses 2 and 4), the seven plagues—though not mentioned—are emptied, one by one, in sequential fashion before the fulfillment of verse 8, soon to be explained.

Verse 5:

For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Cornelius, the centurion, was “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway” (Acts 10:2). Although God could not fully respond to the good deeds of the centurion because of a prior commitment, He kept a record of them. These deeds accumulated as “a memorial before God” until A.D. 36, the year marking the termination of the seventy weeks ($70 \times 7 = 490$ years) of *exclusive favor* promised to Israel (Acts 10:4). At this point in time, the prayers of Cornelius were answered: the Holy Spirit came upon this Gentile convert just as it had come three years earlier upon the Jewish converts to Christ at Pentecost in A.D. 33.

In similar manner but not in similar kind, Babylon's bloodguilt and sins accumulated for centuries until they reached up into heaven demanding, as it were, recognition. The Lord foresaw and declared, “I gave her space [Greek *chronos*] to repent of her fornication [A.D. 1157 + 360 = A.D. 1517]; and she repented not” (Rev. 2:21). A second opportunity of repentance was afforded to Babylon: “I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, . . . 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 it was said unto

them, that they should rest yet for a . . . season³ [*chronos*—A.D. 1517 + 360 = spring of A.D. 1878]” (Rev. 6:9–11). After two opportunities to repent, Babylon still has not shown any remorse for her dreadful deeds of the past. Therefore, her fate is sealed and the execution of that penalty draweth nigh.

Verse 6:

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.

The Sinaitic omission of the pronoun “you” helps to remove an apparent difficulty in understanding the opening clause of this verse. It clarifies the meaning to translate the passage thus: “Reward [render unto] her even as she rewarded [rendered unto] *others*.” The Christian, during his earthly sojourn, is to “fight the good fight of *faith*” and not to battle with carnal weapons inflicting corporal punishment. Neither are followers of the Lamb to return evil for evil or slander for slander (Rom. 12:17), for they are enjoined to combat error only with the sword of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth. The command to “double unto her double according to her works” cannot refer to the imposition of a new dispensational double in time or to a form of retribution twice as severe as Babylon rendered to others. What, then, is the thought behind these two injunctions to “reward” and “double”?

The solution lies in the statement concluding the verse: “in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.” The apostate Church has assumed the role of being the sole authorized teacher of the Bible and, accordingly, has dispensed to others the purported elixir of life drawn from that receptacle of truth. This “cup,” however, has been filled with a mixed wine of truth and error, which produces a stupefying drink. Combining, therefore, all three elements of the verse—the rewarding, the doubling, and the filling of the cup—indicates the form of retribution performed by the saints this side of the veil. The retribution is to be along doctrinal lines; namely, exposing popular errors and espousing unpopular truths, and countering Papacy’s fraudulent scriptural claims with the true application of Holy Writ.

Verse 7:

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.

For over a century the mother Church and her daughters have had a comfortable and prosperous living. This Laodicean adequacy and complacency (“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing”—Rev. 3:17) is also reflected in the papal Church viewing herself as “a queen, and . . . no widow.” Her claim of nonwidowhood is predicated upon the supposed unbroken chain of apostolic succession of her popes (acting as head of the Church), who have survived despite the loss of temporal dominion.

Her further boast that she “shall see no sorrow” reveals the Babylonian spirit of pride and vain security while under long-term siege before sudden destruction. The

3. “Little” is omitted in the Sinaitic manuscript.

order from God, “so much torment and sorrow give her,” pertains to the pouring of the plagues, particularly the seventh, which will be delivered with energy and conviction yet in the spirit of meekness, aided and directed by the Lord’s grace.

“Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans [Babylonians]: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms. . . . And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly [confidently], that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection [completeness] for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments” (Isa. 47:5,7–9).

Verse 8:

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Immediately there comes to attention a listing in the reverse order of what might be expected: “death, and mourning, and famine.” Normally, death might be seen as the logical culmination of this sequence. But, on second thought, the order as given is the reality or norm in many instances. First, the notable or loved one deceases; next a funeral service is held followed by the burial, both of which are associated with a period of weeping and mourning; then follows a void, or vacuum, in the lives of close relatives and friends left behind in the land of the living.

When Catholic and Protestant systems cease to function and the tare element is burned, there will exist on the part of the populace a general aversion to all standard forms of ceremonial worship. Those former communicants of orthodoxy, the common people who survive, will not mourn that which they themselves have come to despise. The mourners will be those who were enriched and who specially profited in earthly affluence, goods, and power through an unholy alliance and too close an affiliation with the worldly Church; they will sorrow for their loss of revenue and former manner of livelihood.

When a city is utterly destroyed in fulfillment of prophecy, the ensuing void—that is, the desolation and ruins of the site—is commonly described as the haunt and habitation of wild beasts. “Babylon shall become heaps [mounds of ruins covered by the sands of time], a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant” (Jer. 51:37). Moreover, the Scriptures indicate that with the fall of mystic Babylon, the world’s wealth will become worthless; silver and gold will be figuratively cast into the streets (Ezek. 7:19; Zeph. 1:18). Money will become worthless, for stores will be depleted of food and wares; there will be nothing to purchase. Farmers will not sow seed or plant crops only to have them plundered. Therefore, the famine, as well as the mourning, will be sudden. The fall of literal Babylon was so sudden that at the very time Daniel was interpreting the handwriting on the wall, a runner was on his way to King Belshazzar’s palace to report that a breach had been made in the city by the enemy. That very night—while the king

was banqueting and making sport of the Lord's Temple vessels—the messenger arrived with news of the invasion. Belshazzar was slain before morning.

Babylon's plagues—death, mourning, and famine—shall come “in *one day*.” These three plagues are not the same as the earlier seven (message) plagues. The seven plagues occur not in “one day” but over a longer period of time. Furthermore, the mourning and the famine take place *after* Babylon's demise, while the seven plagues and the drying up of the river Euphrates *precede* her destruction. The term “one day” in verse 8 is synonymous with the “one hour” of Revelation 17:12 and 18:10,17,19. The emphasis is on the *suddenness* and the completeness of the destruction more than on the time element. The plagues in Revelation 18 begin with and follow Babylon's death.

“She shall be utterly burned with fire.” For example, if an individual is slain and considered not fit for burial, the corpse cannot be left to lie around indefinitely to decay and stink. For the common good, the dead victim is finally and completely disposed of and the air is purified—by fire. With mystic Babylon such utter destruction signifies there will be no revival or recurrence. The harlot system will collapse never to rise again.

“For strong is the Lord God who judgeth [hath judged—verse 2] her.” Babylon is Satan's masterpiece of deception. Therefore, the One who would destroy the harlot must contend with the Adversary and be stronger and mightier than he. It is prophesied that the god of this world, Satan, will, with all the power at his command, resist every attempt to overthrow his empire among men (2 Thess. 2:9). This future judgment is expressed here as an already accomplished fact. Verses 9 through 20 continue in this same vein.

Verse 9:

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

Verse 10:

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

This scene follows the perdition of the beast and the desolation of the whore as testified by the sight of “the smoke of her burning.” The expression “kings of the earth” applies in a primary sense to the ten horns, or powers of Europe, and in a secondary manner to the kings “of the whole world”—Christendom (Rev. 16:14). The term “kings of the earth” had a historical application prior to the scene presently under consideration (Rev. 17:2; 18:3). However, in the time frame now set before the reader, the application of this term follows (a) the destruction of the beast (Rev. 17:8,11) and (b) the death of the woman (Rev. 17:16).

In the previous chapter the ten horns, or powers, are said to be ten kings (Rev. 17:12) who give their support to the beast (Rev. 17:13). Yet the same ten horns are said to “hate the whore” (Rev. 17:16). This hatred manifested by the horns needs closer scrutiny. The angel who addresses the Apostle John points backward in time:

“the ten horns which thou sawest [*previously*] upon the beast [i.e., when you were translated in spirit back into the wilderness scene, in which the woman rode the *ten-horned beast*—Rev. 17:3].” The angel is referring to the ten horns seen *back there* upon the beast. But the angel in Revelation 17:16 does not state either (a) that the beast hates the whore or (b) that the beast actually exists *at the time the whore is made desolate*.

The Papacy will cease to exist as a temporal power, as a beast, the moment the ten horns become disenchanting and withdraw their support completely, failing to recognize in any sense the legitimacy of the Holy See. It will logically follow that, because of unprecedented and tumultuous circumstances, the pope will be defrocked and the Vatican vandalized and left in ruins. But Catholicism as a religious institution *will still remain momentarily*. Revelation 17:16 refers to the desolation of the whore by the ten horns—apart from the nonexistent beast.

The term “kings of the earth” (verse 9) marks the identity of the former regime that exercised control over the horns, which in turn gave their support to the beast for the duration of its “one hour” of power. The “one hour,” at this point in time, *has just expired*—as indicated by the sight of the burning. The separation (Rev. 16:19) and removal “afar off” (verse 10) of the ten kings is due not to hatred but to discretion, based on trepidation and fear, lest they share the same dire fate of the beast and the woman. Their lamentation and cry of “Alas, alas” express anguish and sorrow for the loss of a luxuriant way of life with its attendant privilege, prestige, and power.

The departure of the old regime, of these former rulers of the nations of Europe, at this future point in time does not mean the ten powers will be without leadership; rather, it indicates that a counterrevolution takes place in which a new and radical regime replaces the old. The rulership changes and a different set of kings controls the same horns, which now hate the whore.

Verse 11:

*And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her;
for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:*

Verse 12:

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 vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

Verse 13:

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.

Verse 14:

And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

The “merchants” would be the businessmen in the nominal Church in one capacity or another: financiers, contractors, etc. Not only will the merchants be involved, but there will be hatred toward them as well as toward the religious leaders. In the French Revolution the clergy, the political leaders, the nobility, and the wealthy were all ferreted out for punishment by the masses. If it were not for the promises of the Kingdom, this picture would be very dark indeed.

The various articles of commerce enumerated do not require particular consideration. Since the meaning is generalized, treating the items too specifically would get the picture out of focus. The whole is calculated to convey, in the most impressive manner possible, some idea of the splendor, luxury, abundance, self-indulgence, and excess of all kinds of which the Church has become the recipient. A vast number of other individuals have also been enriched but at the expense and impoverishment of the nations belonging to the Roman Catholic persuasion.

Nor is it necessary to accommodate the various particulars to the several kinds of spiritual merchandise that enrich the popes, cardinals, bishops, abbots, priests, and other retainees. Why not? Because the list of merchandise is *not the spiritual benefits* the Church purchases for itself but the *earthly benefits*. The goods are temporal, not spiritual—even as Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage (Gen. 25:34; Heb. 12:16). If one ponders each item recorded for sale to the Church, in what way could spiritual benefits be acquired by a *worldly* Church from the “merchants of the earth”?

The apostate Church was able to purchase for itself the rich store of goods itemized in verses 12 and 13 through the sale or barter of its own (unlisted) imaginary spiritual wares, fabrications, and fascinating allurements: impostures, dispensations, indulgences, absolutions, Masses for the dead, simony, and the sale, viewing, or handling of relics considered most sacred. Other purported gifts and favors attracted “slaves,” men and women, to become servants of the Church and devote their minds, bodies, and souls as unto God. These served as nonsalaried monks, nuns, maids, butlers, and so on.

“In the church of All Saints, at Wittemberg [*sic*], were shown a piece of Noah’s Ark—a small portion of soot from the furnace of the Three Young Men [Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 3:20)—Ed.]—a bit of the manger in which our Saviour was laid—hair from the beard of the great [St.] Christopher; and nineteen thousand other relics of greater or less value. At Schaffhausen was shown the breath of St. Joseph, which Nicodemus had received into his glove. In Wurtemberg, a vendor of indulgences was seen selling his wares, and having his head adorned with a large feather, plucked from the wing of the archangel Michael. But there was no occasion to go to a distance in quest of these precious treasures. Persons with hired relics travelled the country, and hawked them about . . . those travelling hawkers paid a fixed sum to the owners, and also gave them so much per centage on their returns.”⁴

4. J. H. Merle D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1872), p. 9.

“Indulgences, *in the Romish church* [emphasis added], are a remission of the punishment due to sin, granted by the church, and supposed to save the sinner from purgatory.

“According to the doctrine of the Romish church, all the good works of the saints, over and above those which were necessary towards their own justification, are deposited, together with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, in one inexhaustible treasury. The keys of this were committed to St. Peter, and to his successors, the popes, who may open it at pleasure, and, by transferring a portion of this superabundant merit to any particular person for a sum of money, may convey to him either the pardon of his own sins, or a release for any one in whom he is interested from the pains of purgatory. Such indulgences were first invented in the eleventh century, by Urban II. as a recompence [*sic*] for those who went in person upon the glorious enterprise of conquering the Holy Land. They were afterwards granted to those who hired a soldier for that purpose; and in process of time were bestowed on such as gave money for accomplishing any pious work enjoined by the pope. The power of granting indulgences has been greatly abused in the church of Rome. Pope Leo X., in order to carry on the magnificent structure of St. Peter’s, at Rome, published indulgences, and a plenary remission to all such as should contribute money towards it. Finding the project take, he granted to Albert, elector of Mentz, and archbishop of Magdeburg, the benefit of the indulgences of Saxony, and the neighbouring parts, and farmed out those of other countries to the highest bidders: who, to make the best of the bargain, procured the ablest preachers to cry up the value of the ware. The form of these indulgences was as follows:—‘May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion. And I, by his authority, that of his blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, and of the most holy pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first from all ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred; then from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be: even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see, and as far as the keys of the holy church extend. I remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory on their account: and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism: so that when you die, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened; and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.’ According to a book, called the Tax of the sacred Roman Chancery, in which are contained the exact sums to be levied for the pardon of each particular sin, we find some of the fees to be thus:

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
“For procuring abortion	7	6
For simony	10	6
For sacrilege	10	6
For taking a false oath in a criminal case	9	0
For robbing	12	0
For burning a neighbour’s house	12	0

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
For defiling a virgin	9	0
For lying with a mother, sister, &c.	7	6
For murdering a layman	7	6
For keeping a concubine	10	6
For laying violent hands on a clergyman	10	6
And so on.		

“The terms in which the retailers of indulgences described their benefits, and the necessity of purchasing them, were so extravagant that they appear almost incredible. ‘If any man,’ said they, ‘purchase letters of indulgence, his soul may rest secure with respect to its salvation. The souls confined in purgatory, for whose redemption indulgences are purchased, as soon as the money tinkles in the chest, instantly escape from that place of torment, and ascend into heaven. That the efficacy of indulgences was so great, that the most heinous sins, even if one should violate (which was impossible) the Mother of God, would be remitted and expiated by them, and the person be freed both from punishment and guilt. That this was the unspeakable gift of God, in order to reconcile man to himself. That the cross erected by the preachers of indulgences was equally efficacious with the cross of Christ itself.’ ‘Lo,’ said they, ‘the heavens are open: if you enter not now, when will you enter? For twelve pence you may redeem the soul of your father out of purgatory; and are you so ungrateful that you will not rescue the soul of your parent from torment? If you had but one coat, you ought to strip yourself instantly, and sell it, in order to purchase such benefit,’ &c. It was this great abuse of indulgences that contributed not a little to the reformation of religion in Germany, where Martin Luther began first to declaim against the preachers of indulgences, and afterwards against indulgences themselves. Since that time the popes have been more sparing in the exercise of this power. . . .”⁵

Verse 15:

The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

Verse 16:

And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

Verse 17:

For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

5. Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary*, Stereotype ed. (Philadelphia: Joseph J. Woodward, 1829), 2 Vols. in 1, pp. 261–262.

Verse 18:

And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

Verse 19:

And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

The “merchants of the earth” and the “kings of the earth” are the two classes to have materially benefited the most from their relationship to the Roman Church (verses 9 and 11). Now, in the ongoing scene of Revelation 18, both classes share the same fears and have suffered similar losses. The chief customer of the merchants has just deceased, along with her costly tastes (verse 19). The king and merchant classes stand afar off, fearfully weeping and wailing over her demise and saying, “Alas, alas, that great city” (verses 9, 10, 15, and 16). And again the destruction is said to occur in the “one hour” of power (verses 10 and 19).

Tyre, Literal and Symbolic

Earlier in the Apocalypse the Lady Kingdom was pictured as Babylon the Great situated on the Euphrates, the river on which ships brought up their wealth of goods. The word “merchandise” (*gomos*) in the Greek signifies the lading, or cargo, of a ship (verse 12). In verses 15 through 19, the repeated use of nautical terms to describe Babylon as a great maritime power, together with the close parallelism, in many respects, to the experiences and symbolisms of mystic Tyre (Ezekiel 26 and 27), suggests that Tyre is another alias or synonym for mystic Babylon the Great. Before the Christian era two different sites were called “Tyre,” and both were destroyed. (1) *Ancient Tyre* was on the mainland, and it took King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon thirteen years to conquer and destroy the city by siege. (2) Rebuilt as *insular Tyre*, an island one-half mile offshore from its former location, the city was conquered again three centuries later.

Insular Tyre, isolated from the seashore and fortified with an extremely high wall, appeared to be unassailable even by a greater rival maritime power. But in 332 B.C. Alexander the Great employed the unexpected stratagem of constructing an earthen causeway of great magnitude to establish a connection to the isle of Tyre from the mainland. This was accomplished by scraping the ruins and debris of the old city, destroyed by the King of Babylon, into the water of the bay as landfill (or “sea fill”). Alexander the Great then succeeded in breaching the high wall of insular Tyre, bringing it into submission.

The prophecy of Ezekiel 26:1–3,5–13 pertains to Nebuchadnezzar’s land siege and desolation of the old city, whereas verses 4 and 14 remained to be fulfilled by Alexander three centuries later. Verse 15 represents a break in the narrative and diverts attention to the fate of the isle of Tyre; details more or less continue on through Ezekiel 27:1–9,26–36.

The point is that both insular Tyre, located in the midst of the sea, and Babylon, situated on the Euphrates River, were taken in a manner least expected; and both

were seen as centers of international commerce related to water transport. Spiritual Babylon (Revelation 17) is similarly seen as seated on many waters, deriving its support and revenues from a diversity of peoples, nations, and tongues. Mystic Babylon will also be surprised and taken in its hour of power.

The name “Tyre” is recorded forty-six times in the Hebrew Old Testament as *tsor* or *tsr*, which signifies *rock*. This definition calls to mind the proud boast of the Catholic Church (but later to its chagrin) that it is the rock against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. The true Rock is Christ (1 Cor. 10:4; Matt. 16:16–18), and in a broader sense the rock represents the true consortium of individual believers who recognize only the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ as the head of the Church.

With the Catholic Church centered in Rome, the Living Bible expresses in particularly appropriate language the testimony of Revelation 18:15–19 as follows:

And so the merchants who have become wealthy by selling her these things shall stand at a distance, fearing danger to themselves, weeping and crying, “Alas, that great city, so beautiful—like a woman clothed in finest purple and scarlet linens, decked out with gold and precious stones and pearls! In one moment, all the wealth of the city is gone!”

And all the shipowners and captains of the merchant ships and crews will stand a long way off, crying as they watch the smoke ascend, and saying, “Where in all the world is there another city such as this?” And they will throw dust on their heads in their sorrow and say, “Alas, alas, for that great city! She made us all rich from her great wealth. And now in a single hour all is gone. . . .”

Ashes of Grief

The merchants “cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing.” In Old Testament times an evidence of genuine, deep grief and anguish of spirit was to wear sackcloth and to rub ashes in the hair. These actions would be outward signs of intense inner grief. In verse 19 the merchants experience such emotion when they see “the smoke of her burning” (verse 18), that is, when they see Babylon actually *being consumed*.

In contrast, Revelation 14:11 and 19:3 do not mention the burning but state that Babylon’s smoke will rise up forever and ever. The burning will cease when the false systems have been utterly destroyed, but the cloud of smoke will remain, signifying that the lesson of false religion will be kept in perpetual remembrance. This principle is illustrated by the type of Queen Jezebel. When her own eunuchs pushed her out the window and dogs ate her remains, as prophesied by the Prophet Elijah, all that was left were her palms, feet, and skull (2 Kings 9:30–37). “Palms” represent Papacy’s foul deeds, “feet” picture the system’s conduct, and the “skull” would be Papacy’s identity—all of which will be remembered. But there was no body—and hence, throughout eternity, never again will this false religion revive or be resurrected.

Verse 20:

*Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets;
for God hath avenged you on her.*

The implication clearly comes through that the complete Church of Christ—that is, the Little Flock—will all be alive beyond the veil at the time final judgment is visited upon the false Church system. Peculiarly worthy of observation is the fact that the apostles (particularly Peter and Paul), who have for ages been idolatrously honored at Rome and falsely accredited as being the founding fathers of Catholicism, participate in this rejoicing. It is as if they are now “avenged . . . on her” for Papacy’s blasphemous misrepresentation of the glory and honor due the Father and the Son, and for the dishonor cast on the apostles’ own characters. For this reason judgments on Papal (not Pagan) Rome must be exclusively intended.

All down the age both the Roman and the Anglican churches have claimed apostolic succession. Instead of just the twelve apostles, more were designated. Holy Writ says, “Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” (Rev. 2:2). These church systems have taken unmerited credit. Those who maintain their association with Papacy must share its tribulation and woe. Therefore, God warns His people to forsake Babylon “that ye be not partakers of her sins, and . . . plagues” (Rev. 18:4).

The literal translation of verse 20 according to the Sinaitic should be: “Rejoice thou over her, ye heavens [the angels who desired to look into these things as a spectator host—1 Cor. 4:9; 1 Pet. 1:12], and the holy ones [the saints, the Little Flock—Rev. 6:9,10], and the apostles, and the prophets [primarily those of the ‘seven stars’ who are not apostles—Arius, Waldo, Wycliffe, etc.]: for God hath avenged you on her.” The Holy Spirit does not indicate the slightest disapproval of this soon-to-occur rejoicing in the judgments to be inflicted upon Babylon in the near future.

Verse 21:

And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

Millstones, which are used in pairs, are usually huge circular stones, flat on two sides, with a hole in the center. The lower stone may be fastened to or encircle a stake-like arrangement or be secured to a cogwheel set up to grind grain between an upper and this lower stone. The lower stone is stationary, and the upper stone is rotated by hand or animal or by water power. As the coarse grain is ground, the husk is broken, and wind or another fanning method blows away the chaff, leaving only the wheat germ or flour behind.

From the natural standpoint, the weight and size of the millstone would be impressive. This verse shows how the Lord will deal with the influential and powerful nominal systems. An individual would find it impossible to lift up such a huge stone and throw it into the sea. Such an act would require mighty power. Accordingly, The Christ, the *Herculean* (“mighty”) angel acting as God’s agent, will pick up the impressive, *weighty* stone and hurl it down violently (the Greek means “with vig-

orous impetuosity”) into the sea. John, who witnessed this act in vision, would be impressed with the size of the stone, then with the strength of the angel, and finally with the tremendous splash caused by the stone being cast into the sea. When the “great city” is destroyed in one hour, great will be the repercussion. Everybody will be affected when the false system is destroyed; figuratively, there will be a big splash.

Of Seraiah, a quiet prince, Jeremiah commanded: “And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates: And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her” (Jer. 51:63,64).

Concerning the Exodus, it is written: “Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. . . . they sank as lead in the mighty waters” (Exod. 15:4,5,10).

The mighty angel *taking up* “a stone like a great millstone” suggests a temporary lifting up of Babylon to a great height before it is cast down into the sea—the anarchistic masses.

Verse 22:

And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

Verse 23:

And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

The first grouping is that of music and musicians. The “voice of harpers” refers to those who are happy in the nominal Church; they play the Bible (make music) in their *own* way to the delight of themselves and others. Their joy can come from singing about and praising an activity or work rather than the Lord. All of these pipers, flute players, and noisemakers tell others how wonderful their sect is, but with many God is not well pleased.

After the musical aspect comes the working feature—the craftsmen—and then the millstone activity. The “sound of a millstone” refers to the noise the stone makes when grinding the grain; symbolically, this refers to the preparation of spiritual food. Just as the literal millstone monotonously grinds the grain, so the spiritual food turned out is often monotonous and false. Activity in the theological seminaries and the Sunday schools will come to a halt “because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel . . . to teach and to seduce my servants . . . to eat things sacrificed unto idols” (Rev. 2:20). Worldly philosophy and politics are often preached, and very little of the Bible. In the nominal Church are choirs, organists, the incantation of the litany, colorful vestments, incense, ceremonies, etc.—which many find pleasing, relaxing, and entertaining. Verse 22 shows that all these will cease.

Although the portion of text regarding the millstone is wanting in the Sinaitic manuscript, the thought is scripturally correct. There appears to be creditable evidence that the original copyist, in transferring characters from a more ancient original, inadvertently skipped two complete lines. Such an omission can more readily occur when a word or clause is often repeated, as here with the expression “shall be heard no more at all in thee.” The clause concerning the sound of the millstone not being heard anymore is found in the Alexandrian Codex and also in a companion text in the Old Testament about unfaithful nominal Israel, a type of Christendom: “Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the *sound of the millstones*, and the light of the candle” (Jer. 25:10).

“No craftsman . . . shall be found any more in thee.” “Craftsman” would include those who make images, icons, rosary beads, crucifixes, candles, and stained glass, as well as statuary, furniture, and fancy vestments. When such things are done away with, there will be no more employment in these areas. The building of churches and cathedrals has employed countless thousands.

“And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee.” The “light of a candle” refers to the light of truth, based on Revelation 2:1,5, where Jesus is described as walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. The Master likened the true Christian to the light of a candle that should not be hidden under a bushel but placed where it will be seen (Matt. 5:14–16).

“The voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee.” The “bridegroom” is Jesus, and the “bride,” of course, is the Church. The voice of *both* the bridegroom and the bride will cease in Babylon. Is the Church the “bride” in the present Gospel Age? No, she is an espoused virgin. Therefore, at the time of this vision’s fulfillment, the Church will be beyond the veil. This verse is another confirmation that the true Church will be off the earthly scene when Babylon meets its doom. The voice of a bride is the same both before and after marriage; she may be happier when married, but the voice is the same. In other words, in natural life a person talks with the same voice whether single or married. Verse 23 states that at the time of the fulfillment of the vision, the voices of the same personalities who are *now* the Bridegroom and the Bride, but who were *formerly* heard in Babylon, are no longer audible, the system having perished. It is important to perceive the time slot of verses 22 and 23; the events are viewed in the future prophetic past tense, as though the marriage of the Lamb had been consummated. Seen from this perspective, the context is a flashback to a former era.

Verses 22 and 23 provide a more sweeping description of events than those just subsequent to 1878. From a natural standpoint, the sound of music and gaiety, the sight of workmen and craftsmen employed in their skills, the sound of millstone activity at the mills, the lights and sounds of wedding festivity—all of these conditions have existed within the portals of Christendom both prior to and following 1878—and they *still exist*.

Even from a spiritual standpoint, the Lord’s voice is still heard in Babylon today. It is true that the Christian well informed about present dispensational truth realizes Babylon was spewed out of the Lord’s mouth in 1878; since that date Babylon has

not in any sense been overruled as a golden cup in the hand of the Lord or as a channel of truth, as was the circumstance prior to 1878. Yet this does not mean that at present Babylon has no light at all. Babylon possesses a certain degree of truth, but that truth is mixed with considerable error. To be a light-bearer having the Lord's approval is quite another matter, however. Although the Lord no longer recognizes Babylon as a light-bearer, as a candle, and in no way sanctions or approves of the nominal Church in this role, *yet the world considers Babylon as that candle*; and furthermore, Babylon still assumes to be the world's teacher and light-bearer. It considers its own decrees as echoing, in an authoritative manner, the voice of the Lord and the voice of his true Church. The nominal system will claim to be this voice right up to the time of its destruction.

Some may still question whether the voice of the Lord is heard in Babylon today. It is one thing for those in Babylon to hear the Master's voice emanating from within the system, and quite another thing for those to hear his voice *from without* penetrating *to within* Babylon's walls, beckoning "Come out of her, *my people*" (Rev. 18:4). Otherwise, how could there be a harvest, a separation of the wheat from the tares, preparatory to garnering the wheat into the Lord's heavenly barn?

The reason the "great men of the earth" (those in Christendom underneath religious restraint) are its merchants (engaged as profit-sharing agents in the exchanging of commodities on behalf of the nominal Church) is because of Babylon's sorceries, the magical arts the system employs in juggling Scripture to justify its role in earth's affairs.

Verse 24:

And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

In Revelation 17:6 John saw the woman *drunken* in an orgy of the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. The "all" of verse 24 might be qualified (cf. Matt. 26:52; John 16:13; 1 Cor. 8:1) to signify those slain or murdered "upon the earth," that is, those who perished in this manner within the precincts of Christendom and under the control and influence of orthodoxy. The verse might also be understood to signify "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, even all that were slain [for Jesus' or righteousness' sake] upon the earth." What a horrible epitaph indeed!

Revelation Chapter 19

Verse 1:

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

Verse 2:

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.

According to Benjamin Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*, the expression "much people" should be "a great crowd." Although called "people" in the King James, those praising God are the holy angelic host, who have been witnessing events all down through the New Testament age. The worshippers are not the saints, for the saints are mentioned in verse 2 as part of the subject matter of the proclamation of praise: God "hath avenged the blood of *his servants* [the Church—Rev. 1:1] at her hand." If the "much people" were the saints, the account would read: God "hath avenged us of *our* blood." Also, the fact that this group in heaven is composed of a *great* number of beings would rule out Jesus and the *Little Flock*. In Revelation 18:20, which is directed to the saints, the words are "God hath avenged *you* on her." If Jesus and the Church were the speakers at this juncture of the drama, the account would have been worded differently. Therefore, those praising God, in this particular context, are the angels in heaven where His Majesty resides.

Some might offer the interpretation that because of the large number involved, "much people" would refer to the Great Company speaking in the symbolic heavens down here on earth. As the vision is analyzed further in succeeding verses, it will become apparent that the Great Company is not being referred to.

In the opening two verses of Chapter 19, God's truth and righteousness are made conspicuous in the act of retributive justice rendered against the great harlot, who debauched the world and persecuted the true Church. "Alleluia" comes from the Hebrew *hallelujah*, signifying "Praise ye *Jah* [*He who is*]," which implies faithfulness in regard to God's promises—even though their accomplishment seems to take a long time.

Many are so lopsided in their thinking that they do not see the propriety of capital punishment. Today the proven murderer is usually not executed; he gets life imprisonment, and if cooperative, he is released on good behavior in ten or so years. In fact, the convicted felon might even be released sooner if committed to a mental institution. Such is often the judgment of learned(?) and noble(?) men. The people in the streets who are victimized are not passing the laws, and the legislators are often unknown to the public. Lawyers and congressmen press for legislation eliminating capital punishment.

Those in this lenient frame of mind will not appreciate the exultation of “Alleluia[!] . . . [God] hath judged the great whore.” One who cannot appreciate such judgment in the natural realm would have difficulty viewing, in its true perspective, the justice to be inflicted upon Babylon. Out of balance in the other direction is a hypercritical class who insist on a hell of everlasting burnings. The Bible shows death to be simply extinction, not physical torture.

Verse 3:

And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

For the “much people in heaven” to repeat “Alleluia” indicates they will be pleased—even thrilled—to see the judgment rendered. Not satisfied to say once, “Alleluia . . . he hath judged the great whore,” they, on second thought, exclaim again, “Alleluia”! This is the spirit of prophecy. Christians should sympathetically imbibe the same spirit themselves and rejoice for that time when the saints, previously persecuted, are vindicated and honored and their betrayers and persecutors are revealed and abased. Note the glory given to God for executing this judgment.

Her “smoke” is to arise “for ever and ever” in the sense that the memory of the deeds of the great whore will be perpetuated forever. The thought is not that in the future the people’s minds will be continuously occupied in this direction but that, when the occasion so demands, the past activities of the great harlot will be restored to the attention of men and angels. It is likely this will be accomplished by means of spirit-supervised visual aids and the replay of historical events that have transpired on this planet in its present sin-cursed condition. The deleterious and ravaging effects of sin as the result of disobedience to God’s counsel and commandments will be demonstrated for educational purposes.

Smoke is the evidence that God’s judgment of Babylon has taken place. Normally the smoke would dissipate, but in this case the smoke is to remain “for ever and ever,” i.e., to the ages of ages. A tombstone in a cemetery is a lasting reminder or evidence of someone who has departed this life. Likewise, figuratively speaking, this “tombstone cloud in the sky” will always be there; its epitaph will commemorate how and why the symbolic woman died. One might ask why the account does not state more plainly that the *memory* of the woman and her deeds will be continued forever and ever. Answer: If made too plain, the Book of Revelation would be understood by more people. Truth is only for the chosen, who hunger and seek for it as for hid treasure (Prov. 2:1–5).

In the Kingdom when representatives of the nations go to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, and for other purposes, they will be shown the burial ground of Gog, the immense horde from the north quarters that in the near future will invade the Holy Land with the intent to destroy Israel. It is written that this enemy will itself be destroyed when the Lord goes forth to fight for His people as in the days of old. This *literal cemetery* will be so large and extensive that it can be likened to Flanders Field in France, where so many young Americans who have died in action since World War I have been buried. Likened by the Prophet Ezekiel to a city of the dead, the cemetery is prophetically designated “Hamonah” (the burial ground of Haman- or Hamon-gog—Ezek. 39:15,16).

The Prophet Isaiah (66:24), treating the same subject from a completely different standpoint, states the matter thus: “They [all flesh] shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for *their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring* unto all flesh.” This prophetic verbal description, which uses an ancient vocabulary and limited terminology, can be translated or explained more clearly. Whereas, simply stated, the Ezekiel account tells that the fate of the forces of Gog and his confederates will be evidenced by the existence of a literal graveyard with nonvisible corpses buried beneath the earth, the Isaiah account suggests that a theater will be there, on location, where an audiovisual program will preserve for posterity the events incidental to Israel’s deliverance in Jacob’s Trouble by means of supernatural miracles (earthquake and “fire”—Ezek. 38:19,22). The action that befalls Israel’s enemies, leading up to and including their burial in the cemetery, will be photographically recorded and frozen, as it were, on tape.¹ Innumerable bodies in various stages of decay will be seen strewn over the countryside before burial (here are the immortalized “worm[s]”); their obvious stench (“*an abhorrence to all*”—RSV) will be apparent in the countenances of passersby and in the masked faces of those who are engaged in burying the dead. This digression and analysis afford a better appreciation and understanding of how the “smoke of her burning” (Rev. 18:9,18) will rise up forever and ever.

Verse 4:

And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

In connection with the judgment that has just taken place, the twenty-four elders and the four living ones are pacified and thankful that soon the reign of sin, death, and terror will be ended. As explained under earlier verses, the “four and twenty elders” represent the Old Testament.²

The “four beasts,” more accurately described as the “four living ones,” represent the four cardinal attributes of God’s character that control the divine government itself. To the world God’s attributes seem to be nonoperative. For example, people ask, “If there is a God, why doesn’t He do something? Innocent people are dying and being persecuted; justice is often perverted; everything is upside down.” From their standpoint the Creator is doing nothing. Based upon the observation that these evils have been going on for thousands of years, the conclusion is that God is not interested in the fate of mankind. However, when the judgments on Babylon are fulfilled, God’s Justice will be vindicated upon her, and His other attributes will be made manifest shortly thereafter.

At the present time, with the operation of all of God’s attributes—Justice, Love, Power, and Wisdom—being obscured by the permission of evil, some conclude there is a God of Intelligence but do not consider Him to be a God of Revelation. As infidels, they think the earth and its inhabitants are so little and insignificant that

1. Compare Luke 12:2,3; Zechariah 4:10; 12:10; Daniel 4:13,17,23; Psalms 69:5; 139:7–12; 1 Cor. 4:5; and John 1:48.

2. See pages 125–126, 194–195.

God ignores their existence. For the most part, God's attributes have assumed a low-key profile down through the ages lest the period of faith testing and the experience of the temporary permission of evil as a taskmaster and as a school instructor and disciplinarian be disrupted before the due time.

Although God's attributes have wanted to openly vindicate His character, they have had to hold themselves in check. If, as a human, one boils when seeing an infraction of justice, how must God feel? Some think, "If only something could be done . . .," but the Creator refrains from expunging the evil and from destroying the human race. His attributes—namely, the living ones—would like to disclose that God does have a plan, that He intends to take care of mankind in due time, that He is interested in their welfare, and so forth. When the appointed time does come for God to reveal Himself, His attributes and His Word will begin to speak and to praise His holy name.

To get the Holy Spirit's power of the vision, notice that the twenty-four elders and the four living ones fall down and *worship* God. The four attributes have been *longing* for freedom of expression, poetically speaking. They have been fettered just like the two cherubim fashioned on the Mercy Seat. Looking intently inward and down upon the seat of atonement while they wait for the blood of the bullock and the Lord's goat to be sprinkled thereon, the two cherubim have urgently desired to fly on their errands of mercy and relief to mankind. But not until the completion of the symbolic Temple will they be released with their wings stretched out wide (1 Kings 6:27; Rev. 15:8). God's Love (Mercy) and Power are interestedly staring at the propitiatory lid of the Ark of the Covenant, waiting for Justice to be fully satisfied. Then the living ones will fall down, with the twenty-four elders, and worship God. What a superlative and highly figurative portrayal!

Verse 5:

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.

Verse 6:

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.

The voice coming out of the Father's throne (see verse 4) is subsequently found to be Jesus'. The fact that the praise commanded is to be offered unto "our God" (that is, the God of the one speaking and on behalf of his Bride) rules out the possibility of the voice being God's. Jesus is in the same throne as the Father. The passage "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me [Jesus] in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21) indicates the Church will be included with Jesus in this setting of Chapter 19 where The Christ speaks with authority. Primarily Jesus does the speaking, but the Church shares in that honor (Matt. 26:64).

The words coming from the throne enjoin everyone to worship Jehovah. The Church is not included in the original cry (verses 1 and 2), for they are *in* the throne. First, the congregation about the throne, the angelic host, praises God, and

then the pronouncement goes forth from the throne itself (from Jesus and the Church) to all down below on earth, “both small and great.” Who are the “great”? Are they those in former positions of power and influence, such as kings, nobles, earth’s financiers, and prominent politicians? No. The key to understanding this term is the time setting of verses 5 and 6. The clue is found in the proclamation of the decree and in the joyous response: “*For the³ Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*” The vision indicates the great whore has already been executed and the reign of Jehovah and His Christ has begun. At that time the “great” would refer not to those who were formerly great in worldly esteem but to those who are appointed to higher office in the earthly phase of the Kingdom of God. The “small” would be humbled mankind, and the “great” would be the Ancient Worthies (Luke 7:28; 13:28).

Verses 1 through 6 form a single and separate scenario, indicating the significance of events subsequent to the (implied) wedding of the Lamb up to the manifestation of God’s Kingdom on earth and its recognition and joyful acceptance by humanity, the “great multitude.” If this phrase applied to the Great Company, the words “both small and great” would be inappropriate. Hence a class larger than the Great Company is being addressed. (Verses 7 to 10 are parenthetical rather than sequential.)

Verse 7:

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Verse 8:

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.

Verse 6 concludes with the fitting climax of the rendering of praise to the Lord God Almighty. Verse 7 is not a continuation of the joyous acclamation of the preceding six verses but a separate refrain uttered by a separate class. It is a flashback and a cognition by the Great Company of an important event (the marriage of the Lamb) that previously transpired, that is, before the full and final judgment of the Babylonish whore (Rev. 18:21–24) and prior to the reign of Jehovah and His Anointed (Rev. 19:1–6). Two factors in the opening clause of verse 7 assist in differentiating those making the proclamation in this verse from those rendering tribute in verse 6. They are the pronouns: “Let *us* be glad and rejoice, and give honour to *them*⁴ [to Jesus and his Bride—the subject matter of verses 7 and 8].”

The Great Company class will recognize the significance of events considerably in advance of the world of mankind and shortly before the holy remnant of natural Israel. They will, at first, be deeply disappointed and chagrined with their failure to obtain the chief prize of the high calling to be united to the Lamb as his Bride, the door having been closed, as indicated by the following texts. “Afterward came also the other [the foolish] virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us” (Matt. 25:11).

3. The expression “our” or “of us” in verse 6, while in the Sinaitic, should properly be omitted as in the Alexandrian Codex and the King James Version.

4. In the Sinaitic manuscript, the objective singular pronoun *him* is wanting, and in its stead the objective plural pronoun *them* is found.

“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14). Upon further reflection they will realize their own unworthiness for so high a station, and they will recognize the further evidence of God’s tender mercy and abounding grace on their behalf in proffering opportunity for the consolation prize of admittance into the spirit realm in a secondary sense. “Therefore are they *before* [not in] the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. . . . God shall wipe away *all tears* from their eyes” (Rev. 7:15–17), and “they shall enter into the king’s palace” (Psa. 45:15).

The Great Company class also utter the following: “Although the fig tree [the Jewish nation—Luke 13:6–9] shall not [yet] blossom [be seen as the promised blesser nation—John 4:22], neither shall fruit [yet] be in the vines [when all the families of the earth are blessed—Gen. 12:2,3]; the labour of the olive [the Holy Spirit calling of the Rebekah class—Genesis 24] shall fail, and the fields [nations] shall yield no meat [the harvest being ended, no further results are yielded—Jer. 8:20]; the [little] flock shall be cut off from the [earthly] fold [transferred to the spirit realm—1 Thess. 4:17], and there shall be no herd [the red heifer class, the Ancient Worthies—Num. 19:2–10; Heb. 9:13; *Tabernacle Shadows*, pp. 105–112] in the stalls [that is, installed in their various appointed offices throughout the earth—Psa. 45:16]: Yet I [those of the Great Company class] will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 3:17,18).

Verse 8 is an interjection into the narrative and a commentary about the attire of the Bride class at the wedding ceremony of the Lamb. The Sinaitic manuscript supplies the additional adjective “shining” as follows: “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen *shining* [or *bright*], clean [of utmost pristine purity] and white [reminiscent of Jesus’ garments on the Mount of Transfiguration—Matt. 17:2]: for the fine linen is the *righteousnesses* [or righteous acts] of the saints.” The robes of verse 8 represent the resurrection robes of actual righteousness. (In their former earthly pilgrimage the saints received, on loan, the Lord’s imputed robe of justification to cover their sins.)

Verse 7 signifies the arrival of the wedding day. Verse 8 pictures the resurrected Church in brilliant white bridal garments, as it were, about to proceed down the aisle (as the heavenly host breathlessly listen and watch) possibly to the accompaniment of music somewhat akin to the well-known “Wedding March”: “Here comes the bride! All dressed in white!” In any event, the Bride in verse 8 is presented and finally stationed at the Master’s side, figuratively speaking, awaiting the formality and finality of the nuptial ceremony.

One might ask why in Psalm 45:9 the Church of Christ is seen standing at the right hand of Jesus in “gold of Ophir.” (Cohen’s translation of this verse is “Her raiment is of chequer work [needlework] inwrought with gold.”) The reason is that Revelation 19:7,8 describes the *wedding attire of the Bride*, whereas Psalm 45 pictures the later *coronation garments of the Queen* (the glorified Church).

Verse 9:

And he saith 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.

Verse 10:

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The pronoun “he” in “he saith unto me” abruptly intrudes into the narrative with no explanation as to what symbolism or personal identity is involved. The exact antecedent of “he” is unclear. It does not even state that this was an “angel.” The “he” could not be Jesus acting in the role of an angel because the one speaking later says (verse 10) he is “of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.” Nor is there a connecting link with the angel of Revelation 17:1, which conducted John on an extended historical itinerary leading up to the judgment of the great whore. For that matter, two other unrelated angels intervene and make their appearance between the angel of Revelation 17 and the “he” of Revelation 19:9.

Verse 10 identifies the speaker as a fellow servant and as one of Jesus’ followers. The historical fulfillment suggests this could be none other than the seventh messenger to the Church, Pastor C. T. Russell (Rev. 3:14; 11:15). Perhaps no prior biblical expositor (other than the Lord, the apostles, and the prophets) has pointed out, with such depth and clarity, the prophetic behavioral characteristics and the destiny of this secondary class. Also, both during his earthly ministry and in the years since, some have inordinately revered him for his writings and his works.

It should not be construed that John’s falling down to worship the one addressing him is an indicator of who the John class are. Indeed the very opposite lesson is to be drawn. This episode is a warning of the ever present danger of improper “voluntary humility” to worship the one through whom great enlightenment comes rather than the Creator, the source of light (Col. 2:18). One is to put trust not in leaders but in the Lord. This does not signify that leaders are not to be acknowledged, however, for all the history of the Lord’s dealings with His people—the typical as well as the antitypical dealings—shows He is pleased to use human agencies as His representatives to teach and lead His people from grace to grace and from knowledge to knowledge. The lesson is that the Lord is thoroughly competent to manage His own work and that while His leading may come through human agencies, the trust of the consecrated is not in them, their wisdom, their strength, but in the Lord’s wisdom and strength guiding them and His people through them, “for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” In other words, the Master’s filial spirit of alert deference, of eager obedience, and of reverential awe of the Heavenly Father—his looking for God’s leadings—was ever manifest during Jesus’ earthly ministry; and now that he is the risen Lord, the same spirit pervades the Apocalypse, where he frequently, of his own volition, portrays himself symbolically to John as a servant or angelic messenger. This attitude of heart and mind, “the spirit of prophecy,” greatly assists in the understanding of dispensational truth.

Back to verse 9. There is a difference between being at the marriage and partaking of the marriage supper. When the door is shut, the wise virgins will go in to the marriage, but the marriage supper will not take place until after the wedding. Obviously, the Great Company will not be at the wedding but will join the nuptial feast later, after they have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them white (Rev. 7:14).

Verse 11:

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.

The White Horse

In the time of the Roman Republic, in honor of returning triumphant generals, the custom was to decorate the city gates with garlands and trophies and to erect temporary arches for entry, which was usually on a white horse amidst great fanfare. Rome used this practice to mark the *return* of a *conqueror*, one who had been victorious coming *from* battle, not going to battle. The white horse in verse 11, besides being indicative of victory and often kingship, was also a symbol of judgeship (Judg. 5:10).

The individual seated on the white horse⁵ (verse 11) is “the faithful one, the being called one, the true one [literal translation].” He is Jehovah’s Anointed “because he [God] hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained [‘the being called one’]; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). Yes, “in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”

Psalm 45

In verse 1 the word “inditing” is a weak translation; the thought would be “My heart is boiling [or bubbling] over.” A person who has exceptionally good news cannot wait to tell it; accordingly, the Psalmist is so enthusiastic about the potentialities of Messiah’s reign and the victory and the blessing to ensue that he is only too willing to record the prophecy. “My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”

In this scene Messiah is riding on a horse to battle. Exuberantly the Psalmist states: “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O . . . mighty [One]. . . . And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness” (verses 3 and 4). In verse 4 the text “Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible [awesome] things” is at first puzzling. The reference is to Messiah’s own “right hand.” Verse 2 shows the Lord’s general disposition to be that of a peacemaker: “Grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.” Messiah is not inclined to be aggressive (cf. Matt. 11:29; 12:20; 21:5). Although bold for truth, he is not given to inflicting harsh judgment or punishment. Usually, therefore, the right hand is one of favor, but this right hand is one of discipline and power. (The right hand is usually more developed and hence stronger than the left, for most people are right-handed.) Jesus has acquired this faculty because of prior faithfulness under

5. This horseman should not be confused with the Antichrist rider in Revelation 6:2.

duress: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). Everything he did earlier in heaven as the Logos was pleasurable, but now he has to deal sternly and do things, as it were, on his own—things never done before. This is a *learning experience* for him.

“Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s [Jehovah’s] enemies [those unwittingly His opponents]; whereby the people [the others, including the incorrigible] fall under thee” (verse 5). When an arrow pierces a person’s heart, the thought is usually of one dying, but these are arrows of grace and truth. They will bring conviction and repentance, thus slaying the victims as “enemies,” whereas the incorrigibly wicked will be utterly destroyed. In Psalm 45 both God and Jesus are called kings, the One being superior to the other and being distinguished by the context. In verse 1 “the king” refers to Jesus, who is riding as the general of Jehovah to establish the Kingdom. Jesus’ mission will then be to convert the world. “Every knee should bow . . . and . . . every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil. 2:10,11).

Psalm 45 is a mixture of both the strong and the sweet. First, grace is poured into Jesus’ lips (verse 2). Next he is buckling on armor and preparing for warfare (verse 3), yet there is a perfume about his body: “All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia” (verse 8). When Jesus is in his battle attire, the fragrance is so distinct that each herb or spice can be separately distinguished. Battle attire would normally carry an odor of perspiration, not perfume. One would not expect a warrior to have such a fragrance, but Messiah comes from the “ivory palaces” (verse 8). Generally, a good fighter is the rough-and-tough type that does not cultivate the niceties of life; in contrast, Jesus is genteel—wonderful breeding and good culture are all about him. Such an admixture is unusual, but God has purposed that the One who is to establish the rule of the Kingdom must have both qualities; that is, he must *love* righteousness and *hate* iniquity. Since Jesus passed that test, God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows (verse 7).

The “ivory palaces” are the heavens whence Jesus came—the courts of heaven. Regarding his garments having the fragrance of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, myrrh is generally a symbol of wisdom. The Hebrew word *marah* means bitter, as does “myrrh.” Experience and wisdom are usually learned the hard way. Aloes coupled with myrrh was used for burials; bodies were wrapped in spices, and aloes was added as a preservative. Hence myrrh indicates that Jesus’ presence and charisma exude an aura of wisdom, and aloes signifies the preservative quality of that wisdom; Jesus’ wisdom is wholesome and beneficial—lasting. Cassia refers to workmanship. Not only is the wisdom Jesus possesses employed in a constructive manner, but the lesson gets across to others so that the proper result is produced. Some have considerable wisdom but cannot convey it to others; although they pass exams and are brilliant, they lack the ability to teach. Teaching ability is specially beneficial because more than just the one individual is blessed. Jesus’ ability to put his character-building wisdom into action produces lasting results in those who accept and comply with his counsel.

Verse 12:

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.

Jesus is described as having eyes “as a flame of fire.” In other words, he has a most *penetrating* gaze so that, as verse 11 states, “in righteousness he doth judge and make war.” He is not deceived but sees through sham and hypocrisy. His ability to discern right and wrong, to properly judge a matter, ensures that he will wage a proper warfare. “And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins” (Isa. 11:2–5).

“On his head were many crowns.” When a king invaded a foreign country and conquered it, he took not only the enemy’s goods but also the crown, thereby *displacing* the power and authority of the former occupant to the throne. The victorious king then wore that crown to show he had conquered the nation and was now the ruler. The “many crowns” worn by Jesus signify his kingship over all nations—he is King *over* kings. The fact those riding behind him (verse 14) wore no crowns perhaps indicates that the formal inauguration of Messiah’s Kingdom and the crowning of his Bride, the coronation ceremony of the Queen, are still future from the standpoint of the fulfillment of this particular scene.

“And he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.” Jesus has promised to give each of the 144,000 a personal name: “To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it” (Rev. 2:17). This individual name and its significance will not be known by others, for it indicates a special relationship between each member of the body and Jesus. Each one will have private communion and fellowship with the dear Master.

The “name” in verse 12 signifies that a similar relationship will exist between Jesus and his Heavenly Father, a relationship that even his Bride will not know about. Strangely, John was aware of such a name, but he did not know what the name was or what it sounded like. Possibly John saw some undecipherable symbols on Jesus’ forehead.

Verse 13:

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

Crimson Vesture

“Heaven opened” to John—that is, he was spiritually informed—to see the Lord portrayed as coming back from battle, having “judged the great whore” and having “avenged the blood of his servants at her hand” (Rev. 19:11,2). As evidence, the Lord’s outer vestment, or cloak, is stained and besmirched with blood, the lower portion of his body and clothing being particularly soiled as of one having trodden grapes in a wine vat (Rev. 14:18,19).

Revelation 19:11–16 bears a striking resemblance to portions of Isaiah 63:

Who is this that cometh from Edom [the land of Esau, who for one earthly morsel sacrificed his spiritual inheritance—Edom thus typifying the nominal Church and so-called Christendom], with dyed [crimson—RSV] garments from Bozrah [the capital of Edom signifying the Papacy]? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling [riding on horseback] in the greatness of his strength?

I [the risen Lord] that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat [wine vat]?

I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me⁶ [in the sense of upholding his cause]: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled [splattered] upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. . . . And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered [was appalled—RSV] that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation [victory—RSV] unto me; and my fury [righteous indignation], it upheld me. And I will *tread down the people* in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury [similar to when Moses forced the Israelites to drink the golden calf, which he had powdered and mixed with water—Exod. 32:19,20], and I will bring down their strength to the earth. (Isa. 63:1–3,5,6)

Jesus will exercise *strength* and *power*, whereas at his First Advent he employed *reason*: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). Down through the Gospel Age Jesus has continuously issued invitations to come unto him, but in the near future he will use a new and necessary technique: “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:9). It would be useless in earth’s great Time of Trouble to try to convert the world through reason and solicitation.

6. In the hymn and elsewhere, these words are applied to Gethsemane and Calvary. The emphasis given is that Jesus went through this bitter experience alone, his soul being exceedingly sorrowful unto death. The apostles, not being able to fully enter into his experience, fell asleep.

The text does not refer to Gethsemane, however. Jesus is speaking about treading the vine of the earth, which takes place at this end of the age. The “people” not with him are those of Edom—Christendom, ecclesiastical and civil. They will not be with him in the sense that, in the final circumstance, no righteous ones will remain. Conditions in the earth will be so corrupt that no one will stand upright for truth and principle.

The Word of God

“His name is called The Word of God.” This title refers to the role of Jesus in his prehuman existence as *The Logos*, which means “The Word,” that is, the spokesman, or mouthpiece, for the Heavenly Father.⁷ In verse 13 the risen Lord Jesus continues to figuratively fulfill the office of agent, or representative, of Jehovah before men. Jesus will be honored as the antitypical Joseph before Pharaoh (in this case a type of Jehovah); every knee must bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Christ to the glory of God. “And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt [the world]. And Pharaoh took off his ring . . . and put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt” (Gen. 41:39–43).

In editing the scene in verse 13, which infers a prior trampling of the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored, the Holy Spirit saw fit to observe only the central figure, Jesus, as bearing the telltale stains of performing the judgment work. Lest there be any diminishing of the Master’s role, he is seen taking the prominent lead in administering the judgments incidental to the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. Although repeatedly termed the “Day of Jehovah,” the judgment will be accomplished through Christ Jesus, the Son. “The government shall be upon *his* shoulder” (Isa. 9:6).

Verse 14:

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

The overcoming Church, seen here riding on white horses, symbolic of judgment, inferentially participate in the treading work. Several Scriptures support this conclusion. (1) The “army” of verse 19 would be the glorified Church associated with Jesus in the war versus the beast and the kings of the earth. (2) In Revelation 14:20 the word “horse” should be plural, implying the participation of others (the faithful Little Flock) in the treading of the winepress. (3) Those who follow the lead horseman, Jesus, in Isaiah 21:6–9⁸ inferentially assist in the fall of Babylon.

Armies in Heaven

This scene of the “armies” following Jesus occurs *after* Babylon’s fall. The garments of “fine linen, white and clean” are the *victory* robes of the risen saints, for the entire Little Flock will be beyond the veil when the nominal system falls. To the consecrated still in the flesh at that time, the collapse of Babylon will be proof of the closing of the door (Matt. 25:10) and of the full entrance of the 144,000 into the marriage of the Lamb.

7. See pages 102–103.

8. For further information on Isaiah 21:6–9 and the relationship of the Very Elect, see Appendix 8, “A Prophecy Nearing Fulfillment,” pages 643–646.

The plural form “armies” should prove no obstacle, for it simply means “troops” in this context. Those accompanying Jesus on his return from battle do not follow him in a haphazard or disorderly fashion but in military rank with precision. The proper thought would be that troops followed Jesus on white horses. That two separate hosts are not meant, but divisions in the *one army* on the same plane, is seen in verse 19, where those with Jesus are called an “army” (singular). “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!” (Psa. 84:1).

It is incongruous to reason that some members of the body of Christ are spirit beings while other members of that same body remain in the flesh. How could two hosts, one on this side of the veil and one on the other side of the veil, both follow Jesus in the *same heaven*, garbed in the *same white robes* of justification and riding the *same white horses*—after the winepress has been trodden?

Psalms 149:5, “Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud *upon their beds*,” does not refer to beds of faith but to the rest that yet remaineth for the people of God beyond the veil: “Let us labour therefore to enter into that *rest*” (Heb. 4:11). The Prophet Isaiah (57:1,2), in reference to some of the saints who die and are changed to spirit nature near the close of the age, before the great Time of Trouble sets in, states: “The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come [cf. Matt. 24:20–22]. He shall enter into peace: they shall *rest in their beds*, each one *walking in his uprightness*.” To this, John the Revelator (14:13) attests: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may *rest from their labours*; and *their works do follow [with] them*.” Of this class it is written: “My beloved [Jesus] is gone down into his garden [he has taken his Bride to himself], to the beds of spices [to accept from the garden of her heart the fragrant and sweet ingredients of the Holy Spirit], to feed in the gardens [to receive unto himself the precious fruits cultivated in her earthly pilgrimage], and to gather lilies [to take the humble, sweet ones home, to gather the wheat into the heavenly garner]” (Song of Sol. 6:2).⁹

Psalms 149 and 105

Let the saints be joyful in glory:
 let them sing aloud upon their beds.
 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,
 and a *twoedged sword in their hand*;
 To execute vengeance upon the heathen,
 and punishments upon the people;
To bind their kings with chains,
and their nobles with fetters of iron;
 To execute upon them the judgment written:
 this honour have all his saints.
 Praise ye the LORD. (Psa. 149:5–9)

9. *The Finished Mystery, Studies in the Scriptures* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: International Bible Students Association, 1918), Ser. 7, p. 357.

He [the LORD] sent a man before them,
 even Joseph, who was sold for a servant:
Whose feet they hurt with fetters:
 he was laid in iron: Until the time
 that his word [through Pharaoh] came:
 the word of the LORD tried him.
 The king sent and loosed him; even the
 ruler of the people, and let him go free.
 He made him lord of his house,
 and ruler of all his substance:
To bind his princes at his pleasure;
and teach his senators wisdom.
 (Psa. 105:17–22)

In both of the above psalms, the prerogatives exercised are those of the *exalted* Church. The possession of the two-edged sword in the hand is not incontrovertible evidence of the use of the sword of truth by the saints down here in the flesh. Is not the *risen Lord* seen with the sharp sickle of truth (Rev. 14:14) and the little open book (Rev. 10:2) of Scripture information in his hand? A two-edged sword issues forth from the mouth of the glorified Jesus (Rev. 1:16), and he has a sword upon his thigh (Psa. 45:3).

In Psalm 105:18 the feet of Joseph, which were hurt, represent the imprisonment and execution of the last members of the body of Christ (cf. Gen. 3:15). The binding and judgmental features of the psalm are performed only after resurrection change. The Joseph class does not exercise this authority until elevated from prison, the fetters of flesh, to rulership.

Verse 15:

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

The Sharp Sword

The use of the sword in verse 15 is not spoken of as being “two-edged.” This expression is omitted in the Authorized Version as well as in both the Alexandrian and the Sinaitic codices, for the sword points in one direction only. Penetrating to the quick, the sword will destroy man’s fancied rights—all rights not in harmony with the divine will. The sword of truth going forth out of Messiah’s mouth will expose human depravity and all corruption in business, government, and religion, resulting in anarchy that will sweep away the refuge of lies, leaving bare the foundation for a new order. He who wounds to heal “shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips [pursed to furnish added vigor and spirited thrust to the truth] shall he slay the wicked” (Isa. 11:4). “To no human generalship can the honors of the coming victory for truth and righteousness be ascribed. Wild will be the conflict of the angry nations, and world-wide will be the battle-field and the distress of nations; and no human Alexander, Caesar or Napo-

leon will be found to bring order out of the dreadful confusion. But in the end it will be known that the grand victory of justice and truth, and the punishment of iniquity with its just deserts, was brought about by the mighty power of the King of kings and Lord of lords.”¹⁰ “And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Mic. 4:3).

The sword of truth pertaining to nations in this context is one thing, whereas the “arrows” of Psalm 45:5 are another. Arrows of truth will conquer individuals after the judgment of nations has taken place. The arrows are designed to make each individual fall prostrate before God, acknowledge his sin, and confess Jesus to be his Lord. “Every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23).

The Rod of Iron

That the saints shall share in the work of breaking to pieces present kingdoms, there can be no doubt. It is written: “This honour have all his saints”—“to execute . . . the judgment written” (Psa. 149:9). “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 [the nations] be broken to shivers” (Rev. 2:26,27).

The rod of iron pictures the inflexible rule of the Kingdom, for as iron does not bend, so Messiah will brook no interference nor tolerate any insubordination. In Scripture the Roman government, noted for its rigid rule, is symbolically portrayed by iron. The Romans ruthlessly commanded obedience to their laws; there was no compassion in their justice. The Kingdom of God will be notably different in that Christ, who died for mankind, will be the chief administrator. It is written: “He shall rule [*shepherd* in the Greek] them with a rod of iron.” Whereas the future smiting of the *corporate* image by the *corporate* stone will be sudden and dramatic (Dan. 2:45), the subjugation or smiting of *individual* incorrigible sinners (Luke 20:18), upon whom the prophesied top stone (Christ) shall fall and “grind . . . to powder” (Greek *likmao*, to scatter and consume, as the useless chaff of the summer threshing floor), will repeatedly occur from time to time throughout the entire Kingdom reign.

