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SIXTEEN PAPERS

ON

THE REVELATION

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FOREWORD

This exposition is the result of two years concentrated and prayerful research, helped by the best available commentaries and histories.

The qualification of the writer is of over seventy years reading of the Scriptures by means of The Bible Companion.

Notes kindly sent-by Bro. A. J. Ford of Wolverhampton helped to an understanding of Rev.11.

The more the relationship of betrothal to Jesus is appreciated, the more His last message will be studied and valued. The greater too will be the effort to prepare, by the grace of God, to become part of the Bride shown to John in such splendour, described in amazing symbolism by "celestial poetry" (J.B. Phillips) written by one wrapped in Spirit on The Lord's Day.

Emmeline Norris.

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Sixteen Papers on The Revelation

Paper No. 1.

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST.

Is it for sisters? "Certainly," we all say; we all admit without a question, for does not the very first verse tell us that it is to shew unto HIS SERVANTS what was to be revealed.? It does. Moreover, the word means BOND-SERVANTS, those bought and owned by a Master, and there is neither male nor female in Jesus; all alike are bought into His name with His precious blood. And yet, as this Revelation comes biannually in our Bible Companion Readings, many sisters sigh and long to understand this last book of our Scriptures, feeling it is only about half-a-dozen chapters which they read intelligently and the rest is to them a closed book.

We have no gospels or epistles actually written by our Lord. He once wrote on the ground, in the presence of a humiliated and ashamed woman; that writing was not placed on record. The accusers saw it. The woman saw it. Its object was served. Jesus who sent the Revelation had an old man as His secretary and this elderly apostle was told to write for Christ's servants, for us, and it contains epistles from HIM.

The Jesus who so kindly gave this Revelation was the exalted all-powerful, immortal Son of God and He was in Heaven itself, in the highest place in the Universe, as expressed by the words "at the right hand of the majesty of the heavens". "All power", said Jesus "is given to me in Heaven and in Earth". He did not say "All knowledge". You remember the occasion when He said "no man knoweth neither the Son..... only the Father". But there came a time in His perfect life when the Father gave Him knowledge in detail of His own purpose and the ways in which that purpose would be executed all down the ages until, and even after, Jesus will come with His mighty angels to this earth He left long ago. That knowledge, His last message to men, the Son of God condescends to give us in the book "The Revelation".

There is a blessing promised to those who are really concerned with and interested in the Revelation. The reading means the reading aloud to the Ecclesia. But the hearers are blessed and the 'keepers' of this Word are blessed. Thank God we can read individually and in the quiet of our homes. We are not dependent on some brother bringing a copy to our Ecclesia in its turn and our just listening and seeing the brother fold it up and take it away. We have the Word 'nigh' us and it can be in our mouths and in our hearts as Paul wrote of the Word of faith he preached.

But sisters say The Revelation is too difficult. They do not know history. If this book needs three huge volumes to explain it, what can THEY do about it, busy as they surely are with babies, growing families, shopping, cooking, washing, and mending? They despair even after reading "Notes on the Apocalypse". Such dates, such name's such puzzling symbols.

Something can be done, with God's help. I believe the book can be simplified so that we welcome it in June and December each year, not turn from it rather sadly. We may have difficulties. But so we have in Daniel, in Ezekiel, in Zechariah. Let us remember we are not dealing with a textbook in Domestic Science which can be mastered all through. The Bible is a Divine Book from the Almighty Father and He wisely gives His children what will instruct, guide, comfort, AND, exercise their deepest thoughts throughout life, and it is, for, all generations of believers.

There are, among absolute essentials to understanding Revelation, three which, sisters already have. One is there must be prior knowledge of the Gospel of the Kingdom: 16 chapters demand this. Secondly, one must believe and be familiar with the Old Testament. Every chapter requires this. We are told that out of 404 verses 278 contain references to the Old Testament. No quotations such as abound in other parts of the New Testament, but words, phrases, thoughts, symbols, (at least a dozen in chapter 1). The Lord Jesus and His secretary John were 'steeped' in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms.

We sisters claim these two essentials and the third is an earnest prayerful desire to be ready to ask "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law". Concentration is necessary. It is helpful to try to see in our minds what John saw, to listen carefully, and to think on these things.

The remaining essential is a knowledge of some history and of some geography. We trust, also with assistance from above, to help all of us in this need.

Let us look at Chapter 1. Have we noticed how many of the first principles it contains?

God, the Father of Jesus Christ, to whom He gives knowledge. (No Trinity here).

Jesus, who died for our, sins and rose, the first-begotten from the dead.

The faithful servants of God to be Kings and Priests on the earth with Jesus as the Prince of the Kings of the earth

Jesus to come and be visible to all, even to His murderers, who therefore must be raised from the dead. (Responsibility).

Jesus has the keys of the grave and of death.

Have we noticed any other name of "The Revelation"?

The Word of God.

The testimony of Jesus Christ and all things John saw.

John gives a personal introduction which occupies 5 verses, greets and addresses 7 churches in Asia. The usual apostolic greeting is given. "Grace and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ." In his beauty of reverence John begins his introduction and ends it by the attributes of the Almighty, Who is and Who was and is to come.

Grace and peace could only be given by means of God's Spirit, the unity of which is involved in the expression:

"Seven spirits before his throne."

Could we have a more comprehensive word-picture of our Saviour than John gives in verses 5,6, and 7.

The murderers of Jesus are not forgotten. (Had not John seen them pierce His hands and His feet? He always carried, with him that scene of agony and the words spoken to him: "Behold thy mother".

Yes, he was "the disciple standing by whom Jesus loved"). Nor does John fail to tell of a great wailing when the Lord returns. The wailing in the Land is described in detail by Zechariah.

After this most suitable introduction John gives a very brief preface and introduces himself to the Ecclesias.

In one verse only, "I, John...." who and what? Where?, Why?.

"Your brother.

Your fellow-sufferer.

Your companion in patient endurance.

Your companion in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

I, John, was in the Isle of Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ".

Part of this verse was quoted in 107 A.D. by an early Father called Ignatius.

John, in Patmos, in spirit, and on the Lord's Day. One version says "Wrapped in spirit" which is understandable. The Lord's Day was probably the first day of the week. Evidence that this was so-called at that time has come to light in some ancient writings discovered since Dr. Thomas lived. John, in this spirit-enveloped condition, heard a trumpet-voice behind him which told him to write what he saw and send it to the Ecclesias. (The most modern translation omits "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last", as also the Revised Version) 7 Ecclesias are named. To the Hebrews 7 meant completion. Indeed this perfect number occurs 54 times in Revelation. John adds - "I turned to see who was speaking". Throughout the whole book are those simple but telling sentences: I saw, I looked, I heard, I beheld, and John is told to write what he saw. 7 times he is told to write, that is to' each of the 7 Churches. John turned to see and what he saw was so frightening, so terrible, dreadful and awe-inspiring he fell as if, dead. Daniel had a similar vision and it is interesting to compare the two, Daniel saw a representation of the immortal Messiah, John saw a symbol of an immortal, perfected, all-seeing, all-powerful one to whom judgment had been committed, but the symbol also represented ONE Who was in the very midst of the Ecclesias, even supporting the elders of each Ecclesias.

Daniel saw a certain man.

John saw one like unto the Son of Man. (Jesus called himself "Son of Man" over 80 times). John recognised whom the symbol represented because, as he himself wrote:

"We have seen with our eyes, we have looked upon, our hands have handled..." so John would at once easily' associate this symbol with his Lord.

John had seen his Master naked on the Cross.

Now there was clothing down to the foot,
the robing of judge and of king

John had seen his Master take a towel and gird himself.

Now there is a golden girdle of His infinite
love and perfected precious faith

John had seen his Master impaled to a cross.

Now there are 7 golden candle-sticks and He
is in their midst.

John had seen head and hair dishevelled, by a crown of thorns.
Now white as wool, white as snow, "of purity
and yet of age that is not aged", of perfect maturity.

John had seen his Master's eyes look pityingly at him and
His mother.
Now His eyes are as a "flame of fire", "from
which no secret thing can be hidden".

John had seen His feet pierced.
Now the feet are like burnished brass, strong
and glorious to break down all evil.

John had seen His hands pierced.
Now the right hand holds 7 stars, the right hand of perfect protection.

John had soon the parched tongue and heard the words:
"Father forgive them".
Now a sharp two-edged sword comes from His mouth, for all judgment is committed to Him.

John had seen the blood-stained countenance.
Now, as the sun shineth in his strength,
showing His perfect glory and splendour.

But had not John also with Peter and James seen Jesus transfigured upon the mountain when His
face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as the light?

They saw Jesus as "HIS MAJESTY", as King of the Kingdom. Then John knew that he was looking on a
symbol of the ATTRIBUTES of his glorified risen Lord, and though he fell down as dead all his fears
were dispelled when the right hand of the Angel was placed on him and the voice said: "Fear not: I
am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore:
Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death..."

The Angel spoke for Jesus just as the Angel at the burning bush could say: "I am the God of thy
fathers". All the attributes of the awe-inspiring symbol of the glorified Saviour are woven into the
messages to the Ecclesias given in the two following chapters. The one suitable is selected in each
case. John knew about the 7-branched candlestick of the Tabernacle, of the Temple and of the vision
of Zechariah. Now the new meaning of these is given. The churches, the Ecclesias, are the
candlesticks or lamp-stands, not as in Mosaic and later times providing artificial light in the Holy
Place, but illuminating the hearts of the believers who radiate the light of the Gospel to all who will
hear. Paul writes of "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ" and Jesus proclaimed Himself "the
Light of the World." and commanded that our light should shine before men. "The seven
candlesticks," said the voice, "are the seven churches" that is, all churches, therefore we are
included.

But there was in this symbol something quite new -- 7 stars in the right hand. Stars gave light and
beauty in darkness. The angelic voice explains the "mystery". "The 7 stars in my right hand are the
angels of the 7 churches." They represented the responsible brethren in each Ecclesia and the
messages are sent to these to communicate to all in each Ecclesia. Here was a comforting thought
indeed. The arranging brethren could feel that their Lord would uphold and guide them in their very

difficult responsibilities at that time, always, even now, if they trust and prayerfully commit the ordering of Ecclesial affairs to the Father in earnestness and faith through Jesus Christ.

There was comfort to John, an old man, truly an "elder", exiled to a lonely island away from all friends, perhaps having to work in the quarries, not knowing his coming fate, for the cruel Domitian ruled the Empire and Christians were passing through great tribulation. He had seen the glorious attributes of immortality for which he yearned. He had read in Ezekiel of the glory of the God of Israel "whose voice was like a noise of many waters and the earth shone with His glory" and the same prophet had instructed him in the words "the noise of many waters", as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of "a host". And John would remember, probably with bowed head, his own words of comfort: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." Now, it had appeared in symbol; he had seen the attributes of immortality, of glory, of power, wisdom, discernment, and could comfort himself in the wonderful reward to be brought by the One who loved him and had the keys of the grave.

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (chs. 2 - 3)

Paper No. 2.

The Letters of Jesus - to us

"What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the 7 churches which are in Asia." To SEVEN, therefore to all and to us. But why are 7 particular ones named, 7 real Ecclesias which were actually in existence in the first century? There were dozens more in Asia and in Europe. These were the nearest to Patmos and all joined by a good postal road making communication easy.

John was told: "SEND" and the One Who said "send." would provide the messenger as He provided the messages. Maybe too, these were typical of all Ecclesias in their good points and in their failings, all that have ever been, all that are now and will be until the Lord comes, bringing into relief for all time the necessary warnings, exhortations, encouragements, and wonderful promises that each and every Ecclesia might respond to her Lord.

A letter would be sent by John with a description of the "ONE like unto the Son of Man", else the introductory words to each of the Ecclesial "elders" for their Ecclesias would not be understood.

Before each of the 7 messages are the words "THESE THINGS SAITH HE" and some part of the vision we considered last time is used as an introduction in each and with good reason.

Seven times Jesus says: "I know thy works"- "doings" (Weymouth) HE KNOWS OURS.

He supports and controls our brethren and He walks in our midst as: He said to the Ephesian Ecclesia.

In every case Jesus commends or comforts first of all, wherever commendation is due. If our Lord used this method with His children - first praise - then the fault or shortcoming or criticism, it must be the wisest way in dealing with our children.

Do the good points listed of Ephesus fit us? works, labour, patience, intolerance of evil, not giving in when the way is difficult. Very personal question And yet, in spite of such a good record these brethren and sisters didn't love Jesus as earnestly and zealously as they did when they left paganism and were baptised into the Saving Name. He utters two heart-searching words: "Remember", "repent" and gives a threat, unless they did so, the Ecclesia would end. Jesus wants our love to burn brightly.

The Nicolaitanes are twice mentioned in the seven messages. Jesus hated their doctrines and hated their deeds. They are thought to be those who encouraged a return to heathen low morals. Several suggestions have been made and we cannot be sure.

Seven times Jesus says

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

Seven times Jesus. says:

"He that overcometh..." Life is one long series of attempts, failures and victories in overcoming.

Thirtyfive miles north of Ephesus was an Ecclesia of suffering brethren and sisters - that of Smyrna The Jews hated those who turned from Moses to Christ. They circulated, wicked reports and raised mobs who went to the homes of the brethren and sisters and looted them. These brethren and sisters had bitter experiences, tribulation and poverty. Jesus said "I know" and He said more, to these sorely-trying, ones He added.

"BUT THOU ART RICH"

How comforting would these words be to them. Their sufferings were to continue. The Roman authorities - the Devil as a roaring lion - would imprison them - death might be their lot.

For in this city, as in Ephesus, there was a Caesar-worshipping temple. The city boasted its castle-crowned hill (like Edinburgh or Lancaster). Jesus promised a crown of life if they would be faithful unto death: they would rise again to receive this and know no more death.

Away north would travel the bearer of the message to the great capital city of Pergamos, where Satan, the adversary of Christians held sway. Here were courts of justice to which prisoners were brought to trial from all parts of Asia to appear before the ONE who had "the right of the sword", that is, to punish. Antipas and maybe many such had been martyrs here. Not easy was it to worship God through His dear Son in a wealthy, fashionable and very idolatrous city. The temple here to the emperor meant Caesar worship and shocking immoralities like fornication and worse. No wonder evil, practices crept into the Ecclesia. Balaam had led Israel astray with such wickedness, the terrible sins of idolatry and lasciviousness. There were indeed dreadful practices in this Royal City and the Ecclesia was not immune, Jesus said "Repent". He had the sharp sword with the two edges and could use it against such sinners, but to those who overcame -Manna Himself - eternal life, a white stone containing a mysterious name. Such was given to one acquitted after trial,

or to one as a reward of victory won,
or as a sign of free citizenship

It was a sign of unending friendship: and used as permission to enter a feat.

All these privileges are blended in the Lord's promise. The new name will remain a mystery until we receive it with the Master's "Well done".

I like to think about Thyatira, and to talk of it at a Sisters Class is most appropriate. In Acts 16 we have read of Lydia, a business woman, a worshipper of God, a woman who attended public prayers at the riverside at Philippi. Lydia's heart was opened by God to hear and accept the Gospel and she was baptised. Then she showed she was given to hospitality by inviting Paul and Timothy to stay at her home. Can we not imagine her going back to Thyatira to tell her friends, relatives and neighbours of the Gospel? And maybe we now see in Thyatira the fruits of her labours. How commendable this Ecclesia was Jesus knew its works, love, faith, service, and patient endurance. Indeed Jesus added that their latter works were greater than their first ones. They hadn't lost their first love like the Ephesians. "Hold fast what you have till I come" said He. They had sufficient of each of these lovely virtues and just needed to carry on as they were doing, except. They tolerated a woman who called herself a prophetess, that is, one who claimed to have had visions and received special revelations. She was immoral, evidently saying it didn't matter doing as the pagans did, eating food they knew had been sacrificed in the pagan temple. And it didn't matter even practising the wickedness the pagans practised.at their feasts Jesus knew all about the woman or the class she represented and had patiently waited for repentance which had not come and now He can bear this no longer.

Certain ones betrothed to Him were back in the world that was spiritual adultery. But if they were actually guilty of this sin so common in the pagan feasts to their gods as the words seem to imply, then they and their children would perish in their own corruption after great suffering. The presence of this cancer in the Ecclesia would be a great trial to the faithful ones there Jesus comforts them by promising power over the nations and that He will give them the Morning Star. Jesus is the bright and morning Star. The promise is to partake of His nature and be made like Him. His eyes like a flame of fire, had seen the Jezebel in their midst. His feet, like burnished brass, would punish the evildoers then, for they had not repented and fiery judgments were to be visited without delay.

'What a sad picture is our next SARDIS. If we had visited the Ecclesia at Smyrna we should have seen scantily clad brethren and sisters for had not their very homes been rifled by the mobs because they were Christians? But Jesus said: "But thou art rich." A visitor to Sardis would see gold, pearls and costly clothes, an appearance of strict respectability and formalism. The city was remarkable for its riches and luxury, and for its temple to Caesar. Jesus said: "I know your doings....you are supposed to be alive but in reality you are dead." (Weymouth).

"Rouse yourself and keep awake...I have found no doings of yours perfect in the sight of my God." "Remember what you have seen and heard." Evidently the good seed received, the Word preached to them, had been choked by "the deceitfulness of riches." No fruit had grown. Jesus knew every member. He knew there were just a few in Sardis who had not soiled their garments. These, said He, "are worthy and shall walk with me in white" We note that these few worthy ones had not soiled their garments and the inference is that the others, the 'dead' ones, had. They had mixed with the pagan world and soiled their garments with worldly practices. It is not wrong to be rich. It is wrong to trust in riches. It is wrong to allow them to lead us into worldly doings which are contaminating. A rich sister may have more to overcome. To each who overcomes Jesus says: "You will receive white garments; your name shall be in the Book of Life, and I will confess that name and will acknowledge you in the very presence of My Father and His angels." "Listen all of you", He again adds.

Most of these towns in Asia were subject to earthquakes. We have no experience of them. A sister told us of her experiences as a girl in Trinidad in the West Indies. How the earth trembled, houses shook, crocks rattled in cupboards or slipped, off the table without warning. Natives ran out shrieking and alarmed, and doors opened or banged.

Philadelphia was particularly prone to shocks, often very serious and doing tremendous damage.

Only Jesus could use the words, spoken to this city. "He that is holy, He that is true and has the key of David" and He quotes from Isaiah 22:22 of His power to open or to shut. NOT ONE FAULT does the Holy and True One find. What an ideal Ecclesia that was! We may be sure the brethren and sisters all had their shortcomings, but Jesus doesn't mention one. They must have tried hard, for the Emperor was worshipped in Philadelphia. He says "You have but a little strength, yet you have kept my word...." and note, "not disowned Me" He repeats, "You have kept the word of my patience"... or, "for which I suffered, and I will keep you during the testing time which is coming" This Ecclesia had been troubled by pretenders, sham Christians and had evidently pleased Jesus by their attitude. They will have to come and, bow, down before you and, know that I have loved you. This must be in the future, surely. At the outset Jesus shows that HE sets before the Ecclesia an open door that no man could shut. Let us pray in these days that He will set before our Ecclesias open doors of opportunity for His service.

His final exhortation is to hold fast and His promise to Philadelphia is in keeping with their experiences of uncertainty due to the earthquakes. "I will make the victor a pillar in God's Temple...." stability, endurance, positions of authority, and a NAME Jesus himself and Jesus only, can

write, for such will be a citizen of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, and bear His nature and share His glory.

For the sixth time Jesus tells us to listen to Him and now to the seventh Ecclesia He speaks. LAODICEA. The message to this city is to us perhaps the most interesting of the seven. To all Ecclesias it is a trumpet call to be zealous and enthusiastic. To each brother and sister individually it is the most touching. The very heart can be moved, stirred, quickened.

Like Ephesus, Laodicea had received letters before from the Apostle Paul. The deep teaching and comprehensive instructions to Ephesus and Colossae have deeply impressed and helped many who have marvelled at the advanced spiritual knowledge these churches had. Over thirty years had passed. A new generation had come. And now, the Lord Himself sends letters, Jesus. Who knew all they did. Jesus, the "Amen" (established the last word.), the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation, the "first-begotten from the dead."

There is NO commendation of Laodicea, NONE. Jesus just didn't like it; it was insipid to Him; distasteful, only fit to be called utterly obnoxious. Could we have stronger figures of speech? "You are neither cold nor hot. I am about to spue you out of my mouth." The members said: "We are rich, prosperous, in need of nothing, quite independent." There was no temple to Caesar here, therefore the Ecclesia had not the great trials five of the other Ecclesias had. A comparatively easy going one, plenty of money, good clothes, good homes, good jobs. "You are really", says Jesus, "poor, naked, blind, wretched and miserable." Jesus did not say. "Therefore I have finished with you." He gives advice and counsel. He held the remedies. He had gold, garments, and He had eye-ointment for their blindness. That is more, they could "buy" them from Him by using their all, themselves, their money, time and opportunities in His service. The key to profiting from this message comes in the exhortation Jesus gave - "BE ZEALOUS and change your ways." They lacked zeal. Then comes the gracious offer to each brother and sister individually "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with Me." There are two conditions for such lovely communion with our Lord Hearing His voice and opening the door. Let us listen to His words, with our hearts open and feel His presence. Daily this is possible and on the First Day even more so.

His final promise is: "I have conquered and am with my Father: if you conquer you shall be with me".

Laodicea was a wool city. Much prized black fleeces came in from the sheep of neighbouring hills and valleys. In the city this wool was spun and woven and made into garments for home and export, so Laodicea was famous for textiles.

Laodicea was a city of banking and exchange. There were wealthy money changers as our banks have their various departments, and our cities their "exchanges" where business is discussed and arranged. Laodicea had a school of medicine. Here ointment was made from a famous stone (Phrygian) for strengthening weak eyes. We understand now how the brethren and sisters would feel when Jesus said "Buy salve from Me to anoint your eyes."

"Be zealous therefore", so that we may receive HIS commendation and the rewards so graciously promised.

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chs. 4 and 5)

Paper No, 3.

The Glory of the Lord: Worthy the Lamb.

The scenes before us could not be painted on canvas, The panorama seen by John was too wonderful for a painter's brush, Indeed, we find, it almost too grand for words, even with the varied and expressive language of the twentieth century. Yet in eleven verses the inspired witness of the vision has his experience recorded for us in a simple, yet dignified manner, assuming even greater beauty when, read in The Revised Standard Version.

When the majesty of the Lord was shown to Israel at Sinai there were thunders, darkness, clouds, lightning's, and trumpet voices. There was a great quaking of the mountain and it was covered, with smoke, no clearness nor, brightness nor flashing of the most precious stones. "If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." "That which i done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious."

The Lord encouraged and blessed Moses, Aaron and his sons and seventy of the elders of Israel by a sight of His glory manifested by an angel in whom was God's Name: "under His feet a paved work of a bright (R.V. margin) sapphire stone and as it were the very (R.V.) (body of) heaven in clearness". Much later Isaiah was helped and inspired, yet frightened at the moment, by a vision of the time when the whole earth is full of God's glory. He saw an exalted throne with one whose train or skirts filled the temple and seraphim were above it representing the same as the four living creatures of our chapter, for each had six wings, two over the face, two over the feet, two for flight, in an attitude of silent adoration and worship. Then they speak and say: "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory." Isaiah believed in the day of the Lord and asked the question so often asked by God's longing ones: "Lord, how long?" and the reply is of very special interest to us 2650 years later. The cities were to be wasted, the land desolated, one tenth of the people returned and broused. (R.V. eaten up). We see that one tenth returned and expect it to be "eaten up" by invasion and the Holy Seed to manifest Himself. In this vision Isaiah saw the House filled with smoke and he felt severely conscious of his uncleanness in the presence of such glory and one of the seraphim flew to him, and with tongs, this creature took a hot stone (RV. margin) from the altar and. touched Isaiah's mouth and said "Thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged." So these seraphim, these living creatures, are represented in a vision as flying, speaking and acting.

