

The Book of Revelation

Introduction

This great final Book of the Word of God may well be called the capstone of the entire Bible. A pyramid becomes a pyramid by the great capstone, and the Bible becomes the full and complete revelation of God through this document "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." If this book were not in the Bible, the Bible would be an unfinished book; the issues raised in the preceding documents would be forever unsolved.

This disposes at once of the miserable attempts which have been made by critics and others to eliminate the book of Revelation from the canon of the New Testament. Revelation is a necessity. "A book which offers in some way or other to open up those secrets of God which yet lie hidden in the future, seems wholly in place in our sacred Scriptures. It is towards some such book that our thoughts have been moving as we travelled through the Gospels, the Acts and Epistles; for all alike point forward to a consummation of all things, to a time when the kingdom of God shall be finally and completely established, when all creation shall cease to groan and travail, when the inheritance of which we have received the first fruits shall be wholly ours. It is, moreover, towards some such book that our hearts seem to yearn as we travel through the earlier volumes of experience, discovering the contradictions between what should be and what is, accumulating impressions of the Protean forms and tremendous power of wickedness, and craving for the manifestation of triumphant righteousness. Thus both the Christian Bible and the Christian consciousness seem to demand a book of revelation for their completion or satisfaction" (C. Anderson Scott).

The Authorship

The title of the book as we find it in the King James Version is "The Revelation of St. John the Divine"; the better title would be to take the opening words of the book and call it "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." But the above title tells us that John is the author. This is confirmed by the book itself, for we read twice in the first chapter that the writer says "John to the seven churches," and again, "I, John, who also am your brother" (1:4, 9). Furthermore, at the close of the book he names himself again: "And I, John, saw these things" (22:8). The Church down to the middle of the third century has but one testimony as to the authorship of this book, and that is, the Johannine, that John, the beloved disciple, the son of Zebedee, wrote this book in the isle of Patmos when banished there. The only exceptions were the Alogians, a heretical sect which also rejected the Gospel of John, and a controversialist by name of Caius.

As it is of much interest to be acquainted with the testimony of the many early witnesses in refutation of the destructive critics, who attack this great book, we give a brief summary of these historical evidences.

The first witness is Justin Martyr, who wrote about the year 140 in the Dialogue, "that a certain man, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, prophesied in an apocalypse (revelation) which came to him that believers should reign a thousand years in Jerusalem. Melito, Bishop of Sardis, according to the historian Eusebius, wrote treatises on "the devil and on the Apocalypse of John." This was about the year 170. Then follow the testimonies of Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch (180); and Apollonius.

A greater witness still is Irenaeus. We remind the reader of our introduction to the Gospel of John, and call to mind the fact that Irenaeus was in his youth acquainted with Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John. A number of times Irenaeus speaks of "Ioannes Domini discipulus"--John the disciple of the Lord--and that he had written the Apocalypse. Tertullian (about 200 A.D.) refers in his writings four times to the Revelation as being the work of the Apostle John. The so-

called Muratorian fragments quote from the Revelation, and it can be shown by the context of the passage that the Apostle John was believed to be author.

Clement of Alexandria (about 200 A.D.) mentions also John, the beloved disciple as the writer of the book. A scholar of Clement was Origen (233 A.D.). He made careful research about the canonicity and genuineness of the books of the New Testament. While he reported carefully any doubts or disputes about different books, he has nothing to say about the Revelation and its author. He quotes from the book frequently, and it proves that in his time no question was raised about John being the author. Hippolytus, Bishop of Ostia (240 A.D.) quotes John's words many times and does not leave us in doubt that he means the son of Zebedee.

Then follow a host of witnesses. The first commentator, as far as we know, of the Revelation was Bishop Victorinus. He states positively that the Apostle John wrote the Revelation (about 303 A.D.). Ephrem Syrus (about 378), the greatest scholar in the Syrian church, repeatedly in his numerous writings, cites the Revelation as canonical and ascribes it to the Apostle John. The Syrian translation of the Bible, the Peshito, probably made in the second century, does not contain the book of Revelation, yet Ephrem Syrus possessed the Syrian translation. Scholars who have examined this question say that the Peshito in its original version had the book of Revelation, and that it was later detached, while others advanced the theory that the Peshito translation may have been made in the first century when the Apocalypse was not yet generally known.

After citing many more witnesses, including Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Augustine-- and others, Dean Alford says: "The apostolic authorship rests on the firmest ground. We have it assured to us by one who had companied men who had known St. John himself; we have it held in continuous succession by Fathers in all parts of the Church. Nowhere, in primitive times, does there appear any counter-tradition on the subject."

The First Critic

This unquestionable historical evidence of the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse was first attacked by Dionysius, the disciple of Origen and Bishop of Alexandria. In the second half of the third century this scholar raised his voice against the solid traditional view, declaring that not the same man could have written the fourth Gospel, the Epistles of John and Revelation. He also pointed out the contrast between the language, the grammar, and the diction of the Apocalypse and the other writings of the Apostle John. He suggested another man by name of John, a presbyter of Ephesus, as the author of the Revelation. He spoke of two tombs in Ephesus, one in which the body of the apostle was buried and in the other John the presbyter. But Dionysius spoke of this John the presbyter, yet he was entirely unknown to him. It was a new idea he invented to back up his contention, for such a person was wholly unknown to the ecclesiastical tradition in the church of Alexandria in the middle of the third century. Nor does it appear that his opinion on the authorship of the Revelation made any permanent impression on the Alexandrian church. That this "John the presbyter" is a fictitious person, who never existed, is fully demonstrated by the entire, the complete disappearance of John the presbyter from the memory of the Church of the second century.

But modern critics like Bleek, Duesterdieck, Ewald, and others have seized upon this man of straw and followed the invention of Dionysius about the two Johns. Other critics have gone a step further and reject wholly the tradition that the Apostle John lived and died in Ephesus, thus making the other John the sole outstanding bearer of the name in that community, ascribing to him not only the book of Revelation but also the fourth Gospel. Modern critics reject the Johannine authorship of the Revelation. They hold that a work of small compass, by somebody, nobody knows who wrote it, was worked over by somebody else, then expanded by somebody else, passing through three or four redactions till it took on the form of the book we call "The Revelation." They also claim that at best the Revelation is "a Christian redaction of a Jewish apocalypse."

The book also received a strange treatment from the different reformers. Luther for a time treated

the Revelation with suspicion and questioned its inspiration; later he greatly modified this opinion. Zwingli followed the theory of Dionysius and attributed it to another John; he excluded it from the Bible. Calvin, however, believed in its canonicity and upheld the apostolic authorship. Melancthon did the same.

All the criticism has not affected in the least the truth that John, the Apostle, the author of the Gospel of John and The Epistles, is the author also of the book of Revelation. The fact is, the Holy Spirit seems to have taken special care to preserve such historical evidences for the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which makes the true authorship and date unimpeachable.

"The apostolic authorship and canonicity of the Apocalypse were generally accepted, and went unchallenged, until toward the third century. Then contrary views began to make their appearance. But when the evidence, direct and indirect, on either side is weighed in respect of its date, its quantity, its quality, its freedom from bias, the external evidence in favor of the Johannine authorship, outweighs the other at every point."

The Date of the Book

It is interesting to find that the modern critics have done the opposite with the date of the book of Revelation from what they have done with the other Bible books. They generally fix the date of a book later than the traditional view holds; but they assign to the Apocalypse an earlier date than that which the Church has held in the past. Some have dated it during the reign of Nero. They do so on account of some particular interpretation of certain historical allusions. Of late some of the critics have adopted the later date, the year 96 A.D., that is the traditional view held from the beginning. Irenaeus, the friend of Polycarp, who knew John, stated about the year 180 that "the Revelation was seen at Patmos at the end of Domitian's reign." Domitian reigned from 81 to 96 A.D. Then Clement of Alexandria left the testimony behind that John returned from his exile to the island of Patmos on the death of the emperor, which was Emperor Domitian, in the year 96. This is the correct date.

The Message and Interpretation

Revelation is marked out in the beginning as a book of prophecy (1:3). Of this we have more to say in the Preface and Key to Revelation, which follows this introduction. Furthermore, the book is in greater part written in symbolical language, which is a very important fact to be remembered in the interpretation. The message is prophetic, and this message is clothed in symbols, which are not difficult to interpret. Our analysis will show that the accusation brought against this book, as being disjointed a veritable chaos, is wholly unfounded. Like all the other books of the Word of God it has a perfect arrangement.

There are three modes of interpreting this book, with its prophecies and symbols. The historical interpretation claims that the book covers the entire history of the Church and pictures the antagonism of the forces of evil in the world against the church. This method was in vogue during the Reformation period and for several centuries down to the nineteenth, especially during the Napoleonic upheavals, it was the acknowledged method of interpretation. It still has supporters. The Reformers saw in the Antichrist, the beast, the pope and the Romish church. Luther was very strong on that. On the other side, the Catholic exegetes, who also employed the same method, branded Protestantism as the Antichrist, and discovered that the mysterious 666 was contained in the name of Dr. Martin Luther. Then Napoleon was seen by believers living toward the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries as fulfilling the thirteenth chapter in Revelation. Many predictions were made and the different numbers, the three years and a half, etc., applied to the stirring history of that time, just the same as men today are trying to figure out the duration of the "times of the Gentiles," and when certain events must occur.

The Preterist School of interpretation teaches that the greater part of the prophecies of this book

have been fulfilled in the past in the struggles of the past, especially with the struggle of the Church with the Roman Empire, and that the victory of the Church as foretold in the book is accomplished. The third school is the so-called Futurist. This method of interpretation is the only satisfying one and in full harmony with the entire Prophetic Word. We follow this method in our annotations. Nothing beyond the third chapter of this book is fulfilled; all is still future, this is the claim of the Futurist school. The two chapters in which the word "Church" is exclusively found in Revelation (chapters 2 and 3) contain the prophecy concerning the Church on earth. This divinely given history of the Church is about finished and the predicted events from chapter 4 to the end of Revelation are yet to be accomplished. Chapters 5-19 contain the specific prophecy of the end of the age, the last seven years, the unfulfilled 70th week of Daniel's great prophecy. The scripturalness of this interpretation will be readily discovered by reading the "Preface and Key to Revelation."

There are other theories of interpretation. One of them is the Judaizing interpretation of the late Dr. Bullinger, who taught that nothing is fulfilled in the Apocalypse, that the seven churches in Asia are yet to come into existence. We request our readers and students of the Word to study carefully the article which follows this introduction and the analysis of the book.

PREFACE AND KEY TO THE REVELATION

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him." This is the first sentence with which this last book in God's Word begins. The best title therefore is, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Our Lord received, according to this opening statement, a revelation from God. This must be understood in connection with Himself as the Son of Man. As the Only-Begotten He had no need of a revelation; in His deity He is acquainted with all the eternal purposes. One with God He knows the end from the beginning. But He, who is very God, took on in incarnation the form of a servant, and thus being in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself (Phil. 2:7-8). And as the Man who had passed through death, whom God raised from the dead, and exalted at His own right hand, God gave Him this revelation concerning the judgment Of the earth and the glory of Himself. "God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory" (1 Peter 1:21). What this glory is which He received from God is fully and blessedly revealed in this book. It is the revelation of His acquired glory and how this glory is to be manifested in connection with the earth. And this revelation He makes known to His servants, because His own are sharers with Him in all He received from God.

Preeminently His Revelation

The Revelation is preeminently His revelation; the revelation of His person and His glory. "In the volume of the book it is written of Me ..." (Heb. 10:7) Martin Luther asked, "What Book and what person?" and answered, "There is only one Book--the Bible; and only one Person--Jesus Christ." The whole Book, the Word of God, bears witness of Him, Who is the living Word. He is the center, the sum total and the substance of the Holy Scriptures. The prayerful reader of the Bible will never read in vain if he approaches the blessed Book with the one desire to know Christ and His glory. His blessed face is seen on every page and the infallible Guide, the Holy Spirit, never fails to satisfy the longing of the believer's heart to know more of Christ. Inasmuch as this last Bible book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, an "unveiling" of Himself, we find in it the completest revelation of His person and His glory.

It is here where many expositions of Revelation have missed the mark. Occupied chiefly with the symbols of the book, the mysteries, the judgments and the promised consummation, they have neglected to emphasize sufficiently Him, who throughout this book is preeminently the center of everything. The reader of Revelation does well to read first of all through the entire book with this object in mind, to see what is said of our Lord, of His person, His present and His future glory.

We shall find all the features of His person and His work mentioned. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last (1:11); the Ancient of Days (1:14 compare with Daniel 7:9); the "I Am," that is,

Jehovah, "I am He that liveth" (1:18); the Son of God (2:18). These terms speak of His deity. His earthly life in humiliation is touched upon in the statement, "the Faithful Witness" (1:5). His death on the cross is likewise mentioned--"He hath washed us from our sins in His blood" (1:5); "He was dead" (1:18); "the Lamb as it had been slain" (5:6); "worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (5:12). He is mentioned twenty-eight times as the Lamb in Revelation and each time it reminds us of the cross and the great work accomplished there. His resurrection is seen for He is called, "the First-begotten from the dead" (1:5), and He speaks of Himself as, "He that was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore" (1:18); and again, "these things saith the first and the last, who was dead and is alive" (2:8).

Then we behold Him "in the midst" in glory, seen face to face by all the redeemed and worshipped by them, as well as by the heavenly hosts and ultimately by every creature, the fulfillment of Phil. 2:10-11, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Rev. 5:13-14). After the fifth chapter we have His revelation as the executor of the decreed judgments. He opens the seals; He sends forth the seven angels with the judgment trumpets and the seven angels with the judgment vials, in which the wrath of God is completed. "The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). Then He is seen in the glorious union with the bride (19:7-10) and as the victorious Christ who passeth out of heaven followed by the armies of heaven (19:11-21), conquering the opposing forces of evil, executing the wrath of Almighty God, appearing as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The twentieth chapter reveals Him as the reigning Christ. He and His saints with Him will reign over the earth for a thousand years. And all which follows reveals Him and His glory as well as the blessed and eternal results of His work.

A Book of Prophecy

Aside from the title of the book, which indicates that it deals with things future, there is a direct statement which determines its prophetic character. In the first beatitude of the seven which are found in the book, we read that it is a book of prophecy--"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy" (1:3). It is known to every intelligent student of the Bible that a good part of it is prophecy. The great prophecies concerning the people Israel and the nations of the world are found in the Old Testament Scriptures. In the New Testament there is but one book of Prophecy, the Revelation. As it is the capstone of the entire revelation of God, without which the Bible would be an unfinished book, we find in its pages the consummation of the great prophecies which were given by the prophets of God in Old Testament times.

For the study of this New Testament prophetic book, the knowledge of the chief content of the Old Testament Prophetic Word is therefore an absolute necessity. For instance, to a Christian who does not have a fair grasp of Daniel's great prophecies, or is ignorant of the place which the people Israel hold in the purposes of God, the book of Revelation is a sealed book, without any possible meaning. This is one of the chief reasons why this book has suffered so much both from the critics and from the hands of commentators. The Apostle Peter saith, "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 Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21). The better translation for "private interpretation" is, "its own interpretation." It means that the interpretation of prophecy must be done by comparing Scripture with Scripture. The holy men of God, the prophets, were the instruments of the Holy Spirit and made known God's purposes in a progressive way. To understand any prophecy is only possible by taking the entire Prophetic Word into consideration. That there is a wonderful harmony in the great body of prophetic dispensational truths as found in the Bible we have demonstrated in another volume. (Harmony of the Prophetic Word has been used under God's blessing to open the minds of many to the meaning of prophecy.) This principle finds its strongest application in the interpretation of the Revelation.

The Three Classes

In 1 Corinthians 10:32 the Apostle Paul speaks of three classes into which the human race is divided: the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God. In the Old Testament there was no Church of God, for the Church is a New Testament institution. As the Revelation is the book of consummation these three classes must be seen in the contents of this book. Many expositors have seen nothing but the struggles of the Church in her history in this book. This is true of the so-called Preterist school and also of the Historical school of interpretation. The Preterist school teaches a fulfillment of all the apocalyptic visions in the struggles of the Church in the past. The Historical school also teaches that the visions concern mostly the Church. These schools of interpretation leave out the Jews and what is written concerning them and their final history during the end of the age, preceding the glorious appearing of our Lord. Of late another school of interpreters has come into existence. They teach that the entire book of Revelation concerns the Jewish people and that there is nothing about the Church in this last book of the Bible. Any interpretation of Revelation which ignores the Jews, the people Israel and fulfillment of Old Testament predictions concerning them is wrong. And any interpretation which teaches that there is nothing about the Church in Revelation is equally wrong. The Church and her destiny on earth, the destiny of the true Church and the destiny of the apostate Church, or Christendom, is found in the book. The Jews and what concerns them in the end of the age, the Gentiles, the nations of the earth, and the judgments in store for them, as well as the future of the earth, a future of glory and blessing: all this is recorded in our New Testament book of prophecy.

The True Interpretation

There is a true interpretation of Revelation which is in harmony with all previous prophecies and which opens the book to our understanding. But how are we to find this true interpretation? We answer, the book itself furnishes it. This is an important fact, both convincing and conclusive. It is therefore of no profit to examine the different theories and schools of interpretation. We shall avoid the terms Preterist, Historical and Futurist, and not try, as it has been attempted, to reconcile these different modes of interpretation. There must be one true interpretation, and we claim that this is given to us by the Lord Himself in this book.

The Key Which Fits

It has often been truthfully said, every book in the Bible contains a key which unlocks the book. The Revelation is no exception. John the beloved disciple was in banishment in the isle of Patmos, as Daniel the man greatly beloved, was a captive in Babylon. The Lord called these two great servants to behold the panorama of the future. Both wrote down their visions. While in the book of Daniel we find no direct command to write, we find such a command in the first chapter of Revelation. John received divine instruction how to write the Revelation. We find this in the nineteenth verse, "Write therefore what thou hast seen, and the things that are, and the things that are about to be after these." (This is the correct translation of this important verse.) John, guided by the Holy Spirit then wrote the Revelation according to the divine direction. In examining this command to write we find that three things are mentioned. He is to write first the things he had seen, then the things which are, and finally the things that are about to be after these. When John received these instructions he had already seen something and the vision he had he was instructed to write down. Then present things, the things which are, and future things, to be after present things have passed away, must be located in this book. So we have the past, the present and the future in this key verse.

Three Divisions--Where are They

It is then clear that the book of Revelation must be divided into three main divisions. How are we to

locate these divisions? They are marked, so that we are not left in doubt about it. In the beginning of the fourth chapter we find a significant statement which shows where the third division begins. After these things, that is after the contents of the opening three chapters were past, John heard the same voice speaking to him once more. He sees a door opened in heaven and is told, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must take place after these things" (4:1). There can be no doubt at all that with the fourth chapter the seer beheld the things which take place after the preceding things which have passed away. The third division of Revelation begins with the fourth chapter. John beholds future things from heaven into which he had been taken "in the Spirit." The things he had seen and the things which are, are therefore contained in the first three chapters of the book.