In the early stages of the Kingdom, the iron rule will be enforced most noticeably in order to properly set up the divine government and put everything in its proper place. As time goes on, the rule, having brought order out of disorder, will be less noticeable as a rod of iron except for those like Nero and others who, when they come forth from the grave, will be bereft of all authority and in line to receive stern retribution for misdeeds of the past. Only if contrite and obedient after receiving many stripes will such individuals be granted opportunity to walk up the highway of holiness to reconciliation with God.

10. *The Battle of Armageddon, Studies in the Scriptures*, 1961 ed. (East Rutherford, N.J.: Dawn Bible Students Association, 1897), Ser. 4, p. 19.

Treading the Winepress

“And he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” The winepress scene pictures the Time of Trouble, in which the grapes of wrath, such as the Papacy, the false prophet, and the whore, are first crushed. The Lord is seen to emerge from this treading with blood-stained garments and riding on a white horse (verses 11 and 13). But this treading will continue on, affecting others.

For my sword shall be bathed in [the nominal] heaven[s—ecclesiastical, political, civil]: behold, it shall come down [in judgment] upon Idumea [Christendom], and upon the people of my curse [see Mal. 4:6], to judgment.

The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs [not developed to maturity, i.e., the Great Company] and goats [the Second Death class at this end of the Gospel Age], with the fat of the kidneys of rams [those professing and outwardly appearing to be zealous and exemplary members of the Little Flock but whose pretensions will be brought low]: for the LORD hath [both] a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter *in the land* of Idumea.

And the unicorns [rhinoceroses] shall come down with them [the lambs and the goats], and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness [their prestige and pomp brought low with them]. (Isa. 34:5–7)

The unicorns, bulls, and bullocks are the great(?) ones of earth—a worldly class. There is to be a treading of the people (Isa. 63:6; Jer. 25:30). And still later there will be a treading of past leaders who either supported or were identified with the papal beast and the harlot during the dreadful Inquisition and other atrocities.

Verse 16:

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

In treading the winepress, seated on horseback (Rev. 14:20), Jesus has his knees and thighs drawn up from the stirrups to be horizontal to the upper ridge of the back of the horse, for the animal is mired deeply in the wine vat, being up to its jowls, or cheeks, in blood. Thus only the lower portion of his cloak and undergarment is symbolically soaked, or drenched, with blood. His thigh and upper vestment are sufficiently clean for John to see Jesus' status or title of his rank (“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS”) inscribed on the shoulder of his vesture and on his thigh—the thigh signifying the Master's power to exercise such authority and rulership, which he will share with his fellow priests and kings.

Verse 17:

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;

Verse 18:

That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

Standing in the Sun

John sees “[another] angel standing in the sun.” Why is the angel standing in this location? The sun often indicates favor, as in the benediction of Moses: “The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee” (Num. 6:25). And during the Ephesus period, before the apostasy took place, the woman, the true Church, was robed in sunlight, indicating she was desirable on the whole (Rev. 2:1; 12:1). Sunlight can also indicate *dispensational* light, as it did in the beginning of the Gospel Age. At that time the Church was adorned with the light of the gospel, which shone in the face of Jesus Christ; the early Church was crowned with the starlight of the twelve apostles and found to be in harmony with the moonlight (the testimony of the Law and the Prophets), for the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in them who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:4). In that first period the Church possessed fullness of dispensational light then due; likewise, at this end of the age, much dispensational truth is due to be understood but by only a *small minority or remnant* of the professed Church of Christ. The remnant is collectively pictured as the “angel standing in the sun.”

Fowl of Heaven

John hears the angel make a loud announcement inviting all the fowl that “*fly in the midst of heaven*” to come to the “[great] supper of God.” (According to the Sinaitic manuscript “great” is misplaced in the King James Version.) The enlightened ones comprising the “angel” will first be accredited to the last members of the Elijah class (1 Kings 19:15–17; 2 Kings 9:36,37,25), but this enlightenment of the Holy Spirit will later carry through to the Elisha class (2 Kings 8:12,13; 9:1–3).

In what way will an enlightened angel invite the fowl of heaven to this feast? The reason Babylon enjoys the favor and support of the people is that they do not know any better. The masses feel Babylon is somewhat an obsolescent system, but they do not realize it is a great deception—and there is a big difference! They merely think that the system is archaic and too conservative, that some of its practices were appropriate for the Middle Ages but not for today. Those of the public who reject the system today do so from the standpoint of its being like a straitjacket. No particular animosity is involved because they are not aware of the Antichrist character of Babylon. However, when they are enlightened as to its true character, when the veil is pulled off the harlot’s face to reveal her actual identity (Nah. 3:5), anger will be the result. When the people realize how much they have been blinded and that all history has been involved in the deception, they will feel justified in tearing down Babylon. The Christian does *not incite* violence, but when the corruption and evil deeds are exposed, the masses will react. Irresponsible people act differently than law-abiding citizens; they will not wait for the wheels of justice to grind slowly but will seek swift retribution.

What does “fly in the midst of heaven” signify? Being “in the midst of heaven” pictures the position of a class who are not especially under the control of, or identified with, either civil or ecclesiastical government, although they are in close proximity to both. Those of this class are not consecrated Christians, for they are represented as birds of prey. They are the equivalent of the “sea,” a term used elsewhere in the Apocalypse and in the Old and New Testaments to symbolize the restless masses not under religious restraint (Rev. 7:1; 13:1). Thus this class in the midst of heaven is not stabilized either in heaven (the religious realm) or in the earth (the civil government).

Would the fact that Babylon is the cage of every unclean bird (Rev. 18:2) be related to the fowl flying in the midst of heaven? Answer: The birds in Babylon are *nominally Christianized pagan birds* that came in and roosted. While certain Scriptures show that Babylon’s fall in part will come from *within* as well as be assisted from *without*, the birds specially portrayed in verse 17 are those that “fly in the midst of heaven,” suggesting they are *disenchanted* and *independent*; they are in mid-heaven, a position between earth and heaven. Though the Greek word *orneon* indicates domestic or wild fowl, the fowl in this context would be birds of prey, such as hawks, ravens, eagles, and vultures.

The Great Supper

When wars occurred in olden times, the victors looted the victims’ dead bodies, taking weapons, valuables, and mementos. They then left the corpses of their opponents on the battlefield for the birds of prey and animals to feed on and devour. Thus the dead were frequently not buried till the stench became so unbearable that the local residents, if any, performed en masse burials. What was not fully consumed was taken care of by maggots, decay, and bacteria, so that after a few months there was no odor and all that remained were bones and some clothing.

In verse 17 the angel, in a loud voice, invites all the fowl of mid-heaven to come to such a slaughter, which is called “the great supper of God.” Where the account says, “Come . . . unto the supper,” the Lord is, in effect, predicting a lot of casualties, and the various categories of birds of prey are all invited. Very broad terms are used: “the flesh of kings, . . . of captains, . . . of mighty men, . . . of horses, and of them that sit on them, . . . all men, both free and bond, both small and great.” These birds of prey will eat the flesh of *all* men; in other words, all those identified with the nominal Christian system and its ethics will become targets of a nonreligious element. Fed up with present arrangements, they will have no particular restraints or governing rules of their own, nor will they seek the advice of the Lord in that day. Fortunately, the Lord will overrule man’s inhumanity to man and will establish his own Kingdom on the ruins of present civilization. A wild lot, these symbolic birds of prey will take advantage of the situation to plunder the wealth, the flesh, and the goods of so-called Christendom. Coming conditions will give them opportunity to vent their spleens. The “great” ones would be the leaders of industry, finance, politics, and so forth.

The listing of the various elements whose flesh will be eaten includes the term “the flesh of horses,” which is also something birds of prey like to eat. The “flesh of horses” represents something other than the flesh of humans, who will be the

primary objects of *revenge*. The pillage will include the cars, machinery, and material gain involved in everyday living. Just as goods and spoils are seized in racial riots, stores are plundered, etc., so likewise in the coming conflict, these will be seized, appropriated, and consumed.

The question might be asked: Would this nonreligious element be connected with the Lord's "great army" (Joel 2:11,25)? Yes, these birds of prey will be a part of the Lord's great army. When will this call to the fowl of heaven take place? The invitation will issue forth a short time before the fall of Babylon, but it will be more noticeably pronounced and realized *after the fall of Babylon*. Does verse 18 include more than Christendom? No, the Apocalypse is particularly slanted to happenings amidst purported Christian nations. However, other Scriptures indicate there will be a domino effect of worldwide proportions.

The Scriptures mention at least five feasts or suppers. (1) Now, in the time of harvest, the Lord is serving spiritual food, or "meat in due season," to his followers who hunger (Rev. 3:20; Matt. 24:45). (2) Earlier in Chapter 19 the word "supper" is used in connection with the Great Company class: "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (verse 9). (3) A great supper is mentioned in verse 17. (4) The Prophet Ezekiel (39:17–20) calls attention to the time when Gog and Magog will go down into Israel; the Lord will eventually destroy that host, leaving literal carcasses strewn about the land and exposed as a prey to the birds invited to that feast. The Ezekiel picture is a physical one, whereas the emphasis in Revelation 19:17 is more on a symbolic feast (although not exclusively, as already explained). And (5) a feast of rejoicing for all people with wine, corn, and oil will mark the introduction of the Kingdom proper (Isa. 25:6; Joel 2:19,24). In summary, the five feasts are the harvest feast, the marriage supper, two distressing and distasteful feasts involving birds, and a feast of happiness at the inauguration of the Kingdom.

Verse 19:

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.

Part of this gathering work will be the mandatory requirement for all to have the mark of the beast or of the image of the beast in their right hands or foreheads (Rev. 13:15–17). Everybody—both small and great—will be required to have this mark and to cooperate with the authorities. The beast is the Papacy, and the kings of the earth correspond to the first set of kings, or ten horns, of Revelation 17:12,13, which support the beast in its hour of power. The confrontation is between the beast, including the kings of the earth with their armies, and the risen Lord with his army, the 144,000 overcomers beyond the veil (not the Church in the flesh).

During the gathering process the Church in the flesh will be engaged in doctrinal confrontation and will be ushered off the earthly plane before half of the hour of power expires. In earthly conflicts there are often vicissitudes where first one side seems to be winning and then the other, but the victor is determined by the last battle. The Church in the flesh will be among the first casualties, and the war will end with the downfall of Babylon. While the winepress scene and treading of the

grapes of wrath of the Book of Revelation are primarily limited to Christendom, the false Christian Church and its allies will not be the only objects of God's wrath, for the false religions of other nations will also be doomed.

Just before the last members of the true Church finish their earthly course, they will give a final witness that will set in motion the machinery of destruction; then, after the saints are beyond the veil, the destruction will take place. In other words, the message of truth will open people's minds, but the feet members will not be on the scene here below to see the fruits of that message. Question: If the saints are on the other side of the veil in verse 19, how can they make war? Answer: The same way Jesus can wage war—the same way Jesus can and will effectively reign in the Kingdom.

Verse 20:

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.

In verse 19 the beast and the kings of the earth lead the assault. The false prophet is not mentioned because it will unwittingly act in the role of a puppet; nevertheless, it will be fully responsible for its deeds and will be treated accordingly (verse 20). Again the reader is reminded of the miracles to be wrought by the false prophet (Rev. 13:13–17).

The call to the birds to come to the yet future great supper (verses 17 and 18) precedes the battle of verse 19. In its symbolic fulfillment the announcement also precedes the “hour of power” of (the *woman* and) the beast, for there could be no battle between the beast and the Lord if the Catholic Church (the woman) had already been trodden underfoot. What army of supporters, composed of its own membership, could the beast muster to battle if the ranks of the populace were not sympathetic towards the Roman Church? Therefore, the fact that the harlot is nowhere to be found in this warfare does not mean the mother and her daughters are nonexistent at this time; they are simply not the topic of discussion. The fate of the woman was described in detail in Chapter 17.

The last five verses of Chapter 19, verses 17 through 21, interrupt the narrative; as a unit, they replay in detail how—in what manner—the beast of Revelation 17:11 “goeth into perdition,” and they describe the previously undisclosed fate of the false prophet in the “battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16:14). Both the beast and the false prophet are to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone; that is, both systems are to be utterly destroyed, never to arise again. Being cast in “alive” means they will most energetically resist this turn of events.

Verse 21:

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

The slain remnant includes (a) the kings of earth who first supported and then forsook Papacy and (b) the small and great who were in opposition and enmity to the Lord and his army.

This table shows a parallelism and time sequence of the events in Chapter 19.

Verses 1 to 10	Verses 11 to 16	Verses 17 to 21
[Harvest message]		(Verses 17 and 18) Call of birds to great supper
[Marriage of Lamb]		(Verse 19) Lord and saints at war vs. beast and first set of ten kings (powers)
(Verses 1 and 2) Whore judged	(Verses 11 to 13) Whore judged	(Verse 20) Beast and false prophet cast into lake of fire
Great Company awareness of: (Verses 7 and 8) Lamb and Bride already married; (Verse 9) Marriage supper consolation; (Verse 10) Warning about angel worship	(Verse 14) Lord and saints after battle	
	(Verse 15) Whore just freshly trodden; nations to be smitten with sword	[Second set of ten kings eats whore's flesh]
	[Anarchy]	(Verse 21a) Remnant slain including first set of ten kings (powers)
	[Marriage supper]	[Gog reaches Israel] [Jacob's Trouble]
(Verses 3 to 6) Lord God reigneth	(Verse 16) Vesture with "KING OF KINGS"	(Verse 21b) Great supper [Great sacrifice of Ezekiel 39] [Feast of fat things]

Revelation Chapter 20

Prologue

In Chapter 20 the term “thousand years” is mentioned frequently, but in a couple of instances the use is spurious. The subject of “the thousand years” involves the binding and the loosing of Satan, the reign of Christ, and the reign of the Church. The relationship of these events to each other is one of the thorniest problems in Scripture. Before the verses of this chapter are examined one by one, the reader should be aware that other texts bearing upon the subject will be considered to establish guidelines for explaining Chapter 20. If this chapter is studied by itself, certain portions cause a degree of puzzlement. However, Holy Writ narrows down the area of interpretation so that these issues can be resolved.

A superficial reading of Chapter 20 gives the impression that the binding of Satan and the reign of Christ are synonymous in their application, namely, that Satan is bound for a thousand years and that Christ and his Church reign for the same thousand years. Also, a first impression leads one to think that Satan will be loosed after the thousand-year period has ended. Such conclusions are obviated by other Scriptures, which must be considered to prevent jumping to improper conclusions before suitably harmonizing and summarizing all pertinent information.

Luke 20:34–36

Jesus had just been asked a hypothetical question about the resurrection along these lines: In successive order a woman had seven husbands, each of whom sequentially died. Finally the woman herself died. Therefore, whose wife would she be in the resurrection? Part of Jesus’ reply is of special interest at this time: “The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage.” Of significance is the expression “that world,” meaning “that age.” Those accounted worthy to obtain that age will neither marry nor already be given in marriage. In other words, the marital relationship will cease to exist for those people accounted worthy to enter the age about which Jesus is speaking. “Would that be the Kingdom Age?” one might ask. An emphatic no is the reply. The Master refers to the *age beyond the Millennium*.

First: The awakening from the tomb is *resuscitation*, not resurrection (Greek *anastasis*). The awakening of mankind from the sleep of death will be similar to that of Lazarus (John 11), for the saved world will not be resurrected in the full sense until the *end* of the Millennium and the entrance to the age beyond. Thus the raising-up process requires the whole Millennium.

Second: One does not have to be accounted “worthy” to be awakened from death in order to gain entrance to the Kingdom Age. Did not Jesus say (John 5:25), “The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear [who hearken further in obedience] shall live”? And did not the Apostle Paul declare that “there will be a resurrection [a raising-up process] of both the just *and the unjust* [with the

hope of retrieval of some of the latter class]” (Acts 24:15 RSV)? Thus all who have died are guaranteed the opportunity of being awakened, the wicked as well as the righteous, though the wicked will receive grievous stripes proportionate to the evils committed (Heb. 2:9).

Third: Whether or not one has given careful and serious consideration to the subject, certain Scriptures do show there will be marriage during at least part of the Millennium (Ezek. 44:22; Isa. 65:23). And what about the unnumbered millions of the present generation already given in marriage who will live through the great Time of Trouble about to burst upon the world? During the Kingdom Age the marital state will be gradually phased out. (Of course the spouse relationship of those who rise from the tomb will have ceased, since death ends the marriage contract.)

Fourth: Millions will die during the Kingdom Age, yet *none* will see death who are “accounted worthy” to enter the age whereof Jesus speaks (verse 35). Of the Kingdom Age it is stated that “every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23; Deut. 18:15). Those who fail to make appreciable progress after a hundred years of trial and instruction during Christ’s reign will also be destroyed (Isa. 65:20). Those who are outwardly obedient and who conform to the rules and regulations of that Kingdom yet who are not in thorough heart sympathy with righteousness—“the number of whom is as the sand of the sea”—will likewise be cut off (Amos 8:5,6; Isa. 26:10; Rev. 20:8).

In Luke 20:36 Jesus mentions three reasons why those who are accounted worthy to enter the age beyond the Millennium cannot die anymore:

(1) “They are equal unto the angels.” The comparison is that those who are worthy to obtain that age will be like the *holy angels*, who will not die. In the time of the Flood the angels who remained steadfast and left not their first estate (Jude 6) withstood a most severe and crucial test, which is comparable to the test the world will have at the end of the Millennium. All of mankind who pass that inspection will have no further concern about dying, for they will have passed a difficult heart examination and character test. The comparison, then, is that just as the angels who were faithful prior to the Flood by not succumbing to evil and disobedience need worry no longer about death, so those of mankind who survive and enter the age beyond the Millennium need worry no longer about their true heart condition and steadfastness, for they will have obtained their inheritance of life everlasting. Mankind will also be like the angels in that all will become males, or “sons of God” like Adam before his gender division in the formation of Eve (Gen. 6:2). The marital relationship will cease because humankind will be “equal unto the angels” in this respect.

(2) They will be “children of God,” that is, an endeared species like the holy angels but dwelling on a lower or earthly plane of existence. Beyond the Millennium the faithful of mankind will become “children of God,” whereas previously, during the Millennium, they are children of the “everlasting [age-lasting] Father”—children of Jesus (Isa. 9:6). The human race will not obtain permanent sonship until they have proved their faithfulness at the close of the Millennium. The “children of God” will not die anymore, for they will now be God’s sons in the truest sense of

the word. “Come, ye blessed of my Father” will not apply until the very close of the Kingdom Age (Matt. 25:34).

(3) The “children of the resurrection” will be an already tried and proven class. They will not be merely raised to a status like that of Father Adam before he sinned but to a condition where the resurrection is full and *finalized*. It should be carefully noted that each of the six days of the Creative Week ended with God’s full approval and purposed intent. The creation of Adam and Eve in the physical and moral perfection of innocence—though as yet in an untried state—marked the end of the sixth Creative Day. But the seventh day of the Creative Week will terminate in a tried perfection and the eradication of sin and death, that is, in crowning glory. The completion of this seventh day will serve as the introduction of the grandest of all Jubilees. The end, *terminus ad quem*, of the seven *one-thousand-year* days since the fall of Adam will be coincidental to the end of the seventh day of the Creative Week, composed of seven *seven-thousand-year* days.

False Versus True Casting Out of the Dragon

Chapter 12 is a record of events *as viewed in the eyes of orthodoxy*. These were regarded as wonderful events, indeed as God’s overruling providential care in granting His professed Church the astonishing conquest of the Roman dragon power personalized in Constantine, who espoused Christianity and made it the religion of the realm. The victory of the pseudo-Michael over the awesome dragon power, which was cast out of the nominal heavens, was seen as nothing short of miraculous. But the jubilation in the false heavens (Rev. 12:10) was actually a *premature* and false pronouncement of the Kingdom of Christ. The pseudo-Michael (the false Christ) took unto himself his great power and ultimately reigned a thousand years (from A.D. 800 to 1800). The false Christ asserted the establishment of the promised Kingdom after the casting down of Satan, the dragon power, which had been persecuting the saints (verse 10 is not to be confused with verse 13). In Chapter 12 the dragon, though cast down, is not seen as being bound (as in Revelation 20:2) but, contrariwise, continues in active and hot pursuit of the woman—the true Church.¹

In marked contrast, Revelation 20 represents the conquest of the real dragon (Satan himself) by the true Michael (Jesus personally). The dragon of Chapters 12, 13, and 16 is the pseudo-dragon in the same sense that the serpent which beguiled Eve in Eden was but a medium used by the Adversary to advance his own purposes.

1. The question might arise as to whether the woman would be a virgin after giving birth to the man-child. The Virgin Mary is a good illustration. Her miraculous impregnation by the Holy Spirit of God resulted in the birth of Jesus, but when Jesus was born, Mary was still a virgin. It was the Father Himself—God Almighty—who implanted the seed of the holy child into the womb of the Virgin Mary. In Revelation 12 the virgin Church is pictured shining as the sun with a diadem of twelve stars and the moon under her feet, and yet she is later found to be pregnant. In this case it was the Adversary who supernaturally planted the unholy seed; and the woman, who fled into the wilderness, continued to maintain her integrity and purity because she in no sense sympathized or fraternized with the evil. She was, as it were, artificially inseminated—not by the Heavenly Father this time but by the Adversary. Thus, when the man-child was born and the woman fled into the wilderness, she was still scripturally considered a virgin Church in spite of what had happened. And so the true Church, or woman, has retained her virginity throughout the Gospel Age, and at its close is spoken of as being composed of ten *virgins*, five wise and five foolish.

The serpent was the front, or the mask, behind which Satan hid his nefarious designs. The literal serpent in Eden was not morally responsible for its behavior; the overwhelming spirit force and angelic power exerted upon the serpent caused it to act in accordance with the desire of the superior influence. Therefore, in one sense, the literal serpent could be likened to the pseudo-dragon of Chapters 12, 13, and 16; and Satan, the manipulator, to the real snake or dragon of Chapter 20.

Verse 1:

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Key of the Abyss

Jesus is the “angel” who has the key of the abyss. A “key” signifies the authority to lock and to unlock. In this case the locking is emphasized. Earlier, the fact that Jesus had the key was encouraging to the Church, for it meant he could unlock the chamber of death (Rev. 1:18). Here Jesus is the prison keeper of the “bottomless pit,” in which he will put Satan, the Adversary.

Sometimes a clever prisoner can escape from his cell. Jesus will ensure the imprisonment of Satan during the Millennium, however, by shackling him with a “great chain.” It is one thing to put someone in jail, slam the door, lock it, and post a guard, but it is another thing to additionally put a great chain about him. The necessity for the chain shows that although the Adversary is powerful, he will be powerfully and adequately restrained from activity *in any direction* during his incarceration. The seal (verse 3) on the outer door of the cell indicates that anyone who would presume to sympathize with or to aid such a one would be answerable to the highest authority.

Great Chain of Light?

Is “light” the chain that binds the Adversary? Do the opening of people’s eyes and the taking away, in part, of the ignorance with which Satan has blinded the masses curtail his influence in any manner? Perhaps these questions would best be answered by still another question. If light binds Satan, *how is it possible for him to be loosed* at the end of the Kingdom Age when (a) “the light of the sun shall be sevenfold” (Isa. 30:26), (b) all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest (Jer. 31:34), and (c) “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14)? If light is binding Satan, how can the powers of evil be increasing day by day? If light can bind the prince of demons, would it not proportionately also bind the fallen angels . . . and even more so?

Satan capitalizes on a person’s known weaknesses. There are three time-honored areas of temptation: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Only one of these will now be considered: the flesh. No amount of education—in itself—can offset the depraved tastes and overpowering lusts and sexual desires that afflict the vast majority of mankind. Hence mental knowledge and moral enlightenment of proper behavior are not sufficient to bind Satan. As an invisible spirit being, he is greatly advantaged, whereas humanity is correspondingly disadvantaged by not being able to discern in advance, and thus guard against, the moment the Adversary chooses to make his attack.

Also, those individuals who perceive the fallacy of—and for that reason forsake—Papacy or orthodoxy and go into the world (but do not flee unto Christ) are in possible danger of an even worse condition apart from or outside the system. While in the nominal Church, they were taught at least a modicum of moral behavior even if they unwittingly worshipped in an antichrist system; but when they go into the world, they are apt to have *no* inhibitions. They might say: “Forget religion. Why have any barriers or restrictions? Let’s do what we find pleasurable. We’ll eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” Those who thus return to the world discard everything. Just the realization that Papacy is an erroneous system will not solve the world’s problems. The solution is God’s Kingdom, and in order for that Kingdom to be a success, there must be a new Mediator, a New Covenant, new instructors, and power as well as wisdom—all of which Jesus has in his possession. Even though a *perfect* Law with all the accompanying knowledge was given to Israel, the nation failed miserably; and if a perfect law were given to the world today, the people would also fail miserably. In fact, stupendous miracles, signs, and wonders attended the Israelites in Moses’ day, and yet they sinned only a week or two afterwards. Thus, in order for the human race to escape the ensnarement of sin in the next age, Satan and the powers of evil will have to be bound and each person given private aid and instruction. The people will need help mentally, morally, physically, and spiritually—in every way. Personal assistance will be required for them to reach perfection and to attain everlasting life. God has guaranteed that earth’s High Priest will do everything he can to assist them.

Light, for the present, merely makes Satan change his tactics at times. For instance, if a person who has been deceived by a certain means becomes aware of that method, the Adversary realizes the tactic must be changed. The Devil’s quiver is full of a deadly assortment of arrows. Light itself is not sufficient to bring in the Kingdom. Utopia will never be established unless Satan and his institutions are brought to naught. Not only does the roaring lion have to be chained, but the stones and other obstructions he has set up have to be removed so that there will be no hindrances (Isa. 35:8,9; 62:10).

Verse 2:

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Verse 3:

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, . . .

The expression “a thousand years” in verse 2 is not in the Sinaitic manuscript.² Indeed, if verses 2 and 3 are carefully examined, “a thousand years” is seen to be discordant, for it interrupts the flow and progression of the narrative. In the light of this and other information in the chapter, the phrase can be deemed spurious. How could Jesus bind Satan a thousand years and then (afterwards) cast him into the bottomless pit?

2. The list of spurious passages in the *Berean Manual* is incomplete, and this expression is one of the omissions.

Moses' Rod

The statement Jesus “laid hold on the dragon” calls to mind how Moses grabbed the serpent by the tail (Exod. 4:2–4). First, Moses threw down his rod and it became a serpent. Then he grasped the serpent by the tail and it turned back into a rod. This incident illustrates a relinquishing of authority and a temporary permission (not a sanctioning) of evil, and then its sudden restraint. When Moses laid hold upon the serpent, it straightened out like a rod as if paralyzed. The wriggling serpent became stiff like a board.

Binding of Satan

No significant distinction is to be made, in this instance, between laying hold of Satan and binding him. Laying hold of Satan would be the curtailing of his power; binding and casting, being the same action, are simply an assurance of a coming reality. Laying hold of, binding, casting, locking, and sealing Satan all refer to his *complete restraint*, which will happen suddenly and not in progressive stages. The repetition of these terms is merely a form of emphasis to give assurance that there is not the faintest possibility of the Adversary's getting loose until the due time comes, i.e., until the “little season” (verse 3).

On the one hand, Chapter 12 presents the perspective of the dragon as the *instrument* Satan has employed the longest in maintaining his civil or governing authority as the “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4). The various aliases used in Revelation 12:9 *reflect* the outrageously wicked features of his diabolical character. Chapter 20, on the other hand, sets forth the dragon as now signifying the personage *behind* the instrument used; and the same names, being repeated in the same order, instead of *reflecting the qualities* previously described in Chapter 12, are now presented as the very embodiment or source of that evil.

Chapter 19, which pertains to the destruction of the beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth and their armies, has already shown the dissolution of the former status quo and the abolition of civil government as hitherto known. This insight prepares the reader to realize that the binding of the dragon in Chapter 20—the restraining of Satan in chains—is separate from the symbolism of the civil authority, through which he has so long ruled under the similitude of the dragon.

Gospel Clues on Binding of Satan

Perhaps the binding of Satan can best be understood by considering some of the Master's own remarks in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Matthew 12

22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

Matthew 12 (cont.)

26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.

28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

Luke 11

14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Mark 3

22 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

23 And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mark 3 (cont.)

25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27 No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, ex-

cept he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

Matthew 24

43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

When the unclean spirit that had possessed this man was exorcised, those who wished to minimize the influence and popularity of Jesus and to justify their opposition to his ministry suggested to others that he could perform this miracle because of some mysterious rapport or secret understanding he had with Satan in which both had agreed to appear as adversaries while really being in collusion. But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, used this very criticism as the basis of his own stinging rebuttal, showing that such reasoning was unsound and defied logic, for (1) "How can Satan cast out Satan?"³ "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:18). Furthermore, "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? . . . no fountain [can] . . . yield [both] salt water and fresh" (James 3:11,12). (2) If divided against itself, would not a royal house or governing body, as well as a humble domicile, be doomed to short success? How, therefore, could the Adversary's rulership over demons and nations have prevailed so long that he is notoriously called the "prince of the power of the air" and the "god of this world" unless he ran a tight ship and a close-knit organization? (3) In the presence of witnesses and with simplicity and forthrightness—without the necessity of magical incantation, the burning of incense, etc.—Jesus, by the *Spirit of God*, healed one who was possessed by a devil. Would not this great miracle indicate that heaven's Royal Majesty was in their midst? This, the "finger of God," was but a small indicator and sample of Jesus' coming glory and Kingdom work. (4) If, as the scribes said, his being in league with Satan enabled him to do such things, by whom and by what power were their children enabled to cast out demons? Were their children or the prophets also in collaboration with Beelzebub, the prince of demons? "Therefore they shall be your judges."

Binding Precedes Entering

The thought that Satan's binding is progressive and that his house is being progressively destroyed is not valid. Mark 3:27 rules out such a conclusion by showing that Satan's house cannot be entered until he is *first* bound. If the binding were progressive—a partial binding and a partial plundering—the binding could not occur first. Jesus *first* binds Satan and *then* spoils his goods. If Jesus did both at the same time, the word "first" would be meaningless.

Moreover, the entry into Satan's house cannot be thought of as the initial *parousia* of Christ's Second Presence because then Satan would have to be bound first,

3. Mark states Jesus' reply in unequivocal fashion; it is not a prediction of a future condition that would indicate the weakening of Satan's kingdom.

i.e., *before* Jesus' entry in 1874. The Lord, as a spirit being, has made several unhindered entries into earth's atmosphere in both Old and New Testament times; during the Gospel Age the guardian angels, who are far less in rank and authority, have also gone to and fro. Thus an innumerable host of both holy and unholy angels occupy earth's atmosphere at the same time.⁴

Satan's Spoils

Not only is it important to note that Satan must first be bound *before* his goods are spoiled, but the term "spoil" needs to be defined. The common perception is that it signifies the disruption, smashing, and destruction of Satan's kingdom. The true meaning of the Greek *diarpazo*, which is not to be confused with Webster's definition in English, is to snatch away thoroughly, to take possession of one's goods. That these goods, or spoils, cannot be Satan's institutions or systems of error, but must refer to something worthwhile, will now be proven.

In the concluding verses of Revelation 19, the false religious systems (beast and false prophet) and the kings of the earth, or this cosmos, are seen as already slain; and in Revelation 20 the binding of Satan is portrayed as a *subsequent* event—yet the "house" (see preceding columns of parallel Scriptures) is not even entered until the Adversary is first bound. In this setting (Matt. 12:29; Luke 11:21,22; Mark 3:27), the "house" refers to Satan's citadel, or center of control, in earth's circumambient atmosphere whence, amidst his fellow demons, he has successfully influenced and manipulated earth's affairs. This domain, or principality of power, is to be cleansed and occupied by earth's rightful invisible ("the world seeth me no more"—John 14:19) ruler, Jesus, and his associates, thus constituting a "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Pet. 3:13). In summation: both the *house* and the *goods* are *TAKEN AS A SPOIL AND ARE NOT DESTROYED!*

Question: What is the thought of dividing the spoils? Answer: When a victor divides the spoils, he takes those things that are valuable and discards the rest as refuse (Isa. 9:3). In warfare the victors take the enemy's weapons, money, equipment, and so forth. True, the Lord already owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psa. 50:10) and does not need material possessions, but He wants to rescue the *people*, those who will ultimately be His children, who are a part of these goods. Satan's religious, civil, and political institutions, as well as his organized vice and racketeer overlords, will all be replaced. In the next age the same *modus operandi* will be used; the mechanics of Jesus' reign will be quite similar except that he will rule with *righteousness*. And instead of enticing men to evil, Jesus will exhort, instruct, and discipline men to do good. He will deal with the world through an earthly and a spiritual priesthood; the Ancient Worthies will be princes throughout the earth, and the Church class will reign with him in heaven. Jerusalem, not Rome, will be earth's religious capital. Satan usurped the *earth*, and Jesus will take over the *earth*, part of Satan's illegitimate goods. "Therefore will I [Jehovah] divide him [Jesus] a portion with the great [ones], and he [Jesus] shall *divide the spoil* with the strong [the overcoming Church and fellow heirs of the Kingdom]" (Isa. 53:12).

4. See pages 385–386.

Satan's Armor

According to the Gospel of Luke, which presents a more personalized and direct confrontation between Jesus and the Adversary, the sequence of events pertaining to the possession of the strong man's (Satan's) house is that Satan (a) is overcome, (b) is stripped or wrenched of his armor, and (c) has his spoils divided. In practical terms, (a) and (b) are speedy if not simultaneous in occurrence. In Matthew, (a) the Adversary is first bound before (b) the house is penetrated, and (c) the household goods worthy of possession are appropriated. Thus the overcoming of Satan and the taking of his armor are one event and are to be equated with, or represented by, the binding.

The armor in which Satan trusts for his own personal safety would not be human institutions or falsehood, precious though they may be to him; nor can it be the satisfaction of his lust, vanity, prestige, or position. What then is the armor wherein he trusts that is to be taken away? The component parts of Satan's armor are (a) a false confidence of his own indestructibility spawned by the observation that no spirit beings have hitherto been known to die, (b) a false confidence in his own strength and cunning, (c) a false confidence of protection from harm due to the legions of demons under his command, and (d) a false confidence that if and when he assumes human form, he can, at liberty, dematerialize. The "palace" Satan guards (Luke 11:21) is rendered "courtyard" in Matthew 26:69 (*Emphatic Diaglott*). It appears Satan's house will be broken into sometime after the "third watch" (Luke 12:38,39; cf. Mark 13:35).

Cleansing of Individual

With regard to the individual whom Jesus cleansed (Matt. 12:22; Luke 11:14), the demon had to be dealt with before relief could be brought to the soul thus victimized. The possession of his body by the unclean spirit illustrated in pantomime the house controlled by the strong man. Before the blindness and the dumbness could be removed, the demon guarding the entrance to what he may have deemed his rightful home—as the saying goes, "possession is nine-tenths of the law"—was suddenly threatened by dispossession. The victim, however, had everything to gain from the outcome of this encounter.

Cleansing of Nation

Jesus went among his own people, the *house* of Israel, casting out demons and healing all who came to him for aid. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Matt. 4:16). The Master's message was both exhilarating and revolutionary. His doctrine was uplifting and ennobling. He exposed sham and hypocrisy in religion and morals, denouncing that outward appearance or form of godliness which denied the power thereof. And he criticized those who garnished the tombs of the righteous but were themselves whited sepulchers full of dead men's bones (Matt. 23:27).

Jesus reached the zenith of popularity upon his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, but his ministry of cleansing and the sowing of good seed fell largely on sterile and barren hearts (Matt. 13:19), the barren heart being a condition worse than the first (Matt. 12:43–45). Five days later he was crucified.

Cleansing of World

The individual whom Jesus healed, whose body had housed a demon that caused blindness and dumbness, is but a microcosm of the spiritual house or rulership over the world of mankind, who are like the lower house or parliament. The human race, who need cleansing as “children of disobedience,” are of their father the devil (Eph. 2:2; John 8:44). A commentary on the individual in Matthew 12:22 states: “A person from whom the indwelling demon took away both *sight* and *hearing* [*sic*]. Satan makes himself master of the *heart*, the *eyes*, and the *tongue* of the sinner. His *heart* he fills with the love of sin; his eyes he *blinds* that he may not see his guilt, and the perdition which awaits him; and his tongue he hinders from prayer and supplication, though he gives it increasing liberty in blasphemies, lies, slanders, &c. None but Jesus can redeem from this threefold captivity.”⁵

It appears likely that this individual who was healed had a later relapse foreseen by Jesus. The Master hinted to those who witnessed this miraculous demonstration of grace (which he used as the basis of his sermon on the binding of Satan) that this person would again be possessed by demons (Matt. 12:43–45). On a separate occasion the *same day*, Jesus repeated the suggestion (Matt. 13:19). The remarks indicate that many in the Kingdom of God will not receive the seed, or Word of God, into good and honest hearts. Though initially their hearts will be swept clean, they will later be found still void and empty because of being only cosmetically or superficially garnished or set in order unto righteousness. This class, referred to in Matthew 25:41–46, has its primary fulfillment at the end of the Kingdom Age.

Little Season

Before the remainder of Revelation 20:3 is treated, it is necessary to consider 1 Corinthians 15:24–28 as follows:

Then cometh the end [of the Kingdom Age], when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he [Christ] shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

Verse 24, above, indicates that by the close of the Millennium, everything will have been brought into subordination to Christ, at which time he will turn over the Kingdom to God. “As I live, saith the Lord [Jesus], every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” “of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” (Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10).

For he [Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Verse 25 goes one step further, stating that by the close of the Millennium, all enemies will have been eliminated, not merely brought into subjection under Christ’s feet. In other words, all *enemies* are put under Christ’s feet—are slain—*during his reign* (Josh. 10:24–26; 2 Sam. 22:39; Lam. 3:34; Rom. 16:20).

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

5. *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testament*, new ed., commentary by Adam Clarke (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., n.d.), Vol. 5 of 6.

Verse 26 states that the *last* enemy is death. Is not Satan an enemy? Are not his associates in sin also enemies? Will not the unrepentant be slain *before* the *last* enemy, death, is destroyed? How can the “little season” (verse 3), when Satan is loosed, occur after Jesus’ reign, for Christ “must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet”? (Incidentally, the enemy “death” in verse 26 applies only to those men and angels classified in Scripture as being under judgment; it is associated with planet Earth and its spirit environs.)

If the little season occurs after the reign is over, how could enemies yet remain to be trodden underfoot? Since Christ will reign until all enemies are put under his feet, is it not illogical to say that after his reign will come the little season in which millions will be deceived—millions who are counted as enemies, or “goats” (Matt. 25:31–46)? Relatively few of the goats will be cut off prior to the test at the close of the Millennium. Verses 25 and 26 alone prove the little season will occur during Christ’s reign. Revelation 20 shows the same time sequence, as will be demonstrated—the Scriptures harmonize!

[For he hath put all things under his feet—this clause is omitted in the main text of the Sinaitic manuscript.] But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he [God] is excepted, which did put all things under him [Jesus].

Verse 27 states that the “all things” being put under Jesus do not include the Father. What does the term “put under” signify? First, those who repent, trust, and obey Christ implicitly—those who, under testing, are found fit to enter eternal life beyond the Millennium—are the class God can and will accept. Second, those found unfit for eternal life—the incorrigible who are at enmity with God and are, therefore, unworthy of acceptance—will be destroyed.

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him [the Father] that put all things under him [the Son], that God may be all in all.

Verse 28, in conjunction with verse 24, informs the reader that the Son will turn over to the *Father* loyal sons, tried to the core, in whom there is no trace of disloyalty, so that “God may be *all* in *all*.” The Father’s character and principles will be 100 percent in 100 percent of all who are turned over to Him. At that time the Son’s work will be fully accomplished, for the very object of the work is that “God may be all in all,” that He might be in *everybody completely*. Adam, the son of God, was created perfect and innocent but was not yet tried; when tested, he failed. Those of mankind who get everlasting life will be tried and proven in their perfection—and will, therefore, be everlastingly faithful.

Although everlasting life and immortality are both *unending* life, the quality of each is vastly different. Immortality, the *crown of life* reserved for only a few, is the possession of an inherent life welling up within oneself. It is to dwell on the divine plane of existence in the very presence of Jesus and the Father. Everlasting life, on the other hand, is an unending life on a lower plane of existence and a life, whether on the human or the spirit plane, that needs to be sustained by food, drink, sleep, and continued obedience (even though already proven) to the divine will.

. . . 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.

The Sinaitic omits “and” to render the end of this passage “After these things [Greek *tauta*—plural] he must be loosed a little season.” After what things must Satan be loosed? After being laid hold of, being bound, being cast into the abyss, being shut up, and having a seal set upon him—the emphasis is on *these things* and not specially on the thousand years, as the conjunction “and” would necessitate.

True, translated into English from the Greek, the passage states that no deception will occur “till the thousand years should be fulfilled.” But if the expression “the thousand years” is considered as a title (“till *The Millennium* should be fulfilled”), the literalness of the Millennium being a thousand years in duration is preserved while, however, allowing it to be thought of in less rigid terms as a *generality*. If the thousand years began in 1874, they would end in 2874. Satan could be loosed *sometime during* the year 2874. Since Jesus returned as a spirit being in October 1874, it is logical to assume that October 2874 would mark the end of the thousand years in a technical sense.

In the Bible several significant events happen in the spring and some in the fall. For instance, the Passover season occurs in the first month, in the spring of the year, while the Day of Atonement takes place in the seventh month, in the fall of the year; the sacred year begins in the spring, and the civil year begins in the fall of the *same year*. Therefore, Satan could be loosed for, say, six months of the same year, namely, 2874. In other words, Satan will be loosed in *one part* of the very year the thousand years end; he will be loosed before that year, the one thousandth year, is over—the year in which the Kingdom Age comes to an end and the Golden Age beyond the Millennium is ushered in.

Verse 4:

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: . . .

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them” would suggest a rulership change. This follows a logical sequence of events in which displacement proceedings previously took place: the beast, the false prophet, the kings of the earth, and, last of all, the dragon were dethroned.

Here the word “judgment” (Greek *krima*) signifies judicial authority to sentence more in a punitive sense, as in Luke 23:40; James 3:1; and Jude 4. It calls to mind the promise “behold, I will make them [of the synagogue of Satan] to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee” (Rev. 3:9).

This part of the scenario is also reminiscent of portions of certain passages in Daniel 7: “I beheld till the thrones were cast down [Hebrew *remah*]” (verse 9). “But *the saints* of the most High shall take the kingdom” (verse 18). “And judgment was given to *the saints* of the most High; and the time came that *the saints* possessed the kingdom” (verse 22). “And the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of *the saints* [a multitudinous seed comprising the ‘Son of man’—verse 13] of the most High” (verse 27).

. . . 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; . . .

The question arises: Why did the risen Lord give this scene, in such fashion, to the Apostle John for review by the saints down here? The clue is found in a further scrutiny of the circumstances recorded in Revelation 6:9–11. John saw “under the altar the souls of them that *were slain* for the word of God, and . . . they cried . . . How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge *our blood* on them that dwell on the earth?” Revelation 20:4 speaks of this same class as being “*beheaded*” (Greek *pelekizo*, cut with an ax). Figurative beheading implies not merely a consecration to do the Lord’s will even unto death but death by execution or violence.

Furthermore, not only did the Apostle John recognize that the beheaded souls in Revelation 20 correspond to the souls seen slain in Revelation 6:9–11, but also he perceived that some among the enthroned saints were those prophesied to be slain in Revelation 13:15, which portrays an event terminating the earthly career of the feet members of the body of Christ. In Revelation 6:9–11 the ones slain, or beheaded, were told that they should rest “for a little season” until 1878, at which time they would receive white robes held in trust for them; but as far as being avenged of their blood, they must wait “until their fellowservants also . . . should be killed”—a still later event.

In the throne scene of Revelation 20, the saints who were martyred five centuries earlier are singled out and seen as associates of the risen *feet members* of The Christ, who likewise do not bow the knee to Baal. This is a prophetic indication that the feet members will share a fate in the present life similar to that endured by the souls under the altar. The blood of this former Abel class cannot be requited and their prayer answered until the completion of the Very Elect and the establishment of Messiah’s Kingdom shortly to follow. Then “judgment” will be turned over to those who were thus persecuted in the days of their flesh.

The “souls” of those seen seated on thrones indicates that the rulership of saints over mankind will be not with corporeal bodies or human substance but as spirit beings. At present “the whole world lieth in wickedness [the Wicked One],” and Satan is the “god of this [evil] world” (1 John 5:19; 2 Cor. 4:4). Worldlings are likened to “children of disobedience” and are of their father the devil (Eph. 2:2; John 8:44). Just as the Adversary, a strong invisible spirit being, has effectively influenced earth’s inhabitants in wrongdoing, so the invisible Messiah, imbued with power from on high, will, during his reign, influence mankind for good.

. . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

The Sinaitic renders this portion of verse 4 “and they *both* lived and reigned. . . .” The addition of “both” would be superfluous if it were meant to merely identify the two classes of saints previously mentioned (the souls who were beheaded and those who did not worship the beast). Why? These two classes are already significantly fresh in memory and quite obviously comprehended by the pronoun “they”; there-

fore, the inclusion of “both” would be redundant. If, however, the intended thrust was that those enthroned both “lived” and “reigned” the thousand years, then the emphasis would be specially meaningful and helpful in strengthening the faith of the saints (previously categorized) during their earthly pilgrimage.

While the brotherhood at large believe wholeheartedly, without the slightest diminution of faith, that those who suffer with Christ *shall reign with him*, yet not every individual believer would possess a similar unwavering conviction of faith with regard to oneself when confronted with the immediacy of death by execution or violence. When such a crisis enters the life of the Christian, it is eminently proper to importune divine aid and solace. The Master in the Garden of Gethsemane agonized as to whether he had been faithful in the performance of his ministry in every particular. He also, for a moment in time, cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). The text under consideration, therefore, is a precious promise to be laid hold upon by those about to be figuratively beheaded because of their fidelity to God. Life is a most precious commodity indeed, and the hope of its possession beyond the grave would assume primary importance under such a sobering circumstance. And if after death one should be so blessed as to hear the Master say, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt. 25:23), how much better this added benefit would be—and far beyond human comprehension, dimension, and adequacy of expression in gratitude. This portion of verse 4 shows the sequence to be life first and then, next, the reigning. An additional thought is that the reign would not begin until the Bride class, including the *feet* members, is complete.

In this one instance in Revelation 20 (i.e., the last part of verse 4), the Sinaitic manuscript has apparently incorrectly transcribed the expression “a thousand years”; in *all* other occurrences, the expression is “*the* thousand years.” In view of the reasoning already presented pertaining to Luke 20 and 1 Corinthians 15 that the “little season” must occur *prior* to Jesus’ handing the Kingdom to the Father, the term “the thousand years,” although literal, would in this context be considered a title, meaning The Millennium,⁶ rather than a detail.

6. The following sources, though not conclusive testimony, indicate “the” instead of “a” thousand years:

Code	Document	Century
C	Codex Ephraemi: Paris.	V
95s.	Syriac Codex Parham “17”: Mt. Athos. Scrivener Collation.	XII–XIII
7	Harleianus “5537” Ms.: London.	XI
38s.	Codex Vaticanus “579.” Alford Recollation.	VIII?
046	Codex Vaticanus b.	VIII–X
Q	Codex Basilanus: Rome. Tischendorf and Mai collations. The Common Greek Text, Textus Receptus, et al.	V–VI

The code notation “s” (*e silentio collatorum*) signifies the reading does not rest on published testimony but was brought together and is based upon personal observation, private correspondence, etc.

The Eastern Aramaic Text, according to George M. Lamsa (*The Modern New Testament* [Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co., 1940]), renders the passage “these thousand years” (centuries V–VI).

(cont.)

Verse 5:

[But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.] This is the first resurrection.

The first sentence, in brackets, is spurious; it is not found in the Sinaitic manuscript. The next sentence, “This is the first resurrection,” is authentic. Even though earlier it was demonstrated that anyone who enters the age beyond the Millennium will not die anymore, being truly “children of the resurrection,” yet is this resultant condition to be understood as the “first resurrection”? The answer is obvious: no.

Verse 6:

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.

In the Sinaitic the end of verse 6 is rendered “and shall reign with him *the*⁷ thousand years.” The “first resurrection” signifies that which is first in both (a) importance and (b) time sequence of fulfillment. “On such the second death hath no power” indicates that those who attain the first resurrection possess immortality and receive the divine nature. Their earlier schooling here on earth under the Master’s tutelage prepared them for office above as priests. In their former imperfect state they were inhibited by the flesh (Rom. 7:14–25), whereas now, in the scene being considered, they are morally and mentally equipped—endowed with power from on high—to render capable and efficient service. But where and over whom are God’s elect and Christ’s joint-heirs to perform this priestly service? This question was ably addressed as follows:

“... the destiny of the Church of this dispensation figures so largely in their anticipations that they seem almost to forget that “the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world,” and to lose sight of the blessed prospect that not only is the present Church to be saved out of the ruined world, to become the Eve of the Second Adam, but the ruined earth itself is yet to be renewed, and to become the happy home of saved nations who participate in the results of redemption.

The following extract is of no little significance: “There is no indefinite article in the Greek. The use of it in translation is *a matter of individual judgment* [emphasis added]” (*The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, 2nd ed., Nestle Greek text translated by Alfred Marshall [London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd., 1958], Introduction, p. ix).

Also, the Greek text of the twenty-first edition of Eberhard Nestle’s *Novum Testamentum Graece* includes the definite article “[*ta*],” with the brackets, in the main body of the text (*The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* [cited above], p. 1018). The brackets indicate that the present publishers consider the article of doubtful authenticity, but nevertheless it is there.

7. The plural form of the Greek article “the” (*ta*) is also found in:

Code	Document	Century
Q	Codex Basilanus: Rome. Tischendorf and Mai collations.	V–VI
38	Vaticanus Codex “579.” Birch Collation.	—
92.	Codex Montfortianus-Leicester (14). Tregelles Collation. Plymouth, England.	XIV
Syr. Pst.	A version of the Syriac. Tregelles Collation. Plymouth, England.	VI

““The narrowness which sees nothing but the salvation of the Church of this dispensation is born of human selfishness and not of Divine love; it is founded not on the teaching of Scripture, but on tradition and prejudice. The Bible in this, its last revelation on the subject, plainly teaches that while the peculiar glories of the Church are hers, and hers alone, that while the special privileges of the natural seed of Abraham belong to Israel, and to Israel only, that there is also a blessed future awaiting mankind under the gracious government of Immanuel; that one of the effects of the completed work of Christ will be to place the saved nations of the eternal kingdom in a restored paradise, completely delivered from the Tempter, and so established in righteousness that the Holy One can take up His abode among them forever. “He will 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.”

““The salvation of the Church of this dispensation is not the whole result of the death of Christ. There is to be in addition the establishment forever of a Kingdom of God in which His will shall be as fully done by men on earth as it is now done by angels in heaven. The consummation for which we daily pray is destined to come at last; and holy and happy service, without a flaw and without an interruption is yet to be rendered to God, not merely by the glorified saints of the New Jerusalem, but by redeemed nations on the earth, who walk forever in the light of the Celestial City.

““Such is the sublime vista of the future of our race, and of our earth in the eternal ages with which Scripture closes.””⁸

The Thousand Years

The Day of Christ commenced in October 1874. This date is the beginning of the *parousia*, the Day of the Lord’s Second Presence, an advent of one thousand years’ duration (Psa. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8). The same year marks the ending of six thousand years since the fall of Adam and is the beginning of the seventh one-thousand-year day otherwise known as earth’s Sabbath Day. As each solar day commences in total darkness at the hour of midnight (12:00 A.M.), so the beginning of earth’s antitypical Sabbath Day is not discernible to the natural eye or to the worldly-wise. The Judgment Day is also one thousand years long. Even though the Day of Christ’s Second Presence, earth’s Sabbath Day, the Judgment Day, and earth’s Jubilee (an explanation of this term being outside the parameter or scope of this treatise)⁹ all

8. This unreferenced and untitled excerpt was attributed to the Bible expositor H. Grattan Guinness in R. E. Streater’s treatise *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Pastoral Bible Institute, 1924), Vol. 2, pp. 496–497.

9. The following outline of the sabbath in Scripture may prove helpful:

- (1) The sabbath day of the week was designated a day of rest (Exod. 31:15).
- (2) The sabbath of weeks was followed by a Pentecostal day of refreshment (Lev. 23:15,16,21).
- (3) The first day of the sabbath month was a day of rest (Lev. 23:24,25).
- (4) The sabbath year was a year of rest unto the land (Lev. 25:4,5).

(cont.)

began in 1874, yet the same is not true in regard to the *reign* of Christ or to the binding of Satan, for both of these events occur within, but fall shy of, the boundaries of the thousand-year period.

Sabbath-Day Winter

Jesus instructs his disciples who now find themselves living in this harvest period (Matt. 13:39), especially toward its close: “Pray ye that your flight be *not in winter, neither on the sabbath day*: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake [i.e., by or through the elect] those days shall be shortened” (Matt. 24:20–22). And “pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36). The Scriptures do not refer to those of the Elect who of their own volition, in obedience to the Lord’s call, come out of Babylon promptly; the reference is to a later flight in panic of the Great Company class, who will flee when they see the nominal Church system begin to crumble. Such will be driven out by force of circumstance. The true Church, being accounted worthy to escape this feature of the trouble, will be granted an invisible spiritual translation before this happening.

Two conditions must transpire to mark the identity of this flight from Babylon: (1) a figurative nuclear “winter” (2) in or during the “sabbath” era (Jer. 8:20). This great Time of Trouble did not begin in 1874 nor in 1914 when the lease of Gentile dominion expired. Despite the loss of life in the world wars, plagues, and horrors of recent times, other wars and other plagues that have occurred throughout history have decimated a far larger proportion of earth’s inhabitants.

Judgment Day

The Judgment Day has already begun in which, as the Master said, the sons of Levi (the spiritual priesthood) would be purged as silver and gold (Mal. 3:3). The gospel net has been drawn to shore, and the sorting out of the good and the bad fish has already commenced (Matt. 13:47,48; Mark 1:17). There are various classes and stages of development in a long-range perspective of this subject, which begins with the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17). The following sequence may be observed:

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- (5) Seven sabbaths of years were followed by a Jubilee fiftieth year, during which the land rested and every man returned to his own possession (Lev. 25:8–17).
 - (6) Thus, inferentially, if seven squared ($7^2 = 49$ years) introduced the Jubilee fiftieth year, so, likewise, the Jubilee squared ($50^2 = 2,500$ years) would introduce earth’s Jubilee, in which a marked change in mankind’s former drudgery would be discerned. This corresponds to the seventh one-thousand-year era of the last day of the Creative Week.
 - (7) The seven Creative Days (of 7,000 years each or 49,000 years) introduce, with the Jubilee of God’s universe, an unending age in which sin and death, having been eradicated in this presently benighted planet *and its environs*, will forever be absent from all quarters of His domain.

Therefore, when the Millennium *fully expires*, God can—and inferentially will—crown the seventh Creative Day with His blessing as He similarly blessed the previous six creative epochs upon their completion.

1. Resurrection of the sleeping saints
2. Resurrection of the living remnant of saints
3. Destruction of mystical Babylon
4. Resurrection of the Great Company class
5. Binding of Satan
6. Judgment of the nations
7. Judgment of individuals (the living and the dead)

Reign of The Christ

Christ has reigned over the *Church* all down the Gospel Age since Pentecost—long before 1874. In fact, even during his earthly ministry Jesus said to his disciples: “If any man come to me, and hate not [by comparison] his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and *his own life also*, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26,27). Are not the requirements of discipleship as absolute as those of a king over his subjects? Therefore, the reign of Christ at his Second Advent will not be over his Church but over the *nations*. Jesus’ reign over the nations is future, and it will be *with* the Church, not in advance of the Church. It will be a joint reign; as the Lamb and his Bride, as the King and his Queen, they will be glorified together.

Long ago Jesus held the position and name of sovereign without exercising the ruling power. Herod asked, “Where is he that is born *King* of the Jews?” (Matt. 2:2). Matthew 21:5 states, “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, *thy King* cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” Upon this same entry into Jerusalem, much people “went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is *the King* of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord” (John 12:12,13). “And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou *the King* of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it” (Luke 23:3). “And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH *THE KING OF THE JEWS*” (John 19:19). And in Galilee before his ascension to heaven, Jesus said to his disciples, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18).

Smiting of the Image

The smiting of the image (Dan. 2:37–45) will be the first exercise of the kingly power of The Christ. The stone Kingdom class must first be completely “cut out of the mountain” (the earth) before they can smite the image upon its clay and iron feet (Dan. 2:34). Not only must the stone Kingdom class (Matt. 16:18) be cut, chiseled, shaped, fitted, and polished in earth’s quarry for their future position in the glorified body of Christ, but also they must be extracted, cut off, and snatched from this mountain and removed to the temple site in heaven above to be glorified. Then the stone Kingdom class will return to smite the image.

The smiting will be a sudden and devastating blow, sometimes called the Armageddon crash, upon the clay and iron feet of the image. An excellent example is provided in Isaiah 30:13,14. It is like “a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh *suddenly at an instant*. And he shall break it *as the breaking of the potters’ vessel that is broken in pieces*; he shall not spare: so that

there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.” The smiting will result in *complete* and *sudden* destruction (Jer. 51:8). The smiting described by Daniel does not signify stages of destruction, such as a smiting, a grinding (not even mentioned), and a blowing away. Nay, it compares well to a nuclear explosion, which instantly pulverizes everything to powder and is accompanied by a violent wind-fire storm, resulting *at once* in a complete dissolution of matter.

In Elijah’s vision (1 Kings 19:11,12), there is seen the progression of a *general* time of trouble acting as the prelude to the Lord’s intervention in the establishment of his Kingdom. The Daniel picture concentrates on *THE* Time of Trouble in a much more restricted sense. Elijah saw the Lord passing by, and “a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks *before* the LORD; but the LORD *was not in the wind*: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD *was not in the earthquake*: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD *was not in the fire*: and after the fire a still small voice [with which the Lord was presumably identified].” The sum of the matter is this: the wind, the earthquake, and the fire all represent man’s inhumanity to man; the threat of the extinction of all law and order will serve to thoroughly awaken and alarm earth’s leaders to see the utter necessity to ruthlessly clamp down on every form of democratic liberalism in an attempt to smother the fire of anarchy by the establishment of a police state. But the efforts will be to no lasting avail. At this juncture the stone Kingdom, *in which the Lord is represented*, will smash all earthly institutions. Thus the Lord will intervene in earth’s affairs as “a man of war” (Isa. 42:13), which occurs between the fire and the still small voice of Elijah’s vision. In like manner, the violence in the earth that steadily increased in Noah’s day was not of the Lord’s doing, but the Flood that terminated the violence was of the Lord’s doing. The destruction is not serialized or progressive in the smiting of the image, for the wind that blows away every vestige of the former image *is seen last*. In Elijah’s vision, which is serialized, the wind *is seen first*. These two pictures do not portray the same thing even though closely related in circumstance.

When the smiting of the image occurs, the overcoming Church has to be with Jesus. Hear his own words: “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he [each individual of the 144,000 elect] 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” (Rev. 2:26,27). To repeat: When the smiting of the image (Dan. 2:44,45) takes place, the entire overcoming Church has to be with Jesus. Yet some say not only that the image was smitten in 1914 but that, further, it is now being ground to powder to be blown away. If so, where is the Church? Must they not all participate in the initial shattering of the image? If the image has been smitten, then The Christ would have to be exercising its executive authority—which is not logical because the inauguration of the reign¹⁰ and the public service and ceremony associated with it must await the salvation of

10. For example: The President of the United States is determined in November of the election year, but not until two months later, in January, can he exercise the prerogatives of that office when he is inaugurated.

the holy remnant of natural Israel from their captivity to the hordes of the north, as prophesied by the Prophet Ezekiel (Chapters 38 and 39).

Presence Versus the Reign

The crux of the problem is this: If the reign of Christ were one thousand years long—yet future—then the Day of Christ’s Presence, instead of being one thousand years in length, would have to be in excess of eleven hundred years before the purported thousand-year reign would end. In addition, and of more importance, this eleven hundred years plus, when added to the six thousand years since Adam’s fall, would mean that the reign of Christ *and the loosing of Satan* would extend a considerable distance beyond the completion of the Creative Week (of seven seven-thousand-year days), thus marring the harmony of a cleansed universe. Eleven hundred years would also extend beyond the last millennium of the last Creative Day.

Therefore, it is affirmed that the Day of Christ is a period of one thousand years, the Judgment Day is one thousand years long, and the Sabbath Day is one thousand years. But the *reign* over the nations is *not* the *full* one thousand years, and neither is the binding of Satan, as will be further demonstrated. The reign, which is only *part* of that thousand-year day spoken of in Scripture, takes place within the framework of the Millennium (1874–2874). However, the close of the reign of Christ does correspond to the close of the Millennium. Viewed in this manner, the chronology can be completely harmonized.

Lesson in Nature

As the Apostle Paul might say, “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that . . .” (1 Cor. 11:14). The calendar day consists of twenty-four hours, yet sometimes the word “day” is thought of as being twelve hours long (John 11:9), that is, consisting of twelve hours of *daylight* and making a distinction between day and night. However, day and night together comprehend a twenty-four-hour day. “And God made two great lights; the greater light [the sun] *to rule the day*, and the lesser light [the moon] *to rule the night*” (Gen. 1:16). Thus the anomaly is that *the sun rules only part of its own twenty-four-hour day*. Similarly, the reign or rule of Christ is not the full thousand years any more than the sun reigns all twenty-four hours.