One hundred years later another prophet, Ezekiel, in exile, sees a vision in a foreign land. Each year as we read these visions in chapters 1 and 10 we see a little more of the meaning of these living creatures which form such an important part of our chapter in Revelation. Indeed we must turn to Ezekiel to learn about these cherubim, seraphim, or living creatures (called, beasts in Revelation), Above their heads was the appearance of a throne like a sapphire stone and on it was as the appearance of a man- - note the indefiniteness - - a form, man-like, amber-coloured, (amber is related in meaning to electricity), like fire from loins upward and from loins downward, brightness all around and encircled by a rainbow. Four living creatures were beneath the throne, evolved from fire and also amber in colour. Each had four faces and four wings, with feet like burnished brass (reminding us of the symbol of our Lord) and hands of a man. Wings joined together and in motion going straight forward, no turning, spirit-controlled, lightning emerging from them and they moving like lightning. They are associated with wheels comparable to precious stones, with circumferences full of eyes. The background of these was as the colour of terrible crystal. Note that when these

creatures moved it was like the voice of the Almighty, like the noise of a host. In chapter 10 their whole body, backs, hands, wings and wheels were full of eyes. They were seen by Ezekiel in vision standing at the door of the East gate of the House of the Lord.

We cannot leave Ezekiel without turning to his last vision of the House of the Lord to be built for world-worship in the Kingdom of God. At the East gate the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East - (Kings from the sun's rising with their King) - a voice like the sound of many waters and the earth shined with His glory, the glory of the Lord filled the house. Ezekiel adds "the visions were like the vision I saw by the river "Chebar" and no wonder he fell upon his face.

And now we shall better understand the vision of John. Indeed we cannot understand it intelligently without reading and thinking about the glory of the Lord revealed to Moses, to Isaiah, and to Ezekiel.

Let us accompany our brother John and try to see with our mind's eye something of the glory he saw and feel the worshipful attitude he must have experienced in these visions. Let us concentrate our imagination, feeble though it may be and see with John through the heavenly door which was standing open and to which the trumpet-voice previously heard invited him. "I will show you", said the voice, "things which are to happen in the future". Later, John was to see in the Divine programme symbols arise from the earth, from the sea and from the bottomless pit, but it was most fitting that he should see in the sky the glory of the Lord yet to be manifested on earth, in the heaven, because it was connected with what Paul calls "heavenly". "What the heavenly One is, that also are those who are heavenly. As we have worn the likeness of the man of dust, let us also wear the likeness of the heavenly One".

We see a throne, the One on it like precious stones, jasper and sardius. The first foundation stone of the Holy City was jasper and its wall was of jasper, maybe diamond like, and the sardius with reddish content teaching the indispensability of sacrifice in the Divine scheme of redemption. Note again the Indefiniteness of the description of the One on the throne compared with the first vision of the One John at once recognised as "like the Son of Man". Too holy for man's eyes or man's words. An emerald rainbow around the throne telling of rich blessings of covenant promises around the throne twenty four other thrones on which were seated elders clothed in white robes and crowned with golden crowns. Elders assisted Moses; there were elders in the church, and Peter wrote to elders, saying he too was an elder. Evidently these twenty four enthroned ones immediately suggested to John that they were elders. Such had not been in the visions of Moses, Isaiah and Ezekiel, because the way to immortality was not made clear until Jesus came, died and rose again. Indeed it was not possible until the ONE great offering had been made "whereby God's children could attain priesthood and kingship in the kingdom. The white robes suggested the former, and clearly crowns the latter. We pause a moment to think of some of the Lord's promises we considered last time -- crowns of life, white raiment, association with the throne, rulership of nations.

Why twenty four? There were twelve tribes of Israel. Now, the Gentiles form part of the commonwealth, therefore the number is doubled. Note that the crowned ones were sitting, indicating a period of rest after activity.

It is fitting that the Majesty of Heaven in the throne should be distinguished from all other thrones of men which ever have been or will be, by supernatural effects and accompaniments. Not mere sounds of trumpets but lightning flashes, voices, peals of thunder, seven blazing torches in front of the throne and in front, to separate from everything because of perfect purity and holiness, a sea of glass like crystal. The perfection of God's spirit power will be in full operation when the Lord rules and after the "storms" which necessarily accompany judgment and judgments, will come

peace. The glory of the Lord at last. How frequently we hear that phrase "the glory of the Lord". What do we mean by it? Perfect worship of our Heavenly Father everywhere, a perfect everlasting gospel preached perfectly everywhere, perfect love manifested to all creation by perfected-beings healing and blessing everywhere.

The perfect worship and adoration of the saints is taught by the presence about the throne of the four living creatures between the throne and the elders, showing that worship, 'perfect worship, is first in their new, lives of complete dedication. These living creatures are full of eyes, perfect intelligence and marvellous all-seeing power, lion-like in majesty like their Head, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Useful and strong like the indispensable OX, able to mount up through the heavens like an EAGLE: as Isaiah wrote, yet retaining a HUMAN FORM as their Master did and does with His pierced hands' and side.

These representations of the immortalised saints, the living creatures and crowned elders are, as indicated, perfect in their worship for the living creatures are represented as ceaselessly ascribing Holiness to the Lord, the Ruler of all "who wast and art, and art to be". The crowned elders join in this adoration and their words are given to us "Worthy art thou our Lord and God to receive glory and honour and power. For thou didst create all things and it was by thy will that they came into existence and were created." (Weymouth)

We reflect on the feebleness of our worship now. We regret often our wandering thoughts, we regret too our feeble voices in songs of praise, we long for places of worship which will add dignity and holiness to our efforts. We may have all these IF. All our longings will be satisfied to the full. This glorious vision of perfected praise in the coming Kingdom encourages and helps us and makes us long ardently to be in that throng who will enter by the East Gate into the glorious House of Prayer for all nations which will surely be built, when pure incense will be offered throughout the world by all who live, and "righteousness and praise will spring forth before all nations".

Having gazed mentally on the unique symbols around their Lord, having grasped their meaning as far as possible with our frailties, that this first picture represents the perfection of praise to be accorded in the Kingdom, we are aware that the scene changes, and the answer is now to be symbolically shown to the question HOW MADE POSSIBLE?

A "right hand" of the enthroned majesty appears. In it a scroll with writing on both sides. It is securely, perfectly fastened, sealed with seven seals. The voice of a strong angel is heard: "Who is worthy to open the scroll, to break its seals?" John has been told he is to see future events. He recognises that on this scroll these events are written. Truly a scroll of destiny. We can sense John's eagerness and his disappointment when no one anywhere was worthy even to look into it. He wept, he wept much. Comfort was forthcoming. It was given by one of the "elders". (If we would be in the "elder" class, we must be ready to comfort those who mourn). The Lion of Judah, the Root of David could open the scroll, could open the seals. Why? (Rev. Standard Version) -- Because HE HAD CONQUERED. You remember how HE made a beautiful promise to individual members of each of the seven churches. To each He said: "If you overcome you shall...." Now, in the latest translation, the word for "overcome" is "conquer"... IF YOU CONQUER How beautifully the words now come... The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David HAS CONQUERED. If we were without Jesus, what a weeping world this would be, but like John, we can dry our tears, for HE HAS CONQUERED and in His strength we too may overcome, may conquer.

John did not see a Lion he saw a symbol of a lamb such as never had been seen and Israel had offered hundreds of thousands of lambs; this one represented the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world: God provided ,seven horns, seven eyes, "all power", said Jesus, "is given unto

me in Heaven and in earth..." He can say: "I know what you are doing" to everyone in every Ecclesia. This extraordinary Lamb was in the midst of throne, beasts and elders, walking in the midst of the lamp-stands. How very beautifully the symbols harmonise as phrases and sentences are repeated. Does the Lamb symbol now become another - of a person - of the Saviour? For HE went and took the scroll from the right hand of the enthroned ONE.

John heard music, - a new song, - sung by prostrated symbols, each holding a harp and a golden incense-filled bowl, - worship and prayer, the two indispensable attributes of those who would be acceptable. We are told the actual song. Not so in a later part of this Revelation. It is indeed the everlasting gospel: the things concerning Jesus and His coming Kingdom and friends. Let us read it from the Revised Standard Version "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth." A song we can sing and appreciate. "Then I looked", says John. He sees the symbols multiply in number, myriads of myriads, thousands of thousands of angels add, their voices to those of creatures and elders and John heard a loud voice, not of song but words which ascribe to the Lamb worthiness to receive. Never had such words been heard as John heard in this vision the Son of God our Saviour acclaimed worthy to receive....what? EVERYTHING. A sevenfold, gift from His Father -- perfection, each of these gifts could helpfully and appropriately be meditated upon: power, how the world needs an all-powerful One. Riches, - Why, everything in this wonderful earth is His. Wisdom, - "more precious than rubies and all things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her". Strength, - there is no weariness in the immortal body. How often do we now feel tired. Not, so if we, like our Lord, are "worthy to receive." Honour, - because He honoured God. Glory, - due indeed to the One, who ceaselessly showed the glory of the Lord. Blessing, - the sweetest of the seven, because God-given.

But the loud voice John heard increased in volume for to the voices of creatures, elders and angels, were added the voices of everything in heaven on earth, under, the earth and in the sea, - all John heard saying: "Blessing, honour, glory, power to the enthroned One and to the Lamb to all eternity". There must be perfect reasons why, four of the seven are given - three omitted. "Amen", said the living creatures and those representing-the priest-kings of the future prostrated themselves and worshipped. How, could they do, otherwise? We feel like doing the same and we can do so in the quiet of our homes and be accepted by the One, on the throne through the Lamb.

We should like to finish with an extract from the book "First Century Ecclesia" - page 172.

"The day is no longer remote when the door in Heaven, will be manifested to the whole world, but not then as a means of gracious access to God and acquaintance with His purpose. Of a sudden a glory will issue from those portals which will strike awe into the heart of the most insolent; and there will appear the Figure for whom creation has long waited, One whose countenance will be as the Sun shining in His strength. Whose eyes will be as a flame of fire. Whose voice as the sound of many waters. And every eye shall see Him, and they also who in every age have chosen to pierce Him."

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapter 6)

Paper No 4.

The seals are opened and John sees in symbol the pattern of things to come.

It has been stated that in the "Revelation" there are nearly 300 allusions to the Old Testament. Some of these will be presented in this study. But not only shall we use the Holy Scriptures of Jesus, but also His very utterances. All these will be like bright torches, lighting up our path as we proceed thoughtfully on our way of understanding.

The glorious scene at which we reverently wondered is still before John. The ONLY ONE in the UNIVERSE worthy to unloose the seals of the scroll He had taken from the right hand of the enthroned. Majesty now holds that scroll of destiny. Every living thing everywhere paid homage to His excellences and attributed blessing, honour, glory and power to Him on the throne and to the Lamb.

We stop a moment to recognise that as James said to the business meeting at Jerusalem when there arose difficulties regarding the status of the newly received Gentiles into the quickly growing Ecclesias: "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." Christadelphians sincerely believe in the fore-knowledge of God. This fore-knowledge He graciously communicated to us in the Book of Revelation and is now before us in symbol - the symbol of a seven-sealed scroll. Again we join John when he says: "And I saw..." Jesus opens each seal. John adds: "And I heard..." What? "A voice like thunder" - a Divine accompaniment - and in the case of each of the first four breakings of the seals, each of the living creatures says in turns "Come and see".

From Jesus to the disciple who asked. "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" came the words: "Come and see", Said Philip to Nathaniel who questioned whether any good thing, could come out of Nazareth, "Come and see". The living creatures are symbolical of the immortalized, saints; the saints now are privileged to say to all who enquire concerning Jesus: "Come and see".

John saw one after another, four horses, - white, red, black, and pale. Zechariah saw such. In ch. 1 he saw in vision, red, speckled and white horses; in chapter 6 there were red, black, white and bay or speckled. "O, my Lord", said Zechariah, "what are these?" "These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro in the earth". Indeed a voice says: "We have walked to and fro in the earth and behold, all the earth sitteth still and is at rest". So Zechariah in the prophecy is informed that the forces represented by the horses had completed their work and peace was inaugurated, the earth at last "at rest". From the time John saw his vision to the time when the Lord speaks peace to the nations, the forces indicated by the horses he described have been and still are in operation in the earth. Not that they had not been in existence previously; the Old Testament reveals otherwise. All had been, were, and will be until the earth is "at rest".

A white horse, a man on it with a bow, the man was given a crown, he went forth conquering and to conquer. We need only turn to read ch. 19:11 and 14 to conclude that white horses carry righteous riders.

A bow? Habakkuk answers our question: the Word of God. A crown? Just what Jesus promised to the faithful Smyrnans. Conquering and to conquer? Are we not reminded of our last study? "He that

overcomes (conquers), I will give..." The Lion of the tribe of Judah had conquered (Revised Standard Version). The would-be righteous, ones go forth conquering themselves and endeavouring to conquer, - to win others to gain that promised crown of life, -as they say: "Come and see".

The red horse is next seen and the forces it symbolised are OF WAR, not a crown for its rider but "a great sword". In the train of war comes famine; the rider of the black horse carried a balance. In the aftermath of war comes rationing. Ezekiel told Israel that as a result of sin they should eat their "bread by weight!". The penny was the daily wage of a workman (we remember the Lord's parable of the labourers in the vineyard). A measure of wheat was the daily food and barley the staple diet of the poor because much cheaper than wheat. There was to be just sufficient to maintain life, and the oil and wine, - so important in the East, - were not to be destroyed. Life was to go on, but with the barest necessities.

The fourth horse was pale and the rider was DEATH with THE, GRAVE in attendance and a quarter of the earth's population was to suffer - war, famine, pestilence, invasions by armies comparable to wild beasts in their fierce and destructive attacks.

Jeremiah names more than once this-forces symbolised by these horses and their riders - the sword, famine pestilence, for Nebuchadnezzar and his forces were invading his beloved city.

Jesus in the Olivet prophecy had clearly foretold wars, rumours of wars, famines and pestilences. There are some thoughtful students of Revelation who believe John saw these visions before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and that what he saw as the first seals were broken was an amplification of the prophecy of Jesus in reply to the disciples question: "When shall these things be?" We prefer our generally accepted understanding of a date much later than that awful calamity - namely about 96 A.D. in the last year of the Emperor Domitian. The words of Jesus were fulfilled. All down mortal rule there have been successions of wars, famines and pestilences. Jesus prophesied more than this. He, said: "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake". When the Lamb opened the fifth seal, no living creature attended. A tragic and moving scene doubtless filled the eyes of John with tears. He had lived through the reigns of many emperors and had doubtless seen brethren and sisters hurried to death because they refused to worship the Emperor and would have no part in their Caesar-worshipping festivals. Peter and Paul had suffered death in Nero's reign for that monster was the arch persecutor of Christians. John would know of hundreds more who had died for "the word of God and the witness they had borne" (Revised Standard Version). Another Nero-like Caesar, Domitian, had sent him to Patmos for the same reason. Believers were severely tried in the closing years of the first century. John saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain. They are represented as crying out loudly: "O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" At once the words of the Lord come to us, spoken after the murder of Abel: "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground". A reply is given to the cry of the martyrs they were told to rest a little longer until others were killed. They were given white robes. Jesus is the only one who can give white garments. He promised them to the few faithful ones at Sardis. He counselled the worldly Laodioeans to buy such from Him. The faithful ones seen under the altar, resting IN Jesus, were worthy of such and had to rest until..., rest from their labours, for they were indeed of the class described in Rev. 14, 13. "Write", said the Heavenly voice: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord., that they may rest from their labours". There is rest, unconscious rest, in the sleep of death, but there is another "rest" promised to the faithful, to the troubled..."rest with us", wrote Paul, "when the Lord. Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with the angels of his power..... when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe IN THAT DAY". "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest...."

Not now, nineteen centuries later, does the choice, the tremendous choice, have to be made between staying with our families or being hurried to death. Other trials are ours, more wearing to the soul than tragic in their suddenness, trials which demand patience, continued kindness under daily provocation, and above all, a loving, living, active faith in our Sovereign Lord, holy and true.

Reference had been made to the fearful persecutions which took place in the reigns of Nero and of Domitian. Famines and pestilences were common. At the end of the second century pestilences shattered the Empire. In the middle of the third century a great plague carried off one third of the people of the world. Coming to later times pestilences have ravaged Europe and this island frequently and particularly after wars. The 1918 influenza scourge is still remembered.

The next great persecutor was Diocletian. He had churches demolished and the books of Christians burnt. Fires were blamed on Christians. Leaders and preachers were imprisoned. If they did not recant they were often tortured or martyred. Rome continued pagan. Jupiter and the gods were worshipped but true Christians continued to worship the One True God and refused to conform to idolatry. They were therefore enemies of the State. This period has been called "The era of Martyrs". Persecutions of faithful witnesses continued down the ages, especially in the middle centuries when the blood of thousands of faithful saints was shed by the "beast" that made war with the saints. Rev. 13:7.

In most early centuries Christianity was not stamped out. The faithful witnesses continued their work for Jesus, but a falling away from the true gospel gradually took place, especially when Christianity became the State religion. Belief in the Trinity (a doctrine quite foreign to Revelation), heaven-going at death, the substitution of christening for baptism lest babies should be consigned to hell, all these became popular and those who continued in face of popular opposition in the purity of the gospel were often scorned and persecuted.

The Lamb opened the sixth seal and John saw a terrifying and startling scene. He had read in the Scriptures of the eclipse of the sun, moon and stars of Egypt, for as an independent kingdom that power was to be extinguished, put out. Hosea had warned of the coming destruction of Israel when the terrified people would say to the mountains "Cover us" and to the hills "Fall on us" and as our Lord went that sad way to Calvary John had heard Him say to the weeping women who followed: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me but weep for yourselves and for your children, for behold, the days are coming in the which they will say, blessed are the barren and the wombs which never bare and the paps which never gave suck" and then Jesus quoted Hosea's words: "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains "Fall on us" and to the hills "Cover us". But in those old Scriptures of the prophets John had, read too of fearful signs which would herald the last day, the day of the Lord, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth, as Haggai had also prophesied. Men were then to go into the holes of the rocks and into the caves of the earth. Isaiah in a later prophecy pronounced the indignation or wrath of the Lord upon all nations when "all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the host of heaven would fall as a leaf from the vine and as the falling fig from the fig tree and the heavens should be rolled together AS A SCROLL. Joel had added his quota to the terrifying descriptions of the very last days: "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord come". Jesus Himself knew well all these prophecies and put His seal on the certainty of their fulfilment, "Immediately (or suddenly) the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens-shall-be shaken. And THEN... they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory..."

All these prophetic utterances John saw now in telling symbol. "I beheld and lo" - - earthquake, eclipse of all the heavenly bodies, stars falling like unripe figs, heaven departing as a scroll,

mountains and islands moving and all classes of men seeking refuge in dens and rocks of the mountains. Because of the wrath of the Lord and His Son. When? The great day of His wrath. All, classes of men. "And the, kings of the earth, and the great men, and, the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains..." A magnificent yet awful picture in symbol of the start of the final catastrophe which we may see.

If more evidence is needed that the events John saw in this concluding drama of moving symbols belong to the very last days, it is forthcoming by dwelling on the-express vision of the last verse: "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? In the 11th chapter where a most concise summary of events to take place at our Lord's return is given, are the words: "And the nations were angry and THY WRATH IS COME and the time of the dead..." In Ps. 110:5 is another helpful reference. "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in THE DAY OF HIS WRATH". All of us are familiar with Paul's use of the same expression: "... the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God". It is fitting and appropriate that after those under the Christ-altar had asked "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth", and had been told that their fellow-servants and brethren were yet to be martyred, there should come this description of the day of the wrath of the Lord when rulers, great men, rich men, captains and mighty men many of whom had caused the sufferings and torture and death of those martyrs, should be described as cowering in terror and seeking shelter in vain from the wrath of the martyrs' Lord and Saviour.

Our intention is to simplify as much as possible and to avoid names and dates where this can be done. The explanation now submitted of verses 12 - 17 is NOT the one given in our literature. After reading the history of these early centuries conclusions are as given and very briefly now the usual explanation will be stated and the reasons for not accepting it. One name and one date will suffice.

Constantine the Great - reigned 31 years, died 337, after founding the new city of Constantinople, 306. His father died in York. The troops proclaimed Constantine Emperor. He never suffered a defeat. After a vision in which he is said to have seen a cross with the words meaning "By this conquer" he defeated all rivals and he looked on himself as "the favoured son of the victory-bringing God" and determined to ally himself with the so-called Christians, still a minority but numbering hundreds of thousands. Bear in mind Constantine put both his wife and son to death, continued a sun-worshipper and delayed his own baptism until on his death-bed. But he "changed the course of history" by associating Church and State and making Christianity the official religion of the Empire. He was called the 13th apostle. This tremendous change in the Empire from paganism to Christianity is said to be the subject of these verses in Rev. 6.

The language is altogether too awesome for such an interpretation. The change was not effected by violent revolution: it was "slow, easy, gradual", so says the best history obtainable. Verses 14 - 17; "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man hid themselves in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" - simply do not fit at all.

There was religious toleration for pagans and Christians, so the pagan heavens were not "rolled up like a scroll". When the seals were broken, the contents displayed in symbol the pattern of human life from that time onwards to the great day of wrath, - the soldiers of Jesus going forth in all ages on

their peaceful conquests; wars, famines and pestilences occurring and recurring; suffering for Christ's sake; particularly in those early centuries, but continued until He come.

We shall study, God willing, the effects of the blowing of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven bowls of Gods wrath, but these all are, concerned with punishments and judgments, whereas the opening of the first five seals is quite different in that our Lord, revealed the texture, the pattern, the way of human life for 2000' years, and in the sixth the upshot. That great day of His wrath will come, it is very near. May we be able to stand even as Paul, then in chains, wrote: "Therefore, take the whole armour of God that ye may be able to with-stand in the evil day, and having done, all., to STAND".

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapter7)

Paper No. 5.

The Divine Family Sealed and Comforted.

Four great prophets of the Old Testament write of the "four winds" Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah and Jeremiah, all of whom were privileged to see visions of things to come John saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth. To the prophets the winds represented powers or forces at work. "Thus saith the Lord. God, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live". The vision of the valley of dry bones which represented the "dead" condition of Israel prior to 1917, from which time influences began to work visibly for their restoration to national life We see the result today.

Daniel saw the four winds of heaven at work and there were to develop as a result, powers, empires, an enemy of the saints, until the Son of Man should come with the clouds of heaven to receive His everlasting dominion, which was to be shared by "the people of the saints of the most High". Zechariah after seeing the various horses, to which references made in the last study, was told: "These are the four winds of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord of the whole earth". Jeremiah received the word of the Lord regarding ELAM - Persia. "I will bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven and will scatter them (the Elamites) towards all those winds".

Jesus was familiar with this prophetic expression of "the four winds" and His use of the words helps to clarify our understanding "He shall send His angels... they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"

In simple language, influences or powers will be at work to hurt. They are subject to the angels. The angels control all forces operative in the whole earth. John sees thorn holding those forces, the four winds, and something happens.

He sees another angel ascending or having ascended from the East and this angel carries a seal no emperor, rich man or mighty man owned, for it was a seal belonging to the LIVING GOD. The basic idea of the seal here is a signet ring. (Esther 3:12 and Daniel, 6:17). The hurting, or the judgments or punishments or manifestation of the wrath of God and of the Lamb were not to begin until all God's servants were sealed. It was not a document these owned which was to receive God's seal. Each servant of God was vitally concerned and the sealing was in or on their foreheads.

Before discussing the seal we would stress the clear teaching of these verses already taken that the angels of God have charge of forces and powers operative in the earth. Their work is varied. They worship their Lord and the Lamb. Their number is "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands and thousands..." They are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation". "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even many thousands of angels..."