The first chapter contains the things he had seen. "What thou seest write in a book" was the first instruction John received (verse 11). In the nineteenth verse he is told, "Write therefore what thou has seen." Between verse 11 and verse 19 he saw a vision, which he was to write, and this vision constitutes the first section or division of the book. The second and third chapters form the second division, the things which are. The beginning of the fourth chapter to the end of the book is the final, the third division. There is no better and more logical key. And this key given in the book determines the true interpretation.

The Patmos Vision

"The thing thou has seen"--the first section of Revelation is the great Patmos vision, chapter 1:12-18. It is the vision of the glorified Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (or lampstands).

The Things Which Are

The things which are, the present things, begin the prophetic section of the Revelation. The second and third chapters of Revelation, the things which are, contain the messages of our Lord addressed to the seven churches of Asia Minor. These messages contain the first great prophecy of Revelation. The prophecy concerns the Church on earth. We shall show in our comment on these two chapters that we have in them a divine history of the Church on earth. It is one of the most remarkable sections of the Prophetic Word. What this present age is to be religiously and how it will end is made known in other parts of the New Testament. Our Lord in some of His kingdom parables (Matthew 13) reveals the characteristics of this age. The parables of the sower, the evil seed sown into the field, the mustard seed parable and the parable of the leaven are prophetic and teach, in part at least, what the Church messages reveal. The Holy Spirit in the Epistolar testimony also reveals the religious and moral characteristics of the age, and depicts its departure from the truth, and its end. The destiny of the true Church is heavenly. She has a "blessed hope," which is to be with the Lord in glory. She is the body of Christ, and He is the "Head of the body." The Church is also the bride of Christ and He is the Bridegroom. The body is united to the Head in Glory; the bride will be joined to the Bridegroom. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is the Scripture which reveals this end for the true Church on earth.

The professing Church, Christendom, which rejects the doctrine of Christ and goes into apostasy has a far different destiny. The Lord will disown that which has denied His Name, and judgment and wrath is to be poured out upon apostate Christendom (2 Thess. 1:7-9). These predictions concerning the Church on earth are contained in the seven Church messages. When we come to the close of the third chapter we find a significant promise, and equally significant threat. "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation (trial) which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth" (3:10). This is the promise. It tells of the removal of the true Church, composed of all true believers, from this earthly scene. "I will spew thee out of My mouth" (3:16). This is the threat to the apostate Church. Both the promise and the threat will be fulfilled. After the third chapter the word "church" does not occur again in Revelation. The reason for this is obvious.

The history of the Church on earth terminates with the close of the third chapter. Because the true Church is no longer here but has been taken up into glory, and that which professes to be the Church is disowned by the Lord, therefore no more mention of the Church is made in Revelation.

The Things Which Are After These

The future things, things after the removal of the true Church from the earth, occupy the greater part of this book. It is of the greatest importance to see that nothing whatever after the third chapter of Revelation has yet taken place. Some speak of a past and partial fulfillment of some of the visions found in this section. In view of the scope of the book that is impossible. The open door in heaven, the voice which calls the seer to pass through that open door into heaven, is symbolical of the great coming event, the realization of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord for His saints. That this open door is mentioned immediately after the third chapter and John is suddenly in the spirit in the presence of the throne in heaven is very significant. It proves that the entire situation is now changed. And the first great vision is a vision of the saints in glory occupying thrones and worshipping God and the Lamb. With the sixth chapter the great judgment visions of this book begin. These great punitive dealings with the earth are executed from above. All transpires after the Lord has taken His saints into glory. No seal can be broken as long as this event has not been. But after the rapture, the seals of the book, which the Lamb received, are broken by Him, the trumpet and the vial judgments fall upon the earth. All this takes place after the home-going of the true Church and before the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (19:11, etc.).

Now this portion of Revelation from chapter 6 to 19 contains the events which transpire during the end of the age. It is the unfulfilled seventieth week of the great prophecy in the book of Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27). This "end of the age" will last twice 1260 days, that is seven years. It is absolutely necessary to understand the scope of the seventy-week prophecy in Daniel in order to understand the greater part of these chapters in the Revelation. (The Prophetic Daniel by A.C.G. contains a very simple exegesis of Daniel's prophecies.) We are led back upon Jewish ground. Events in connection with the Jewish people and Jerusalem are before us. The times of the Gentiles have taken on their final form of ten kingdoms which Daniel saw on the fourth beast as ten horns, and Nebuchadnezzar on the image as ten toes. The empire in which these ten kingdoms come into existence is the Roman empire. It will have a revival and come into existence again. Then a wicked leader will take the headship of that resurrected Roman empire, and another beast, the false prophet, the Antichrist will domineer over the Jewish people and persecute their saints, the remnant of Israel, while the earth and the dwellers upon the earth experience the great judgments. The last half of these seven years is called the great tribulation. We must also remember that our Lord left behind a great prophecy concerning the end of the age. This prophecy is contained in the Olivet Discourse, the first part of which (Matt. 24:4-44) harmonizes in a striking manner with the events in Revelation 6--19. Our Lord calls special attention to Daniel and likewise speaks of the great tribulation. In our brief annotations we shall point out some of the interesting and convincing details.

The glorious climax is the visible manifestation of the Lord out of heaven, crowned with many crowns, the defeat and overthrow of the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, the binding of Satan, and the reign of Christ with His saints for a thousand years. (Compare Revelation 19:11-21 with Daniel 7:11-14 and Matthew 24:27-31.) After that follows the great white throne judgment, which is the judgment of the wicked dead, the glories of the new Jerusalem, the eternal destiny of the redeemed and the eternal destiny of the lost.

If this last great book of the Bible is studied in this divinely given order it will no longer be, as is so often said, a sealed book. All fanciful interpretations and applications of these great visions to past or present history can no longer be maintained as soon as we reckon with the fact that these visions are not yet fulfilled, and are going to be fulfilled after the true church is no longer on the earth.

The Promised Blessing

"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" (verse 3). A blessing is promised to him who readeth, and who hears and keeps. It does not say that a blessing is for him who understands and knows everything which is in this book. If such were the condition the writer and reader would have no claim on this promised blessing. The Bible teacher, or any other man, who says he knows and understands everything found in this great finale of God's Word is very much mistaken. We cannot be sure about everything in some of these visions and the full meaning of some may not be understood till the world sees the fulfillment. The blessing is promised to all His people who give attention to the Revelation of Jesus Christ. What is the blessing we may expect through the reading and prayerful study of the words of this prophecy?

First of all we receive through this book a wonderful vision of our Saviour and Lord. This is what we need as His people above everything else, and it is this which brings blessing into our lives. As stated before, this book is preeminently His revelation, a blessed unveiling of His person and glory. But we also get another blessing. In reading through this book we see what is in store for this age, what judgments will overtake the world, and how Satan's power will be manifested to the full upon those who rejected His grace. Judgment, tribulation and wrath are swiftly coming upon this age. Out of all this our gracious Lord has delivered us. There is no judgment, no wrath for us who know Him as our sin bearer and our hiding-place. Praise must fill our hearts when we read the words of this prophecy and remember the grace which has saved us from all which is coming upon this age. Another blessing is the assurance of ultimate victory and glory. Dark is the age, and becoming darker, but in Revelation we behold the glory which is coming for His saints first of all and after the judgment clouds are gone, for Jerusalem, the nations and the earth. Reading Revelation fills the heart with the assurance and certainty of the outcome of all. It is a solemn atmosphere which fills the whole book of Revelation. As we continue to read and continue to breathe this heavenly and solemn atmosphere it will result in a closer walk with God, a more spiritual worship and a greater and more unselfish service for Him "Who loveth us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us priests and kings unto God His Father."

The Division of the Revelation

Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ

I. THE PATMOS VISION OF THE GLORIFIED SON OF MAN (1)

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Analysis and Annotations

I. THE PATMOS VISION OF THE GLORIFIED SON OF MAN

CHAPTER 1

1. The introduction (1:1-3)
2. Greeting and benediction (1:4-5)
3. The praise (1:6-7)
4. The testimony of the Almighty (1:8)
5. John in Patmos (1:9-11)
6. The vision of Christ in glory (1:12-16)
7. The commission (1:17-21)

Verses 1-3. The book does not contain "revelations" but it is one great revelation, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The third verse is of much importance. It pronounces a blessing upon all who read and hear the words of this prophecy and who keep the things that are written therein. Here, as already stated, we read that the Revelation is a great prophecy.

Verses 4-5. The churches addressed were in the Province of Asia. (See Acts 16:6; 19:10.) The words of greeting "Grace and peace unto you" tell of the two great possessions of the Church. Though the professing Church may fail in her testimony, grace and peace, even in the dark days of apostasy, will never fail. In the greeting here Jehovah-God, the great "I am"--Who is, Who was and Who is to come--stands first. Then follows the Holy Spirit in His own completeness and His diverse activities, spoken of as "the seven Spirits." And finally the name of our Lord. "He is the faithful witness," who lived as such in holiness and perfect obedience on earth. "The First-Begotten from the dead" He died that shameful death on the cross and God raised Him from the dead. "The Prince of the kings of the earth." This is His future title and glory.

Verses 6-7. This is a true glory-song. It contains the blessed gospel of grace. What He has done for us; what He has made us; and what we shall be with Him. It is the first doxology in this book. See the swelling praise and worship two-fold, three-fold, four-fold and seven-fold in chapters 4:11; 5:13; 7:12. And then for the first time in this book His personal, visible and glorious coming is announced.

Verse 8. God, so to speak, puts His seal upon it. The words of the preceding verse, "Even so, Amen," must be read with this verse. The speaker is Jehovah, the Almighty.

Verses 9-11. John was in banishment in the Isle of Patmos. Patmos is a small rocky isle, and about

ten miles long and six wide. According to ancient tradition this island was used as a place of exile for offenders who belonged to the better classes. John was exiled on account of his faithful witness to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. He came to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. Does this mean "the day of the Lord," that is, the day of His visible manifestation, or does it mean He was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week? Dr. Bullinger teaches that the Lord's day means "the day of the Lord" (Isa. 2:12), and says: "John was not in a state of spiritual exaltation on any particular Sunday at Patmos, as the result of which he saw visions and dreamed dreams. But as we are told he found himself by the Spirit in the day of the Lord." But this view is not correct. It is not the prophetic day of the Lord, but the Lord's day, the day which the early Church from the beginning celebrated as the day of His resurrection. In Corinthians we read of "the Lord's Supper" in the same way as "the Lord's Day" is used here. Nor could John have been projected to the day of the Lord when his first message given to him by the glorified Christ concerned the church and her history on earth.

Verses 12-16. A voice had spoken, as of a trumpet telling him to write in a book what he was about to see and to send the message to the seven churches. And as he turned he beheld the greatest vision human eyes have ever seen. He saw seven golden candlesticks (lampstands); these represent the seven churches (verse 20) and are symbolical of the whole Church. "In the midst," John saw one "like unto a Son of Man." But He is more than Man, He is the Ancient of Days as well as Son of Man, the Alpha and the Omega, in His humiliation and in His exaltation. He was the Son of Man on earth; He is the Son of Man in glory. When He comes back to earth and receives the kingdom, He will receive it as Son of Man to judge the earth in righteousness. Here we behold Him in His judicial character. The robe down to His feet expresses His dignity as the King-Priest, who is about to enter upon His future work. The golden girdle is symbolical of His divine righteousness. His white head and hair identify Him with the person whom Daniel saw sitting in judgment (Dan. 7:9-12). The flaming eyes, the fiery burning feet, the voice like the sound of many waters, the two-edged sword, all are symbolical of His glory and character.

There is one feature of the vision which needs an explanation. What do the seven stars mean, which are in the right hand of the Son of Man? Verse 20 gives the answer, They are the seven angels of the seven churches. Angels and stars are symbolical figures. The application of these terms to church-officers or bishops and pastors is incorrect. Stars are used in scripture to typify true believers. Stars are heavenly bodies which shine during the night; so are true believers in a heavenly position with the responsibility to shine in the night. The lampstands represent the visible, professing Church; the stars represent the true believing element in the Church. They are in the right hand of Himself, held securely there. Furthermore, only true believers have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith. The stars are called angels, because an angel is a messenger and true believers are likewise that.

Verses 17-20. John fell at His feet as dead. Compare with Daniel 10:4-11. The vision was overpowering. But graciously His hand rests upon His prostrated disciple, the same who once leaned upon His bosom, and he hears the blessed words His people know and love so well, "Fear not!" Once more He bears witness as to Himself He is "He that liveth," the Jehovah, the Self-existing One; He was dead; He died the sinner's death and won the victory. He is alive forevermore; as the Risen One He has the key of Hades and of death. Then follows the commission which the reader finds fully explained in the Preface and Key to Revelation.

II. THE THINGS WHICH ARE, THE SEVEN CHURCH MESSAGES, AND THEIR PROPHETIC MEANING

CHAPTER 2

1. Ephesus: The post-apostolic period (2:1-7)

2. Smyrna: The period of persecution (2:8-11)

3. Pergamos: The corruption period (2:12-17)

4. Thyatira: The Romish corruption (2:18-29)

The two chapters which follow the introductory chapter contain seven messages to seven local churches which were in existence in the province of Asia in the days when the Apostle John was prisoner in the isle of Patmos. The view held by the late Dr. Bullinger and a few of his followers that these churches are yet to come into existence in connection with believing Jews during the great tribulation with which the age closes, must be rejected as extremely fanciful. The omniscient Lord on the throne detected in each of these local assemblies certain traits which at different periods of His church on earth would become the leading features. We have therefore, in the seven messages the history of the entire Church in embryo. This assertion is fully confirmed by a closer study of these messages.

Verses 1-7. Ephesus was the church characterized by the greatest purity in doctrine and in walk. To the Ephesians, as "the faithful brethren in Christ," was addressed the most wonderful revelation God has given to man. It stands therefore for the model church in the apostolic age. But when Paul said farewell to the elders he predicted not smooth things, but the incoming failure (Acts 20). Ephesus means "desired" and that corresponds with her original holy character. He reveals Himself afresh as being in the midst and holding His own in His blessed pierced hands, so true of believers at all times. The descriptions of Ephesus suit the apostolic church, and immediately after the apostles had passed away, except John. But He finds fault with it. His omniscient eyes look to the heart and there He finds declension. "I have against thee that thou leavest thy first love." He, the one altogether lovely was no longer the all absorbing object before their hearts. Paul manifests the full meaning of first love. His constant cry was: "Not I but Christ"--"That I may know Him"; for him to live was Christ. Declension began in the church not with less service, less suffering or anything else, but with a decreasing heart-devotion to the Person of our Lord. That is where all backsliding begins. He calls to repentance, a return to Himself The Nicolaitanes, whose works the church then hated, are mentioned again in the third message, where we shall define the word and the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. A promise to the overcomer follows.

Verses 8-11. Smyrna means "bitterness" and is a form of myrrh which was largely used for the embalming of the king of the Jews, the meaning of it was that the King would have to die. Smyrna was a suffering church, many of its members had to seal their faith by dying the martyr's death. Corresponding with this characteristic, the Lord speaks of Himself as "The First and the Last, who was dead and is alive." That is His comfort for the Church passing through the horrors of persecution and intense sufferings. In connection with this message to Smyrna the synagogue of Satan is mentioned. It means the Judaistic faction of the church, who, while they claimed to be Christians, also claimed to be Jews, observing the law, the Sabbath day and other parts of the legal system of Judaism. This synagogue of Satan helped in the afflictions of Smyrna. Nor is the same "synagogue of Satan" missing today in the professing sphere of Christendom.

He announces that the devil would cast some of them into prison, that they should have tribulation for ten days, and that it would require faithfulness unto death to gain the crown of life. The Apostolic age was followed by the martyr age, which lasted up to the beginning of the fourth century. Pagan emperors under the inspiration of Satan, the roaring lion, persecuted the Church. No one knows how many hundreds of thousands died the martyr's death, flayed and burned alive, cast before wild animals and cruelly tortured; thus they were faithful unto death and gained the crown of life. It is also significant that the address to Smyrna contains the number ten; Church history records ten great persecutions.

Verses 12-17. After the devil had played the roaring lion for several centuries, trying to exterminate the church of Jesus Christ, he discovered that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

He then stopped the persecutions suddenly and began to corrupt the Church. This is the meaning of the message to Pergamos, which means "twice married," a typical name for the professing Church which claims to be the bride of Christ, but is married to the world. Pergamos is dwelling where Satan has his throne. Milton described Satan being in hell.

High on a throne of royal state, That far outshone the wealth of Ormuz or of Ind, Satan exalted sat.

But that is not Scripture. Satan will be in hell, in his final abode "the lake of fire," but he is not there now. He is the god of this world (age): his throne is right here on earth. And Pergamos had been married to the world. This is also indicated by the mention of Balaam, who cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, by inducing them to take the daughters of the heathen and thus give up their God-demanded separation. The Church then gave up her pilgrim character, settled down in the world, became a world institution, as revealed by our Lord in the parable of the mustard seed. What happened in the beginning of the fourth century church-historians have proclaimed as the "triumph of Christianity." It was rather "the defeat of Christianity," for that happened which corrupted the Church of Christ.

The instrument of the devil used to bring about this was the emperor Constantine. He had a rival by the name of Maxentius, whom he faced in battle. Constantine claimed that the night before he had a vision of Christ bearing a cross with the words: "In hoc signo vinces (in this sign thou shalt conquer). He had the next morning a beautiful banner made, which was called the Labarum, and went forth to battle, in which Maxentius was defeated as well as another competitor by name of Licinus. Constantine then became emperor and nominally a Christian and head of the Church, while retaining his heathen title as Pontifex Maximus, the high-priest. Then the corruption of the Church resulted. The Church became a political world institution, like the mustard seed, rooting itself in the field (the world) became a great tree, opening its branches to the fowls of the air to defile (Matt. 13; see annotations there). Heathen priests became Christian priests. Heathen temples were changed into Christian churches; he demanded all children to be "christened," that is, made Christians by putting water upon their heads; heathen days of feasting and drinking were made into Christian days, like our "Christmas" and nearly all the other saints' days.

Here again the Nicolaitanes are mentioned, but, while the Ephesians hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, here in Pergamos we find the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, and the Lord says: "which thing I hate." What is it, then? Some say that there was a certain Bishop Nicol who taught bad doctrines and his followers were called "the Nicolaitanes." But this Bishop Nicol is a fictitious person; he cannot be historically located.

Nicolaitanes is Greek; it is a compound. Nikao is a verb and means to have the upper hand, to domineer; laos means the people (our English "laity"). Nicolaitanes signifies "the domineers of the people." A priestly class had sprung up in the Church, domineering over the rest of the people, the so-called laity. And this domineering class claimed a superior place in the body of Christ. This evil was rejected in Ephesus, but is fully sanctioned and tolerated in Pergamos. Priestly assumption became then, and ever since has been, the corruption of Christianity. This is what our Lord hates and what He hates we must hate with Him.

Verses 18-29. The corruption which set in like a great flood with the fourth century increased till the depths of Satan (verse 24) were reached. Thyatira brings us into the period of the Papacy and its wickedness, ecclesiastical and otherwise. Here our Lord reveals Himself as "the Son of God." Rome speaks more of Him as the son of the virgin, the son of Mary, than as the Son of God. The Roman Catholic apostasy has put a woman in the place of the Son of God. Her corruption is fully revealed in verse 20. Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, was permitted to teach and seduce God's servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. Jezebel the wicked woman represents the Papacy. Jezebel was a heathenish woman married to an Israelitish King. She was a queen and an idolatress and persecuted the true prophets of God (1 Kings 18-21).