Verse 7:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

In the Greek the thought, as rendered in the Sinaitic manuscript, is quite different. Instead of stating “when the thousand years are expired,” the Sinaitic reads, “when the thousand years are *expiring*.” The thought is “when the thousand years *are about to be ended*.” In other words, this verse shows that the loosing of Satan will occur toward the end of the Millennium, but not at its very tip end. Satan’s being loosed for the little season, to be followed by his destruction, will take place entirely within the framework of the Millennium—and thus features one aspect of its close.

Verse 7 is an instance in the New Testament where a temporal clause (“when the thousand years are expired”) is indefinite in form but definite in meaning. Other examples are Mark 2:20; Luke 13:28; and Revelation 8:1.

The Greek adverb *ote* and the particle *an* combine to form *otan*,¹¹ which signifies “whenever.” Indefinite temporal clauses introduced by *ote* are followed by the verb in the subjunctive and with *an* when the clause is future time. Thus *otan*¹² is followed by the verb in the *subjunctive future*. It introduces a subjective or hypothetical element into a verbal idea, which also must be followed by the subjunctive mood.¹³

The verb *τελεω* (*teleo*) means “to end.” The word *τελεσθησε* should be considered. Many verbs insert *σ* (s) before *θ* (th or t) in the aorist passive.¹⁴ The underlined letters *CE* are found in the original uncial Greek and signify *se*. Thus *τελεσθησε* is *telesthesē* in present Greek.

The Sinaitic manuscript includes the suffix *CE* with dots above added by a later correctionist. But it is most obvious that these two letters in bold characters at the very beginning of a line were not an error introduced by the original copyist because of visual fatigue, nor were they an error in cross-referral translocation. (Note: The author of this Revelation treatise possesses a photocopy of the entire Sinaiticus Codex.)

The adverbial suffix *-σε* (*se*) denotes *motion towards*, e.g., *αλλοσε*; *to some other place*; etc.¹⁵

Thus: *τελεσθησε τα χιλια ετη*
telesthesē ta chilia eth
 “towards completion the thousand years”

The transitive verb is rendered in the aorist tense, subjunctive mood, and passive voice. In other words, “when the thousand years *are near an end*, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.”

Another very important point to observe is that the article, the adjective, and the noun in the phrase “the thousand years” are *all neuter plural* in the Greek; but the verb for this neuter plural subject is *in the singular*. This is another affirmation that the phrase “the thousand years” is to be considered a *title* rather than a detail with respect to the literal duration of the *reign of Christ* in contradistinction to the *parousia*.

Verse 8:

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.

11. H. P. V. Nunn, *A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: University Press, 1931), p. 112, section 208.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 112, section 209. J. Gresham Machen, *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1931), p. 264.

13. *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, 2nd ed., Nestle Greek text translated by Alfred Marshall (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd., 1958), Introduction, p. vii.

14. Geo. L. Cary, *An Introduction to the Greek of the New Testament*, 4th ed. (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1899), p. 26, section 38.

15. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 8th ed. rev. (New York: American Book Co., n.d.), p. 1377, s.v. “-se.”

While the Scripture states that nearing the completion of the thousand years Satan would be loosed, the manner in which this release is to be accomplished is not revealed. The possibility exists that the Adversary, due to some peculiar circumstance, might falsely assume his loosing was brought to pass through his own cunning and power. If such be the case, it would embolden him to be the chief advocate of opposition to the laws and regulations of the Kingdom, and it would spur him on in his own jealousy and personal animosity of Jesus' role as the Messiah.

In any event, verse 8 tersely reveals that Satan will remain the same incorrigible sinner and implacable foe of God, the same liar and murderer, that he was from the beginning (John 8:44; Matt. 16:23). Appearing at once, he will pursue with alacrity and energy some preconceived plan to foster and forward the seeds of discontent and rebellion worldwide. Those who follow his lead will feel they fared better formerly, in the "present evil world" (Amos 8:5,6; Gal. 1:4), than in the new age, or Kingdom. Such will render mere prudent obedience to Messiah, temporarily restraining self-indulgence, while they await an expected transferal of the Kingdom of earth to the children of men (Psa. 115:16). The deception will not be along religious lines but along the lines of inordinate and unmerited expectations of material gain, the fancied rights of men, and self-centered political aspirations.

Verse 3 states that Satan "*must be loosed* a little season," for the end of the Millennium is to be a harvest time of sifting and sorting out the teeming billions of humanity then living, each of whom will have enjoyed a full opportunity to attain perfection. The sheep will be separated from the goats (Matt. 25:31–46). The sheep represent those who will be eternally saved; during the Kingdom Age they will be interested in and praying for (1) those who have not yet come out of the prison house of death and (2) those who, having come out of that prison, are sin sick and morally undernourished and in need of help and encouragement. The sheep class will exhibit a purpose, will, or spirit in harmony with the Creator and thus will be proportionately immune to the deception of the Adversary.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan used the ploy of posing as a benefactor to the human family and questioning God's ulterior motive *in restricting the liberty* of partaking of the forbidden fruit. Likewise, toward the end of Messiah's reign, the Adversary may plant seeds of doubt in men's minds, suggesting that the thousand years have already expired and that the promised liberty and the turning of the Kingdom over to the people are *overdue*.

Hypothetically, let one mentally project himself over a billion years into the future. Would there be in common use a calendar marking off a particular year in relation to how far removed it was from some event in Jesus' life on earth—or from the creation of Adam? Probably not. What purpose would such a calendar serve? And so it is likely that even in the Millennial Age (as well as in the endless ages beyond), *only months and days within each unnumbered year* will be marked out for the observance of important events and the commemoration of certain feasts. Thus, in all probability, the day, the hour, and perhaps even the very year closing the Millennium will not be known in advance of their occurrence.

Gog and Magog

“And shall go out to deceive the nations” does not mean all nations will be deceived but that only a portion of every nation will be deceived. By alluding to Ezekiel 38 and the soon-to-come invasion of the land of Israel during Jacob’s Trouble, the “Gog and Magog” symbol of Revelation 20:8 represents two enemy classes. Several interesting distinctions between the Gog and Magog of the New Testament and that of the Old Testament are noted in the following table.

Ezekiel 38	Revelation 20
Gog and Magog are identified with the land of the <i>north quarters</i> .	Gog and Magog are identified with the <i>four quarters</i> of the earth.
The forces of Gog, from <i>the land of Magog</i> , invade Israel.	Magog is not the homeland but <i>an associate</i> of Gog.
Gog is <i>the principal</i> enemy force entering Israel.	Gog and Magog are the <i>two principal</i> enemy classes that besiege and surround the Holy City.
The invasion occurs at the end of the <i>Gospel Age</i> .	The invasion occurs at the end of the <i>Millennial Age</i> .

In Ezekiel 38, Magog signifies the literal country or district from which Gog departs to battle. In Revelation 20, Magog signifies a defection in the spirit realm from the ranks of those fallen angels who will be favored during Christ’s Kingdom with the instruction and judgment of the glorified Church (1 Cor. 6:2,3). This will occur contemporaneously with the judgment of the human race on the earthly plane under the schooling of the Church. Those angels who materialize in the last days of the Gospel Age will already have received, on account of that action, their full reward—destruction. Thus there will be two mass destructions of demons, one at the end of the Gospel Age and the other at the end of the Millennium.

During the present dispensation, Satan and the fallen angels have exercised their influence from the spirit realm in close proximity to earth. This baneful influence from the false heavens (the home government, or house of evil influence) has been the chief source behind present sinful conditions on earth; accordingly, those in sympathy with sin on the earthly plane are referred to as children of their father the devil (John 8:44). Those in the spirit realm who are sympathetic to evil at the end of the Millennium are represented by the symbolism of Magog; discontents on the earthly plane, by the symbolism of Gog. In the Kingdom Age, only those who remain under the banner of Messiah and in full sympathy with his rule will be spared.

Gathering to Battle

The expression “to gather *them* together to battle” refers to the bad element being mustered for warfare. Those who go to that battle will not be the holy ones, for the battle will be an uprising, a rebellion, an insurrection. The weapons of this warfare will not be the customary tanks, bazookas, machine guns, assault rifles, and so forth, for such arms will be nonexistent at that time, having been destroyed early in the Kingdom Age. This battle will be a war of words, angry disputations, and

strikes; it will be a massive demonstration of opposition and ill will against the powers that are in control then. The rebels will be fed up; they will feel the time has come for them to receive back the dominion of earth.

Number as the Sand of the Sea

The clause “the number of whom [*them* in the Greek] is as the sand of the sea[shore]” certainly represents an *innumerable class* both here and in every similar instance elsewhere in Scripture. However, two of these instances additionally indicate quality or *kind*. In verse 8 the emphasis is “the *number* . . . is as the sand of the sea.” Question: Could the expression about the number being as the sand of the sea apply to the nations—that the nations in the four quarters of the earth will be numbered as the sand of the sea—and not the rebels? Reply: The answer might be construed either way, but “the number of *them*” is more easily identifiable with “to gather *them* [that is, Gog and Magog, not the righteously inclined] . . . to battle.” This seems unmistakably to point to the immensity of the forces of Gog. Even 10 percent of earth’s approximately twenty billion inhabitants at that time would be an exceedingly great number of rebels, viz., two billion souls. Also, in the sentence structure of verse 8, the clause “sand of the sea” is far removed from the word “nations.” It is far more likely, therefore, that the large number refers to Gog and Magog.

The possibility exists of another mass materialization of fallen angels at the end of the Millennium similar to that suggested in Scripture to occur at the end of this age. Could it be that Satan will materialize at the time of *his destruction* (not his binding) and then figuratively be cast out and “as a carcass trodden under feet” (Isa. 14:12–19)? If so, and fallen angels act as his associates, there would be a curious fulfillment in *kind*, as well as number, in the expression “sand of the sea.”

Verse 9:

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.

Again, the immensity of the force involved in the deception is indicated, this time by the phrase “they went up on the breadth of the earth.” This verse is also reminiscent of the soon-to-come invasion of Israel in this age: “Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou [O Gog], and all thy bands, and many people with thee” (Ezek. 38:9).

The “camp of the saints” refers to the Ancient Worthies, who can be considered “saints” in the same manner as Aaron in the Old Testament is called “the saint of the LORD” (Psa. 106:16). The Ancient Worthies will be princes throughout the earth (Psa. 45:16), but the government, while it will embrace the whole earth, its dominion being from sea to sea and from the rivers to the ends of the earth, will be headquartered in Jerusalem, which will be the throne of the Lord. Therefore, although the majority of these princes will be assigned to outlying areas, the seat of government will be in the Holy Land.

The word “camp” signifies a *temporary dwelling*, suggesting the Ancient Worthies will have a spiritual resurrection after their tenure of office expires in the

Kingdom Age. Since they proved faithful unto death in their prior life, it appears unlikely that this transition to the spirit plane will be accompanied with the rigors of pain or death. The following reasoning and proof texts are offered:

1. On the Mount of Transfiguration (a vision and a type of the excellency in power and glory of the future Kingdom of God—Mark 9:1–4; Matt. 17:9; 2 Pet. 1:16–18), Jesus, being inferentially between the two, talked with Moses (a type of the Old Testament worthies, who looked forward to Christ—Acts 3:22; John 5:46) and Elijah (a type of the Church in the wilderness, who look back to Christ’s example and ministry—Mal. 4:5; Matt. 11:14; James 5:17; Rev. 12:6). At the conclusion of the ministry of all three—Moses, Jesus, and Elijah—their humanity disappeared. The particular point of referral is the body of Moses, a type of the Old Testament saints.

2. God’s oath to Abraham, repeated to Isaac and Jacob—all three are to be princes in the earthly Kingdom—is carefully stated as follows: “And I will give unto thee, and *to thy seed after thee*, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and *I will be their God*” (Gen. 17:8; 28:4; 35:12; Deut. 1:8; Luke 13:28). Their role as princes is temporary; something better is planned for them than the mere possession of a perfect human body, which all the obedient of earth will also eventually possess.

3. The glorified Church is to shine “as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:43), whereas the Ancient Worthies, who will turn many to righteousness in that day, will receive a celestial inheritance and shine as stars in the firmament (Dan. 12:3).

4. The Kohathites, a type of the Ancient Worthies, were one of the four divisions of the Levites encamped about the Tabernacle; the Levites possessed no lasting earthly inheritance (Num. 3:17,29; 18:20–24).

5. “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. . . . And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a *better country*, that is, an *heavenly*: Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. . . . Women received [in faith] their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a *better resurrection* [than the resurrection of the world]” (Heb. 11:8–10,15,16,35).

Encompassing the Camp and the Beloved City

The rebels will gather to battle—that is, for verbal warfare—encompassing the “camp of the saints” in order to voice opposition to the rule of the Kingdom. They will try to break that rule and force the government to meet their demands and misconceived rights. In principle, it will be like a strike against the Kingdom of God, the implication being that a sizable group will not be in the right heart condition.

As already suggested, the term “camp of the saints” is a tabernacle, or temporary state, that will be replaced when the Ancient Worthies are eventually transferred to a more permanent and honored status in the spirit realm above. However, this thought does not preclude the additional application that the “camp of the saints” refers to the outlying areas throughout the earth where the Ancient Worthies will be stationed and the “beloved city” of Jerusalem represents centrality of government.

Today people make known their opposition to a particular foreign power by going to that country’s consulate or embassy and vociferously clamoring and demonstrating in front of it, hoping to be heard and to gain official recognition and redress of a real or fancied wrong or injury. The insurrection at the end of the Millennium may be similar. In each nation, rebels will demonstrate against the visible representatives of government, the Ancient Worthies, in those areas allocated to their jurisdiction. Therefore, not all rebels will go personally to the Holy Land, but they will go there *representatively* in very large numbers.

Fire out of Heaven

“Fire” will come down “from God out of heaven” and devour those comprising Gog and Magog *before* the thousand-year period of the Judgment Day and reign of Christ are fully expired. The Messianic Age is also the Kingdom of God. Of that time it is stated, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms [or Kingdom] of our Lord [God], and of his Christ” (Rev. 11:15); and Jesus said, “Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves [the nominal leaders of Jewry] thrust out [of this office]” (Luke 13:28). “Because he [God] hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

“And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” The thrust of the vision and prophecy seems peculiarly related to the rebellion of Korah and his associates: “Two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown . . . gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? . . . And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense” (Num. 16:2,3,35). Thus Gog and Magog will be consumed by a clean hydrogen implosion or super laser beam.

It may seem amazing and puzzling to think there could be such a deception in such an era of light and understanding. However, if one were to ponder well the past history of the Israelites, the development should not be so surprising. For instance, when the Lord led that people out of the land of Egypt, He performed miracles before their very eyes. What about the ten plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians, particularly the last one in which all the firstborn of Egypt and the firstborn of their cattle died? Yet only three days later they said to Moses, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it

had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness” (Exod. 14:11,12). The nation straightway made that unheard-of and unprecedented miraculous crossing of the Red Sea dry-shod. Yet again, three days later, they murmured against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” (Exod. 15:22–24). What about “all the men that appertained unto Korah,” and Dathan and Abiram and their kin? Moses said: “Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and *the earth closed upon them*: and they perished from among the congregation. . . . BUT ON THE MORROW ALL THE CONGREGATION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL MURMURED AGAINST MOSES AND AGAINST AARON, SAYING, YE HAVE KILLED THE PEOPLE OF THE LORD[!!!]” (Num. 16:28–33,41).

Would certain members of any other nation of the fallen and depraved human race have done differently? Probably not. Therefore, salvation is ultimately secured only through the Cross of Christ and the reception and further cultivation of the truth in a good and honest heart, notwithstanding any amount of accompanying signs and wonders.

Verse 10:

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 for ever and ever.

Revelation 14:11 mentions that “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.” The thought is the same here in verse 10. The “smoke” (the *memory* of what happened to the beast and the false prophet) will rise up forever, as will the memory of the fate of Satan and the dragon civil power. Verse 10 states, “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone [into Second Death, from which there can be no resurrection], where the beast and the false prophet are, and [*they plural*] shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” Since the beast and the false prophet are symbols of false religious institutions, and not living entities, how can *they* be tormented? Furthermore, “the dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence” (Psa. 115:17); and “the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing. . . . Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished” (Eccles. 9:5,6).

Since the expression “for ever and ever” signifies literal perpetuity, could this not mean that a true-to-life audiovisual representation or record of the humiliation, fate, and manner of destruction of these enemies of God will be preserved as a witness to all posterity (past, present, and future) lest in some one of the ages to come of eternity, the circumstances surrounding these events be lost to memory? No

doubt all history has been filmed under divine supervision, including this scene, which will be a painful reminder of the practices of these evil systems. In other words, there will forever be a showing of the history of mankind—both the good and the evil—so that the memory of these systems, as well as the memory of Jesus’ death, what he endured, and how loyal he was to the Heavenly Father, will be perpetuated. These showings will not be seen constantly by every individual every moment in every place, but when all the different times and seasons of future inhabited planets throughout the universe are considered, the showings will be ceaseless. Sometime, somewhere, a showing will be going on. Hence the torment will be a painful *visual* memorial rather than nonending physical suffering actually being inflicted and endured throughout eternity.

Lucifer, Son of the Morning

The Scriptures seem to support the thought that, first, Satan will be bound as an angel, or spirit being, but when he is loosed at the end of the Millennium, he will be destroyed in human form: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou *cut down to the ground*, which didst weaken the nations! . . . Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell [Hebrew *sheol*, to the grave or to everlasting destruction depending on contextual evidence],¹⁶ to the sides of the pit [instead of being elevated to the sides of the north]. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, *Is this the man* that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms[?] . . . But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch . . . that go down to the stones of the pit; *as a carcase trodden under feet*” (Isa. 14:12,15,16,19).

Under the symbolism of the prince of Tyrus, further information is given about Satan: “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. . . . therefore will I bring forth *a fire from the midst of thee*, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee *to ashes upon the earth* in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee *among the people* shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and *never shalt thou be any more*” (Ezek. 28:15,18,19). Since Jesus must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet and the *last enemy* to be destroyed is death, Satan must be destroyed before death is destroyed. When fire comes down and destroys all the rebels (verse 9), it will, in effect, also terminate death itself, for the children of the resurrection cannot die anymore.

Verse 11:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

The “great white throne” is Messiah’s. Its being *white* signifies that the one seated on the throne will have a pure and upright character, wisdom, and the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The greatness of the throne suggests the large magnitude and scope of its authority and its full power to dispense justice and judgment

16. *Gehenna* is not expressly employed to picture Second Death in the Old Testament as it is in the New Testament.

without partiality. The setting of verse 11 is the initial establishment of Christ's Kingdom; and the portion of text "from whose [Christ's] face the earth and the heaven *fled away*; and there was found *no place for them*" refers to the stone striking the image of world government (Dan. 2:34,35) and to the statement concerning the present heavens and earth being kept in reservation "unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:7). The Apostle continued: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night [without observation]; in the which the heavens [the present powers of the air, of which Satan is the prince] shall pass away with a great [hissing] noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth [the organization and fabric of society] also and the works that are therein [pride, rank, aristocracy, etc.] shall be burned up. . . . the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat [of revolution and anarchy]. . . . [But] we, according to his promise, look for new heavens [the new spiritual power—Christ's Kingdom] and a new earth [society organized on the new basis of love and justice], wherein dwelleth righteousness [rather than on the former basis of might and oppression]" (2 Pet. 3:10,12,13). The Prophet added: "For all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language,¹⁷ that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:8,9). In the Living Bible the passage in Revelation 20:11 about the heavens and the earth fleeing away is rendered "they found no place *to hide*"; that is, the Lord will be a "swift witness" against the evildoers (Mal. 3:5).

Verse 12:

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.

In the Sinaitic manuscript the dead, both small and great, are seen to stand "before *the throne*." The erroneous translation "before God" in the King James Version hitherto required that the white throne of verse 11 be considered as Jehovah's. The correct Sinaitic rendering, however, sheds further significance on Jesus' own statement during his earthly ministry: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations [peoples]: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: . . . Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire [destruction], prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:31,32,34,41). Here Jesus gives a compendium of the whole Kingdom Age.

Verse 12 continues with "and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life." There are "books" (plural) and "*the* book of

17. The "fire" is symbolic, for if the whole earth were consumed with literal fire, no inhabitants would be left to benefit from truth and a "pure language."

life.” “Books” refers to (1) the standard, the Bible or Law of God, as well as (2) a person’s record. Stated another way, the textbook is God’s Word, and the other book of “the books [plural]” is an individual’s report card. If a person, when examined, receives a passing grade, his name will be written in the third book, “the book of life,” which is also described as “another book was opened.” A person whose name is not entered in the third book not only will not get a passing grade but will not get life.

A person’s record, one of “the books,” is more than just a record of the present life; it will also include a record of his life during the Millennial Age—his efforts to retrace his steps and amend his wrongs and his deeds as he walks up the highway of holiness (Isa. 35:8). It will be a person’s *whole* record, his *personal history*.

The Bible, the standard, will be opened in regard to things not previously understood by the world; its mysteries will be unlocked. The Law of God will be disclosed with progressive instruction—how to walk, what to do, and so forth. Moreover, the Ancient Worthies will explain this instruction in terms all will be able to understand. The other of “the books,” the personal history of each individual, will additionally contain a background account of the history of mankind with all of its foibles. Like a double report card, the personal history book will tell what people did before the Millennial Age—before their awakening from the grave—as well as their endeavors and achievements during the Millennium. The personal history will include a record of both an individual’s condemned past and his progress (or lack of progress) up the highway of holiness. If one receives a passing grade based on both books—the personal history and the Bible, or standard—he will be written in the book of life and will thus attain life as a reward.

Verse 13:

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.

Verse 13 could be understood to mean: “The dead were judged according to their works *after* they were delivered up from the grave and *after* their new works of the next age.” Or it could be taken as stated: “They were judged . . . according to their works [both past and (the then) present].” This verse describes the work of the entire Millennium. The “sea” will give up its dead not just in the early part of the Millennium but throughout the age as various classes come forth. “Death” and “hell” will deliver up the dead in them. Perhaps more than five hundred years will be required for all the dead to come forth from the grave.

What is the difference between the “sea,” “death,” and “hell” giving up their dead? “Hell” refers to the dead dead, those in the grave. “Death” signifies the living dead, those considered dead in their trespasses and sins, those still under the Adamic curse who do not enter the tomb but who survive the great Time of Trouble soon to come and thus find themselves under Messiah’s rulership. These will not be “alive” in the full sense until they have made good; considerable time will be required to attain that condition. Therefore, both the living dead and the dead dead will be “delivered up” for judgment.

The “sea” represents the restless or irreligious masses, those not under religious restraint. To say this class will be “delivered up” means that when the Kingdom comes, they will have to make a decision. Not having been under religious restraint, they did whatever they pleased, but such an attitude will not be tolerated in the Kingdom. In fact, the sea element will cease to exist, for in the Kingdom they will have to decide whether or not to obey, and those who will not hear “that prophet” will summarily be cut off (Acts 3:23). The moment they make a decision, one way or the other, they will be out of the sea element and enter either the New Covenant arrangement or Second Death. It should be remembered that this verse is written not from the progressive standpoint but from the *finished* standpoint. The sea, death, and hell “gave up” their dead.

Will all be guaranteed a full one hundred years of opportunity, or could some be cut off sooner? Those who refuse to listen and obey will be cut off instantly. Those who at least *passively* obey will be given one hundred years to make progress. However, those who remain in an undeveloped state, having made no progress after one hundred years of full opportunity, will be cut off at that point. Finally, at the end of the Millennium, those who have prudently obeyed and made progress but have failed to reach the proper and expected heart condition will prove their unworthiness by failing to withstand the final testing when Satan is loosed. Only in a qualified way, therefore, is everybody in the Kingdom guaranteed a full one hundred years; all who do not resist and openly disobey will be given that opportunity.

Verse 14:

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

As explained under verse 13, “death” is the condition of the living who are dead in their trespasses and sins, and “hell” is the condition of the unseen dead, those who are hidden in the tomb. Contrary to the doctrines taught of men and the creeds of Christendom, *death and hell are to be destroyed*. In the case of the obedient, death will be swallowed up by life. In the case of the disobedient, death will be swallowed up in the “lake of fire”—in the “second death.” Not literal, the lake of fire is symbolic of the utter destruction of whatever is figuratively cast into it. When death is destroyed, the emphasis is on annihilation, not on suffering. Furthermore, the emphasis is on death being no longer operable here *on planet Earth and in its environs*, which include *tartaroo*.

The death to be destroyed in verse 14 includes the death of the fallen angels as well as the death of the “prince of the power of the air,” Satan (Eph. 2:2). “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Christ] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). Second Death is a prerogative God will always have, but as far as mankind is concerned, those who prove loyal will *never* again die. Those of the human family who pass the test at the end of the Millennium will be like the holy angels, “children of the resurrection” (Luke 20:36). Whether or not those yet to be created on other planets (Isa. 45:18) will also be “children of the resurrection” is another matter. They have not been born yet and hence have never had a trial. Any other insurrection that might arise in the future

will not be tolerated but will be cut off immediately. Suppose that in the billions of years in the future, some being, a free moral agent, should be created who would sin as Satan did. If he were blotted out in the day of his sin, God's will would still be done, for there will be no continuum of rebellion in His universe.

“And he [God through Jesus] will destroy in this mountain [the Kingdom on earth with its throne centered in Jerusalem—Isa. 2:3; Jer. 3:17] the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa. 25:7,8).

Out of the hand of *Sheol* will I ransom them.

Out of Death will I redeem them.

I will be thy plagues, O Death.

I will be thy destruction, O *Sheol*.

Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

(Hos. 13:14 literal translation—editor)¹⁸

Verse 15:

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Verses 11 through 15 apply to the judgment of *individuals* as opposed to systems (beast, false prophet, and dragon, excluding Satan). *Summation:* Verse 11 depicts the inauguration of the Kingdom on earth. Verse 12 deals with the progression of the Kingdom work in those of mankind who survive Armageddon, the great Time of Trouble. Verse 13 indicates a progression in the judgment of those who are raised from the prison house of death. Verses 14 and 15 conclude the Kingdom work still under Messiah's reign. In verse 15 the conjunction “And” probably conveys a summary of the prior four verses and, therefore, should be rendered “Even”: “*Even* whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast [in the final analysis] into the lake of fire.”

18. Modern authorities prefer to translate Hosea 13:14 in a question format throughout and also to render “repentance” in the sense of “pity” or “compassion.” While up to a certain point this is grammatically permissible as an alternate reading, yet it is flawed since the adverb “where” in the Revised Standard Version, so heavily relied upon, finds no support in the Hebrew and is borrowed from the Greek Syriac. This modern preferential reading completely reverses and negates the slant given in the King James Version. The KJV, therefore, is to be given priority where “repentance” is “hid” in the sense of *not breaking covenant or promise* (Num. 23:19; Psa. 110:4; Jer. 4:28; Rom. 11:29; Heb. 7:21). Also, the theme of the prophecy of Hosea is one not of perpetual negation but of *retrieval* (Hos. 1:10; 2:14,19; 3:5; 4:16).

Holy City

Part VII: Chapters 21 & 22

Revelation Chapter 21

Verse 1:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; . . .

God's program with reference to man spans three great periods of time beginning with man's creation and reaching to infinity. The first, from creation to the Flood, under the ministration of angels, is called "the world that then was" (2 Pet. 3:6). The second great epoch, from the Flood to the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom, is under the limited control of Satan, "the prince [or god] of this world," and therefore is called "this present evil world" (John 14:30; Gal. 1:4; 2 Pet. 3:7). The third is to be "the world to come," "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (Heb. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:13). Under Messiah's rulership evil will no longer be permitted to predominate. The blotting out of evil will be gradual, requiring the completion of the thousand years, styled the "Millennium." No longer will the wicked prosper, for "the righteous [shall] flourish" (Psa. 72:7), the "obedient . . . shall eat the good of the land" (Isa. 1:19), and "evildoers shall be cut off" (Psa. 37:9).

It should be remembered that planet Earth is the basis of all these "worlds," or dispensations, and that the physical heavens (sky and atmosphere) and the physical earth do not pass away—they remain. As it is written, "the earth abideth for ever" (Eccl. 1:4). The three great epochs, or "worlds," each consist of a "heavens" and an "earth." The word *heavens* symbolizes the higher or ecclesiastical controlling powers (including the spirit realm), and the *earth* symbolizes those underneath religious restraint.

The "first heaven" and the "first earth" spoken of in verse 1 pertain not to the period prior to the Noachian Flood but to the second epoch, or dispensation; namely, the present evil world, which is to be followed by the "new heaven" and the "new earth." Not only did the Apostle Peter prophesy of this "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Pet. 3:13), but the Apostle Paul was "caught up to the third [prophetic] heaven." From the vantage point of finding himself amidst the spiritual and temporal rulership of that era, Paul was "caught up into paradise" and heard "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:2-4).

. . . and there was no more sea.

In contradistinction to the "earth" being those underneath religious restraint, the "sea" represents those not under religious restraint. With this new arrangement and Messiah's rod-of-iron rule, order will be brought out of chaos and the turbulent masses made subject to righteous government and proper religious restraint. However, although earth's inhabitants will have to comply with the rules and regulations of that era, the obedience will not be a heartfelt submission on the part of some.

*. . . when thy judgments come down to the earth,
The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.*

Though favor be shown to the wicked,
 Yet will he not learn righteousness;
Even in the land of uprightness will he deal wrongfully,
 And will not see [want to behold] the majesty [excellency]
 of the LORD.

[Prophetic Spectator]

O LORD, thy hand is uplifted,¹ but they see it not;
 Now let them see to their shame thy zeal for thy people—
 Let fire consume thine enemies! (Isa. 26:9–11)²

Notwithstanding the iron rule of Messiah, could it be said either (a) early, when Jesus stills the wild and tempestuous ocean waves of humanity, bringing a great calm after the Time of Trouble, or (b) late in Christ's reign, when the hosts of the discontented openly revolt and besiege the beloved city and the camp of the saints, that "*there was no more sea*"? Stilling the sea is one thing; its absence is another matter (cf. Isa. 57:20).

Only after the incorrigibly wicked have been destroyed at the close of the Millennium, when Christ hands over to the Father a *tried and proven race*, will there be "no more sea." Then God's rule will be done on earth as it is in heaven in answer to the Lord's Prayer. The fiftieth thousand-year day (the eighth thousand-year day from the fall of Adam), which follows the completion of the Seventh Creative Day (7 × 7,000 years), marks the beginning of the grand Jubilee of all Jubilees, namely, the Golden Age of Prophecy, the era *beyond* the Millennium. Those who are accounted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection of the dead cannot die anymore (Luke 20:35,36). At that time it will be said to surviving mankind, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, *inherit the kingdom* prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). In other words, the messianic era is but the vestibule into the Golden Era of Eternity. Thus verse 1 of Revelation Chapter 21 expresses in a condensed or capsule format the attainment of this idealized state of utopia.

Verse 2:

*And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from
 God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

This verse pertains to the inauguration of the reign of Christ. The New Jerusalem is the spiritual Holy City, the glorified Christ, head and body members. "Out of

-
1. When Satan is loosed from his prison (Rev. 20:7–10), the deceived multitude will erroneously conclude that the Messianic reign has ended. Observing the behavior and example of the Adversary subsequent to his release and seeing his seeming immunity to further punishment, the forces of "Gog" will be emboldened to follow his leadership down the path to destruction—being unaware that Christ's hand remains "uplifted," that he yet rules. What will appear to be a hiatus or gap in his reign is, in reality, purposely designed to test obedience and to manifest those who truly love God out of the fullness of their hearts and those who do not. At the Red Sea the uplifted hand of Moses (a type of Christ) not only resulted in the Exodus salvation of the Israelites (Exod. 14:13–16) but also was instrumental in the destruction of their enemies (Exod. 14:26,27).
 2. Alexander R. Gordon et al., *The Old Testament: An American Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), Book of Isaiah translated by Alexander R. Gordon.

Zion [the ‘Jerusalem which is above’] shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from [earthly] Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3; Gal. 4:26). Just as a bride shares all the dignities and honors of her husband, so the Church in glory shares these with Christ. Coming down from above signifies that the city is of divine origin, in contrast to the former beastly governments that arose out of the earth or out of the sea. It further indicates that the complete establishment of the Kingdom, or full reparation in the hearts and conduct of the living and the dead, will be gradual, occupying the entire millennial reign from the time of its inception.

The declaration “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” implies that the beauty, grandeur, and perfection of the Bride’s adornment on this occasion are particular and elaborate to the last degree. Also suggested are the happiness of the occasion and the breathless spectacle of the Bride’s appearance, as it were, to the public waiting down here outside the church door *following the wedding*. “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now . . . for the manifestation of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:22,19). Though the members of the Bride class will be invisible to human sight, their identity will be revealed to mankind (Psa. 87:3,5,6).

Verse 3:

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Verse 4:

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.

The Sinaitic manuscript indicates the source of the great voice as coming forth “out of the [Messiah’s] throne.” A forceful announcement will be published and loudly proclaimed to inform earth’s inhabitants that their appointed King is present and the reign of Christ has begun. Then the Jubilee trumpet shall be made to sound throughout all the land, proclaiming “liberty . . . unto all the inhabitants thereof” (Lev. 25:9,10).

Certainly the Emperor of the universe will not vacate His throne in heaven and establish His residence on planet Earth, but the new order will be the Kingdom of *God* in the primary sense because it was solely His idea in the first place. Rulership under God’s dear Son and Messiah’s joint-heirs, the Church, will be so absolutely in accord with the Father that the Kingdom work will completely represent His will for mankind.

God’s presence amidst Israel, His typical people, was represented by the “tabernacle of the congregation,” or “tent of meeting,” around which the Israelites encamped at a respectful distance (Lev. 1:1; cf. RSV). The Most Holy compartment of this structure housed the supernatural Shekinah light, which in a figurative sense portrayed His glory. Under this arrangement the nation approached near unto the house of His presence through the medium of a priesthood. In a somewhat similar

manner, mankind in the Kingdom Age will draw near to God through the earthly representatives of a spiritual priesthood—The Christ.

The expression “tabernacle of God” in verse 3 is associated with Messiah’s Kingdom because this arrangement is not to be a permanent or eternal condition. When the atonement work is complete and mankind is thoroughly reconciled to God, there will be no further need of a mediator between God and man. In other words, there will be no further need for such a rigid or structured arrangement.

In the first half of verse 3, the vision that John saw is presented from the standpoint of a spectator residing momentarily in the Kingdom era. “The tabernacle of God *is* [present tense correctly supplied by the translators] with men.” But the last half of verse 3 and all of verse 4, beginning with the clause “and he [God] will dwell with them,” are recorded in the future tense. To be more specific: these events will have their fulfillment *in the era following the reign of Christ*.

A fine distinction is also to be noted between, first, the tabernacle of God being with men during the Millennium and, next, His dwelling (Greek: tabernacling) with men. The former expression refers to a corporate arrangement conducive to restructuring society as a whole along educational and disciplinary lines, and also to acquainting man with religious standards and instilling moral values. The latter expression refers to the private indwelling of God’s love in the heart of each of the wholly redeemed; namely, in those accounted worthy as “his people” to attain the postmillennial period.

Just as the beloved saints of the Gospel Age are assured “the Father *himself* loveth you” (John 16:27), so likewise the faithful who enter the golden apocalyptic era (Matt. 25:34), the epoch beyond the reign of Christ, are assured that “God *himself* shall be with them, and be their God.” Verse 4 further indicates a gradual wiping away of “*all* [residual] tears from their eyes” even in the utopian era beyond wherein the loss of former loved ones in the “little season” (Rev. 20:3) will cause a temporary lingering of some inner sorrow. But any audible sobs or cries of anguish of soul will be carefully and wholeheartedly—that is, voluntarily—suppressed. Why? Lest such a public manifestation be misunderstood as a lack of appreciation of the righteousness of the judgment inflicted. That there would be absolutely no initial feeling of loss whatever would be unreasonable to expect (Lev. 10:1–6; 1 Sam. 15:35).³

The statement “there shall be no more death” (cf. Luke 20:36) certainly cannot pertain to the Millennial Age, for multitudes will decrease within that time frame. Therefore, the cessation of conditions enumerated in verse 4 subsequent to the statement about “no more death”—sorrow, crying, and pain—refers to the postmillennial period when all “the former things are passed away.”

Verse 5:

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.

3. Although 1 Thessalonians 4:13 applies to the Gospel Age, it expresses a similar thought: “that ye [Christians in the present era] sorrow not [i.e., inordinately or excessively], even as others which have no hope.”

All Things Made New

This message emanates from Christ's throne of earth's dominion. The blessings come not as the result of a process of evolution or human ingenuity but through Jesus' efforts. The lifting up of mankind, the making of "all things new," the bringing of man and his lost Edenic habitat back to a restored paradise—these are Messiah's responsibility. His rulership will be successful because it is *new*.

As present conditions ominously deteriorate and eventually lead into anarchy, the events that occur will seem to belie the glorious things prophetically spoken. Even the Lord's saints, at a time of enervation or low ebb of spirits, will need to be reminded of the surety of this future happy state (cf. Luke 7:19–23). The one who gives this fresh assurance and lays his testimony on the line is none other than that "true and faithful" witness (Rev. 1:5; 3:14).

Verse 6:

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.

The declaration "It is [they are] done"⁴ is one of finality (Isa. 9:7b; Dan. 2:45b); that is to say, from the divine standpoint, "These things are as good as done." The statement "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (verse 6 above and Rev. 1:8) informs the reader that Jesus not only is "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2) at the present time but also will occupy the same role in the earthly call to human restitution during the Millennium. Then the privilege of obtaining everlasting life will be freely open to all, and God's Spirit (of understanding) will be poured out upon all flesh as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9; Acts 2:17). Those who are "*athirst*," those who hunger for truth and righteousness, are most apt to reap life everlasting.

Verse 7:

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

"Those addressed [in verse 7] are not the bride class, selected during the Gospel age [1 John 3:2], but the sheep class of Matt. 25—such of mankind as during the Millennial age become the Lord's sheep and obey his voice. . . . they shall inherit the earth, the purchased possession . . . which Jesus redeemed with his own precious blood, and will restore at the close of the Millennium to all the children of Adam who shall have accepted his gracious favors and been regenerated by him, and thus become his sons, and he their God—their 'Father.'—Isa. 9:6 [cf. Zech. 8:8; Rom. 8:21]."⁵

The Sinaitic manuscript states in verse 7, "I [Jesus] will be [a] *god* to him, and he [the overcomer] shall be to me a son." The omission of the Greek article before *theos* (god) is most significant, for in over ninety-three instances the Apocalypse

4. The Sinaitic manuscript has omission dots placed over the verb.

5. "In the Paradise of God," *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, Vol. 22, No. 12 (June 15, 1901), p. 201.

includes the article before *theos* to designate the Lord God Almighty, not Christ. Moreover, the text indicates that to obtain life everlasting, each subject of the Kingdom to come on earth must be an overcomer: “He that *overcometh* . . .”

Verse 8:

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The **fearful**, *deilos* (Matt. 8:26), lack strength of mind or courage; they are the fainthearted, the cowardly. Those who “draw back” (Heb. 10:38,39) with the unbelievers will be destroyed from among the people.

The **unbelieving**, *apistos* (Heb. 3:12,19; 11:6), lack trust or confidence in God and hence fail to obey His commands.

The **abominable**, *bdelussomai* (Matt. 24:15; Luke 16:15), know the truth yet love unrighteousness. This term pertains to worshippers and the things they offer, which are highly esteemed among men but are an abomination, a foul odor (*flatus per rectum*), in the sight of God.

The **murderers**, *phoneus* (Matt. 22:7; Acts 7:52), are sowers of discord (Prov. 6:14,19) and slanderers who kill the influence or rob the good name of fellow man (1 Pet. 4:15). (The inclusion of this term does not mean that a man who once was guilty of homicide could not reform and subsequently inherit eternal life.)

The **whoremongers**, *pornos* (Eph. 5:5; 1 Cor. 5:1; 1 Tim. 1:10), participate in illicit sexual intercourse; they debauch or defile themselves with mankind or other uncleanness (Heb. 12:16).

The **sorcerers**, *pharmakeia* (Rev. 18:23), use spiritual drugs, potions, spells, and enchantments; that is, they mix the doctrinal and behavioral ingredients of truth and error for purposes of deception, endeavoring to accredit to themselves and not to the Lord the healing process of salvation.

The **idolaters**, *eidolatria* (Eph. 5:5; 1 Cor. 10:7), misappropriate divine favors and render to self or to any other creature the honor and service that belong to God. This trait is also characterized by a sin of the mind against God and is usually associated with immorality or covetousness.

All the **liars**, *pseudēs* (1 John 2:4; 4:20), feign virtue or piety; they are hypocrites, “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Tim. 3:5).

All in the foregoing categories are to “have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Their destiny will be utter destruction, or annihilation, for having failed to take advantage of every opportunity of knowledge and help afforded them under Messiah’s rulership.

Verse 9:

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.

Vision of the New Jerusalem

John, representative of the feet members of the Church in the seventh epoch, is about to be transferred forward into the future to see the Bride, the Lamb's wife, by one of the seven plague-bearing angels—the seventh (see commentary on Revelation 17:1). The John class have to “Come hither”; that is, they have to manifest some interest in prophetic matters, expending time and effort in this direction, if they expect to be rewarded with further understanding of dispensational truth.

The whore reigns as a city, or government, in the present life (Rev. 17:1–5), whereas the true Church of Christ is admonished to keep separate from the world and its politics (James 4:4) and has her Lord's promise of rulership in the future life if faithful in the present one. Thus two women, each associated with a city, are shown in marked contrast to each other.

Verse 10:

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,

In Revelation 17:3 the Apostle was carried backward in time in the spirit into the wilderness period of 1,260 years; here he is translated, or carried forward in the spirit, into the day of Messiah's power, when his throne, or government, will be exalted in the earth. The “great city, the holy Jerusalem, [seen] descending out of heaven from God,” is comparable to the description given in verse 2 of this same chapter.

Verse 11:

Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

It is immediately discerned that this is a vision, not a literal scene, for literal cities are built on terra firma. Seen coming down in one piece, having brilliant light and beauty, this great city, the New Jerusalem, is obviously from God—not only because its source is heaven and its descent miraculous but also because of other furnished detail. Instead of being made of ordinary cement and bricks like terrestrial cities, its walls, foundations, gates, and buildings are all composed of precious material. Not only is this future symbolic city described as “new,” “great,” and “holy,” but it is the city of *glory*: “having the glory of God.” Verse 11 connects the *glory* of God with the “light . . . like unto . . . a jasper stone, clear as crystal [cf. Rev. 4:3].”

The light of the stone is said to be like “a stone most precious.” The diamond, because of its customary quality and stable character, is the standard most precious stone. Therefore, the context contains the very clue as to which jewel the light of the city resembles, and the description “clear as crystal” is a further confirmation. The stone of verse 11 being likened to a “jasper” is quite misleading, for the jasper of today contains imperfections of dirt and other extraneous foreign material, as well as air pockets or bubbles formed by gaseous conditions existent in its original structural arrangement. Jasper is one of the poorest of the semiprecious stones. It comes

in different colors and is not especially beautiful. The jasper of the Book of Revelation is the diamond.

Verse 12:

And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

Verse 13:

On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

Verse 14:

And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The “wall great and high” surrounding the celestial city, or Kingdom government, signifies the protection given to and the security felt by those who enter that blessed estate. Men shall “call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise” (Isa. 60:18).

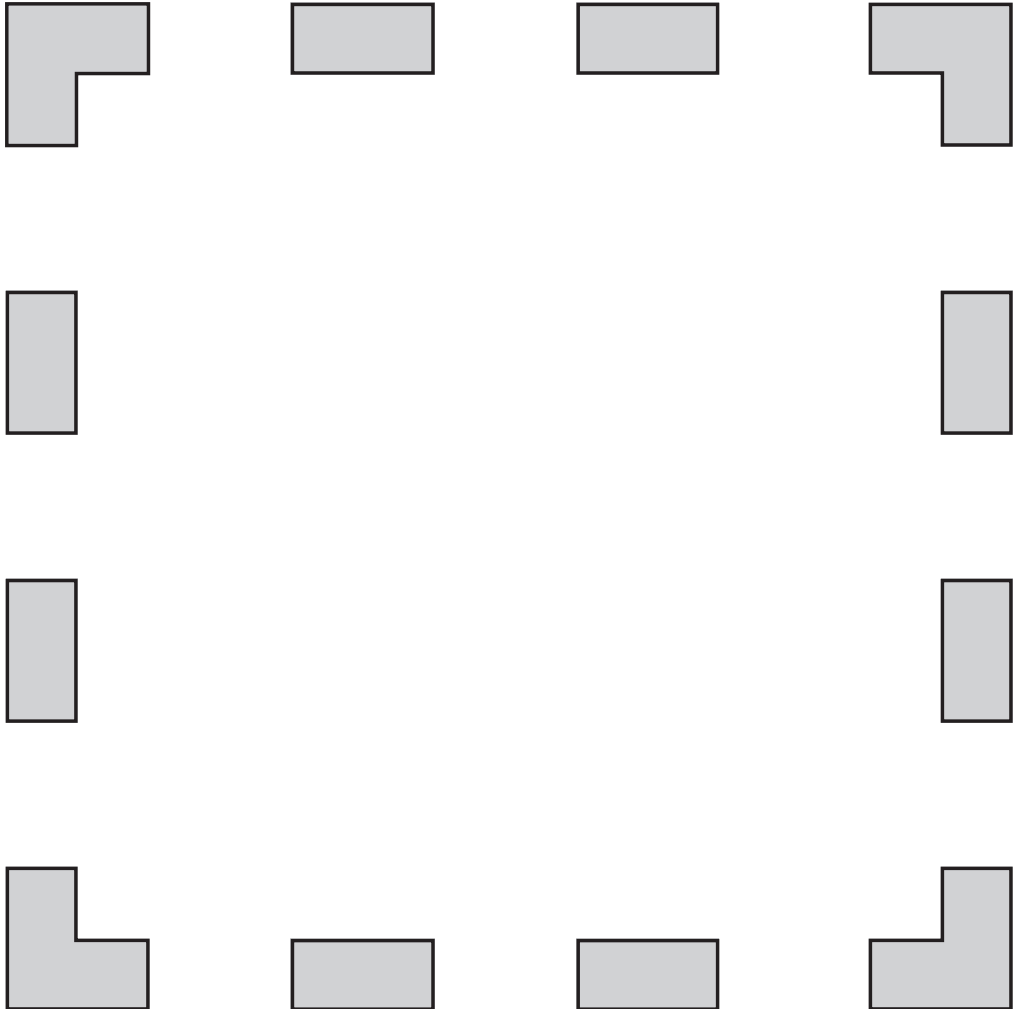
The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are written not on the twelve angels seen standing at the various entries but upon or above the twelve gates themselves (verse 12).⁶ Verse 14 associates the twelve unnamed apostles with the twelve foundations of the city (rather than the gates). At the First Advent Jesus told his apostles they would be seated on “twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28). The superstructure of the wall above the twelve foundations would consist of the remainder of the 144,000 saints.

There is a relationship between the twelve foundations and the twelve gates. Each gate-angel is the earthly representative of one of the twelve apostles. The number of gate-angels totaling twelve is emblematic of the office of the Ancient Worthies, who will serve as human guides to assist the various peoples of mankind through the particular gate that is most suitable to their individual character and personality traits—and *most conducive to their successfully attaining everlasting life*.

The number and the disposition of the symbolic city gates oriented to the four points of the compass are specifically stated, but the name of the particular tribe assigned to each gate is not given. However, the east, north, south, and west ordering of the gates in verse 13 intimates an order of functional importance. Therefore, the right-hand cornerstone of each side facing a cardinal point of the compass is the *more significant stone*.

6. Two thoughts now become apparent. (1) To enter into the New Covenant to obtain the blessings of the next age, one will have to be a Jew or become a Jewish convert. In the Gospel Age there is neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ, but in the millennial Kingdom the world of mankind will have to come into covenant relationship through identity with the Jewish nation (Jer. 31:31). (2) An even deeper significance is that all the people of earth can be divided into twelve basic personality traits. From this perspective, there are twelve tribes of Israel not only in the Church but also in the world. (For additional information see pages 575–617.)

Floor Plan of New Jerusalem



Twelve Wall Foundations and Gates

With the foundations of the wall of the great city, only the number is specified. Both the disposition of each foundation stone and what apostolic name is found written thereon are not supplied. Therefore, a conservative approach has been used in pursuing the minutiae of the Holy City.

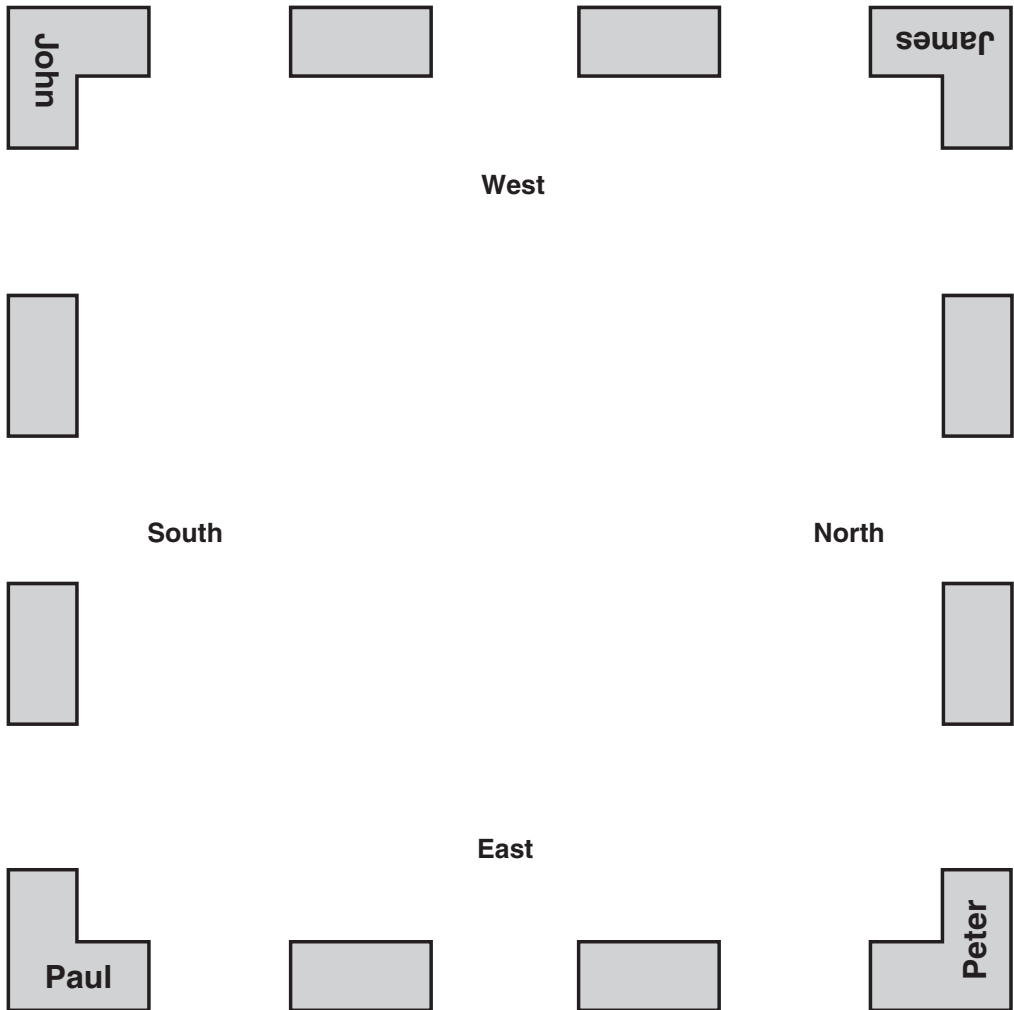
There seems to be unanimity of opinion that the foundation of the wall of the city consists of various tier levels assembled one above another. But such a conclusion does not appear valid, for it attaches undue singular importance to the first, or bottom, tier level. No one foundation stone supports the whole structure in any sense. All twelve stones are required. Of course the description of the city is highly figurative, and therefore, a certain degree of tolerance of perception and interpretation is to be expected.

Placement of Foundations and Gates

The following visual representation of the floor plan of the city was made by piecing together the various apocalyptic details furnished thus far on the twelve foundation stones and gates. A most logical format is the result.

Because of the unique nature and significance of the cornerstones, liberty has been taken to assign the names of the four most prominent apostles to these stones in the compass-point (east, north, south, west) sequence given in verse 13. Since the apostles are not mentioned by name or order in verse 14, the placement assigned below is as far as the matter dare be pursued.

Floor Plan of New Jerusalem



Name Placement of Four Apostles

Verse 15:

And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

Verse 16:

And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Verse 17:

And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

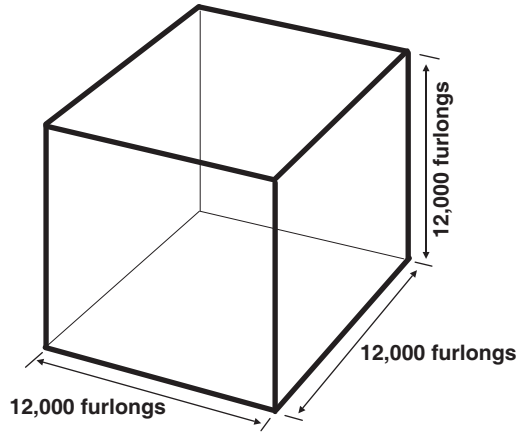
The man with the golden reed enters the flow of the narrative so unobtrusively that the reader assumes, without further thought, the man is none other than the plague-bearing angel who conducted John to the present situation. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that the man with the measuring reed is irrefutably identical with the angel of Revelation 22:8,9.

The golden reed represents the Word of God, by which all things are appraised and measured from the divine standpoint. In this scenario the predetermined length of the rod signifies that those of the Very Elect, comprising the Holy City, attained the measurement set forth in Scripture, for “whom he [God] did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29). In verse 17 the Apocalypse indicates that this qualification is according to the “measure of a man” (personified by the life and ministry of the man Christ Jesus) who is the very “angel” holding the golden rule in the vision. In other words, the man measuring the city, the angel, is Jesus.

The immense size of the Holy City—12,000 furlongs (1,500 miles) in length—serves three purposes: (1) The measurements are seen to be strictly symbolic, not literal. (2) The prevalence of the numbers 12, 144, and 12,000 are so woven into the architectural framework as to indicate that the future Holy City, or government of Messiah, is primarily composed of only the Very Elect—the more-than-overcomers of this dispensation. Certainly the code number of the Little Flock (12,000 = 144,000) is suggested in a variety of ways. (3) The city in another sense represents planet Earth expressed in the simplest of *mathematical terms and signifying the extent of Messiah’s domain*. His throne is as the sun (Psa. 89:36; cf. Matt. 13:43) and as a mountain Kingdom filling and blessing the whole earth (Dan. 2:35; Gen. 12:3), for “from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD’S name is to be praised” (Psa. 113:3; Mal. 1:11). “In them [the heavens] hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is *as a bridegroom* coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth [from man’s perspective] is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat [Mal. 4:2] thereof” (Psa. 19:4–6).

“And the city lieth foursquare” indicates the New Jerusalem is a cube in appearance, and hence is a most unusual city. This brings to mind the Most Holy compartment of the Tabernacle and the Temple—the cubical throne room of Jehovah—which also symbolizes the divine nature promised to the Very Elect, to those who

The New Jerusalem



Diameter of sun = 864,000 miles

Number of seconds in a solar day = 86,400

Area of each side of Holy City cube: 12,000 12,000 or 144,000,000 6 sides of cube = 864,000,000

Diameter of earth = 7,920 miles

12,000 furlongs = 12,000 660 feet (length of 1 furlong) = 7,920,000 feet

Earth's maximum distance (apogee) from the sun = 95,040,000 miles

7,920,000 feet 12 inches (length of 1 foot) = 95,040,000 inches

love God supremely in the present life. It is interesting to note that people who endeavor to live uprightly, whether or not they are Christians, are called “squares.” The government of this city will be “foursquare”; i.e., thoroughly righteous, in harmony with the four attributes of God. It will also be foursquare in the sense of not being overly strict (not strict beyond reason or the capability of the governed). Not only does the picture denote perfection, purity, and stability, but also the equal symmetry indicates its decrees will be “fair and square,” righteous and true . . . *designed to bless.*

“And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits.” The number 144 is a multiple of 12 (12 12). The number 1,000 symbolizes divine perfection (as well as the Millennium) and Divinity. It is God’s number as represented by the measurements of the Most Holy (10 10 10 cubits). Therefore, 144 1,000 represents the apostles and the glorified Church.

Verse 18:

And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

Verse 19:

And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

Verse 20:

The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

Splendor of City as Seen from Without

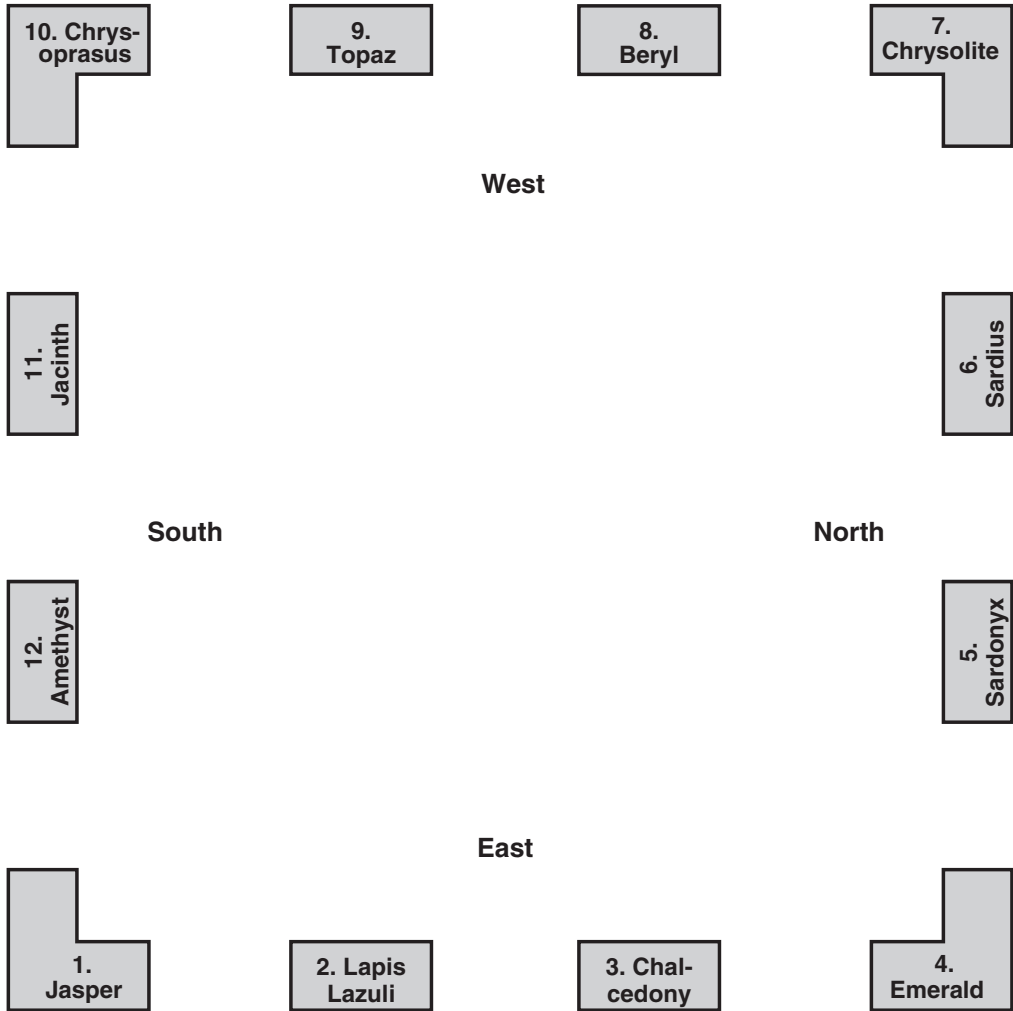
The fabric or composition of the wall (including the twelve foundations) is described as “jasper,” which in verse 11 is said to be “clear as crystal” and is thus the diamond. Normally, a wall circuiting a city is set apart some distance from the structures within, but in this circumstance, with due consideration being given to the city’s immense proportions and unusual cubical configuration, the whole consists of three levels, which, starting from the bottom upward, are as follows: (1) the primary foundation stones of the wall; (2) the remainder of the foundation wall, which, including the primary foundation stones, extends to a height of 144 cubits; and (3) surmounting the bottom two levels, the appearance of an awesome golden crystalline, glasslike, seamless transparency resembling a frozen-atmosphere, icelike superstructure. *All three levels together comprise component parts of the one city*, which arises to a height of 12,000 furlongs. To state the matter another way, the city resembles a stadium boxed in on all sides, somewhat in fashion to a square superdome enclosing a throne and an Edenic garden.

Only the foundations of the wall of the city are adorned or overlaid with all manner of precious stones; that is, each of the twelve foundation stones is garnished with numerous jewels of the variety peculiar to that foundation.⁷ The different stones in the twelve foundations picture variety in the Church not from the standpoint of character importance but from the standpoint of authority and jurisdiction. The first stone, the jasper (or diamond), and the last stone, the amethyst, are, respectively, the greatest and perhaps the least in organizational talent or a leadership role. However, as previously explained, this does not necessarily imply that the stones, in the strict order of their enumeration between the first and the last, represent a sequential ranking in order of importance.

Without question the various jewels are listed in a sequence: first, second, etc. But what kind of sequence—one of prominence or one of simple placement? Partly both. The east side of the city was given a priority earlier in the vision (verse 13) where the rotation commenced counterclockwise. Since the throne of God is in the midst of the city, the right-hand corner of the east side as seen from within the city (but to the left of the observer standing outside) is where the sequence starts, with that cornerstone hypothetically assigned to the Apostle Paul. Accordingly, the first,

7. Although the Greek designates the second stone as a sapphire, it does not refer to the modern sapphire. The gem would be the modern lapis lazuli.