To the angels the present word is subject. This is deduced from the words: "For unto the angels hath He not put into subjection the world to come". And if proof of this assertion be needed, one has only to study the work of the angels as given from Genesis onwards, their work for individuals, for the chosen people, for their part is "the army of heaven" and the "watchers of heaven". The book of Daniel abounds with references to their duties and indeed is probably the most helpful of all the prophets concerning angelic ministrations, revelations, and powers.

The hurting or judgments in the hands of the angels in Chapter 7 of Revelation must refer to the final revelation of the wrath of God described in the last few verses of chapter 6, for the judgments are held back until the sealing: of the Divine family is completed, (v.3.). We saw in Rev. 6 the panic of the unprepared; in Rev 7 the Joy of the prepared.

The command to the four angelic controllers and administrators of Divine judgments to withhold their operations until all the individuals constituting the Divine family were sealed was given by the angel having ascended from the East. This restraining power from the East said, "Do not hurt until WE have sealed God's servants". This indicates plurality of agents. How were the faithful from Abel to Malachi sealed? By receiving the spoken Word of God in faith and obeying it from the heart. The 11th chapter of Hebrews leaves us with no question of their belief and action. It is profitable to discern even in these days so remote from theirs, that influences from the East were operative during the four millennia. The angelic instructors in and near the Garden planted eastward in Eden; the father of the faithful who journeyed at God's command from the East, and concerning whom the angel said. "For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord..." The wives of the Patriarchs were from the East and their influences were not to be discounted. Ezra, Nehemiah and Zerubbabel were from the East and were valiant leaders and impressive teachers of the returned tribes. But far away and above all came the Saviour, whose star was seen in the East, Himself sealed visibly by the Almighty at His baptism. From His teaching and the labours of His faithful apostles and Paul, the apostle born out of due time, came the great sealing-preaching which turned the whole world upside down. By the reception of their living gospel and obedience from the Heart WE in these days are sealed in our foreheads with the seal of the living God. Those whom John later saw (in the vision) on Mt. Zion with the Lamb had the name of the Lamb's Father written in their foreheads. This is another figure "written", not sealed. Every man and woman in the Divine family is sealed on entrance into that family. There was a distinct and visible sealing in the early days, when the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples or was conveyed to the converts by the laying on of hands. To the Ephesians Paul wrote "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise". We have been sealed in our foreheads. Let us think of the manner of our sealing from our own experiences. We were brought up against something which entered our minds and affected our thoughts, our feelings, our manner of life. What was it? The Word of God. Our lives were impressed, changed. When the material seal if brought against the soft surface say of wax, that impact moves parts of the wax into different positions and a mark is affixed. The impact of the living Word on our yielding hearts changed our disposition and marked us as of God's family. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity".

It is a sobering thought that there will be one brother or sister who will-be the very last one to be sealed and "the Lord shall send His angels and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds". The final judgments of God are shown in the 7th chapter of Rev, to be in abeyance until all are sealed.

John was told there were 144,000 so sealed, 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel, 12 multiplied by 12 and then by 1000. Jews and Gentiles together constitute Israel, the true Israel of God. By faith Wand baptism we become the seed of Abraham. Before our sealing we were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel".

The angels fall and worship God. How this whole pageant would fortify John himself and others suffering and yet to suffer and make them trust in God and lean hard on their Saviour.

Here is another sevenfold ascription of praise. What feeling would be uppermost in these prostrated worshippers? Surely gratitude, thanksgiving. And this is now included in the seven in place of "wealth". It is God on the throne Who is worshipped. Their God and God and Father of our Lord; Jesus Christ who had said to Mary: "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God". "My God" are the words of Jesus. They occur four times in Rev 3; v 12 Jesus does not regard Himself as equal and co-eternal with His Father.

One of the elders addressed John. He questions in order to teach. "Who are these clothed in white robes and whence have they come?" "Sir, thou knowest", came the reply. "These", he added, "have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb". We earnestly desire and pray to form part of this great multitude. Let us consider these words of the Elder who knew. They had been tried but God had not suffered them to be tried more than they could bear and He had made a way to escape so that they could endure. It is important to note that the Elder stresses their active part in the Divine process of redemption. He does not say they had had their robes washed and they had had them made white in the Lambs blood. Cooperation of those who would be saved, cooperation with their Father and His Son is clear. They searched like the Bereans. They believed the gospel. They had faith. They were baptised for remission of sins and became workers together with God. The washing of garments in order to appear "clean" before God reminds us of Moses sanctifying the people before the Lord descended on Mt. Sinai in fire.

"They washed their clothes". Very frequently under the law was the command given: "He shall wash his clothes". Frequently also is given the reason: "Ye shall be holy because I the Lord am holy".

The Hebrews washed their clothes in water. The accepted washed theirs in the blood of the Lamb. A Divine provision absolutely: a Divine process entirely: a Divine result perfectly and altogether impossible with man, who cannot redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom, for his soul. John himself had written: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin".

Thus forgiven, thus cleansed, the Elder continued: "Therefore" and give in glorious detail their reward. His words are a prophecy and more, for they are words which have given comfort to God's people all down the ages. They are the Elder's parting and farewell words in this wonderful book. It was said in our last paper that the very early centuries were called "The age of martyrs". Their sufferings for Christ's sake have been referred to several times. Often driven from home and friends, without food and water, at times in desert regions and under the blazing Eastern or African sun. Let us ask first of all what these closing promises would mean to THEM? The outcasts, the exiled, the suffering ones. Many had been brought before rulers, before the Emperor or his representatives on thrones of state. The brethren had refused to offer incense in their Caesar temples. Passing through very great tribulation these Divine assurances come to them. Can we not be sure they would carry these in their memories and say to themselves: "Sometime we shall stand before the throne of God, we shall serve Him all the time. God will be our very shelter. We shall never again be hungry nor thirsty, nor scorched by this terrible heat. Never shall we be alone for Jesus will be our Shepherd and He will guide us to living waters, even to life everlasting and God will dry every tear from our eyes" Every part of each promise exactly fits their needs and provides comfort in their terrible tribulations of the "wilderness" or "desert" state.

Such expressions of God's elect have been repeated down the ages: by all the faithful martyrs have these words been cherished and worn very close to their hearts. In the newest American Revised Version, it is printed in 8 lines of poetry. What does this lovely poem convey to us in the 20th century? By coincidence, when we read this 7th chapter of Revelation on June 24th, the second reading is Isaiah 49 and half these promises are a quotation from this chapter. Jesus is the subject of

the prophecy, the THOU and the THEE of verses 8 and 9; "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places..." Jesus will say to the prisoners: "Go forth". To those in darkness: "Shew yourselves". This is the Resurrection. He has the key of the prison. He told us so in chapter 1 "I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death". Isaiah's prophecy concerns the resurrected ones...."They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them".

Now to our chapter in Revelation. The accepted ones and their relationship to God are described in verse 15. There will be a literal, a real place which the Most High will inhabit by his presence, that is, by His manifested glory. Ezekiel was shown it in vision. "Son of man... the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever". This is the mountain of the Lord's house "the whole limit round about being most holy" A literal temple in which saints will serve Him "day and night", that is, continually, not by lot, in turns, as under the Law. A literal shelter provided. by God which will indicate His presence " on Mt. Zion and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night' for upon all the glory shall be a covering", or a "canopy" or a "tent", "for a shadow in the daytime from the heat and for a place of refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain" reminding, all who go to worship, of the cloud which led Israel, a cloud which became fire by night, telling Israel that God was with them.

Gradually as the nations learn righteousness the whole earth will become the temple of the Lord because it will be full of His glory.

The accepted ones will no longer "hunger or thirst after righteousness for they will be filled". Jesus said to the Samaritan woman "'Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life..." No more fiery trials to endure, no more trials of our faith with fire, no more heaviness from manifold temptations, because the Lord will be in the earth and He, the Lamb of God., will have become once more a visible Shepherd guiding to springs of living water Jesus promised to believers that from them would flow rivers of living water, meaning the possession of the spirit in those apostolic times. But what they had was only a foretaste of the future possession of the Spirit, only a "taste of the powers of the world to come" and yet even by the shadow of Peter healing took place and the dead were raised and the chronic lame walked. What then will be the extent of the powers of the world to come?

And the last promise is a special one for sisters "God will wipe every tear from their eyes" We close with the thought of a life without tears. Not the accepted no more death, no more sorrow, no more pain.

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapter 8)

Paper No 6.

Prayers, and Judgments.

We are expected to keep silence just prior, to the commencement of our services on the First Day. We are about to engage in prayer and praise, therefore to be in the presence of God.

When Jesus opened the Seventh Seal there was silence in heaven about half an hour. After hearing the angelic praises reverberate through the heavens, this silence would be very impressive. Luke in chapter 1: 8-11 describes the time of offering of incense in the Temple. Zecharias was the priest whose lot was to perform this rite. Let us note that the whole multitude of the people were praying outside and awaiting the re-appearance of Zecharias which, was delayed by Gabriel's exciting message concerning the birth of John the Baptist. That would be a silent crowd praying as the incense ascended to heaven.

John saw seven angels who stood before God and to them were given seven trumpets. We wonder who the giver was. These angels were to sound their trumpet in turn. In the scene appears an altar of incense before God's throne and another angel stood at this altar holding a golden censer and to him was given MUCH incense to mingle with the prayers of ALL saints, Let us emphasise that he was given MUCH incense and it was to be added to the prayers of ALL saints. We are included and with David can pray "Let my prayer be directed before thee as incense". How beautiful is verse 4 "And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." "A fragrant smoke-cloud, a symbol of Divine acceptance" (Swete). There was no need for John to be told of the rising prayers. He was familiar with the Law and therefore with incense offering. In tabernacle and temple the incense altar stood in front of the veil. Here in the vision it was before the throne of God for Jesus sacrifice had caused the veil to be rent and as Paul wrote, "the way into the holiest was made manifest". Christ is indeed in heaven itself actually, and "appearing in the presence of God for us".

Before any trumpets are sounded, announcing God's judgments on the world, the saints are assured that their prayers are ascending to the Throne of Grace as the "incense of sweet spices". Does the golden altar before the Throne in the vision represent the Lord Jesus? Under the Law the incense altar was of shittim wood overlaid with gold, with four horns and a golden crown. In the vision it is, described as a golden altar with its horns. This would fittingly represent our Lord now made perfect, immortal. In the book by Bro. Roberts: "The Law of Moses", one of the choicest sections is concerning incense and prayer (pages 107-109). Here is one short extract. "The right incense had to be "beaten small", not offered in lumps. Some people neglect God in daily habit and seem to think that they can make up for lost time by being specially religious at certain times. This must be as odious to God as intermittent friendship would be unsatisfactory to men..." "The incense had to be vaporised by fire from the altar... The altar is Christ... the fire His sufferings....Prayer is a source of pleasure to God... the prayer of the upright is His delight...."

Returning to our chapter, the angel is now seen in a totally different capacity. Following immediately, the ascending up before God out of the angel's hand of the smoke of the incense and the saints prayers, he fills the censer with altar fire and casts it into the earth. No voice had broken the quiet following the half-hour's silence, now there were voices, thunders, lightning's and an

earthquake, the heralds of confusion, ominous rumblings, of coming wars, of flashes of Divine judgments and of convulsions and disasters. There is something very profound in these verses concerning prayer, a privilege so valuable. Jesus said of the "little ones" who believe in God: "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven," When Peter was miraculously released from prison and knocked at the door of Mary, John Mark's mother, those gathered there to pray said to Rhoda, (who, in her ecstasy of joy forgot to unbolt the door and let in Peter), "It is his angel"... that is, Peter's angel. Let us meditate on our verses for a moment, Jesus we know is our Mediator. Do our angels act as intermediaries? Do they receive our prayers on behalf of our Mediator and enter into what must be a cloud of prayer incense practically encompassing the globe? Do they submit those prayers and are they deputed by our Lord to act for their "little ones" in giving or withholding according to the will and purpose of the One made higher than the angels whom they worship and to whom they are subject?

Many prayers in the first century and other centuries are typically given in Rev. 6 "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Take note that immediately following the saints prayers the judgments operate. They will be referred to in connection with difficult verses in ch. 11: 5 - 6. John was seeing in symbol events to transpire, and now time for judgment on the wicked. Roman Empire and the Lord's avenging of His slaughtered saints had arrived and John now sees those judgments in symbol. "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound." Trumpets have been in use for thousands of years. They summoned Israel to gather together. They proclaimed war. They were used at coronations and are so used today. There are four important statements to be looked at as we consider their use. Isaiah first. "And it shall come to pass in that day that the great trumpet shall be blown and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria... and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem". Now our Lord Jesus: "And he shall send out his angels with a loud trumpet call and they shall gather His elect..." Now Paul: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible..." and Paul again, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first..." On asking for a brother's comment on these verses the answer quietly came "The Lord or the angels do not need shaped metal to produce the sound of a trumpet". Those who can control the elements, cause lightnings and thunder at will, can use the wind, to make these tremendous noises as trumpet blasts to announce those world-shaking events," to regather Israel natural and spiritual, and bring the dead to life. How sobering are such thoughts. We shall hear those trumpet-blasts.

John in vision sees seven angels with seven trumpets and they prepared themselves to sound. All this John saw in century one. If one reads the 1st chapter in Romans, 5:26 to the end, a true description is found of the state of Rome and the Empire generally at that time. Though the gospel was preached far and wide, corruption grew, idolatry continued, immorality was shocking and there was no repentance. Just a quotation or two to show the kind of world on which the coming judgments were to fall, judgments described by Chas. Kingsley as "one of the fiercest struggles of humanity... the death of the Roman world...." "The morals of the Empire grew more and more effeminate, corrupt, reckless. Their maxim "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" "A troubled sea, casting up mire and dirt".

In Century FIVE here was the corrupt, dissolute, immoral, wicked Empire." Away to the North and East were barbarous tribes. Some of these had made their camps within the Empire and noticed its lack of defences, its unprotected cities, its enfeebled armies, its weak rulers, and had envied its fertile places, its accumulated riches stolen from conquered lands, its stores of wines, its rich foods, and thought what an easy, prey could be won by conquest. Not all quite barbarians. Some had a partial, translation of their Bible by Ulfilas from the court of Constantine the Great.

The first angel blew a trumpet blast and in the vision John saw hail, fire blood and destruction of trees and grass. He saw what we read of during the last war.... the effect of "a scorched earth" policy. Who brought this about and when? About the beginning of the 5th century "the whole of the Roman Empire in Europe became the prey of robber armies of barbarians". So wrote H.G. Wells. "The GOTHs under their fierce leader ALARIC swarmed into Greece, Italy, Gaul, Spain, and pillaged for three years. ROME was sacked after three horrible sieges. He left nothing but brambles and forests". It was at this time that Rome left Britain.

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became bloody... and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed..." A similar judgment occurs very much later in connection with the second vial (Rev.16). Could we not guess the meaning of this coming judgment? Surely some maritime disaster. We are familiar from school days with the name of volcanoes as "burning mountains" and in the darkness these certainly look "on fire". There are at least three such in and near the sea John saw in vision and also, saw literally from Patmos and all of us know of the terrible effects when these volcanoes become really active. In 79 A.D. Pompeii and Herculaneum were overwhelmed with terribly disastrous effects and in our own time we have read of villages being destroyed by the molten lava which pours from the crater and runs in burning streams, covering villages and towns and causing frightful disasters. Maritime or sea disasters overtook the Roman Empire, for another barbarous people came from the East and South under a terrible leader called GENSERIC. The VANDALS plundered by sea with their ships in the Mediterranean. These Vandals were savages, robbers, "black pirates and cut-throats" (Kingsley) and their chief was the ablest Barbarian chieftain of his age. They captured the islands and looted them. They took Rome and pillaged the city. They took away the seven branched candlestick and golden table. They captured Carthage, built a fleet and attacked ships, sailed for ports all around the coasts and looted them. Fisher, the historian, tells us their intervention in European affairs was of "of critical importance" and had "far reaching consequence" in this fifth century. We certainly feel that the symbols John saw, when the second angel sounded, vividly portray the maritime disasters, the carnage, and looting done by these formidable heathen pirates under Genseric. But further punishments were to be sent on the ungodly, wicked Roman Empire.

The third angel sounded and John saw a great star fall burning like a lamp and it fell on part "of the rivers and fountains of waters". The star was called "Wormwood" and it made the rivers bitter as the name implies, and many men died. The third vial judgments of later time were on rivers and fountains of waters, probably North Italy with its network of lakes and rivers was intended.

The fifth century is described by H.A.L. Fisher in his "History of Europe" as "The Huns Century". All here remember the Huns of the 20th century. Surely with the depredations of the Goths and the sea piracy of the Vandals the Empire would be exhausted. Indeed, there was "economic wretchedness, internal decay and a badly reduced population", but more punishments were to be administered and by the violent, powerful, raiding, plundering Huns so cruel and unscrupulous, riding their tens of thousands of horses, and attacking and looting town after town. John saw a great star fall from heaven burning like a lamp. That an interesting figure this is. Fisher writes that the question raised in this 5th century was:- "Upon whom would the thunder-bolt fall?" And Attila their leader is described as "one of those who startled the world by a sudden revelation of violence and power". Further, "Attila's plunder confederation just fell to pieces and the actual Huns disappear from history". A great and burning star. "These great Hun raids practically brought the end of the Latin Roman Empire". Bitter indeed was "Wormwood."

We are not surprised to read the effects of the sounding of the 4th angel-trumpeter. A third has been mentioned in every section, so it is the same part of the great Empire which is affected. We remember the references in Is. 13 regarding Babylon: "The stars.... not to give their light, the sun darkened, the light of the moon withheld." We conclude that the rulers and great men of some parts of the Roman Empire were to be eclipsed, put out. A quotation or two will give the facts simply and clearly and there can be no mistake here in the interpretation. The Barbarian Goths removed the Emperor (a young lad, Romulus Augustulus) at Rome and informed the Court at Constantinople that there was no longer an Emperor in the West. A Goth became King of Rome, and there were thousands of brigand chiefs throughout the land. The Latin-speaking Roman Empire died in 476 A.D. No more emperors in Rome as one historian wrote: "The Western Empire WENT DOWN" and there was intellectual darkness in the western world.

The eclipse of Rome's temporal rulers gave the opportunity for the Pope of Rome to develop his power and prestige and he began to use imperial titles to make imperial claims. There was of course, still an Emperor in, Constantinople. The West Roman seat ion of the Empire had fallen before Barbarian onslaught. Yet, John was to see and hear something more: an eagle, flying, through mid-heaven. A strong bird of prey and this time a speaking bird, saying with loud voice "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth (not the third part of it) by reason of the other voices of the three angel-trumpeters yet to sound". The last of these three woes ushered in as judgments; by the angels will be the seventh, the final, and then all men and women living will learn, to their dismay or to their salvation, that whatever, not only a nation but a man or woman sows, shall be reaped to the flesh....corruption; to the spirit....life everlasting.

Our opportunity of choice is still open and. we try to help each other even now to take advantage of the quietness and confidence offered by our Father in order that we may please Him and finally, in His mercy, be saved with an everlasting salvation, when the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapter 9)

Paper No 7.

The Fifth Trumpet or First Woe

Our last study closed with the loud voice of the eagle in mid-heaven crying Woe, Woe, Woe to those who dwell on the earth because of the trumpet blasts yet to be sounded. As the fifth angel trumpeter's blast is heard the first of these woes is announced and one expects to be told of symbols of great and far-reaching events bringing woeful and painful effects. The judgments heralded by the first four angels affected only a part, a limited part of the earth. No section is now named, at is the earth which will suffer. Further, the events John saw and recorded connected with the previous judgments were stated only briefly. One verse or two at the most were sufficient. The effects of the first woe occupy eleven verses v. 1 - 11, More details are given probably not only because very many peoples and lands were to be affected; but God's land was included, a fact of outstanding importance.

In vision, John saw a star fall from heaven to earth. We recently noted the figure of a falling, burning star and its application to Attila and the Huns, their sudden appearance and their quick disintegration. That the star of v.1 refers to a powerful leader of men is suggested by the last sentence. TO HIM was given something etc. and v.2 he opened a pit. What is the bottomless pit? No place geographically. Its associations are entirely confined to Revelation. To this verse, to 11:7 and 17:8 where a beast ascends out of it, and to 20:1 and 7 the "prison" where the old serpent, is bound, his activities being strictly limited during the Millennium. It means the unfathomable depths of wickedness and evil, as far removed as possible from the light of righteousness, and is associated with that which is evil, beastly and devilish. "He", the Star, opened the abyss and John saw smoke and darkness, a disagreeable and intense darkness which we can readily connect with ignorance, superstition, confusion. John saw more. He saw a "locust army" develop from the smoke and the following verses describe the activities, powers, restrictions and the "orders" to which they were subject. John had seen real dark clouds appear in the distance actually in his native land and heard the cries of the people "look, the locusts are coming", and doubtless he had seen the results every green thing eaten by the thousands of voracious, destructive creatures and he had heard the laments of the people when the locusts had flown, away leaving devastation, desolation and misery. These locust plagues still occur in the East though science and the spraying by aeroplanes have done much to mitigate their destructive work. Not only had John seen the actual locust visitations, he had read the account of the locust plague directed on Egypt, (Ex-19; 14 0 15) and had read in Joel's prophecy of a locust army which was to devastate his land not real locusts, an "army" sent by God to punish God's disobedient people.

Locusts breed in and come from Africa, Persia and Arabia into Palestine. Did anything arise in the land of Arabia in the early centuries which can be associated with these extremely interesting and detailed, symbols now seen by John following the trumpet blast of the fifth angel? Mohammed arose. He was a "vain, greedy, cunning, selfish man who had several wives", so H.G. Wells tells us. Fisher writes of him: "A cruel, crafty, lustful, ignorant, passionate man", who declared he had visions and that his book, the Koran, was from God and given him in vision, and that he was chosen by God to complete God's Revelation. He called Abraham and Jesus his forerunners. He incorporated the worship of the "sacred." black stone into his system of teaching. He declared One God and Mohammed His prophet. "Suddenly, unexpectedly and from a most unusual source Arabia which had been a land of mystery for hundreds of years, the Bedouin flared out for a brief century of

splendour" (H .G. Wells), and more "Mohammed fired the Arab flame", There was "a sudden and extraordinary outpouring of the Arab race". (Fisher) They are called Saracens, which means "Eastern peoples". They were determined to conquer the world and started to do so with three or four thousand men. They began as plunderers but finding conquest easy they continued until they spread from China to Spain. One writer tells us that the application of the 5th Trumpet to Mohammedism has been made because it has been "the most formidable manifestation of the Anti-Christian power hitherto developed" (Wordsworth) that it "covered with a new darkness the world partly illuminated by Christianity"; that "foul vapours now obscured the Sun of Righteousness". It "did not destroy Christianity but bound it up in a corruption worse than death". (Williams)

Let us examine John's detailed description and see how the conquests of these Mohammedans first led by Mohammed and later 'by his successors answer to the symbols.

That the locusts were not real insects is proved because they were not to "hurt grass, neither any green thing, nor any tree", just exactly what real locusts destroy. They were to discriminate in the class of men they hurt. They were to be of a stinging character like scorpions and their activity was to be limited. Five months is the time or period of the real locust's activity - April to September. Many have tried to make this 5 months mean 150 years, but it may mean simply that the locust army would continue their activities until they could no longer do so. The 5 months is therefore in keeping with the symbols used. One sentence is worth quoting "the locusts are little miniatures of a well ordered army" (Dr Pusey) As we have heard, Gibbon wrote that the successor of Mohamed gave instructions to his Arab hosts not to hurt grass nor trees, to destroy no palm trees, burn no corn, cut down no fruit-trees and smite only the men with shaven crowns who were of the synagogue of Satan On v.4 this is quite an interesting commentary and written in the 18th century.