Apply all this to the Romish church with her spiritual fornication and idolatry. The church, or, rather,

the papacy, assumes the place of teacher and dictator and Christ is rejected. The name Jezebel has a twofold meaning. It means a chaste one"; the other name is "dunghill." Rome claims to be the bride of Christ; in reality she is a harlot, and called so in chapter 17 and therefore a dunghill of all vileness and corruption. In verse 21 we find another important hint. It is said, "She repents not." Rome does not change. She is the same today in every respect as she was 500 years ago. She will continue in her perverted state of impenitence till her predicted doom will overtake her. (Compare verse 22 with chapter 17.) She is the woman of which our Lord spoke in the fourth kingdom parable in Matthew 13 (see annotations there) which took leaven (corruption) and put it into the three measures of meal (symbolical of the doctrine of Christ). It is noteworthy that beginning with the message to Thyatira the Lord announces His coming, that is, His second visible coming. Every following message speaks of it. This shows that the three preceding church periods and conditions are passed and the conditions pictured in Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea will continue till He comes. The apostolic age cannot be brought back; nor will there be again a persecution by Roman emperors nor will the church again become corrupted as in Pergamos. The Romish conditions continue to the end of the age.

CHAPTER 3

Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea

1. Sardis: The reformation period (3:1-6)
2. Philadelphia: The faithful remnant (3:7-13)
3. Laodicea: The indifferent and apostate Church (3:14-22)

Verses 1-6. We have traced briefly the decline during the 1450-1500 years of Church history. The climax is reached in Thyatira, prophetically the Roman abomination and apostasy. In Sardis we see the progress of evil stayed. Roman Catholicism, as already mentioned, is a fixed and unchanging religious system. Rome will yet have for a brief season a startling revival and get back her place as the mistress of the nations. But in Sardis we see a reaction. Sardis means "those escaping." It is the Reformation period, the movement which produced Protestantism. The Reformation itself was of God and the great men who were used were the most mighty instruments of the Holy Spirit. It was the greatest work, up to that time, since the days of the apostles. But out of it came the human systems which go by the name of Protestantism. The Reformation began well, but soon developed in the different Protestant systems into a dead, lifeless thing. They have a name to live but are dead. This is the verdict of our Lord upon the churches which sprung out of the reformation: "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead."

Verses 7-13. Philadelphia means "brotherly love." As Sardis came out of Thyatira, a protest against it, so Philadelphia comes out of Sardis and is a protest against the dead, lifeless, Spiritless condition prevailing in Protestantism. Out of the deadness of the state churches over and over again came forth companies of believers, energized by the Holy Spirit. Philadelphia has been variously applied to early Methodism, the evangelical movements, missionary efforts and to the revivals of the nineteenth century. But it is more than that, It is a complete return to the first principles. The message makes this clear. It is the one message (besides Smyrna) in which the Lord does not say, "I have against thee," it is that which pleases Him and which He commends. It is a revival and turning back to the first love. The Lord Jesus Christ is once more as the all absorbing object before the heart; Philadelphia repudiates all that dishonors Him and owns alone that worthy, ineffable Name. It is a faithful remnant gathering around His Name as there was a faithful remnant in the closing days of the Old Testament (Mal. 3:16-17). All human pretensions are rejected. The truth of the unity of all believers is owned and manifested in brotherly love towards all the saints. They walk in the path of separation, in self-judgment, in lowliness of mind; they have a little strength, which means weakness; they are a feeble few. Twice the Lord speaks of obedience to His

Word. "Thou hast kept My Word"--"Thou has kept the Word of My patience." And the Philadelphian does not deny His Name.

These are the two chief characteristics of this phase of Christianity during the closing days of the professing Church on earth: Obedience to His Word and faithfulness and devotion to His Name. The Word and the Name are denied in the last days. The apostasy of Christendom consists in the rejection of the written Word and the living Word. And turning their backs upon a dead profession, going on in confessed weakness are such paralyzed in their service? Far from it! The Lord promises to open the door for service which no man can shut. Every child of God may test this. True and continued service is the result of true and continued faithfulness to the Lord. Especially is this service to be blessed to those who hold to a perverted Judaism (verse 9). And there is the great promise, which they believe and hope for, the coming of Himself to keep them out of the great tribulation (verse 10). In Philadelphia there is a revival of prophetic truth, an earnest waiting for the coming of the Lord. Philadelphia is not a defined church-period, but rather a description of a loyal remnant called out by the Spirit of God and bearing the final testimony to the whole counsel of God by word and deed. If the reader desires to please the Lord, then study the details of the message to Philadelphia and walk accordingly.

Verses 14-22. Laodicea means "The judging or rights of the people." It is opposite of Nicolaitanism. The domineers of the people still go on in Rome, but in Protestantism the people (the laity) arise and claim their rights and do the judging. This condition was also foreseen by the Apostle Paul. "For the time will come when they (The laity) will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts they shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Tim. 4:3). We see in Laodicea the final religious and apostate conditions of Protestant Christendom and the complete rejection of the professing body. "I will spew thee out of my mouth." He Himself is seen standing outside, which shows that He is rejected. But infinite grace! He knocks and is still willing to come in and bestow the riches of His grace.

The Philadelphian Christian, who is separated from the Laodicean state, whose heart is filled with the love of Christ can learn a lesson here. If our Lord stands outside and yet knocks and waits in patience, we too with Him outside of the camp where He is disowned, can try to gain admittance to the Laodicean hearts. Epaphras did this (Col. 4:12-13). Laodicea consists in a proudly boasting spirit with total indifference to the Lord Jesus Christ and to His Name. It is a religiousness without any truth nor the power of the Holy Spirit. Lukewarmness expresses it all. "Lukewarmness, a perfect jumble of sacred and worldly matters. The word does not point chiefly to half heartedness. But as lukewarmness is produced by pouring of hot and cold water together in the same vessel, so in the Laodicean state, intense worldliness will be varnished over by plausible and humanitarian and religious pretences."

Great reformation movements for the advancement of religion and the betterment of the world, the rejection of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation, are characteristic features of this final phase of Christendom. It will continue and wax worse and worse till His patience is exhausted. Then the true Church will be caught up with the departed saints to meet Him in the air, and Laodicea will be spewed out of His mouth. It is important to notice that Thyatira (Rome), Sardis (Protestantism) and the two phases of Protestantism represented by Philadelphia and Laodicea co-exist. They go on together. This is seen by the fact that in each our Lord speaks of His second coming (2:25; 3:3; 10-11, 16). The Lord takes His own to Himself. Rome and an apostate Protestant Christendom continue on earth during the period of judgment, preceding the visible coming of the Lord.

III. THE THINGS WHICH ARE AFTER THESE, THE END OF THE AGE, THE CONSUMMATION, AND FINAL

MESSAGES (4-22)

CHAPTERS 4-5

1. The open door and the vision of the throne (4:1-3)
2. The twenty-four elders and the throne (4:4-5).
3. The four living creatures and the worship (4:6-11)
4. Who is worthy to open the book? (5:1-3)
5. The answer (5:4-5)
6. The vision of the Lamb (5:6-7)
7. Worship and praise (5:8-14)

Verses 1-3. The scene changes suddenly. We are no longer on earth but are transported into heaven. The true Church is gone and the apostate Church, while still on earth to pass into the judgments of the great tribulation, is no longer owned by the Lord and, therefore, not mentioned. That is why the word "church" disappears entirely from the book after the third chapter. The open door and the voice which calls "come up hither" and John's presence in glory in the spirit, clearly indicate symbolically the fulfillment of 1 Thess. 4:15-17. That for which the faithful remnant waited, the blessed hope of the Church, has suddenly come to pass. The departure of the true Church from the earth will be as sudden as its beginning (Acts 2:1-2).

John's first vision in heaven is the established throne, the sign and symbol of the universal government of God. While thrones on earth begin to totter and to fall and man's day closes in the predicted upheavals, there is a throne which cannot be affected or disturbed. Yea, He who sitteth there and looks down upon earth and sees man's rebellion and madness laughs at them and holds them in derision (Psalm 2:4). The occupant of the throne was to look upon like a jasper (rather the diamond) and a sardine stone. Our Lord and the glory of His person are symbolically represented in these stones. His glory in the brilliant stone, His redemption work in the blood-red sardine. The rainbow in emerald-green tells us that in the judgment about to come upon the earth mercy will also be remembered. It is the covenant sign. Though judgments come, yet mercy is in store for Israel and the earth.

Verses 4-5. Who is represented by these twenty-four elders? They cannot be angels. Angels are never seated upon thrones (not seats, as in the Authorized Version), nor are they crowned, nor can they sing redemption's song as the elders do. There is only one possible meaning. They represent the redeemed, the saints in glory. They are priests (clothed in white) and they are kings (crowned); they are the royal priesthood in the presence of the throne. And why twenty-four? It points us back to the work David did for the temple. He appointed twenty-four courses of the priests (1 Chron. 24). Twice twelve would suggest the saints of the Old and New Testaments.

There were lightnings and voices and thunderings. This is repeatedly stated. See 8:5, 11:19, 16:18. It is the symbol of God's throne in its judicial aspect.

Verses 6-11. The sea of glass is a reminder of the great laver in Solomon's temple in which the priests had to wash. Now it is solidified because no more water is needed for the cleansing of the saints. The word "beast" should be changed to "living creatures" or "living ones." They are not symbolical of the Church, or a special class of saints, but they are the same supernatural beings seen in the Old Testament and always in connection with the throne and the presence of Jehovah. They are the cherubim of Ezekiel's great vision, chapters 1 and 10. Their constant cry, "Holy, Holy," reminds us of the seraphim also (Isa. 6). The worship here is the worship of Him who is the creator.

Chapter 5:1-3. Much has been written about the meaning of the book written within and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals. What the book contains is no secret whatever. Beginning with the sixth chapter the seals are opened and after they are all broken the contents of the book are made known. The book contains the judgments for this earth preceding His coming in power and glory and the beginning of His reign. It is, therefore, the book of the righteous judgments of God, preceding the glorious manifestation of the King of Kings.

Verses 4-5. John receives the answer to the question the strong angel had proclaimed. One of the elders told him, "Behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and the seven seals thereof." No further comment is needed; the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lion of Judah and the Root of David. "The King's wrath is as a roaring lion" (Prov. 19:12). He is now to be revealed in mighty power and strength to execute judgment. (See Gen. 49:9.) And He is also the Root of David.

Verses 6-7. And now He is seen who alone is worthy to open the book. He does not appear as a lion in majesty, but He is seen by John as a Lamb standing, as having been slain. The Lamb slain is the lion. His victory was gained by dying, and, therefore, He must have as the lion the victory over all His enemies. Thrice the number seven is repeated revealing His perfection. Notice especially three descriptions. He is "in the midst." He is the center of God's government and of heaven itself, as He is for His people the center of all their thoughts and affections. He is seen "as a Lamb standing." Now He is seated at the right hand of God, but when the time comes when His enemies are about to be made His footstool, He will arise to act. He will arise and have mercy upon Zion (Psa. 102:13). And He is seen as "the Lamb slain." The Greek word here suggests "slain in sacrifice."

Verses 8-14. A great worship scene follows at once. The four living creatures join in with the elders, but the latter alone have harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. The harps express their great joy and praise and the bowls full of incense denote the priestly ministry of the redeemed. Such is part of our glorious future, an endless praise of deepest joy, and perfect ministry. The prayers of the saints are not the prayers of the past, but the prayers of Jewish saints, so beautifully rewritten in the Psalms, when the time of Jacob's trouble is on the earth. And then the new song! This is redemption's song, the song of redeeming love; the old song was the praise of God as the Creator in His glory (Job 38:7). Redemption is now accomplished for the saints in glory; they look forward to the glorious manifestation with Himself and the great new song bursts forth. The praise of Him becomes universe-wide. The innumerable company of angels joins in it. "The number of them was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands." (This is according to the Greek.) And the praise described here leads us on to the time when God will be all in all. It is the never-ending praise, the hallelujah-chorus of redeemed Creation! The four living creatures say "Amen"; the elders worship. Omit "Him that liveth forever and ever." as these words do not belong here.

CHAPTERS 6:1-8:5

The Opening of the Seven Seals

1. The first seal (6:1-2)
2. The second seal (6:3-4)
3. The third seal (6:5-6)
4. The fourth seal (6:7-8)
5. The fifth seal (6:9-11)

6. The sixth seal (6:12-17)

7. Parenthesis: The remnant of Israel (7:1-8)

8. The saved multitude (7:9-17)

9. The seventh seal (8:1-5)

Verses 1-2. The Lamb, invested with all the authority to execute judgment, having received His commission from God, begins now to open the seals of the book which is in His hands, the hands which were once nailed to the cross. It is evident that the breaking of the seals does not begin till His saints are gathered around the throne in glory. Until then it is still the day of grace. When the first seal is opened one of the living creatures said in voice of thunder, "Come." The words "and see" must be omitted here and in verses 3, 5 and 7. A rider upon a white horse appears; his is a bloodless conquest. He has a bow, but no arrow. He receives a crown and goes forth to conquer. Many expositors make this rider the Lord Jesus or some power which represents Him. It is positively incorrect. The rider here is a great counterfeit leader, not the personal Antichrist, but the little horn which Daniel saw coming out of the ten-horned beast (Dan. 7). This coming leader of the revived Roman empire will go forth to conquer and become its political head. He is Satan's man as we shall see later.

Verses 3-4. The second seal reveals a rider upon a red horse. He takes away the false peace, which the rider upon the white horse as a divine judgment act established. The universal peace of which the world dreams without the presence of the Prince of Peace, will be of short duration. Another awful war follows. It will not be war alone between nation and nation, but it will be a world-wide reign of terror and bloodshed, a carnage unknown before in the history of the world. See in Matthew 24 how our Lord mentions the great conflict of nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom.

Verses 5-6. The black horse rider brings famine, exactly what our Lord mentions next in Matthew 24: "There shall be famines." Famine follows war and inasmuch as the second seal brings the greatest war, the third seal will bring the greatest famine. The judgments of God fall then on the earth. Our Lord also mentions famines.

Verses 7-8. The next rider under the fourth seal is named death. And Hades, the region of the unseen (not hell), is populated. Sword, hunger, death, that is pestilences and the beasts of the earth, claim an awful harvest (Ezek. 14:21). And so our Lord spoke of "pestilences." These four seal judgments are hardening judgments.

Verses 9-11. The four living creatures have uttered their four-fold "Come." They are thus seen in connection with the providential government of the world. Under the fifth seal the scene changes completely. John saw under the altar the souls of them that had been slain. And they cry, "How long, O Lord!" Who are they? Not the martyrs of past ages. They are risen from the dead and are in glory with redeemed bodies. The words of the Lord in the Olivet discourse give us the key. Speaking to His Jewish disciples He said: "Then shall they deliver you up, and shall kill you and ye shall be hated of all nations for My Name's sake" (Matt. 24:9).

The Lord speaks of another company of Jewish disciples who will bear a witness during the end of the age, after the rapture of the Church. He will not leave Himself without a witness. He calls a remnant of His people Israel and they bear a witness to the coming of the Messiah, their coming Deliverer and King. Many of them suffer martyrdom. Their cry, "How long?" is the well-known prayer of Jewish saints; and their prayer to have their blood avenged is equally a Jewish prayer. Christians are not supplicating for vengeance on their foes. The prayer for vengeance refers us to the imprecatory psalms prewritten by the Holy Spirit in anticipation of the final persecution of Jewish believers. And the fellow-servants and their brethren, who are yet to be killed (verse 11), are the martyrs of that remnant during the final three and one-half years, which is the great tribulation.

Verses 12-17. Are the things mentioned under this seal to be taken in a literal sense or symbolically? Most of it is symbolical, yet at the same time great physical phenomena are also involved. The earthquake possibly means a literal earthquake. "Earthquakes in diverse places" our Lord predicted. And they increase as the age draws to its close. But the language is symbolical. Everything is being shaken in this poor world. The civil and governmental powers on earth all go to pieces; every class from kings to slaves is affected by it and terrorized. The political and ecclesiastical world is going to pieces. And when these shaking times have come, when thrones fall and anarchy reigns, when the great collapse of civilization and human society has come with signs on earth and in heaven, the earth-dwellers will see in anticipation the approaching day of wrath. Terror fills every breast and those who sneered at prayer, as the Christ-rejectors do now, will gather for a prayer-meeting to appeal to the rocks to cover them. Read the following Old Testament passages in connection with this seal: Isaiah 24, 34:2-4; Joel 2:30-31; Zephaniah 1; Haggai 2:6-7.

Chapter 7:1-8. This is the first parenthesis. It must not be taken chronologically. The six seal judgments extend over the entire period of the ending age. The rider upon the white horse will be on the scene to the end, wars will continue to the end, and culminate in the battle of Armageddon, and so do the famines and pestilences. And the sixth seal brings the end in view. We shall see the correspondence with the seventh trumpet and seventh vial later. The trumpet and vial judgments are more intense and more terrible than the seal judgments. In a certain sense they are parallel; the effect of each is continuously felt. The parenthetical vision of the seventh chapter also covers the entire period of the last seven years and brings before us even the vision of what will be after the great tribulation.

How much confusion would have been avoided if expositors and Christians in searching for the meaning of this vision, had not lost sight of two great facts: 1. This chapter can have no application to the Church on earth, nor to the Church in glory, for the simple reason that the Church is already complete and translated to glory. 2. The vision states clearly that the sealed company is "of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

The sealed company is of Israel. After the Church is removed to glory, when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in (Rom. 11:26) the Lord will turn in mercy to Israel and call, before the judgments fall, a remnant which will also be sealed (See Ezek. 9). This remnant is frequently seen on the pages of Old Testament prophecy. This sealed company also bears a great testimony. They are the preachers of the gospel of the kingdom, as a witness to all nations before the end comes (Matt. 24:14). Therefore, during the time when the judgments are executed from above there will be a world-wide preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, proclaiming the coming of the King, calling to repentance and faith in His Name, and offering mercy still.

Verses 9-17. The application of this passage of Scripture to the redeemed Church in glory is wrong. This Scripture does not apply to the Church in glory, but to saved Gentiles on earth. It is a company which comes "out of the great tribulation." The Church enters the glory before that great tribulation begins. The great multitude represents those Gentiles who will hear the final testimony and believe. They will have turned in repentance to Him and will be washed in His precious blood. Our Lord speaks of them in the great judgment of the nations as sheep, who stand at His right hand and inherit the kingdom (Matt. 25:31, etc.). The brethren of our Lord mentioned in Matthew are the remnant of Israel. (For a complete exposition see The Gospel of Matthew, by the author of this volume.) This great company, therefore, does not stand before a heavenly throne, but before the millennial throne on earth. It is a millennial scene after the tribulation is passed.