Floor Plan of New Jerusalem



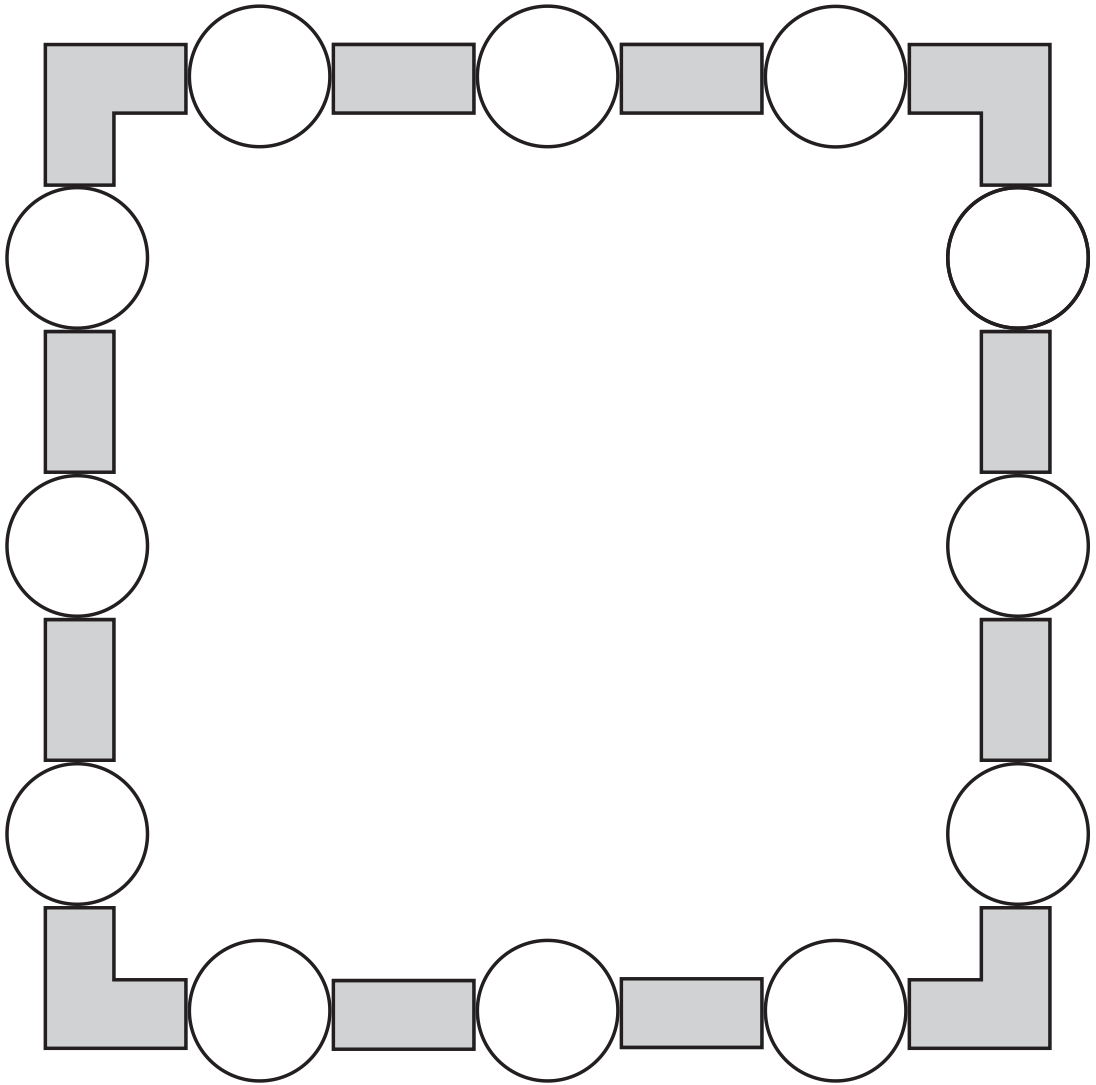
Garnishment of Twelve Foundations

fourth, seventh, and tenth jewels would correspond to each of the four cornerstones, as shown in the above illustration.

Verse 21:

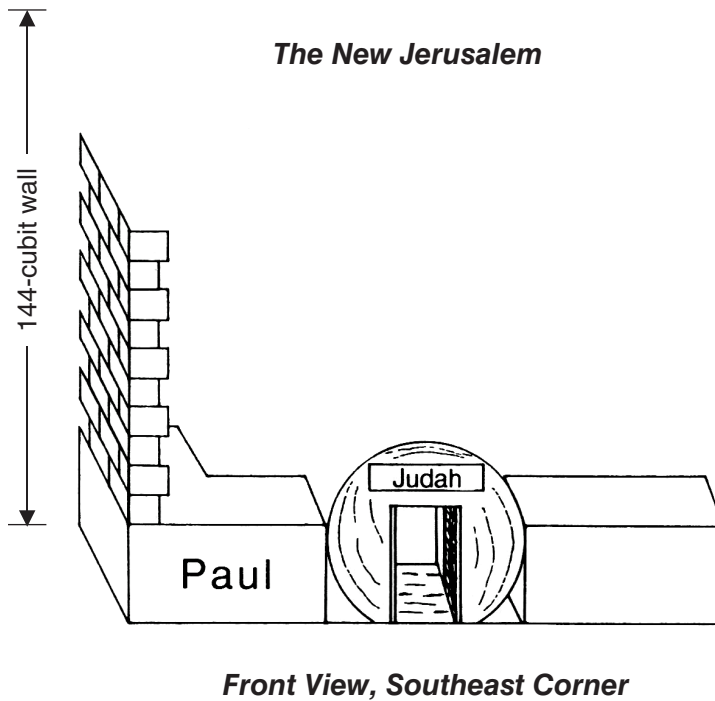
And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: . . .

In the case of the gates, no lineal furlong or cubit dimension is furnished. Instead the reader is informed that each gate measures “one pearl.” Each gate is made not of *pieces* of pearl but of *one huge global-like pearl*, in the center of which is tunneled a rectilinear entry. And, of course, the gates possess the beautiful luminescent

Floor Plan of New Jerusalem**The Twelve Pearl Gates**

sheen characteristic of pearls. In looking at the gates, John would get the impression they are each carved out of one solid pearl, and they are perfectly formed with no fissures or breaks.

The pearl represents Jesus' costly sacrifice, one of the first lessons those who walk into the city will have to learn; that is, the only reason they could even *begin* to enter is because the man Christ Jesus gave his life for them. The gates emphasize the price the Saviour paid, his supreme sacrifice, which brings to mind his parable in Matthew 13:45,46. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found *one pearl* of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Jesus purchased the spiritual Church primarily and



the world secondarily (Acts 20:28). Therefore, since each gate is a pearl, no person can enter the city without first recognizing Christ. Similarly, the brazen altar of sacrifice was the first thing a person saw when he entered the gate of the Tabernacle or the Temple (1 John 2:2; John 3:16). Messiah's role was thus portrayed: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). So, likewise, the lesson of the pearl-gate wall calls attention to this fundamental truth.

It is good to stop for a moment and consider. The wall of the city rests on twelve foundations. No one apostle alone supports this wall or city—*only collectively* are the apostles a support. But in the case of the gates to the city, *every entry* calls attention to Christ, yet not one of these entries rests upon a single foundation stone (see diagram, this page). One is reminded of the Scripture "For through him [Christ] we both [Gentile and Jew] have access [in the present age and in the world to come] by one Spirit unto the Father . . . and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:18,20).

. . . and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Splendor of City Seen Within

The street of the city was also made of "pure gold" like "transparent glass." John knew the composition was *pure* gold, yet unlike natural gold it was transparent, so that he could look with deep penetration of sight into the body of the street and observe there were no flaws. The street was perfect and clear as crystal; it contained no specks or impediments of any kind. And this broad avenue paved with

gold was the one and only main street in the city. Thus both the buildings and the street were of transparent gold. This is reminiscent of “an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein” (Isa. 35:8).

Verse 22:

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

Verse 23:

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.

Attention must first be drawn to the slant given to these two verses. Are they not meant to provide comfort and encouragement to the John class of the present life—as to the glory and honor that will attend the yet future glorified Church? The pronoun “it” in both verses applies to the risen Church, not to the world. Those who constitute the Holy City of the future will need no intermediary to intercede on their behalf in their worship, for communion with God will be immediate and direct. Therefore, it would be inappropriate for the spiritual New Jerusalem to have a tabernacle or temple on their behalf. This condition will not be true of the world of mankind, however; they will require the mediation of the Holy City, which is, as it were, the temple of divinity.

Verse 22 is often cited in an attempt to disprove the existence of a literal Ezekiel’s Temple⁸ in the future. To use this text for such a purpose is inconsistent, for one would also have to say there will be no literal sun or moon in the next age either. Why? Because in the same context, in the very next verse, the absence of a sun and a moon is mentioned. That there will be a *literal Temple* situated in earthly Jerusalem in the Messianic Age is proven by abundant scriptural testimony (for example: Psa. 68:29; Isa. 60:7,13; Ezek. 48:8,10,21; Joel 3:18). That there will also be a *spiritual Temple* in the future the Scriptures explicitly state (Rev. 3:12; 1 Pet. 2:4–9; Eph. 2:19–22).

The question may still persist as to the need for a literal Temple *after* the Millennium . . . when the New Covenant will have been fully consummated . . . when those remaining of Adam’s race will have been tried, screened, and found faithful and true . . . when Jesus’ penetrating statement to the woman of Samaria at the well will finally be fulfilled: “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain [Gerizim], nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye [Samaritans] worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”

8. “The Life-Giving Stream,” *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, Vol. 26, No. 17 (Sept. 1, 1905), p. 269. “The River of Salvation,” *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, Vol. 20, No. 15 (Aug. 1, 1899), pp. 196–197.

(John 4:21–24). These fulfillments do not mean, however, that the future material Temple of God, found so useful throughout the Millennium, will become obsolete and be dismantled, for it could serve several other purposes, such as being an ideal location for special memorial celebrations, an international sacred-music-festival hall, a conference center, etc.

Light in the Holy City

The apocalyptic New Jerusalem, instead of having a temple, a sun, and a moon, has “the glory of God” to lighten it. The Revised Standard Version reads, “The glory of God is its light, and its *lamp* [Greek *luchnos*] is the Lamb.” The Lamb, therefore, would be a lesser light than God. In the Tabernacle arrangement the hidden Shekinah light in the Most Holy represented God, and the lesser light in the Holy⁹ signified Christ as the living exemplar and proponent of the Word of God.

Also in the Tabernacle arrangement, the Israelites in the Wilderness of Sinai realized that God first instructed Moses, and Moses, in turn, instructed the people. They knew that when Moses spoke, the message had been received by him from God. In the next age mankind will look to Jesus (the Prophet like unto Moses whom God promised to raise up—Deut. 18:18) not with the natural eye but in an appreciative manner, with the eyes of understanding, realizing that Messiah is directing the affairs of the world on behalf of Jehovah as the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Age-lasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. As the face of Moses, after communion with God in the Holy Mount, shone with luminescence when he came down to the people, *so the Lamb is pictured as the “light,” or the “lamp,” of the Holy City from the standpoint of his role as instructor of the world.*

Verse 24:

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.

Verse 25:

And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

Verse 26:

And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

The phrase “of them which are saved” is appropriately missing in the Sinaitic manuscript, for the setting of verse 24 is the *beginning* of the world’s trial period of worthiness for life. Only the divinely appointed earthly leaders styled “kings” (the Ancient Worthy class) “do bring” (present tense) their glory into the Holy City. This verse is in notable contradistinction to verse 26 when the glory and honor of the nations *in a collective or dispensational sense* “shall” (future tense) be brought

9. The nose orifice and wick of the lamp resting on the miniature platform atop each branch of the seven-branched lamp stand were pointed in such a fashion “that they may give light over against it”; in other words, they called attention to the lamp surmounting the central shaft of the candelabra (Exod. 25:37). That central lamp pictured Jesus.

into the Holy City—at the end of the Millennium and the introduction of a new era (Matt. 25:34–40).

The Sinaitic and Alexandrian manuscripts omit the expression “and honour” in verse 24, but both manuscripts include this expression in verse 26. In the first instance (verse 24), the word “honour” may have been omitted because the Ancient Worthies in their former lives, prior to the Millennium, already honored God to the fullest extent possible in their unglorified and imperfect bodies—long before being crowned with perfect humanity (Heb. 11:40)—while they yet looked for that “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10). In the second instance, the entire Millennium will be needed for the world to reach the perfection of nature and of character that is necessary to fulfill the requirements of verse 26.

In what manner do the “kings of the earth” bring their glory into the celestial city, and likewise the nations later bring in their glory and honor? Does this mean that the glory of perfect humanity and morality will contribute to and enhance the luster of that city? While, no doubt, this is true to some extent, the answer seems to be that expressed by the Psalmist David and the Apostle Paul: “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name” (Psa. 96:8; 1 Chron. 16:29), and “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: *That no flesh should glory in his [God’s] presence. . . . That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*” (1 Cor. 1:27–29,31; cf. Jer. 9:23,24). The Book of Revelation itself reveals how glory and honor can be brought into the city (Rev. 5:13; 7:11,12; 14:7; 19:1). Bringing glory and honor into the Holy City simply signifies the humility of the recipients of such blessings of acquired dignity of person and nobility of character; they express their humility by rendering praise, honor, and cognition that every good and perfect gift cometh down from the “Father of lights” (James 1:17)—just as the wise men bore gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the newborn King.

Verse 25 describes the interim period that bridges or connects verse 24 (the commencement of the Kingdom reign) with verse 26 (its close). The gates of the city will be open wide to individuals throughout the messianic era, the basis for admittance being predicated upon strict obedience to Kingdom laws and requirements. Other Scriptures inform followers of the Lamb as to the significance of the clause “for there shall be no night there.” Ordinarily the gates of a city would be closed after sundown to keep enemies from entering under cover of darkness. In the New Jerusalem the gates will remain open, for there will be no nighttime, just continuous day, figuratively speaking.

“And it shall be in that day, it shall not be hot [Hebrew *yekaroth*: the *light* or *brightness* of the sun at noonday denotes a withering or scorching severity of judgment] or cold [Hebrew *kippaon*: the *frost* of moonlight denotes condemnation or alienation under the Law; in other words, justice will be mingled with love]. But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD [known as Jehovah’s], not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light [that is,

God's glory will illuminate the hearts of those who are saved]" (Zech. 14:6,7—verse 6 is a free translation by the editor).

"The sun [the gospel light] shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon [the Mosaic Law] give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. *Thy* sun [the light of Jehovah] shall no more go down; neither shall *thy* moon [the light of Jehovah shining in the face of Jesus] withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isa. 60:19,20).

"Moreover the light of the moon [the ordinances of the Law including its types and shadows] shall be as the light of the sun [explicitly understood as the gospel of the Kingdom], and the light of the sun [the teachings, promises, and prophecies of the New Testament as now understood by Christians] shall be[come] sevenfold, as the light of seven days [the historical fulfillment of the Gospel Age including the cumulative knowledge of the seven stages of the millennial era], in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound" (Isa. 30:26).

Verse 27:

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The city is unique in that the unclean will be denied entry. Contamination of others by speech or example will not be tolerated, and those making a false profession of godliness will be exposed. Verse 27 calls to mind Isaiah 35:8—"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it [into the city]; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." The highway of holiness is designed to help the unclean, who must discard their uncleanness as soon as discerned. When the peoples of earth are awakened from the tomb, they must lead a new life; their former practices will be promptly curtailed. A radical change comparable to full consecration to serve the Lord will be required. Any mistakes committed must be unintentional, and they will be controlled lest others be injured. Those who persist in their former pernicious ways will be quickly put off that highway.

Therefore, the thought in regard to entering the city is not that one will have to be perfect to even get through the gate but that consecration will be necessary in order to enter. Should an individual work a willful abomination after entry, his presence will no longer be countenanced, for obedience to the laws of the Kingdom will be the terms for continued residence. In that day consecrations will not be done privately at home as in this age; the inhabitants will have to give formal recognition to God and His dealing through The Messiah (head and body) and the nation of Israel and its princes, the Ancient Worthies, the earthly representatives of the Kingdom. In other words, one will have to become an Israeli proselyte to receive the benefits or blessings of the New Covenant.

The Sinaitic text renders the end of verse 27 as follows: "But they which are written in The [omit 'Lamb's'] Book of Life of Heaven." This Book of Life is Jehovah's. It pertains to all of God's creatures in both heaven and earth and thus is

far more extensive in its coverage than the Lamb's Book of Life. Indeed the Lamb's Book of Life is comprehended within Jehovah's Book of Life, the names of the more-than-overcomers being listed in the latter as an honorarium. When a person is born with the breath of life upon entry into the world, the name of the individual is listed on the register of life. Even though all humanity, with the exception of Jesus, are born under Adamic condemnation, their names are automatically placed on this general register. All are guaranteed the hope and opportunity of everlasting life, for Jesus tasted death for *every man* (Heb. 2:9). Christ is "the true Light, which lighteth every man *that cometh into the world*" (John 1:9). However, when each person gets that opportunity of life, whether or not his or her name remains on that register is another matter.

The slant and usage of the expression "they which are written in The Book of Life of Heaven" in verse 27 pertain to the people of earth who enter the Holy City during the messianic era. It does not apply to the gospel Church faithful overcomers, to those who inherit immortality and who are represented by the city itself. Nor does the phrase "they which are written" mean that the act of writing will take place at the end of the Millennium.

Revelation Chapter 22

Verse 1:

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Who has not heard of Ponce de León, the Spanish explorer, and his longing quest for the fountain of eternal youth? This, the desire of all nations, is beautifully and succinctly set forth in verse 1. The Lord declares that his faithful followers in the present life have in them a well of water springing up into life eternal (John 4:14). These wells, when elevated to glory, will collectively pour out a stream of running water constituting an integral part of the “river of water of life.” The life-giving vitality of this water of refreshment and restitution—its health-giving quality of freshness and purity—is indicated by the descriptive phrase “clear as crystal” and by its being seen issuing forth from “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (the source of atonement and mediation). The purity and clarity of the river picture *pure truth* and *easily understood* communication of thought. God will “turn to the people a pure language, that they may all . . . serve him with one shoulder” (Zeph. 3:9—see KJV margin).

This symbolic river of the Apocalypse bears a striking resemblance to the prophetic literal stream that will issue forth from the future earthly Temple at Jerusalem (Ezek. 47:1; Zech. 14:8).

Verse 2:

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.

Attention must first be given to the disposition of the river, the street, and the trees. Since the street is rendered in the singular, the assumption is that there is but one broad and straight street in the city. Instead of a stone or grass median strip, a river divides the street into two parallel segments. On both sides of this stream, trees hug the banks, or lips, suggesting a close relationship between the two. The similarity of prophetic detail in Ezekiel 47:12—even though more literal than symbolic in character—helps to explain, in some measure, verse 2 here in Revelation.

“On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing” (Ezek. 47:12 RSV). The river in Ezekiel starts underneath the threshold on the south side of the forefront of the Temple and proceeds through the inner court and then outside the Temple precincts down to the Arabah into the Dead Sea (Ezek. 47:1,8 RSV). Wherever that water goes, life and verdure follow it. Both the literal and the symbolic Dead Sea will be freshened. Not

only will it bear and support fish life (Ezek. 47:8–10), but the Dead Sea of humanity will become revitalized.

In the expression “tree of life” here in Revelation 22:2, the Greek word *xulon* denotes plurality with an allowance for diversity, thus signifying a *woods* or *grove of trees*. The correct thought is that twelve kinds of trees in this grove of life bear twelve manner of fruit *every* month—and not that the grove consists of one kind of tree which bears a different selection of fruit each month. The clause “and yielded her fruit every month” indicates the trees bring forth new (fresh, not different) fruit every month, and the fruit is for meat (that is, for food primarily and for ornamental pleasure secondarily). To state the matter another way: The thought is of a continuous yield of produce of twelve separate species of fruit-bearing trees, each of which bears according to kind; the thought is not that a different kind of fruit is produced on the same tree every month of the year, such as peaches one month, apples the next, and so forth. Unlike nature today, where a tree bears fruit seasonally or for only a relatively short portion of the year, these symbolic trees yield fruit perennially, namely, *year-round*.

Spiritual Significance of Trees

What are these trees? In the Bible “trees” can represent either good or evil individuals (Matt. 7:17). Hence a tree pictures one who is established and has reached maturity in either righteousness or unrighteousness. In contrast, those who are undeveloped and immature are symbolized as “grass” (Rev. 9:4). Grass represents the common people, whereas trees picture leadership, the more prominent individuals. The expression “grass roots” is used to refer to a movement that appeals to the sentiments of common people, to those of no particular distinction. Therefore, the trees of verse 2 represent the most mature individuals, the Little Flock.

Spiritual Significance of Fruit

Like the sap of the tree, the workings of the Holy Spirit in the inward parts of the Christian lead to outward signs of life and vitality in the form of leaves and fruit, the fruit being the sum of the graces of that Spirit as comprehended in the development of love.

But what would be the purpose of twelve kinds of fruit-bearing trees? Answer: To nourish the twelve personality types of mankind. In other words, the food of life that will nourish mankind will be divided into *twelve forms of diet*, and all those of a *particular temperament* will receive the same menu. Each of the symbolic tribes of Israel, in this scenario, must enter its respective gate and partake of its respective tree. Moreover, the particular saint assigned to a particular person in the Millennial Kingdom will possess not only the same personality trait or temperament but also a similar background in regard to previous need, which was corrected through overcoming experiences.¹ The *whole grove* of trees, therefore, is styled the “tree [or grove] of life,” for the fruitage of the development of principled love in all the membership of the risen and glorified Little Flock will benefit mankind in the next age.

1. The study of the jewels in the breastplate of the high priest of Israel enlarges upon this subject and provides harmony; it also helps one to see that the trees are of twelve different varieties. See pages 575–617.

Spiritual Significance of Leaves

In the Bible “leaves” of a tree represent leaves of profession. The Lord is looking for more than just leaves of confession and profession, however—He wants the development of fruit (John 15:1–8). John the Baptist said to the multitude who came forth to be baptized by him, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance*” (Luke 3:7,8). For symbolic reasons Jesus cursed the fig tree that had put forth leaves but no fruit. The fig tree signified the nation of Israel, who professed to be children of Abraham but did not perform his works.

In the Book of Revelation the life, profession, and example of the twelve apostles, coupled with those of the risen saints—the 144,000 “trees”—assume another dimension, one that will benefit mankind in the next age. The purpose of the leaves is to heal and restore the sin-sick and to remove and prevent the return of evil. The leaves, therefore, represent instruction and admonition of medicinal value along disciplinary lines.

Verse 3:

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:

The expression “And there shall be no more curse” is fraught with more meaning than just an allusion to the death penalty inflicted upon Father Adam and all mankind through him. The word “curse” is translated as though it were the Greek word *katanathema* instead of that found in the ancient manuscripts, *katathema*, signifying a cursed person, place, or thing. The thought is “And there shall be no longer any cursed thing.” Not only was the death sentence imposed upon the human family but concomitant grief. Adam had to eke out his livelihood by the sweat of his brow from a ground cursed with thorns and thistles; the woman inherited childbearing sorrow; both were expelled from the Garden of Eden and the tree of life; the dominion of dread and fear came also upon the beasts of the earth, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea (Gen. 3:14–24; 9:2).² But all of these conditions will be changed. Sin and death will be forever extinguished, the atonement between God and man will be made full and complete, the animal kingdom is to be reconciled, and the desert will blossom as the rose. Why? Because “the LORD [who cannot countenance evil] is there” (Ezek. 48:35). The “servants” in verse 3 would be the obedient and everlastingly saved of mankind. “They,” the “servants,” the “people,” and the “nations” are all the same in Revelation 21:3 and 22:1–5.

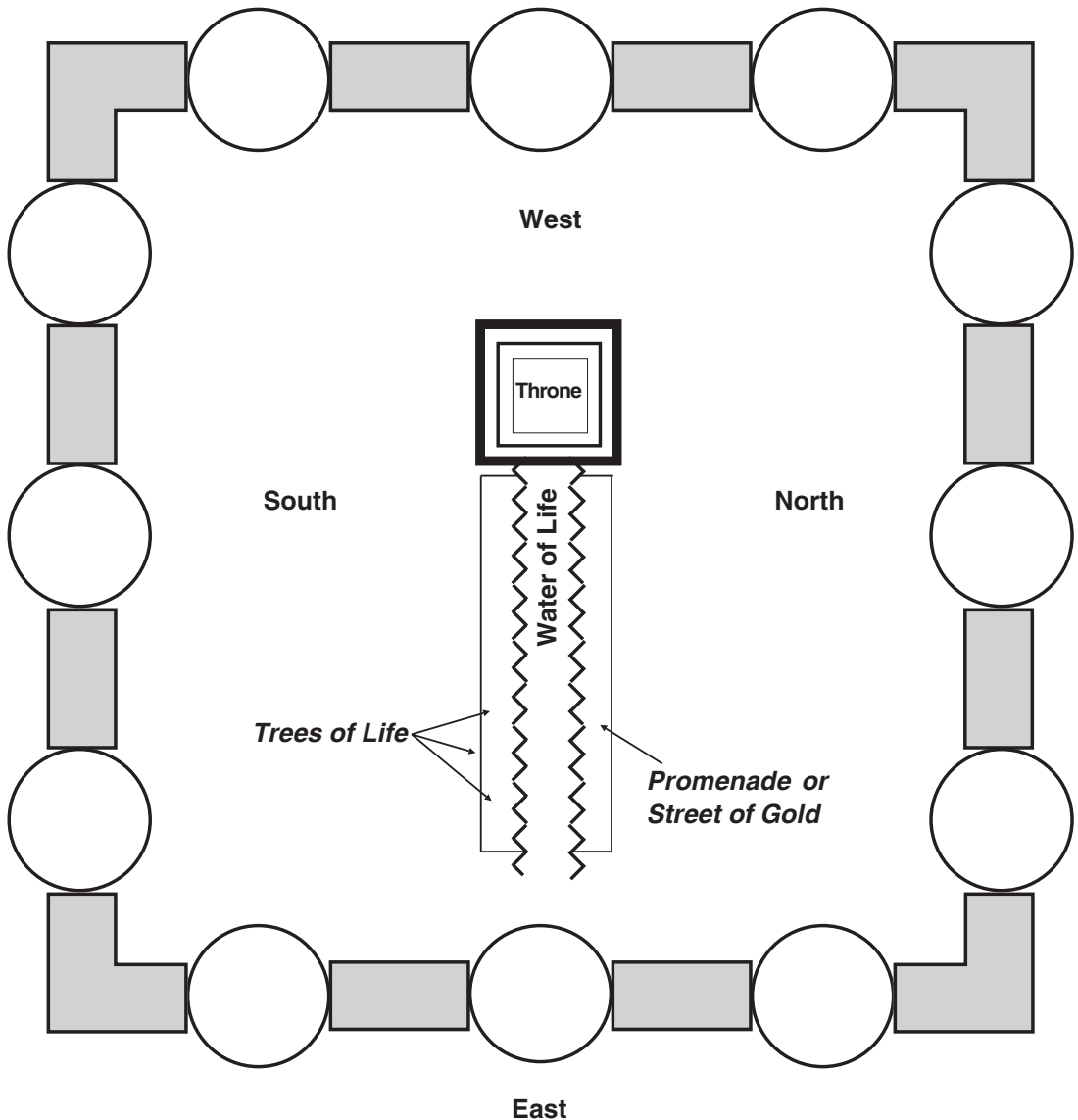
The opening chapters of Genesis describe the entrance of sin and death—Paradise Lost. The closing chapters of Revelation describe the rolling back of the curse—Paradise Restored. The curse upon the human race will be lifted from all who come into harmony with God through Jesus the Mediator. The rest will be swallowed up in death. The Master said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all* men unto me” (John 12:32). Paul added, “Unto them that look for him [and also that

2. In regard to the curse pronounced in Genesis 3:14, the snake, or serpent, in its present state as a creature will continue to exist in the future, for it will be viewed as a valued and beneficial object lesson of the exceeding sinfulness and venomous contagion of sin.

look unto him—Num. 21:8,9] shall he [through the earthly representatives of his Kingdom] appear the second time without sin [not as the sin-bearing Redeemer of the First Advent but as the conquering Messiah of the Second Advent] unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28).

John, in the opening verses of this chapter, from a standpoint in the future, *looks backward* upon the past ministration and services of the Holy City as a marvelous success—as the crowning fruition of the Kingdom Age. The setting of the scene is after the destruction of Satan and all evildoers . . . after the Kingdom has been turned over to the Father. Translators of the Common Version seemed to sense this perspective, stating in verse 2 that “on either side of the river, *was there* [a supplied past tense] the tree of life,” whose leaves “*were* [also past tense] for the healing of

Floor Plan of New Jerusalem



the nations.” Indeed verses 1 through 5 of this concluding chapter of the Apocalypse are to be viewed as a finished picture denoting past activity. The last six verses of Chapter 21 (verses 22 to 27) and the first two of Chapter 22 describe the process whereby restitution will be brought about.

Verse 4:

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Verse 5:

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 for ever and ever.

The obedient of mankind will “see his [God’s] face” in the sense that Job and Adam did . . . in a *figurative* manner, for “no man hath [literally] seen God at any time” or ever will (John 1:18). The only way to harmonize these Scriptures is to say that God will make His presence known to mankind in an intimate fashion but *not* on man’s level. Some manifestation of God’s power and presence will be given to the people, but they will not actually see God Himself. Mankind will see God’s “face” in the sense of having His *favor*. (The turning away of the face indicates disfavor.)

With regard to His name being in their foreheads, all beings made in the likeness of God’s image and proven faithful, whether on the human or the spirit plane, are to have God’s name in their foreheads—the stamp of His final approval.

There will be no nighttime of sin or darkness of ignorance. The flickering light of the candle of the Mosaic dispensation (the Old Testament) and the feeble light of its moon will not be needed. Nor will the sunlight of the gospel (the New Testament) be essential to lighten the pathway of man (Rev. 12:1). Humanity will no longer need to diligently read and study the Word of old to know the will of God. Of that time it is said, “Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Isa. 30:21). In the Gospel Age the Shepherd goes before the sheep, and the sheep listen to his voice and follow him (John 10:27). In the next age direction will be forthrightly stated and firmly given; when a person faces a decision and makes a misstep, he will be told, “This is the way! Walk therein.” *Mandatory* instruction will be given. The “way” will be the *highway of holiness*.

The news media of that day will provide pure and constructive information, and an abundance of audiovisual aids will assist mankind in the knowledge of God. The Ancient Worthies, as representatives of the saints in glory, will speak directly to the people via television. They and/or their assistants will furnish personalized instruction where necessary. The wayfaring man, even though a fool (in natural comprehension), will not err, for the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 35:8; 11:9). “The Lord God giveth them light” (Rev. 21:23,25; 22:5).

“They shall reign for ever and ever.” *All* who pass the final test at the end of the Millennial Age will be like *kings* (Rev. 21:24). Dominion of earth will be given to

the children of men (Psa. 115:16). Instead of living under the thousand-year theocracy of Christ, they will be on their own “for ever and ever.” In one sense, Jesus and the Church will be here for only a *definite, distinct* period of time confined within the parameter of a thousand years (Rev. 20:4,6), but in another sense, the dominion will remain as the everlasting Kingdom of God and The Christ (Isa. 9:6,7; Dan. 7:13–18,27; Rev. 11:15).

Verse 6:

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

In verse 6 the picture changes. The Gospel Age “servants” are being addressed—those for whom the Apocalypse was written. These are *not* the obedient of mankind, the “servants” of verse 3.

Jesus the Speaker

It is necessary that the assertion “These sayings are faithful and true” be made by one possessing unquestionable apostolic authority, namely, Jesus (Heb. 3:1). In Revelation 21:5,6 a similar declaration is made by him, the “Alpha and Omega,” while seated upon a throne. Seated on a white horse in Revelation 19:11, he is called “*Faithful and True*.” And he is called “the Amen, the *faithful and true* witness” in Revelation 3:14. In the Apocalypse this phrase is characteristically and solely applicable to the Master.

The concluding words of verse 6, “and the Lord God of the holy prophets [among whom Jesus is the greatest—Acts 3:22; 7:37] sent his angel [Jesus] to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done,” are a direct correlation to Revelation 1:1, which states, “The Revelation of *Jesus Christ*, which God gave unto him [cf. Rev. 5:6,7], to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.”

Furthermore, the Sinaitic rendering of verse 6 reads, “The Lord God of the holy prophets sent *ME*, his angel.” This identifies Jesus as both the speaker here and the angel of Revelation 1:1 through whom God sent and signified the Book of Revelation unto His servant John. Apparently, when the Sinaitic manuscript was reviewed and proofed in the scriptorium, dots signifying “to be omitted” were superimposed above the personal pronoun “me”; no doubt the superimposition was made because the authorities in Constantine’s day thought it unthinkable that Jesus could be the speaker in verse 6 when in verse 9 the same speaker identifies himself as “thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets.” It is more difficult to explain how, and to negate the fact that, “me” gained entrance into the main body of the text, unless the word was first found in a still more ancient manuscript from which the Sinaitic itself was derived.

Verse 7:

Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Without question Jesus is still the speaker. He exhorts the body members of his Church to maintain their constancy of faith and works in compliance with the Word and to be specially alert for the dispensational instruction and admonition contained in the apocalyptic message.

Under other circumstances verse 7 might be considered a divinely inspired and purposed interruption of the text in which Jesus inserts a word of advice. But this cannot be the case, for Jesus is speaking from verse 6 through the end of Chapter 22 except for verse 8, the last of verse 20, and the benediction of verse 21. How, therefore, could he interrupt his own narration?

Verse 8:

And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

Verse 9:

Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

The falling down of John to worship before the feet of the angel is similar to what the apostle did in Revelation 19:10, but in the former instance the worshipping occurred before a different angel. The fact that the Apostle should repeat his former mistake and thus need the same admonition might come as a surprise—if it were not that this latter angel is of a far more exalted nature. In verse 8 John worships the angel who showed him “these things.” What “angel” and what “things”? Answer: The angel is Jesus, the one seen with the golden reed in Revelation 21:15—the angel who acted as John’s escort, explaining the measurements of the Holy City, and who conducted him on a sight-seeing tour throughout its environs.

In verse 9 the Greek genitive pronoun *sou* in the clause *sundoulos sou eimi* should, because of context, be translated as follows: “See [thou do it] not. A fellowservant [*sundoulos*—singular] with thee [*sou*—though possessive in form, ablative³ in meaning here] I am [*eimi*], and of those keeping the words of this scroll. Worship God.” (Cf. Wilson’s *Emphatic Diaglott* marginal translation of Revelation 22:9.) Why is such particular attention given to verse 9? Because Jesus is not a fellow servant of John but a fellow servant *with* John—and OF GOD!

3. *Instrumental uses of the ablative.* In Greek the genitive (possessive) case can also express any circumstance in which, or with which, something occurs depending on contextual evidence, observation, and experience. Hence it can express the ablative of accompaniment or association. Since the Greek has no ablative case characterized by having the implied prepositions “from,” “WITH,” or “by,” these equivalent functions are divided between the genitive and dative cases. (Edwin A. Abbott, *Via Latina: A First Latin Book* [London: Seeley and Co., Ltd., 1895], p. 4, section 8; p. 145, section 276. J. Gresham Machen, *New Testament Greek for Beginners* [New York: Macmillan Co., 1931], p. 25, section 35. Charles E. Bennett, *First Year Latin: Preparatory to Caesar* [Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1909], p. 154, section 350. Perley Oakland Place, *Beginning Latin* [New York: American Book Co., 1919], p. 69, section 114. Thornton Jenkins, *Collar and Daniell’s First Year Latin*, rev. [Boston: Ginn and Co., 1918], p. 63, sections 142 and 143.)

This native humility of Christ is styled by John as “the testimony of Jesus” (Rev. 19:10). In verse 9 the Master directs John to give attention to the Author of salvation—to God be the glory! (Cf. Matthew 19:17.) Jesus, who is “of thy brethren the prophets,” is not ashamed to admit being of the brotherhood (Heb. 2:11,12; Psa. 22:22; Matt. 28:10; Rom. 8:29) and of the prophets (Matt. 13:57; Luke 4:24), of whom he is chief (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22; 7:37); and he classifies himself as being of those who keep “the sayings of this book.”

When, as commissioned, Jesus communicated *God’s* message to the Church in the flesh, he assumed a low-key profile. Christ portrays himself as an “angel,” or messenger, sixteen times and as a “Lamb” twenty-seven times in the Apocalypse. Not only did he make “himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:7) during his ministry on earth, but even now, when he is the express image of his Father and clothed with the majesty of the divine nature, there is a very noticeable lack of boastfulness on his part. He speaks and acts with great authority only when necessity and dignity require him to do so. He is still meek and lowly of heart (Matt. 11:29)—not proud. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8).

Verse 10:

And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

The opposite instruction, “Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not,” was given to John in Revelation 10:4. The inquiring prophet Daniel was told, “Shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days, . . . even to the time of the end” (Dan. 8:26; 12:4,9). But the command now given to *not* seal the vision is issued from the standpoint of the very end of the age when the converging rays of prophecy are due for disclosure to those for whom they were intended. The command to not seal (or to unseal) the vision should not be applied to the beginning of the age, for then prophecy, to the contrary, was to be *laid up* for successive unfolding to future generations.

To state the matter another way: Since the time frame of verse 10 is in the concluding chapter of the Book of Revelation, and since current events and their prophetic end-time fulfillments are surfacing ever so more clearly, the conclusion to be drawn is that the time for the Apocalypse to be understood and appreciated by the Lord’s saints has come.

It should be further observed that the nature of the command to not seal the vision is such that it could only be given by one of highest authority. This again confirms that the angel in this vision before whom John worshipped, who is still the one speaking, is none other than Jesus (verses 6 to 10).

Verse 11:

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.

These words indicate the arrival of a critical point in history when no more additions, no more vacancies, are available for membership in the body of Christ—the

time for completion of the Very Elect being at the very door. The time of fulfillment is so near at hand that little space remains for repentance and reform. What is to be done must be done instantly. Let no man deceive you with the Laodicean music of complacency and with hymns of wanton mercy and unprincipled love!

The message is not meant to encourage the evildoer in his sin but, rather, to indicate the urgency and the immediacy of judgment. Perhaps unnoticed initially, there is a comparison of opposites: the unjust (the unrighteous) and the filthy with the righteous and the holy.

Four classes are being described. The first class, the unrighteous, are represented by worldlings, those not consecrated, not justified. The implication is that no more candidates for the Little Flock are to be called out from this condition. The second class, the filthy ones, signify the formerly consecrated who, having cast off their robes of Christ's righteousness, expose their own filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). They are true to the proverb: "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:22). Of the third class, the righteous ones, the Sinaitic reads, "Let him *work righteousness* still." Possibly these represent the Great Company, the foolish *virgin* class, whose robes need washing and whitening in the blood of the Lamb as they go through tribulation (Rev. 7:14). The fourth class, the "holy," represent the "saints," or remaining members of the body of Christ.

When giving the sop to the traitor Judas at the Last Supper, Jesus said to him, "That thou doest, do quickly" (John 13:27). So the time is at hand for the bruising of the heel members of the body of Christ.

Verse 12:

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

The expression "behold, I come *quickly*" appears three times in this chapter (verses 7, 12, and 20). Further emphasis is given by the accompanying statement in verse 12 "my reward *is with me*" and by the first word in "*Surely* I come quickly" of verse 20.

This emphasis calls to mind words uttered by the Prophet Ezekiel: "Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the *effect* of every vision. . . . Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezek. 12:22,23,27,28).

Viewed from a dispensational standpoint, a portion of Paul's epistle to the Church at Corinth has a significant bearing upon the latter part of the text under consideration: "my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." In 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 Paul said: "For other foundation can no man

lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones [all nonflammable items], wood, hay, stubble [all of which are flammable]; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide [namely, the gold, silver, and semiprecious stones] which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward [of a threefold nature—cf. Matt. 13:8,23]. If any man's work shall be burned [wood represents the Great Company class (1 Cor. 5:5); hay and stubble, the tare class], he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved;⁴ yet so as by fire.”

Verse 13:

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

“Alpha and Omega” is the name that the Heavenly Father, the Almighty and Everlasting God, “which is, and which was, and which is to come,” assigned to His Son, Jesus, in the opening chapter of the Book of Revelation. The title “Alpha and Omega” corresponds to the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. In Revelation 1:8 the emphasis is on ALPHA; there Jesus is represented as the caretaker of the Church at its inception—as its head and forerunner. Here in Revelation 22:13 the emphasis is on OMEGA; Jesus is seen as the “finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2). “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [Greek *aion*, age]. Amen” (Matt. 28:20).

Verse 14:

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.

Verse 15:

For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

To whom does the Master specially direct his remarks in these two verses? It should be apparent to all that the remarks are not made to his loyal body members, even though some yet remain in the flesh. Verse 11 indicates that when this setting meets proper fulfillment, the pronouncement occurs at a time when, for all practical purposes, the door to the high calling is closed from *God's* standpoint, though not yet visually shut (to be evidenced, spiritually speaking, by Babylon's fall). Why would the Master inform those who are his most loyal followers that if they do his commandments, or wash their robes, they will obtain the right to enter the city through its gates, thereby gaining access to the grove of life? What purpose would be served when they are promised to be an integral part of the city structure or government itself (Rev. 21:2)?

Is this message, then, specially directed to unconsecrated worldlings? Will not Messiah in his Kingdom issue such a directive as a mandate in a setting of divine

4. The Apostle Paul does not discuss the fate of the Second Death class in 1 Corinthians 3:11–15, whereas Revelation 22:12 does not overlook such judgment.

power and glory? Are not these words meant instead to instruct the Great Company class that if those of the world in the future have to enter through the gates of the city, meeting God's standards to procure everlasting life—that is, life predicated upon obedience—will not the Great Company, in principle, also have to meet the same minimum requirements of obedience to secure eternal life? And the Great Company will have to meet these requirements in the present life, before the gates of the Holy City are open to the public, or mankind, in the Kingdom.

This “little sister” class are undeveloped; as “newborn babes,” they need to be breast-fed again with the “milk of the word” drawn from the Old and New Testaments so that they “may grow thereby” (Song of Sol. 8:8,9; 1 Pet. 2:2). To whom “shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts” (Isa. 28:9). “Every one that useth milk [solely] is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe” (Heb. 5:13). In this day and hour of trial, such will need to “go . . . to them that sell, and buy [oil to fill their lamps]” (Matt. 25:8,9). Only after the true Church is glorified, and before full attention is given to the work of restoring mankind, will it be true that “the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them [the Great Company class who remain], and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters” (Rev. 7:17).

In a broad sense, verses 11 through 15 appear to be addressed to the various levels of all those who consider themselves Christians in the present life with the exception of the feet members of the body of Christ, as noted earlier. In a specific sense, the beginning of verse 14, according to the Sinaitic and the Alexandrian manuscripts and other most reliable authorities, should be rendered, “Blessed are they that wash their robes.”⁵ The possession of such robes is another indication that the Great Company, a spiritual class, is being addressed in the days of their pilgrimage (Rev. 7:14).

The terminology in verse 15 has already been considered (see comments on Revelation 21:8). The “dogs” without refer to those who obstinately refuse to enter covenant relationship with the Lord; that is, they refuse to accept the terms of the New Covenant.

Verse 16:

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Jesus, in his own person as God's angel, initially introduced the symbolisms of Revelation to John to be recorded for posterity concerning his counsel and the manner of his dealings with the Church throughout the age via the medium and the ministry of seven successive individuals (each styled an “angel”) of his own appointment. Now the returned Lord, in the waning hours of this era, attests and reaffirms that this procedural method still holds true, and that the historical recognition and identity of these special agents and the teachings of their ministry enable

5. See the *Emphatic Diaglott* footnote for Revelation 22:14 and Benjamin Wilson's marginal reading for that verse.

his followers to better comprehend the fullness of his counsel. Moreover, the coming and departure of the seven messengers signal the Saviour's joyous anticipation of welcoming the last members of his present flock into the heavenly fold.

Jesus, born of Mary the Hebrew, was made "flesh" and thus became the "Branch" ("offspring," or descendant) of the royal lineage of David (John 1:14; Isa. 11:1). By virtue of his perfect obedience to the letter and the spirit of the Law of Moses, Jesus secured the right to human life promised to anyone who could keep that Law inviolate. Because of the voluntary submission of his sinless life upon the Cross of Calvary, he was rewarded by his Father with *spirit life* and glory far above angels, principalities, and powers (that is, with the divine nature) but without the loss or forfeiture of the right to life on the human plane of existence. The possession of this human life-right that Jesus has deposited in the hands of Justice enables the risen Lord to justify consecrated believers in this age and to redeem Adam and his race in the Kingdom Age. It is in this latter sense, as the Redeemer of Adam and mankind, that Jesus becomes the "root" of David; this life-giving factor explains the significance of and the reason for the accompanying expression of his role as the "bright and morning star."

Thus, because of his priceless possession of the purchasing power of redemption, the Master arose from the dungeon of Golgotha's hill and began his ascent to shine with singular brightness in the celestial heaven during this gospel night as the harbinger of the dawn of a better day of glad tidings of joy to all.

O star of wonder, star of night,
 Star with royal beauty bright,
 Westward leading, still proceeding,
 Guide us to thy perfect light.

* * *

As with gladness men of old
 Did the guiding star behold;
 As with joy they hailed its light,
 Leading onward, beaming bright;
 So, most gracious Lord, may we
 Evermore be led to thee.

Holy Saviour, every day
 Keep us in the narrow way;
 And, when earthly things are past,
 Bring our ransomed souls at last
 Where they need no star to guide,
 Where no clouds thy glory hide.

Verse 17:

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.

That Jesus, the one speaking, would identify himself under the synonym “the Spirit” does not seem likely. In the verse immediately preceding, he was not averse to referring to himself as “I Jesus.” Rather, the Holy Spirit of pity, compassion, mercy, and truth, which seeks to inform others of the blessedness inherent in Christ and which can cleanse and enrich their lives and refresh their souls in the knowledge of God, is metaphorically speaking. The obedient, possessed with this Spirit, deem it a privilege to hasten, like Andrew and Philip (John 1:40–45), to tell others of him of whom the Scriptures testify: “Never man spake like this man,” “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14; 7:46).

Nor is it probable that Jesus’ declaration “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come” is according to the Hebrew custom where the espoused virgin could be considered as an *affianced bride* before the consummation of the union in actual marriage. The setting of the vision is that of the adorned Bride *after the wedding* (Rev. 21:2; 19:7,8) when a worldwide invitation will go forth to those who thirst to partake of the water of life freely. It is election—that is, *selection*—now; but it will be *free grace* then.

Verse 18:

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.

Verse 19:

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.

Two kinds of sin are mentioned: (1) *adding to the words* of the prophecy of this book, which could come about, in part, from a careless negligence or indifference in transcription, and (2) *taking away from the words*, suggesting a greater degree of willfulness and hence greater responsibility, which is worse and results in Second Death. In the latter instance God takes away from the individual “his part out of the book of life” (Rev. 3:5; 20:15). The Sinaitic renders this clause “from the tree of life, and out of the holy city—the ones having been [in the past] in the book.” This translation amounts to the same thought.

A distinction should be noted between (a) Scripture itself and (b) the exposition or explanation of Scripture. The words of admonition in verses 18 and 19 apply in a primary sense to anyone responsible for any alteration, addition, or subtraction in the *replication of the original apocalyptic text* recorded by John for future posterity. These words of warning properly apply, in principle, to the whole of Scripture as initially handed down. Without question the sternness of the Master’s words has guarded to a considerable degree against interpolations or changes, thus preserving the integrity of the text.

If these words of warning applied *with equal severity* to those endeavoring to understand, discuss, or explain the significance of the symbols of this last message of Christ to the Church, would not all manner of inquiry, study, and investigation of

its contents be effectively cut off? Is this what the risen Lord intended? If such were the case, would not the fear and dread of uttering or communicating a single thought or word not 100 percent in harmony with Jesus' thinking presumably precipitate the judgment threatened? This would mean that the Book of Revelation is to be read only—*period!*—not discussed publicly or privately. Thus alteration of the canon itself is the primary significance of verses 18 and 19.

Other ramifications are to be considered, however. Though this treatise on the Apocalypse differs to a remarkable degree, in both concept and detail, from the interpretations of Bible expositor Bishop Scott, nevertheless some of his remarks on the verses being reviewed are so admirably expressed that they strike a chord of sympathy with and echo the sentiments of the present author. The remarks are therefore presented: “. . . the merciful Savior will no more condemn unintentional mistakes, in the honest *writer*, who desires to help men to understand his word, and proceeds in simple, humble dependence on his teaching, than he will the honest *preacher*: and I trust this effort to explain his holy scriptures, though feeble and defective, has been conducted from proper motives, and in dependence on the Lord. I can confidently appeal to my heart-searching Judge, that I have, as far as I know, written, word for word, what I supposed he would have me write; without adding, altering, or keeping back the sense of any passage, willingly, to serve any personal end, or party-interest, from fear of incurring reproach or opposition, or desire of conciliating the favor of any man or set of men whatever: and that the mistakes which have been made, were involuntary, the effects of ignorance and error, and not of design.”⁶

Verse 20:

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. . . .

John's response follows.

. . . Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Verse 21:

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

6. Thomas Scott, ed., *The Holy Bible*, Stereotype ed. (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, and Crocker and Brewster, 1833), Vol. 6 (comment on Rev. 22:18–21).

Song of Faith

Original Hymn, 1990

The dawn has come, the Sun will soon be ris - ing: The time is
Though na - tions rage and kings con - spire a - gainst us, We'd lose our

near when shad - ows flee a - way. Our King is here, the signs are all a -
life to gain it, Lord, with Thee. For Thou hast trod this path of faith be -

round us; But, first, the dark night must pre - cede the day. O Lord our
fore us. To suc - cor us in prayer on bend - ed knee. We sing this

God, when foes are gath - ered 'round us, We will not bow
song with joy - ous ex - pec - ta - tion Of prom - is - es

to Sa - tan's beast - ly pow'r Nor wear the mark they would im - pose up -
ful - filled be - yond the veil; We see by faith the glo - rious con - sum -

on us; Their plans will fail, will on - ly last an hour.
ma - tion, The Bride-groom with his bride shall e'er pre - vail.

Appendix 1: The High Priest's Breastplate

The Lord's Jewels

Rare indeed are those individuals who, with constancy, ponder upon God's name and meditate upon the precepts of His Holy Word, and who seek often the fellowship of kindred minds to converse one with another about the great and holy deeds of Jehovah. Nor is the Lord unrighteous or unmindful to forget the labor of love of His children and their compliance with His instructions. That He observes such behavior is attested by His causing a "book of remembrance" to be written "for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels" (Mal. 3:16,17). If precious stones have been likened by some to flowers among the more common stones of the mineral kingdom, it is no wonder that the Heavenly Father regards this gem class amidst the teeming mass of humanity as His own crown jewels (Isa. 62:3).

While stones of gem quality in nature may be regarded as flowers, yet, unlike their counterpart in the botanical realm, they do not fade, wither, and die, but have a lasting beauty and permanent value. Because of their hardness they remain as brilliant today as yesteryear. And so God's living stones (Eph. 2:20–22; 1 Pet. 2:5), His faithful spiritual elect, having endured hardness as good soldiers of Christ (2 Tim. 2:3) with a corresponding development of durability of character and firmness toward truth and righteousness, consequently will receive as their reward an unchanging immortal life on the divine plane of glory.

Unity Versus Diversity

The requirement of all members of this predestined class is that they must be conformed to the image of God's Son so that Jesus might be "the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). This standard of conformity to be attained by the individuals comprising the glorified Church is a unity of fellowship, a oneness of purpose and intent. All will be express images of the Father's person and in thorough agreement with the principles of divine government. They will be alike in the completeness of their submission to the headship of Christ and to the will of God.

However, in spite of this necessary conformity, the different jewels in the high priest's breastplate and their being set in sockets, or pockets, of gold indicate there will be both variety and beauty in the exalted Church of Christ (Exod. 28:15–30; 39:8–21). Perfection in the divine likeness does not mean uniformity or conformity of character wherein unique personality traits will be completely lost by a falsely imagined, fixed "clone" pattern of behavior. To the contrary, the individuality of each will be preserved, as shown by the stones themselves. The diversity of the stones symbolically represents differences in personality traits . . . differences that are so important in the exercise of the role of a sympathetic high priesthood.¹

1. The twelve stones of the breastplate emphasize the *priestly function* of the Church in the next life, whereas the twelve stones of the Holy City portray the Church in *regal honor* (Rev. 21:19,20).

General Description of Breastplate (Exod. 28:6–21)

The “ephod” worn by the high priest was made of cloth of purple, blue, scarlet, white, and gold threads skillfully and beautifully interwoven. It was composed of two parts, one hanging in front and the other over the back of the high priest. These two parts were fastened together by two gold clasps that rested on his shoulders.

On the front of the ephod was placed the “breastplate of judgment.” It was suspended by a gold chain from the clasps on the high priest’s shoulders, and was fastened to the ephod by a blue lacer that ran through golden rings—this fastening being so well concealed underneath that to the casual observer the breastplate appeared to be a part of the ephod.

Made of material similar to the ephod, the breastplate was two spans long and one span wide when not folded in the middle, but only a span long and a span wide when doubled (the size of a span being equivalent to nine inches). Twelve stones were set in gold enclosures, or metal framework, interwoven into the front fold of the breastplate material.

The expression “thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the *Urim* and the *Thummim*” signifies the pressing or snapping of the various gems into their separate sockets, or gold compartments (Exod. 28:30). Thus it is the jewels themselves that are referred to in a collective sense . . . and not additional stones or imaginary religious dice, tarot cards, or other artifacts placed within the fold, or pouch, of the breastplate tapestry.

The two Hebrew words *Urim* and *Thummim* are both rendered in the plural. The former, denoting “lights,” is derived from the term *Horus*, which is associated with the sun rising above the horizon to enlighten the world; the latter, signifying “darkenings,” is derived from *Thum* and is related to the sunset at the completion of day. In other words, when the stones shone above their natural luster, a favorable response was indicated (*Urim*); and conversely, if they dimmed below their normal brilliance, the reply was negative (*Thummim*).

Shape of Breastplate Stones

The overall specific dimensions of the folded breastplate, as well as the number of stones abreast horizontally (three) and the number of such rows allocated (four), inferentially required each jewel to be rectangular in shape. In further support of this hypothesis, a larger size and more readily discernible name of a tribe of Israel could be inscribed, or incised, lengthwise on the front facet of each gem (Exod. 28:21). That being the case, each of the twelve stones had to be cut or planed in such a fashion as to prepare a flattened surface for an inscription.

The fact that the names of the twelve tribes were inscribed also strongly suggests that each stone, though hard, was semiprecious rather than the extremely hard precious stone variety. In the King James Version the naming of the fifth and sixth gems is obviously in error (Exod. 28:18), for it would be most unreasonable to conclude that the diamond and the sapphire, the two hardest stones in nature, could be planed and incised in the desired legible manner.² Moreover, the semiprecious

2. The stones in the breastplate of Aaron were a *historic reality*, whereas the stones of the Holy City were *symbolically visualized* by John on the Patmos isle (Rev. 21:19,20).

variety not only occurred more commonly in Moses' day but was indigenous to Egypt and Sinai.

Composition of the Stones

Basically, the stones of the breastplate denote the sympathetic nature of that select company who are called to be priests, or physicians, to heal the suffering world in need of forgiveness and cleansing from sin. The stones of the breastplate were most likely of a silicate or sand (grit) nature; that is, for the most part, they were composed of different varieties of quartz. Though such stone is conducive to engraving and quite common in nature, it is rarely found in the gem quality form seen in the breastplate. And so the Church class—called of God out of all nations, peoples, and tongues—is prepared, hardened, and polished above the ordinary for priestly duty.

Why Twelve Tribes?

The nation of Israel with its *twelve* tribes,³ the breastplate with its *twelve* stones, the Holy City with its *twelve* gates (Rev. 21:12), and the apostles seated upon *twelve* thrones (Matt. 19:28)—these all infer that the families of earth consist of, or may be divided into, twelve character traits or personality groups. Accordingly, the judging of the twelve tribes teaches that in the future mankind will be first separated into twelve personality groupings and then judged, educated, nourished, and delivered by those members of the royal priesthood who, in their prior life, previously possessed but subsequently *overcame* similar evil propensities of the fallen nature, and who also, on the other hand, still possess on the resurrected plane similar proclivities, *but of the better or more positive kind*. Thus humankind will be judged by a sympathetic priesthood in the most comprehensive sense, for the people will be led and guided by those who previously possessed similar weaknesses and similar strengths not necessarily common to the world at large . . . strengths and weaknesses that could be thoroughly understood, experienced, and appreciated only by those within the various respective personality groups themselves.

Sequence of Tribe Names on the Breastplate

How can the proper identification and sequence of the names of the twelve tribes on the breastplate be determined? The key to a definite resolution of this problem is linked with the time the priesthood was instituted and the services in which the breastplate was worn. This emblem of office was first in contemporary use when the Tabernacle of Moses was constructed and erected in the wilderness of Sinai at the time of the Exodus.

In this prior arrangement the Levites were *not to be numbered* among the tribes of Israel (Num. 1:47–49; 2:33). Instead, the tribe of Levi were to pitch their tents round about in close proximity to the tent of congregation, thus occupying a position between the host (the other tribes of Israel) and the Tabernacle enclosure. In other words, the remaining twelve tribes were to encamp close to their officially

3. The twelve tribes of Israel are a type of the entire world of mankind, and not of Jewry only (compare Rev. 5:9 with Rev. 7:4 RSV; see also 1 Cor. 10:11).

Identification of Breastplate Stones According

Bible Version	Hebrew Designation				
	Odem	Pitedah	Bareqath	Nophek	Sappir
<i>King James Version</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire
<i>Revised Version</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire
<i>American Revised Version</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire
<i>Revised Standard Version</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire
<i>American Standard Version</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire
<i>New American Standard</i>	Ruby	Topaz	Emerald	Turquoise	Sapphire
<i>New American Bible</i>	Carnelian	Topaz	Emerald	Garnet	Sapphire
<i>New Amer. Catholic Ed.</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>Amplified Old Testament</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire
<i>Revised Latin Vulgate</i>	Sardius Stone	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>Douay Version</i>	Sardius Stone	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>New International Version</i>	Ruby	Topaz	Beryl	Turquoise	Sapphire
<i>J. B. Phillips</i>	Sard	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire
<i>Jewish Publication Society</i>	Carnelian	Topaz	Smaragd	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>J. H. Hertz</i>	Carnelian	Topaz	Smaragd	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>Rabbi Shelomo Izakki</i>	Carnelian	Topaz	Smaragd	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>Joseph Magil</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>Ronald Knox</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>Isaac Leeser</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>J. B. Rotherham</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>Robert Young</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire
<i>Theophile J. Meek</i>	Carnelian	Topaz	Emerald	Ruby	Sapphire
<i>Smith & Goodspeed</i>	Carnelian	Topaz	Emerald	Ruby	Sapphire
<i>George Ricker Berry</i>	Carnelian	Topaz	Smaragd	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>Jay Green</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire
<i>New World Translation</i>	Ruby	Topaz	Emerald	Turquoise	Sapphire
<i>Richard G. Moulton</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire
<i>John Nelson Darby</i>	Sardoïn	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>LXX (Septuagint)</i>	Sardius	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>Amer. Baptist Publication</i>	Ruby	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire
<i>Ferrar Fenton</i>	Ruby	Topaz	Diamond	Emerald	Sapphire
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

to Variant Versions (Exod. 28:17–20; 39:10–13)

Hebrew Designation						
Yahalom	Leshem	Shebu	Achlamah	Tarshish	Shoham	Yashepheh
Diamond	Ligure	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Diamond	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Diamond	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Diamond	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Diamond	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Diamond	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Beryl	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Jasper
Jasper	Ligurius	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Beryl
Diamond	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Jasper	Ligurius	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Beryl
Jasper	Ligurius	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Beryl
Emerald	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Jasper
Diamond	Hyacinth	Ruby	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Emerald	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Emerald	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Emerald	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Diamond	Amber	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Jasper
Jasper Stone	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx Stone	Beryl
Diamond	Opal	Turquoise	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Jasper
Diamond	Opal	Agate	Amethyst	Tarshish Stone	Sardonyx	Jasper
Diamond	Opal	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Crystal	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Jasper
Crystal	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Jasper
Jasper	Amber	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Beryl
Jasper	Opal	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Beryl
Jasper	Leshem Stone	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Jade
Diamond	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Diamond	Opal	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Jasper
Jasper	Ligure	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Beryl	Onyx
Diamond	Tourmaline	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Jasper	Ligure	Agate	Amethyst	Amber	Onyx	Pearl
(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)

assigned posts or insignia standards, and at a greater distance and apart from the Levites, namely, "far off about the tabernacle" (Num. 2:2).

There exist but six possible listings of the tribes of Israel inscribed upon the breastplate stones. Five of these can be quickly ruled out, as follows:

1. Genesis 29:32 through 30:24; 35:16–18 is not valid because the tribe of Levi is included.
2. Genesis 49:3–27 is not valid for the same reason.
3. Numbers 1:5–15 is not valid because this is merely a record of the captains appointed to act as tellers in the numbering of the tribes.
4. Numbers 1:20–43 is not valid because this is but a record of the count as it was actually taken.
5. Deuteronomy 33:6–25 is not valid because the tribe of Levi is included.