The "locust army" was to torment and evidently in painful manner. To harass, explains one writer. Another "If Jews and Christians refused Islam they were subject to many disabilities" (Wordsworth) By the way, "Islam" is the name of the Mohammedan religion and means "submit to God".

We can easily imagine how true the prophecy of v.6 would be when men were faced with the alternative of torment or Islam. But further descriptions of this "locust army" are given in the remaining verses 7 to 11.

The locust I saw reminded me of a huge wasp about three inches long. The head is like a horse's head. Note verse 7: "The shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for battle". They have yellow markings and outstanding eyes, strong jaws to tear and destroy, hence "teeth as lions" as Joel's locust army had. The hair would refer to the antennae. The bearded faces and turbaned heads of the Arabs are quite interesting in this part. An Arabian adage runs: "In head like a horse, in breast like a lion, in feet like a camel, in body like a serpent, in tail like a scorpion, in antennae like a virgin's hair". "Locusts have no king", so we read in Prov. 30:27 "yet they go forth all of them by bands", but this "locust army" John saw had a king, so powerful to be called the "angel of the bottomless pit" and his name is given in both Hebrew and Greek. Because both Syrian and Greek lands were to be overrun by the hosts symbolised. "Abaddon" in Hebrew means "destruction" and "Apollyon" in Greek means "destroyer".

Mohammed and his successors called "caliphs" were the leader. God has frequently used a wicked power to punish another people who were also wicked: Assyria to take Israel captive, Babylon to remove Judah, the Medes to take Babylon. Here, the Mohammedans were used to punish the inhabitants of the Roman world, both West and East and African. These punitive peoples followed their own lusts and plans but were directed by Heaven's commanders to do God's will and carry out His purpose. The verses 5 to 7 in Is. 10 are helpful: "O Assyrian.... the rod of mine anger...I will send

him against a hypocritical nation... howbeit he meaneth not so..... it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few...."

In the 7th and 8th Centuries the rod of God's anger was this Arabian Power which conquered nations "not a few" and brought woeful conditions to many countries. Islam still has 300,000,000 followers, but it no longer controls Palestine, yet the mark of its conquest (637) is in Jerusalem in the Mosque of Omar (built 688) and the cold war between Arabs and Jews has had many fierce blasts. The effect of the fifth trumpet warning is therefore even now with us in God's land which is still claimed by these unhappy descendants of Ishmael.

One woe to John had passed in symbol and he heard the sixth angel's sound followed by a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which he had seen before God. This must have been a strong powerful voice to be associated with the four horns, that of Jesus maybe, and a command is given to an angel, the sixth trumpeter and heard by John: "Loose the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates", not IN, but AT: so is the latest version and Weymouth has: "set at liberty the four angels who are prisoners near the River Euphrates". "Bound" in Rev. 20; 2 -- Satan bound a thousand years - - means restrained and in the following verse Satan must be "loosed" a little season, released, no longer restrained.

The Euphrates was the boundary of God's land and beyond it were heathen peoples. Four commentators, Elliot, Alford, Todd and Mede agree that the Euphrates is literal here, as Dr. Thomas also wrote, so the meaning is simply this:- at a certain time let four powers as yet restrained beyond the Euphrates begin their operations. These powers had been prepared or arranged in the Divine plan and fore-knowledge. What do the words mean: "for an hour, a day, a month and a year"? This is easily simplified. There is no need to do any calculation. The correct translation is for THE hour, THE day, THE month, THE year, that is the foreordained exact time when the powers would beset in motion to bring the judgments of God on the remaining part,- -the East - - of the Roman Empire. And preparations were angelically controlled that these punitive hosts would be ready at the appointed time and, the result required would be attained, in a definite time. There is no delay in the execution of the DIVINE plans. When we read that there is an exact time fixed to favour Zion and an "appointed time" for the vision to speak as Habakkuk was told, we may be sure the angels will make no miscalculation. There are four angels or four powers or forces. Were there such and did they come westwards from beyond the Euphrates? To answer these questions and be satisfied that the explanations to which we are accustomed are correct, historians were searched most painstakingly and it was established without question that there were four and that they came in the direction required by the picture John saw in symbol.

From the 10th to the 16th century, 700 years - Turks, Mongols, Tartars advanced from the Asian plains. The FIRST hordes rode out from Turkistan (stan means country), horsemen and archers, multitudes, of them, and conquered Persia, Egypt, Syria and Jerusalem. "All Asia Minor lay prostrate before a pitiless foe" (Fisher).The armies of the Eastern Roman Empire were "mown down". These Turks established themselves in Asia Minor and became Mohammedans. They had spread a "belt of desolation" across the fairest provinces of the Eastern Empire.

SECOND came the Mongols also called Tartars, who were Turks and came from North China H. G. Wells writes that "these rose suddenly to prominence in the world's affairs and achieved such a series of conquests as has no parallel in history". Their leader is described as "the most terrible scourge that ever afflicted the human race". (Myers Mediaeval and Modern History). An Empire was built by blood and plunder from the Pacific to the Dnieper. These Mongols were bitter against Islam. They used gunpowder, which was a Chinese invention, and small field guns.

THIRD came another Mongol invasion most savage and destructive and they had "a mammoth army of horsemen".

FOURTH - The Turks who had settled in Asia Minor having come there from beyond the Euphrates and called after their leader Ottman "Ottoman Turks" took various parts of the Eastern Empire and in 1453, took the capital Constantinople, using a large fleet and a great number of guns. The last Roman Emperor perished. These Turks were for centuries the "terror of Eastern Europe" (Fisher). They had Egypt, N. Africa, Palestine and the Euphratean area under their sway and their pride was not broken until the 16th century. No further Mongolian invasion took place. The remaining hordes in Asia were themselves conquered by Russia and China. The work had been done as planned by the angels, and as seen in symbol by John, and at the time required.

V. 16 tells of an appalling number of horsemen. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of them. Gibbon writes of "the myriads of Turkish horse". V. 17 describes both horses and riders. John saw fire. Smoke and sulphur (R.S.V.) are twice mentioned and mouths and tails having special notice as killing and wounding agents. Many writers agree that this description is symbolic of the artillery used by the Turks, the heads like lions would suggest the roaring of the guns. Interesting details of the Turkish cannon with a good illustration are found in "The Apocalypse & History", pages 64-5. These judgments covering hundreds of years brought no repentance. Idolatry, murder, theft, sorceries and immoralities continued, so reads the last verse. The worship of saints and of images continues still. The sorceries mentioned have reference to drugs used to produce abortion and infanticide. To the immoralities of the celibate priests there is no need to refer, nor to the murders carried out in the name of religion.

Daniels prophecy Chapter 11 has reference to the two powers of our chapter, the Mohammedan and the Turkish. The former became King of the South by their conquest of Egypt and PUSHED AT HIM, that is the Roman power. A pushing power is an annoying or tormenting power. (v.5 of Rev.9) The Turks became King of the North by their conquest of Asia Minor and they came against Rome - Eastern - like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen and many ships. They overflowed or conquered and they entered into the glorious land (v.41) conquered. Egypt as described in verses 42 and 43 and established themselves in the Holy Land until they came to their end in 1917.

These verses may have a final fulfilment in our days, but they certainly have had one clear fulfilment, the end of which we have seen for ourselves in the defeat of Turkey in 1917.

The Turk was a desolator and Moulton's translation of Daniel 9:27 is relevant. "upon the wine of abominations (the wickedness described in our chapter at verses 20 and 21) shall come that maketh desolate", even until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolators. How wonderfully God's counsel has stood - - God, Who declared from ancient times the things that are not yet done.

Let us encourage one another to trust and not be afraid, for HIS SALVATION WILL NOT TARRY.

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapter 10)

Paper No. 8.

The World Emperor

With John we saw in symbol the eclipse of the Western Roman Empire and the woeful disaster brought on the Eastern section of that Empire, the death of the last Emperor and the passing of Constantinople, his supposedly impregnable capital, to the Turks. It is fitting that at this stage in the revelation of future events John should have a grand pre-view of a coming invincible and world-wide Ruler. He is symbolised by a mighty, angel from Heaven. John would at once recognise this powerful messenger as representative of the One he loved, whose face when transfigured in the Mount shone as the sun. He had read in Isaiah's prophecy "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man...He shall cry, yea roar. He shall behave himself mightily against his enemies". One great writer has called this and other chapters in Revelation which appear to break the sequence of symbolical events, excurses or digressions. The giving of comfort is no digression. To John and all who suffered and will suffer for Christ's sake the vision was priceless. Extreme sufferings needed real and absolutely certain promises of comfort and in this chapter such unailing Divine assurances are graphically displayed to John, and later conveyed by him to fellow sufferers.

So far in the visions John had seen many angels. One was still acting as his guide and instructor. The one he now saw was a mighty one whose descent from Heaven took place in the unfolding panorama. An actual cloud had received his Lord as the disciples watched the ascent from Olivet. This powerful one he now saw, was clothed with a cloud, probably indicative of the mighty angels Paul had written of who will accompany the Lord when He brings rest to the troubled ones. Daniel too in vision had seen one like the Son of Man come with the clouds of Heaven. The rainbow John saw on the angel's head was not an emerald one as in ch. 4:3 but an ordinary one of many colours, the covenant token promised in Genesis. In the first vision John had seen feet like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, here the legs appeared as pillars of fire, and later in the visions (ch. 19:15) the Word of God is described as One Who will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. In ch. 1 the "one like the Son of Man held seven stars in His right hand", for the Ecclesias were then particularly needing His care, His guiding hand. Now, an open little scroll, not a large seven-sealed scroll.

John sees the mighty angel take up a position impossible to any mortal. Dr. Thomas writes of "a Colossus prepared to bestride the world", God's great King of Kings and Lord of Lords is here represented, the one who shall have dominion from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth. One writer says that in this position the "totality of terrestrial things" is indicated. The simplicity of the rendering is beautifully adequate without any explanation. "He set his, right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land". Having taken up this position John heard his voice as that of a lion roaring. One of the elders had previously comforted John concerning the Lion of the tribe of Judah who had conquered. Our apostle had read in Daniel the prophet of dominion, glory, and a Kingdom being given to the Son of Man that all people, nations and languages should serve Him (7:14) and he had further read that "the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High".

That wonderful words was John now about to hear. Would he not be excited and trembling as seven thunders rolled out their terrific noises in intelligible and audible words He must write those words.

(John had been writing the visions he had seen) Suddenly there came a voice from Heaven, not that of the angel, but a voice from Heaven forbidding him to write and instructing him to seal up the words.

Daniel, the greatly beloved, who set his heart to understand the deep things of God and was assured that he was heard from the first day of his acceptable determination, had a detailed apocalypse of things yet future. This revelation to Daniel was to be sealed to the time of the end. He looked and saw one on one side and one on the other side of the river. A man clothed in linen who was on the waters of the river was asked how long would elapse to the end of the wonderful events so revealed and it is most interesting to read that the Linen—clothed angel, with both hands held up towards Heaven made a most solemn and impressive oath in his answer. He swore by Him that liveth for ever that all things should be finished in an appointed time. Daniel did not understand and was told that the words were closed and sealed till the time of the end; that many would be cleansed by trial, no wicked should understand., but the wise should understand.

John, also greatly beloved, saw the mighty angel lift up his hand to Heaven and also utter a most solemn oath, swearing by the eternal God, the Creator of Heaven and all therein, of the earth and all therein and the sea and all therein. What followed this most serious and impressive oath must be of major importance, must be a statement demanding our most reverent attention, It was that there should be no more delay (R. S. V.) but God's mystery revealed to His servants the prophets should be fulfilled. When this fulfilment should take place forms the crux of the declaration given on oath. It was to be fulfilled in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the Seventh angel. What a great oath John heard uttered and what a certainty rings in the declaration. The Seventh trumpet is the very last. It is the third and last woe announced by the angel who flew in mid-air. What will be involved in the judgments to be surely ushered in when the last trumpet is sounded is given with terrible emphasis and clarity in chapter 11, the last section. The expression "in the days" of verse 7 has indefiniteness certainly and most wisely. The Rev. Version reads: "Then he is about to sound". Weymouth's translation is: "When he begins to blow" Swete's is: "As soon as the days of the seventh trumpet have come, at the moment when the seventh angel is about to blow, then the secret of God is finished."

Since Daniel was informed that the messages to him were sealed but would be understood by the wise at the time of the end, one is moved to ask with humility if the Revelation given to John from our Lord was the promised elucidation and intended for God's servants who had elected to answer wisdoms call and were ready, as Christ's servants, to receive and appreciate the things shortly to come to pass. Here is an exhortation to us to incline our ear unto wisdom and apply our hearts to understanding, seeking her as for silver and searching as for hid treasures.

The voice from Heaven which had instructed John not to write the messages of the seven thunders again spoke and commanded him to take the little open book from the hand of the mighty angel which bestrode sea and earth. John now becomes not just a hearer and one who saw, but an active participant in the vision. In the vision he obeyed and said "Give me the little book". Though this seems rather peremptory it must be remembered that the tone of John's voice would undoubtedly be reverent. It could not be otherwise under such deeply impressive circumstances. The reply came at once: "Take it and eat it". In vision John did so no doubt tremblingly and with excited anticipation and the results were as the mighty angel had said: sweet to the taste, bitter in effect.

Ezekiel had similar experiences. He was in the spirit and in captivity in Babylon. One must bear in mind that the vision he had only ended with the events of chapter 11, where the words occur: "So the vision that I had went up from me". But when the Spirit of God had entered him a voice said: "Open thy mouth and eat that I give thee".

Ezekiel then saw a roll of a book in a hand, a scroll written on both sides, containing lamentations, mourning, woe, and. he was told to eat the roll and was, helped to do so. The result was the same as with John, - sweet to the taste, bitter in its effect. What can this mean? To John the angel said it would be in his mouth sweet as honey. The expressions of David, in the Psalms immediately come to mind that God's judgments are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb and in Ps. 119, the words from which the familiar hymn is taken: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth". The reading of the 'Word and the hearing of the faithful exposition of the Word are a happy experience. Why or how, should the result become bitter? Two suggestions are made. Firstly, that we are, often wretched and disappointed because we fail to keep the commandments but repeatedly slip and trip up. Paul voiced his disappointment in the well-known words: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" He did not stop there: he had asked a question in that mood of utter disappointment. He answered it immediately and with gratitude: "I thank God... through, Jesus Christ our Lord". Note that he had also written that he delighted in the law of God after the inward man.

There is another way in which the Word becomes "bitter-sweet". We are happy to read and hear the plans of God for the establishment of the Kingdom on earth, but when we contemplate the judgments which will be necessary our joy turns into sadness, at the prospect of suffering which will surely take place before the world's inhabitants learn righteousness.

After John had seen the mighty angel, heard the voices of the seven thunders and the deeply impressive oath concerning the period of the sounding of the seventh angel trumpeter and after his digestion of the open scroll, the final words of the angel in this particular vision are spoken to him "Thou must prophesy again about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings". Weymouth's translation reads "You must prophesy yet further concerning..." etc. Dr. Thomas: regarded the prophesying as to take place in the future after John is raised from the dead. The new translation rather suggests that the angel indicated that John was to receive and write still more. Up to this vision he had prophesied concerning one empire only but the destinies of nations and rulers were to be seen by him in the subjects of the visions he was yet to experience. In fact the whole earth was finally to be comprehended in the scope of the wanders he was yet to behold. In our chapter, only eleven verses, but half-a-dozen allusions to the Scripture, to "His servants the prophets" and to the greatest prophet of all, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

Only eleven verses, yet in "Eureka" Dr. Thomas wrote over 80 pages on them and his chapters on "The rainbowed angel" are regarded as outstandingly fine. Those who have not read them may well wonder about what he could write to fill so many pages. His three volumes are an exposition of Revelation but they are more. He frequently leads his readers from the main broad paths into by-paths of very detailed interpretations of other parts of Scripture he considers relevant to the subject. "Our Lord and His Christ" was represented by the mighty angel and the Dr. devotes 30 pages to dilating on the position of the Lord, the place to which He will return and what must be done before he stands "Lord of all". The Lord comes to Sinai, nearly 300 miles from Jerusalem to the South. "So august and powerful a prince would not come alone", he writes, "but would be accompanied by ten thousand angels whose work would be to raise the dead." Paul wrote that the trumpet would sound and the dead would be raised. Dr. Thomas sweetly writes: "an angel's whisper can wake the dead". The judgment takes place and wisely he tells us that the time occupied in judgment is not revealed. "How long? I cannot tell but it will not be the work of an instant". His explanation of Habakkuk 3, beginning: "God comes from Teman and the holy one from Mt. Paran", of Isaiah 63: "Who is this that comes from Edom?", of Deut. 33: 2; "The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir", which he regards as prophetic as well as historic, his reference to Ps. 68:17 "The chariots of God are twenty thousand., even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, Sinai is the holy", all

combine to make a grand and startling picture of the march northwards from Sinai of the Lord and His saints who conquer Egypt from Gog en route and reach Olivet as Zechariah shows when the returned tenth of the Jews are in great distress. The city has been taken. The gates are closed. Dr. Thomas then introduces Ps. 24:7 - 10; "Lift up your heads, O ye gates... and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty" (again comes the command) "Lift up your heads, O ye gates", and again the question: "Who is the King of glory? The Lord of Hosts; He is the King of glory". Do we not feel the joy of "insight and foresight" and the promise of great joys to come?

The resurrection judgment and journey from Sinai to Jerusalem are before and during the descent of Gog the Russian hosts on the land, for Jesus and His saints come to Olivet when Jerusalem has been taken, so Zechariah 14 reveals. It is when the Jews are returning that the nations go against Jerusalem so writes Joel "Watch therefore, said Jesus, "and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy ... to stand before the Son of Man"

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapter 11)

Paper No 9.

The Testimony, Trials and Triumphs of the Witnesses

This chapter is a continuation of the previous vision which so dramatically symbolised our Lord returned in power and overwhelming glory. John is given a reed (rod R. V.) and certain instructions. He has to measure God's Temple, the altar and the worshippers. He therefore could see in vision a temple complete with courts thronged with people. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Ye are the temple of God the temple of God is holy, and that temple you are..." And again to the Hebrews: "and we are HIS house". John used an ordinary reed because his measurements were concerning mortals. In ch. 21 an angel does the required measuring and uses a golden reed. He measures the immortals. John therefore is identified with those he measures: the angel is one with the immortals. All who are part of God's temple have to fit a given required standard. That seems to be the meaning. Paul added these words to those already quoted from Hebrews; IF WE HOLD FAST the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end: "WHEREFORE TAKE HEED...."

Outside the temple John saw and was measuring was an outer court. He was told not to measure that. It was for the Gentiles (R.V. nations). They evidently represented people unacceptable, who do not conform to the standard accepted and required. They are called Gentiles because they are strangers from the covenants of promise and the commonwealth of Israel, as Paul clearly states the Ephesian believers were before Baptism. "Gentiles in the flesh" is his expression. Such are unacceptable because as Jesus said to this class: "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life" and He was speaking to Jews after the flesh. Those rejected ones were to tread underfoot the holy city for 42 months One must call to mind, here the words of our Lord Jesus concerning the real Jerusalem over which He wept. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled", but that Jerusalem was no longer the holy city. It was in bondage with its children. The Holy City of the Revelation refers to the New Jerusalem, called the Bride of Christ, now espoused to one husband and to be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ when He returns. (2 Cor. 11:2). Those who are so defined were to be trodden underfoot forty-two months or 1260 days or years, i.e. for a definite period.

The first person singular now occurs - I - was this the voice from Heaven? The voice of our Lord? For the words are: "I will grant my two witnesses power to prophesy for 1260 days" and adds..."clothed in sackcloth". The persecutors trample for forty-two months: the two witnesses prophesy for 1260 days, the same length of time. Why months in one case and days in the other? Months are moon (lunar) periods: days are sun (solar) periods. Can we see that the witnesses are connected with the Sun of Righteousness? The persecutors, like the moon, have no light in themselves. This is a thought. There must be some reason for the difference. But why two witnesses? Two were required under the Law of Moses (Num. 35;30) Jesus said: "It is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me". There are two vital words in this verse which must be noted. I will grant my two witnesses power. Those who witness cannot do it in their own strength. Our brethren who preach the gospel and exhort the Ecclesias cannot do this work in their own strength. If we sisters speak the Word privately we must rely on help from above. We all feel our insufficiency.

To prophesy, says Paul, is to speak to edification, exhortation and comfort. This, besides the usual meaning of forth telling future events concerning peoples or nations which we can do by means of the Word of God through the prophets.

Since the word "witnesses" is selected, it would seem that their mission was to be all that is involved in witnessing for Jesus, who was described by John in his prologue as "Jesus Christ", the faithful witness". The words of Paul to Agrippa are beautifully appropriate, and he recognises the help from God. " Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles". What an excellent example Paul was of a faithful witness.

But the witnesses are clothed in sackcloth. At this stage it is necessary to consult Daniel the prophet He saw in vision a power arise which "made war with the saints and prevailed against them". (Dan. 7:21) The angel told him this power would "speak great words against the Most High and wear out (v. 25) the saints of the Most High", and this power was to be operative for a "time, times and the dividing of time". In early days a time was a season, 360 days (i.e. 12 times 30, - 12 months, each of 30 days), so the period altogether was 1260 days or 42 months, as in our chapter. We conclude there is identity in meaning between the wearing out of the, saints (Daniel) and the treading underfoot of the witnesses (v 2). The saints were persecuted first by pagan Rome, but later by Papal Rome of which much, later in our studies. The particular phrase just now is "clothed in sackcloth". The persecutions caused terrible sadness, often overwhelming sorrow when loved ones were rushed to death, at times to horrible death, yet as the Son of God was sustained by an angel in Gethsemane, so the Lord would help His witnesses in -their hour of suffering Stephen saw heaven open and the Lord Jesus standing ready to succour him Paul wrote "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me".

Is there sadness attached to witnessing in these days when the Beast is no longer able to imprison and to kill? We are sad that so few will hear; we are more sad when those who have responded grow lax and the Word is "choked by the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things entering in" as foretold by Jesus. Sometimes we feel we are witnessing not in sackcloth but in SILK.

John is now given further descriptions of the two witnesses. "They are two olive trees and two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth". Zechariah had a vision of one lampstand and two Olive trees. In his day, the Gentiles had not received the gospel message; Israel only was the lampstand, the witnesses for God. Zechariah asked "What are these two olive trees?" We cannot do better than be told by an angel who replied: "These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth". These were a symbolic and prophetic revelation of God's two witnesses now before us in Rev.11. Joshua had used that lovely expression of the Creator at the crossing of Jordan: "The Lord of all the earth".

Two witnesses, two olive trees, two lampstands, each descriptive of all who are truly witnesses for the Lord, each figure beautifully describing the essential characteristics of those who would be faithful sons of oil and shining lights in the world comparable to the man who foil among thieves and received oil and wine for his wounds from the neighbour who did not pass by on the other side.

The powers of the witnesses to punish and revenge are now described:-

- fire from their mouths to devour enemies,
- death to those who kill them,
- power to cause drought, turn waters to blood and bring plagues as they will,

reminding us of Moses and Aaron, God's two witnesses in Egypt.

But these powers are not used by God's witnesses, by His people now nor during the period stated, because they were forbidden to take vengeance on their enemies by the Lord, Who, when He suffered, threatened not; when He was reviled, reviled not again and so left us an example. What did Jesus do? Here is one key to this passage: "HE COMMITTED HIMSELF TO HIM THAT JUDGETH RIGHTEOUSLY", that is IN PRAYER. Note carefully that "fire' proceedeth out of their mouth", that is the key. They, suffer and pray. God avengeth His elect who cry night and day unto Him, though He bear long with them.