Chapter 8:1-5. The silence in heaven when the seventh seal is opened is indicative of the solemn things which are now to come. The scroll is now fully opened and there is an ominous hush as the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets of judgment. John beholds these seven angels, but before they begin to sound "another angel" is seen standing at the altar. This angel is not a creature, but like the angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament, is our Lord Himself. He is seen as the Priest in behalf of the praying, suffering saints on earth. No angel can offer the prayers of the

saints, but He, who is the one intercessor, alone can do that. And for what do they pray on earth? For mercy for those who persecute the remnant of Israel? No! They pray for divine intervention, for the fire of judgment as Elijah did.

CHAPTERS 8:6-11:18

The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets

1. The first trumpet (8:6-7)
2. The second trumpet (8:8-9)
3. The third trumpet (8:10-11)
4. The fourth trumpet (8:12-13)
5. The fifth trumpet (9:1-12)
6. The sixth trumpet (9:13-21)
7. Parenthesis: The angel and the little book (10:1-11)
8. The temple (11:1-2)
9. The two witnesses (11:3-12)
10. The earthquake and the seventh trumpet (11:13-18)

Chapter 8:6-7. The judgments which follow can hardly be fully interpreted at this time. It would be folly to dogmatize about them. The historical application we reject, because the scope of the book makes it clear that these judgments have not yet taken place. What many of these things mean may perhaps never be fully understood till they are actually in fulfillment. The first four trumpet judgments evidently stand by themselves. The fire the Lord cast down is doing its work. The first trumpet manifests the same evidences of divine wrath as came upon Egypt, when Israel suffered there, under the seventh plague (Exodus 9:23). Hail (heat withdrawn), fire and blood are all symbols of divine wrath. The trees and the green grass were burned up. The green things are symbols of agricultural and commercial prosperity.

Verses 8-9. That this is not a literal mountain is obvious. A mountain in Scripture language represents a kingdom (Isaiah 2:2; Zech. 4:7; Psalm 46:2; and especially Jer. 51:25). The sea is typical of nations. Some kingdom, internally on fire, signifying probably revolution, will be precipitated into the restless sea of nations, and the result will be a still greater destruction of life and commerce, which is represented by the ships.

Verses 10-11. In the preceding trumpet judgments things were cast upon the earth, but here is a star which falls. It is some person who claimed authority and who becomes an apostate, whose fall produces the awful results given here. It may be the final Antichrist who first may have claimed to be for Israel a great teacher with divine authority and then takes the awful plunge. Wormwood is his name and the waters became wormwood and bitter.

Verses 12-13. The sun, the moon and the stars are now affected. The sun is the symbol of the highest authority; the moon, who has not her own light, is symbolical of derived authority; and the stars are symbolical of subordinate authority. The symbolical meaning of this trumpet judgment is that all authority within the revived Roman empire will be smitten by the hand of one above and as a result there will be the most awful moral darkness. These four trumpet judgments tell of prosperity taken first from the earth; a great power burning with the fires of revolution affecting the nations; a great leader will fall and become wormwood; and authority disowned and smitten will fill the territory

of the Roman empire (Europe) with the densest darkness.

Chapter 9:1-12. The remaining three trumpets have a "woe" attached to each. This is announced in the last verse of the preceding chapter, where the word angel should be "eagle." An eagle, the bird of prey, proclaims the threefold woe. He acts thus as a herald of great judgments (Matt. 24:28, Rev. 19:17-18). The fifth trumpet is a special judgment upon apostate Israel: because those who suffer are they "which have not the seal of God on their foreheads" (verse 4). The great tribulation in the second half of the week, comes now into prominence. If we turn to chapter 12:12 we read something similar to the eagle's message of woe. "Woe unto 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."

Preceding the sounding of the fifth trumpet the eagle proclaimed the woe upon the inhabitants of the earth. The star which is seen fallen from heaven with the key of the pit of the abyss is Satan himself cast out of heaven. The details of this event we learn in the twelfth chapter. He has the key to the pit of the abyss, the same word "deep," used in Luke 8:31. "And they (the demons) besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep (abyss)." He unlocks the prison house of the fallen angels and the most awful satanic agencies come forth to begin their "dread" work of torment. The smoke first, symbolical of darkening; the locusts next, symbolical of these demon powers. Awful darkness prevails and the most diabolical delusions, producing fearful torments among apostate Israel and the inhabitants of the earth. It is the time of the strong delusion (2 Thess. 2:4-11) which has come. And over them is a king. His name is given in Greek and Hebrew, showing that it is both Jew and Gentile that come under His power. Both names mean destruction.

Verses 13-21. The sixth angel is commanded by a voice from the horns of the golden altar to loose the four angels who are found at Euphrates, and as a result an innumerable company of horsemen is released. (Greek: twice ten thousand times ten thousand, that is, 200 million. The number would indicate the immense, uncountable hordes.) They are prepared for a specific time to do their work. Euphrates is once more mentioned under the pouring out of the sixth vial. We believe the sixth vial judgment gives the key to these horsemen here. Euphrates does not mean the Turkish Empire, as we shall more fully show when we come to the sixth vial. This river was both the boundary line of the old Roman Empire and the land of Israel. Restraining influences held back the tide of nations on the other side of the river, this restraint is now removed and therefore a great invasion takes place. As the land of Israel is nearest it will suffer first, but the revived Roman empire will be the objective of these invading hordes. The "third part" stands for the Roman Empire, the coming European confederacy. This invasion is under the king of the north. It is seen in its beginning here and is consummated under the sixth vial. There the "kings of the sunrise" are included. And under the sixth vial they are more specifically gathered for the great day of God Almighty.

Chapter 10:1-11. The proclamation of the mighty angel is the first recorded event in this parenthesis. Who is this angel? It is Christ Himself. We saw our Lord in angel's form before the opening of the seventh seal and then He appeared in priestly dignity. Here before the sounding of the seventh trumpet He appears again in the same form, but He is called a mighty angel and we behold Him in royal dignity. The cloud, the rainbow, the face like the sun, His right foot upon the sea, the left on the earth, the voice like a lion and the seven thunders, all declare this to be correct. The hour is rapidly approaching when the kingdoms of this earth are to become His kingdom. This is seen under the seventh trumpet. And, therefore, He is seen now in this attitude of royal dignity. The words which He speaks (verses 6 and 7) bear out this interpretation. "There shall be no longer delay." Man's day is about to close. The mystery of God is now to be finished, "as He hath declared to His servants, the prophets"; or in better rendering "the mystery of God also shall be completed according to the good tidings which He declared by His own servants, the prophets." How great has been that mystery! Evil had apparently triumphed; the heavens for so long had been silent. Satan had been permitted to be the god of this age, deceiving the nations. And Israel, too, is included in this mystery. And now the time has come when the mystery of God will be completed, when the glorious messages, the good tidings of the prophets concerning Israel's blessing and the kingdom,

will be fulfilled.

But what is the little book which the angel holds in His right hand? It is not a sealed book, but open. It stands for the prophecies in the Old Testament relating especially to Israel during the time of the great tribulation, which is yet to come upon the earth, culminating in the personal and glorious appearing of the Lord to begin His millennial reign.

Chapter 11:1-2. We see at once how Jewish things come now into view. To apply these verses to the Church and make the temple the Church is absolutely wrong. The temple and the altar are Jewish; the holy city is Jerusalem. After the Church has left the earth the Jewish people will be fully restored to their own land, and their land restored to them. They will possess Jerusalem once more. When the Jews are once more masters in their own promised land they will erect another temple and then restore the Levitical worship as far as it is possible. Such a temple must be in Jerusalem. (See Isaiah 66:1-4.) In that temple the personal Antichrist, the beast out of the land of whom we shall read in chapter 13, will appear and claim divine worship. (See 2 Thess. 2:3-4.) Apostate Israel in corrupt alliance with equally apostate Gentiles is seen in the opening verses of this eleventh chapter, as the court without the temple. But in the midst of this corrupt mass, which will follow the delusion of the Antichrist and accept Satan's man as their Messiah, there will be the God-fearing remnant. This remnant is here divinely recognized as worshippers. Therefore that coming is called "the temple of God," because the Lord owns the true worshippers found in the midst of the unbelieving mass.

Verses 3-12. Much has been written on these two witnesses who will appear in Jerusalem. It is clear they are still future and their work will be in that city. Some make them Enoch and Elijah and others think they will be Moses and Elijah returned in person. Some have claimed to be a reincarnation of Elijah. Such claims are fanatical. No second coming of Moses is anywhere promised in the Word. Something, however, is said about the work of Elijah in the future (Mal. 4:5-6). But the words of our Lord in Matt. 11:14, speaking of John the Baptist, and Matt. 17:12, seem to make clear that no literal coming of the same Elijah, who went into glory, without dying, is meant. Yet the deeds of these two witnesses clearly link them with the work of Moses and Elijah. They each do both the things Moses and Elijah did separately. We take it then that these two witnesses represent the great testimony to be given in Jerusalem during the 1,260 days of the great tribulation. Perhaps the leaders will be two great instruments, manifesting the spirit of Moses and Elijah, endowed with supernatural power, but a large number of witnesses is unquestionably in view here. They maintain in the midst of the Satanic scenes a powerful testimony for God.

The period of the great tribulation was mentioned in verse 2. Here for the first time the beast is mentioned. This beast coming out of the pit of the abyss, the deep, is the revived Roman empire under the little horn, seen by Daniel on the four-horned beast (Dan. 7:8). While he dominates over the Gentiles, he will turn in fury against these Jewish saints, and the two witnesses will be slain. He makes war with the godly remnant (Dan. 7:21). A part of that remnant will be killed. The vileness of these coming days of Satan's rule on earth is seen in the treatment of the bodies of Jehovah's servants. The wicked are so elated over the silencing of the testimony that they refuse to permit their burial so that they may feast their eyes upon the sickening spectacle. They rejoice and make it a festive occasion, because torment had come to their consciences through the testimony of the slain.

Gentiles, who side with apostate Israel are mentioned, but especially a class which is called "they that dwell on the earth" rejoices over the end of the witnesses. The same class is mentioned several times. Study the passages where they are mentioned: Chapter 3:10, 6:9, 10; 8:13; 11:9, 10; 12:12; 14:6, 7; 17:8. They are the apostate, nominal Christians who are utterly blinded and hardened. Phil. 3:18-19 gives their character and destiny. They claim possession of the earth as belonging to them, but God is not only the God of heaven, He is also "the God of the earth" (Rev. 11:4). God's power is manifested in the physical resurrection and the visible translation of the two witnesses. Their enemies see a great miracle. The apostates who ridicule even now a physical

resurrection, who sneer at the blessed hope of a coming translation of the saints, will witness these two great facts. No wonder that a great fear fell upon them. The raised witnesses belong to the first resurrection (20:4).

Verses 13-18. The terror becomes still greater when the whole city is shaken by a mighty earthquake. This is not a symbolical earthquake but a convulsion of nature by which the fourth part of the city falls and 7,000 men are killed. It marks the end of the second woe. Then those who escaped the visitation gave glory unto the God of heaven. It is only inspired by fear. They do not turn in repentance unto God. Here ends the parenthetical vision.

The seventh trumpet brings us to the very end of the tribulation and to the beginning of the millennial reign. It is Jerusalem's deliverance. He who alone is worthy receives the kingdom. How clear this ought to make the fact that our Lord has no earthly kingdom now, but He receives the promised kingdom on the earth at the end of these things. See Dan. 7:14. Heaven worships too; they celebrate the fact that He has taken His great power. It is a review of all that takes place and what follows when He appears out of heaven. The nations were full of wrath (Ps. 2; 46:6); His wrath is come; resurrection will follow; this points to the time after the kingdom (chapter 20:12). And His servants, the prophets and the saints, receive their rewards, to reign with Him.

CHAPTERS 11:19-13

Satan's Power and Masterpiece

1. The vision of the opened temple (11:19)
2. The woman with child (12:1-5)
3. The escape of the woman (12:6)
4. War in heaven (12:7-12)
5. The dragon persecuting the woman (12:13-17)
6. The beast out of the sea (13:1-10)
7. The beast out of the earth (13:11-18)

Chapter 11:19. What follows now brings the great tribulation, the 1,260 days, into prominence. As we have seen the seventh trumpet takes us right to the end. But now we are led back.

Verse 19 of chapter 11 belongs properly to the twelfth chapter. The ark contains the covenant made with Israel. This is now to be remembered and connected with it are the manifestations of coming wrath for those who oppress His people.

Chapter 12:1-5. Who is represented by the sun-clothed woman? Romanists have made out of her the Virgin Mary. Many expositors claim it is the Church which is represented by this woman. Some claim the woman is the professing Church and the man-child represents, according to their view, a class of overcomers who will escape the tribulation. This is a favored interpretation of some of the so-called "holiness people."

In the light of the scope of this book the woman cannot possibly have anything to do with the Church. Again, Christian Science has made the most absurd claim that this woman represents that instrument of Satan, the deluded woman, whom they worship as the founder of their cult. A hundred years ago another sect existed in England under the leadership of a woman, who also claimed to be the one of this vision. We do not need to seek long for the true meaning of the woman seen by John. She represents Israel. Everything in the symbolical statements bears this out, especially the

crown with the twelve stars (Gen. 37:9).

"Thus she is seen clothed with the glory of the sun--that is, of Christ Himself as He will presently appear in supreme power as Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2); for the sun is the ruler of the day. As a consequence, her glory of old, before the day-dawn, the reflected light of her typical system, is like the moon under her feet. Upon her head the crown of twelve stars speaks naturally of her twelve tribes, planets now around the central sun."

it is Israel, what she is in the purposes of God. And the child, the nation brought forth, is the Messiah, Christ. Even so Paul writes of Israel, "of whom as according to the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever" (Rom. 9:5). The identity of the child is established beyond controversy by the fact that the child is caught up unto God and His throne, destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron (Psa. 2:9; Rev. 2:27). The great red dragon, the enemy of the woman and the child, is Satan. Seven crowns are symbolical of his authority as the god of this age and the ten horns symbolical of his power. These historical facts are seen first through this vision. But this is done for the one purpose of bringing into view what is yet in store of Israel during the end time. Christ ascended upon high, took His place at the right hand of God, is waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. Then the present Christian age began. It is not recorded in this vision at all. He who came from Israel and who was rejected by His own, is nevertheless Israel's Messiah, the hope of Israel. In Him and through Him alone the promises made to Israel can be fulfilled. The fulfillment of these promises is preceded by great sorrows and tribulation, the travail pains which come upon Israel during the great tribulation, before He, whom Israel once disowned, is revealed as Deliverer and King. And the red Dragon will do His most awful work during that period of tribulation, a work of hatred against the faithful seed of the woman.

Verse 6. The flight of the woman, Israel, has been taken by some to mean the dispersion of that nation during this age and Israel's miraculous preservation. But this is incorrect. It is true Israel has been miraculously preserved and Satan's hatred, too, has been against that nation. But here we have a special period mentioned, the 1,260 days, the last three and one-half years of Daniel's seventieth week. It means, therefore, that when the Dragon rises in all his furious power to exterminate the nation, God will preserve her. However, before we are told the details of that preservation and Satan's hatred, we read of the war in heaven. Satan is cast out of heaven, down upon the earth. Verses 15-17 and the entire chapter 13 will tell us what he will do on the earth.

Verses 7-12. This great scene takes place before the great tribulation begins. Satan's place is not in hell at this time. As we saw in the message to Pergamos his throne is on earth, he is the god of this age. His dominion is in the air, he is the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). Our present conflict as believers is "against principalities, against authorities, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the wicked spirits in the heavenlies" (Eph. 6:12). Satan as the accuser of the brethren has access even into the presence of God. His accusations are ended. All the redeemed are gathered before the throne. All the malice and power of Satan could not frustrate the purpose of God. His grace and power have been victorious. Thus when the saints come into the heavenly possession Satan's dominion there is at an end. The purchased possession, the region above, will be redeemed by the power of God (Eph. 1:13).

Michael and his angels will begin their short and decisive war against Satan and his angels. Michael is the one archangel mentioned in Scripture. It is not the first time he meets Satan face to face (Jude 9). And Daniel speaks of Michael, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. 12: 1). From this we learn that Michael will not only cause the expulsion of Satan out of heaven, but he will also stand up for the believing portion of Israel.

Satan is then cast out into the earth and his angels are cast out with him. It is identical with what we

have seen already under the fifth trumpet, the star fallen out of heaven, opening the pit of the abyss with the darkening smoke and the locust swarms coming forth. Then there is joy in heaven because the accuser is cast down and his accusations are forever silenced. And the "woe" is pronounced upon those who dwell on the earth.

Verses 13-17. He turns in fury against the woman which brought forth the man-child. Satan realizes now that his time is short. His exclusion from heaven will soon be followed by his arrest and imprisonment in the pit for a thousand years, and after that there is prepared for him his eternal home of misery, the lake of fire. As he knows that Israel is mostly concerned in the final drama, and the believing portion of that nation will inherit the kingdom, he turns in wrath against them. Verse 6 should be connected with verse 14. It is symbolical language again we have here. The wilderness is a place of isolation, and the place prepared, speaks of God's care for them. But it is not the entire nation. The apostate part sides with Satan and with Satan's man, the Antichrist. But there is another part, which is preserved. This part is in the place of isolation among the nations. The water cast out by Satan is symbolical of the hatred which Satan stirs up against the people amongst the nations. But there will be other agencies in the earth by which this Satanic attempt to wipe from the face of the earth this faithful part of the nation will be frustrated.

Chapter 13:1-10. This chapter brings now fully into view the Satanic powers operating during the great tribulation--the forty-two months. Satan's masterpieces are on the earth; energized by him and endowed with his powers they work together to stamp out all that is left of the truth on earth. Their combined efforts are directed against the godly remnant of Jews and against those Gentiles who accepted the message of the gospel of the kingdom.

And John sees this first beast having ten horns with crowns and seven heads and these heads have names of blasphemy. Daniel had seen Babylonia, Medo-Persia and Greco-Macedonia under the emblem of the lion, the bear and the leopard. John sees this beast here like a leopard, with bear's feet and lion's mouth. This revived Roman empire is an amalgamation of parts of the previous world empires. The preceding ones are absorbed by the last, the Roman empire. Therefore the revived Roman empire will contain the different elements in one great monster. This Roman empire will be revived in the first part of the final seven years. We saw this under the first seal. Here is the beginning of the period for which the dragon gives to him his power, and his throne and great authority. It becomes now fully possessed by Satan. The ten horns are the ten kingdoms which will exist in that empire. We are told later that these ten kings "have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the beast" (17:13).

In the same chapter the beast is also seen coming out of the abyss (17:8) denoting its Satanic origin. The heads represent the seven forms of government which have characterized the empire in the past, the seventh becomes the eighth. One of the heads is especially mentioned; later we read "he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition" (17:11). He was as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. This head denotes the imperial form of government, which had died, and now is revived in the person of the leader, the prince of Daniel 9:27, the little horn, which Daniel saw in the midst of the ten horns. This will be Satan's man, one of his masterpieces. The whole earth will wonder after that beast and its Satan-possessed head.