Therefore, the foregoing process of elimination leaves for consideration only the listing of the tribes in Numbers 2:3–31. Several lines of evidence authenticate this particular tabulation. (1) The tribes are grouped according to their official ensign standards. (2) This listing corresponds not only to the sacred sequence and/or positioning of the tribes as they encircled the Tabernacle at a distance but also to their order of march. (3) This enumeration of the tribes, being expressed in groups of three, is in exact agreement with the four horizontal rows of *triad* stones mentioned in the breastplate arrangement (Exod. 28:15–20). (4) The east-side grouping of Numbers 2:3—that is, in front of the Tabernacle—occupied the most prominent and important side of that structure (Num. 2:9b); thus it should (and does) correspond to the first triune row of stones in the breastplate.

In summation, therefore, the *visual order* of the tribes on the breastplate is *according to Hebrew placement from right to left*, and from the standpoint of the beholder, as follows: Judah, Issachar, Zebulun; next Reuben, Simeon, Gad; then Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin; and finally, Dan, Asher, Naphtali.

Order of Importance of the Tribes According to Their Standards

Of the twelve tribes represented on the breastplate, an *order of importance* can be determined by further examining how they were grouped according to their official ensign standards.

1. Judah (Num. 2:3) was stationed *before the Tabernacle* on the east, or front side, but far removed. Issachar and Zebulun (Num. 2:5,7) were also positioned on the east side but to the right and to the left *of Judah*, respectively.

2. Reuben (Num. 2:10) was stationed on the *south side of the Tabernacle* at a distance. Simeon and Gad (Num. 2:12,14) were positioned on the same side but to the right and left *of Reuben*.

3. Ephraim (Num. 2:18) was stationed on the *west, or back side, of the Tabernacle*. Manasseh and Benjamin (Num. 2:20,22) were also on the west but to the right and left, respectively, *of Ephraim*.

4. Dan (Num. 2:25) was stationed on the *north side of the Tabernacle*. Asher and Naphtali (Num. 2:27,29) were likewise on the north but to the right and left *of Dan*.

When these Scriptures are considered, it is evident that Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan were the most honored tribes—and in that order—as far as the Tabernacle arrangement was concerned. It should also be observed that the placement of all the tribes round about the Tabernacle was in rotational, clockwise order; however, this sequence did not show importance but was merely a running, descriptive

Figure 1: Running Commentary

3	2	1
6	5	4
9	8	7
12	11	10

Figure 2: Order of Importance

9	5	1
10	6	2
11	7	3
12	8	4

commentary. On the breastplate itself, which does give the order of importance—by reading *down the vertical columns from right to left* according to Hebrew reckoning—stones one, four, seven, and ten (see Figure 1) represent the most significant tribes (compare Figure 2). Stated another way, the stones to the viewer’s right in all four rows correspond to the four leading tribes. Next in importance would be the stones in the second (or middle) vertical column—that is, stones two, five, eight, and eleven (Figure 1)—since these were the *right-hand* men of the four leading representative tribes. Finally, the last stone in each row—the stones on the left (Figure 1)—represent those tribes last in prominence in the Tabernacle service. *Note: The order of the stones as shown in Figure 2 will be used throughout the remainder of this appendix.*

Tribal Name Meanings

What each tribe represents is predicated upon (a) the etymological significance of the name itself; (b) in most cases, the experience and mood of the mother during pregnancy, the formative period for the fetal development of the head of each tribe (Gen. 29:32 through 30:24; 35:16–18); and (c) the extraction of information pertaining to the character traits of the tribes and other pertinent spiritual matter, such as that contained in Jacob’s deathbed prophecy (Gen. 49:3–28), Moses’ blessing of the tribes (Deut. 33:1,6–25), etc.

Names of the Twelve Apostles in Relation to the Breastplate

The Master declared that twelve apostles are to be seated on twelve separate thrones, or divisions of power, in the Kingdom (Matt. 19:28). In all, a total of twelve thousand saints will be assigned to each of twelve separate ranks (Rev. 7:5–8).

Breastplate Tribal Names

Zebulun	Issachar	Judah
Gad	Simeon	Reuben
Benjamin	Manasseh	Ephraim
Naphtali	Asher	Dan

Based on the scriptural information available concerning (1) the ministry and lifestyle of the different apostles, (2) the meaning of each tribal name, (3) the prophesied tribal characteristics, and (4) the meaning of the name and/or the peculiar properties of each gem stone in the breastplate,⁴ the following conclusions can, with most reasonable assurance, be obtained. One final point: it is of the utmost importance to ever keep in mind that the twelve tribal names inscribed upon the breastplate, though literal and natural in their original occurrence and historic appearance, are in reality but a representation of *symbolic tribes*, i.e., of the twelve basic character traits or personality groups of the world of mankind and especially of the Church in glory. The subsequent descriptions of the twelve tribes, twelve

4. An in-depth analogy of the chemical and physical properties—particularly the crystallography—of each stone has been purposely avoided because there is too wide an area of speculation to definitively identify personality traits. The conservative method adopted and pursued yields surprising and beneficial results which, it is thought, will stand the test of time and of careful, prayerful analysis as to its veracity. The outstanding characteristic of each stone is described with simplicity and without forcing the interpretation to fit the application. As a result, the conclusions fall into place easily so as to reveal the hidden significance of the stones.

Hebrew Breastplate Tribal Names



breastplate stones, and twelve apostles are to be considered from the standpoint of the *Church*, and they are presented in *order of importance* (see Figure 2, page 581).

1. Judah = Sard = Paul

Judah (Praise)

She [Leah] said, Now will I *praise* the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah. (Gen. 29:35)

This class most ideally represents and effectively brings “praise” to the Heavenly Father. Jesus, among other things a natural descendant of Judah, brought foremost honor to this tribe, even though basically, as before stated, the tribe denotes a spiritual class.

Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall *praise*: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies. . . . Judah is a lion’s whelp. . . . The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver . . . until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. . . . He

Breastplate Jewels

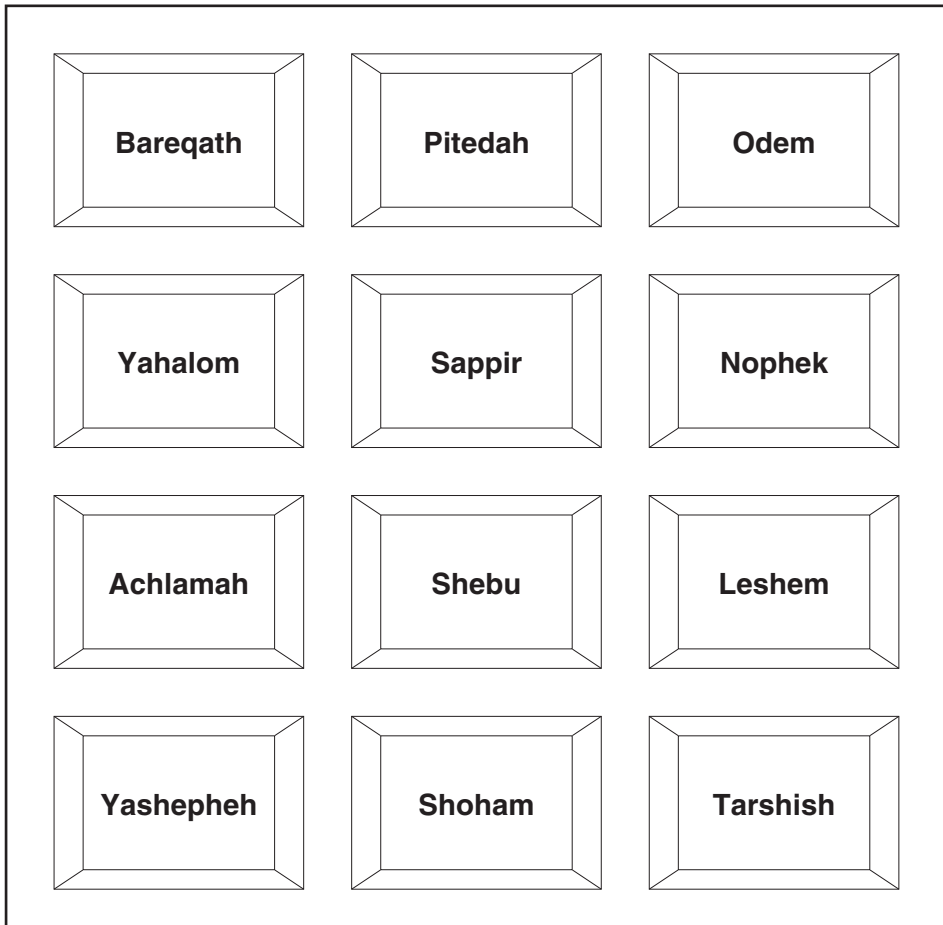
washed . . . his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. (Gen. 49:8–12)

Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies. (Deut. 33:7)

The noteworthy behavior of the Judah class will elicit the praise and respect of the other tribes without any provocation to do so. The *lionlike* nature of the victorious and righteous tribe of Judah is contrasted with the similar possession of the *lamblike* patience and gentleness of Shiloh, the *peaceable* one. Judah's "red-wine eyes" of medicinal sympathy and understanding are seen to operate in conjunction with "milk-white teeth," indicating fair and just, progressive and corrective—"biting"—judgments.

This combination of love and justice, of Shiloh and the lawgiver, will attract the sin-sick and weary in the Kingdom. However, no encouragement is to be given to the incorrigibly wicked, for he whose raiment is bathed in the "blood of grapes" shall grasp the neck of his enemies (Isa. 63:1–5; Rev. 19:11–15).

Hebrew Breastplate Jewels



The personal character of the progenitor of the tribe of Judah and his inclination toward mercy were brought to view when he spared Joseph's life in conjunction with Reuben (Gen. 37:26–28). Also, it was Judah who, at the risk of his own life, undertook the responsibility for Benjamin's safety (Gen. 43:3–10).

Openness, honesty, and an effulgence of devotion are the driving force underlying the Judah class in their worship and reverence of the Lord.

Sardius (Hebrew *odem*, LXX [Septuagint] *sardion*)

The root meaning of the Hebrew *odem* is "red." The sard, usually found in seam cavities of volcanic rock, is a semitransparent silica, a form of quartz with a waxy luster and a smooth, rounded surface that is creamy white in color.

The sard stone was probably obtained from Sardis in Asia Minor and marketed in Egypt. Today the material is still available at this former site, although it is no longer of superlative value due to the depletion of the better quality stone.

The sard has been considered a prized form of carnelian because its hue varies from a raw-red to an off-white fleshlike color. Ideally suited for women to wear as a necklace cameo or a brooch, it is given a further three-dimensional effect by

Hypothetical Placement of Apostles in Breastplate

sculpting out the area surrounding the engraved human figurine (usually a white image of a head or bust) down to a darker red strata of the material. This darker color offsets the figure, providing greater clarity or definition, beauty, and warmth.

The white fittingly represents purity and justice; the red denotes mercy and love. These two cardinal-color virtues operate not in opposition to each other but as a harmonious whole. They represent a noncompromising yet sympathetic and approachable high priesthood class (Heb. 5:1,2; Isa. 57:15). A “heart of flesh” signifies tenderness and compassion as well as a sensitivity to right and wrong (Ezek. 11:19,20; 36:26,27).

It should be kept in mind that the jewels of the breastplate are not assigned in the order of their intrinsic commercial value, nor are they ranked for their beauty of appearance. Rather, they are figuratively classified according to the personality or character value that would be most suitable or pertinent to a spiritual doctor ministering to a sin-sick world. The sard, therefore, is given the signal honor of introducing the stones of judgment. Of that day it is said: “This is my Father’s world. O let me ne’er forget that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.”

Paul

That the Apostle Paul is the leading representative of the spiritual tribe of Judah, the class most pleasing to the Lord, no one will seriously contest. The broad scope of his commission to bear the Lord's name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel attests to his superiority above the other apostles. His importance is confirmed by the preponderance of epistles he wrote.

The ferocity of Paul's former persecuting zeal (Acts 9:1,2) was channeled into *equal boldness* in testifying to the truth of the Gospel, as demonstrated at Damascus, Jerusalem, and Ephesus (Acts 9:20,27,29; 19:30,31). "Not a [one] whit behind the very chiefest [of the] apostles" is the way Holy Writ describes Paul (2 Cor. 11:5). The extent, the variety, and the appalling nature of the persecutions he endured are recorded by him:

. . . in labours more abundant [than the other apostles], in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. (2 Cor. 11:23–27)

As for Paul's *education*, his early training in religious and philosophical matters was under the tutelage of the then famous Gamaliel, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, a teacher of teachers; at his feet Paul received instruction (Acts 22:3). Paul's *superior wisdom* in things of the Spirit is acknowledged by no less an authority than the Apostle Peter himself (2 Pet. 3:15,16). Furthermore, in a vision Paul was realistically caught up into the "third heaven," or dispensation of righteousness, and given a preview or vivid portrayal of the Kingdom of our Lord as it will operate in the next age (2 Cor. 12:2–4). Unlike the preview later given to John on the Isle of Patmos—one veiled in mystical symbols and signs—Paul's occurred in so literal a fashion that it was unlawful for him to disclose to others the details of what he saw. Nevertheless, his visions and revelations greatly aided him in elucidating the Scriptures to others.

An instance of the knowledge and ability of Paul to act *as a judge* in resolving difficult issues is brought to light in 1 Corinthians 5:1,3; 6:1; 7:1,2; 8:1. His commonsense approach is seen in 1 Corinthians 11:14, "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?"

The depth of Paul's love—his *emotions* and personal involvement with the welfare of God's people—is evidenced by his service to the Ephesians "with all humility of mind, and with *many tears*. . . by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day *with tears*" (Acts 20:19,31). Daily he felt the responsibility and care of all the churches he had helped to establish (2 Cor. 11:28); and remembering such in prayer (Col. 1:3; 2 Thess. 1:11), he wrote epistles (which

would tax his physical and mental energy) to the distant ecclesias, often “out of much affliction and anguish of heart . . . [and] with many tears” (2 Cor. 2:4). He yearned for the spiritual growth and development of others as a woman travailing to give birth (Gal. 4:19), being jealous over them with a “godly jealousy” (2 Cor. 11:2). His advice to all Christians was to likewise put on “*bowels of mercies*” (Col. 3:12), a sard characteristic.

2. Reuben = Pyrope = Peter

Reuben (Look, a Son!)

Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath *looked upon* my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me. (Gen. 29:32)

Thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity [honor—NIV], and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch. (Gen. 49:3,4)

Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few. (Deut. 33:6)

From a preceding setback or grievous “affliction,” recovery and restoration are made to a favorable circumstance by means of sonship. This thought seems to be additionally supported by the illicit intrusion of Reuben into his father's privacy, followed again by a most remarkable recovery, as implied by the words of solace “Let Reuben live, and not die.”

The Reuben class, in the earlier days of its development, in the “beginning of strength,” seems destined to entrenchment in honor, power, and esteem as a “*first-born*.” In time, however, there occurs a setback of no longer “excelling” in a position of sole preeminence among the other tribes; but, nonetheless, the Reuben class still occupies a position of prominence: “Let not his men be few.”

The expression “unstable as water” exposes a characteristic of tempestuousness, turbulence, and impetuosity that needs to be harnessed under control if it is to be of service, and not of danger, to others. It is well known, for example, that a very wild, “spirited” horse, if properly broken, is of far greater value, endurance, and usefulness to its owner than one that is more docile by nature. The combined testimony concerning Reuben clearly infers a happy conclusion to those who overcome in this matter.

Pyrope (Hebrew *nophek*, LXX *anthrax*)

The Hebrew word *nophek* indicates a “shining stone.” The Greek word *anthrax* signifies “anthracite,” that is, a burning ember of coal. The term “carbuncle,” derived from the Latin *carbunculus*, means much the same thing: a “glowing coal.” Although all three terms vividly and accurately describe the chief feature of the Reuben class (impulsiveness), none specifically identify the stone intended, which is pyrope.

Pyrope is a magnesium-aluminum silicate of the orthosilicate type. A deep yellow-red gem, its properties include a glassy luster and the possession of little or no cleavage. Inferior grades of the stone are used as an abrasive in garnet paper.

A particular variety of garnet found in volcanic rocks, pyrope received its name from *puropos* because of its “fiery” or “live-fire” color. Thus *puropos* not only conveys the same signification as the terminology previously noted but also identifies this gem of the breastplate. On closer investigation red specks or grains are seen embedded in pyrope. Perhaps these specks, at least in part, account for the term “dancing sparks” used by some gemologists to describe it.

Peter

Jesus gave Peter the Syriac name *Cephas*, which, translated into the Greek *Petros*, signifies a rock or stone. This appellation did not at first describe a character already possessed, but one that the Master perceived and foretold would become Peter’s under the guidance and tutelage of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost.

That Peter was the most prominent apostle prior to the appearance of Paul no one can deny. He is named first in every listing of the Twelve in the Gospels and even invariably in smaller groupings. Among the apostles his deeds and actions not only commanded the most attention during our Lord’s ministry but also occupy the larger early portion of the Book of Acts. The Master usually addressed Peter as the apostles’ representative, and Peter frequently assumed the role as their spokesman. Of the apostles, according to Luke and Paul, the risen Lord appeared to Peter first (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).

Peter was given to brash statements, such as his attempt to constrain the Master not to go to Jerusalem and to certain death: “Be it *far* from thee, Lord!” For these words Jesus sharply rebuked Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan” (Matt. 16:22,23). On the Mount of Transfiguration the elated Peter said, “Let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias,” to which a voice from heaven replied, “This is my beloved Son . . . hear ye him” (Matt. 17:4,5; Mark 9:5,7). At the scene of the Last Supper and our Lord’s washing the feet of the disciples, Peter stated, “Thou shalt never wash my feet”; but upon Jesus’ response to this remark, the impetuous Peter then hastily replied, “Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!” (John 13:8,9). Later that same evening the Apostle also said, “Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended” (Matt. 26:33; Mark 14:29). Yea, the spirit of Peter was willing and wholly devoted to the Master, but the flesh was weak. He later denied Christ three times (Matt. 26:70,72,74).

Despite his gruff exterior, Peter was also touchingly meek and very humble. Early in Jesus’ ministry when the miraculous draught of fishes was supplied, resulting in the filling of both ships so that they began to sink, Peter hastened to fall down at the Master’s knees, saying, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5:8). At the time of Jesus’ trial at the house of Caiaphas, the high priest, Peter denied the Master; and Holy Writ records Peter’s reaction: He “wept bitterly” (Luke 22:62). When the risen Lord appeared to the disciples on the shore of Galilee and Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, “he girt his fisher’s coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea” (John 21:7). When Paul

pointed out Peter's inconsistent behavior upon a certain occasion (Gal. 2:11), there is no record of contention or resistance on Peter's part; in fact, he learned the point of the lesson so well that at a conference on the same issue a short time later, he forcibly asked, "Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10). He also tacitly acknowledged Paul's superior wisdom in this and other matters (2 Pet. 3:15,16).

The boldness and courage of Peter are outstanding, though at times he was possessed with a momentary weakness and sensitivity in regard to what others thought concerning him. He boldly struck off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant, when Jesus was apprehended in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:10). Peter's fearlessness with respect to bodily injury to the outer man was demonstrated by the courageous manner in which he spoke to the many thousands assembled at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14–40). On the occasion of his healing the man lame from his mother's womb, Peter boldly, *in the Temple precincts*, charged the nation with the responsibility of killing the "Prince of life" (Acts 3:12–15). He also refused to be intimidated by either high priest or magistrate (Acts 4:5–20; 5:28,29).

If in early life Peter evidenced occasional instability, he matured into the rock-stable character Jesus foresaw and became one to whom the great Teacher could say, "Feed my lambs" and "Feed my sheep" (John 21:15–17). Peter's two epistles reflect this remarkable transformation. His words have rung down through the centuries: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" (Matt. 16:16).

3. Ephraim = Fire Opal = John

Ephraim (Double Fruitfulness)

And the name of the second called he [Joseph] Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be *fruitful* in the land [Egypt] of my affliction. (Gen. 41:52)

And his father [Jacob] refused, and said, I know it, my son [Joseph], I know it: he [Manasseh] also shall become a people, and he [Manasseh] also shall be great: but truly his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he [Jacob] blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. (Gen. 48:19,20)

His [Joseph's] glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns [Ephraim and Manasseh] are like the horns of unicorns [wild oxen]: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. (Deut. 33:17)

Joseph received from Jacob a firstborn inheritance in the founding of the nation of Israel (Deut. 21:17). To accomplish this, Joseph's single representation amidst the tribes became a double one by the substitution of two of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, in his stead (Gen. 48:22). (Earlier Reuben had forfeited this particular feature of his birthright—1 Chron. 5:1.) The very name Ephraim is plural in form,

indicating “double fruitfulness.” However, even though Joseph attained and maintained this double representation, his posterity did not achieve the position of exclusive spiritual preeminence—any more than did Reuben—for that honor passed on to Judah (Psa. 78:67,68).

When the scriptural pronouncements to the various tribes are considered, it becomes increasingly apparent that they contain both positive and negative values which are also common to mankind. However, all twelve classes of the glorified Church—having had, previously, traits not so desirable but having waged, subsequently, a good warfare against the ways of the world, the flesh, and the devil—are accredited as overcomers and receive the victor’s crown of a perfect and incorruptible nature. In the present life these prior tendencies, by the Lord’s grace, either (a) are put under constant subjection, or (b) where profitable and possible, are diverted, channeled, and trained in a new direction so as to become a blessing both to the individual and to others *without losing the spontaneity and power of thrust*.

Since there is a paucity of favorable information regarding the tribe of Ephraim, it is necessary to carefully consider the undesirable tendencies and at the same time realize that in the spiritual application of the antitype, those who will attain to this particular jewel or tribal quality in glory must, in the present life, largely overcome these traits in a very pronounced way by a distinct development *in a favorable direction*. In other words, the positive values of the Ephraim class can be learned by observing the slant of the negative ones.

The following negative characteristics of Ephraim are delineated in conspicuous fashion:

Negative Values

Pride (Isa. 28:1)
 Boastfulness (Hos. 12:8)
 Stubbornness (Hos. 4:16 RSV)
 Anger (Judg. 8:3; 2 Chron. 25:6–10)
 Jealousy (Isa. 11:13 RSV; Judg. 8:1–3; 12:1)
 False ceremonial worship (Hos. 4:17)
 False socializing with world (Hos. 7:8)
 Being easily deceived (Hos. 7:11 NIV)
 Inordinate love of society (Isa. 28:1b)

Positive Values

Humility
 Glory in the Lord
 Submission to God’s will
 Righteous indignation
 Absence of jealousy
 True worship (Hos. 6:6)
 Separateness from world
 Nondeception
 Being filled with God’s Spirit

While Ephraim was designated a firstborn class (Jer. 31:9; Psa. 60:7; 108:8), centuries passed in the type before there appeared any evidence of this predicted fruitfulness either in numbers or in influence. When the fruitfulness did occur, the influence of the tribe of Ephraim became so great and it permeated the other nine tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel to such a degree that the term “Ephraim” was viewed as synonymous with the whole ten-tribe kingdom (Hos. 5:3). And likewise, spiritual Ephraim, both the nominal and the true, is more numerous in the present age or life.

In conclusion, in each fault of Ephraim one overall common, basic weakness can be noted—a weakness that must be overcome and directed into proper channels if one is to become a noble representative of this class—namely, *emotionalism*. This

emotionalism especially manifests itself in a *false* love, humility, and sympathy . . . in being *more* loving than God.

Fire Opal (Hebrew *leshem*, LXX *ligurion*)

The meaning of the Hebrew name *leshem*, used to designate this jewel in the breastplate, is “fortress.” The LXX *ligurion* is probably a form of the Greek *lugkourion*, which Theophrastus described as a stone of deep yellow and as being “electric.”

The fire opal, a hydrous silica, is a noncrystalline form of quartz; yet the interior of the stone occasionally contains minute platelets of tridymite, a crystalline form of quartz different in composition from the main body of the stone itself. Like quartz, opal consists of silica, but with the addition of water. It is found in volcanic rock and also as deposits from hot springs arising from the depths of the earth. In regard to hardness, quartz can scar opal, but opal scratches glass. Fire opal is transparent, having a vitreous, sometimes pearly luster; and it possesses a rich orange-yellow-to-red color.

The fire opal is a girasol (Latin *gyra sol*, i.e., “to turn around the sun”). Though the tint may vary somewhat, this jewel gives forth intense red-to-orange firelike reflections when it is turned around in a bright light; hence it is called a fire opal. Pliny states (Plinii, *Naturalis Historia*, lib. XXXVII, cap. 6.), “There is in them [fire opals] a softer fire than in the carbuncle [the second or Reuben stone, the pyrope].”

The spiritual lesson of the fire opal is that it represents a class who are emotional and staunch defenders of “the faith . . . once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

John

Three apostles—Peter, James, and John—are constantly brought to attention as having had special communion with Christ during his ministry. John is invariably mentioned either last or second to James, his brother, probably because the latter was the elder of the two. Yet at Pentecost and thereafter the deeds of Peter and John were noticeably brought to the forefront, and James occupied a lesser role. This change in emphasis seems to indicate that John was second to Peter in New Testament importance; that is, until Paul appeared on the scene, at which point John became third in rank.

There is a common misconception concerning John. Because he leaned on the Lord’s bosom (John 13:23) and was specially beloved of the Master, because he dwelt on the theme of love more than the other apostles, some fantasize that John must have had a fair, placid, soft, feminine countenance; but this is contradicted by the scriptural testimony concerning him. Some style John, therefore, as the “Apostle of love,” whereas this expression would fit the Apostle Paul more accurately in its highest and truest sense.

Jesus did not surname John a “son of *thunder*” for naught (Mark 3:17). The manifestations of the impulsive, passionate, vehement side of John’s nature seem to pass by unnoticed, whereas only his tender, loving disposition is seen. No doubt his passionate affection for the Lord’s noble character and station had something to do with (1) his indignation toward one who was casting out demons in Christ’s name and his forbidding such a one to do so thereafter (Luke 9:49) and (2) the anger he

manifested toward the Samaritans who refused to receive Jesus—anger to the extent of seeking the Master’s permission to call down fire from heaven to consume them, as the Prophet Elijah had done (Luke 9:51–54). In the second case Jesus severely rebuked James and John.

Peter and John courageously spoke to the people within the Temple precincts and were subsequently arrested for this action and brought before the council. “When the Council saw the boldness of Peter and John, and could see that they were obviously uneducated non-professionals, they were amazed and realized what being with Jesus had done for them!” When the council prepared to release the apostles with the admonition to speak no more about Jesus, Peter and John replied, “You decide whether God wants us to obey you instead of him! We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we saw Jesus do and heard him say” (Acts 4:13,19,20 Living Bible).

It is quite probable that love in great measure prompted James and John to petition Jesus to sit close to him in the Kingdom (Mark 10:35–37). John’s affection for Jesus’ strength and nobility of character constrained him to bravely follow the Master, after his apprehension in the Garden of Gethsemane, to the high priest’s palace to undergo trial for death. It was love also that drove John to press close to the Cross of Calvary during Jesus’ dying agony (John 19:26). In several instances the same apostle *emotionally perceived* certain details not mentioned in the other Gospels (John 6:21; 20:8; 21:7).

The transformation of John’s character, the watering down or “opal-tempering” of the fire within his breast, proceeded as he mellowed with experience and age. The voluntary suppression of self-will is reflected in the total absence of his own name in the Gospel of John—or indeed anywhere in his three pastoral epistles. He merely inferentially alludes to himself as being “one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20).

The emotional theme and content of Jesus’ long discourse at the Last Supper, with his tender expressions dwelling on the new commandment to “love one another” and the changed, compassionate manner of address our Lord then used to communicate with the disciples (“little children”), all deeply stirred John within. In fact, they left such a profound impression upon him that he found himself adopting the same mannerism and pattern of behavior later in his own life (John 13:33–35; 15:12,13,17; 1 John 3:18,23).

Nevertheless, manly virtue attended John for the remainder of his days. In his first pastoral epistle counseling on the importance of love, he had stern remarks for those who differed with his advice. The word “liar” appears less than a dozen times in the entire New Testament, yet on five of these occasions it was used by John in his first epistle. This is a sample; hear John *thunder*: “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son!” (1 John 2:22).

The enthusiasm of the very aged apostle bursts forth when—Jesus having concluded the Apocalypse with the statement “Surely I come quickly”—John hastily adds, “Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20).

4. Dan = Chrysolite = James of Zebedee

Dan (Judge)

And Rachel said, God hath *judged* me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan. (Gen. 30:6)

Dan shall *judge* his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD. (Gen. 49:16–18)

It is quite manifest that Dan represents a class who are prone to examine and weigh what they see and hear . . . a class inclined to render “judgment,” be it exercised in a rightful or a wrongful manner. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this attribute can be a blessing to all with whom they come in contact. If, however, the attribute is implemented improperly, the tendency is toward a faultfinding spirit of an insidious nature because such judgment is usually justified and falsely labeled as righteous indignation (Prov. 14:12). (Righteous indignation is a justifiable trait only when it is applied according to *scriptural* definition and at the proper time and circumstance.) Indeed, Jacob’s prophecy expressly refers to the peril inherent in misusing the ability to judge.

Likened to a horned viper or a venomous serpent, this class can be of the utmost danger to others as well as to themselves, for they incur a reciprocal fate. Used symbolically, the “horse” represents doctrine (Zech. 6:2–5); and a chariot, an organization or society governed by that doctrine. Just as an individual rides a horse to a destination, so humans are often carried or directed to goals of their own choosing or habit of thought. The “biting of the horse heels” means to tamper with doctrine. Such prepared deceit is usually introduced publicly in the latter (or “heel”) part of a sermon or discussion, although sometimes the poison is injected privately by remarks made behind one’s back. In either case, the guilty party speaks without fear or trepidation, uttering words not strictly supported by facts and not applied according to scriptural injunction.

“I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.” Both the personal aspect and the spontaneity of this utterance pertaining to waiting for a salvation are most unusual. The entertainment of the hope of salvation acts as a bridling or harnessing factor to keep under proper restraint those of the Dan class who are rightly exercised . . . yet without a cooling of their ardor and zeal for the Lord. Their penetrating, commonsense analytical ability easily perceives the incongruities of expression and behavior of others who are given to formalities, social amenities, and outward forms of godliness, which evidence a lack of deep dedication to God and to Christ. Curbing their own frustrations and lacking success in correcting such matters because of the prevalent misconduct of others and the majority opinion, such individuals of the Dan class leave the seemingly unattainable desirable outcome in the Lord’s hands.

Dan is a lion’s whelp: he shall leap from Bashan. (Deut. 33:22)

Moses' blessing reveals the predatory nature and prowess of Dan. A small portion of this tribe left their originally allotted territory and emigrated to the isolated city of Laish (Judg. 18:27,29; Josh. 19:47) situated on a mound at the foot of Mount Hermon. The setting of Moses' prophecy alludes to this new location in the far north, which gives rise to the commonly known phrase defining Israel's borders as being "from Dan to Beer-sheba" (Judg. 20:1; 1 Chron. 21:2). One of the main sources of the Jordan River gushes from a nearby cavern. Evidently, this emission of water is being compared with the leaping forth of a lion from the northern limits of Bashan.

In its spiritual aspect, these prophecies can, and apparently were intended to, convey two possible applications. The city of Dan, noted for Jeroboam's placement there of one of the two golden calves for the worship of Baal, was a center of idolatry. Accordingly, in its unfavorable sense, Dan depicts the aggressive traits of the little horn of Papacy (Dan. 7:8). When considered in a favorable light, however, the city represents the positive traits of the Dan class in their good fight of faith waged neither with malice nor with carnal weapons but with the spiritual weaponry of truth and righteousness.

Chrysolite (Hebrew *tarshish*, LXX *chrysolithos*)

Chrysolite, a magnesium-iron silicate, is a transparent gem of *yellowish*-green color, vitreous luster, and double refraction. It is found in igneous rock, and commonly occurs as grains embedded in meteorites. Anciently, most gem-quality crystals were found in veins of serpentine rock on St. John's Isle (Zeberged) in the Red Sea off the coast of Egypt.

The word *tarshish* in Hebrew means "hard." However, it also calls to mind two different navies (of Tarshish ships): One sailed from the Phoenician Tyre to the coast of Spain, and the other embarked from Ezion-geber (Eilat, Israel) to the Orient, the land of Ophir, in quest of gold (1 Kings 9:26–28; 10:21,22; 22:48). If the Hebrew stone *tarshish* is intended in a geographical sense, then its latter use with the primary objective of gold seems to be the more agreeable interpretation of the significance of the stone.

The Septuagint *chrysolithos* comes from the Greek *chrysos* ("gold") and *lithos* ("stone")—hence "the golden stone." The beautiful and soft transparency of this stone of gold (symbol of divinity) signifies that "the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits" (James 3:17).

It is to be noted that while the soft and gentle characteristics of true wisdom far outnumber any harsh or discordant note or theme, yet all these lovely, attractive qualities are dependent upon and are preceded by that one all-important ingredient: "*first pure*" (James 3:17; Phil. 4:8; Psa. 89:14). Those who insist upon this scriptural priority of purity are sometimes considered "hard," severe, and unloving.

Spiritually, this gem denotes a class who have sanctified common sense and possess a large degree of forceful, sound, and practical thoughts in their expounding and practice of the principles of divine government.

James of Zebedee

In the Gospels this James is referred to as “the son of Zebedee” to distinguish him from James “of Alphaeus.” Like his brother John, James of Zebedee was surnamed “Boanerges, which is, The sons of *thunder*” (Mark 3:17). Twice this trait was exhibited: (a) when the two brothers desired “fire to come down from heaven” to consume the Samaritans who were not receptive to Jesus (Luke 9:51–54), and (b) when the two were emboldened to request their placement to the right and to the left of the Lord in the Kingdom (Mark 10:35–37).

As one of the original three whom Jesus favored upon several occasions, James stood on special terms of intimacy with the Master. In four instances John is given greater preference for no other apparent reason than that of character (Luke 8:51 RSV; 9:28; Acts 1:13 RSV; 12:2). In all other instances James’s name precedes that of his brother John, probably to show respect for James as the elder of the two. However, from Pentecost on, John is given more eminence due to his appointment as a special emissary and to his close association and activity with Peter.

Because James Zebedee is sometimes confused with James of Alphaeus, the Lord’s brother, it is necessary to consider three Scriptures that are commonly misapplied or misunderstood:

1. 1 Corinthians 15:7—The risen Lord was seen by James of Zebedee, not the Lord’s brother. This privilege would have been an encouragement to him since his ministry was cut short in the prime of life, James being the first of the apostles to be martyred. If this identification is proper, then the first four notable apostles of the Lamb were each favored with a special revelation of Jesus Christ as the *risen* Lord (1 Cor. 15:5,7,8; Rev. 1:17).

2. Galatians 1:19—Three years after his conversion Paul went to visit Peter for fifteen days, most likely to be filled in with further details concerning Jesus’ prior earthly ministry. In addition, Paul saw “James the Lord’s brother” (instead of James Zebedee) to obtain still more information about the Master’s life, this time *from his youth up to the time of his baptism*. This accounts for the attention given to James of Alphaeus at this early period.

3. Galatians 2:9—Fourteen years later, James of Alphaeus was noted ahead of Peter and John, both of whom were his superior, out of deference to his succession to the bishopric of Jerusalem and the office of chairman of the elders there following the death of James of Zebedee. Thereafter, “James” would no longer need the designation “the Lord’s brother” or the suffix “of Alphaeus” since all three terms applied to the same person.

Epistle of James

For additional information pertaining to the personality traits of James Zebedee, it is essential to examine in some detail the Epistle of James in order to determine which James was its author; only then can character reflections be assigned according to its message content.

When Epistle Was Written

James is recognized as the first of the general epistles, being placed before those of Peter, John, and Jude. The evidence is convincing that the Epistle of James was written much earlier than is commonly accepted. In fact, some ancient manuscripts

place it even before the epistles of Paul. The Epistle of James appears to have been written sometime between the conversion of Paul in A.D. 33 and the council of apostles and elders convened at Jerusalem to settle the controversy resulting from the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas in A.D. 47 or 50 (depending on the manner in which the fourteen years of Galatians 2:1 are applied). If James had been written later than that date, its author would have taken special care to explain that his remarks on the subject of faith did not contradict the view Paul presented. The latter apostle, a decade later in his letter to the Romans emphasizing faith-justification (Rom. 3:27 through 4:6; 5:1; etc.), seemed to take pains to show his agreement with James's contention (James 2:21–26) that deeds, or works, are *proof* of a justifying faith (Rom. 2:13). Thus the Epistle of James was written before the interpretation of this subject by Paul was yet known or widely circulated.

To Whom Epistle Was Written

The Church in its earliest infancy was completely Israelitish. Eight thousand Jews of foreign extraction or residence entered the Christian faith during the Pentecostal season A.D. 33 (Acts 2:5,41; 4:4). For this reason, James's message, though now of immeasurable benefit to both Jew and Gentile, was *originally* sent forth to Jewish converts who, upon returning to their homes scattered abroad, would be in relative spiritual isolation and in need of further counseling and instruction in righteousness. Soon Paul, and later other apostles, would minister unto their wants; but in the interim James felt compelled to address this situation.

Manner in Which Epistle Was Written

The letter is a moral treatise on Christian living presented to those who already knew the identity of Messiah and his basic doctrines. For this reason the name of the Lord is mentioned only twice. The subject matter is not developed argumentatively into a cohesive whole; instead the epistle consists of a series of mini-topics that to a remarkable degree in subject matter, parallels, and tone bear semblance to the Sermon on the Mount, with which the author was obviously familiar (Matt. 5:3 through 7:27; Luke 6:20–49). Although Hebraic in thought content, the epistle is clothed in Hellenic literary-style language.

Author of Epistle

It appears that the message was composed under urgent circumstances and penned by some gifted amanuensis who faithfully and accurately translated the Apostle's dictation into Greek, the international language of the day, expressing the thoughts in the spirited fashion so characteristic of James of Zebedee. The message does not have any of the usual concluding remarks, salutations, etc., but comes to an unannounced and unexpected conclusion. This abrupt termination suggests that it was written shortly before James Zebedee's martyrdom at the hands of Herod Agrippa in A.D. 44. Thus James of Zebedee is the logical author of the Epistle of James, for James of Alphaeus was not martyred until A.D. 62—too late to account for such an abrupt ending of the letter.

The epistle reveals the character of its author as a dynamic reasoner not given to mincing words but to forceful exhortation, exposing matters to the very core and propounding pure religion in *open and easy-to-be-understood practical terms*.

Summation of the First Four Stones

(1) Paul's qualities, which most closely resembled those of the Saviour, almost defy simple definition except as described by the single word "Praise" in its most comprehensive sense, signifying a consuming incense and fragrance unto God.

(2) Peter was fueled with insuppressible zeal and impetuosity in declaring unto others the identity of the true Messiah. He seemed to be inflamed into action with the intense realization of the cost entailed in the purchase price of his redemption and the responsibility it laid upon him as a blood-bought possession.

(3) John's activity was impelled by a strong emotional appeal for the personal worthiness, sensitive character, and tender grace manifested in the life of the beloved Master . . . for the Son gloriously evidenced the likeness of the Father, who had trained and sent him forth to minister unto men.

(4) James of Zebedee was inspired with bold openness to point out the necessity for pure inner motives accompanied with an outward walk in life (as revealed in word and conduct) consistent with divine instruction, particularly as laid down in the Sermon on the Mount and demonstrated by the Master in his earthly ministry.

5. Issachar = Topaz = Andrew

Issachar (Hire or Wage)

Leah said, God hath given me my *hire*, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar.

(Gen. 30:18)

Issachar is a strong ass couching [crouching] down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute. (Gen. 49:14,15)

The settling down between the "two burdens" implies a prior realization on the part of this class of little hope of advancement in the present life, of the strenuous and seemingly nonrewarding labor to follow their arising from this posture and assuming the burdens. But contemplating the promises and assurances in Holy Writ to be given to those who faithfully perform such a duty—namely, the permanent cessation of fatigue with regard to future activities in the Kingdom, and the fruits of victory to be enjoyed in the Beulah land of rest—they willingly bow their shoulder to the task at hand.

The Issachar class submit themselves as bondslaves to their Master, Christ, and in humbleness of spirit and mind accept the *double* burden of responsibility proffered in the present life only to the "called of God"; that is, (a) the denial of self and (b) the taking up of one's cross to follow Jesus (Matt. 16:24). This charge, once assented to, becomes a mandatory obligation (Luke 9:62; 14:26–28; Matt. 22:19–21). If the twofold burden is great, the "hire," or reward, will be exceedingly greater.

Rejoice, . . . Issachar, in thy tents. They [Issachar and Zebulun] shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacri-

fices of righteousness: for they [Zebulun] shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and [Issachar] of treasures hid in the sand.
(Deut. 33:18,19)

Here the missionary spirit of both the Issachar and the Zebulun tribes is revealed in calling men to the “mountain” of the Lord (Heb. 12:18,22). Wherever the Issacharites pitch their tents, their diligent seeking out of the hard-to-find “little flock” in seemingly overworked, unproductive, sterile ground will bring its ultimate reward (Luke 12:32). In this life the Issachar class willingly assume less attractive and more onerous duties in localized areas. Presumably the “treasures” of the sand will yield Issachar a higher personal reward than Zebulun’s opulence of the seas.

Topaz (Hebrew *pitedah*, LXX *topazion*)

This stone should not be confused with “oriental topaz,” a corundum. The name comes from *topazios*, meaning “to seek,” because the earliest known locality where it was found was a small island of that name in the Red Sea. Often surrounded by a mist or fog, the island was difficult to find. Pliny states that there were two types of stone of gem quality on this island—one having a green and the other a golden hue. The golden-color jewel corresponds to the fifth stone, the Hebrew *pitedah*. In Sanskrit *pita* signifies “yellow.” Although, symbolically, yellow quartz, or citrine, would seem to meet the spiritual requirements of the breastplate theme, the weight of evidence appears to favor the selection of the topaz.

Topaz is an aluminum fluosilicate with a glassy luster and a hardness exceeding that of quartz. When rubbed vigorously, it generates an electrostatic charge somewhat similar to the piezoelectric quality of the quartz stones . . . portraying, in a religious sense, the transmission capabilities of the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit possessed by the jewel Church class as a whole. In the topaz class this electrostatic charge represents the ability to attract converts through persistent effort.

Andrew

The Apostle Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, had been a disciple of John the Baptist before becoming a disciple of Jesus. Andrew was also one of the first two of John’s disciples who, on hearing John’s declaration, “Behold the Lamb of God,” instantly followed the Master and even lodged with him that very day. Convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, he promptly introduced Simon Peter to Christ (John 1:40–42).

Andrew’s place among the apostles seems to be fourth, after Peter, James, and John (Mark 3:16–18; Acts 1:13)—that is, until the Apostle Paul came on the scene after Pentecost to occupy the vacancy created by the defection of Judas the traitor. Note that Andrew (with Peter, James, and John) was among the four who privately inquired of Jesus on the Mount of Olives regarding his prediction of the future destruction of the Temple (Mark 13:1–4).

Jesus, while walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw Peter and Andrew casting a net into the sea and said, “Follow me, and I will make you [both] *fishers of men*” (Matt. 4:18,19; Mark 1:16,17). Immediately they left their nets and followed the Master.

From these brief but pertinent incidents in the life of Andrew recorded in the Gospels, it can be seen that this apostle was prompt and industrious in rendering early devotion and service to God.

It will be of interest to some, based on the tradition of the early church fathers, that the Roman and Greek Catholic churches celebrate in November a holy day dedicated to St. Andrew. On that day, according to custom, the subject of *missions* is preached—a thought that harmonizes with the Andrew class characteristic.

6. Simeon = Lapis Lazuli = Bartholomew

Simeon (Hearing)

She [Leah] . . . said, Because the LORD hath *heard* that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon. (Gen. 29:33)

Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. (Gen. 49:5–7)

The Genesis 49 account is entirely negative in its description of Simeon. It is designed to show why this tribe was viewed with general disesteem, and also to explain why, in the literal receiving of their inheritance in the land of Israel, they were not given specific land boundaries but were allotted scattered villages throughout the nation (Josh. 19:1–9; 1 Chron. 4:28–33).

The favorable traits of this tribe relate more to the name they were given (“Simeon”) and to the significance of the stone chosen to represent them. Sensitive to their lack of general recognition and longing for respect from the other tribes, as well as introversive by nature (they look to the Lord rather than to others for comfort), the Simeon class are driven to largely develop the art of secret communion with God—namely, their *prayer life*. They are devout by nature and idealistically inclined, yet strangely prone to openly persecute others with whom they are not in agreement if afforded favorable opportunity. This latter trait must be purged vigorously.

Lapis Lazuli (Hebrew *sappir*, LXX *sappheiros*)

Since the ancients described the “sapphire” (stone of blue) as one sprinkled with golden spots (Job 28:6), this obviously could not be the modern sapphire. Rather, this stone corresponds to the bright blue, opaque *lapis lazuli* (Latin “stone of azure”) speckled with yellow iron pyrites.

The lapis lazuli is a sodium-aluminum silicate containing free sulphur and a small admixture of other related minerals. This gem-quality stone is basically crystalline limestone in which there is a rich constituency of the blue mineral lazurite. The bright brassy-yellow specks dispersed in the blue matrix background suggest a comparison with the deep azure night sky bedecked with stars.

The color blue is a universal symbol of faithfulness. For example, one speaks of another as being “true blue,” that is, loyal to the core. The blue heavens represent both God’s constancy and the fact that He keeps His covenants of promise, hope, and mercy to those who place and maintain their faith in Him (Jer. 31:35–37; Psa. 89:34–37; 36:5). As the poet has so beautifully expressed it:

I lift mine eyes, the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it.
And day by day this pathway smooths,
Since first I learned to love it.

Bartholomew

Bartholomew was one of the twelve apostles, and he is the same individual who in John’s Gospel is called Nathanael. This conclusion is based on the fact that in the first three Gospels Philip and Bartholomew are constantly coupled together, while Nathanael is nowhere mentioned; in the fourth Gospel, however, the names of Philip and Nathanael are combined in a similar manner with nothing being said about Bartholomew.

It is possible that the apostolic name Bartholomew—instead of being a filial relation, that is, *son of Tolmai*—signifies *son of venture*. If this appellation was given to him by the Master, then it would mean one who was prone to venture out on a difficult undertaking based on faith rather than human rationalization.

The only other knowledge pertaining to the character of this individual is that contained in John’s Gospel, as follows:

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see!

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered, . . . Before that Philip called thee, *when thou wast under the fig tree*, I saw thee. Nathanael answered, . . . Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!

Jesus answered, . . . Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon [before] the Son of man. (John 1:45–51)

From the preceding account the following can be deduced. Before meeting Jesus, Nathanael seems to have already heard something concerning John the Baptist’s identification of him as the Messiah. No doubt Nathanael held John in high personal esteem, but he had a natural bias or prejudice pertaining to Nazareth, a local village of mean repute neighboring Cana, where Nathanael dwelt (John 21:2). Nazareth

had hitherto produced no prophet or priest of renown. It is conjectured that Nathanael, troubled in mind and in spirit, secretly took the matter to God, screened beneath the foliage of a fig tree. While thus engaged in communion with his God in prayer, he heard Philip calling out aloud for his presence. When Philip made known to him his finding and endorsement of Jesus as the Messiah, Nathanael at once made known to Philip his concern with regard to Jesus' background—his identity with Nazareth. Nevertheless, he followed Philip.

Jesus, evidently conversing with others, noticed Nathanael approaching. While the latter was still at a distance, Jesus called out and addressed him not only as though he knew Nathanael, but in a way that seemed to indicate he had previously been on intimate terms with him. Nathanael resented this seeming artifice of familiarity. But when Jesus disclosed he was aware of Nathanael's secret presence beneath that tree, the latter was overwhelmingly convinced that Jesus had supernatural powers, that this was the answer to his prayer, and that the testimony of the Baptist concerning Jesus was indeed true.

The Master then indicated to Nathanael that a day would come when he would witness a far greater miracle, namely, in the Kingdom Age. At that time countless individuals would, like Nathanael, make known their petitions to God in the privacy of prayer, and Jesus would send individual angels, or messengers, in response to such requests—*just as he had sent his angel Philip to answer Nathanael!*

Jesus' appraisal of Nathanael, in addition to revealing that he was given to a prayer life, was that he was an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile. This indicates that the Apostle was "clear as the heaven"; that is, he was open and honest in all his dealings before men, and he shunned deception of any kind, perhaps even to the point of what might appear to others as an unnecessary extreme.

7. Manasseh = Agate = Thomas

Manasseh (Forgetting)

And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me *forget* all my toil, and all my father's house. (Gen. 41:51)

. . . he [Manasseh] also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. (Gen. 48:19)

. . . he [Joseph] shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. (Deut. 33:17)

Manasseh, like his brother Ephraim, was half Hebrew and half Egyptian, both being born of the daughter of the priest of On in the land of Egypt. Upon their full adoption into the natural as well as the spiritual family of God, Ephraim and Manasseh in time no longer felt estranged either for this reason or because of not being direct first-generation sons of Jacob, the father of the nation of Israel. Not only were they accepted into nationhood on the same level as the other sons, but their

father Joseph, who was only *one* of Jacob's sons, was honored with the distinction of *double* representation in the persons of Ephraim and Manasseh.

The implication of the foregoing promises is that the elder of the two sons, Manasseh, upon receiving his inheritance, would “forget” any prior misgivings he might have had with regard to Ephraim's obtaining the birthright that should have been his (Gen. 48:17–19), for Manasseh received, as it were, a somewhat double fruitfulness similar to Ephraim's. Half the tribe of Manasseh inherited a portion of land *west of Jordan* to the north of Ephraim; and the other half tribe of Manasseh obtained *east of Jordan* a large part of the rich country of Gilead plus the whole land of Bashan (also signifying *fruitfulness*).

Therefore, when the tribe of Manasseh reminisced about the variety and multitude of blessings received—even though they were quantitatively inferior and less important than Ephraim, in other respects they possessed a uniqueness of their own—they could feel amply compensated for the humiliation, hardships, and trials incidental to the period of their development.

Agate (Hebrew *shebu*, LXX *achates*)

The agate, silicon dioxide, is a beautiful, veined semitransparent-to-opaque fine-grained stone. It is composed of several intimately adjacent layers of different-colored quartz arranged in wavy bands and/or concentric circles.

The Greek *achates* seems to indicate that the stone was first discovered or brought to prominence and popularity in the vicinity of a river by that name in Sicily. The close similarity in Hebrew between *shebu* and *sheba* (signifying “oath” or “covenant”) suggests that the former term is but another form of the latter.

As instituted by God, the rainbow was intended to be a perpetual reminder and the seal of His promise to Noah to nevermore utterly destroy man from the face of the earth (Gen. 9:12–17). Thus the meaning of *shebu* clearly identifies the agate, with its rainbow of colors, as the intended seventh stone in the breastplate. It is interesting that an alternate meaning for the Hebrew *sheba* is “seven,” which corresponds to the placement of this stone in the breastplate.

Initially, the beauty of the agate is hidden either under a rough, dingy coating or within detached, rounded nodules. However, when the interior is exposed by grinding or being cut across, an unsuspected and surprising beauty is revealed.

This stone illustrates a class who are introspective by nature. Although prone to be silent, they are separate and independent thinkers who mentally feed and dwell upon sublime and exhilarating thoughts. Consequently, they are able to forget exterior injustices inflicted upon them as well as to put aside any feelings of jealousy toward others. They are so happy with the resplendency and variety of the truth that they are unaware of, and do not have time to worry about, the aspersions of others.

Thomas

Three times in the New Testament the Apostle is styled “Thomas, which is called Didymus” (John 11:16; 20:24; 21:2). The name Thomas is a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic word for *twin*, whereas Didymus is the normal Greek word for *twin*. Therefore, the tradition that the real name of Thomas was Judas but that the *epithet* “twin” was given to him by the Master seems to have great validity, for this

would differentiate him from the Apostle Jude, the brother of James, and from Judas Iscariot, the traitor—all three of whom had the same name. Moreover, Thomas's name calls attention to the characteristic of the agate, which consists of two (twin) or more closely related colored strata of the same material.

When at the Last Supper Jesus said, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," and Thomas replied, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"—it should be taken into account that the other apostles were probably also ignorant (John 14:4,5). Nevertheless, this episode reveals the disposition of Thomas to proceed cautiously, perhaps with undue tardiness approaching uncertainty, with respect to developing a fullness of faith. The possession of any native mental reservations of this kind would hinder a rapid growth of faith. Such a characteristic would be conspicuous to others as well as to the individual himself, and would hamper the evaluation of the hidden inner Christian life except when providentially exposed.

When the resurrection of our Lord occurred, "the other disciples therefore said unto him [Thomas], We have seen the Lord! But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails . . . and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. . . . then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God! Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:24–29).

The faith structure of the Apostle required a relatively inordinate degree of factual information compared to what should normally be necessary. This course, if pursued, tends toward higher criticism, which in turn leads to infidelism. The Master's remark concerning the blessedness of believing without seeing was a carefully phrased rebuke to Thomas that was intended to instruct future Christians who would possess a disposition similar to Thomas's. (1) Such should not give up hope, for the Master knoweth their frame and can read their hearts (Psa. 103:14). Time is required, and abrupt providence, to remove the scurf or veil that obstructs the beauty and joy of a full realization of truth. (2) A continual catering to the desire for rationalization can jeopardize the chance of obtaining the chief prize of the high calling. (3) Care must be exercised in the mental judgment of others who appear weak in faith, for they may yet, by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, be marvelously changed.

In that upper room the risen Lord did not forget the courage and devotion displayed by Thomas on a prior occasion. When Jesus purposed to return to Bethany to heal Lazarus, the apostles accompanying him fully realized the danger to which he would be exposed: the peril of implacable foes lying in wait to entrap him in the environs of Jerusalem. The Gospel account infers that the apostles at first were somewhat hesitant as to what to do. Then it was that Thomas said unto his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16).

According to tradition Thomas was martyred by being pierced through with a lance. This calls to mind Jesus' pierced side, into which Thomas had previously

thrust his hand. If such was the fate and thinking of Thomas at the time, then how starkly and penetratingly the unyielding shaft brought the lesson home! In principle this resembles the prediction about Mary that “a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,” which was figuratively fulfilled when she beheld her naked Son exposed to shame on Calvary’s hill.

8. Asher = Onyx = Simon Zelotes

Asher (Happy)

And Leah said, *Happy* am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher. (Gen. 30:13)

Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties. (Gen. 49:20)

And of Asher he [Moses] said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be. (Deut. 33:24,25)

The happiness of Leah concerning Asher needs little or no explanation. This tribe represents a class noted for cheerful constancy even in circumstances apparently not warranting such optimism.

Asher possessed the maritime portion of the rich, fertile plain of Esdraelon, and its territory extended approximately sixty miles in length from Mount Carmel northward. Exceptional prosperity was enjoyed by Asher, probably due in part to its olive vineyards and the oil extracted therefrom, and also to its fine harbor (now Haifa).

However, despite a distribution and benefaction to others from its riches, Asher was criticized in the Song of Deborah and Barak (Judg. 5:17) for failing to assist in battle against Sisera, who “mightily oppressed the children of Israel” (Judg. 4:3). As time went on, Asher was increasingly viewed in a less favorable light by the other tribes.

Apparently, the natural or literal fulfillment of the prophecy is intended to reach a culmination when Asher receives its inheritance in the Kingdom Age. At that time the tribe of Asher will be in a position to dispense *royal dainties* to others; and petroleum, rather than olive oil, will become the more important product. The prediction is that oil will be found either within the Joshua (19:24–31) or the Ezekiel (48:2) borders, which in places overlap. In addition, other rich deposits of mineral wealth, such as iron and brass (derived from copper ore), are likely to be found underfoot. Then it shall no more be said that Moses led the children of Israel to the one spot in the Mideast where there is no oil in contrast to the lot of their Arab neighbors.

While a purview of the three blessings pronounced upon Asher in Deuteronomy, as seen from a spiritual or Christian standpoint, seems to be all joy and no sorrow, yet the provision of “shoes of iron and brass” suggests the need for overcoming the hardships and spikes strewn along the pathway of present experience. Then at life’s

end, with the removal of such inflexible and protective footwear, the reward will be the bathing, relaxation, and soothing of each foot in comforting "oil."

The ensuing phrase ("as thy days, so shall thy strength be") gives support to this view. This quotation has been of special value to countless followers of Jesus throughout the Gospel Age, for it has been interpreted to mean that for each day of evil a sufficiency of strength will be granted. Helpful and sweet as this consolation has been, it includes an additional emphasis upon the faithful discharge of life's journey. "As thy days [increase with vicissitude], so shall thy *rest* [Arabic, *daba*] be." Only then, in the next life, will Asher be "blessed with children" and fully "acceptable" to the brotherhood of the tribes without reservation, i.e., without any resentment or jealousy.

Onyx (Hebrew *shoham*, LXX *beryllion*)

Onyx is a special variety of silica in which the semitransparent-to-opaque layers are alternately white and dark humus (portraying "humility") brown or black. It is similar to agate quartz, but the layers are arranged in straight or parallel bands.

The word "onyx" comes from the Greek term denoting a "fingernail," based upon the appearance of the stone when it is cut in a certain fashion. The LXX mistakenly has *onychion* as the twelfth instead of the eighth stone of importance in the breastplate. The word *shoham* is usually thought of as the Hebrew equivalent for "fingernail," although there is some doubt as to this signification. Possibly *shoham* is the more ancient form of the later word *shachar* or *shochor*, both of which convey the thought of "black."

The onyx stone of the breastplate was cut *cross-grained* in order to expose a two-layered surface, with the clouds or bands positioned *vertically*, across which the name Asher was horizontally incised. The black and white strata would then indicate that for every dark cloud there is a silver lining. Spiritually, this would represent cheerful constancy, optimism, and an effervescent spirit in spite of trouble and hardship.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

William Cowper

Simon Zelotes

This apostle is designated "Simon the Canaanite" by Matthew and Mark (Matt. 10:4; Mark 3:18) and "Simon called Zelotes" by Luke (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). The word "Canaanite" can be used in several senses:

(1) It refers to a tribe that generally inhabited the whole country west of Jordan. The Canaanites, more particularly the Phoenician branch, were given to commerce far and wide, employing sea lanes in the distribution of goods. Thus the name became somewhat synonymous for a *trader* or a *merchant*.

(2) The term "Canaanite" is derived from the Hebrew *canna*, of which the Greek *zelotes* is the equivalent, both meaning *zealous* or a *zealot*. It is in this sense that the term was applied to Simon.

(3) An ancient use of “Canaanite” referred to the worship of the Phoenicians. Not only was it a demoralizing form of sacred prostitution practiced by various heathen nations, but on special occasions human sacrifices were offered to the fire god Molech. This did not involve the offering up of already slain animals but required the stabbing, slashing, devouring, and burning of *live* victims, often children—hence the origin of cannibalism (*canna baal*), that is, one showing his zeal for Baal (lord) in this ghoulish fashion.

As this form of worship ceased, the term “Canaanite” evolved to signify one overly zealous for any religious or political—and often visionary—cause. In New Testament times the Zealots were a body of people conspicuous for their fierce advocacy of the Mosaic ritual, and on occasion this fanaticism spilled over into the political arena.

The apparent identity of Simon the Zealot with this movement provides some insight into the direction of his former temperament. However, upon his adoption into the body of Christ, this prior disposition would become greatly modified. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, a previously manifested quick temper, an embittered mood of self-righteous despotism, and/or an overly excessive and misdirected zeal for an impractical goal would be channeled and converted into an equally insuppressible but sweetened spirit of enthusiasm, cheerful optimism, and vivacity for the *cause of the Master*.

9. Zebulun = Aquamarine = Philip

Zebulun (Dwelling)

Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband *dwell* with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun. (Gen. 30:20)

Zebulun shall *dwell* at the *haven of the sea*; and he shall be for an *haven of ships*. (Gen. 49:13)

Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; . . . They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas. (Deut. 33:18,19)

The Zebulun class is somewhat similar to that of Issachar, but is apparently more successful in this age in evangelizing others. Zebulun’s ministry seems to be more extensive in its “going out”—in its outreach to others—yet, on the other hand, this class provides a home base or centralized port to which spiritual mariners on the high seas can return to make repairs, take on supplies, etc. “Outgoing” in personality, this class is an encouragement and a source of renewal to others. This trait meets a kindred response in the hearts of many, resulting in above-average success in bringing others to Christ as a port in the storm.

The Zebulun class are recognized as comforters of the brethren. Possessing a quality of acquired fatherliness, they are those to whom one in trouble would go for confidence and strength; hence they are a harbor, or “haven” of refuge, for a troubled soul adrift on the sea of life. The Zebulun class tend to have more of this world’s goods in one way or another and thus are in a position to be hospitable and

to help others; they do not use these temporal possessions for their own pleasure and satisfaction.

Aquamarine (Hebrew *bareqath*, LXX *smaragdos*)

Bareqath means a “glittering” or “flashing stone,” whereas *smaragdos* signifies an emerald. In properly identifying this stone, Bible scholarship has generally wavered back and forth between the emerald and the carbuncle. Those favoring the emerald rely on the LXX *smaragd*, and those preferring the carbuncle lean on the meaning of the Masoretic *bareqath* but misinterpret the “flashing stone” to signify a stone of fire. However, the correct choice for this breastplate jewel contains some elements of both, for it is between the color green and flashing, with the greater emphasis being upon the original Hebrew. Therefore, it is quite possible that the other stone of greenish hue found on the island of Topazios in the Red Sea, being applicable here, was a form of beryllium, although of the more common variety aquamarine.