During the stated period of witnessing in sackcloth, they certainly did cry day and night to Him. As was pointed out in the study of chapter 8 verses 4/5, the smoke of the incense with saints prayers ascended up to God out of the angel's hand and the angel's response was "fire cast upon the earth". The prayer was (6:10)"How long, Holy and True, dost Thou, not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" The reply was under angelic control in answer to prayer, hence the figure "fire proceeth out of their mouths". More will be brought before us as we study later chapters, non-resistance by God's people and of God's punishment of their persecutors.

The next seven verses are a symbolic revelation in miniature of the trials and triumphs of God's people during the stated period of their witnessing, the 1260 day-year period. It is an amazing "multum in parvo", much in little; symbols are contracted as only the Spirit could, to describe the power of the enemy, the shame to which the sufferers were put, the wicked but very temporary satisfaction of the persecutors, the exaltation of these oppressed ones and this publicly, and the great shaking of this world with its resultant fear and final recognition of the Creator. Just a glance first at the heaven-given periods and their meanings:

- Daniel 7:25. A wearing out of God's saints by an evilpower for a time, times and the dividing of time.
- Revelation 11:2 Holy City trodden underfoot 42 months.
- :3 Witnesses prophesy 1260 days in sackcloth.
- :9 Shame, humiliation, ignominy, mortification, 3 days and a half - day, days and a half.
- :11 After 3 days and a half resuscitation, a coming to life, resurrection.

The time or season was the Jewish year of 360 days. May we now quote some apt words from "Elpis Israel", p.319: "The Apocalypse as a whole is a miniature representation of the things which are and the things which shall be hereafter.... Everything is exhibited on a smaller scale than the reality and the time of the symbols is in keeping with them. Thus, multitudes of witnesses are reduced to two; the years of their prophesying to days. It would have been a violation of the fitness of things to have made these testify for 1,260 years, because this is far beyond the duration of human life....So in indicating the time of their unburied state, the real time must be expressed in accordance with physical laws A dead body might lie in the open air for "three days and a half" without disappearing, but not three years and a half or three months and a half. Hence the symbol required the smallest possible period capable of expressing the real time and that is three days and a half".

Let us now look a little more closely at the seven verses. "When they shall have fully delivered their testimony..." (Weymouth). Take this individually. We know what happened when Jesus had finished HIS work, and what took place when Paul could say: "I have finished my course". The witnesses 'in the period of down treading are killed by the Beast, - an evil power with an origin as far removed as possible from Heaven and the God of Heaven, - the bottomless pit. This must be the power referred to by Daniel, for the persecution period is the same, time, times and an half, 42 weeks, In early days

the Pagan Rome authority, such emperors as Nero, Domitian, Decius, Valerian, Diocletian, but in the 1260 period the Catholic powers (Dan. 7).

To lie unburied was to the Hebrews ignominious, full of shame and it was a terrible thing not to be buried with one's family. The street of the great city would be the open spaces of the Roman world. Jesus was crucified in a part of that Empire, an empire comparable to Sodom for its licentiousness and to Egypt for its idolatry and darkness (Rev. 18:10 and 16 - "Alas, that great city") The 3 1/2 days could represent the whole of the Witnesses' period of testimony, a time of persecution and of shameful treatment by their persecutors as expressed in the words "shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves".

When massacres of witnesses took place did their persecutors rejoice? Undoubtedly. All down those middle ages there was satisfaction when those who dared to preach against the wickedness of the Pope and the Papists were tortured or burnt or slain. One Pope had a medal struck to commemorate the massacre of the Huguenots. The witnesses were often detested for their separateness, their refusal to worship the Beast, were blamed for evil occurrences such as plagues, and no doubt they worried the consciences of those in the broad way. They preached another King and a coming Kingdom to overthrow all earthly rulers and they were consequently unpopular.

After the period of witnessing and shame the breath of life from God entered then, and they stood upon their feet. This can only mean - - RESURRECTION from the dead. How simply and concisely this great event is stated. The political resurrection of Israel as described in Ezek. 37:9 is helpful here: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live", and "So I prophesied", adds Ezekiel, "and the breath came into them and they lived and stood upon their feet.." We have seen this happen. The resurrection at Christ's return and its results will cause great fear. Consternation will seize those living at the time. But the peoples on earth will not only witness the Resurrection but will see God's people exalted to power; that is the meaning of v.12. "Come up hither" - exaltation to immortality, to rulership, to full fellowship with Jesus. At that time there will be earth-shaking events, - a great earthquake - a large part of human structures will be destroyed as useless; a large proportion of earth's population will suffer death because they refuse the King of Kings and only a remnant will be ready to give glory to their Creator.

The second woe, the sixth trumpet judgments, - the events of chapters 8 and 9 and the parts of chapters 10 (the return of Jesus) and 11, the resurrection and immortalisation of His witnesses, all are included in this second woe or sixth trumpet judgments and now the third woe, the seventh trumpet, - the last is announced.

There are loud voices on earth now, John heard loud voices in heaven (R.S.V.) of those exalted to be rulers referred to in v.12. Loud voices are voices of authority and they have here the most important announcement men have ever heard since these words were spoken: "HE IS RISEN" "The Kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign for ever and ever". Long, long before "announcements" became possible we wondered how the peoples of the earth would be told that their, rightful King had started His reign, how the law would go forth from Zion. We no longer wonder. Men need stations and valves. The Lord and the immortals need no apparatus. We do not read in this v 15 of chapter 11 of possibilities, probabilities, maybes. The announcement rings clear and unmistakeable. Who will be the first to bow, to worship, to thank God? Those represented, by the 24 elders - the Kings and Priests who are to help their King. They fall on their faces in absolute adoration. They speak. What could they say, what will they say under such unprecedented conditions, for they are immortal and. the earth is now, as they speak, the Kingdom of our Lord: and of His Christ, words of almost inexpressible gratitude yet beautifully simple: "We give thee thanks Lord, God, Almighty, Who art and Who wast, that Thou hast taken Thy great power

and begun to reign." The Kingdom of God has started. They say more. They give a marvellous resume of the outstanding leading events which have taken place prior to this inauguration of the Kingdom Let us look at them and note the order:-

The nations raged,
But Thy wrath came,
And the time of the dead to be judged - resurrection –
The time to reward Thy servants, the prophets and saints and those who fear Thy Name both
small and, great.
Something more, - and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.

As unworthy mortals we can only take up the attitude of the elders, fall on our faces and worship God. Such a Divine programme is absolutely beyond us, but that programme is sure and certain. Then, the Lord Jesus will be seen, - the ark of Gods covenant and the presence of the King of Kings will be accompanied by terrific judgments on those who are called "Destroyers of the earth".

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne saying, It is done And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great".

God grant that we may abide the day of His coming and stand when He appeareth. (Mal. 3:2.)

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapter 12)

Paper No 10.

"The Prince of this World cast out..

Simplification of difficult sections of this wonderful Revelation was promised at the start of the study. The 12th chapter abounds in symbols and personifications. These can be made intelligible by comparison with similar symbols used elsewhere in Scripture. This is a safe way to proceed and one which brings satisfying results.

At the outset it is suggested that chapters 10, 11 and 12 form a perfect trio, summarised in this simple manner:

The Lord Jesus returned as universal king - ch. 10.

The witnesses who will be accepted and glorified - ch. 11

How all this - the Lord as King, His people as immortalised - is or has been made possible - ch. 12.

Before those tremendous events we read at the end of ch. 11 could take place "the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and satan" (20:2) had to be overthrown, cast out How this was done and by whom is the burden of chapter 12 which could appropriately be headed - sin vanquished or, to use the very words of Jesus "The Prince of this world cast out".

As John watched the heavenly temple opened, and the ark - Jesus clearly visible, with the accompanying shakings, flashes and noises, the scene changed and a great portent appeared in heaven. A Greek scholar informs us: "It is not the interior of the Heavenly World that John sees but the outer veil, the sky, on which the vision is depicted". (Swete) For the first time in the Revelation a woman appears in the vision. Now putting aside all we have read and heard concerning these signs we cannot be surprised that "ancient expositors in general understood the woman to represent the true church". To be clothed with the Sun is - to put it mildly - to be in the light, and the moon under her feet is to have no use for borrowed light, almost a superfluous statement of one enveloped in sunshine. What can be the meaning of a crown of 12 stars? The eons of Israel were represented in Joseph's dream by stars and from the 12 tribes we have read of the redeemed being sealed. The star out of Jacob, the bright and morning star, the day-star, are names of the righteous Lord Jesus and His Gospel has an Israelitish association and basis. When later in the Apocalypse 12 is used, it is of the foundation of the Holy City containing the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

The condition of the crowned woman is no new figure in Scripture. Micah addresses the daughter of Zion as a woman in travail and adds: "labour to bring forth like a woman in travail". As in the natural, so in the figurative, for when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

John sees another portent or sign, - a great red dragon. This beast has seven crowned heads and ten horns. God had called Pharaoh King of Egypt a great dragon. Here then some world-power of murderous character is represented. But since later in the description (v.9) John tells us that the great dragon was also that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world, it seems reasonable to conclude that the great red dragon with seven crowned heads and ten horns, at this particular stage represented an extremely sinful world-power, the

embodiment of sin. Which one is identifiable by reason of its crowned heads and ten horns? Firstly, the relationship to Daniel's fourth beast with ten horns is obvious. Secondly Rev. 17:9 tells us that the seven heads are seven mountains on which the harlot was seated and the woman the great city which had dominion over the kings of the earth (v. 18 ch. 17) - ROME. The heads being crowned suggest a period of Roman power and ascendancy.

The next verse helps still further with the identification. "His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth". This is clearly paralleled by Daniel's description of a power recognised as Rome. "It waxed great even against the host of heaven and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground and stamped upon them, - yea, he magnified himself even against the prince of the host". ROME - the great power which removed and destroyed rulers, which had conquered God's land and through Herod, its representative, endeavoured to destroy the child Jesus as soon as he was born; Jesus, who was destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron, Psalm 2:9 contains the actual words "Thou shalt break them - the nations - with a rod of iron". The child was caught up to God and to His throne, - a perfect summary and representation in symbol of what had actually occurred as Jesus himself said in giving a promise to the victor: "I will give such the privilege of sitting down beside ME on my throne AS I HAVE WON THE VICTORY AND HAVE SAT DOWN BESIDE MY FATHER ON HIS THRONE". (How could this be said of Constantine the pseudo-Christian and murderer) The time came when Christ's true people, HIS FAITHFUL CHURCH, had to go into a wilderness condition prepared by the Father, and there to be cared for (Weymouth) and to continue the life of sojourn started by their ancestor Abraham.

The following verses, 7 onwards now give details of a terrible conflict. The verses considered before v 7 are a very brief summary of tremendous events, but John now sees in symbol a mighty conflict which had been won before the Lord ascended to His Father's Throne. Michael and his angels are representative of righteousness. The dragon and his angels of sin. The dragon and his angels: did John see the dragon and lesser dragons? Maybe. Jesus was manifested to destroy the devil. Heb. 2:14. His battle, His war is described early and late in the gospel narratives and there were very many minor skirmishes with the lesser dragons, and generation of vipers, all through His life of victory over sin. We think principally of His great conflict in the wilderness and His agonising experience in Gethsemane, visibly helped by an angel there. Ministered to by angels in His period of exhaustion after 40 days terrific struggle without any natural sustenance at all. As Jesus, being in an agony in Gethsemane and praying more earnestly had the devil in a veritable death—struggle, there appeared an angel from Heaven strengthening Him, who more likely than Michael the great prince of Israel? (Dan. 12:1). This is a most reasonable suggestion. Think now of Jesus's words when the disciples returned from their successful mission: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18). As He was about to complete His final victory over sin, over the devil, He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out". "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me". "The prince of this world is judged". Read now v.9 of our chapter and note the language: "The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world", and the repetition for emphasis "he was, thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him". Sin absolutely conquered by our Lord. No wonder there was joy in Heaven. There is joy in Heaven when ONE sinner repents; what joy unspeakable and. indescribable there when SIN was conquered by the Son of God. Why such rejoicing? Salvation was made possible, for the devil held the power, of death. The Kingdom of God was made possible. The authority of His Christ was established, His anointed King, without question, for the devil was thrown down, cast out. And to bring the victory very close to the feelings of John and his fellow sufferers: The accuser, (the devil), of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. They join their Lord as conquerors and overcome by reason of His sacrifice and victory. Nourished by His blood as they partook of the symbolic wine, they often silenced the devilish authorities as they spoke boldly the Word of their testimony. They were

the witnesses who loved not their lives even unto death. Rejoicing indeed in Heaven but continued persecution on earth, for the devil, though cast out by our Lord Jesus, was not yet cast into the lake of fire to be totally annihilated. The strongest form of personification, highly developed in this most unusual series of symbols, is now used. "The devil has come down to you in great wrath", because he knows that his time is short". Sin still works in the children of disobedience, still was and is a power to be reckoned with and grappled with: in those early centuries a power strong as a lion in the persecuting Emperors and their minions. He is represented to John as an angry dragon pursuing the mother of the male child, the true church of that time. But she was helped, as Paul was: "The Lord stood by me and delivered me from the lion's mouth". Into the wilderness the woman fled having been given "the two wings of the great eagle". The Lord bore Israel on "eagle's wings", but literally there was neither eagle nor wings of eagles, yet we know how Israel was fed, clothed and sustained in the real wilderness. This is a most helpful O.T. reference on which; doubtless the figure is based. For was not the church at that time Israel, as Stephen said in his defence? "This is he (Moses) that was in the church in the wilderness". The woman fled from the dragon, she fled from, the serpent. This extract is helpful regarding the wilderness-condition to which he fled: (Swete). "To some extent the solitary life is a necessity imposed on Christians by their religion: to the end of the present order the church dwells in the wilderness. As a historical fact the withdrawal into the wilderness began with the outbreak of persecution. The Church was constrained to meet the policy of persecution by a policy of secrecy". Although in Constantine's time Christianity so-called was the State religion this association became "a principal source of the secular pride and ambition which for so many centuries has obscured the original candour of the Christian life". (Fisher 103). Those who still clung to the doctrines and practices of the early church, the real "first century Christians" separated themselves from the worldliness of the now popular Christianity, for loyalty to Christ was not compatible with loyalty to the State and many fled to outlying parts of Europe. Some were called "Montanists" (Milner. Church History).

In verse 6 the duration of her wilderness sojourn where she was to be nourished was 1260 days. In verse 14 a time, times and half-a-time, where she was note the repetition "to be nourished". This period synchronises, is the same as the period of the prophesying of the two witnesses, 1260 days, trampled for 42 months as was considered in the last study. By the way, - showing how interestingly figures in Revelation are associated with O.T. visions or events, there were 42 stopping places of Israel in their wilderness journeying's. These can be counted in Numbers 33. In Elijah's days there was a drought for 3 ½ years (1260) days and he was sustained by Divine Provision; and Luke 4:25/26 (Jesus's reference to him).

As with Israel, as with Elijah, the wanderings and wilderness conditions ended as with Israel and Elijah, provision is made and has been made for' the sustenance of God's people in their separated state. In these last days, as one brother has said: "we are a voice in the wilderness, endeavouring to prepare a people for the coming of the Lord. He continues to sustain and supply our needs."

The persecutions of the true and separated church are symbolically described in the words: "The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman to sweep her away with the flood". Many vicious and determined efforts have been made down the centuries to destroy the Saints, to engulf them, but they have not been exterminated. God decree otherwise, though we note with apprehension the question of Jesus "When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?"

"The earth came to the help of the woman" John saw in the symbols before him the earth swallowing the river which the dragon had poured from his mouth. In early days many unforeseen happenings reversed or ameliorated decrees ordering persecution, events which drew away the attention of the opposing populace from the Christians, the death of a persecuting Emperor or the

influence on such of a counsellor or relative at Court, many of these can be listed and noted with interest. In our own time the Government has allowed God's people freedom from military service and so recognised their conscientious objection to breaking the commands of their Lord and of their God., Who said: "Vengeance is mine: I will repay".

The chapter closes with the expression of anger on the dragon's part, anger towards the woman and the set purpose to make war on the rest of her offspring. The offspring is clearly described as those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus. Then her male child, her special offspring, was of this class. Not Constantine. He was not one who kept the commandments of God. No argument is needed. The male child and the rest of her offspring are obedient children of God. The fierceness of persecution both in the early and middle centuries of those who bravely kept their Lord's commands and preached His name is the historical fulfilment of the dragon-serpent war so unmistakably foretold by the symbols used.

There could be no more graphic and dramatic portrayal of the fight between good and evil than the one John saw and recorded for the comfort and reassurance of all who would and must overcome. Such are exhorted by Paul to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. He provides the armour so that "we may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand". He will nourish us in "places prepared by God".

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapter 13)

Paper No. 11

BLASPHEMY

The Old Testament prophet acknowledged as such by our Lord and really outstanding for his wisdom and righteousness as Ezekiel clearly showed shall be our unerring commentator in this study, DANIEL. To him we are grateful; to the Lord. Who revealed secrets to him and helped him to write his dreams, we offer our thanksgiving.

Often we hear the story of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, a most suitable one for visitors to lectures. The dream Daniel had is particularly for those who would be "little Daniels" in these last days. For many years, this chapter 7 has strengthened faith, evoked reverence to God, and given great comfort to saints.

Let us try to see an ugly beast rising out of the sea, which sea all of us understand to be a symbol of "the moving, agitated mass of humanity". The dragon of Rev. 12 had seven crowned heads and ten horns. This beast note the reversed order, had ten crowned horns and seven heads. No longer Imperial Rome, the Rome of the Caesars, but the Roman Empire divided, the "ten toe-stage" started, the ten-horned period begun, the Empire split up amongst Kings and Princes. Said the angel to Daniel "The ten horns are ten kings". The word 'blasphemy' stands out. The beast was labelled. Its very name was blasphemous. Its very pronouncements were haughty and blasphemous. Lest any doubt should be entertained, the fact is again repeated, and the objects of the blasphemy clearly listed:- "It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming His Name and His dwelling, that is those who dwell in heaven".

Three other characteristics of this remarkable beast are told in verse 7.

- No 1. It was allowed to make war on the saints and conquer them.
- No 2. It was given authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation (no third parts here).
- No 3. All whose names are not written in the book of life of the slain Lamb, written before the foundation of the world would worship it.

Here surely some power was represented which would be blasphemous to an astonishing degree, would persecute the people of God, and would have world-wide power.

We turn to our commentator Daniel 7 - verses 7,8,19,20,21,23,24,25.

What a perfect description of the same kind of beast. Surely not just a commentary, but the very same story in slightly different language and written hundreds of years before. A dreadful, terrible ten-horned., beast that would crush and stamp with its feet, and on its head a horn with a mouth, speaking great things; a horn which made war with the saints, spoke great words against the Most High (blasphemy), exercised power a time, times and a half and the beast of Rev. 13; was allowed to exercise authority 42 months.

Before proceeding to identify this blasphemous universal world-power, this persecuting power, the other characteristics must be considered to complete the picture, the fearsome picture of the blasphemous and persecuting beast.

Daniel in vision saw four beasts, the fourth an unnameable animal. The first three, in order were: "like a lion", "like a bear", "like a leopard". The beast John saw was a composite unnameable one and remarkably reminiscent of Daniel's Nos 1,2, and 3, but in the order 3,2 and 1, for its mouth was lion-like, its feet bear-like, and it was generally leopard-like. There was no collaboration between these two saints. Daniel lived, six hundred years before the date when John was an-exile in Patmos. They had visions in the Spirit and this is the only possible explanation. The world-power represented by the beast John saw was to have the agility, cat-like vigilance, fierce cruelty of a leopard, was to have power to crush and stamp to death like a bear, was to have authority to "roar" out its edicts with lion-like roars which would startle and terrify. How did this power receive such might, such a centre of government (his seat) and his great authority? In some way John saw the dragon give these to it. John had been watching this animal in the vision previously narrated, and he wrote "the great dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan". From some form, some manifestation of sin, this beast received its status and power. Whatever the dragon was in the last vision, it must be the same here, sins wickedness, unrighteousness.

As John watched, one of the seven heads seemed fatally wounded and this deadly wound John saw healed. It was not the beast which was wounded, only a head. Though if a head be slain, the beast would be out of action. The crowned heads John saw in the last vision we decided indicated a period of Roman power and ascendancy. Was there an end to this? As far as the West was concerned, YES. The last Emperor who ruled at Rome was dethroned by his enemies (476). By what or whom was he succeeded? Was there a HEALING? a RESTORATION? Quotations help here: "As the Empire vanished from the West, the empty place was taken by the descendant of Peter". (Fisher) "The court at Constantinople was informed there was no longer an emperor in the West". (H.G. Wells), Imperial Rome gone in the West, Papal Rome takes its place. The fatal wound healed. "The awe which attached to the old Roman name (was left) to gather around the tiara of the Pontiff... the long habit of connecting together the name of Rome with supreme dominion, silently co-operated in establishing the spiritual despotism of the Papal See". (Milner) "Though the Latin-speaking Roman Empire died in the 5th century, something else had been born within it that had to avail itself enormously of its prestige and tradition and that was the Latin-speaking half of the Catholic Church.....throughout the 4th and 5th centuries while the Empire was decaying, (Catholic) Christianity was spreading to a universal dominion in Europe-.... The Pope claimed; to be the HEAD of the, entire Christian Church. Now that there were no more Emperors, he began to annex the imperial titles and. claims. He took the title of Pontifex Maximus, - head sacrificial priest of the Roman dominion, —the most ancient of all the titles that the Emperors had enjoyed" (Written 1928 A.D. by H.G. Wells).

Now John:- "The whole earth followed the beast with wonder". Authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation and all who dwell on earth will worship it, whose names are not written in the book of life". (Written 96 A.D.)

One Pope very much later, seated on a throne and crowned, holding sceptre declared: "I am Caesar, I am Emperor" (Boniface VIII early 14th century).

All the world wondered, all did homage as the servants of sin, all did homage to him "whose coming was after the working of Satan", recognising the universality and impregnable standing of the beastly power which had not only the name "blasphemy" but, had a mouth speaking great things

and blasphemy against God, His Name and those who dwell in heaven. Shall we read Paul's prophecy concerning this "Man of Sin" and his "blasphemy" (2 Thess. 2)

Concerning the 12th century a historian (Hallam: "England during the Middle Ages") wrote: "Rome inspired... all the terror of her ancient name. She was once more the mistress of the world and kings were her vassals..." "The 'Pope lorded it over the Emperors". (He was "supreme from Bulgaria to Ireland, from Norway to Jerusalem". Power was given him to continue 42 months. The power of the Papacy was secure by beginning of the 7th century, and his power continued for 1260 years. The Pope's kingdom fell, his temporal power ended in 1870 when the city was taken by the King of Italy.

Did the Papacy make war with the saints during its period of power and ascendancy? In the 13th century the Waldenses were suppressed with fire, sword, rape, and abominable cruelties. About the unmentionable terrors of the Inquisition we all have read. Thirty thousand Protestants perished in the 16th century, when further inquisitions were setup. Anabaptists, were slowly-roasted or tortured. Lutherans and their preachers were killed or hanged. Six thousand Huguenots were slain in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, when a veritable carnival of butchery took place. In most cases the crime of the martyrs was: "They met to read the Scriptures in their native tongue, resolved, to worship. God in their own way and declared their disapproval, of the doctrine of the Transubstantiation, the worship of relics, and the sale of indulgences".

How could the names of such idolaters and murderers be written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain. We pray we may be of those chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, having in love predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself.

The sevenfold warning to the Churches is now repeated so something of vast importance is now to be given:— "Captivity, to those who take captive. Death by the sword to those who slay with the sword..." The words of Jesus come to mind at once of those perishing by the sword who take the sword. This verse would be a wonderful exhortation to suffering saints of all times, especially when they were so fiendishly persecuted, and their patience and faith would be strengthened and renewed as they read and heard the clarion call for endurance and faith.