Verses 11-18. The second beast is not an empire with a great leader, but a person. The first beast is out of the sea; the second out of the earth (land). The first has ten horns; the second has two. The beast out of the sea comes first; the other beast follows him. The first beast is a political power, the second is a religious leader. The first is a Gentile power and its head a Gentile; the second is a Jew. The first beast has Satanic power; so has the second beast. The second beast induced the worship of the first beast whose dominion is over the entire Roman world and after whom the whole earth wonders; the sphere of the second beast is Palestine. The first beast through its head makes in the beginning of the seven years a covenant with many of the Jews, but in the middle of the week he breaks that covenant (Dan. 9:27). That covenant will probably be the permission given to the

Jews to build a temple and to resume their sacrificial worship.

The first and the second beast make a covenant, which marks the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel. But when the little horn, the first beast, becomes energized by Satan, he breaks that covenant. Then the second beast demands the worship of the first beast as well as the worship of himself. This second beast is the final, personal Antichrist. He has two horns like a lamb, and speaks like a dragon. He is a counterfeit lamb and his two horns are an imitation of the priestly and kingly authority of Christ. He is the one of whose coming our Lord spoke (John 5:43). He is the man of sin, the son of perdition described by Paul in 2 Thess. 2. He must be a Jew or his claim of being Israel's true Messiah would not be accepted by the Jews.

Daniel also gives an interesting prophetic picture which bears out his Jewish character and his wicked, satanic ways. See Daniel 11:36-39. This second beast is also called the false prophet (16:13; 19:20; 20:10). He does lying wonders. He reigns as the false king in Jerusalem and sits as god in the temple. He will be the religious head of apostate Judaism and apostate Christendom. It is the strong delusion of the second chapter of Second Thessalonians. He also demands the worship of the first beast. He makes an image of the first beast and gives breath to it, so that it can speak. Whoever has not the mark of the beast on hand and forehead cannot buy nor sell, and whosoever does not worship the beast will be killed. And those who worship the beast and receive the mark are lost souls. Great will be the number of martyrs at that time. To find out what the mark is and some of the other details would only be guesswork. No one can imagine the horrors of that time when Satan rules for a short time on earth and produces the great tribulation, such as was not before on earth, nor ever can be again.

But what does the number 666 mean? If we were to state all the different views on this number and the different applications we would have to fill many pages and then we would not know what is right and wrong. Seven is the complete perfect number; six is incomplete and is man's number. Here we have three times six. It is humanity fallen, filled with pride, defying God. The number 666 signifies man's day and man's defiance of God under Satan's power in its culmination.

CHAPTER 14

Grace ancient

1. The Lamb and the 144,000 (14:1-5)
2. The everlasting gospel (14:6-7)
3. Fall of Babylon anticipated (14:8)
4. Wrath for the worshippers of the beast (14:9-11)
5. The blessed dead (14:12-13)
6. The harvest and the vintage (14:14-20)

Verses 1-5. A series of visions follow the dark scenes in chapter 13. The conditions under the domineering power of the two beasts are going to be changed. The Lord will answer the prayers of the persecuted Jewish people and deliver them by His personal coming out of the opened heaven. This glorious manifestation is fully revealed in the nineteenth chapter. Here it is anticipated. There is much said about this intervention in behalf of the suffering godly remnant in the Old Testament. As an illustration we call attention to Psalms 44 and 45. In the Forty-fourth Psalm we find a description of their suffering and the cry to heaven: "Arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies' sake." In the Forty-fifth Psalm the answer to this prayer is recorded. The King riding in majesty, dealing with His enemies, surrounded by redeemed companies, is beheld in that Psalm. The entire book of Psalms should be studied from the viewpoint of prophecy; it will shed much light

upon these events of this portion of Revelation.

But who are the 144,000 standing with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, having His Name and His Father's Name written on their foreheads? In the previous chapter we saw a company on earth who have the mark of the beast on their foreheads; but here is a company who have His Name and the Father's Name on the forehead. A good many have made of this company a portion of the Church, as first-fruits, who, according to this theory, have lived separated lives and are caught up into heaven, while the other believers, who did not live as near to God as they did, will have to suffer in the great tribulation.

The reader who has followed the unfolding of this book will see at once that such an interpretation is impossible. These 144,000 have nothing to do whatever with the Church. And the 144,000 learn to sing this new song. Who then are the harpers? They are the martyred company seen in connection with the fifth seal and they also include now their brethren which were slain during the great tribulation. The characteristics of the 144,000 are next given. Verse 4 must not be interpreted in a literal sense. Those who apply it to a first-fruits of the Church have done so, and it has led to much confusion and even worse things. Literal impurity is not in view. If it had a literal meaning this company would consist of men only. The woman, the great harlot Babylon and her daughters, the godless and christless religious world-systems (chapter 17) are then on earth. They did not defile themselves with the corruptions and idolatries prevalent on the earth. They kept themselves from spiritual fornication. They are the first-fruits and the earnest of the blessings soon in store for the earth. They were devoted to the Lamb and no lie (not guile) was in their mouth. The lie and delusion of the end-time were utterly repudiated by them.

Verses 6-7. This has nothing to do with the preaching of the gospel during this church-age. The angel must not be taken as a literal angel. The preaching of any gospel to those who dwell on earth is never committed to angels, but to men. This is true of the gospel of grace which redeemed sinners are privileged to proclaim during this age, and of the everlasting gospel during the end of the age. The gospel preached is the gospel of the kingdom and the preachers are this faithful remnant of God's earthly people. Nothing of this preaching was said in chapter 7, though the result, the gathered multitude coming out of the great tribulation is seen there. But here, where the moral and spiritual characteristics of the remnant of Israel are seen, their testimony also comes into view. What this everlasting gospel is we need not explain, for verse 7 gives us the information. It is everlasting because it concerns the Creator as the only object of worship. And it will sound the loudest and go forth in no uncertain sound at the time when pandemonium reigns on earth, and heaven is about to open to manifest the King of glory. How great is God's mercy! And the nations who hear and turn to God will enter the coming kingdom. Read in connection with verses 6 and 7 Psalm 96. It will give you a great deal of light on this portion of Revelation.

Verse 8. This is an anticipative announcement of what will also happen as the great tribulation nears its close. The particulars are not given here. These and what Babylon is and how Babylon the great (city must be omitted in this verse) falls, we shall find in chapters 17 and 18. God's intervention in judgment upon the great whore is simply mentioned here.

Verses 9-11. Here we have a third angelic announcement. It concerns the worshipers of the beast. They drink of the wrath of God. It is "without mixture," that is, no mercy is found in the cup of His indignation. It serves as a solemn warning. Babylon falls prior to the glorious appearing of the King, and the beast will afterward manifest his power as never before. Therefore, the warning concerning the inevitable fate of those who worship the beast and take its mark.

Verses 12-13. It is a voice which proclaims this. It refers especially to those who are martyrs at that time. Certainly all our loved ones who fall asleep in Jesus are blessed. They are absent from the body and consciously present with the Lord. But here is the comfort for those who faithfully resist the worship of the beast, who refuse to take the mark. They become martyrs. The book of Revelation will be read and studied during the great tribulation. Satan through the beasts, will try to

annihilate it and the rest of the Bible. But it will be a failure as all former attempts to get the Bible out of the world have failed. Here then, is first the warning. If they worship the beast they will be lost forever. Then there is the alternative to resist the beast and be killed as to the body, but die in the Lord. "From henceforth" means during the tribulation when the great persecution goes on.

Verses 14-20. This brings now the coming of the Son of Man with judgment power into view. The harvest and the vintage have come. The sickle is put in. The reapers used will be angels (Matt. 13:41). The day of vengeance has come. Read Isaiah 63:1-6; Joel 3; Zechariah 12-14. This will greatly help to a better understanding of the harvest and the vintage. The nations and their armies will be in the land; the Assyrian from the north, foreshadowed by the wicked work of Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 8) will do his awful work, the false prophet, the second beast is in Jerusalem. But then the judgment clouds break. The battle of Armageddon comes into view for the first time in verse 20. How we ought to praise Him for His infinite grace which has separated us from these awful judgments of vengeance and wrath. His people will be at home when these things come to pass.

CHAPTERS 15-16

The Seven Vials

1. The victors' song and worship (15:1-4)
2. The seven angels leave the temple (15:5-8)
3. The first vial (16:1-2)
4. The second vial (16:3)
5. The third vial (16:4-7)
6. The fourth vial (16:8-9)
7. The fifth vial (16:10-11)
8. The sixth vial (16:12)
9. Parenthesis: The seventh vial (16:13-21)

Chapter 15:1-4. And now the last seven angels appear; seven seal judgments first, followed by seven angels with trumpets and next the last seven angels. With these seven angels who have the seven last plagues for the world, the wrath of God is completed. Before these angels go forth we behold another worship scene. Who are they? Not the twenty-four elders, but they are the harpers which we saw harping and singing in chapter 14:2-3. They are the martyred company worshiping in glory. Here we are told of their victory and their song, the song of Moses and of the Lamb. The song of Moses (Ex. 15) is the song of an earthly deliverance and the song of the Lamb concerns a spiritual deliverance. They are redeemed by power and by blood.

Verses 5-8. A wonderful sight it is. There is again an ominous silence similar to the silence in connection with the opening of the seventh seal. The silence is not mentioned. But the text shows an impressive scene of silence. Quietly the procession of these ministers of judgment file out of the temple. They are clothed in pure, white linen; this is symbolical of the righteousness which demands the judgment wrath about to be poured out. And the golden girdles with which their breasts are girdled speak still more of divine righteousness. God in His righteousness must judge and now His wrath in completeness is about to be felt on the earth. The angels left the temple empty-handed, but the four living creatures give into their hands the bowls full of the wrath of God. And behind that smoke is the fire of judgment.

Chapter 16:1-2. The great voice commands the seven angels to go on their way and to empty the bowls upon the earth (Ps. 49:24). And these vials of judgments affect not only the Roman Empire, but the entire world, for the whole world is guilty before God. The first vial poured out produces a grievous sore upon the worshipers of the beast. While it is undoubtedly true that we have symbols also in these vial judgments, it is nevertheless possible that some of these plagues may have, besides the symbolical, also a literal meaning. The sixth plague which came upon Egypt, the first judgment upon the persons of the Egyptians, was also a sore (Ex. 9:10-11). The worshipers of the beast and of the image will be dreadfully afflicted.

Verse 3. This is poured out into the sea. The sea represents the Gentiles. These will now experience the wrath of God. See the plague in Egypt (Ex. 7:17-25). That was a literal thing; but not so here. Some apply it to the continued carnage which will be one of the leading features of the final history of the times of the Gentiles. That it presents a state of the most unspeakable corruption and spiritual death is obvious.

Verses 4-7. Another scene in which the blood is prominent. The apostates denied the blood, sneered at it as the Unitarians and Christian Scientists do in our own days, and now the angel of the waters saith, "Thou has given them blood to drink, for they are worthy." They have to feel the dreadful results of having rejected the Christ of God and accepted the man of sin. The children of Israel had to taste their own idolatry when Moses put the ashes of the burnt golden calf in the water and made them drink it (Ex. 32:20). They have to taste the vileness and bitterness of their apostasy. They reap what they sow. All the joys of life typified by rivers and fountains of water, are poisoned and corrupted. It is a retributive judgment of God falling upon the earth.

Verses 8-9. The fourth vial is poured into the sun and men are scorched with great heat. Some also apply this literally, but the symbolical meaning is to be preferred. There can be no doubt that the powers of nature will also bear witness to the wrath of God. Famines, droughts, great floods, volcanic disturbances, great and widespread earthquakes and other physical phenomena will occur throughout these days of tribulation. However, the sun here is not the physical sun, but means, as under the fourth trumpet, the supreme authority governing them (the Roman empire). Under the fourth trumpet great moral darkness came upon all; here it is fearful, fiery agony "scorched with great heat." The government, Satan-ruled as it is, becomes now the source of the most awful torment to those who are under its dominion. God, in judgment and in His wrath, permits those terrible things to come to pass. Everything under these vial judgments will become more aggravated than under the trumpet judgment.

Verses 10-11. Under the fifth trumpet we saw the star fallen from heaven. It synchronizes with chapter 12:7-12-Satan cast out of heaven. Then Satan fallen from heaven gave his power and authority to the beast, the head of the empire. Here the throne (not seat) of the beast is dealt with. His throne and his kingdom are deluged with wrath. All becomes darkness.

Verse 12. Once more the river Euphrates is mentioned. It dries up when the sixth bowl is poured out so that the way of the kings of the east (literal: from the rising of the sun) might be prepared. We have hinted before at the correspondence between the trumpet judgments and the pouring out of the vials. This now becomes very marked, for under the sixth trumpet the river Euphrates is also mentioned. There the forces which keep back hostile powers are removed and here the river is dried up.

As already stated the Euphrates was the boundary of the Roman empire and the land of Israel. It is a kind of barrier which separates the west from the east. This barrier symbolized by the river Euphrates is now completely removed, so that the kings from the sunrise can invade the land. This invasion is also seen in connection with the sixth trumpet. The nations must gather from all quarters in and about Palestine. We find much of this revealed in the Old Testament and it would be strange if the Revelation were silent on so important an event. Ezekiel describes a great invader, a confederacy of nations (Ezek. 38 and 39). Gog, Magog, the Prince of Rosh (Russia), Meshech,

Tubal, Persia, Cush and Put are mentioned as forming this confederacy. The term "Kings of the sunrise" may even mean the far Eastern Asiatic nations, like China and Japan. The drying up of the Euphrates seems therefore to mean the removal of the barrier, so that the predicted gathering of the nations may take place (Joel 3:2). What began under the sixth trumpet is consummated when the sixth vial is poured out. It is an act of judgment-wrath, while at the same time these opposing nations are gathering for the great day of God Almighty.

Verses 13-21. Just as we had a parenthetical vision between the sixth and seventh seal, and between the sixth and seventh trumpet, so we find here a very brief one between the sixth and seventh vial judgments. Armageddon is not yet, but it now comes in view. Unclean spirits, like frogs, creatures of the slimy, evil-smelling swamps and of the night, now proceed out of the mouth of the trinity of evil. The dragon is Satan; the beast, the political head of the empire, and the false prophet, the Antichrist. Satanic influences, emanating from him and his two master-pieces are then at work; and they are of such a nature that we cannot fully understand them. They are the spirits of demons, working miracles.

The seventh angel pours his vial into the air. This is Satan's sphere. His power and dominion are now dealt with in wrath. While Satan was cast out of heaven, he may still maintain part of the atmosphere immediately above the earth, thus upholding his claim as the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). A great voice declares "It is done." All that follows shows that the climax is reached. The judgment shown is sweeping everything. A great earthquake as under the sixth seal and the seventh trumpet takes place. The great city Babylon is divided into three parts; the cities of the nations fall. It is the hour of collapse, when the stone from above does its smiting work (Dan. 2). "It is done!" The Lord has come. The nineteenth chapter will furnish us the particulars.

CHAPTERS 17-18

Babylon, the Harlot, and Her judgment

1. The description of the woman (17:1-6)
2. The angel's interpretation (17:7-15)
3. The desolation of the whore (17:16-18)
4. The angelic announcement (18:1-3)
5. The call to separation (18:4-5)
6. Her pride and destruction (18:6-8)
7. Lamentation and jubilation (18:9-20)
8. Her utter and eternal destruction (18:21-24)

Chapter 17:1-6. Babylon was mentioned for the first time in this book in chapter 14:8; her fall was then anticipated. In two chapters we have a description of her and the details of her overthrow and complete destruction. Babylon is seen as a great, world-wide ecclesiastical, political and commercial system, and her dwelling-place, from where she exercises authority, is a great city, which is the seven-hilled city Rome. There are many who believe that the literal Babylon is in view here in these two chapters. It is claimed that literal Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates is to become once more a large city and the seat of government during the end of this age. Literal Babylon never was a part of the Roman empire, and as the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 is seen in closest identification with the empire, and for a time at least is at its center and capital, the Babylon in Asia is ruled out at once. Rome was the great center of the Roman empire and Rome will once more become the seat where the woman pictured in this chapter will exercise her

authority.

In the first part of this chapter we have a description of the great harlot Babylon. Who, then, is this woman, branded a harlot, whom one of the seven angels who poured out the vials showed to John? She represents the papal system in its final power and control in the world. We shall see how this assertion is fully confirmed by the words of this chapter.

We saw in the church-message to Thyatira, which stands for the papacy and its great corruption, that Rome is pictured as the woman Jezebel, corresponding to the woman in the parable of the leaven. And of Thyatira it is said "she repents not." This shows that Rome will continue in her corrupt ways to the end, till judgment overtakes her. She is to be cast into great tribulation (2:22).

When the true Church is caught up, the papal system, as we call it, the Roman Catholic "church" will see a great revival. For a time she has been stripped of the temporal power she once had, but it will be restored to her. Along with the revival of the Roman empire there will be a revival of papal Rome. But we must look very briefly at some of the descriptions of this woman, the harlot. "She sitteth upon many waters." We find the interpretation in verse 15. "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth are peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues." Rome even now can boast of her children among all nations. She gets her support from the whole world. And when she gets her revival she will have a still greater dominion. The kings of the earth will yield once more to her spiritual fornication. Then John saw the woman upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. Who is the Beast she rides? It is the first beast of chapter 13, the revived Roman empire. She becomes identified with that empire. Her attire is purple and scarlet and she is decked with gold, precious stones and pearls. The pope and his cardinals wear these colors. Purple and scarlet are the leading colors displayed in great Romish celebrations; gold, precious stones and pearls describe her enormous wealth and dazzling glory, so attractive to the natural man. And in her hand was a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

How clearly this describes papal Rome. Her service, called worship, her rituals, her splendid edifices, etc., all are fair to behold and pleasing to the eye, like a golden cup. But inside we find her filthiness in doctrine and in practices. She encourages sin by her indulgences. With the celibacy there is also filth connected. And then the vileness and abomination of the confessional. Her shameless character is written upon her forehead. The true Church is to have His name upon the forehead and the great harlot-system bears an inscription.

Verses 7-15. The interpreting angel told John who the beast is, the beast, that was, and is not, and yet is (verse 8). It is the Roman empire as stated before, it was, in an imperial form in John's day. In the fifth century, A.D., it ceased existing as imperial Rome; it is not. But it is to be again, a revival which is here described as coming out of the pit of the abyss (chapter 13). Verse 9 shows Rome (seven mountains), where the woman sitteth. Therefore, Rome speaks of "the See of the Papacy," and "See" is derived from the Latin Sedes, which means seat or throne.

The seven kings or heads in verse 10, mean different forms of government of the Roman empire. Five are fallen; these were kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs and military tribunes. These are past forms of government. But in John's day the empire had the imperial form of government. This is the meaning of "one is." The other and final form of the Roman empire "is not yet come." That is in John's day it had not yet come. It is the Satanic revival and control of the empire as we saw it in chapter 13. And the eighth head, which goeth into perdition, is the man who heads the empire, the little horn, which Daniel saw on the ten-horned beast. The ten horns in verses 12-13 are kings. They correspond to the ten toes on Nebuchadnezzar's image and the ten horns on the fourth beast which Daniel saw coming out of the sea. And these ten kings yield their power and strength unto the beast. In verse 14, their awful future is seen. We shall see this more fully in chapter 19:11-21. They are going to make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb, who is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, will overcome them. With Him are the called, the chosen and the faithful, that is the redeemed, who

come with Him and are manifested when He appears.