Aquamarine is a transparent beryllium-aluminum silicate having a glassy luster. Berylliums possessing gem value are either (a) aquamarine (blue, blue-green, or *sea-green*); (b) emerald (grass-green), which should not be confused with “oriental emerald,” i.e., corundum; or (c) chrysoberyl (yellow-brown or sometimes pink). In contrast with the occurrence of aquamarine in rocks of igneous origin, emerald occurs in rocks of metamorphic origin. Beryllium, one of the chief constituents of aquamarine, is frequently called glucinum because of the sweet taste of its salts, which comports well with the pleasing personality of the Zebulun class.

Aquamarine is always striated parallel to its length. This gives the gem a pronounced pleochroic effect (different shades of coloration) when there is a slight movement of either the stone or the beholder. For this reason the aquamarine, rather than the emerald, better evidences the *bareqath* characteristic. When viewed closely, the aquamarine renders the impression of a sunlit sea . . . of the rippling or *glittering* effect of light upon ocean waters. This quality is reminiscent of the prophecy of Jacob and that of Moses with respect to the Zebulun class and their association with the sea (Gen. 49:13; Deut. 33:19).

Philip

On one occasion certain Greeks approached Philip seeking an audience with Jesus; but Philip went to Andrew first, perhaps deferentially recognizing his seniority and superior worth, and then both presented the Master with this information (John 12:20–22). This incident reveals Philip's native humility, and possibly an original innate need for support in important matters, a characteristic later changing with age and experience.

Like Andrew, who desired to share the good tidings of great joy with others, the outgoing Philip “findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son [in law] of Joseph” (John 1:45).

At the time of the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus beforehand “saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he [Jesus] said to prove him [Philip]: for he himself [Jesus] knew what he would do. Philip answered

him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little” (John 6:5–7). As to why Jesus pointedly wished to test Philip on this occasion, it may have been (a) to cause Philip to reflect upon the magnitude of the task at hand so that (b) the lesson of the miraculous feeding would be useful to him in a particular future situation that would occur in his evangelical ministry after Jesus’ departure. In other words, when Philip would later call to mind the feeding of the five thousand, he would be buoyed up in a time of depression to look in faith to the risen Lord and thus be able to perform whatever stupendous task might confront him.

During Jesus’ last hours with his disciples, “Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” (John 14:8,9). The reason Jesus gently, with pathos, reproveth Philip for such a laudable (though in the present life expectantly foolish) desire to see the Father, “which art in *heaven*,” was to point out that in order to understand and appreciate God, it is essential to come to Him through the Son. And having done so, one must further heed and focus in upon Christ’s doctrine and manner of life if he would fulfill this aspiration to see God (Matt. 5:8).

Andrew, it appears, was a more manly—that is, a more stable—person by nature, whereas Philip was less secure and more in need of the support, as it were, of a father. In contrast, Andrew followed and sought after Jesus (John 1:37–40), but Christ sought after and, fatherlike, “findeth Philip” (John 1:43). It may be, therefore, that subsequently on his missionary exploits, Philip, whose name means “brotherly love,” felt the need to establish a headquarters or haven for others who, like himself, were orphanlike and thus in need of the Father. The Apostle is identified as “Philip of Bethsaida” (meaning *house of fish* or *fish town*). Since his native residence is linked with his name, perhaps a spiritual significance is also intended (John 1:44; 12:21).

10. Gad = Rock Crystal = James of Alphaeus

Gad (Troop)

And Zilpah Leah’s maid bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, A *troop* cometh: and she called his name Gad. (Gen. 30:10,11)

Gad, a *troop* shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last. (Gen. 49:19)

or

Raiders shall raid Gad, but he shall raid at their heels. (RSV)

With great unanimity modern translators follow the traditional rendering of scholars and interpret the name Gad to mean, as it were, “good fortune” or “good luck.” Only the Common Authorized Version (KJV) and Young’s (own revised) Literal Translation of the Bible render the term “troop,” which is more agreeable both contextually and idiomatically in its application of here representing outside military relief coming to the aid of a party under a state of siege. Rotherham’s interpretation

of this portion of Scripture as "Victory hath come!" is a close approximation of the truth that "A troop cometh!"

Blessed is he who enlarges Gad's domain! Gad lives there like a lion tearing at arm or head. He chose the best land for himself; the leader's portion was kept for him. When the heads of the people assembled, he carried out the LORD'S righteous will, and his judgments concerning Israel. (Deut. 33:20,21 NIV)

Gad is pictured as a fierce, warlike but *disciplined* host (1 Chron. 12:8) who occupied a commander's post of leadership and to whom the other tribes looked for decisive action.

Rock Crystal (Hebrew *yahalom*, LXX *iaspis*)

Based largely on the LXX *iaspis*, this stone has been falsely named the diamond. That it could not be a diamond is obvious because such a gem of the size required in the breastplate would be (a) too valuable to occupy a place of tenth rank amidst the other stones, and (b) too conspicuous and distracting. Moreover, the extreme hardness of the gem would make it unfit not only for planing down to a flattened surface and specific conformity but also for engraving suitably. Nevertheless, it is interesting that good colorless specimens of rock crystal are sometimes called "Herkimer diamonds."

Rock crystal is silicon dioxide without additives. It is water-clear in its transparency and has a glassy luster. The ancient Greeks thought this clear form of quartz was water frozen so hard it could not melt. Strangely, it is cool to sight and to touch. Its sturdy composition provides strength and durability for gem purposes.

Clear rock crystal is of great value for electronic equipment such as resonators and oscillators because of its piezoelectric properties and fixed vibration frequencies. Lenses are also made of rock crystal. Spiritually, all these characteristics portray the Gad class as specially proficient communicators and coordinators.

The Hebrew word *yahalom* is derived from a verb meaning "to smite." Thus the spiritual application of this stone could be "*to strike*," as in the sense of a gavel being used to bring a court to order.

James of Alphaeus

No information can be gleaned from the Gospels concerning the character of James of Alphaeus other than his inclusion in the apostolic listing (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15). In the Book of Acts he is seen as one of the eleven in the upper room awaiting Pentecost (Acts 1:13).

His rise to importance amidst the apostles was given special impetus upon the martyrdom of the other James, the son of Zebedee. On this occasion Peter recognized James of Alphaeus, the Lord's brother, as a personality not to be overlooked (Acts 12:16,17). In approximately eight intervening years, upon the general recognition of his organizational talent and reputation for evenhandedness, he rose to such prominence that he was considered specially qualified to act as conference chairman among the apostles at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13-22); for several years thereafter he was held in continual esteem in this capacity as a spokesman (Acts 21:18).

James of Alphaeus was admired by Jewish Christians because of his levelheadedness and was reportedly given the surname “the Just” (Eusebius *H.E.*, ii 23).

11. Benjamin = Amethyst = Jude

Benjamin (Son of Right Hand)

And it came to pass, as her [Rachel’s] soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni [son of (my) sorrow]: but his father called him Benjamin [*son of the right hand*]. (Gen. 35:18)

The sobering experiences in the development of the Benjamin class are reflected in Rachel’s painful death following, on the other hand, the miraculous preservation of life in the birth of her child.

Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil. (Gen. 49:27)

Another situation that threatened the survival of the Benjamites was their unwillingness to surrender to the other tribes for execution the “men of Belial,” who had committed a heinous crime within the borders of Benjamin (Judges 19 through 21). The tribe was subsequently defeated in battle with their countrymen to the extent of almost complete annihilation. The entire civilian population was destroyed, and their armed host, which consisted of 26,700 men of war (Judg. 20:15), was reduced to six hundred fleeing survivors (Judg. 20:47). Following this great decimation, the rest of Israel took compassion on “little Benjamin” (Psa. 68:27), fearing the possibility of their extinction as a tribe; and measures were contrived to secure the Benjamites’ reproduction as a people. A part of this remedial action was to allow them to “catch . . . every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh” at the annual dance festival, and then to return home, repair their cities, and dwell in them (Judg. 21:19–23).

It is to this unusual method of obtaining wives that the expression “Benjamin shall ravin [raven or rend—Leeser] as a wolf” refers. In other words, a parallel is drawn between (a) the longing desire of the Benjamites for spouses and their obtaining satisfaction for this need, and (b) the characteristics of a wolf, the allusion being not only to its ravenous appetite and desire for food but also to the rapacious manner in which it seizes (or “catches”) its prey (Judg. 21:21,23).

“In the morning he shall devour the prey.” This supplemental remark concerning the wolf refers to the same historical incident. This event took place in the “*morning*” period—that is, in the judgeship era—of Israel’s tribal evolution.

However, the latter part of the verse—“and at night he shall divide the spoil”—pertains to a different event and a much later date of fulfillment. It is conjectured that the background of this circumstance occurred long after Israel’s *sunset as an independent nation*; that is, long after 606 B.C., when the land of Judah and Benjamin was laid waste and a remnant of its people taken into Babylonian captivity. This prophecy appears to have been fulfilled during the time of Israel’s subjection to the rule of the Medes and Persians in the fifth century B.C. In this *night period* of Israel’s subjugation, Mordecai the Jew and Esther the Jewess rose to prominence throughout the empire. Queen Esther acquired the house of Haman, and Mordecai

was elevated in rank to be next to the king (Esther 8:7; 10:2,3). "He [Benjamin] shall divide the spoil"; i.e., all Jewry benefited, or shared, in the spoil as a result of the exaltation of Mordecai and Esther, both of whom were *Benjamites* (Esther 2:5–7).

And of Benjamin he [Moses] said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders. (Deut. 33:12)

This verse seems to apply to Benjamin's change from a sorrowful condition to a happy one due to their being allotted a small but strategic position in the Land of Promise. As a result, the tribe of Benjamin occupied a place between the ten-tribe kingdom to the north and the large land area of Judah to the south—the two "shoulders" referred to in the prophecy. Moreover, the tribe of Benjamin was situated on the hillsides, or "shoulder" flanks, that encompassed the environs of Jerusalem (see Deut. 33:12 footnote and Josh. 15:8; 18:16 in the Jerusalem Bible). Thus the latter end of Benjamin more than compensated for the sorrow and travail of former days.

Spiritually speaking, this tribe represents a class who hunger and thirst for and seize upon the meat of God's Word, their sincerity and serious temperament, however, being less popular and less attractive to the Christian community as a whole in the present life.

Amethyst (Hebrew *achlamah*, LXX *amethystos*)

An amethyst of gem quality is a transparent silica of quartz composed of strong blue and deep red coloring in such proportion as to produce a purple-to-violet hue. It is found frequently in the interior lining of geodes or balls of agate, sometimes in veins, and also in almond-shaped cavities of volcanic rock, particularly basalt.

The Hebrew name *achlamah* is a derivation of *chalom*, which signifies "to dream"; hence *achlamah* denotes "not a dreamer." The LXX *amethystos* means "not soaked with" (*methu*), that is, "not drunken." Though usually described as wine-colored, the amethyst has always been regarded as a charm for the prevention of intoxication.

The spiritual etymological interpretation would be that this jewel represents a class noted for sobriety and sincerity, as characterized by their earnest and individualistic behavior. This application comports well with the color of amethyst, for the mixture of blue (faithfulness) and red (blood) conveys the thought of "faithfulness unto death." There is a close association between the agate and the amethyst; and like the agate, the seventh stone, the amethyst represents a class who are inclined toward introspection.

Jude

The Apostle Jude identified himself in the epistle he authored merely as the "brother of James" (Jude 1). He is named among the Twelve as "Judas the brother of James" according to Luke (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and as "Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus," by Matthew (Matt. 10:3)—to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot.

The names Lebbeaus and Thaddaeus are somewhat synonymous Syriac terms, the first being “man of heart” and the other “man of breast” (i.e., chest). They seem to signify one who is characterized by sincerity or earnestness of feeling and behavior, coupled with the quality of fearlessness.

If Paul speaks of James as the Lord’s brother (Gal. 1:19), then the same could be said with respect to Jude, the brother of James. When Jesus returned to his own country on one occasion, the people asked, “Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?” (Matt. 13:55; cf. Mark 6:3).

The fact that the Epistle of Jude does not call attention to apostolic sponsorship is no proof to the contrary, for the same can be said with respect to the Epistle of James. The Pauline letters to the Philippians, to the Thessalonians, and to Philemon also fail to designate apostolic authorship, as do the three epistles of John. Moreover, the four Gospels and the Book of Acts, essentially historical records of events, are understood to have been written under direct or indirect apostolic supervision or approval. Therefore, it is inconceivable that the Epistle of Jude and that of James, both of which are primarily devoted to doctrinal instruction in righteousness, could have been authored other than by the apostles so named.

That Jude did not allude to himself as “the Lord’s brother” is also quite understandable. Rather than to establish authenticity by attracting attention to this endowment of a family relationship with the dear Saviour, he preferred, out of humility, to style himself a “*slave of Jesus Christ*” (Jude 1—see Young’s *Analytical Concordance*). The Second and Third Epistles of the Apostle John are merely given the signature “The elder” (2 John 1; 3 John 1).

Jude’s identification as the “brother of James” was a demure manner of establishing apostolic authenticity (Gal. 1:19). Not only did it serve as a tacit acknowledgment of James’s superior status, but it enhanced Jude’s own message so that it might thereby gain wider recognition and attention. Verse 17 of Jude, rather than being a disavowal of apostolicity, indicates the epistle was written later, after the decease of all the other apostles—except for John. It is a reminder to the reader that Jude’s testimony, in large part, is but a reiteration of a prior admonition of the apostles, notably Peter and Paul.

Not much can be learned concerning Jude from his question addressed to our Lord at the Last Supper: “How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” (John 14:22). The Master replied that this manifestation was to be an inner revealment of the Father and the Son in the heart of the believer.

Therefore, the only truly pertinent insight into the character values of Jude would be the epistle he left to posterity. In the epistle the Apostle vigorously applied himself to give advice pertaining to a serious situation that would come upon the Church, knowing full well that his message would be neither popular nor comforting to the hearer. The manner in which he addressed this issue comports well with the etymological meaning of his name, giving added import. Indeed the message content of the Book of Jude mirrors forth his personality to a considerable degree—he was sober, earnest, and serious, plus he was willing to suffer for what he believed to be right.

12. Naphtali = Jasper = Matthew

Naphtali (Wrestling)

And Rachel said, With great *wrestlings* have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali.
(Gen. 30:8)

Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words. (Gen. 49:21)

And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west [Sea of Galilee] and the south. (Deut. 33:23)

The “wrestlings” associated with Naphtali indicate a long, exhaustive struggle for victory. It is very much reminiscent of Jacob’s wrestling until daybreak to secure the blessing (Gen. 32:24–32). The lesson of this tribe is of a class who do not win the battle with short, decisive victories but overcome through the grit of sheer perseverance.

The land given to Naphtali was located to the north and west of the Sea of Galilee, bordering the western shore of the lake itself, which extended southward, and containing the cities of Capernaum, Chorazin, Magdala, and Tiberias. While the land was exceedingly fertile and with its semitropical climate had great potential, yet because it occupied the principal invasion route of Palestine from the north, it was subject to pillage and frequent ravaging. Hot-water springs in the vicinity encouraged the enemy to settle there, and a darkness or pall seemed to pervade the Jewish inhabitants as a result of this alien power and influence.

The territory of Naphtali produced a paucity of leadership until the advent of Jesus Christ: “The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up” (Matt. 4:16). The people of Naphtali were eager, industrious, and quick to come to the defense of Israel (Judg. 5:18), but the interspersing of foreigners in their midst hindered their growth and prestige as true Jews, even affecting their diction (Matt. 26:73; Mark 14:70). The presence of foreigners also brought to the area a spiritual and moral decay from which they did not receive deliverance until the First Advent of Messiah. It is interesting that this area was called “Galilee of the *nations*” (Isa. 9:1; Matt. 4:15).

Many of the apostles and disciples of our Lord were inhabitants of this Galilee region. Under the guidance and instruction of the Master during his ministry, they were enabled to drop “goodly words” with speed, diligence, and enthusiasm (like a “hind let loose”), which ever since have been perpetuated in the written Word. This work is but a foretaste of future honors.

Jasper (Hebrew *yashepheh*, LXX *onychion*)

The Hebrew word *yashepheh* (or *yashpu*) so closely resembles the jasper by name that for this reason it is generally accepted as the twelfth jewel in the breastplate. Evidently, the Septuagint *onychion* is in error; the Greek term for jasper should be *iaspis*.

Gem-quality jasper is a compact aggregate of fine granules of quartz mixed with foreign matter that in large measure acts, in the final analysis, as both a coloring

and a beautifying agent. However, this stone lacks the translucency and the banding of some of the chalcedony group. Distinguished by its opacity because clay (sometimes called “baked mudstone”) or other more valuable substances are mixed with the silica of which it is chiefly composed, jasper takes on a good polish and has a waxy luster. Jasper is frequently spotted, mottled, or clouded; and it occurs in many colors, a dark yellow-brown or a dull red being more characteristic. Jasper is commonly found in the shape of pebbles.

In regard to the spiritual connotation, this gem represents a class who, in spite of former imperfections, ultimately qualify for membership amidst the jewels—howbeit, in last place. In the end they will succeed as more-than-overcomers . . . but only through much struggle and patient endurance against the spirit of the world and the imperfections of the flesh in their vessels of clay, in addition to persevering in well-doing.

Not generally held in high esteem either in the Church or in the world, this class are as “pebbles,” lacking any noteworthy or outstanding virtue. Their efforts here and there display good intentions but are exerted in a haphazard, disorganized fashion. Nevertheless, this class possess a trait that is very pleasing to God, though not appreciated by ungodly men. Their pluck, sheer grit, and determination to do God’s will in spite of their shortcomings, and their constant seeking of forgiveness and grace in Christ through repentance, manifest in the Father’s sight the sincerity of their hearts.

Matthew

In all listings of the apostles, this disciple is named Matthew (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13; etc.). Under other circumstances he is also called by his family name, “Levi . . . of Alphaeus” (Mark 2:14), and designated the “publican . . . Levi” (Luke 5:27). The fact that Mark and Luke refer to Levi as *Matthew* in their apostolic listings would indicate this name was given to him by Jesus. The Apostle calls himself “Matthew the *publican*” in his own Gospel (Matt. 10:3), perhaps not only as an act of humility but also as an encouragement to others with a tainted past, showing Jesus’ ability and willingness to save repentant sinners.

The class designated as publicans were generally natives of the locality in which they were employed. Matthew, as a collector of tolls, was brought into daily contact with people from all walks of life. In the sight of orthodox Jewry, this was the basest of all livelihoods, for many Jews considered the paying of tribute to Rome as odious, as absolutely unlawful. The publican, at whatever level of employment, was considered a traitor and an apostate defiled by frequent intercourse with the heathen, in this case the enemy and the oppressor.

Those sinners and publicans who with saddened, contrite spirits recognized their alienation from God, and who in desperation hoped for retrieval, found that the scribes and Pharisees, instead of helping them, barred the door of reentry into the commonwealth of Israel. The acceptance of Gentiles (A.D. 36) to fellowship—based on repentance, reformation, and adoption into the body of Christ—helped to open the door of hope, oxygenating and energizing that element of Jewry who had, to a greater or lesser extent, departed from the Law. Indeed Christ opened up a new and living way to both Jew and Gentile (Heb. 10:20).

Therefore, the name Matthew (“gift of Jehovah”) given by the Master to Levi has added significance; it seems to refer to the gift of reconciliation and restoration to favor granted to the Apostle from on high. It would also imply that in view of the degree of contamination and of compromise that Matthew incurred as a publican, a twofold mission was now set before him in the gospel: first, to get rid of any defiling practice within himself and to root out any slackness of obedience to the will of God resulting from his former occupation; and second, to help others who, like him, found themselves entangled in similar sin and bondage—to point sinners and publicans, particularly those of Jewry, to Christ, the new and living way.

This theme of saving grace is reflected throughout the Gospel of Matthew. Of the four evangelists he alone called attention to the Lord’s statement that he came to save “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:6; 15:24). Moreover, in the Apostle’s tracing of the male lineage of the Messiah, he included the seemingly unessential, but nonetheless important, information concerning some of the wives—women who had a clouded background yet were associated with that honorable ancestry—such as *Tamar*, who bore a son Pharez of her father-in-law Judah (Genesis 38; Matt. 1:3); *Rahab*, the former harlot, the mother of Boaz (Josh. 2:1; Heb. 11:31; Matt. 1:5); *Ruth*, the Moabitess, the mother of Obed (Ruth 4:5; Matt. 1:5); and *Bathsheba*, the wife of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. 11:3; Matt. 1:6).

The Shoulder Stones of the High Priest

In summation, attention should now be given to the two single black onyx epaulette shoulder stones of the high priest, which also had names inscribed upon them—the same twelve tribal names that were incised upon the breastplate jewels. Upon each of these two flat, rectangular stones, six names were engraved, being arranged according to the natural order of birth of each tribal progenitor (Exod. 28:9–12). When the value of this positioning is understood as a mere sequence of birth, then the stones in the breastplate are more clearly seen to represent, in addition to tribal personality traits, the order of importance. Thus is seen election or selection based on character values.

In regard to the two epaulette stones, the firstborn name occupied the position nearest the neck of the high priest on the *right shoulder*. Then, alternating from shoulder to shoulder and working outward, the names were placed in birth sequence; hence the secondborn was placed nearest the high priest’s neck on the left shoulder, and so on.

These two stones were of the same material as the eighth stone in the breastplate, the chief difference being in the manner in which they were cut. When cut *parallel* to the black and white bands, with the black as the upper, predominating surface, the same type of onyx stone would serve as an epaulette or shoulder ornament of birth rank, much in the fashion of the broad, flat cloth shoulder pads worn by naval and military officers to show rank and status of service.

In the cutting process, when six tribal names were incised into each black shoulder stone, the light layer underneath would be exposed. The names, therefore, would appear as white lettering against a dark background, greatly enhancing clarity and legibility.

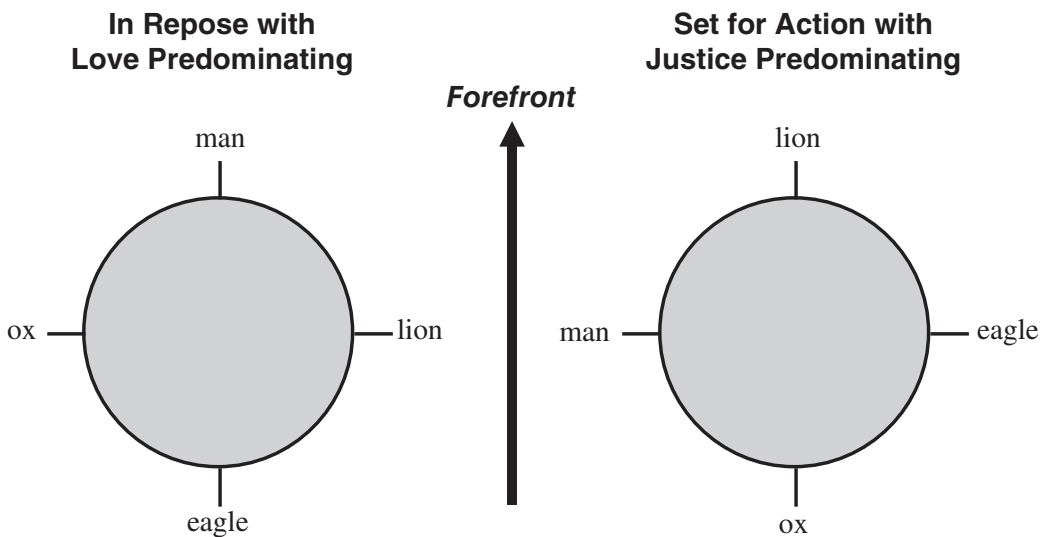
The *black* background of the shoulder pieces points out that the class thus honored (the Church in glory) would, in their dealings with others, ever be kept humble and in constant remembrance of their former common origin in contrast to their new *white* names of honor . . . they were dug from the dark, miry pit of the sin-cursed planet Earth (Psa. 40:2; Isa. 51:1). Such a remembrance will be of utmost benefit to mankind here on earth in dire need of a merciful priesthood.

Be it noted that the glory breastplate of judgment was suspended and held up by two golden chains fastened to two clasp attachments that positioned the onyx stones upon the governing high priest's shoulders (Exod. 28:9–14,22–25; cf. Isa. 9:6); as a result, the breastplate hung over his breast and *heart* (Exod. 28:29). The high priest was a type, or picture, of our Lord Jesus (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14,15; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21).

Appendix 2: Disposition of Ezekiel Faces

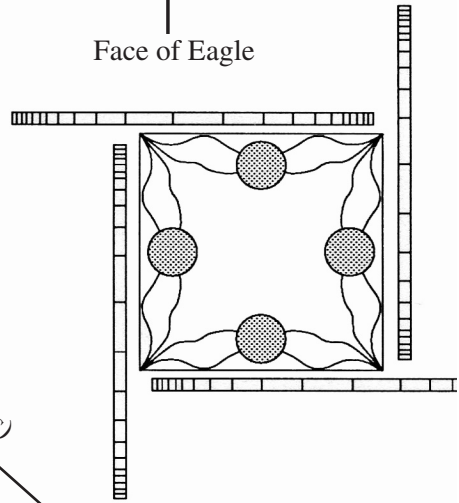
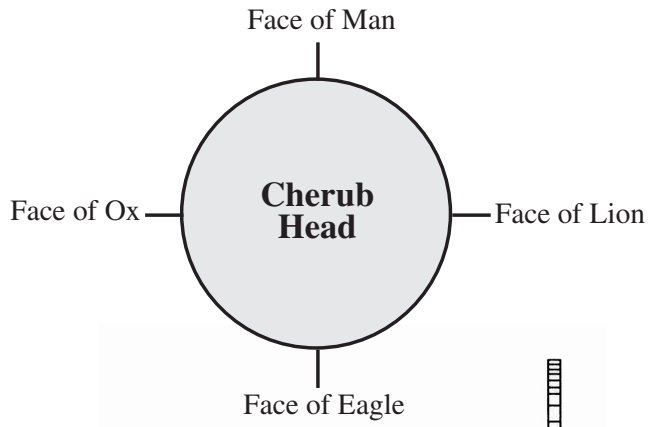
In *normal repose*, the four faces of each cherub, having one common head and neck stem, were positioned on the skull according to the cardinal points of the compass: one face directed to the north, one toward the east, one to the west, and the fourth to the south. These faces were not flat caricatures, but were physiognomical or three-dimensional.

In *action*, it having been predetermined which one of God's attributes would spring into motion, the face most pertinent to that principle of character would swivel upon the neck stem until its gaze became fixed directly frontward in the direction of accomplishment. Because the other three faces were permanently positioned upon the same skull, they, of necessity, would have to pivot accordingly, so that each face would now be directed toward another cardinal point (Ezek. 1:10).

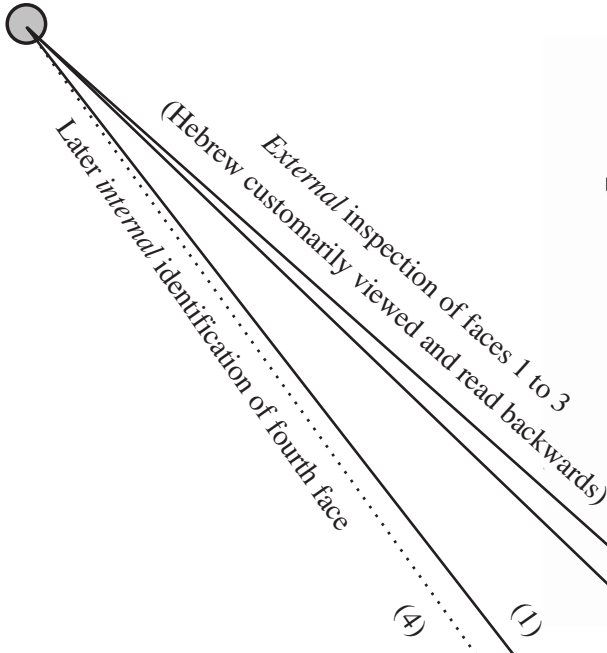


The four cherubim were now ready for forward motion: (a) their characteristic *straight* feet were poised for action directly in line with the purposed path of fulfillment (Ezek. 1:7; Isa. 55:11); (b) their faces were properly positioned in harmony with the nature of their mission; and (c) each cherub was accompanied by an ever present adjacent wheel, which duplicated its every maneuver instantly and contemporaneously, turning neither to the right nor to the left *when once in motion* to fulfill the will of Him that sitteth above and between the cherubim (Ezek. 1:15–21; Psa. 99:1). It is important to note that as the head, the body, and the feet of each living creature moved forward and its wheel revolved in the desired direction, *none of these deviated* from their course both to and from the object of God's intention (they "turned not" sideways—Ezek. 1:17). Upon their return, the cherubim and their faces assumed their normal posture.

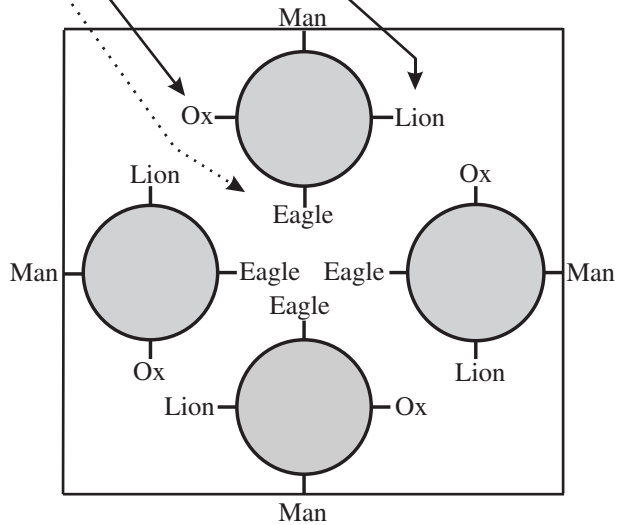
Ezekiel 1:10

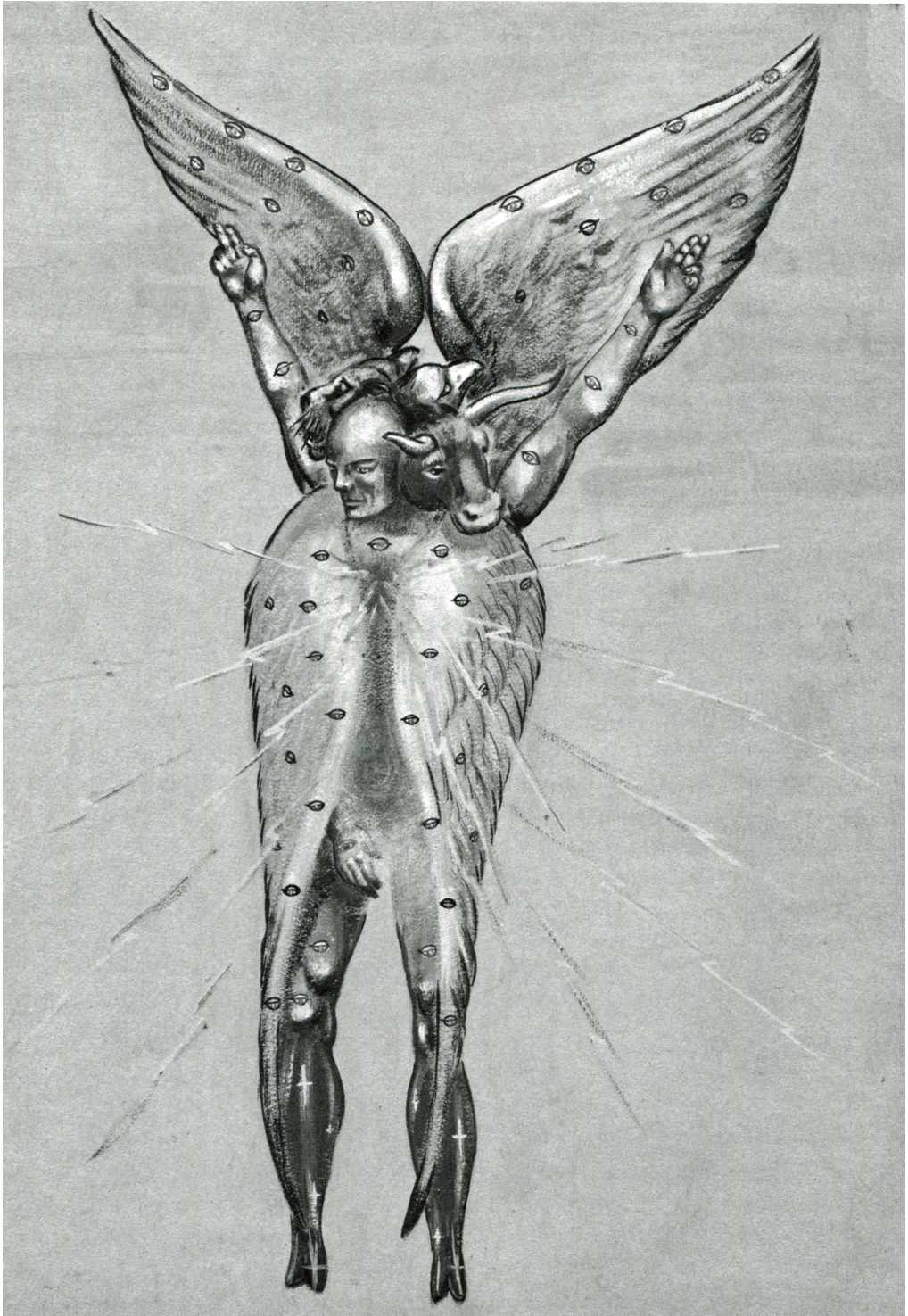


Ezekiel 10:14
 Probable Point and
 Angle of Observation



- (1)
- (2)
- (3)
- (4)





**A Living Creature
(Ezekiel 1:5-13)**

Appendix 3: Symbolism of Ezekiel Faces

Revelation 4:7	Ezekiel 1:10	Ezekiel 10:14
1. Lion (Justice)	1. Man (Love)	1. [Cherub] Ox (Power)
2. [Calf] Ox (Power)	2. Lion (Justice)	2. Man (Love)
3. Man (Love)	3. Ox (Power)	3. Lion (Justice)
4. Eagle (Wisdom)	4. Eagle (Wisdom)	4. Eagle (Wisdom)

Ezekiel 1:10

A most fundamental and important element of God’s character is Justice. Represented in the *Mercy Seat* of the Tabernacle, Justice is illustrated by the bottom portion of the *propitiatory* lid, the slab of the Ark of the Covenant upon which the blood of atonement was sprinkled (see page 132). “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

But, thank God, the other three primary virtues possessed by Deity contrived a way to rescue man from the morass of sin. It was *Love* that prompted Wisdom to conceive a *plan* to accomplish this desired end—yet without the violation of Justice. Love had to be just before it could be generous. In order to assure ultimate success, Love also got the consent of Power.

The sequence of the listing in Ezekiel 1:10 represents the attributes of God as seen in their most favorable light . . . as they will be revealed in universal splendor in the Temple or Millennial Age. The clue to the reason for this order of the attributes is best explained by the setting of the vision itself and by its stated purpose; namely, that it was “the appearance of the likeness of the *glory of the LORD*” and “that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God” (Ezek. 1:1,28).

1. Man (Love)

Jehovah God is best characterized as the God of *Love*, and He is most pleased to be worshipped as such. Furthermore, Love is the attribute that most appeals to the Lord’s people because of their former background as members of a convict-race under sentence of death. This grace, which is the very embodiment of pity, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness, is the attribute upon which Christians can best cast their hopes.

The listing in Ezekiel 1:10 denotes the order in which God’s attributes will burst in glory and beauty upon the world’s consciousness. True, the Heavenly Father has already provided for man’s redemption by securing the ransom price; yet the world’s first practical realization of His Love will be significantly experienced only when earth’s prisoners are called forth in *personal remembrance* from the tomb and granted the opportunity to walk with gladness up the highway of holiness unto life. This awakening will be not only from bondage to liberty, from death to life, but from blindness to the recognition (the light) of God’s mercy on their behalf.

The Revised Standard Version renders Ezekiel 1:10 thus:

As for the likeness of their faces,
 each had the face of a man in front;
 the four had the face of a lion on the right side,
 the four had the face of an ox on the left side,
 and the four had the face of an eagle at the back.

While the Hebrew lacks “in front” and “at the back,” this order, or arrangement, is clearly implied by the inclusion of the two phrases “on the right side” and “on the left side.” More particularly, the association of the left side with only the third face necessitates the placement of the eagle face to the rear.

The choice of words indicates that in this instance the Holy Spirit avoided an arrangement of the four attributes according to order of importance—possibly because of the supreme merit and sterling quality of each virtue. It is significant that the four faces are not enumerated. Instead, emphasis is directed to their positional placement upon the sole head and single neck stem of each of the living creatures.

Notwithstanding this fact, the frontal role that the *human* face occupied (when the cherubim were standing at attention or, in another sense, in a relative posture of repose, awaiting instruction from the voice above, in God’s throne) does indicate the primacy of *Love* among the four attributes. This attribute represents God’s normal disposition *in repose* amidst His *holy* subjects . . . one or another of the attributes (faces) assuming a leading role only when occasion demands.

2. *Lion (Justice)*

In the Millennial Kingdom soon to be established, *Justice* and judgment will be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet (Isa. 28:17). Messiah, ruling with a rod of iron, will not tolerate evil (Rev. 2:27). The righteous will flourish.

3. *Ox (Power)*

The rules and decrees of Christ’s Kingdom will be backed by divine *Power* and authority, for Jesus “must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death [itself]” (1 Cor. 15:25,26).

4. *Eagle (Wisdom)*

See comments on God’s *Wisdom* (Rev. 4:7), page 136.

Ezekiel 10:14

The arrangement of the divine principles in this listing is better understood in the contextual light of the vision itself. This description of Ezekiel 10:14 is preceded by the separation and removal of God’s glory from the cherubim throne; that is, first, *God’s absence* is noted (Ezek. 10:4), and then the union of Deity above the cherubim, the *return of His presence* (Ezek. 10:18). The listing in Ezekiel 10:14, therefore, denotes the activity or inactivity of God’s attributes *throughout earth’s seventh Creative Day* as viewed by men and angels, first from a negative and then from a positive standpoint. For this reason Ezekiel 10:14 covers a much wider spectrum of time than the listings in either Revelation 4:7 or Ezekiel 1:10.

1. [*Cherub*] *Ox (Power)*

The first face in Ezekiel 10:14 is incorrectly described as “the face of a cherub.” The error is obvious because the appearance of the cherubim in the tenth chapter is

expressly stated to be the likeness of “the same faces which I saw by the river of Chebar” (Ezek. 1:10; 10:22). Three of the faces identified in the tenth chapter have their counterpart in the first chapter. Only the likeness of the ox of Ezekiel 1:10 is missing in the tenth chapter. Therefore, the first face of the cherub of Ezekiel 10:14 is properly understood to be that of an ox (Power).

In the process of time such rare and superficial external discrepancies have crept into the text to hinder those wise in their own conceits from knowing the divine secrets due to their lack of humility and their failure to acknowledge and seek wisdom from on high. However, in this transcriber’s gloss or *lapsus linguae* on the part of the Prophet, there is an indirect confirmation of the hypothesis that the first attribute of Ezekiel 10:14 was more a *cherubic* test of faith in God’s *Power*. Additional supporting evidence that Ezekiel 10:14 involved a test of faith upon the angels is delicately implied because the same attributes, described in Chapter 1 of Ezekiel as “living creatures,” are called “cherubims” in Chapter 10.

When sin and death entered the world through Adam in concert with the machinations of the Devil, the angels in heaven, though grieved by this introduction, were not startled so much by (a) the enormity of Adam’s transgression (probably the first instance in celestial and terrestrial history of an outward act of direct disobedience toward God) and (b) the external evidence of death working in man (Adam lived 930 years before he died—Gen. 5:5), as they were indeed shocked by the apparent impotency of God’s *Power* to peremptorily carry out the death sentence. Under the peculiar circumstances of the incident in the Garden of Eden, it was a natural development for the angels to assume God would slay Adam at the moment of his disobedience. They failed to understand the significance of the statement “*In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die [dying thou shalt die]*” (Gen. 2:17).

The penalty, which *promptly began* to work within man, was designed to be a slow inner dying process, unseen by the natural eye and unbeknownst to spirit beings, that victimized Adam in death within the allotted time—a thousand-year day (Psa. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8). What appeared to be a failure on God’s part to immediately execute the sinner in the day he ate thereof and to suppress Satan’s activities, or to later curb the unholy angels when they left their first estate (Jude 6), constituted a most severe test of loyalty to God, particularly on the part of the angels.

It was the seeming absence of God’s *Power* that caused a credibility gap and tried men and angels to the very core. Not until evil had waxed worse and worse, not until 1,654 years subsequent to the Fall, was a climax reached with the Flood, which ended the age and cleansed the earth of excessive evil. At the time of the Deluge, the unholy angels were locked up in chains of darkness pending a future judgment (Jude 6). Thus God revealed to all that He did indeed have *Power* to execute full judgment . . . but in His own time and way.

2. *Man (Love)*

However, although mankind in the person of Noah and his family started afresh in the new postdiluvian era, sin and death, instead of being eradicated, persisted. Doubts again arose as to why God did not put His foot down and hold in check this rebellious planet. Since the Creator had manifested His ability and His power in the Deluge, why did He further tolerate these conditions? The only logical answer

appeared to be not that God lacked power, but that perhaps He had lost interest in man, particularly in view of the fallen condition of the human race. Hence God's *Love* was questioned; to some His sympathy seemed to be lagging. Perhaps one reason why God frequently spoke in the Old Testament writings in such a blunt, stern, and critical fashion (and properly so!) was to afford occasion to fallen man to find fault with, to misjudge, to misinterpret, and to slander His generosity. On the other hand, the *reverent of heart* trace and view these same acts of God in quite a different light.

Thus Power and Love were both questioned, and in that order. Just as in due time Power was vindicated by various acts (particularly by the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the plagues upon Egypt, and also in the giving of the Law upon thundering Mount Sinai), so God's Love gradually became manifest in His dealings with the nation of Israel, whom He was slow to chide and swift to bless, until the climax of His mercy was revealed with the coming of Messiah at the First Advent.

In no other way could the Lord's people have gained such a deep, penetrating insight into the vast reservoir of *God's Love* than through the sending forth of His own Son, the dearest treasure of His heart, to be man's Redeemer. Herein also was revealed the Saviour's own great compassion for mankind in the giving of his life as "a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:6). To some it might appear that the love of Jesus transcended the love of the Father in that the former experienced the rigors of death upon the Cross. That this thought is erroneous is shown by a study of the Book of Revelation as a whole. For now it is sufficient to say the Creator's love excels that of all other beings.

3. *Lion (Justice)*

When the ransom price for deliverance from sin had been secured at Calvary, when Jesus had tasted death for every man, each subsequent passing moment called into question the reason for God's delay in ushering in the Kingdom blessings so long awaited. Why the delay? Had not the demands of *Justice* been satisfied through the Cross? What caused the confusion was the failure to fully realize the importance and necessity of the element of time for the call of the body members of Christ and for the work of the *ministry of evil* in preparing them for their future priestly service in the Kingdom of glory. The cry "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" has been the refrain echoed by many throughout this Gospel Age (Rev. 6:10; Hab. 1:2-4).

While the demands of Justice, and its related inexorable death toll, appear appalling to the eyes of an enlightened(?) public, yet only too soon do these same individuals forget the simplicity and reasonableness of the original requirement in Eden and Adam's test of obedience as a basis for continued access to the tree of life. This same trait of Justice in the divine character is the very quality that spawns other associated virtues, such as unchangeableness (versus fickleness), covenant-keeping reliability, and the firmness and constancy of purpose so essential to good government and the maintenance of order.

Briefly then, as (a) God's Power was questioned subsequent to the Fall, then vindicated by the Flood, and (b) God's Love and bow of promise to Noah since the

Flood were doubted because of the delay in fulfilling the anticipated blessings, then answered by the message of the Cross; so (c) God's long-deferred Justice (with the exception of the death penalty) is to be revealed from heaven in the coming reign of righteousness.

4. *Eagle (Wisdom)*

See comments on God's *Wisdom* (Rev. 4:7), page 136.

Appendix 4:
Symbolism of Ezekiel Wheels (Ezekiel 1 and 10)

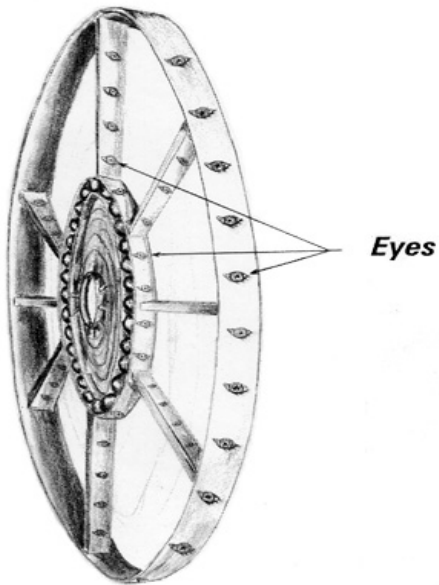
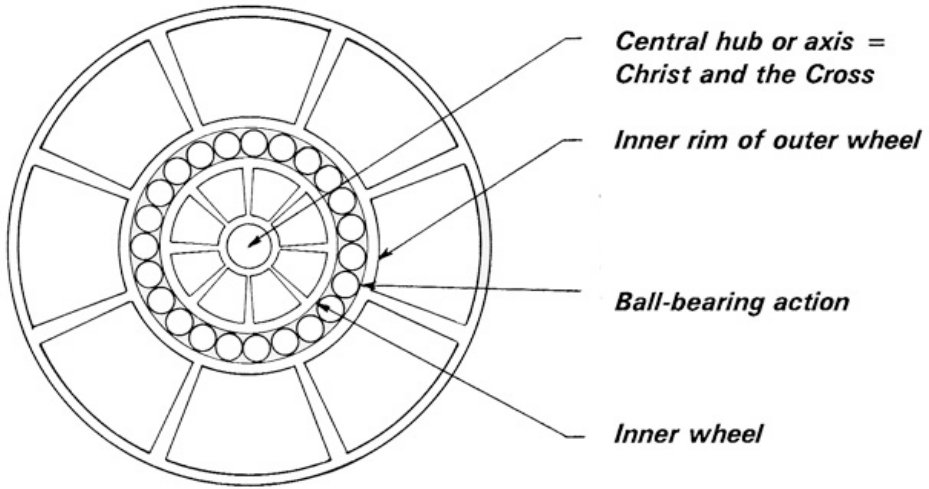
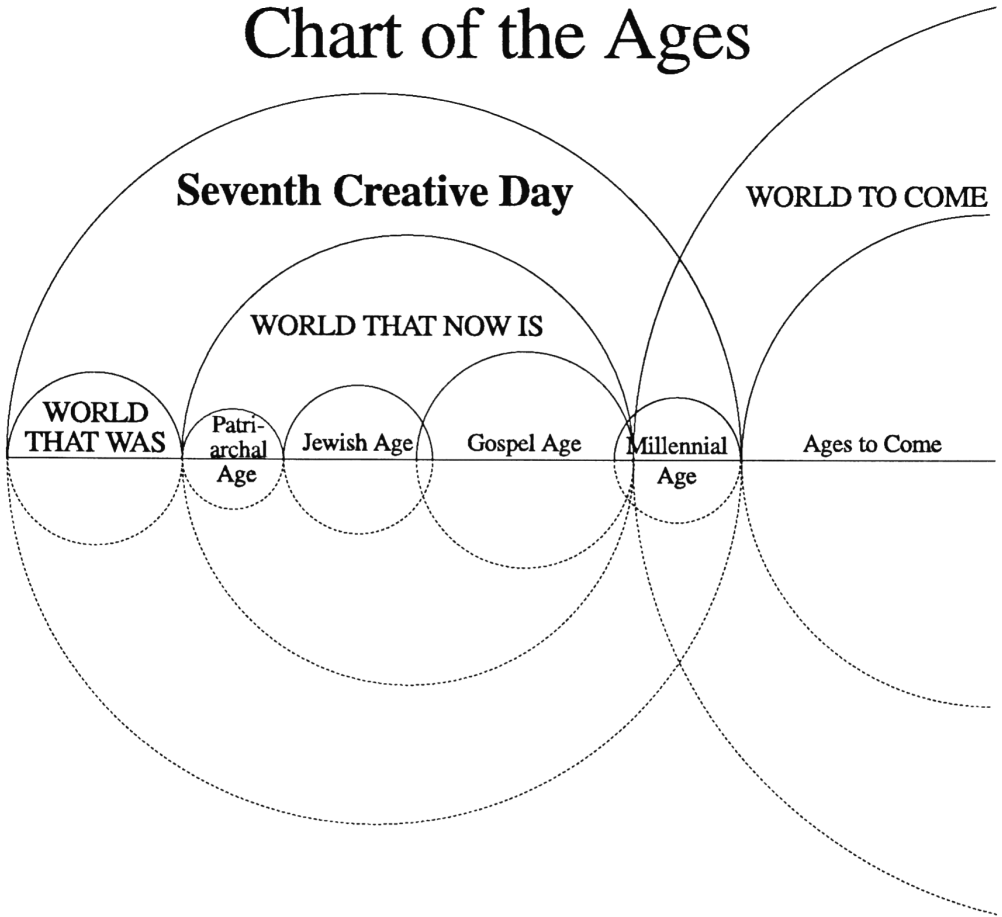
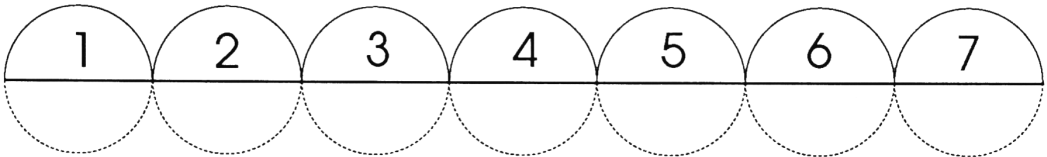


Chart of the Ages



Creative Days



Each cherub wheel consisted of an inner and an outer wheel, each of which could separately and distinctly revolve without interference from the other. The extremely large outer wheel represents God's time clock for action and the fulfillment of the Divine Plan of the Ages. Today the wheel is frequently used as a symbol of industry and progress, and in this instance it signifies the Creator's stately steppings down through history, His movement through great expanses of time, such as the three "worlds," or ages. Indeed, the three large arcs, or semicircles, on the Chart of the Ages, which are used to indicate three great periods, are actually cycles, or circles of time, each having its own complete, purposed fulfillment. Every semicircle, or arc (i.e., part), is representative of a whole circle in the same manner that, in nautical terminology, "three masts" or "three sails" viewed side by side on the distant horizon signify three entire vessels. The same principle applies to yet an even larger scope of operation; namely, the seven great epochal Days of Creation, each of which is of seven thousand years' duration. The awesome height of the wheels, or cycles, indicates that "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are . . . my [God's] thoughts than your [man's] thoughts [imagination]" (Isa. 55:9). The same principle also applies to the lesser, though great, dispensations such as the Patriarchal, Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial ages.

The smaller or inner (whirring—Ezek. 10:13) wheel is the more noticeable or the seemingly more active movement of Divinity, as shown in His *contemporary* dealings either with the nations at large or, more particularly, with the nation of Israel as presently viewed in the light of prophecy. It also represents God's *current* dealings with the body members of Jesus; that is, God's providence on the Church as a whole or His individual providences in their daily lives. While the movement of the hour and the minute hand of a clock is scarcely perceptible, yet on the other hand, the movement, or sweep, of the second hand (the inner, smaller wheel) is far more visibly and audibly discernible.

The *spokes* of the large wheel, as well as those of the smaller wheel, represent both the sequence and the specific value of the more important *events* that relate to the *outworking* of God's purpose within the framework of the particular wheel of His operation for any given period.

Appendix 5: The Ark of the Covenant

True Type

A portable throne of the Lord is mentioned in the Old Testament:

The *chariot* of the cherubims,
that spread out their wings,
and covered the *ark of the covenant* of the LORD.
(1 Chron. 28:18; cf. 2 Sam. 22:11 and Psa. 18:10)

The Ark was the most important religious artifact of the Tabernacle of the congregation of Israel. It was a rectangular chest made of wood overlaid with gold, having a lid of pure gold called the Propitiatory, or Mercy Seat. It rested in the Most Holy compartment of the Tabernacle.

On the two ends of its slab cover of solid gold, and of the same piece of metal, were formed two cherubim with wings uplifted as if ready to fly. Between the cherubim, above the Mercy Seat, a supernatural light shone out (Psa. 80:1), visible only to Moses and Aaron, the high priest of Israel who alone had access to the Most Holy. This light, called the “Shekinah glory,” symbolically represented the invisible God of Israel, Jehovah, seated upon the throne of His glory in the innermost chamber or sanctum of the Tabernacle—the One whom no ordinary mortal can approach unto, whose native form no man hath seen, or can see, as it is in reality.

The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: *he sitteth between the cherubims*; let the earth be moved. (Psa. 99:1—compare in RSV: Psa. 80:1; 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; Isa. 37:16)

And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him [God], then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims. (Num. 7:89)

The Ark of the Testimony was called such because it contained the two tables of the Law given to Moses on Mount Sinai (2 Chron. 5:10). So sacred was the Ark that the penalty of death was inflicted upon any who might dare to touch it with human hands (2 Sam. 6:2–11; 1 Chron. 13:7–14) or presume to look within, upon its contents (1 Sam. 6:19).

Since this most sacred relic accompanied the nation of Israel for forty years in their frequent wilderness wanderings until their entrance into the Land of Promise, it was specially constructed lest it be touched during transport. As originally designed, it was fitted with rings at its four corners through which were passed long staves of gold-covered wood. By means of these staves, the Ark was carried from place to place by Kohathite Levites selected for that service.

False Counterpart

“On the stroke of 10:30 [February 12, the day after the signing of the Lateran Treaty and Concordat of 1929 between the Holy See and Italy, in which the former was recognized as a temporal sovereign] His Holiness, accompanied by his Court, escorted by the Noble Guard, and preceded and followed by two detachments of the Swiss Guard with their cuirasses and halberds, left his private apartment and proceeded to the Chapel of the Sacrament, where the canons of the Chapter of St. Peter’s, headed by the Patriarch of Constantinople, Mgr. Rossi, were awaiting him. Here he donned his white mantle and the Triregno, or triple crown, and then entered the chapel of San Sebastian, where the Sacred College were gathered in a kneeling attitude. Here the Pope ascended the *Sedia Gestatoria* [the portable seat, or throne, corresponding to the Ark of the Covenant borne by staves], which was borne by 24 *sediari*, or carriers [corresponding to the twenty-four elders about the throne of God—see Rev. 4:4,10; 5:6,8], and flanked by two *flabelli*, or fans composed of magnificent [usually peacock] feathers [note the similarity to the cherubim wings of the Ark of the Covenant—see 2 Chron. 5:8], made his entry into the Basilica, announced by a long blast from the silver trumpets [compare 1 Chron. 16:6]. . . .

“The imposing procession passed slowly across the Basilica. . . . Near the Altar the Pope, still seated on the *Sedia Gestatoria*, was surrounded by the officers of the Noble Guard, by mace-bearers in Spanish costumes, and by the Swiss Guards with unsheathed swords. While the choir of the Sistine Chapel intoned the *Tu es Petrus* [‘Thou art Peter’], the Holy Father was carried to the Papal Throne. After all the Cardinals had one by one made a genuflexion [*sic*] before His Holiness, as a sign of obedience, the two Cardinal Deacons, and Cardinal Gasparri and Prince Colonna took their place near to him.

“At the end of the ceremony the procession reformed [*sic*] and the Pope was about to re-enter his apartment when . . . His Holiness proceeded to the outside loggia of the Basilica and showed himself dressed in his white robes, mozetta [*sic*], and Red Hat.

“A moment of solemn silence followed. Then the troops presented arms and the military band played the Pontifical hymn [*Te Deum*—‘Thou O God!’].”¹

Summation

Thus the Ark of God is a fitting symbol of the worship and veneration due Jehovah’s holy name, whereas the pomp and adulation poured upon the Pope, a human, seated in his transportable throne, is the grossest malpractice of the former exalted theme. As 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4 states:

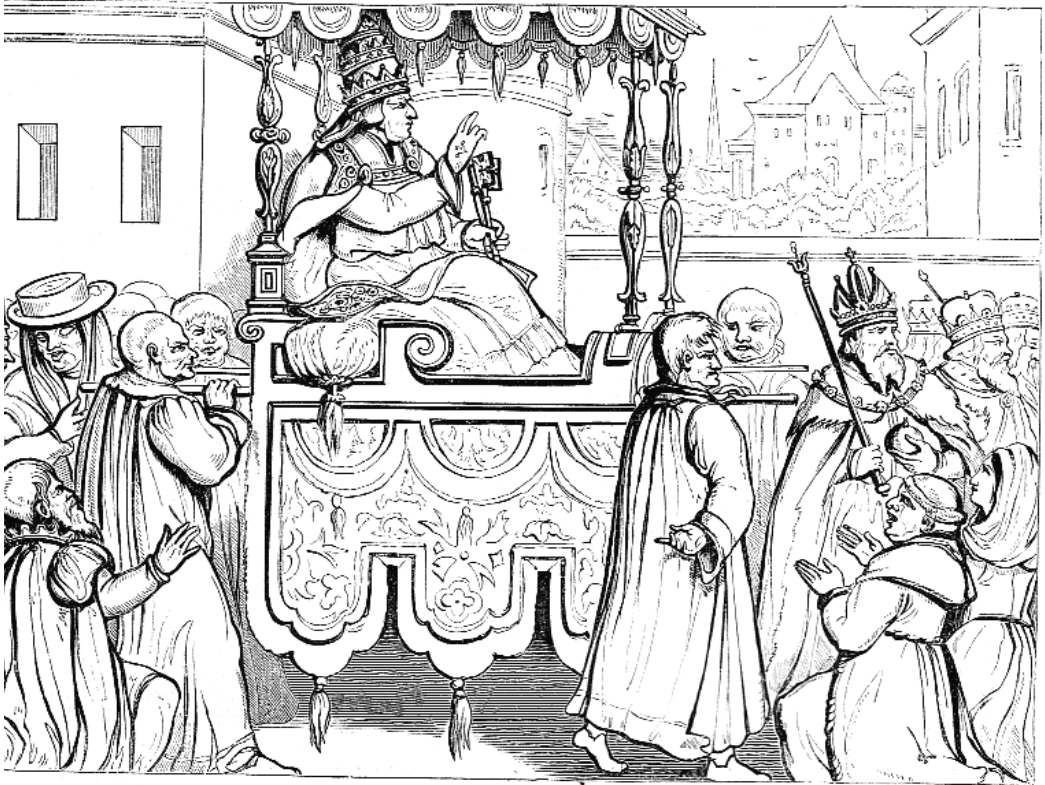
Let no man deceive you . . . and that man of sin be revealed . . .
 who opposeth and exalteth himself . . . so that he as God sitteth in
 the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Even the holy, harmless, sinless Christ’s reply to the rich ruler’s query “Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” was “Why callest thou me god? none is good [in the supreme sense], save one, that is, God” (Luke 18:18,19). When

1. Civis Romanus, *The Pope Is King* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1929), pp. 140–143.

Cornelius the centurion approached and worshipped the Apostle Peter (the supposed founder of the Catholic Church), the latter said, “Stand up; I myself also am a man” (Acts 10:26).

***The Pope Being Carried on Men’s Shoulders
with Emperors and Kings Walking***



Appendix 6: The Twelve Tribes of Israel

A relationship, not yet fully known, subsists between the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve signs of the zodiac. In Scripture there are ten enumerations of the twelve tribes of Israel. With no two lists being the same, the Holy Spirit thus signifies a separate lesson in each case. The chart on the following two pages is presented for consideration as a reference and research aid.



Scriptural Listings of the

Birth Jacob (Gen. 29–35)	Prophetic Jacob (Gen. 49:3-27)	Pedigree of Princes (Num. 1:5-15)	Numbered for War (Num. 1:20-43)	Order of March Camp (Num. 2:3-31)
29:32 Reuben	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben	Judah (EAST)
29:33 Simeon	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon	Issachar First Rank
29:34 Levi	Levi	Judah	Gad	Zebulun
<i>(Tabernacle, Num. 10:14-17)</i>				
29:35 Judah	Judah	Issachar	Judah	Reuben (SOUTH)
30:5,6 Dan	Zebulun	Zebulun	Issachar	Simeon Second Rank
30:7,8 Naphtali	Issachar	Ephraim	Zebulun	Gad
<i>(Tab. Furniture, Num. 10:18-21)</i>				
30:10,11 Gad	Dan	Manasseh	Ephraim	Ephraim (WEST)
30:12,13 Asher	Gad	Benjamin	Manasseh	Manasseh Third Rank
30:17,18 Issachar	Asher	Dan	Benjamin	Benjamin
30:19,20 Zebulun	Naphtali	Asher	Dan	Dan (NORTH)
30:22-24 Joseph	Joseph	Gad	Asher	Asher Hindmost
35:16-18 Benjamin	Benjamin	Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali

Twelve Tribes of Israel

Prophetic Moses (Deut. 33:6-25)	Division of Land (Josh. 13-19)	Kingdom Land (Ezek. 48:1-29)	Kingdom City Gates (Ezek. 48:31-34)	Glory Sealed (Rev. 7:5-8)
Reuben	13:15 Reuben	Dan	Reuben	Judah
Judah	13:24 Gad	Asher	Judah	Reuben
Levi	13:29 ½ Manasseh	Naphtali	Levi	Gad
Benjamin	15:1 Judah	Manasseh	Joseph	Asher
Ephraim	16:5 Ephraim	Ephraim	Benjamin	Naphtali
Manasseh	17:7 ½ Manasseh	Reuben	Dan	Manasseh
Zebulun	18:11 Benjamin			
Issachar	19:1 Simeon	Judah <i>(Holy Oblation)</i>	Simeon	Simeon
Gad	19:10 Zebulun	Benjamin	Issachar	Levi
Dan	19:17 Issachar	Simeon	Zebulun	Issachar
Naphtali	19:24 Asher	Issachar	Gad	Zebulun
Asher	19:32 Naphtali	Zebulun	Asher	Joseph
	19:40 Dan	Gad	Naphtali	Benjamin

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Appendix 7:

Jehovah’s Description of the Horse (Job 39:19–25)

Jehovah condescends to the level of man’s intelligence and gives an animated description of characteristics looked for in the selection of the ideal spirited war-horse.