John then saw another beast which has no prototype in the Old Testament. It just rose out of the earth, distinctly of the earth, earthy. No beast seen by Daniel was described in such detail. It can surely be identified when so many clues are given, first concerning its appearance and words. Two horns like a lamb, words like a dragon, some power or community which looks quite harmless and really innocent, but can speak with strength and sinful ferocity. The first beast was identified as the Papal system which superseded Pagan Rome. Now for the identification marks of the lamb—like class here indicated:-

1. It has the power of the Papal system
2. It makes all worship this authority in ITS PRESENCE
3. It works great signs (2 Thess. 2:9) "Pretended signs and wonders" R.S.V.)
4. It works great signs IN THE PRESENCE of this authority.
5. It deceives people.
6. It commands people to make an image or false god.
7. It gives breath to this false god
8. It condemns to death all who object to this idolatry.
9. It marks the worshippers, - all, - on the right hand or forehead and sees to it that any others are boycotted in their trades.

Not an empire, - There was "an age—long dispute of Pope and Emperor for priority", but men who looked harmless but could and did speak like a dragon. What class other than the numberless masses of priests and cardinals of the Roman Catholic church can here be meant, with their sleek appearance, wicked practices, deceptions innumerable, sorcery, magic, jugglery, even ventriloquism in early ages to deceive, their condemnation to torture and imprisonment and death of those they called heretics. From the 11th Century the Pope, himself was voted for by the Cardinals as he is today. On one occasion they disagreed and there were two popes; each excommunicated and cursed his rival. "The priests" we read, "were always hunting for money and legacies". The work and ways of the priests called the Jesuits make one shudder. They reorganised the Papal church; in the middle centuries (when many countries including this island and the Northern countries of Europe left the Latin church). Indeed the Pope had and always has had a "vast propaganda organisation in his priests throughout the whole Latin world". The Roman Catholic hierarchy, its government by priests. Re-read: the nine marks of identification and ask: Do they fit? We all know what the mark is, for we have seen it made. But John enlarges on this mark. He says it is the name of the beast or the number of its name: it is a human number (no sevens), 666, the family name, the family number. Throughout this paper the word Latin has appeared several times. To-day much of the Roman Catholic service is in Latin and we understand that in Latin and Greek each letter has a numerical value and in the old word 'Lateinos' the values of the letters actually make 666. Every figure comes short of the heavenly perfect number so familiar to us in Revelation, the number 7. As absolutely distinct from the mark of the beast we rejoice in the seal of the living God and anticipate the day when the real Lamb of God shall stand on Mt. Zion with those who have his name and his Father's Name written in their foreheads.

'We have tried to show that the sea beast of ch. 13 represented the Papal system, the earth lamblike beast, the priesthood of that system. That the power, throne and great authority were those of the Pope whose mouth uttered haughty and blasphemous words against God and who was worshipped by and exercised power over all tribes, peoples, tongues and nations, that the priests ordered all to worship this false god on pain of death, deceiving the worshippers, marking them and punishing "heretics". We have also stated that this Papal system with its Pope dates from about the 7th Century. John conveyed these visions to the churches in the 1st Century. When the brethren and sisters received this particular vision did they sadly say: "This does not concern us; it is all in the future, a long time ahead?" Not at all. The One Who gave this Revelation-Jesus knew that His people at that very time were suffering severely from persecution. There was much in the vision they would not understand and would have to leave. But their persecutor was Roman beast. The Emperor Domitian like some predecessors, claimed Divine honours, insisted on being regarded as a god. Temples were erected to the honour of the Emperors, especially in Asia, as we learnt when studying the messages to the Churches and remarked at the time that in five out of seven cities there were temples for this Caesar-cult. And in each temple was an image of the Emperor. Connected with each temple were priests who officiated. They practised wicked deceptions. Ventriloquism, magic, jugglery were their arts, feared by the ignorant worshippers. Christians who refused to take part in the festivities and to worship the statue of the Emperor were quickly charged with disloyalty and put to death. Markets were closed against buyers and sellers who did not bear the mark, of the worshippers. We remember the type of false worshippers at Ephesus, of Diana, their excitability, and can easily understand the effect on such crowds of the magicmongers with their lying wonders, as the images were made "to speak" by their ventriloquism.

Here then in the early centuries was a previous fulfilment of the vision, some hundreds of years before the Papal system was established. These early Christians would read in this vision: "it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them" and they would also read: "Those who take captive shall be taken captive. Those who slay shall be slain". "Here is a call for the endurance and

faith of the saints". They would read these first few verses 'of our next chapter and they would be comforted.

On the other hand, we live about 80 years after the expiry of the 42 months, 1260 day—years, for the Pope lost his temporal power about 1870 and can no longer slay those who refuse the beast mark. What is the effect on us of this chapter with its dual beasts? We marvel at the wisdom and foreknowledge Of God and of His revelation through Jesus and John to us. We see how accurately the prophecies of Daniel and of John as revealed in their respective visions have: been fulfilled so far. Our faith is strengthened. The remaining promises are absolutely sure Our part is to continue to be in the Divine memory the book of life, the book of remembrance.

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapter 14)

Paper No 12.

The Lamb and the Redeemed on Mt Zion The World's Harvest & Vintage to Follow.

Chapter 13 opens with these words "And I saw a beast rising out of the sea...."

Chapter 14 opens with these words "Then I looked and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb and with him an hundred forty and four thousand...."

What a contrast between a nameless ugly beast from the sea and the Lamb and the Redeemed on Zion their objective and not nameless for they have the Name of the Lamb (Revised St. Version) and the Father written in their foreheads, or in their minds. They have characters which correspond to the Family's traits. One of the many promises to the Ecclesia at Philadelphia comes to mind. "He who conquers... I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the City of my God". May it not be that the very appearances of the accepted ones stamp them as Divine? John had written: "We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is". The Psalmist wrote: "Yet have I set my king upon Zion the hill of my holiness". One wrote of the saints' objective: "But ye are come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem... and to the spirits of just men made perfect".

In chapter VII John heard the number of the Redeemed. Now he sees them (in vision) with their Lord. The number 144,000 was noted in the study of Rev. 7. It consists of 12 x 12 extended, for Jews and Gentiles form this happy throng. Twelve is the often repeated Divine number of both Old and New Testaments: 12 tribes, 12 stones in the breastplate, 12 lions to add to the dignity of Solomon's throne, 12 apostles, 12 thrones in the Holy Land for these apostles, 12 foundations of the Holy City and the woman of Rev. 12, the true church with a crown of 12 stars.

The Redeemed are on Mt. Zion, but John hears their song before the throne, the elders and the living creatures seen in the very earliest visions. This seems a most interesting connection, for the elders and living creatures were considered to be representative of the saints in their priestly and kingly aspects, a dual role promised for the Kingdom. The association now given is another proof of the meaning then understood, for the Lamb and the Redeemed on Mt. Zion indicate that the Kingdom has initially started, the King is represented as in His city accompanied by His accepted ones, after the defeat of Gog, after the relief of the city. This point of time must be stressed to understand and appreciate the events John sees symbolised in this 14th chapter. Will it not be a time for singing and rendering praise and worship? No wonder the united voices with their harp accompaniments were like the sound of many waters and of loud thunder. And the song can only be sung and appropriated by the Redeemed ones. Who are they? This is made abundantly clear. John is told they are pure, holy and have been obedient followers of Jesus, pure in speech and like the sacrifices required of old, unblemished, not blameless. They have been redeemed from mankind. Such fellowship with the King was not their achievement. They were bought for Him by His precious blood Firstfruits for God and the Lamb they are called. After firstfruits comes the harvest. This harvest will be at the end of the millennium, after which there will be no more death. How thrilled John would be to hear the grand paean of praise. Moments of ecstasy for this old suffering disciple even in vision, and all too wonderful for mortal lips to describe and mortal minds to imagine, but it is

a Revelation from One Who is faithful and true, Who Himself has made possible such indescribable glories. We wonder what the song will be.

It has already been stressed that when this rejoicing takes place, the Northern hosts have been defeated in Palestine. The third World War now anticipated, has started. What kind of news bulletin will have been heard? Something after this fashion maybe "This is the B.B.C. Home and Foreign Service. Severe fighting has taken place in Israel where the Soviet forces with the armies of their satellites captured the City of Jerusalem and took thousands of Jewish prisoners. The most extraordinary series of events then took place. An unexpected host of people arrived with an unknown Leader and relieved the City. The Soviet soldiers were panic-stricken and actually began to attack one another and the most terrific thunderstorm took place. Huge stones fell amongst the invaders and electric flashes accompanied by thunderbolts worked havoc, indescribable havoc. The accounts coming to hand of the slaughter of the invaders lend colour to the rumours now heard that the Messiah has come, - the Jewish Messiah, - and has delivered the Jews and caused the slaughter of their enemies. Further news is breathlessly awaited". We wonder how this news will reach the ears of earth's millions. The affrighted nations have not long to wait. A message comes to the whole world doubtless now seeking shelter in the caves of the earth, having experienced maybe the first round in the dreaded atomic warfare All are now full of fearful forebodings. Not a B.B.C. announcement. It is a clear and extraordinarily concise command with a loud voice from certain ones in high authority, - the highest authority possible, - symbolized to John as an angel flying in midheaven. What a command. "Fear God and give Him glory, for the hour of His judgment has come: worship Him Who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water".

This is called the everlasting gospel or eternal gospel to all earth-dwellers. Never such a campaign for it is world-wide, to every nation, tribe, tongue and people. Never such organised, all-powerful, wise campaigners; they are the immortal saints. We stop to think of the mercy of God at this unprecedented stage in human affairs. The Lord has come to an unbelieving world, full of its own cares, worries, pleasure and business. A world too busy for Bible reading and attention to Divine matters. Yet there will be an offer of mercy in the hour of His judgment, all people are to be commanded to fear God, give Him glory, worship Him. How is this Divine grace received? How do the nations respond? We may be quite sure that individuals who obey the summons will be allowed to live as the mortal inhabitants in the Kingdom. This ch 14 does not give the national results. These are partly given in chapters 17 and 19. There is organised resistance. How utterly futile. Something else happens for it is the hour of God's judgments. Another ambassador from - - no, not the court of St. James, but the Court of the King of Kings Who has begun His reign at Jerusalem, makes one more announcement to the whole world which runs: "Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of her impure passion. Similar words are recorded by Isaiah, in a prophecy concerning the fall of the natural city of Babylon: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen". Significantly the "burden" of Isaiah is of the "desert of the sea" and the prostitute of Revelation was seen by John in the wilderness or desert (17:3) and the blasphemous boast of Rev.13 rose "out of the sea". "In both Jewish and Christian circles Babylon was a synonym for Rome" (Swale). The prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the Old Babylon also provides a basis for the figure used in this Divine announcement.

"Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand that made, all the earth drunken: the nations have, drunken of her wine therefore the nations are mad". The false religion of Rome was the intoxicating influence which affected all nations. Rome had fallen. Will the city with the Vatican with its churches and palaces be destroyed? It certainly will. Details of this destruction are reserved as a special vision given to John later, which will be studied in Rev. 17 and 18. Although the city is destroyed and we remember this is after the coming of Jesus, after the defeat of the Northern hosts, after the merciful preaching of the everlasting gospel to the whole world, its influence, its doctrine, its priests and cardinals all persist. Saddened and angered by the loss of their beloved headquarters

ROME they are still a force to be reckoned with and a third. Divine announcement is made to the world and evidently a LOUD voice is necessary, showing the persistence of the world-wide ramifications of the corrupt church. A solemn warning is broadcast. How? This remains a secret we may KNOW, IF and WHEN we are accepted in the beloved.

"If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead, or in his hand the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name". There is to be no further following allowed of this great and blasphemous system of false-worship. Terrible punishments await any who dare to defy the Lord, for the day of His wrath has arrived and it will be a fearful thing to have His punishment, meted out actually in the presence of the Lord and His holy angels. What anguish is here indicated. Their plight is like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, - irremediable, perpetual, terrible and final. We note the mercy of God, - warning first, punishment if that warning is unheeded. (Verse 11 was quoted to African churches by Cyprin around 252-3 to warn them not to sacrifice to the Emperor.

Before that great day of the Lord's wrath and John's time in Century One, ages were to intervene, and thousands of saints were to suffer because of their refusal to worship the beast and the false god, hence the call of verse 12 for endurance. Those who would keep the commandments and be true to the faith could read in this vision of the time when the great persecuting power and all its minions would receive their deserts and the sufferers would take great comfort from the words John was told by a voice from heaven to write: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth". The blessing is emphasized immediately. "Blessed indeed", added the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them". Rest in death with a certainty that what they have done is not forgotten but is on record. We may add, with Paul: "There remaineth, therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God". The persecuted ones of all ages have been comforted by these promised and certain blessings. In John's days such a beautiful exhortation was very much, needed and would be a source of strength to the aged disciple himself in that lonely isle.

Seven verses now remain introduced by the familiar words: "Then I looked..." With John we look on a picture which is one of the most impressive in the whole series in this Divine Revelation. This chapter we find deeply moving. Firstly because, as previously stated, the mercy of God is so clearly provided before His indignation is poured out, and secondly, the evident rejection of this proffered kindness by multitudes of earth's peoples is so obvious and the results so drastic and final.

The Lamb and His redeemed now give place to the Son of Man in a new, an entirely new role. He is seated on a white cloud. He is crowned. His coronation has taken place. The crown is gold. No orb or sceptre in HIS hand. He holds a sharp sickle. Some feel that the cloud represents His people. May it not be an accompaniment of Divine glory? Daniel "in a night vision" saw the Son of Man come with the clouds of heaven. Jesus in the Olivet prophecy said: "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory". He repeated this description of His advent to the Jewish Sanhedrin. The disciples saw Him taken from their gaze by a cloud. All faithful Israelites were familiar with the words of the Lord to Moses: "I will appear in the cloud on the mercy seat".

What does the sharp sickle portend? Harvest-time. Not the harvest of Jesus parable of the wheat and the tares. That has taken place for we have seen the accepted with the Lamb on Mt. Zion. It is, as stated, the harvest of the earth. John sees an angel come out of the Temple. We remember that the temple John saw (Rev 11) represented the people of God, then marked out for trial. Those now said to be in the temple probably represent the faithful now clothed with immortality, made like the

angels, at one with their Lord. This messenger speaks with a loud, voice to the cloud-enthroned Messiah - "reap" - it is now time; the earth's harvest is fully ripe; there is no further delay. John sees the sharp sickle go into action. We are not told that he sees a separation into classes of mankind. Those pregnant words only are recorded: "He who sat upon the cloud swung his sickle on the earth and the earth was reaped". Terribly forceful. Imagination runs riot in contemplation of what John saw, but it is abruptly brought to the stark reality of the fact that John saw in symbol the judgment on earth's peoples, the revelation of the righteous judgments of God. The day arrived foretold by prophet and apostle when the proud and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble and burnt up, leaving neither root nor branch. Kings and judges have refused to be wise, to be instructed, to serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling, to kiss the Son. All such who refuse God's mercy are represented as clusters of the vine of the earth, thrown into a winepress without God's city, to be trampled on. This retribution which takes place after the rejection of the Divine command, John sees as the work of the angels, two angels, one from the temple and one from the altar. The one from the temple carries a sharp sickle. The one from the altar is stated to have power over fire. The obvious connection between this latter one and the saints who had suffered martyrdom and who were to rest under the altar arises here. The work of the accepted saints, the Redeemed, seems to be indicated by these two Divine messengers. Let us consult Joel 3:12-13 first and note the almost identical symbology. It is a wonderful prophecy: "Let the nations be wakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat (judgment): for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about.

PUT YE IN THE SICKLE, FOR THE HARVEST IS RIPE: COME, GET YOU DOWN; FOR THE PRESS IS FULL, THE VATS OVERFLOW" -- note the next sentence - "FOR THEIR WICKEDNESS IS GREAT."

God's people now turn from such scenes with sadness. There can be no gloating over such a prospect. But the glory of God cannot fill the earth as long a wicked people live who will not have the Lord to reign over them. David's words may not now appeal to us in our weak and erring nature, feeling all the time how repeatedly we ourselves need the mercy of God. Yet, here are the Psalmists words : "To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written; this honour have all saints."

Peter did not hesitate under the influence of the Spirit to pronounce the punishment on Ananias and Sapphira, nor Paul to inflict blindness on the one who would commercialise the Holy Spirit. Various passages from the prophets indicate the slaughter which will and must take place to rid this fair earth of wickedness, and that slaughter will be great, so great as to cause John to see represented in fearful symbol "oceans of blood", - overwhelming destruction.

It would appear that the preaching of the everlasting gospel bring little response. Dr. Thomas was inclined to believe that there would be many years occupied in bringing the world into complete subjection to the Kind and wrote: "Deity is never in a hurry, but deliberate, effective, sure." (Eureka III 402) More details of the opposition to Jesus and the saints will come before our notice in the study of chapters 17 and 19. The chapter now claiming our attention is more a summary of events following the destruction of Gog and the relief of Jerusalem, after the resurrection and judgment which precede the Gogian invasion of Palestine. We shall sing our Hymn 198 with much more feeling, much more understanding than hitherto.

"Lord, Thy judgments now are waking,
Let not Thy compassion sleep
But while earthly thrones are shaking,
Sure and firm Thy purpose keep;
O Lord, hear us, be Thou near us,
When the storm shall o'er us sweep".

remembering that the words John recorded are FAITHFUL and TRUE. The lesson however, comes home very forcibly that the Lord is merciful and longsuffering, not willing that any should perish. He has graciously allowed us to hear the gospel and we bow our heads in sincere gratitude.

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapters 15 & 16)

Paper No. 13

John had seen in vision scene after scene depicting marvellous events to happen during many centuries. In the panorama showing to him the casting out of the prince of this world (chapter 12) he had viewed "a great portent" or sign. Now, on the screen of Heaven, he describes what he beholds there as a "portent great and wonderful", so we may anticipate the representation to John of most important occurrences of tremendous magnitude, impressiveness and consequences. Indeed he sees in symbol the outpouring of seven plagues described in those four stirring, moving words: "WHICH ARE THE LAST". Why the last? Because the Lord is to punish evildoers with whom He is righteously angry, and since there will be a culmination of such retribution before His glory is dominant, the words of verse 1 tell us that with these last seven plagues "the wrath of God is ended". His righteous judgments will then be complete, for as the seventh angel finishes his task John hears a great voice from the throne, out of the Temple, speaking those three words so pregnant "IT IS DONE".

Such mighty and terrible scenes necessitate a correspondingly grand introduction and chapter 15 is this prologue. John is shown also in symbol and at the outset, the sequel, God's sequel, a picture of those who had conquered the enemy, standing with harps in their hands at the side of a sea of glass mingled with fire and they are singing. They sing for sheer downright joy. John tells us their song is the song of Moses, the servant of God and, the song of the Lamb. We remember that a song was sung by Israel on the other side of the Red Sea, for they were subjects of a mighty deliverance. The sea of glass mingled with fire might represent the nations stilled through God's cleansing agencies or might portray the experiences of the redeemed who pass through waters of affliction and fire of cleansing before they emerge to sing as the Redeemed this song of deliverance. The last two lines of their song of praise date the time of singing:-
"All nations shall come and worship Thee, FOR THY JUDGEMENTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED"

When all is subjected to God in the whole earth the saints sing a mighty song of praise to the Creator. Let us just repeat the words, hoping and praying most earnestly that we may all be allowed to take part in that tremendous chorus of the immortal orchestra:

"Great and wonderful are Thy deeds
O Lord God the Almighty.
Just and true are Thy ways,
O King of the ages (nations).
Who shall not fear and glorify Thy Name, O Lord?
For Thou alone art holy.
All nations shall come and worship Thee,
For Thy judgments have been revealed."

The work of the ages is finished, completed. Having seen this picture of surpassing grandeur and glory and having heard the chorus of all choruses, the song of the redeemed, John is permitted to see the sevenfold series of events which must precede the song.

We have said that John sees in symbol the sequel, then the events which must transpire leading onwards to that end, that glorious end of the Redeemed who had overcome. John looked and saw

opened the temple seen previously in the sky. An interesting name of the temple is given: it is called the temple of the tent (or tabernacle) of witness, (Numbers 9:15), reminding us of the tabernacle in the wilderness where God said He would dwell amongst Israel. The temple has already been associated with God's people and they are fittingly called in Rev. 11 - God's witnesses, because they speak to men and women of God and His purpose. Out of this symbolic temple poised in mid-air John sees in the vision seven angels clothed in pure bright linen and girded, like the Son of Man represented in vision to John in chapter 1, with golden girdles around their breasts. To these beautifully-robed beings are given seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God. These bowls are given to them by one of the four living creatures. Some have suggested that these seven angels represent the saints in their perfected state of immortality and that these inflictions of wrath take place after Jesus comes. We do not think so. May it not be that these 7 angels, operating in the final stages of God's purpose are so described to provide a picture clearly setting forth the two essentials of those who would please God - purity and faith?

The fact that one of the living creatures gives the bowls to the angels clearly shows that the saints have an important part in connection with the pouring out of God's wrath in these seven last plagues. God's people pray earnestly for the Kingdom of God to come, that His will may be done on earth as in Heaven. They pray, as told in the Word, for the peace of Jerusalem. Indeed they are told to give the Father no rest till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. These prayers are answered, in that earth's affairs are directed to that great end, punishments are meted: out by angelic direction to certain peoples.

God's glory is not manifested until these punishments have been given. Maybe we can now see the connection between the prayers of God's people and these necessary so-called plagues and at the same time remember the difficult passage explained similarly in the study of Rev. 11:6 "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will..."

Smoke fills the temple as John watches and he is told that no-one can enter that temple, that is, have complete communion with God, be one with Him in nature, until these seven vials are poured out.

John now heard a Divine, voice from the temple which commanded the seven angels to pour out God's wrath on the earth. Then the seven angel-trumpeters (of ch. 8) summoned punitive forces, the first four affected third parts of earth, sea,, rivers and fountains of waters and the sun. The first four bowls of God's wrath also were poured on earth, sea, rivers and fountains of water, and the sun. We are left in no doubt as to why and on whom these four and also the fifth were directed. In ch. 13 a blasphemous beast was part of the imagery. The power and supporters of the system represented by this beast made war on the saints. The image of the beast, the head of that persecuting system, the Pope, was worshipped by marked worshippers and death was the lot of those who refused his homage. In chapter 14 the most terrible punishment of those idolaters was announced and, in chapter 15 the glorious destiny was pictured of those who would have no part in that wicked system summarised as "the beast, its image and the number of its name", then the first three angels had in symbol poured out God's wrath, John heard words which clearly indicate the recipients of this anger. Words from an angel of water, words from the altar instruct us. These angelic and Divine interpositions must be noted and appreciated. They would be spoken with great solemnity and definiteness. Verses 5, 6, and 7:

"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and
Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God
Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments..."

The conclusion is inevitable that the Catholic world was to be punished for persecuting those who would not join in their idolatry. Even the very seat or throne of the beast was the special object of God's wrath, for the fifth angel poured his bowl upon this throne, the very head-quarters of this blasphemous power.

The explanation of the first five bowls of God's wrath is only offered after prolonged study and prayerful deliberation. Errors, omissions and wrong conclusions must be allowed for. These judgments are the LAST, God's last, and that is a most solemn thought.