Verses 16-18. The woman rides the beast for a short time only. She will not be long successful in her regained power. The ten horns, the ten kingdoms, and the beast hate her and turn against the whore. ("And the Beast" is not in the Authorized Version; it is added in the Revised Version and belongs rightfully in the text.) First they were all for her and now they unite in making her desolate and naked and burn her with fire. But more than that "and shall eat her flesh," just as Jezebel was eaten by the dogs. It is God in His righteous judgment who decreed her desolation in this way.

Chapter 18:1-3. Babylon is now seen under another aspect. In the former chapter we have the religious center of Rome and her wicked idolatries, in the present chapter it includes also the whole system of apostate Christendom in its social and commercial aspect, the so-called "Christian civilization" in its final apostate condition and doom. Papal Rome in her short revival becomes the head of apostate Christendom and controls everything till her appointed doom comes upon her. While we saw in the preceding chapter the desolation of the whore by the ten kings and the beast, here we see how God views her and that He dethrones this system in His judgment. A strong angel comes down to announce her doom and to lay bare her inner and most awful corruption. A strong descending Angel whose glory lightened the earth, shows what the boasting thing, she, who bore the blessed name of Christ, has become. (This angel may represent the Lord Himself. If this is correct we have the third manifestation of our Lord in the garb of an angel: 8:3 in His priestly dignity; 10:1 in His royal dignity and here as the herald and executor of the vengeance of God upon Babylon.) She is seen to be the habitation of demons. Even now behind all the denials of the doctrine of Christ and the false doctrines which mark the onward march of the predicted apostasy, demons are the leaders (1 Tim. 4:1).

And the nations drank eagerly her cup and the kings committed fornication with her. These kings are not the ten kings of the Empire for they are used in the judgment of the whore, while the kings mentioned here bewail her destruction (verse 9). And with the system there was connected great commerce; merchants through her became rich.

Verses 4-5. God always calls out His true children from that which is evil. His own must be a separate people. Saints in past centuries have heard this call and left behind the Romish abominations and thousands sealed their testimony with their blood. And in these days in which our lot is cast, days of increasing signs, heralding as never before the approaching end and the homecall of His people to meet Him in the air, in these days God demands the separation of His true children. Christendom is becoming daily more and more the religious camp of apostasy. And, therefore, He calls: "Let us go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13). He who remains in that which denies His Name, is partaker of her sins (verse 4; compare with 2 John, verses 10-11). As all drifts back to Rome and the coming political and religious confederacy, this final Babylon looms up; God's people must hear that call. To whom is this call addressed? Undoubtedly to the remnant of God's ancient people, the believing remnant and also to that large number of Gentiles who hear the final message, the gospel of the kingdom.

Verses 6-8. Like ancient Babylon, the whole apostate system, Rome and all her offspring, was filled with pride. She was lifted up in all her earthly glory and now God breaks her completely. "She shall be utterly burned with fire." As her smoke is to arise forever and ever (19:3) it is possible that the proud city, Rome, the center of the system of apostasy and commerce, will be destroyed by volcanic action, and where the seven-hilled city once stood there may be instead an immense crater, testifying through the millennium of God's righteous retribution. In view of the volcanic conditions on the Italian peninsula this is more than possible.

Verses 9-20. And now follows the great and universal lamentation over the destruction of the great world-system. There is weeping and wailing when at last this anti-Christian civilization, all Christendom united with Rome, and for a time controlling the commerce of the world, is wiped out by the hand of God. The kings, the merchants, the ship masters, the company in ships and sailors,

all are seen mourning, weeping and wailing. The destruction of the system and of its proud city affects them all. They bewail their great loss. Notice twenty-eight things are mentioned by them. The first is gold and the last is the souls of men. How this describes Rome! She is the trafficker in souls and the destroyer of souls as well. And in studying the articles of the commerce of apostate Christendom we notice that these are nearly all articles of luxury. The greatest panic has then come and there will be no recovery of the market. The rich men will weep and howl for their misery is come upon them (James 5:1). See also Zeph. 1:11, 15.

Heaven is called to rejoice over her, and three classes are mentioned (Revised Version), saints, apostles and prophets. "For God hath judged your judgment of her." This is the better rendering. The judgment which the saints pronounced on her is now executed. The next chapter shows us more fully the rejoicing heavens.

Verses 21-24. In Jeremiah 51:60-64 we read that Seraiah was commissioned by Jeremiah to attach a stone to the book containing the prophet's words and to cast it into the Euphrates. "And thou shalt say, thus shall Babylon sink and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her and they shall be weary." Here an angel took up a millstone and cast it into the sea, showing by this action the complete and final destruction of the wicked system and the equally wicked city. And what revelation there is in the statement, "for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." In chapter 20 we read that the old serpent deceives the nations. Sorceries, wicked spirits, demon-powers blinded the eyes of the nations to follow Rome's seductive lure. And thus it is with a lifeless, spiritless Protestantism and its bloodless gospel. The sorceries of Rome, the demons underneath it all, attract apostate Christendom so that all will be united in the great, final Babylon.

So that we may not question that both chapters refer to Rome, though the entire apostate Christendom is also in view, her blood-guiltiness is mentioned once more.

CHAPTERS 19-20:6

The Manifestation of the King and the Millennium

1. Heavenly hallelujahs and the marriage of the Lamb (19:1-6)
2. Heaven opened and His visible manifestation (19:11-16)
3. The battle of Armageddon (19:17-21)
4. The binding of Satan (20:1-3)
5. The thousand-year reign (20:4-6)

Verses 1-10. Once more we find the significant phrase "after these things" (chapter 4:1; 7:1; 18:1). "After these things"--the things which are described in chapters 17 and 18, the fall of Babylon and the complete destruction of the whore and the system over which she presided and domineered, after these things, voices in heaven are heard again. We were first introduced to the heavens in this book in the fourth chapter.

In chapter 18:20 we heard the words addressed to heaven, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." And now we see heaven rejoicing. "I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven saying, 'Hallelujah.' Hallelujah means 'Praise ye Jehovah.'" This Hebrew word is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. Four times this word of praise is found in the beginning of this chapter; the Hallelujah times for heaven and earth are imminent. The book of Psalms closes with many hallelujahs; the blessed time which the Psalms so often anticipate, when the earth is judged in righteousness and the glory of the Lord is manifested, is now at hand. The praise here is on account of the righteousness of God exhibited in the judgment of the great whore "which did corrupt the earth with her fornication" and because

the blood of God's servants shed by her is now avenged. The great multitude whose Hallelujah is heard first must be the company of martyrs who died during the tribulation. The souls under the altar and their brethren which were slain later utter this praise now. They are seen as a distinct company from the twenty-four elders. A second hallelujah is uttered by them, while the smoke of the destroyed city goes up forever and ever.

The whole redeemed company, Old and New Testament saints, add their amen and hallelujah to the outburst of praise on account of the execution of the righteous judgment. And they worship God, for it is of the righteousness which accomplished the destruction of the great whore. In the midst of this wonderful and impressive worship-scene the throne begins to be heard. A voice from the throne said: "Give Praise unto God all ye His servants and ye that fear Him both small and great." And the command is at once obeyed. John hears the fourth hallelujah and it is the greatest, the most magnificent. It is the great hallelujah-chorus of heaven. Like the voice of many roaring waters, like the voice of mighty thunderings, a great multitude saith, "Hallelujah for the Lord our God Omnipotent reigneth."

Who is this great multitude? In the first verse we heard the Hallelujah of the martyred companies. The twenty-four elders and four living creatures did not join in this first hallelujah. Their hallelujah followed. And now the great outburst of a great multitude. This multitude includes all the redeemed in glory. And they rejoice and give glory for an additional reason which is made known for the first time in this book. The marriage of the Lamb is about to be consummated. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready." The harlot, which claimed to be the bride, being judged, the true bride of Christ is seen in glory. And it is the marriage of the Lamb. His joy is now filled full for He receives her, who is bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. The second Man, the last Adam, is joined to her who is to rule and reign with Him.

But who is the bride about to become the Lamb's wife? Some teach that it is Israel to be united with the Lord in the closest bonds. But these expositors forget that the scene is a heavenly one. This marriage does not take place on earth where the faithful remnant looks up, expecting Him to appear for their deliverance, but this marriage is in glory. It is true such relationship is declared to be Israel's in the Old Testament. She was married to Jehovah in a legal covenant and on account of her faithless condition, because Jerusalem played the harlot (Ezek. 16:35), she was put away. For a time Israel was the wife of Jehovah (Is. 54:1) and then on account of her wickedness became divorced. She will be taken back in the day of her national repentance when the Lord comes. But as one who had been divorced she cannot be a bride again. The bride of Christ to become the Lamb's wife is the Church of the New Testament.

All who accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord since the day of Pentecost constitute the bride of Christ. The Church began on Pentecost and her completion will be the translation to glory (1 Thess. 4:17). She is both the body of Christ and the bride of Christ, as Eve was of the body of Adam and also his bride. The Church is the nearest and the most beloved object of His loving heart.

But how has she made herself ready? And what does it mean, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white for the linen is the righteousness of the saints"? The grace of God has supplied the robe and the precious blood is her title to glory. In this respect she was ready. But the words here refer us to the judgment seat of Christ, that award seat before which we must appear. Then the hidden things are brought to light and the wood and the hay and stubble are burned (1 Cor. 3:12-15). Then "every man shall have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5) and what grace accomplished in each one and through each will be manifested. And the clean white linen "is the righteousness of the saints." The word "righteousness" is in the plural. It means more than the righteousness which we are in Christ or the faith in Him which is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4:3). It includes all the blessed results in life and service produced by the Holy Spirit, the practical righteousness of the saints. And yet even these need the washing in that precious blood without

which all is unclean and unholy.

And so it is grace after all, as indicated by the word "given" (Revised Version); "it was given to her to be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure." He himself has made her ready and removed every spot, every wrinkle and every blemish. God grant that we His people may daily meditate on this coming glorious event, the marriage of the Lamb, and walk worthy of such a Lord and such a calling. Once more John is commissioned to write: "Write, Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And who can estimate the blessedness of being in His ever blessed presence, at His table, at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Verses 11-16. And now we reach the great event so often mentioned in the Old Testament, the event for which this world is waiting, the visible manifestation of Him, whom the heavens received, who returns to judge the earth, to receive the promised kingdom and rule over the earth for a thousand years. We have reached the great climax in the Revelation. His own words are now to be fulfilled. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:29-30).

Impressive words--"And I saw heaven opened." Heaven was opened unto Him when He came out of Jordan at His baptism. While His baptism foreshadowed His death in the sinner's place, His resurrection and ascension are foreshadowed in coming out of the waters and the open heaven. In heaven at the right hand of God He has been ever since, unseen by human eyes. At last the time has come when God is to make His enemies as the footstool of His feet. Heaven is opened so that He might be revealed in His glorious majesty. And out of the opened heavens He comes forth. He comes as the mighty Victor to judge in righteousness and to make war. "And behold a white horse; and He that sat thereon was called Faithful and True and in righteousness He doth judge and make war." The white horse is symbolical of victorious warfare and glorious conquest. When, seven years before the first seal had been opened (6:1), a rider appeared upon a white horse achieving great conquest, it was the false king who was then seen in vision. He is as the beast on earth with the King and their armies to make war with the coming King who comes out of the opened heaven. Glorious sight! He is coming to conquer and to claim His inheritance. The appointed day has come in which God "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). Upon His head are many diadems. The saints wear crowns, but He to whom belongs all power in heaven and on earth wears many diadems, encircling His head in dazzling splendor.

"And He had a name written, that no man knew but Himself." And again it is written, "His Name is called the Word of God." And on His vesture and on His thigh there is a name written, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." The unknown Name is the name of His essential deity. No human name can express what He is in Himself "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." His Name "the Word of God" refers us to the Gospel of John. As the Word He is the express image of God, that is, He makes God visible. He is the expression of God in His character, His thoughts and counsels. And the third name mentioned, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," expresses what He is in relation to the earth.

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood"--"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 blood-dipped vesture has nothing to do with His work on the cross. He is described in Isaiah 63:1-4 as the One who has the day of vengeance in His heart, and this passage in Isaiah is here being fulfilled. The two-edged sword refers us to Isaiah 11:4: "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked."

But He is not alone. The armies of heaven follow the great King. They are, like Him, upon white horses and are clothed in fine linen, white and clean. These armies are not angels. It is true, angels will be with Him as He comes, for it is written, then He shall be revealed with His holy angels. Angels will be the reapers in the judgment (Matt. 13:41) when the age ends and they will be used in the regathering of Israel (Matt. 24:31). But the armies here are not angels. They are the glorified saints; the fine linen, white and clean, identifies them fully. In faith and blessed assurance, you, dear reader, and the writer can say, we shall be in that company with Himself as leader. The Son brings His many sons unto glory (Heb. 2:10). What a sight that will be for the earth-dwellers! Each in that company bears His own image; each reflects His own glory.

Verses 17-21. And what a sublime vision comes next! An angel is beheld by the Seer standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he summons the birds that fly in mid-heaven to gather themselves to the great supper of God to eat the flesh of the slain. The birds of prey are summoned in anticipation of the battle of Armageddon which is then imminent. And now the hour of judgment has come. An angel, standing in the sun, the place of supreme authority, gives the invitation to the birds of prey to be ready for the feast which a holy and righteous God will have for them. The day of wrath has come. The slain of the Lord shall be many (Isaiah 66:16).

And down on earth there is the greatest gathering of armies the world has ever seen. The beast, the head of the revived Roman Empire, is the commander-in-chief. The kings of the earth are with him. Vast armies camp on all sides. The great valley on the plains of Esdraelon is filled with soldiers. The hills and mountains swarm with armed men. Satan's power has gathered and blinded this vast multitude to the utmost. The unclean spirits, the demons working miracles, have brought them together to the battle of that day. And the hordes from the north, under the Prince of Rosh are coming later. These vast multitudes from the north and beyond Euphrates are described in Ezekiel 38-39. And in that Old Testament prophecy we find a statement which reminds us of the great supper of God in Revelation. "Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, assemble yourselves and come; gather yourselves on every side to My sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood" (Ezek. 39:17). "Thus shall ye be filled at My table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God" (verse 20).

Zechariah 14:2 is now being fulfilled. While the vast armies are covering valleys and hills, the objective will be Jerusalem. All nations are gathered against her. "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." And now as these armies are massed together the great battle of Armageddon takes place. They are ready to make war against Him, who comes through heaven's portals. "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations" (Zech. 14:3). The battle does not consume much time. Sennacherib's army was suddenly smitten and they all perished, and here are armies in comparison with which Sennacherib's forces were insignificant. One mighty blow from above, one flash of glory and all their strength and power is gone. The stone has fallen (Dan. 2). With one blow the dominion and misrule of the Gentiles is at an end.

The kings of the present day might profitably listen to Nebuchadnezzar's letter in Daniel 4. He began at the times of the Gentiles, and has left this letter to be read by his successors. The words our Lord spoke while on earth "on whom this stone falls it shall grind him to powder" have been fulfilled (Matt. 21:44). Such is the awful fate which "Christian civilization" (?) and "Kultur" (!) and a Christless Christendom is rapidly approaching. And while the armies perish as to the body and God's wrath sweeps the earth clean of the mass of apostates, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel, the beast (the head of the empire) and the false prophet (the second beast of chapter 13), that is the false Messiah, the Antichrist, are cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. They were not annihilated, for a thousand years later we still find them there (20:10); and still they are in existence and will ever be as individuals in that place of eternal punishment. And those that were slain as to the body will be raised after the millennium and also

share the place with the two, whom they followed and worshipped.

Chapter 20:1-3. And now Satan, who was cast out of heaven three and one-half years before the visible and glorious coming of the Lord, and who has been on earth in person, though not beheld by human eyes, is seized to be put into his prison for a thousand years. And the demons, who were liberated by Satan (chapter 9) are likewise shut up in the bottomless pit, though this is not mentioned because it is self-evident. The terms "key" and "great chain" are of course figurative. He is mentioned in all his infamous titles. He is called dragon on account of his horrible cruelty and vileness, the old serpent on account of his maliciousness, guile and deception; he is the devil, the arch-tempter of man, and Satan because he is the accuser of the brethren, the one who opposed Christ and His people. He is now dethroned as the god of this age, completely stripped of his power; and his dethronement means the complete enthronement of our Lord Jesus Christ. And here is the important statement that this being, the once glorious Lucifer, the Son of the morning and light-bearer, who fell through pride, has been the deceiver of the nations.

Verses 4-6. Thrones are seen next by the Seer. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them." Daniel also saw thrones in connection with the judgment of the beast, but nothing is said of those occupying the thrones in Daniel's vision. Here we have the complete revelation, and several times the blessed statement is made that Christ and His saints shall reign with Him for a thousand years. The new age in which all things are put in subjection under His feet, the personal reign of Christ, in which all His redeemed people have a share, begins. It will last a thousand years. Six times we read of the thousand years in this chapter. Because this coming age will last a thousand years it has been called by the Latin word "millennium." Not a few have made the astonishing declaration that such a period of time during which Christ and His saints reign over the earth has but little foundation in the Scripture.

It is quite true that the only place in which the duration of such an age is given is this great final book of Revelation. And that should be sufficient for any Christian to believe in such an age of a thousand years. However, this age of unspeakable blessing and glory for this earth is revealed throughout the entire Bible. The Old Testament contains hundreds of unfulfilled promises of blessing for Israel, the nations of the earth and even for all creation, which have never seen even a partial fulfillment. Isaiah is full of such promises. In the New Testament there are also passages which clearly teach and point to such an age of glory for this earth. Read Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 8:19-23; Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:20; Phil. 2:9-11. What awfully disheartening pessimism it would be if we had to believe that the terrible conditions prevailing on the earth now, conditions which have steadily become worse, were to continue and that man's work is to remedy them and produce something better. This earth has a bright and glorious future. Nations will some day no longer turn, as they do now, their plowshares into swords, but change their swords into plowshares. Righteousness and peace will surely kiss each other and creation's curse and travail pains will end. Mercy and truth meet together.

But when? Never as long as the great unfoldings of this book, which we have briefly followed, have not come to pass. There can be no better day for the earth as long as He is absent and not on the throne which belongs to Him. But when He comes, when He has appeared in glory and in majesty, then the earth will find her rest and groaning creation will be delivered. As we do not write on the great blessings and glories to come when He comes, we must refrain from following these things. Here in our book the revelation is given that Christ shall reign for a thousand years and His Saints shall reign with Him.

Let us notice briefly the different classes mentioned who are associated with Christ in His personal reign. The entire company of the redeemed, as we saw them under the symbolical figure of the twenty-four elders, occupying thrones and wearing crowns, are undoubtedly meant by the first statement, "they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them." They judge with Him. This is the raptured company whom we saw first in glory in chapters 4 and 5; and we, dear fellow-believer, belong to this company. Then follow the martyrs, whom we saw under the fifth seal (6:9-11): "And I

saw the souls of them that had been beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus and for the Word of God." Then we have a third company. "And I saw those who had not worshiped the beast, nor his image, and had not received his mark on their forehead, or in their hands." These are the other martyrs who were slain during the great tribulation, when the beast set up the image and demanded its worship (13). They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The first resurrection is passed and all who have part in it reign with Christ, are priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Oh! wonderful grace which has saved us! Grace which has saved us in Christ and through His ever precious blood delivered us from eternal perdition! Grace which saved us from Satan's power, from sin and all its curse! Grace which has lifted into such heights of glory and has made us the sons of God and the joint-heirs of the Lord Jesus Christ! And how little after all we enter into all these things, which ought to be our daily joy and delight. How little we know of the power of the coming glory of being with Christ and reigning with Him!