Verse 19:

Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

The strength of the horse is even discerned in the rippling muscles of its own torso. The animal, when mad and frenzied, is frightening to behold: a dreadful snorting sound issues forth from deep within its throat and powerful neck.

Verse 20:

Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.

Isolated grasshoppers in the meadow—that is, when not in a colony or swarm—are easily agitated and frightened. It is not unusual for the insects to suddenly jump from before the feet of a person walking through an open field, and they doubly betray their presence by the “whirring” sound of their wings in their brief and hasty flight. (The intrepid locusts of Revelation 9:2–10 vastly differ in this respect from their counterpart in nature.) On the other hand, the horse is a fearless creature. It displays anger and fury by an awesome dilation of the nostrils. When a horse rears its head and flares its nostrils, horribly distorting its visage, the spectacle is fearsome to behold.

Verse 21:

He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.

In anticipation of the battle, the war-horse eagerly paws the ground. He innately enjoys the fray and is ready to go forth into conflict at a moment’s notice.

Verse 22:

He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

The armor and weaponry of the opponent are meaningless to the horse. The animal is not intimidated in the least.

Verse 23:

The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

Unless the horse is mortally wounded, even brutal physical contact with the enemy does not dim its ardor for continued warfare.

Verse 24:

He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.

The commander of either an infantry or a cavalry charge will often order his men to issue a battle cry of victory accompanied with an appropriate bugle or trumpet blare. This accomplishes two purposes: (a) it unifies and rallies his own forces, and (b) it disheartens the adversaries. But the battle pony or horse knoweth not the meaning of the sound. Fear may be instilled in man, but to the horse, if anything, the sound is more apt to whet his appetite to shorten the distance to the enemy and thus hasten the engagement.

Verse 25:

He saith among the trumpets, Ha! ha! and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

The animal seems to exhibit extrasensory perception when preparations are being made for imminent battle. It is as if the horse understands the tense conversation and curt commands of the officers, and then indicates its own exhilaration and enthusiasm with snorting and whinnying.

Appendix 8:

A Prophecy Nearing Fulfillment (Isaiah 21:5–12)

In Song of Solomon 2:12 the time of mating is called the “time of the singing.” This book is the love song of Jesus and his future Bride. As the time nears for the marriage, the focal rays of prophecy converge in a climactic fashion, and there comes a quickening need for these predictions to terminate in prophetic events. As the birds begin to flock together, fast and more numerous fulfillments are to be expected. All the evidences picture the near approach of God’s Kingdom and the marriage of the Lamb, which is the Song of Songs.

Isaiah 34:16 states, “Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded.” God’s word is sent like a bird on an errand; it will not return unto Him void but will accomplish that for which it was sent. Not one prophecy will fail because each one will be mated. In this analogy one bird represents prophecy *foretold*, and the other, prophecy *fulfilled*.

The following is a corrected translation of Isaiah 21:5–12.

Verse 5:

Prepare the table, watch in the lookout, eat, drink: Arise ye princes [Psa. 82:6,7], and anoint [that is, grease with the oil of the Holy Spirit] the shield [thus deflecting more readily the darts of the enemy].

The action taken here is somewhat comparable to the preparation made by Gideon and his three hundred men in their conquest of the Midianites (Judges 7). Both of these pictures will have their prophetic fulfillment at the very end of the gospel dispensation.

Verse 6:

For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go set a lookout, let him declare what he seeth.

Verse 7:

When he seeth a rider,¹ [in the forefront, as in Rev. 19:11, and behind him a cavalry of] horsemen in double rank [i.e., paired], a rider on an ass [a symbol of kingship—Zech. 9:9], a rider on a camel [often referred to as a ship in the ocean-desert—cf. Isa. 21:1]; let him hearken diligently, very diligently, AND THEN CRY AS A LION.²

1. The Hebrew should be singular based on context: *rakab*, not *rekeb*.

2. The KJV margin reads, “cried *as* a lion.” “As” or “like” is definitely implied because the watchman saw horsemen, asses, and camels, but he did not see a lion.

Verse 8:

Upon a watchtower I stand, O Lord, continually by day, and at my post I am stationed whole nights.

Verse 9:

Then: Behold, here cometh a rider—a man.³ Horsemen in double rank [also]. So he began and said, Has fallen, has fallen Babylon, and all the graven images of her gods, he [the Lord] hath shattered to the ground.

The camels and the asses (verses 7 and 9) are portrayed as marching side by side in double-file formation, each camel being paired with an ass, and a horseman on each animal. In other words, there was a column of camels down the line on one side, and there was a column of asses or horses down the line on the other side. They approached on the horizon like a train, each pair after the other.

When the watchman, *with prophetic foresight*, saw the animals thus mated together in pairs, he emphatically announced Babylon's utter destruction. The setting of the vision is this: the watchman (the seventh messenger to the Church) "hearkened diligently with much heed" to future events, which he understood long in advance of other Bible students. Even the religious publication of which he was the founding editor was called *Zion's WATCH TOWER*. But what is there in this particular vision to suggest that Babylon indeed had fallen? No booty or trophy of war is described to ostensibly indicate the cavalcade was returning from the scene of Babylon's destruction.

The key is this: a rider on a camel was paired with a rider on an ass. But what is the significance of such an odd mating? Each member of the Very Elect rides both a camel and an ass. The camel, a conveyor of water in the desert, is a symbol of spiritual transport in the wilderness of sin and a reminder of Rebekah, who, picturing a class, rode such an animal to meet her bridegroom Isaac, a representation of Christ (Gen. 24:61–64). On the other hand, the ass is associated with victory and rulership. The judges of Israel rode on white asses (Judg. 5:10). Therefore, each one who faithfully suffers with Christ during this Gospel Age will symbolically ride on the white horse of kingship (Rev. 19:14). Each animal wants its mate. If the individual is faithful in performing the one task, he is assured of the honor of participating in the other. The rider on the camel and the rider on the ass are *one and the same person!* In verse 7 of the prophecy, the rider on the ass is mentioned before the rider on the camel to indicate that which most recently is seen to occur. The camel represents the former fleshly condition, in which the promise of future reward was *foretold*, and the other animal portrays the performance faithfully *fulfilled*. Throughout his ministry the watchman (seventh messenger) consistently taught that the true Church would pass beyond the veil of human experience before

3. The Hebrew *ish* (meaning an individual) represents the "man," or risen Lord. This word is in the text, but for some unknown reason it is invariably excluded by translators. The inclusion of this word confirms the thought of a *single* rider in the forefront of the cavalcade in the first line of verse 7 of the corrected translation.

Babylon's final fall. Therefore, the sight in the vision of the two animals paired throughout the line of march indicates the destruction of Babylon as a past event.

Verse 10:

O thou my threshing, the [bruised] sons of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

The “threshing” and “corn of my floor” refer to the harvesting and winnowing of the wheat class at the end of the age.⁴ The interjection and infusion of sympathy, as expressed in these words, come from Christ, the chief reaper (Matt. 13:30). So far in the harvest period, there has been a remarkable lack of the kind of persecuting experiences that have occurred in past ages—on the whole, there has not been the violence or the special crushing of the Dark Ages. However, this Scripture, as well as others, seems to unmistakably indicate that in the end-time the “heel” members of the Little Flock will be bruised. In other words, the millstone will grind again before it is cast into the sea (Jer. 51:63,64). Some of the Lord's people will find themselves between the upper and nether millstones (Rev. 18:21).

Verse 11:

The burden of Dumah [Edom, a type of Christendom]. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?

Verse 12:

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.

The Psalmist (30:5) has said, “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the [dawning of the] morning.” A chronological entrance has already been made into the early dark morning hours of that day, referred to by the watchman (verse 12). The sunrise of blessing is but a few years hence, but the Bible points out a preceding nighttime of trouble to come upon (a) the true Church (John 9:4), (b) the false Church (Rev. 17:1,16), (c) the Great Company (Rev. 7:14), and (d) the world of mankind (Rev. 3:10) and the nation of Israel (Jer. 30:7) . . . *in that order*.

4. A remnant of true spiritual Israelites are appointed to endure severe discipline and persecution in the near future for His name's sake, even as stalks of grain are laid on the threshing floor to be either trodden down underfoot or beaten with a rod or other instrument to separate the grain from the stalk. In the expression “son of my [threshing] floor,” the word “son,” rendered in the singular form, is to be understood as a collective noun, such as in Deuteronomy 1:31 and Hosea 11:1. This singular and more personalized form of address better communicates to the true Church the concern and the compassion of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Though in the Hebrew the passage Isaiah 21:10 literally signifies, “O my downtrodden [one] and the son of my floor,” it is clearly indicated that the verse should be understood in an *idiomatic sense*. As a single ear of corn contains many kernels, or seeds, comfortably ensconced in orderly array, embedded in the fruit spike and tucked in a protective sheathing or envelope . . . so the passage should be thought of in plural form and in agricultural terms: “O thou my threshing and the grain of my corn-floor.” The Holy Bible translated from the Latin Vulgate and containing Bishop Challoner's notes (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd. [publishers to the Holy See], Westminster, die 30 Julii, 1914) translates this passage: “O my thrashing, and the children of my floor.”

Although the accompanying solemn phrase of the watchman “*and also the night*” (verse 12) indicates a severe testing period for all the classes previously categorized, before the ushering in of the glad day of promise, yet the special implication of that solemn phrase relates to the “threshing” (verse 10) to come upon the “princes” (verse 5), who are appointed to a final and fatal witness in the last days.

Summation

The reason for the close scrutiny of this Isaiah prophecy is because of its close relationship to the tenth chapter of Revelation. The mighty angel who came down from heaven and placed one foot on the sea and the other foot on land also *roared as a lion*. Of course, the watchman in the tower in Isaiah 21 was, or is, not the same personage as the mighty angel of Revelation 10; the latter was Jesus, the head of the Church, and the former was merely the seventh messenger to Laodicea. The lion cry of the Isaiah prophecy occurs during the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet. It is the *echo fulfillment* of the earlier roar of the Lord portrayed under the Sixth Trumpet. However, the setting of the watchman prophecy furnishes the Bible student with a slight but valuable clue as to what provoked the outcry of Revelation 10 in the first place: (1) not only the Lord’s indignation toward the nominal Church for its maltreatment of his people in past ages, but also his foresight and awareness of the indignity it would inflict upon the final feet members; and (2) the Lord’s declaration of wrath and final judgment to come upon the false system.

Appendix 9: Second-Century Old Latin (*Vetus Latina*) Version

Latin, now called a “dead” language, originated in Latium, a central province of Italy. It was the commonly employed legal language of Rome and was known by *its citizenry* throughout the empire.

“Very little is known about the origin of the Latin versions [of the Scriptures] save that they were translated from the Septuagint. Latin was the vernacular of the church in North Africa westward from Cyrenica, and apparently a number of Latin translations of various parts of the Old Testament were produced in the second century for the use of Christian communities in this area. Only fragments of these remain.”¹

“The earliest versions of the New Testament were the Old Latin and the Old Syriac. These belong to the second century. . . . The most important ancient version of the New Testament is, of course, the Vulgate (i.e., the Vernacular or Common Version). The Vulgate rendering of the New Testament was in the main a revision of the Old Latin (called also the Itala); and since this earlier version was not very carefully done, the Vulgate has inherited from it a good many faults.”²

“The most interesting of all the versions is the Old Latin, known to have been made long before St. Jerome’s Vulgate which superseded it, and believed to date from as early as about A.D. 150. It seems likely that it originated in Africa. . . .”³

“We have no means of tracing the history of the Version before the time of Tertullian [the first Latin writer of the early church fathers]; but its previous existence is attested by other contemporary evidence. . . . That this source was no other than a recension of the *Vetus Latina* appears from the coincidence of readings which it exhibits with the most trustworthy Manuscripts of the Version.”⁴ “The writings of Tertullian [A.D. 150–220] offer the true starting-point in the history of the Old Latin Text.”⁵ “The Canon of the Old Latin Version coincided I believe exactly with that of the Muratorian fragment.”⁶

“We possess in the *Latin Fragment* [emphasis added], first published by Muratori in 1740, something like a full list of the New Testament Scriptures from a writer who describes himself as contemporary with Pius Bishop of Rome, c. A.D. 150.”⁷

1. *The Interpreter’s Bible* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), Vol. 1, p. 60.

2. John Robert Van Pelt, *An Introduction to the Study of the Bible* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1923), pp. 228–229.

3. Geddes MacGregor, *The Bible in the Making* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1959), p. 86.

4. Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1875), p. 253.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 254.

7. *Helps to the Study of the Bible* (London: Oxford University Press, n.d.), p. 81.

“The first mention of the existence of a Latin version occurs in Tertullian. . . .”⁸

“Tertullian was born of pagan parentage, at Carthage, about A.D. 160. . . . The ante-Hieronymian version in Latin, which seems to have been made in North Africa . . . about the time of Tertullian’s birth, . . . was continually referred to by that Father. . . .”⁹

8. James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909), p. 921.

9. Edwin Cone Bissell, *The Historic Origin of the Bible* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 1873), pp. 154–155.

Appendix 10: Third-Century Roman (*Vetus Itala*) Version

“Obscure though the beginnings of the Latin Church translation may be, it is clear the need for it arose in the provinces, specifically in North Africa, *rather than in Rome where Greek was the language of the Church* [emphasis added] in its early days.”¹

“Meanwhile however, though Greek continued to be the natural, if not the sole language of the Roman Church, the seeds of Latin Christianity were rapidly developing [elsewhere] in Africa. . . . Carthage, the second Rome, escaped the *Graecism of the first* [emphasis added]. In Africa Greek was no longer a current dialect.”²

“At first it seems natural to look to Italy as the centre of the Latin literature of Christianity, and the original source of that Latin Version of the Holy Scriptures which in a later form has become identified with the Church of Rome. Yet however plausible such a belief may be, it finds no support in history. Rome itself under the emperors was well described as a ‘Greek city;’ and Greek was its second language. As far as we can learn, the mass of the poorer population—to which the great bulk of the early Christians everywhere belonged—was Greek either in descent or in speech. Among the names of the fifteen bishops of Rome up to the close of the second century, four only are Latin; though *in the next century* [emphasis added] the proportion is nearly reversed.”³

“It was, perhaps, at Carthage in the 2d. cent. A.D. that the Septuagint Version was first translated into Latin, the Old Latin Bible (*Vetus Itala*) frequently and accurately quoted by [Tertullian’s successor] Cyprian (middle of the 3d. cent.).”⁴

“The Vulgate, we have implied, was preceded by an earlier Latin Bible. . . . Throughout the 4th century, this Old Latin Version, as it is called, was read in all the churches of northern Africa and western Europe, but the tradition of its origin seems to have perished. It is known that it was based, not on the original Hebrew, but upon the Greek of the Septuagint. This is its most notable difference from the Vulgate. It can be traced back *with certainty to the middle of the 3d century* [emphasis added] and, with great probability, even a century earlier. Its place of origin is unknown. . . . It was the corrupt condition of the existing Latin text that caused Saint Jerome to undertake, first, a revision [A.D. 383] and then a translation of the Bible.”⁵

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1. Max L. Margolis, *The Story of Bible Translations* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1917), p. 45.
 2. Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1875), pp. 246–247.
 3. *Ibid.*, pp. 244–245.
 4. Funk and Wagnalls, *New “Standard” Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1936), s.v. “Other Versions of the OT.”
 5. *The Encyclopedia Americana*, 1956 ed., s.v. “Vulgate. Latin Bible Before St. Jerome.”

“From the writings of Tertullian and Cyprian it is evident that during the 2nd and 3rd centuries there arose Latin translations of the Bible, one in North African usage, and *another in Italian usage* [emphasis added]. . . .”⁶

All the foregoing excerpts show that the Church of Rome was essentially Greek during the first two centuries, that is, before Latin superseded Greek as the official language of its liturgy in the third century.

6. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1971 ed., s.v. “Bible: Translations, Greek and Latin, Vulgate.”

Appendix 11: The 3½-Day/Year Slaughter of Revelation 11:9

“Driven from his home by persecution, he [Tyndale] went to London, and there for a time pursued his labors undisturbed. But again the violence of the *papists* [emphasis added] forced him to flee. All England seemed closed against him, and he resolved to seek shelter in Germany. Here he began the printing of the English New Testament. Twice the work was stopped; but when forbidden to print in one city, he went to another. At last he made his way to Worms . . . and Tyndale there prosecuted his work without further hindrance. Three thousand copies of the New Testament were soon finished, and another edition followed the same year.”¹ The octavo printed in Worms in 1525 was being read in England as early as January and February 1526.

“Britain had hardly received the Scriptures in Greek and Latin, and then in English, before the priests began to make war upon them with indefatigable zeal.”²

“. . . the New Testament in English had entered the kingdom by surprise. . . . The cardinal [Wolsey] hastened to assemble the bishops, and these . . . took the matter seriously, when they were shewn [*sic*] that the New Testament was circulating throughout England. These priests believed with Wolsey, that the authority of the pope and of the clergy was a dogma to which all others were subordinate. They saw in the reform an uprising of the human mind, a desire of thinking for themselves, of judging freely the doctrines and institutions which the nations had hitherto received humbly from the hands of the priests. . . . It was the New Testament that compromised the absolute power of Rome. It must be seized and destroyed, said the bishops. London, Oxford, and above all, Cambridge, those three haunts of heresy, must be carefully searched. Definitive orders were issued on Saturday, 3rd February, 1526, and the work began immediately.”³

On February 11, 1526, at St. Paul’s churchyard in London, the *first* of a series of burnings occurred in which *books* deemed heretical were committed to the flames. The books had been secured in the infamous “secret search” made by the clergy on the premises of the Oxford and Cambridge universities and elsewhere in the city of London. Among these books, some copies of Tyndale’s New Testament were no doubt for the first time cast into the fire; others were also burned at Oxford the same week.

“So mighty and so important was the occasion [of the February 11 burning], that, according to Foxe: ‘The Cardinal [Wolsey] had a scaffold made on the top of

1. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1888), p. 247.

2. J. H. Merle D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1872), p. 662.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 646.

the stairs for himself, with six and thirty Abbots, mitred Priors, and Bishops, and he, in his whole pomp . . . sat there enthroned! His Chaplains and Spiritual Doctors, in gowns of damask and satin, and he himself in purple! And there was a new pulpit erected on the top of the stairs, for *Fisher*, the Bishop of Rochester, to preach against Luther and Dr. Barnes; and great baskets *full of books* . . . were commanded, after the great fire was made before the Rood of Northern, (or large crucifix at the north gate of St. Paul's), there to be burned; and these heretics after the sermon, to go three times round the fire, and cast in their faggots."⁴

The point to be observed is that while this action was taken by the supreme and express authority of the cardinal, yet it served more as an expression of the Church's sore displeasure in the publication of such unauthorized literature. The hope was that the abject humiliation of Dr. Barnes and five others would serve as a sufficient warning to the populace. It was a clearly implied, though not formal, prohibition against the publishing and reading of such material. However, no specific penalties for disobedience were included at this time.

Five weeks after the famous burning at St. Paul's, that is, March 20, 1526, King Henry VIII received a copy of an open letter by Luther, to which His Majesty replied, through the advice of Cardinal Wolsey, in a preface addressed to his "dearly beloved people": "And, with many flattering words, he [Luther] laboureth to have us content that he might be bold to write to us, in the matter and cause of the gospel: and thereupon, *without* answer had from us, not only published the same letter and put it *in print*, of purpose that his adherents should be the bolder under the shadow of our authority; but also fell in device with one or two lewd [i.e., unlearned, ignorant] persons [obviously Tyndale and probably the earlier reformer Wycliffe], born in this our realm, for the translating of the *New Testament into English*; as well with many corruptions of that holy text, as certain *prefaces* and other pestilent *glosses in the margins*, for the advancement and setting forth of his abominable heresies, intending to abuse the good minds and devotion, that you, our dearly beloved people, bear toward the holy Scripture, and infect you with the deadly corruption and contagious odour of his pestilent errors. In the avoiding whereof, We, of our special tender zeal towards you, have, with the deliberate advice of the most reverend father in God, Thomas [Wolsey] Lord Cardinal, Legate *a latere* of the See Apostolic [tacit recognition of papal authority], Archbishop of York, Primate and our Chancellor of this realm, and other reverend fathers of the spirituality, determined the said and untrue *translations to be burned*, with further sharp correction and punishment against the keepers and readers of the same, reckoning of your wisdom very sure that ye will well and thankfully perceive our tender and loving mind toward you *therein*, and that ye will never be so greedy of any sweet wine, be the grape never so pleasant, that ye will desire to taste it, being well advertised that your enemy before hath poisoned it."⁵

New Testaments, along with other books, were previously burned on February 11. But this advice given by Wolsey and cordially sanctioned by the king, singling

4. Christopher Anderson, *The Annals of the English Bible* (London: William Pickering, 1845), Vol. 1, p. 106.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 112–113.

out Tyndale's quarto edition of the New Testament with its marginal glosses *for burning*, prepared the way for the more formal injunctions of Tunstal and Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, toward the end of the year. Accordingly, on October 24, 1526, Cuthbert Tunstal, bishop of London, issued the first formal instrument of prohibition against the translation of the New Testament in the English tongue. This prohibition included *both* earlier editions of Tyndale's Testament, which had already been dispersed in great number but were now, at last, denounced and were to be turned in under penalty of excommunication for failure to do so.

After the usual introduction, Bishop Tunstal addressed his archdeacons thus:

"By the duty of our pastoral office, we are bound diligently, with all our power, to foresee, provide for, root out, and put away, all those things, which seem to tend to the *peril* and *danger* of our subjects, and specially the *destruction* of their souls! Wherefore, we having understanding, by the report of divers credible persons, and also by the evident appearance of the matter, that many children of iniquity, maintainers of Luther's sect, blinded through extreme wickedness, wandering from the way of truth and the Catholic faith, craftily have *translated the New Testament into our English tongue*, intermingling therewith many heretical articles, and erroneous opinions, pernicious and offensive, seducing the simple people, attempting, by their wicked and perverse interpretations, to profanate the majesty of the Scripture, which hitherto hath remained undefiled, and craftily to abuse the most Holy Word of God, and the true sense of the same; of the which translation there are *many* books imprinted, some *with* glosses [the quarto], and some *without* [the octavo]; containing in the English tongue, that *pestiferous and most pernicious poison*, dispersed throughout all our diocese, in great number: which truly, without it be speedily foreseen, without doubt will contaminate and infect the flock committed unto us, with most deadly poison and heresy, to the grievous peril and danger of the souls committed to our charge, and the offence of God's Divine Majesty: Wherefore we, Cuthbert, the Bishop aforesaid, grievously sorrowing for the premises, willing to withstand the craft and subtlety of the ancient enemy and his ministers, which seek the destruction of my flock, and with a diligent care to take heed unto the flock committed to my charge, desiring to find speedy remedies for the premises, Do charge you, jointly and severally, (the Archdeacons,) and by virtue of your obedience, straightly enjoin and command you, that, by our authority, you warn, or cause to be warned, all and singular, as well exempt as not exempt, dwelling within your archdeaconries, that within thirty days' space, whereof ten days shall be for the first, ten for the second, and ten for the third peremptory term, under pain of excommunication, and incurring the suspicion of heresy, they do bring in, and really deliver unto our Vicar-General, (Geoffrey Wharton,) all and singular such books, as contain the translation of the *New Testament in the English tongue*; and that you do certify us, or our said Commissary, within *two months* after the day of the date of these presents, duly, personally, or by your letters, together with these presents under your seals, what you have done in the premises, under pain of contempt! Given under our seal, the four and twentieth day of October, A.D. 1526, in the fifth year of our consecration."⁶ (Note: The date October 24, 1526, is from the *Register* itself, xxiiij.)

6. Ibid., pp. 118–119.

“Tunstal’s orders being thus issued on Wednesday the 24th of October, a copy was sent to the Archdeacons of Middlesex, Essex and Colchester; and eleven days afterwards, or the 3d of November, a ‘Mandate,’ in nearly the same terms, was given out by Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, to search his entire province. Both instruments refer simply to the New Testament of Tyndale, of both editions, and in wide circulation; *no other book* being referred to, or prohibited at the same moment.”⁷

It should be noted that a month’s advance notice was given, starting from the day the decree was issued, October 24, and extending to the significant deadline of *November 23, 1526*, beyond which time the possessors of said testaments who failed to comply would become answerable to the most serious charges. The bishop stressed the urgency of a quick compliance with the terms of the edict by the public at large, whether great or small, by dividing the allotted thirty-day period into three equal ten-day parts. He thereby likened the time period to a countdown in which the fatal stroke of three would mark the point of no return from liability to excommunication and consequent trial for heresy. The two-month expiration date applied to the archdeacons and to their preparation of a progress report on the mission’s success and their transferal of the appropriated testaments to the custody of the vicar-general or the bishop himself.

“By the end of this year [1526], therefore, many copies of the New Testament must have been consumed in the flames, for it has been altogether a mistake to confine this to one or two great occasions. On the contrary, in the very first month of next year [1527] we shall . . . hear the ambassador of Henry, in the Low countries, bringing it forward as an argument for burning others *there*, that *this had been doing in England daily!*”⁸

“Not withstanding the solemn and pointed injunctions of the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury, issued in the close of 1526, calling in *both* editions, both Bishops had found that the possessors of the Sacred Volume were by no means disposed to surrender it, merely for being threatened. . . .”⁹

As great as the demand was for Holy Writ by the laity, that they might read it; so equally great was the demand of the ecclesiastical authorities, that they might destroy it. Therefore, the religious leadership devised the idea of *purchasing* and burning in order to prevent circulation. Bishops bought up whole editions of the Scriptures only to consign them to the flames.

“At that time [about April 1527] the bishops subscribed to suppress the Scriptures, . . . and, accordingly, a great number of copies brought over by Bayfield and his friends were bought up.”¹⁰

“At first, the more copies that were bought just to be burned, the more money Tyndale got to carry on the good work. All the Bibles were ‘cornered’ and bought, and then collected and committed to the flames. . . . All the copies of Tyndale’s

7. Ibid., p. 119.

8. Ibid., p. 122.

9. Ibid., p. 157.

10. D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 661.

version of the Bible that could be collected, were burned all over Europe. . . . But out of the ashes of the Book there arose again fresh copies for distribution.”¹¹

“As *soon* . . . as [Sir Thomas] More came into favour, he pressed the King much, to put the laws against heretics in execution, and suggested that the Court of Rome would be more wrought upon by the King’s supporting the Church, and defending the faith vigorously, than by threatenings. . . .”¹² “Consequently, on the 24th of May, 1530, More, Warham, Tonstall [*sic*], and Gardiner, having been admitted into St. Edward’s chamber at Westminster, to make a report to the king concerning heresy, they proposed forbidding, in the most positive manner, the New Testament and certain other books in which the following doctrines were taught: ‘That Christ has shed His blood for our iniquities, as a sacrifice to the Father.—Faith only doth justify us.—Faith without good works is no little or weak faith, it is no faith.—Labouring in good works to come to heaven, thou dost shame Christ’s blood.’”¹³ “. . . *therefore*, a long proclamation was issued out against the heretics, many of their *books* were prohibited, and all the laws against them were appointed to be put in execution, and great care was taken to seize them as they came into England.”¹⁴ “Tonstall [*sic*], who still kept under lock and key the Testaments purchased at Antwerp through Packington’s assistance, had them carried to St. Paul’s Churchyard, where they were publicly burnt.”¹⁵ “Accordingly, says Halle, ‘this year in *May* [1530], the Bishop of London’ (formerly, now of Durham) ‘caused all his New Testaments which he had bought, with many other books, to be brought into Paul’s Church Yard, in London, and there were openly burned.’”¹⁶

“Here, then, we have the first *Royal* proclamation interdicting printed books. . . . The only formal public instruments hitherto issued, were the injunctions of Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Tunstal, Bishop of London, in the close of 1526; and up to December 1529, this persecution had been an affair of the ‘Spirituality’ alone. The King, it is true, had approved of what they did in 1526, and, before then, was himself writing to the Netherlands, and eager about the burning of books. But his name, *as* Sovereign, had never, till this period, been employed to strike terror into the hearts of his *own* subjects, to make *heresy* and *treason* convertible terms, and lay the entire civil power at the feet of the Bishops.”¹⁷

“To return, however, to these Bishops as a body; having in May secured their object, in so far as a *Royal* proclamation could go, it seems to have been with a view to greater effect, that a second grand and more public *book-fire* was then determined. The first had been the result of Wolsey’s ‘secret search’ in 1526; the present was the consequence of the negotiation [*sic*] at Antwerp last year [1529]. Warham’s purchase in 1527, was disposed of, or consumed, without show; but Tunstal had reserved his books till now. Tyndale by name, and his translation, had

11. John Macmillan, *The Crucified and Risen Bible* (London: Marshall Brothers Ltd., n.d.), p. 85.

12. Anderson, *The Annals of the English Bible*, p. 233.

13. D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 718.

14. Anderson, *The Annals of the English Bible*, p. 233.

15. D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 718.

16. Anderson, *The Annals of the English Bible*, pp. 262–263.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

both been branded by royal authority, and the Bishop, no doubt, thought it a fortunate moment for fulfilling his purpose.”¹⁸

“There was, however, a great difference between the effects of this [May 24, 1530] burning, and that in the year 1526. Then the people, generally, were not aware of the value of what they saw consumed; but it was far otherwise *now*, and this alone is a proof that the cause of Divine Truth, which the Bishops would fain have crushed, was making decided progress. This burning *‘had such an hateful appearance in it, being generally called a burning of the Word of God, that people from thence concluded, there must be a visible contrariety between that book, and the doctrines of those who handled it; by which both their prejudice against the clergy, and their desire of reading the New Testament WAS INCREASED’* [special emphasis added].

“In corroboration of this statement, it is certain that neither the [recent] purchase at Antwerp, nor the [present] burning at Paul’s Cross, had any effect [thenceforth] on the importations into this country, except the reverse of what was intended and desired by the enemy. . . . ‘Afterwards,’ says Halle, ‘when more New Testaments were imprinted, they came *thick and threefold* into England. . . .’ And so . . . ended the device of purchasing books in order to burn them; . . . and [while] the Bishops, with the King at their head, were imagining a vain thing, the printing press was as busy as ever.”¹⁹

“It was, in fact, evident that the appetite for an English Bible, once fairly excited, could not be wholly balked. In 1530 an assembly convoked by the Archbishop Warham, while maintaining the previous condemnations of Tindale [*sic*], and asserting that it was not expedient at that time to divulge the Scripture in the English tongue, announced that the King would have the NT faithfully translated by learned men, and published as soon as he might see their manners and behaviour meet, apt, and convenient to receive the same.”²⁰

These two happenings of the same year (1530)—(a) the May 24 burning and (b) the announcement of an *authorized* version *shortly* to come forth, whether properly or improperly understood—instead of causing the populace to exercise patience and abstain from the Word, awaiting official approval at some future date, produced exactly the opposite results intended. The people’s hunger for Scripture now knew no bounds. No amount of forthcoming bodily persecution of its adherents could henceforth diminish their ardor or decrease in the slightest the popularity and publication of the Word.

“After a time, of course, the early opposition to the giving of the Bible to the people was removed, for in the years 1531–1534 Henry VIII effected a complete breach with Rome.”²¹

“Bibles, said Sir Thomas More in 1532, continued to be imported ‘thick and threefold,’ ‘by the whole vats full at once.’ The conclusion was soon reached,

18. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 263–264.

20. James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909), p. 223.

21. John Robert Van Pelt, *An Introduction to the Study of the Bible* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1923), p. 261.

therefore, that to burn Bibles and subject such as held them to all sorts of indignities and annoyances was insufficient. They must also proceed to burn the *possessors* [emphasis added] of Bibles.”²²

In summation, the foregoing reference material points out that the 3½-day/year crucifixion of the Bible (Rev. 11:9) dates from November 23, 1526, to May 24, 1530, as follows:

Nov. 23, 1526 =		7 days to end of month
Dec. 1526 =		31 days
Jan.–Dec. 1527 =	1 year	
Jan.–Dec. 1528 =	1 year	
Jan.–Dec. 1529 =	1 year	
Jan. 1530 =		31 days
Feb. 1530 =		28 days
Mar. 1530 =		31 days
Apr. 1530 =		30 days
May 24, 1530 =		24 days to burning
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Total:	3 years + 182 days =	3½ years

22. Edwin Cone Bissell, *The Historic Origin of the Bible* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 1873), p. 33.

Appendix 12:

Prophetic Utterances of the Twenty-four Elders

To facilitate a comparison, the following Scriptures are cited in the order that the twenty-four books (elders) are listed on page 195.

1. The seed of woman will crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15).
"I will make of thee a great nation" (Gen. 12:1-3,7).
"A father of many nations have I made thee" (Gen. 17:3-8).
The antitypical Joseph is set over all the land of "Egypt" (Gen. 41:41-44).
The people are gathered unto Shiloh (Gen. 49:10).
2. Israel will yet see, on a grander scale than previously, "that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians" (Exod. 14:27-31).
"The glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Exod. 40:34).
3. The Jubilee year is proclaimed throughout all the land (earth) (Lev. 25:8-13).
4. The shout of a king (Jesus) is heard in Israel's midst (Num. 23:21-24).
Israel "shall eat up the nations," its "enemies" (Num. 24:5-9).
A Star (Jesus) is to come out of Jacob, a scepter out of Israel (Num. 24:17-19).
5. A prophet like unto Moses is to be raised up (Deut. 18:15,19).
6. The siege and fall of Jericho (Christendom) are to occur (Josh. 6:1-21).
7. A victory follows the work of Gideon (Christ) and the three hundred (Judges 7).
Samson pulls down the Dagon temple pillars (Judg. 16:23-30).
8. A victory follows the slaying of Goliath (1 Samuel 17).
9. Every man will dwell safely under his own vine and fig tree in Solomon's (Jesus') reign (1 Kings 4:20-25).
10. All nations flow unto the mountain of the Lord's house (Isa. 2:2-4).
The government will be upon Jesus' shoulder (Isa. 9:6,7; 11:1-10; 32:1-4; 35).
11. The righteous Branch (Jesus) will rule (Jer. 23:5-8).
The promise and New Covenant will go into effect (Jer. 31:31).
12. When the sanctuary is in Israel's midst, the heathen shall know God (Ezek. 37:27,28).
God is to be known in the eyes of all nations (Ezekiel 38; 39).

13. Judah is to be saved by the Lord (Hos. 1:7).
 God will make a safety covenant with Israel and “break . . . the battle out of the earth” (Hos. 2:18).
 Joel 2; 3
 Amos 9:11–15
 Obad. 17,21
 Jonah 1:4–16 (Luke 11:29–32)
 Micah 4; 7:16–20
 Nah. 1:15
 Hab. 2:14,20
 Zeph. 3:8–20
 Hag. 2:6–9,21–23
 Zech. 2:10–13; 3:8–10; 6:12–15;
 8:3–8,20–23; 12; 14
 Mal. 1:11; 3:4,5; 4:1–3
14. Christ’s victorious Kingdom is to be established (Psalm 2).
 “Be still, and know that I am God: . . . I will be exalted in the earth” (Psa. 46:10).
 “Thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth” (Psa. 67:4).
 Solomon’s reign is a type of Christ’s (Psalm 72, etc.).
15. “The upright shall dwell in the land, . . . but the wicked shall be cut off” (Prov. 2:21,22).
 “The candle of the wicked shall be put out”; fear Jehovah and King Jesus (Prov. 24:20,21).
 King Lemuel prophetically describes the Church as a good wife (Prov. 31:1,10–31).
16. Job will be called forth from death (Job 14:13–15).
 The Redeemer is to stand upon the earth “at the latter day” (Job 19:25).
 The latter end of Job (the Church) will be more blessed than the beginning (Job 42:12).
17. Daughters of Zion (the Church) behold King Solomon (Jesus) with the crown (Song of Sol. 3:11).
18. Boaz (Christ) marries Ruth the Moabitess (the Gentile Church) (Ruth 4:13).
19. “Great is thy faithfulness”—Israel was not cast off forever (Lam. 3:22–31).
20. “God shall judge the righteous and the wicked” (Eccles. 3:17; 8:12,13).
 “God shall bring every work into judgment” (Eccles. 12:14).
21. Esther (the Church) wins the beauty contest and marries King Ahasuerus (Christ) (Esther 2:17).
 Feast of Purim commemorates Jews’ victory over Haman (a prototype of Hamon-gog in Ezekiel 39:11) (Esther 9:24–28).
22. The God of heaven will set up a Kingdom (Dan. 2:44).
 The saints of the most High are to possess the Kingdom (Dan. 7:18,22,27).

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23. Ezra (type of Christ as Priest) obtains from King Artaxerxes (type of Jehovah) a decree to rebuild the Temple (Ezra 7:11–28).
Nehemiah (type of Christ as King) obtains from Artaxerxes (type of Jehovah) a decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:5,6).
24. David (type of The Christ in the flesh) is to be succeeded by Solomon (type of The Christ in glory). Solomon is anointed a second time (after the death of David) and sits as governor on the throne (1 Kings 2:10–12; 1 Chron. 29:22).

Appendix 13: Satan, the Serpent, and the Woman

What beginning is referred to in John 8:44, which states that Satan was a liar from the beginning? Satan was perfect from the time he was created until the day iniquity was found in him (Ezek. 28:15). His defection commenced here on earth, in the physical Garden of Eden, and is associated with the dawn, or “beginning,” of *human* civilization.

The failure of Lucifer to exercise continued and steadfast trust in the inherent goodness of God, as well as his failure to maintain a proper respect for the dignity of the office of the Supreme Deity, paved the way for his downfall. These failures, together with the development and the harboring of personal pride and ambition in his thoughts, were the soil or culture of his heart, in which the seeds of sin germinated and lodged.

Piecing together the clues in the Genesis narrative reveals that the Adversary felt confident in his distorted assessment of what appeared to be the true nature of God’s motives and dealings with the first human pair. Until events proved otherwise, Satan felt justified in his appraisal of the situation, and he was oblivious to the rebellion in his own heart and to the abhorrence of his own defection.

The record is clear that Satan desired to be Adam’s Lord and God. It did not take much imagination on Lucifer’s part to see that the creation of physical beings on this planet was but the prelude to a vast program of populating all the other physical universes with creatures similar in nature to Adam.

Nor did the Adversary, up to this point in time, possess a sense of dread of impending judgment for his actions. None of God’s intelligent creation had heretofore died in the spirit realm. It would, therefore, be easy to assume falsely that death to those created in God’s image was an impossibility. Until this time no occasion had arisen to invoke divine indignation, for God’s will was, is now, and ever will be done in heaven. The exception is the earth; it is here that God did not prohibit or interfere with the introduction of sin—which He foresaw—to stain, to pollute, and to temporarily mar His *physical work*. The divine intention is that all should see, as an object lesson, the exceeding sinfulness of sin and be alerted to the danger of the allurements of evil, so that those who are rightly exercised will profit thereby.

Satan’s strategy in Eden was to beguile Eve in order to get through to Adam. The Adversary used the serpent as his medium by taking possession of that creature¹ so that he could better incite or provoke the woman to transgress the Lord’s commandment and thus prove his estimate that God was a liar.

First, the serpent (or Satan) put God’s commandment to Adam in a very unfavorable light by introducing an improper emphasis into the original declaration. God had put the emphasis upon the generosity of His terms:

1. On another occasion the Lord took possession of Balaam’s ass, speaking to that prophet through the mouth of the animal upon which he rode, in an attempt to thwart his madness. This incident was intended for Balaam’s own good, that he might profit withal (Num. 22:21–35).

Of *every tree* of the garden thou mayest *freely* eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil [merely], thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof [dying] thou shalt surely die. (Gen. 2:16,17)

Satan's slant was a negative approach:

Yea, hath God said, Ye shall *not* eat of every tree of the garden? (Gen. 3:1)

The Devil thus planted a seed of doubt, impugning God's motives by injecting suspicion into Eve's mind in the form of a question to engender distrust. Note the reply of Eve:

We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden [she omits "every tree"]: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, *neither shall ye touch it*, lest ye die. (Gen. 3:2,3)

It can be seen that both Eve and Satan misunderstood the situation. The prohibition of the tree of knowledge was simply a *test of obedience* on man's part. If, on the one hand, the penalty of death for disobedience was severe, the test, when seen in its proper light under normal circumstances, was, on the other hand, a very simple and reasonable one to obey. God did not say, "If ye touch it, ye shall die"; but He said, "If ye eat of it, ye shall die."

The woman thought God had inferred that this particular species of tree was *exceedingly poisonous* and that mere contact with it would be lethal. Anyone possessing a suspicious nature will sometimes misunderstand the most explicit of statements. This trait also applies to the Adversary, in spite of all the intelligence he may possess. A careful reading of Genesis 2:9 plainly indicates that every tree of the garden, including the tree of knowledge, was good for food—the tree of knowledge was simply prohibited. At first, both the Devil and the woman thought God had implied that the tree was poisonous; and since they both saw the serpent partake of it, they concluded that the Creator had deliberately misrepresented the matter. It is written that God had made the serpent "more subtil" (Gen. 3:1); therefore, the cunning this creature possessed did not result from partaking of the forbidden fruit as a "brain food" but was a part of its very implanted nature.

The Adversary's reply to the woman revealed Satan's own mistrust of Deity. Note the boldness and effrontery of Lucifer's flat contradiction of the Creator's original declaration of the death penalty. The Devil declared, "Ye shall *not* surely die" (Gen. 3:4). The inclusion of the word "surely" is tinged with sarcasm and even contempt.

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then *your eyes shall be opened*, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (Gen. 3:5)

It is true that the Lord Himself designated this particular species of tree "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," but the Lord did not mean, as the Adversary thought, that eating its fruit would enable man to possess the intelligence of angels

in acquiring a superhuman ability to discern that which is wise and that which is unwise, or to foresee in greater measure the results of certain actions or events for good or evil in due process of time. Rather, God's designation of the title "the tree of knowledge" indicated His foreknowledge that:

1. Man would sin by partaking of the forbidden fruit.
2. Man, by partaking thereof, would experience shame, nakedness, and related guilt complexes, as well as harrowing experiences ending in death. All such experiences would be in marked contrast to his former blissful state before the entrance of sin.
3. This tree would forever be a symbol of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its dire consequences.

By believing the tree was a brain food, Satan thought God was trying to curtail the liberty of both Adam and Eve lest they become too independent of divine control. The Adversary regarded the threat of death and extinction as a mere bluff on God's part to prevent them from getting too far out of line. Satan, therefore, patronizingly posed as man's true benefactor, hoping to win to himself the friendship and loyalty of the parents of a new and potentially illimitable race of physical beings. Thus reasoning, he would be the "Lord God" over a vast physical domain, similar to Jehovah's supreme rule over the vast spiritual realm.

Therefore, the woman—seeing that the tree was "desired to make one wise," feeling to some degree that God had withheld this reward from her and her husband for some selfish reason, and realizing that the food was not poisonous as she mistakenly thought she had been led to believe—considered her doubts about God justified and ate the fruit. The scriptural narrative indicates that Eve had Adam accompany her to the tree.

She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband *with her* [i.e., by her side]; and he [no doubt shocked by her betrayal and act of disobedience to the divine command] *did eat* [the forbidden fruit]. (Gen. 3:6)

Adam was not deceived with the hope of obtaining an illegal reward as was Eve. In a sudden, impulsive suicidal pact, he partook of the fruit to share with her the penalty of death (1 Tim. 2:14; 2 Cor. 11:3).

And the Lord God, who had taken the man and put him into the garden to dress and keep it, now banished him without.

Improper Translation

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. (Gen. 3:22)

It is difficult to see—yea, almost incomprehensible to understand—how man, through an act of disobedience, could become more godlike, resembling God or the Logos or the angels of heaven. What would have happened had man not sinned? Would he whom the Creator had looked upon and declared to be "very good" have

been less godlike by abstinence from sin? Certainly not! Adam and Eve were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) before they ate the forbidden fruit.

Corrected Translation

And the LORD God said, Behold the man become as one of us [previously made in our image and likeness] to know good and evil [how he has fallen!].

Appendix 14: Eden and the Flood—Does Eden Still Exist?

And now, lest he [Adam] put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and *live for ever*: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. (Gen. 3:22–24)

This record pertaining to the expulsion of Adam from the Garden of Eden reveals two significant facts:

1. Although man incurred the death penalty because of his transgression, still—all other factors remaining equal and without further action on God’s part—he would not have died from natural causes if he had been allowed to continue to partake freely of the tree of life. Would not the fact the Lord so pointedly calls attention to this matter indicate that such a possibility did exist?

2. To prevent Adam from returning to the Garden of Life after his expulsion, the Lord God stationed cherubim on the east side. In other words, the Creator, instead of destroying the garden as He later destroyed Jonah’s gourd (Jon. 4:6,7), chose to *preserve* the garden. Why . . . particularly since the Scriptures so emphatically declare that “the wages of sin is death” and “as in Adam *all* die”? Everywhere one witnesses the hopeless futility of resisting the Grim Reaper, so what purpose could possibly be served in preserving Eden?

Before this circumstance is analyzed, it is well to realize that the Word of God is emphatic. Although “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” yet each member of the human family stands condemned and dies not for his or her own personal sin, but solely because of the disobedience of another—Father Adam, the progenitor of the race (Rom. 3:23; 5:15–19). Consequently, the righteousness of one individual, of one Redeemer, is all that is needed as an offset for the sin of the world; and God, in His wisdom and mercy, provided a way of escape, made allowance for a hope of future recovery. Were mankind individually judged instead of collectively condemned in Adam, it would have necessitated a separate perfect man’s life as a ransom for each forfeited man’s life in order to obtain salvation. It would have required many redeemers instead of only *one* Saviour. The penalty was centered upon Adam alone. In the day he ate thereof, he began to die within the specified time allotment of a one-thousand-year day (2 Pet. 3:8; Psa. 90:4).

Why then, one may ask, do Adam’s children die? There are two primary reasons: (1) Through heredity and environment mankind has inherited the seeds of disease and death, and (2) thereafter no member of the contaminated race was born with the inherent right to earthly life.

The point to be established is this: Although all are born and shapen in iniquity, although all are under the curse, collectively condemned in Adam, yet all need not die within the time limitation of a one-thousand-year day, as did Adam, for only

upon him was the curse specifically placed. Therefore, it should not be unduly surprising to learn the Holy Scriptures distinctly point out that the Prophet Enoch—though a member of Adam’s race, born of imperfect stock—*did not die!*

This is the testimony concerning him:

By faith Enoch was translated that he should *not see death*;¹ and was not found,² because God had translated him. (Heb. 11:5)

Genesis

5:5	“And all the days that Adam lived	were 930 years: and he died.”
5:8	“And all the days of Seth	were 912 years: and he died.”
5:11	“And all the days of Enos	were 905 years: and he died.”
5:14	“And all the days of Cainan	were 910 years: and he died.”
5:17	“And all the days of Mahalaleel	were 895 years: and he died.”
5:20	“And all the days of Jared	were 962 years: and he died.”
5:23	“And all the days of Enoch	were 365[+] years.”
5:24	“And Enoch walked with God: and he WAS NOT ; for God took him.”	
5:27	“And all the days of Methuselah	were 969 years: and he died.”
5:31	“And all the days of Lamech	were 777 years: and he died.”
9:29	“And all the days of Noah	were 950 years: and he died.”

What does the expression Enoch should “not see death” mean? Before this question is answered, it helps to consider what it does *not* signify. Enoch was not taken away to prevent his being an eyewitness to the death of others, for certainly many fatalities had occurred prior to his translation. Adam had both lived and died during Enoch’s lifetime. In all probability the same is true concerning Mother Eve. The list or tabulation of the ten patriarchs in the fifth chapter of Genesis is a chronological

1. The statement “These all died in faith, not having received the promises” (Heb. 11:13) does not apply to Enoch, who, among others, is mentioned by Paul as a member of that honorable company of Ancient Worthies. To the contrary, the Apostle specifically states in the same context that Enoch was a notable exception to the rule. For a parallel instance where the comprehensive term “all” is used, and yet is modified by the exclusion of a single noteworthy individual, see 1 Corinthians 15:27.
2. A unique sample demonstration of the manner in which Enoch was translated, or bodily transferred from one place to another location, is recorded in the New Testament. An Ethiopian eunuch who was journeying southward from Jerusalem in his chariot had reached the Gaza Strip area, when Philip the Evangelist was instructed of the Spirit to intercept him, to draw nigh and associate himself with this chariot. Subsequent events afforded Philip the opportunity to preach “the Word” to this God-fearing man and led to the eunuch’s desire to be baptized into Christ in a nearby stream.

And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more [compare “he was not; for God took him” —Gen. 5:24]: and he [the eunuch] went on his way rejoicing. But Philip *was found* at [was translated to] Azotus [a town fifteen miles north of Jerusalem, and forty or fifty miles distant from Gaza]. (Acts 8:39,40)

record of the descent of man to the Flood. It also serves to point out that Noah's lineage was of pure Adamic stock and that it was not adulterated with the dread seed of the *Nephilim*. Nor does this list contain all the names of the patriarchal children, for reference is made to the begetting of other "sons and daughters" (Gen. 5:4,7,10,13,16,19,22,26,30); and no doubt many of these died during Enoch's day.

Nor should the expression "not see death" be thought to signify that Enoch died suddenly—not being subjected himself to the disagreeable rigors of death. Why not? Because numerous others, both of the good and of the evil, have died painlessly, in their sleep; such a death is not a reward for having faithfully "walked with God" as did Enoch.

The following, then, explains the significance of the term "not see death": Enoch did not experience death at all, God having translated, or physically transferred, him to another place where his life would be perpetuated until his reappearance at a later date, in the Kingdom Age, both as a sign and as a testimony of the unlimited capabilities of Jehovah's power.³ For this reason God preserved the Garden of Eden—He translated Enoch to that very location.

Indeed, the legend of Shangri-la persists; it pertains to a mysterious plateau⁴ hidden somewhere in a remote mountain recess where age, infirmity, and deformity would depart and the exuberance of youth be restored to the individual fortunate enough to find and gain access to it. Conversely, if one were to leave this favored Utopia to return to present fallen society, a retrogression to one's former condition would speedily follow. Thus this mythological legend that persists has its roots based somewhat in reality—the story of the Garden of Eden! Yes, truth is often stranger than fiction; Eden exists and Enoch lives.

Location of Eden

And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden. . . . And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is *Pison*: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is *Gihon*: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia [Cush—RSV]. And the name of the third river is *Hiddekel* [Tigris—RSV]: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is *Euphrates*. (Gen. 2:8,10–14)

An important clue in trying to locate Eden is that the garden was watered *within* by one river, but *without*, it parted into tributaries, into four separate rivers, each

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3. "Enoch, Elijah and the Sentence," *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, Vol. 18, No. 10 (May 15, 1897), pp. 145–149; Vol. 25, No. 11 (June 1, 1904), pp. 166–168. "Lifted by Whirlwind out of Sight," *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Feb. 1, 1911), pp. 41–42.
 4. Hebrew *Eden*, Akkadian *Edinu*, meaning plain, plateau, or steppe. The Hebrew noun understandably later took on the connotation of pleasure and enjoyment.

traveling its own way, coursing through a different territory.⁵ Additional clues can be extracted from the scriptural narrative:

1. The hypothetical whereabouts of the headwaters of Eden can at least be approximated by tracking down the source of the two rivers that are still extant: the Tigris and the Euphrates.

2. The headwaters of two such mighty affluents must arise from a high elevation.

3. To prevent Adam's return to the Garden of Eden following his expulsion, the Lord had to station cherubim on only the east side of the enclosure (Gen. 3:24), for the river, before parting into four streams, exited the garden on this side. The information clearly indicates that the garden was surrounded on *three sides* by formidable mountain slopes, the steep sides of which would prohibit danger of trespass.

It can be assumed, by coordinating the facts thus far, that the garden was a high, fertile plateau encircled by precipitous cliffs—the only means of entrance being through a gorge or mountain pass on the east side—and situated somewhere in the mountainous terrain of Anatolia, Turkey.

Origin of the Flood

The Genesis account of the days of creation relates not to the *construction* or creation of the globe itself, but to the *ordering* of its *surface*, making it fit for later human habitation.

Of the various theories regarding the formation of the earth, the one that most closely harmonizes with the Bible is called the Vailian Theory of Cosmogony. It assumes that Saturn's rings and Jupiter's belts illustrate earth's development as a

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5. There is a spiritual significance to this description, the lesson being that all humanity originally stemmed from a single stock, or one "river," namely, Father Adam. Just as the stream, upon its exit from the garden, subsequently parted into four heads, so the human race or the seed of man, subsequent to Adam's fall and banishment from Eden, terminates in four separate salvations or destinies between Paradise Lost and Paradise Restored.

The Four Rivers of Eden

A. The *PISON* (the gusher) of the land of Havilah (the circle or crown) represents the Very Elect class, the called of God in Christ Jesus.

Gold, utilized in the Tabernacle of Witness and in the service of its elect priesthood, is associated with divinity. It relates to royalty and rulership, and pertains also to the crown of life promised to those who become partakers of its untarnished and unchangeable glory.

Bdellium is associated with the manna, or heavenly food, miraculously supplied to the nation of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai following their Exodus from Egypt (Num. 11:7; Exod. 16:35). The apocalyptic assurance given to the overcoming Church is that they are to receive of the golden pot of "hidden manna" (Rev. 2:17; Heb. 9:4), which of old was laid up, or stored, within the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy. The bdellium-manna, therefore, is a reminder of the hope of immortality, of incorruptibility, of self-sustaining or inherent life—the future reward to the faithful.

Black *onyx* was the epaulette stone worn on each shoulder of Israel's high priest. The names of all twelve tribes were inscribed on the onyx; that is, six on the one shoulder stone and six on the other. The *black onyx* indicates the humble origin of the exalted Christ company, all of whom geographically are called forth from the dark continent of sin—this beclouded and benighted earth below, the black stone. Such are the topsoil or "humus" of the earth, who will one day both inherit and shoulder its rulership. The lesson of this stone, therefore, is that The Christ in glory will ever be mindful of the pit whence they were dug and the rock whence they were hewn (Isa. 51:1). Hence they will be a most sympathetic priesthood, able to be touched with a feeling for mankind's infirmities.

(cont.)

planet. When the earth was molten, its water and minerals were thrown off in gaseous form at a distance from the earth. As these cooled and took shape, they constituted great rings of different densities and varied states of aggregate content. When the orbital motion or the speed of revolution of these belts began to diminish, they approached the face of the planet. For a time, however, they were kept off by centrifugal force, which was particularly strong at the Equator and relatively weak at both of the flattened polar regions, where (a) the East-West spin of the earth upon its axis would have been least effectual in warding them off, and (b) the downward gravitational pull of earth's core would have been greatest.

Originally about the Equator, the rings were eventually pulled or stretched out as a canopy in the heaven above, in the direction of the polar regions, where they gradually concentrated for a while before cascading their substance upon the earth. These rings or belts of water and minerals followed each other as great deluges upon the earth—perhaps thousands of years apart—throughout the duration of the first four Creative Days. Their universal character and extent lessened with each outpouring subsequent to earth's fourth Creative Day.

As the rings collapsed from time to time, the heavier, more mineralized substances fell first, progressively leaving behind clearer and clearer layers of water which, in turn, allowed more and more sunlight to penetrate to the surface of the earth. The water above the planet acted like a giant glass dome, creating a hothouse condition below that was conducive to the growth of extremely lush vegetation. This period of time is known as the Carboniferous Era. It was during the latter state of this era that prehistoric monsters and dinosaurs plodded about, when the atmosphere was too heavy-laden with carbon dioxide and the vegetation too dense for

B. The *GIHON* River (the bubbler), which winds through Cush (Kash—Persian), does not refer to a tributary of the Nile located in Northern Africa, for the river Gihon of Eden must be situated in Asia Minor near the headwaters of the Euphrates, the most easily identifiable of the four rivers. The early years of Cush, the son of Ham, were spent not too far from Ararat, where Noah's Ark came to rest, for Nimrod, the son of Cush, founded several Assyrian cities before moving southward. The descendants of Cush finally settled in Ethiopia. His father migrated to Egypt, later called "the land of Ham."

The river Gihon represents a secondary class developed contemporaneously with the Church during the Gospel Age. This company is sometimes referred to as "the virgins her companions that follow her" (Psa. 45:14), as Rebekah's "damsels" (Gen. 24:61), as the "little sister" (Song of Sol. 8:8), and as the "great multitude" (Rev. 7:9). Their reward is a spiritual resurrection to the King's palace in heaven.

C. The *HIDDEKEL* River (the encircler) flows east of Assyria. Dekel is an equivalent of Digla or Diglath, a name borne by the Tigris in all ages. It "was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel," that Daniel, "a man greatly beloved" of God, saw an important vision (Dan. 10:4,11). This river represents the Ancient Worthy class (Hebrews 11).

D. The *EUPHRATES* (Syriac *purates*, waters) is called "the great river" (Gen. 15:18). It rises in Armenia and empties into the Persian Gulf. Both literal Babylon and mystic Babylon the Great were situated on the banks of this river. The Book of Revelation interprets, "The waters which thou sawest . . . are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (16:12; 17:1,5,15). This river fitly represents the redemption and salvation of the world of mankind.

Genesis 2—A Time Sequence of Resurrection

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|---------------------------------|--|
| (1) Pison River (Little Flock) | (3) Hiddekel River (Ancient Worthies) |
| (2) Gihon River (Great Company) | (4) Euphrates River (World of Mankind) |

human survival. Man's creation and introduction upon the planet occurred when the atmosphere became more oxygenated—1,656 years before the last thin veil of water above the earth was due to collapse. Mankind were so accustomed to the slight resultant haze in the upper reaches of the atmosphere that they were entirely oblivious to the impending collapse of the last water ring.

How Extensive Was the Flood of Noah's Day?

The evidence of a flood of worldwide proportions is incontrovertible. Fieldstones worn smooth and round, profusely deposited in the topsoil of many lands, indicate the turbulent action of a covering body of water. Such an extensive flood can be accounted for by the prevalence of waters upon the earth *before* the Creative Week even commenced.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the *face of the deep*. And the Spirit of God moved upon the *face of the waters*. (Gen. 1:2)

An extensive glacial invasion has left telltale marks and scars, deep and wide, such as in the Grand Canyon area. Scattered over the continents of the world are the fossilized remains of shellfish and other marine life. These phenomena can be explained by the collapse of various pre-Noachian rings up to the early part of earth's fifth Creative Day. The finding of a giant mastodon embedded in ice with food in its mouth, and of various reindeer with undigested grass in their mouths and stomachs, testifies to the suddenness of some such catastrophe, and to a radical environmental change in the localized region. These and other findings are not a convincing proof, however, that such events occurred in Noah's day. Instead, the evidence points to the contrary. To reflect for a moment . . .

1. Were mastodons roaming the earth at the time of Noah? The answer is no.
2. If the waters prevailed over the highest mountains of earth, as some believe the biblical narrative to teach, then, taking Mount Everest as an example, the flood waters would have had to cover the entire earth to a depth of six miles. With a global hypothesis of this sort, where would such a large body of water drain off to or go—if the whole earth were already completely submerged in water to *so great a depth*?
3. Under these same circumstances, if glaciers extended in parts of the world as far south as New Mexico and the pervading ice sheet rose to the exaggerated height of tens of thousands of feet, how could such a body of ice melt in the short span of one year? And there would still be the problem of where the melted ice would be evacuated to.
4. With the presence of so gigantic an ice flow, how could Noah and his family and the animals within the Ark have endured the bitter cold, particularly the loss of heat in the melting and evaporating process?
5. If the flood waters were universal in extent, they would have been either predominantly saline or predominantly freshwater in content. How could saltwater fish survive in freshwater? How could freshwater fish survive in salt water?
6. The fact that folklore of a worldwide flood, resembling the story of Noah and the Ark, is contained in the local cultures of various lands is not substantive

evidence that flood waters covered these lands at that time. Who were the survivors in these various territories who could testify as to what they had seen? Is it not more sensible to realize that after Noah and his family departed from the Ark, they and their progeny took the story of their experience with them wherever they went in their migrations?

Let it not be misunderstood: No attempt is being made to discount or discredit, in the least, the validity of Holy Writ as it pertains to the subject matter under examination. God forbid! The intent is to understand and to properly and scripturally evaluate the true story, and to find an . . .