Some history and geography are needed in making clear the object and extent of these plague visitations which have taken place. At the beginning of the 13th century the Roman Catholic Church was rich, secure, worldly and ambitious. Priests were in N. Africa, China, Persia and India. Europe and this country were in absolute subjection to the Pope. Gradually, due to the extortions and worldliness of the Papacy, the spirit of affection, reverence and adoration gave place to criticism, anger and mistrust. For a time, the Pope lived in France and held a luxurious court. Conduct there shocked scrupulous minds all over Europe. When he returned to Rome, two Popes claimed headship and this "Great Schism" as it was called, continued nearly forty years. Questions arose in various countries. Was the Roman Church Great Babylon? Was the Pope Antichrist? The pomp, the claims, the worldly ambitions of the Papacy were challenged. Many small sects arose which preached against transubstantiation, the worship of relics, confessions and indulgences. Wycliffe and the Lollards in England, the Hussites in Bohemia, the Albigenses, Waldenses, Huguenots, Anabaptists, Lutherans and Calvinists. In spite of rigorous, terrible persecutions and massacres, the Protestant beliefs spread in England, Scotland, Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Bohemia, parts of France and even parts of Italy and Spain. The results were sores, malignant ulcers, eating away the Catholic "flesh", the body of the persecuting beast. This we suggest, is the meaning of verse 2; "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image...." To The Papacy, the inroads of Protestantism were like a foul and loathsome disease.

In the 15th century there were actually three rival Popes. Efforts were made to reform the Papacy and end the great Schism. Yet the Popes slew, tortured and hanged their opponents. What next? A new era opened. The various Protestant sects became militant, determined to fight, since preaching did not avail to overthrow the Catholics. Fire and sword were carried into the heart of Germany by Hussites. There were savage battles even in Rome. Religious wars took place in France. Violence and atrocities accompanied the fighting. A savage conflict in Germany left that country "a ruin". There were two great opposing camps "entrenched in war positions", so history tells, Protestants and Catholics. Can we therefore say that the sea of nations had become blood? Many limit the effects of the second vial to the actual sea and the Napoleonic naval warfare, when over 1000 ships were destroyed. We feel the suggested interpretation to be more acceptable. "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea..." The rivers and fountains of waters are affected and become blood as John sees the third vial outpoured. Rivers and fountains are the source of food and drink. Wars interrupted the cultivation of the soil and there was great economic and social distress. Experiences of this country and Europe's plight following two world wars illustrate the suggestion. The effects of the wars were

as if the very fountains of life had been poisoned and the rivers polluted. John saw the third angel empty his bowl "into the rivers and fountains of waters and they became blood". Famine, disease and pestilence follow wars and this was even more so before developments in science and surgery had taken place.

The effects of the fourth angel's visitation were seen in vision by John to be on the sun and it (R.S.V.) was allowed to scorch men with fire. Men were "scorched by the fierce heat". A leader, general, Consul and Emperor rose to power. Napoleon. He had some years of dazzling victories against European powers and exacted fearful penalties. Thousands of men were slain. Finally his enemies closed around him and he was "eclipsed", but not before all over Europe and in Northern Italy especially, the place of actual fountains and rivers, men had been scorched with the fires of war. Blasphemy and unbelief continued. After Waterloo there were many years of comparative peace and many alliances were made. The Great Exhibition of 1851 (at which Dr. Thomas spoke) was held in the atmosphere of hope. Tennyson wrote of the time

"When the war-drum throbbed no longer,
The battle flags were furled,
In the Parliament of man, the federation of the world."

That federation is still future, but it will come as the KINGDOM OF GOD.

Only four of God's angels had done their work. Three were yet to come; Italy and Rome had to suffer, the throne of the beast and its kingdom. "And the fifth angel poured out his vial on the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds..."

Revolution took place in several cities of Italy. There were states and kingdoms in the North and kingdoms in the South. Between these were the ill-managed states of the Papacy. Rome was mobbed. The Pope fled. With Garibaldi's help a republic was set up and later crushed by the French, but the hope of Rome becoming the centre and capital of the whole of Italy grew. In 1870 French troops were recalled from Rome, a new Royal Government of Italy was set up. The Pope's states - HIS KINGDOM were joined to the rest of Italy and. Catholics forbidden to take any active part in the new Kingdom of Italy. Two years before this, the Pope had amidst great splendour, declared his infallibility (during a terrible thunderstorm). He now regarded himself as a prisoner in the Vatican. HIS TEMPORARY POWER HAD ENDED AND HE COULD NO LONGER PERSECUTE PROTESTANTS. His kingdom was "in darkness... and they did not repent of their deeds".

The sixth angel trumpeter of chapter 9 brought hordes of Asiatics over the Euphrates - Turks, who conquered all the Middle East, North Africa and Europe to the city of Vienna. In our chapter 16 Gods judgments are poured on these Moslems, whose ruler was unrighteous, whose rule was misrule, and whose treatment of Christians abominable.

The River Euphrates ran through their territory and the diminishing power of the Turks is described as the drying up of this River, for on these waters John saw in vision the sixth angel pour his bowl. Thirty years ago lectures were given to show the interesting fulfilment of this vial-judgment. A map was used to show the full extent of Turkish territory and as the lecture proceeded, sections were taken away and the date given when that particular area was lopped off by war from the dying empire. The Sultan of Turkey was called "the sick man of Europe" because of the decline of his power and gradual loss of territory. In 1917, the Turk was driven from Palestine and this was hailed as a marvellôus sign of the times, for the way was then opened for the return of the Jews and the

development of God's land. Turkey now owns Asia Minor and a small area around Istanbul - Constantinople, the capital being Ankara. The reason given by the angel to John for the "evaporation" of Turkish power was "that the way of the kings (R.V.) from the sunrising might be prepared". In Isaiah a righteous one is extolled who will rule over nations, one who would come from the rising of the sun. A first application to Cyrus, the deliverance of Judah from captivity, but without doubt Jesus. Read the context, chapters 40 to 43. With Jesus will be associated lesser kings to rule in His lands and elsewhere. As long, as the Turk occupied the land of promise there was no way back for Israel. Remember that the Euphrates was the border of God's land. This sixth vial was so explained by Dr. Thomas, Mede and others. The following quotation is from Grattan Guinness in a book written over 70 years ago: "*The approaching end of the Age*".

"Then the nations of Europe - - - shall conspire to reinstate the Jews in the land of their forefathers, then the last warning bell will have rung; then the last of the unfulfilled predictions of Scripture as to events prior to the great crisis will have received its accomplishment, then the second advent of Israel's rejected Messiah to reign in conjunction with His risen and glorified saints as King over all the earth will be close at hand and the manifestation of Christ immediate...."

"The destruction of the power and independence of the Ottoman Empire, like the annihilation of the temporal dominion of the Papacy should be as a trumpet blast to Christendom proclaiming that the day of Christ is at hand...."

We have lived to see these tremendous signs fulfilled.

In the meantime evil, unclean influences were to be at work, originating in the three sinful manifestations described in the Apocalypse - sin itself, the Dragon; the enemy of all righteousness and of God's people - the Beast; the retainers, supporters and upholders of all false doctrine, - the false prophet. These evil and unclean influences at large in the earth were to cause earth's rulers to prepare armies ready for the great day of God Almighty. These evil influences, at work were to cause miracles or signs to be performed. Have we not heard of these seemingly miraculous performances in the Soviet, Cape Canaveral, Nevada and the Pacific? Are not the aeroplane, submarine, radio, telephone, radar, miraculous inventions? We live in these thrilling days and can expect at any time the fulfilment of the words of the Lord, actually interposed in the description of this sixth vial outpouring: "Lo, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is he who is awake, keeping his garments that he may not go naked and be seen exposed". (R.S.V.) Jesus will come before the assembly at Armageddon call His people and all responsible ones from the grave, from their homes, their work and their beds and there will be no further time for preparation. Bro. Carter in the "*Christadelphian*" for November 1952 wrote: "The Northern onslaught when it comes will take everyone by surprise, and so far as the saints are concerned it is likely that the Lord will be already in the earth". (Note from "*Christadelphian*" 1948 P. 150: "The narrower interpretation of traditional views that would make France itself the focal point of the unclean spirits which gather the nations to war will no longer hold water").

John saw the last in the angelic procession pour his bowl into the air. Not until this century could such words be understood - "into the air". Many brethren think that the judgments of this last vial have run alongside those of the sixth. One fact is certain. Air warfare is here with its fearful, appalling, terrifying consequences. A Divine voice pronounces those solemn words: "IT IS DONE". Did the "lightning, loud noises, peals of thunder and great earthquakes" start in 1914? We have seen and heard of the fall of many cities, but not yet of the division of the great city into three parts, nor has Babylon been made to drink the cup of the fury of God's wrath. Islands and mountains no longer

provide shelter from warfare and "great hailstones" of 1 cwt. might be a prophetic description of atom-bombs. The plague is fearful whenever and wherever it occurs but men do not turn to God.

Seven angels pouring seven bowls of God's wrath upon peoples and kingdoms; the assembling of armies, unheard of calamities. To readers of the Revelation in the early and middle centuries, these plagues might be expected to be as literal as the plagues of Egypt. Critics could say that the interpretations now suggested concern historical developments all perfectly natural and just what could have been expected when knowledge was increased, outstanding leaders appeared, aerial warfare developed and the atomic age opened.

The reply is that all these were foreknown by the Creator. All were classified into their septiform character 1900 years ago. Not only so, as each period opened as outstanding characters appeared on the stage of history, as powers waxed and waned, and scientific inventions developed by leaps and bounds in the 19th and 20th centuries, all these were directed and controlled by angelic manipulation of men and circumstances. Punishments by man-made wars divinely allowed and regulated with definite objects the punishment of those who had shed the blood of saints and prophets, the preparations for the kings from the Sun's rising and the final visitation on earth's unrepentant peoples by aerial destruction of their own devising; these were foreknown. There are seven outstanding words for us and every Bible lover "Lo, I am coming like a thief".

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapters 17 & 18 & 19 to v 5)

Paper No. 14

In the next four chapters, - 17 to 20, - events are recorded which were revealed in symbol and which will happen after the resurrection, judgment and immortalization of the accepted, and they, the accepted, are referred to in some of these events One might ask why should such details be shown to John, for those who earnestly desire to be with the Lamb would be quite satisfied, perfectly happy, just to be with their Lord without knowing now what they will have to do.

The One who gave the Revelation decided otherwise. It was His Pleasure to make known to "His servants", the part generally they would play in the bringing of all powers into subjection to the King. They will not immediately find themselves in an earth at peace, at rest and filled with obedient subjects. Chapters 17, 18 and 19 graphically show a continuation of God's judgments before it will be possible to hear the words dwelt on previously: "IT IS DONE".

One item in the Divine programme outlined in chapter 16:19 is the subject of the chapters 17 and 18. "God remembered great Babylon, to make her drink the cup of the fury of His wrath." These words have the frightful sound of Divine nemesis.

One of the brightly-robed angels with shining golden girdle invited John to see a fearful sight - "the most disgusting of womankind." (Dr. Thomas) - a great harlot The angel seemed to take John away into a wilderness and he carefully records in vivid detail what he saw after first giving his angel guide's introductory explanations. The angelic description was of a great harlot seated on many waters. With her the kings of earth had committed fornication and with the wine of her fornication earth's dwellers were drunk. John was to see God's judgment on tins terrible woman.

He then gives his own impressions. He saw a woman dressed in purple and scarlet embroidered with gold, jewels and, pearls; she held a golden cup full of abominations and impurities of her evil deeds. She was drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs of Jesus. On her forehead was the name: "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations" and she sat on a red beast full of blasphemous names, a beast with seven heads and ten horns.

John was astonished, he marvelled greatly. He was bewildered, seems to be the meaning. The angel saw his astonishment and proceeded to explain what he called THE MYSTERY. A word familiar to us from Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians 2:7 a part of verses definitely prophetic of the very judgment John was in symbol, about to see.

The angel first tells John about the, beast. That he said has perplexed many, for the expression "was, is not, and is to come" is not easy to grasp. Indeed the angel adds later these words. "This calls for a mind with wisdom". There is comfort in James' epistle. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

John has seen in his previous visions a beast with ten crowned horns and seven heads. The beast he now sees is part of that beast which had authority 42 months. IT WAS, as the Papal power at Rome. We read in Chapter 16 of God's wrath being executed on the very throne and kingdom of the beast and darkness resulted. As a world-wide political power it ceased. IT WAS NOT. But it was to reappear

from a sinful origin as far removed from God as possible - the bottomless pit. IT WAS TO COME as a new political power or powers and have authority in Rome, the seven-hilled city.

This scarlet beast of chapter 17 is anatomically the same as the beast of the sea in chapter 13. Then why was it necessary to show the symbol of the scarlet beast. Because a new directing and controlling agency is to develop in the very last days; that is, directing and controlling the beast, in simple terms, a new head. This scarlet beast as a new head of the former beast.

The ten uncrowned horns represented rulers or powers also to be manifested in the last days who will give their power to this new head, but this will be for a limited time called one hour. Dr. Thomas wrote nearly 100 years ago: Britain is not included in the 10 Kingdoms. She is reserved to antagonize Russia" (Elpis Israel - p.328 New Ed.)

All Christadelphians are familiar with the visions described in Daniel: 10 toes of the image, 10 horns of the fourth beast. This dreadful fourth beast represented the fourth world empire – ROME. The beast of Rev. 13 and the scarlet beast of chapter 17 are phases of this period when the Roman Empire has given place to a divided Europe. This scarlet beast is a symbol of power which will exist in Europe just before Jesus comes, when He comes, and immediately after His coming. Some keen watchers of the signs of the times think it possible that the countries now united under the Common Market based on the Treaty of Rome might be the beginning of this beast combination. Other European States represented by the ten horns will eventually ally themselves with the beast-powers, for God has decreed that they will carry out His purpose by being of one mind, and giving their royal power to the beast until the Word of God be fulfilled. One very interesting matter must be stressed. The horns are uncrowned. Just think of all the countries of Europe which have lost their crowned heads during the last 100 years: Russia, Turkey, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Portugal, Italy and before these, France and Poland. Truly, as our Lord said (Matt. 24.29) "The stars shall fall from heaven".

John was invited to see the judgment of God on the harlot. She sat on the scarlet beast, drunk with the blood of saints. That will happen?

The Catholic countries, called the Beast, and the other European powers, called the 10 rulers, with whom they will be allied, are to turn against the harlot, to hate her, to make her desolate and naked and devour her flesh and (note) to BURN HER UP WITH FIRE. Who is this woman? The angel's words were "And the woman that you saw is the great city". On her forehead was her name: "BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS and of EARTH'S ABOMINATIONS". What a terrible indictment! Is it likely that Catholic powers will turn against Rome, the headquarters of the Papacy? There is not the slightest doubt. "The very beast on which Rome has triumphantly ridden shall shake her off, turn on her and aid the ten kings in her spoliation and destruction". '(Barnes) Vittingra wrote: "The ruins of Papal Rome will not be effected by Protestant nations but by Papal princes and peoples rising against her". Milligan wrote: "Rev. 17:16 is one of the most startling in Revelation and its statement totally unexpected....The Harlot had been sitting on the beast and guiding the beast ... all at once the scene is changed. Defeat has taken place and what is the effect? The bond which in prosperity had bound together the partners in wickedness is dissolved; they who had cooperated in sin fall out; the one turns round upon the other and she who had found a ready instrument in the beast and its horns...now sees them fall on herself and mercilessly destroy her." "A great principle is proceeded on..." "Combinations of the wicked speedily break up and the guilty associates turn upon and destroy one another..."

These powers will do more than burn the harlot with fire. They will make war with the Lamb. With what result? The Lamb will conquer them for He is Lord of lords and King of kings. The Lamb will not

be alone. This is where our deep interest is aroused. "Those with Him are called and chosen and faithful." These words tell unmistakably that the judgment of the great Harlot, ROME, is AFTER the return of our Master, after the resurrection, after the judgment, for they that are with Jesus are the accepted ones.

To simplify the teaching of this chapter. A group of powers must arise just before or just after the coming of Jesus, which are Catholic, represented by a scarlet beast full of blasphemous names. These powers will turn against the Papacy at Rome which hitherto they had "carried" or supported. They will be joined by other states or countries called the ten horns and these together will be responsible for finally burning the harlot, the seat of the Papal power at Rome, the great city which in John's time and for many centuries had dominion over the rulers of the earth.

A verse by verse interpretation of this chapter would not have proved helpful but one note must be added; Verse 10 is a parenthesis put there to give John and the readers of those early days a further identification of the city to be judged. Rome had had five forms of government, in John's time another, that of Emperors —and one more was to come which would not last long - the Gothic rulers. These all constituted seven heads. When chapter 13 was studied it was pointed out that the head John saw slain to death, recovered. This became the Papal head to rule in Rome for 42 months. The scarletbeast of chapter 17 is therefore the 8th Head and must consequently have power in Italy and Rome its capital.

It is certainly interesting to read the language of Jeremiah concerning the literal Babylon of old: "Babylon hath been a golden cup...that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine: therefore the nations are mad." The idolatrous teaching of ancient Babylon had many points of agreement with the doctrines of Papal Rome - Babylon the Great. These are given and illustrated in the book "The Two Babylons" by Alexander Hislop. One quotation from that book will be given: In 1825 Pope Leo XII struck a medal bearing on one side his own image and on the other that of the Church of Rome symbolised as a woman, holding in her left hand a cross and in her right hand a cup with a legend around her in Latin, a translation being "The whole world is her seat". The woman has seven spikes in her headdress. Mr. Hislop states "The essential character of her (Rome's) system, the grand objects of her worship, her festivals, her doctrine and discipline, her rites and ceremonies her priesthood, and their orders, have all been derived from ancient Babylon." (P.3 of Introduction). This certainly helps us to appreciate the similarity of language used concerning the destruction of the literal Babylon of old and the great city "Babylon the Great" of Revelation.

John had been invited to see the judgment of the great harlot and was told that certain powers would combine to destroy her. More than these human alliances were to be used, for he sees "an angel coming down from heaven having great authority and the earth was made bright with his splendour". Associate this with 2 These. 2:8 "whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming". The Divine sentence is pronounced by a mighty voice. "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great!". In Old Testament language the fallen condition is described and the reasons for its fall are again given. But a warning note is sounded which also has an Old Testament counterpart. God's people are exhorted to come out of her and her sins. The warning was applicable from John's time to the coming of Jesus. God knows: God remembers Babylon's pride was known: "A queen I sit. I am no widow, mourning I shall never see."

The punishments are summed up in these words:- pestilence, mourning, famine, destruction by fire, and these were God's judgments. We have read, that the rulers and Beast will make her desolate and naked, devour her flesh and burn her with fire; 17:16. Are these powers alone then to work God's wrath on Papal Rome as Cyrus armies destroyed ancient Babylon? It would seem that a

Heaven sent catastrophe completes that destruction. In the unusual chapter 18 of dirges the expression is used "in a single day". A more drastic expression is thrice repeated:

"In one hour has thy judgment come"

"In one hour all this wealth has been laid waste"

"In one hour she has been, laid waste"

Surely these expressions indicate a quick and violent judgment: "Mighty is the Lord God who judges her". The effect on various classes of people who are represented as "seeing" the smoke of her 'burning is most graphically given. The sadness of her friends and paramours; the regrets of merchants who have traded with her to their very great advantage; the bemoaning's of sea faring men of all ranks because their source of gain was gone. These all are said to "stand afar off" as if afraid to go near lest they too should be engulfed, for they are "in fear of her torment".

To early Christians the city of Rome itself would answer to all the details given: in this chapter 18, definitely they thought of the actual city. To them Rome was Babylon the Great, the wicked city with worldwide evil influences the persecuting city in which was found the blood of prophets and saints. To them it was a city of vast treasures of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen (a species of fine cotton highly prized by the ancients), purple and scarlet, of scented woods, ivory, bronze, iron and marble. A city of spices, incense, wine, oil, flour, wheat, cattle, chariots and slaves in particular, tens of thousands of them. A city with its rich merchants and depending on seaborne trade for practically all its food and its goods.

TO US the words tell of the worldwide connections - all nations who supply Rome with her beautiful costly vestments, church decorations shrines and gifts and statuary. There is indeed perhaps the greatest accumulation of these and of jewels in the whole world to be found at Rome, Papal Rome. The most distinguished musicians and craftsmen are there and priests clothed in scarlet, the cardinals with purple capes. As for candles, the light of which shall shine no more at all after the terrible destruction has taken place, these are a source of revenue in all Catholic churches and are almost objects of veneration.

With Bro. Roberts and Dr. Thomas we believe that literal Rome itself is the subject of these judgments. The details cannot be understood apart from this conclusion. The city and all its costly treasures will be engulfed by a world shaking catastrophe. There is a startling literality about many of the sentences.

The whole area of Rome and the geographical surroundings lie in a volcanic area. Three great volcanoes loom in this part of the Mediterranean - Vesuvius, Stromboli and Etna. Many have read of the destruction by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius of Herculaneum and Pompeii - 17 years before John's vision. Early this century terrible disasters overtook the towns and villages of Sicily when an earthquake destroyed 100,000 people. May it not be that - to quote "The city of Rome and all its environs will be suddenly engulfed in a fiery abyss which underlies its site". "The disappearance in the volcanic subterranean, amid earthquake, tempest and fire of the city of the Pope with its presumptuous Temple of St. Peter, its Vatican Palace, its hundreds of costly churches, shrines and all the multiplied paraphernalia of priestly superstition and iniquity - only such a catastrophe would answer to the features of this chapter." Indeed, it "goes to perdition" as the angel said and repeated to John. To use Bible figures - "exalted to heaven, it is cast down to hell"

John saw a mighty angel take up a great millstone and throw it into the sea saying: "So shall Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence and shall be found no more".

About 2500 years ago, Jeremiah the prophet was commissioned by God to write words against literal Babylon, to give these to Seraiah who was instructed to go to Babylon, read the message publicly, bind a stone to the tablet, cast it into the River Euphrates and say: "Thus shall Babylon sink and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her". As literally as Ancient Babylon sank from her heights of pride and idolatry, so literal. "Babylon the Great" will be destroyed, but much more or quickly and even more terribly, for "in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who had been slain on earth". Grattan Guineas has stated that Rome is responsible for the blood of 50,000,000 people. When this happens there will be Hallelujah Choruses sung never equalled by any combination of Choral Societies, for they will be sung by immortal voices. There are three such choruses, but let us note at present only two of them at the beginning of Chapter 19. John heard what seemed to be a mighty voice of a great multitude in heaven. Truly, they represent the highly exalted ones! They sing "Hallelujah" and ascribe "salvation, glory and power" to their God, recognising the justice and truth of His judgments on the wicked harlot who had slain His servants. They are represented to John as being unable to restrain a further "Hallelujah" recognising the absolute finality of Gods true and righteous judgments. As the vision, this marvellous vision unfolds its unparalleled pictures, John sees the twenty four elders and four living creatures fall down in adoration before their Lord on the throne. They add their fervent "Amen, Hallelujah" and a voice from the throne cries:
"Praise our God, all you His servants,
You who fear Him, small and great."

The REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (Chapters 19 & 20 & 21 to v9)

Paper No. 15 The Marriage of the Lamb; Earth Cleansed; All Things New

We have heard in imagination the Hallelujahs of the exalted ones following on the true and just judgments of the corrupter of the earth, the murderer of the servants of God. Now an even greater Hallelujah resounds. John likens it to the voice of a great multitude, the sound of many waters, the sound of mighty thunderpeals. Some of us have listened awestruck to the mighty roar of Niagara Falls; all of us have heard the terrific crashes and reverberations of thunder. John heard words never before heard, for this magnificent Hallelujah chorus is the mightiest and most glorious announcement in song ever made on the earth. The prayers of millions of God's people are answered. THE KINGDOM HAS COME: GOD REIGNS. But even more than this, if that were possible THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB HAS COME: THE BRIDE IS READY; she even wears her bridal dress, which is fine linen, bright and pure; truly angelic garments; the consummation of righteousness. For nearly 6000 years the Bride has been preparing. For 4000 years only glimpses were possible of future glory. Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ; David even wrote an ode on the marriage and in cryptic verse the mutual love of and admiration of bride and bridegroom, are revealed in the Song of Songs. Not until the Bridegroom—to—be announced Himself did the future felicity become the subject of clear expectation. Jesus Himself spoke of a wedding feast and a necessary garment and warned of unpreparedness to meet the Bridegroom on His arrival. It remained for Paul to tell of the saints as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ.