CHAPTERS 20:7-22:5

After the Thousand Years and the New Jerusalem

1. Satan's last revolt (20:7-10)
2. The great white throne (20:11-15)
3. The eternal state (21:1-8)
4. The vision of the holy city (21:9-27)
5. The glories of the redeemed (22:1-5)

Verses 7-10. Satan who was put into the abyss a thousand years before, is now loosed out of his prison. God permits him to come forth once more. Who would have ever thought of such a thing! The archenemy who had done his vile and wicked work among the human race, for a thousand years put at least into the place of perfect restraint, and now loosed once more to continue, for a brief season, his work! And he finds nations ready for his deception, not a few, but a number "as the sand of the sea." God permits Satan to come out of his prison, so that the absolute corruption of man might be demonstrated. Man has been tried and tested under every possible condition. He has failed in every age. He failed under the law and he failed even more in the grace-dispensation; and now, under the most glorious conditions, during the millennium, when the Lord Himself is known in all the earth and reigns in righteousness, when want and nearly all the sorrows of a ruined creation are banished, when there is peace on earth, man also fails and does not fully respond to a gracious Lord.

But here is a difficulty which many have. Many a sincere post-Millennialist, who has studied the pre-millennial coming of our Lord, has asked this question, "If the whole world is converted during the millennium, how is it then that Satan finds nations ready to side with him after the thousand-year reign of Christ and then leads them on to destructions?" The difficulty is far from being as great as it is generally made. In fact it is easily explained. As far as Israel is concerned, the "all Israel" living, when He comes, the trusting remnant of Israel, they will constitute the blessed nation in possession of all her promised blessings. They are not mentioned as siding with Satan. No more backsliding for that nation. Isaiah 59:20-21 vouches for this.

And the Gentile nations in the beginning of the millennium will also be converted. However, the human conditions of the earth will continue. The nations are not in a glorified state. Marriage will continue. Children will be born during the millennium. Indeed the earth will be populated as never before. Billions of human beings can be sustained upon our planet and they will come into existence by natural generation during the golden age of glory. Wars will be unknown. No longer

will the flower of manhood be cruelly murdered by human passion in that legalized horrible thing called war. Earthquakes will no longer sweep thousands upon thousands into an untimely grave, nor can famines and pestilences claim their millions. Nor will there be the great infant mortality. Physical death will no longer be the universal rule, but rather an exception (see Isaiah 65:20).

Now every child born during the millennium of the converted nations comes into the world the same as the children in the present age, it is still true, conceived and born in sin. And it is equally true, they must be born again.

As many children of pious, godly parents in this age are gospel-hardened and live on in sin, though they hear the gospel and see its power, so in the millennium, an enormous multitude will see the glory, live under the best and most glorious conditions the earth has seen since before the fall of man, and yet they will be glory-hardened and only submit to the righteousness of that age and yield obedience through fear, for disobedience to the governing laws of the kingdom on earth, will mean sudden and certain judgment. It is not the obedience produced by a believing, trusting heart, but only a feigned obedience. Three prophetic Psalms which speak of these millennial conditions make this clear, if we consider the marginal reading. "As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me, the strangers shall yield feigned obedience unto Me" (Ps. 18:44). "Say unto God, How terrible art Thou in Thy works! Through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies yield feigned obedience unto Thee" (Ps. 66:3). "The haters of the Lord yield feigned obedience unto Him, but their time might have endured forever" (Ps. 81:15). Study these Psalms in their millennial bearing. Thus many nations submit while sin is in their heart and in their blindness they long and hope for the day when they may cast off the restraint. And that day comes when Satan is loosed out of the prison to deceive these nations again.

It was the final attempt of the dethroned usurper to regain his lost dominion. For thousands of years, in the all-wise purposes of God, he was permitted to be the prince of the power of the air and the god of this age. We have followed his history in this book and seen how he was cast out of heaven upon the earth where he caused the great tribulation. Then we beheld him stripped of all his power. The kingdoms of the world became the kingdom of Christ and the old serpent was cast unto the abyss where he remained a thousand years. Loosed for a little season he tried once more to become earth's master. And fire out of heaven devoured the nations who had revolted.

The devil receives his final doom. He is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. He goes to a fixed place, a locality where unspeakable and eternal torment is his portion. This place is prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). And all the wicked will share that place. And he finds others there. The first beings who were cast into this final abode were the beast (the emperor of the Roman empire, the little horn of Dan. 7), and the false prophet (the personal Antichrist, the second beast of chapter 13). They were put there a thousand years before, and as they are there as persons it shows they were not annihilated. And they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever--for the ages of ages--never ending--for all eternity. What a solemn truth this is! Yet men meddle with it and deny future, conscious and eternal punishment. Besides these three persons, the nations who were judged and condemned in the beginning of the millennium, when the Son of Man sat upon the throne of His glory (Matt. 25:31), are also in the Lake of Fire.

Verses 11-15. And now we reach the last great judgment scene of God's holy Word. Much confusion prevails among Christians about this judgment. There is no such thing in the Word of God as a universal judgment, nor is there a universal resurrection. Every human being that has died will be raised at some time. Our Lord spoke (John 5:28) of two resurrections, a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto judgment. The Revelation speaks of the first resurrection. "This is the first resurrection" (20:5). And previously the apostle wrote of a resurrection from among the dead (Phil. 3:11). The first resurrection was finished in the beginning of the millennium. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." The rest of the dead come now into view and they are of necessity the wicked dead, who died in their sins, and whose is the

resurrection unto judgment.

Some, like "Pastor" Russell, who echoes the evil teachings of others, have invented a third resurrection, a resurrection of the unsaved for a second chance. In the light of this final Bible book there is no room whatever for such a resurrection, which would give the lost another opportunity. Nor does the rest of the Bible mention such a third resurrection. And this great judgment is not a universal judgment. It is taught that the entire human race, the living and the dead, will appear before this great throne. But this is incorrect, for it saith, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." No living people are there at all. Again the judgment-scene in Matthew 25:31, etc., is spoken of as being the universal judgment and identical with the judgment here in Revelation. But this is another error. In the judgment of Matthew 25 the dead are not there, but living nations are judged in the beginning of the millennium. And these nations are judged on account of the treatment of the Jewish preachers of the gospel of the kingdom heralded by them during the last seven years of the age. They did not accept the last offer of mercy and that is why they treated the messengers as they did.

Furthermore, the throne which the Son of Man occupies in Matthew 25 is upon the earth; the throne in Revelation 20:11 comes into view after earth and heaven fled away. The Church and the saints of God are not concerned at all in the judgment of Matthew 25, nor in the great white throne judgment. They are at that time in His own presence glorified. Every Christian should have these things clearly defined and know that for him, as in Christ, there is no more judgment or condemnation (John 5:24; Rom. 8:1). The judgment seat of Christ before which believers have to appear (2 Cor. 5:10) does not concern their eternal salvation, but their works and rewards.

Who is the occupant of this great white throne? Not God the Father, but God the Son. "The Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). The earth and heaven fled from His face. Sin-stained and defiled as they were they flee away from the face of the Holy One. The great conflagration of 2 Peter 3:7-12 takes place. (See Annotations on 2 Peter 3.) Fire of judgment swept the earth before the millennium, the day of the Lord, began; but the all consuming fire comes after the millennium. out of that great conflagration there arises a new heaven and a new earth (21:1).

But what about the millions of saved Israelites and Gentiles who are on the millennial earth? Where are they during this great conflagration? What becomes of them? That they share the eternal blessings and glories in the eternal state is certain. But their abode between the burning of the earth and the calling into existence of the new heaven and the new earth is unrevealed. Speculation on it would be wrong. We should accept the silences of Scripture as much in faith as we accept the promises of God.

And John sees the dead standing before the throne. Books were opened and another book was opened, the book of life. "And the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." The books are symbolical; conscience and memory will speak loudly. Twice we read that they are judged according to their works. And in the "book of life" none of their names were written, or they would not have been in that company. "All this would seem to show that, though a millennium has passed since the first resurrection, yet no righteous dead can stand among this throng. The suggestion of the 'book of life' has seemed to many to imply that there are such; but it is not said that there are, and the words 'whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire' may be simply a solemn declaration (now affirmed by the result) that grace is man's only possible escape from the judgment" (Numerical Bible).

The second resurrection takes place. The sea gives up the dead and death and Hades give up the dead. Hades gives up the soul, and death, used here for the grave, gives up the bodies. Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. Both had come into existence because man had sinned, and, therefore, they are cast into the place where all belongs which is contrary to the holiness and righteousness of God. And then that solemn word! "And whosoever was not found written in the

Book of life was cast into the lake of fire." It corresponds to that other solemn statement in John 3:36. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him." To be written in the "book of life" means to have life in Christ. Not our works, not our character, not our religiousness, not our tears, our prayers or our service can put our names in the "book of life." Grace alone can do it, and grace does it, as we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Reader! is your name written there?

The saints of God are in eternal glory; the wicked dead, the lost, are in an eternal lake of fire and suffer conscious, eternal punishment. And how man, blind, presumptuous man, yea, even such who know God, rise up against this solemn truth, the eternal punishment of the wicked. They accuse God of injustice, as if the judge of all the earth would not do right. That the suffering of the lost differs is obvious. It is eternal, because the evil condition remains unchanged. There is no repentance, no faith, no new birth in hell. As there are different rewards for the faithful service of the saints, so are there different degrees of punishment for the unsaved (Luke 12:47-48). This is the second death, not blotting out of existence, but endless in a separation from God.

Chapter 21:1-8. And now the eternal state comes into view. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and the sea is no more." This is the revelation concerning the final and eternal state of the earth. "Thou hast established the earth and it abideth" (Ps. 119:90); "But the earth abideth forever" (Eccl. 1:4). These divine statements are now fulfilled. Many Christians have a very vague conception of the eternal state of the earth and the abode of the redeemed. They think of it as a spiritual state destitute of any locality. But it is not so. The earth and the heaven abide as definite places throughout all eternity. What a marvellous fact this is! In chapter 20:11 we read that the earth and the heaven fled away and there was found no place. We saw that at that time the great conflagration of which Peter speaks took place, when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements, shall be dissolved with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

But we read in the same chapter "nevertheless we, according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (verse 13). During the millennium righteousness reigns upon the earth, but now a state comes for the earth when righteousness shall dwell there. The great burning up meant not an annihilation of the earth and the heavens; God does not annihilate anything, nor does Scripture teach an annihilation of material things and much less the annihilation of human beings, as false teachers claim. The conflagration of the earth and the heaven means their complete purification. The heaven mentioned cannot be the entire heavens; for there is a heaven which cannot be touched by these fires of purification. The heaven is that which surrounds the earth and which was once the peculiar sphere of the great usurper, the prince of the power in the air. And when Peter writes that all this is according to His promise, he has a well-known prophetic statement in Isaiah in mind. "For as the new heaven and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain ." (Isaiah 66:22. See also 65:17).

From this statement we get definite information that the redeemed Israel established upon the new earth will throughout the eternal state be distinct from the saved nations. They will throughout all eternity bear witness of God's faithfulness as the covenant-keeping God. The new heaven and the new earth are therefore the abodes of the redeemed. The new earth, the eternal glory spot of redeemed Israel and the redeemed nations, and the new Jerusalem will come out of heaven to fill the new earth and the new heaven as well. "And I John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

The new Jerusalem, the holy city, comes into view. During the millennium the city of Jerusalem was known as the place of glory for the earth. Numerous Old Testament predictions were fulfilled. In chapter 20:9, she is called "the beloved city." But in Revelation 3:12 we have another Jerusalem mentioned, the same city which John sees coming down out of heaven, the place of the highest glory. It is the abode of the Church in all her glory; the statement "prepared as a bride adorned for

her husband" establishes this beyond controversy. She is called "holy" for all is holy; and a "city" because the Saints are in blessed communion and fellowship there. In the highest glory she had her abode. But now she is being revealed in all her eternal glory and beauty.

During the millennial reign this wonderful city was above the earth and from there Christ reigned and His saints with Him. But here she comes down out of heaven. A thousand years before the marriage of the Lamb had taken place (19:7-8), and now after a thousand years of unspeakable glory, she is still seen "as a bride adorned for her husband." And yet all these things are given in figurative language. What will be the reality! The masterwork of God is at last fully manifested; what He accomplished through Him, who left the glory to die on the cross, is made known. The eternal, never ending riches, purchased by Him who was rich and became poor for our sakes, are beginning to be displayed in all their unfading splendor. Then the saints of God will learn to know the full meaning of Eph. 2:7, "that in the ages to come He might display the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." "And I heard a loud 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." This is the glorious consummation. It is the goal of a holy, loving God.

In Eden God visited man unfallen, walked and talked with Him. Then sin severed this fellowship. He dwelt in the midst of Israel in the holiest of the tabernacle. In this age the Church is His habitation by the Spirit, but the blessed consummation in the eternal state will result in God dwelling with His redeemed creatures. What holy, glorious, never-ending intimacy that will be! It is the time when God is all in all (1 Cor. 15:28). When that time has come all the former things are passed away. "And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Tears, death, sorrow, crying, pain and suffering, these came into existence through sin. And all these things, the effects of sin, are now gone. What relief and what joy!

And next comes the eternal state of those who have rejected the gospel, who lived in their sins and died in their sins, unsaved, unregenerated. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, 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." God still speaks. How many false teachers are meddling today with the solemn Scripture doctrine on the endless punishment of the wicked.

Verses 9-27. With the ninth verse we are brought back once more to the millennial state. What was briefly stated in chapter 20:4-6 is now more fully revealed and we have a description of the bride, the Lamb's Wife, in her millennial glory, in relation to Israel and to the nations on the earth. one of the angels which had the seven vials appears on the scene to show something to the seer. We had a similar scene in chapter 17:1-3. There one of these angelic bearers of the vials showed to John the harlot woman and her judgment; but now he is to see the bride, the Lamb's wife. "And he carried me away in the Spirit, and set me on a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." She is seen coming down out of heaven. This coming down precedes the one mentioned in verses 2-3 by a thousand years. Her coming down does not mean here that she actually comes down upon the earth, to dwell on the earth during the millennium. Her coming out of heaven in verses 2-3 is undoubtedly to the new earth. But here she comes down to be over the earth.

For a fuller exposition of the symbolical language we refer the reader to the larger exposition of Revelation by the author. We mention briefly that the foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem are twelve precious stones.

The jasper again stands first; the wall itself is of jasper, while the first foundation stone mentioned is also jasper. It stands for the glory of God. Then the stones follow in their order. The sapphire (blue); the chalcedony (a combination of grey, blue and yellow); the emerald (green); the sardonyx (a pale

blue); the sardius (blood red); chrysolite (purple and green); the beryl (bluish green); the topaz (pale green or golden); the chrysoprasus (mixed blue, green and yellow); the jacinth (combination of red, violet and yellow), and the amethyst (purple). And what must be the deeper meaning of all these precious stones! What varied aspects of the glory of God they must represent! And the redeemed in their heavenly city shall know, understand and enjoy it all. What wonderful, unspeakable glory is ahead of us! May we look forward to it every day and willingly serve and suffer the little while down here.

The city itself was seen by John as of pure gold. Gold typifies the righteousness of God in His nature and such the holy city is, composed of the saints who were made through grace the partakers of the divine nature. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each one of the several gates was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold as it were transparent glass." How suitable the pearl to form each gate, the entrance to the city divine. The Pearl is a type of the Church. She is the one pearl of great price for which the Lord gave all He had (Matt. 13:45-46). And the golden street like unto pure glass shows that all the ways and walks in that city are according to righteousness and that defilement is eternally impossible.

And there was no temple in that city; the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. There is no need any longer of a certain access into the presence of God, as it was on earth, but there is a free and unhindered fellowship with God and with His ever-blessed Son, the Lamb. Precious it is to hear Him again mentioned as the Lamb. His blessed work which He accomplished can never be forgotten by the saints in glory. And the light is not created light, but the light is the glory of God and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. The glory of God and Christ, the Lamb of God, will be the light and supersede all created light.

"And the nations shall walk by its light and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor unto it (the better rendering); and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations unto it." From this we learn that the glory light which shines eternally and undiminished in the holy city is the light in which the saved millennial nations on the earth walk. And the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor unto it; not "into" it as it is rendered in the Authorized Version. The heavens then rule, for Christ and His co-heirs are in that holy city, and the government and rule over the earth proceeds from there. The kings bring their glory and honor unto it, they bow in homage in the presence of the holy city.

Heaven is acknowledged as the source of all light, glory and blessing. When the nations and the kings of the earth go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord of Hosts during the millennial age (Psa. 72:8-11; Is. 60:1-3; Zech. 14:16) we doubt not, they will turn their faces upward. Mount Zion in Israel's land will have resting upon it the glory and above it the vision of the city in which the glory dwells and from which the glory emanates. And unto it they bring honor and glory. The open gates, never closed, denote security and suggest also communication and intercourse with the earth. "There shall be no night there"; the night of sin and sorrow is forever gone for the dwellers in the holy city. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Chapter 22:1-5. After the coming, Jerusalem and her blessings are once more revealed. In the opening verses of this chapter we find the glories of the redeemed.

Unspeakably beautiful and glorious are the concluding statements of this glory-section of the Revelation. Seven glories of the Redeemed are enumerated. 1. There will be no more curse. It means a perfect sinlessness; perfect holiness. 2. The throne of God and of the Lamb is there and the redeemed are forever linked with that throne. It is a perfect and blessed government which can never be disturbed by disorder. 3. His servant shall serve Him. Heaven will not consist in idleness. The holy city knows of service. And the service the saints will render to God in glory will be a perfect service. What will it be? We do not know what service it will be. God will have many surprises for His saints in glory. 4. There is also an eternal vision. "And they shall see His face." Oh!

joy of all the joys in glory to see Him as He is and never lose sight of Him in all eternity. 5. His name shall be in their foreheads. It tells of eternal ownership and eternal possession. His name and the glory connected with it will be ours in eternal ages. 6. An eternal day. No more night; no need of any light. He is the light for all eternity. 7. An eternal reign. And they shall reign forever and ever. What glory and blessedness all this means. Such are the coming glories of the redeemed.

CHAPTER 22:6-21

The Final Messages

1. The angel's message (22:6-11)
2. The message of the Lord (22:12-13)
3. The two classes (22:14-15)
4. His final testimony (22:16)
5. The answer of the Spirit and the bride (22:17)
6. The final warning (22:18-19)
7. The final word--the final prayer (22:20-21)

Verses 6-11. Here it is an angel who speaks. "And the Lord God of the holy prophets (literal: of the spirits of the prophets) sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done." This reminds us of the beginning of the book, where we find a similar announcement. Suddenly some day these things will come to pass. The Lord will call His people to glory in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and then these things John had beheld will shortly come to pass. And then His own voice breaks in: "Behold I come quickly; Blessed is He that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Three times we find this announcement in the last chapter (verses 7, 12 and 20). Here it is connected with the walk of the believer.