Explanation for the Flood

The conclusion set forth is that the waters of Noah's Flood were not universal but that they did cover the *entire*⁶ *civilized world* of his day.⁷

There first occurred a gradual and a literal sinking of the continental land mass where civilization was cradled. Into this pocket or depression in the earth's crust, there gravitationally flowed the Mediterranean Sea, the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and/or other waters of the surrounding area. This crater was awesomely large and deep. The top of the highest mountain in the prescribed area failed by 15 cubits (Gen. 7:20) to break the surface of the water which filled this depression—the minimum allowance necessary to provide buoyancy for the Ark.⁸ Thus, with sufficient clearance assured for the bottom of the boat, dangerous contact with any promontory beneath the surface of the waters was avoided. The sinking of the land and the rushing in of the waters are succinctly referred to as:

All the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up. (Gen. 7:11)

Contemporaneous with the events previously described, there was an extremely heavy and continuous rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights (Gen. 7:12). The rain was caused by the breaking of the last water ring above the earth, which precipitated telluric snow and ice close to the polar caps and a cloudburst of water in its outer fringes. It is probable that the thinness of the last veil of water resulted in an unequal collapse of the canopy about the earth, resembling a water skin that burst and emptied its *liquid* content in Mesopotamia and other pertinent areas. The collapse of the last water ring is briefly described as follows:

And the windows of heaven were opened. (Gen. 7:11)

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6. "All" sometimes refers to "some" (Exod. 9:6,22). A part is sometimes put forth as the whole (Gen. 6:12; Isa. 66:23).
 7. "The Story of the Deluge," *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, Vol. 22, No. 13 (July 1, 1901), pp. 220–225. "The Lesson of the Flood," *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Feb. 1, 1907), pp. 37–40.
 8. The Ark, a barge-shaped vessel (300 cubits by 50 cubits by 30 cubits, or 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high), was indeed quite large with considerable storage capacity. The chief problem posed is how several pairs of the larger animals, such as the elephant, the hippopotamus, and the rhinoceros, as well as the sizable quantity of food necessary to sustain their lives, could have been stored in the Ark. This difficulty is tremendously reduced when one ponders for a moment and realizes that these animals would have been placed in the craft in their infancy or baby state.

When the inundated land mass (or portion thereof)⁹ later arose from the nautical grave wherein it found itself, it shed the watery mantle off its back, returning the seas to the beds whence they originated.

The Apostle Peter draws a most informative analogy between the lack of awareness of Noah's contemporaries and the corresponding ignorance of the general populace today along other lines:

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing *out of* the water and *in* the water. (2 Pet. 3:5)

Peter calls attention to the fact that the people of Noah's day, insensible to the Patriarch's warnings and entreaties, trusted in their natural vision and stood confidently in the logic of their own human reasoning. They were not aware of impending destruction from two sources: (1) the collapse of the transparent water ring above the earth, or as the Apostle states it, "the earth standing *out of* [apart from] *the water*"; and (2) the possibility of the surrounding waters rushing in, or as recorded, "the earth standing . . . *in* [the dry land being situated as an island in the threatening surrounding body of] *the water*." Peter alludes directly to Genesis 1:6, "And [the Word of] God said, Let there be a firmament [the atmosphere, or the *heavens of old*] in the midst of [between] the waters, and let it divide the waters [under the firmament—Gen. 1:7] from the waters [above the firmament—Gen. 1:7]."

There is three times as much water covering the earth's surface as there is land. The only thing holding back this preponderance of waters from further encroachment of the dry land is God's decree:

Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed. (Job 38:11; Gen. 1:9,10)

Peter further implies (2 Pet. 3:6,7) that the same Word of God, which kept in store the waters above the earth and which fixed or established the ocean beds, could—should God see fit—reverse these decrees according to the counsel of His will and make them two avenues of judgment.

An additional reason Noah's message seemed so preposterous to the people is that up to that time it had never even rained.

For the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth. . . . But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. (Gen. 2:5,6)

Conclusion

The Garden of Eden could have been preserved from the ravages of the Great Deluge simply by being located *outside* the peripheral area of the zone affected.

9. The destruction of the social order in Noah's day no doubt forms the basis for some of the myths which pertain to prior lost civilizations or submerged continents, such as Mu and Atlantis.

Appendix 15: Israel's Cloud

God's providence on behalf of the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings through the Sinai desert, the land of Moab, and the land of the Ammonites was manifested by a miraculous cloud formation, which became to them a visible token of His constant care and presence in their midst.

And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night. (Exod. 13:21,22; Psa. 78:14)

This cloud and fire pillar seems to have been associated with the Tabernacle in the sense that a branch, or foot, came down from the cloud to the Tabernacle. When the foot left, or was lifted up into the main body cloud above, it indicated that the time had come for the Israelites to travel. They followed the leading of the cloud: When it stayed, they rested and constructed their camp, and a columnar connection, or pillar cloud foot, established itself as before.

And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. (Exod. 40:36–38; Num. 9:15–23)

The thick main body cloud above was not confined merely to the air space above the Tabernacle structure itself but, rather, was spread as a canopy, or awning, over the entire nation of journeying Israelites. When they were at rest in their tents, it further served as a protective covering, providing shade from the scorching rays of the noon desert sun, ameliorating the intense heat of the day, lest the multitude below perish in the way. The cloud cover also had a calming influence upon the wind and blistering sandstorms which arose, suddenly posing, at times, a menace to security—yea, a threat to the very survival of the host.

Also, it is well to realize that although the average annual rate of rainfall in the wilderness area is pitifully small compared to that of other regions, both distant and near, nonetheless, a third danger existed for a wandering desert nomad people. Very rare but very real flash floods produced by a sudden torrential downpour of rain—a cloudburst—sent waters flowing down the dry gulches or wadis, in some places, figuratively, with the speed of an express train. Such flash floods constituted an inherent peril to those not alerted to, and familiar with, the necessity to hastily depart from the dry riverbeds, which frequently were used as natural desert highways to known destinations. The covering cloud over the camp of the Israelites minimized the potential hazard accompanying such storms.

Many who are disposed to scoff at such biblical statements calling attention to God's dealings with His people of old, apparently are unappreciative of the many miracles performed by nature in everyday life. Routine miracles are soon forgotten because of their multiplicity and common occurrence. Yet the events experienced by

the Israelites are certified by the authority of God's own testimony through the writings of holy men of the past.

Archaeology of late, by reason of uncovered evidence, has been instrumental in leading several nonreligious men from skepticism to an increased respect for the accuracy and reliability of biblical descriptions of the ancient past . . . which testimony, formerly, they were unwilling to recognize. Recent discoveries have put to foolishness the former scorn of some higher critics and their learned(?) arguments.

To refresh the reader's memory, a few select passages of Scripture are given:

And the LORD will create [again, not as previously in a literal manner but in a figurative sense] upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire [in the Exodus, this was a spectacular luminous cloud awning or glowing firelight canopy] by night: for upon all [i.e., the entire nation, every individual household or dwelling place] the glory [of this cloud formation] shall be a defence [protective covering]. And there shall be a [similar though symbolic] tabernacle [replacing the literal, temporary cloud cover accompanying the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings] for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from [wind and sand] storm and from [overflowing] rain. (Isa. 4:5,6; 25:4)

He spread a cloud for a covering. (Psa. 105:39)

Appendix 16: The Exodus

A few centuries prior to the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, Joseph, the Hebrew seer, was elevated to a position of great authority, second only to Pharaoh upon his throne (Gen. 41:43). Under divine guidance, and through wise counsel and able administration, Joseph was instrumental in preserving Egypt during a seven-year period of drought and famine. Because he was hailed as a messiah, his kinsfolk were allowed to take up residence in Egypt in the land of Goshen. In the process of time both Joseph and his Egyptian supporters fell asleep in death, departing from the scene.

“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, ‘Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and if war befall us, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.’

“Therefore they [the Egyptians] set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens; and they [the children of Israel] built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Ra-amases. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. So they made the people of Israel serve with rigor, and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field; in all their work they [the Egyptians] made them serve with rigor. . . . Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, ‘Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live’” (Exod. 1:8–14,22 RSV).

Even then, in this dark moment of Israel’s history, unbeknownst to the people, the Lord raised up Moses, His servant, who one day would lead forth the people out of the land.

Now Moses, who fled from Egypt, “kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he [Moses] led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. . . . God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, ‘Moses! Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here am I.’ Then he [God] said, ‘Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. . . . behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt’” (Exod. 3:1,2,4,5,9,10 KJV and RSV).

Nine plagues were visited upon the Egyptians, and it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let the children of Israel go, that “the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon. . . .

“And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where one

was not dead. And he summoned Moses and Aaron by night, and said, ‘Rise up, go forth from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said’” (Exod. 12:29–31 KJV and RSV).

It is well to remember that the Israelites were not to partake of the paschal lamb in a leisurely fashion, with garments unloosened and feet unshod. No, quite to the contrary, they were to eat it in haste, with garments and waistband closely girt about the body, with shoes or sandals on, and with a staff or walking stick in hand.

Not only was the faithful observance of this ritualistic feast by the Israelites at the time of the Exodus a visually dramatic event to the participants involved, but, more than that, for succeeding generations the feast has been a graphic memorial of Israel’s former national deliverance. (And there are spiritual connotations as well.) In addition, the original celebration had the very practical benefit of inducing a state of readiness, which enabled the Israelites to speedily depart with their flocks and possessions *that very night*, after the midnight hour and before the sunrise of the next day.

And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. (Exod. 12:33,34)

The Scriptures show that at the time of the Exodus, the Israelites were “thrust out” of Egypt. In their urgency and haste, the Hebrew women did not even have time to bake the seven days’ supply of unleavened dough they had on hand into convenient, round pita-bread cakes for use during the feast week of Passover. Therefore, they improvised carrying pouches by putting the moistened dough in flexible reed mats.¹ The women supported these mats by first gathering them up in the forepart of their long, loose raiment and then slinging them back over their shoulders. For those women who did not possess such flexible mats, the moistened dough was simply and crudely gathered up *directly in their garments* and carried in a similar manner. For this reason the dough was later called the “bread of affliction [or hardship]; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste” (Deut. 16:3).

And they [later daily] baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry [to do so], neither had they prepared for themselves any victual. (Exod. 12:39)

When the Israelites encamped at the conclusion of each day’s march, they cooked a sufficient amount of the dough for their immediate and next day’s need. After

1. Bedouin women, accustomed to long journeys and frequent changes of encampment, possessed flexible reed-woven, leather-lined mats upon which they kneaded their dough. On a journey these mats were either folded or rolled up and then transported in whatever fashion was suitable for the occasion. At rest they were spread for a tablecloth both to prepare and to serve the meal. Quite likely, the Israelitish women used kneading mats of this nature when they and their menfolk were temporarily displaced from their humble homes and engaged elsewhere in building Pharaoh’s treasure cities, such as Pithom and Rameses (Exod. 1:11).

partaking of this basic victual, which was their sole sustenance, they rested and then slept in preparation for the following day's journey.

And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; for they had asked of the Egyptians jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing. And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they despoiled the Egyptians. (Exod. 12:35,36 RSV and KJV)

It is interesting to note the arrangement of Divine Providence. After long years of arduous and unrewarding labor, Israel asked for and received partial compensation in this unforeseen and startling manner.

On the very night in which the Israelites ate the Passover lamb, they left their abodes before dawn. No doubt they were assisted by the light of the full moon, predicated on the paschal observance, as they hastened to the outskirts of Rameses, the predetermined point of rendezvous from which they were to depart the land as a unified body.

It can be established with reasonable certainty that Rameses is to be equated with On or Heliopolis.² Ra (the sun) was the chief deity of Heliopolis, which signifies "city of the sun," and the Temple of the Sun that was located there gave the city its name and object. Heliopolis had been built and was already famous before the birth of Rameses the Great. Since the Scriptures make the land of Rameses identical with the land of Goshen, the city of Rameses may have been the capital of Goshen as well—and thus was a logical starting point for the Exodus (Gen. 47:6,11).

Heliopolis is a place of biblical significance. Traditionally, Abraham once resided there, and it was probably the place of origin of Joseph's wife (Gen. 41:45). Moreover, Heliopolis or On is the traditional place where Moses was born and educated, and it is reputed to be where the Holy Family rested on their return journey from Egypt back to Israel. In later times, during the Persian period, the city was called Babylon. Heliopolis is situated about five miles east of modern Cairo toward the Eastern Desert.

And the children of Israel [numbered] . . . about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. (Exod. 12:37,38)

Next to be considered is the number of Israelites who escaped Egypt. The population of able-bodied men is given as a little over six hundred thousand, implying a combined total of more than two million people of all ages and both sexes. Some consider such a great multitude to be excessive, and say it would be impossible for that number to make a journey of such proportions in the allotted time required by the scriptural account. They suggest that the word *thousands* in Hebrew can mean, and in this case does mean, "family" or "clan." On this basis they conclude that

2. Rameses is called *On* by Moses (Gen. 41:45), *Beth-shemesh* by Jeremiah (43:13), *Aven* by Ezekiel (30:17), and *Matariyeh* (Old Heliopolis) today.

considerably less than one hundred thousand people were involved in the Exodus. This theoretical supposition directly contradicts the Mosaic record.

And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation [as a ransom for their souls—Exod. 30:12–16] was an *hundred talents*, and a *thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary. A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for *six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men*. (Exod. 38:25,26)

Since a bekah (a half shekel) was required of every man, the following tabulation shows the conversion of talents and shekels into bekahs:

1 talent (3,000 shekels) = 6,000 bekahs

Therefore:

100 talents = 600,000 bekahs

1,775 shekels = +3,550 bekahs

Total individuals at 1 bekah each = 603,550 men

Another confirmation that there were more than six hundred thousand able-bodied men is the statement in verse 26: “Six hundred *thousand* and three *thousand* and five hundred and fifty men.” If the word *clan* is substituted for the word *thousand* in the sacred canon, this statement would then signify “603 *clans* and 550 men.” It is obvious that the number of individuals in a clan would have to exceed the number 550 in order to make any sense at all. Therefore, if a single unit or clan constituted, say, one thousand—that is, a number in excess of 550—the total would be right back to the number already demonstrated by the atonement money itself, namely, “six hundred . . . and three *thousand* . . . five hundred and fifty men.”

And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their *armies*. . . . and the children of Israel went up *harnessed* out of the land of Egypt. (Exod. 12:51; 13:18)

The children of Israel left Egypt in military orderliness. This thought is implied by the phrase “by their *armies*.”³ The Hebrew suggests by ranks of five; that is, the Israelites left Rameses in five columns. If, then, in the journey to the sea, it is calculated that one hundred people marched abreast in *each* file, or rank, and there were five ranks, and if each column was four thousand deep or long and wagons and flocks were included, the overall mass of humanity and animals would have averaged approximately one mile in width and eight miles in length. Able captains throughout the ranks directed the order of movement of this mighty host, especially in rare instances where the open terrain narrowed, thus necessitating a constriction

3. The word *armies* in Hebrew is the plural form of the number five. The signification is not that individual Israelites marched five abreast in a single column but that five distinct divisions or *squadrons* marched *side by side*.

and an integration of the ranks. A further duty of the captains was to direct the order of encampment at the end of each day's march.

And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea. (Exod. 13:17,18)

In Moses' day there were but two principal routes to Canaan from Rameses, the staging area for the Exodus. One was the northern Mediterranean coastal route via the Gaza Strip, or Philistia, which required seven days' normal travel. The other was the so-called "southern route" almost due east of Cairo, by way of the wilderness, which eventually led across the top of the Gulf of Suez into and through Sinai and required a month's strenuous journey.

Obviously, the Philistine route was the shorter way. However, Divine Wisdom knew that if the Israelites took the shorter route, they were, at best, poorly armed, dispirited by long bondage, and hardly able to cope with the Philistines, a hardy, warlike people obstructing the way.⁴ And besides, God had other plans for the chosen Israelites. He intended to speak with and instruct them at His holy mount in Sinai. First, however, must come the crossing of the mighty sea. There He would manifest His awesome power and authority not only to the Egyptians and the surrounding nations but also to His own people as a basis of faith and encouragement to sustain them in the later rigors of the Sinai wanderings.

The sacred narrative reveals that "God led them *not* through the way of the land of the Philistines . . . but . . . through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea." In other words, contrary to what many think, the Israelites did not traverse the marshland bordering the Mediterranean; they did not penetrate the Sirbonian bog into Sinai; and they did not cross the isthmus in the vicinity of the Bitter Lakes region. No, the crossing occurred at a site that necessitated a far greater miracle than any of these would have!

The sea that is familiarly known in Scripture as the "Red sea" is indeed the *Yam Suph*, the "sea of reeds" or "sea of weeds," but not in the manner normally realized; rather, it was considered the "sea of weeds" in a *fossilized sense*. The sea derived its name from the vast amount of red coral growing in it. In fact, from

4. There is a spiritual lesson in the Israelites' avoidance of an encounter with the Philistines. Just as Pharaoh held the Hebrews in bondage in Egypt, so Satan, the god of this world, has for a long time held the Israel of God, the human race, in slavery to sin and death. Bishop Scott has well said that the Devil, "the strong man armed," who capitalizes on the weaknesses, lusts, and passions in our fallen nature, "vehemently opposes our conversion, and 'will hardly let us go;' but 'when a Stronger than he comes upon him, he takes from him his armor wherein he trusted, and divides the spoil.' Then, being delivered from bondage, putting ourselves under the Lord's care and protection, and joining ourselves to his people, we learn to walk before him in all his ordinances and commandments: and though the way in which he leads us is widely different from that which we should choose for ourselves, we shall find that he in every particular regards our weakness, and that he orders all things for our good, and in such a manner as may most effectually keep us from returning back to sin and the world." (Thomas Scott, ed., *The Holy Bible*, Stereotype ed. [Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1833], Vol. 1, p. 229 [comment on Exod. 13:1-10]).

certain high vantage points in the mountains that prevail in the area, the coral can be clearly observed beneath the water along the shoreline. Hence the Reed Sea, on account of the color of the coral and the hue it casts, eventually became known as the Red Sea.

The name *Yam Suph* refers to both arms of the sea. The left or western branch is now called the Gulf of Suez (that is, the Gulf of Destruction in Arabic), and the right or eastern branch is known as the Gulf of Aqaba or Eilat. That the right fork, as well as the left one, is called the *Yam Suph* (currently designated the Red Sea) is affirmed by the sacred canon itself (Deut. 1:40; 2:1; 1 Kings 9:26). This dual application of the Hebrew term belies the various theories that would limit the Red Sea crossing to the swamps or the marshy ground anciently predominating in both the north and the central portions of the Suez isthmus, or land bridge, between Egypt and Sinai. Such theorists seek to nullify, rather than to identify, the route of the Exodus with regard to the depth of the waters of the Gulf of Suez.

And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.
(Exod. 13:19; cf. Gen. 50:25)

In their march toward Canaan, the people of God were to carry with them the bones of Joseph as a continued remembrance of the Hebrew patriot and prophet's "faith-fulness" unto death. Having fully forgiven his brethren who sold him into slavery and oblivion in Egypt, Joseph was a prototype of Messiah, the example for the human race to follow.

And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth.
(Exod. 12:37)

The encampments of the children of Israel are named with an exactness in the Bible that today is both provocative and tantalizing in proportion to the realization that these were once known with certainty. An important clue for identifying the place names of the various encampments is the premise that with the exception of the outskirts of Rameses, the starting point, these sites could not have been cities or villages. The reason is simple: Passing through cities or villages would have greatly hindered the progress of so great a multitude. Instead, the intriguing nomenclature pertains to something in the terrain or to some other notable landmarks where the Israelites encamped.

Evidently, Abraham's seed left Rameses in the clear light of dawn, while the Egyptians were mourning and sorrowfully preparing their dead for burial. Thus the Hebrew marshaled host would have marched from early morning coolness to the burning heat of day . . . to perhaps midafternoon, about which time they came to Succoth. In Hebrew the name Succoth signifies "booths" or, more properly, "[leafy] shelters."

It is not necessary to conclude that at the time of the Exodus the Israelites simply happened upon or themselves constructed leafy shade trellises under which to rest. (In reality there was not sufficient time to erect the shelters.) More likely, it was under divine direction that after several hours of marching in the large, barren des-

ert wadi, they suddenly came upon a relative abundance of tamarisk and sycamore trees, some palms, and other large brush scattered about. After perhaps hastily draping excess clothing or other materials on the trees and brush, the weary, sunbaked Israelites found there a most welcome rest and refreshment. It is not hard to imagine the feeling of exhilaration and the sense of joy they would have experienced in finding the shade—that coupled with the thought they had severed ties with Egypt and put considerable distance between themselves and their former taskmasters.

Succoth was the first official stop in the Israelites' wilderness wanderings. How deeply that first resting place sunk into their consciousness and remembrance may be realized from the fact that of all the numerous stations of their journey to the promised Canaan, they chose to memorialize this particular one as representative of the whole. This memorialization is known as the Feast of Tabernacles.⁵

And they took their journey from Succoth. . . . And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night. (Exod. 13:20,21)

The next day, the second morrow after the Passover, the children of Israel left Succoth (*Bir Gindali*). But, lo, a remarkable thing occurred! A dark cloud covering overspread the entire host.

He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night. (Psa. 105:39)

. . . for upon all the glory shall be a defence [covering]. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from [sand]storm and from rain [flash floods]. (Isa. 4:5,6)

The cloud shielded the eyes of the Israelites from the glaring sun and provided shade from the burning heat of day, to which they had been exposed the day before.

At the forefront of this main body cloud formation, yet attached to it, there hung suspended a supplementary cloud that looked like a giant columnar finger pointing downward, as if to say, "This is the way you should go." This pillar cloud was designated the "angel of God" (Exod. 14:19). Both the awesome main cloud and its

5. The Feast of Tabernacles is a separate review of the Feast of Passover, but with a different emphasis. Instead of stressing the Passover lamb meal and the redemption of the *firstborn* of Israel, the Feast of Tabernacles emphasizes the deliverance of the *nation* subsequent to the plague of death visited upon Egypt.

As originally pictorialized by the Passover week at the time of the Exodus, the Feast of Tabernacles was not a feast of tents, but one of shelters provided by nature. It was later that the Lord instructed Israel to erect temporary booths, or shelters, interwoven with the boughs of various trees and willows of the brook to simulate their former experience and initial joy in departing Egypt (Lev. 23:40). The purpose of perpetuating the feast was to remind later generations that the Lord made the children of Israel to dwell in Succoth, the *place* of booths (Lev. 23:43).

Tents for daily use were probably not made until the Israelites' arrival and long stay at Mount Sinai.

lofty smokelike appendage were a manifestation of the presence of Jehovah. Such a signal was needed to guide so large a multitude.

At night this cloud complex became interlaced with a fiery luminescence that enabled the Israelites to march in light and to pitch camp at any hour. Not only did the cloud *shade* their eyes and *cool* their bodies during the day, but it acted in a diverse manner at night, *enhancing* their vision and *warming* their bodies.

On a *clear moonlit night* the desert can be frightfully cold.⁶ During the day the heat of the sun is absorbed by the sand and gravel, but this warmth rapidly dissipates into the thin atmosphere at night, turning to chilliness and frost. Although the miracle cloud obscured the valuable moonlight, it nonetheless replaced nature's light with a supernatural effulgent glow of its own. It also acted as a thermal blanket at night for the host of Israel by retaining the daylight surface warmth of the terrain and thus providing insulation from the cold.

How amazing was this demonstration of God's power and supervision in the affairs of His people! Unfortunately, many back there did not let this wholesome observation sink fully into their hearts, perhaps because they were too busily engaged in their own personal needs, activities, and problems. God's providences, met with obedience and trust, constitute the means whereby one is progressively sanctified.

And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham,
in the edge of the wilderness. (Exod. 13:20)

The next halt was Etham.⁷ In two different ways, both pertaining to peculiarities of the terrain, Etham was "in [or on] the edge of the wilderness." The first pertained to a sandstone plateau; the second, to vantage points on the ridge of the plateau.

In regard to the plateau, the route from Rameses via Succoth to Etham for the greater part climbs steadily among low hills, and then cuts straight across a plateau. The latter part of the second-day journey led along the edge of this plateau, that is, along the upper elevation of two distinct and notable levels in the desert floor. It is to this demarcation in the land surface that the Hebrew annals refer.

The Egyptian word *Hetem* (Etham in Hebrew) signifies "fortress" or "rampart." However, as previously explained, the place name refers not to a town, village, or fortress but to a region. Appropriately, this *west-to-east* sandstone escarpment, which exceeds ten miles in length, resembles a *rampart wall*; hence the area got its name. (Incidentally, the rampart effect of the plateau can be more readily discerned from below, from the lower level of the desert floor.)

The plateau itself has a rather long, more or less centrally located, higher level of elevation that furnishes two unusual views. In their journey the Israelites gradually ascended the plateau until they reached the beginning of the higher level. Pausing there to look backward, they could observe the route they had just taken, all the

6. The literal application of Psalm 121:6 reads: "The [heat of the] sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the [cold of the] moon [smite thee] by night."

7. The Etham in Egypt is not to be confused with the Wilderness of Etham in Sinai (Num. 33:8). The former was encountered on the second day of the Exodus, whereas the latter was entered at the end of the fourth day of march, which terminated with the Red Sea crossing.

way back down the sloping terrain to the Nile basin. They continued across the higher level of elevation for several miles until they reached the other end. From there the Israelites could look forward, down the sloping terrain ahead, to the Red Sea and Suez. In other words, from the western end of the plateau's higher area, the Eastern Desert of Egypt gradually slopes downward and westward to the Nile basin. From the other or eastern end, the desert descends in an easterly direction: northeasterly to Suez and southeasterly to the Red Sea.

In both senses, then—the plateau and the vantage points—the region of Etham fits the descriptive requirement of being at the “edge of the wilderness.”⁸ Once again, the accuracy of detail in Holy Writ is a cause for marvel and awe.

In harmony with this projection, it would seem that the Israelites encamped the second day at the eastern end of the plateau, which is located before or west of Mount Ataka, at or near the lesser mount of Gebel (Jebel) Khaliya, and in the vicinity of three wadis: Umm Itla, Hagul, and Khaliya. The first two wadis serve as gateways of descent southward into a large valley or plain that leads eastward to the main body of the Red Sea. The third or last wadi descends northward to a large plain that also leads eastward, but up near the head of the gulf in the Suez area.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they *turn* and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. (Exod. 14:1,2)

While the host was at rest in Etham, the Lord revealed to Moses His hitherto carefully concealed design to excite and entice Pharaoh to pursue the Israelites in order that a still more climactic judgment might be inflicted upon the Egyptians. The divine instruction was to encamp by the seaside “between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon” and “before Pi-hahiroth.” Here is another instance where a site was well known to Moses and no doubt to others amidst the Israeli host, but has since confounded student and scholar alike.

As the Israelites departed from Etham, the third station of march, the next obvious step would have been to continue the journey forward with all due haste down the Wadi Khaliya in order to reach the Wilderness of Sinai by sundown and thus speedily finalize their separation from Egypt. But, no, instead of pursuing their march via Suez and bypassing the sea on their right, the multitude was commanded by the Lord to change direction and go south, keeping the gulf on their left. This change of course, in effect, constituted a turning back into the very land whence they were fleeing bondage and serfdom.

Those amidst the host who were familiar with the terrain but unable to communicate with Moses would have realized that for some unaccountable reason the pillar

8. Many have incorrectly reasoned that the reference to “edge” means that Etham was situated in or near the city of Suez at the head of the Gulf of Suez, or that it was located at some other place in the north on the boundary line between Egypt and Sinai. There are several objections to the first conclusion, one of which pertains to distance. Etham was reached at the end of two days, and Suez is over seventy-five miles from Cairo—much too great a distance to travel in that length of time. A somewhat similar difficulty would exist if the starting point of the Exodus were considered to be in the northern region bordering the Mediterranean.

of the cloud had chosen the ravine that would lead to the right along the southern flank of the Ataka range. This observed puzzling change of course occurred at a pivotal point where the mountain intervenes and begins its rapid ascent to formidable heights, continuing as an uninterrupted lofty barrier until its descent into the sea. Another, even more formidable, elevated southwest-to-northeasterly mountain range—that is, the North Galala Plateau or Mount Ghuweibba—runs roughly parallel to Ataka some twenty-five miles farther south. The boxed-in transit of the Israelites was now in the large, open wilderness between the two ranges, heading in the direction of the open sea.

A further confirmation that would fix Etham in this vicinity is that several of the principal landmarks in the area have names generated from incidents related to the Hebrew Exodus. The Wadi-el-Tih, which in Arabic means the “valley of wanderings,” originates near Heliopolis and passes through Succoth and Etham. Gebel Ataka means “mount of deliverance” in Arabic, and the large Wadi Baideah or Bediah (now called Badi or Batat) signifies “miraculous.”

For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. . . . And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? . . . and he pursued after the children of Israel. (Exod. 14:3,5,8)

It was when the departure from Etham occurred that spies, or stationed watchmen, informed Pharaoh of the puzzling route the Jews had taken. The report was that they “fled” because instead of stopping and remaining the third day to observe the religious feast and to offer sacrifices Pharaoh had agreed upon, the Israelites were attempting to leave the land for good—and in an apparently confused fashion (Exod. 5:1,3; 8:1,8,25–27; 10:9,25; 12:31).

Pharaoh’s wounded pride and the nation’s prior humiliation goaded king and people alike to seek revenge for the calamities that had befallen them.⁹ Hence preparations were made for an immediate and hot pursuit.

And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. (Exod. 14:7)

A distinction is made between the “six hundred *chosen* chariots” and “all the [*other*] chariots of Egypt,” which would have numbered in the thousands. The “chosen chariots” undoubtedly referred to Pharaoh’s most trusted and skilled warriors.

In each of the first, or chosen, chariots were three men: a charioteer and two warriors. The driver occupied the forepart of the chariot, and the two foot soldiers

9. The king apparently attempted to minimize his own responsibility in the release of the Israelites and also implied that they clandestinely departed, whereas, to the contrary, the Israelites left with a “high hand”; that is, they left openly with strength and boldness, and not in panic or disorder (Exod. 14:8).

stood on a low step at the rear of the open-ended wagon. Holy Writ seems to indicate that the drivers of these chosen chariots held the rank of captain.¹⁰

The regular chariots of Egypt were of two types. Some were two-man vehicles, with one man as the driver and the other as the fighter. The remainder were single-person chariots, in which the driver would lash the reins about his body while engaged in combat, and then spear or club the enemy from within the confines of the vehicle. In either case the drivers of these common chariots had no special rank.

Evidently, each of the chosen chariots would singly lead a detachment of regular chariots.¹¹ A reasonable estimate would be that the Egyptian host numbered between forty thousand and fifty thousand well-trained and well-armed men—the backbone of the militia. (It should be apparent to all that no marching infantry accompanied Pharaoh because of the speed and the distance of the pursuit.)

. . . all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen,
and his army . . . overtook them encamping by the sea, beside
Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon . . . between Migdol and the sea.
(Exod. 14:9,2)

Pi-hahiroth seems to have been the Egyptian name for a small tract of green pasture near the Red Sea. Here the Israelites were ordered to encamp. The name Pi-hahiroth signifies “the abode” or “the place of meadows.”¹² In the Book of Numbers (33:7,8) the reference to the same location is slightly altered in the Hebrew with the addition of the single consonant *n*: Pin- (or Pen-) hahiroth. This addition signifies not the broad plain itself but a small protrusion of the plain into the sea, that is, the last point on the mainland. Accordingly, Pi-hahiroth was where the children of Israel departed Egypt and entered the sea; in other words, it was the pen(insula) of “Ha hiroth.”

Migdol means “fortress” or “[watch]tower.” This Migdol is not to be confused with a later Migdol in Egypt, mentioned a thousand years afterward by the two contemporary prophets Jeremiah (44:1) and Ezekiel (29:10—see KJV margin). These prophets were referring to a fortified city or tower situated in the northeast quadrant of the Nile delta near Philistia at the upper end of the then great wall of Egypt.

A different site, the Migdol of the Exodus refers to a large mountain promontory called Gebel Ghuweibba, which is south of Ataka and some thirty-five miles from Suez. From this lofty height of nature, a simple garrison could spy across the Red Sea any movement of a potential enemy host over a very large area a week or more in advance of entry into Egypt proper. The location of this mount was particularly suited to giving fast advance warning to the inhabitants of upper Thebes or lower Memphis.

10. The captain assigned to each of the six hundred vehicles derived his title from the Hebrew word *shalish*, meaning “third”; that is, he was one of three, and *over* the others.

11. Pharaoh “took six hundred *picked* chariots,” and his “picked officers” were sunk in the sea (Exod. 14:7; 15:4 RSV).

12. Pi-hahiroth denotes “the place where sedge grows.” (William Smith, *A Dictionary of the Bible* [New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.], p. 538.)

Baal-zephon signifies “lord of the north [point, wind, etc.]” An equally appropriate rendering could be “lord of the watching [tower],” and this definition seems to be the proper thought because of the proximity of Baal-zephon to Migdol. Apparently, Baal-zephon refers to a small conical or pyramidal elevation both before and between Migdol and the sea, where anciently there stood on its summit a statue or altar dedicated to the honor of Baal, the lord and protector of Migdol.

And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel *lifted up their eyes*, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD.
(Exod. 14:10)

The Israelites were now encamped on the western or Egyptian shore of the Red Sea, at a point at least twenty-five miles distant from the eastern or Sinai shore. Suddenly a cry of alarm ran through the vast multitude, for, lo, over the ridges of the desert hills were seen the well-known horses and terrible chariots of the Egyptian host. The Israelites were sore afraid!

It is not difficult to imagine the terror and the perplexity that came over the multitude. The Israelites were cut off to the rear by their enemy, they were hemmed in by mountains on both sides, and their advance was barred by *twenty-five miles* of dark sea water. Escape seemed humanly impossible. Having the flower of the Egyptian army behind them and being unarmed, unprepared for war, and encumbered by wives and children, the Israelites appeared doomed.

And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.
(Exod. 14:11,12)

Those relatively few Israelites who were aware of the cloud of Jehovah’s presence above them called aloud and besought the Lord in their distress. However, many forgot all that God had done on their behalf; and giving themselves completely over to despair, they murmured against Moses and complained that he had brought them into this situation against their will. With bitter sarcasm they reminded Moses that Egypt possessed illimitable burial sites along the entire length of the land, but just a stone’s throw from the Nile, where the dead could be buried in the sandy wastes and the desert hills . . . so why bring them here to die?¹³

And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, *stand still*, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no

13. “Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him *at the sea*, even at the Red sea” (Psa. 106:7). There is a lesson here. At times the extremity of fear causes some to forget the divine benefits of freedom and salvation. They then seek to return to Egypt (the world) instead of continuing to trust in the protection of the God who had already delivered them and taken them for His own people.

more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. (Exod. 14:13,14)

On this most trying occasion the faith of Moses was illustrious. He did not stoop to reason or answer the false charges brought against him. Instead, his meek, unruffled, magnanimous composure permitted him to properly fulfill his obligation as leader and representative of the Israelites. As a result, he was able to restore their confidence and hope of redemption.

First, Moses instructed Israel to remain still and to watch the salvation of the Lord; that is, they, as a people, would not have to lift, as it were, so much as the proverbial finger, for God would bring the deliverance. Next Moses boldly declared that the Egyptians whom they had seen on the heights would die.

Apparently, Moses had come to this conclusion based upon the information the Lord had given him the previous day; namely, that it was God's purpose to "be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host" (Exod. 14:4). In other words, God Himself intended to destroy the whole pursuing host so that, henceforth, He might be known conclusively as Jehovah.

Thus far, Moses' perception of the matter was correct. However, since at the same time he had also been commanded to go and encamp at Pi-hahiroth on the gulf, he evidently *falsely assumed* that the Lord would *then and there*—upon the pursuing archenemy's arrival at the scene—visit upon the Egyptians a final judgment even more significant than that of the death of their firstborn.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? . . .
(Exod. 14:15)

In fullness of faith and with complete confidence in God's willingness and capability to fulfill His Word, Moses began to call upon the Lord in prayer, having in mind this premature conception of when the judgment would be rendered. Scarcely had he begun to pray when the Lord cut short his petition.

It should not be concluded that the Lord was displeased with Moses. Rather, the Lord knew that it was more propitious for Moses to be silent, as well as the people, and now observe the salvation that Divine Wisdom had had in mind all along.

. . . speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.
(Exod. 14:15)

When Moses received the divine command to go *forward*, he no longer questioned by what kind of miracle the salvation would be effected.

But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. (Exod. 14:16)

Moses merely had to lift up his rod over the sea, and the sea would divide. The purpose of this command to Moses was to show all Israel that the divine instruction and power about to be manifested were confided to and through Moses as God's chosen representative. In addition, the lifting of the rod inferred that Moses had

been appointed their leader not merely in their Exodus from Egypt but also henceforth to the Promised Land.

And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. . . . And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. (Exod. 14:17,19,20)

First, the movement of the majestic column, or pillar portion of the cloud, from before the Israelites to a position behind them—its literal transfer through the air—must have excited the people. The pillar cloud now became an effectual barrier between the Israelites and their pursuers. The front side of the pillar cloud to the rear of the Israelites, as well as the main cloud formation above, overspreading the entire nation, produced light, a symbol of favor, that shone down upon and before the people of God. In contrast, the back side of the pillar cloud caused a darkening effect to the rearward, cloaking the Egyptian pursuers in utter darkness and confusion, a symbol of wrath and disfavor.

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east[ward] wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground. (Exod. 14:21,22)

In endeavoring to define the action of this vehement wind, which both literally and laterally divided a wide swath or expanse in the sea (perhaps two miles in breadth), one must keep in mind the fact that the Scriptures represent the entire affair as miraculous. Were not the ten plagues visited upon Egypt all supernatural occurrences? What about the astonishing cloud formation that continued to accompany the children of Israel from Succoth? And other miracles assisted the Israelites in their flight, such as the statement that “there was not one feeble person among their tribes” to hinder their progress (Psa. 105:37). Therefore, if one wishes to know the *true story* of the Exodus, *as it happened*, one must have implicit faith in, and an explicit understanding of, the Word of God.

Unwittingly, many sincere believers try to assist the Lord when they explain how the dividing of the Red Sea was accomplished. They say that the crossing was made possible by the combined action of the wind and a natural recession of the tide, both uniquely occurring at the right moment and place. But does not this type of explanation somewhat vitiate or minimize the awesome power and manner in which the crossing is described in the sacred annals?

The biblical account specifically indicates that the waters were caused “to go back,” or recede, from before the fleeing multitude (Exod. 14:21). Therefore, the

direction of the wind, as well as the direction of the fleeing host, was one and the same: from west to east.¹⁴

However, it should be noted that such a mighty wind blowing in *either* direction—either toward or away from the Israelites—would have caused certain problems. An opposing or contrary wind would not merely have impeded or slowed progress but, because of its fierce intensity, would have prevented passage altogether. Moreover, a favorable accompanying gale of such proportions blowing at their backs would have blown the children of Israel into complete disarray (if not into a trajectory orbit!). In other words, if the premise of an eastward thrust in the power of the wind is accepted as valid, it must still be explained more *definitively*. The question arises as to how or in what manner such a wind could have acted to benefit the Israelites, particularly since the wind is spoken of as having prevailed throughout the entire night of their transit through the waters.

The popular literalist conception of some fundamentalist believers is that the wind divided the sea from shore to shore, from Egypt to Sinai, *at once*, and that the purpose of the *continuance* of the wind was primarily to hold back the waters, to the right and to the left, until the Israelites had safely crossed. While such a concept manifests a complete faith and a commendable confidence in the power of God, it still does not dispel the problem of why such a *continuing wind* did not adversely affect the people as they marched across its pathway.

The solution lies in the realization that the *ferocity* of the wind did not at any time blow directly upon the Israelites. Rather, the concentrated force was directed in front of them as if through a gigantic, invisible air hose, so that the seabed opened *slowly* and *progressively* before them.¹⁵

14. Most translators, although well qualified and skilled in their work, have somehow overlooked the critical importance of the Hebrew word *qadim* in this instance, thereby unintentionally hindering a fuller appreciation of the miraculous nature of the Exodus. Admittedly, as a general rule, *qadim* should be translated simply as “east.” It is, therefore, no surprise that in almost all common versions of the Bible, the wind that caused the Red Sea to divide is represented as arising *out of* or *from* the east. However, since the context of Exodus 14:21 indicates movement in a specific direction other than from the east, the word *qadim* accordingly takes on its alternate or variant meaning of “eastward”; that is, a wind blowing *toward* the east, an *eastward* (or literally, a “forward”) wind. In Ezekiel 47:3 the same translators were forced by contextual evidence, which could not be obviated, to interpret *qadim* correctly as “eastward.”

Further supportive evidence follows:

(1) *Qadim* means *east, what is before, eastward*. (Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible*, 8th ed. rev. [London: Lutterworth Press, 1939], p. 284.)

(2) “*Qadim* masc.—I. *the front, only forwards*, Hab. 1:9.” (Benjamin Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* [London: Samuel Bagster & Sons Ltd., n.d.], p. 653.)

(3) Re *qadim*: “Not necessarily ‘east.’ See LXX. (Ex. xiv. 21), and Philo, *V.M.* i. 32.” (Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1892], Vol. 1, p. 112.)

(4) *Qadim* in the text of Habakkuk 1:9 is translated *forwards*. (J. N. Darby’s new translation of *The Holy Bible* [London: G. Morrish, 1920].)

(5) The Hebrew letter *he* local in “strong eastward wind” is *suffixed* to the adjective, in lieu of the adverb, as a determinative of direction, i.e., *forward*. (Author’s note.)

15. “He *rebuked* the Red sea” (Psa. 106:9). “And with the *blast* of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together” (Exod. 15:8). “The waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled” (Psa. 77:16).

Thou [O God] didst walk through the sea. . . . (Hab. 3:15)

. . . and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. (Exod. 14:22,29)

As the waters of the sea were divided or forced aside by the power of the wind, they *remained open behind*, to the right and to the left, by means of an instantaneous and miraculous conversion of the immediate, adjacent waters from a liquid to a semisolid state. Moreover, the strong “forward” wind that preceded the multitude would have invariably induced a secondary, more moderate wind behind it to both assist and hasten the crossing.

The birth of Israel as a nation—their rescue from the depths of the ocean floor and safe deposit on Sinai’s shore—was an awesome spectacle of sight and sound.

And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. (Exod. 14:23)

The violence of the storm in the Red Sea was such that the roaring of the waves could be distinctly heard.¹⁶ The angry, raging sea was kept back on both sides by an invisible power and shield of containment.¹⁷ As the tempestuous waters beat and churned against this barrier, they curdled, “*congealed*,” or solidified into successive layers described as “*floods*,” which stacked up like sheaves or a “heap of great waters” (Exod. 15:8; Hab. 3:15).

The *depth* of the sea that opened before the people—the *height* of the lateral waters—is emphasized repeatedly.¹⁸ Moreover, such waves as dared to leap, or vault, over the forbidden wall were countered in such a manner that the overspreading water *rigidified* in its stance, as though frozen in midair. The resultant appearance of the upper rim of the water on either side was a frigid posturing with grotesque irregularity, resembling ogre-like “hands [held] on high” (Hab. 3:10).¹⁹ Thus the scene appeared to those walking in safety upon the dry seabed beneath the shadow of this threatening but now impotent and immobile mass; and thus it is written.

And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. (Exod. 14:24,25)

16. “The deep uttered *his voice*” (Hab. 3:10).

17. “The *floods* stood upright as an heap, and the depths were *congealed*” (Exod. 15:8).

18. “The floods *stood upright* [cf. Psa. 78:13] *as an heap* [Hebrew *ned*, mound or wall], and the *depths were congealed* [Hebrew *qapha*, curdled (as cheese)—cf. Job 10:10] *in the heart of the sea*” (Exod. 15:8). “Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the *great waters*” (Psa. 77:19). “Thou [O God] didst walk through the sea with thine [invisible] horses [escorting Israel to safety—cf. 2 Kings 6:15–17], through the heap [Hebrew *chomer*, clay or mortar] of *great waters*” (Hab. 3:15). “So he led them through the *depths*, as through the [dry] wilderness” (Psa. 106:9). “And the waters were a *wall* [Hebrew *chomah*, wall or enclosure] unto them on their right hand, and on their left” (Exod. 14:22,29).

19. “The deep . . . lifted up his hands on high” (Hab. 3:10).

As further accompaniment to the scene already described, a fierce storm occurred throughout the night.²⁰ Attendant lightning, peals of thunder, and reverberations led in increasing degree to the discomfort, delay, and ultimate consternation of the Egyptians in their pursuit in the deep.

And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and *all the host* of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained *not* so much as *one* of them.
(Exod. 14:27,28)

When the passage of the Israelites was fully accomplished, Moses again lifted up his rod over the sea. A remarkable and immediate transformation took place. The wind that had previously advanced before the Israelites had by now entered a sufficient distance inland into the wilderness so as not to adversely affect the assembling of the exiting multitude upon the shore of the Sinai peninsula, though it continued to blow from west to east. After a momentary lull, however, the wind, which previously had blown harmlessly over the heads of the Israelites—its power slanted downward to open a passage in the Red Sea before them—now, all of a sudden, freshly renewed and retraced in part its journey over the sea, expending its fury down upon the pursuing enemy host.²¹ As though in concert, the pent-up waters were released from their bondage. The sea rapidly sought its own level, rushing into the open, formerly restricted area to converge upon Pharaoh, his army, and his chariots.²² The turbulence of the wind and the returning water momentarily cast up the enemy host as flotsam before they sank as lead to the bottom of the sea, all life being extinguished. When part of the host again began to surface, the continuing

20. “The clouds poured out water [upon the Egyptians]: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook” (Psa. 77:17,18).

21. “Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters” (Exod. 15:10). “The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone” (Exod. 15:5). “Their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters” (Neh. 9:11).

22. Rameses II (the Great) and Menepthah, his son, are commonly accepted as the pharaohs of the oppression and of the Exodus, respectively. However, this view fails to harmonize the record in Holy Writ with Egyptian annals. The sacred canon distinctly declares that the king who ruled Egypt at the time of the miraculous crossing perished in his pursuit of the Israelites. “The horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea . . . and brought again the waters of the sea upon them. . . there remained not so much as one of them” (cf. Exod. 14:28; 15:19; Psa. 136:15).

The Egyptian annals indicate that *both* Rameses, earlier in his reign, and later his immediate successor, Menepthah, in his third regal year, ravaged an *Israeli-occupied* Canaan. Since the biblical account indicates that the Israelites did not even enter the land of Palestine until forty years after their transit through the deep waters (Josh. 5:6), the Egyptian invasion would have occurred subsequently, that is, many years *after* the death of the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

Indeed, there is strong evidence to support the view that the passage in the sea occurred centuries prior to the reigns of Rameses II and Menepthah, at the end of Egyptian Dynasty XII instead of the purported Dynasty XIX. (Immanuel Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos* [Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1952], Vol. 1, p. 99.)

wind, which by now would have moderated considerably, caused such remains to be deposited as debris upon the shore of the sea.

Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.
(Exod. 14:30)

The sacred narrative states that the Israelites actually saw the Egyptian dead upon the shore. For them to behold the dead on the *Egyptian* shore would have been impossible, however, for that shore was now more than twenty-five miles away. Therefore, the only logical conclusion is that the remains were deposited upon the Sinai shore of the Red Sea—at the very feet of the Israelites, as it were. In this manner the Lord provided the Hebrews with the additional spoil of arms, clothing, and equipment. It is quite possible that at this psychological moment the wind quickly dissipated into an eerie calm, its mission satisfied, accomplished.

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song . . . I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. . . . The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. . . . And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. . . . And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. (Exod. 15:1,5,8,20,21)

Is it any wonder, then, that Moses, Miriam, and the children of Israel sang with such holy enthusiasm, and that the women danced with glee, having just witnessed so great a salvation? Is it any wonder that notable men and prophets of old, such as David, Nehemiah, Habakkuk, and Nahum, exultantly lifted pen and no doubt voice in ecstasy when, like Moses, they reflected upon the momentous occasion of their national deliverance? To the praise and glory of God, they testified also of the miraculous nature of the deliverance—not with exaggerated expressions of exuberance or redundant hyperbole, but with a balanced and appropriate poetic appraisal of a *reality*.

As awesome as the literal Exodus was, it also serves as a double picture or a prototype of a still grander salvation. The Exodus prefigures both a present and a future deliverance of the willing and obedient of mankind from the chains of sin, sorrow, and death into the joyous, everlasting liberty of the sons of God.

And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses. (Exod. 14:31)

Appendix 17: Interesting Parallels

The purpose at hand is not to moralize and give an in-depth explanation but to illustrate correspondencies of sequence between the seven parables of the Master in Matthew 13, plus their admonitions, and the dispensational experiences clearly implied and reflected in the messages to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation.

1. Parable of the Sower and Church of Ephesus (A.D. 34–70)

Matthew 13

3 . . . Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth

the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Mark 4

21 And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

22 For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

25 For he that hath, to him shall be

given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

Revelation 2

1 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;

2 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:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat

against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. . . .

Revelation 12

1 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:

In this first parable the quality of the soil in one's heart, not the seed sown, is the determining factor of the success or failure in fruitage. *Only good seed*, representing the Word or pure doctrines of truth, are visually sown. This corresponds to the Church of the apostolic era, Ephesus, which signifies that which is *first* or *desirable*. The early Church is also seen as the woman in heaven clothed in the brilliant sunlight radiance of the gospel of Christ, crowned with the star-studded diadem of the teachings of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and standing upon the moon foundation of the Law and the Prophets (Rev. 12:1; cf. Rev. 6:1,2).

Both the Parable of the Sower and the message to the Church of Ephesus refer to the candle and/or the candlestick. Seen in Ephesus as one walking among the candlesticks, Jesus threatens the removal of the candlestick from the first Church—that is, removal of the privilege of being light-bearer to the world—unless repentance is forthcoming. The Parable of the Sower according to the Gospel of Mark includes a similar testimony and threat of removal (Mark 4:3–25; see also Luke 8:16–18).

The presence of evil in the parable is seen in the fowl of the air, which signify the machinations of Satan and his demons. These indeed work mischief, but such injury is confined to the seed strewn on the beaten path by the wayside—to those who hear the Word and “understandeth it not.” The Lord's faithful in the parallel Ephesus period are commended for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans and for their utter impatience toward false apostles acting in the role of light-bearers. Proponents of error in the early Church posed no immediate danger, for they were promptly exposed and their influence uprooted (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17,18; Acts 5:1–11; 8:9–24).

In verse 20 of the parable, does not the expression concerning those who receive the Word “into stony places . . . and anon with joy” but by and by are offended bear some semblance to those in Ephesus who left their first love and did not repent?

And last but not least, when the Parable of the Sower was initially preached to the multitude and again later when its meaning was explained to the disciples, the Master concluded with the admonition “If any man have ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 13:9; Mark 4:23). Is not this warning strikingly similar to Jesus’ remark at the close of his message to Ephesus: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”?

2. Parable of the Wheat and the Tares and Church of Smyrna (A.D. 70–313)

Matthew 13

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

36 Then . . . his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Revelation 2

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9 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.

10 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.

Revelation 12

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares depicts the intrusion of error and evil-doers into the professed Church of Christ. As in the Parable of the Sower, good seed are again sown, but in addition, bad seed sown by the Adversary enter the scene, causing the growth of numerous tares, that is, children of the Wicked One. What in the previous Parable of the Sower and in Ephesus was seen as scattered individuals of ill repute here and there, now, in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares and in Smyrna, is seen as an aggregate of tares, a congregation called the “synagogue of Satan.”

Evil did not prosper in the early Church (Acts 5:11–13), but when “men slept” (when the apostles were deceased), things soon took a turn for the worse. The “mystery of iniquity” (2 Thess. 2:7), which earlier was secretly at work, now, in this second parable, obtained a footing, took root, and then surfaced into view.

In the first parable the good seed are explained as the Word, but in this second parable a more noticeable and advanced growth appears styled “children of the kingdom.” The tare seed are called “children of the wicked one.” The Adversary is more prominent in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares and also in the message to the Church of Smyrna, which refers to the synagogue of *Satan* and the casting of some into prison by the *Devil*.

The dragon (the Roman power in the Smyrna period) considered the appearance of the woman robed with sunlight in the ecclesiastical heaven a potential threat to its supremacy, particularly in regard to the affection and worship of the populace of the empire in religious matters. Therefore, the professed Church of Christ—merely nominal Christians as well as the true—were considered the enemy of Rome. To ensure his success, Satan had adherents in both camps. He already had the controlling interest in the ranks of the dragon power (his preferred role), but he also had representation through the Nicolaitan spirit of insemination, which he introduced into the virgin Church and which resulted in fertilization during the Smyrna era. Thus Satan, the Devil, the Dragon, is seen as an active contestant for possession of the Lord’s wheat field in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares and in the message to the Church of Smyrna. This rivalry for men’s souls surfaces in the parable “when the blade was sprung up” (verse 26), in the message to Smyrna, and in the visible labor pains of the woman in Revelation 12:2.

Some may have difficulty synchronizing the time feature of the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares with the Smyrna period because the activity in the parable is described as taking place during the harvest, or end of the age. But the mention of the harvest is an addendum or forecast of a still more *future* event. The setting or time feature of the parable is when the servants of the householder come and say, “Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence hath it tares? . . . Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?” (verses 27 and 28).

3. Parable of the Mustard Seed and Church of Pergamos (A.D. 313–1157)

Matthew 13

31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Revelation 2

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 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.

14 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 stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which

thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Revelation 12

3 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.

4 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.

5 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.

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

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

9 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.

In the first parable, the Parable of the Sower, only good seed were sown; in the second, that of the Wheat and the Tares, both good and bad seed were sown; in this third parable, only a bad (the mustard) seed is sown in the field. Thus a progression of evil is seen. Jesus draws attention to the demonstration in nature of the rise and development of the mustard seed, "the least of all seeds," to become the giant of the herbal kingdom.

The parable aptly portrays Pergamos as that which signifies "earthly elevation," or promontory, in the rise of Papacy. In this period the nominal Church adopted pagan rituals and Balaamitic practices. This accommodation attracted alien fowl to come and lodge on branches within the ranks of orthodoxy. It also led to a rivalry

for religious supremacy between the former (but now supposedly sanctified) pagan priesthood and the homegrown Nicolaitan clergy. Though the latter gained the ascendancy, cardinal features of doctrines of the Balaam priesthood were retained.

The rise of Papacy during the Pergamos era parallels to a remarkable degree the lesson of the subsequent growth and prosperity of the mustard seed. The developing mustard seed also corresponds to the scene in Revelation 12:5 of Antichrist as the male child who arose from infancy in A.D. 314 to the stature of the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2:3) and dominance in the religious realm in A.D. 539. But this triumph marked only another giant step in its still higher aspiration for superiority in the political arena.

Papal political supremacy approached attainment in January 1077 during the pontificate of Gregory VII when Emperor Henry IV was forced to appear before him at Canossa as a penitent sinner standing three days barefoot in the cold of winter. Such coercion set a dangerous precedent for the pope's spiritual authority over that of the temporal. This act of acquiescence by the earthly sovereign was not lost sight of in the succeeding generation.

In the 1100s Emperor Frederick Barbarossa haughtily refused to act as squire to Pope Adrian IV and to hold bridle and stirrup as the pope prepared to mount his steed. The emperor finally submitted to this affront to his imperial dignity only when it was pointed out there was ample precedent for the act. Two years later the same pope sent a letter to the same emperor, who was in conference at Besancon in Burgundy, France, referring to the imperial crown as a "benefice" "conferred" by him on the emperor. Such incidents illustrate the pending achievement of Papacy's final aspiration in the twelfth century.

4. Parable of the Leaven and Church of Thyatira (A.D. 1157–1367)

Matthew 13

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Revelation 2

18 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;

19 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.

20 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.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Leaven is a symbol of sin and of the doctrines of false spiritual leadership (Matt. 16:12). Again, as in the previous parable, emphasis is placed on the implantation of an erroneous seed in Christendom. The seed now is pictured in the form of leaven. The setting of the parable is during the era of papal supremacy.

Three features stand out prominently in the Parable of the Leaven: A *woman* is hiding *leaven* in *three measures* of meal or unbaked dough. She is clandestinely tampering with the food, or doctrine, of the Church. In the message of Thyatira an alternate rendering of the appellation signifies “tiara,” or diadem of royalty. This definition refers to the period when the Roman Church reached the pinnacle of its authority, when the woman, antitypical Jezebel, was tolerated to teach and to seduce the Lord’s servants to commit fornication.

Three barley loaves of doctrinal bread were contaminated by Jezebel so that they became harlot’s food (Num. 5:15). In Revelation 6:6 when the Third Seal was broken, a black horse appeared; and its rider, denoting papal authority, was seen holding a pair of balances, which indicated control of the food supply during a period of famine. *Three measures* of barley to one measure of wheat were available for a day’s earning.

This correspondency between the three measures of meal in the Parable of the Leaven and the three measures of barley in the vision of the Third Seal is remarkable. The period of the Third Seal covered the years 539 to 1367,¹ whereas the Thyatira era extended from 1157 to 1367.² In other words, the period of the Third Seal overlaps the message of the fourth Church and extends into the fourth parable era. The last 210 years of the Third Seal era correspond and synchronize with the whole of the Thyatira period, as well as with the setting of the woman who was seen leavening the loaves.

5. Parable of the Hidden Treasure and Church of Sardis (A.D. 1367–1517)

Matthew 13

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Revelation 3

1 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.

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

4 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.

Jesus, seated in a boat, preached the previous four parables while the whole multitude stood on the seashore. He then sent the multitude away and went into a house; his disciples came to him there and he continued to discourse that same day on the next three parables (Matt. 13:1,2,36).

1. See page 164.

2. See page 52.

The subject matter of the Parable of the Hidden Treasure concerns something highly prized found in a field (a symbol of the earth and its inhabitants, particularly the so-called Christian world). The word “treasure” frequently calls to mind something *hidden* or *buried* in land or sea, something rare or scarce, something valuable. All of these circumstances or conditions compare well with the events prophesied about Sardis. While the true Church in this era had an exaggerated reputation for greatness in zeal and in numbers, as far as any *collective public testimony* was concerned, Christ’s true witnesses were reduced to silence. They were *buried* amidst the nominal mass of believers and, for all practical purposes, were hidden from view after the death of the reformer Wycliffe.

Sardis, signifying *remnant*, also suggests smallness in terms of numbers or survival. This definition agrees with the testimony “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.*” The “man” in the Parable of the Hidden Treasure, who for joy went and sold all that he had, is Jesus, who laid down his life and bought the world in order to redeem those most dear to his heart (Matt. 12:48–50), “the *church of God*, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28) and who “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth . . . being the *firstfruits* unto God and to the Lamb” (Rev. 14:4).

6. Parable of the Pearl of Great Price and Church of Philadelphia (A.D. 1517–1877)

Matthew 13

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Revelation 3

7 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. . . .

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I

will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 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.

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

12 Him that overcometh . . . 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. . . .

The pearl-bearing oyster lines the inside of its shell, which is composed of a harsh granular surface, with a secretion that produces a beautifully smooth surface; thus any unpleasant friction is prevented from harming the tender organism within. This secretion is laid down in extremely thin layers of translucent film of iridescent quality. The accretion of these layers of film results in sufficient thickness and hardness to allow cutting into ornamental material called “mother-of-pearl.”

In addition to the pearl lining of these shells, the secretion is sometimes found in a detached manner around a grain of sand or other foreign body that intrudes between the mantle and the tender body of the mollusk; in self-defense the oyster is obliged to cover the cause of the offense, *which it has no power to remove*. Around this foreign body thin layers are deposited like the successive layers of an onion until the irritant is completely encysted, and thus a pearl is formed.

The lesson is that the outer shell, or vessel, represents the old man, or nature. The tender organism within can be likened to that person's ego and feelings. The intrusion of the foreign body, or irritant, illustrates the ministry of the permission of evil, which is so overruled by the operation and indwelling of God's Holy Spirit in one's heart acting as an unguent that there is laid up in heavenly store a separate new creation or treasure, a "pearl of great price."

The true Church is that "*one pearl*" in the parable. Hear the Bridegroom's appraisal of his spouse: "My dove, my undefiled *is but one*; she is *the only one* of her mother [the Sarah Covenant], she is *the choice one* of her that bare her" (Song of Sol. 6:9). And hear his comforting message to the faithful in Philadelphia: "I will make them [the true Church's persecutors] to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that *I have loved thee*" (Rev. 3:9).

Another lesson in the development of the pearl, which finds a correspondency in the Philadelphia era, is that of patient endurance. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience [Greek *hupomone*: endurance, continuance], I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10). "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire [like the pearl], wanting nothing" (James 1:3,4).

7. Parable of the Dragnet and Church of Laodicea (A.D. 1878–1998?)

Matthew 13

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye

understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

53 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

Revelation 3

14 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;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 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:

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

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

20 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.

The setting of this last parable is truly the harvest, the end of the age. The net cast into the waters represents the harvest or full ingathering of faithful professed believers, or “fish” (Matt. 4:19), from amidst the sea of humanity.

Each of the good fish being gathered into “vessels” (small congregations or ecclesias) is likened to a “scribe which is *instructed* unto the kingdom of heaven” and a “householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things new and old*,” even the dispensational truth provided by the Lord “when he cometh”—the “meat in due season” being served through the ministry of that “faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler [one appointed or set down as a steward] over his household, to give them *meat in due season*” (Matt. 13:52; 24:45; Luke 12:42,43). This emphasis on spiritual food corresponds to those in Laodicea who hear the Master’s prophetic 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” (Rev. 3:20).

The separating work related to the bad fish in the Parable of the Dragnet compares with those in Laodicea who are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17). The bad fish are *cast away* into the “furnace of fire” (trouble). As tares (Matt. 13:40), they are burned (cease their profession to be true wheat); and as “lukewarm” Laodiceans, “neither cold nor hot,” they are *spewed out* of the Lord’s mouth (Rev. 3:16).

In conclusion, the seven successive parables of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew are prophetic foregleams of the apocalyptic messages to, and the experiences of, the professed Church of Christ throughout its gospel career.

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