Between the time here symbolised and that shown in chapter 21:9 where the angel says to John: "Come, and I will show you the Bride, the WIFE of the Lamb" the marriage and the marriage rejoicings take place. Another beatitude is introduced by the angel as John listens to the mighty paeans. "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb", and there is a postscript:- "These are the true words of God".

When the marriage is consummated, when the actual bestowal of immortality making the saints one with their Lord takes place and where it takes place we do not know: this is the sweet secret of the Bridegroom. Where the rejoicings, the feast, will be celebrated is part of that sweet secret. Dr. Thomas thought at Sinai. Isaiah wrote of "this mountain where death will be swallowed up in victory" and Mt. Zion figures in symbol in Rev 14 as the place where the Lamb and the redeemed will stand in joy ecstatic. What it will mean to have this mortal put on immortality in the presence of Jesus, fully and completely recognised as His very own, how can we mortals describe?

Passing from future indescribable joys to the present work-a-day realities, let us note two lines in the song of exultation and the following verse; "The Bride has made herself ready." This is our time of preparation and the words are added, "The fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints." The second line to be noted is: "it was granted her to be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure", and we remember that it is through the mercy of God that her marriage attire is made possible. Divine grace allows the dazzling whiteness of the saints' purification. Linen, not as in the attire of the harlot, a highly prized cotton, but the real fine linen of righteousness bestowed by their gracious Lord. Could there be a greater contrast than that we have seen exhibited between the gaudy drunken prostitute and the Bride in fine linen, bright and pure?

John was so overcome, by emotion, with gratitude, by the wondrous songs heard "and the marvellous announcements made, that he prostrated himself before the angel in worship and was immediately rebuked. The angel declared himself to be a fellow servant of John and all who bore testimony to Jesus, that being the very essential of prophecy. When this, vision was read in the Churches, Paul's words to the Colossian forbidding angel-worship would be remembered.

After marriage and honeymoon comes attention to domestic duties and the next vision vividly portrays the necessary work of Bridegroom and Bride now exhibited in a manner which would recall the words of Jesus, John himself had recorded as spoken to the astonished Nathaniel, that the very heaven would be opened and angels visible. Our frail imagination is taxed to its limits as we try to see what John describes and consider the meaning of the telling symbols exhibited. A full and detailed picture of a divine Conqueror leading immortal hosts and all on white horses, symbols of purity and victory. Never such a Commander-in-Chief. His names are truly wonderful! Faithful and true; The Word of God: King of Kings: Lord of Lords; - names only perfectly understandable by Jesus Himself. He is the only one to judge and make war in righteousness. He wears many diadems, a feature unique in itself. The events foreshadowed and anticipated by the symbols of chapter 14 now spring to life in the symbols now seen. As also the nature and results of the opposition to the Lamb and His redeemed pictured in chapter 17. An examination of these three remarkable chapters side by side clears impressions and also increases our appreciation of the gradual unfolding of events seen by John in such grand symbolic review.

Nations have yet to be subdued. The enemy is divided into sections called the beast and the kings of the earth AND the false prophet. These are political and religious combinations with their armies who will actually cooperate to make war on the King of Kings and His armies. They have refused to "kiss the Son" and are to perish. All are totally annihilated. That is the sombre meaning of the words "thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone". John saw in vision the beast and the false prophet. He saw in vision a lake of fire and records the scene in words which cannot be simplified or paraphrased. There was just a summary and complete destruction and he adds that any remaining objectors suffered death, for from the Lord's mouth he saw a sharp sword for the smiting of the nations. Men of all ranks formed the enemy, kings, captains, mighty men, cavalry, freemen and slaves, all.

The vividness of these moving symbolic pictures is heightened by a very remarkable invitation given with a loud, voice to all, the carrion birds of heaven, an invitation spoken by one "standing in the blaze of the brightest of Heaven's orbs", as one has written and Dr. Thomas only of many commentators suggests that this angel represents the woman clothed with the sun of chapter 12, now the Bride. We remember that Ezekiel the prophet was moved to invite every feathered fowl and beast to the great sacrifice he described as to take place on the mountains of Israel. That of Rev. 19 is a SECOND FEAST; the first is in Israel.

The great harlot destroyed, the political and religious enemies of the Lord annihilated, John is shown the great enemy "manacled." Only by Divine power could the dragon, that ancient serpent, the Devil and Satan be turned out of office. The angel from Heaven holding a great chain Dr. Thomas described as "the invincible Lord Jesus", who alone has the key or power to place sin under perfect control for 1000 years. The certainty of the restraint is indicated by the bottomless pit being shut and sealed. Reflect on the scene John saw, and the conclusion is inevitable that no more fitting symbols could possibly have been used to indicate the subjection of sin and sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus who Himself had so successfully grappled with sin and cast it out.

John then "saw thrones and seated on them were those to whom judgment had been committed." John would think of the thrones promised to the twelve disciples. In keeping with this symbol of the

5th seal John saw the martyrs whose rest in the grave had ended, and all faithful ones to life again" and they reigned with Christ a thousand years. This is resurrection and it is resurrection to life eternal. The visions allowed to John, did not represent events which happened just one after the other. We have read of the Redeemed being with their Lord, of the wiping out of opposition to the King of Kings. Now we are seeing with John visions of the resurrection which necessarily preceded these events, visions of God's plans for this world for the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ and even of the Millennia beyond. This part of the Revelation is unique. Indeed it is the unique part of the whole Bible, for here and here only is the actual mention of the 1000 years reign, and it is mentioned six times. Paul's summary is: "He must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet...then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father...then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all and in all." To know this programme, Paul had seen "visions and revelations of the Lord".

The resurrected, immortalised children of God will reign, with Jesus 1000 years and they will be priests of God and of Christ. A lovely beatitude follows:- "Blessed and holy is he who shares the first resurrection." This is the resurrection Jesus called "the resurrection of the just" and it is the resurrection Paul yearned to experience if by any means he might attain to it.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

This verse seems to be a parenthesis, an explanatory note, meaning there will be no further resurrection until the end of the 1000 years. Only the accepted, the righteous, appear in these visions. Those who have done evil, those raised to shame, are here pictured not at all. Dean Alford wrote: "Those who lived next to the apostles and the whole church for 300 years understood the thousand years reign in the plain literal sense." Another writer in the Speakers Commentary gives the information that when the age of persecution passed by the union of church and state, the motive died out which prompted the longing for the thousand years reign of believers with Christ.

There is here in chapter 20 no detailed description of the Millennial reign apart from the restraint on sin and the blessed work of the accepted as rulers and as priests. John was familiar with many pictures of that era in the prophecies of the Old Testament.

Those mortals who live at the close of the thousand years have had no experience whatever of the wars, pestilence and famine consequent upon human misrule. But they are still of sinful nature and finally rebel "Satan is loosed from his prison" and deceives the nations North, South, East and West. It would appear that the saints are withdrawn temporarily to Palestine as "the beloved city" is named as being surrounded, together with the saints there. For the very last time men are permitted to say "we will not have this Man to reign over us" The great army described as Gog and Magog because so closely akin to the Lord's enemies prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, are as the sand of the sea and march up "over the broad earth". Whatever implements of war they have must have been hastily prepared, for, as Dr. Thomas wrote: "The government of the Lord Jesus has not had one soldier in its pay". What happens? They are destroyed by fire from Heaven; the last weeding out, the last mortal rebels obliterated. Sin is forever destroyed as expressed forcibly by the words "The devil that deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet were annihilated. Like Sodom and Gomorrah as described by Jude, they undergo a punishment, of eternal fire. This explains the words: "They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever".

Time after time in "Revelation" a paragraph is introduced by the words "Then I saw". And what a sight opened before John! So Majestic, so dazzling, radiating purity and holiness well-nigh

unapproachable. Indeed John saw earth and sky not disintegrate, but "flee away" from the presence of the unapproachable Judge of all on a great white throne. It was a breath-taking experience, for from earth and sea were raised the dead who formed a vast crowd standing before the throne. This was the second resurrection, a raising of all who had died during the thousand years reign of the Lord. John saw books opened. He saw a book opened called the Book of Life. Such had been mentioned in the message to Sardis, the sick Ecclesia. It is a sobering thought that knowledge of individuals is recorded, in Heaven. We do not know how the Heavenly Register is kept, but kept it is, without actual books, pens or ink by infallible scribes. The dead were judged by what was recorded on high and those deemed unfit to survive were obliterated in the lake of fire - their second death. An explanatory sentence is given regarding the ground of judgement "by what they had done". Neither in this post millennial judgment nor in that described by Jesus in Matt.25 is doctrinal belief mentioned. That is taken for granted, for the everlasting gospel has been preached all down the ages and to the end of the Millennium and knowledge is the ground of responsibility. So Jesus clearly taught.

Just prior to and immediately after the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ there will certainly be a thinning out of the earth's millions. Jeremiah's unequalled description clearly tells us so.

"Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from the holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind: shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground."

At the end of the Millennium vast numbers of rebels are destroyed by fire from Heaven and all the wicked are obliterated. All who remain after the Millennium must be sinless, perfect, immortal. Sin is destroyed: death and the grave are thrown into the lake of fire - annihilated. What then remains? An entirely new order, as indicated by the words so revealing: "A new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea - of nations - was no more". These sentences are profound. They teem with meaning. The perfection of the human race achieved! But not by human agency. The One Who sat on the throne has made all things new and He said to John: "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true: IT IS DONE", one family the world over and God with men, dwelling with them and they His people. God Himself shall be with them. What these words really mean how can we know in this mortal, imperfect and sinful state? Bro. Roberts wrote: "The Father is no longer in the background. --- the earth's entire population are all one and worship God without mediation which has been necessary by sacrifice for 7000 years."

But mortals can appreciate the details so kindly written for them, details supplied by a great voice from the throne: "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning or crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away". Tears fill our eyes as we receive this, the greatest promise of all time from the Only One Who can make it and we thank God. It is no politician speaking, no philosopher, but the Lord. To John He said: "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true". Unspeakable joy, indescribable happiness, always, for ever. A Divine promise: words from the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. A gracious promise is added: a lovely exhortation, especially to all who have suffered all down the ages. To the thirsty: "I will give water without price from the fountain of the water of life". This means immortality. "He who conquers shall have this heritage and I will be his God and he shall be my son."

The more these promises are studied, the more lovely and attractive they become.

A warning accompanies the promise of the destruction of all sinners. These are listed and have evidently been raised, for they are consigned to oblivion which, is a second death. The cowardly, faithless, unclean, idolaters and untruthful.

Perhaps there will be some remarkable and extraordinary display before all peoples of those who, with Jesus the King, have been priests and rulers during the Millennium, to take place when the grand new perfect era opens after sin, and, death are finally obliterated, for John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from Heaven from God. This manifestation seems to be postmillennial.

The section ends with the opening of a new vision which will occupy us and rejoice us in the closing study. Meanwhile we thank God, for the gracious promise of a time when women will no longer suffer pain, no longer weep, no more be separated from those they love, because death shall be no more.

The REVELATION of JESUS CHRIST (Chapter 21 from v. 9 and Chapter 22)

Paper No. 16.

Verse 9 seems to start a new section. We have seen in vision the gradual filling of the earth with God's glory, the destruction of all enemies of righteousness, even the end of mourning, of pain and of death. "All things made new", and we have been assured that what we have read is trustworthy and true. The time will indeed come when those three pregnant words will have their fulfilment: "IT IS DONE" (v.6). The last paragraph contained promises to the conquerors and warnings to the wicked. It is wise to think about two of those classes enumerated as such: the cowardly and the faithless, for these were particularly warned by Jesus. Those who are afraid to confess Him before men. Those who lack faith. Do we? Not when all is going well, but what of times otherwise? A stimulus is often needed. Our Father knew this, and in the succeeding verses, this is provided. John is shown the Bride, the Lamb's wife. Bro. R. Roberts called these sections "a consoling beacon light" and described these closing scenes allowed to John as gorgeous.

One of the seven angels who had poured out God's wrath was deputed to reappear to speak to John and show him the beauties and glories of the Holy City.

John had some time previously been invited to see a woman the very antithesis of a lovely bride, a gaudy intoxicated prostitute. To see that horrible one the angel carried John in vision into a wilderness, a fitting symbolic domicile for such a character. Now, John is taken in vision, indeed, he is "carried away". Before we can be actually the Lamb's wife it will be necessary for us to be carried away from our present surroundings. John is taken to a great and high mountain, a most suitable vantage point, for from thence he has an uninterrupted view. He sees a whole city coming down out of Heaven from God, a city called the Holy City, new Jerusalem, and the rest of this chapter contains first, a detailed description of what John saw and then of certain measurements John saw the angel make, followed by further revealing and entrancing particulars.

It was from Heaven. All in it that was beautiful, rare and costly was from God, a city of glory, perfection, dazzling splendour, sparkling with the colours of precious stones. It was a symbol of God's servants of all age, perfected, glorified, at one with the Lord Jesus Christ, presented to Him as a chaste virgin, His bride, and become His wife.

Let us try to imagine the majestic, resplendent, dazzling and magnificent vista shown to John by the angel. A stupendous cubical mass of buildings in mid-air, too large for our comprehension; Higher, wider, longer by far than England, Scotland and Ireland placed end to end. It is staggeringly brilliant, transparently bright; three gates on each side, each one a single pearl; at each gate an angel and on each gate the name of one of the tribes of Israel. On twelve foundations the shining structure rests, each named, the names being those of the Lord. Jesus's apostles. Each foundation was made of very precious stone and was studded with jewels of every hue. These foundation stones and their gems are named and authorities tell us of the prevailing colours, every shade of green, of blue, of red, of yellow and of purple. The most precious, lasting, costly, rare, choice and exquisite precious stones John sees. What a sight indeed for a mortal to contemplate!

There was an open highway called a street and actually the throne of God and of the Lamb was there! Flowing through this open way John saw a crystal-like stream which the angel told him was the river of the water of life. This flame from the throne. On each bank of the stream were trees

called the tree or wood of life. These trees fruited monthly and the leaves were the healing medicines for the nations.

No temple was in this city because the throne of God and of the Lamb was there. They were its lights so no light of sun or moon was needed and the light was continuous always day. Its gates were always open and into the city was brought all that nations could give in honour, glory, praise and thanksgiving. The whole city and its street looked like transparent gold.

Was it a real city? No. It represented the saints of God, the Bride, the Lamb's wife. Made immortal and perfect, in full communion with their Lord, looked on by Him as His precious jewels which would radiate light throughout the earth and bring all nations to worship God. Men and women made like the angels to die no more, able to teach for so the light suggests, able to heal, for this the leaves be token. All curse shall give place to blessing.

The community of saints Bro. Roberts describes as a large family, an intelligent family, a noble family, a loving family, and adds: "We see it enthroned in Zion with all power in their hands, all wealth at their disposal, all strength and joy in their possession, for the glory of earth's Creator and the blessing of universal man" (p.211 Lect. on the Apoc.)

John's angel guide was responsible for telling John the measurements of the city, its gates and its walls. In a previous vision (XI) John himself was given a measuring rod with which to measure the people of God, to measure or mark them off for trial in their mortality. The angel does the measuring of the new Jerusalem and uses a golden rod, for all included in that city are immortal, made like the angels to die no more. The enormous limits have already been considered but no-city was complete at that time without a wall indeed concerning the real Jerusalem, the city of the Great King, an angel said to Zechariah "For It saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about..." a guarantee of perfect Divine protection. The wall John saw around the new Jerusalem was of Jasper, the city itself being of pure transparent gold, clear as glass, a precious metal unknown to man in such a state. This wall suggests a Divine and perfect refuge, guard and security. Jasper is a precious stone of varying colours. One would have to be a skilful lapidary to write correctly, about the gems John saw. One commentator has recorded that "so minute an acquaintance with the nicest shades of colour of the precious stones....displays that exact knowledge of particulars only possessed by people dealing in precious stones, such could never have been found in a Galilean fisherman - John - and the only explanation is inspiration".

The varying, beautiful gems which are named provide a beautiful thought-avenue. Even in the perfected, the immortal state, there is to be variety of excellence, all precious, but each with an individual preciousness. Jesus indicated there would be rulers over ten cities, five cities, two cities. No plain uniformity or all-alike-ness except in nature. Even in the mortal state God's people were described by another Galilean fisherman, Peter, as living stones, that is living, sparkling and lustrous, and in connection with precious stones it is sobering to remember that they are all practically from the earth. They need cutting and polishing to reveal their beauty, and even then are dull and uninteresting in darkness but reveal their diverse beauties when exposed to light. Apart from discipline, we are earthy; away from the Light of the Word we are useless. There must be inner beauty which can be developed and made glorious and we can rejoice even now that our Lord has seen in us some even negligible suitability of character for His use, development and final perfection.

There were 12 gates, each made of a single pearl, each having an angel doorkeeper and the names of the 12 tribes inscribed one on each gate. The gates were on all four sides, three on each side.

The gate is the way into the city. Jesus said "I am the Way... no man cometh to the Father but by me." Unto them that believe He is precious indeed, as pearls are and always have been precious. And He is ready to help and succour all who seek Him, from "the four winds", North, South, East and West, but all who come must become His, must put Him on and become, Spiritual Israel for He is inseparably connected with Abraham from whose descendants spiritual Israel is selected and sealed. What is meant by the angels, twelve angels at the gates? We can only answer in words to the Hebrews: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?" The lives of God's children would be absolutely incomplete without angelic ministrations. For some thousands of years visible, for nearly 2000, invisible but indispensable.

The reading of verse 22 "And I saw no temple in the city" sometimes puzzles, especially those who believe that there will be a literal Temple built at Jerusalem as a House of Prayer for all nations, but the careful reader remembers that the city now described in Revelation is not a real city, but a symbol of the accepted people of God - the Bride. This "city" exists for the glory of God, radiates that glory throughout the world. Those who comprise it are all in Christ and in God in being in the spirit nature absolutely. They are one with God and constitute a "Holy of Holies" and the Temple of God of Rev. 2.12. They need no created light of sun or of moon, no illumination from outside, because being of spirit nature, power and light are inherent in them. They themselves radiate: the glory of God and Jesus is their lamp, for He has given them glory, honour and immortality. They will be His light bearers to the whole world and all kings, all rulers will acknowledge and bless them. The knowledge of God will radiate from them unceasingly. No spells of depression or periods of weakness. The gates of this city will not close at all. That is the meaning of the words "there shall be no night there". Psalm 72 fittingly describes conditions. Not only will kings bow in recognition of the Divinely appointed teachers and rulers of mankind, but the people themselves will give honour and worship through them to the Creator. The angel commentator completes his description by words at once searching and penetrating, answering any question which arises in the minds of listeners, by saying who will and who will not be part of this precious and shining community. And this is what really concerns us individually. The pure before God in word and deed. Those who enter are enrolled, in the Lamb's Book of Life. We remember mention, has been made of some whose names would be blotted out from that Book. What, a solemn thought! Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Daniel's angel-guide told him that every one shall be delivered that is found written in the Book. Is this Book the same as Malachi's "Book of Remembrance"? The names were written of those who feared the Lord, and thought upon His Name.

Chapter 22.

The angel continued to show John other features of this symbolic city. A crystal-like stream issued from the throne of God and of the Lamb and flowed along the main open space. Trees grew on both sides called "the tree of life" and John was told the trees fruited every month and further, the leaves of the trees were to heal the nations. Truly all things new.

Jesus now gives living water to His people and promised it would spring up into everlasting life. Then they are immortalised, this pure stream of living water will be distributed by them as its channel, to all mankind. Just as the actual water which flows from the actual Temple to be really built at Jerusalem flows into and heals the, water of the real Dead Sea, so the spiritual river of life will reach the peoples of the earth and bring the healing so badly and so sorely needed by earth's suffering souls. Dr. Thomas wrote of these world benefactors: "They will belong to the Royal and Divine College of infallible physicians." They, the saints, will have partaken of the tree of life as promised by Jesus (Re.v.2.7). Theirs will be to teach others the way and in the Kingdom the opportunities for receiving the Divine Gospel will be regular and continuous for the tree of life John saw in vision fruited monthly and its leaves were for national healing. Some have concluded that the leaves represented individual saints but confusion of thought is easily possible.

All curse will be removed, and the angel reiterates the presence of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the city, and mortal minds cannot rise: to the solemnity of the promise given: "His servants shall worship Him." We know the imperfections of our worship now and our longings to render praise and thanksgiving really acceptably. The realisation of such yearnings is promised: "His servants SHALL worship Him." They will be His absolutely, for His Name will be on their foreheads - in some way they will be recognisable as God's own children! No more groping and searching for Him because "night will be no more" and no artificial aids will be necessary, the Lord God will be their light. Their ways, their lives, Divinely illuminated and something we cannot explain or understand "they shall see His face".

Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God". And the final promise in this long and detailed, description of the City of God, the holy city, the bride, the Lamb's wife, is: "They shall reign for ever and ever". Jesus promised rulership in the days of His flesh. He promised this after He was glorified and in Heaven. The assurance is repeated. This again is a promise mortality cannot fully appreciate, but look at the words spoken to John following this gorgeous and dazzling vision: "These words are trustworthy and true and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent His angel to show His servants what must soon take place." Who could have any doubts after reading such words? The voice adds "And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book". These are the words of Jesus, v.16 makes this clear: "I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the Church".

We are reading in these closing sentences actual messages from Heaven, from Jesus. Previously in the book He is styled "The Lamb". Now He uses the name given to Mary, "because" said Gabriel, "He shall save His people from their sins". All we have heard and read is only possible because He is our Saviour, Jesus. Three times in these closing verses He says: "I am coming soon". It is nearly 2000 years since Jesus said this, repeated it and re-affirmed it. Human life is so short, the years speed by so quickly, the close of life comes unbelievably quickly and Jesus knew it was so and therefore to every saint "He is coming soon".

Two beatitudes are given by Jesus. Firstly a blessing to those who keep the words of the prophecy and this Revelation contains many commands. Secondly, a blessing on those who wash their robes and do His commandments. Jesus calls for a cleansing to take place, a washing away of all bad habits and unsound speech, the work of a lifetime.

John was so overwhelmed by what he had seen and heard that he fell down in adoration before the angel who had shown him the visions and was again reproved and told to worship God. The angel's humility is remarkable, for he declared himself to be John's fellow-servant, the fellow-servant of the prophets and even of those who obey the words of the Revelation. Undoubtedly the angel himself would be overwhelmed also to be the revealer of such marvellous scenes and feel his own inferiority in the great Divine scheme he had been permitted to unfold.

John was not told to seal the words of this prophecy. Daniel was told to shut up the words, seal the book, and again came the angel's words to Daniel: "The words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. ...but the wise shall understand..."

The unsealed words of the prophecy of the Revelation as they can now be viewed, when practically all the events outlined have come to pass, clearly tell us that Jesus is very near, to bring His "recompense, to repay everyone for what he has done". When He comes there will be no further opportunity as v.11 clearly teaches. The door will be closed, some will be within and some without, outside, saying in vain: "Lord, Lord, open to us".

Jesus reminds us of His greatness, of His Davidic origin and that He is the bright and morning star, for He will announce the dawn of the great Day of the Lord. In His mercy He joins His bride in saying "Come". Once we have heard, we too must say to others "Come" for there are many thirsty ones and the water of life He offers is free.

He warns against using this great and final Revelation lightly, a very grave warning indeed which must be heeded and as He reiterates that true and trustworthy promise: "Surely, I am coming soon", we join in the beautiful refrain: "Amen, come, Lord. Jesus".

May His grace be with us now and throughout our lives, and above all, when He comes, may we in His mercy, share in the tree of life and in the holy city which are described in this book.