Just as in the beginning of the book a blessing is pronounced upon them that read the words of this prophecy (1:3), so we have at the close of Revelation a similar beatitude. And keeping these blessed words means more than believing in them; their power is to shape our conduct and walk. What godly lives God's people would live on earth, what unselfish and sacrificing lives, if they remembered constantly Him who thus testifies three times in the last chapter of the Bible, "Behold I come quickly." Note the awful results in Christendom today for not having kept the sayings of the Prophecy of this book.

Then the Seer is told not to seal the sayings of this prophecy. Daniel was told to do the opposite (Dan. 12:4). Old Testament prophecy reveals prophetic events in the far distance. They could then not be fully comprehended. But after Christ came and the full revelation of things to come is given, no sealing is needed; the events are at hand, yet grace has delayed and delays still the fulfillment. And the heavenly messenger announces also the fixed state of the two classes into which all humanity is divided. The unjust and filthy, the unsaved, continue to exist in the nature which they possess, and the fact that the desires of that corrupt nature can no longer be gratified must constitute in itself an unspeakable torment. The righteous and holy, those saved by grace, partakers of the divine nature, will always be righteous and holy.

Verses 12-13. And now the Lord speaks again. For the second time He announces His coming. Here it is in connection with rewards. "My reward is with Me." He Himself will receive His reward which is due Him as the sin-bearer. He will see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And with His coming, His own people will receive their rewards. What a stimulating power His soon coming is to service! And the coming One is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the

end.

Verses 14-15. Once more the two classes come into view. This is in fullest keeping with the end of the book and the end of the Bible. The Authorized Version here is faulty. Instead of "Blessed are they that do His commandments" the correct reading is "Blessed are they that wash their robes." The former is an interpolation; the latter is the divine statement. (All leading scholars like Alford, Darby, etc., make the change. Even the Vulgate has it "Beati, qui lavant stolas suas in sanguinem Agni.") Eternal life and eternal glory cannot be obtained by keeping commandments, by the works of the law. The blood of the Lamb alone is the title to glory. And then the other class. The one who rejects Christ, and thereby denies his lost condition and need of a Saviour, loveth and maketh a lie. He lives according to the old nature and the fruits of the flesh are there.

Verse 16. How He speaks in this last Bible book! In the beginning of Revelation we find His self-witness in the church-message and once more we hear His voice, bearing testimony to Himself. How majestic: I, Jesus! He reveals Himself once more by the name of humiliation. What comfort it must have been to John! What comfort it is to us! Then He speaks of Himself as the Root and Offspring of David. He is David's Lord and David's Son (Psalm 110:1). He is the hope of Israel and in Him the promises made to David will all be realized. This will be the case when He comes to reign in power and great glory. But He also speaks of Himself as "the bright and morning-star." His coming in power and glory is the sunrise for Israel and the Gentiles, the breaking of the millennial day. But for His Church He comes first as the morning star, as the Morning star in the eastern sky precedes the rising of the sun in all its glory. The Lord will come as the Morning star some time in the interval between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel and as the Sun of Righteousness after that week has come to an end.

Verse 17. As soon as He mentions Himself as the Morning star, there is an answer from the earth. The Spirit now down here, for He came down from heaven on Pentecost, and the Bride, the Church, say, "Come." It is addressed to the Lord. They both long for His coming. And each individual believer who heareth is asked to join with this "Come." Surely in these days of darkness and world-confusion, the Spirit saith, "Come!" And never before were there so many individual believers on earth who say "Come," who wait for His coming. And the Come--from loving hearts--will increase and become a loud and pleading cry, till one blessed day He will answer and come to take His waiting people home. Here also is the final gospel message of the Bible. He that will, let him take the water of life freely. Once more a loving God makes it clear that the water of life is free to all who want it. It is the last "Whosoever" in the Bible.

Verses 18-19. And what a solemn warning is given! In a larger sense the warning applies to the entire Word of God. Higher criticism, which takes away, and false teachers, who add unto it, find written here their deserved judgment. But the Revelation is specially in view. Whosoever meddles with His Revelation must fall under the severest divine displeasure. Beware! oh ye critics! Beware! ye who call this book uninspired and warn against the study of it!

Verses 20-21. We reach the final statements of this great book. For the third time He announces His coming. "He that testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly." It is the last time our Lord speaks from heaven. The next time His voice will be heard will be on that day when He descends out of heaven with a shout. While the two former announcements of His coming found in this chapter are preceded by the word, "Behold," this last one affirms the absolute certainty of the event. And there is the answer, the blessed response. "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It is the Church which answers His positive and certain announcement. It is the last word recorded in the Bible coming from the lips of man.

The first word we hear man address to the Lord in the Bible is the solemn word "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid" (Gen. 3:10). The last word addressed to the Lord by redeemed man is "even so, come, Lord Jesus." And between these two utterances in Genesis and Revelation is the story of redemption. Well might this final prayer of the Bible be termed the forgotten prayer. But

it is equally true, with the revival of the study of prophecy, more hearts and lips are praying today for His coming, than ever before. And the prayer will be answered. May the reader and the writer pray for His coming daily and may our lives too bear witness to the fact that we expect Him to answer the petition of His people. The final benediction assures us once more of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The better rendering is "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints."

APPENDIX

Prominent Names and Their Symbolical Meaning in Revelation

Abaddon. (9:11) Destruction. The king over the locust army, denoting Satan and his agencies.

Abyss, The. (9:1; 20:1-3) The pit of the abyss or the deep. This expression occurs seven times in Revelation. Out of the deep, the lowest pit, there comes the demon and into the pit of the abyss Satan will be cast for 1000 years. The lake of fire is a different place.

Accuser, The. Satan is the accuser of the brethren (12:10). His expulsion out of heaven occurs in the middle of the week, followed by the great tribulation on earth.

Alpha. The first letter in the Greek alphabet; Omega is the last letter. Therefore Alpha and Omega is equivalent to an A and Z. Symbolical of the first and last (1:8; 21:6; 22:13).

Amen, The. A name of our Lord. He is the verily, "the truth, and assurance and certainty are expressed by this word (1:18).

Angels. Angels are prominently mentioned throughout Revelation. The exposition shows that the angel mentioned in 8:1-5; 10:1 is the Lord Jesus Christ. Angels will be used in the end of the age to carry out the decreed judgments. On the angels of the different churches, the symbolical meaning, see the exposition, chapter 1:20. The angels are the messengers who carried the Lord's message to the churches. They needed the power of the Spirit to do it. Hence the churches were to hear what the Spirit said to the churches (Rev. 2:7, etc.).

Antichrist, The. The final and personal Antichrist is mentioned for the first time in Revelation in chapter 13:11-18. He is also called the false prophet, because he heads up the ecclesiastical corruption and apostasy of the end of the age. He must not be confounded with the first beast out of the sea who is a political head, the emperor of the revived Roman empire, the little horn of Daniel 7, and the prince that shall come of Dan. 9:26.

Antipas. An unknown faithful martyr in Pergamos, known to Christ (2:13), meaning one against all.

Apollyon. (9:11) The Greek name of Abaddon, the King over the Locust army. The name means destruction or destroyer.

Ark, The. (11:19) It is seen by John in the temple. It means symbolically the assured presence of Jehovah with His people Israel, the faithful remnant, in the trying times of Jacob's trouble.

Armageddon. Mentioned for the first time in the parenthesis between the sixth and seventh vial, (16:12-16). It means "The hill of slaughter." The battle of Armageddon will be of brief duration. It is the stone of Nebuchadnezzar's dream smiting suddenly the ten toes, the ten kingdoms (Dan. 2). The battle of Armageddon is briefly described in chapter 19:19-20.

Alleluia. "Praise ye the Lord." The four hallelujahs are found in chapter 19:1-5.

Babylon. On the literal and mystical Babylon see exposition of chapter 17. The literal Babylon will undoubtedly be restored as a city of Influence. But the city mentioned in chapter 17 is not the literal

Babylon, but Rome. Not only will the Roman Empire be revived, but also papal Rome. Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, will see a great revival. The system in its corruption is described in chapter 18.

Balaam. The heathen prophet who could not curse Israel, but put a stumbling-block before the children of Israel. Used in Revelation to describe the corruption in the professing Church in giving up the divinely demanded separation from the world (chapter 2:14).

Beast, The. The expression "four beasts" in Rev. 4 and 5, etc., is faulty. The correct rendering is "the four living creatures" or the "four living ones." The term "beast" applies to the revived Roman empire and its head, the little horn of Daniel, also called beast in Daniel's vision. The Antichrist is likewise called a beast. The work of the two beasts is seen in chapter 13.

Birds, unclean and hateful. Symbolical of evil persons outwardly professing to be something but full of corruption. They describe the apostate masses of Christendom (Rev. 18:2. Also Matt. 13:31-32).

Black Horse. The black horse comes into view with the opening of the third seal. Black is the color of night, darkness and death.

Blood, with Hail and Fire. (8:7) Not literal things, but symbols of divine judgment for this earth.

Bow, The. (6:2) The bow without an arrow as in possession by the rider upon the white horse is the symbol of a bloodless conquest.

Bride, The. (21:2) the Bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife (19:7); it is not Israel but the church.

Brimstone and Fire. The symbols of divine wrath (Isa. 30:33).

Candlestick, Golden. Symbolical of that which gives light. Representing the seven assemblies. The Church is on earth to give light.

Crowns. The symbols of given glory and also rewards for service. The crowns seen upon the seven heads of the dragon (12:3) and upon the four horns of the Beast (13:1) denote despotic authority.

David, Key of. Symbolical of the right to open and to enter in. See Isa. 22:22. It is a prediction concerning Christ. The authority of the kingdom of heaven.

David, Root and Offspring. (22:16) Christ is the Root and offspring of David.

Demons. Fallen spirit beings; the wicked spirits over which Satan is the head. They will be worshipped by the apostates during the end of the age. Demon-worship is even now going on to some extent, for the Antichristian cults are produced by demons (1 Tim. 4:1). See Rev. 9:20-21. The word devils must be changed to demons. There is but one devil, but legions of demons.

Dwellers on the Earth. This class mentioned repeatedly in Revelation is the large number of professing Christians, who did not receive the love of the truth and rejecting the gospel follow the strong delusion and are utterly blinded, as well as hardened, during the tribulation.

Eagle. (8:13) The word angel must be changed to "eagle." Symbolical of the coming judgment, as an eagle is a bird of prey. Eagle's wings (12:13-17) are symbolical of swift motion, escape and deliverance.

Earth. The prophetic territory of the Roman Empire is mostly described by this form, though the entire earth is also indicated.

Earthquake. Symbolical of the shaking of all political and ecclesiastical institutions. But, as we show in our exposition, literal earthquakes will take place.

Elders, Twenty-four. The twenty-four elders typify all the redeemed in glory. Old and New Testament saints are included. After chapter 19 this term does not appear again, because the

Church, the bride of Christ, is then seen separate from the entire company of the redeemed, and takes her exalted position as the Lamb's wife.

Eternal State, The. The eternal state is described in chapter 21:1-8.

Euphrates. This great river is mentioned twice in Revelation, 9:14 and 16:12. It is the boundary line of the Roman empire and the land of Israel. See exposition of these passages.

Everlasting Gospel. (14:6) The declaration of the gospel of the kingdom during the tribulation, and the proclamation of God as Creator to the heathen nations of the world, to prepare them for the gospel of the kingdom.

Fire. often mentioned in this book and symbolical of the judgments which will be executed upon the earth as well as the everlasting wrath upon the unsaved.

Fornication. Spiritual wickedness in departing from the Truth of God, followed by the literal lusts of the flesh. The days of Lot will be on the earth before the Son of Man cometh.

Four. This number appears a number of times in Revelation. Four living creatures; four corners of the earth; four horns of the golden altar; four angels; four winds. Four is the number of universality.

Frogs. Mentioned between the sixth and seventh vial. Symbolical of demon influences, denoting filthy and wicked things. Frogs come out of slimy and dark waters; evil doctrines.

Glass, Sea of. (4:6). Compare with Ex. 30:18-21 and 1 Kings 7:23, etc. Symbolical of fixed lasting holiness. No more water needed for cleansing from sin, for the saints in glory are delivered from the presence of sin itself.

God, Supper of. (19:17) Symbolical of God's judgment upon the wicked nations and the earth dwellers.

Gold. Symbolical of divine righteousness.

Grass. (8:7) Symbolical of human prosperity (Isa. 40:7 and 1 Peter 1:24).

Hades. The region of disembodied spirits; literally "the unknown." Christ has the keys. Hades with death, because they came into existence through sin, will be cast into the lake of fire.

Harvest of the Earth. The harvest is the end of the age. In chapter 14:14-15 we read of the Lord's judgment dealing with the earth.

Hidden Manna. (2:17) Symbolical of the reward those who overcome will receive from the Lord.

Horns. Horn is symbolical of power. Horns mean typically kings, and powers and kingdoms (Dan. 7:24).

Image of the Beast. (13:12-15) Compare with Dan. 3. It will be a literal image of the princely leader of the revived Roman empire, the first beast, which John saw rising out of the sea.

Islands. Mentioned under the sixth seal and the seventh vial. Mountains typify kingdoms and governments; islands are symbolical of smaller and isolated governments. All will be affected. No doubt when the great earthquakes will shake the very foundations of the earth, many islands will also disappear.

jasper. A precious stone, most likely our diamond. See exposition of chapter 4.

Jerusalem. The earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem are mentioned in the book. During the tribulation the earthly Jerusalem will be the seat of the Antichrist, the false prophet. Jerusalem is for this reason called "Sodom and Egypt" (11:8). Then Jerusalem will pass through her worst history. A great siege will take place at the close of the tribulation period and the city will fall (Zech. 14). After

that Jerusalem will become the capital of the kingdom of Christ and a great temple will be erected, the universal place of worship during the millennium. The heavenly Jerusalem is above the earth. From there the glorious reign of Christ and the saints will be executed. This glorious city will come down out of heaven at the end of the millennium to find its eternal resting-place on the new earth (chapters 21-22).

Jezebel. Symbolical of the Papacy. The corruptress which claims to be the bride of Christ, but plays the harlot. See chapters 2 and 17.

Judgment. Judgment falls upon the earth during the seven years, which constitute the end of the age. When the Lord comes in His glory the great judgment of the nations takes place. Chapter 19:11, etc., compare with Matt. 25:31. After the millennium the second resurrection takes place and the great white throne judgment is the judgment of the wicked dead.

King of the Nations. (15:2-4) King of the saints should be changed to King of the nations. Our Lord is the King of the nations, the King of Kings.

Lake of Fire. The place which God has prepared for the devil and his angels. The beast and the false prophet will be cast there; also the Assyrian, the king of the north, the nations who followed the beast and all the wicked dead. Death and Hades will likewise be put into that place.

The Lamb. The Lamb (John 1:29), our Lord in His sacrificial character, is mentioned twenty-eight times in the Revelation. The Lamb is worshipped by all. Thus we find the song of the Lamb, the throne of the Lamb and the marriage of the Lamb, and the wife of the Lamb (the Church) in this book.

Lightning. Symbolical of the divine judgment, Wrath.

Locust Army. Symbolical of the host of demons, which come out of the abyss to torment mankind.

Lord's Day, The. Mentioned but once in 1:10. It is the first day of the week on which John saw the great Patmos vision.

Man-child. (Chapter 12) The Man-child is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark of the Beast. Some special mark which declares ownership. As the Holy Spirit seals those who trust on Christ, so Antichrist will put his mark upon those who follow him.

Millennium, The. Millennium means "a thousand years." Six times this period of blessing and glory is mentioned in Rev. 20.

Moon as blood. The Moon is symbolical of derived authority. Blood is the symbol of death. Apostate Israel and the apostate Church passing through the most severe judgments are symbolized by this figure.

Morning Star, The. Christ in His coming for the Church (22:16; 2:28).

Mountain. A kingdom.

Mountains, Seven. Rome is the city built upon the seven hills. See exposition of chapter 17.

Nicolaitanes. Mentioned in the message of Ephesus and Pergamos. They signify the domineering, priestly class which assumed an unscriptural place of authority in the Church.

Palms. Emblems of victory.

Rainbow. The symbol of covenant and of mercy. Mentioned twice. Around the throne (chapter 4) and around His head (chapter 10).

Rest of the Dead. (20:5) Meaning those who had not part in the first resurrection, hence the wicked

dead.

River of Life. (22:1) Symbolical of the fullness of life, glory and blessing.

Saints. The saints in Revelation include all the saints. The Old and New Testament saints are seen under the figure of the twenty-four elders. The suffering saints are the Jewish saints and the remnant of Israel, as well as the multitude of nations, who accept the final message and come out of the great tribulation (chapter 7).

Satan. The entire book reveals his person, his work and his destiny. His work may be traced in the church-messages. Then we have his work during the tribulation and his final work after the millennium.

Scorpions. Symbolical of the torment caused by the army of demons under the fifth trumpet judgment.

Sea. Symbol of the nations. Also the literal sea, which gives up the dead. Then there will be no more sea, All wickedness and restlessness will cease forever.

Seven. The divine number. No other book in the Bible contains so many "sevens" as this final Bible book, the Revelation. There are seven angels, churches, attributes of the Lord, heads, horns, eyes, spirits, lamps, seals, trumpets, vials, plagues, stars, thunders, times and a sevenfold doxology.

Song. The songs of the redeemed and the song of Moses and the Lamb are mentioned in the book.

Stars. See exposition on the meaning of the seven stars in His hand. Stars are also symbolical of lesser authorities, which will all fall during the tribulation period. Lights in the night.

Sun. The symbol of supreme authority.

Synagogue of Satan. Mentioned in the messages to Smyrna and Philadelphia. It means a Judaized Christianity as seen in ritualistic, professing Christendom.

Temple. The tribulation temple is in view in chapter 11:1-3. The millennial temple is seen in 7:15. Then there is the temple of heaven (16:17). In the heavenly Jerusalem there is no temple (21:22).

Third Part. Mentioned in connection with men, the sea, the stars of heaven, the sun and the moon. It probably refers exclusively to the Roman Empire, which in its different aspects and authorities, will be affected during these judgments.

Two horns. The beast out of the land has two horns like a lamb, but speaks like the dragon. He is the counterfeit Christ.

Waters, Many. Symbolical of peoples and nations over which the Romish whore has authority.

White. Color of righteousness and purity; also denoting victorious conquests. We have in Revelation, white robes, the white horses, white linen, a white cloud and a white throne.

Witnesses. See in Rev. 11 about the two witnesses.

Wrath. We read of the wrath of God and the wrath of the Lamb. The wrath of God is completed with the pouring out of the vials. The wrath of the Lamb will be executed when He comes in glory.

Zion. Mentioned only once in Rev., chapter 14:1. It means the literal Zion in Palestine. Upon that holy hill of Zion the glory will rest during the millennium. See Psalm 132:13-14